



Austin Animal Services 5-Year Strategic Plan One Year Update

Presented May 6, 2026



Agenda

Introduction & Background

Strategic Plan Summary

Priorities & Progress Highlights

Summary & Next Steps

Questions?



What's the purpose of the new Strategic Plan?

The plan is a roadmap for future initiatives and decisions. It guides resource allocation, performance targets, and future collaboration with stakeholders.



How was it developed?

The strategic plan was developed over an 8-month period with **input from diverse stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, partners, and the community.**

The Working Group used feedback/information gathered from stakeholders, along with their own expertise in animal welfare, to develop the strategic plan during a series of workshops facilitated by an external consultant.

How's it going?

Well! Since March 2025, many initiatives have begun to meet the priorities and goals established by the plan.

The strategic plan established **six** priorities:



Humane
Care



Open
Intake



Public
Health
and Safety



Spay
Neuter



Live
Release



Staff and
Volunteers

Each has goals and strategies to help achieve the priority. **In total, there are eighteen (18) goals and sixty-four (64) strategies.**

4

Goals

11

Strategies

Humane Care

“Meet animals’ physical and emotional needs and ensure a high quality of life for animals in shelter and foster care by providing enrichment, behavioral support, and well-maintained facilities.”

1

INCREASE ENRICHMENT, SOCIALIZATION, AND BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

- Expanded dog play group activities
- Implemented population rounds
- Added Outcomes Consultant role

2

OFFER TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

- Provided animal handling training for staff and volunteers

4

Goals

11

Strategies

Humane Care

“Meet animals’ physical and emotional needs and ensure a high quality of life for animals in shelter and foster care by providing enrichment, behavioral support, and well-maintained facilities.”

3

ENHANCE SHELTER CLEANLINESS AND SANITATION

- Revised the Cleaning and Disinfecting Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
- Implemented inspections following SOP implementation

4

IMPROVE CAMPUS FACILITIES AND PHYSICAL SPACES

- Facilities enhancement was included in the proposed bond that is pending voter approval

2
Goals5
Strategies

Spay Neuter

“Reduce the number of stray, unowned, and unwanted animals by improving and increasing spay/neuter services.”

1 INCREASE FREE & SUBSIDIZED SPAY/NEUTER SURGERIES FOR OWNED ANIMALS

- Increased free spay/neuter surgeries by **25%** from fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2025.
 - **13,433 owned animals** were spayed through clinics provided by contracted vendors in fiscal year 2025.

2 INCREASE SPAY/NEUTER SURGERIES FOR STRAY & UNOWNED ANIMALS

- **2,321 surgeries** performed on Community Cats through the City’s contract with Austin Humane Society in FY2025 (2.93% decrease from FY2024)
- **5660 surgeries** performed by Austin Animal Services (0.53% decrease from FY2024)

3

Goals

Open Intake

12

Strategies

“Ensure Austin Animal Services has the capacity to accept animals, facilitate care by partners and the public and assist people in keeping their pets in a timely manner.”

1

INCREASE THE TIMELINESS OF INTAKE SUPPORT

- Added greeter position in the lobby of the shelter
- Conducted an evaluation of the intake to outcome process and identified areas for improvement

2

EXPAND THE CAPACITY OF THE SHELTER

- Provided animal handling training for staff and volunteers
- Strengthened adoption partnerships with Humane Society and Austin Pets Alive
- Increased number of “pet detectives” to improve the number of Returned to Owner success stories
- Implemented a marketing plan to help get animals out of the shelter and into forever homes

3

Goals

Open Intake

12

Strategies

“Ensure Austin Animal Services has the capacity to accept animals, facilitate care by partners and the public and assist people in keeping their pets in a timely manner.”

2

EXPAND THE CAPACITY OF THE SHELTER (continued)

- Secured a third-party architect to develop construction plans for a small dog kennel with dedicated outdoor space
- Facility enhancements were included in the proposed bond that is pending voter approval

3

REMOVE BARRIERS TO PET OWNERSHIP THROUGH RESOURCES AND POLICY CHANGE

- Created a working group with animal welfare partners to address policies that affect pet ownership

3

Goals

17

Strategies

Live Release

“Maximize the number of animals that are adopted, rescued, transferred, or returned to their owners through enhanced services, partnerships, and community engagement.”

1

EXPAND/ENHANCE ALL PROGRAMS THAT LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENTS FOR ANIMALS

- Held multiple adoption events including Clear the Shelters, Area-Wide Name-Your-Price Adoption Event, March 6-8, 2026.
- Partnered with the Animal Welfare Coalition to hold an adoption event April 17 – 19, 2026 that resulted in 137 dogs being adopted or fostered.
- Implemented Enduring Service Jail Foster Program
- Implemented Doggie Day Out and Overnight Program

2

IMPROVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- Initiated Volunteer Adoption Application Program
- Began offering 30-day trial adoptions
- Implemented new shelter management system

3

Goals

17

Strategies

Live Release

“Maximize the number of animals that are adopted, rescued, transferred, or returned to their owners through enhanced services, partnerships, and community engagement.”

3

INCREASE AWARENESS OF ANIMAL SERVICES AND BUILD COMMUNITY TRUST

- Launched Communications and Public Relations Plan to build community trust
- Developed Enduring Service Jail Foster Program
- Implemented City department microchip scanning pilot program
- Developed transport opportunities with local partners

3

Goals

8

Strategies

Public Health & Safety

“Ensure the health and safety of the public and animals by providing resources and information, working with community partners, and responding quickly to animal related concerns

1

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON HOW TO INTERACT SAFELY WITH ANIMALS

- Developed a Communications and Public Relations Plan that includes public safety reels and pet retention information
- Community Cats Program was expanded to include trappers in the volunteer program
- Provided training vouchers and online support to assist with behavioral challenges

2

TIMELY RESPONSE TO ANIMAL WELFARE CALLS AND PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

- Enhanced the 311 Triage system
- Designated Animal Protection Officers as emergency responders
- Executed a new interlocal agreement with the Travis County Sheriff’s Office

3

Goals

8

Strategies

Public Health & Safety

“Ensure the health and safety of the public and animals by providing resources and information, working with community partners, and responding quickly to animal related concerns

3

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING AGGRESSIVE OR UNHEALTHY ANIMALS

- Austin Wildlife Rescue and Texas Game Wardens provided training to Animal Protection Officers on the proper handling of animals that are rabies vectors

3

Goals

11

Strategies

Staff & Volunteers

“Recruit and retain well-trained and dedicated staff and volunteers by providing the tools, resources, and support they need to create a culture of inclusion and responsibility.”

1

ENHANCE WORKING CONDITIONS & BUILD SKILLED/SUPPORTED STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- Modified operations by closing the shelter on the second Wednesday of every month to implement monthly department-wide staff development and training days.
 - *Note: Emergency services are still provided on these closure days.*
- Communication tool roll out
- The City’s LEAD Office provided training to Animal Services’ Leadership Team on working styles and communication.

2

INCREASE MORALE AND SATISFACTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- Implemented a new Award & Recognition Program
- Conducted a Workplace Environment Survey

3

Goals

11

Strategies

Staff & Volunteers

“Recruit and retain well-trained and dedicated staff and volunteers by providing the tools, resources, and support they need to create a culture of inclusion and responsibility.”

3

IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

- The department reorganized October 1, 2025, to maximize operational efficiencies and better align resources.
- Discovery Project
 - Partnered with Austin Budget and Operational Excellence
 - Reviewed the intake to outcome process flow and identified opportunities for improvement.

Animal Services has made significant progress in the past year.

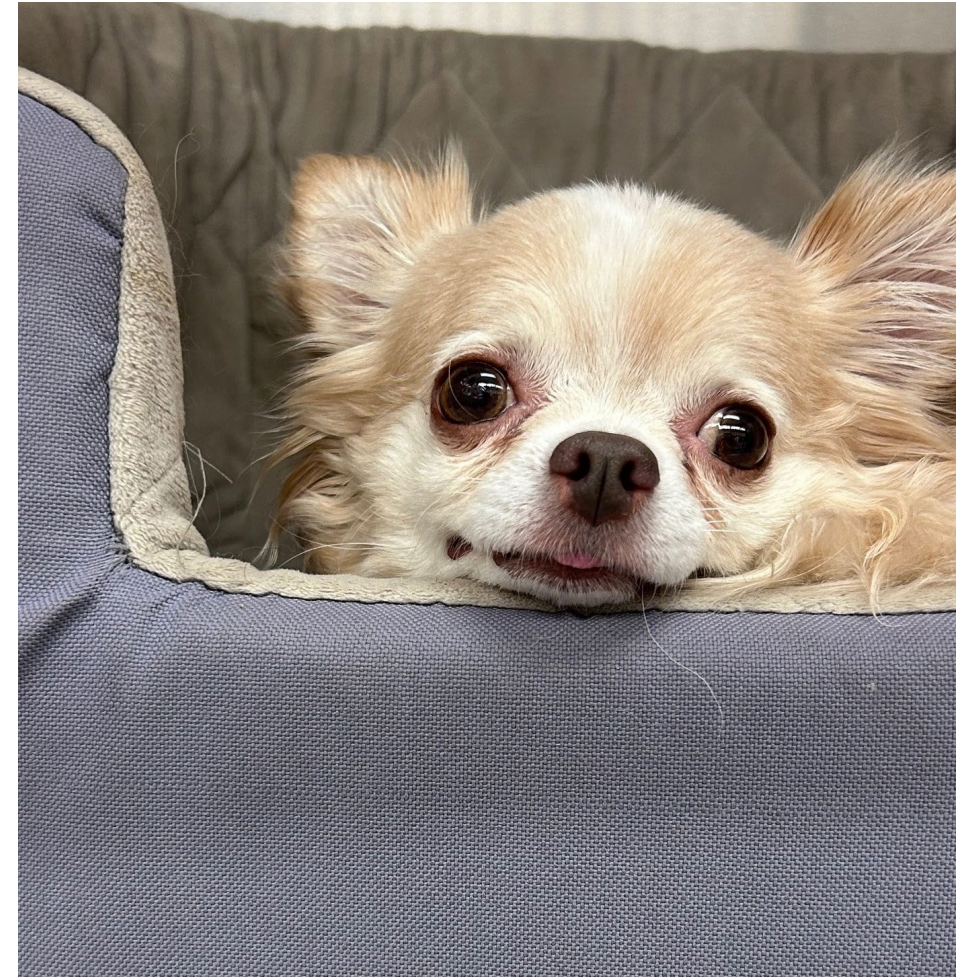


Key Programs and Initiatives:

- Doggy Day Out and Overnights
- Enduring Service Program
- Communications and 3-Year Public Relations Plan
- Prevention Program - Increased Spay and Neuter surgeries for owned pets by 25%
- Facility improvement plans
- Employee Training Days

Additional Updates:

- Hired Stephanie Frances, Business Process Consultant, to manage implementation of the strategic plan in April 2026
- Developed a strategic plan dashboard for the public (release expected May 2026)



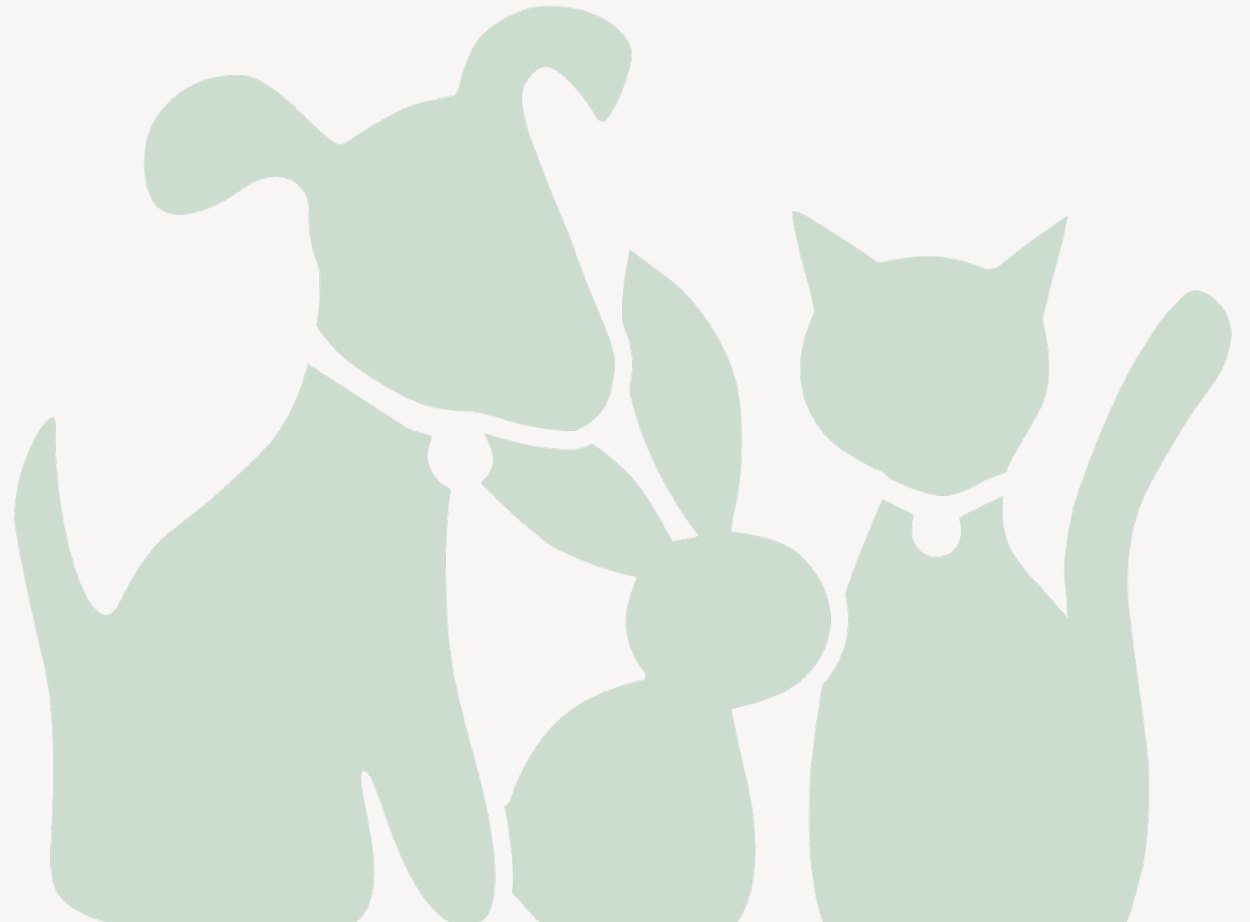


What comes next?

- Launch the Strategic Plan Dashboard
- Collaborate with the Animal Advisory Commission working group to develop performance measures
- Continue to make progress towards full implementation of the plan!



Questions?



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