



RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Animal Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number: [20260413-006]: Austin Pet Friendly Housing

WHEREAS, Housing barriers remain one of the leading causes of pet relinquishment and families living in affordable or subsidized housing often face the greatest barriers to keeping companion animals, forcing many residents to choose between stable housing and keeping their pets;

WHEREAS, 1506 pets were surrendered to Austin Animal Services in FY25 alone, in addition to an untrackable number of abandoned pets due to open intake hurdles, with conservatively \$50 dollars per day being spent to maintain large dogs, and 2,500 existing publicly funded affordable housing units and approximately 49,800 subsidized housing units in Austin, making efforts to mitigate these impacts not just the compassionate choice, but the fiscally responsible one;

WHEREAS, Austin Animal Services has as one of its six priorities Open Intake with a specific goal to “remove barriers to pet ownership through resources and policy change,” making it critical to identify upstream solutions that preventatively and proactively address the number of animals being surrendered to the shelter’s care or end up as homeless strays;

WHEREAS, Pet-inclusive housing supports family stability, promotes public health, and reduces animal shelter intake by preventing unnecessary pet relinquishment due to housing restrictions; and that these policies are especially important for residents of affordable housing, who are disproportionately impacted by restrictive pet policies;

WHEREAS, Austin has long been recognized as a national leader in animal welfare and implementing pet-inclusive housing standards in publicly funded developments would further demonstrate the City’s commitment to keeping families and their companion animals together;

WHEREAS, Several states have recently adopted legislation addressing these barriers and creating models for pet-inclusive housing policy, including:

1. Nevada law requires that tenants in housing developed or rehabilitated with public affordable housing funds must be allowed to keep pets, while still permitting reasonable rules regarding sanitation, vaccination, leash requirements, and nuisance prevention. ([Justia](#))
2. Colorado enacted legislation requiring affordable housing developments that receive public financing to permit residents to keep dogs or cats regardless of breed or size, while allowing reasonable management policies and modest limits on deposits or fees. ([rentgrace.com](#))
3. California lawmakers have also advanced legislation aimed at ending blanket prohibitions on pets in rental housing and requiring landlords to provide reasonable justification for denying tenants the ability to keep companion animals, acknowledging

that housing restrictions significantly limit access to housing for pet-owning families.
(californiaglobe.com)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED The Austin Animal Advisory Commission respectfully recommends that the Austin City Council adopt a policy requiring all housing developments that receive public funding, subsidies, tax incentives, or other forms of financial assistance from the City of Austin to implement the following pet-friendly housing policies:

a. **Pet-Friendly Requirement**

Housing developments receiving City funding, tax credits, or other public financial support should permit residents to keep companion animals.

b. **Prohibition of Breed and Weight Restrictions**

Housing providers should not impose blanket breed-specific or weight-based restrictions on dogs or other companion animals.

c. **Waiver and Subsidy for Pet Deposits or Fees**

If pet deposits or fees are required, Austin should follow the proposed bill at the Texas State legislature of a maximum of \$500 refundable deposit OR \$20 per month pet rent (not both). Since these can often be cost prohibitive, if a larger deposit is required, Austin should consider subsidizing pet bonds for dogs over 40 pounds on behalf of these residents- still resulting in a cost savings when juxtaposed to the costs incurred for taking these animals in under the City's care.

d. **Individual Behavior-Based Evaluation**

Any restrictions on animals should be based on documented behavior - such as bite cases or complaints on record with City or County officials- of an individual animal rather than breed, size, or appearance.

e. Date of Approval: April 13, 2026

Vote: 10-0

Motioned: Commissioner Dulzaides

Seconded: Commissioner Daniel

For: Chair Nilson, Commissioners Daniel, Dulzaides, Ferguson, Holt, Loignon, Maron, Nemer, Norton, Van Lanningham

Against: None

Absent: Commissioners Ahmed, Clinton, and Huddleston

Attest: *Nedrahan Watson*, Staff Liaison