



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Matt Cano

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** May 11, 2022

Approved

Date: 5/11/2022

**SUBJECT: SAN JOSE ANIMAL CARE AND SERVICES**

The purpose of this Manager's Budget Addendum is to provide an update on the City of San José's Animal Care and Services Division, its current service level challenges, and associated solutions to those challenges, which includes budget augmentations as described in the 2022-2023 Proposed Budget and forthcoming.

**BACKGROUND**

The Animal Care and Services (ACS) Division is part of the City's Department of Public Works. The primary objective of ACS is to provide a welcoming and humane place for animals and those who care for them; to protect, educate, and serve the public; develop programs that improve the lives of people and animals; and create opportunities for our community and supporters to help us succeed. ACS cares deeply about their employees, animals, partners, and the community. The ACS Division provides animal care and services to approximately 1.2 million residents in Santa Clara County.

ACS is responsible for sheltering, licensing, rabies compliance, and providing field service and programs to domestic animals. ACS provides services to residents in San José, and the cities of Cupertino, Milpitas, Saratoga and the Town of Los Gatos that are under contract.

Shelter operations includes adoptions, animal enrichment, animal feeding, owner surrender, spay and neuter surgeries, cage and kennel cleaning, and animal euthanasia (medical and behavioral). Animal population fluctuates from month to month, which is consistent with animal shelters elsewhere. March and October are transitional months, while April through September are high-volume due to seasonal litters of kittens. The months of November through February are generally the lowest volume months in an animal shelter. In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, animal intake was at 13,619, less than the high of 19,000 in Fiscal Year 2016-2017. To date, in Fiscal Year 2021-2022, we are tracking towards a volume of over 15,000 animals.

Medical operations staff includes full- and part-time Veterinarian and Animal Health Technician positions. The medical team provides medical care, treatment, health management, and

emergency care. Medical staff will also conduct advance procedures such as X-rays, blood analysis, dental procedures/extractions, major surgery, orthopedic procedures, and forensic analysis for criminal investigations. The medical unit also conducts spay and neuter surgeries for shelter animals, owned pets, and stray cats.

Field services responds to the following types of calls: aggressive animals, injured, sick, and stray domestic animals, dead animal pick up, noise complaints, vicious or dangerous animal regulation, pet shop inspections, injured or sick wildlife, and animal crimes investigations. In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, staff completed over 21,000 calls for service and is on a track for a similar volume this fiscal year.

## **ANALYSIS**

As a General Fund dependent division, opportunities to enhance service levels have been relatively low the last several years; similarly, ACS has been thinly staffed over the years. Currently, ACS is experiencing a significant level of vacant positions which, unfortunately, coincides with a busy time of the year known as “kitten season” - an increase of new kittens born due to the warmer weather and an abundance of feral cats. While part-time staff is working to accommodate the staff shortage, there has been a decrease in medical treatment service levels. Specifically, (1) there has been a temporary hold on providing spay/neuter services to households owning pets; (2) ACS has a significantly reduced capacity to offer spay/neuter services for Trap-Neuter-Return partners who return cats to their outdoor environments; and (3) there is an overall reduction in surgery and advanced medical procedures. Staff has prioritized medical treatment and health checks for the animals in the shelter. Although current staff has increased workloads and responsibilities, challenges with maintaining service levels still exist. As further detailed below, staff is placing a tremendous focus on filling the vacant positions, yet, this is challenged by the difficult job recruitment market of the Bay Area.

In order to mitigate service level reductions and return to normal staffing levels, staff is implementing a number of efforts, including, but not limited to:

- *Staffing Levels:* As described in detail in the 2022-2023 Proposed Operating Budget on page 711, the Administration recommends eliminating three hard-to-fill part time positions and adding six new full time positions that add capacity for both the medical and shelter operations. Additionally, the Department of Public Works is shifting other department resources to ACS to provide temporary support in some specific areas while ACS positions are being filled.

- *Recruitment:* Both the Department of Public Works and the City's Human Resources Department are focused on filling the vacant positions. Several recruitments are currently underway, and others have resulted in some positions being recently filled. The City Manager has authorized the Department to begin the recruitment process for the positions that are recommended in the Proposed Budget in order to get ACS stabilized and the new positions filled as soon as possible, pending City Council approval of the Proposed Operating Budget.
- *Shelter Partners:* The City is part of a "WeCare" Coalition of South Bay shelters, including the Humane Society of Silicon Valley, County of Santa Clara Animal Shelter, Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority, City of Palo Alto Animal Services, Pets in Need, and Town Cats. East Bay SPCA is another shelter partner that has consistently assisted with animals from ACS. The City has requested temporary support from these partner shelters until ACS staffing vacancies are filled. Discussions to date have been productive and staff is working with these partners to quickly solidify areas where they may be able to best support ACS.
- *Community Partners:* Staff is coordinating with rescue partner organizations and the Trap-Neuter-Return community to collaborate and identify potential partnerships. Staff understand the value of these partnerships and are committed to continuing to strengthen and leverage these partnerships.
- *Facility:* The Public Works Facilities team is prioritizing shelter work orders and repairs. Additionally, through the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget process, City staff is working to identify funding for the highest priority needs at the shelter such as, plumbing and roofing repairs, and will bring forward recommendations later in the budget process.
- *Consultation:* Nationally recognized animal welfare non-profit, **Maddie's Fund**, has selected ACS to receive a "capacity of care" consultation beginning in summer 2022. This consultation will allow the City to identify key operational areas that need improvement moving forward.
- *Vendors:* Staff is committed to ensuring that the animals who are in the shelter are in a comfortable and clean environment. Given the current ACS staffing challenges, Public Works is working to increase the level of custodial vendor support that can be provided to ACS.

The commitment of our shelter staff and volunteers to the health and well-being of the animals in our community is beyond measure. Yet, additional resources and immediate action are required to provide our staff the ability to effectively perform their jobs, as well as to provide the highest standard of service for the community. These actions and resources are being focused on as noted in the above list.

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**COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Human Resources Department and City Manager's Budget Office. Further updates will be provided through informational memorandums or placed on the ACS website to ensure that the Mayor, Council and public are kept up to date on service levels at ACS and areas where the community can support ACS.

/s/  
MATT CANO  
Director, Department of Public Works

For questions, please contact Jay Terrado at [jay.terrado@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:jay.terrado@sanjoseca.gov)