

AUSTIN NO KILL COALITION
2014 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

1. Since February 2011, Austin's open-admission municipal animal shelter has saved 90% or more of all impounded animals, making Austin the largest "No Kill" City in the United States. But success in the past does not guarantee success in the future, and there is always room for improvement. How important is the City's "No Kill" status to you? If the issue were to come before the Council again, will you commit to maintaining the City's resolve to be a "No Kill" community? Why or why not?

I supported advancing a No-Kill policy for the City of Austin when it was first proposed, and cheered when Council approved the resolution. All of my animals are rescues, some from TLAC, which has always been very conveniently located. The move to Levander Loop (where I have gone to use Emancipets' services) is in an out-of-the-way area of town. It's made it difficult to get to the location and it's a fair distance from the center of town. Town Lake Animal Center and Austin Pets Alive are a great combo at Lamar Beach – a much more central location and visible to passers-by who may be visiting it for the first time.

2. In 2007, the City Council voted to build a new animal shelter in East Austin but only upon the condition that an adoption center remain on the old Town Lake Animal Center site. The Council has repeatedly voted that it wishes the current tenant of the site, Austin Pets Alive, to remain on the site, but the building is old and deteriorating. Given that APA saves three to four thousand animals from Austin Animal Center each year (15-20% of AAC intake), and given that APA is willing to build a new, state-of-the-art shelter on the site at no cost to city taxpayers, will you commit to supporting APA signing a long-term agreement with the city to build and operate a new, streamlined shelter as its headquarters on the site with a two-acre footprint (cutting in half its current footprint of four acres)? Why or why not?

Yes, I support APA's continuing to operate on Lamar Beach area at the TLAC site. I understand APA is actively fundraising for the new building, and has plans to reduce the footprint (two acres with a multiple-story state-of-the-art facility). A new facility is overdue! I would like to see partnerships expanded to include the teams using the fields, and groups like the Boy and Girl Scouts, to bring those people into the programs at a new, expanded APA shelter.

3. In 2010, the City Council passed a "No Kill" plan for the City of Austin that has produced dramatic, measurable, and positive outcomes for Austin's shelter pets. The "No Kill" plan took a balanced approach aimed at both increasing "live outcomes" and decreasing shelter intake through proven and cost-effective policies and programs. However, some persons in town who oppose Austin's "No Kill" efforts want the City to instead pass a mandatory pet alteration law or a costly tax on owners of unaltered pets---even though such laws have proven ineffective across the country, are nearly uniformly opposed by national animal-welfare groups, and have frequently led to increases in shelter intake, killing, and animal-control costs. Do you support the current balanced "No Kill" approach embraced by the Council and "No Kill" advocates? Or, are you willing to risk the progress Austin has made by imposing a mandatory alteration law?

I fully support the current balanced "No Kill" approach embraced by Council and "No Kill" advocates as the specific, tested approach to achieve positive outcomes for Austin's shelter pets and to meet or surpass the goals of Austin's No-Kill policy.

4. The largest category of “savable” animals still not making it out of Austin Animal Center alive are high-energy large dogs in need of behavior training. These dogs often take the longest time to be adopted, and they are also often surrendered to the city shelter due to apartment or neighborhood housing restrictions that discriminate based on breed or size. Would you be willing to explore ways to change housing restrictions so that they are based on an individual animal’s behavior rather than on its size and apparent breed? At the least, would you be willing to condition city contributions (such as money or land) to residential developers on an agreement that they not discriminate based on an animal’s breed or size? Why or why not?

Yes, I am willing to explore ways to change housing restrictions to base them on an individual animal’s behavior rather than on its size and apparent breed, or to condition city contributions to residential developers on an agreement that they would not discriminate based on an animal’s breed or size. Size is not a certain indicator of an animal’s behavior or personality. Much of how an animal behaves is related to how it has been treated or raised which points to the person, not the animal.

5. What pets, if any, do you have? Where did you get them from?
- I have fostered kittens myself, and had rescue animals since I was a girl and for the 34 years I’ve lived in Austin. When my daughter, Emily, was a Brownie, she signed up to foster, too. First she spent time at the Humane Society playing with the kittens to socialize them to people, and then when she was old enough she became a foster. Her first two fosters were successful, if gut-wrenching and then the last one – two little boy kitts (Scout and Tucker) – a beautiful failure. Those boys were with us for many years, but they have both passed on now. Our other kittens (we usually have at least two, often three) have come either directly from TLAC (Jake) or been adopted from friends who have rescued them: one from the HEB parking lot on Oltorf (Zoe aka Rowdy), the other from a truck stop in East Texas. That little girl, Tess, was fortuitously gathered up by a co-worker and brought to our office (National Wildlife Federation office in the Rainey Street area) and she’s been home with me ever since.*

My daughter now lives in Brooklyn, but she continues our tradition of rescues as our chosen animals. Her two cats, Jackson and Little, were rescued – one of them literally during a rainstorm – when Emily was at the University of North Texas. They are thriving in her apartment, providing a sense of home and comfort despite living so far from Austin.