

As a result of the global pandemic, there have been massive disruptions to spay/neuter access throughout the United States. Austin and Travis County have been no exception.

Research out of the University of Florida suggests there is a backlog of 3 million pets awaiting spay/neuter surgeries. Locally, we are seeing long wait times for our residents who need free or low cost spay/neuter surgeries for their pets. Emancipet is currently booking large breed, female dogs into the last quarter of 2023. Under these circumstances, one female dog would have the opportunity to have two litters of puppies prior to her spay appointment.

The purpose of this recommendation is to secure a third party vendor, in addition to Austin Humane Society and Emancipet and to coordinate one or two 3-to-4-day sterilization campaigns prior to the end of this fiscal year. Pop-up clinics would be hosted in various areas of Travis County with daily goals ranging from 250-400.

The aim of these clinics would be high-volume, targeted sterilization directed at animals most at risk of entering the animal shelter system. Additional focus would be placed on accommodating pets owned by Austin and Travis County's unhoused population.

Nine Austin zip codes accounted for approximately 38% of stray dogs in 2022. The same nine zip codes are tracking similarly in 2023, with an increase in dogs compared to cats of 3.5%. These same zip codes accounted for 50% of owner surrenders in 2022 and have accounted for over 60% of the owner surrenders received thus far in 2023. **It is the recommendation of the spay/neuter working group to focus these additional surgeries on zip codes: 78744, 78741, 78617, 78702, 78745, 78724, 78753, 78653 and 78758.**

In addition to sterilization, these animals would receive microchips, rabies and their FVRCP/DHPP vaccinations.

Historically, spay/neuter services for community dogs and cats in Austin and Travis County have been divided between two vendors: Austin Humane Society (AHS) and Emancipet. **In a recent study published by Mars Veterinary Health, even with the new graduates expected to graduate over the next 10 years, the veterinary shortage is predicted to worsen to an estimated deficit of 15,000 veterinarians by 2030. One of the primary ways recommended to support this crisis is to increase access to care for pets through innovative routes.**

Austin Humane Society has been tasked with providing spay/neuter, microchipping and vaccination services to unowned cats in Austin and Travis County. Currently, the COA has a five-year contract with AHS for a total of \$662,500. The current contract will expire on August 2, 2025 and provides for approximately 1,800 community cat surgeries annually.

Emancipet provides free sterilization surgery, microchips and rabies vaccines at mobile surgical locations throughout Austin and Travis County. In addition to surgery, Emancipet provides free rabies vaccinations and microchips to animal presenting to their mobile clinics for preventative care. Dogs under four months of age can also receive free distemper/parvo viral vaccination. The contract with Emancipet is for \$5.6 million for five years, from March 14, 2020, to March 13, 2025.