

City of Santa Paula

City Council

MAYOR PEDRO A. CHAVEZ
VICE MAYOR CARLOS JUAREZ
COUNCILMEMBER JENNY CROSSWHITE
COUNCILMEMBER LESLIE CORNEJO
COUNCILMEMBER GABRIELA ORNELAS



CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SANTA PAULA CITY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025

4:30 PM - City Council Special Meeting

SANTA PAULA CITY HALL
970 VENTURA STREET
SANTA PAULA, CA 93060

JULIE LATSHAW, CITY CLERK
DAN SINGER, CITY MANAGER
MONICA CASTILLO, CITY ATTORNEY

BRINGING ITEMS BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL

You are invited to participate in all Regular City Council meetings. Agendas are posted in the front of Santa Paula City Hall, 970 Ventura Street, Santa Paula, 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meetings. The City Council's regular meetings start at 6:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 970 Ventura Street in Santa Paula. Special and Closed Sessions vary by date and time.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN PERSON DURING THE MEETING: If you wish to speak at a City Council meeting, please fill out a **Public Comment Form** noting your name and address and submit the form to the City Clerk. Include the Agenda item number you wish to speak on. Members of the public may address the Council on items on this agenda only. **Public Comments are limited to 3 minutes.**

HOW TO PARTICIPATE BEFORE THE MEETING: Members of the public are encouraged to submit email correspondence on any agenda item by sending an email to cityclerk@spcity.org. All public correspondence received by three hours before the meeting date will be provided to the legislative body before the meeting. Public Comments received after, will be provided to the legislative body the next day.

Your Participation in this meeting is in the public domain; meetings are cablecast; minutes of this meeting will reflect your participation in this meeting and are posted on the city's website.

PLEASE NOTE: Be advised that if you bring a legal challenge to an action, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the meeting described in this Agenda, or in written correspondence delivered to the City Council at or before the meeting. Any action is subject to the ninety-day time period set forth in Code of Civil Procedure § 1094.6.

In compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk at (805) 933-4208. Notification 48 hours before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35, 102-35.104 ADA Title II). Written materials distributed to the City Council within 72 hours of the City Council meeting are available for public inspection immediately upon distribution in the City Clerk's office.

SPECIAL MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

1. CALL TO ORDER

REMINDER: in order to minimize distractions during public meetings, all personal communication devices should be turned off or put in a non-audible mode.

2. ROLL CALL

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item appearing on the agenda only. Individual Councilmembers may briefly respond to Public Comments or ask questions for clarification. **Public Comments are limited to three minutes.**

4. ORDER OF BUSINESS

4.A STUDY SESSION ON ANIMAL SERVICES

5. CLOSED SESSION

The City Council may move into a closed session pursuant to applicable law, including the Brown Act (Government Code Section 54956, et seq.) for the following purpose:

5.A

CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE §54957.6 - City Representatives: Chief Labor Negotiator Irma Rodriguez Moisa, City Manager Dan Singer, Finance Director Christy Ramirez, and Human Resources Specialist Lorena Alvarez; Employee Organizations: Community Services Officer Association; Mid-Management Association; Professional & Supervisory Association; Service Employee

International Union, Local 721 (SEIU); Santa Paula Police Officers Association (SPPOA); and Unrepresented Employees: Executive Management; Confidential employees; Part-time employees.

6. CLOSED SESSION REPORT

7. ADJOURNMENT

State of California)-

County of Ventura)- ss

City of Santa Paula)-

I declare under penalty of perjury that I posted this City Council Agenda on the bulletin board near the front door of City Hall, 970 Ventura Street, Santa Paula, California.

On _____, at _____ Signed: _____

Julie Latshaw

City Clerk

**CITY OF SANTA PAULA
MEMORANDUM**

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dan Singer, City Manager

Subject: STUDY SESSION ON ANIMAL SERVICES

Date: April 2, 2025

Agenda Item: 4.A

RECOMMENDATION:

BACKGROUND:

On November 20, 2024 a study session of the Council and City staff convened to discuss animal control and shelter services. The City was operating under an expired Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Santa Paula Animal Rescue Center (SPARC) which provides the City with shelter services for impounded or stray animals, spay/neuter and veterinary services, animal vaccinations and pet adoptions at a convenient location in the City's downtown core. Instead of relying on the Ventura County Animal Service agency (VCAS) located in Camarillo, Santa Paula has been fortunate to have a local non-profit no-kill shelter that has provided the community with a convenient and humane option for animal care, adoptions, surrenders and fostering, among other services.

For the past six years, the City was contributing \$150,000 per year to SPARC to provide the essential mandated services required under the City's Municipal Code and State Law. In addition, the City provides a full-time Animal Control Officer under the umbrella of the Police Department. Most municipalities contract with the County for animal control and shelter services, but doing so for Santa Paula would result in decreased service levels, increased costs and a significant inconvenience given the distance to the VCAS shelter at the Camarillo airport.

At the November Study Session, SPARC presented some of their financial struggles and their desire to see a more permanent and appropriate shelter site and expressed the need for additional City help to do so.

In December 2024, SPARC notified the City it would no longer be offering shelter services, essentially putting the City on 30-days notice of the termination of the MOU.

ANALYSIS:

Since February 1, the City has been working without the benefit of a contract for shelter services. Our Animal Control Officer (ACO) continues to perform all of his normal functions in serving the community and has secured temporary kennels to house and protect animals on a

limited-term basis. For the past two months the City has been informally working with the Humane Society of Ventura County to shelter the occasional dogs our ACO impounds or those turned in by the community as stray animals when an owner cannot be located. [Note: SPARC is no longer accepting stray or surrender animals from the community]. The Humane Society is located in the City of Ojai approximately 16 miles from the center of town.

OPTIONS

1. Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS)

The County of Ventura provides contract-based animal shelter, licensing and field services to the majority of cities within the County. Thousand Oaks contracts for services with Los Angeles County. The attached table (exhibit A) provides a breakdown of current costs for participating jurisdictions. The VCAS was unable to provide the City with a quote for service because costs are computed based on historic participation and a complex formula for distribution of costs. It is reasonable to conclude that Santa Paula's costs might be somewhere similar to that of Port Hueneme or Moorpark (both in the \$200,000 - \$300,000 range). However, these costs do not include an Animal Control Officer, which may be contracted with the County for an additional expense or could continue to be provided as a service of our Police Department.

2. The Humane Society of Ventura County

The Humane Society is open to servicing Santa Paula and City staff has had numerous meetings and discussions with them and has completed a site visit to their four-acre facility in Ojai. They are a well established national non-profit organization with extensive services and resources that could serve Santa Paula well, albeit from a greater distance than what we are accustomed to.

The Humane Society offers a facility that is clean, well run, and driven by guidelines to support the best interest of the animals. In addition, they have free mobile programs available to offer the community of Santa Paula such as vaccination clinics and spay & neuter clinics. With this, they also offer adoption services, licensing, and micro chipping. They have two full-time Veterinarians who work six-days per week. They also have the ability to respond, during their business operational hours, in their animal control vehicle (just like ACO Morale does) to assist with animal control in our community, however we have not confirmed the cost or availability of such service on a more permanent basis were that to be desired.

At this time the City does not have a formal proposal or cost estimate for Santa Paula but is close to completing such a request, pending further input from Council at the Study Session.

3. The Pet Support Project

Bill LeFeuvre, a former advisor to SPARC, has been in discussions with the founder and Board President of SPARC, Jean-Marie Webster, regarding a new non-profit organization that would take over once SPARC closes its doors.

The Pet Support Project is based on the Human-Animal Support Services (HASS) model, an industry-backed initiative with 1,500 animal and human welfare professionals and 300+ partner organizations. It seeks to be more proactive in education, outreach and prevention services to minimize the impacts of unwanted animals and could be a strong model for a community such as Santa Paula. An Executive Summary of this proposal is attached as Exhibit B. It is still uncertain as to

when this non-profit and board of directors would be established and operational, thus this option may be most desirable, but would still require an interim solution until a new MOU could be established with the Pet Support Project.

CONCLUSION

Similar to the November 2024 discussion, this Study Session is designed to initiate dialogue on the service models available to Santa Paula and seek input from the Council and public on desired animal control and shelter service options. No decisions will be made until specific proposals are before the Council.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

FISCAL IMPACTS:

OPTIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

[Exhibit A - Ventura County Animal Shelter Costs.docx](#)

[Exhibit B - Pet Support Project Concept.docx](#)

Executive Summary

Imagine a Santa Paula where...

- ✓ A family struggling with financial hardship doesn't have to surrender their beloved pet because affordable veterinary care and pet food assistance are available.
- ✓ A lost dog isn't stuck in a shelter for days but is quickly reunited with its owner through a community-based lost pet reunification system.
- ✓ Pet owners facing housing challenges don't have to make the heartbreaking decision to give up their animals—because resources exist to help them keep their pets.
- ✓ Taxpayer dollars aren't wasted on costly shelter intakes but are instead invested in prevention, intervention, and community support programs.

This is the future that The Pet Support Project (TPSP) will bring to Santa Paula.

A New Model for Animal Services in Santa Paula

The traditional sheltering model is expensive, reactive, and outdated. It fails to address the root causes of pet homelessness and needlessly diverts taxpayer dollars into a high-cost impoundment system.

The Pet Support Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit designed to modernize animal services through a public-private partnership model. Rather than relying on expensive sheltering, TPSP focuses on:

- ? **Prevention** – Providing low-cost veterinary care, spay/neuter services, and emergency pet support to keep animals with their families.
- ? **Intervention** – Offering short-term pet boarding, behavioral support, and rehoming assistance to prevent unnecessary surrenders.
- ? **Community-Based Support** – Implementing a lost pet reunification system and virtual pet licensing program to reduce shelter intake.

A Proven Model Backed by National Success

The Pet Support Project is based on the Human-Animal Support Services (HASS) model, an industry-backed initiative with 1,500+ animal & human welfare professionals and 300+ partner organizations.

Real-World Success Stories from HASS Shelters

? Austin Pets Alive! (APA!) – Manages over 18,000 animals annually and reduced shelter intake by 50% through community-based interventions.

? San Diego Humane Society – Handles 35,000+ animals per year and improved pet retention by 22% with HASS strategies.

? Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) – Tucson, AZ – Reduced shelter intake by 34% and increased live release rates by 20% within the first year of HASS implementation.

? Wisconsin Humane Society – Achieved a dog return-to-home rate of 80% through targeted lost pet reunification efforts.

? Santa Paula's intake is significantly lower than these larger cities, meaning this model can be implemented more rapidly and with greater effect at a local level.

HASS Is Backed by National Leaders in Animal Welfare

? Major National Partners & Animal Welfare Leaders:

-

Best Friends Animal Society

-

ASPCA

-

Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

-

National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA)

-

Maddie's Fund®

-

American Pets Alive!

? University & Veterinary Experts:

- University of Denver – Institute for Human-Animal Connection (IHAC)
- University of Florida Shelter Medicine Program
- UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

💰 Corporate & Nonprofit Foundations:

- The Rachael Ray Foundation™
- Mars Petcare
- Michelson Found Animals Foundation
- Purina, Petfinder, Chewy Gives Back
- PetSmart Charities, Petco Love

☐☐ California Municipal Shelters Already Using HASS:

- ? Los Angeles Animal Services
- ? Long Beach Animal Care Services
- ? Oakland Animal Services
- ? Rancho Cucamonga Animal Center
- ? San Diego Humane Society

? These results demonstrate that HASS strategies are working across the country. Now, Santa Paula has the opportunity to become a leader in progressive, community-driven animal services.

Why This Model Works for Santa Paula

Larger cities implementing HASS manage tens of thousands of animals annually, yet they've successfully reduced intake, increased reunifications, and cut costs.

With fewer animals entering the system, Santa Paula is in an even stronger position to achieve faster, more dramatic improvements.

- ✓ Less bureaucracy → Faster implementation of policy changes
- ✓ More direct community engagement → Higher participation in reunification & intervention programs
- ✓ Easier data tracking → Better accountability and measurable results

The Community Has Spoken—Santa Paula Wants HASS

? A community-wide survey of Santa Paula residents conducted by the University of Denver’s Institute for Human-Animal Connection (IHAC) found overwhelming public support for the exact services provides:

- ✓ 90% support city-funded low-cost spay/neuter services.
- ✓ 82% support affordable (or free) veterinary care & vaccine clinics.
- ✓ 77% of pet owners & 70% of non-pet owners support publicly funded animal services.
- ✓ Strong demand for pet food banks, behavioral support, emergency pet boarding, and lost pet reunification programs.

A Smarter, More Cost-Effective Approach

? Current City Model: Santa Paula spends \$150,000 on sheltering and \$150,000 on animal control—yet intake remains high, and lost pet reunification rates are low.

? The Pet Support Project Model: Shifts funding from impoundment to prevention, lowering long-term costs and improving outcomes for animals and the community.

? With the Pet Support Project, Santa Paula can modernize its animal services system immediately, improving outcomes without increasing costs.