



# Memorandum

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Councilmember Rose Herrera

**SUBJECT:** Animal License Amnesty

**DATE:** June 14, 2011

Approved

Date:

6/14/11

## RECOMMENDATION

Approve staff recommendation authorizing an animal license amnesty program.

## BACKGROUND

With over a million people living in San José, there are thousands of pets that also call San José home. The City of San José's Animal Care and Services Division is responsible for balancing the needs of the greater community with the needs of the animals that live amongst us.

The pet licensing program is important to all residents, even non-pet owners. If every pet in San José is licensed, we would have the resources to meet the demands of a city that is over 170 square miles. Benefits include: picking up stray and dead animals, helping animals in distress, following up on citizen complaints, providing lost pet services, administrative work such as maintaining records, hosting low-cost spay and neuter clinics, animal adoption and many more services.

Maintaining accurate data may seem like a low priority but it is a critical piece in researching a stray animal or dog bite case. On April 5, 2011, I submitted a memo requesting the Animal Care and Services Division to track dog bite incidents by the severity of the bite and whether the dog bite was provoked or unprovoked. Thanks to current and accurate record keeping, Animal Control Officers can quickly track an animal's history in San José. This is important to help keep our city safe but maintaining data requires funding in order to provide these services.

Given the economic hardships the city is facing, this amnesty has great potential to bring in revenue. The animal license amnesty program should be supported as the increased revenue through licensing will help secure ongoing animal service programs. During the last animal license amnesty, revenue increased by 40%, from \$445,000 to \$625,000. It also increased rabies vaccinations.

The Animal Care and Services Division truly cares about animals. License fees helps pay for animal cruelty investigations and humane education and keeps the doors open on low-cost spay and neuter clinics, which reduces animal overpopulation and unnecessary euthanasia. If every pet owner in San José licensed their animal, we would be able to provide more rapid responses to calls throughout the community.