

Long Beach Municipal Election Candidate Survey

Candidates' views on the state of Long Beach's shelter animals

Long Beach Municipal Election 2014
Stayin' Alive Long Beach

Stayin'  Alive
LONG BEACH

Stayin' Alive Long Beach is an initiative to increase the save rate of companion animals at the Long Beach shelter. The purpose of this survey is to familiarize the community with the positions and intentions of candidates for elected office in the City of Long Beach regarding the status and management of Long Beach Animal Care Services (ACS). Every candidate on the April 8th ballot is being asked to complete the survey. Candidate responses will be compiled as part of a voting guide that will be distributed to Long Beach voters in preparation for the April 8, 2014 election.

As part of the awareness campaign by **Stayin' Alive Long Beach**, candidate responses will also be rated, and then released to the media and posted on some or all of our websites and social media. **Responses as well as non-responses will be reported.**

We ask that candidates provide their responses by Tuesday, March 4, 2014. You may respond via the SurveyMonkey link provided in the e-mail sent to you or by typing your responses into an e-mail and sending them to stayinalivelongbeach@gmail.com.

The survey is composed of 9 questions. Candidates are encouraged to respond in writing with enough detail to adequately represent the candidate's view of the current state of Long Beach Animal Care Services and his or her views on how ACS should operate in coming years.

To provide background on the issue, we have attached our policy report "What is Happening to Long Beach's Shelter Animals?: A report on the effectiveness of Long Beach Animal Care Services and recommendations for change." We appreciate your participation in this survey. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Patricia Turner, Ph.D., co-founder and spokesperson of **Stayin' Alive Long Beach**, via e-mail at stayinalivelongbeach@gmail.com.

Shelter Animal Save Rate at LBACS

Last year, Long Beach Animal Care Services euthanized 50% of the dogs and cats that entered the city shelter. This percentage includes 15% of puppies, 29% of dogs, 72% of cats and 75% of kittens.¹ Over the past 7 years, ACS has euthanized over 38,000 dogs and cats. **Innovative sheltering programs, such as comprehensive adoption programs, proactive marketing of animals, volunteer programs and foster programs, have been implemented in a number of communities across the nation, resulting in save rates of upwards of 90%.** Long Beach currently does not implement the majority of these innovative sheltering programs. If we are to increase the save rate for Long Beach shelter animals, ACS policies will need to undergo significant changes to be mandated by the City Council and overseen by the Mayor.

1. How important is the issue of increasing the number of animals saved at the Long Beach animal shelter to you? Please explain your response. Please circle or place an "X" next to your answer.

XX Very important ___ Important ___ Somewhat important ___ Not very important

¹ Based on data received from Long Beach Animal Care Services through the California Public Records Act. Data covers Jan-Nov 2013.

2. Would you support a review and restructuring of ACS's lifesaving programs to include sheltering programs such as a comprehensive adoption program, proactive marketing of animals, volunteer programs and foster programs? (A complete list can be found under Question 5 in this survey. They are also described on pp. 36-37 of the SALB Policy Report and on the SALB website). Would you support the participation of the public in this process? Please explain your response.

I am a lover of all animals and agree with saving the lives of all animals. All of the issues and concerns that Stayin Alive has posed on this questionnaire are not just government issues, but community issues as well. I am in support of a city council appointed "Keep Animals Alive Commission" to oversee all of these concerns. The commission will set policy for the City of Long Beach, for pet owners, and penalties for irresponsible pet owners. I am in favor of mandatory Spay and Neutering of ALL animals at the time of registration at the cost of the owners. If responsible pet owners want to have litters for their own home, this can be an option at the time of registration. The commission will have policy established for these responsible pet owners. If the litters are larger than expected, the commission will have policy for the placement and adoption of these animals.

In addition I am against the sale and breeding of any animals within our City.

Parents of human children have many government mandated rules they must follow or else they will lose they parental rights. This should not be different for our non-human children.

3. What percentage of shelter animals do you think the City of Long Beach can reasonably be expected to save? Please circle or place an "X" next to your answer.

50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Adoption Programs

ACS's current operations manual states that ACS, itself, does not adopt animals out to the public. ACS's current official stance is that this is the job of the neighboring spcaLA, an agency which takes in only 28% of the animals impounded by ACS every year. Long Beach Animal Care Services currently euthanizes over 50% of dogs and cats in the city shelter due to its failure to run a comprehensive adoption program, including frequent and ongoing off-site adoptions, extensive marketing of at-risk animals, public-friendly adoption hours and mobile adoptions.

4. If elected or re-elected to public office:

Specifically in regard to ACS's Adoption Program, would you support a review and restructuring of the Adoption Program at Long Beach Animal Care Services to include the elements mentioned above (offsite adoptions, public-friendly adoption hours, etc.)? Would you support the participation of the public in this restructuring process? Please explain your response.

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Essential Lifesaving Programs

There is a suite of fiscally-responsible, humane, 21st century animal sheltering programs that have been proven to work in more than 200 communities across the United States. These programs are given below. They are also explained on pp. 36-37 of the SALB Policy Report and on the SALB website.

5. Please rank the programs to indicate which programs you think are the most important for the City to implement. Place a "1" next to the MOST important program or policy, a "2" next to the second most important policy, and so on.

All of these are equally important, and I give them all a 1. All of these programs should be decided by a city appointed commission.

____Comprehensive Adoption Programs	Collaboration with Rescue Groups	Trap-Neuter-Release Programs for Community Cats
____Foster Programs	____Vigorous Volunteer Programs to help run other lifesaving programs	____Behavioral and Medical Rehabilitation
____Pet Retention Programs (Help desks, information lines)	____Public Relations and Community Involvement	____Pet Redemption (Making it easy for people to get their pets back from the shelter, including working with them financially)
____Low-Cost, High Volume Spay/Neuter	____A Compassionate, Hard-Working Director	____Transparency in reporting numbers of animals euthanized vs. placed into adoptive homes

Spay/Neuter Funding

ACS reduced its funding of low-cost spay/neuter by 77% from 2010 to 2012, spending only \$25,000 in 2012 on the City's popular low-cost spay/neuter voucher program. At the same time, the City received revenues of more than \$1 million from pet licensing efforts alone. In 2013, ACS's year-end expenditures for low-cost spay/neuter are projected to be approximately \$50,000 – still a massive reduction over the \$110,000 the agency spent on spay/neuter voucher funding in 2010.

6. If elected or re-elected to public office, would you support an increase in the funding for low-cost spay/neuter in Long Beach? What is your view of the City's role in providing low-cost spay/neuter options to city residents?

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ACS Transparency and Accountability

Increasingly, municipal animal shelters are reporting their save and euthanasia rates to the public on their websites on a monthly basis (e.g., City of Sacramento and City of Austin, TX). Typically, these reports are easy to generate using an integrated shelter management software program called Chameleon. Long Beach ACS already uses the Chameleon software.

If elected or re-elected to public office:

7. Would you support a City Council mandate that ACS publish accurate and transparent statistics regarding the numbers and types of animals the agency euthanizes on the ACS website? If so, why do you feel this is important? If not, why not?

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8. Would you support the City's setting and publishing clear performance goals in terms of ACS's live release rate (save rate)? Please explain your answer.

Public Responsiveness

9. In a Dec. 10, 2013 editorial, LBReport.com urged City Council to seek a Study Session that would include participation by Stayin' Alive Long Beach (see <http://www.lbreport.com/editorial/dec13/edanieu.htm>). Would you be willing to ask for a Study Session on the current status of Long Beach's shelter animals that would include a podium presentation by Stayin' Alive Long Beach?

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Thank you for responding to this survey. If you have any questions about this survey or about **Stayin' Alive Long Beach's** initiative to increase lifesaving at the Long Beach municipal shelter, please contact us at stayinalivelongbeach@gmail.com.



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