



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 27, 2006  
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Meeting Date: July 11, 2006

TO: City Council  
FROM: Chief License Inspector  
SUBJECT: Animal Control Services Strategic Plan Update

#### RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council accept this report as an update on the implementation of the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan work program to date.
- B. THAT Council endorse the continuation of the implementation of the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan work program for Years 2007 to 2009.

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the above recommendations.

#### COUNCIL POLICY

The Vancouver Charter empowers the City to establish a pound and to regulate the keeping of dogs and other animals. Pursuant to this power, the City has enacted the Animal Control By-Law which establishes a dog shelter (pound) and licenses and controls dogs and other animals in the City.

License By-Law No. 4450 provides for the issuing of licenses and regulates business, trades, professions and other occupations within the City of Vancouver, including pet businesses.

In May 2004, Council adopted an Animal Control Services Strategic Plan which was developed to improve animal control operations and services over a five-year period from 2004 to 2009.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the implementation to date of the work program outlined in the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan, along with actual Animal Control licensing and revenue data for the past two and a half years.

## **BACKGROUND**

In May 2004, Council adopted the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan as a guide for improving animal control operations and services. Specific actions in the Plan are tailored to address key animal control issues facing the City and public and include a comprehensive review of by-laws, penalties/fines and enforcement. The Plan unfolds over a five-year implementation period and focuses on achieving a higher level of licensing compliance and increased licensing revenue each year.

Since the Plan's conception in mid-2004, most of the actions for 2004 to 2006 designed to address key animal control issues have been successfully completed resulting in improved efficiencies for the animal control operation, dog owners and the public. However, the recent elimination of an Animal Control Officer position through the 2006 budget process and a longer than expected time frame for the implementation of critical Animal Control By-law amendments have had and will continue to have an impact on the Plan's implementation and financial projections.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Actions and Completed Tasks**

The specific actions identified in the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan are listed below:

1. Responsible dog ownership multi-faceted education campaign
2. Hiring additional staff
3. Amend Animal Control By-Law
4. Targeted and effective staff training
5. Improved enforcement for Animal Control
6. Add Community Programs Coordinator and associated communications and advertising to expand adoption, foster and volunteer programs.
7. Replace or upgrade the present Animal Control facility
8. Improvements to Animal Control Shelter - technology and equipment upgrades; five-year phased improvement of the fleet; upgraded telephone system to improve customer service
9. Greater focus on licensing compliance, license canvassing and exploration of various initiatives to make licenses easier to obtain

The first six actions listed above will be fully or partially completed by the end of 2006, and a greater focus on licensing compliance will be addressed in 2007. Work on the animal shelter

replacement project commenced in 2006 and a search for appropriate sites is on-going. This includes an update of the 2006 - 2008 capital plan submission which was not approved and the finalization of a 2009 - 2011 capital plan submission for a new animal control facility. With respect to additional staff hired, three new ACO positions were created since 2003 but as one of these positions was recently eliminated through the budget process, the result is a net increase of two Animal Control Officer positions.

The hiring of additional staff, increased fines for infractions, by-law changes, additional training and new enforcement procedures have all contributed to increased licensing compliance and a reduction in dog-related infractions in parks and along the beaches. Statistics are not available but Animal Control Officers note a visible improvement in compliance levels of off-leash and unlicensed dogs in some areas. Enforcement will continue to be a challenge as resources are spread out over the entire city and in addition it takes time to change some dog owner attitudes towards regulation. The current Park Board process for review of off-leash areas may also have a positive impact on the Plan's success.

The tables in Appendix A list the specific actions that commenced in the first and second year of the Plan's work program (ie. 2004 & 2005) and the respective tasks that have been completed to date in greater detail. Actions and completed tasks are grouped together under the particular issue they have been tailored to address.

### **Specific Actions Scheduled for Year 2006 - 2008**

The following key actions identified in the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan's work program are scheduled to commence this year and to be concluded within the next two years:

1. Continued work on the Animal shelter replacement project, including continuing to search for appropriate sites and updating and finalizing the 2009 - 2011 Capital Plan submission. The existing Animal Control facility compromises the full implementation of the Animal Control Strategic Plan as lack of adequate space makes it impossible to proceed with many of the proposed scheduled programs (eg. dog training; public education; and a canine community center) elaborated upon in the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan.
2. Development of exotic animal regulatory policy to address the sale, ownership and use of exotic animals in public performances and other forms of entertainment.
3. Exploring the possibility of adding pet vendor licensing into the Animal Control By-Law.
4. Hiring a dog trainer/instructor to make dogs at the shelter more adoptable and offer an educational service to the general public.
5. Identifying further actions to increase rate of licensing.

### **Public Consultation**

Animal Control Services has consulted with representatives of the SPCA, Parks Board and various animal advocacy groups on two separate occasions in 2005. The first meeting in February 2005 was held to discuss the Dangerous Dog report and the appropriateness of breed

specific legislation, while the second meeting in June 2005 addressed the proposed new Animal Control By-Law and changes to the Noise By-Law and License By-Law. The second meeting included representatives from BC SPCA, Canadian Kennel Club, UBC Animal Welfare Program, Vancouver Humane Society, Vancouver Dog Owners Association and the British Columbia Veterinary Medical Association.

Further public consultation will continue as the next phase of the work unfolds and will focus on exotic animal regulatory policy and the effectiveness of the changes implemented to date through the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan process.

### Park Board Comments

The Vancouver Park Board has received a range of public comments about the need for additional support from Animal Control staff in parks. This increased support is required for enforcement particularly in dog off-leash areas and other parks in the city where pet owners are required to keep their off-leash pets away from children's play areas and sports fields, clean-up after their pets and keep off of beaches and out of natural areas. Noise complaints have also been received about barking dogs in park areas in close proximity to residential areas. As a result of these concerns, the Park Board at its meeting of May 29, 2006 passed a motion that supported the need to increase the number of staff resources to deal with these issues and indicates their support to Council for a 2007 budget increase for Animal Control officers.

### Licensing Revenue

The Animal Control Services Strategic Plan presents a specific funding strategy focusing on achieving a higher level of licensing compliance and increased licensing revenue every year. The expectation is that as components of the Plan are successfully implemented, licensing revenue will increase. The increased revenue is expected to cover the costs of the expanded Animal Control services by 2009, the final year of the Plan.

The first table below shows the projected expenses for Animal Control over the Plan's five-year time frame as well as the revised total budget from 2006 onwards which reflects the elimination of an ACO position in the 2006 budget process. The second table presents the projected dog license fee revenue over the Plan's five-year time frame and the actual dog license fee revenue realized in 2004 - 2006 (to date).

### Animal Control Expenses

Year	Year 1 2004	Year 2 2005	Year 3 2006	Year 4 2007	Year 5 2008	Year 6 2009
Animal Control Base Budget	1,005,400	1,005,400	1,005,400	1,005,400	1,005,400	1,005,400
Budget Increase - Strategic Plan	301,300	423,300	519,800	624,700	670,300	670,300
Animal Control Total Budget	1,306,700	1,428,700	1,525,200	1,630,100	1,675,700	1,675,700
Revised Total Budget reflecting elimination of ACO position in 2006 (approx. salary + benefits \$47,500)			1,477,700	1,582,600	1,628,200	1,628,200

Note: Amounts noted in table are in 2004 dollars

**Projected/Actual Revenue**

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Projected Dog License Fee Revenue	\$544,000	\$612,000	\$714,000	\$850,000	\$1,020,000	\$1,190,000
Actual Dog License Fee Revenue	\$504,000 *	\$611,164	\$600,000**			
Difference in revenue	\$40,000	\$836	\$114,000**			

\* Animal Control Services Strategic Plan was implemented half way through 2004.

\*\* Approximate figure to date.

It is evident in the above table that revenue is on target to date. However, as a result of the recent staff reduction through the budget process, it is anticipated that Animal Control may not be able to meet its revenue target in future years.

**CONCLUSION**

This report provides Council with an update on the progress of the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan work program along with data on revenue and expense figures realized by Animal Control Services since the Plan's conception. The new programs, staffing and focus on enforcement and licensing have been implemented as proposed in the 2004 and 2005 Plan. Items identified for 2006 are underway and revenue projections were realized in 2005 and are on target for 2006. The reduction in an ACO position for 2006 will have an impact on future revenues and will limit opportunities for increased enforcement. Council is requested to endorse the continuation of the five year plan for 2007 to 2009.

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## APPENDIX A

### Animal Control Services Strategic Plan's Work Program (2004 & 2005) Actions and Respective Tasks Completed to Date

## A) Issue: Public Safety around Dogs &amp; Shared Use of Public Space by Dogs and Public

Actions	Completed Tasks
a) Undertake the Responsible Dog Ownership public education campaign with Park Board, SPCA and other agencies	"Rex in the City" campaign (booklet, counter cards & book marks) was launched June 18, 2005 in conjunction with SPCA to teach responsible dog ownership (ie. licensing; pick-up; respectful use of public spaces; animal welfare). A dog obedience training book written by the Animal Control Manager was also published in March 2006.
b) Work with Park Board and public to identify off-leash park improvements for both dog owners and general public.	On-going discussions are held with Park Board management staff to identify off-leash park improvements for dog owners & general public. ( eg. Connaught Park; signage; provision of bag dispensers for canine waste).
c) Increase staff by adding one clerical position, one kennel attendant, one duty driver and gradually increasing ACO's as revenues increase	Staff hired: one clerical position, one kennel attendant, one duty driver, two ACO's and a Canine Services Supervisor.
d) Expand enforcement capacity & follow-up by: - registering ACO's for Justice Institute course work/training to improve effectiveness w/investigations, providing evidence & court prep - identifying a City prosecutor as part of Animal Control Office - working with police to provide greater enforcement authority for ACO's	- Staff have been trained on verbal judo & ticketing skills, court procedure and evidence gathering; also attended Cheryl Smith's 2-day seminar on Canine Aggression (March 2005). - Two prosecutors have now been identified. - Park and beach "sting" operations with VPD are on-going. - Providing greater enforcement authority for ACO's is currently not possible as it is not permitted under the Vancouver Charter.
e) Increase penalties, fines & enforcement powers by preparing amendments to the Animal Control By-Law and exploring expansion of authority of ACO's to include Special Constable status	- Amendments to the Animal Control By-Law were prepared (ie. increased penalties & fines for vicious dogs and fines for other violations) and presented to Council on July 14, 2005. Discussion and deliberation continued on October 6, 2005; the new Animal Control By-Law was approved at this meeting. - Expansion of ACO's authority was explored and not permitted under the Vancouver Charter

## B) Issue: Animal Welfare and Cruelty

Actions	Completed Tasks
a) Include animal welfare information in the Responsible Dog Ownership public education campaign	Completed
b) Increase liaison with SPCA - information sharing, cross-training, referrals, etc. (SPCA has Provincial legal mandate for animal welfare)	- Monthly operational meetings are held with SPCA.; - Animal welfare concerns (eg. dogs confined in cars in summer, abuse/neglect issues) are referred to SPCA on on-going basis.
c) Prepare amendments to the Animal Control By-Law to add animal welfare and care standards and regulations for pet owners based on past research by SPCA and on by-laws in other municipalities.	- Animal welfare and care standards and regulations for pet owners have been added
d) Increase patrol and enforcement related to new animal welfare and care standards and regulations	Patrol and enforcement related to new animal welfare and care standards/regulations has been increased since the approval of the new Animal Control By-Law.

## C) Issue: Shelter Programs and Equipment

Actions	Completed Tasks
a) Improve animal care and management through staff development and training; and through gradual replacement of Kennel Assistants with Vet Technicians	Staff training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACO's &amp; kennel staff attended Cheryl Smith's 2-day seminar on Canine Aggression (March 2005)</li> <li>- 2005 - Supp cap application submitted but denied; development of veterinary treatment area postponed pending funding</li> <li>- 2004 - In-House Veterinary Treatment Area - plans drawn</li> <li>- Kennel assistants have gradually been replaced with veterinary technicians through attrition.</li> </ul>
b) Expand adoption, foster & volunteer programs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adding a Community Programs Coordinator to work on outreach, partnerships, communications, and advertising</li> <li>- Improving communications, advertising, signage</li> </ul>	No progress to date
c) Upgrade technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve telephone system</li> <li>- Improve computer hardware</li> <li>- Assess and develop integrated system (to improve tracking &amp; dispatching, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided in 2004: one additional computer for kennel area; new telephone system for shelter (voice mail; caller ID; dedicated lines for supervisory &amp; mgmt staff); and installation of fibre optics (improved computer hardware)</li> <li>- In 2005, video surveillance (digital recorder), intruder alarm and City Hall security monitors were installed (the latter at no cost). The Amanda upgrade process was also commenced.</li> </ul>
d) Upgrade & expand the fleet through replacements & additions over five years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An additional vehicle was leased for the new duty truck driver and one design replacement vehicle was introduced per years 2004 and 2005.</li> </ul>
e) Plan to upgrade shelter facilities: Develop design needs and costs for a new shelter facility; explore capital and operating funding options & partnerships; and investigate location alternatives - to include in 2006-08 Capital Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In February 2005, Kasian Architecture &amp; Interior Design was hired for program design.</li> <li>- In April 2005, a Capital Plan presentation &amp; submission was made to the Capital Plan Budget Committee, however, the proposal was unsuccessful for this round.</li> <li>- Investigation of appropriate sites is on-going.</li> </ul>

## D) Issue: Low Rate of Dog Licensing and Revenue

Actions	Completed Tasks
a) Include licensing in the Responsible Dog Ownership education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2004, an "I'd be Lost Without You" bus shelter advertising &amp; print advertising campaign was implemented.</li> <li>- In 2005 - "Rex in the City" -bus shelter advertising, print advertising &amp; radio advertising</li> </ul>
b) Give more focus to licensing improvements and effectiveness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adding one ACO to focus on this work.</li> <li>- Implementing strong licensing campaign with door-to-door canvassing &amp; partnerships with other agencies (eg. Post office)</li> <li>- Making licenses easier to obtain (eg. Investigate options for staggered licensing renewal, lifetime dog tags and licenses available at financial institutions).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2004, investigated partnership with Canada Post to assist with identifying where dogs reside (licensing enforcement) - Canada Post declined.</li> <li>In 2005, reduced commissions for outlets and ordered life-time dog tags; also proceeded with staggered license renewal process for cost savings to be implemented January 2006.</li> <li>2004 &amp; 2005 - Re-allocation of staff resources (ACO's) to follow-up all delinquent license renewals.</li> <li>- Increased violation notices for unlicensed dogs.</li> </ul>
c) Monitor licensing rate and revenue and report to Council regularly on progress toward achieving financial goals	Licensing rate and revenue monitored on on-going basis.