

City of Sacramento
Animal Wellbeing Commission Report
915 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814
www.cityofsacramento.org

File ID: 2026-00843

4/15/2026

Dissolution of the Dog Adoption Rate Study Ad Hoc Committee

File ID: 2026-00843

Location: Citywide

Recommendation: Pass a **Motion** dissolving the Dog Adoption Rate Ad Hoc Committee.

Contact: Jacob Bredberg, Administrative Analyst, (916) 808-6846, jbredberg@cityofsacramento.org; Mindy Cuppy, City Clerk, (916) 808-5441, mcuppy@cityofsacramento.org; Office of the City Clerk

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

2-Update on Dog Adoption Rates Staff Report from October 15, 2025

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: Per the City's administrative policy, ad hoc committees are to be dissolved within one year of creation with a summary report provided to the commission. At the March 12, 2025, Animal Wellbeing Commission (Commission) meeting, the Commission voted to create the Dog Adoption Rate Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) to study dog adoption conversion rates and utilize the data to work with City staff to increase adoption rates at the shelter. At the October 15, 2025, Commission meeting, an update on dog adoption rates from the Committee and City staff was provided to the Commission. As the Committee's work has concluded, it is appropriate to dissolve.

Policy Considerations: Sacramento City Code section 2.40.160(A) states that city commissions may create temporary meeting bodies that are known as ad-hoc committees, and they are subject to the restrictions of both the Ralph M. Brown Act (Cal. Gov. Code § 54952 (b).) and the City's administrative policy pertaining to ad-hoc committees.

Economic Impacts: Not applicable.

Environmental Considerations: Not applicable.

Sustainability: Not applicable.

Commission/Committee Action: None.

Rationale for Recommendation: This action formally dissolves the Metrics Ad Hoc Committee as required by the City's Administrative Policy on Ad-Hoc Committees.

Financial Considerations: Not applicable

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): None.

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File ID: 2025-01758

10/15/2025

Update on Dog Adoption Rates

File ID: 2025-01758

Location: Citywide

Recommendation: Receive an update from the Dog Adoption Rates Ad Hoc Committee.

Contact: Phillip Zimmerman, Animal Care Services Manager, (916) 808-8333,
pzimmerman@cityofsacramento.org, Community Development Department

Presenter: Paul Hefner, Chair, Animal Wellbeing Commission

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

2-Exhibit A: Draft Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Dog Adoptions

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: Chair Hefner previously provided some statistical data on dog adoptions at the shelter. The commission has created an Ad hoc committee to further study how visitors to the shelter can be converted to adopters.

Policy Considerations: None.

Economic Impacts: None.

Environmental Considerations: None.

Sustainability: Not applicable.

Commission/Committee Action: Discuss and assign commissioners to work with City staff on using this data to increase adoptions at the shelter.

Rationale for Recommendation: Not applicable.

Financial Considerations: Not applicable.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not applicable.

Background: Chair Hefner has been analyzing data of adoptions and customers who have visited the shelter and signed up to adopt a dog and compared the conversion rates of who signed up to adopt a dog, and how many actually adopted a dog.

Draft Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Dog Adoptions

In 2025, the Commission continued its focused efforts on improving animal adoption outcomes, building upon the foundational work initiated by the former Advisory Committee in 2024.

To further advance adoption outcomes, the Commission established an Ad Hoc Committee on Dog Adoptions. The Committee met regularly with shelter leadership to:

- Analyze shelter adoption data
- Review current research on shelter animal adoptions
- Develop strategies to increase adoption rates and improve animal outcomes

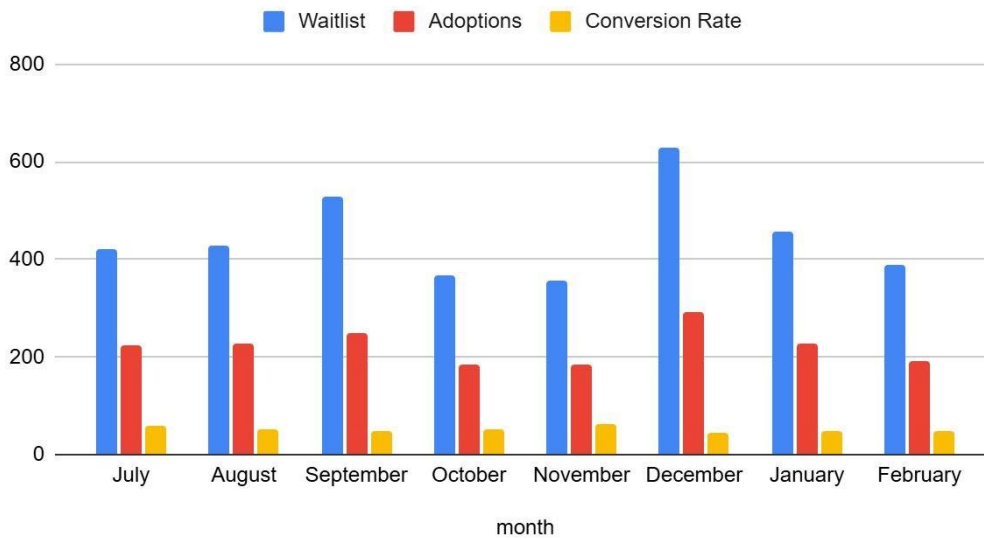
A key area of inquiry was the shelter's conversion rate—the ratio of animals adopted to shelter visitors—used to assess adoption efficiency and identify barriers to successful placements.

Conversion Rate Analysis

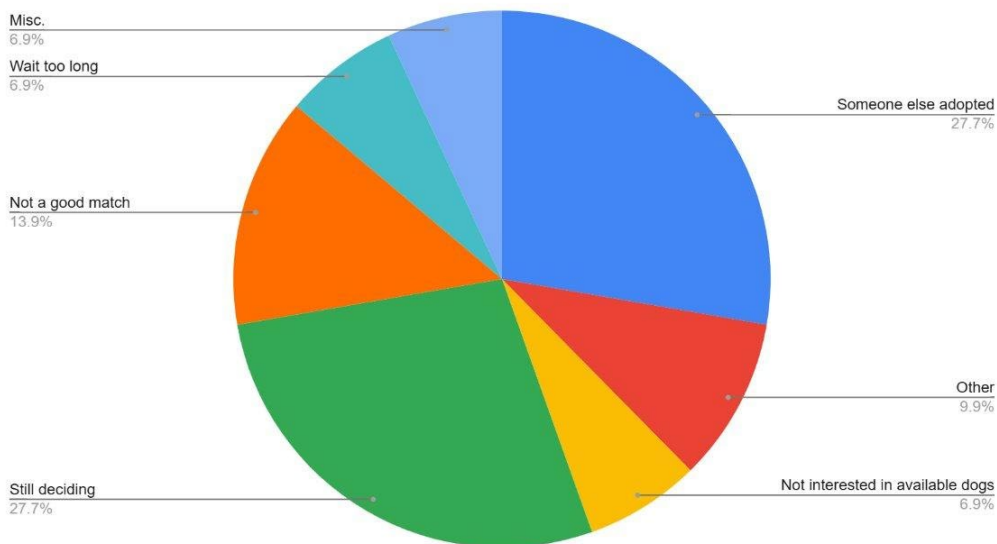
Commission members analyzed shelter visitor and adoption data, revealing that although visitor numbers increase during weekends and “free adoption” events, the conversion rate declines during these high-volume periods. This trend suggests that facility and staffing limitations—particularly the fact that the shelter has only two meet-and-greet areas—impede the finalization of adoptions during peak times.

To address this constraint, the Commission scheduled quarterly training sessions for volunteer adoption counselors to improve efficiency and support during busy periods.

Waitlist, Adoptions and Conversion Rate



Why Did You Not Adopt Today?



Post-Visit Survey Initiative

At the Committee's recommendation, the shelter implemented a text-message survey for visitors. Early findings indicated that many potential adopters were either undecided or had missed the opportunity to adopt a specific animal due to prior adoption.

This insight led the Committee to emphasize the importance of the virtual adoption experience. In response, shelter staff and volunteers prioritized:

- High-quality photography of adoptable pets
- Detailed online pet biographies, which can be created quickly using [rescuewriter.ai](#)

Behavioral Enrichment for Adoptable Dogs

Based on research indicating that dogs displaying engaging behaviors are more likely to be adopted, shelter volunteers have begun teaching adoptable dogs to:

- Fetch a toy of their choice
- Lay calmly at the feet of potential adopters

These behaviors aim to increase the dogs' appeal and adoption likelihood.

Targeted Marketing Strategies

The Committee conducted a demographic analysis of dog adopters to refine marketing efforts. Recommendations included:

- Targeting millennial adopters with appropriate messaging
- Focusing outreach on neighborhoods with historically high adoption rates

Post-Adoption Support Recommendations

The Committee reviewed academic research on post-adoption support, including:

- Scheduled phone follow-ups
- Behavioral training and enrichment
- Educational materials and digital resources
- Peer-support networks for new adopters

While many of these initiatives require significant resources, the Committee identified several potential volunteer-led strategies:

Volunteer-Led Initiatives

- **Post-Adoption Telephone Support Program:** Volunteers would contact adopters of large adult dogs at regular intervals to offer behavioral guidance and support.
- **“Dibs for Dogs” Program:** For a small fee, adopters could reserve appointments to meet and adopt animals immediately after their stray hold expires. Modeled after a successful program in Riverside County, this initiative could reduce animal length-of-stay and shelter operating costs.
- **Staff-Favorites Bulletin Board:** Located near the shelter entrance, this board would feature photos and biographies of overlooked animals, increasing their visibility to potential adopters.

Conclusion

The Ad Hoc Committee on Dog Adoptions has provided data-driven recommendations and innovative strategies to enhance adoption outcomes. Continued collaboration between shelter staff, volunteers, and the Commission will be essential to sustaining and expanding these efforts.