PRAIRIE DOG RELOCATION INFORMATION

Updated December 2014

This document serves as an explanation of the City’s Prairie Dog Policy (Ordinance Number 2628 adopted on August 28, 2000), of the procedures for compliance, and of organizations available to perform prairie dog removal. A copy of Ordinance 2628 is available upon request. Ordinance 2628 states that no Development Permits will be issued for development applications received after August 2000 until the developer documents good faith efforts to relocate prairie dogs from the land slated for development.

Compliance Procedures

To verify compliance with the City’s Prairie Dog Policy, the City Development Department requires documentation from the developer at three key points in the development process:

1. At First Submittal – Developer required to indicate (by marking the correct box on the development application) whether prairie dogs currently inhabit the site in question.
2. Prior to Public Hearing – For Development Permits and Subdivision Plats, the developer must submit a letter that serves as evidence of good faith efforts to relocate the prairie dogs (see below for more details.) If a development project requires neither a Development Permit nor a Subdivision Plat, then the planner assigned to the project will determine the appropriate time for submission of the evidence of good faith effort.
3. With Grading Permit Application – To receive a grading permit, the developer must submit a letter indicating actions taken to remove prairie dogs from the site.

Evidence of Good Faith Effort

The City of Thornton requires developers to submit a letter outlining actions taken in good faith to relocate prairie dog colonies from the development site, including the results of those efforts. The City of Thornton considers a good faith effort to relocate prairie dogs to include, at a minimum, but not limited to, two of the following actions:

- Contacting private and public property owners in Adams County to request use of their land for prairie dog relocation.
- Examining other personal property holdings of the developer, or other persons not listed, for suitability for prairie dog relocation.
- Working with Division of Wildlife and City Development staff to examine the possibility of including prairie dog colonies in the proposed development. (This option is possible only on a case-specific basis.)
- Contacting at least one or more prairie dog relocation organizations to attempt to schedule prairie dog relocation.
- Contacting a contractor to inquire into possibility of relocating the prairie dogs to a black-footed ferret farm or raptor rehabilitation center.
- Pursuing any other options known to the developer.

When good faith efforts reveal that relocation is possible, the developer is expected to relocate the prairie dogs, in conformance with Division of Wildlife policies, from the land slated for development. If good faith efforts reveal that relocation is not feasible, the developer may dispose of the prairie dogs through those extermination methods permitted by the Department of Agriculture.
Relocation Permit Application

In order to relocate prairie dogs, a permit is required from the Division of Wildlife. The process takes approximately 30 days and requires the applicant to identify the relocation site, the process through which the prairie dogs will be relocated and the relocation organization. The Division of Wildlife recommends that individuals who are attempting prairie dog relocation start by contacting a relocation organization, listed below.

Relocation Organizations

- **Dog Gone**
  Gay Balfour
  970-565-9878

Dog-Gone uses vacuuming to remove the prairie dogs. If the developer does not have a relocation site for the prairie dogs, they are donated to the black-footed ferret reintroduction program. The vacuuming is performed only between June and October. Currently there is a waiting list for this service.

- **Enviro-Zone**
  Scott Harvey
  303-735-0406
  Or email harveysd@colorado.edu

Enviro-Zone is a business that specializes in protecting the natural environment. The company uses only trapping to relocate prairie dogs, which can be conducted at anytime during the year, except the birthing season which is approximately March through May. Enviro-Zone conducts relocation only. If a suitable relocation site is not identified, either by the developer or by the company, Enviro-Zone will not take the prairie dogs to the black-footed ferret reintroduction program. Enviro-Zone has extensive experience relocating prairie dogs throughout the Front Range, including in the cities of Boulder and Fort Collins and for the Stapleton Redevelopment Area.

- **Roe Ecological Services, LLC**
  Christopher Roe and Kelly Roe, Wildlife Biologists
  970-532-1305 or email to res@yourwildlife.com
  Website - www.YourWildlife.com

Roe Ecological Services, LLC (RES) is a wildlife consulting company staffed by wildlife biologists. RES has been conducting live relocations for many years and has scientifically documented retention rates. If a suitable relocation site is not available, RES conducts publicly acceptable humane removals. This entails live-trapping the prairie dogs and taking them to a wildlife rehabilitation center to be used as food for the wildlife. RES refuses to flush (use of water and soap suds), poison or gas prairie dog burrows.

- **Smith Environmental and Engineering**
  Peter Smith, Vice President
  720-887-4928 or email to petersmith@smithdelivers.com
  Website - www.smithdelivers.com

Smith Environmental and Engineering (SMITH) has a property in eastern Adams County that receives live prairie dogs. In addition to receiving and relocating prairie dogs, SMITH provides comprehensive environmental services, including NEPA document preparation, environmental assessments, threatened and endangered species surveys, wetlands surveys, wildlife studies,
and many others. SMITH’s engineers and scientists can perform any and all environmental studies and design needed to get clients through the planning and permitting process for any project.

- **Prairie Dog Action**
  Deb Jones, President
  PO Box 725
  Broomfield, CO 80038
  Phone: 303-439-9264 or 303-324-6829
  Or email to Notestodj@aol.com
  Website – www.prairiedogaction.org

Prairie Dog Action is an all volunteer, non-profit organization committed to saving the Black-Tailed Prairie Dog and the prairie ecosystem.

- **Prairie Preserves, LLC**
  Pam Wanek
  Phone: 303-280-8860 or email to wanek@q.com

Available for consultation on restoring native grass communities and practicing Black-Tailed Prairie Dog relocations.

- **Animal & Pest Control Specialist, Inc.**
  3800 E. 64th Ave.
  Commerce City, CO 80022
  Phone: 303-987-0842
  Fax: 303-431-4968

Animal & Pest Control Specialists (APCS) is a nuisance wildlife removal company with an emphasis on prairie dog removals and management. All technicians carry licenses issued by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and/or the Colorado Department of Agriculture. APCS has a division dedicated to prairie dog removals and works closely with raptor programs and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service’s Black-footed Ferret Program in Carr, Colorado. APCS uses the most up-to-date methods and equipment when implementing trapping, flushing or fumigation programs in order to assist you and meet your needs. Any and all non-target animals that are captured during the trapping or flushing process will be released immediately on-site. All methods and procedures follow all city, county, state and federal rules and regulations.

**Relocation Sites**

State statutes prohibit the transfer of prairie dogs across county lines without the prior approval of the board of county commissioners of the receiving county. At present, neither the City of Thornton nor the Colorado Division of Wildlife know of designated prairie dog relocation sites in Adams County. Developers may wish to approach public and private landowners in Adams County to search for relocation sites. In addition, developers may wish to review their existing property holdings or to purchase land to examine the possibility of relocating the prairie dogs to another site within Adams County. The Division of Wildlife has guidelines as to what constitutes a suitable prairie dog relocation site. Contact the Division of Wildlife for specific guidelines at 303-297-1192 or visit their website at www.wildlife.state.co.us.

**Timing of Relocation**

If a prairie dog relocation site is identified, be advised that the relocation process is lengthy, with approximately 30 days required to receive a relocation permit. In addition, prairie dogs can be
relocated only at specific times during the year, which must be considered when planning relocation. While the relocation process must commence as early as possible in the development process to insure success, prairie dogs must be physically relocated close to the time of grading to prevent recolonization prior to the start of construction.

**Contact Information**

Please direct questions about the City of Thornton’s prairie dog ordinance to City Development at 303-538-7278.

To receive a prairie dog relocation permit application, or for more information about state regulations on prairie dogs, contact the Colorado Division of Wildlife at:

6060 Broadway
Denver, CO 80216
303-297-1192
[www.wildlife.state.co.us](http://www.wildlife.state.co.us)