



King County

Records and Licensing Services Division

Department of Executive Services
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Mayor Joan McGilton
City of Burien
400 SW 152nd St, Suite 300
Burien, WA 98166

Dear Mayor Joan McGilton:

Regional Animal Services of King County (RASKC) was formed last year (July, 2010), as a joint effort between 27 cities and unincorporated King County to provide better public health, safety and animal welfare in the communities we serve. RASKC operates the Pet Adoption Center (Kent, WA) as an open admission shelter and provides services to the public 7 days a week.

Since your citizens do not have access to our program, this is an opportunity to learn about the benefits of moving your animal services to a comprehensive regional model. One immediate benefit is experienced and professional officers. RASKC officers are well known with law enforcement and are preferred for handling cruelty cases and criminal concerns where animals are present.

In addition, our licensing ratio is one of the highest in the country. RASKC partners with the cities to provide guidance to their efforts, but most importantly cities benefit directly from our marketing efforts.

RASKC has reduced shelter costs through the growing use of volunteers and foster parents. We see this as a progressive step to balancing the expenses of this program and protecting lives in our communities. We are committed to continuing to grow this element of our program and our donation fund to ease the burden of animal care.

We have included a RASKC Fact Sheet – which contains more detailed information on the services provided utilizing the RASKC Regional model.

As you may be aware, we are entering the last year of our existing agreement with our current partner cities. We have initiated discussions with our current partners regarding a successor agreement. We would like the opportunity to sit down and discuss our

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thoughts on how RASKC and your city could benefit from working together in providing some or all of the services RASKC provides.

If you are interested in learning more about our agency's ability to meet your needs, please contact my office at (206) 296-3185. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lorraine A. Patterson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lorraine A Patterson, Director
Records and Licensing Services Division
Department of Executive Services

Regional Animal Services of King County - Fact Sheet

Regional Animal Services of King County (RASKC) is a joint effort between 26 cities and unincorporated King County to provide better public health, safety and animal welfare in the communities we serve. RASKC services and functions include operating the Regional Shelter (Pet Adoption Center), providing for animal control and licensing services, as well as numerous critical behind the scenes ancillary services and functions.

Pet Adoption Center

The Pet Adoption Center provides services 7 days a week – including customer hours for claiming lost or adopting animals at the Center. The Center provides for animal care 365 days a year – as animals in care require food, water and area cleaning every day of the year.

The Center is an **open shelter**, which means all animals regardless of age, condition, adoptability and breed are admissible. The Center takes in over 6,500 animals annually. Many of the Center's local counterparts are funded by private donations – and avoid taking in animals that are less likely to be adopted, have special care needs or medical conditions – to minimize the need for euthanasia or disease exposure. **EUTHANASIA RATES** have dropped dramatically since 2007, when the rate exceeded 40% of animals taken in. In 2011, through October 20th the euthanasia rate is 14.4%. No adoptable animals are euthanized at the center. High Adoption Rates - the overwhelming majority (68%) of animals brought to the Center are adopted (either through off-site programs, adoptions at the shelter or transfers to adoption partners).

The Center uses private donations to fund heroic treatments of animals that are adoptable and have a considerable life expectancy remaining, rather than using limited public funds. While there is a public duty to provide basic care and alleviate suffering, heroic treatment is an added service that reflects the values of the communities we serve at **NO ADDED COST TO OUR RASKC PARTNERS** or King County.

All animals received at the Center and not claimed by owners undergo behavior assessments. Those animals that are adoptable undergo surgical sterilization prior to adoption. This reduces the demand for field and shelter services in the future, as there are fewer unwanted pets as a result. No animals are adopted without spaying or neutering.

Foster care both reduces the cost of operating the shelter and allows us to provide a higher level of care than we otherwise would be able to. The Center's animals, our city partners and the County all benefit immensely from the **OVER 300 VOLUNTEERS DEDICATED** to the Center. The volunteers contribute over 60,000 hours of support each year (equivalent to over **30 full time employees**). Almost 25% of the Center intakes (1,658 animals), benefited from foster care in 2010. Many of the animals we foster out are animals that are too young, or have special care requirements in the Center thus reducing our operating costs. All dogs and cats entering the shelter are vaccinated to prevent the spread of disease in both the Center and the communities we serve. Failing to vaccinate increases the likelihood of a catastrophic outbreak in the shelter, which increases care costs and reduces availability to the communities we serve. The Center has the configuration and capacity to allow for quarantining and disease prevention.

Regional Animal Services of King County - Fact Sheet

Animal Control and Licensing Services

RASKC provides animal control services, with options for **ENHANCED SERVICES**, which can tailor response time to meet cities needs.

RASKC receives over 6,500 calls per year – more than 80% of these calls were responding to an immediate or potential threat to life of a person or an animal. About 8% of call activity is related to barking dogs. The common misperception is that calls are mostly related to barking dogs, stray animals and dead animals in the roadway.

Calls are dispatched on a prioritized basis – with cases involving the life, health and safety of a person receiving the highest priority – RASKC has regular hours of service that are supplemented by a 24/7/365 on-call response.

RASKC has zero tolerance for unlicensed pets. The fine for unlicensed pets is \$125 for altered animals and \$250 for unaltered animals – which alone is reason enough for many people to license their pet.

In the year ending June 30, 2011, RASKC received 592 calls where cruelty to an animal was alleged. All these calls were investigated and 47.6% of them required some level of subsequent follow-up (**CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS**) to ensure animal welfare.

Annual license fees are collected from dog and cat owners – and are used investigate animal cruelty, enforce local laws, promote animal adoption, and provide a safe shelter for abandoned, surrendered or lost pets. Licenses are sold at local City Halls, select veterinary clinics, at the Pet Adoption Center in Kent, and online at www.kingcounty.gov/pets

As more people have become comfortable with online transactions, fewer transactions are taking place at licensing partners. In an effort to reduce costs, RASKC has reduced the number of licensing agents and developed a system that no longer requires maintaining an inventory of physical tags with most partners – both of which reduces costs – a savings that is passed along to partner cities through reduced license administration costs. Additionally, new stainless steel permanent license tags were introduced in 2011. This efficiency reduced costs by \$50,000 a year.

Ancillary services and functions

Most of the less serious offenses involving animals (barking, off-leash, stray, unlicensed, etc.) are handled as civil offenses before the King County Board of Appeals. This reduces district and municipal court caseloads, as these cases would otherwise be handled by the courts where costs are higher. Civil penalties collected proportionately benefit all RASKC members by reducing the overall costs of operating the RASKC program.

Animal issues can be highly emotional matters that can involve vocal animal advocacy groups and equally passionate animal owners. Additionally, the nature of animal cases and issues often result in **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE REQUESTS** for information about the case, who complained and investigation reports. RASKC responds to many hundreds of public disclosure requests per year.