



Memorandum

**TO: BUILDING STRONG
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE**

FROM: Albert Balagso

**SUBJECT: ANIMAL CARE AND SERVICES
BI-ANNUAL UPDATE**

DATE: 12-04-06

Approved

Date

PURPOSE

The following memorandum provides an update on the activities of the San Jose Animal Care and Services (SJACS) Program in the last year. SJACS is responsible for sheltering and field services programs related to domestic animals in the City of San José and the contract cities of Cupertino, Los Gatos, Milpitas, and Saratoga. These field services include responding to aggressive, injured, sick, or stray animals, dead animal pick up, barking dog complaints, vicious or dangerous animal regulation, pet shop inspections, and injured or sick wildlife. The Animal Care Center provides shelter for stray and homeless domestic animals, reunites lost pets with their families, places animals in responsible new homes, and euthanizes animals that are suffering, not adopted, or not reclaimed.

The Animal Care Center opened to the public on October 1, 2004. This report details the activities of the second year of operations at the new shelter and field operations for the period 10/1/05 – 9/30/06. The statistical information also includes data from service contracts with the cities of Cupertino, Los Gatos, Milpitas, and Saratoga. Currently, the Division provides animal care and services to approximately 1,100,000 residents in Santa Clara County.

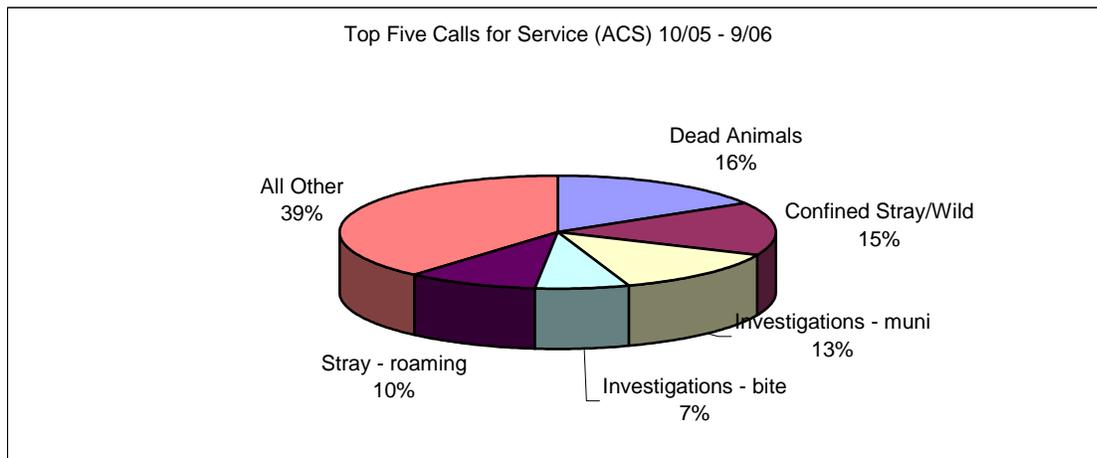
FIELD OPERATIONS

During the last year (10/1/05 - 9/30/06), SJACS responded to 31,765 calls for service. This represents an increase of 7% compared to the previous year. These calls are categorized into three priority levels with Priority 1 (P1) calls being the most urgent (aggressive dogs, injured animals, police assists). Priority 1 calls typically represent 10-15% of the total service calls.

The performance measure for field services reflects the ability of the Division to respond to Priority 1 service calls within one hour or less. The target is to respond within that timeframe at least 85% of the time. The response time for the period of October 2005 through September 2006 was 89%.

Oct. 05 – Sept. 06	Oct – Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Total
Calls for service	7670	7233	8406	8456	31,765
Response (P1 – target 85%)	89%	95%	88%	84%	89%

The field services unit responds to approximately 50 different call types. The following chart, *Top Five Calls for Service (SJACS) 10/05 – 9/06*, illustrates the five most common service requests. These top five call categories comprised 61% (19,510) of all calls for service during the last year. Other types of common calls include injured or sick animals, investigations of minimum standards of care, park patrols, and cats.

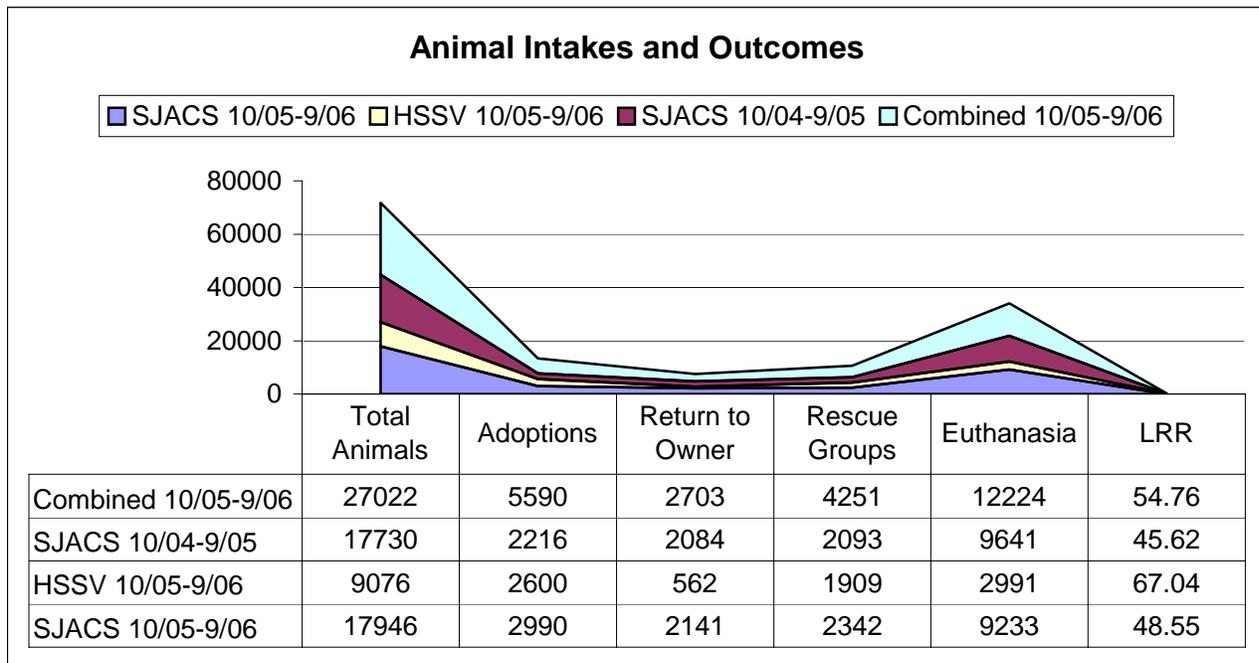


SHELTER OPERATIONS

The Animal Care Center (ACC) has been in operation for two years, Oct. 2004 through Sept. 2006. The months of November through February are generally the lowest volume months in any animal shelter. March and October are transitional months and April through September are very high volume due to seasonal litters of cats.

Total animals: SJACS received 17,946 animals in the second year of operations, which is 0.5% more than the previous year. One-half of a percent is not a significant change and may represent a plateau for animal intake; however, long-term data is needed to verify any significant trend.

The following graph, *Animal Intakes and Outcomes – comparison*, details the number of incoming animals at the ACC in the second twelve months of operation. It also details the same twelve months for the previous year, and the 2003-2004 year when the City of San Jose was contracting with the Human Society Silicon Valley, HSSV, to provide animal sheltering services. The City received and cared for 5,425 dogs and puppies (+3%), 10,932 cats and kittens (0% change), and 1,589 other animals (rabbits, chickens, reptiles, birds, small mammals) (+1%).



10/05 – 9/06 = 12-month period October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006
 Combined 10/05-9/06 = combined activity for SJACS and HSSV, 12-month period October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006

Adoptions: The Animal Care Center performed better in the second year of operation. The 2,990 adoptions were an increase of 35% over the previous year and makes the ACC the highest volume adoption agency in the South Bay. Although the improvement has been excellent, there is still opportunity for growth. Additional marketing strategies will be used to attract more customers to the adoption program.

Rescue Groups: Area animal rescue groups have also been more active compared to the previous year and rescued 12% more animals. SJACS is now able to offer low cost spay and neuter services to rescue groups that take animals from the shelter, which may account for some of the increase. SJACS has developed relationships with more than 40 animal rescue organizations in the Bay Area. Rescue groups focus on animals that need “above standard” care that the City does not have the time or resources to provide. These services include minor/major medical care, behavior modification, and care for the very young or the very old. Rescue groups find new homes for these animals through their own adoption programs.

Euthanasia: The number of animals euthanized at the ACC decreased (-4%) compared to the previous year. This represents approximately 400 fewer animals euthanized than the previous year, even though the total number of incoming animals increased slightly. Increased adoptions, increased animal rescue, and additional animal holding space (constructed winter 2005) all contributed to the decline.

LRR:* The Live Release Rate is an industry term that measures the number of animals that leave an animal shelter alive. This is determined by dividing the number of animals that were released alive (to their owner, adoptions, rescue) by the total number that were admitted alive. Based on

national statistics for an open door public animal shelter, a very successful LRR for dogs is 70% to 80%. A successful LRR for cats is 60% or better. Total combined (dog + cat) LRR for the second year of operation at the Animal Care Center improved to 48.6% which is an increase of 6% over the same period last year. For reference, the national average is 36% and the division target is 50% for 2006-2007..

*The large volume of cats received by the City significantly influences this measurement of euthanasia. A more detailed evaluation of the numbers reveal that the LRR for all dogs was 75% at the ACC and the LRR for all cats was 29%.

Revenues

In FY 2005-2006 the Division collected \$1,913,000 in revenue, representing 36% of the operating budget (\$5,250,000). These revenue sources include animal licensing, fees and charges for services, board and impound charges, adoptions, and contracts for service with other cities. This represents an increase of almost \$200,000 over estimates, however, due to the lack of a state reimbursement (see next paragraph) there was an overall decline of 12% (-\$267,000) compared to last year. The primary revenue increases were in board and impound fees, adoption fees, and licensing.

The 05-06 fiscal year did not include a reimbursement from the state of California. Cities/counties are entitled to reimbursement for some of the increased costs incurred under Senate Bill 1785 (1998) that mandates veterinary care and increased holding periods for animals. In FY 04-05, the City received \$505,000 from this source. In FY 06-07 the City has already received more than \$460,000 and expects up to \$200,000 more. All operating revenues should continue at current levels or improve this year resulting in total revenues near 50% of operating costs in FY 06-07.

The Division has also helped local animal advocates form a 501c3 non-profit organization that will directly benefit the Animal Care Center and its programs. The primary purpose will be to develop additional funding for medical needs, support the spay/neuter clinic, and public education about responsible pet ownership. The non-profit group can help to attract grants and donations to these critical services. In addition, SJACS has received a grant for \$50,000 to support the new spay and neuter clinic.

POLICY and PROGRAMS

Recent Legislation: The State has passed three laws that are significant to Animal Care and Services. The first is a law that makes it illegal to tether or tie a dog to a stationary object for long periods. The second law allows for felony prosecution of people who participate in cockfighting and were previously convicted of cockfighting. The third law provides that it is a misdemeanor to leave an animal in an unattended vehicle in hot weather and increases the authority of officials to remove the animal from the vehicle. These new laws will take effect January 1, 2007.

SJACS also continues to move forward with ordinance revisions to Title 7 Animals, of the San Jose Municipal Code. The division presented the changes to the Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee in June of this year, and has conducted 4 public meetings. The changes include mandatory spay and neuter for all dogs and cats, with some exceptions for breeders, hobbyist, and service animals. The recommendations also include minimum standards of care for animals, limitations on livestock and small animals, location of sale exemptions for animal rescuers, and multiple administrative changes. The final draft of the changes will be presented to Council in Winter 2007.

Spay and Neuter Clinic: SJACS now operates a low cost spay and neuter clinic at the Animal Care Center. Male cats are neutered for \$5, and females are spayed for \$10. The clinic opened for service in March of this year, and was only open for two days per week for the first two months. As the operation has matured, the clinic has expanded to four days a week and focuses only on cats. Since opening, the staff has performed 1,460 surgeries for the public. In addition, SJACS performed 2,887 s/n surgeries on animals for adoption, and redeemed 1,721 vouchers for s/n surgeries. The voucher program provided low cost surgeries for residents while the San Jose clinic was under construction. Vouchers were issued to residents and redeemed by participating veterinarians. The City will no longer administer the voucher program because the low cost/high volume clinic is now open.

In total, the SJACS program performed or funded 6,068 surgeries during the last twelve months. This represents a 135% increase compared to the first year of operations (2,580). The operating capacity of the clinic is approximately 30 cats per day or nearly 6,000 surgeries per year, although it is more likely that it will perform 4,000 – 5,000 surgeries per year, primarily for cats. The target for total surgeries in the next year (adoptions and public clinic) is between 7,000 and 8,000.

The City Council has recognized that there are more humane solutions to reducing the feral cat population and in October 2006, issued a resolution that endorses humane trap, neuter, and release programs (TNR) for feral cats and encourages residents to use the services at the Animal Care Center. These programs seek to reduce the feral cat population by limiting breeding and decreasing the use of euthanasia as the primary method for control of the population.

Animal Advisory Committee: Pursuant to Council direction in August of this year, the Animal Advisory Committee has adjusted the practices of the committee to include public posting of the meeting agenda. The committee produces minutes at every regular meeting, uses Roberts Rules of Order to conduct meetings, and allows public participation. The committee remains advisory to the Animal Care and Services division. The change to include a public notice makes this committee Brown Act compliant. An information memo about the history, structure, and function of the Animal Advisory Committee was provided to Council in October.

Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee

12-4-06

Subject: Animal Care Services (SJACS) Update

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NEXT STEPS

In 2007, major programming efforts will include a greater focus on licensing, improved adoptions, feral cat control, and a foster program for animals.

ALBERT BALAGSO
Director, Parks, Recreation, and
Neighborhood Services

Questions, contact: Jon Cicirelli, Deputy Director Animal Care and Services, 408-361-6623