

Orozco, Norma

From: Bulmaro Vicente <boomer@chispaoc.org>
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 7:29 PM
To: eComment
Cc: Amezcua, Valerie; Lopez, Jessie; Hernandez, Johnathan; Bacerra, Phil; Vazquez, Benjamin; Phan, Thai; Penaloza, David
Subject: Agenda Item 52: Ordinance to Adopt Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Cycle
Attachments: Item 52 - Chispa FY 2023-24 Budget Letter.pdf

Good Evening,

On behalf of Chispa, I am attaching our letter for **Agenda Item # 52- Ordinance to Adopt Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Cycle**.

In Solidarity,

Boomer
Policy and Political Director | Chispa
e: boomer@chispaoc.org c: [714.747.4271](tel:714.747.4271)
1505 E 17th Street Suite 117 Santa Ana, CA 92705

Chispa is building a political home for young Latinxs in Orange County! Please consider making a donation to help us build our casita. Chispa is a project of Tides Advocacy, a 501c4 non-profit organization.





June 2, 2023

Mayor Amezcua and Members of the Council
City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza
P.O. Bo 1988, M31
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Agenda Item # 52 - Ordinance to Adopt Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Cycle

Mayor Amezcua and Members of the City Council,

I write on behalf of Chispa to urge the Santa Ana City Council (Council) to direct the City of Santa Ana (City) staff to adopt our recommended investments within the City's 2023-24 Fiscal Year (FY).

Chispa is a membership based organization for young Latinxs advocating for systemic changes across Orange County that uproot systems of oppression and cultivate systems grounded in community accountability, solidarity, and self-determination for our communities to thrive. In furtherance of our mission we are committed to advocate for a community-centered municipal budgets that prioritize investments in our community, police transparency and accountability, and the expansion of youth programs and job opportunities.

At past City Budget meetings, this Council expressed a strong desire to continue improving safety by addressing root causes and investing in residents' material needs, well being, and opportunities to thrive. We believe that the recommendations outlined below achieve these goals by strengthening our City's infrastructure, focusing on crucial programs such as providing mental health services, counseling and preventative services, jobs, and recreational activities. The recommendations below also further the City's goal of developing and maintaining an effective and meaningful system of police oversight that is responsive to residents' needs..

1. Well-Funded and Robust Police Oversight Commission (Commission)

- a. The Council must rollover the previous budget commitment of \$1 million dollars and ensure the Independent Director and the Management Analysis Position are filled and hired for the Calendar year.
- b. Residents deserve a well funded and robust Commission that is adequately staffed and resourced.

2. Increase Grants to Community Based Organizations (CBO)

- a. Allocate \$200,000 to provide four \$50,000 grants to CBOs.

- b. Grants will have the greatest impact on organizations building their capacity, and prioritize organizations that offer mental health services for LGBTQ youth, re-entry programs and support for system impacted youth, as well as counseling and preventative services for youth.
- 3. **Allocate New Funding for a New Pilot Program that Provides Paid Job Opportunities for Undocumented Youth that are Non-DACA Recipients within City Government**
 - a. Establish a pilot program to provide PAID job and internship opportunities for Undocumented Youth that are non-DACA recipients for the 2023-2024 FY.
 - b. Undocumented youth without DACA are currently not eligible for existing paid job opportunities and internships that the City provides.
- 4. **Increase Funding for Youth Service Programs and Establish a City Youth Center**
 - a. Expand existing opportunities such as cost-free sports programs, fitness centers, and skill development training for youth.
 - b. Create a Youth-led center that offers wraparound mental health services, free recreational activities, college and career readiness resources, and a safe space for youth in need.

Context Police Oversight:

Last fall, the Council responded to a longstanding community demand by passing a historic Commission. As part of the 2022-2023 FY Budget Cycle, the Council allocated \$1 million to fund the newly established Commission, enabling the hiring of one support staff and an Independent Director to oversee the Commission. The Council must rollover this previous budget commitment and ensure these positions are filled for the Calendar year. Residents deserve a well funded and robust Police Oversight Commission that is adequately staffed and resourced.

Context CBO Grants:

The FY 2022-2023 Budget included a budget allocation of \$150,000 for three \$50,000 grants to CBOs. The priority was CBOs that offer crucial mental health services for LGBTQ youth, re-entry programs and support for system impacted youth, as well as counseling and preventative services for youth. It is vital for the City to sustain and expand its support for CBOs that provide essential services to youth and residents as a whole.

Therefore, we request the Council to consider increasing the allocation for CBO grants to \$200,000 to provide four grants of \$50,000 each. This funding would provide four organizations with support to expand their reach and impact, and help the City further address the diverse needs of our youth population more effectively.

Context Youth Funding:

The City is one of the youngest Cities in Orange County, with one in four residents being less than 18 years old and the average age being 32.6 years old, according to the U.S. Census. This demographic

composition creates an urgent need to provide adequate support and investment in youth. This year, the Santanero Project, a community-based, youth-led empowerment group, launched a survey and conducted focus groups to understand how youth felt about establishing a City Youth Center. Thus far, the survey has garnered 51 responses from young individuals aged 13-20, representing all zip codes within the City. The survey results shed light on a critical concern expressed by the youth of the City: the lack of safe recreational spaces and community programs.

In response, we support the Santanero Project's demand to create a Youth-led Center that offers wraparound mental health services, free recreational activities, college and career readiness resources, and a safe space for youth in need. Furthermore, we recommend that the City expand existing opportunities, such as cost-free sports programs, fitness centers, and skill development training for youth. By implementing these recommendations, the City will be able to provide the necessary support and opportunities for youth to thrive, securing a brighter and more promising future for the next generation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bulmaro Vicente', with a stylized, flowing script.

Bulmaro Vicente
Policy and Political Director
Chispa

Santa Ana City Council
20 Civic Center Plaza
Santa Ana, CA 92701

SANTA ANA CITY CLERK
JUN 6 '23 AM 11:31

Dear City of Santa Ana,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the lack of support for children's programs in our community. As a member of this community, I strongly believe that investing in children's programs is one of the most important things we can do to ensure a bright future for our city.

Children are the future of our community, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they have access to high-quality programs that will help them grow and develop into successful adults.

Studies have shown that children who participate in after-school programs are more likely to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. They are also less likely to engage in risky behaviors such as drug use and violence. Furthermore, these programs provide a safe and supportive environment for children who may not have access to such resources at home.

Unfortunately, many children in our community do not have access to these programs due to the lack of funding and support. This is a problem that affects us all, as it can lead to increased crime rates, decreased academic achievement, and a less vibrant community overall.

Therefore, I urge the City of Santa Ana to prioritize more funding for children's programs in our community. This includes after-school programs, summer camps, sports programs, and other activities that provide children with opportunities to learn and grow.

Investing in our children today will pay dividends for years to come. It will create a brighter future for our community and ensure that our children have the tools they need to succeed in life. I hope that you will consider my request and take more action to support children's programs in our city.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Resident of Santa Ana



Sara Murrieta
2620 W Segerstrom Avenue #C
Santa Ana, CA 92704-6560

Santa Ana City Council
20 Civic Center Plaza
Santa Ana, CA 92701

SANTA ANA CITY CLERK
JUN 6 '23 AM 11:30

Dear City of Santa Ana,

~~W. A. L.~~
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Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

ANGEL E. MARQUEZ VASSOS

Resident of ~~Santa Ana~~ IRVING

Orozco, Norma

From: Yvonne Flores <yvonnefloresrealtor@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 12:00 PM
To: BudgetOffice; eComment
Subject: Public Comments - Yvonne Flores

Dear City Council and Budget Office:

I am writing to ask the city Council to adopt an equitable city budget that truly addresses the needs of our community in Santa Ana.

I stand with Council Member Thai Viet Phan and respectfully ask that we use the \$1.4 Million slated for the Winter Festival and focus the funds on a "Lunar Festival" instead. Unfortunately, the Winter Festival hasn't had fantastic attendance and is located in such an obscure place that most residents don't have the opportunity to attend the event. Additionally, the cost is also an obstacle to the residents at large as parking is not free, and the cost of ice skating is not cheap. With a cost of \$1.4 million, we can fund a Lunar Festival that has both cultural benefits, is fun, and inclusive for attendees. Big sponsorship for this event is difficult at best as it's just a dead zone for lack of any opened businesses in the area, and especially outside of normal business hours.

Additionally, I would like to ask the Council to think about implementing Park Rangers again as we had in the 80's and consider creating a 2nd dog park. Our kids, our seniors, even our pets, we all need more park space in Santa Ana, but we need our parks to be safe and that means we need Park Rangers to help keep our parks and our residents safe. As we increase our housing units in Santa Ana, we are also increasing our pet population and new residents and their pets will need a 2nd dog park soon after the 1st dog park opens.

Please include increased funding in the budget for additional libraries and increased/extended library hours. In order to best serve our community, we need to make the library accessible to them by providing longer operating hours and be open on Saturday and Sunday through 9pm.

Last of all, we need increased grant opportunities for community based organizations that provide youth services and we need a city youth center. We have the largest population of young persons but yet we don't have a youth center.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yvonne Flores
Downtown Live Scan
Westcliff Properties
211 N Sycamore St., SA CA 92701
(714) 215-7421

Orozco, Norma

From: Tim Johnson <tjohnson@jlkrlp.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 12:15 PM
To: eComment; Amezcua, Valerie; Phan, Thai; Bacerra, Phil; Penaloza, David; Hernandez, Johnathan; Lopez, Jessie; Vazquez, Benjamin
Cc: Downs, Kathryn; Mendoza, Steven; Ridge, Kristine
Subject: City Budget- Agenda Item #52 (6/6/23)

Happy Tuesday everyone...tonight I believe you will be considering the FY 23/24 budget. Our city finance team and others have obviously put a lot of work into preparing a budget based on your guidance. I urge each of you to review the below email from the May 11th discussion regarding the same.

I also urge you each to consider when something is saved to not immediately re-allocate those funds for another project but instead to save it in preparation of a future Measure X revenue drop which is highlighted in the Ten Year Outlook on page 4 of the Staff Report. If past history, including this year, is any indication, we will continue to spend based on our revenue and the surplus (Revenue > Spending) in the Ten Year Outlook will erode to next to zero each future year (i.e. FY 24/25, 25/26, 26/27, & 27/28)...the surplus will not be there in the future unless we change spending habits now. We need to prepare for the future Measure X Revenue drop now instead of saddling a future council and our residents' future pocketbooks. We cannot lose site of the planned \$24M deficit...small changes in habits now will pay dividends in the future.

If we continue to spend all of our revenue each year without putting substantial amounts away to plan for the drop in Measure X revenue in the future, we are putting this all onto our future selves which is not correct. Fast forward to this time next year, and I bet you the planned FY24/25 \$8M surplus will be spent. Just as the surplus is no longer there this year...in fact, per the chart on page 3 of the Staff Report, the net activity is actually NEGATIVE \$29.285M. We are taking the 22/23 surplus and spending it in FY 23/24. This is easily highlighted by comparing the estimated ending general fund balance in the chart on page 2 of the Staff Report. FY 22/23 Revised Budget has an estimated ending general fund balance of \$101.4M wheres the estimated gen fund balance at the end of FY 23/24 is \$72.1M...just above the 18% reserve requirement. We need to stop this cycle of spending each dollar we get into when we know that there is a planned huge revenue drop in the future. In essence, we are taking the gains we have made in the past and spending it...we did that in FY22/23 and are planning on doing it again in FY 23/24.

To recap our general fund balances, as shown in the General Fund table on page 2 of the Staff Report has been decreasing as follows: \$121.4M Beg 22/23 Balance → \$101.4M Est End FY22/23 Balance → \$72.1M Est FY23/24 Proposed Balance. That is right, our General Fund Balance will have decreased in a two year period (7/1/22 to 6/30/24) by approx \$49.3M (\$121.4M at 7/1/22 to \$72.14M at 6/30/24). Let that sink in...when you are making decisions on spending.

Also, I cannot tell what is being planned/budgeted for the school crossing guard program but I urge you to not budget for 100% coverage for the school crossing guard program. This should be at a minimum a shared responsibility between the city and the school district. Ask yourself...why are charter elementary and private schools able to get their students safely to school without the city funding a program for these residents of our city? Are charter and private schools not residents of the city? Yet, the city chooses to only fund a program for the public school district. If this is for the community, all students should benefit...I am not advocating to expand the program to private schools and charter school but instead pointing out the fact that these schools have been able to find ways to get their students to school safely without a city funded program and at a MINIMUM the school district should bear at LEAST 50% of the cost of this program. We should be moving in the direction of the schools figuring it out instead of the city spending taxpayer dollars on something that other schools have shown that they are able to do it. Our public schools have some great minds and we should tap into them just as our charters and private schools have done. In fact, I would say that the

school district really should bear more of the cost...just like public charter schools and private elementary schools have found a way to do. However, 50% is a good compromise in year one of change. Then, once the city saves these funds, please do not spend them but instead put it away into a Measure X Stabilization Fund to prepare for the steep decrease in future revenue.

Thank you for all of your work that you do for our city. Please also pass along all of my appreciation to those involved with the budgeting process who do not vote but instead put hours into preparing information for you to be able to vote upon after digesting your opinions and guidance while considering public thoughts. The end result may be a vote, but the process is grueling I am sure for those tasked with the day to day job.

Tim Johnson, CPA

JLK Rosenberger, LLP

☎ (949) 860-9892

📠 (714) 743-1065

From: Tim Johnson

Sent: Thursday, May 11, 2023 12:09 PM

To: ecomment@santa-ana.org; Amezcua, Valerie <VAmezcua@santa-ana.org>; Phan, Thai <TPhan@santa-ana.org>; Bacerra, Phil <pbacerra@santa-ana.org>; Penaloza, David <dpenaloza@santa-ana.org>; jryanhernandez@santa-ana.org; Lopez, Jessie <JessieLopez@santa-ana.org>; bvazquez@santa-ana.org

Cc: Downs, Kathryn <KDowns@santa-ana.org>; Mendoza, Steven <SMendoza@santa-ana.org>; Ridge, Kristine <kridge@santa-ana.org>

Subject: City Budget- Agenda Item (5/11/23)

Good day mayor, council, and selected city leaders...I am writing today about tonight's special council session agenda item 1, Work Study Session on the FY 23/24 Budget. I pray that tonight's session is productive for the council receiving and providing information as well as for the residents and staff. I have a few thoughts that I think are relevant- they may be a little scattered but the theme is that we need to prepare today for the future. We are not as financially stable as many may think. We have a significant reduction in revenue on the horizon with the Measure X rate reduction AND our city has a deficit net position balance meaning that we do not have assets to cover the liabilities that have accrued to date. We need a plan to improve.

Disclosure...I am on the Measure X Citizen Oversight Committee but these thoughts are my own only as an interested and vested resident of Ward 3 in our great city and may not reflect the Measure X Citizen Oversight Committee's thoughts/recommendations. Although some of my thoughts will echo those presented in the Oversight Committee's Annual Report which you received at your April 18th meeting, again, these thoughts are my own.

Summary

If you think our city is on secure sound financial ground, I ask that you be open to additional information and to look at the long game financially. Our city is able to pay its current bills and provide a level of services according to the revenue being generated presently. However, when you look at the big picture I believe you will see that:

- Our city is not prepared for the 1/3 drop in Measure X (MX) sales tax revenue (1.5% to 1.0%; 0.5% = 1/3). In today's dollars, that is around \$29.5M (using the proposed 23/24 budget MX revenue of \$88.616M). Ask yourself, what our city will look like with reduced revenue of \$29.5M. That is what will be coming. We need to prepare today because next year or 5 years from now may be too late and will only make it that much tougher to make meaningful change.
- Our city has an extreme unfunded debt burden to our residents. Even though we are paying our bills, our city has a deficit Unrestricted Net Position from Governmental Activities of \$468.4M as of 6/30/22. That is approx \$1518 of debt allocated to each of our 308,459 residents. Let that sink in...each of us are in debt to the tune of

\$1518. My family of 5 would be \$7592 in debt. We need to understand and recognize that, determine if it is acceptable, and then come up with a plan to tackle it assuming the council agrees that our city's residents should not be in debt or at least commits to decreasing the level of debt. We are using today's revenue to pay for liabilities generated in the past...we need to make headway.

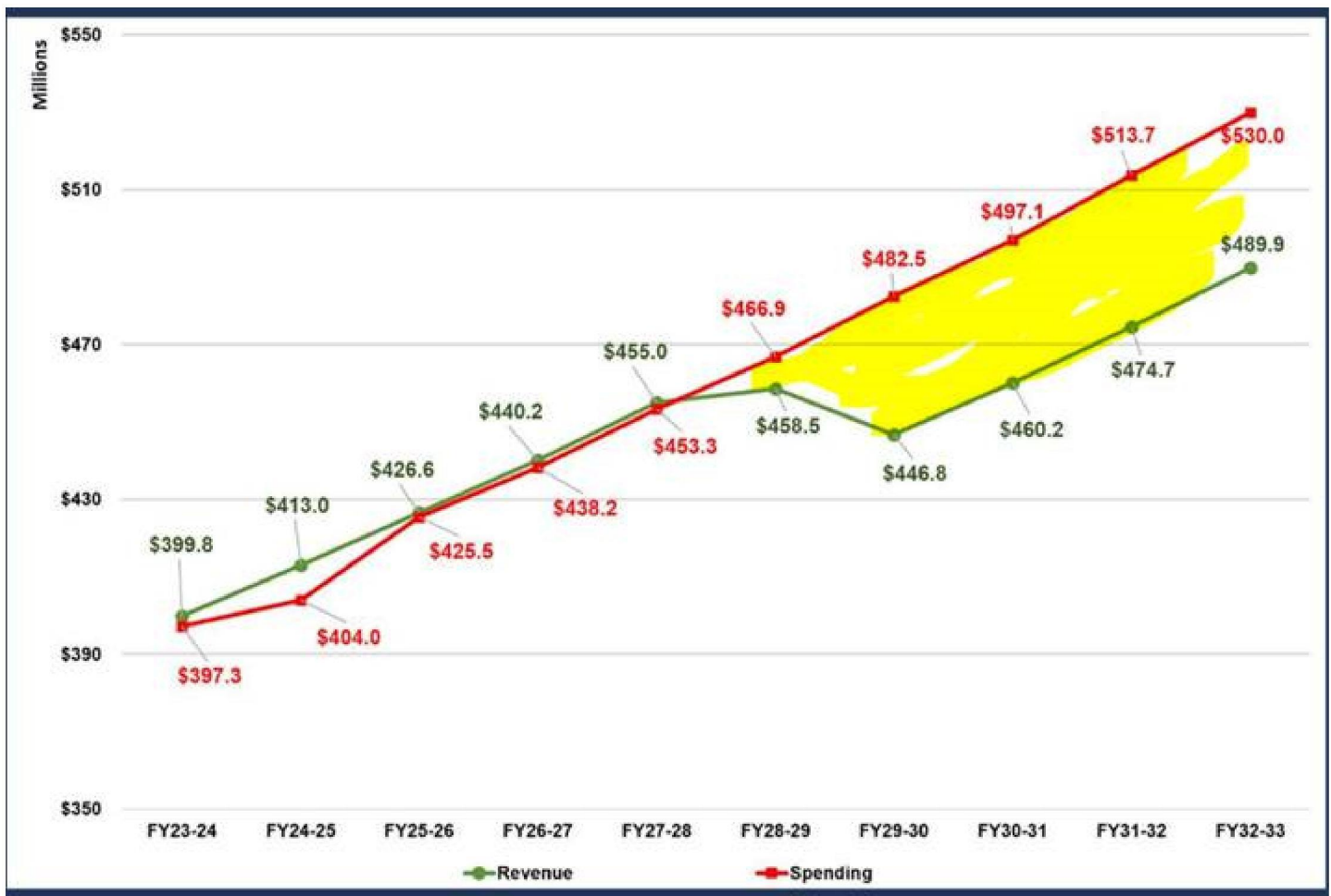
We need to take steps now to address both of the above items. This needs to be part of a long term financial strategic plan which would contain goals, steps to achieve those goals, and monitoring of the progress. This also means that such a plan will span across multiple councils, councilmembers, and possibly even other city leaders such as our city manager and police chief. We need to take long term financial stability seriously. We need to implement change now in order secure a better future.

Ten Year Outlook

Director Downs previously provided to you at the April 18th council meeting on Agenda Item 22, the below Ten Year Outlook. She has previously provided the a similar schedule multiple times over the past few years. Fortunately, due to MX, the city's revenue is projected to cover its expenses for the next few years. However, the concern lies when the MX sales tax rate is reduced from 1.5% to 1% in 2029. As you can see there is a huge gap when this drop off occurs. The city NEEDS to prepare for this drop in revenue now. I applaud the council members/mayor that brought this up at your May 2nd meeting.

Even if the city is utilizing MX funds for one time expenditures, when one time expenditures are utilized each year, which they have been, they become viewed as recurring expenditures. Expenditures which the city become reliant upon. If something is truly one-time, ask yourself, can we just not do that this year and save the money? If the answer is yes, well, then it is time to start making those decisions. If the answer is no we need to do that...I question whether it is truly meets the spirit one-time spending. If we make changes to our spending now, couple that with increasing business activity and hence revenue in our city, we may be able to make the MX rate reduction impact more of a gradual slide instead of a drastic cut. Again, I know that it will be easy to say that MX spending is focused on one time items, but when that spending is happening year after year, it becomes part of the fabric of our city.

I dub this Ten Year Outlook as my "scary chart" because it is scary to look at in 2029 and forward. The yellow (I added) below is the scary part. That shows our shortfall where projected Spending will exceed projected Revenue. What will the city look like with a \$35M+ shortfall year after year? What can we do now to prepare for that shortfall? The earlier we plan for this gap, the easier it will be to lessen the impact on our residents, businesses, visitors, and city as a whole.



I ask that our city consider a few action items now in order to prepare for the drop:

1. Direct staff to prepare a big picture pro-forma budget (not line by line but big picture) to illustrate what our city services will look like based upon the drop. What services will need to be lessened, how this will impact our residents/business, etc...By doing this, we will see what our city will look like after the MX rate reduction.
2. Direct staff to come up with a MX Sunset Plan with goals of such plan and concrete action steps to achieve those goals. Presumably, this council's feedback is imperative in coming up with any Sunset Plan. I would anticipate that this plan would include both spending reductions AND also revenue generation.
3. Create a MX Sunset Stabilization Reserve Fund now. Build it in to the 23/24 budget. Build it into any surpluses from the 22/23 fiscal year (if any). Our city needs to put money away now to prepare for the MX rate reduction to lessen the impact and absorb such impact over multiple years instead of at once. MX revenue is such a large amount and if we truly are favoring one-time spending on MX revenue, we certainly should be able to come up with a plan now to put aside some of the revenue generated to help with the sunset.
4. Although I am not in favor of extending the 1.5% rate for MX and I believe I have heard current councilmembers (and past) indicate that they are looking forward to a lower MX sales tax rate, IF the council is going to count on the full 1.5% of MX revenue in 2029 and forward, they need to be honest with our residents, businesses, and visitors and tell us now. Obviously, it is not up to the council to make this decision but the council likely will be the body that would put it on a ballot for the residents to vote upon. IF the current council wants to go that direction, then they should say so. IF the current council does not want to have a 1.5% MX rate, then they need to begin take financially prudent steps NOW...to do otherwise is not financially wise in my opinion.
5. Consider forming a MX Sunset council committee to meet, in public, to discuss and recommend a MX Sunset Plan. I would prefer that this committee meet in public but if that is not the council's desire, I would ask that such a committee be tasked with regular reporting to the council and the public.

City Debt (Unrestricted Net Position Deficit)

According to the city's latest Statement of Net Position June 30, 2022 which was present previously, our city has an Unrestricted Net Position deficit balance from Governmental Activities of \$468,389,289 (\$468M for ease of conversation). This \$468M is the amount that our city's liabilities exceed its assets adjusted for exclusion of investment in capital assets and also restricted assets.

Overall, the city has a positive Net Position from Governmental Activities of \$685.1M but that figure includes net capital assets and restricted assets. The city cannot use restricted assets to cover general liabilities due to external restrictions on use of funds and so it seems prudent to exclude such assets when determining operating debt. Additionally, since the city is not really able to sell most of its capital assets (such as rights of way, street trees, infrastructure such as streets and sewer projects) it would also seem appropriate to exclude the net capital assets (net means that included in this figure is the city's debt on that the capital assets). After you exclude net positions that are not applicable to covering general debts, we are at a deficit of \$468M.

This is approx \$1518 of debt per resident of our city. Let that sink in please...If each resident of our city were asked to pay up for a one time assessment so the city could have assets that equal our liabilities, we each (including our kids) would be writing a check to the city for \$1518. This \$1518 would not be used to provide additional services to our residents such as fixing streets, improving parks, or increasing public safety but instead would just get us on sound footing. That \$1518 would be every resident regardless of their ability to pay including those who are already struggling to find housing, feed their families, and meet general every day needs.

So, when we focus on current Revenue covering our Spending, which seems to be true right now, this is just one part of the picture...the bigger picture shows we are in debt. Now a lot of our fellow cities are also in debt though too but that should not make us feel any better IMO. As of 6/30/21 (I have not looked at the 6/30/22 financials for each city), there are 17 cities in Orange County that actually have per capita surpluses meaning their unrestricted net position from government activities is positive. For example, residents of Cypress each have approx \$1800 of surplus, Irvine approx \$1400 surplus, Tustin \$1300. These are cities whose residents are not in debt just because of where they live. These are cities that can choose to make investments in services and capital. The other 17 cities are in debt. Santa Ana is 31 out of 34 on that list...Brea, Anaheim, and Costa Mesa all have higher per capital deficits than Santa Ana but just imagine if we had a goal to erode that deficit year by year and ultimately be one of the cities that has a surplus. When we say we want to be a top city in the county, we need to have our financial status reflect that also.

The city made progress in reducing its deficit during the FYE June 30, 2022 which is great to see but that likely was due to a favorable stock/bond market impacting the pension obligations which we may find that flipping in future years due to the more recent markets especially when combined with a looming/lingering recession and inflationary pressures.

Our city needs to make progress in reducing its deficit balance of our unrestricted net position. The vast majority of our city's deficit appears to be generated by our pension obligations and retiree benefits (OPEB plan). We have committed to pay benefits, including pension, to our city workers that we have not funded. We do not have the cash on hand to pay these obligations currently. We have committed to this yet we will be using future revenue to pay for these obligations. We need to start making progress, in a meaningful and large way, in reducing our deficit net position otherwise we are committing to spending future revenue and further burdening our residents now and into the future.

I suggest that our council do the following:

1. Direct staff to provide further detail on our deficit balance in the unrestricted net position for governmental activities. Essentially, educate our residents and other leaders about the current financial position of the city. Our focus is usually on our Revenue and Spending, which is appropriate on a year by year basis, but the future is just as important and to be truly thriving city, the long term needs to be addressed also.
2. Direct staff to come up with a plan to reduce the deficit balance into a neutral position or even a surplus over time. Nothing will happen overnight but if nothing is done presently, we will be in even more of surprise in the future. A start is needed and that start needs to be done now.

3. Direct staff to come up with a savings plan built into the current budget to implement the plan in #2 above. Yes, this means that we will need to increase revenue and control spending. We need to fund the liabilities that we have accrued yet have not funded.
4. If council feels that using continually having a deficit net position is acceptable, then the public should know...flat out tell us. Are we OK in being one of the lowest financially stable cities? Again, let's be transparent about it if we are...if we are not, then let's come up with a plan to improve...year by year.

The above information can be seen in the city's June 30, 2022 Financial Statements on page 27 (See picture below...this is the summary in millions) and the second picture is the detailed Statement of Net Position on page 41. Many will focus on the Total Net Position but as discussed above, this included restricted net position and the net investment in capital assets. The more appropriate measure is the unrestricted net position.

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

**City of Santa Ana
Statement of Net Position**

	Governmental Activities		Business-type Activities		Total	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Assets:						
Cash and investments	\$ 457.4	\$ 376.6	\$ 86.8	\$ 95.9	\$ 544.2	\$ 472.5
Current and other assets	194.3	181.7	17.4	14.9	211.7	196.6
Capital assets	1,031.4	1,008.2	157.5	142.5	1,188.9	1,150.7
Total assets	1,683.1	1,566.5	261.7	253.3	1,944.8	1,819.8
Deferred outflows of resources:						
Unamortized loss on bond defeasance	2.1	2.9	0.1	0.2	2.2	3.1
Deferred amounts on pension plans	497.7	81.2	20.0	4.4	517.7	85.6
Deferred amounts on OPEB plan	4.3	2.6	0.7	0.4	5.0	3.0
Total deferred outflows of resources	504.1	86.7	20.8	5.0	524.9	91.7
Liabilities:						
Long-term liabilities	576.9	178.3	30.5	14.9	607.4	193.2
Net pension liability	480.1	667.6	18.7	34.9	498.8	702.5
Total OPEB liability	46.9	47.7	7.6	7.5	54.5	55.2
Other liabilities	225.9	171.8	16.8	12.7	242.7	184.5
Total liabilities	1,329.8	1,065.4	73.6	70.0	1,403.4	1,135.4
Deferred inflows of resources:						
Deferred amounts on pension plans	160.2	-	10.8	-	171.0	-
Deferred amounts on OPEB plan	5.9	3.3	1.0	0.5	6.9	3.8
Deferred amounts on leases	6.2	-	0.4	-	6.6	-
Total deferred inflows of resources	172.3	3.3	12.2	0.5	184.5	3.8
Net position:						
Net investment in capital assets	941.9	909.6	141.3	129.3	1,083.2	1,038.9
Restricted	211.6	208.4	2.5	1.8	214.1	210.2
Unrestricted	(468.4)	(533.5)	52.9	56.7	(415.5)	(476.8)
Total net position	\$ 685.1	\$ 584.5	\$ 196.7	\$ 187.8	\$ 881.8	\$ 772.3

Statement of Net Position
June 30, 2022

	Governmental Activities	Business-Type Activities	Total
Assets:			
Cash and investments	\$ 447,185,233	\$ 85,815,343	\$ 533,000,576
Receivables:			
Taxes	5,373,847	-	5,373,847
Interest	907,011	198,804	1,105,815
Accounts, net of allowances	4,890,040	16,683,629	21,573,669
Intergovernmental	80,170,835	-	80,170,835
Leases	6,343,255	483,356	6,826,611
Loans and notes	87,993,725	-	87,993,725
Deposits	10,300	-	10,300
Inventory of supplies	597,116	-	597,116
Prepaid items	265,421	-	265,421
Restricted assets:			
Cash and investments	7,024,980	965,540	7,990,520
Cash and investments with fiscal agents	2,670,152	-	2,670,152
Pension stability fund	523,156	-	523,156
Land held for resale	7,775,641	-	7,775,641
Capital assets, not being depreciated	660,383,477	29,951,865	690,335,342
Capital assets, being depreciated, net of accumulated depreciation	361,454,189	127,631,129	489,085,318
Leased assets, being amortized, net of accumulated amortization	9,550,755	-	9,550,755
Total assets	1,683,119,133	261,729,666	1,944,848,799
Deferred outflows of resources:			
Unamortized loss on bond defeasance	2,097,249	126,397	2,223,646
Deferred amounts on pension plans	497,662,838	20,016,360	517,679,198
Deferred amounts on OPEB plan	4,294,654	698,412	4,993,066
Total deferred outflows of resources	504,054,741	20,841,169	524,895,910
Liabilities:			
Accounts payable	21,796,276	14,510,767	36,307,043
Interest payable	4,660,219	344,986	5,005,205
Retention payable	1,488,667	801,250	2,289,917
Due to city employees	6,530,639	-	6,530,639
Due to other governmental agencies	58,608,791	-	58,608,791
Deposits	6,888,437	1,172,942	8,061,379
Unearned revenue	125,813,597	-	125,813,597
Long-term liabilities- due within one year	25,954,209	1,648,075	27,602,284
Total OPEB liability- due within one year	1,443,356	297,623	1,740,979
Claims payable- due within one year	9,600,000	-	9,600,000
Due in more than one year:			
Long-term liabilities	498,957,168	28,830,488	527,787,656
Net pension liability	480,076,589	18,733,051	498,809,640
Total OPEB liability	45,482,846	7,333,714	52,816,560
Claims payable	42,361,080	-	42,361,080
Total liabilities	1,329,661,874	73,672,896	1,403,334,770
Deferred inflows of resources:			
Deferred amounts on pension plans	160,256,078	10,783,804	171,039,882
Deferred amounts on OPEB plan	5,926,119	963,733	6,889,852
Deferred amounts on leases	6,186,242	463,987	6,650,229
Total deferred inflows of resources	172,368,439	12,211,524	184,579,963
Net Position:			
Net investment in capital assets	941,900,878	141,332,453	1,083,233,331
Restricted for:			
Debt service	94,049	-	94,049
Capital projects	58,014,677	-	58,014,677
National pollution discharge elimination system	-	2,453,629	2,453,629
Community Development	7,807,162	-	7,807,162
Community Services & Planning	505,966	-	505,966
Recreation & Community Services	2,632,004	-	2,632,004
Public Safety	5,253,386	-	5,253,386
Public Works	104,064,087	-	104,064,087
Special revenue housing authority projects	32,737,485	-	32,737,485
Pension stability	523,156	-	523,156
Unrestricted	(468,389,289)	52,900,333	(415,488,956)
Total net position	\$ 685,143,561	\$ 196,686,415	\$ 881,829,976

See accompanying Notes to the Basic Financial Statements.

Further to illustrate the above, I point you to Truth In Accounting's analysis of the City of Santa Ana in the "Financial State of the Cities 2023" report found here: <https://www.truthinaccounting.org/library/doclib/FSOC-2023.pdf> Their analysis ranks us as #50 out of the 75 largest cities in the US. They utilize a similar analysis as I have above in trying to determine the city's ability to pay its bills. I believe that their most recent study is based on the 6/30/21

information. Based on the 6/30/21 financials, it puts our deficit (money needed to pay bills) at \$565M which is close, although not exactly at, the unrestricted net position balance at the same period per the above. Their breakdown is useful, although because of pandemic funds and an increasing investment market, our 6/30/22 I expect will be better. Truth in Accounting grades us as a D....and at 50th in the nation out of 75 (#1 is best btw).

Even though I say that each resident's share of the city's deficit is about \$1500, they have it pegged at \$5600. Their population basis is only those in the city that have a positive federal tax burden per the IRS. I believe for our city, that reducing the spread of the burden from about 300K people to only about 100K people. I personally think that is not appropriate to spread the city debt burden across all residents though for a city especially because our city revenue is driven more by sales tax, property taxes, and other non-income tax related items. The theme is the same though...each of us is in debt and we don't even know it.

Here is their analysis of our city:

Santa Ana, CA

Earned 'D' Grade for Fiscal Health

The Truth

Money Needed to Pay Bills **\$565.7 million**

Taxpayer Burden **\$5,600**

Financial Grade **D**

Ranking **50 out of 75**



Financial State of Santa Ana

After the Covid-pandemic, in part due to federal government stimulus money, Santa Ana's financial condition appeared to improve. Despite apparent improvements, Santa Ana had a Taxpayer Burden™ of \$5,600, earning it a "D" grade from Truth in Accounting.

Santa Ana's financial problems stem mostly from unfunded retirement obligations that have accumulated over the years. Unfortunately, the amounts of unfunded pension and retiree health care benefits used by Santa Ana and in this report were the same as 2020, because newer data could not be found. The outdated numbers used do not reflect the unusual market gains experienced by CALPers in 2021. In 2022, the city had set aside only 68 cents for every dollar of promised pension benefits and had no money set aside for promised retiree health care benefits.

Santa Ana's elected officials have repeatedly made financial decisions that left the city with a debt burden of \$565.7 million. That burden came to \$5,600 for every city taxpayer. In 2022, markets produced negative market returns and federal COVID relief waned. These conditions may increase the per taxpayer Tax Burden. Santa Ana could struggle to maintain current levels of government services and benefits without further negative impact on its financial health.

The data included in this report is derived from Santa Ana's 2021 audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and retirement plans' reports. To compare prior years and other cities' financial, demographic, and economic information, go to Data-Z.org.

February 2023

www.truthinaccounting.org

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Santa Ana's Financial Breakdown

Fast Facts

- Santa Ana needed \$565.7 million to pay its bills.
- This means each taxpayer would have to pay \$5,600 in future taxes for which they would receive no related services or benefits.
- Santa Ana's unfunded pension and retiree health care amounts did not change because new valuations could not be found.

The City's Bills Exceeded Its Assets

Total Assets	\$1,819,859,000
Minus: Capital Assets	-\$1,150,707,000
Restricted Assets	-\$210,213,000
Assets Available to Pay Bills	\$458,939,000
Minus: Total Bills*	-\$1,024,646,000
Money Needed to Pay Bills	\$565,707,000
Each Taxpayer's Share of this Burden	\$5,600

*Breakdown of Total Bills

Bonds	\$73,947,000
Other Liabilities	\$303,780,000
Minus: Debt Related to Capital Assets	-\$111,794,000
Unfunded Pension Benefits	\$703,312,000
Unfunded Retiree Health Care Benefits	\$55,401,000
Total Bills	\$1,024,646,000

Grade:

D

Bottom line: Santa Ana would need \$5,600 from each of its taxpayers to pay all of its bills, so it has received a "D" for its finances. According to Truth in Accounting's grading scale, any government with a Taxpayer Burden between \$5,000 and \$20,000 receives a "D" grade.

Truth in Accounting is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to educating and empowering you with understandable, reliable, and transparent government financial information so you can be a knowledgeable participant in your government and its budget process.

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Here are a couple of interesting pages from the same Truth in Accounting report that is related to our city's situation also:

Introduction & Background

All of the 75 cities we analyze have balanced budget requirements, which are in place to avert future financial difficulties and to enhance accountability. As the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) points out, these requirements are “to require financing and spending practices that enable governmental entities to avoid financial difficulty and to live within their means.”

Another objective of balanced budget requirements is accountability; elected officials should be accountable for the tax dollars they spend. Former U.S. Treasury official Frank Cavanaugh said it best, “Politicians should not have the pleasure of spending (getting votes) without the pain of taxing (losing votes).”

By definition, if a city has a balanced budget requirement, then spending should not exceed earned revenue brought in during a specific year. Balanced budget requirements are meant to prevent elected officials from shifting the burden of paying for current-year services onto future-year taxpayers.

So how can cities claim their budgets are balanced while our report shows many of them are in debt? The answer is in the accounting tricks used to calculate budgets.

Municipalities balance budgets by using accounting tricks such as the following:

- Inflating revenue assumptions
- Counting borrowed money as income
- Understating the true costs of government
- Delaying the payment of current bills until the start of the next fiscal year so they aren't included in the calculations

The most common accounting trick cities use is to hide employee benefits such as healthcare, life insurance, and pensions, from the current budgeting process by not acknowledging they exist. Cities become obligated to pay for these benefits as employees earn them. Although these retirement benefits will not be paid until the employees retire, they still represent current compensation costs because they were earned and incurred throughout the employees' tenure. Furthermore, that money must be put into the retirement fund to accumulate investment earnings. Unfortunately, some elected officials have used portions of the money owed to pension and OPEB funds to keep taxes low and pay for politically popular programs. Instead of funding promised benefits now, they have been charged to future taxpayers. Shifting these payments to future taxpayers allows the budget to appear balanced while city debt is increasing.

Governments are able to accumulate debt while claiming balanced budgets because the vast majority of budgets are prepared on the cash-basis. This is an antiquated accounting method that includes cash inflows, including loan proceeds as revenue, and outflows—in other words, only checks written.

We recommend FACT-based budgeting and accounting, which stands for full accrual calculations and techniques (FACT). FACT-based budgeting and accounting moves beyond cash-basis to provide more reliable and truthful budgeting and financial reporting documents.

This is the motivation and foundation for the nonpartisan mission of TIA: to educate and empower citizens with understandable, reliable, and transparent government financial information. TIA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan organization composed of business, community, and academic leaders interested in improving government financial reporting. TIA makes no policy recommendations beyond improvements to budgeting and accounting practices that will enhance the public's understanding of government finances.

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Pensions & Market Volatility

A government's Net Pension Liability is calculated by subtracting the market value of its pension plan assets from the estimated amount of promised benefits. When using the market value of pension plan assets, the Net Pension Liability will fluctuate based upon market conditions. Some argue that because Net Pension Liability is a component of a government's Net Position (assets minus liabilities), fluctuations in market values would result in great volatility in the Net Position. To avoid such fluctuations, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board allows governments to amortize the fluctuation in market values over time.

Truth in Accounting believes that the Net Position should not be shielded from market fluctuations. Users of the financial report, especially taxpayers, need to understand the reality of pension plan investments. We highlight that reporting, including the market value in the pension liability, does not cause great volatility in a government's Net Position. Reality does. Taxpayers need to understand this volatility and the risk taken on by governments, which in turn is a risk to taxpayers.

Therefore, our money needed to pay bills is calculated using the market value of pension assets without any amortization of the unrealized gains in market value. We found that for most cities in fiscal year 2021 pension assets* increased dramatically, because of strong markets. The resulting pension liability and money needed to pay bills decreased equally dramatically.

In reviewing cities whose pension plans' financial reports for fiscal year 2022 were available, we usually found that these unrealized gains either dropped greatly or switched to unrealized losses. Therefore, we suspect that cities' pension liabilities and money needed to pay bills will increase when we issue our next Financial State of the Cities.

In fact, in some cities we found that the dramatic gains of 2021 resulted in their pension plans appearing to be overfunded, but investment losses in 2022 brought their pension plans back to an underfunded status. For example, on June 30, 2020, Los Angeles Fire and Police Pension System reported a Net Pension Liability of \$2.57 billion. In fiscal year 2021 its pension assets experienced unrealized gains of 32.56% which caused the pension system to appear to be overfunded by \$2.7 billion. In fiscal year 2022 the funds' pension asset values experienced unrealized losses of 7.23%, which played a large part in bringing the system back to an underfunded status with a Net Pension Liability of \$648.8 million.

This highlights the volatility and risk surrounding pension plan assets and corresponding pension liabilities. Taxpayers can only hope that when pension plan investments need to be sold to pay for benefits, the market value of those investments will be high. If not, taxpayers will be on the hook to pay higher taxes to cover the promised benefits.

As in the case of a few cities, pension plans should be overfunded during market upturns, so they can weather downturns in the market. Elected officials may see this temporary, unrealized overfunded status as an opportunity to reduce pension contributions and/or increase benefits. Such actions are not advisable, because of future downturns in the markets, as happened in 2022. The 2022 downturn is switching many overfunded pension plans back into an underfunded position.

* For many cities prior year (2020) amounts were used to calculate their pension liability, including the market value of pension assets. When Truth in Accounting researchers could find the 2021 year numbers, we used those numbers for our 2021 calculations. Because of the high market valuations that occurred in 2021, the use of outdated numbers greatly affected the cities' pension liability numbers.

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I hope that you find the above information useful for your discussion tonight and in the future. I believe that our city Finance Dept is great btw. I don't think they are trying to hide things or are playing accounting tricks (some of the Truth in Accounting language above implies that). We are fortunate that we have a great finance team which also provides me hope that they can help be part of the solution here with your guidance. Thank you for each of your attention to our city. Your time is much appreciated.

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Orozco, Norma

From: Debbi Dickinson <debbi@dslextreme.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 12:34 PM
To: eComment
Subject: Comments for today's meeting
Attachments: Santa Ana meeting.pdf

Please accept my comments regarding the HUGE need for a low cost spay/neuter service for Santa Ana. I will also be calling in to speak.

Thank you,

Debbi Hammil

Spay/Neuter/Vaccine and Medical Expenses by two Independent trappers, one cat networker in Santa Ana alone since the closing of OCAC due to Covid.

2020

30 cats

\$8,309

2021

238 cats

\$15,166

Only 31 of these cats were TNR'd. All others were networked to rescues and a majority were kittens that found rescues that then incurred the spay/neuter and vetting costs.

2022

130 cats

\$15,192

2023 ytd

52 cats

\$5,368

These numbers are only down because we have so few places to get kitties fixed. In 2020, we had 5-6 vets that would do low cost spay neuter. Today we have to go to LA or Riverside County to get low cost.

Due to this, the county most particularly Santa Ana, will be over-run with homeless animals. We will start looking like a third world country.

Even a rescue I volunteer for, have lost their three vets they have used for 15 years for Spay/neutering.

Orange County has NO truly LOW COST spay/neuter facilities. The few reasonable vets or vets that accepted vouchers offered by animal welfare agencies, stopped taking or limiting acceptance of feral cats for spay/neuter.

LA County, San Diego County and Riverside County – less affluent counties than Orange County, all have these services.

OUTCOME:

Animal owners can not afford to spay/neuter their pets. People who feed feral/community cats can not afford the cost to spay/neuter. Hence, the cat

population has exploded in Orange County.

This has left the burden of managing these colonies up to independent trappers who spend hours after working their full-time jobs trapping. They also spend their own money to fix, vaccinate and vet these cats.

Prior to COVID, OCAC had a RTF (return to field) program for feral and community cats. It was paid for and sponsored by Stray Cat Alliance. OCAC shut it down. Last year another organization offered to sponsor and pay for a RTF program if it could be hosted at OCAC. OCAC turned it down.

OCAC has continually told people who have brought in found, unfixed cats, to return them to where they were found, UNFIXED.

When OCAC has taken in kittens, they immediately put them on the Euthanasia list and guilt rescues to take them in causing rescues to be so overwhelmed and running out of funds to care for all these cats.

OCAC fosters who step up to foster these euth-listed kittens, are given no supplies to care for them. When they take in bottle babies, they are told they will take back and fix once eating on their own and weighing 2 pounds. Now they are being required to hold for 3 months before the shelter will take back. This doesn't allow these fosters to take in more high risk kittens.

In addition, anyone going to the shelter to pick up kittens to foster or return kittens for vet checks, are required to sit inside their cars and sometimes wait an hour for the kittens to be picked up and returned to them – many times seeing the shelter worker pull up in their car to come in to do that job. No one seems to be on site working at the shelter yet the budget shows they are still being paid.

I can only speak to the treatment or lack of treatment for the cat community. I have heard just as horrid stories for the dogs.

With 17 cities tax dollars going to this beautiful \$35 million facility, why has there been no audit of their practices? How can they claim to be operating this way do to Covid when most business has fully resumed business as usual?

Orozco, Norma

From: Margot Boyer <margotboyer0@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 1:43 PM
To: eComment
Subject: Latest Reports on OC Animal Care!!
Attachments: OCAC Summary Bad Data.pdf; OCAC Wrong Numbers and No Plan.pdf; OCAC bad Data on Bites.pdf; OCAC bad Data on Animal Counts.pdf; OCAC BOS-Approved 2018 Strategic Plan.pdf

Dear Committee

I have attached a number of reports written by Michael Mavrovouniotis, who up until recently was a volunteer at the OCAC shelter until he was fired after producing reports that demonstrated that the OCAC figures were completely incorrect.

Michael is from MIT and has spent his entire career analyzing data, first in academia and then in an investment form.

It is important that management from Santa Ana council know of the incorrect data that is being produced by OCAC and where the tax payers spend their money and to consider if you want to change what your budget should be spent on.

For example, the OCAC is not open to the public, if the public wishes to see an animal then they have to make an appointment first and only see 2 animals.

Is that considered open in your eyes and what you want for all the money spent each year?

As a consequence to the shelter being shut and not open to the public more animals are being euthanized.

Please read these comprehensive and accurate reports that have been comprised from data provided by OCAC.

Thank you.

Margot Boyer

Excuse my typos. I'm typing this from my phone!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Margot Boyer <margotboyer0@gmail.com>
Date: June 6, 2023 at 10:56:22 AM PDT
To: Destiny Torres <dtorres@scng.com>
Subject: Fwd: Latest Reports on OC Animal Care!!

Hey Destiny.

You might find this useful!

These reports have been taken from the OC Shelters own statistics.

It's just awful and total proof of what is happening there.

Margot Boyer

Excuse my typos. I'm typing this from my phone!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Michael Mavrovouniotis <michaelmavrovouniotis@gmail.com>
Date: June 6, 2023 at 10:04:11 AM PDT
To: Michael Mavrovouniotis <michaelmavrovouniotis@gmail.com>
Subject: Latest Reports on OC Animal Care!!

Hello! You are receiving this email (bcc) because you are on my list of recipients for Reports on OC Animal Care. If you do not wish to receive these messages, please let me know.

I have now put all the Reports and supporting documents on a website:

<http://OCShelter.com>

At the bottom of the webpage, you'll see links to Box folders. The ones tagged as June 2023 are the new ones.

I will also go ahead and attach the key reports, though you'll have to go to the website for the supporting documents they reference. (I'm happy to email you everything, I just thought it would be confusing for the recipients.) Please feel free to disseminate all the reports, and contact me if you have any questions.

These are the key reports:

"OCAC Summary Bad Data.pdf" (~2 pages) is the recommended starting point. Structured in charts and bullet items, its main points are:

- OCAC Animal Bite Statistics are just plain WRONG. For more, see a separate report "OCAC bad Data on Bites.pdf" in the Bites folder.
- Animal counts from OCAC Shelter Animals Count data don't add up. See a separate report "OCAC bad Data on Animal Counts.pdf" in the Animal Count folder.
- OCAC's Strategic Plan has been tossed out. See the report "OCAC BOS-Approved 2018 Strategic Plan.pdf" in the Suppression of Strategic Plan folder.
- What should be done? On this last point, also consult the second summary document below, whose recommendations are more detailed.

"OCAC Wrong Numbers and No Plan.pdf" (~3 pages) is a wordier summary document that ties everything together, making references to the remaining documents from this release. It cites earlier studies on the rising kill rate, return rate, and length of stay, from the May 2023 studies "OCAC Summary.pdf" and "OCAC Details.pdf", which are still useful to review. It highlights new results on the misrepresentation of bites and the inconsistency of OCAC published statistics. It introduces the curiously neglected Strategic Plan, voted by the Board of Supervisors in 2018, and largely disdained and disregarded by OCAC and

OCCR in the 2020-2022 period under cover of the pandemic. Finally, it recommends actions that County administration and the Board of Supervisors can take to address the problem.

"OCAC bad Data on Bites.pdf" (~8 pages) is a report detailing the finding that OCAC and OCCR gave false numbers for the bites that occurred in OCAC in recent years. This is astounding, because OCAC/OCCR constantly used a supposed dramatic reduction in bites as the reason for continuing the pandemic-era policies. This report shows that this reduction is in fact much smaller. For bites by dogs, the report further documents that this effect is largely due to a change in the number and age distribution of shelter dogs. Once you account for the reduction in the number of dogs and the fact the average age went down, the difference becomes quite small.

"OCAC bad Data on Animal Counts.pdf" (~6 pages) details the discrepancies in the shelter's published statistics. If you start from their stated initial animal count, add intakes (animals that came in), and subtract outcomes (animals that left, alive or dead), you don't get their reported final count. It's as if, in your bank statement, the initial balance plus credits minus debits just doesn't equal the final balance. This is in direct violation of Industry Standards (documented in files below).

"OCAC BOS-Approved 2018 Strategic Plan.pdf" (~4 pages) is a quick preview of the BOS-approved 2018 Strategic Plan and its derailment and suppression by OC Animal Care and OC Community Resources. Notably, the Strategic Plan required:

- All qualified dogs in daily playgroups.
- 100% Tracking of animal enrichment activities
- Reduction in average length of stay

More extensive study and a future report are needed. But the BOS and the county should reaffirm and implement it as quickly as possible.

Summary - OCAC Animal Care: Bad Data & No Plan

Orange County Animal Care (OCAC) and Orange County Community Resources (OCCR) are pulling numbers out of thin air.

- The animal bite statistics reported by them are fictional.
- Their “industry standard” statistics on the OCAC website have animals appearing and disappearing when you do a basic check of the numbers.

Can any of their data and “facts” be trusted?

The Strategic Plan for OCAC has been tossed out the window by OCCR without consultation with stakeholders, experts, or the Board of Supervisors. The Strategic Plan requires:

- Daily playgroups for both large and small dogs.
- Tracking 100% of animal enrichment activities.
- Reduction in average length of stay.

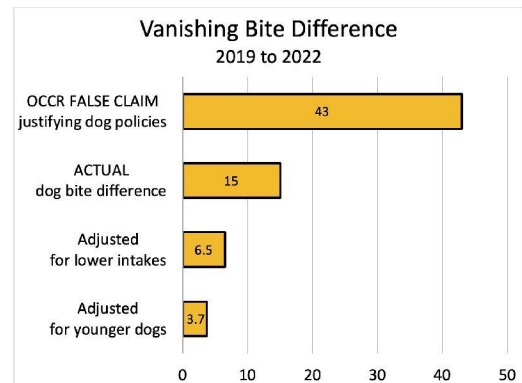
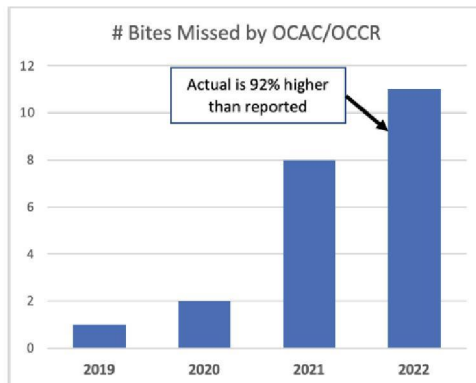
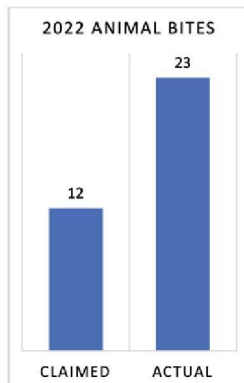
None of these things are happening. What plan are OCAC/OCCR using?

An external audit of OCAC’s data gathering, data analysis, and fact compilations is in order. In addition, there should be an investigation of how and why OCAC and OCCR:

- Misled the public with their “facts”.
- Discarded and buried their strategic plan.

OCAC Animal Bite Statistics are just plain WRONG

The animal bite statistics provided by OCAC/OCCR are fictional. For example, in 2022, their tables show that only 12 animal bites occurred. But there were at least 23 animal bites at OCAC (almost double the number they reported) in the county-wide bite database and we have the reports.



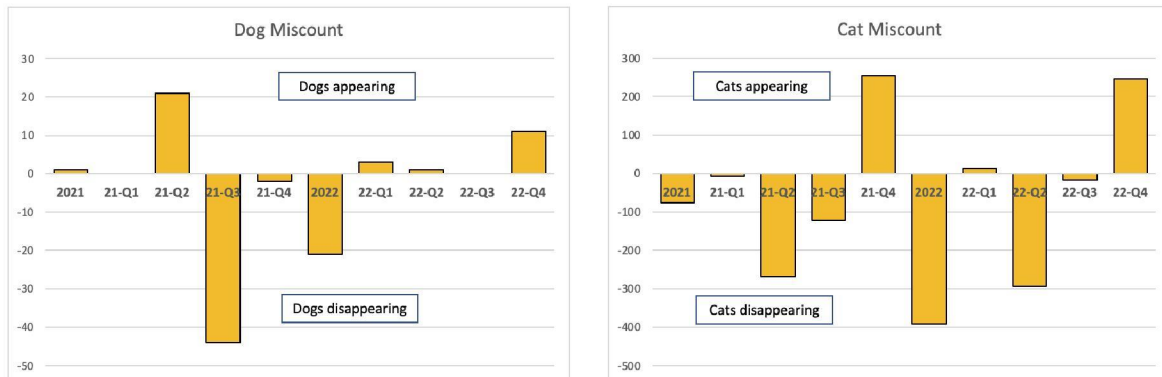
If you look at the bite reports, there were 19 DOG bites alone in 2022. The reduction in dog bites from 34 in 2019 to 19 in 2022 can mostly be explained by the reduction in intakes and changing dog demographics. OCAC had more older dogs in 2019 and older dogs are more likely to bite.

How did OCAC/OCCR get their numbers so wrong? Did they purposely falsify their animal bite statistics to justify their policies? Or were they just grossly incompetent? Or perhaps both?

Animal counts from OCAC Shelter Animals Count data don't add up

When asked about data, OCAC/OCCR refer to their “industry standard” statistics on the OCAC website. But the animal counts given on their website don't add up. If you look at the number of animals at the start of the period, add the number coming in, and subtract the number going out, you should get the final count. This is part of the Shelter Animals Count and Asilomar standards.

If you do this basic check on OCAC's 2021 & 2022 year-end data as well as on the quarterly data, the number of dogs and cats at the end of the periods aren't what you would expect. Animals are appearing or disappearing unaccounted for by their data.



How can OCAC get their animal counts so wrong? Do they not understand how to do their books? Are they as careless with their fiscal accounting as they are with their animal accounting?

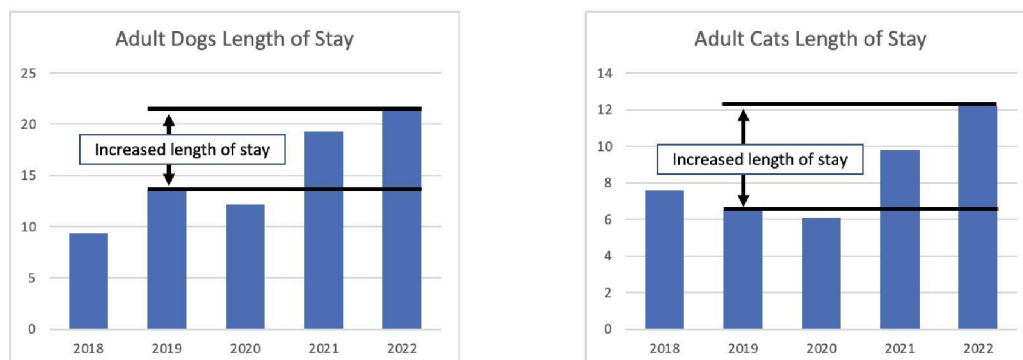
OCAC's Strategic Plan has been tossed out

A Strategic Plan for OCAC was created when the new shelter was built with the full participation of animal-sheltering experts, county staff, and the community. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved the Strategic Plan on May 18, 2018.

In 2020, the goals and metrics set out by the Strategic Plan were tossed aside without consultation with stakeholders, experts, or the BOS. The Strategic Plan required daily playgroups for all qualified dogs, tracking of all animal enrichment activities, reduction in length of stay, and a lot more.

The reality for early 2023:

- Large dog playgroups virtually never happen, if we exclude isolated for-show instances when there was active scrutiny by the press. Small dog playgroups occur only 3 times a week.
- Out-of-kennel enrichment is not tracked.
- The average length of stay has steadily climbed from 2019 to 2022 for adult dogs and cats.



Have OCAC/OCCR created a secret strategic plan that has bites as the only metric? Why aren't care, enrichment, and speed of placement (key components of Strategic Priority #1) being tracked?

What should be done?

Restore good policies, do a thorough external audit, and implement the Strategic Plan.

OCAC Wrong Numbers and No Plan

Malignant Innumeracy

Most of the numbers OC Animal Care (OCAC) puts forward wither at the slightest scrutiny. A benign innumeracy might entail merely poor grasp of hard data, but OCAC also invents and distorts numbers and facts, and it actively resists high quality analysis and statistics. OCAC suffers from malignant innumeracy.

Oversight by OC Community Resources (OCCR) and upper county leadership has been superficial. Instead of identifying and remedying the problem, OCCR has enabled it - if not amplified it. OCAC built a Potemkin village. OCCR and county leadership did not look behind the façade. OCCR abetted the misrepresentations by acting as OCAC's advertising agency.

Previously, in the saga of OCAC

An earlier round of reports, headlined by "OCAC Summary.pdf" and "OCAC Details.pdf" already corrected a slew of OCAC's misrepresentations. Just three highlights:

- The kill rate rose in the 2020-2022 period, even though intakes are well below pre-pandemic levels.
- OCAC's Orwellian "Fact Check" brags about the low rate at which adopted animals were returned. In reality, the return rate was higher in 2022 than in any prior year.
- OCAC claims it maintains a low length of stay of 11 days. The real length of stay has been rising and, in 2022, reached about 20 days for dogs.

The earlier reports showed the impact of (on-going) pandemic-era policies on large dogs and proposed remedies. They fell on deaf ears. Suffering from malignant innumeracy, OCAC treats sound analysis with contempt or hostility, even as it is unable to produce a valid study of its own.

OCAC is refusing to talk about the length of stay or the return rates, because it can't refute them and they show its poor performance. The misleading metrics in its Orwellian "Fact Check" document have been exposed, so a code of silence is its only option.

The OCAC/OCCR primary talent is false advertising with invented metrics, telling pretty stories disconnected from the reality on the ground.

The OCAC Bite Statistics are Wrong

OCAC and OCCR make a show of caring deeply about the number of bites at the shelter. But not deeply enough to actually count them correctly. Or is it possible that they care too deeply, to the point of massaging the numbers to better fit a preconceived story?

The report "OCAC Bad Data on Bites.pdf" and its supporting documents show that **the number of bites is 92% higher than the OCAC/OCCR report for 2022**. The artificially low numbers of bites were used to justify dog-kennel policies - without even attempting to look specifically at dog bites. Apparently, OCAC/OCCR believe that *cat bites* matter for judging *dog adoption* procedures.

A simple study shows that **the frequency of dog bites depends on the age of the dog**. From 2019 to 2022 we saw not only a **drop in the number of dogs** (intakes or outcomes), but also a **shift to younger dogs**. **These two effects account for most of the change in the number of dog bites** between 2019 to 2022. Any credit given to procedure changes is preposterously inflated.

OCCR persistently obstructed PRAs over 3.5 months before the bite data was (fortuitously) obtained. Will OCAC and OCCR inform the county how they arrived at the erroneous numbers, dismal quality analysis, and flagrant misinterpretation - and why they covered their tracks? **Were bites just a ruse to justify the continuation of pandemic-era policies?**

The OCAC Animal Checkbook doesn't Balance

The OCAC never ceases to point to its published statistics which it claims are "Industry Standard" and "transparent". **But a simple consistency check of the OCAC's statistics revealed that its animal accounts don't balance.** If you start from their stated initial animal count, add intakes (animals that came in), and subtract outcomes (animals that left, alive or dead), you don't get their reported final

count. It's as if, in your bank statement, the initial balance plus credits minus debits just doesn't equal the final balance.

The report, "OCAC bad Data on Animal Counts.pdf" and its companion documents show the pervasiveness of the mysterious appearance and disappearance of animals from the shelter's accounting. **The discrepancies violate "Industry Standards" and any semblance of "transparency"**. How can it be that, **in the entire OCAC/OCCR hierarchy nobody even took note of the discrepancy?**

OCAC is Suppressing its Strategic Plan

Pop quiz:

- Did you know there is a Strategic Plan for OCAC?
- That it was put together with the full participation of animal-sheltering experts, county staff, and the community?
- That it was approved by the BOS in 2018?

This Strategic Plan was so well hidden that we only found about it at in the last week of May. It's nowhere to be found on the OCAC and county websites. Even a cursory glance reveals why: The goals and metrics set out by the Strategic Plan were quietly cast aside (or thrown with great force) in 2020. For all that and more read the preview report "OCAC BOS-Approved 2018 Strategic Plan.pdf".

The Strategic Plan required daily play groups for large dogs as well as small ones. It required 100% tracking of animal enrichment activities. **It required reduction of Length Of Stay** (the very metric our first reports documented and OCAC/OCCR refuse to even study.)

One would think that the Strategic Plan would be prominently displayed on the shelter's website. It is nowhere to be found. It was procured only by a PRA. Is this a rather implausible oversight, or **did OCAC/OCCR hide the Strategic Plan because they did not intend to abide by it?** What is certain is that OCAC/OCCR overthrew the Strategic Plan without consultation with stakeholders, experts, or the BOS.

The Strategic Plan has spent too much time in the shadows. It was practically buried without a funeral. It's time for the BOS to restore it as OCAC's guiding document.

OCCR is Part of the Problem

Consider the totality of OCAC's misrepresentations, including the inconsistent statistics and the flat-out wrong bite counts. Consider the performance decline documented in the previous reports. Instead of intervening to identify and solve problems, OCCR devoted its energies on PR to cover up the shelter's shortcomings. It resisted outside information - as recently as in the last month. For several months it denied access to the data on bites that exposed OCAC/OCCR disinformation. If just a fraction of the PR effort had been directed at getting the facts, the county's animals and citizens would have been better served.

It is reasonable to ask whether OCCR played an active or passive role in the misrepresentations. For example, it is difficult to imagine that the bite-count slide was believed unchallenged. It is equally difficult to understand how OCCR could ignore multiple efforts by citizens to inform it of the realities of the shelter. It seems that OCCR contrived a sequence of ever-changing arguments to justify policies that were decided for other reasons. Perhaps it was just to save money, but it didn't even do that. Longer stays raise costs. This falls way short of the high standards citizens and elected officials expect of Orange County agencies.

Need for Action

In 2022, OCAC received fewer incoming animals than in 2019 (i.e., pre-pandemic), yet it experienced higher kill rates, higher return rates, longer stays, and higher inventory which led to higher costs and declining level of care. In 2023 this poor performance is exacerbated by an external factor, a large increase in intakes.

The OCAC Strategic Plan was put together with the guidance of top-notch experts and input from the community, and was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2018. It laid out a plan for the new

shelter. Under cover of pandemic, OCAC and OCCR management steered a course away from this Strategic Plan. In most goals and metrics laid out by the Strategic Plan, OCAC is failing spectacularly. Worse, it's not even trying to meet them.

The Board of Supervisors can remedy the situation by:

- **Confirming that the Strategic Plan approved in 2018 is still valid.**
- **Instructing County staff to take steps towards its rapid implementation.**

Given the accumulated errors of OCAC/OCCR, proper implementation of the Strategic Plan should involve:

- *An external audit of OCAC's data-gathering, data-analysis, and fact compilations*
- *An investigation of how and why OCAC and OCCR misled the public.*

In the interim, county leaders should instruct OCAC to state unequivocally that, until the audits can be completed, it does not have faith in its Bite Statistics, the inconsistent Animal Counts, the so-called Fact Check document, and all other metrics it has used in presentations to the public and the BOS.

In order for OCAC/OCCR to demonstrate the bare minimum of good intentions:

- OCAC needs to **address the socialization needs of dogs** by instituting daily playgroups for small dogs and large dogs, as set forth in the strategic plan. It should commit to socializing the majority of large dogs. It should meticulously document this activity.
- OCAC should immediately **return to the freer pre-pandemic adoption procedures for most of its hours of operation.** The kennel area should be open to visitors a minimum of 4 days a week, including one weekend day. Modest adjustments can create a welcoming environment for all types of visitors.

The citizens of Orange County can make up their own mind about assigning responsibility. Those of us that have the skills and inclination will watch, collect more data, and delve into as-yet-unexplored areas of the shelter's data.. We can update all graphs and tables on a quarterly basis. To this end, OCAC and OCCR should commit to **fulfilling all data requests speedily and transparently.**

The truth about the number of bites in 2018-2022

Faced with any analysis or recommendations, OC Animal Care (OCAC) and OC Community Resources (OCCR), always turn the discussion to safety, i.e., bites. A key slide that shows the number of bites at the shelter each year is present most presentations by OCAC/OCCR. The slide is shown below.


OCAC and OCCR are proud of the very low number of bites in the 2020-2022 period. You would think they assembled these statistics (just double-digit numbers annually) carefully. There are many of ways to do this:

- *Put the bite reports in a file drawer, and hand-count them at the end of the year.*
- *Enter them in a calendar.*
- *Instruct staff to flag the bite reports with a hashtag.*
- *Or, lacking all foresight, spend a modicum of effort to sort through the data and count.*

As it becomes evident below, OCAC and OCCR took none of these steps. **The numbers they present in the slide are, like so many of their numbers and assertions, fictional.**

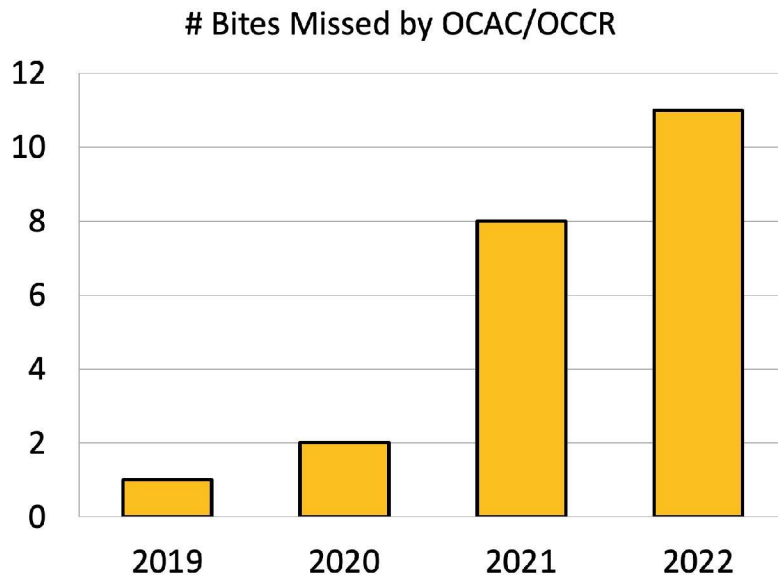
In effect, **nobody knows with certainty how many bites occurred at the shelter in each recent year.** Not OCAC, not OCCR, not the Supervisors, not the public. But we do know one thing: The bite statistics presented by OCAC/OCCR are wrong by a wide margin.

ANIMAL BITES STATISTICS at OC Animal Care				
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
9 bites to employees	20 bites to employees	16 bites to employees	4 bites to employees	6 bites to employees
6 bites to volunteers	12 bites to volunteers	0 bites to volunteers	4 bites to volunteers	2 bites to volunteers
2 bites to members of public	23 bites to members of public	7 bites to members of public	3 bites to members of public	4 bites to members of public
TOTAL 17	TOTAL 55	TOTAL 23	TOTAL 11	TOTAL 12

 OC Animal Care

What is the true number of bites?

The saga of the PRAs and OCCR's resistance are detailed in an Appendix at the end of this report. The first PRAs were met with an assertion that no records are available! OCCR avoided full disclosure for over three months. A total of 3 databases (not consistent among them) were obtained only after a cascade of PRAs. Two were supposed to be specific to bites occurring in the shelter. One was the master database of all bites in the county, from PRA 23-296 submitted for unknown reasons by an unknown requestor.



These give three close, but not identical, counts by year. **ALL THREE show that the bites in any year EXCEPT 2019 are higher than the numbers reported by OCAC/OCCR.**

We cannot be absolutely certain about the correct numbers of bites. The most reliable source is the county-wide database. We extracted from this database the bites that occurred at the shelter's street address, using a variety of formulations for how the address can be written. (There were still dozens of entries with no address, and it is possible that some odd formulation of the address was overlooked.) **In a manual verification, the 2022 bites from this database all appear valid.**

OCAC/OCCR will tell you not to trust this report. But we are providing official documentation of the 2022 bites, in the PDF file "Bite Reports in OCAC 2022.pdf". A total of 23 bites occurred in OCAC in 2022. Official documents obtained via PRAs are included for all bites but the last one, B22-001727, represented by a printout from the county-wide bite database. (Official documents for this last bite have been requested.) We are also providing a CSV file of all the shelter bites for the 2018-2022 period, "Bites at OCAC Address.csv".

Based on our best efforts to extract the relevant records from the database, **the real number of bites for 2022 is 92% higher than what OCAC/OCCR reported.** The number for 2019 is only off by one. The number of bites missed by OCAC/OCCR is showing in a chart for the years 2019-2022. We left out 2018 because the magnitude of that correction is enormous. (The extravagant understatement of 2018 made only 2019 the baddie in the OCAC/OCCR slide, which raises the question of whether the OCAC/OCCR statistics were meant to pin the bites on policies followed by a specific previous Director.)

Here is a summary of the corrections that need to be made to OCAC/OCCR numbers in the 2018-2022 period:

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
OCAC/OCCR claim	17	55	23	11	12
Database Count	59	56	25	19	23
Pct correction	+347%	+2%	+9%	+73%	+92%

Conveniently, the 2019 number, used by OC as a baseline, is the only one almost correct. If it had been underestimated just like the others, OCAC/OCCR wouldn't get the favorable comparison they were looking for.

The OCAC/OCCR slide shown earlier is presented in an annotated form in the file "Bite Statistics - annotated.pdf". The annotation shows the correct numbers and the size of the error.

The number of bites is still lower in 2020-2022 than in 2019, BUT that's an apples-and-oranges comparison. **Compared to 2019, the 2020-2022 period had fewer intakes, fewer adoptions, less animal care staffing, and fewer volunteers.** (There was even a drop in county-wide bites.) Have OCAC/OCCR even considered the effects of these other factors on the number of bites? Not only did OCAC/OCCR present false data, they failed to carry out any analysis. **OCAC/OCCR didn't even grasp that you need to adjust the number of bites by, for example, the number of animals.**

An initial attempt at a more granular analysis immediately runs into problems. **There was disturbing negligence in collecting the data in the first place.** For example, a reasonable analysis would want to look at bites to children or to senior citizens; but the victim age is missing in a large number of cases. The bite_circumstance field is in most cases "OTHER" – not very useful. Staff are sometimes identified only by title, making it impossible to tell if the same staff are repeatedly suffering bites. Given these difficulties, a complete analysis of bite incidents will have to wait. But there is a basic adjustment we'll look at below to arrive at a fair comparison.

For Dog Bites, the Reduction is mostly Demographics

Cat programs and their modifications over time are not familiar to the author of this report. **In discussing policies specific to dogs (play groups, access to the kennel buildings), we have to focus on dog bites, not the total.** OCAC/OCCR didn't even achieve this simple feat of logic.

There were 34 bites by dogs in 2019, and 19 in 2022. This is already a far cry from OCAC's 55-to-12 wild claim.

But remember that, **compared to 2019, in 2022 there were fewer dog intakes, fewer dog adoptions, fewer kennel attendants, and fewer volunteers.** If we average two fiscal years to estimate one calendar year, the number of **Kennel Attendant dropped from 21 to 16.5; Senior Kennel Attendants from 5.5 to 4; and Volunteer hours dropped from roughly 22,000 to 16,000.**

To compare bites across years without an adjustment would be foolish.

Here we'll focus on adjusting by the number of dog intakes or adoptions. **Even the simplest adjustment by dog numbers makes the difference shrivel.** If we adjust the 2019 number by the number of dog intakes, i.e., multiply by the ratio of (2022 dog intakes) / (2019 dog intakes) it goes from 34 to 25.5, and **the 2019-2022 difference shrinks to just 6.5 bites per year.**

We can do an even better comparison by looking at the one piece of information that is almost always recorded in the bite database, **dog age.**

It turns out that the bite rate is strongly dependent on dog age. A large portion of the reduction in dog bites between 2019 and 2022 can be explained by a simple shift in the numbers and the age-distribution of shelter dogs. This will be shown via the Table "Dog Bites based on 2018-2022 Statistics". Each column represents an age bracket for dogs, in years. *(This table is derived from an animal database dump, and imperfections in this dump necessitate omitting a very small percentage of the entries. The effect on the analysis we are doing here is negligible.)* There is a small number of Unknown ages and the Total is also shown.

The Bites Countywide as well as the Bites at OCAC show the same trend: **More bites by older dogs.** (The only small difference is that bites in the youngest age bracket are somewhat more common countywide, possibly because, unlike in OCAC, young children can be bitten in the course of playing with puppies.) **The shelter dog population, whether measured as Intakes or as Adoptions plus Transfers, skews young,** with diminishing numbers in the upper age brackets.

Simply put, **a small fraction of dogs going through the shelter accounts for a large fraction of the bites.** Any shift in that fraction will have a strong effect on the expected number of bites.

To get the Bite Rate in the 2018-2022 period for a given age bracket, we compute the ratio of the number of bites divided by the number of Adoptions and Transfers (expressed as a percentage). Why? Because what we achieve at the shelter is Adoptions and Transfers, and bites are an undesirable penalty we pay. We could have used Intakes as the reference, but Intakes include a large number of Returned-to-Owner (RTO) dogs that are never handled by adopters, volunteers, and even most staff. Therefore, it's misleading to include them in this cost-benefit analysis. Still, the qualitative conclusion would be similar if we used Intakes.

Armed with this overall bite rate per age bracket, we can compare 2019 and 2022. For each year, we count the Adoptions and Transfers by age bracket, and multiply by the bite rate in each category; these are then added up in the Total column. We can compare the Expected Bites (Total) for each year to the Actual number of bites.

Dog Bites based on 2018-2022 Statistics

Age Bracket in Years	0-2	2-4	4-7	7+	Unkn	Total
Bites Countywide (Not Used)	1,194	967	1,782	2,418	0	6,361
Intakes (Not Used)	9,129	4,670	3,810	4,459	103	22,171
Outcome Adoption or Transfer	6,012	2,560	1,901	1,737	50	12,260
Bites at OCAC Address	8	19	37	52	0	116
Bite Rate per Adoption or Transfer	0.13%	0.74%	1.95%	2.99%	0.00%	
2019 Adoption or Transfer	1,427	737	549	444	10	3,167
2019 Expected Bites	1.9	5.5	10.7	13.3	0.0	31.3
2019 Actual Bites						34
2022 Adoption or Transfer	1,383	460	297	300	16	2,456
2022 Expected Bites	1.8	3.4	5.8	9.0	0.0	20.0
2022 Actual Bites						19

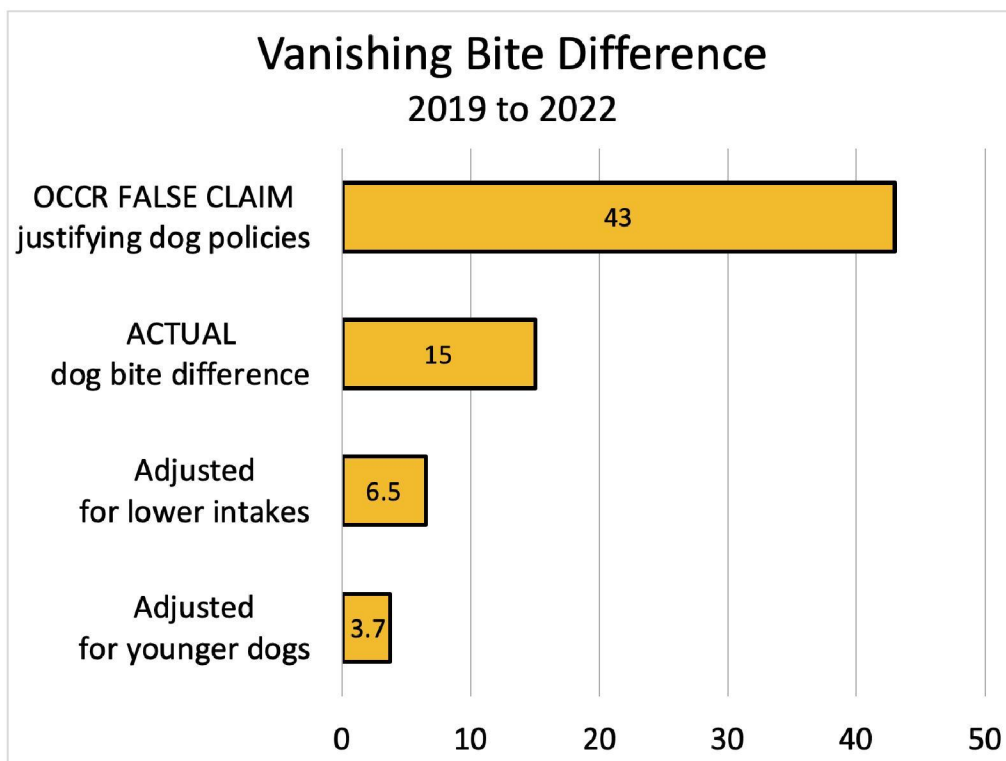
For 2019, 31.3 bites were expected, 34 occurred. For 2022, 20.0 bites were expected, 19 occurred. The Actual fell within a stone's throw of the Expected. That is to say, **the change in the number of dogs by age bracket largely explains the change in the number of bites.**

The chart "Vanishing Bite Difference" tracks how, with honest counting and a bit of common sense, the false and misleading claim of 43 bites (as the difference between 2019 and 2022, in the OCCR slide) shrinks to 15 (actual dog bite difference), 6.5 (adjusted just for dog intakes), and finally 3.7 adjusted for the change in age distribution.

Is it surprising that the pandemic-era policies (which entail reduced dog-human contact) don't lead to substantially fewer bites? Less contact isn't the only consequence of the policies followed in the 2020-2022 period. **The restrictions caused additional stress to dogs and longer stays.** So the reduction in handling may have caused a reduction in the bite rate – which was then largely offset by the increase in stress and the longer stays. **Suspending playgroups for large dogs may have avoided bites in the play sessions, but it may have caused additional bites during regular handling because the dogs are more stressed.** Suppose the continuation of pandemic-era restrictive adoption procedures reduces bites per day, but the dogs stay twice as long. Then the **longer stay presents more occasions for bites, and the added stress puts more dogs at risk of biting.**

Were OCAC/OCCR unaware of the fact that the incoming and outgoing populations of dogs were different in 2022 vs 2019, both in total numbers and in age distribution? Did they not care to look at how this might be influencing bites? Perhaps these questions are too difficult for organizations that didn't want to report the correct number of bites in the first place.

The blindness to the data, intentional or not, also led to failure to recognize an obvious measure to reduce bites: Focus on behavior issues for dogs age 4 and up, because that 30% of dogs account for 75% of the bites in the 2018-2022 period. Just the additional staff and volunteer awareness of the issue would have helped.



Do we have a bite problem?

Of course we do. Every bite is one too many. We had a problem in 2019 and we have a problem now. This is not the end of the story. After debunking other false or misleading claims made by OCAC, we can return to this important issue. OCAC should make an effort to fill out its databases with more complete information, and make all data available for analysis. We can then examine other factors that affect bites.

OCAC/OCCR didn't even count the bites. They didn't even get that for dog-related policies you should look at dog bites, not the total. They didn't think to account for the change in the total number of dogs – let alone the age distribution. They haven't even created a reasonably complete record of the data for each bite. **They can hardly be taken as serious participants in the more complex task of finding patterns, causes, and remedies.**

The policies that OCAC/OCCR based on false data and incompetent analysis should be immediately reversed. That does not mean being complacent about bites. Common sense policies can include:

A bite-prevention behavior protocol of dogs older than ~4 years (30% of the dogs but 75% of the bites).

No children under 6.

A limit of one child (age 6-12) per adult.

A smarter queuing system that may involve appointments for peak visiting days/times.

Reserving two weekdays (e.g., Monday and Thursday) as quiet, appointment-only days, to accommodate adopters who prefer it.

Are any numbers or facts produced by OCAC/OCCR reliable?

Does it look like there was much concern about analyzing and rectifying the bite issue? Or **does it look more like bites were a convenient pretext to keep kennel buildings off-limits?**

Can we even be sure that OCAC didn't suppress bite reports altogether? Given their other efforts to present a false rosy picture, are we sure they didn't drop hints that they'd like fewer official bite reports entered?

OCAC/OCCR are not interested in data and facts that identify problems and suggest improvements. Rather, **OCAC/OCCR use numbers, accurate or not, as public relations tools to justify already-made decisions, not as analytical tools to identify and resolve problems.** That's why they didn't even want to look at the previous studies that showed an increase in kill rates, return rates, and lengths of stay.

At the very least, OCCR exercised no oversight and provided no guidance to OCAC to avoid and correct its mistakes. Instead, it acted as an advertising agency, devoting all its energy to promulgating its client's claims with no regard for facts. And the Appendix below shows that **OCCR went to great lengths to prevent the truth from coming to light, delaying and obstructing PRAs.**

We cannot trust any "data", "facts", or analysis coming from OCAC/OCCR. **An outside audit is needed, reporting directly to the Board of Supervisors.** Since it is impossible to know in advance what level of county management bears responsibility, an entirely independent review is indispensable.

Appendix: How was the truth uncovered?

We cannot know what went on behind closed doors or inside somebody's head. We can only pose the questions that the published documents, PRAs, and eventually discovered data suggest:

Did OCAC/OCCR construct numbers favorable to an already-made decision to limit access to the kennel buildings and suspend play groups?

Did OCCR block access to the data - as might an organization that either invented false statistics or is just trying to hide its negligence?

Here is the saga of the PRAs that tried to get underlying data. (If it looks like there are too many requests involved, please bear in mind that if the very first one had been answered truthfully, the remaining ones would have been moot or trivial.)

PRA 23-456

Submitted 1/31/2023, Response was **blatant suppression of the data**:

This letter is in response to your California Public Records Act request 23-456, which OC Animal Care received on 456 [sic]. The request seeks the following records: list of all incidents of an animal biting a person at the OC Animal Care facility from 1/1/2016 to the present. For each incident please include:

- Date of incident*
- Type of animal (dog, cat, other)*
- Whether the person that was bit was a staff member, a volunteer, or a visitor*

OC Animal Care has concluded its search and is unable to locate records responsive to your request.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Kirkpatrick

Custodian of Records

February 2, 2023, 11:23am by Jeff Kirkpatrick, Administrative Manager (Staff)

PRA 23-589

Submitted 2/6/2023. **Response was misdirection and deflection.** This PRA was merged with a different PRA (23-556) that was requesting the animal database, and then that second PRA's response failed to include the bite information.

PRA 23-1283

Submitted 3/21/2023. While not naming bites, this PRA sought access to other PRAs pertaining to OCAC – and it will turn out that these other PRAs contained bite data. **The response was flagrantly incomplete**, listing only a handful of PRAs, a small fraction of the appropriate set. **Among the omissions was the PRA that later turned out to contain the bite database.**

A message was sent challenging this response, informing OCCR that a number of omissions were independently known to the requestor, and asking that a complete list be provided. In response, the same reply with all the same files was provided. **A further protest yielded no reply at all.**

Two months into the search, with 3 PRAs blocked and tackled by OCCR, a path towards bite data remained hidden.

PRA 23-1421

Submitted 3/29/2023, fulfilled 4/20/2023, a full 3 weeks later, exceeding PRA deadlines and OCCR's normal turnaround time.

A messy table was provided. There are obvious extraneous data. There are obvious duplications. **That made it likely that there were also omissions.**

Therefore, without corroborating data, no meticulous researcher would treat this table as a reliable source. We will not go through this table in detail, but the numbers derived from it, though inaccurate, are in the ballpark of the ones presented as our best estimate.

PRA 23-2244

Submitted 5/11/2023, and restating the substance of 23-1283. In response to this a complete (as far as we can tell) list of PRAs was finally supplied, and within this list there was PRA 23-296 which sought and obtained a database of bites for the whole county. (Gratitude is owed to the unknown author of that request.)

This is a much larger database, unwieldy for anybody without a professional background in data analysis. But an experienced researcher applying some smart filtering, can use this database to extract the bites that occurred at the shelter.

This is the most reliable source. Note that 3.5 months elapsed since the first request.

PRA 23-2265

Submitted 5/12/2023 and restating the request of 23-589 in a more argumentative fashion. At this point, OCAC is already under public scrutiny and receiving data requests from the press. A database was supplied, but we deem the larger database described above more reliable.

End result

After months of delay and an apparent effort to derail the search, a total of 3 databases resulted from all this. Two were supposed to be specific to bites occurring in the shelter, yet they are the least reliable. One was the master database of all bites in the county, from the coincidental PRA 23-296. It, too, has its problems but is likely the most trustworthy of the three. It just requires extra effort to extract the data.

On something so central to the OCAC/OCCR narrative, why did it take so much pressure, and a bit of luck, to get to the facts? Was OCCR trying to hide the truth?

The shelter's animal checkbook doesn't balance

When confronted with a detailed analysis of the shelter's kill rate, length of stay, return rate, etc., OC Animal Care (OCAC) and OC Community Resources (OCCR) refuse to engage with any analysis. As part of their effort to avoid confronting the deterioration of the shelter's performance, their mantra is that they are "transparent" and publish "industry standard" statistics.

Let's set aside the fact that the industry standard obviously does not preclude additional analysis - warranted in this case by declining performance. We'll take a look at what the Industry Standard says and show that OCAC/OCCR published statistics do not conform to it.

The Industry Standard is clear

We highlighted in yellow key entries in the Asilomar Accords standard in the attached file "Industry Standard Asilomar Accords.pdf". They show (emphasis added):

A BEGINNING SHELTER COUNT (date)

*The number of dogs and cats in your shelter or in your care **including fosters** at the beginning of the reporting period.*

W ENDING SHELTER COUNT (date)

*The number of dogs and cats in your shelter or in your care **including fosters** at the end of the reporting period*

*To **check the accuracy of the shelter data you've compiled**, the Beginning Shelter Count (A) plus the Adjusted Total Intake (H) should equal the Total Outcomes (V) plus the Ending Shelter Count (W): $A + H = V + W$*

The accuracy check can also be written as **$A+H-V=W$** , i.e., **Initial+Intake-Outcomes=Ending**. We prefer the latter formulation, because it's reminiscent of a checkbook or bank statement.

We likewise highlighted in yellow key passages from the Shelter Animals Count template in the attached file "Industry Standard SAC Basic Data Matrix.pdf". (Shelter Animals Count is often cited by the OCAC.) They show (emphasis added):

Beginning and Ending Shelter Counts

*These numbers help frame the population of the animals sheltered and cared for by the organization. [...] **not forgetting to count those animals who have been admitted but who are not currently within the shelter (foster care, in the care of a veterinary hospital, etc.).***

Beginning Count, Ending Count: TOTAL IN CARE

*Number of animals at the shelter, offsite locations, **and in foster care** on the first and last day of the month.*

In both standards, the **beginning and ending count are an integral part of the report**. Both specify that **all animals that are the shelter's responsibility, even if not on the premises (e.g., fosters), are to be included**.

Asilomar explicitly shows a **data check**, but that's just a **sanity check any sensible observer would do with these statistics**.

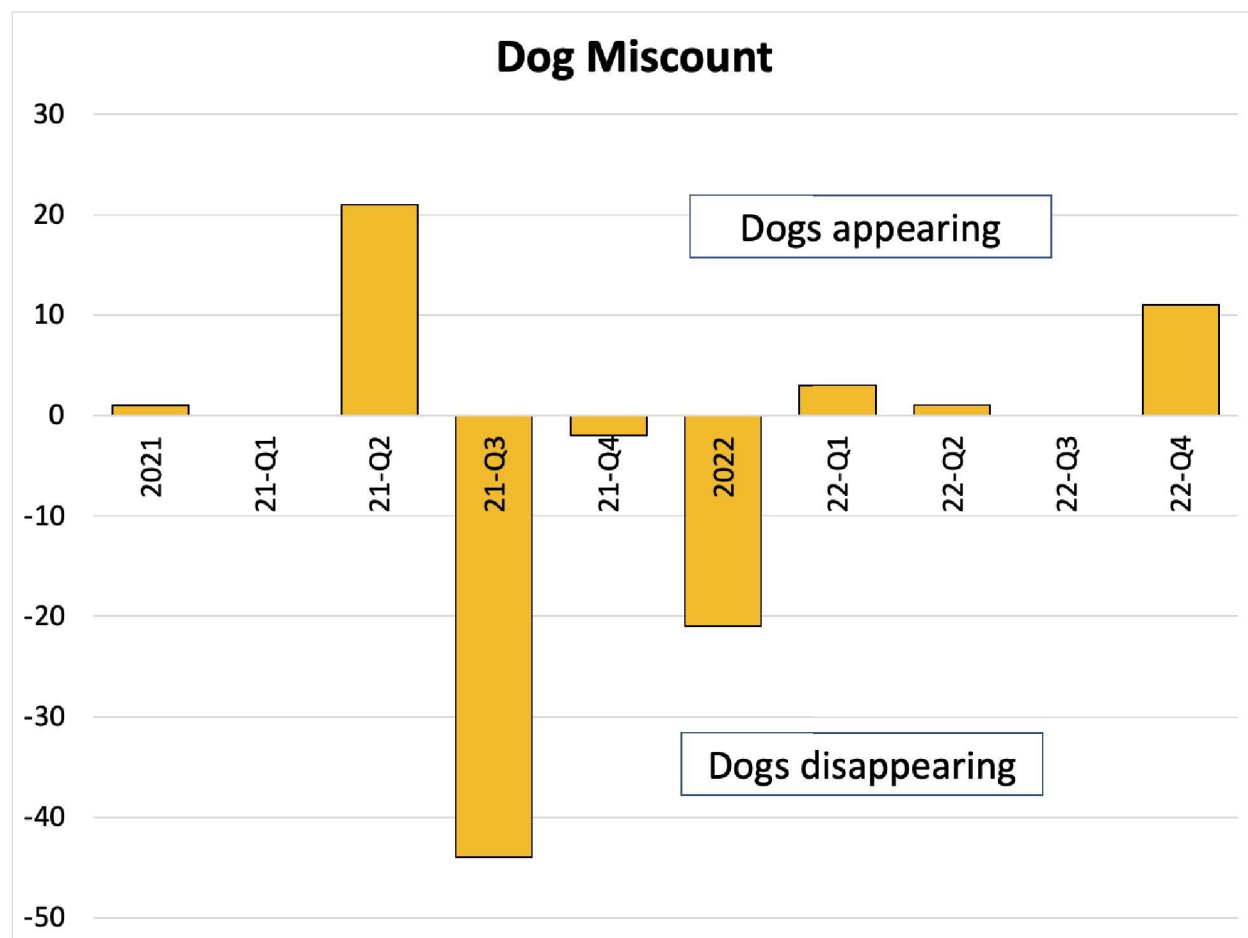
If you strip down the complexity, **these statistical tables are like a checkbook**: You start with a number of animals, you have intakes that add to it, you have outcomes (live and dead) that subtract from it, and that gives you the final number of animals. Or it would, if you put all the entries in correctly.

The numbers just don't add up

We downloaded annual, quarterly, and monthly statistics (PDF files) for the 2020-2022 period from the shelter's website. We converted these to Excel spreadsheets (through an Adobe subscription service). These spreadsheets were grouped by year, and the files are named "2020 Calculated.xlsx" and so on for 2021, 2022, 2023.

To do the data check, we added two rows to the spreadsheets of the shelter's statistics. The added rows are yellow and tagged by a red square (empty cell) on the left. One row does the calculation **initial+intakes-outcomes** to arrive at **the expected final number of animals at the shelter**. The other row computes the **discrepancy between the reported final number and the expected one**. A negative number means a deficit, i.e., the shelter is reporting fewer animals at the end of the period than it should have based on the other numbers. A positive number is a surplus, i.e., the shelter seems to have more animals than it should at the end of the period. **This second row, labeled "DIFF (ENDING - EXPECTED)" should have contained all zeros.**

For each year, we did this calculation not only for the full-year report but also for the monthly, quarterly, or other part-year reports available on the shelter's website. We reiterate that the numbers outside the two added rows are the ones in the shelter's public statistics, since we started by converting the shelter's PDFs into spreadsheets.



In OCAC's statistics, the sum of initial+intakes-outcomes usually doesn't equal the final count. The DIFF row is almost never zero. Animals are disappearing into thin air and other animals are sometimes appearing from thin air. We're not talking about animals being booked in the statistics as "lost" – there is indeed a category for that rare event in the tables. Rather, one of two things is happening: Real or phantom animals are completely unaccounted for in intakes or outcomes; or the shelter just doesn't know how many animals it has at the beginning or the end of the period. **This happens on almost ALL their tables, except in the ones where OCAC doesn't provide a final count at all.** Do these empty rows suggest OCAC just doesn't know how many animals it had? Or is their record-keeping so bad they didn't dare put a number down?

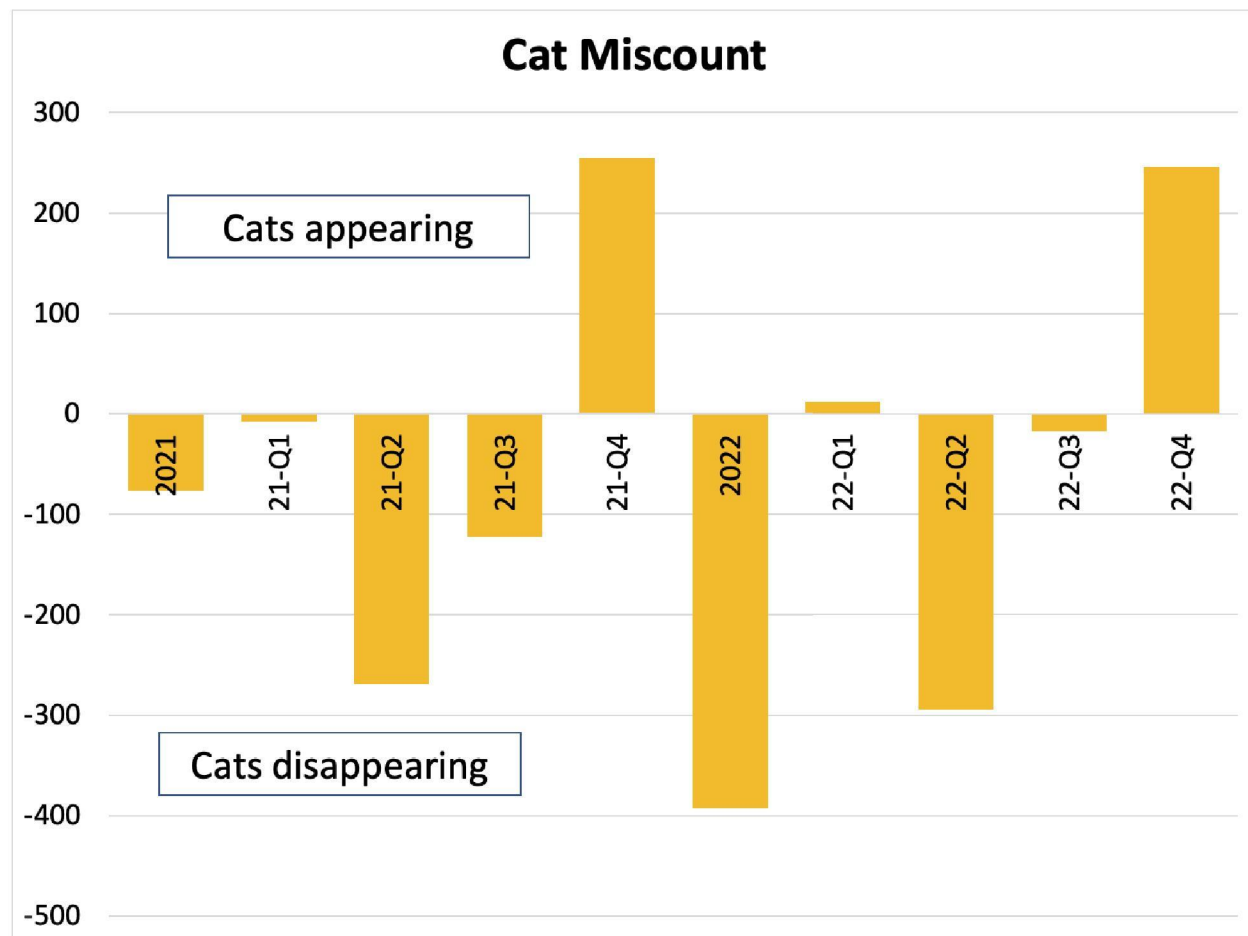
The charts "Dog Mismatch" and "Cat Mismatch" show the discrepancies for the years 2021 and 2022, for annual as well as quarterly reports. If the animal accounting were correct, there should be no yellow bars at all. It should just be a flat zero throughout.

This is accounting, not guesswork, there should be absolutely NO discrepancy. Has nobody at OCAC or OCCR ever looked at these numbers? If your accountants did your books this badly, you'd fire them on the spot.

We need answers

The public is entitled to ask:

- Are animals disappearing without anyone's knowledge?
- Are animals brought in without proper recording?



Comparison of the Number of Transfers

YEAR	Dogs					Cats				
	Published Shelter Statistics			PRA	DIFF	Published Shelter Statistics			PRA	DIFF
	Adult	Juvenile	Total	Total		Adult	Juvenile	Total	Total	
2021	522	54	576	582	6	361	1,084	1,445	1,451	6
2022	516	90	606	582	-24	329	1,115	1,444	1,441	-3

- Is there an off-the-books population of animals that come and go?
- Is OCAC just unable to keep good data on its animals - and doesn't even know how many it has?
- Does nobody at OCAC or OCCR even look at these statistics?

This is just another instance of **OCAC's casual indifference to maintaining good data, OCCR's lack of oversight, and the inability of OCAC/OCCR to even understand statistics, not even their own.** It's no surprise that they've shown an unwillingness to engage with, or respond to, additional analysis offered to them.

Another Run, a Different Result

Why should we trust the intake and outcome categorizations, inherently trickier, when the more straightforward initial and final counts are grossly erroneous? In fact, there is additional evidence that we shouldn't. PRA 23-462 obtained the monthly and annual numbers of transfers (animals going to rescues or other agencies). We can compare these to the numbers of transfers in the statistics. The Table "Comparison of the Number of Transfers" shows that the numbers don't match.

Both sets of numbers are derived from same database. Why should we believe the number published in the statistics is more reliable than the number disclosed in the PRA?

What happened to those 24 dogs that are classified as a Transfer in the statistics but not on the PRA? Is it possible - indeed, likely - that other types of intakes and outcomes are misclassified? Might even the total intakes and outcomes be incorrect?

No easy excuses

A bit of slicing and dicing reveals some likely causes for the discrepancies.

*Some large discrepancies in the numbers of kittens may be due to fostered kittens not being included in the initial and final counts - but being included in outcomes. It's not clear how they are handled in intake counts. **This violates Industry Standards, both Asilomar and Shelter Animals Count.** The shelter should be counting all animals that are its responsibility, even if they are temporarily off the premises, whether in foster or for some other reason.*

*Some discrepancies appear to be caused from copying a row in the table from the same row in a previous table, except that it's the wrong previous table. That's an erroneous procedure. The shelter should have a good, clean way to generate these numbers. A comparison to a previous table is an extra sanity-check to do at the end, not a substitute for deriving the right inventory number from the database (or from a walk-through). Again, **Industry Standards clearly refer to counting the animals, not just copying a number from somewhere else.***

For the sake of completeness, we give the discrepancy in each category in the table: Adult and juvenile dogs separately, all dogs combined, adult and juvenile cats separately, all cats combined, and finally dogs and cats put together. It is possible that a deficit in juvenile dogs and a surplus of adult dogs is explained by some dogs reaching adulthood while in the shelter. (But the reverse does not hold: A deficit in adult dogs and a surplus in juvenile dogs cannot offset.) This should be an unusual case, and the total for dogs should have still been correct.

Even all these errors combined (as gross and inexcusable as they are) fail to account for the bulk of the discrepancies. The fact is, **the numbers almost never add up correctly.**

OCAC/OCCR might say that these are just approximate statistics, a type of survey. It is no such thing. **This is an accounting report and it should match exactly**, just like your bank statement or a company's financial statements. That's why it even provides categories for animals being lost.

OCAC/OCCR might tell you to just ignore the initial and final counts, because not all other shelters include those. That would be a remarkable change of tune. They'd be saying that they intend to follow only the most lax practice they can find in another shelter, not the Industry Standards. Why? **Does OCAC know the number of animals in its care or not? If it does, why do the numbers not add up?** If it doesn't, is it just making guesses, and how can the shelter be managed without these numbers?

The initial and final counts could have been derived from the same database tables as the intake and outcome counts. They serve as a check for the correctness of intake and outcome counts. In the absence of this check, the intake and outcome numbers could easily be wrong. **If the data is inconsistent, it's inherently untrustworthy. That's the reason the Industry Standards include these counts, and Asilomar expressly states the data check.**

One person's manual error isn't enough to explain this. A sequence of senior staff surely looked at these numbers. **OCAC just publishes half a dozen of these tables per year and it's constantly talking about them. Did nobody pay any attention?** And how come these discrepancies are so pervasive? So much for "Industry Standards" and "transparency".

Everywhere you look, you find errors, so here's one more. Beginning numbers for one period should equal the ending numbers from the previous period. In your bank statement, the initial balance for 2022 is the final balance for 2021. In OCAC's statistics, that pair of years fails to match. This was already pointed out in a previous report ("OCAC Details.pdf") which OCAC received on April 16 and OCCR saw on April 26 or earlier. Six weeks later, the discrepancy is still there. This is not the only case; two dogs appear magically between the ending count of March 2020 and the beginning count of April 2020. In 2021, the end of Q2 and the beginning of Q3 don't match.

Is innumeracy the institutional culture of OCAC and OCCR?

Is OCAC trying to avoid scrutiny of its messy data?

The 2022 Annual report was **not** published in January 2023... or in February... or in early March. It was **published ONLY when a PRA** (23-1127, March 12, 2023) **asked for it.**

The 2023 Q1 report was not published in early April, but rather **ONLY** on April 26, the day of the Community Outreach Committee meeting, i.e., only when it was impossible to delay it any longer. This report, Jan-Mar 2023, gives the date for the beginning shelter count as 04/01/2023 (in April??) and the date for the ending count date as 6/30/2023 (in June??). **After sitting on this report for 25 days, is that the best OCAC/OCCR could do?**

Participating Organizations

Registered/Participating Shelters | California Shelter/Rescue Type | Government Animal Services



To explore the nearly 7,000 organizations who have contributed intake/outcome data to The National Database, select criteria from the drop downs!
To learn more about an organization, click on the organization name or circles under the years to see their website. If website is unavailable, the organization needs to enter more recent data or update their website in their data portal.

SELECT AREA	SELECT ORG NAME	ORG TYPE
California	(All)	Government Animal Services

Name	COUNTY	LAST REPORTED	2020	2021	2022	2023
Monterey County Animal Services	MONTEREY	April 2023				
Napa County Animal Shelter	NAPA	January 2023				
Newman Animal Services	STANISLAUS	April 2023				
Newport Beach Animal Shelter	ORANGE	December 2016				
Oakland Animal Services	ALAMEDA	April 2023				
OC Animal Care	ORANGE	December 2020				

There is another nagging question. The shelter routinely cites trends from the national Shelter Animals Count database, but **they stopped sending in their data in 2020**. See attached screen shot, but you can also observe this by going to the webpage as shown below.

<https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/about-the-data/>

Scroll down to Participating Organizations

Select Area: California

Organization Type: Government Animal services

Scroll though organizations to get to OC Animal Care

Last month reported is December 2020

Action is needed

At a minimum, these discrepancies show **innumeracy and rampant carelessness**. Since OCAC/OCCR bear responsibility in making the data so messy, can we trust them to clean it up without outside auditing and oversight? Once someone is caught for producing inconsistent data, there is too much temptation for them to cover up the error by making up new numbers.

To go back to accounting, if your accounts are repeatedly incorrect, the imaginative accountant should step aside and an external audit should take place.

We need a thorough outside audit that will show what went wrong and how it was fixed, not just with this data but with **a slew of misrepresentations** that the shelter has made.

OCAC BOS-Approved 2018 Strategic Plan

"OCAC Strategic Plan 052218 (004).pdf" is a copy of the OCAC Strategic Plan approved on May 18, 2018 by the Board of Supervisors (BOS). It was Agenda item 44 on that day.

The first two pages (excluding the cover page) of the OCAC Strategic Plan are included below (and also as a standalone file "OCAC Strategic Plan Priority 1.pdf"). They cover "Strategic Priority 1: Animal Care, Enrichment, and Placement."

OCAC and OCCR are Ignoring the Strategic Plan

It is remarkable that, from 2020 on, **key goals and measures stated in the Strategic Plan have been thrown overboard by OCAC/OCCR**, without any recourse to expertise or community consultation. **The pandemic served as cover** for this surreptitious shift.

Why is OCCR so quiet about the Strategic Plan? Has it submitted these major alterations in aims to the BOS? Has it sought consultation with stakeholders? Has it solicited input from the experts who were (at the county's behest) instrumental in developing the Strategic Plan?

Perhaps OCCR believes that its casual opinions, unsupported by either facts or data, are enough to throw the strategic plan overboard.

Strategic Priority 1: Animal Care, Enrichment, and Placement

Goals:	Success Measures:
1. Every animal in the shelter receives daily, varied enrichment.	a) One hundred percent of all dogs qualified (retention met, healthy, friendly) are in daily playgroups. (Small dogs by Summer 2018; large dogs by Fall 2018 with occasional playgroups before then, as staffing permits). b) 100% of dogs are provided in-kennel enrichment tailored for their needs daily by June 2018. c) Every adoptable cat is taken out of his or her housing unit for enrichment at least three times per week by Summer 2018. d) 100% of cats receive appropriate enrichment tailored for their needs daily and are housed in portalized or large cages by Fall 2018.
2. Every animal's care and status is tracked in order to demonstrate ongoing, daily care and comfort during their stay.	a) Every "must" outlined in ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters is implemented and occurring at OCAC by Spring 2019. b) 100% of "should and ideally" ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters practices are implemented by Summer 2021. c) 100% of animal enrichment activities are tracked by Fall 2018.
3. Options for moving animals quickly through the system to live outcomes are maximized.	a) Average length of stay (LOS) of 8 days for most "Fast Track" animals and 15 days for most "Slow Track" animals by January 2019. Animals may stay beyond this LOS but all efforts are made to decrease roadblocks to movement of animals to live release. b) 75% of medical animals (any animal under veterinary care at OCAC) placed for public adoption while undergoing treatment. c) Increase number of fosters able to house animals with medical conditions by 50% by Summer 2018. d) Length of stay for cats with upper respiratory infections is reduced by 20%, as cats recover quicker through targeted medical fosters.
4. More animals that enter OCAC are saved annually.	a) Live release rate for dogs will remain over 90%. b) Underage kitten transfers will increase by 10% by December 2018. c) Live release for cats will increase by at least 5% each year with a target of 85% or higher by December 2020.

Key Metrics are Disregarded

This topic merits a thorough future report, to which the following observations are merely a prelude. We will contrast excerpts from Strategic Priority 1 (in *italics*) to the reality (in **bold**) as it existed in early 2023.

Goal 1: "Every animal in the shelter receives daily, varied enrichment." Success Measure (a): "One hundred percent of all dogs qualified (retention met, healthy, friendly) are in daily playgroups."

Early 2023 Reality: Play groups for small dogs occur only 3 times a week. Playgroups for large dogs virtually never happen, if we exclude isolated for-show instances when there was active scrutiny by the press.

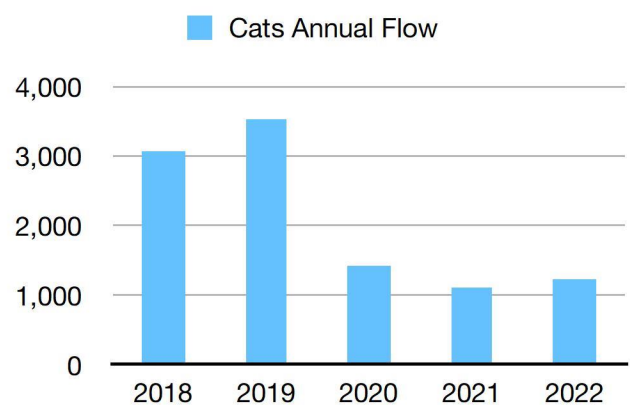
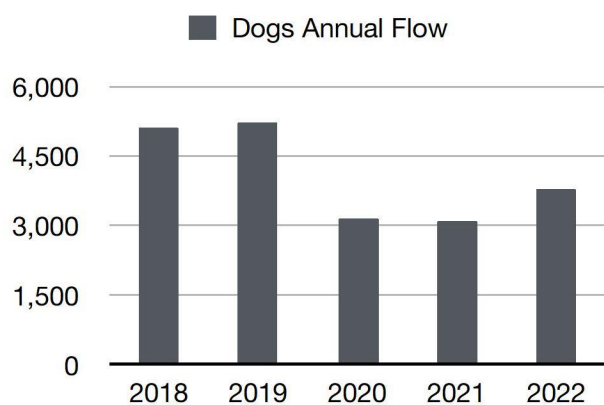
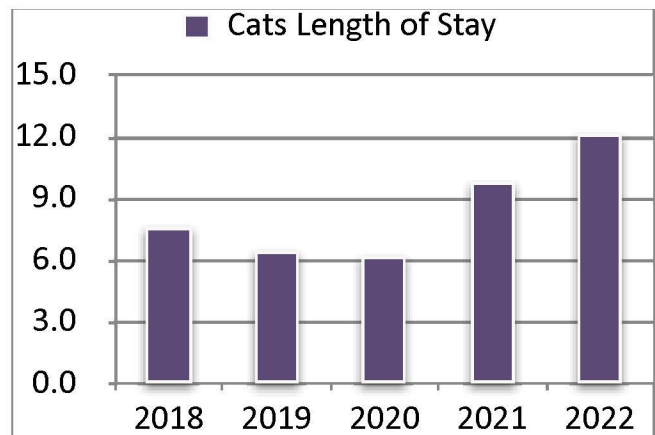
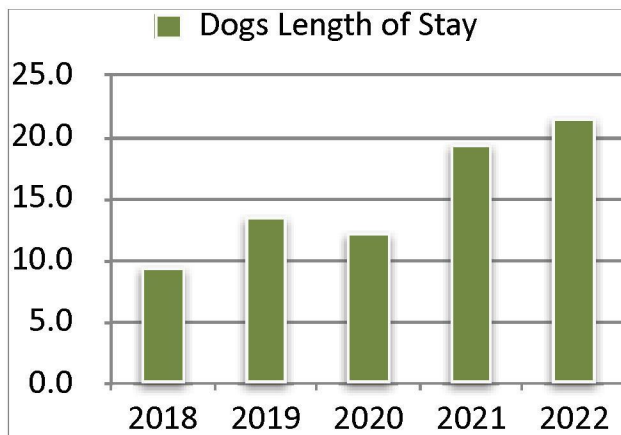
Goal 2: "Every animal's care and status is tracked in order to demonstrate ongoing, daily care and comfort during their stay." Success Measure (c): "100% of animal enrichment activities are tracked by Fall 2018."

Early 2023 Reality: Out-of-Kennel enrichment is not tracked. Visual inspection of a whiteboard does not amount to tracking. In response to repeated PRAs (23-1987, 23-2018, 23-2147), OCAC has unequivocally stated that it does not keep any photos of the whiteboards (where enrichment is marked) for any period, not even intra-day. At the

Goals:	Success Measures:
	<p>d) Live release rates for kittens will increase to at least 70% by the beginning of 2019. Staff will evaluate annually and adjust up as needed.</p> <p>e) Owner requested euthanasia for dogs and cats decreases to 2% of intake by 2019 (and is monitored).</p> <p>f) Owner surrenders for dogs and cats are increasingly referred to our diversion program instead of shelter intake. A baseline for this metric will be recorded at the end of 2018 and shall increase by 10%. This metric will be evaluated annually to determine next target.</p>
5. Reunite more lost pets with their owners.	<p>a) Increase RTO (Return to Owner) rate for dogs to 45% and RTO for cats to 5% by December 2019.</p> <p>b) Licensing compliance of 60% or greater by 2019.</p> <p>c) Increase TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) rate for cats to 20% by 2019. (Numbers will be evaluated at the end of 2018; if we have significantly increased our TNR cats by that time, this metric may be increased.)</p>

Overview of Department Roles in Reaching These Goals:

Executive	Customer Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and assign leads to accomplish new rounds and pathway planning procedures. Support training in ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters at all-hands meetings. Track live release and LOS data to ensure that goals are being met. Ensure ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters and ASV Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs are implemented and track data components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish messaging with COT and Shelter teams so that the public receives a consistent answer on OC Animal Care procedures for Adoption, Redemption, etc from all staff and volunteers. Implement methods to increase RTO rate for all animals.
Shelter Services	Field Services



Community Outreach Committee meeting on April 26, 2023, the Director stated that no per-animal records are kept.

Goal 3: "Options for moving animals quickly through the system to live outcomes are maximized." Success Measure (a): "Average length of stay (LOS) of 8 days for most "Fast Track" animals and 15 days for most "Slow Track" animals by January 2019. Animals may stay beyond this LOS but all efforts are made to decrease roadblocks to movement of animals to live release."

Early 2023 Reality: The Length of Stay has steadily climbed from 2019 to 2022, to roughly 20 days for dogs. The details were given in a previous report ("OCAC Details.pdf" Appendix A) but we reproduce here the key charts that show the increase in the length of stay for dogs and cats, despite the fact that the number of dogs and cats the shelter has to process remains well below 2018-2019 (pre-pandemic) levels.

Goal 4: More animals that enter OCAC are saved annually. Success Measure (f): Owner surrenders for dogs and cats are increasingly referred to our diversion program instead of shelter intake. A baseline for this metric will be recorded at the end of 2018 and shall increase by 10%. This metric will be evaluated annually to determine next target.

Early 2023 Reality: Diversion program does not exist.

The Strategic Plan should be Front and Center

One would think that the Strategic Plan would be prominently displayed on the shelter's website. It is nowhere to be found. It was procured only by a PRA. Is this a rather implausible oversight, or did OCCR hide the Strategic Plan because they did not intend to abide by it?

The Strategic Plan has spent too much time in the shadows. We plan to look at its provisions in detail, and a future report will document all the shortfalls in shelter practices.

In the meantime, the only way to return to a well-functioning animal shelter and restore the trust of the community is for the Strategic Plan to regain its rightful prominent role.

The Board of Supervisors can remedy the situation by:

- **Confirming that the Strategic Plan approved in 2018 is still valid.**
- **Instructing County staff to take steps towards its rapid implementation.**

Among other implementation steps, OCAC should:

- address the socialization needs of dogs by instituting daily playgroups for small dogs and large dogs, as set forth in the strategic plan. It should commit to socializing the majority of large dogs. It should meticulously document this activity.
- return to the freer pre-pandemic adoption procedures for most of its hours of operation. The kennel area should be open to visitors a minimum of 4 days a week, including one weekend day.

Orozco, Norma

From: Deborah Felin <catpaws.deborah@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 1:49 PM
To: eComment
Subject: Santa Ana cat spay/neuter TNR Program

Greetings,

I am writing in support of a Spay/Neuter program in Santa Ana.

As rescuers, and those who care about animals, we are faced every day with the consequences of unwanted litters.

As I volunteered at the OC Animal Care Pet Food Pantry one Saturday morning, asking folks what city they were from and what pets they had, a lady tearfully recounted how she was trying to feed the starving cats around her apartment complex in Santa Ana, cats who kept getting pregnant, making more homeless kittens, born to suffer and die. Her English was better than my Spanish but the despair in her voice needed no translation. She said her neighbor threatened to beat her up for feeding them. She didn't want to see these kittens dying and suffering, what could she do, she pleaded with me? As I stood there, a line of cars behind her, I gazed up at the massive, beautiful building that houses Orange County Animal Services, paid for with millions of dollars of taxpayer money, and told her I didn't know who could help her.

There is no provision at Orange County Animal Care Services for public spay/neuter assistance. There is no longer a TNR program. Our organization gave out 900 spay neuter vouchers last year, over 500 of which were redeemed, costing our organization about \$50,000 to help people in Orange County get their cats fixed, over 140 of those to Santa Ana residents alone. This is not an expense our small non-profit cat rescue can continue to bear. Other groups struggle valiantly, but we are overmatched by the magnitude of the problem.

There are those who will say, 'they're just cats, we have bigger problems'. There are always problems, some bigger than others, but the suffering of animals intersects with that of humans in a uniquely profound way, and for those who don't care about the cats I would ask them to care about the people who do. In these unwanted, sometimes abused and discarded creatures, perhaps some people see themselves, living on the margins of a society in which they feel they have no voice and no one cares, scrounging just to survive. I have often found it is the people who have the least who care the most.

I think, too, of shelter staff, confronted with the grim task of killing kitten after kitten after litter. This is a human toll, too often dismissed and devalued.

A sampling of the many emails and messages we get from residents trying to help cats in their community:

"...my husband checked our cameras and saw that a coyote entered our yard in the early am. We kept filling the bowls for over a week and drove the neighborhood streets and never saw them again. It broke my heart. To this day, I look for them. I loved watching them play in our yard"

"I would like to thank you one more time for helping me to right this situation. I hope I have helped my neighborhood, even just a little, by spaying Mama and getting her children off the streets. In the absence now of the TNR program this is getting out of hand."

"Helping them has revealed a part of me I didn't know existed. I always considered myself a dog person but this past year has changed me. Some of the cats have bonded with me and allow me to pet and hold them and put flea collars on them! I realize how special they are and how they have unique personalities!"

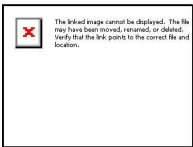
Please consider implementing a spay/neuter program for community cats in Santa Ana, and help the people who are trying to reduce suffering and make their neighborhoods a little kinder.

Sincerely,

Deborah Felin Magaldi

Director

www.helensanderscatpaws.com



Orozco, Norma

From: michael friedman <mgfajf@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 2:06 PM
To: eComment
Subject: TNR Spay- Neuter Clinic Needed

As a concerned animal lover, I am asking the City of Santa Ana board to include funding in the 2023/ 2024 budget for a TNR/ spay- neuter clinic. The clinic provides a humane way of controlling the over population of animals/ cats keeping them out of the Orange County Animal Shelter. The clinic also provides an excellent benefit to lower income pet owners by giving them the financial support to have their pets spay- neutered.

Thank you

Michael Friedman
Sent from my iPhone

Orozco, Norma

From: Andi Friedman <andiattheark@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 2:10 PM
To: eComment
Subject: Please Include Funds in 2023-2024 Budget for TNR, Spay and Neuter Programs to Help Extreme Animal Overpopulation, Assist Minority/Marginalized Communities that Can't Afford TNR, and Save Taxpayers' Money

Dear Council Members and Mayor:

Thank you for allowing public comment on your 2023-2024 budget.

It is extremely important to include adequate funding for mobile TNR Spay and Neuter clinics in the City of Santa Ana's budget for 2023-2024. We urge you to do so. Statistics reflect that Santa Ana is one of Orange County's cities with the highest overpopulation of cats and kittens, with most of those animals ending up at the Orange County Shelter (OC Animal Care) or injured or dead on the street.

By acting proactively and budgeting for mobile TNR Neuter Spay clinics, you will help reduce animal overpopulation and suffering, and concurrently save tax dollars by utilizing the OC Shelter less. Having these programs also helps the residents, especially those in minority or marginalized communities, that can not afford to get their animal neutered or spayed.

Neither the OC Shelter, nor the small non-profit OC animal rescues (that partner with the OC Shelter) can possibly keep up with the sheer high number of animals needing care and adoption. The current overpopulation of cats and kittens is untenable from both a humane and financial standpoint.

Please help animals, people and taxpayers by doing the right thing and including this in your budget.

Respectfully,
Andrea Friedman

Sent from my iPhone

Orozco, Norma

From: Carla Etzold <carla@calismisfits.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 2:31 PM
To: eComment; Carla Etzold
Subject: Animal Welfare & Community Support

Hello Santa Ana City Council!

I am writing to you as a Santa Ana resident and a community supporter. I have been a member of the animal rescue community since 2013, when I first started participating in Trap Neuter Return. At that time OC Animal Care had a wonderful program for the community. The Feral Free Program allowed members of the community to trap feral & community cats to take to OCAC. At that point the shelter would then have the cats spayed/neutered, vaccinated and microchipped. Once done volunteers would release the cats back to their homes (the neighborhoods they were brought in from).

This program operated for many years and just about the point we were seeing progress the program was stopped at OC Animal Care. In fact, many changes have happened there that is clear that OC Animal Care is no longer interested in participating in community support. At the same time the community is in more need of support than ever, if you own a pet then you know that the costs associated with owning a pet has increased during the pandemic and now after. Veterinary costs have sky-rocketed. In local community pages people can often be seen asking for low-cost veterinary information because they cannot afford to have their pet spayed/neutered at \$300+. Those are owned pets, people also cannot find help for feral and community cats. Instead good meaning people are left unable to do anything for these free roaming cats. Sadly this unchecked cat population will mean an increased issue with cats instead of where we were in 2019 finally making an impact with TNR. I know Santa Ana pays heavily into OC Animal Care, I urge you all to look at what you are paying for. Animal welfare needs to be proactive and progressive, not just responsive and yet that is what OC Animal Care is providing. If the animal population continues to increase due to lack of affordable spay/neuter services the fees Santa Ana incurs from impounded pets will continue to increase. We are seeing that now in the dog population, there are more and more puppies coming in to OCAC. On top of that, OCAC no longer accepts stray cats and rather instructs the community to release them where they were found - without an exam and without vetting. These cats are being left to multiply, creating more food for wildlife in return. Spay/neuter is absolutely vital and necessary to keep the animal population manageable, but right now those of us in rescue are struggling without animal control/shelter support and city support. We cannot support the community on our own.

If funding could be provided for the community for veterinary support for spay/neuter it would make a huge difference to our community. For owned pets and free roaming cats. We are a very small rescue organization, we do our best to support but with limited veterinary support and limited funding we can only do so much. We need our city to see that this need is very real, to support the animals in our community and the people. We have assisted with 76 cats this year, a majority being from Santa Ana. Among those cats there are many others that we were unable to support.

I urge you all to look at providing community support in the way of spay/neuter assistance for animals in our city, owned and free-roaming cats.

Thank you,



Carla

Co-Founder and CEO

Cali's Misfits

 [714-696-4440](tel:714-696-4440)

 carla@calismisfits.com

 www.calismisfits.com

Orozco, Norma

From: agustinluz1992 <agustinluz1992@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 3:08 PM
To: eComment
Subject: .

Good afternoon my name is Luz.

As a single mother of 3 I have struggle to find an affordable boxing place for my daughters and myself. We are truly thankful for this club and would love to continue to provide us with their services. I

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device