

## Instructions

This document is a fill-in form. Tab through the document to type in your answers in the fields below. Don't worry about space, the text fields will expand if needed. When you're done, email the completed form to [REDACTED]. Thank you for your time.

Perla Cavazos

1. **In October 2007, the City Council voted to relocate Austin's animal shelter to the eastern edge of the City, but only if the newest building at the current shelter were kept open as an adoption center. Shelter staff, who did not support the adoption center, have not developed a plan for the center or allocated any bond money to prepare the building, currently used for administration, to house animals.**

- A. **What steps, if any, will you take to ensure that shelter management fulfills Council's mandate for a downtown adoption center?**

A few strategies required for effectively implementing Council's mandate for a downtown adoption center include creating and following a strong timetable with benchmarks, setting and measuring goals, and creating and maintaining measures of oversight. I am confident that with the leadership I and others would offer to this effort, along with the strong participation of the public, we can ensure that we create and follow through on community values set forth in the mandate.

Where appropriate, budget items and performance measures should link-up to goals, objectives and priorities set forth in the mandate for a downtown adoption center.

In addition, I think it is important to look to members of the animal advocacy community, including members of the Animal Advisory Council, to offer guidance, feedback and otherwise help to appropriately implement the mandate.

- B. **Will you commit to supporting a downtown adoption center that is open the same hours as the main shelter, and where adoptable animals can stay full-time until they are adopted?**

I am committed to utilizing the best strategies to adopt out animals, including increased promotion of off-site community adoption events. I would be excited to learn more about which strategies concerning the hours and locations would be the best practices to reach our shared goals in consideration with the City's budget.

- C. **Would you support an expansion of the proposed adoption center to include more of the existing shelter buildings, such as the adoption dog kennels?**

Before I could unequivocally commit to this specific proposal I would be very open to learning more about how to best reach our shared goals of housing animals humanely while they await adoption. I would very much like to take a tour of the facilities to get a first-hand perspective of the shelter facilities and the expansion you propose.

2. **While there was a significant decline in the number of cats entering the shelter in 2008, the number of adoptions from Austin's pound has not seen a significant increase. The number of animals leaving through placement partner groups would have actually decreased last year if it were not for the work of a single new nonprofit group. Would you commit to demanding the implementation of proven programs that have increased positive outcomes at other shelters---such as off-site adoptions and a large-scale foster program? If so, would you be willing to direct budgetary expenditures towards those programs?**

I do support utilizing best practices, such as off-site adoptions, and see public-private partnerships as a great opportunity to work towards meeting our shared goal of increasing adoptions, especially given the City's limited budget at this time.

3. **Since 2000 when the current shelter director took over, Austin's pound has killed an average of 52.4 percent of impounded animals (about 12,000 animals each year). During the same period, the annual budget has increased from below \$3 million to nearly \$6 million. Other communities across the country have implemented common sense and innovative methods to reduce their shelter kill rate to under 10% of all impounded animals, often in just one or two years.**

- A. **Would you commit to making “no kill”—defined as killing less than 10% of pets sheltered at the community’s open-admission shelter—the official policy of Austin and support any laws or policy changes necessary to achieve this goal?**

Yes, I commit to making Austin an official "no kill" city. I am eager to work with animal advocates and the Animal Advisory Commission to draft and implement appropriate policies to reach this goal. And, I appreciate your understanding that I can not make an unequivocal commitment to unseen policies. Additionally, I feel strongly that my background working with many advocates to craft sound public policy at the legislature would be of great benefit to help reach our shared goals.

- B. **Given the track record of shelter management, do you believe it's time for a new direction? If yes, would you consider hiring a consultant with demonstrated experience in achieving “no kill” to evaluate Austin’s shelter?**

I would like to learn more about how we could improve the shelter management as we move toward a no-kill system. If hiring a new consultant or manager was, in fact, a necessary step then it would be fundamental to consider someone with experience in directing no-kill policies to implement a no-kill program for Austin.

**C. Would you support the implementation of performance standards that tie management performance to salary increments or bonuses or continued employment? If not, please explain why not.**

As a union member and advocate, I feel strongly that performance standards should be clearly set to ensure that individuals have the opportunity to be evaluated on merit, are held accountable for their job performance and are compensated accordingly.

**4. Two audits by the State of Texas, plus multiple independent checks, have revealed that on most days, Austin's shelter keeps more than 100 cages empty and unused while it continues killing healthy, non-aggressive animals.**

**A. Would you require TLAC to explain this policy? Please explain why or why not.**

Yes, policies of the TLAC and other City-operated facilities should be clearly accessible to the public to ensure an open government, an honest dialogue with the public about City policies and the creation of sound public policy.

**B. Would you commit to supporting a moratorium on convenience killing at Austin's shelter---i.e., the killing of animals that are neither suffering nor aggressive while dozens of cages sit empty? Please explain why or why not.**

I would like to learn more about why this is occurring and what we can do to ensure that non-aggressive animals are not euthanized when our facilities can accommodate them. While I suspect a moratorium is an appropriate first step, I would like to learn more from TLAC and the Animal Advisory Commission about this issue.

**5. Shelter management has discretion to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual donations to the shelter, yet public documents do not make clear how that money is spent. Would you support an audit of the City's animal-services budget—including all discretionary funds? If not, please explain why not.**

Yes. I think it's important for the public to know how tax-payer money is being spent. The budget of the TLAC and other City-operated facilities should be clearly accessible to the public to ensure an open government, an honest dialogue with the public about City

policies and the creation of sound public policy.

- 6. No city in America has achieved “no kill” success by implementing a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. Some cities, like Los Angeles, have even seen an increase in shelter killing after introducing mandatory spay/neuter. In addition, such ordinances require increased enforcement costs, money that could be used for life-saving programs that are correlated with reduced shelter killing. As a council member, would you support mandatory spay/neuter, or would you support additional funding to increase access to low cost or free spay/neuter services?**

If elected, I would be very open to working with animal advocates and the Animal Advisory Council to draft and implement appropriate policies to increase the number of spayed and neutered animals in Austin -- with the goal of decreasing the numbers of animals in our shelter system. I do support utilizing best practices, such as low cost or free spay/neuter services, and see public-private partnerships as a great opportunity to work towards meeting our shared goal, especially given the City's limited budget at this time.

- 7. What, if anything, do you envision as the role of the Austin Animal Advisory Commission? What kind of person will you appoint to the commission?**

As a former member of two City Commissions, the Planning Commission and the Women’s Commission, I expected Council to rely on the information provided by myself and other hardworking Austinites who volunteer their time to help our leaders navigate important City issues.

I do not have a specific person in mind that I would appoint to the Austin Animal Advisory Commission, should I be elected. Rather, I would be very open to looking for recommendations from groups like FixAustin. I think it would be important to me and beneficial for the City to appoint someone who has a background in "no kill" policies, experience in coordinating off-site adoptions and/or creating public-private partnerships to promote low cost or free spay/neuter programs.

- 8. Have you ever rescued or adopted a pet? If you currently have pets, where did you get them?**

Due to my previous jobs which required me to work very long hours which would not be conducive to responsibly owning a pet, I have chosen not to have a pet. However, my sister Ruby, who lives with me has a Chihuahua, ChaCha, whom she adopted from a friend.

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