

**AUSTIN NO KILL COALITION  
CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM QUESTIONNAIRE**

- **In February and March, Austin saved 90% of the impounded animals at Town Lake Animal Center (now called Austin Animal Center), making Austin the largest “No Kill” City in the United States. There is still much work to be done to keep and maintain this status, however, such as increasing adoptions from our City Shelter, Austin Animal Shelter. How important is this 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 City?**

I am very proud the City has reached the goal of becoming a “No Kill” City and will continue working hard to ensure we sustain the results achieved in recent months. As the Chair of the Council’s Public Health and Human Services Committee, I strongly supported the hard work that citizens and staff went through over the course of several months last year to come up with the Implementation Plan to Reduce Animal Intake and Increase Live Animal Outcomes. I voted to bring this legislation to the entire Council and commit to continuing that support.

- **The City Shelter is moving to a smaller facility in November 2011. In 2007, the City Council voted to keep part of the existing facility open to serve as an Adoption Center (the Davenport Building only); and in 2010, the Council voted to keep all of the existing facility open for at least 6 months as a safety net when the shelter moves. Knowing that the current TLAC facility is the only one of its kind in the whole of Austin and that Austin Pets Alive is proposing to run it at little cost to the City, would you support keeping the whole facility open beyond 6 months as both a safety net for the new, smaller facility, and also to significantly increase shelter adoptions?**

I support keeping an Adoption Center at the current TLAC location and voted to keep the entire facility open for at least six months after the new shelter opens. I still support that notion and am exploring options that would allow for further uses of the property to include animal adoptions and other services that strengthen animal welfare in Austin. Until we see how the transition to the new facility goes, however, it is hard to know how much of the existing facility should remain open for the long-term.

- **Maintaining Austin’s status as a “No Kill” City requires an unhesitating commitment to “live outcomes”--- keeping high the percentage of impounded animals that leave the shelter alive through rescue groups, other shelters, and direct adoptions to the public. The largest percentage of live outcomes at any time is direct adoptions, which will remain essential to the City’s “No Kill” goals when the main shelter is relocated to the new, smaller facility. When determining which nonprofit should inhabit the existing Austin Animal Center facility after the main shelter relocates, would you commit to prioritizing a non-profit that focuses exclusively on saving those animals who are slated to die at the City facility, thereby directly reducing the City’s “kill rate”? Or, would you be willing to have the City facility be run by a non-profit that instead focuses on animals brought in from other communities or from sources other than the City’s municipal shelter? How specifically will you determine which non-profit will be housed in the old facility?**

There is no question that Austin Pets Alive! has a stellar record in adopting animals out of TLAC. Over the last three years the live transfer rate of TLAC has dramatically increased, from 3,468 in 2008 to 5,699 in 2010 and a lot of the credit goes to APA! When it comes to contracting for services, the City must follow proper procurement procedures and adhere to an open, fair and transparent process for requesting proposals (RFP). That said, I would

Randi Shade

Place 3

expect, and would advocate for, an RFP that prioritizes activities and services that reduce the City's "kill rate."

- **Recognizing that No Kill is an ongoing project and that the City Animal Services is the only City department where lives are lost on a daily basis, would you vote for or against moderate increased expenditures that are directly associated with more lives saved?**

I support the current Implementation Plan to Reduce Animal Intake and Increase Live Animal Outcomes and have supported funding increases needed to implement the plan. I plan to continue my support for the plan in future budgets, as well.

- **The City of Austin returns about 8% of stray cats and 37% of stray dogs to their rightful owners. Other successful "No Kill" cities, however, are able to reduce the strain on the shelter and rescue groups by returning upwards of 65% of dogs to their owners. Would you support an internal review, and if necessary, restructuring of the City's Return to Owner Program at Austin Animal Center in order to gain more live outcomes and ease strain on the City and non-profit resources?**

Restructuring the City's Return to Owner Program warrants review, and I am always interested to learn about ways to gain more live outcomes at the Center. With a new Animal Services Officer newly onboard, I would expect this and other recommendations for increasing live outcomes to be carefully vetted.

- **Would you support the implementation of performance standards that tie management performance to salary increments or bonuses? If not, why not?**

I have experience using salary incentives and bonus plans to achieve improved performance among employees and managers, but at the City this is not common practice. There are many reasons for that. I am open to exploring this idea; however, implementation within the current City structure is not as simple as one would think. Regardless of whether financial incentives are in place, though, I am very supportive of the implementation of clearly defined performance metrics being part of the annual management review process.

- **As many as 15 different dog breeds are being restricted in 99% of the rental housing market in Austin, which makes finding appropriate housing very difficult for owners of these dogs, despite high levels of owner responsibility and great dog temperaments and training. This is significantly slowing adoptions of these breeds from the shelter and causing many owners to surrender their pets or dump them into the community. What steps would you take to find solutions to this problem, in working with the apartment associations and property managers in Austin?**

I am looking forward to the City quickly hiring an Animal Behaviorist and seeing what this could mean for the dogs (and cats) that are quick to be deemed aggressive, whether true or not. I would suggest having the Animal Advisory Commission lead an effort to raise awareness for this problem, and I will commit to encouraging the Austin Apartment Association and other groups to engage in the discussion.

- **Pit bull type dogs are the highest at-risk population for "euthanasia" at the shelter. Love-A-Bull, the City's Pit Bull Working Group, mixed breed rescue groups, shelter staff, and the Animal Advisory Commission all recognize that there is a great need to address public perception and reverse media stereotypes that paint a negative picture of these dogs, in order to increase adoptions and acceptance of pit bulls as wonderful family**

**companions, and maintain a commitment to No-Kill. Would you support the work of these groups and the message that they are sending to the community, through City support of pit bull-focused education and awareness events and initiatives?**

Yes, and I fully expect the Animal Services Center to continue partnering with these groups to promote education and awareness, as I anticipate they will do with many of their other partner organizations and rescue groups. Partnering like this, and especially with breed-experts, is essential to keeping our no-kill status.

- **Austin is a No Kill City because it embraced new concepts that proved old rhetoric, sheltering ideology, and traditional excuses for killing wrong and outdated. Rather than relying on disproved excuses for killing, the City Council in March 2010 embraced the successful No Kill Implementation Plan, which aims to both increase live outcomes (through off-site adoptions, marketing, enhanced customer service, fostering, etc.) and decreasing shelter intake (through owner-surrender counseling, low-cost and free spay-neuter programs, etc.). Prior to March 2010, the City's animal-welfare policy focused almost exclusively on decreasing intake while largely ignoring the plight of the animals who were entering the shelter annually. Due to the more balanced approach in the 2010 plan, there have been dramatic reductions in shelter killing through significantly increasing "live outcomes" while maintaining the City's previous commitment to free and low-cost spay/neuter programs. Given the now proven success of the "No Kill" methodology compared to the high rates of killing resulting from the old model of animal sheltering, what vision do you have for the future of Austin's animal services?**

My vision is a City where we maintain a 90%+ live outcome rate at our animal shelter, continue successful methods for promoting responsible pet ownership, and achieve mutual respect and effective levels of cooperation and collaboration among all the many animal welfare organizations and agencies in our community. If we are all working together, not only will we increase the resources available to address all the many challenges facing the animal welfare community, we will also save lives and have a more engaged and committed community of animal welfare advocates.

- **As you likely know, the No Kill Implementation Plan passed by the Council in March 2010 has had a dramatic, measurable, and positive effect in reducing the number of animals killed at Austin Animal Center. The shelter's save rate has been almost or over 90% for all impounded dogs and cats from December 2010 to March 2011. However, some persons in town who oppose No Kill programs want the City to instead pass a mandatory pet alteration law or an intentionally exorbitant tax on unaltered pets that, when implemented in other cities, has never proven effective and has on multiple occasions resulted in a dramatic increase in shelter intake and killing. We believe that the passage of such a law could turn back the clock on Austin's lifesaving movement, resulting in higher intake and significantly more killing with no benefit at all. Do you support the current No Kill direction embraced by the Council and No Kill advocates? Or, are you willing to place at risk all of the progress Austin has made in the last year by imposing a regressive, punitive, and disproven mandatory alteration law?**

I have spent considerable time in my first term working with Animal Welfare issues. I am very proud of my work to help strengthen the role of the citizen commission, to increase the transparency of the donation fund, and to work through the transition of animal shelter directors, all while making considerable progress on achieving our No Kill goals. Between the No-Kill Implementation Plan that I supported and the many non-profit animal welfare agencies in Austin that the City partners with, we are doing a good job of educating the public and working against pet overpopulation. From Emancipet's low-cost and free spay/neuter clinics to the Austin Humane Society's trap-and-release program, to Austin Pets

Randi Shade

Place 3

Alive!'s tremendous outreach and adoption efforts, the City has accomplished a lot without mandating what people do with their pets. However, I do not view passage of a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance in the same way as it is described in this question. My track record demonstrates my commitment to No Kill programs, but because there are so many citizens and organizations wishing to explore this, too, I can't completely reject the idea without more information and public deliberation.