

Director's Report

July 19, 2023

Introduction:

Since the last ACS Advisory Board meeting, staff have placed a legendary effort into the implementation of the Strategic Plan and how that will be manifested not only in the FY24 budget, but how it will come to fruition over the next 5 years. There are many priorities that require attention but implementing this using a balanced approach is essential to ensure all aspects of the plan move forward together to support creating safer neighborhoods, getting more animals into forever homes and ensuring there are adequate resources in the community to facilitate easier access to spay/neuter and vaccination clinics.

Topic #1 – Updates to Animal Care Officer Scheduling:

This year ACS is seeking to increase its Field response rates by staffing an additional shift of First Responders during the most critical times. Through some creative scheduling and the addition of more Animal Care Officers, our goal is to double the number of Animal Care Officers in the Field during the five highest operational tempo days of the week. This is anticipated to positively affect not only response times but also decrease the incidences of multiple calls to 311 for the same situation. This will also allow Animal Care Officers to spend quality time at calls, allowing for increased opportunity to return roaming dogs to owners with education and enforcement, as necessary.

Topic #2 – Updates to On-Site Staffing and Budget:

At the same time, we must continue to expand our outcome initiatives, shelter support and medical care for animals that are not able to be re-united with their owners. The FY24 budget proposal moves these along as well with additional Clinic, Live Release and Shelter staff, as well as key positions and advertising money to create a more relevant presence in the community for placing animals and educating residents throughout the city.

Topic #3 – Community Involvement:

One of the key methods to implement change in the community is through community involvement. This is easier said than done but as a key tenant of the strategic plan, ACS is moving forward with partnerships with Joint Base San Antonio to increase impactful volunteer opportunities at ACS as well as piloting a community-based solution to difficult spay/neuter situations. By partnering with advocates that are already involved in helping pet owners in their neighborhoods to provide surgery access, we hope to reach and serve the most difficult cases.

Closing:

While there is still a long way to go in finalizing next year's budget, I am encouraged by the work staff has put in to create an impactful and sustainable plan that will significantly impact and expand our operational support to the community over the next several years.

Shannon W. Sims
Animal Care Services Director