Walker County Animal Shelter
Walker County, GA

SHELTER ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The Target Zero Team was invited to Walker County to do a shelter and community assessment in March of 2017. Prior to the onsite visit, research was done that included the reviews of state laws, local ordinances, Standard Operating Procedures, historical statistical data and a Best Practice presentation was given to shelter leadership.

This report is a result of that research and onsite observations at the shelter as well as interviews with staff and area non-profits. The Target Zero team was also able to meet with county leadership to further understand and discuss perceived obstacles to lifesaving programs and discuss basic Best Practice principles outlined in this report.

The Target Zero team hosted a public meeting during the assessment week that was attended by area shelters, spay/neuter clinic staff, rescue group volunteers and other non-profits who also heard the Best Practice presentation. Also in attendance were representatives from 2 spay/neuter funders, Two Mauds, Inc. and Fix Georgia Pets.

The Target Zero team looks at all operational processes within the municipal framework as they relate to the current community services, enforcement, shelter intake and outcome along with current allocations with a keen focus on making recommendations to create the most efficient organization. Public shelters exist to protect people from dangerous animals and protect animals from dangerous people but within the scope of enforcement responsibilities government shelters are obligated to create lifesaving programs.

Though the purpose of this assessment is to highlight opportunities for improvement, many positive attributes include but are not limited to:

- Newly elected commissioner supportive of the shelter and interested in improving overall performance while assisting constituents
- Shelter leadership, staff and 2 volunteers dedicated to animal care and welfare
- Shelter intake for dogs and cats decreased between 2015 and 2016
- Rescue transfer program responsible for the majority of lifesaving
- Dog kennels with divider doors and access to the outdoors
- Outside dog exercise area
- Shelter open on Saturdays
- Dogs fed high quality food

Recommendations in this assessment report are based on a variety of core Best Practices shared by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Best Friends Animal Society, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), The American Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Alley Cat Allies and The Million Cat Challenge (see **Resources**).

Leadership should read and follow the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters.

The goal of Target Zero is to help create responsible public and shelter policies that productively decrease intake by solving problems for constituents and achieve/maintain a 90%+ live outcome of

shelter pets, within the scope of the municipal organization. Consultants acknowledge that advanced medical cases beyond hope and large, aggressive dogs that cannot be safely rehabilitated, would be humanely euthanized.

TECHNOLOGY, DATA AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No shelter software or dependable internet access
- Individual pictures may be posted on Facebook but not using adoption search engines
- Statistics kept on handwritten charts so trends are not easily retrievable or verifiable
- Data not separated between:
  - owner requested euthanasia and shelter euthanasia
  - died vs missing
  - stray vs owner surrender
  - adoptions vs return to owner
- Do not use statistical trends/analysis to revise impactful programming

Year	Dog Intake	Dog Save Rate	Cat Intake	Cat Save Rate	Combined Save Rate
2015	1,652	57.32%	1,334	16.79%	39.22%
2016	1,119	60.59%	894	16.11%	40.83%

Figure 1: Shelter intake and save rates for the past 2 years.

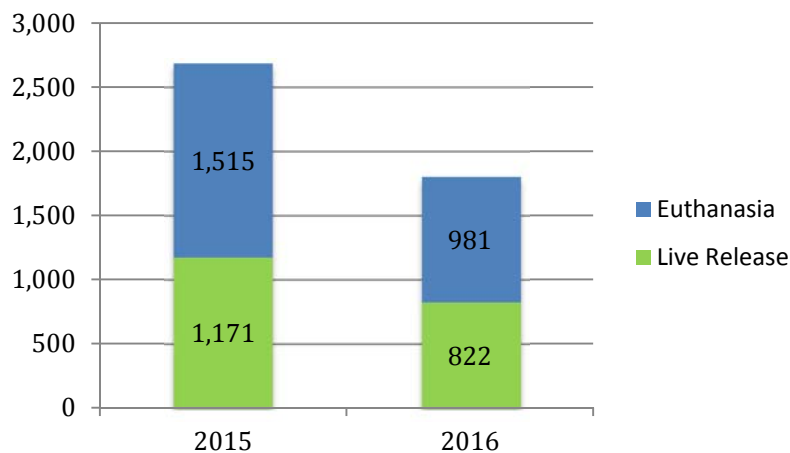**Live Release vs Euthanasia of Shelter Dogs and Cats**

Figure 2: Desired decrease in shelter intake and euthanasia between 2015 and 2016.
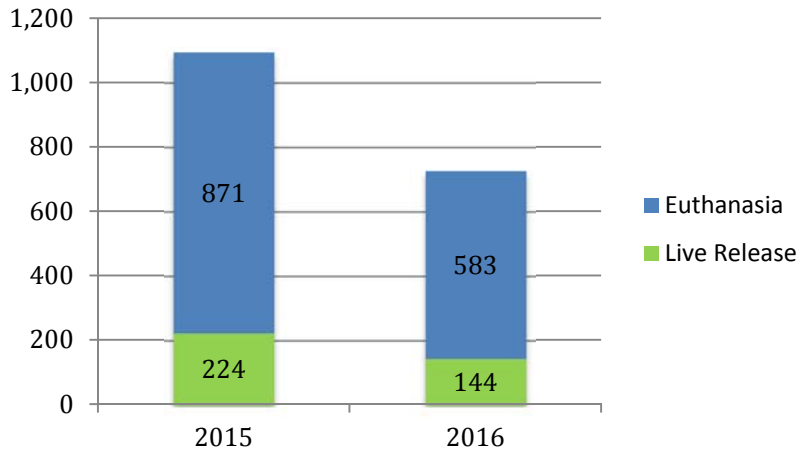
Live Release vs Euthanasia of Shelter Cats

Figure 3: Cat intake has decreased significantly from 2015 to 2016; however, euthanasia remains the primary outcome.
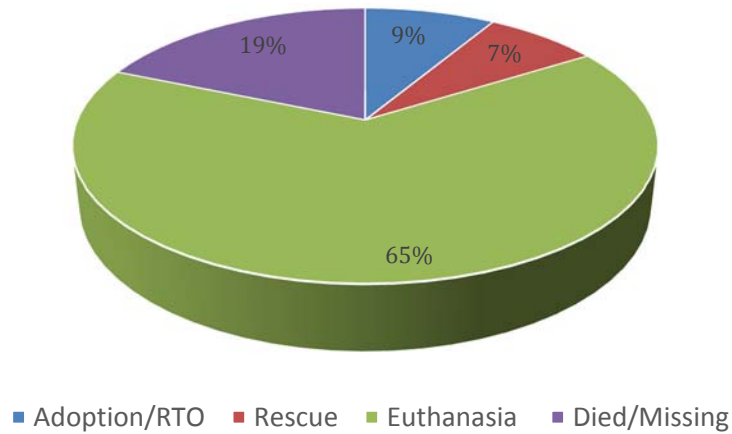
Outcome of Cats by Category

Figure 4: Depicts the percentage of outcome for cats by category for 2016.
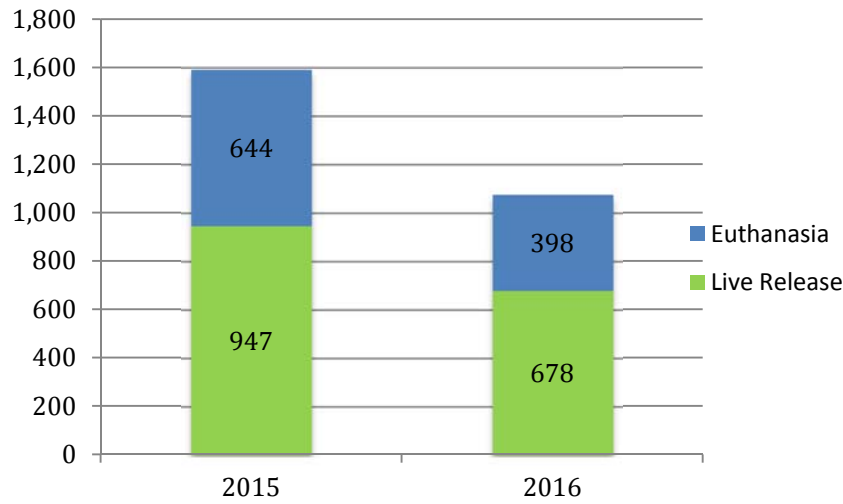
Live Release vs Euthanasia of Shelter Dogs

Figure 5: Shows the desired trend of decreasing of dog intake and euthanasia numbers from 2015 to 2016.

Outcome of Dogs by Category

Adoption/RTO   Rescue   Euthanasia   Died/Missing
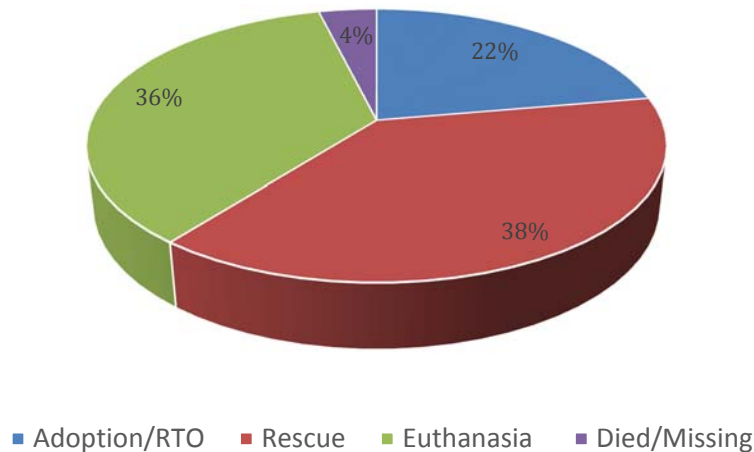
Figure 6: Depicts the percentage of outcome for dogs by category for 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The nationally accepted goal for live outcome percentage of shelter animals is 90%+. A wide variety of shelters including public, private, large, small, urban and rural, are proving this to be a reasonable goal in conjunction with productively decreasing intake. With an overall live outcome percentage of 41% from a combined 16% for cats and 60% for dogs in 2016, it can be concluded that we need to approach the Walker County shelter department from a different perspective.

The first step is the efficient use of technology as it relates to the enforcement and shelter operation. The importance of this basic process cannot be underestimated. All essential data should be entered into the software in real time and reports created to assist leadership in monitoring the success or need for improvement of programming.

These include the source such as stray or owner surrender, however, as an enforcement agency, it is also important to know whether the stray pet was brought to the shelter by the public or an officer, as well as the geographic location the pet was found. Estimating the age of the pet is crucial in determining high risk pets and grouped together in reports as neonates, under 5 months or adult over 5 months. 'Outcome' refers to the path the pet left the shelter such as return to owner, adoption, rescue transfer, foster, return to outside home, died, missing or euthanasia. Walker County must constantly strive to be as fiscally responsible as possible. The analysis of these trends over time with respect to each of these categories is absolutely essential when developing/evaluating programs and allocating limited resources.

Other helpful reports as programs are developed include intact animals so the surgery list can be created easily, animals missing a picture or preventive care, community cats ready for transfer to a non-profit partner, etc. With respect to outcome, Walker County has not fully developed an adoption program and several staff commented that people in Walker County were not responsible pet owners. This misperception has been developed over time as staff are frequently exposed to those people guilty of cruelty and neglect, by nature of the role of the shelter. Consultants submit that the lack of outreach, absence of pictures of all shelter pets on the website and adoption search engines has provided a barrier for a successful adoption program and more people are good and trustworthy than bad, in any community (see **Adoptions**).

There are a variety of efficient shelter software programs, such as Shelter Buddy and ShelterPro that can be linked to adoption search engines such as PetFinder and Adopt-a-Pet. When pictures are taken on intake and uploaded into the shelter software, they are automatically uploaded to those search engines. This basic, standard process will help those searching for their lost pets, looking to adopt a pet and rescue partners able to transfer pets.

Since this technology is based on dependable internet service, that must be addressed first. In the meantime, utilizing an Excel or Access spreadsheet would allow for easy retrieval of information. The Shelter Animals Count data matrix should be used monthly beginning with January of 2017.

BUDGET, BASELINE FUNDING AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Line item budget not available/analyzed during assessment visit
- Leadership reported no budget line item for preventive care or spay/neuter of shelter pets
- Have not applied for any grants

Although Walker County is tasked with enforcement of animal laws, it also bears the responsibility to provide basic standard care and line item allocations should include those for food, preventive care on intake, spay/neuter, microchipping and basic medical care (see **Population Management**).

Leadership must position all programs to reduce or eliminate the cycle of intact and stray animals. Part of the baseline budget for every shelter must be the inclusion of spay/neuter for adopters and sterilization a requirement for all animals reclaimed by their owners. Adoption and Return to Owner fees should not be viewed as revenue to recuperate costs of services and microchipping/registering all pets leaving the shelter should be mandatory (see **Return to Owner** and **Open Adoptions**).

Leadership should research and keep abreast on all grant opportunities now available for open admission public shelters. Many national funders, such as the Petco Foundation and Best Friends Animal Society are interested in helping organizations in particular, start new lifesaving programs. In order to be eligible, shelters must apply to become a Petco Foundation partner and a Best Friends Network partner as well as participate in Shelter Animals Count (see **Resources**). The Target Zero team confirmed that there is already a means for the public or funder to make a donation to the shelter with monies deposited in a designated fund.

Public~Private partnerships and collaborative community efforts are highly favored among funders as well and there are many opportunities to offset the operational budget with donor dollars (see **Resources**). Data, however, must be tracked appropriately as funders are strict about accurate statistics and transparency. Shelter leadership should also join the Million Cat Challenge as there are ongoing opportunities for donations and connections to other resources through a list-serve. A formal volunteer program and up to date Amazon Wish List provides great opportunities for outreach and supplementing staff and needed supplies, thus decreasing costs of care.

PUBLIC POLICY

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 5 day stray hold for dogs and cats

RECOMMENDATIONS

Laws and ordinances are created with the best of intentions to achieve a particular goal, but many of these outdated public policies are not in line with current knowledge of Best Practices that are based on actual data and studies.

In 2015, only 23% of the total canines left the shelter via adoption or return to owner and in 2016, only 22%. Since categories are not separated, the actual return to owner rate could not be determined without a manual count, although it is reasonable to conclude the return to owner rate is low. Beginning from January 2017, these categories should be tracked in the Shelter Animals Count data matrix, *along with the number of days for an owner to reclaim their dog. This data will likely support revising the 5 day stray hold to 3 days so the dogs may move to a live outcome opportunity quicker.*

Until the ordinance is revised, in light of the low return to owner rate, leadership should consider a Foster to Adopt program so animals can move out of the shelter quickly (see **Adoptions**). Length of stay is correlated with negative consequences such as overcrowding, higher levels of infectious diseases and euthanasia. Moving animals to the best live outcome opportunity as quickly as possible is crucial.

In the case of healthy outside cats, friendly or feral, brought to the shelter by a Good Samaritan or an officer, much evidence supports that the traditional approach of admitting them to the shelter so their owners can 'find' them or euthanizing them for population control are not effective. Although stray and owner surrendered cats were not reported separately, only 16% of the total cats entering the shelter in 2016 left alive.

Community Cat Diversion involves diverting all outside cats, friendly or feral, to spay/neuter/ear tip/rabies vaccination and return to their original location as opposed to admitting them to the shelter and holding for a stray period (see **Felines~ Community Cat Diversion, Housing and Husbandry**). Good Samaritans are most likely to take the cats directly to a spay/neuter program and continue to care for them when there is a heavily subsidized program available.

ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Officers report directly to the commissioner and are not under the shelter director
- Contracts with 2 cities, each with their own ACO (1 city alternates any available staff through the Public Works department)
- Loan traps to the public to trap community cats for surrender to the shelter

RECOMMENDATIONS

Walker County is tasked with the enforcement of animal laws and should therefore be laser focused on protecting the public and animals alike. The shelter director is given the responsibility to care for and the outcome of the shelter animals, yet does not have authority over animal control officers responsible for much of the intake. To create a more streamlined organization, it is recommended that the county enforcement staff answer to the shelter director.

Municipal contracts should be reviewed as well as the number of animals brought to the shelter by officers so they are in line with Best Practices. Evenings and weekends should be reserved for emergencies and police assists only.

Reuniting pets in the field must be an ongoing goal of the officers and each truck must be equipped with a microchip scanner. Officers should set traps for rabies suspects or animals posing a danger to the public and discontinue loaning traps to the public for the purpose of surrendering healthy animals to the shelter that are not posing a danger to the public.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Currently have 2 volunteers

RECOMMENDATIONS

The value and importance of a formal volunteer program cannot be overemphasized. Volunteers can provide enrichment, socialization, exercise, behavior modification, enhance the care of the shelter pets, assist with adoptions, transfer of pets to rescue groups, bathe and groom dogs, fundraise and more.

A robust formalized volunteer program can supplement the work of limited staff.

Volunteers must be educated about the shelter and be provided with an orientation. Leadership should consider a train-the-trainer type program whereby volunteers are providing the shelter orientation and on the job training.

The Humane Society of the United States Volunteer Management for Animal Care Organizations at animalsheltering.org/topics/volunteer-management, is a helpful guide when designing this program. A standard release of liability should be provided by the Walker County attorney's office.

When the community knows there is a need at the shelter and a way that they can help make a positive difference, they are likely to become valuable members of the lifesaving team. All volunteers must be required to sign a release of liability created by the county attorney.

TARGETED SPAY/NEUTER

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Unknown number of subsidized targeted surgeries in area for low-income pet owners

RECOMMENDATIONS

Part of productively reducing shelter intake is providing accessible services to target groups. Studies prove that most animals entering shelters are intact and from low-income households. Therefore, by providing low-income pet owners subsidized spay/neuter services, intake at the public shelter decreases (*Getting to Zero,* Peter Marsh). In general, the tipping point is 5 subsidized surgeries per 1,000 residents.

In Walker County with 68,000 residents, a minimum of 344 surgeries must be subsidized annually (±177 cats and ±177dogs) to decrease shelter intake.

Walker County leadership is encouraged to collaborate with non-profit spay/neuter clinics eligible for grant funding that will offset the costs for both organizations. Assuming a cat sterilization is approximately $50 and dog $60 at one of those clinics, the annual cost may be around $20,000.

The owner must be income qualified and any co-pay kept under $20 but preferably free. Income qualifying pet owners should be simple and streamlined in an effort to remove all barriers to service with as few steps as possible. When scheduling the appointment with the service provider, the client would be instructed to bring proof of qualification. Pet owners on government assistance automatically qualify and can simply show their Medicaid, Food Stamp, WIC, Section 8 or SSI documentation.

For those in need but not on government assistance, qualification may be done based on income if they earn less than 250% of the poverty level (2017 Federal Poverty Level Chart can be found online). For those individuals, copies of their W2's, previous year tax returns, current paystubs or other income verifying documentation can be used.

Partnerships could be created with local non-profit spay neuter groups that include Wally's Friends, National Spay Alliance, Chattaneuter Spay Neuter Clinic and private practice veterinarians to provide surgeries and receive reimbursement from the county. This proactive program may be funded by a combination of a county allocation, grants and/or donations. Fix Georgia Pets is a state-wide nonprofit spay/neuter program that offers limited matching funds as well.

Targeted spay/neuter programs that include low-income pet owners, community cats, large breed dogs and pets from high intake areas are showing the direct inverse correlation between the number of targeted surgeries in the community and shelter intake/euthanasia. Walker County leadership should determine/track the number of targeted surgeries done in 2017 and compare to shelter intake trends as an even sharper decline would be expected.

Many targeted spay/neuter programs, such as the ones below, are proving the inverse relationship between subsidized surgeries and decreased shelter intake/euthanasia.

Jacksonville, Florida
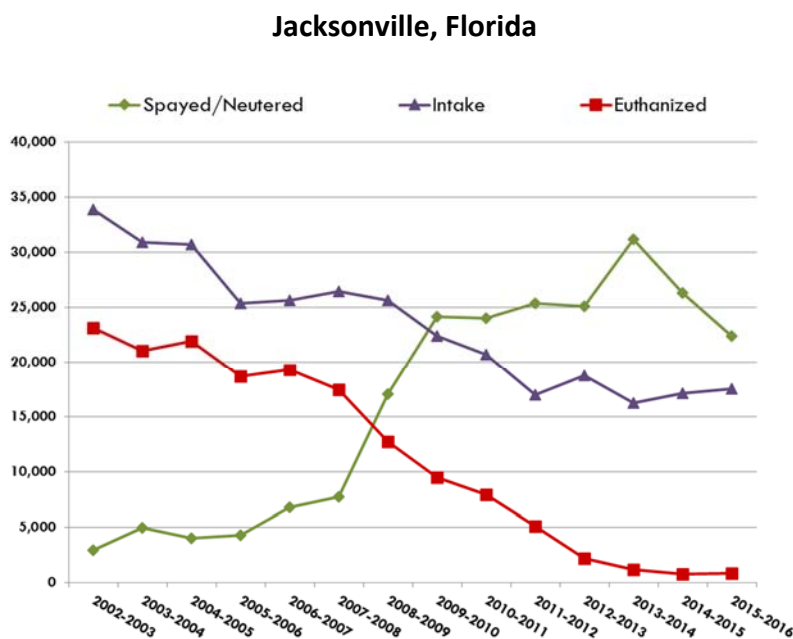

Figure 7: Inverse Relationship between targeted spay/neuter and shelter intake/euthanasia in Jacksonville, Florida.
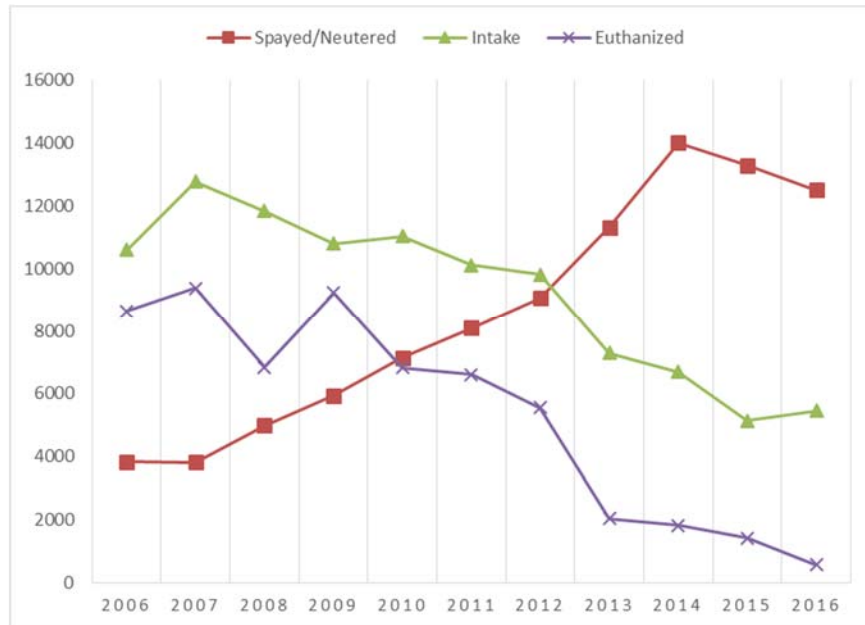
Waco, Texas

Figure 8: Inverse Relationship between targeted spay/neuter and shelter intake/euthanasia in Waco, Texas.
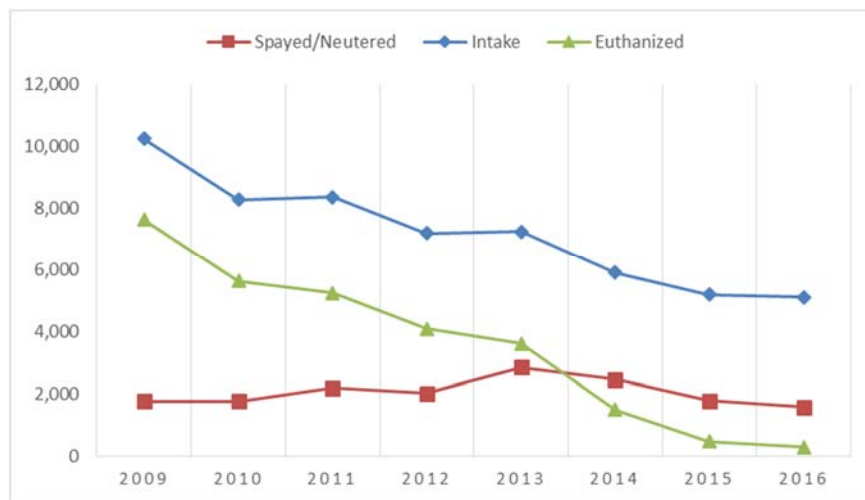
Huntsville, Alabama

Figure 9: Inverse Relationship between targeted spay/neuter and shelter intake/euthanasia in Huntsville, Alabama.
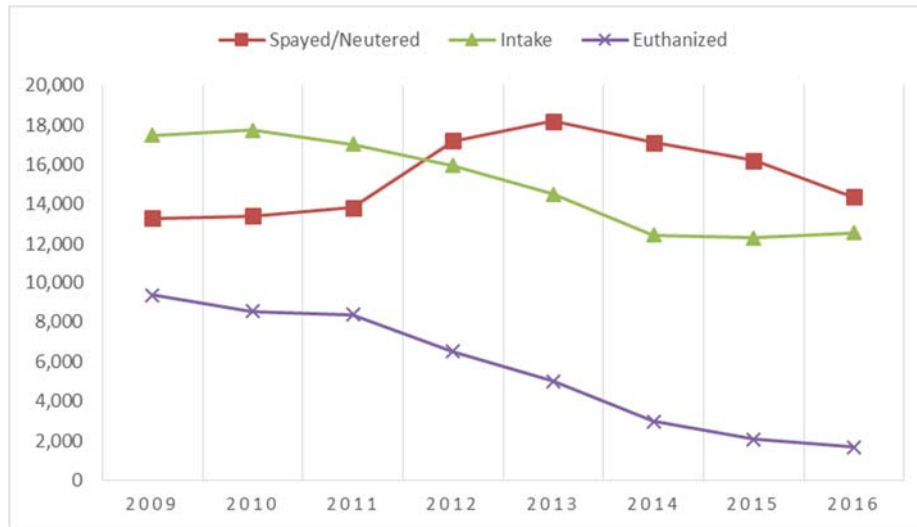
Indianapolis, Indiana

Figure 10: Inverse Relationship between targeted spay/neuter and shelter intake/euthanasia in Indianapolis, Indiana.

MANAGED INTAKE AND SAFETY NET

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No Safety Net program or managed intake

RECOMMENDATIONS

We now know there are many simple and free strategies that can productively decrease shelter intake while keeping animals and people safe and providing solutions for pet owners.

A 2015 study done by the ASPCA showed that 30 to 40% of pet owners surrendering to shelters would have kept their pets if they had temporary assistance. Also, in 2015, a Maddie's Fund survey showed that even though open admission shelters need the most help, they are the least likely to ask.

With this knowledge, we can see the great potential to ensure that shelters are used as a last resort and not the first option. Safety Net programs can be volunteer or staff driven and include a call back service for pet owners needing assistance before arriving at the shelter. Requiring appointments to surrender their pets to the shelter provides an opportunity for a Safety Net volunteer to intervene and identify the challenge.

Leadership is encouraged to collaborate with the non-profit A.D.R.E.A.M. (adreamcharity.org) already doing Safety Net work in the area. Walker County can benefit from a public~private partnership and help grow that program.

Volunteers may network in the community and raise funds to assist pet owners with minor veterinary bills, crisis housing/foster care, subsidized spay/neuter, behavior advice and training. Services may be in kind, donated or associated with a cost.

The Target Zero Fellow in Brevard County, Florida is operated by the Sheriff's Office. In the first year of the Safety Net program, a dedicated staff person has been successful helping 80% of the canines and 80% of the felines *outside the shelter*, thereby dramatically reducing intake of owner surrenders.

When there are no options other than surrender to the shelter, an owner must be required to schedule an appointment and be charged a fee to surrender. This is commonly called managed intake and allows limited shelter resources to be used most effectively. National funders, such as the ASPCA, have awarded grants for such programs in 2016 and this is now a major focus area in animal welfare.

SHELTER PROGRAMS

OPERATIONS

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No written Standard Operating Procedures
- Open to the public 10am to 4pm Monday through Friday and 8am to 1pm Saturdays
- No information, including address, on county website regarding shelter
- No onsite spay/neuter
  - adopter/owner responsible for cost of sterilization
  - Unknown non-compliance rate and no consequences but leadership reports 'big stack' of pending sterilization status forms

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regardless of the size of an animal shelter or number of employees, it is essential to have written Standard Operating Procedures for staff and volunteers. Protocols regarding capturing intake data, sanitation procedures and communicating with the public must be clearly documented and staff held accountable as appropriate.

Walker County leadership must set the shelter operation up for success. It is unclear to the Target Zero team why basic information regarding the shelter, such as the address, would not be on the Walker County website. Standard basic Best Practice includes opening to the public convenient hours that include several evenings. Most people work and children are in school between the hours of 10am and 4pm so would be unable to search for their lost pet or come to adopt without taking time off from their jobs.

Walker County leadership is not only tasked with public and animal safety, but must be committed to saving the lives of shelter animals as well. Basic information including the address, hours of operation and pictures of all pets in the shelter (with the exception of those involved in court cases of bite quarantine) should be available on the county website.

One theme the county leadership should embrace is dedication to ending the cycle of unwanted litters. Ensuring all animals that are reclaimed and/or adopted from the shelter are sterilized prior to transfer of ownership is essential and the county should not leave that crucial responsibility to the public. This has created unnecessary work for the staff attempting to ensure compliance not to mention the risk that those animals would reproduce before their sterilization appointment.

The Target Zero team appreciates the challenges inherent with not having onsite spay/neuter but local non-profit spay/neuter groups are interested in assisting and even transporting. A program should be established so animals are sterilized the day after their stray hold is up so a pending spay/neuter appointment is not increasing their length of stay. Line item budget allocation and grant funding should be covering these services while adoption fees kept under $35 for dogs and waived for cats (see **Adoptions**).

CANINES~HOUSING AND HUSBANDRY

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Do not dry kennels before allowing dogs access after cleaning
- No toys for dogs or puppies due to lack of drain covers
- Puppies and some dogs with no beds
- No soft bedding for dogs/puppies
- Puppies kept in cages with slats covered with newspaper

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Target Zero team was encouraged to see dog runs with divider doors and access to the outside. This is considered Best Practice design.

Sound sanitation practices are essential for disease control and the comfort of shelter animals and include the following:

1. Dogs should be sequestered on one side of the run and fed breakfast first thing in the morning
2. Bedding should be laundered with bleach
3. Toys should be disinfected in a bin with the appropriately diluted
4. Feces and other bodily waste should be discarded in a receptacle and not rinsed down the drain
5. A disinfectant such as Rescue® (formerly known as Accel) should be applied while the neighboring kennel is prepared
6. The disinfectant should be rinsed with water
7. The kennel should be dried using a squeegee
8. A clean bed and toys should be placed in the kennel
9. The dog should be moved to the clean side and steps 1 through 8 repeated on the opposite side

The kennel environment is by definition a stressful place for a dog so loud noises, such as those from an industrial fan should be avoided. Enrichment is crucial for pets in shelters that provide mental stimulation and prevent boredom. Providing interactive toys, soft blankets or towels and social interaction with people is imperative. Some companies have shelter programs, such as those found at kongcompany.com and all shelters should have an Amazon Wish List easily found on their website. Only items that can be disinfected should be used and drain covers must be fixed to prevent toys from clogging the plumbing system.

When the volunteer program is developed, dogs may be walked or exercised outside and consideration should be given to divide the outdoor play yard. The yards could be lined with artificial grass for easy disinfection, have shade sails and provide a place for exercise and normal play activity for shelter dogs. Puppies under 6 months should only be placed on surfaces that can be disinfected due to the risk of viruses such as parvo being transmitted by fomites.

Housing shelter pets on slatted surfaces in not consistent with Best Practices but the team encouraged to see puppy cages lined with newspaper. Providing soft bedding will further lessen the risk of their paws and nails getting stuck in the slats.

FELINES~ COMMUNITY CAT DIVERSION, HOUSING AND HUSBANDRY

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Admit all healthy cats found outside
- Two partitioned rooms for cats in the center of the shelter/dog kennels
- Sound meter showed 82 decibels in cat areas at one point during assessment visit, an environment terrifying for cats
- Single compartment cages below the standard minimum requirement with no visual or solid physical barrier between cats
- No consistent spot cleaning of cats
- No toys, bedding or enrichment
- Attention paid to purchase high quality food for dogs but not for cats

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Cat Diversion programs make sense for shelters, the public and is a crucial lifesaving strategy. Healthy cats 'found' outside should not be admitted to the shelter but rather taken to a spay/neuter program and returned where they were found.

Sterilizing, ear tipping and vaccinating an outside cat against rabies and returning him to his outside home as opposed to admitting him to the shelter is considered Best Practice.

This program is supported philosophically and financially by all reputable national organizations to include the Best Friends Animal Society, PetSmart Charities, the ASPCA, the Humane Society of the United States, Alley Cat Allies, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and the Million Cat Challenge. Leadership should join the Million Cat Challenge list-serve to learn how progressive shelters are operating and about Best Practice strategy successes.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control does not recommend euthanizing *any* species that could *potentially* carry rabies as a method of prevention. Stopping the population growth by sterilizing and vaccinating cats before returning them to their outside home increases community immunity against rabies that is not addressed by trap and euthanize.

This program has only benefits including:

- Targeting the solution and stopping the reproduction cycle, thus decreasing the overall number of outside cats and their unwanted mating behaviors
- Returns cats to their outdoor home where they had a known food source(s)
- Increases community immunity against rabies
- Decreases the number of cats entering the shelter and ultimately losing their lives
- Increases the chance of reuniting cats with their owners as studies show that cats are 7 to 10 times more likely to find their way home or find another home from the street versus a shelter
- Increases the adoption chance of those cats that do enter the adoption program (indoor only, declawed cats, young kittens)
- Conserves limited shelter resources (time, staff, money, supplies, cage space, etc.) for other proactive and lifesaving programs for shelter dogs and cats
- Decreases the number of free roaming cats so less zoonotic potential of rabies and intestinal parasites
- Less free roaming cats means less wildlife at risk
- No need to test for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) or Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) since sterilized cats are unlikely to spread these diseases even if positive

There are several key reasons why Community Cat Diversion makes sense operationally, financially and morally:

- It will drastically decrease cat intake and therefore cost of care
- Every community that implements Community Cat Diversion programs virtually eliminates complaint calls regarding cats since behaviors associated with mating are eliminated
- This program offers a solution by ending the reproduction of cats returning to their 'outside home' instead of trying to manage the never ending symptoms by trapping and euthanizing
- Community Cat Diversion is successful in many hundreds of communities across the country as well including the southern states

It is crucial that all shelter staff understand the very basic and simple components of this program before it is started. In a national survey sponsored by Alley Cat Allies, a Harris poll showed that 81% of respondents did not want community cats euthanized. When this program is rolled out with informed staff and volunteers, the culture in the community will eventually change as the public becomes educated.

For the state of Georgia, the Target Zero team recommends focusing on funding for area spay/neuter programs so Good Samaritans have access to spay/neuter at no cost for community cats, thus bypassing the shelter. If the Good Samaritan is unable to transport the cat then staff should educate them regarding the benefits of returning the cat sterilized to his outside home.

The Target Zero team appreciates the current challenges without onsite spay/neuter but when this program is developed, the ideal turnaround time is:

- Day 1: Enters the shelter only if Good Samaritan cannot take directly to spay/neuter
- Day 2: Spay/neuter, ear tip, rabies vaccination, deworming, flea control if needed
- Day 3: Return to outside home by Good Samaritan or volunteer

During the 3-day period, feral cats may be held in humane traps and given food/water. This type of temporary housing is the least stressful and safest for the cats and staff. If cats must wait longer than 3 days in the shelter for surgery, a feral den in an appropriately sized cage is a better option.

Figure 11: Example of a feral cat housed in a humane trap on PCV pipes with food/water awaiting next day surgery or return.

Figure 12: An example of a feral den with a plexiglass front door that should face the back or side of the cage and a circle opening on the side for the cat to access food/water and litter box while awaiting surgery or release.

If a fractious cat does need to be euthanized, the cat should be sequestered in a feral den or a trap with a trap divider (see picture below).

Figure 13: Sample TD2 Small Trap Divider offered for sale at trucatchtraps.com

Many communities across the country have adopted this program and virtually eliminated complaints about cats as well as preserved valuable and limited enforcement time to focus on true public safety issues.

Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services-Cat Intake and Outcome
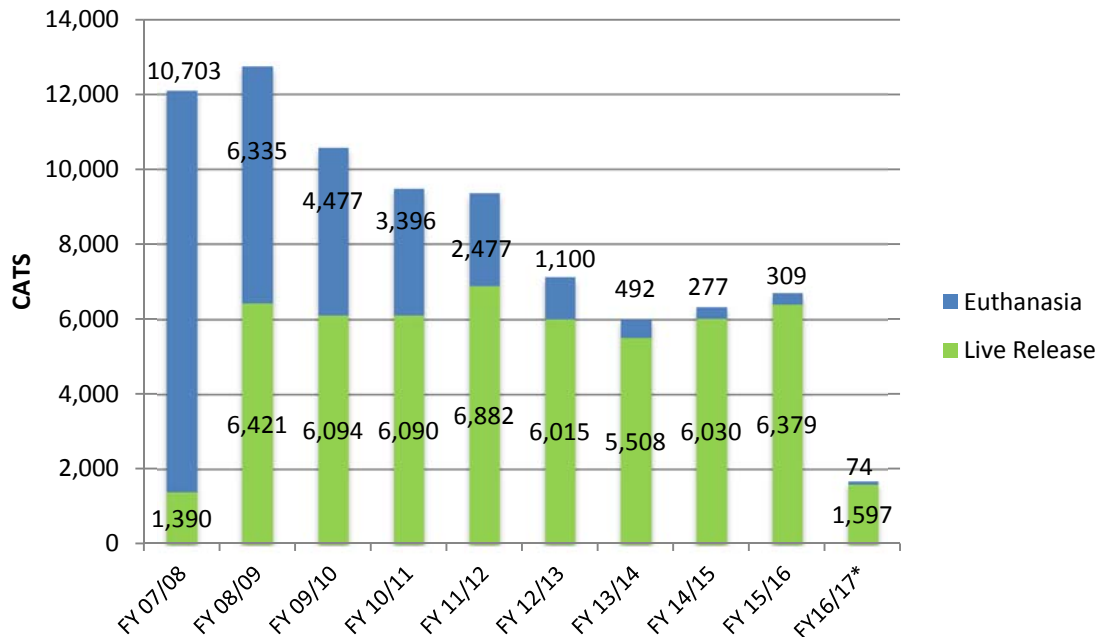
Figure 14: Shows decreasing intake/euthanasia of cats after Community Cat Diversion program (called Feral Freedom) in Jacksonville, Florida in August 2008.

City of Waco Animal Shelter-Cat Intake and Outcome
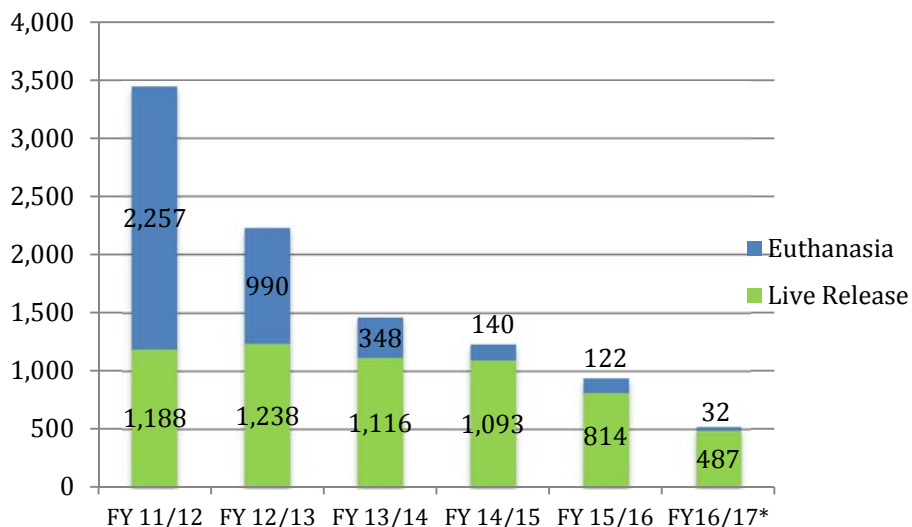
Figure 15: Shows the decrease in shelter intake and euthanasia after the Community Cat program began in October of 2013 in Waco, Texas. FY16/17 stats are through February 28, 2017.

Huntsville Animal Services-Cat Intake and Outcome

Figure 16: Shows decrease shelter intake of cats after income targeted spay/neuter began in 2009 and increased live release of cats after the Community Cat Diversion program began in April 2014 at Huntsville Animal Services. 2017* figures are through February 28, 2017.

Indianapolis Animal Care and Control -Cat Intake and Outcome
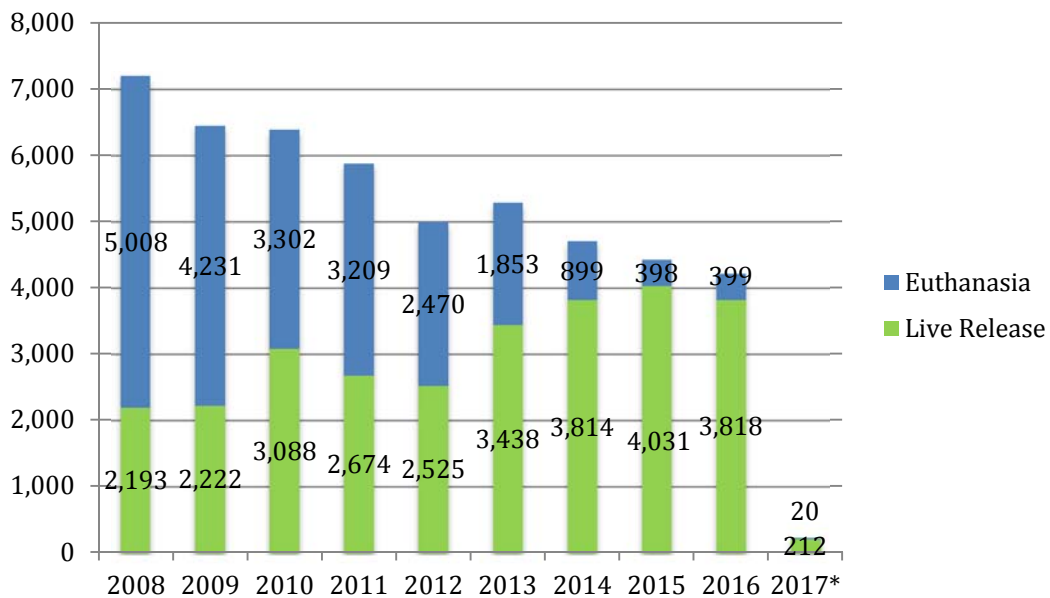
Figure 17: Shows the dramatic decrease of cat euthanasia numbers after the Community Cat Diversion Program was implemented in August 2013. 2017* figures are through January 31, 2017.

Greenville County Community Cat Intake by Source
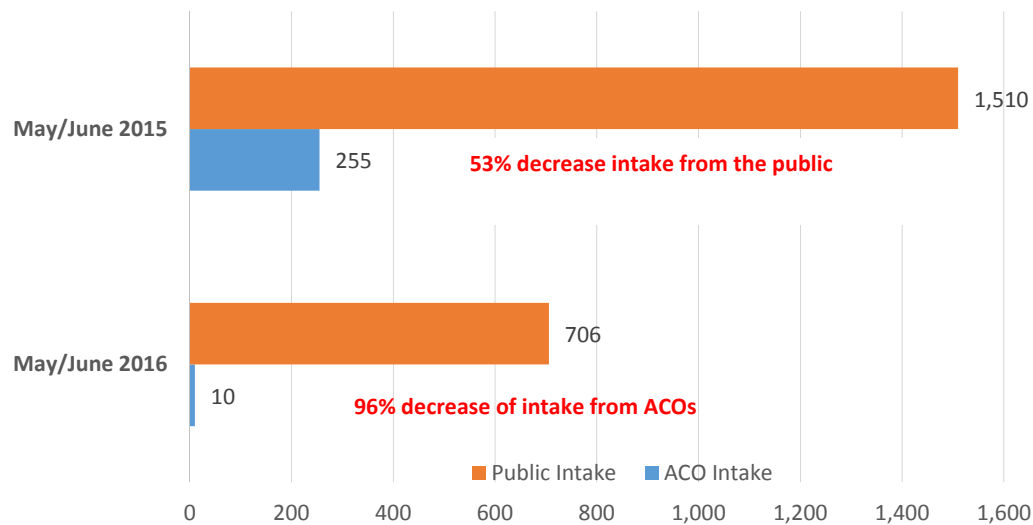
Figure 18: Shows the comparison in intake from the public and animal control officers in a 2 month period before and after Community Cat Diversion implemented.

Only indoor owner surrendered cats with no other alternative intake should enter the shelter system, which should be a fraction of the historical number, although data is not easily retrievable for 2016. Proper housing and enrichment reduces stress and therefore the incidence of upper respiratory infections in cats. Less than 12 square foot of space per cat is considered inhumane housing.

Cage banks on the shelter property, below the minimum requirements can be retrofit with a simple portal that provides access to 2 small cages thus providing the most humane housing for cats.

Figure 19: Shows an example of stainless steel cages retrofitted with one porthole between two cages. http://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/manufactured-portals-order-information-and-instruction-for-installation

Wire cages with no visual barrier between cages should not be used to house cats. During the visit, the shelter director transported those cages so county maintenance could remove the middle divider giving one cat a large enclosure. In addition, cats were housed in the adoption and quarantine areas in the

middle of the dog kennels with an unacceptable noise level. During the assessment visit, action was taken to remove cats from the center of the dog kennels. With few other options in the shelter building and the original area designated for cats with drainage issues, the Target Zero team was encouraged to learn that in a meeting with Walker County Commissioner Whitfield, a single wide trailer may be available to house cats on the property so they are not exposed to dogs. *This trailer should be easily accessible to the public and staff at the front parking lot.*

Housing cats in the dog kennels is highly stressful and terrifying for cats, but equally as important puts the staff at great risk of injury when handling those cats who are likely to bite and/or scratch out of fear.

Cats are comforted by smells and items they have become accustomed to. It is not necessary to fully disinfect an enclosure during the cats' stay and likewise, items such as toys, blankets and beds that are not soiled, should remain with the cat. A simple spot clean, changing litter and providing clean water and food bowls is sufficient while the cat remains in his enclosure. The concept of spot cleaning cats was introduced during the assessment and shelter leadership very receptive.

Enrichment for shelter cats is as important as it is for dogs. Interactive toys, especially those that can be disinfected, like ping pong balls, work well. Companies, such as Imperial cats, have shelter programs for Scratch 'n Bits (imperialcat.com/giveback.php, see **Resources**). Part of the basic enrichment program is palatable nutrition. Cats should be feed free choice dry food and canned food twice daily.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No formal population management done daily
- No inventory of animals done with no numbers easily retrievable
- Pictures not taken on intake or posted to adoption search engines
- No preventive care on intake due to euthanasia rate and lack of perceived value as animals still got sick in the past
- If need fecal test done, for example, may take sample to local veterinarian
- Status update on any animal typically communicated verbally between staff with no/minimal written records
- Staff reports high levels of kennel cough

RECOMMENDATIONS

Designated staff and/or volunteers should be working to ensure each pet entering the shelter has a plan for live outcome with the shortest length of stay in the shelter, called Population Management~Daily Rounds. Once efforts have been made through targeted spay/neuter in the community, Safety Net, managed intake and Good Samaritan foster care, there will be far fewer animals in the shelter annually.

A variety of adoption and lost and found online search engines reach an unlimited number of people in real time so it is imperative that a picture of each pet be taken on intake and auto uploaded to the website. Not only will this process likely increase the number of pets adopted and sent to rescue groups but it will reunite more pets with their owners. Without dependable internet and appropriate shelter

software, posting pictures individually is very time consuming but at this time posting on Facebook is currently the only exposure shelter pets have.

Basic standard Best Practice includes providing shelter pets with appropriate preventive care *at the point of intake:*

For canines:
> Booster vaccine (DHPP)
> Kennel cough vaccine
> Dewormer
> Flea/tick control if needed

For felines:
> Booster vaccine (FVRCP)
> Dewormer
> Flea control if needed

Vaccinating all pets on intake adds to the protection against infectious diseases pets face when housed at a shelter and is considered basic standard Best Practice. But the real key to keeping shelter pets healthy is to minimize their time in the shelter and moving them to a live outcome opportunity as quickly as possible, especially puppies and kittens who are the most vulnerable populations. The perceived high incidence of infectious diseases is a consequence of length of stay, not vaccinating on intake.

LIVE OUTCOME PROGRAMS

OUTREACH/SOCIAL MEDIA

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No social media utilized except Facebook
- No adoption search engines utilized
- Pictures of shelter pets not posted on county website

RECOMMENDATIONS

In our culture today, technology is utilized to reunite pets with their owners, find new homes for pets, showcase shelter pets, network with rescue partners and raise money and awareness for shelter pets. Walker County is obligated to create a basic social media program that must include taking pictures of all shelter pets on intake. Posting those pictures in real time on the county website, a Facebook page and auto uploading to all search engines such as adoptapet.com and petfinder.com is considered basic standard Best Practice (Exceptions are court cases, dangerous dogs, etc.).

The county should capitalize on the help of non-profit groups already working on social media outreach but the absence of pictures taken on intake makes this an arduous and time consuming task that could be streamlined. As discussed, dependable internet access is needed.

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- In 2015 119 dogs out of 1,652 and 0 cats out of 1,334 were returned to their owners (RTO)
- In 2016 RTO rates are unknown as data was combined with adoption numbers and is not easily retrieved due to lack of computer software

RECOMMENDATIONS

Only a small percentage of dogs and presumably no cats are returned to their owners from the shelter. Ensuring all animal control officers, county and city, have working microchip scanners can help increase the number of pets reunited in the field.

As discussed throughout the report, directing Good Samaritans to a free spay/neuter opportunity for an outside cat that they return to their outside home is recommended. A presence on the internet, posting pictures in real time on adoption search engines will increase the number of dogs reunited.

In the meantime, the county attorney should create a release allowing interested adopters to foster dogs and puppies during the stray hold, requiring them to return them if the owner is found within 5 days. With such a small percentage reunited, this is a low risk program.

ADOPTIONS

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- $40 for dogs and $15 for cats that includes the rabies at a local veterinarian only
- Adopters responsible for spay/neuter but unknown compliance rate
- Considering increasing adoption fee to include spay/neuter
- Staff sentiment that most people would be irresponsible pet owners and cannot be trusted

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Target Zero team was encouraged to see the low adoption fees but spay/neuter should be arranged and covered within that fee without increasing the length of stay for the pet. Adoption fees must not be viewed as a revenue generator to cover cost of services or to screen potential adopters. Leadership reported there is consideration for raising the adoption fee to include spay/neuter services, this line of thought should not be pursued as it will reduce the number of animals saved and increase length of stay which ultimately leads to overcrowding, exposure to infectious disease and increased euthanasia.

Staff sentiment that people in their community cannot be trusted to be responsible pet owners has created another barrier to saving lives. This perception roots itself in the exposure to victims of cruelty and neglect by the staff. The staff then fear that placing a pet with an adopter may repeat the cycle.

The concept of open adoptions means that shelter staff and volunteers work with potential adopters to make the right match for both pet and person, making the assumption that there are more good than

bad pet owners. Conversational adoptions focuses on learning about the potential adopter's lifestyle, etc. and using it as an opportunity to educate.

The Humane Society of the United States Adopters Welcome Guidelines regarding open adoptions must be required reading by and embraced by all county leadership, budget analysts, county attorneys, shelter staff, rescue partners and volunteers.

Finally, the adoption contract should outline the responsibilities of both parties and serve to educate the adopter about the booster vaccinations, importance of seeing a veterinarian and heartworm prevention for dogs, etc., none of which is currently included. Full disclosure of any medical or behavioral concerns should also be part of the adoption package. With a change in philosophy regarding the adoption program, more animals will be saved in a shorter period of time.

In general, staff is more attentive to the plight of shelter dogs, while not as sensitive to the needs of cats. All animals entering the shelter should receive the same care and consideration.

Dogs entering the shelter should be evaluated as individuals and based on their observed or known behaviors, not judged based only on their appearance. There is absolutely no evidence, scientific or otherwise, that dogs with certain physical characteristics, such as those of the American Stafford terrier or pit bull type dogs are inherently aggressive. In fact, there is much evidence to conclude that breed is not a correlated risk factor for aggression but abuse, neglect and tethering are.

As per the National Canine Research Council, organizations that *do not endorse* breed specific discrimination include but are not limited to the:

- Centers for Disease Control
- National Animal Control Association
- American Bar Association
- Humane Society of the United States
- National Association of Obedience Instructors
- Best Friends Animal Society
- ASPCA
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- American Animal Hospital Association
- American Humane Association

In addition, in 2012, the insurance giant State Farm repealed a ban in the state of Ohio and in annual tests by the American Temperament Testing Society, pit bulls consistently scored higher than many other popular breeds including golden retrievers (atts.org).

Shelter staff should make a concerted effort to advocate for all dogs appropriate for adoption or rescue transfer. A bias from the shelter staff continues to perpetuate myths regarding bully breeds.

As discussed throughout this report, internet access, appropriate shelter software, a county website presence and auto uploads to search engines will dramatically increase the number of animals placed in permanent homes through adoption. With a social media presence, adoption events will attract people to the shelter, no different than those surrendering pets find the shelter.

STATUS~OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Rescue partners responsible for the bulk of the live outcome
- 52 active rescue groups with program developed in the last year

RECOMMENDATIONS

Shelter leadership and the rescue coordinator are to be commended for the expansion of the rescue partnership in the last year that has resulted in the majority of life saving from the shelter.

Target Zero team recommends that Walker County have an approval process in place beginning with an online application for potential rescue partners. Technology should be utilized to communicate with rescue partners highlighting shelter pets. Rescue partners have been very effective in helping pets in need but should also be encouraged to transfer pets they can place in a permanent home quickly.

Rescue partners, are currently the most critical lifesaving pathway for shelter pets. No fees should be charged to transfer pets and any help should be offered to enable groups to transfer more pets. This will be more feasible when there is a spay/neuter program in place for shelter pets.

During the assessment, Target Zero connected shelter leadership with a contact from the Best Friends Atlanta Pet Adoption Center. Rescue partnerships blossom when the shelter communicates the need for help and creates a streamlined process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is an exciting time in Walker County with respect to animal welfare and the Target Zero team truly appreciates the enthusiasm of leadership and invitation to help take the organization to the next level. While progress has been made, there remains many areas of opportunity to work smarter, not harder, such as creating more public~private partnerships to productively decrease intake and provide sustainable resolutions.

Leadership should be attending national and regional conferences to learn more about the proven Best Practices in this report. The Humane Society of the United States will be hosting the annual EXPO in Fort Lauderdale, Florida from May 9 through May 12 and Best Friends will host their conference in Atlantic City, NJ from July 13 through 15. In the meantime, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* should be used as the gold standard and staff view the plethora of webinars available online (see **Resources**).

Leadership should also join the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and Million Cat Challenge and become a Petco Foundation partner and Best Friends Network partner for educational purposes as well as potential funding opportunities.

The Target Zero team would welcome Walker County as a Fellow. As a Target Zero Fellow, our team would provide ongoing assistance with the development and implementation of recommendations in this assessment. This includes but is not limited to program development, training, assistance with updating the Standard Operating Procedures, networking, ordinance revisions and collaboration with the legal teams from national organizations, contract revisions and links to potential funding.

All Target Zero services are provided pro bono and there is no legal contract/obligation that would need to be approved. County leadership would agree via an email confirmation to work directly with the Target Zero team, provide monthly statistics and agree to work towards Safety Net, Open Adoptions and spay/neuter programs, in particular. The Target Zero team appreciates the position of the municipality and that some recommendations may take longer than others while some may require legal approval and/or funding.

Congratulations on the lifesaving rescue partnerships and dedicated staff and volunteers. Walker County is perfectly positioned to become a leader in the state of Georgia for shelter reform and Target Zero looks forward to a fruitful partnership.

SUMMARY OF ACTION STEPS

CATEGORY	PROGRESS UPDATE
TECHNOLOGY, DATA AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS	
Provide dependable internet service at the shelter	
Chose shelter software	
Until shelter software installed, track numbers using excel document	
Begin tracking shelter numbers using Shelter Animals Count matrix	
BUDGET, BASELINE FUNDING AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES	
Provide Target Zero with line item budget	
Prepare budget to include preventive care including spay/neuter	
Register as a Petco Foundation Partner	
Register as a Best Friends Network Partner	
Join the Million Cat Challenge list-serve	
Join the Association of Shelter Veterinarians	
Research local and national grant opportunities	
Create/update Amazon Wish List	
PUBLIC POLICY	
Track the number and time frame of dogs and puppies returned to their owners	
Consider reducing the stray hold to 3 days when there is a live outcome opportunity	
Seek public~private partnerships and grant monies to subsidize spay/neuter programs for community cats	
ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM	
Update the Table of Organization so enforcement staff report to the shelter director	
Review municipal contracts so animal control officer protocols are in line with shelter protocols	
Discontinue loaning traps to the public for the surrender of cats	
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM	
Advertise need for shelter volunteers	
Create orientation that can be given by a lead volunteer team	

TARGETED SPAY/NEUTER	
Research number of income or other targeted surgeries done in area	
Meet with Spay Alliance, Chattaneuter and Wally's Friends to determine surgery costs and potential grant collaborations	
Communicate with Fix Georgia Pets regarding matching funds	
Research local, regional and national spay/neuter funding opportunities	
Track number of targeted surgeries done in Walker County and compare to shelter intake in 2017	
MANAGED INTAKE, SAFETY NET AND GOOD SAMARITAN FOSTER PROGRAM	
Consider charging a fee for owners to surrender their pets	
Meet with A.D.R.E.A.M. to capitalize on Safety Net program already in place	
OPERATIONS	
Include all pertinent shelter information on the county website	
Create written Standard Operating Procedures	
Open to the public at least 2 evenings a week	
Work with local non-profit spay/neuter organizations so animals sterilized prior to release	
CANINE~HOUSING AND HUSBANDRY	
Create Standard Operating Procedure for sanitation of dog runs that includes drying the run before returning the dog	
Fix drain covers so dogs can have toys	
Provide soft bedding for each dog and puppy	
Divide outside play run and line with artificial grass that can be disinfected	
Discontinue the use of large industrial fans	
FELINE~COMMUNITY CAT DIVERSION, HOUSING AND HUSBANDRY	
Identify funding for spay/neuter for community cats and discontinue admitting to the shelter	
Move cats out of dog kennel area	Done during assessment
Set up trailer in parking lot exclusively for cats	
Create humane cat housing with current cages	Partially done during assessment
Implement spot cleaning for cats	
Provide toys and bedding for all cats	

Feed cats free choice dry food and canned food twice daily	
POPULATION MANAGEMENT	
Conduct daily rounds to ensure plan of action for each pet	
Conduct daily inventory to ensure all animals accounted for	
Take pictures of all pets on intake	
Vaccinate all canines with booster and kennel cough vaccines	
Vaccinate all felines with booster	
Deworm all pets	
Provide Flea/tick control	
SOCIAL MEDIA	
Post all pictures on intake to county website and search engines (with the exception of court cases, dangerous dogs, etc.)	
RETURN TO OWNER	
Track number of animals returned to owner (separated by category) beginning January 2017	
Track number of days for owner to reclaim beginning January 2017	
ADOPTION PROGRAM	
Include spay/neuter and preventive care with adoptions	
Work with spay/neuter programs to sterilize shelter pets the day after their stray hold or owner surrender as soon as possible	
Require that all staff and volunteers read and embrace **Adopters Welcome**	
RESCUE PARTNERSHIP	
Create written documentation/contact information for all rescue partners	
Develop plan to communicate rescue holds prior to shelter software implementation	

RESOURCES

Grant Opportunities (this list in not all inclusive)
- ASPCA
- American Humane Association
- Animal Farm Foundation
- Banfield Charitable Trust
- Bernice Barbour Foundation
- Best Friends Animal Society
- Bissell Pet Foundation
- Greg Biffel Foundation
- Humane Society of the United States
- Petfinder Foundation
- Petco Foundation
- PetSmart Charities

Helpful Websites
- target-zero.org (Target Zero)
- sheltervet.org (The Association of Shelter Veterinarians)
- aspcapro.org (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
- animalsheltering.org (Humane Society of the United States)
- bestfriends.org (Best Friends Animal Society)
- alleycatallies.org (Alley Cat Allies)
- millioncatchallenge.org (Million Cat Challenge)
- petmicrochiplookup.org (AAHA Universal Pet Microchip Look Up)
- shelteranimalscount.org (Shelter Animals Count)
- American Temperament Testing Society (atts.org)

Must See Webinars (access links at target-zero.org/resources)
- *Best Practice Strategies for Redefining Animal Sheltering* presented by Dr. Sara Pizano
- *Return to Field: Putting Theory into Action Saving Cats* presented by Cameron Moore
- *Creating Responsible Lifesaving Public Policy*: Solutions for Community Cats presented by Dr. Sara Pizano
- *Stress Reduction: Happy and Healthy Shelter Cats on a Fast Track to Adoption* presented by Dr. Brenda Griffin
- *Proactive Community Animal Control* presented by Todd Stosuy

Helpful Books
- *Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters,* Lila Miller, DVM & Kate Hurley, DVM
- *Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff,* Lila Miller, DVM & Steven Zawistowski, PhD, CAAB
- *Getting to Zero*, Peter Marsh
- *Replacing Myth with Math,* Peter Marsh

Helpful Guidelines
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-neuter Programs (sheltervet.org) with checklist for guidelines at http://www.aspcapro.org/checklist
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters (sheltervet.org)
- Adopters Welcome, Humane Society of the United States (animalsheltering.org)
- The Five Freedoms: http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/shelter-health-animal-care/five-freedoms
- Managing Heartworm Disease in Shelter Animals (https://www.heartwormsociety.org/veterinary-resources/veterinary-education/ahs-board-speaks-out/281-managing-heartworm-disease-in-shelter-animals)
- Humane Society of the United States Volunteer Management for Animal Care Organizations https://www.animalsheltering.org/topics/volunteer-management

Enrichment for Cats

- Stress Reduction: Happy and Healthy Shelter Cats on a Fast Track to Adoption http://www.maddiesfund.org/stress-reduction-happy-and-healthy-shelter-cats.htm
- UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program: http://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/facility-design-and-animal-housing
- Cat Cage Modifications: Making Double Compartment Cat Cages using a PVC Portal: http://www.sheltermedicine.com/shelter-health-portal/information-sheets/cat-cage-modifications-making-double-compartment-cat-cages-
- Elevated beds: http://www.sheltermedicine.com/shelter-health-portal/information-sheets/building-an-elevated-bed-for-use-in-shelter-cat-housing
- Kuranda Shelter Shopping Account/Donate a Bed Program: https://kuranda.com/humane
- Simple Shelter Enrichment for Cats: http://ufsheltermedicine.com/files/2011/11/simple-shelter-enrichment-for-cats.pdf
- Scratch N Bits Shelter Donation Program: http://www.imperialcat.com/adoptacat.php

Enrichment for Dogs
- Simple Shelter Enrichment for Dogs: http://ufsheltermedicine.com/files/2011/11/simple-shelter-enrichment-for-dogs.pdf

- Organized Play Groups for Dogs, see centerforshelterdogs.org

- Animal Farm Foundation – Everyday Enrichment Ideas: http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Everyday-Ideas

- Kuranda Shelter Shopping Account/Donate a Bed Program: https://kuranda.com/humane

- Kong Pet Partner Programs: https://www.kongcompany.com/pet-partner-programs/shelter-registration/

- Amazon Wish List: create a shelter account and add items to your wish list that donors can purchase and ship directly to the shelter (toys, treats, bedding, canned or dry food, items needed for kitten and puppy fosters, grooming supplies, microchip scanners). www.amazon.com

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HUMANE SOCIETIES
BASIC ANIMAL STATS MATRIX
(VRS 10-2013)

Introduction to the Basic Matrix:

This basic matrix was designed to serve as a tool for basic data collection. It is a simple matrix containing what many (including Asilomar, ASPCA, National Federation, American Humane, UC Davis, Maddies Fund, PetSmart Charities and HSUS) have agreed are the minimum data points (along with definitions) an organization should gather.   Whether organizations already gather a great deal of data or have only gathered the basics, this matrix should facilitate the roll up or merging of data at the local, regional or national level by providing a common framework. This matrix does not reflect any preference in data analysis or the calculation of rates but is rather simply a tool for data collection.

Tracking by Species and Age:

The risks associated with being an adult dog, puppy, adult cat or kitten (or neonate of any kind) in a shelter environment will vary a great deal. To help shelters assess and understand the differing risks for these populations of animals, this basic animal stats matrix includes a break out by species and age. If tracking statistics broken out by species and age is beyond the capacity of an agency, simply tracking statistics by species would be a place to begin. This document defines puppy and kitten as under 5 months of age (see below: Determining Age). Again – given the differing level of risk – breaking age down further to include a neonate category for both dogs and cats can also be very informative.

Determining Age:

This basic matrix utilizes 5 months as the break point between puppy/kitten and adult. At or near 5 months of age there are changes in the teeth which can help guide trained staff regarding proper categorization of the animal. For cats, at 4-5 months of age permanent canines, premolars and molars are coming in (all in by 6 months of age). For dogs, at 5-7 months of age permanent canines, premolars and molars are coming in (all in by 7 months of age).

> Source: "How to . . . series" from Animal Sheltering,
> http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/may_jun_1996/how_to_determine_age.html
> Or, contact the National Federation of Humane Societies for a copy of the document.

Beginning and Ending Shelter Counts:

These numbers help frame the population of the animals sheltered and cared for by the organization. We are recommending that a shelter do a walk through – physically counting the animals sheltered within the organization, and 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).

The **NATIONAL FEDERATION**
of **HUMANE SOCIETIES**

Defining Owner Intended Euthanasia:

Some shelters offer pet euthanasia to the public as a service whose cost may be subsidized and therefore more affordable than local veterinary clinics, thus ensuring access to this service. Defining when euthanasia should be recorded as "at the request of the owner", or not, is the subject of much discussion. For the purposes of this document, we are choosing to define owner INTENDED euthanasia as the euthanasia of a pet whose owner brought the pet to the shelter for that service. In other words, the owner brought the pet in specifically for that service – it was their intent before arriving. Any other definition of "owner requested" euthanasia leaves much up to interpretation and therefore a great deal of variation among organizations and their reporting. We believe the simplicity of this definition helps to ensure consistent application and record keeping.

Live Admissions Only:

For the purposes of this matrix we are tracking LIVE admissions only, i.e. animals who are alive when they come into an agency's possession. Animals who are dead when taken in to an agency's possession may be a data point to track, but that information is not tracked by this matrix.

What is Possession?

"Adoption" and "Transferred to another Agency" both make reference to possession. The primary concept here is one of ownership. For example, in foster care, the agency still has possession or ownership. If adopted or transferred to another Agency, possession is now with the new owner, or with another Agency.

Where are the "Others"?

This basic data matrix focuses on canines and felines. Many organizations also provide extraordinary services for other pets (pocket pets, rabbits, ferrets) and animals (wildlife), and that good work is not captured here.

Why a Basic Matrix?

This basic matrix was designed to serve as a tool for data collection. It is a simple matrix containing what many have agreed are the minimum data points an organization should consider gathering. By agreeing to this basic matrix - we hope organizations will gather AT LEAST this data, or if an organization all ready gathers a great deal of data, that they will consider rolling up their data into this format to help facilitate (if individual agencies are interested) data collection at a local, regional or national level, which would allow participating agencies to benchmark their work against similar agencies around their region or the nation. This matrix does not reflect any preference for the variety of live release rates used in animal sheltering and welfare. Most rates, other than full Asilomar which requires a conditions matrix, should be able to be calculated from the data points included.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HUMANE SOCIETIES
BASIC ANIMAL STATS MATRIX
(vrs 10-2013)

BASIC DATA MATRIX (Oct 2013)

	Species / By Age	Canine Adult	Canine Up to 5 months	Feline Adult	Feline Up to 5 months	Total	
A	**Beginning Animal Count** (date: ....)						Age at Intake. Should include animals in shelter and animals admitted but currently in foster care or other offsite facility.
	Live Intake						
B	Stray/At Large						Admitted through animal control/stated to be unowned or freeroaming
C	Relinquished by Owner						Admitted by owner
D	Owner Intended Euthanasia						Limited to this definition: Admission of pets whose owner brought the pet to the shelter with the INTENT of requesting euthanasia
E	Transferred in from Agency						An admission from another agency - for adoption, large scale seizure support, etc.
F	Other Intakes						Impounds for cruelty cases & protective custody. Also, pets born while in care, and others types of admission not captured above.
G	**TOTAL LIVE INTAKE**						*Sum of B, C, D, E and F*
	Outcomes						
H	Adoption						Final adoptions only, having permanently left the Agency's possession. For example, it does NOT include animals placed in foster care or on overnight 'trial' stays.
I	Returned to Owner						Stray or Owner Reliquished animal returned to their owner
J	Transferred to another Agency						Transferred out of the Agency's possession to another entity
K	Returned to Field	N/A	N/A				Animals included in Intake, altered and returned to stray capture location as free-roaming felines
L	Other Live Outcome						Barn cat programs, etc
M	**Subtotal: Live Outcomes**						*Sum of H, I, J, K and L*
N	Died in Care						Animals who die while sheltered
O	Lost in Care						Animals whose outcome is unknown (may have escaped the shelter, outcome was not recorded and unknown)
P	Shelter Euthanasia						All euthanasia other than that performed by the definition below as Owner Intended Euthanasia.
Q	Owner Intended Euthanasia						Limited to this definition: Euthanasia of pets whose owner brought the pet to the shelter with the INTENT of utilizing euthanasia services
R	**Subtotal: Other Outcomes**						*Sum of N, O, P and Q*
S	**TOTAL OUTCOMES**						*Sum of M and R*
T	**Ending Shelter Count** (date: ....)						Should include animals in shelter and animals admitted but currently in foster care or offsite facility

Note: To check your statistics and calculations ¨A plus G should equal S   T

Total A + ¨u   ¨G = [   ]

Total S + ¨u   T = [   ]