

**JOINT ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
MEETING & RETREAT AGENDA  
AUGUST 1, 2022 AT 5:30PM  
IN-PERSON AND REMOTE MEETING  
CITY OF LACEY – COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
420 COLLEGE STREET SE, LACEY, WA 98503**

**In-person attendance:** Lacey City Council Chambers, 420 College St SE, Lacey WA 98503

**Remote attendance:** You may register in advance to view and/or provide public comment at the JASCOM meeting by watching live on Zoom. [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_r9-trhnTQrurNcH3Scj\\_Sg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_r9-trhnTQrurNcH3Scj_Sg)

The public may also listen to the meeting by dialing toll-free:  
(888) 788-0099 - **Webinar ID:** 868 7241 1435

Watch live or as a recording on [YouTube](https://youtu.be/3ppDOQjE2S4): <https://youtu.be/3ppDOQjE2S4>

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**1 ROLL CALL:**

**Board Members:**

- Lisa Parshley, City of Olympia – Chair
- Carolina Mejia-Barahona, Thurston County – Vice Chair
- Ed Kunkel, City of Lacey
- Peter Agabi, City of Tumwater
- Richard Blinn, Thurston County Humane Society
- Jo MacGugan, Feline Friends of Olympia

**Animal Services Staff:**

- Sarah Hock, Executive Director
- Liz McQueen, Animal and Veterinary Care Manager

**City of Lacey Staff:**

- Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager

**2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**3 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of the June 29th, 2022, Meeting Minutes**
  - i. Attachment:

1. *June 29th, 2022, Meeting Minutes*

**B. Approval of June 2022 Shelter Statistics**

i. Attachment:

1. *June 2022 Shelter Statistics*

**4 PUBLIC COMMENT:**

To provide public comment by Zoom, please use the “raise your hand” function.  
To provide public comment by phone, please press \*9.

**5 DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**6 ACTION ITEMS:**

i. Municipal Code Changes to support a Community Cat Program

1. *Attachments:*

a. *JASCOM letter to jurisdictions supporting a Community Cat Program*

b. *Municipal Code changes recommended for each jurisdiction*

7

**8 STAFF PRESENTATION/REPORTS:**

**9 DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**

i. Introduce Liz McQueen

ii. Director’s Report

1. Attachment:

a. *Director’s Report*

iii. Happy Tails

**10 ADJOURNMENT**

**VISION:**

Our vision is to build a safe and humane community for humans and animals.

**MISSION:**

To foster an environment of respect, responsibility, and compassion for all animals through learning, legislation and leadership.

**GOALS:**

- Ensure and advocate for animal welfare.
- Promote public safety.
- Support responsible animal ownership.

**MINUTES OF THE JASCOM MEETING AND RETREAT**  
**June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**In-Person and Remote JASCOM Meeting**

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lisa Parshley, City of Olympia, Carolina Mejia-Barahona, Thurston County; Ed Kunkel, City of Lacey; Peter Agabi, City of Tumwater; Dick Blinn, Thurston County Humane Society; Jo MacGugan, Feline Friends of Olympia
- STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Hock, Executive Director
- STAFF LIAISON:** Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager
- GUESTS:** Jenn Stone, Best Friends Animal Society
- MEETING BEGAN:** 5:00 PM meeting called to order by Chair Parshley.
- APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** COMMISSIONER MEJIA MOVED THAT THE AGENDA BE ACCEPTED. COUNCIL MEMBER AGABI SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:** MEMBER BLINN MOVED THAT THE CONSENT AGENDA BE ACCEPTED. COMMISSIONER MEJIA SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- PUBLIC COMMENT:** NONE
- GUEST PRESENTATIONS:** COMMUNITY CAT PROGRAM- Jenn Stone, Best Friends Animal Society
- Jenn Stone presented about Community Cats and what a Community Cat Program looks like for communities and shelters. Community cats can be found just about everywhere that people live. These outdoor, free-roaming cats live in and are cared for by the community, hence the term “community cats.” These cats can be friendly, feral, adults, kittens, healthy, sick, altered and/or unaltered. They may or may not have a caretaker. Through TNVR, these cats are humanely trapped, vaccinated, spayed or neutered, ear-tipped, and returned to outdoor homes to live out their lives.
- DISCUSSION ITEMS:** ORDINANCE REVIEW- COMMUNITY CAT PROGRAM- Sarah Hock & Jenn Stone
- Sarah Hock and Jenn Stone presented and lead a discussion around suggested ordinance changes to support the lifesaving community cat program being implemented by Joint Animal Services. Suggestions included adding definitions for community cats and community cat caregivers.
- Staff will bring recommended language to present to the jurisdictions at the next meeting.

**ACTION ITEMS:** NONE

**STAFF**

**PRESENTATIONS:** 2021 JAS NET POSTION

Sarah Hock presented an overview of the 2021 net position, which included assets and liabilities, restricted and unrestricted funds, donations, and reserves for a total of \$3,432,470.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Sarah Hock presented the director's report highlighting operational updates including grants awarded to JAS, compassion fatigue workshop for staff, and pay equity for staff.

**JASCOM STRATEGIC  
PLAN UPDATE:**

JASCOM FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Sarah Hock presented to JASCOM the mid-year update related the strategic plan. Updated included finding of stage one of the feasibility study, addressing the shelter's vulnerable populations including large behavior dogs and feral cats, staff training, surgery suite, and building community relationships.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, August 1 at 5:30 PM, In-Person and Virtual Meeting

**Animal Services Shelter Statistics 2022**

22-Jun 21-Jun

**Total Animals Received (live and doa)**

Dogs	96	83
Cats	124	150
Other	25	36
Wild	13	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>287</b>

**Custody-Misc Reasons**

Dogs	18	5
Cats	6	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>

**Strays Received**

Dogs	52	52
Cats	78	113
Other	9	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>185</b>

**Owner Surrendered**

Dogs	26	26
Cats	40	37
Other	16	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>70</b>

**Owner Status Refused**

Dogs	0	0
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Wildlife**

**Incoming**

Live	8	9
Doa	5	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>

**Outgoing**

Doa	7	9
Euthanized (sick/inj)	5	6
Died	0	1
Bat-Rabies check	0	0
Released/Transferred	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>

**Total Animals Out, incl all categories below**

Dogs	102	87
Cats	95	108
Other	32	37
Wild	13	17
Died, esc, stolen	0	2

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>251</b>
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**Animals Adopted**

Dogs	23	21
Cats	55	49
Other	27	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>94</b>

**Animals Transferred**

Dogs	19	2
Cats	5	10
Other	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>

**Animals Reclaimed**

Dogs	31	47
Cats	6	6
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>53</b>

**Animals DOA**

Dogs	6	2
Cats	12	24
Other	6	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>38</b>

**All Euthanasia, Died, Escaped, Stolen (from pg 2)**

Dogs	23	15
Cats	16	19
Other	11	16
Died, esc, stolen	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>
	22-Feb	21-Feb

**Animals Euthanized  
Unhealthy/Untreatable**

Dogs	21	13
Cats	10	14
Other	11	16

**Treatable - Rehabilitatable**

Dogs	2	0
Cats	6	5
Other	0	0

**Treatable - Manageable**

Dogs	0	0
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0

**Healthy**

Dogs	0	2
Cats	0	0

Other	0	0
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Owner Request (E5)</b>		
Dogs	18	12
Cats	9	13
Other	1	3
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>TOTAL EUTHANASIA</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Died At Shelter</b>	0	2
<b>Escaped/Stolen</b>	0	0
<b>Animals Currently Court Involved</b>		
Dogs	2	0
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Field Response</b>		
Olympia	47	53
Lacey	49	46
Tumwater	18	21
Thurston County	86	54
JBLM	0	0
Other	2	0
Yelm	5	7
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>PDD/DD Appeals</b>	0	0





<b>Unhealthy/Untreatable</b>														
Dogs	12	17	17	18	14	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	99	39
Cats	8	6	12	7	13	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	41
Other	1	4	6	5	6	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	30
<b>Treatable - Rehabilitatable</b>														
Dogs	1	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0
Cats	0	1	1	1	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	5
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Treatable - Manageable</b>														
Dogs	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Cats	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Healthy</b>														
Dogs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Cats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Owner Request (E5)</b>														
Dogs	11	13	19	12	11	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	84	78
Cats	8	3	13	7	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	43
Other	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	8
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>TOTAL EUTHANASIA</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Died At Shelter</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Escaped/Stolen</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>FIELD AND OTHER SERVICES</b>														
<b>Animals Currently Court Involved</b>														
Dogs	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
Cats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Field Response</b>														
Olympia	38	29	53	42	39	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	248	269
Lacey	37	32	54	46	25	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	243	319
Tumwater	11	8	15	11	9	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	72	125
Thurston County	71	67	109	97	66	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	496	380
JBLM	1	3	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	7
Other	3	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	23
Yelm	10	8	7	10	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	195
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>1,318</b>
<b>PDD/DD Appeals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

# Recommended Ordinance Changes for CCP

## Thurston County

Community Cat Program requested changes or additions to Ordinances:

### Adding definitions:

#### **9.10.030 Definitions.**

**Community cat** means any free roaming cat that may be cared for by one or more residents in the area, known or unknown. Community cats with ears-tipped were sterilized and vaccinated against rabies at least one time. Community cats are not considered pet animals.

**Community cat caregiver** means a person who provides care to a community cat in the form of food, water, shelter and veterinary care, while not being considered the owner, custodian, harbinger, possessor, or keeper of a community cat.

## City of Lacey

Community Cat Program requested changes or additions to Ordinances:

### Adding definitions:

#### **7.04.030 Definitions.**

**Community cat** means any free roaming cat that may be cared for by one or more residents in the area, known or unknown. Community cats with ears-tipped were sterilized and vaccinated against rabies at least one time. Community cats are not considered pet animals.

**Community cat caregiver** means a person who provides care to a community cat in the form of food, water, shelter and veterinary care, while not being considered the owner, custodian, harbinger, possessor, or keeper of a community cat.

### Language change:

#### **7.04.040 Licensing and registration requirements.**

A. Failure to License ~~a Dog or Cat~~ a pet animal. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to own, keep or have control of any dog or cat **considered a pet animal** in the city of Lacey unless the person has procured a license. Failure to license a pet animal is a civil infraction. If a person is charged with a violation, the person shall not be determined to have committed an infraction if the person produces within fourteen days of the date of issuance proof of licensing or registering of the subject dog or cat under this subsection to either the court clerk or Lacey violations bureau. The court or violations bureau at the direction of the court may assess court administrative costs of \$25.00 at the time of dismissal.

## City of Olympia

Community Cat Program requested changes or additions to Ordinances:

### Adding definitions:

#### **6.04.030 Definitions.**

**Community cat** means any free roaming cat that may be cared for by one or more residents in the area, known or unknown. Community cats with ears-tipped were sterilized and vaccinated against rabies at least one time. Community cats are not considered pet animals.

**Community cat caregiver** means a person who provides care to a community cat in the form of food, water, shelter and veterinary care, while not being considered the owner, custodian, harbinger, possessor, or keeper of a community cat.

### Language change:

#### **6.04.040 Licensing and registration requirements**

A. Failure to license a pet animal. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to own, keep, or have control of any ~~dog, cat, or potbelly pig~~ dog or cat considered a pet animal in the City of Olympia unless the person has procured a license. Failure to license such animals is a class 3 civil infraction. Provided, however, such infraction may be dismissed if, within fourteen days of its issuance, the cited person submits evidence of licensing such animal to the court.

## City of Tumwater

Community Cat Program requested changes or additions to Ordinances:

### Adding definitions:

#### **6.04.030 Definitions.**

**Community cat** means any free roaming cat that may be cared for by one or more residents in the area, known or unknown. Community cats with ears-tipped were sterilized and vaccinated against rabies at least one time. Community cats are not considered pet animals.

**Community cat caregiver** means a person who provides care to a community cat in the form of food, water, shelter and veterinary care, while not being considered the owner, custodian, harbinger, possessor, or keeper of a community cat.

### Language change:

#### **6.04.040 Licensing and registration requirements.**

A. Failure to License ~~a Dog or Cat~~ a pet animal. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, it is unlawful for any Except any person to own, keep or have control of any dog or cat considered a pet animal in the city of Tumwater unless the person has person has procured a license. Failure to license a dog or cat is a class 3 civil infraction. Provided, however, the procured infraction of anyone cited hereunder may be dismissed if, within fourteen days of the date of issuance, evidence of licensing of the subject animal is submitted to the court.



3120 Martin Way E, Olympia, WA 98506-4950  
Phone (360) 352-2510, x1006 Fax (360) 352-2782

[www.jointanimalservices.org](http://www.jointanimalservices.org)

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

Jurisdiction representatives

Jurisdiction

Address

City, WA 98503

**Re: Ordinance Change to Support Live Saving Community Cat Program**

Dear (INSERT JURISDICTION REPRESENTATIVES),

Last year, Joint Animal Services Commission (JASCOM) adopted a 5-year Strategic Plan for 2022-2026. Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan is to:

**“Expand and improve animal care and programming to support our community’s pets and people.”**

Within this goal, the Strategic Plan identifies the following strategy:

**“2. Review, identify, and recommend changes to local ordinances that impede or limit live-saving programs and services within Thurston County.”**

Under this goal and strategy, JASCOM recommends updating definitions and language to the (INSERT JURISDICTION) city/county municipal code to support a new, lifesaving cat program at Joint Animal Services (JAS), called the Community Cat Program (CCP).

**What is a community cat and community cat program?**

Community cats (sometimes referred to as “free-roaming,” “stray,” “feral” or “at-large” cats) can be found just about everywhere that people live. These outdoor, free-roaming cats live in and are cared for by the community, hence the term “community cats.” Notably, while cared for by individuals, community cat are not pets; no one individual owns a community cat. For decades, community cats have been trapped and removed in a failed attempt at population management. Using this approach, shelters have struggled with resources, staffing, and space, including JAS, to keep up with the number of cats coming in.



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There are two approaches for managing community cats. Over the past century the most common approach has been the “Catch-and-Kill” which relies on an ineffective and expensive model where animal control officers round up cats (typically in response to nuisance complaints), attempt to adopt out the small number as appropriate, and then euthanize the remaining cats at the local animal shelter. However, the data continues to demonstrate that the catch-and-kill approach does not work to control cat populations. Cats reproduce faster than a typical animal control department can catch them, which is why more and more municipalities across the United States have adopted alternative options.

To address the failures of the catch-and-kill model, communities have increasingly turned to Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR), which has proven itself effective for managing community cat populations. TNVR is a non-lethal, decentralized technique employed by community members for managing community cats. The cats are humanely trapped, spayed or neutered by a licensed veterinarian, ear-tipped (the universal sign that they have been sterilized and vaccinated for rabies), and returned to where they were trapped. TNVR empowers the community to take action in their neighborhoods. In addition to being a more humane option, TNVR can also reduce the costs required for animal control and sheltering.

Many TNVR programs, in addition to vaccinating against rabies, also vaccinate cats against three other common viruses (feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia virus) using the FVRCP vaccine. In addition, some TNVR programs will find homes for adoptable cats and kittens (when doing so is feasible and appropriate) and coordinate with designated cat caregivers who provide ongoing care (e.g., food, water, shelter, veterinary care), avoiding the costs of sheltering and care usually borne by the local government in the Catch-and-Kill model. These programs will also relocate a cat from the place it was trapped if doing so is required or in the best interest of the cat and/ or community.

Brick and mortar municipal animal shelters (and private shelters with government contracts) also commonly implement this type of programming, calling it Return-to-Field (RTF), Shelter-Neuter-Return, Shelter-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return, or some variation on these terms. The major difference between TNVR and RTF is that TNVR programs are community-based (with residents typically bringing community cats to a local clinic) whereas RTF programs are shelter-based (i.e., for community cats brought to a shelter by residents or animal control officers).

The places that have most successfully controlled their community cat populations implement and support both TNVR and RTF. Both programs operate best when the shelter and the community work hand-in-hand as partners with a shared goal.

In addition to its effectiveness at population control, communities turn to TNVR and RTF because when confronted with a choice to euthanize the majority of these cats, or to return them to the community

**Thurston County • City of Olympia • City of Lacey • City of Tumwater**



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where they have been thriving (after being vaccinated and spayed or neutered), the public will choose the latter. In two recent national surveys, respondents preferred TNVR over catch and kill by a 3-to-1 or 4-to-1 margin. Since many community cats are not socialized and not adoption-eligible, impounded community cats often end up being euthanized in shelters. Successfully community cat programs also lead to a dramatic decrease in nuisance complaints. Community cat programs also foster better relationships between local government and residents. This type of model is centered on the idea of community members partnering with their government agencies and partner entities to achieve a shared goal.

Given all of these positive reasons, it's no surprise that so many people prefer the community cat program approach to the Cat-and-Kill model.

#### **Recommendations from JASCOM**

Align with the Strategic Plan, JASCOM recommends updating definitions and language to the (INSERT JURISDICTION) city/county municipal code to support a new, lifesaving cat program at Joint Animal Services (JAS), called the community cat program.

With this program, staff will proactively work to educate the public regarding humane and responsible co-existence and care of pet and community cats, to include:

- Education on the benefits and resources for spay/neuter and vaccination;
- Responsible feeding and management practices for those choosing to care for community cats; and
- Effective methods to humanely deter and exclude animals from homes, structures and targeted areas.

JAS will be partnering with Best Friends Animal Society (Best Friends) on the implementation of the Community Cat Program across all jurisdictions in Thurston County. Specifically, Best Friends will be supporting JAS with funding and training for this program.

The following changes are being requested by JASCOM and JAS to aid in our life-saving community cat program.

#### Adding definitions:

##### **7.04.030 Definitions.**

**Community cat** means any free roaming cat that may be cared for by one or more residents in the area, known or unknown. Community cats with ears-tipped were sterilized and vaccinated against rabies at least one time. Community cats are not considered pet animals.



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*Community cat caregiver means a person who provides care to a community cat in the form of food, water, shelter and veterinary care, while not being considered the owner, custodian, harborer, possessor, or keeper of a community cat.*

Language change:

**7.04.040 Licensing and registration requirements.**

A. Failure to License ~~a Dog or Cat~~ a pet animal. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to own, keep or have control of any dog or cat **considered a pet animal** in the city of Lacey unless the person has procured a license. Failure to license a pet animal is a civil infraction. If a person is charged with a violation, the person shall not be determined to have committed an infraction if the person produces within fourteen days of the date of issuance proof of licensing or registering of the subject dog or cat under this subsection to either the court clerk or Lacey violations bureau. The court or violations bureau at the direction of the court may assess court administrative costs of \$25.00 at the time of dismissal.

JASCOM thanks you in advance for considering this reasonable and effective measure to not only benefit the community but to save the lives of community cats in the (INSERT JURISDICTION).

Respectfully,

Joint Animal Services Commission



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## BEST FRIENDS NATIONAL EMBED PROGRAM CASE STUDIES

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### FARMINGTON REGIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER, FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO

A municipal shelter serving 45,285 residents (2019 U.S. census)

EMBED PERIOD: August 2020 – July 2021 (case study for the six-month mark)

#### IMPACT: SAVE RATES BY CALENDAR YEAR

2017	2018	2019	2020
Overall: 73.4%	72.9%	68.8%	81.1%
Cats: 60.3%	58.2%	51.7%	73.5%

#### Why was this collaboration important?

- In 2019, Farmington Regional Animal Shelter was number 75 in the nation for total lifesaving opportunity and number 48 in the nation for cat lifesaving opportunity.\*

#### Keys to success

- The implementation of a community cat program increased the save rate for cats from 51.7% in 2019 to 73.5% in 2020. A targeted trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR) component and nuisance mitigation training for staff saved additional lives, while addressing community concerns and increasing positive engagement between community members and the program.
- The addition of a kitten diversion program contributed to the increased cat save rate by preventing the second most at-risk population of cats from entering the shelter.

#### Creating ambassadors and advocates in the community

Engaging the community is the core of a community cat program's success and sustainability. Effective engagement can also be one of the most daunting tasks, as it involves meeting residents and explaining the program and the rationale behind it, rather than simply impounding cats. This kind of communication takes time and effective interpersonal skills.

By working together with community members to solve the root cause of a problem, staff members can generate acceptance and sometimes transform complainants into believers and potential ambassadors for the program itself. This not only saves lives, it gives staff more confidence to work through initial discomfort and create more positive outcomes.

According to Farmington's customer service manager, Tabatha Rhodes, complaint mitigation solves problems in the community and also prevents intakes in the future. Here's an example:



One complainant initially wanted to trap cats in his neighborhood and drop them at the shelter solely to be rid of them. After Tabatha explained why this wouldn't solve the problem long-term and offered options for addressing the root of the problem, the caller agreed to bring the cats to the shelter for spay/neuter, vaccinations and ear tipping, then pick them up and return them to the neighborhood. The complainant transformed from someone who might have become an adversary into an advocate, keeping some cats in his home overnight to monitor them post-surgery before releasing them into the community. He has named all the cats in his care and provides Tabatha with updates on them when he calls.

Problems with community cats take on additional layers of complexity when the groups are large and impact community businesses. But businesses can become advocates, too. Here's an example:

The owner of a tire shop located in front of a major mega-store was frustrated by the presence of a large group of cats near his shop. He defaulted to trapping them and having animal control officers take the trapped cats to the shelter, where positive outcomes were rare. As Tabatha explained to the tire shop owner, alternative solutions would not only save cats' lives but free animal control officers to provide much more critical services related to public and animal safety. Simply knowing that the cats picked up would likely not leave the shelter alive was enough for the tire shop owner to consider alternatives.

Now that cats are being vaccinated and spayed or neutered and ear tipped before they're returned to the area, the entire tire shop team supports the program. "They've been wonderful every single time we've called," says Tabatha. "It's been great to have a positive outcome for them as well as the community cat team. It has helped build the team's confidence."

### What's next?

- Farmington Regional Animal Shelter is working with the neighboring Aztec Animal Shelter to help the San Juan County Board fully embrace the benefits of community cat programs. This joint endeavor has connected the directors of the two shelters, opening the door to future collaborations on other lifesaving techniques.
- Farmington will expand its working cat program to offer positive outcomes to cats who are not eligible for return-to-field or those who are not ideal candidates for traditional adoption, further increasing the overall save rate.
- Farmington is creating a sustainability plan for programming, funding and continuity of contact with Best Friends' regional team once the initial cat lifesaving project ends.

\*National data is used to identify agencies with the largest lifesaving gaps. Those with the greatest gaps are considered to be in the "top 100," and a primary focus for the national shelter embed program.

-- Last revised 7/21/21

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*The national shelter embed program has roots dating back to 2011, when Best Friends piloted Community Cat Projects in partnership with PetSmart Charities®, which placed staff members in shelters to lead a game-changing program to dramatically increase cat save rates. Today, Best Friends is partnered with Maddie's Fund®, and thanks to that partnership the national embed program continues to place Best Friends staff members in agencies across the country. These staff members work side by side with agency staff to help them implement proven strategies to take their community to no-kill. Agencies with the highest lifesaving gaps qualify to have leadership staff embedded at their agency to lead and sustain systemic change. Backed by a diverse array of subject-matter experts and short-term (two to three months), program-specific embeds, embedded leadership helps partner organizations accomplish lifesaving outcomes that normally would take years in just a matter of months.*



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## BEST FRIENDS NATIONAL EMBED PROGRAM CASE STUDIES

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### STANISLAUS ANIMAL SERVICES AGENCY, MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

A municipal agency serving 550,660 county residents (2019 census)

EMBED PERIOD: April 2018 – April 2021

#### IMPACT: SAVE RATES BY CALENDAR YEAR

2017	2018	2019	2020
Overall: 66.2%	77.0%	81.7%	91.8%
Cats: 49.6%	67.1%	73.3%	89.2%

#### Why was this collaboration important?

- In 2017, Stanislaus Animal Services was number 20 in lifesaving opportunity. The state of California was number 2 among all the states in lifesaving opportunity.\*
- Stanislaus Animal Services was the first shelter in California's Central Valley to partner with Best Friends for a community cat program. The staff's willingness to commit to a comprehensive approach and the final outcome (more than 9,000 cats spayed or neutered and vaccinated during the three year-program) set the example for many shelters in the area. This partnership led to mentorship, embed and network partner opportunities with Tulare and Merced counties and the city of Turlock in Stanislaus County.

#### Leadership funding partners

- The original investment by Best Friends of \$747,660 allowed Stanislaus Animal Services to expand its cat lifesaving programs, with special emphasis on the launch of the community cat program. In February 2020, Stanislaus Animal Services received a Petco Foundation grant of \$225,000 for foster and kitten programming.

#### Impact of the embed

- The launch of a comprehensive community cat program addressed Stanislaus Animal Services' challenges on all fronts in an integrated way. The program included (1) targeted trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR) tactics, (2) robust community engagement to return cats to the location

they came from, (3) complaint mitigation and (4) a barn cat program called Working Whiskers for healthy cats who are ineligible for TNVR or adoption.

- The expansion of Stanislaus Animal Services' foster program to include neonatal kittens also allowed them to clear the shelter during the initial months of the pandemic.
- The implementation of managed intake and kitten diversion programming helped prevent some of the most vulnerable members of the cat population from entering the shelter and allowed staff to share information and alternatives with community members as part of the intake process.

### Creating allies and ambassadors in the community

Engaging the community is the core of a community cat program's success and sustainability. Effective engagement can also be one of the most daunting tasks, as it involves engaging residents and explaining the program and the rationale behind it, rather than simply impounding cats. This kind of communication takes time and effective interpersonal skills.

Using the talking points and coaching provided by Best Friends' national shelter embed team, Stanislaus staff reimagined and redesigned their relationships with not only individual community members, but with fellow municipal branches that also interact with the public.

For example, one of the biggest transformations has been the collaboration between the shelter and the Modesto Police Department (MPD). Complaints about cats from the public ranged from constituents upset with the number of cats in the community and the destruction of property to concern for sick or injured cats. The complaints that reached MPD were considered urgent problems requiring immediate action. Impounding the animals involved and euthanasia were the tools used to respond to (but never really solve) the problems.

Over time, and using consistent and ongoing community engagement techniques, shelter staff and the embed team demonstrated that the problems could be solved using humane ways of intervention. MPD took notice. Instead of impounding and removing cats from the area, Stanislaus Animal Services staff started to provide trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR) for the community cats, including medical help for sick or injured cats. Success stories like these soon emerged:

- An MPD officer contacted the community cat program coordinator directly about an injured cat, deviating from the previous protocol of impound followed by euthanasia. The shelter medical team treated the cat by amputating the broken leg and naming the cat Angel. Angel moved on to the Cat Network Rescue group with every hope of finding a new home. This established a new communications path between MPD officers responding to cat complaints and those who could help the cats quickly and most effectively.
- Another MPD officer requested help from the Stanislaus community cat program. A resident was upset that neighborhood cats were defecating on his roof. Working together, Best Friends' embedded staff member and a community cat program trainee resolved the complaint by providing TNVR for a dozen cats in the area. They also educated the caregiver feeding the cats on how to enhance her responsible care and participate in TNVR on her own. Both the original complainant and the caregiver have continued to trap, spay/neuter and return the remaining cats in the area. One neighborhood boy had noticed the extended absence of a cat that he considered his cat even though the cat didn't belong to his family. The cat wasn't particularly friendly with anyone but him. The boy was overjoyed when the cat returned home, safely fixed and vaccinated.

## What's next for Stanislaus Animal Services and Best Friends?

- The lifesaving success of Stanislaus' community cat work has allowed the staff the bandwidth to provide help and resources to Merced County Animal Control (MCAC), number 63 on the top 100 list in 2020. MCAC operates a municipal shelter about 30 miles south that serves approximately 278,000 residents (2019 census) but currently does not have a community cat program in place. Stanislaus' community cat work with MCAC has opened the door for Best Friends to support MCAC directly, increasing MCAC's lifesaving ability exponentially.
- Through participation in Best Friends executive leadership and management leadership certification [programs](#), Stanislaus Animal Services' director and other team leaders are increasing their skills and enhancing their ability to lead their teams and new programs effectively.

\*National data is used to identify agencies with the largest lifesaving gaps. Those with the greatest gaps are considered to be in the "top 100," and a primary focus for the national shelter embed program.

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*The national shelter embed program has roots dating back to 2011, when Best Friends piloted Community Cat Projects in partnership with PetSmart Charities®, which placed staff members in shelters to lead a game-changing program to dramatically increase cat save rates. Today, Best Friends is partnered with Maddie's Fund®, and thanks to that partnership the national embed program continues to place Best Friends staff members in agencies across the country. These staff members work side by side with agency staff to help them implement proven strategies to take their community to no-kill. Agencies with the highest lifesaving gaps qualify to have leadership staff embedded at their agency to lead and sustain systemic change. Backed by a diverse array of subject-matter experts and short-term (two to three months), program-specific embeds, embedded leadership helps partner organizations accomplish lifesaving outcomes that normally would take years in just a matter of months.*

Revised 9/17/21



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## BEST FRIENDS NATIONAL EMBED PROGRAM CASE STUDIES

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### St. Tammany Parish Animal Services, Lacombe, Louisiana

A municipal shelter serving 269,388 residents

EMBED PERIOD: March 2021 – February 2022

IMPACT: LIFESAVING RATES BY CALENDAR YEAR			
	2019	2020	2021
Overall:	52.5%	72.1%	92.9%
Cat:	35.1%	63.4%	93.3%

### Why was this collaboration important?

- St. Tammany Parish Animal Services was #71 for lifesaving opportunities for animals and #66 for felines in 2019. The shelter had a lifesaving gap\* of 250 for cats in 2020.
- Best Friends Animal Society had already built a relationship with the shelter through a shelter assessment and a field services mentorship. The new shelter leadership was open to changes with their cat lifesaving programs and was ready to take steps to change ordinances that prohibited shelter-neuter-vaccinate-return.

### Keys to success, including Best Friends' contributions to the partnership

- Best Friends' national shelter embed team provided funding to cover spay/neuter and vaccine packages for at least 225 community cats, humane deterrents to resolve nuisance-related complaints, and kitten kits.
- In addition to providing the staff with virtual training, a national embed team member provided in-person support. This support focused especially on bolstering kitten intake diversion and conflict mitigation conversations at intake. Due to the ordinance barriers present at the start of the embed, diverting intakes and engaging the community were key pieces to community cat program success.
- To allow shelter-neuter-vaccinate-return, informational resources and in-person support were given to assist in updating St. Tammany Parish ordinances. The council voted unanimously to update the ordinance in July 2021.
- The data and early successes of the program were used to add a community cat coordinator position.

## Every nose has a name

St. Tammany Parish Animal Services had immediate success in cat lifesaving, achieving and sustaining a save rate of 90% or above throughout 2021 for both species. As a result of the support that Best Friends offered, the changes in policies and the growth in community engagement, community support for the shelter increased.

The story of Gizmo is an example of how connecting with the community positively impacted the shelter, cats and people in the parish. The shelter staff had reservations about returning friendly cats (an obstacle in many shelters). The shelter staff were willing to try to return Gizmo, a friendly community cat who had been in the shelter for several weeks. A shelter staff member and a Best Friends national shelter embed specialist spoke to the finder, who thought the cat must have been lost or abandoned. They canvassed and knocked on quite a few doors, but no one recognized the cat.

That changed when the staff member talked to some neighborhood kids, who quickly pointed her in the direction of the “cat house” nearby. The woman who lived there was caring for a group of cats and was so grateful to be informed that there was a free service in the community where she could get the rest of the cats fixed. The caregiver took one look at the cat and said, “Yep, that’s Gizmo!” So Gizmo was successfully returned and the caregiver was given information about how to get the rest of the cats spayed or neutered.

## What’s next for St. Tammany Parish Animal Services and Best Friends?

- The shelter is focusing on increasing its managed intake and safety net programs to divert more intakes and better support the community.
- With their increased staff bandwidth and time, the staff intend to grow their dog play groups and enrichment activities.
- The shelter is in a great position to support and mentor surrounding shelters via the modern animal services practices that have been successfully implemented.
- At the 2022 Best Friends National Conference, the assistant director will be speaking about starting or enhancing a community cat program.

\* The lifesaving gap is determined by subtracting 10% of the total live intakes in the baseline year (the year prior to the program) from the total number of animals who did not have live outcomes in that same baseline year. National data is used to identify agencies with the largest lifesaving gaps. Those with the greatest gaps are considered to be in the “top 100” and they are a primary focus for the national shelter embed program.

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Last revised 6/10/22



# Joint Animal Services Commission Director's report

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

## Operations

### ***Best Friends Animal Society***

We are excited to be partnering once again with Best Friends, this time in a mentorship role. Best Friends will be providing mentorship and training to our field team, from mitigating complaints, community engagement, to wildlife. They will help create a training program along with updating SOPs we can continue to use moving forward. This approach will help smooth the transition as we continue to move away to a more community based approach when handling complaints and working with the public.

### ***Coastal Farm and Ranch***

The new store had their grand opening in July and invited Joint Animal Services. As part of the grand opening ceremony, they donated \$1,000 to JAS to help with the care of the animals. Their new store is located in the City of Lacey.

### ***Best Friends National Conference***

I attended the BFNC in July. It was a great week and I was able to bring back a lot of ideas and content that can be applied to Joint Animal Services. More updates to follow as well work through some details.

## JASCOM

### ***Commission Recruitment***

Currently we have received an applicant for the appointed veterinarian seat on JASCOM. We are working through the interview process and I could potentially have a recommendation for the September meeting.