



# A Proposal to Make Austin Animal Services (even) Better for People and Pets

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Ellen Jefferson, DVM  
Executive Director, Austin Pets Alive!/American Pets Alive!  
Executive Leadership Team, Human Animal Support Services Project

## Great News Coming Out of Shelters

TMZ

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Palm Beach County Animal Shelter Empty for First Time Ever



### PALM BEACH COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER WE'RE EMPTY FOR FIRST TIME EVER!!!

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4/18/2020 9:44 AM PT



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### Adoptions, fosters empty shelter cages during COVID-19 crisis. but there will always be pets

ANIMALS MEET KILLER

CULTURE 04.18.2020 09:00 AM

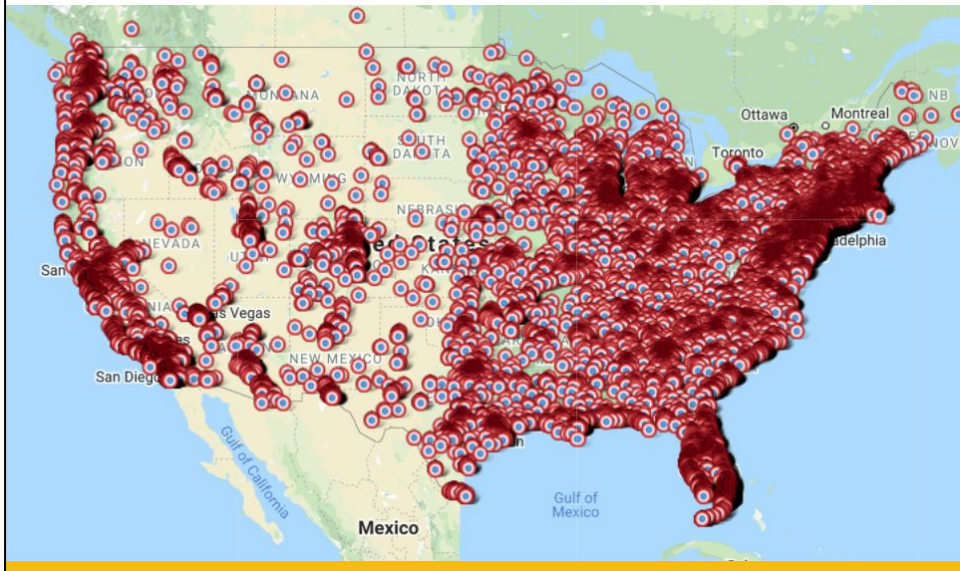
#### Thanks to Sheltering in Place, Animal Shelters Are Empty

A recent pet-adoption boom is the feel-good pandemic story you need right now.

Updated 1:06 p.m. ET Apr. 29, 2020

In March, shelters all over the country, even those that historically never had a foster program, saw the benefit of massive numbers of fosters coming forward to take pets home in an effort to prevent pets from being stuck in shelters in case of govt shutdowns or staff illness. This was extremely eye opening because shelters are entrenched in the “not enough homes” mindset. Lifesaving rates have never been higher.

80,000 foster homes signed up through Greater Good, only 30,000 were used



In May, Greater Good did a national push to count foster homes that still wanted a shelter pet (this is more than 30 days after the shelters already emptied out so doesn't count that initial rush of homes that were already full). Only a fraction were used which means that there is a much larger demand than shelters have ever realized for homes willing to house and help animals.

## COVID-19 Caused Disruption

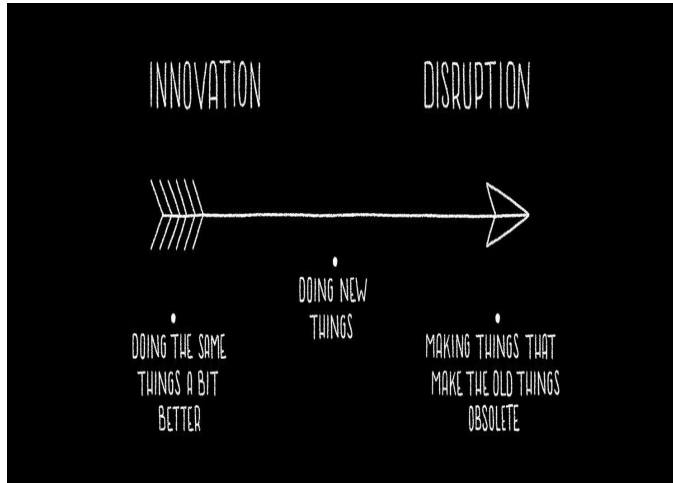


image source: unschool.co

Because government funded shelters all over the country were able to take a breath from the rat race of intake, kenneling, outcomes due to empty kennels, discussions started about how the entire system needed to be overhauled to more accurately reflect what people want as exemplified by the outpouring of support to keep pets out of shelters.

## The history of animal sheltering in Austin

- 1900 - emergency of the dog pound model
- Pets are taken from their homes and neighborhoods, rounded up, and reclaimed or killed
- Our movement is built on this old foundation



The “taking a breath” also allowed the industry to reflect on how we got here into this system that is so fundamentally broken. In doing research on Austin (which turns out is typical of almost every city), we found that the entire shelter system was created to deal with the pandemic of Rabies. Rabies caused huge amounts of livestock losses, massive public fear of death from it (100% fatal) and it was spread by dogs. The police were charged with shooting loose dogs on sight. The public became upset by that because their pets were being shot. The shelter was created in the late 1800s to pick up loose dogs, house them for 3 days and then shoot them. If an owner could 1. access the shelter and 2. Pay to get their dog out, the dog could live. If not, the dog died. Sound familiar? 120 years + later, we still have the same basic framework as our operating model. A vaccine for rabies was created in the 1950s but nothing changed in the shelter model.

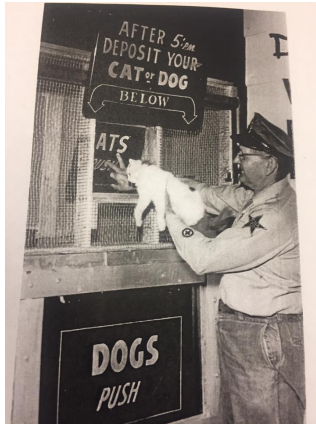
**Austin American  
Statesman, 1894**

**Three Hundred Dogs Killed.**

It will be remembered that on the 1st of June the officers began the putting of dogs into the dog pound because their owners failed to pay the tax due on them. Of course, the city could not keep these dogs alive so they have been killing all uncalled for dogs at stated intervals. Up to the present writing 300 dogs have been put in the pound and shot. Officers Gibson, Kennerly and Grizzard share the honors of being dog executioners and are the admiration and envy of the balance of the force.

Article showing that dogs were only released if the owner could pay the fee and find the shelter.

## The pound model is persistent



(Left): Shelters made it super easy to dispose of pets. Only ~10 years ago, Austin's night drop boxes closed. We are entrenched in a disposal history.

(Right): MUCH nicer facility but even after millions of dollars, it is still very institutional in style and environment which we know, based on human institutions, is not good for animals or people.

## Austin American Statesman 1944

I say again whoever is responsible for this condition at the city dog pound should be investigated and asked why these unsanitary conditions exist as they have been. Then somebody should be placed in charge who will see to it that the dogs in the care of the city are at least allowed to live decently until they have been claimed by the owner or disposed of if diseased.

S. J. VON KOENNERITZ.

Complaints about the conditions of the shelter have been happening for 80 years. Obviously, something needs to change foundationally if we still don't have it ironed out.

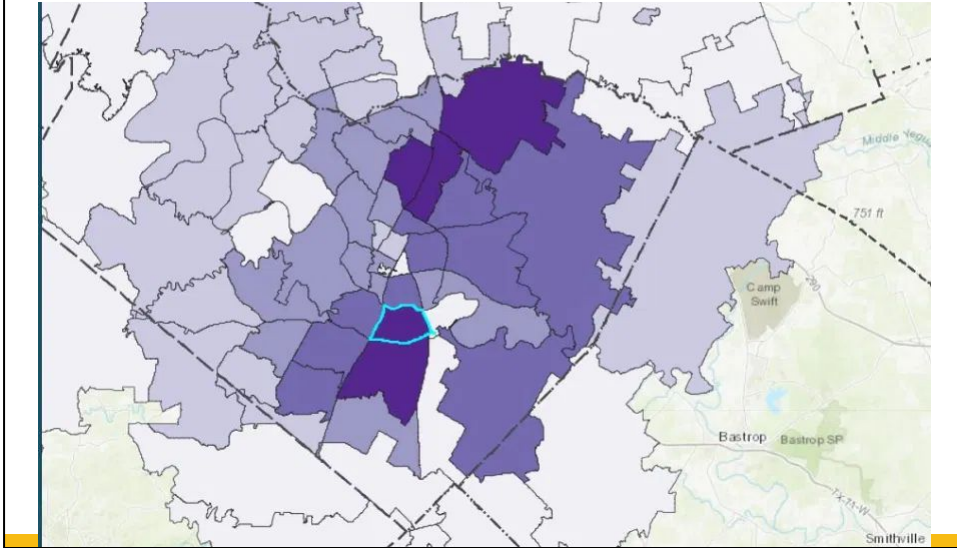


Austin American Statesman, 1969

A black and white photograph of a newspaper clipping. The text is bold and reads: "he said. 'Local police run the dog pound, get cats out of trees, remove children's fingers from bottles, handle tax collection, licensing and chauffeur duty.'" The clipping is set against a light background and is framed by a thin black border. Below the clipping, there is a thick yellow horizontal bar.

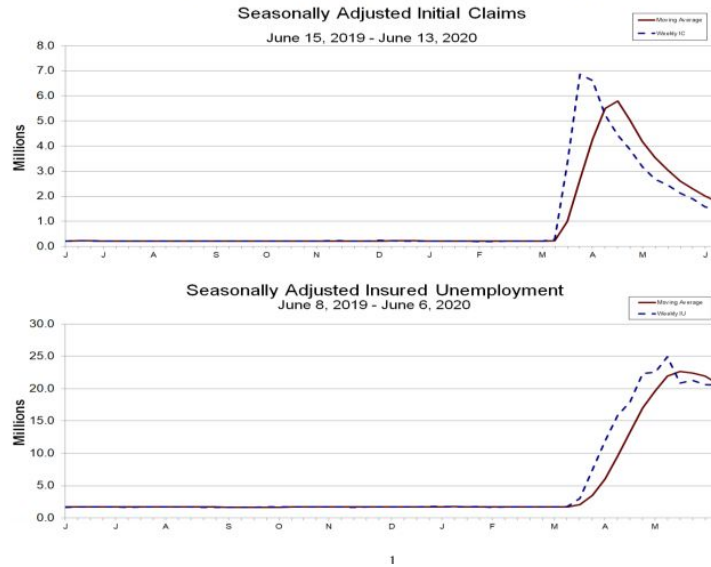
As late as the 60s and 70s (and probably until the 90s), animal control was still run by the police in Austin. This is important as we examine the roots of animal services and the parallel with law enforcement changes being made in the name of social justice.

## COVID positive maps match highest animal intake maps



This map is from Greg Casar in early July that shows where COVID hotspots are. The city instituted neighborhood based COVID testing to help triage the situation instead of continuing to require people to go to less accessible testing sites. It's important to note that high intake, COVID-19 hotspots and other markers of inequity (ie redlining, etc) exist in same areas.

## Staggering Job Loss



On to a new reason we need to change the system. We know that there is going to be much higher percent of Austinites experiencing job loss than we have ever seen as a result of COVID.

## Not Yet Appearing in Our Data

### CARES Act Eviction Protection

The CARES Act, signed into law Mar. 27, 2020, provides **120 days** of eviction relief for tenants in federally-backed housing. Specifically, you may not be served with an eviction notice until July 25, 2020 and the notice must give you 30 days to leave the property (Aug. 24, 2020).

During the 120 day eviction moratorium, your landlord may not charge you late fees, penalties, or other charges for paying your rent late. It's important to note that the eviction moratorium does not relieve you of your obligation to pay your rent. It merely forbids your landlord from evicting you during that period for late payment.<sup>[1]</sup>

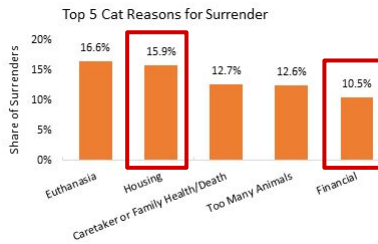
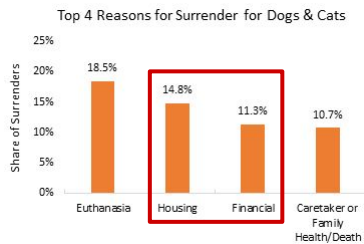
### Rental Housing Covered by the Eviction Moratorium

The temporary moratorium on eviction filings pertains to any rental housing that is:

- Covered under section 41411 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 ([34 U.S.C. 12491\(a\)](#)); or
- Covered by the rural housing voucher program under section 542 of the Housing Act of 1949 ([42 U.S.C. 1490r](#)); or
- Has a Federally backed mortgage or multifamily mortgage loan<sup>[1]</sup>

Job loss and evictions are going to have a dire effect in every community in the US.

## Living Situations Drive Owner Relinquishment



Top 11 Dog Reasons for Surrender	
Euthanasia	19.8%
Housing	14.0%
Financial	11.9%
Caretaker or Family Health/Death	9.3%
Cannot Care for Animal	7.5%
Non-Aggressive Behavior/Personality	7.0%
No Longer Want	6.6%
Animal Medical Issues	6.2%
Too Many Animals	5.7%
Breeder/Litter	4.8%
Aggression	3.2%

Which will drive shelter intake to skyrocket. If we are not prepared for at least a 2-3x need for owner surrenders, shame on us. We need to be preparing now for the impending doom of the next couple of years.

## Animal Welfare is Experiencing a “Great Awakening” Worldwide to 3 BIG Problems

1. COVID- Can't Shelter Like Before and Don't Want To
2. Job Loss/Evictions - Dramatic Intake Increases Expected in near Future
3. Based on Inequity - Shelter Foundation is Based on Rabies Epidemic and Discriminatory Practices that Started 120 Years Ago

So we have 3 major reasons that we need to make drastic change to how govt funded shelters operate. 1. We can't continue using shelters as a place for congregation of staff, volunteers, adopters, visitors due to risk of illness. If people can't congregate to care for and outcome animals, then animals can't be there. That is accomplished through a change in operations or more death. 2. We need to be smart enough to prepare for the future. 3. We need to evolve all of our practices including creating new programming around every reason an animal comes into AAC to ensure that we are practicing equity and inclusiveness in the services provided, eliminate barriers of inaccessibility and discrimination.

**Animal  
Sheltering  
Reimagined:**  
Introduction  
to HASS



**HUMAN ANIMAL  
SUPPORT SERVICES**

by **american pets alive!**

That is why the Human Animal Support Services Model is fervently being created by the industry.

## Why are we doing HASS?



To transform animal services into the human animal support services model during COVID to:

1. eliminate the need for gathering of humans by eliminating gathering of animals
2. prepare for a potential massive increase in pets in need during the economic depression and to
3. take part in the social justice movement to undo the systemic inequality that was created 120 years ago.



Address the three problems



## What will HASS do?

Foundationally transform animal sheltering into community based support and services that value all humans, all animals and their bond.



## The Mission of HASS Project



To bring together all sectors of the industry to:

- collaborate and build a HASS model, which serves people and animals together more effectively than the current model,
- pilot it in prominent shelters throughout the country with success measured over the course of a year and then
- iterate the process more widely.



## How we will get there

Bring the whole industry together

- 18 Tier 1 communities agreed to build and pilot HASS together
- ~20 Tier 2 communities who will follow Tier 1
- 200 individuals on 35 Working Groups to solve long standing industry problems
- Build the programs while driving the movement
  - Rehoming without using the shelter kennel
  - Lost and Found without using the shelter kennel
  - Keeping Pets with Family by providing medical and behavioral support
  - Public Safety Reimagined
  - Intake to Placement ASAP



## Tier 1 and Tier 2 HASS Pilot Communities

### Tier 1

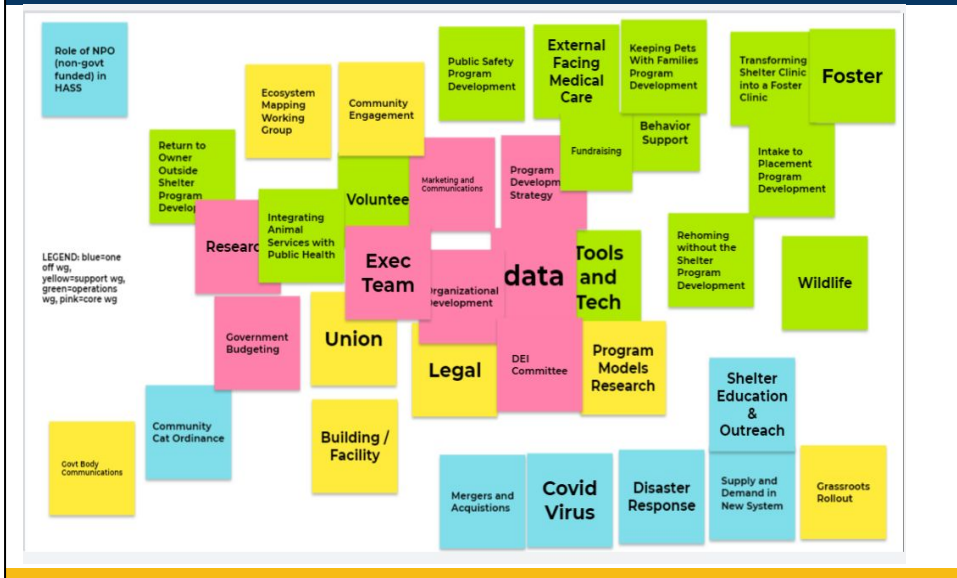
- Atlanta, GA
- Cabot, AR
- El Paso, TX
- Greenville, SC
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC
- Denver, CO
- Pima County, AZ
- Fresno, CA
- Washington, DC
- Morris County, NJ
- Oakland, CA
- Guilford, NC
- Rio Grande Area, TX
- Dallas, TX
- Los Angeles, CA
- San Diego, CA
- Kansas City, MO
- Detroit, MI
- Cincinnati, OH

### Tier 2

- Carroll County Animal Services
- Bampton Animal Services
- Brenham Animal Services
- Humane Society of Sedona
- Guilford County Animal Shelter
- Florence Lauderdale Animal Shelter
- Baytown Animal Services
- Rochester Animal Services
- Norfolk Animal Care
- Indianapolis Animal Care Services
- London Animal Care Centre
- Chico Animal Services
- Kauai Humane Society
- Humane Society of Chittenden County
- Riverside County Animal Services

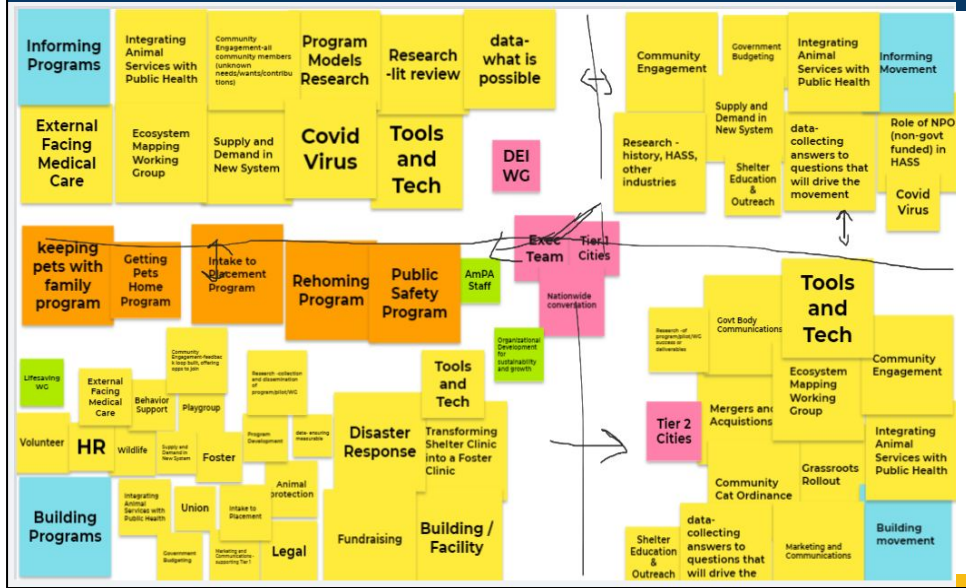
If Austin becomes a HASS Pilot City, we would be able to benefit from the work of 18 other prominent communities who are building the new programming while they are trying it. They are using metrics to chronicle success and working together to turn Animal Services into a true Human Animal Support Services model. As a pilot, the programs are tested in these cities first then reiterated nationwide.

## 35 Working Groups to Overcome Industry Obstacles



There are massive problems that are in the way and there are over 200 incredible industry experts helping to resolve them.

## Building a Movement and a Model



The Working Groups and Tier cities are both leading the movement and creating the programming.



Schematic of how AAC operates pre-COVID. Everything has to touch the shelter, most in person. People can't navigate the system. Most staff located IN the shelter. A few people (blue dots) are out in the field as APOs. During COVID some of these services have been cut off, causing community outrage. That is not the intention of HASS.

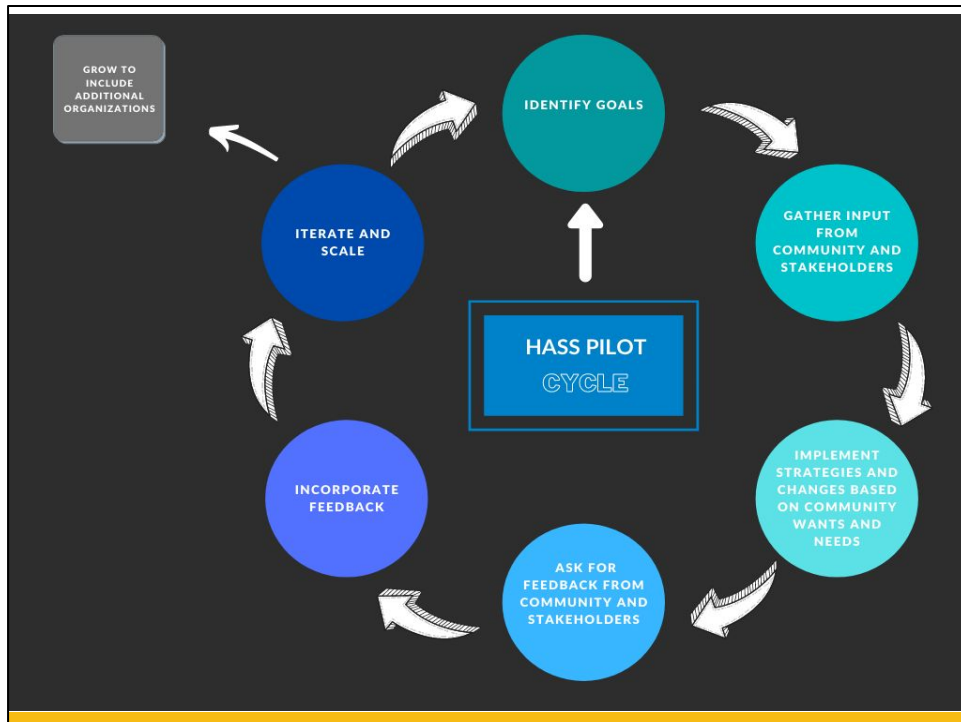


Schematic showing HASS System: By creating embedded services in every neighborhood and a “ring” of support around the shelter, calls/needs can be boomeranged back to those embedded services if appropriate. We know that more animals will find their original homes if they DON’T come into the shelter and neighborhoods with the highest intake are sorely lacking accessible services. Providing more accessible neighborhood based services, facilitated/operated by the city is a huge need.



## Important Points

- HASS is NOT leaving animals on the streets to die
  - HASS is NOT forcing people to be part of the network of support
  - HASS is NOT preventing animals from entering the shelter who really need to be there
  - HASS is NOT a sudden beginning
- 
- HASS provides CASE Management to find the RIGHT pathway for each individual animal and person
  - HASS is creating a network of community fosters who are able to accept animals instead of putting them in a shelter kennel
  - HASS is sheltering animals who have no other legitimate option
  - HASS is a transition - as programs are built, animals and people use those programs



This slide might help explain the transition better.

## HASS is the City's Intake Solution

Human Animal Support Services will:

- Keep Austin's high live release rate, regardless where they are in the community
- Make Austin more safe for pets who don't make it into the shelter
- Reunite lost pets with owners more effectively
- Move pets into homes no matter where they are in the community
- Treat all neighborhoods to be treated equally
- Prevent overcrowding at the city shelter after implementing HASS programming
- Use data to answer unanswered questions and ensure animals are safe

HASS is not the cause of people being upset due to COVID intake restrictions, the lack of HASS is.

## Why Austin?

- Austin needs to be prepared for the economic fallout
- Austin is changing because of COVID and the social justice movement.
- Fits with 5 out of 6 of Austin's Priority Outcomes:
  - Economic opportunity and affordability
  - Mobility
  - Safety
  - Health and Environment
  - Government that Works For All
- City of Austin promotes itself as a leader
- It's the right thing to do

In previous budgets, AAC has a hard time showing how they fit in the city's priorities. That makes sense because the work is isolated. With a more inclusive, neighborhood based program that addresses the reasons animals AND people get into crisis, it becomes a well rounded department.

Urgency is necessary because the city cannot join without council support, complaints are pouring in and Austin pet owners need the city more than ever.

This will not happen without council action.

It is clear that we will not see this systemic change without some help from the City Council to make it a priority (amongst so many other big priorities). If we want to fundamentally change the way we operate as a govt funded shelter, we have to act now. If we want to get ahead of a massive spike in pet need, we need to act now. If we want to prevent killing in our shelter, we need to act now. If we want to reverse the history of discrimination and inaccessibility, we have to act now.

## We are asking the Commission to:

1. Recommend to the City Council to pass a resolution to align Animal Services operations with Human Animal Support Services and join the HASS Project.
  - a. Become a pilot city committed to implementing HASS as it develops over next 12 months
2. In the resolution we would propose the following:
  - a. Set up task force of city employees, citizens, commission, public officials to work on fully integrating Animal Services with Human Services and DEI initiatives
  - b. Expect to see performance metrics that show shift in services, budget, efficacy of new programs and outcomes