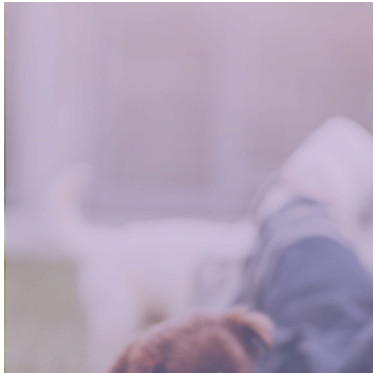
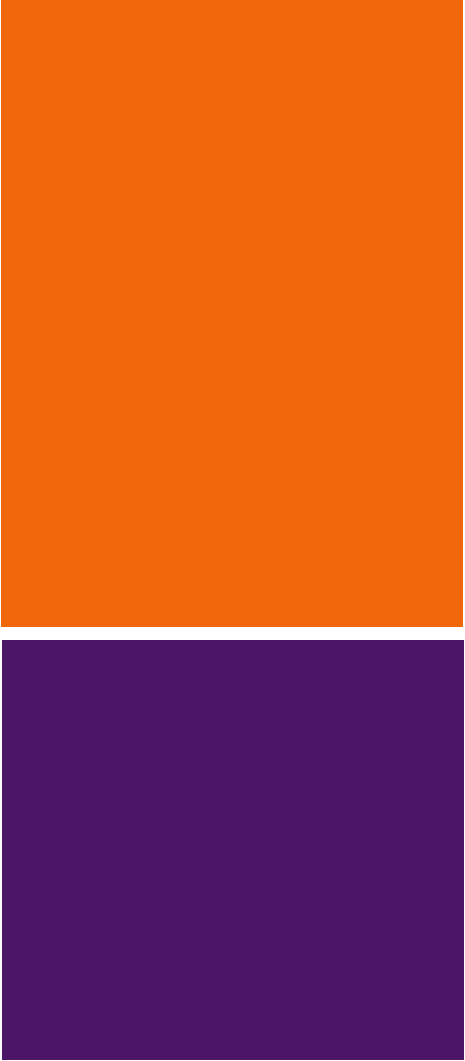


Animal Shelter
Advisory Committee

Annual Report

Calendar Year 2024
City of El Paso, TX



ASAC 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Mission

The Animal Shelter Advisory Committee will advise, support, and advocate for the wellbeing of all animals in the El Paso community.

Vision

El Paso will be the leader in animal welfare.

Strategic Goals

- Support the City of El Paso's initiative to reach and sustain a 90% or greater live-release rate by 2025.
- **Engage ASAC members on best practices in Animal Health, Welfare, and Technology by providing community and shelter support for all animals.**
- Promote education and community engagement in Animal Health and Welfare.
- **Research and advise on effective ordinances and policies to improve overall health, welfare, and safety for animals.**
- Advance population stability practices in the community.
- Work in concert and engage with animal welfare organizations, El Paso Animal Services, EPVMA, and regional governmental entities to develop and recommend proactive and progressive disease control measures.
- **Foster the development and expand collaboration of partners to meet the mission.**
- **Emergency Response with a Disaster Preparedness Plan and the transition return to normal operations.**
- Engage with City Council on priorities and concerns of the ASAC.

Committee Membership in 2024

Member	Appointed By	Joined	Left	Meetings Attended	Possible Meetings
Chris Canales (Chair)	Mayor (City Council Position)	Active at year start	Active at year end	10	10
Ileene Mendoza	District 1	Active at year start	Active at year end	10	10
Ruby A. Montana	District 2	Active at year start	Active at year end	10	10
Sandra DiFrancesco	District 3	Active at year start	Active at year end	10	10
Ron Comeau	District 4	Active at year start	May 2024	4	5
Terry M. Breaux	District 4	June 2024	Active at year end	6	6
Alejandra Valdez	District 5	April 2024	Active at year end	7	7
Barbara Candelaria (Vice Chair)	District 6	Active at year start	Active at year end	10	10
Mary Bardouche	District 7	October 2024	Active at year end	3	3
Elvira Stephanie Frias	District 8	Active at year start	Active at year end	9	10
Dr. Patricia Riley	Mayor (Veterinarian Position)	Active at year start	May 2024	5	5
Dr. Raquel Ellis	Mayor (Veterinarian Position)	November 2024	Active at year end	2	2

97.73% attendance rate



2024 By The Numbers

11 Meetings Held



35
Total
Agenda Items
Discussed

4
New
Members
Welcomed

Total Meeting Duration

**17 hours &
11 minutes**



What Was Discussed?

Westside Adoption Center Renovation and Expansion

The committee frequently discussed the ongoing renovations and planned expansions at the Westside Adoption Center. Topics included the timeline for construction, improvements to kennel space, the addition of a veterinary suite, and its potential role as a second full-service Animal Services location. Members also discussed ongoing funding and operational considerations for the expanded facility.

Return to Owner (RTO) Strategies

The committee focused on increasing RTO rates by improving shelter practices and community awareness. Strategies included better public access to microchip scanners, utilizing social media for lost pet alerts, and engaging with rescue groups to assist in reunification efforts. The impact of behavior assessments on RTO rates was also reviewed.

Mobile Microchip Scanner Subcommittee Progress

A dedicated subcommittee worked throughout the year to improve lost pet reunification by increasing access to mobile microchip scanners. Discussions covered logistics such as where scanners should be placed, partnerships with local businesses, and the feasibility of an online map showing scanner locations. The committee also explored potential funding sources to support expansion efforts.

Overcrowding and Euthanasia Rates

The shelter's capacity challenges and euthanasia rates were a major focus. Members discussed intake trends, the impact of limited foster/adoption options, and ways to reduce euthanasia rates through increased community engagement. Concerns about large dogs staying in the shelter for extended periods were especially prevalent.

Animal Services Budget and Funding Sources

The committee discussed how City funding and external grants could support key programs, including veterinary staffing, pet adoption incentives, and infrastructure improvements. There were discussions on how to allocate resources effectively, as well as the impact of budget constraints on shelter operations.



Frequently Raised Concerns

Stray Animal Welfare

The welfare of stray animals, particularly their access to shelter, food, and medical care, was a frequent concern. The committee explored ways to improve community education about responsible pet ownership and stray management, as well as partnerships with rescue organizations.

Spay/Neuter Programs and Veterinary Availability

The lack of affordable spay/neuter services and the shortage of veterinarians in El Paso were persistent challenges. Members discussed ways to expand access to these services, including partnerships with local clinics and mobile spay/neuter units.

Public Education and Outreach

Increasing community awareness about responsible pet ownership, adoption, and lost pet reunification was a major focus. The committee considered various outreach strategies, including educational events, social media campaigns, and school partnerships.

City Ordinance Clarifications (e.g., Title 7, Animal Trapping)

Members frequently raised questions about City ordinances related to animal control, including regulations on trapping, breeding, and public safety concerns. Discussions centered on potential ordinance updates, enforcement challenges, and improving clarity for residents navigating animal-related laws.



The ASAC's Recommendations to the City Council

The Animal Shelter Advisory Committee (ASAC) serves as an advisory body to the City Council, providing guidance on policies and initiatives that impact the welfare of animals in El Paso. Our primary responsibility is to review and recommend improvements to the City's animal services, shelter operations, and public policies that affect both pets and the broader community.

Throughout 2024, the ASAC has engaged in in-depth discussions on key issues, including shelter overcrowding, pet reunification efforts, spay/neuter initiatives, and community education on responsible pet ownership. The recommendations outlined in this report reflect the most pressing needs identified during our meetings and are intended to support the City's goal of achieving and sustaining a 90% or greater live-release rate by 2025.

These recommendations are based on extensive discussions with Animal Services leadership, community stakeholders, and data-driven assessments of shelter trends. By implementing these strategies, the City can improve animal welfare, enhance public engagement, and build a more effective and sustainable animal services system.



Recommendation #1:

Continue Progress on the Westside Adoption Center Conversion

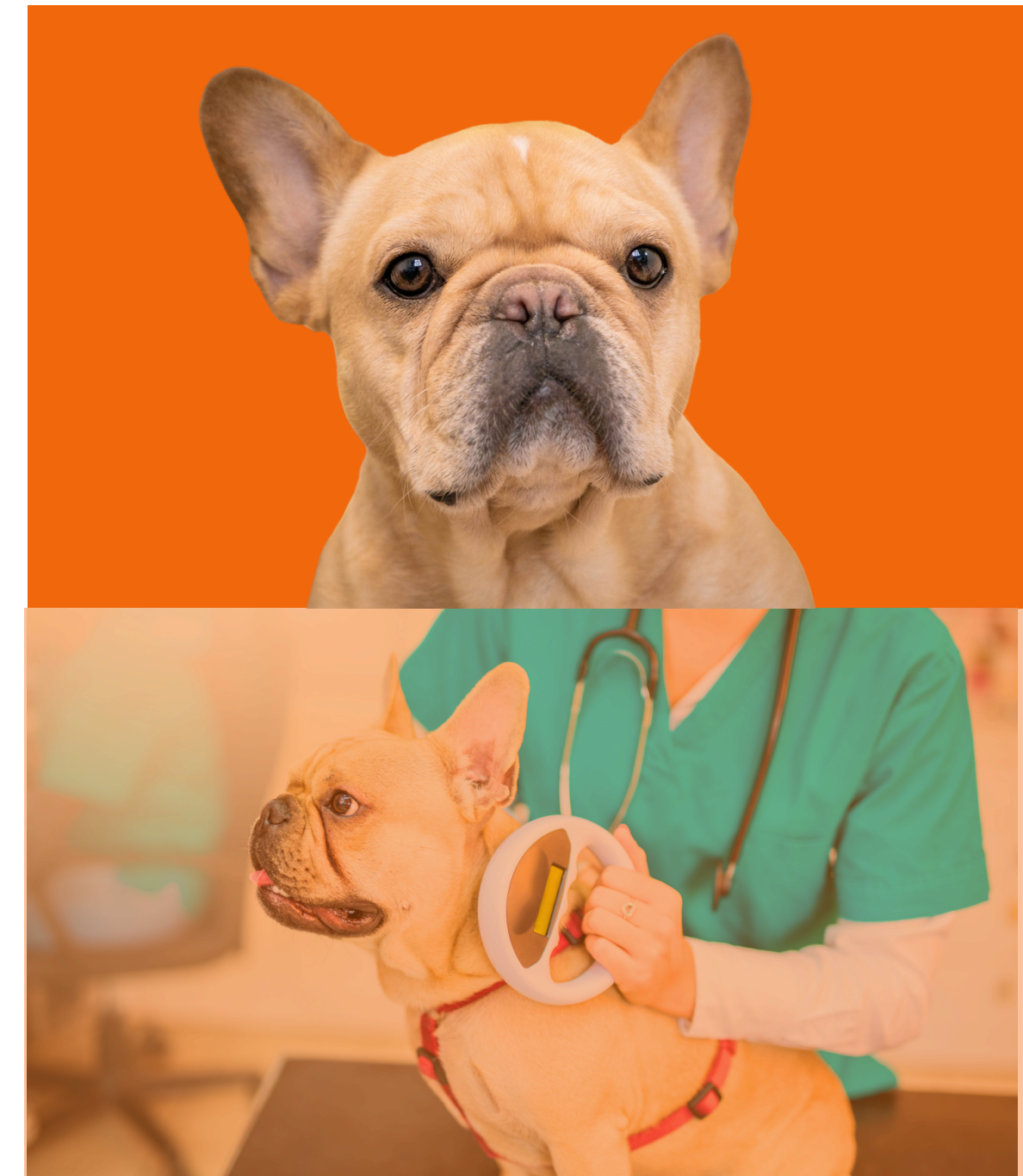
Given the ongoing renovations and discussions about turning the Westside Adoption Center into a full-service shelter, the committee recommends proceeding through Phase II of construction at the fastest possible pace, constructing veterinary facilities, and ensuring operational sustainability at the new location.



Recommendation #2:

Expand the Mobile Microchip Scanner Program

To improve Return to Owner (RTO) rates, the committee recommends funding for additional mobile microchip scanners at key locations, potentially including veterinary clinics, pet supply pantries, and community centers. This could also involve an expanded online directory or app for residents to locate nearby scanners.



Recommendation #3:

Enhance Public Education and Outreach on Pet Ownership and Ordinances

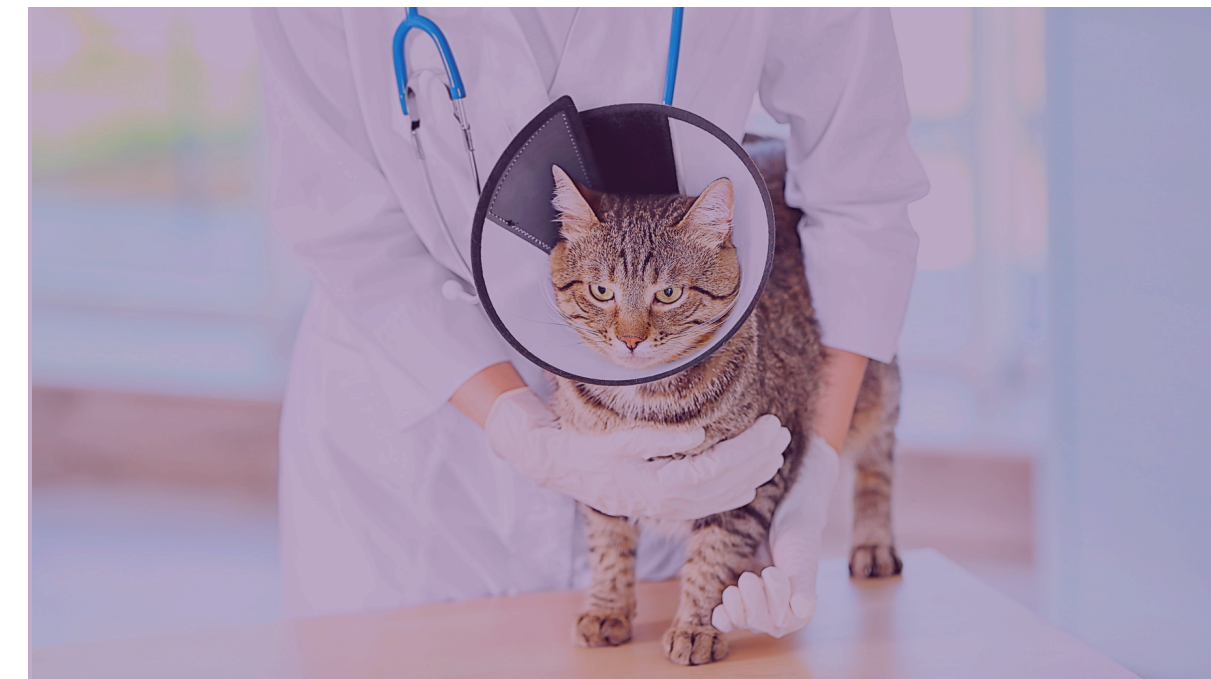
After frequent discussions on stray animal welfare, adoption concerns, and City ordinances (Title 7 of the Municipal Code), the committee proposes a citywide outreach campaign on responsible ownership. This could include educational workshops, multilingual resources, and partnerships with schools to improve public understanding of pet ownership responsibilities.



Recommendation #4:

Develop and Fund a Comprehensive Spay/Neuter Program

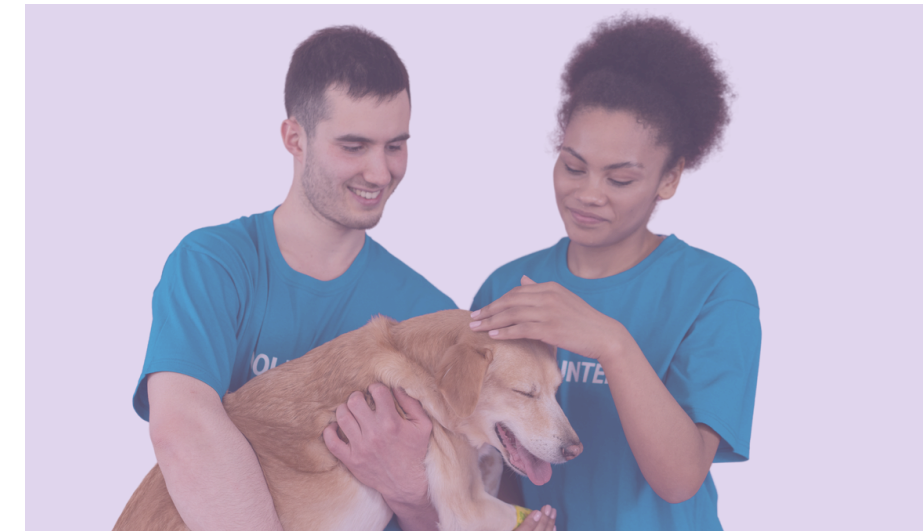
Given concerns about overcrowding, at-risk animals, and euthanasia, the committee recommends allocating City resources to expand low-cost spay/neuter services. This could include expanded mobile clinics and Spay-a-Thon programming, financial incentives for pet owners, and partnerships with local veterinarians to address staffing shortages.



Recommendation #5:

Implement a Structured Adoption Follow-Up Program

In response to concerns about post-adoption welfare and tracking, the committee recommends a structured follow-up system, either using a digital platform like Petszel (which is currently being tested) or by Animal Services staff checking in directly with adopters. This could ensure that pets are not returned or abandoned and help identify adopters in need of additional support.



Recommendation #6:

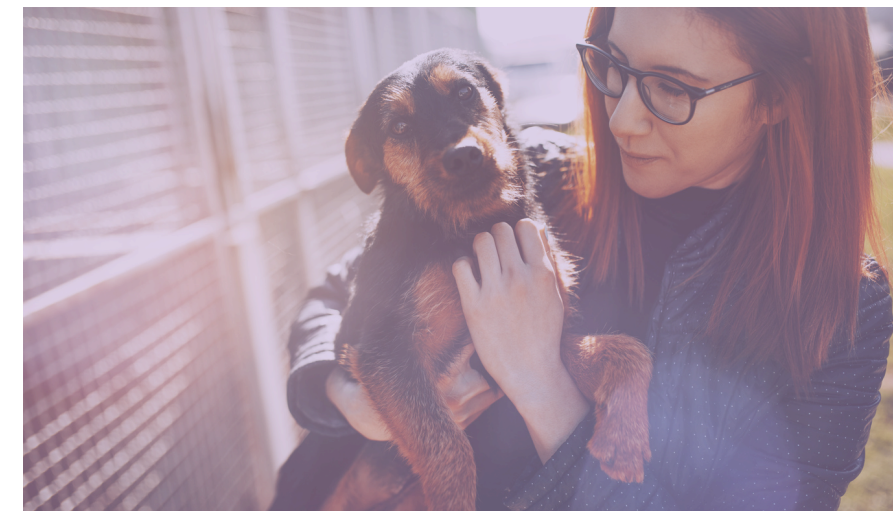
Support and Strengthen Trap-Neuter-Return Programs for Cats

To better manage El Paso's stray cat population, the committee recommends increasing funding and resources for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) initiatives. This could include expanding low-cost spay/neuter services, improving access to humane trapping equipment, and strengthening partnerships with local animal welfare groups. Additionally, a public education campaign could help residents understand the benefits of TNR in reducing feral cat populations and euthanasia rates while ensuring humane treatment of community cats.



Special Thanks

- **Terry Kebschull** – Director of Animal Services
- **Michael Wachsmann** – Animal Services Assistant Director
- **Dr. Antony Chacon** – Animal Services Chief Veterinarian
- **Adan Parra** – Animal Services Staff
- **Maria Arciniega** – Animal Services Staff
- **Michele Anderson** – Animal Services Staff
- **Gina Ramirez** – Animal Services Staff
- **Veronica Frescas** – Animal Services Staff
- **Julieanne Newbold** – Animal Services Staff
- **Wesley Walker** – Animal Services Staff
- **Kristen Gurrola** – Animal Services Staff
- **Josette Flores** – City Attorney's Office
- **Carlos Armendariz** – City Attorney's Office



Questions?