

The Wisconsin Humane Society and MADACC are united in opposing the proposed resolution dictating that MADACC should use arbitrary quotas and definitions to make decisions about the animals in their care. A resolution like this is appealing on the surface, because everyone wants to help animals. But the Common Council should not pass any resolution on this topic without a clear understanding of its cost and impact.

MADACC and the Wisconsin Humane Society are already making positive changes for homeless animals. A resolution dictating arbitrary quotas and definitions would threaten the progress we are already making.

- Under the new leadership of Karen Sparapani, MADACC has greatly improved its live release rates without dramatic cost increases and without need of an external mandate. In October 2014, for example, shelter euthanasia at MADACC represented 24% of all outcomes, a drop of more than 47% over the same month in the prior year.
- MADACC's improvements have brought it to a point where healthy, friendly animals are not being euthanized for space reasons. This is an important milestone the community should celebrate. MADACC still has finite resources to care for sick and behaviorally challenged animals, however. To force MADACC to care for all animals except those who are "dying and dangerous" would significantly increase the number of animals in its shelter and require it to turn animals away for lack of space.
- MADACC's board has just approved a \$3.2 million facility improvement. MADACC's current facility is too small and is designed in a way that puts animals at risk of becoming sick. The updated facility will improve their health and therefore our ability to find them permanent homes.
- WHS is opening Milwaukee's first high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinic in June 2015. The clinic will have the capacity to sterilize 6,000 animals in the first year alone and 14,000 animals in year three. Increased spay/neuter rates will reduce animal homelessness and save lives in our community.
- MADACC and WHS have made our partnership a strategic priority and are working closely together to improve live outcomes for local animals. The relationship between WHS and MADACC has never been stronger.

The proposal does not consider cost or quality of care. It is unrealistic to think every sick and behaviorally challenged animal can be sheltered indefinitely with no increase in cost. Caring for animals takes compassion, but it also takes money — money for food, facilities, staffing, medical care and other essential needs.

Euthanizing only "dying and dangerous" animals, without adding space and dollars to treat and find homes for the rest, is not sheltering; it is hoarding. If MADACC were barred from euthanizing sick animals and not given additional resources to treat and care for them, it is certain that more *healthy* animals -- who are currently finding homes -- would become ill because of increased crowding. Dictating MADACC's decisions with no thought of cost will hurt animals, not help them.

*"In March of 2014 the city's 'no-kill' animal shelter, the Austin Animal Center, was again over capacity, leaving at least 60 animals at the facility without kennels. The contracting adoption shelter was also at capacity and was unable to take in more animals. The Austin Animal Center is routinely unable to accept animals because it's full."
(kxan.com)*

The proposal does not consider how Milwaukee is different from communities seeking high live outcome rates.

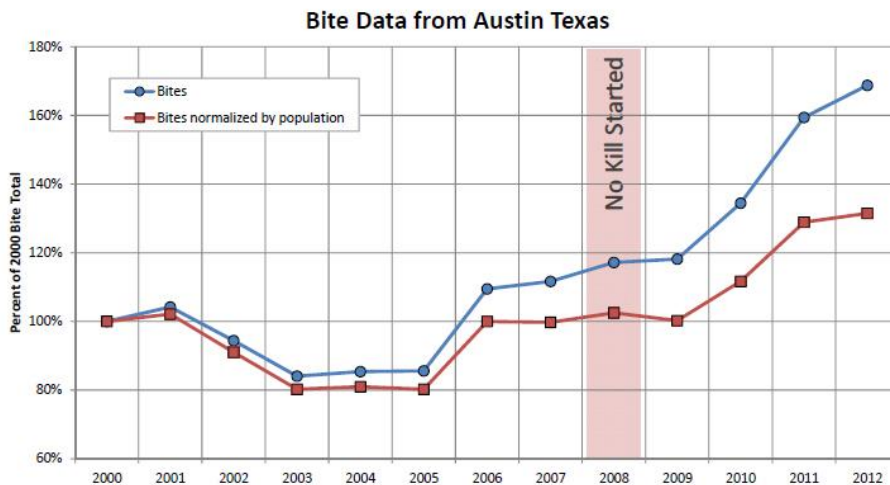
- Poverty and education. High poverty and comparatively low education statistics will always show in a city's animal outcomes. In comparatively affluent and educated communities, families have more resources to care for and retain their animals, keeping them out of shelters in the first place.
- Stray hold time. A Wisconsin state statute requires stray animals to be held for seven days, one of the longest "stray holds" in the country. This long required "hold" before stray animals can be adopted increases illness and shelter crowding.
- Outdoor cat policies. Milwaukee, like many cities, allows people to regularly bring stray cats to animal control. Many communities with very high live outcome rates have decided not to take stray cats into shelters.

There is no example we know of where a municipality has achieved outcomes in the 90th percentile without: (1) turning away animals in need; (2) high average income and education levels; (3) leaving most cats outdoors; (4) spending significantly more on animal sheltering than Milwaukee does; and/or (5) a shorter stray hold than Wisconsin's 7 days.

The proposal does not consider public safety. Animal “live release rate” is a critical metric, but it is not the only metric. Measuring MADACC’s success based on live release rate alone loses sight of MADACC’s primary mission of protecting safety and health. In most communities that seek very high live release rates, shelters impose barriers to accepting animals, to the point of becoming full and refusing to take animals at all.

When this happens, euthanasia numbers do fall, but citizens and animals are left unserved. A 2013 article in the *San Antonio Express News*, titled “City’s massive stray problem despite no-kill goal success,” reported that “an estimated 150,000 dogs and 187,000 cats roam the city’s streets . . . [w]hile ACS has been touting that it has averaged a live release rate of 79 percent since January.”

(<http://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/City-s-massive-stray-problem-despite-no-kill-goal-4676873.php#/0>) Since Austin, Texas, sought “no-kill” recognition, reported dog bites have risen 35%.



June 2014:

*“Kansas City’s municipal animal shelter has taken in so many animals this month that it is using bathrooms, closets, locker rooms, the basement and even the employee break room to have enough space for them all. KC Pet Project takes in the third most animals of all the no-kill, open-admissions municipal shelters in the nation, according to the No Kill Advocacy Center. **The shelter needs to be three times the size it is currently to accommodate the number of pets it holds, Johnson** (the Executive Director) said.*

*“We simply can’t keep on ignoring this problem and hope it will go away’ said Councilman John Sharp. **Sharp has proposed including \$10 million for a new shelter in the next bond issue the city puts before voters.”*** (www.kansascity.com)

MADACC and WHS applaud the desire of the City of Milwaukee to achieve the best outcomes for homeless animals. If the Common Council wishes to consider alternatives that reflect a clear-eyed assessment of the impact of various animal welfare strategies on municipal expenses, public safety, and conditions of care for animals, we stand ready to provide candid and documented input.

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