

# I. What Bite Reports Represent

What Austin Animal Services collects as *bite reports* are designed to reflect any and all cases where a person has potentially been exposed to salival contact/transmission from an animal. A bite report - specifically when concerning a canine - may involve a situation as minor as a puppy breaking a person's skin while playing, all the way to severe, life-threatening bites from demonstrably aggressive dogs. Many reports may have inconclusive information; that is, we may have received an allegation of a bite, but were unable to receive any confirmation on the bite from the complainant. In short, a bite report is intended to address the health and safety of a person, and not to necessarily record an injurious act from an animal.

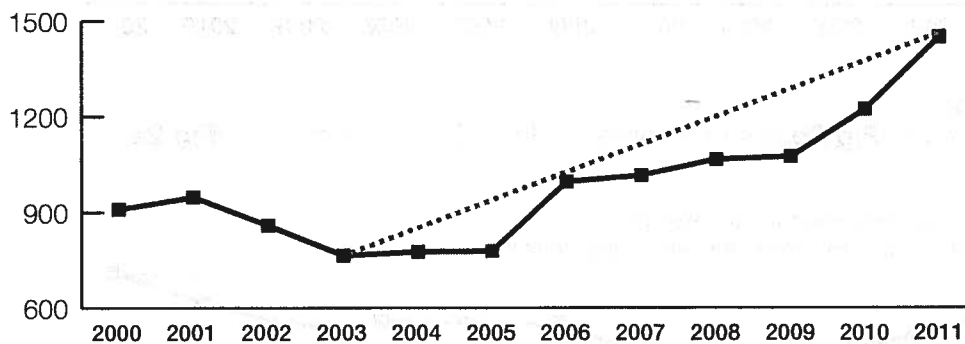
That being clarified, it is reasonable to assume that many dog bite reports do involve injurious contact from a dog.<sup>1</sup>

# II. A Longer Upward Trend of Bite Reports

While DogsBite.org's letter did accurately reflect the dataset with which they were provided, their dataset represented a limited range of data (2007-2011), ostensibly with a focus on establishing a correlation between the implementation of no-kill policies and an increase in bite reports.<sup>2</sup> **Simply showing a broader timeframe shows that the upward trend of bite reports has remained consistent since 2003 - six years before the Council's resolution. (Figure 1).**

Figure 1. Bite reports 2000 - 2011

1a. Bite Reports Graph



1b. Bite Reports Data Table

2000	909
2001	947
2002	858
2003	764
2004	776
2005	778
2006	995
2007	1015
2008	1065
2009	1074
2010	1222
2011	1449

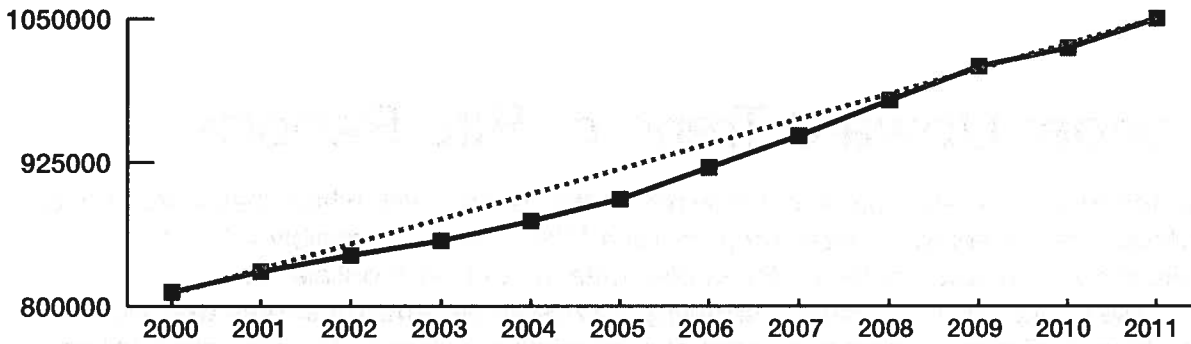
### III. Bite Reports vs. Population Growth

With a consistent upward trend of bite reports for the last eight years, it is clear that the increase in bite reports predates the Council's no-kill resolution. As the City of Austin and Travis Co. (both serviced by AAS) are now part of the fastest-growing metro area in the country, it is also expected that the overall amount of bite reports will increase as well, and it seems apparent that this is the stronger reason for the increase in reports. **Therefore, the passing of the no-kill resolution has no substantive correlation to bite report increases; whereas population growth provides a strong correlative relation for a consistent increase in bite reports.**

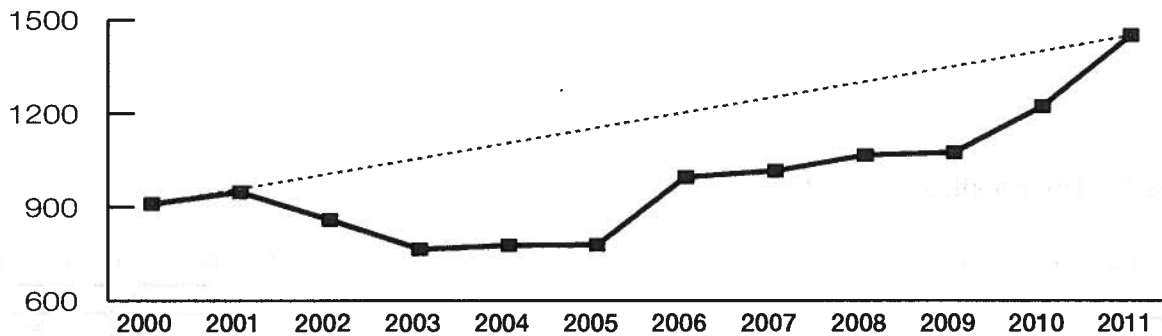
Figure 2. Travis Co. Population and Bite Reports

2a. Travis Co. Population Growth 2000-2011

Source: [http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Demographics/austin\\_forecast\\_2012\\_annual\\_pub.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Demographics/austin_forecast_2012_annual_pub.pdf)

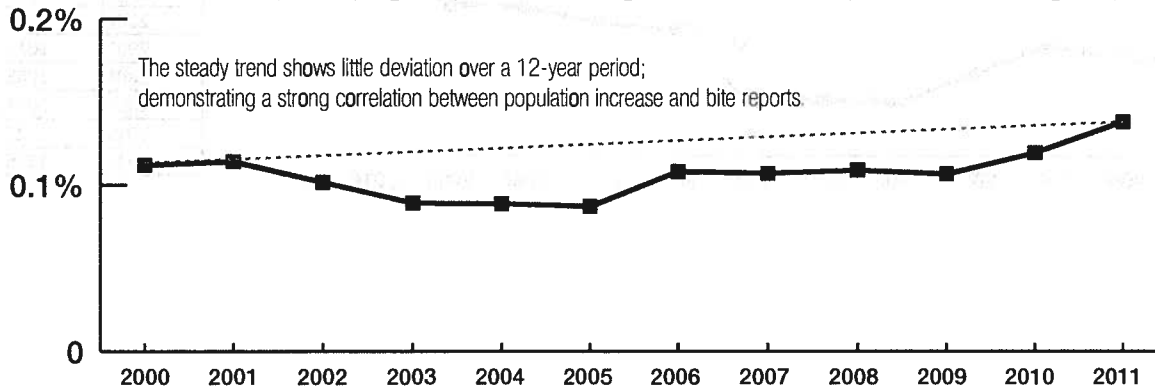


2b. Bite Reports



2c. Correlative Graph -

Amount of Bite Reports (Fig 2b.) as Percentage of Travis County Population (Fig 2a.)



## IV. Austin Animal Center and Bite Reports

In their statement to the Austin Public Safety Commission, DogsBite.org stated “Unwanted pit bulls flood open admission shelters across the United States; Austin is no different. The combination of this reality with a No-Kill policy, which often leads to the reduction of screening of potential adopters and behavior testing, is a considerable public safety risk”. The dataset DogsBite.org requested did not provide any intake, outcome or shelter-specific data. With the passing of the no-kill resolution, the banning of retail pet sales, and the increased resources allocated to adoptions, the Center did adopt out a record amount of dogs in 2011, and in doing so did adopt out more dogs with bite reports. There are two caveats to this data, however. First, the only substantial increase is with dogs who had a “minor” bite recorded. Second, **the percentage of bite-report dogs compared to the total amount of dogs adopted from the Austin Animal Center has not increased, and in 2011 was at or lower than historical levels.**<sup>3, 4, 5</sup>

Figure 3. AAS/TLAC Adoptions 2000-2011

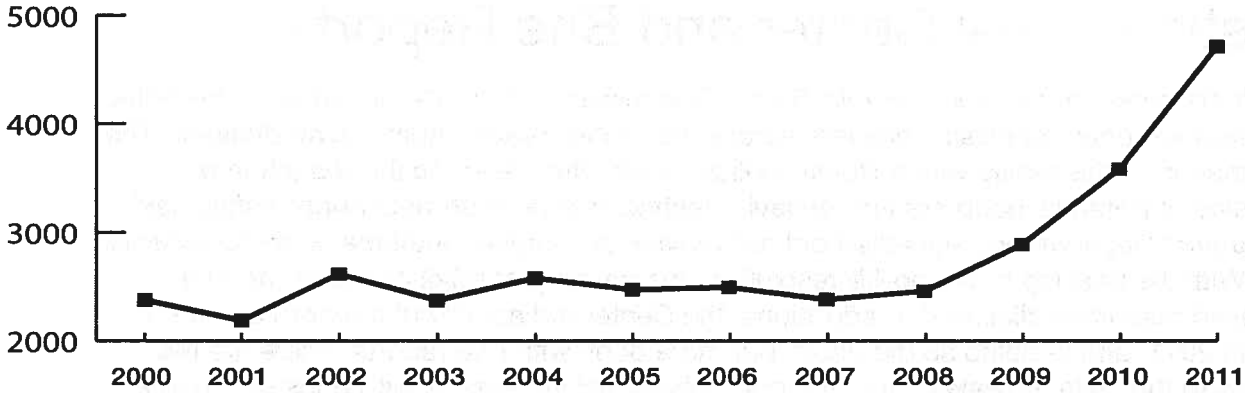


Figure 3 Data Table

2377	2000
2188	2001
2615	2002
2374	2003
2578	2004
2471	2005
2494	2006
2379	2007
2458	2008
2886	2009
3581	2010
4707	2011

Figure 4. Dogs Adopted from AAC who had a Bite Report 2000-2011

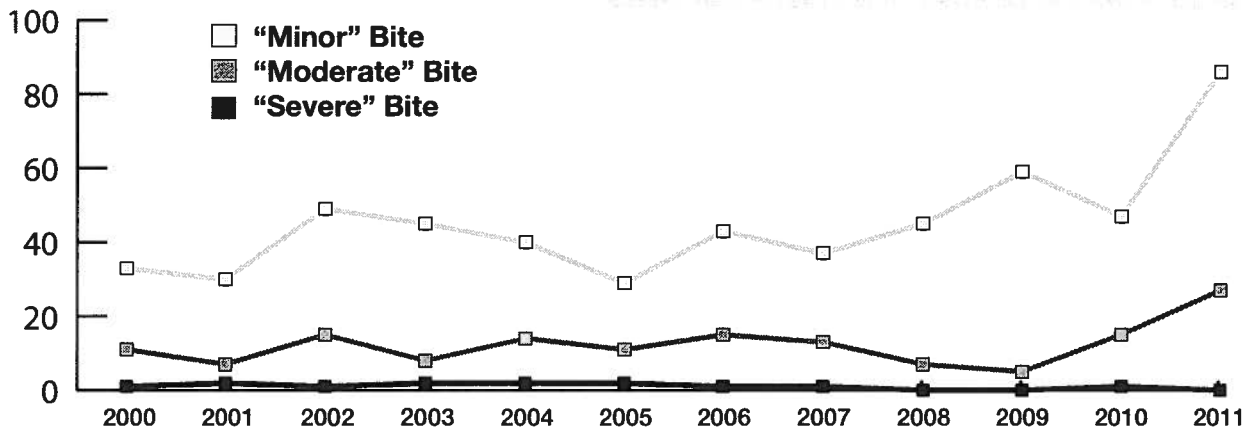


Figure 4 Data Table - Totals

47	2000
41	2001
66	2002
57	2003
58	2004
42	2005
59	2006
54	2007
54	2008
67	2009
65	2010
117	2011

Fig. 4 Additional Tables

Minor Bites	Moderate Bites	Severe Bites	"Unknown" Bites (not charted)
33	11	1	2
30	7	2	2
49	15	1	1
45	8	2	2
40	14	2	2
29	11	2	0
43	15	1	0
37	13	1	3
45	7	0	2
59	5	0	3
47	15	1	2
86	27	0	4

Figure 5. Percentage of All Adopted Dogs (Figure 3) Who Had a Bite Report (Figure 4)

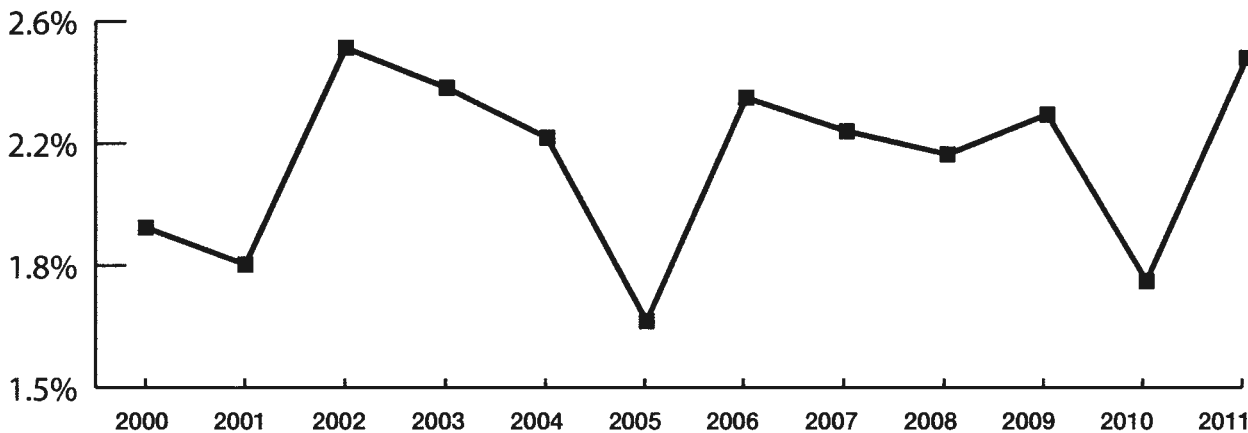


Figure 5 Data Table

1.98%	2000
1.87%	2001
2.52%	2002
2.40%	2003
2.25%	2004
1.70%	2005
2.37%	2006
2.27%	2007
2.20%	2008
2.32%	2009
1.82%	2010
2.49%	2011

## V. Conclusion

When looking at a more thorough dataset than used by DogsBite.org, we can conclusively say that we do not believe there is any evidence that suggests the no-kill plan has had any direct affect on bite report volume.

Even when evaluating correlative elements such as population growth vs. bite reports, there are noticeable aberrations in the trends for certain ranges of time. This demonstrates that the data has some element of volatility and, while certain correlations can be established, they are only so useful in speculating the causative agents of changes in bite report trends.

Furthermore, bite reports, being designed to be more precisely “salival contact” reports than “aggressive animal reports”, are overall not a reliable metric of vicious and injurious acts involving a canine. While it is true, as DogsBite.org had stated, that the City ended pet licensing/registration years ago, Austin Animal Services still vigilantly maintains a “dangerous dog” database, and requires all owners keep their dangerous animal registered annually. The safety of the community’s citizens, along with their ability to live harmoniously with Austin’s/Travis Co.’s companion animals, are the central focus of Austin Animal Services.

We will be happy to provide any more requested supplemental information.

## Sources/Data References

*These can all be accessed at <http://austintexas.gov/page/bite-report-analysis>*

1. [http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal\\_Services/Bite\\_Report\\_Raw\\_Data\\_2000\\_-\\_2011.pdf](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Bite_Report_Raw_Data_2000_-_2011.pdf)
2. [http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal\\_Services/Dataset\\_Sent\\_to\\_DogsBitedotOrg.pdf](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Dataset_Sent_to_DogsBitedotOrg.pdf)
3. [http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal\\_Services/Bite\\_Report\\_Raw\\_Data\\_2000\\_-\\_2011.pdf](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Bite_Report_Raw_Data_2000_-_2011.pdf)
4. [http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal\\_Services/Count\\_of\\_All\\_Dog\\_Bite\\_Reports\\_Per\\_Year%2C\\_Years\\_2000-2011.pdf](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Count_of_All_Dog_Bite_Reports_Per_Year%2C_Years_2000-2011.pdf)
5. [http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal\\_Services/Austin\\_Animal\\_Center\\_Adopted\\_dogs\\_with\\_bite\\_reports\\_2000-2011.pdf](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Austin_Animal_Center_Adopted_dogs_with_bite_reports_2000-2011.pdf)

### *Population Data:*

[www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Demographics/austin\\_forecast\\_2012\\_annual\\_pub.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Demographics/austin_forecast_2012_annual_pub.pdf)

[www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Demographics/MSA\\_growth\\_2010\\_2011.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Demographics/MSA_growth_2010_2011.pdf)