



# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** G. Harold Duffey  
Interim City Administrator

**FROM:** Ann Dunn  
Director, Department of  
Oakland Animal Services

**SUBJECT:** Annual Informational Report on  
Oakland Animal Services' Operations

**DATE:** February 6, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date: Feb 17, 2023

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report and Presentation From Oakland Animal Services Regarding the Status of Its Operations.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Informational Report represents an annual update to the Life Enrichment Committee to apprise Councilmembers and the public on the progress of the Department of Oakland Animal Services (OAS) in its overarching goals for shifting from a shelter-based to community-based model to best support the needs of pet guardians and animals in Oakland.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

OAS is continuing its shift from a shelter-based model to a community-based model, by focusing on the pet guardians in Oakland who most need support. This approach allows OAS to address systemic racism in animal welfare, which has historically resulted in significant barriers and made it difficult for Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) individuals and families to have and keep companion animals. To this end, OAS has moved from a punitive model which relied heavily on animal seizure, and now focuses on supporting people with limited resources, making adoptions more accessible, and outreaching directly to underserved neighborhoods, while still addressing public safety and prosecuting crimes against animals.

Based on this shift, in 2022, OAS began reporting out to the Life Enrichment Committee instead of the Public Safety Committee. The Life Enrichment Committee requested an annual informational report on the work of the OAS. This informational report provides the update for the year 2022; the prior annual report for 2021 was presented March 21, 2022.

## **ANALYSIS**

The mission of Oakland Animal Services is to improve the lives of people and animals in our community by assisting injured wildlife, facilitating adoption of shelter animals, supporting guardians of companion animals, combating animal cruelty and neglect, and when needed, serving as the safety net for the neediest animals living in the City of Oakland.

Life Enrichment Committee  
February 28, 2023

OAS strives to provide services that meet the following Citywide goals: **Holistic Community Safety**, by better integrating Animal Services into the City's response to homelessness; **Housing, Economic, & Cultural Security**, by providing support to pets of people who are experiencing homelessness; **Vibrant, Sustainable Infrastructure**, by improving accessibility of OAS services; and, **Responsive, Trustworthy Government**, by developing a community engagement strategy to achieve transparency and improve community trust.

This informational report addresses OAS's work in 2022 in the following areas: accessibility of services, improvements to Animal Control operations, an update on staffing, access to veterinary care, support from Friends of Oakland Animal Services and income and outcome data.

### ***Accessibility of Services***

For many years, OAS was only open to the public on a limited basis, at just 20 hours per week. Now, OAS is open to the public seven days per week, from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, every day except Thursday, when OAS is open from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. Appointments are encouraged, but not required. An appointment-based system provides an opportunity to speak with people and offer support, with the goal of keeping pets with their families whenever possible.

To increase access to adoptions, OAS is open for walk-in adoptions Thursdays from 12:00 pm to 7:00 pm, and Friday to Sunday from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. The adoption process seeks to remove obstacles to adoption for Oakland residents with limited resources and/or online access.

Animal Control Officers are available from 7:00 am to 9:30 pm, and on standby at all other hours.

### ***Improvements to Animal Control Operations***

In 2022, Animal Control Officers responded to 5,867 service requests, as outlined in the table below.

<b>Call Type</b>	<b>Number of requests</b>
Help with stray animals	1,934
Injured domestic animals	906
Injured wild animals	352
Animal cruelty investigations	809
Animal welfare checks	152
Barking or other noise complaints	148
Deceased animal pick up	1,265
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,867</b>

Animal Control Officers have received extensive training in 2022, including crisis intervention, forensics, digital evidence collection, seizure of animals related to animal cruelty, interrogation and interview techniques, search warrants and report writing.

**Update on Staffing**

The following is a summary of the status of all OAS positions, with OAS currently experiencing a 23% vacancy rate.

	<b>Budgeted FY 22/23</b>	<b>Filled</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Frozen</b>
Director	1	1	0	0
Assistant to the Director	1	1	0	0
Executive Assistant to the Director	1	0	1	0
Administrative Assistant	0	0	0	1
Animal Control Officers	8.5	8.5	0	1
Animal Control Supervisor	1	0	1	0
Animal Care Attendants FTE	6	6	0	0
Animal Care Attendants (TPT) FTE	3	2.5	.5	0
Animal Care Supervisor	1	1	0	0
Public Service Representatives	3.5	1	2.5	0
Veterinarian	2	1	1	0
Registered Veterinary Technicians	3	1	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>

It is anticipated the following positions will be filled by June 30, 2023: Animal Control Supervisor, a Public Service Representative, Veterinarian and two Registered Veterinary Technicians.

**Access to Veterinary Care**

To begin to address the need to increase access to veterinary care, the OAS personnel budget was restructured to eliminate a senior management position to hire a second full-time vet. In 2020 and 2021, OAS received two separate grants, totaling \$110,000.00, to provide access to veterinary care for pets of people who are homeless and, separately, for residents of East Oakland, in neighborhoods that are the focus of the City's violence prevention efforts. Through these grants, over 18 months, OAS provided free veterinary care to over 1,000 animals. OAS is working in collaboration with the Department of Human Services and service providers at Oakland's Community Cabin and Safe RV Sites, as well as providing services to unsheltered people outside of the City sites, with a special focus on the large community along Wood Street, in West Oakland.

After completing the grant funded pilot program, OAS has restructured its access to care program. Animal Control Officers now provide regular outreach to pet guardians experiencing homelessness, to provide vaccines and other wellness services. Additionally, OAS hosts wellness clinics at OAS at least quarterly. We anticipate this new model will allow OAS to reach at least as many people as through the grant-funded clinics, in a far more efficient service delivery model. Additionally, OAS received a \$75,000 grant in 2022 to provide vouchers to low-income guardians for urgent veterinary services through private clinics. Through a separate \$75,000 grant, OAS will provide spay/neuter for owned animals and

community cats.

### ***Support from Friends of Oakland Animal Services***

OAS works in close collaboration with its nonprofit partner, Friends of Oakland Animal Services (FOAS), to provide services that would not be possible through the City's budget alone. These programs are primarily focused on animal lifesaving:

**Cat Foster Program:** This program focuses primarily on the over 900 medically fragile kittens that come into the shelter each year.

**Dog Foster Program:** Launched in June 2020, this program primarily focuses on big dogs who would have been euthanized in the past. With the shelter often operating at full capacity for dogs, with 630 dogs in foster in 2022, this program greatly expands our ability to help dogs who need more time and support to get adopted. At any given time, approximately 40% of dogs in our care are in foster homes.

**Working Cat Program:** This program provides safe relocation options for outdoor cats who are in habitats that are unsafe.

**Adoption and Outreach:** FOAS-funded staff have primary responsibility for improving our adoption process through meaningful matchmaking and post adoption support, as well as through making our adoption process more accessible.

**Dog Behavior Support:** This program provides support for staff, volunteers, fosters and adopters to better help dogs with behavior issues and supports playgroups and enrichment for shelter dogs.

**Getting Lost Animals Home:** This program focuses on reuniting lost/stray animals with their families.

### ***Intake and Outcome Data***

The following sections highlight key data points related to intake and outcomes in 2022 as compared to the previous three years. Because intake decreased dramatically in 2020 and 2021, consistent with nationwide trends during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2019 represents the baseline year against which 2022 is compared.

#### **Takeaways for 2022:**

**Animal intake is back to “normal” for dogs and increasing significantly for cats:** After a nearly 30% drop in intake in 2020 as compared to 2019, intake for dogs in 2022 was nearly identical to 2019. In contrast, OAS saw a 26% increase in intake for cats and kittens (driven largely by reproduction of outdoor cats).

**Transfer opportunities remain low:** Historically, far more animals were transferred to rescue partners, organizations such as East Bay SPCA, who bring OAS animals into their adoption programs, than were adopted through OAS. For reasons that are multi-faceted and beyond the control of OAS, and consistent with statewide and national trends, OAS saw a drastic reduction

in transfers to rescue organizations, with transfers at their lowest in 2021, and a modest increase in 2022. Because OAS is often full or nearly full, this puts immense pressure on OAS to increase adoptions in order to prevent having to euthanize for space.

**Dogs**

Year	Intake #	Transfer #	Transfer %
2019	2,808	1333	47.50%
2020	1,870	753	40.30%
2021	2,297	551	24.00%
2022	2,852	874	30.60%

**Cats**

Year	Intake #	Transfer #	Transfer %
2019	2,119	862	40.70%
2020	1,642	547	33.30%
2021	2,444	857	35.10%
2022	2,857	1,161	40.60%

**Adoptions have increased significantly:** After introducing new practices to remove barriers to adoption, such as eliminating the requirement for online applications or appointments, to make adoption easy and accessible, OAS tripled the number of dogs and cats adopted since 2019, with just 1,266 adoptions in 2019, compared to 3,720 in 2022.

**Dogs**

Year	Intake #	Adopt #	Adopt %
2019	2,808	399	14.20%
2020	1,870	391	20.90%
2021	2,297	907	39.50%
2022	2,852	1,161	40.70%

**Cats**

Year	Intake #	Adopt #	Adopt %
2019	2,119	867	40.90%
2020	1,642	882	53.70%
2021	2,444	1,151	47.10%
2022	2,857	1,286	45.00%

**Euthanasia is at the lowest rate in OAS' history, with euthanasia for dogs cut by 67% since 2019:** There will always be a need for euthanasia, to end the suffering of animals that are found severely sick or injured, or for dogs who threaten public safety. Reduction in dog euthanasia can largely be attributed to the creation of the foster program for big dogs, funded by FOAS, as well as a greatly improved adoption program.

**Dogs**

Year	Intake #	Euthanasia #	Euthanasia %
2019	2,808	465	16.60%
2020	1,870	282	15.10%
2021	2,297	166	7.20%
2022	2,852	157	5.50%

Cat euthanasia has remained low for many years and is slightly higher in 2022 due to a very unusual number of cases of panleukopenia in kittens found outside. Panleukopenia is similar to parvo in dogs and has a very high mortality rate.

As noted above, excluding 2020 and 2021, the intake for cats and kittens has increased significantly year over year, due to an extreme veterinary shortage, which has led to very limited access to spay/neuter services. This is a national crisis with no resolution in sight. While OAS has a very successful kitten foster program, the shelter is often at maximum capacity during the months when cat reproduction is at its highest (typically June to October).

**Cats**

Year	Intake #	Euthanasia #	Euthanasia %
2019	2,119	200	9.40%
2020	1,642	159	9.70%
2021	2,444	190	7.80%
2022	2,857	240	8.40%

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This item is for informational purposes only and does not have any fiscal impact.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

This item is for informational purposes only and did not require public outreach.

**COORDINATION**

This item is for informational purposes only and did not involve coordination.

**SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** This item is for informational purposes only and has no economic impact.

**Environmental:** This item is for informational purposes only and has no environmental impact.

**Race & Equity:** Considerations of race and equity have been foundational for the restructuring of OAS to operate in support of the pet guardians in Oakland who most need assistance to keep

their pets. Historically, Animal Control practices have relied heavily on punitive measures, particularly for people who love their animals but lack the resources to provide veterinary care, disproportionately impacting BIPOC communities. Current practices seek to make adoptions more accessible and to direct our limited resources to underserved populations, especially people who are experiencing homelessness.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report and Presentation From Oakland Animal Services Regarding the Status of Its Operations

For questions regarding this report, please contact ANN DUNN, DIRECTOR, at (510) 535-5604.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ann Dunn*

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ANN DUNN  
Director, Department of Oakland Animal  
Services

Reviewed by:  
Betsy Lake, Assistant City Administrator

Prepared by:  
Ann Dunn, Director

Attachments (2):

A: Oakland Animal Services Organizational Chart

B: Presentation – Status of Oakland Animal Services' Operations