



## City hoping to lease old kennels at Brooks

By [Brian Chasnoff](#) - Express-News

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Joseph Jensen (left) and brother check on an abandoned puppy they took to Animal Care Services. More holding space is sought because the ACS facilities are full. BOB OWEN/[rowen@express-news.net](mailto:rowen@express-news.net)

In the midst of an animal overpopulation crisis, the city is aiming to lease long-abandoned kennels at Brooks City-Base that could nearly double its capacity for capturing and holding stray dogs, officials say.

But the city first must win approval from Brooks Development Authority board members.

Attempting to allay concerns that euthanasia would occur at the former Air Force base, Assistant City Manager T.C. Broadnax spoke to board members Tuesday about the city's plans.

"This will be a holding facility," he assured them. "We will not do any euthanasia at this site."

Built in the 1960s, the three cement facilities have not been used in about 10 years and are antiquated and rundown. Using them again would require renovations and repairs costing up to \$300,000, Broadnax said.

For the past two years, Animal Care Services has run a \$12 million facility at Old Highway 90 and Texas 151 that holds 193 animals on 15 acres.

The stray dog population — estimated at 100,000 — meanwhile has continued to frustrate residents across San Antonio and jeopardizes the city's goal of stopping the killing of healthy, adoptable animals by 2012.

“We have so many dogs on the streets that are causing problems, and our shelter is full,” ACS Director Gary Hendel said. “It’s full every day.”

Broadnax said the kennels on Brooks could hold between 10,000 and 12,000 dogs annually — about 150 at a time. The added space would address the city's “inability to pick up strays because of capacity issues,” he said.

And fewer strays mean fewer dogs born on the streets.

“It’s integral to our efforts to no-kill,” Broadnax said. “I think it will have a huge impact on the community in general.”

Nine city employees would work at the Brooks kennels — seven kennel attendants, a veterinary technician and an animal care specialist. No veterinarians would be staffed at the site; therefore, no sick or injured dogs would be taken there.

The public wouldn't be allowed access to the Brooks site.

Animals not reclaimed from the Brooks kennels within three days would be transported to the main ACS facility and either “screened out” for potential adoption or euthanized there, Hendel said.

Broadnax said the city initially had not ruled out killing dogs at Brooks City-Base but decided against it because “we didn't want to break up our operation like that.”

That possibility raised indignant alarm among some Brooks board members who believed euthanasia on the site would deter business development on and around Brooks.

Donald Jakeway, president of Brooks Development Authority, said the dustup was a reaction to the city doing its homework and considering all of its options at the new site.

“When the homework surfaced the comment (about euthanasia), people were like, ‘What’s that mean?’” Jakeway said. “But I think the city is trying to be very responsible in what they do with us.”

The Police Department already leases 140 separate kennels near the proposed ACS overflow site for its K-9 Unit, Hendel said. SAPD kennels about 25 dogs there. That lease expires in 2014.

The city is seeking to amend the lease to use the abandoned kennels for at least two years for ACS overflow.

Board members will vote on the issue May 11. The City Council is scheduled to consider it two days later.

Hendel acknowledged that opening the new site could cause euthanasia numbers initially to spike.

“We're trying to get the animals off the street,” he said, adding that about 70 percent of stray animals are adoptable.

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