



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

June 9, 2026

Summary and Motions

Chair Jennifer Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Vice Mayor Dan Wu and Committee Members Chuck Ellinger, Tyler Morton, Shayla Lynch, Tom Eblen, Lisa Higgins-Hord, Joseph Hale, Amy Beasley, and Whitney Elliott Baxter were in attendance as voting members. Council Members Emma Curtis, Liz Sheehan, Dave Sevigny, and Hil Boone were present as non-voting members.

I. APPROVAL OF MAY 5, 2026 COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Motion by Ellinger for approval of the May 5, 2026 Committee Meeting Summary. Seconded by Baxter. Motion passed without dissent.

II. GLOBAL LEXINGTON UPDATE

Global Lex continues to serve as Lexington's primary hub for immigrant, refugee, and multilingual community engagement, supporting residents through language access, education, cultural programming, community partnerships, and government services. The program's mission is to ensure all residents can fully participate in civic life and contribute to Lexington's future.

Lexington's international population continues to grow and diversify. Fayette County schools currently serve students speaking 115 active languages, with approximately one in five students identified as English learners. Statewide, immigrants play a significant role in Kentucky's economy, contributing billions in spending power and tax revenue while representing key segments of the workforce.

During the first five months of 2026, Global Lex provided direct community support through multilingual referrals, technical assistance, and case advocacy. Services were available through in-person, phone, virtual, email, and WhatsApp platforms, with staff providing support in nine languages and additional interpretation resources available through technology and contracted language services.

Global Lex also expanded educational programming through English-language instruction, citizenship and civics classes, community health and safety workshops, and tenant-rights education. Partnerships with community-based organizations, Fayette County Public Schools, the University of Kentucky, Bluegrass Community and Technical College, and numerous cultural organizations strengthened outreach efforts and community engagement.

The office reported significant community engagement impacts between January and May 2026, including:

- 12 community convenings hosted
- More than 2,000 residents reached through community outreach events
- Over 12,500 multilingual messages distributed
- Nearly 37,000 social media views
- Continued collaboration with local, state, and international partners

Global Lex also plays a critical role in LFUCG's compliance with Title VI language access requirements, helping protect federal funding eligibility while providing training, technical assistance, program design support, and outreach strategies across multiple city departments.

Looking ahead to Summer 2026, Global Lex plans to expand language-access resources, launch additional targeted English-language classes, support major cultural celebrations and festivals, update the FY27 Title VI Plan, and continue modernizing language-access systems across LFUCG. No action was taken on this item.

III. STREE(E)T SAFETY TASK FORCE: BIKE LANE ORDINANCE

The proposed Bike Lane Ordinance is a recommendation from the Street(e)t Safety Task Force, which met throughout 2025 to identify short-term strategies to improve roadway safety through engineering, education, and enforcement. The ordinance seeks to prohibit stopping, standing, or parking within designated bicycle lanes, addressing a frequently cited safety concern among cyclists and supporting Lexington's broader Vision Zero and multimodal transportation goals.

The proposal is informed by local collision data showing 205 bicycle crashes involving injuries between 2020 and 2025, including 13 serious injuries and one fatality. Stakeholder feedback and public engagement consistently identified blocked bike lanes as a major safety issue, often forcing cyclists into vehicle travel lanes and increasing crash risk.

The ordinance would amend Section 18-119 of the Lexington Code of Ordinances by adding bicycle lanes to the list of locations where stopping, standing, or parking is prohibited. New definitions for bicycle lane, bicycle, and bicyclist would be added. Limited exemptions would allow short-term loading, unloading, pick-up, and drop-off activities, subject to a 10-minute limit, activation of hazard lights, and a requirement to yield to bicyclists and pedestrians. Emergency vehicles and transit operations would also be exempt.

Research presented to the committee indicates that protected bicycle infrastructure and unobstructed bike lanes can significantly reduce crashes, while peer cities such as Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburgh, and Houston have adopted similar prohibitions. Public engagement conducted through Engage Lexington generated 960 page visits and 178 survey responses, with 86% of respondents supporting a bike lane ordinance and 78% reporting they had felt unsafe while riding in a bike lane.

Enforcement would be shared among the Lexington Police Department, LexPark, and other relevant agencies, utilizing existing non-moving violation penalties. Stakeholder discussions emphasized the importance of coupling enforcement with public education, designated loading zones, improved signage, and continued investment in protected bicycle infrastructure.

Motion by Eblen an ordinance amending Section 18-119 of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Code of Ordinances to prohibit stopping, standing or parking in designated bike lanes except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic or in compliance with law or the directions of a police officer or traffic-control device, within a bicycle lane(as presented to the Social Services and Public Safety Committee on June 9, 2026 and included in the committee packet). Seconded by Morton. Motion passed without dissent.

IV. ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL ORDINANCE UPDATES

The proposed Animal Care & Control ordinance amendments are the result of a collaborative review involving Council offices, Animal Care & Control, the Fayette County Attorney's Office, LFUCG Law, and community advocates. The review was initiated following public concerns during the summer of 2025

regarding animals left outdoors during extreme heat and severe weather events, as well as broader concerns about enforcement clarity and animal welfare protections.

The proposed revisions are intended to modernize the ordinance, strengthen humane treatment standards, improve enforcement consistency, and better align local regulations with current operational practices and public safety expectations. Key areas addressed include unsafe weather protections, tethering standards, impoundment procedures, and animal care costs during pending court cases.

The amendments to Section 4-2 would expand tethering provisions to apply to all domestic animals rather than only dogs and update outdated collar restrictions. The ordinance would also establish a definition of “unsafe weather conditions” and prohibit leaving domestic animals unattended during extreme heat, extreme cold, or other hazardous weather events. The proposal clarifies that animals left outdoors, tethered, confined, loose in fenced areas, or housed in temporary structures during such conditions may be subject to enforcement action.

The amendments to Section 4-9 address a longstanding challenge involving animals seized during cruelty investigations. Under current procedures, Animal Care & Control may be required to care for animals for extended periods while cases move through the court system, creating significant operational and financial burdens. Examples presented included animals remaining in protective custody for periods ranging from 248 to 565 days.

To address this issue, the proposal would establish a “cost of care” process similar to laws used in more than 40 states. Following a court finding of probable cause, owners would be required to post a bond covering ongoing food, shelter, and veterinary expenses while a case remains pending. Failure to provide the bond would result in forfeiture of ownership, allowing animals to be adopted or transferred to rescue organizations rather than remaining in extended legal custody.

Motion by Morton to place on the June 16, 2026 Work Session Docket, an ordinance amending Chapter 4 and sections 4-2, 4-9, 4-12.4, 4-12.5, 4-14, and 4-21 of the Lexington-Fayette Urban Government County Code of Ordinances to define unsafe weather conditions, set standards for tethering and confinement of domestic animals, implement a statutory scheme for the impounding and custody of victimized animals, and adopt urban county animal control officer as the uniform identification within this chapter, for officers of Lexington Fayette Animal Care and Control, all effective following passage of council (as presented to Social Services and Public Safety Committee on June 9, 2026 and included in the committee packet). Seconded by Beasley. Motion passed without dissent.

V. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

No action was taken on this item.

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 pm.