

## **White Tailed Deer Communication Plan**

### **Project Title**

Deer Education and Information

### **Background**

The City of Rockville developed in 1995 a White-Tailed Deer Control Policy that promoted tolerance and co-existence with the City's deer population. The policy was developed because residents were concerned about the rising white-tailed deer population and its impact on landscaping and gardens. At that time, the issue was seen more as a nuisance than a problem with deer over-population.

The policy outlined a methodology for coping with an increasing deer population, including collecting data such as conducting aerial surveys and providing public information, primarily educational materials and consultations on methods of exclusion and deer repellents.

The policy also outlined a control plan based on the impacts of deer on public safety, including but not limited to auto accidents. The control plan called for population management and reductions when other methods failed and a significant impact initiated the need for conflict resolution.

In 2009, after many years of a policy emphasizing tolerance and coexistence, increasing impacts of the deer population prompted the Mayor and Council to form a White-Tailed Deer Task Force (WTDTF) charged with studying and analyzing current white-tailed deer population data and impacts, as well as the methods and practices used to manage a desired deer population.

The task force, which first met in May 2010, was asked to use the information to update the City's White-Tailed Deer Management Plan and to generate specific recommendations to the Mayor and Council.

### **Public Information to Date**

- Presentation before the Mayor and Council – July 11, 2011
- Draft policy and recommendations posted to web – July 15, 2011
- Deer Task Force email created – July 26, 2011 (Note: Comments accepted prior to that)
- Rockville 11 program – aired, beginning Aug. 1 on Rockville 11, Rockville website, County cable channel and YouTube
- Information included in home page rotation – Aug. 1 and beyond
- Press release issued – Aug. 8

### **Educational Program**

Education is a cornerstone of a White Tailed Deer Management Plan. In order to achieve the plan's goal of reducing deer impacts to acceptable levels, an education program about the deer population must be developed; and City residents must become educated in how to live with deer and how to minimize their negative impacts.

### **Objectives**

- Inform and educate residents about Mayor and Council approved recommendations to manage the impacts associated with white-tailed deer population in the City limits.
- Educate residents about the deer over population.

### **Primary Audiences**

- Residents and business owners in the City of Rockville
- Residents in neighboring jurisdictions

### **Recommended Strategy**

The Communication Division will work with the Recreation and Parks Department to develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan.

To do so, the Communication Division will produce a dedicated web page(s), print materials and television programming. The division will also use social media, the City's homepage, the e-newsletter and Rockville Reports.

### **Communication Action Plans**

- A comprehensive educational program on deer, their impacts and remedial methods including: informational brochures and publications, phone numbers for help, the seasonal use of Public Service Announcements about deer-vehicle collisions, local Cable TV Programs on deer management in the county, programs on deer through the nature center.
- Develop and maintain a media plan to provide timely and relevant information on deer, suited to the needs of the season. Any press releases and broadcast segments would be distributed to local newspapers, television and radio outlets, and through the government access cable channel (Cable 11).
- Work with other local government agencies to use (if existing) any educational video on preventing deer-vehicle collisions. This program could be aired on Rockville 11 during the peak seasons for deer vehicle collisions.
- City deer information Internet web page with educational information, phone numbers for reporting deer damage and receiving helpful information.