



PROJECT PROPOSAL

SAN ANTONIO COMMUNITY RESCUE SHELTER



Presented To
City Council

Presented by
Residents of San Antonio

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Executive Summary

The San Antonio Community Rescue Shelter (SACRS) is an innovative program developed in response to the need for new and agile approaches to solve the excessive number of animal euthanasia and rapid turnover rate at Animal Care Services (ACS), as well as the exorbitant number of stray animals abandoned by former owners.

As a solution, we propose the establishment of an innovative shelter that provides a place of refuge where rescue organizations can safely place cats and dogs without the dependence of finding a foster family, which is one of the biggest road blocks to successfully removing an animal from the ACS euthanasia list.

Operating as a community led shelter, it is a true partnership and collaborative effort between members of the local community, ACS, rescue organizations, the City of San Antonio and business partners, to provide a proactive approach to extending the life cycle opportunity offered to animals in our city's care, while additionally functioning as a means to provide adequate time to coordinate placement with fosters and/or find permanent loving homes locally and through vetted out-of-state transfer programs.

This pilot program will serve as a use-case of how a community shelter staffed with key salaried employees and a variety of volunteer partners can operate, maintain and successfully help the City of San Antonio handle the overwhelming influx of animals at ACS and those found roaming the city.

Why This Shelter Is Needed

In the month of May 2024 alone, ACS euthanized 516 animals on the basis that space was required. What if the necessity to euthanize to accommodate incoming animals was lessened and the animals in question had the opportunity to not only live longer but also live in a stable and comforting environment?

The establishment of this shelter will allow ACS to focus greater effort on the adoption of animals currently on premises and handle some of the duties it excels in, such as street intake and investigations.

Program Goals

Mission

The mission of the San Antonio Community Rescue Shelter is to work alongside ACS and rescue organizations to provide an immediate longer term housing alternative for animals at high risk of euthanasia, and to facilitate the intake of animals abandoned on the street when there are no available options.

This will be accomplished by providing a place of refuge that presents the opportunity to hold admitted animals for a lengthier amount of time than the current 3 day average, and 1 day average for those animals considered as owner surrender.

Vision

Our vision is to significantly reduce the euthanasia rate and increase the positive outcomes for animals in our community.

When assessing potential impact, we can use last year's numbers as a predictive guide:

In 2023, ACS reported the euthanization of 4,872 cats and dogs. Annually, the San Antonio Community Animal Sanctuary aims to serve a minimum of 702 animals while operating on a budget that is a mere 4.7% of the \$21,400,000 invested by the city in 2023 (3.6% of the current budget).

With a minimal investment from the city, SACRS has the potential to boost the successful outcome rate by 14.4%.

Objectives & Goals

Working in partnership with ACS and the local community, the San Antonio Community Rescue Shelter will provide the following benefits:

1. Simultaneously relieve ACS of animals on the critical euthanasia list while extending the opportunity to find suitable and loving homes.
2. Present rescue organizations the opportunity to intake animals that have undergone initial foundational care and facilitate placement in the shelter.
3. Provide a nurturing, rehabilitative environment on a longer term basis until permanent homes/placement plans are secured.
4. Offer hands-on community involvement via volunteer opportunities to develop compassion and education among a variety of age groups and diverse backgrounds.
5. Facilitate a relationship of cooperation between the ACS and community members oriented to the common goal of finding stable homes for animals and provide a good standard of life in the interim.

Program Details

The success of The San Antonio Community Rescue Shelter is based on the fundamental principle that by using resources already at our disposal and employing them in a more effective way, we can gain greater positive results.

These resources include:

1. Vacant property provided as a charitable contribution for the purpose of the sanctuary.
2. Invested community members committed to volunteering on a regular cadence.
3. Product contributions from business owners that are vital for the care of animals.
4. Charitable contributions from business owners and private persons with roots in San Antonio who wish to see the City develop new modes of caring for animals.

Program Scope & Measuring Success

The San Antonio Community Rescue Shelter program will be classified as a public private partnership between the City and the community of San Antonio and will be formed under Friends of Animal Care Services, the nonprofit arm of ACS. It shall be funded by the City of San Antonio in addition to contributions from community partners.

Contributions from the community shall be treated as a "charitable contribution" and are therefore tax deductible when gifted to a 501(c)(3) when intended for a public purpose.

This pioneering pilot program aims to validate if a City funded animal shelter program can produce positive outcomes for animals by diminishing the prospect of euthanasia, and instead place greater focus on longer holding times and connecting each animal with adoption and transfer opportunities.

Working alongside Animal Care Services, we seek to increase the live outcome percentage of animals at ACS and facilitate the intake of stray and abandoned animals from the local community.

In order to assess the outcomes, it is proposed that the pilot program is operational for at least 2 years. During this time, the shelter will be independently led by a hand-picked team capable of overseeing the facility and ensuring operation at the highest level.

Measuring success will be vital to determine if the goals of the program are accomplished. We intend to partner with an academic institution to ensure the relevant collection of data and the correct interpretation of the results.

On a quarterly basis, progress updates and reports will be presented to City Council and City Management to keep all stakeholders knowledgeable and informed.

Staffing & Capacity

One of the most exciting aspects of the San Antonio Community Rescue Shelter is the flexibility of its structure and the adjustable carrying capacity based on community needs. This is made possible by rooms that can accommodate larger numbers and is also based on the availability of adequate staff members to meet care requirements.

The adaptable nature of the carrying capacity permits the shelter to increase during peak times in order to remain responsive to the on-the-ground situation and evolving demands.

The operational homeostasis of the shelter will hover around 80 animals at all times.

Open 7 Days A Week

Animals held at the shelter will require constant care and monitoring.

As such, it will be staffed 7 days, and open to the public between 8 am to 6 pm.

Staffing the shelter appropriately is a key component to its success.

Staffing Needs

The Humane Society estimates that it takes 15 minutes to care for the daily needs of a shelter animal.

We aim to allocate 25 - 30 minutes of care to each animal. Refer to table below for the carrying capacity.

A staff of 5 - 6 team members will be the operational homeostasis for the shelter.

Staffing & Capacity

STAFF COUNT	ANIMAL CARE MINIMUM (15 Mins (.25)/Per Animal)	ANIMAL CARE CAPACITY (20 Mins (.3333)/Per Animal)	ANIMAL CARE CAPACITY (25 Mins (.42)/Per Animal)
4 SHELTER TECHNICIANS	120	90	72
5 SHELTER TECHNICIANS	150	113	90
6 SHELTER TECHNICIANS	180	135	108

Location & Design

Good design is good for animals.

Good shelter design is critical for the efficient operation of daily tasks, management of workflows and allowing staff to adequately handle capacity in a focused and manageable manner.

This methodology has proven successful for the Greenville Humane Society (GHS), Aiken County Animal Shelter (ACAS) in South Carolina and Adopt-A-Dog in Greenwich Connecticut:

- A complete shelter redesign allowed the GHS to reduce the length of stay for adult dogs to one to two weeks versus one to two months in the previous facility, and the length of stay for puppies is currently two days versus one to two weeks. In addition to this, the GHS is has become so successful at flow-through that it pulls animals from 11 other shelters to keep up with demand.
- Similarly, ACAS used thoughtful design to increase adoptions by almost 40% in the first two years and almost double that within two more years.
- Adopt-A-Dog is a non-profit animal shelter established in 1981. Since its inception it has relied on charitable contributions and dedicated community volunteers to perform essential operational functions.

Location

The specific property on which the shelter will be developed is a key factor of importance as it influences the size of the facility, accessibility and the overall layout.

We are currently exploring the route of property provided as a charitable contribution by a philanthropist between 2 - 4 acres, or securing enough funds to purchase a lot within the city limits.

Design

Guiding the entire design and location scouting process is prestigious design firm, [Stephen J. Kramer Architecture + Design](#).

Their experience includes designing the Animal Defense League of Texas and the new Bexar County Animal Shelter.

Underscoring the design and function of SACRS is the desire to strike a balance between providing an environment that positively impacts the health of a shelter animal, and one that is conducive for staff and volunteers to work efficiently and effectively.

Proposed Budget

Funding for the program will be generated by 2 main sources: funds donated as charitable contributions by community partners and a budget allocation from the City of San Antonio.

To pay for the inception of the program we aim to raise \$300,000 in charitable contributions and request that City Council consider providing the following to assist with the costs associated with establishing and running the sanctuary on an annual basis:

- I. An initial allocation of \$350,000 to establish the program.
- II. Subsequent allocation of \$350,000 on an annual basis to contribute to running the program during a typical year.

When possible, the program will rely on resources and systems already in place via ACS and partners for services such as initial screenings, health checks and testing, spay and neuter services and the use of diagnostic tools.

Solar Powered : Community partner [Atma Energy](#) will donate solar panels to reduce utility costs.

Year 1: Establishing the Sanctuary

SERVICE	COST
Architectural Services	\$60,000
Construction Services	\$350,000
Administrative Costs	\$30,000
Property Tax & Lease	\$10,000
Permits	\$50,000
Salaries	\$60,000
Supplies	\$70,000
TOTAL	\$630,000

Subsequent Years: Operational Costs

SERVICE	COST
Supplies	\$80,000
Utilities	\$30,000
Administrative Costs	\$30,000
Property Tax & Lease	\$10,000
Permits & Insurance	\$40,000
Salaries	\$415,000
TOTAL	\$605,000

Closing Summary

When considering the many nuances and factors that contribute to the landscape of animal welfare in San Antonio, we can conclude there is a need to:

1. Decrease reliance on euthanasia when capacity is reached.
2. Provide assistance to ACS, rescue organizations and community residents that are currently taking on the burden of care related to stray animals at their own expense.
3. Present proactive solutions to find suitable homes for animals and other positive outcomes.

The San Antonio Community Rescue Shelter endeavors to collectively leverage Animal Care Services, local governance, the community and philanthropists to curtail the animal crisis currently impacting San Antonio.

The construction of this visionary facility will assist ACS in its operation by reducing the reliance on euthanasia and by providing a refuge for animals while they await new homes and/or placement opportunities. In addition, the shelter will promote a coordinated effort between ACS and the animal rescue community to work together and find solutions.

The program we envision is multifaceted, comprehensive and innovative. It arrives at a crucial time when the local community has a tremendous need for an animal care facility that guarantees a good quality of life, while extending the time available to find a positive outcome for the animals in question.

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