



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**THRU:** Christopher Shorter, Assistant City Manager

**FROM:** Don Bland, Chief Animal Services Officer 

**DATE:** June 22, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Austin Animal Center Intake Protocols

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With this memorandum, I would like to clarify any confusion about perceived changes in our shelter model, as noted in recent emails to Mayor and Council.

Austin Animal Center is not participating in the National Pilot project that Austin Pets Alive! and other major shelters throughout the nation are participating in. To be clear, none of the participating partners in the national project are advocating closing intake.

The new model of sheltering promotes procedures that the Austin Animal Center (AAC) and our Animal Protection Officers (APOs) have been utilizing. Our neighborhood level programs are focused on keeping pets in homes where they are loved and cared for and out of the shelter, as well as assisting those animals that are sick, injured or in danger. Our community assistance model, implemented through our Animal Protection and Public Resource Center (PRC), has provided guidance to shelters and communities for many years and assisted pet owners with the resources needed to keep their animals.

During our COVID-19 closure, the community did an amazing job assisting with lost pets. AAC has taken in more than 1,000 sick, injured, aggressive, bite quarantines cases, and animals that were truly in danger.

We also know, prior to our Covid-19 closure, that citizens who have contacted us through 311, after finding a stray and taking a few steps in the neighborhood where the pet was found, have a 50 percent success rate at getting the animals back home. Citizens who are able and willing to assist before

bringing the animals to the shelter, where the chances of it being reunited with its family are reduced, are greatly appreciated. Our data shows that, if that pet was brought to the shelter, its chance of being reunited with its family dropped to 18 to 20 percent. Our Animal Protection Officers have been keeping data for years, and we have learned that most animals are picked up within 1,000 feet from where they live.

Prior to the closure, Animal Protection was in the process of enhancing programs aimed at getting pets home faster, and the PRC was expanding access to free spay and neuter services, free microchips and low-cost veterinary care. We placed 70 microchip scanners in all the Austin Fire Stations and Parks and Recreations Centers.

Austin Animal Center is not closing intake, and our post-COVID-19 standard operating procedures will be the same as our pre-COVID-19 procedures.

We have always strived to help lost animals get back to the homes where they are loved and cared for, and we have always assisted those that are sick, injured and need our care. I can assure you that will not change.

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
CMO Leadership Team