



WICHITA INDEPENDENT NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

Vicious Dogs Report

Spurred by complaints to WIN from member neighborhood associations, the WIN Board asked its Community Action Committee to study the vicious dog issue. Over the last seven months, numerous meetings, seeking information and meeting with the City of Wichita's Department of Environmental Services staff, the Committee initiated the Vicious Dog Survey. The Committee wants to thank neighborhoods and Neighborhood Associations, the Media and City staff for their assistance for success of this project. Although our survey was not scientifically perfect, it has provided some tremendous insight as to how citizens of Wichita feel about dogs and security in their neighborhoods.

Many are angry, frustrated and frightened. They have had the experience of returning to their home to find a vicious dog or dogs running loose with the potential to harm them, their family or their peaceful family pet. Of the 248 respondents to the WIN Dog Survey (*Addendum A*), 82% stated they had observed dogs running loose in the city and 66% stated they had been fearful of these dogs. If they manage to elude harm (and many have not), they call animal control with the hope someone will arrive and intervene. Alas, as our survey data indicates 22% of the time no one responded. When someone did respond, it generally took 30 minutes to 2 or more hours to respond. Less frequently the police were called with a better response rate and in a timelier manner. A final question on the survey asked if the respondent thought there needed to be better enforcement of current Wichita ordinances for vicious, unleashed dogs. An overwhelming majority, 74% stated yes.

When reviewing current Wichita dog ordinances it is apparent that improvements could be made. Limited results have been achieved through past ordinance reform efforts. *Addendum B* of this report is a model ordinance provided by the National Humane Society. Its emphasis is on holding errant pet owners responsible rather than targeting specific breeds of dogs or dogs in general. It has been included to act as a catalyst for reform of our own ordinances. Many of the survey respondents who provided written

testimony of their vicious dog experiences agree that it is a pet owner issue as much as a vicious, poorly trained dog.

Vicious dogs exist in every community. Discussion with law enforcement and those who responded to the survey show that gangs use dogs to enhance their presence in the neighborhood and add to an image of power. Vicious dogs also act as sentinels and security for criminal elements such as drug dealers. Other discussion reveals that some pet owners are vicious and cruel themselves and have mistreated their pet by having them continuously tethered and with physical abuse.

Discussions with the Director of Environmental Services reveal that recording and tracking repeat complaints concerning vicious dogs is difficult, if not impossible. It was found that tickets issued for dog violations were written one each per event. These tickets are not entered into a database, therefore there is no way to track or retrieve previous complaint data without a manual search of old tickets. Without computerization of this data, it would be very difficult to stay informed about repeat complaints of the same dog or owners. Currently there is no clear process to share vicious animal alerts with other city departments such as law enforcement or fire and rescue due to the lack of any reliable data banking software within Environmental Services. We must conclude that the City of Wichita needs to make a serious consideration to computerize the animal control complaints in order to provide a reasonable amount of proper information in a reasonable period of time for those who need the data including neighborhood associations.

As stated earlier, many of the survey respondents felt the need for stronger enforcement of current ordinances. If you look at the number of calls made to animal control each day and the number of personnel in place, it is impossible to solve this problem with the present staff. There are currently 12 animal control officers in the Animal Control Department to respond to approximately 200 calls per day on a 24/7 basis. We have been told that cities the size of Wichita may have twice that many officers. It is no wonder that the survey respondents reported poor response rates and times. We need more resources in our Animal Control division. Demand is so great that even the Wichita Police Department has had to be involved in response to animal issues on a regular basis in recent years. According to a department representative, police officers have had to respond to numerous vicious dog attacks. Of those calls they drew and

discharged their weapons at 40 vicious animals, killing 21 and debilitating 11. Thirty-two of those animals were pit bulls.

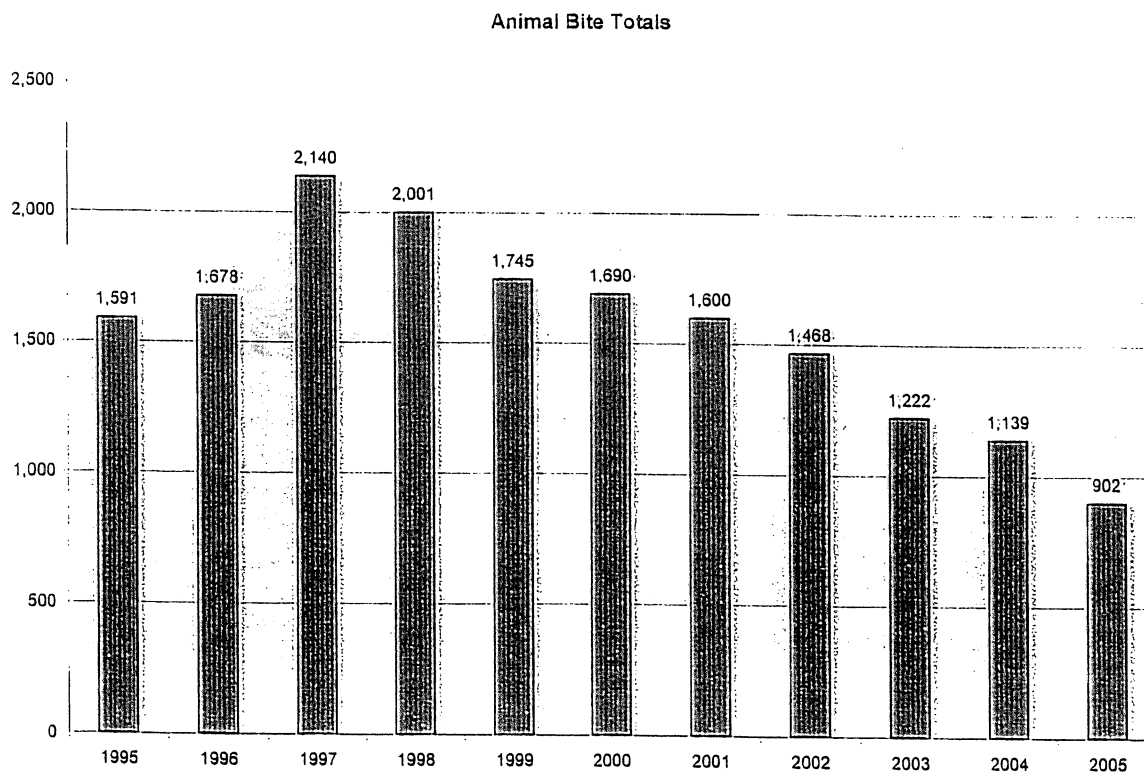
What is the cost to solve this problem? What is the cost if we don't solve this problem? Standards have not been set high enough to protect the public from excessive pain and suffering caused from over 900 dog bites in 2005 (please see the picture and chart). WIN asks that the City Council look at the possible solutions that would include increased enforcement, stronger ordinances, and education for pet owners and neighborhoods regarding ordinances, enforcement and how to get help. Citizens don't want to tell their friends visiting Wichita to be sure and carry a supply of pepper spray if you walk in one of our neighborhoods. If we want a happier, safer city, changes need to be made and something needs to be done to implement the changes.

For stronger neighborhoods and a better Wichita,



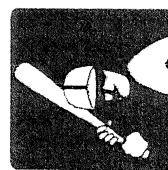
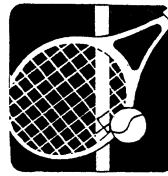
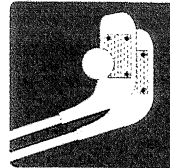
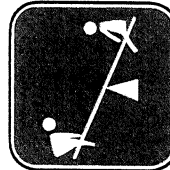
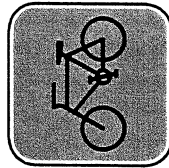
Wichita Independent Neighborhoods, Inc.

Members of the board





WICHITA INDEPENDENT NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.



Vicious Dog Surveys April, 2006

WICHITA INDEPENDENT NEIGHBORHOODS, INC. COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

Neighborhood Dangerous and Vicious Dog Survey Results

The Community Action Committee of WIN wanted input from neighborhoods regarding the issue of dangerous and vicious dogs. A survey was developed and distributed to neighborhood associations through publication in the WIN newsletter. The Department of Environmental Services of the City of Wichita assisted in the distribution by posting the survey on the city website. Several articles in the Wichita Eagle directed citizens to call to have copies sent to them by mail. Due to the combined efforts of WIN, Environmental Services and the Wichita Eagle, Wichita neighbors were able to provide their input on the issue of Dangerous and Vicious Dogs. The following are the results of the input from participating neighbors that submitted a survey.

Number of surveys submitted with responses			248 (N)
Questions 1.			
Are there dogs living in your neighborhood that threaten you or your neighbors?			
	Response	% N	
YES	161	65%	
NO	81	33%	
NO RESPONSE	6	2%	

Question 2.			% N
Have you ever seen dogs running unleashed in the city?			
	Response		
YES	204	82%	
NO	44	18%	
NO RESPONSE	0		

Question 3.			% N
Have you ever been afraid because of dogs running loose in the city?			
	Response		
YES	163	66%	
NO	85	34%	
NO RESPONSE	0		

Question 4.		
Have you ever called to report threatening dogs?		

	<u>Response</u>	<u>% N</u>
YES	128 (N.1)	52%
NO	84	34%
NO RESPONSE	36	14%

Question 4A.

If yes, who did you call?

	<u>Response</u>	<u>% N.1</u>
POLICE	16 (N.2)	13%
ANIMAL CONTROL	67 (N.3)	52%
BOTH	45 (N.4)	35%

Question 4B.

Did they respond to your call?

	<u>Response</u>	
POLICE	14	88% of N.2
	1	6% of N.2
ANIMAL CONTROL	37	55% of N.3
	29	43% of N.3
BOTH	30	67% of N.4
	10	22% of N.4
NO RESPONSE OR UNSURE	7	

Question 5.

What was the response time?

Police	15-30 min	31	63% (of 49 responses)
	30-60 min	9	18%
	1-2 hrs.	6	12%
	>2 hrs.	3	7%
Animal Control	15-30 min	16	27% (of 60 responses)
	30-60 min	21	35%
	1-2 hrs.	5	8%
	>2 hrs.	18	30%

Question 6.

Based on your experience, does the city of Wichita need stronger enforcement of current animal control laws regarding dangerous and vicious dogs?

<u>Response</u>	<u>% N</u>
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Respondents were asked to list the name of their neighborhood association. The results of this question were not tallied since many did not list their NA, did not know the name of their NA or did not have an NA.

Respondents were also asked to share their stories. The original, hand written stories have been copied and place in the binder with these results. By reading the stories in the respondents own handwriting, we it will convey the passions and concern with which these stories were written.

Service Requests Received '99-05

