



[Houston PetSet](#) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to ending the homelessness and suffering of companion animals and elevating their status in society. Houston PetSet works to achieve its mission by focusing its efforts in six key impact areas including spay & neuter, transport & rescue, community service & education, cruelty prevention, research, and advocacy. In addition, Houston PetSet provides annual grants to animal welfare-related organizations in the Greater Houston area. By providing critical funds and collaborating with strategic partners, Houston PetSet seeks to end the crisis of animal homelessness in our community.

On behalf of Houston PetSet, our partners, and those in the animal welfare community, we thank you in advance for taking the time to provide your responses to this questionnaire. It is important to note that Houston PetSet will **NOT** be endorsing any candidate in any municipal race and will be using this completed document as a resource for groups and individuals that are interested in learning more about your candidacy. Your responses will be posted to our website and will be accessible for all.

The current animal homelessness population presents a public health and public safety issue that affects the quality of life of many Houstonians. The Houston PetSet questionnaire includes questions covering general animal welfare, city services, and partnerships. **We ask that you complete this questionnaire (by filling in your answers via Microsoft Word) and return it to [marketing@houstonpetset.org](mailto:marketing@houstonpetset.org) no later than July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.**

Sincerely,

**Tena Lundquist Faust**  
**Co-President**

**Tama Lundquist**  
**Co-President**

## Animal Welfare

1. To what extent have you been involved with any animal welfare issues, including rescue, spay & neuter, foster, transport programming, legislation, and anti-cruelty?

Answer:

As a city council staffer, I was engaged in the budgeting, operations, policy creation, and regulation of animals and pets. As a staffer I:

- Participated in tours of areas of Houston with local animal-rights groups to gain a better understanding of underlying issues;
- Urged council members for whom I worked to support increases in BARC funding and increased spay and neuter efforts;
- Researched best animal welfare practices in other cities to better inform decision making for Houston;
- Supported the creation of the BARC special revenue fund in 2010 in order to ensure donations and other funding for BARC could be used only for intended purposes;
- Advocated for creation of the BARC wellness clinic and construction of the adoption center;
- Promoted partnerships with rescue and transport groups to increase the live release rate; and
- Supported and promoted the Healthy Pets Healthy Streets initiative.

2. Do you have a plan to address underserved areas that need low cost spay & neuter programming and other veterinary services?

Answer:

- Continue partnerships with Friends for Life, Emancipet, SNAP, Houston Humane Society and others to provide low- and no-cost spay and neuter programming and wellness services.
- The Fixin' Houston spay and neuter clinic at BARC is currently "closed until further notice" due to a shortage of veterinarians. I would make sure the city steps up efforts to recruit and attract veterinarians so the clinic is reopened. Over 2500 surgeries were performed at this clinic in 2017-2018, so its continued operation is really important.
- Actively seek corporate, foundation, and philanthropic support to further expand the strategic, targeted Healthy Pets Healthy Streets initiative.
- Send BARC representatives to civic meetings, super neighborhood meetings, and neighborhood events to educate and raise awareness on what it means to be a responsible pet owner.

3. Do you have, or have you ever had in the past, a companion animal? If so, was it a rescue animal?

Answer:

YES! BODO was at my house when I was a baby brought home from the hospital and he died when I was 16 years old. I loved that dog so much and learned all about caring for animals from him. He was an integral part of our family and I still think about him all the time. George and I have four children and we made sure they also grew up with pets to care for and love. We had two dogs EDITH and KAY and a rescue cat ELIZABETH (from BARC!) who were part of our family for many years. Each of these animals lived long, healthy lives in our home. Sadly, KAY died just last year.

**Quality of Life/Public Safety/Public Health**

4. What impact, and how will reducing the stray animal population improve the quality of life of all Houstonians, if any?

Answer:

Stray animals negatively impact the quality of life for both residents and animals. Every Houstonian should be able to enjoy freedom of movement in and around their neighborhoods and children deserve to play outside without worrying about strays. Animals deserve regular meals and loving, caring homes. Reducing the stray population will bring vitality back to affected Houston neighborhoods, improve the health and safety of animals, lessen the potential for attacks, and minimize transmission of diseases.

5. How do you plan to work with communities that have historically reported high rates of stray animals? Please describe below.

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

As it does in many other operational aspects, the city should use a data-driven approach in its efforts to reduce the stray animal population. Neighborhoods with high concentrations of strays should be prioritized for increased educational efforts and

other services. I will work closely with district council members who represent areas with high rates of strays to host awareness campaigns, spay/neuter Healthy Pets Healthy Streets events, vaccine clinics, pet ownership classes, and adoption events. It's also important to systematically track the progress of all initiatives in order to determine effectiveness.

6. How do you plan to address animal homelessness and the stray population citywide?

Answer:

- Continue partnerships with Emancipet, SNAP, Houston Humane Society, and rescue groups to collaborate on a citywide high-volume spay/neuter strategy to include Big Fix Houston and Healthy Pets Healthy Streets.
- Grow the trap, neuter, return program to decrease the number of feral and community cats.
- Expand BARC's efforts to educate residents about responsible pet ownership and spay/neuter options.
- Aggressively seek funding for spay/neuter efforts from corporations, foundations, and the philanthropic community.
- Keep metrics on initiatives to determine most effective methods for reducing strays.

### **City of Houston Services**

7. Do you have a strategy to address overcrowding in the city animal shelter? If so, please describe below.

Yes X No

Additional Comment:

I will work to:

- Collaborate with other cities experiencing a shortage of adoptable pets;
- Seek additional capital dollars to expand BARC shelter space;
- Explore how the city could help formalize a network of registered foster homes for pets; and

- Partner with Harris County, other municipalities, animal welfare organizations, rescue groups, and the nonprofit community to expand shelter space, fostering, and adoption programs.

8. Should BARC (City of Houston animal shelter) receive additional funding based on budget comparisons to national standards and peer cities? If so, how much and how would you increase the department's overall budget?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

Funding is most certainly an issue to be addressed. BARC is currently funded at less than \$6 per capita—one of the lowest per capita rates with the next lowest being \$8 per capita and Austin at \$12 per capita, according to the director of the city's Administration and Regulatory Affairs department (FY2020 budget presentation May 14, 2019). Also, BARC is funded at a rate in which staff can address just 56% of calls for stray animals. Further, BARC's goal is to work with partners to spay/neuter 20,000 animals per year; however, studies show Houston needs to perform 68,000 low- or no-cost spay/neuter services to even begin to make an impact on the stray population.

Obviously, funding is an issue which must be tackled aggressively. With the city's budget constraints, we will need to be creative and proactive in seeking grant and other funding opportunities from corporations, foundations, and the philanthropic community. In addition, during the budget process, I will advocate for phased-in increases to BARC's operating and capital budgets so the city is better equipped to meet growing challenges. I will make it a point to meet with BARC and finance department officials to best understand the gaps and how to fund them. I am also open to exploring consolidation of city and county animal welfare and care departments through a city/county shared services working group. There should be operational efficiencies to gain by combining efforts.

9. Will you commit to expanding intake hours for animal surrenders at the city shelter?

Yes  No

Will need to identify funding associated with an adjusted schedule.

10. Will you commit to funding additional Animal Control Officers to respond to 311 and BARC calls?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

Limited resources preclude BARC from adequate response to 311 and BARC calls, especially for lower priority calls such injured animals, closely tied up animals, or other situations with no imminent danger to humans. More officers are needed in order to be responsive. Will need to identify funding within the city budget.

11. What is your plan to address animal abuse, including dog fighting (and cock fighting) in the City of Houston and how would you involve the community to assist in this effort?

Answer:

The city must have a zero-tolerance policy regarding dog/cock fighting and criminally prosecute those who engage in such cruelty. I believe education is the number one tool for the city in curbing these horrific things. There needs to be a collaborative effort between multiple law enforcement agencies (HPD, constables, sheriff) to find these rings and arrest people involved. Separately, the city should create an anonymous tip line to allow neighbors and concerned citizens to report the activities.

12. There are a number of duplicative services (ex. animal control services, investigative/enforcement, wellness services, etc.) that are offered between the City and County. Do you believe in the existing model, based on geography OR would you explore other options? If you would explore other options, what specific options do you have in mind?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

I will be strong advocate for a shared-services working group as recommended by the city's PFM long-range financial report. This group will do an in-depth exploration of services which could be shared or consolidated. Combining efforts and initiatives should yield positive operational efficiencies and related savings. I wholeheartedly support efforts to collaborate and consolidate where possible to reduce duplication and

expand overall effectiveness. I believe there is an immediate opportunity for the city and county to collaborate on programming and adoption events.

### Partnerships

13. Would you support a partnership with local animal welfare organizations to address the growing issues relating to animal welfare? What specifically would you propose?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

Animal welfare organizations are at the forefront of addressing Houston's animal-related challenges, so these organizations must be part of the solution. I would propose the city take the lead in facilitating a collaborative community-wide partnership effort to provide a coordinated response to issues related to animal welfare. There are many worthy organizations providing much-needed services for animals in Houston, and there needs to be an overarching strategy and coordinated effort to end animal homelessness and improve animal welfare.

The fact that Houston PetSet grantees spent three times the amount the city and county spend on animal welfare efforts underscores the need for partnerships. The city cannot begin to tackle the growing problem without these partners and coordination and collaboration is essential. Coordinating efforts must also include the county in order to provide a consistent, regional approach.

14. Are you familiar with the six key impact areas of Houston PetSet? How would your administration support Houston PetSet's impact areas?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

The six key impact areas of Houston PetSet are spay and neuter, transport and rescue, community service and education, cruelty prevention, research, and advocacy. As an at-large council member, I will be involved in seeking funding and creating policies to advance each of these impact areas.

Spay and neuter: I will seek additional funding for increased spay and neuter funding from the city budget, corporations, foundations, and philanthropic organizations. I will promote and participate in Healthy Pets Healthy Streets and Big Fix events.

Transport and rescue: I will advocate for community-wide partnerships with transport and rescue organizations to maximize BARC's live-release rate.

Community service and education: I will push for BARC staff to attend meetings and events to educate residents about responsible pet ownership. I will promote animal welfare-related community service projects and help recruit volunteers for them.

Cruelty prevention: I am in favor of an anonymous tip line to report cases of animal cruelty and working with police to enforce laws against cruelty. I will advocate at the state level for laws aimed at reducing animal cruelty. I will support rescue groups who care for abused animals and make sure they have a say in policy have a say in policies related to cruelty.

Research: I will push BARC to provide metrics and benchmarking data to inform policy and decision making. Important statistics and data from the city, county, and all animal welfare and rescue groups should be amassed centrally by the city or other leading partner. This information should be easily accessible to Houstonians.

Advocacy: I will be a strong advocate for best practices to be the norm at Houston BARC, and I will advocate for community-wide partnerships to systematically and strategically tackle the stray dog population in Houston.

### **City of Houston Ordinance/Advocacy**

15. Would you support a local ordinance that prohibits apartments or home owners' associations from banning specific dog breeds?

Yes\_\_\_No\_\_\_ (open to exploring)

Additional Comment:

I am open to discussion and consideration of this matter and am interested in hearing from all stakeholders. I feel a dog's breed does not determine aggression or dangerous behavior.

16. Will you support the creation of a local ordinance that better defines and creates a higher standard of shelter for animals?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

I would support an ordinance created with broad stakeholder support.

17. Will you support a local ordinance that bans the sale of dogs from breeders and puppy mills in retail locations within the City of Houston?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

This type of ordinance would send a strong message that Houston does not accept puppy mill cruelty. If there are changes needing to be made at the state level in order to enact such an ordinance, I will advocate for these changes at the state level.

18. Would you support mandatory microchipping for dogs and cats in the City of Houston?

Yes  No

Additional Comment:

I would be open to considering mandatory microchipping to coincide with annual pet licensing. Prior to voting yes on such an ordinance, funding would need to be identified to provide financial assistance to those who cannot afford microchipping. Mandatory microchipping helps lost pets get home, thereby lessening burden on the shelter system. The city and county should work together on licensing and microchipping rules to make sure they are consistent.

In future, please contact Houston PetSet if you would like information or educational materials relating to the subjects above.

**We ask that you complete this questionnaire (by filling in your answers via Microsoft Word) and return it to [marketing@houstonpetset.org](mailto:marketing@houstonpetset.org) no later than July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.**