

## 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.

Chris Riley

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'll request a report from the Health and Human Services Department on progress toward a downtown adoption center. If the report does not show meaningful progress, I'll support asking the Animal Advisory Commission to review progress on this effort on a monthly basis, and directing staff to provide monthly progress reports to the commission.

I'll also make sure that non-profits dedicated to animals are included in this effort as it moves forward. As we consider how to follow through on the Council's October 2007 resolution, we need to explore the possibility of a public-private partnership with a group such as Austin Pets Alive!

- 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?**

We need to make every effort to ensure that the animals we're caring for are adopted. I believe a downtown adoption center, where adoptable animals can stay full-time until they are adopted, would increase the number of adoptions, so I'll support that. I'll look to the Animal Advisory Commission, as well as interested non-profits, for guidance on the operations of the downtown adoption center. I would expect the hours at the two facilities to be the same.

- 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?**

As noted above, I'll look to the Animal Advisory Commission and interested non-profits for guidance on the operations of the downtown adoption center. We will need to consider budgetary issues, as well as flooding and other health/safety issues, but I would support integrating more of the existing shelter buildings, if that approach is feasible and recommended.

- 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, I'll commit to demanding the implementation of proven programs that have increased positive outcomes at other shelters. I'll support directing budgetary expenditures toward those programs, and I would also step up our coordination with nonprofits to increase the number of adoptions.

- 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 we need better data on our progress toward no-kill. I would ask our Animal Advisory Commission to take on the task of gathering and assessing that data, and I would look to that assessment in determining next steps for the shelter. It may be some time before we're in a position financially to be able to hire consultants for this effort, but I will consider any options recommended by the commission.

- 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.**

Yes.

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. We need to know why we are killing adoptable animals when the shelter is keeping so many cages empty.

- 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.**

Subject to hearing the explanation described in the previous question, yes, I would support a moratorium on convenience killing at Austin's shelter.

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.

- 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 would look to the Animal Advisory Commission for input on a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. Our focus needs to remain on reducing the number of animals killed. To the extent that we can find the resources, I would support additional funding to increase access to low cost or free spay/neuter services, and I would work collaboratively with private-sector groups toward that end.

- 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?**

Having spent a good part of my life on our city's boards and commissions, I'm a firm believer in taking them seriously. The Animal Advisory Commission's scope of authority is currently limited to our compliance with Chapter 823 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, which governs animal shelters, and "other issues that are referred to the Commission by the city council." I envision the Animal Advisory Commission providing guidance on a range of issues affecting the welfare of animals in Austin, including some beyond the scope of Chapter 823.

I am a longtime supporter of animal advocacy groups such as the Animal Trustees of Austin, so I know we have a great community of very compassionate and dedicated supporters of animals. I will appoint a strong animal advocate to the commission.

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

At the apartments where I lived from 1990 to 2002, the resident-managers moved out of town in the early 90's, leaving behind their cat, Laka. I adopted Laka and cared for her through the end of her life, including the difficult final year when she grew progressively worse with cancer. I haven't had a pet since then, but when needed I care for a cat named Hank, who lives with my upstairs tenant.

I have become familiar with rescue and adoption efforts through the work of my parents, who look out for cats in their neighborhood in West Austin. They have trapped, spayed/neutered, and released over twenty cats in the neighborhood, kept the ones they could, and sought

homes for others. They currently live with nine cats they have rescued, and care for one feral cat. They are longtime supporters of the Animal Trustees of Austin, and have worked with ATA in their efforts.

Chris Riley