



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Matt Loesch

**SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 ANIMAL CARE  
AND SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT**

**DATE:** December 7, 2023

Approved

Date

12/7/23

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the annual report on the City of San José Animal Care and Services Division for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 related to ongoing operations, policies, and programs.

## BACKGROUND

This annual report provides an update on the activities of the Animal Care and Services (ACS) Division in the Department of Public Works. ACS is responsible for sheltering, licensing, rabies compliance, and field services programs related to domestic animals. ACS provides services to the City of San José, and the contracted cities of Cupertino, Milpitas, Saratoga, and the Town of Los Gatos. This report details the activities of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023, unless otherwise indicated.

San José ACS, along with many shelters throughout the bay area, state, and nation are in a state of crisis. The current crisis in our animal shelter and across California and the United States is primarily characterized by overpopulation, strained resources, and depressed animal conditions initiated, in part, by the community's access to veterinary services through the COVID-19 pandemic. Shelters faced increased intakes of animals due to factors such as economic hardships, housing instability, and limited access to veterinary care. The pandemic further strained shelter operations, with staffing shortages, volunteer limitations, and financial constraints affecting their ability to provide adequate care. Adoption and rescue rates fluctuated, and many shelters and rescue organizations struggled to find suitable homes for the animals in their care. While efforts were being made to address these challenges through community outreach, awareness campaigns, and collaborations with rescue partners, the situation highlights the need for sustained support and systemic solutions to alleviate the pressure on animal shelters in the long term.

The increasing trend of private veterinarian practice acquisitions in the United States has sparked both opportunities and concerns. On the positive side, such investments can inject capital into practices, facilitating modernization, improved technology, and expanded services. However, it has been argued that the profit-driven nature of acquiring parties may lead to a focus on financial returns over animal welfare, potentially influencing the quality and affordability of veterinary care. The rising costs have been witnessed in our community and is an area gaining attention as an additional cause impairing community access to veterinary care for pet owners through traditional private channels exacerbating the challenges at San José ACS. Striking a balance between business efficiency and maintaining the core values of compassionate and accessible animal care is a crucial challenge faced by the veterinary industry.

Just prior to this FY, San José ACS experienced significant losses in both shelter operations and medical staff. The increase in staffing vacancies was magnified by the increase in pet acquisitions during the pandemic and the return or release of pets post pandemic. Our shortage of medical staff triggered the loss of Trap, Neuter and Release; and limited availability of Spay and Neuter and Vaccination services. Our rescue partners also felt this pinch that stretched their resources too.

## **ANALYSIS**

The current state of the San José ACS is harrowing. As you will see below, the animal intake count was down from prior years and yet the animal length of stay in our shelter has increased. The condition of the animals on intake has worsened and the population surged dramatically in the summer 2023. At one point in June, the animal population in the shelter reached 950 animals for a building built for half that capacity.

### **Shelter Operations**

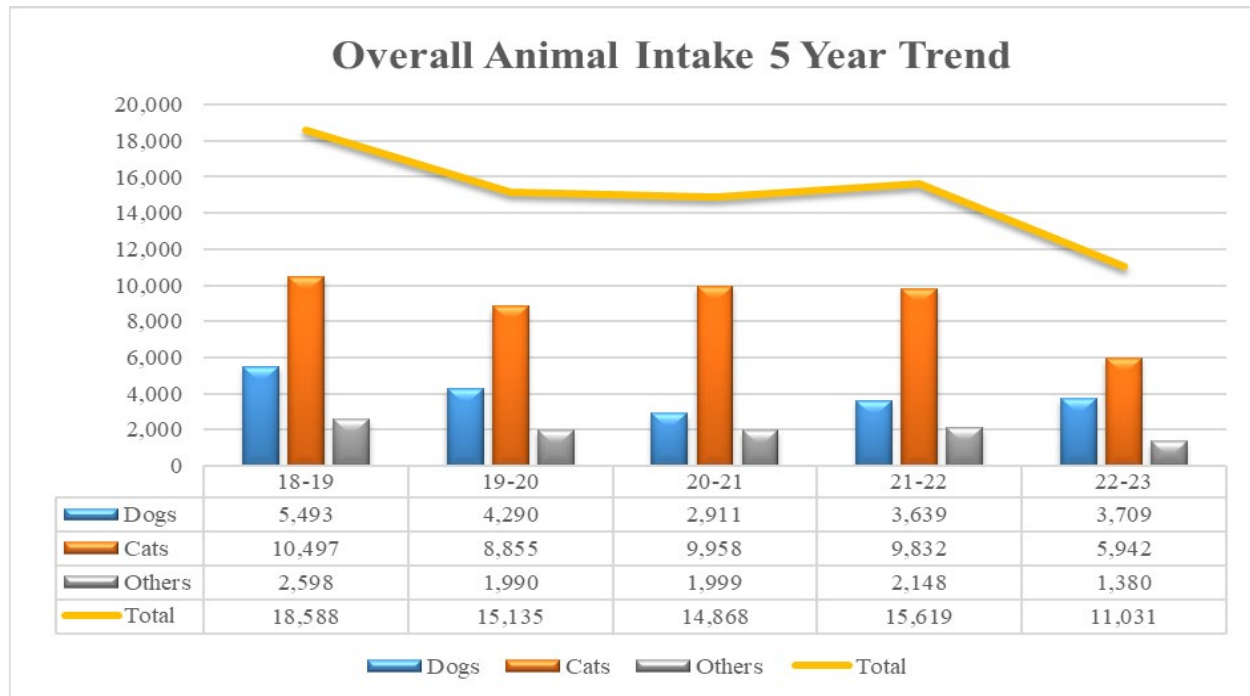
ACS shelter operations has 41 full time equivalent budgeted positions. Shelter operations include adoptions, animal enrichment, animal feeding, owner surrender, support spay and neuter surgeries, cage and kennel cleaning, and animal euthanasia (for medical and behavioral issues that affect the animal's quality of life or to protect public safety). Shelter operations also includes the Volunteer Program. Volunteers help socialize adoptable animals, walk adoption dogs, assist with some cleaning, provide enrichment, help with adoptions, conduct play groups, and support other shelter activities.

Animal population usually fluctuates from month to month with April through September seeing a very high-volume due to seasonal litters of kittens. Anachronistically, dog intake for FY 2022-2023 increased when compared to the prior two fiscal years and the shelter experienced a large increase in the average length of stay, in particular for dogs, but also experienced by other animals. Shelter operations continue to encounter staffing vacancies and turnovers for the Animal Care Attendant position.

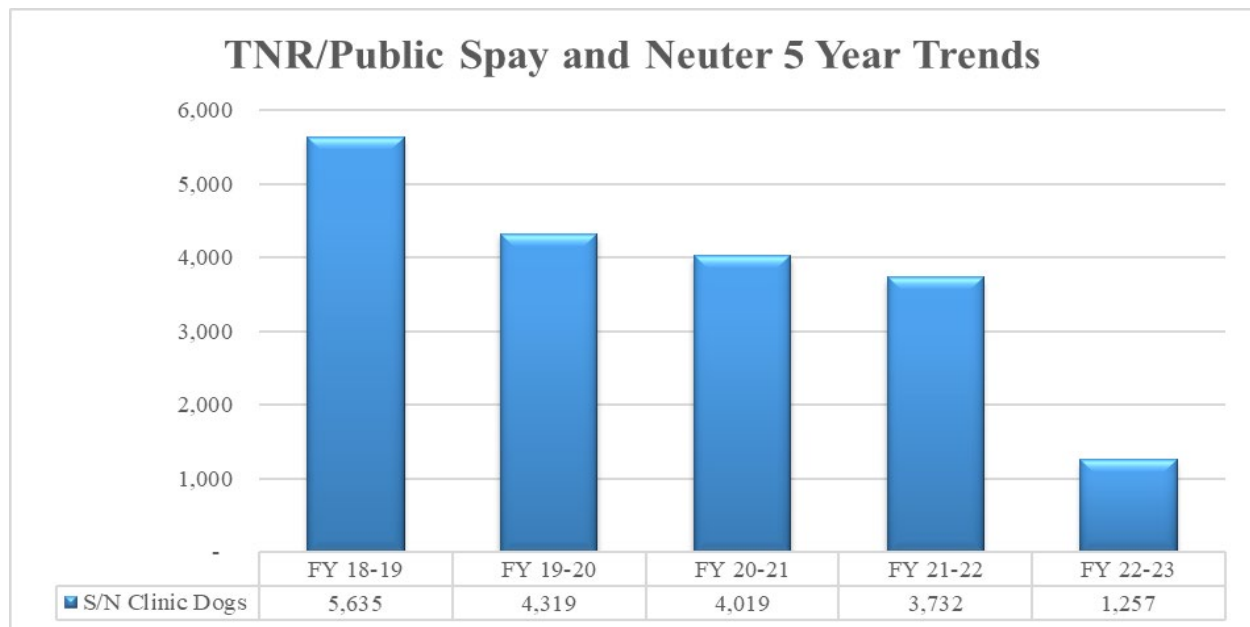
## Animal Intake

The ACS total animal intake for FY 2022-2023 was 11,031 animals. The animal intake for FY 2022-2023 decreased by 29% (-4,588 animals) when compared to the overall animal intake from FY 2021-2022 (15,619 animals). The five-year animal intake trends are illustrated in the chart below.

### Animal Intake-5 Year Trends



The decrease in animal intake was primarily a result of the suspension of the Trap Neuter and Release program for cats and kittens along with spay and neuter services provided to the public. Data from previous TNR and spay and neuter services provided to the public is highlighted in the chart below.

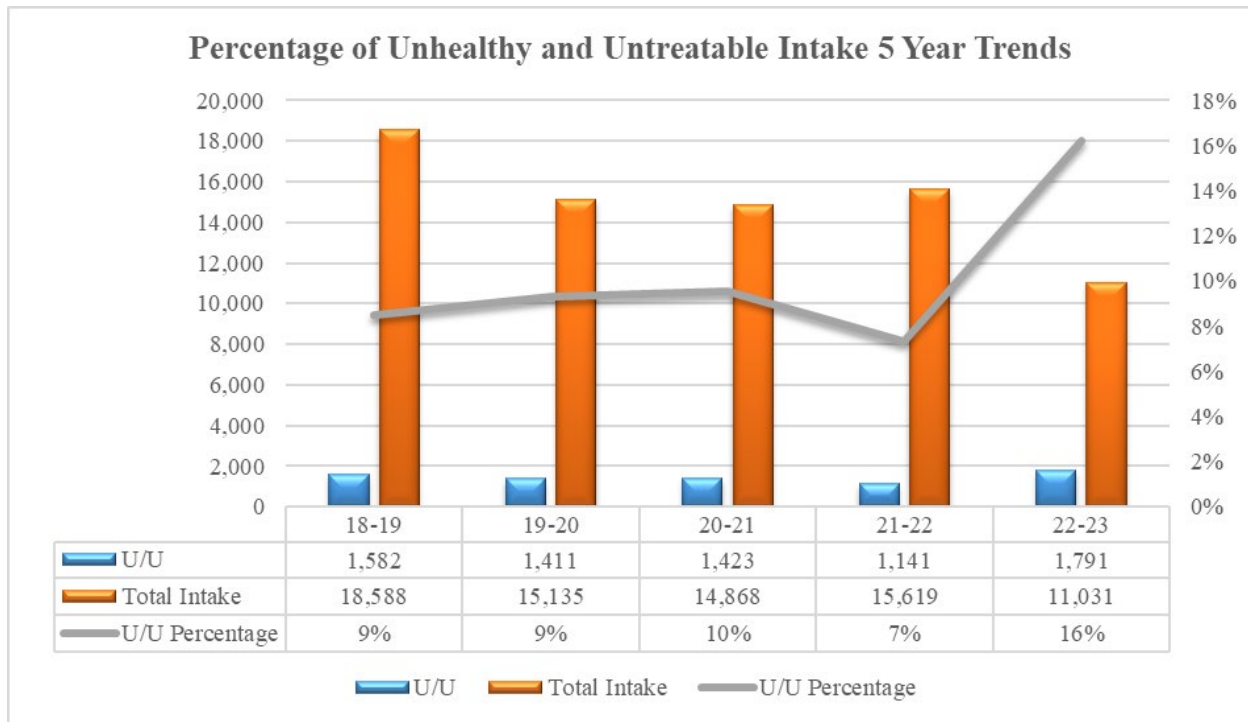
**TNR/Public Spay and Neuter Trends**

Based on recommendations from Maddie's Fund (an independent animal welfare organization) and in an effort to slow the flow of animals into the shelter, staff prioritized the intake of sick, injured, and aggressive animals which also contributed to the decrease in overall intake. Healthy animals were taken in on a case-by-case basis when staffing resources and space were available.

The condition of all animals is evaluated upon intake based on the weCARE Pet Evaluation Matrix<sup>1</sup>. The condition rating on intake of the animals arriving to the shelter worsened this year as a percent of total animals served. This was, in part, due to San José ACS controlling animal intake to sick and injured and because community access to veterinary care elsewhere has been challenged due to cost and availability. The increase in the number of unhealthy and untreatable animals (U/U) that were impounded at the shelter when compared to previous fiscal years is shown in the chart below.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.hssv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/weCARE\\_Pet\\_Evaluation\\_Matrix.pdf](https://www.hssv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/weCARE_Pet_Evaluation_Matrix.pdf)

### Unhealthy and Untreatable Intake Trends



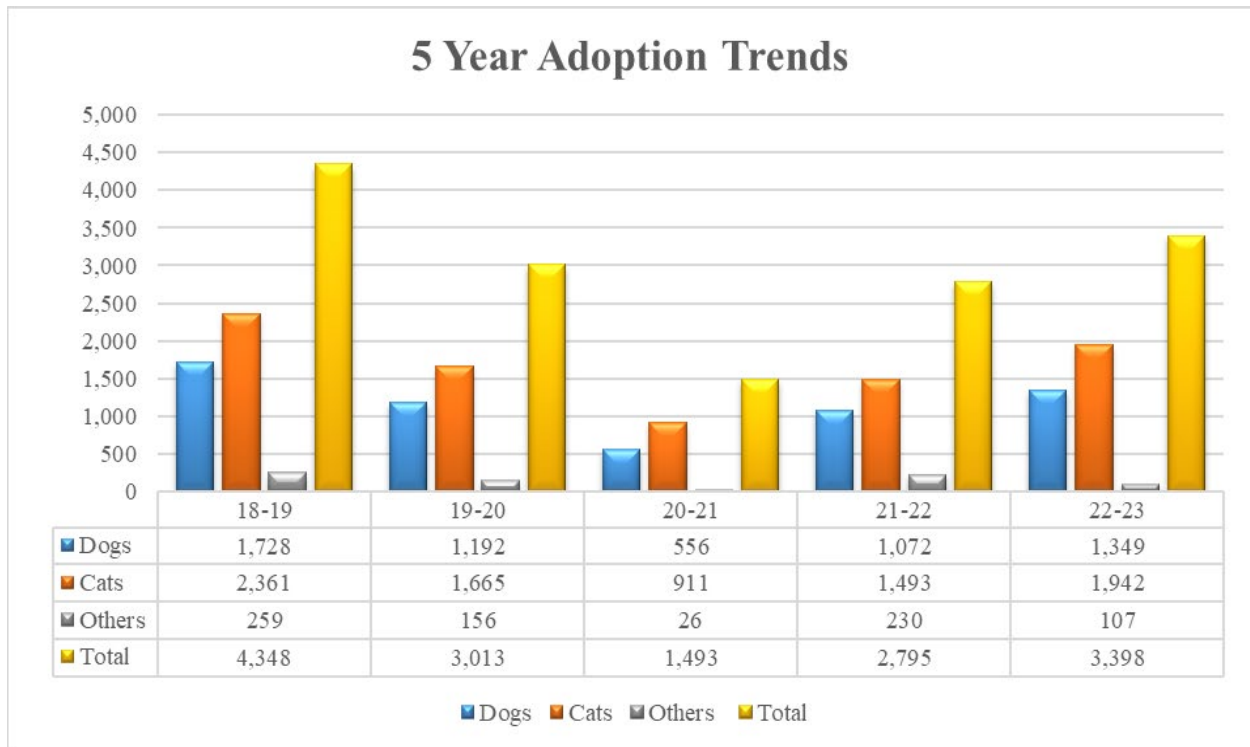
### Animal Outcomes

There are multiple animal outcomes tracked by ACS staff that includes both live and non-live outcomes. The categories tracked are as follows: adoptions, rescue, transfer, return to field, return to owner, missing, died, and euthanasia. As anticipated, with the decrease in total animal intake in FY 2022-2023, the total animal outcome numbers have also decreased.

In January 2023, ACS launched a renewed foster program. Between January 2023 and June 30, 2023, a total of 1,451 animals went to foster homes, with approximately 1,293 additional animals going to foster homes between July 1, 2023, and November 30, 2023. ACS tracks the foster program outcomes separately from the live outcome calculation demonstrated below. Animals within the foster program are not counted in the live outcome data until the animal is adopted, rescued, or transferred to another organization (animal shelters or rescues).

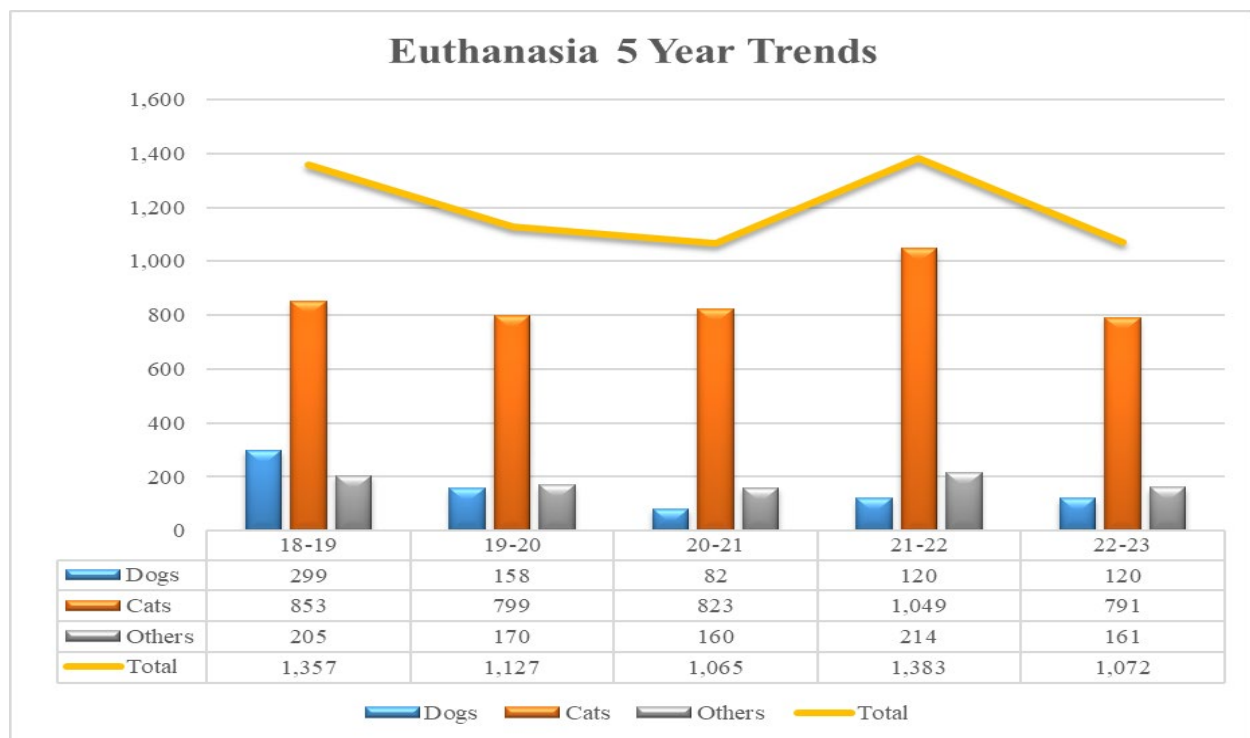
A major ACS accomplishment during FY 2022-2023 was the increase in animal adoptions. As shown in the chart below, the number of animal adoptions has increased by approximately 22% when compared to the previous fiscal year. The increase in adoption numbers can be attributed to the increase in social media outreach, community events, media coverage, and a focus by staff to prioritize adoption staffing daily.

### Animal Adoptions Trends



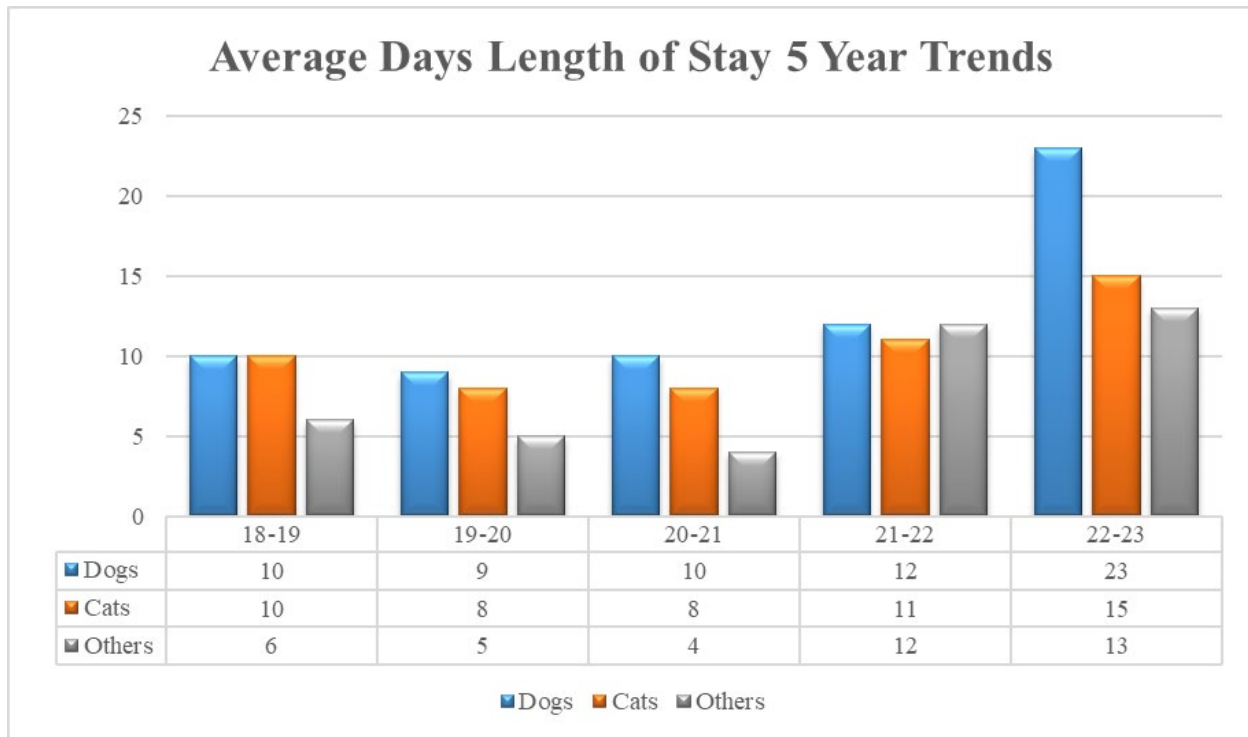
One focus area of improvement for this current fiscal year will be to rebuild rescue partnerships, as the rescue outcomes for FY 2022-2023 decreased by approximately 68% when compared to previous fiscal years. ACS acknowledges that rebuilding rescue partnerships is important to the overall outcome of an animal and in FY 2023-2024 ACS staff is working to increase rescue collaboration and live outcomes.

Non-live outcome numbers are divided into two major categories: animals that were euthanized and animals that died. When compared to the last five fiscal years, the percentage of animals that were euthanized at ACS was around the same or less when compared to FY 2022-2023, Euthanasia data from previous fiscal years is shown in the chart below.

**Euthanasia Trends**

During FY 2022-2023 more animals died (426 animals) when compared to the last five fiscal years. As noted above, a major factor that led to the increase in animal deaths experienced at ACS was the increase in the number of unhealthy and untreatable animals (U/U) that were impounded at the shelter when compared to the previous fiscal years.

The average length of stay for animals from previous fiscal years was consistently around 10-12 days. The length of stay for many animals at the shelter increased dramatically this fiscal year when compared to FY 2021-2022. The average length of stay for animals at the shelter for the previous fiscal years is shown in the chart below.

**Average Days Length of Stay Trends**

The increased in length of stay generated the need for more resources for the animals at the shelter, including additional staffing to ensure adequate care could be provided. The animal shelter environment is not easy on any of the animals. This increased length of stay can lead to deterioration in both the animal health and behavior. ACS staff will continue to work on decreasing the average length of stay for all animals at the shelter by continuing to promote the adoption and foster programs as well as increase rescue partner collaboration.

**Live Release Rate**

The Live Release Rate (LRR) or Live Outcome Rate is an industry term that measures the number of animals that leave an animal shelter alive. The LRR is calculated by dividing the number of live outcomes by the total outcome.

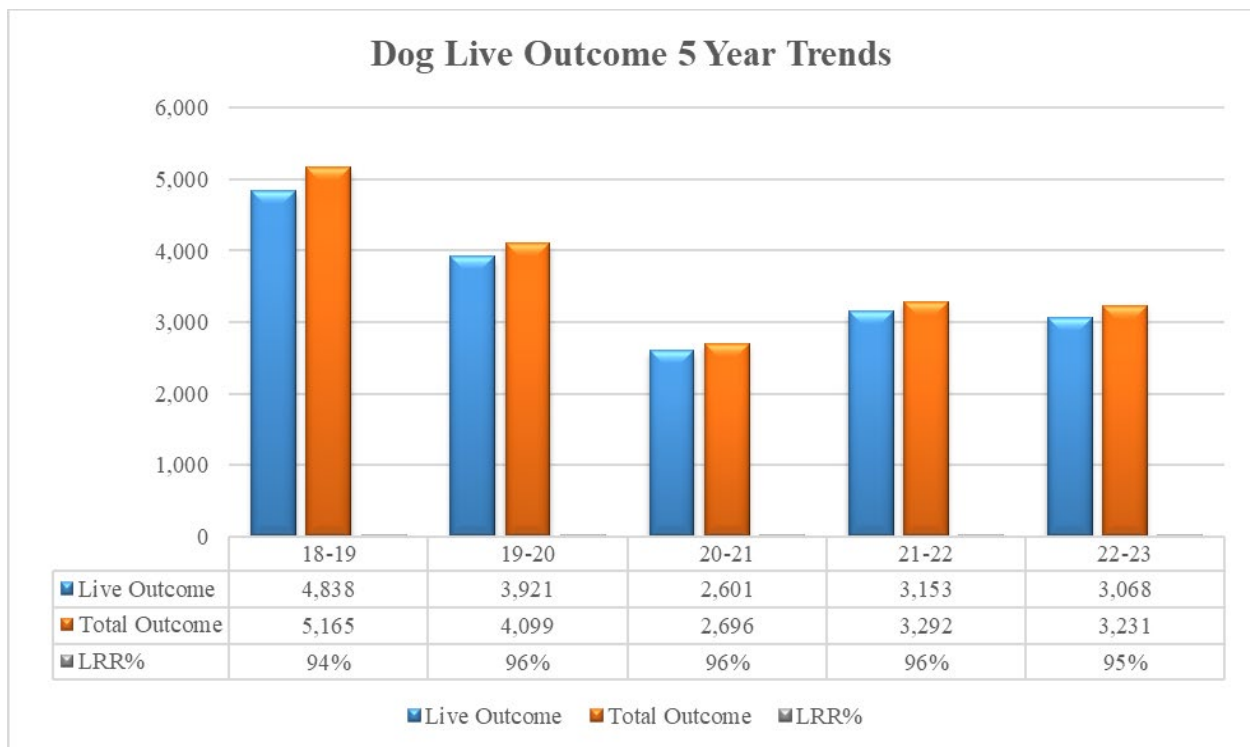
There are five categories that result in a live outcome for an animal: adoptions, return to field (trap, neuter, and return), rescues, transfers, and return to an owner. Non-live outcomes include missing euthanasia, and animals that died due to medical reasons. Animals that died during transportation, at the emergency clinic, at the shelter, and at a foster home are also counted in the non-live outcome data reporting.

The ACS combined (dog + cat) LLR for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 was 85% which is 5% lower than FY 2021-2022. The decrease can be attributed to the following factors:

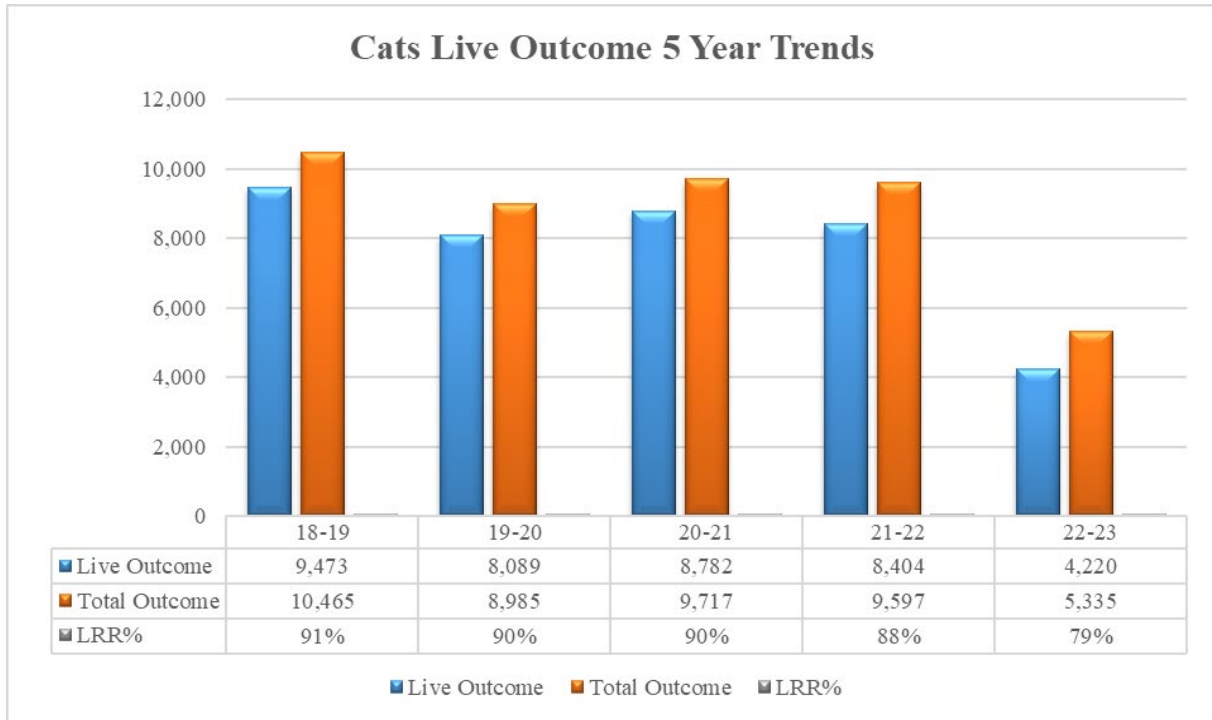
- Intake was limited to animals in poor condition which had a higher probability of a non-live outcome
- The increase in intake of unhealthy and untreatable animals meant there were less healthy animals in the herd with a lower probability of a live outcome
- The length of stay of animals in the shelter strained the overall system and does not promote long term animal health
- The suspension of the TNR program reduced the average for the live outcome numbers of cats and kittens

Even though the LLR was lower for FY 2022-2023, a total of 8,468 animals left the animal shelter alive. The charts below provide the live release trends over the past five years for dogs, cats, and the combined live release trend.

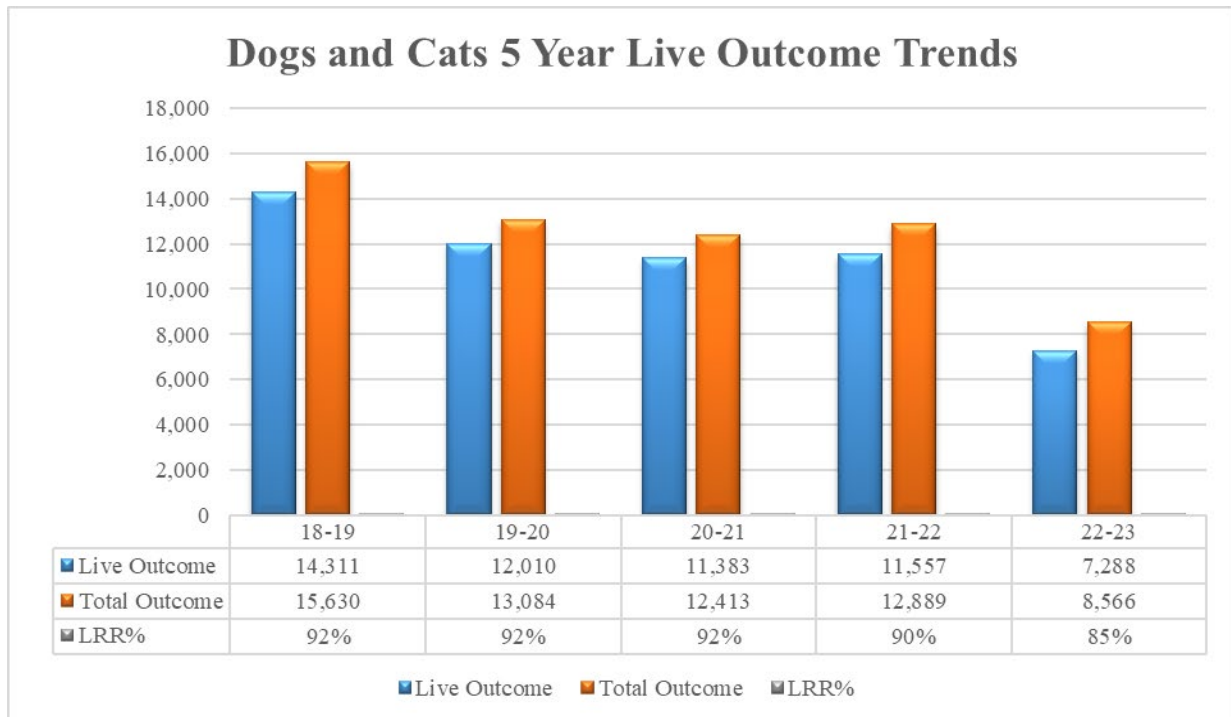
### Live Release Trends: Dogs – FY 2022-2023, LRR 95%



**Live Release Trends: Cats – FY 2022-2023, LRR 79%**



**Live Release Trends: Dogs & Cats - FY 2022-2023, 85 LRR%**



## **Medical Operations**

The medical operations team provides medical care, treatment, herd health management, and emergency care for all animals within the shelter. Medical staff perform procedures such as x-ray, blood analysis, dental procedures/extractions, major surgeries, orthopedic procedures, forensic analysis for criminal investigations, in addition to spay and neuter surgeries for shelter animals, owned pets, and stray community cats.

## **Medical Staffing**

Currently the medical operations team has 14 full time equivalent budgeted positions. Medical operations staff includes full time and part-time veterinarians and Animal Health Technicians. In early 2022, two full time Veterinarians and several Animal Health Technicians (AHT) resigned creating an operational crisis. For several months, ACS was operating with only two part time veterinarians and a skeleton crew of AHT's. The major loss of medical staffing occurred when "Kitten Season" was ramping up, which created another challenge for ACS staff, partners, and the community.

Public Works prioritized recruitment for veterinarians and AHT's. A Division Manager (Medical Director) position was approved by the Mayor and City Council and the position was filled at the end of August 2022. Additionally, the pay scale for AHT's was increased to help with recruitment and retention efforts. The status of Veterinarian and AHT recruitments are summarized below:

- Veterinarians: A full-time veterinarian was hired at the end of September 2022. Recruitment for an additional full-time veterinarian continued and was recently filled in Mid-September 2023.
- Medical Supervisor: Using one of the vacant AHT positions, a new "Medical Supervisor" position was created and added to the ACS operating budget for FY 23-24. This supervisor provides experienced oversight over administration, scheduling and training of the AHTs. The Medical Operations Supervisor (Registered Veterinary Technician) also serves a point person in the medical division to coordinate with the rest of the shelter.
- Animal Health Technicians: Four of the five full time AHT positions are filled. Currently there are 11 part time AHT's with schedules ranging from 1-5 days per week. However, additional full time and part time licensed AHTs are needed to increase spay and neuter surgeries for both the shelter population and public services (trap, neuter, and return and low cost spay and neuter).

## **Public Spay and Neuter Surgeries**

Spay and neuter surgeries help with behavioral problems, provide protection against some serious health problems as well as reduce the overall animal population within the community. These surgeries also help reduce the number of cats and kittens impounded at ACS every year.

Cats and kittens represented approximately 54% (5,942) of the overall ACS intake of 11,031 animals for FY 2022-2023. Many of the cats and kittens that are impounded are stray or feral. ACS resumed limited spay and neuter services for cat trappers and rescues during FY 2022-2023.

As anticipated with the medical operations staffing challenges as well as the increase in overall population at the shelter, the spay and neuter services are below prior service levels. To help with spay and neuter surgery resources, ACS contracted with external organizations for spay and neuter surgeries. These organizations include Snipbus, 9lives Foundation, Humane Society of Silicon Valley, and other non-profit and private veterinarians. For FY 2022-2023 ACS committed \$90,947 for external spay and neuter surgeries. These resources provided 854 spay and neuter surgeries in addition to the 3,608 surgeries completed by ACS medical staff during FY 2022-2023.

### **Field Operations**

ACS field operations is comprised of dispatchers and animal service officers. The ACS dispatchers are responsible for answers calls from the community reporting or needing assistance with animal related issues. The ACS field officers are responsible for responding to the calls which are generally one of the following types of calls: aggressive animals, injured, sick, stray domestic animals, dead animal pick-up, noise complaints, vicious or dangerous animal regulation, pet shop inspections, injured or sick wildlife, and animal crimes investigations.

### **Calls for Service**

ACS field operations is currently staffed with five dispatchers, one Field Operations Supervisor, four Senior Animal Services Officers, and 13 Animal Services Officers. Ten officers provide services and emergency response primarily within San José and Milpitas. The remaining three additional officers primarily respond to calls for service in the contract cities of Saratoga, Cupertino, and the Town of Los Gatos.

Typically, ACS has four officers on duty during the day shift and three officers on duty during the evening shift. For after-hours emergency calls, one on-call officer is scheduled from 10:00 PM until 7:00 AM.

### **Types of Calls**

Field services responds to calls from the public and other agencies in need of specialized assistance. The most common service requests are bite investigations, animal neglect, quarantine release, patrols, and dead animals. Other calls for service include aggressive or dangerous animals, injured or sick animals, animal nuisances, and municipal code violations.

During FY 2022-2023, ACS completed 16,916 calls for service, which was a decrease of 16% (-3,192) when compared to FY 2021-2022. The decrease in call completion is likely due to officer staffing vacancies. As of October 2023, four out of the five vacant positions for officers have been filled. Training for the new officers will take approximately six months to complete.

The calls for service are categorized into three priority levels. Details on performance and response times for each priority level are outlined below.

- **Priority 1 (P1)** - P1 calls are emergency calls that represent approximately 15% (2,663 calls) of the overall total calls completed. Emergency calls include aggressive dogs, injured or sick animals, animal rescues, and other emergencies. The response time goal for P1 is one hour or less. The average response time to P1 for FY 2022-2023 was 30 minutes.
- **Priority 2 (P2)** – P2 calls are non-emergency calls that represent approximately 57% of the total calls (9,698 calls). Non-emergency calls include animal bite reports, humane investigations, confined animals, animals in traps, and agency assists. The goal for P2 response time is within six hours. The average response time to P2 calls for FY 2022-2023 was approximately two days.
- **Priority 3 (P3)** - P3 calls are categorized as those that do not pose an immediate threat to public health and safety and represent approximately 27% of the overall total calls (4,548 calls). P3 calls for service include loose animals and dead animals. The goal for a P3 response time is within 36 hours. The average response time to Priority 3 calls for FY 2022-2023 was approximately three days.

As shown in the table below, in FY 2022-2023 ACS field staff met the 95% performance target for Priority 1 calls, similar to prior fiscal years. Staff will continue to look at ways to increase the response time performance percentage for Priority 2 and Priority 3 calls for service, and anticipate achieving success through a combination of process improvements and increased staffing levels.

**Calls for Service: Response Time Targets**

	<b>Target</b>	<b>FY 2018-2019</b>	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023</b>
<b>Priority 1: w/in 1 hour</b>	95%	95%	95%	97%	96%	96%
<b>Priority 2: w/in 6 hours</b>	n/a	58%	53%	53%	56%	56%
<b>Priority 3: w/in 36 hours</b>	n/a	83%	71%	76%	81%	81%

Additionally, in April 2023 San José ACS Field Operations collaborated with the San José Police Department to begin tracking and reporting animal crimes complaints and investigations to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Adding animal cruelty to NIBRS will allow law enforcement agencies and other groups to have a complete picture of the nature of crimes against animals. ACS has reported 298 investigations related to crimes against animals to the San José Police Department. The data is used for tracking purposes. ACS field staff works with SJPD, Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office and other law enforcement agencies to investigate animal crimes.

**Administration**

ACS Administration unit has 10 full time equivalent budgeted positions and is responsible for customer service, licensing, fees, accounts receivable/payable, billing, processing donations and budget tracking.

**Donations and Revenues**

Throughout the year, ACS conducts modest fundraising efforts through the Guardian Angels Program. These donations are used primarily to provide extra medical care for animals at the facility as well as provide an incentive for rescue partners to transfer animals from the shelter.

Treatments range from supporting foster care for newborn kittens, dental work, broken bone repair, and other major ailments. These funds also help provide enrichment for the animals while they are in the shelter, and marketing for adoption promotions.

Total donations for FY 2022-2023 were \$489,435 which was an increase of \$21,888 when compared to FY 2021-2022. The overall revenue for FY 2022-2023 was \$3,393,516, which was a decrease of \$369,835 when compared to the previous fiscal year. Overall revenues resulted in a 28% cost recovery against the ACS operating budget.

## **Animal Licensing**

Animal Licensing for FY 2022-2023 resulted in an overall revenue of \$1,650,468, which was higher than the previous FY by \$43,670. Licensing fees provide a revenue source for ACS and aims to be a cost recovery operation within the administration team. ACS will continue to evaluate how to increase license compliance rates for pet owners within the City of San José.

## **Maddie's Million Pet Challenge Recommendations**

During Calendar year 2022 ACS leadership applied for a consultation audit from Maddie's Fund, a non-profit organization, that was launching the Maddie's Million Pet Challenge. The goal of the Million Pet Challenge was to help animal shelters and their communities to build programs to keep families and their pets together, improve outcomes for all shelter pets, and assure that pets who already have families receive the care that they need. ACS was awarded the consultation and a team from the Maddie's Million Pet Challenge conducted an onsite consultation in July 2022.

ACS continues to implement the Maddie's Million Pet Challenge (Maddie's) Recommendations<sup>2</sup> that were provided in July 2022. The following categories of the Maddie's recommendations sections have already been implemented by ACS staff:

- Shelter Medicine and Surgery
- Admissions/Medical Intake Protocols
- Sanitation and Safety Measures
- Field Services
- Volunteer Program
- Animal Handling
- Foster Care
- Intake Process
- Statistics and Trade

The following categories of the Maddie's recommendations have not been fully implemented, though many are in progress:

- Record Keeping
- Population Management and Capacity
- Community Programs, Surrender Policies and Safety Net
- Community Cat Program
- Live Outcome Programs
- Adoption Program
- Rescue/Transfer

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/88891/637970477926600000>

- Website and Social Media
- Feline Housing, Husbandry and Enrichment
- Canine Housing, Husbandry and Enrichment
- Staffing and Management
- Pocket Pet Housing, Husbandry and Enrichment

ACS staff will continue to work towards completing and implementing the remaining recommendations. After most of the recommendations have been completed, ACS staff will request that the Maddie's Fund Organization reassess and evaluates the progress made towards their recommendations and best industry practices.

### **ACS Accomplishments for FY 2022-2023**

The Department of Public Works, with the support from the City Manager's Office, has continued to address the challenges of the condition of the animals ACS was facing with operational and system enhancements. The operational and system accomplishments during the fiscal year are described below.

#### *Staffing*

- Two new senior management positions, an Assistant Shelter Director with a focus on shelter operations and a Medical Director, were approved by the Mayor and City Council as part of the annual budget process. Both positions have been filled. The new Assistant Shelter Director started in late June 2022 and the Medical Director started in August 2022.
- Five contractual custodial staff were added to the shelter to provide additional cleaning of the kennels. This allows shelter staff to improve support in adoptions, intake, and other responsibilities.
- The budget approval for the ACS nightshift staff (starting in October 2023) will increase the staff's ability to provide after-hours care and help improve overall outcomes and community support. Seven fulltime Animal Care Attendants and three Shelter Coordinators will be recruited for swing and graveyard shifts. The nightshift staff will enhance and improve animal care, outreach, animal flow, and help reduce the length of stay for many animals at the shelter.
- A second Shelter Supervisor was added to help with live outcomes including: foster, return to owner, transfer/rescues, adoptions, behavior, and volunteers.
- ACS has concentrated on recruiting more volunteers to help with the animals at the shelter. To date around 1,000 volunteers have signed up. However, only a small number of volunteers consistently help the animal shelter weekly. ACS will continue to recruit more volunteers to sustain the weekly operational need for volunteers.

#### *Systems*

- Public Works IT staff developed an internal tracking dashboard to provide real-time information on shelter capacity, cleaning, feeding, statistics, and other services completed

for the animals. The dashboard management system won a Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) that was awarded to the City of San José in recognition of this outstanding work with GIS technology.

- A second QR code system was implemented to allow volunteers and staff provide a medical or kennel observation including pictures via e-mail. The system allows supervisors and managers to reply directly to the sender by e-mail. This system enhances the medical care and treatment for the animals at the shelter.
- The creation and implementation of the Pet Compass system has allowed the public to access stray pets more easily including animals that need help from rescue partners.
- Elimination of paper-based record keeping and creation and implementation of reports to streamline and ensure animals that are on medication, needing veterinary exams or due for recheck examinations received medical care and treatment.
- In August 2023, medical staff implemented the use of an iPad to improve the staff's ability to enter and read real time information including vaccination status, medical condition, medical treatments, surgery information, and other information. The iPad will enhance overall efficiency and animal care.

#### *Facilities*

- ACS built two large play yards, approximately 700 square feet each, in previously underutilized areas, to expand space for dogs to exercise and meet potential adopters.
- The medical area was expanded to improve medical operations and enhance overall animal care.
- Cat/kitten portal project was completed in early 2023. The portals allow cats and or kittens to access another cage, which allows a cat or kitten to have more room.
- The field unit received (3) new ACS trucks and a horse trailer. The addition to the fleet increases the field unit's operational capability including the impounding of large animals and livestock.

#### *Outreach*

- ACS worked with the Library Department and launched the "Books and Bunnies" program. The goal was to promote the foster to adopt program to interested community members. Staff have also begun performing kitten foster parent training at our community libraries.
- ACS implemented a foster program that started in January 2023. The program successfully recruited and collaborated with community members and rescues to help animals that need additional care. As of October 2023, over 2,500 animals went to a foster home.
- ACS worked with SJ Beautify and the Housing Department to mitigate pets impacted by camp cleanups and abatements. Additionally, staff continued its collaboration with Kim McIntyre, Director St. Francis Animal Protection Society to help unhoused pet owners and their pets.

- ACS worked with the Office of Emergency Services, supporting approximately 40 displaced people with pets, to ensure they were not separated during the two flood evacuation periods that occurred early in 2023.
- ACS staff participated in events such as the City Wellness Fair, July 4th Freedom Fest Parade in Morgan Hill, dog park ribbon-cutting ceremonies, animal shelter open house for City staff, and adoption fairs.
- ACS also partnered with Pets in Need for a vaccination and wellness clinic at the animal shelter. The vaccination clinic was a success which resulted in 114 families and 192 pets receiving vaccinations and other services.

### *Training*

- “Dogs Playing for Life” is a high-volume dog playgroup implemented to improve the socialization and enrichment of dogs. Depending on staffing, approximately 10 or more dogs are taken out at a time, to a play yard to socialize.
- Staff and volunteers have attended training related to behavior and enrichment. One of the training tools include “Click to Calm”. This program helps decrease a dog’s anxiety in a kennel environment.
- A full-day workshop was provided to staff and volunteers to train on safe handling practices, as well as body language and understanding aggression in dogs. Staff continues to evaluate and research additional behavior training to help with dogs exhibiting concerning behavior or stress.
- Staff training curriculum has been revamped to include safe handling and sanitization materials from both ASPCA Pro and Maddie’s University. Staff has additionally begun performing vaccinations on intake for all animals who don’t require specialized handling.
- Through the continued relationship with Maddie’s Fund Organization, ACS has brought in a certified behaviorist to review current practices of animal behavior practice, and document recommendations to improve animal behavior evaluation/observation system that is consistent with industry standards.

### *Communications*

- ACS worked with the City Manager’s Office (CMO) communications team to help with community and staff outreach to promote animals. The goal was to increase awareness and increase adoptions and foster placement to City staff and the community. The team successfully engaged media outlets to bring awareness to the high number (over 900 at the peak) of animals at the shelter.
- Use of Social Media venues such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have grown dramatically.
- An elevated communications position, Public Information Manager, was approved through the annual budget process to facilitate communications with internal and external partners and the community.

While the above resources and improvements in operations have been extremely impactful, more needs to be done. Eight categories and strategies have been identified that will improve the lives

of animals both in the shelter and in the community. ACS is focused on making improvements in the areas listed below:

- Rebuilding, re-balancing, and strengthening relationships with rescue and shelter partners.
- Increase resources for trap, neuter and return capacity.
- Improve and increase staff training, including continued behavior training for cats and dogs.
- Update and communicate medical service protocols.
- Review and redesign intake process.
- Increase spay and neuter resources and capacity.
- Improve communication and conflict resolution protocols.
- Expanding live outcome options and opportunities.

The San Jose Auditors Office will be performing an audit of ACS in calendar year 2024. ACS looks forward to receiving the results from the audit and recommendations.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum and attached report have been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

/s/

MATT LOESCH

Director, Department of Public Works

For questions, please contact Jay Terrado, Deputy Director (408) 794-7223.