

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.

Mike Martinez

- 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?**

I will remain diligent in my position that the new shelter will not open without an adoption center at the Lady Bird Lake Center.

- 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?**

Yes, as long as the budget allows. It would be premature and irresponsible to make any commitments to future budget constraints until the full budget process has run its course.

- 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?**

I would be open to the discussion but cannot support a proposal until it is fully vetted and on the table.

- 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?

Yes, but with the same rationale as the answer to 1B.

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

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 believe there is always room for improvement, and look forward to continuing to work with the animal community to find the best solutions possible.

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.

I am open to the discussion but would need to see the proposal before committing to it.

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. I believe we need to know the relationship between space constraints and euthanasia rates.

- 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.**

Yes. Same as above.

- 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. We need to know how these funds are being used and I welcome input from the community to help develop a 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?**

I sponsored a resolution asking the AAAC to take a look at best practices used to reduce the rate of euthanized animals. I look forward to their recommendations related to spay/neuter practices and how we can reduce our numbers.

- 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?**

The AAAC is the policy recommendation board for the City Council. My appointee to the AAAC is David Lunstedt, and I am proud of his leadership and service.

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

I have adopted 2 rescue dogs from PAWS and one cat from TLAC.
We also now have 2 more cats we found on Craigslist.

Mike Martinez