Cat Pathway Planning

Animal Commission October 2022

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A few notes on animal welfare work …

- In an ideal world, we wouldn't need to do this work!

- It is difficult work- emotionally, physically, mentally, ethically and not everyone is suited for it. Everyone is doing their best and everyone has their limits.

- Often the problems we see related to animals have a root cause in the problems we see with humans- we can't solve all of the problems as an agency or as individuals. Resources are not limitless.

- No one can do it alone and we are grateful for the work that all animal advocates do!

Cat Pathway Planning and Intake

Cat intake and outcome data

Points of Clarification
- Transfers
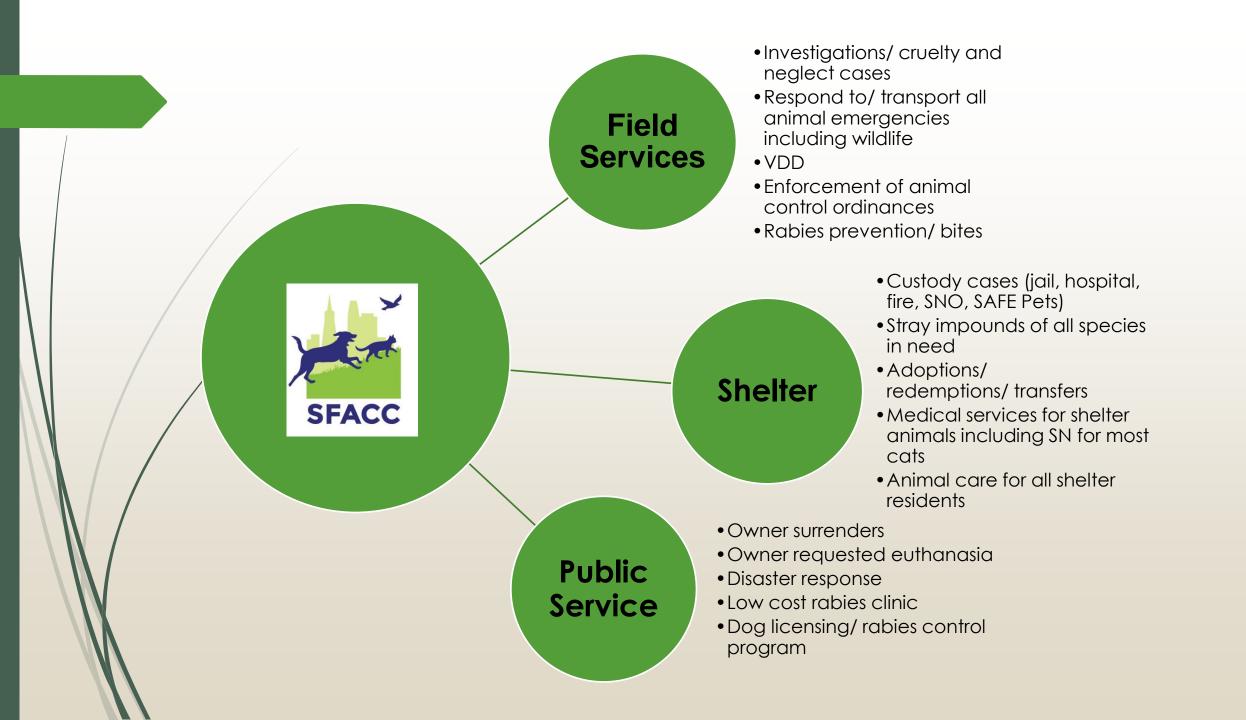- Redemptions
- Cat programming development at SFACC

Sheltering 101
- Capacity for Care
- Length of Stay

Strategies for managing Community Cats

SFACC Intake Polices and Talking Points

Population management next steps

Field Services

- Investigations/ cruelty and neglect cases
- Respond to/ transport all animal emergencies including wildlife
- VDD
- Enforcement of animal control ordinances
- Rabies prevention/ bites

Shelter

- Custody cases (jail, hospital, fire, SNO, SAFE Pets)
- Stray impounds of all species in need
- Adoptions/ redemptions/ transfers
- Medical services for shelter animals including SN for most cats
- Animal care for all shelter residents

Public Service

- Owner surrenders
- Owner requested euthanasia
- Disaster response
- Low cost rabies clinic
- Dog licensing/ rabies control program

Cat Programming Advancements at SFACC

Husbandry and Care

- Portals and customizable caging for all cats

- Cat dens (2019)

- Increase in-house SN for cats and kittens

- Use of Petriage to support cats and kittens in foster care

Volunteer Programs

- Go Cat Go: DQ training and Forums on behavior modification and handling

- Cat Pawsitive program: enrichment

- CHAMP program: behavior fostering for mild-moderate cases within criteria

- PURR program: updated training and methods for working with custody and stray cats in shelter

Other

- Increase to 30 current cat transfer partners (19 on-boarded since 2019)

- Earlier SN for kittens, and managed foster returns based on SN availability (decreased time to adoption and overall time in shelter)

- Population rounds

- ASV Guidelines and Assessment

Shelter Guidelines (sheltervet.org)

Staff Training and Professional Development

- Fear Free Shelter Certification for ACAs, B and T staff and veterinary staff (2021-22)

- Low Stress Handling Workshop for ACAs and B and T staff (2018)

- Consultation with cat behaviorist to revise behavior assessment methods

- Attendance at Feline Science Symposium, Animal Care Conference, CAWA Conference

- CalAnimals Emerging Leaders Program for managers

- Population Management Bootcamp (UC Davis Shelter Medicine) for key staff
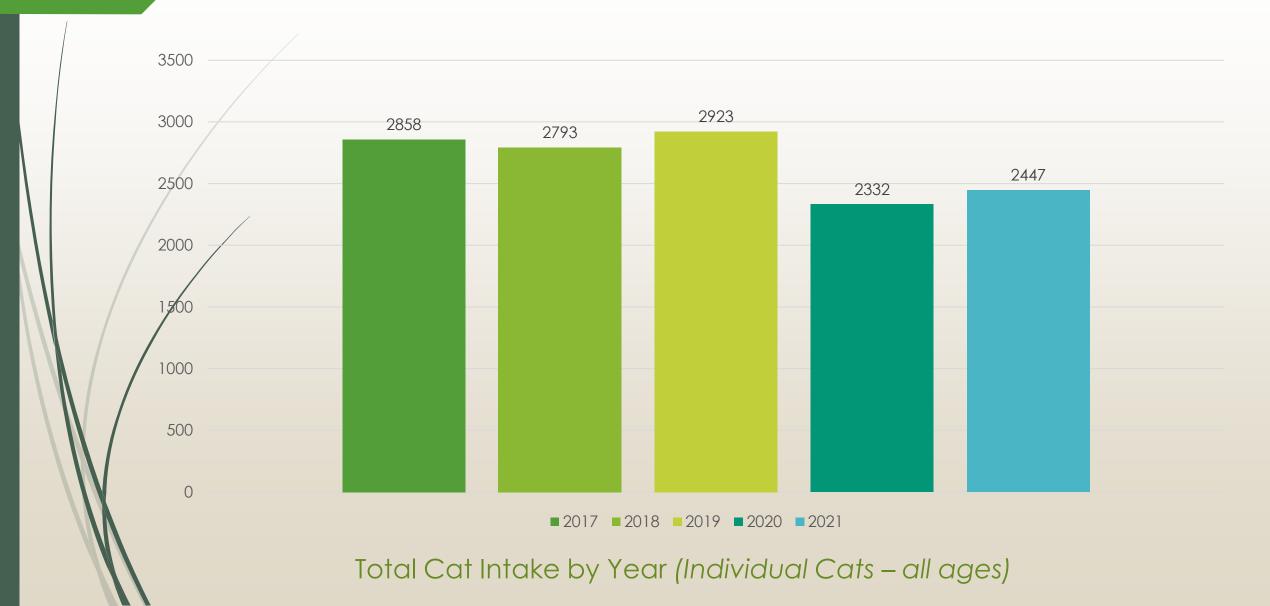
A few notes on the data...

- The statistics enclosed are as reported to the public on our website and to the national database, Shelter Animals Count.
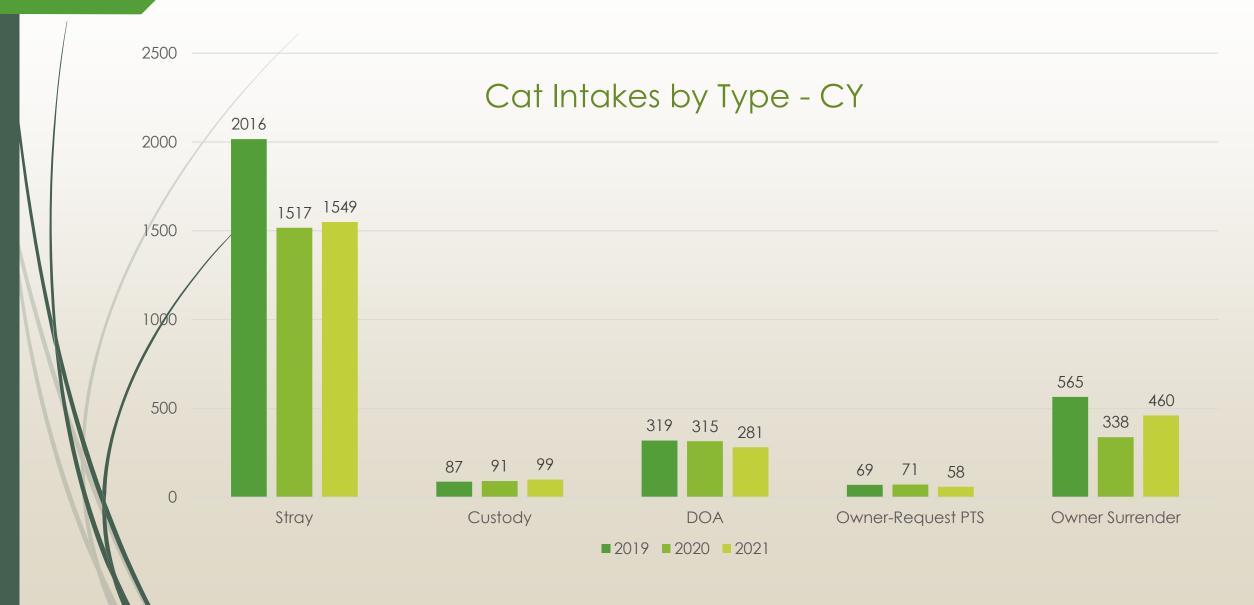
- All statistics enclosed are data points that can be quantified. All databases have limitations and while we capture a great deal information on each individual animal, not every question can be answered this way.
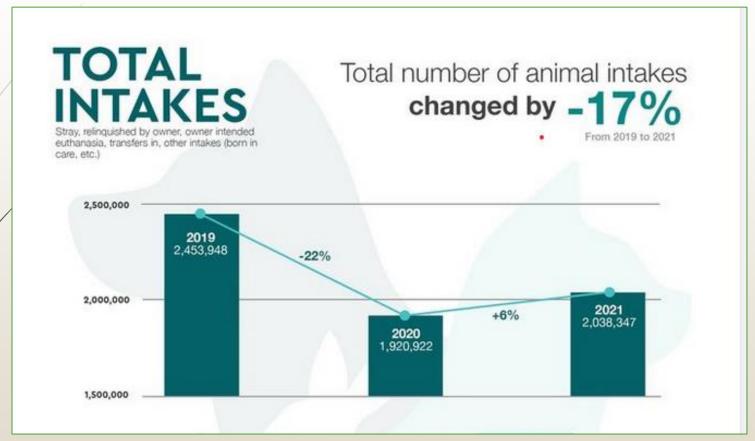
Cat intake and outcome data

Total Cats Served for
CY 2021

2,447

Cat intake and outcome data

Total Cat Intake by Year *(Individual Cats – all ages)*

Legend: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Values:
- 2017: 2858
- 2018: 2793
- 2019: 2923
- 2020: 2332
- 2021: 2447

Cat intake and outcome data

Cat Intakes by Type - CY

	Stray	Custody	DOA	Owner-Request PTS	Owner Surrender
2019	2016	87	319	69	565
2020	1517	91	315	71	338
2021	1549	99	281	58	460

■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021

Cat intake and outcome data
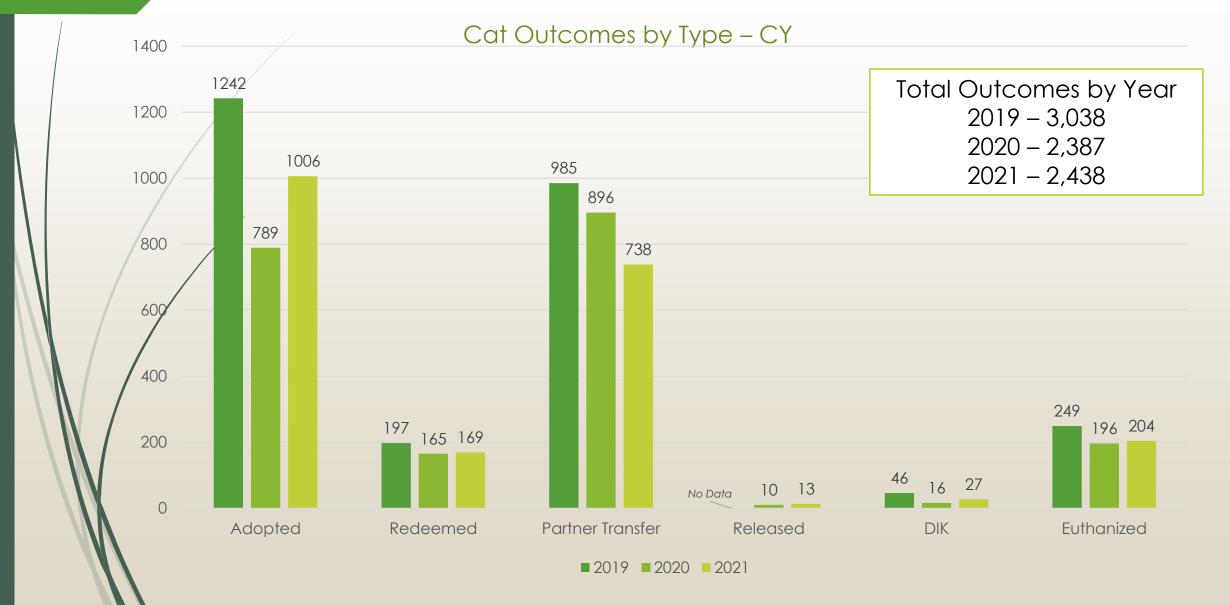

From 2019 to 2021 SFACC has seen an intake change of 16.3%, on trend with national findings.

National Trends from 2019-2021

Cat intake and outcome data

Cat Outcomes by Type – CY

Total Outcomes by Year
2019 – 3,038
2020 – 2,387
2021 – 2,438

Cat intake and outcome data

Live Release Rates (LRR)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Dogs & Cats	91%	91%	92%	93%	94%
Cats Only	92%	90%	92%	93%	94%
CA Municipals*	--	--	80%	88%	88%
US Municipals*	--	--	85%	90%	90%

LRR is calculated by dividing total live outcomes (adoptions, transfers, return to owner/guardian) by total outcomes (total live outcomes plus euthanasia not including owner/guardian requested euthanasia.

*Shelter statistics from Shelter Animals Count data project. SFACC public statistics published on SFAnimalCare.org and reported annually on SAC.

Overall Cat Trends for CY 2021

- Cat adoptions increased by 27%
- SPCA decreased their intake from 2020 by 25%
- SFACC has diversified Adoption Partner base for cats by 44% from 2017
- 20% decrease in LOS for cats since 2017

Point of Clarification- Transfers

"SFACC has reliable pathways to send cats to rescues. This allows a higher capacity for cat intake."

"SFACC has an agreement with SPCA which reduces euthanasia of animals."

Yes, but . . .

Point of Clarification- Transfers
Why Transfer to Partners?

- Medical / Behavior may be better addressed in a different environment or with different resources

- Decreases Length of Stay (LOS) and therefore likelihood of disease transmission

- Increases ability of staff and volunteers to provide higher quality care/attention to animals with a slower pathway

- During Shelter-In-Place transfers minimized number of staff on site for care

Point of Clarification- Transfers

Not every animal fits criteria for transfer:

- Each transfer partner has their own criteria for accepting animals from SFACC based on species, breed, age, behavior/medical, etc.

- Some animals are not eligible for transfer based on status (investigation, custody, other legal holds).

Animals transferred to partners with few exceptions receive basic care, vaccinations and SN services prior to transfer.
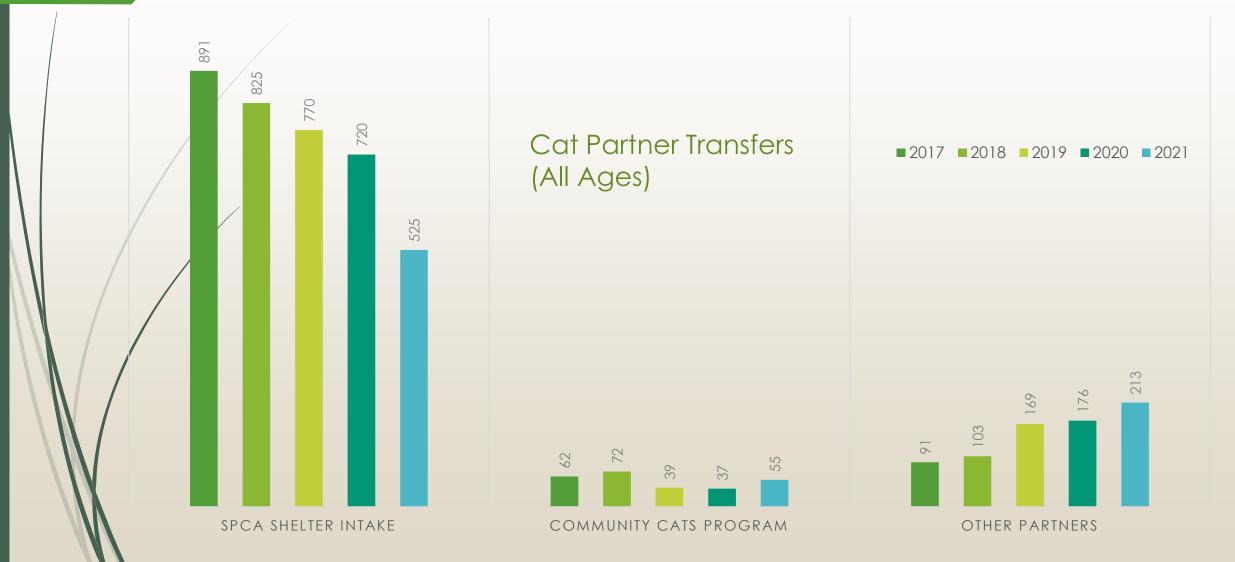
Point of Clarification- Transfers

SPCA

- Private, non-profit
- Limited admissions shelter
- Intake based on capacity for care
- Adoption based capacity/ destination shelter
- Do not accept owner surrenders
- Dogs and cats only

SFACC

- Public, municipal
- Open admissions (surrenders, custody, investigations, rabies quarantines, SNO, Safe Pets)
- Legal contract for specific animal services regardless of capacity
- Pass-through shelter for many animals/ many different pathways
- Multiple species with different needs and pathways

SPCA has a choice about accepting or declining any animal- just like every other transfer partner.

Point of Clarification- Transfers

Cat Partner Transfers
(All Ages)

Legend: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

SPCA SHELTER INTAKE: 891, 825, 770, 720, 525

COMMUNITY CATS PROGRAM: 62, 72, 39, 37, 55

OTHER PARTNERS: 91, 103, 169, 176, 213

Point of Clarification- Redemptions

"Cats are more likely to be redeemed by owners if they come to the shelter."

Not in most cases . . .

Point of Clarification- Redemptions

Nationally, reclaim rates for cats of 2% or less are commonly reported

- many cats entering shelters as "strays" are actually community cats with no owner to come looking for them
- when pet cats do become lost, owners are unlikely to look for their cat at a shelter.

Year	Cat Redemption Rate
FY20	7%
FY21	9%
FY22	6%

One study found that lost cats were over 13 times more likely to be reunited with their owners by non-shelter means than by a visit or call to a shelter, with "returning home on their own" accounting for over 60% of found cats.

Owners generally delay searching for lost cats longer than they do for dogs, meaning that by the time they get to the shelter, their cat may already be gone.

Lord, L.K., et al., *Search and identification methods that owners use to find a lost cat.* J Am Vet Med Assoc, 2007. 230(2): p. 217-20.

Point of Clarification- Redemptions

Evidence is building that lost cats without identification *may actually have a better chance of being reunited with their owners if they are left where they are versus brought to a shelter.*

- approximately one third of cats were recovered within 7 days

- a physical search increased the chances of finding cats alive and *75% of cats were found within a 500m (0.3 miles) radius of their point of escape.*

- those cats that were indoor-outdoor and allowed outside unsupervised traveled longer distances compared with indoor cats that were never allowed outside

Huang L, Coradini M, Rand J, et al. Search Methods Used to Locate Missing Cats and Locations Where Missing Cats Are Found.
Animals: an Open Access Journal From MDPI. 2018 Jan;8(1):E5. DOI: 10.3390/ani8010005. PMID: 29301322; PMCID: PMC5789300.

Point of Clarification- Cat programming

"Previous (community) cat programming has been overwhelmingly successful over the past 30 years."

Many strategies for community cats have been tried with mixed success . . .

Point of Clarification- Cat programming

SFACC cat programming has progressed over many years based on outcome data of previously implemented programs that did not have as much success as hoped as well as evolving industry standards.

Point of Clarification- Cat programming
A Brief History of Community Cat Strategies

- Over the last 25 years, animal shelters have been faced with finding an approach to the complex issue of Community Cats – **how** and **when** to best serve this population.

- Community cats were brought to the shelter because it was thought to be cruel to have them live on the street. Historically this population of cats was euthanized in large numbers (1 in 4) because:
    - 1) they were unacceptable candidates for adoption
    - 2) it was intended to be a means of population control

- As this was not sustainable, effective, or humane, new methods were needed and immediate euthanasia was replaced by Trap-Neuter-Release (*TNR*).

- The approach to meeting the needs of Community Cats has continued to evolve and has branched into *multiple strategies* to deliver the maximum positive outcomes for the cats and their community (*TNR, RTF, Orphan Fostering, Public Awareness, etc.*).

Point of Clarification- Cat programming

Free-roaming Cats are Community Cats

"Free-roaming" cats = any cat found outside without evidence of clear ownership

- distinctions based on ownership status, socialization, perceived level of care and location found (urban, natural habitat)

- assessment of which categories the cat may belong to is not determined on casual inspection and can be fluid over time

Any strategies in cat management practices will affect all cats in multiple categories.

Point of Clarification- Cat programming
What have we tried?

SFACC Strategies

- Indiscriminate impounds of all cats and kittens

- Allowing feral queens & litters to stay in foster homes

- Allowing feral queens & litters to stay in shelter

- Transferring feral queens & litters to SFSPCA Feral Mom Nursery (*Mamas From the Streets*)

- Implementing Behavior Treatment Plans for feral kittens 5 months and under

Results

- Increased illness, fading kittens, increased LOS

- Increased illness, fading kittens, low welfare for queens = poor care of kittens

- Increased illness, fading kittens, low welfare for queens = poor care of kittens

- MFTS regularly had same problems, including illness so severe staff were impacted as well as safety concerns

- Behavior strategies failed and kittens returned without significant improvement, stuck in system and more difficult to place

Point of Clarification- Cat programming
Changes Implemented 2019

Changes to policy

- Delaying intake of kittens in their most vulnerable state by triaging inquiries pre-impound
- Forgoing unnecessary and detrimental sheltering or fostering of feral queens
- Limiting scope of behavior fostering for kittens 3 months of age and under

No change

- Unweaned orphans to be fostered via ACC
- Weaned orphans to be triaged based on resources available
- Feral queens with kittens 4 weeks of age or older to CCP; kittens to SPCA, queen RTF after surgery
- ACC response protocols around injured, sick, unsafe locations remain the same

Point of Clarification- Cat programming
Cat behavior programming

- An individual animal's behavioral and emotional suffering can be quiet, gradual, and internal.

- **Learned Helplessness**: The notable lack of defense is indicative of flooding or habituation- prolonged and forced exposure to a stimulus that is unpleasant, leading to a traumatic "shut down" of typical response.

- Learned helplessness is observed in animals subjected to unpredictable episodes of _punishment_ – intentional or otherwise - in which the animal stops responding to a stimulus altogether, appearing depressed, insensitive to pain, exceedingly passive or withdrawn.
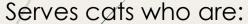
Point of Clarification- Cat programming
Cat Behavior Programming

CHAMP (Caregivers Helping Animals Make Progress) is a program that trains fosters with an advanced scope of behavior and modification practices to enhance an animal's adoptability.

Serves cats who are:

- believed to be prosocial with humans but display mild-moderate shy/fearful or anxious behavior in the shelter environment and have been assessed below adoption criteria.

- Passed their behavior evaluation / met adoption criteria and were made Available in the shelter but have had a long Length of Stay and are now displaying mild-moderate behaviors indicative of distress/decline which do not pose a safety risk to humans.

- Are young (generally 2mo – 4mo) and display mild-moderate behavioral indicators of under socialization with the potential to respond positively to desensitization and counterconditioning measures.

Point of Clarification- Cat programming
Cat Behavior Programming

P.U.R.R. (Play, Uplift, Relax, Reinforce!) is a revitalized version of the Orange Cat program from previous years. In collaboration with feline behavior consultant Daniel Quagliozzi of Go Cat Go, the Behavior & Training and Volunteer teams created renewed training for volunteers that work with both custody and stray cats awaiting next steps. Using the principles of Fear Free Sheltering, the P.U.R.R. team coaches fearful cats and kittens through the shelter experience, providing beneficial interactions that are ***consensual and steered by the cat's choice*** and trust in our compassionate understanding approach and presence.

Cats and kittens served:

- Cats held for cruelty investigations or abandonment
- Safekeeping clients with owners that are hospitalized, incarcerated, escaping domestic violence, facing eviction, etc.
- Cats with mild-moderate behavior issues (fear, anxiety, under socialization, environmental sensitivity, overstimulation, etc.)
- Cats with medical issues
- Cats in shelter that are unable to be placed for SFACC adoption and are awaiting reunification, treatment, or transfer

Point of Clarification- Summary

Admission to the shelter is not without risk.

- Many animals deteriorate medically or behaviorally in the shelter setting over time which makes them less likely to be a successful candidate for transfer or adoption.

- Even with the best care and facility, intake to the shelter still means keeping cats in confinement and contributes to negative effects on their physical and mental well-being due to fear, anxiety and stress.

- Rehoming cats who already have homes/ owners requires resources which could be used for placing cats who truly have no other place to go. Leaving healthy cats in place gives them a better chance of staying in their community/ finding their way home than admission to the shelter.

- Behavioral intervention is most successful within a specific developmental period. Interactions with people should be positive and are dependent on the cat's individual personality and response.
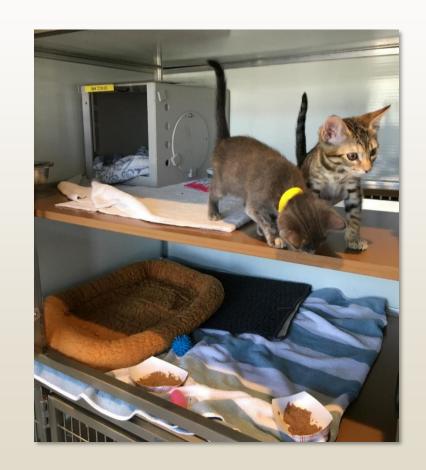
Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care

"SFACC's new building affords the opportunity to take in more animals."

SFACC has the same number of animal enclosures and staff.
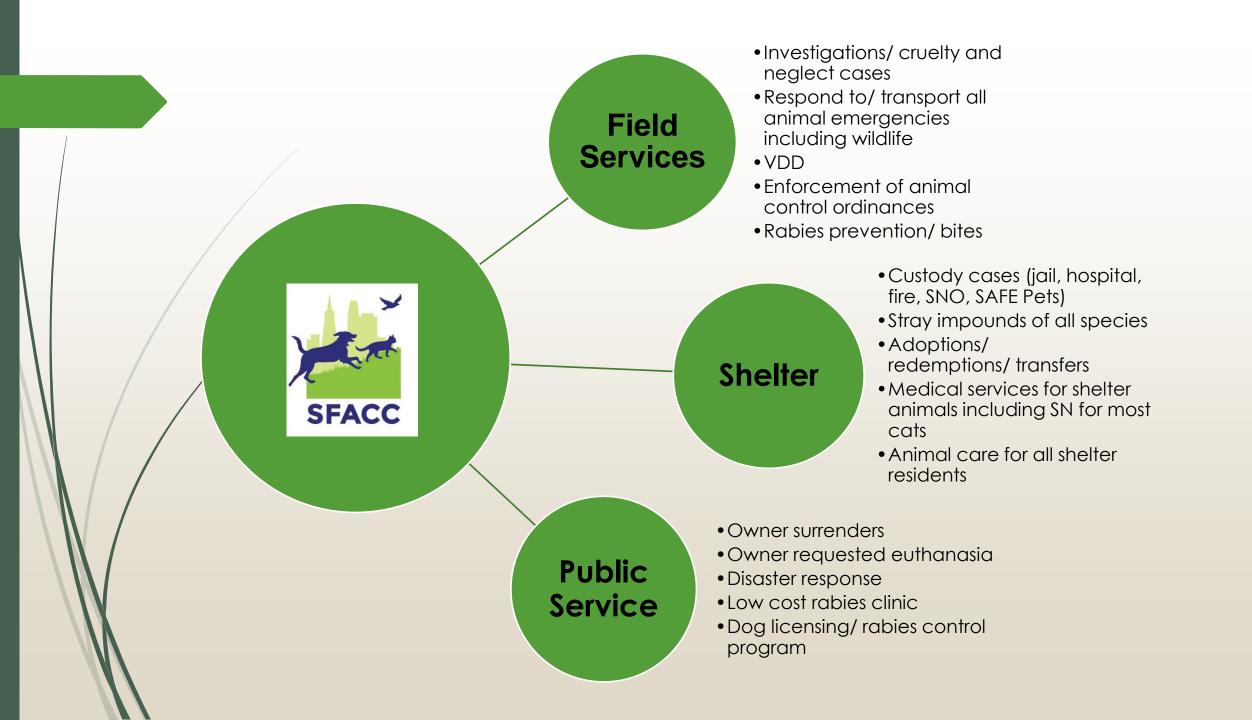
Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care

Over physical capacity on numerous occasions in 2022 with variety of species

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care

What IS Capacity for Care?

- Capacity for care (C4C), considered holistically, means meeting the needs of every animal admitted to a shelter, regardless of how they came in, when they came in or their age, health status and personality.

- Every sheltering organization must acknowledge their C4C and function within it to allow them to be the best resource for the animals and people in their community.

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care

- **Physical holding capacity:** this is the physical space required for animals in stray hold, or other required/desired finite holding periods prior to being made available for adoption. Must also allow for isolation and disaster/emergency sheltering. **No more than 80% of physical capacity should be in use at any point in time.**

- **Adoption driven capacity:** this is the optimal number of animals to have actively available for adoption. It is defined at the high end by the number of adoptions and the optimal length of stay. Too many animals in adoption however will result in a longer length of stay.

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
Physical Holding Capacity

Dog wards	Number of enclosures
216 (med)	4
218 (iso)	4
219 (iso)	4
127 (adopt)	4
122 (adopt)	7
123 (puppy)	8
143 (stray)	12
144 (stray)	12
151(stray)	12
161(custody)	5
164 (custody)	8
TOTAL	**80**

Cat wards	Number of enclosures
254 (CC)	4
253 (custody)	4
264 (iso)	16
231 (stray)	16
245 (stray)	6
243 (adopt/cat)	4
244 (adopt/kitten)	10
246 (adopt/cat)	4
247(adopt/cat)	4
condos	4
TOTAL	**72**

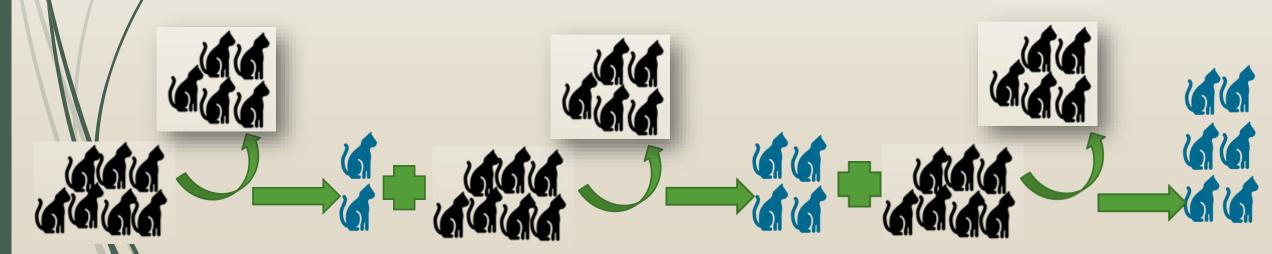# Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
Adoption Driven Capacity

Peak Kitten Season Math

During peak season (May-September):

+7 kittens ADDED to shelter population daily

-5 kittens ADOPTED daily

= 2 kittens OVER capacity on average any given day

14 kittens per week need to move through pathways <u>other than adoption</u> in order to keep shelter operational.

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
Adoption Driven Capacity

What is the ideal number of animals to have on the adoption floor at any one time?

Too few

- perception is that shelter is not helping the community
- adopters may not find a pet

Too many

- increased costs, increased length of stay, health and welfare are affected, overwhelming number of choices for adopters

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care

- **Staff capacity for daily care:** this is the number of animals that can be adequately cared for, based on national and/or internal standards, on a daily basis. Even if physical capacity is sufficient, staff capacity may limit the number that can be provided adequate care.

- **Staff capacity for flow through:** each animal will require specific services at several points during their shelter stay, e.g. intake, behavioral evaluation, spay/neuter surgery, and processing. If staff capacity for flow through is inadequate for any of these points it can lead to a backlog that in turn creates problems with capacity in other areas.

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
Staff Capacity for Daily Care

Required staff capacity for daily care is calculated by multiplying the number of animals present on a daily basis by the number of minutes required for basic care per animal per day:

*Required Staff for Daily Care = Minutes per animal * average daily population/60 to give the number of hours required for basic care.*

The inverse can also be calculated: Staff Capacity for Daily Care is calculated by dividing the number of staff minutes available for basic care activities per day by the number of minutes required per animal, to get the total number of animals that can be humanely cared for at any one time.

Staff Capacity for Daily Care (SCDC) = Minutes of daily staff time for care/minutes required per animal per day

*As a general guideline, NACA and HSUS recommend allocating 15 minutes per animal per day for basic cleaning and feeding.

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
Staff Capacity for Daily Care

Animal Care Attendants (ACAs)- cleaning, feeding and monitoring

6 staff per day X 8 hours = 2880 total care minutes

10 hours (600 minutes) spent on tasks other than care (impounds, releases, adoption counseling, etc.) = 2280 minutes

2280 minutes/ 15 minutes per animal = 152

Total on-site population 7/7/22 = 221

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
Staff Capacity for Flow Through

Behavioral assessments

The SFACC Animal Care Division considers each animal's individual behavior assessment on a spectrum, with confounding factors deriving from the environment, intra-tester reliability, and socialization level, among others. A shelter animal's baseline behavior will differ from day to day and alternative staff members or volunteers may have additional information. Observations from these sources should also be taken into account to portray a more complete picture of the animal's in-shelter behavior. If an animal does not meet or exceed criteria for adoption through SFACC, an animal may be rechecked multiple times throughout their length of stay to determine best pathway for their final outcome from the shelter. These rechecks may be instituted at the discretion of the testing staff member, the Behavior & Training Supervisor, or the Animal Care Supervisor. Further, the second tester should consult with ACA staff, the Veterinary division, and volunteers regarding their experiences while handling the animal during their stay.

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
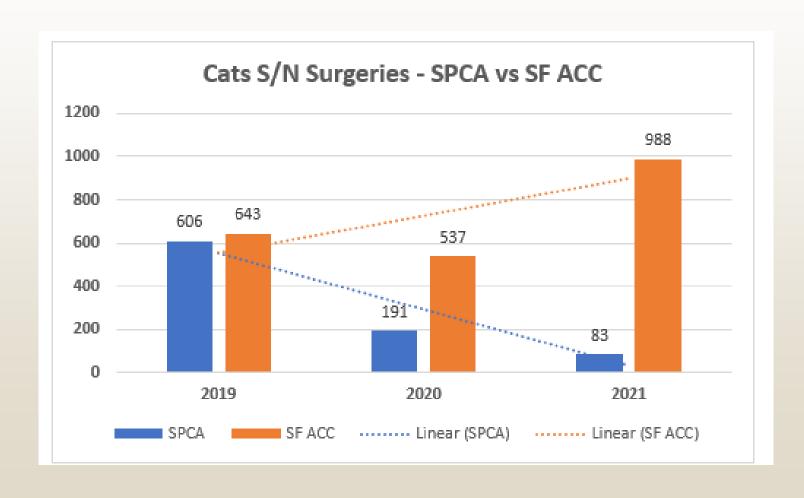## Staff Capacity for Flow Through

Medical Assessments

Exams
- Physical exams and assignment of status (can change over time)
- Investigational exams and documentation
- Emergency/ urgent care (OTC, field services)

Treatment for ongoing/ new concerns
- Ringworm, URI

SN capacity

Sheltering 101-Capacity for Care
Staff Capacity for Flow Through

Cats S/N Surgeries - SPCA vs SF ACC

Sheltering 101- Length of Stay

A bottle neck at any point in flow through also leads to an increase LOS.

At any given time, each animal may have a different length of time they need to stay. Each individual should stay long enough for what they need or what we can provide, but ideally as short as possible.

Sheltering 101- Length of Stay

Why is Length of Stay (LOS) Important?

- Length of Stay directly correlates to a higher likelihood of shelter-acquired disease for cats of all ages.

  - **Probability of URI is >90% when in-shelter longer than 2 weeks**

- Longer LOS also correlates to higher stress scores across all species in sheltered animals.

- The longer an animal is in care, the shelter has exponentially less capacity for other animals.

- Sheltering is meant to be a temporary port in the storm, not a destination. The sooner an animal finds their forever placement, the better off mentally, physically, and emotionally they are.

Point of Clarification- Length of Stay

What IS Length of Stay (LOS)?

Let's Play Length of Stay!

Sheltering 101- Length of Stay
Average Length of Stay for Cats

LOS from Intake → Outcome	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021
	22.8 days	22.6 days	19.9 days	7.9 days (Shelter) 34.2 days (Foster)	18.2 days

*During SIP order, many residents sent to foster homes.

Pathway Planning Goals

Our hope is to provide **the Right Care, in the Right Place, at the Right Time, to the Right Outcome** for each animal in our community.

Strategies for managing Community Cats

- Common goals of programs should consider wildlife conservation, public health protection, nuisance abatement, and/or promotion of cat health and welfare.

- Any method must be scientifically based and sufficiently focused, intensive and sustained in order to succeed.

- Recognize that there is not one intervention to address all issues and decisions should be based on objective assessment of individuals.

- Discontinue investment in methods that are ineffective as well as potentially ethically problematic.

- Redirect resources to more promising strategies for management of cats as well as other important animal shelter functions.

Strategies for managing Community Cats

Three possible shelter-based strategies for free-roaming cat management:

- *ad hoc* removal by admission to the shelter (adoption, relocation, euthanasia)
- admission to the shelter followed by sterilization and return to the location found
- leaving cats in place with or without referral to mitigation strategies or services provided by other agencies

No method is perfect and each option must be evaluated on a basis of cost, effectiveness and practicality. Most cat management takes place through local animal shelters and resources are limited.

Rethinking the Animal Shelter's Role in Free-Roaming Cat Management. Hurley KF and Levy JK (2022) *Front. Vet. Sci.* 9:847081. doi: 10.3389/fvets.2022.847081

Strategies for managing Community Cats
Removal by Admission to the Shelter as a Control Strategy

Risks:

- Removal $\neq$ decrease in population unless critical threshold reached (>50%)

- Decrease in density leads to increased birth rate and lower survival, introduction of disease in to previously stable populations

- **From an ecosystem perspective, the impact of removal will be the same regardless of whether cats are killed, relocated or adopted.**

At the low end of the estimated range of unowned cat populations in the US, **50% removal would require admission of 15 million cats to shelters** (over 13 million more than the 1.34 million free-roaming/stray cats estimated to enter shelters in 2019).

Strategies for managing Community Cats
Removal by Admission to the Shelter as Control Strategy

Appropriate to impound free-roaming cats when:

- Specific and significant targeted and sustained TNR for colonies (vital wildlife habitats, severe nuisance situations)

- Individual cats that are sick, injured, or not thriving- including truly orphaned underage kittens

- Known abandonment

- Exigent risk of environmental factors

- Kittens are of appropriate age and temperament for sterilization and adoption

Strategies for managing Community Cats
Sterilization and Return (SNR/ TNR) as a Control Strategy

- Appropriate for feral **and** friendly cats

- Prevents the issues that arise with removal (cat will continue to access food source and stabilize population)

- Engagement with public to address nuisance issues, feeding concerns

- Improved health for cats (sterilization and vaccination)

- However . . . Estimates of 57% to >90% must be achieved for TNR to reach a threshold of control in a population

Strategies for managing Community Cats
Leaving Cats in Place either with or without Referral as a Control Strategy

- Fewer than 1 in 8,000 free-roaming cats are admitted to North American shelters on a daily basis, thus remaining in place is the status quo for the vast majority.

- Impact on shelter operations should additional free-roaming cats are impounded is not insignificant.
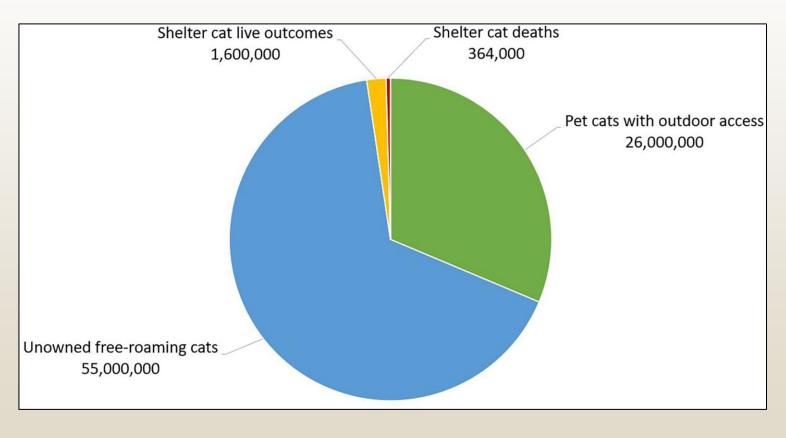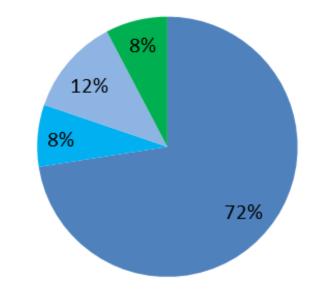

FIGURE 1 | Estimate of the number of cats in the United States with outdoor access and the number and outcome of cats taken in by animal shelters. Approximately 33% of an estimated 79 million owned pet cats are allowed outdoors at least some of the time (58). The number of unowned free-roaming cats has been estimated at 30-80 million, so a mid-point of 55 million was used (19). In this example, almost one-third of outdoor cats are owned pets, two-thirds are un-owned free-roaming cats, and <3% are managed by animal shelters

Strategies for managing Community Cats
Leaving Cats in Place either with or without Referral as a Control Strategy

"Most cats you see outdoors are not in need of intervention and should be left where they are. So first determine whether this is a cat in need of immediate attention (sick or injured) or a healthy neighborhood cat out for a stroll."

Human Animal Support Services- Public Communication Guide for Lost Cats and Found Cats

Methods by which lost cats were reunited with owners

- 8%
- 12%
- 8%
- 72%

- Returned home on their own
- Found in neighborhood
- Posting neighborhood signs
- Call or visit to shelter

Strategies for managing Community Cats
Community Cat Programming

"In the traditional sheltering model, indiscriminate impound and automatic intake results in the following consequences:

- breeding seasonality leads to surges in feline intake
- unsocialized cats are often brought into shelters where traditional adoption is not possible
- community cats are removed from their families and neighborhoods
- impounded cats are rarely reunited with their families and the compounding effect is a national euthanasia rate that disproportionately affects cats

The traditional model sees drastic spikes in cat intake which may result in sickness, mental health decline and stress, shelter crowding, neonatal kitten fatality, and needless animal deaths in shelters. The traditional model is also expensive, and resource-intensive in daily shelter care and feeding of animals who may not need intake."

HASS Toolkit: Community Cat Programming - Google Docs

Strategies for managing Community Cats
NACA Position Statement Regarding Community Cats

Animal Control Intake of Free-Roaming Cats

It is the position [policy] of the National Animal Care & Control Association that, at every opportunity, officers should [will] work to educate the public regarding humane and responsible co-existence and care of pet and community cats, to include education on the benefits and resources for spay/neuter and vaccination; responsible feeding and management practices for those choosing to care for community cats; and effective methods to humanely deter and exclude animals from homes, structures and targeted areas. It is the position of NACA that indiscriminate pick up or admission of healthy, free-roaming cats, regardless of temperament, for any purpose other than TNR/SNR, **fails to serve commonly held goals of community animal management and protection programs and, as such, is a misuse of time and public funds and should be avoided.**

Strategies for managing Community Cats

Best Friends Supports Community Cat Programs

Community cat programs (CCPs) are an integral part of operations for animal shelters across the country. This humane approach is fiscally responsible and effective, providing an immediate, lasting response for cats in and out of shelters. CCPs also free up valuable resources and increase adoption of cats not eligible for return to their neighborhoods. CCPs are as unique as the communities they serve, but all share one central belief: Trap-and-remove does not work.

Programs can include:

- Not accepting healthy community cats into a shelter program when access to spay/neuter is not available

- Using strategic intake to leave kittens outside with their nursing mom until they are of age for surgery

- Addressing complaints with meaningful nuisance mitigation

- Using TNVR in areas of limited resources to support RTF programs or provide direct intake prevention

Through TNVR and RTF, cats:

- Are either feral or friendly
- Are at the age and weight that the spay/neuter provider deems appropriate for surgery
- Are returned after an overnight recovery period for females
- Receive one dose of FVCRP and one dose of rabies (if the cat is old enough, per local legislation)
- Are with or without known caregivers

Strategies for managing Community Cats

California Animal Welfare Association Statement in Support of Community Cat Programs
August 2021

"The current practice of admitting healthy, community cats is an outdated modality and often fails to serve the public or the goal of advancing animal welfare for cats and each community."

"Impoundment of healthy adult cats reduces the likelihood of reuniting families with pets; lost cats are 10-50 times more likely to be reunited with their owners in the neighborhood of origin than through an animal shelter."

"Shelters that support community cats are not "putting cats out there" but rather supporting the cats that are already there, thriving in outdoor environments, and altering them to slowly, effectively, and humanely reduce the overall population."

CA Animal Welfare Association Statement

SFACC Intake Polices and Talking Points

Public education will be an ongoing effort:

- Flyers and website updates with resources

- Open-ended questions to get the right information (age, location, etc.), photo submissions, call center training and algorithms for next steps

COMMUNITY CATS PATHWAY

SAN FRANCISCO SPCA — SF ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

NEWBORN TO 8 WEEKS (ORPHANED)	BRING TO ACC
NON-MOBILE KITTENS: NEWBORN TO 4+ WEEKS (W/ QUEEN)	CONTACT ACC ONLY IF FAMILY IS UNSAFE
QUEEN W/ WEANED (MOBILE) KITTENS: 4+ WEEKS	CONTACT CCP
8 - 12 WEEKS WITH UNTIPPED EARS	IF FERAL, CONTACT CCP. IF TAME, BRING TO ACC.
12+ WEEKS WITH UNTIPPED EARS	CONTACT CCP
ADULT FERAL CATS WITH UNTIPPED EARS	CONTACT CCP
ANY TIPPED EAR CAT	LEAVE IN COMMUNITY UNLESS ASSISTANCE NEEDED.
FERAL CAT IN DISTRESS (INJURED, SICK, NON-MOBILE, ETC)	CONTACT ACC

SFACC Intake Polices and Talking Points
Queen and Kitten Pathways

Description: In alignment with our partner SFSPCA, SFACC will encourage the public to leave non-distressed queens with unweaned, non-mobile kittens in the field until they are old enough (~4 wo) for next steps, and mom is ready for TNR. The shelter is not an ideal environment and is very stressful / unhealthy for a nursing queen and her kittens.

NEW Protocol: Please log ANY call concerning queens and kittens on the Feral Family Log at dispatch.

SFACC Intake Polices and Talking Points
Queen and Kitten Pathways

Status of Queen: Have you seen the mother cat within the last 6 hours?

Physical Description: Are the kittens mobile, eyes/ears open?

Environmental Concerns: Is the family in an unsafe location?

Nuisance/Relocation: Does the RP indicate that this is a nuisance family and they have refused to leave them on premises?

For basic nuisance cat and cohabitation information, the Community Cats resource website has information on feral cat deterrents, conflicts with neighbors, and overall normalizing.
(https://www.sfspca.org/resources/community-cares-programs/community-cats-resources)

SFACC Intake Polices and Talking Points
Adult Cat Pathways

ADULT CATS – Pre-Impound (Stray / Non-Distressed / Safe Location)

Description: SFACC will have a more proactive approach in communicating to the public about the populations that need our help and those that are best served outside of the shelter system. This will include educating staff to work with the public and fact-find *prior* to impounding **any friendly, non-injured, and non-distressed adult cats**. While we encourage all members of the public and adopters to keep their cats indoors, there is still a large population of indoor-outdoor owned cats. Additionally, we have many instances of cats impounded from just outside of their homes. Before recommending intake at the shelter, see if the cat is already TNR'd OR if perhaps this is an owned indoor/outdoor cat.

SFACC Intake Polices and Talking Points
Adult Cat Pathways

Possible ownership: Does the cat have a collar, harness, or other indicator of ownership and have you seen this cat in the neighborhood before?

Previous TNR: Does the cat have a tipped ear?

In distress: Does the cat appear in distress? (vocalizing, unkempt coat, overtly injured, appears ill)

Nuisance/Relocation: Does the RP indicate that this is a nuisance cat and they have refused to leave them on premises?

SFACC Intake Polices and Talking Points

Coordinated Care and Case Management

- Talking Points represent a systematic approach to assess the situation **before** arrival at the shelter to determine the best course of action.

- Recommendations could include shelter admission, leave in place or directing caller to the appropriate resource.

- Appointment based system when possible to allow for the opportunity to divert intake to the shelter if possible and for better communication with SSRs.

- Our hope is to provide **the Right Care, in the Right Place, at the Right Time, to the Right Outcome** for each animal in our community.

Pathway Planning/ Population management Next Steps:

- Home-to-Home Program
- Update and improve resource materials for keeping animals in their existing homes
- Fee Waivers when appropriate, remove barriers to redemption
- Appointment-Based Admissions
- Public facing self-scheduling
- Adjusting hold periods
- Revision of mission statement to reflect best practices
- Applying metrics other than LRR to measure improvements in operations

Resources

Studies

An observational study of the relationship between Capacity for Care as an animal shelter management model and cat health, adoption and death in three animal shelters. C.L. Karsten, D.C. Wagner, P.H. Kass, K.F. Hurley. The Veterinary Journal, Volume 227, 2017, p. 15-22.

Associations among weight loss, stress, and upper respiratory tract infections in shelter cats. A. Tanaka, D.C. Wagner, P.H. Kass, K.F. Hurley. Journal of the American Veterinary Association, 240 (2010), p. 570-576

Common virus infections in cats, before and after being placed in shelters, with emphasis on feline enteric coronavirus. Pedersen, N.C., et al., J Feline Med Surg, 2004. 6(2): p. 83-8.

Epidemiologic evaluation of multiple respiratory pathogens in cats in animal shelters. Bannasch, M.J. and J.E. Foley, J Feline Med Surg, 2005. 7(2): p. 109-19.

Methods of Assessment of the Welfare of Shelter Cats: A Review. Veronika Vojtkovská, Eva Voslářová, Vladimír Večerek. Animals (Basel) 2020 Sep; 10(9): 1527. Published online 2020 Aug 28. doi: 10.3390/ani10091527

Physical and Behavioral Measures that Predict Cats' Socialization in an Animal Shelter Environment during a Three Day Period. Margaret Slater, Laurie Garrison, Katherine Miller, Emily Weiss, Natasha Drain, Kathleen Makolinski. Animals (Basel) 2013 Dec; 3(4): 1215–1228. Published online 2013 Dec 18. doi: 10.3390/ani3041215

Quality of life in long-term care and confinement. Consultations in Feline Internal Medicine (fourth ed.) G.J. Patronek, E. Sperry., Saunders Elsevier, St. Louis, MO, USA (2001), p. 621-633.

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians™ Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters. Newbury, S., Blinn, M.K., Bushby, P.A., Cox, C.B., Dinnage, J.D., Griffin, B., Hurley, K.F., Isaza, N., Jones, W., Miller, L., et al., 2010.

The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters. Pizano, S., Hurley, K., &; Levy, J. K. (2019). Team Shelter USA.

Rethinking the Animal Shelter's Role in Free-Roaming Cat Management. Hurley KF and Levy JK (2022) *Front. Vet. Sci.* 9:847081. doi: 10.3389/fvets.2022.847081

Managing Community Cats – A Guide for Municipal Leaders:
http://www.millioncatchallenge.org/docs/default-source/return-to-field/managing-community-cats.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Rethinking the Animal Shelter's Role in Free-Roaming Cat Management -
https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2022.847081/full?fbclid=IwAR3xgMklw41fRxv7roe8k-Dz-1GVAkYb1Q6T2m2FbGe68LSzsN7daFQ6Fl8

Webcast Series – Maddie's Million Pet Challenge: The Four Rights -
https://forum.maddiesfund.org/communities/community-home/digestviewer/viewthread?MessageKey=a903eb60-ebb4-4b03-9bb4-7b37d94135b7&CommunityKey=afce7f7a-fd5a-431e-9f2a-aaedc46a03d6&bm=a903eb60-ebb4-4b03-9bb4-7b37d94135b7

CalAnimals Community Cat Programs Statement
https://www.calanimals.org/_files/ugd/b7420a_5cc018886eb84612960c40339af427fd.pdf

NACA Policy Statement on Free Roaming Cats
Animal Control Intake of Free-Roaming Cats | National Animal Care & Control Association (nacanet.org)

[The Top Ten- Questions and Controversy with Community Cat Programs (millioncatchallenge.org)](https://millioncatchallenge.org)

[Responding to the Top Ten Concerns About Community Cat Programming - HASS (humananimalsupportservices.org)](https://humananimalsupportservices.org)

Shelter Animals Count - www.shelteranimalscount.org