

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	King County Animal Control Agreement Amendment- Supplemental Services
DEPARTMENT:	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
PRESENTED BY:	Dick Deal, PRCS Director

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

The City of Shoreline currently has an Interlocal Agreement with King County to provide animal control services in Shoreline. King County is allowed to collect all license fees, with a small amount retained by the City for each license the City sells, and in return King County Animal Control will provide services and enforcement of regulations as adopted in City of Shoreline Ordinance No. 25, approved July 10, 1995. Most cities in King County have similar agreements.

King County provides these services 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Officers are on duty from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily with emergency services provided at other times by on-call officers. The total King County Animal Control staff is 45 FTEs. This includes pet licensing, pet canvassing, shelter personnel, administration, etc. Of these 45, 16 employees are patrol officers. Given the expansive geographical area they cover, over 2,100 square miles, only one of these officers is dedicated to our district and this district includes: Kirkland, Bothell, Woodinville, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park and Shoreline.

About 75 to 80% of this service is funded through licensing and adoption fees, with the remainder funded by taxes paid to KC by our residents (King County General Fund). City residents are required to purchase a pet license each year, and this may be done in the City Clerk's Office for \$20 if their pet has been spayed or neutered, \$60 if not. There is a senior discount of \$20 for dogs and \$12 for cats, and they are required to pay only once during the ownership of said animal. The Clerk's Office processed 438 licenses in 2007. This is an increase of nearly 23% from 2006 City license registrations. Some of this increase can be attributed to the City off-leash enforcement that started in 2006. The City retains \$1 for each license purchased through the City.

Many people register their animals directly with King County Animal Control so the City only processes a small percentage of the total license issued. Throughout the county, King County Animal Control anticipates there is approximately one dog for every two households. If that ratio holds true in Shoreline, that would represent more than 10,000 dogs. Not all people register their dogs, but there are several thousand Shoreline dogs registered each year.

The inter-local agreement between King County and Shoreline sets the level of service standard for the City. Distinct response times or resource allocations are not described in the agreement. Though not specified in the inter-local, the services provided by King County include:

- Patrol requests
- Trespassing cats and dogs
- Stray dogs and cats, pick up.
- Owner release dogs and cats (if unlicensed a fee will apply)
- Animal pick-ups
- Vicious animal complaints
- Cruelty investigations
- Animal bites
- Barking dog complaints and petitions
- Injured animal rescues
- "Dead-on-arrival" wildlife/livestock/cats/dogs
- Pet license sales
- Requests for animal traps to capture nuisance stray pets
- Police department calls for assistance
- Leash law violations
- Loose livestock on roadways

Many of the complaints we receive are related to off leash dogs in our city parks. Since our base service agreement with King County, as described above, does not provide adequate foot patrol in our parks, in April 2006 the City executed a supplemental agreement which provided a KCAC officer to patrol the Shoreline park system. The officer worked for approximately six months in 2006 and was responsible for educating park users about the leash law, which brought more public attention to the problem of off-leash activity in Shoreline Parks. Through regular reports made by this officer in the field, the educational effort reached over 1000 park users and resulted in reduced off-leash activity.

This agreement was revised on May 18, 2007 which allowed the City of Shoreline to address the off-leash dog issue in our parks again that year by paying for additional hours of patrol each week for on-leash enforcement. This amendment allowed the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department to schedule a KCAC employee to help manage off-leash activity in Shoreline parks.

Due to a successful campaign that has reduced off-leash activity with the past two years of additional education and enforcement services, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department would like to establish this as an ongoing agreement with King County Animal Services.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

- The approval of this amendment to the Interlocal agreement would be in effect for the remainder of 2008, automatically renewable each year, and be limited to a maximum annual expenditure of \$20,000. Funds are available in the 2008 Parks budget for this expenditure.

BACKGROUND

This issue was last presented before Council on January 9, 2006. Council approved the first amendment to the Interlocal Agreement to provide education to park users about the leash law in Shoreline parks, and to re-enforce our commitment to a safe park system for multiple user groups. Since the last amendment was made, the KCAC officer has made contact with more than a thousand dog owners who bring their pets to Shoreline parks off-leash. Staff spends a significant amount of time in contact with park users who have had concerns in the past about their own level of comfort and personal safety while using a park.

It is staff's intent to continue educating off-leash violators in our park system. However, the Park Board recommended at its January 2007 meeting that staff direct the Animal Control officer to ticket repeat offenders who have previously been warned. It became evident that this increased enforcement would be necessary as last year several people were warned yet continued to violate the park leash regulations. The main reason for this enforcement is safety. In fall 2006 two people were hurt by an off-leash dog in our park system. In addition, many people are fearful of dogs and we receive several calls a year from citizens who are not comfortable using their park system because of the off-leash activity.

Staff continues to pursue the development of an off-leash area. An Off-leash Study Group was convened in July 2007 and has met regularly to review and develop criteria for site selection of the off-leash area, as well as anticipated regulations regarding use and operation.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council authorize the City Manager to sign this addendum, as attached, to the King County Animal Control services agreement that would provide ongoing and regular services for the enforcement of off-leash dog activity in Shoreline parks.

Approved By:

City Manager 

City Attorney 

ATTACHMENTS

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