



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council

Thru: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, Assistant City Manager

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

Date: September 12, 2022

Subject: **Austin Animal Center Intake Restricted**

The purpose of this memorandum is to make you aware of the capacity issues currently challenging the Austin Animal Center and the urgent need to temporarily restrict intake to emergencies only.

As of today, the Austin Animal Center (AAC) has no additional capacity to house animals. AAC is currently housing over 700 animals at the shelter. Every kennel is full, many of our animals are doubled up dogs in suites, 67 dogs are currently housed in popup temporary wire crates and 54 dogs need a public kennel. These animals are looking for their forever home and we are pleading with the community to consider fostering or adopting a furry friend.

AAC has made multiple efforts to avoid restricting intake and to promote adoptions, but we continue to take in more animals than we adopt out. Some of our efforts to date include:

- Regularly reaching out to partners for assistance
- Holding 6 offsite adoption events, and 2 large onsite events in August
- Waiving adoption fees
- Posting foster pleas
- Holding a foster matchmaking event
- Continuing to come up with creative adoption promotions such as displaying the Modern Museum of Art exhibit at City Hall

With a 97.3% live outcome rate, AAC continues to exceed the City-required 95% live outcome rate as well as the national 90% live outcome rate standard and is a leader as one of the largest municipal no-kill shelters. Staff have been diligently working to reduce intake and

keep animals out of the shelter, but there are simply more animals coming into the shelter than we can maintain and get into rescues, foster or adoptive homes. Since January 1, 2022, AAC has taken in 1,055 more dogs and cats than have been adopted or placed in foster homes. An average of 28 more dogs arrives each week and, in August alone, AAC took in 121 more animals than were reclaimed, adopted, fostered, or rescued.

We are not alone in this challenge. Shelters across the region are facing similar challenges and we are all exploring new, innovative and creative ways to reach adopters and fosters, all while dealing with staffing shortages and recruitment challenges. This space challenge is not only impacting the animals in our care it is also taking a toll on the staff and volunteers.

For these reasons, AAC has made the difficult decision to temporarily restrict animal intake to emergencies only effective September 13, 2021. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by case-basis. Residents will be asked to call 311 and speak with an Animal Protection Officer for a determination. This will remain in place until the shelter can balance intake with outcomes.

AAC will continue to promote our animals for rescue, adoption, and foster, and we will utilize all forms of media with our pleas for assistance. Maintaining a No Kill community remains a top priority for the shelter.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Animal Advisory Commission