

Final Report of the Evaluation of the Animal Services Division

MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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This initial chapter of the report introduces the approaches utilized in this study and summarizes key findings, conclusions and recommendations to be found in this report.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT.

The Matrix Consulting Group was retained by Manatee County to conduct an evaluation of the Animal Services Division. In reaching the conclusion of the study, the project team has assembled this final report summarizing our major findings, conclusions and recommendations. As part of this study, the Matrix Consulting Group analyzed the following specific areas, as well as other related topics:

- Operational issues for field and shelter operations (including policies, protocols, processes, record keeping and staffing).
- Processes utilized to handle complaints received.
- Processes utilized to investigate complaints received and approaches to improve the investigation process.
- Evaluation of the existing shelter regarding suitability for providing required services in a safe, efficient and effective manner.
- Evaluation of processes and procedures utilized to handle animal transfers, placements, disease prevention, and animal health and well-being.

The overall goal of this study was to develop an assessment of MCAS compliance with best practices, identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations on changes necessary to improve operating capabilities.

2. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY METHODOLOGY.

As part of this study of Manatee County Animal Services, the project team conducted the following activities:

- Detailed interviews with staff in the Animal Services Division and with selected employees in other departments with which the Department regularly interacts in performing their functions;
- Conducted interviews with the County's contract veterinarian, and representatives of rescue groups that work with the Manatee County Animal Services Division.
- Spent time at the shelter to observe and evaluate operating practices, animal care and handling, and facility conditions;
- Conducted data collection to gather relevant information regarding the services provided, the volume of work staff has to manage, and the time frames in which the work is completed;
- Conducted surveys with representatives of various key stakeholder groups. Three online surveys were conducted with the following stakeholder groups: volunteers, employees, and stakeholders.
- Completed a best practices comparison that gauged the current practices in Manatee County against a set of "best management practices" for the provision of Animal Services.

These activities enabled the project team to analyze the current performance of duties, the duties assigned and allocated to staff, and the organizational structure. The analysis conducted led to the recommendations that are contained in the later chapters of this report.

3. OVERVIEW AND KEY THEMES.

It is important to keep in mind when reviewing this assessment, that Manatee County Animal Services has achieved a lot during the last three years in implementing a new approach to animal services and significantly increased the save rate. This has been overshadowed during the last year, due to several high profile issues.

Notwithstanding the need to correct existing issues or problems, the County and the public should acknowledge the strengths that currently exist in operations. Overall, the County has a very dedicated and committed staff who have remained dedicated to providing quality services during a difficult period.

In developing the recommendations, the project team focused heavily on evaluating operations against the core tenets of the No Kill philosophy that the County has adopted and against best practices. Finally, it is important to note that there are several key issues that directly impact the operations and operational practices of Manatee County Animal Services. These include:

- **MCAS operates under an “open admission” approach.** All animals acquired through field pick-ups and those brought to the shelter for surrender by owners are accepted without regard to current animal populations, space limitations, or staffing impacts. This service delivery approach provides greater challenges to managing animal populations at the shelter than organizations, which operate under a “limited admission” methodology.
- **In 2011, Manatee County adopted the No Kill Community approach.** In 2011, Manatee County adopted a resolution supporting the implementation of a No Kill Community approach to providing animal services. This approach, as will be discussed in more detail shortly, supports approaches that limit euthanasia and supports caring for and sheltering all adoptable animals until they are placed. It is critical for all parties to remember that achievement of a No Kill Community status is not entirely dependent upon MCAS but the entire county community including residents, rescue groups and charities that support animal care.
- **No additional resources were allocated to implement the No Kill service approach.** The No Kill Community philosophy approach was implemented without any additional resources (staff or financial) to support the enhanced services, programs or shelter modifications.
- **A save rate over 90% is the typical benchmark utilized for achieving No Kill status.** The No Kill Advocacy Center is describing achievement of No Kill status states in one publication that: “Successful No Kill communities are proving that roughly 95% of animals entering a shelter are savable”. Many within Manatee County have a perception that no kill means the complete elimination of euthanasia at the shelter. This is a misunderstanding of the concept. It is acknowledged that a set percentage of animals handled are not suitable for

adoption (i.e. – dangerous animals, those with untreatable illness or injuries, severely behaviorally challenged animals where rehabilitation is not possible) and will be euthanized. The plan developed for Manatee County established 90% of animals saved as their goal.

- **MCAS has significantly increased the save rate to almost 90% in the last 3 years.** In October of 2011, the save rate at MCAS was approximately 61%. The save rate increased to 79% for 2012, 88% for 2013, and is at 86.8% for 2014 (YTD). This represents substantial improvements in the save rate over this time period.
- **Significant public perception challenges have impacted MCAS's ability over the last year to develop and maintain the necessary partnerships and relationships with key constituency groups.** During the last year, MCAS has been under considerable scrutiny due to public events that have negatively impacted to some measure public support, perception, and in some cases relationships with key stakeholders.

The following table outlines the summary of recommendations contained in the report.

4. SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS.

The following table provides a comprehensive listing of the key findings and recommendations contained within this report. Recommendations are listed in the order that they appear in the report. For each recommendation, a relative priority (in relation to other recommendations in the report) is provided.

Where applicable, we have also provided an indication of the fiscal impact of the recommendation to the County and the individual responsible for implementation. Most of the recommendations do not require direct outlay of financial support to implement – but will require staff time and effort be allocated to implement the recommendation.

Section	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility for Implementation	Estimated Fiscal Impact
7.1	MCAS should continue a strong feral cat trap and release program to reduce community populations of feral cats.	High	Animal Services Director	Unk.
7.1	MCAS should publicize the purpose, goals and rationale of the trap and release program to educate the public about this program.	Medium	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.2	MCAS should prominently publicize existing spay and neutering programs both on its website and through public education events.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.3	MCAS must strengthen the working relationships with all rescue groups. A quarterly coordination meeting should be held between MCAS and representatives of each rescue group to develop strategies for working together, increase dialogue, and address issues that arise in a timely manner.	Critical	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.3	MCAS should modify the agreement that it enters into with rescue groups who are being provided with animals from the shelter to ensure an appropriate standard of care is provided and that provides access by MCAS staff to facilities and information regarding the care, placement and location of animals placed with the rescue groups.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.3	MCAS staff should conduct pre-approval inspections prior to entering into agreements with rescue groups and at least annual inspections thereafter.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.4	MCAS should work in collaboration with the rescue groups to develop a foster program to be administered by MCAS to provide an additional avenue for placement of animals, on a temporary basis, to provide relief for overcrowding at the shelter.	Medium	Animal Services Director	n/a

Section	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility for Implementation	Estimated Fiscal Impact
7.4	MCAS should, as part of its volunteer program, seek to determine if individuals who have already expressed interest in volunteering for the shelter have an interest and capabilities to participate in the foster program.	Medium	Volunteer Coordinator	n/a
7.5	MCAS should continue its strong focus on adoption programs including maintaining a satellite adoption center.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.5	MCAS should employ various adoption incentive events throughout the year.	Medium	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.5	MCAS should implement evening hours for adoptions at least one night per week at the shelter and/or satellite adoption center.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.6	MCAS staff should develop a training program for all staff on how to appropriately discuss pet relinquishment with individuals bringing animals to the shelter.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.6	MCAS should develop a resource handbook that outlines community resources available to individuals who may need temporary assistance to support their ability to maintain their pet rather than choosing relinquishment.	Medium	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.7	All animals should be timely assessed for behavioral and medical condition upon intake.	Critical	Animal Services Supervisor (animal care) / Vet Tech	n/a
7.7	Staffing adjustments need to be made at MCAS to provide the appropriate level of resources to provide medical care in a timely, effective, and cost appropriate manner. A staff veterinarian should be added to the MCAS staffing allocation.	High	Animal Services Director	\$70,000 to \$125,000
7.7	MCAS should develop and implement a comprehensive shelter behavior assessment program (based upon the criteria outlined by Maddie's Fund or a similar program).	High	Animal Services Director	n/a

Section	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility for Implementation	Estimated Fiscal Impact
7.8	A strategic communications plan should be developed for MCAS that outlines approaches to be utilized to increase transparency, enhance public awareness, and promote available animals for adoption. This should include development of periodic newsletters, community meetings and a redesign of the website.	Medium	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.9	An annual work program should be developed for the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure a coordinated effort is in place to improve the recruitment, training and utilization of volunteers within MCAS.	High	Animal Services Director / Volunteer Coordinator	n/a
7.10	A proactive field canvassing program should be instituted for Animal Control Officers and volunteers to identify unlicensed pets.	Medium	Animal Services Supervisor (field operations)	n/a
7.11	At the time the County fills the MCAS Director position, it should conduct a national search and seek an individual with an understanding, commitment, and prior experience with the No Kill philosophy.	High	County Administrator	n/a
7.11	The County should undertake an RFP process to determine feasibility of outsourcing the animal sheltering function of MCAS through a public-private partnership.	High	County Administrator	n/a
7.11	If the County enters into a public private partnership for delivery of Animal Services shelter and adoption operations, the County should reevaluate the need for a continued Animal Services Advisory Board and/or modify the role of the board.	Medium	County Administrator	n/a
7.12	The Animal Services Division policy and procedure manual should be comprehensively reviewed and updated to ensure that all policies are in compliance with current operational practices.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a
7.12	After updating, a training session should be held for all staff to ensure understanding of the new policy manual. Additionally, a portion of each staff meeting should be devoted to policy review and discussion.	High	Animal Services Director	n/a

Section	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility for Implementation	Estimated Fiscal Impact
7.13	MCAS should develop a comprehensive training program covering all staff and each unique position. Key areas of focus should be on: new hire training and on-going training for each position including volunteers.	High	Animal Services Director	Unknown
7.14	MCAS should fill the dispatcher position at the appropriate level rather than with an individual classified as an Animal Control Officer.	Medium	Animal Services Director	Should be reduction in salary expense.

The following chapters provide background materials developed by the project team and supporting narrative and analysis leading to the recommendations.

2. PROFILE OF OPERATIONS

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In this profile is a summary description of the project team's understanding of the organization, staffing and operations of Manatee County's Animal Services Division as currently provided. This summary was developed based on data collection and analysis, interviews with staff, and site visits to the Shelter.

1. OVERVIEW OF MANATEE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES (MCAS).

Manatee County operates a full service animal care shelter located at 305 25th Street West in Palmetto, FL. This facility has 50 dog adoption kennels, 30 dog impound kennels, and a free-range cat room, which can accommodate approximately 30 cats. Until recently, the County also operated a satellite adoption center located in downtown Bradenton. This satellite center is temporarily closed due to facility issues. Determination of the future location and opening of the satellite facility is still under review. The following table outlines the operating hours for MCAS:

Center Location / Function	Operating Hours
Palmetto Center – Adoptions	Monday – Friday: 10:00 am. To 4:00 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Downtown Bradenton – Adoption Center (currently closed)	Tuesday – Friday: 11:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

MCAS's programs and services are broad and include programs related to: education, adoption, licensing, care of surrendered and stray animals (primarily dogs and cats), veterinary care, volunteer opportunities, and partnerships with local rescue organizations and other programs and services.

The MCAS provides services in accordance with its adopted mission statement that states:

“To maintain public health and safety through the enforcement of laws and ordinances related to animals. To promote responsible pet ownership, promote adoptions, and reduce pet overpopulation.”

Manatee County became the first County within Florida to formally adopt a “No Kill” community philosophy. This occurred on October 11, 2011 with the adoption of a resolution by the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners. The approach adopted by the County was based upon the principles contained in a national program, that targets implementation of core set of practices to increase the save rate of animals.

The programs and approaches include the following key elements:

- A feral cat trap and release program,
- Low Cost and Free Spay and Neuter Services,
- Comprehensive Adoption Program,
- Pet Retention Program,
- Medical and Behavioral Programs,
- Rescue Group Partnerships,
- Foster Care,
- Public Relations / Community Involvement,
- Proactive Redemptions,
- A Compassionate Director, and
- Volunteers.

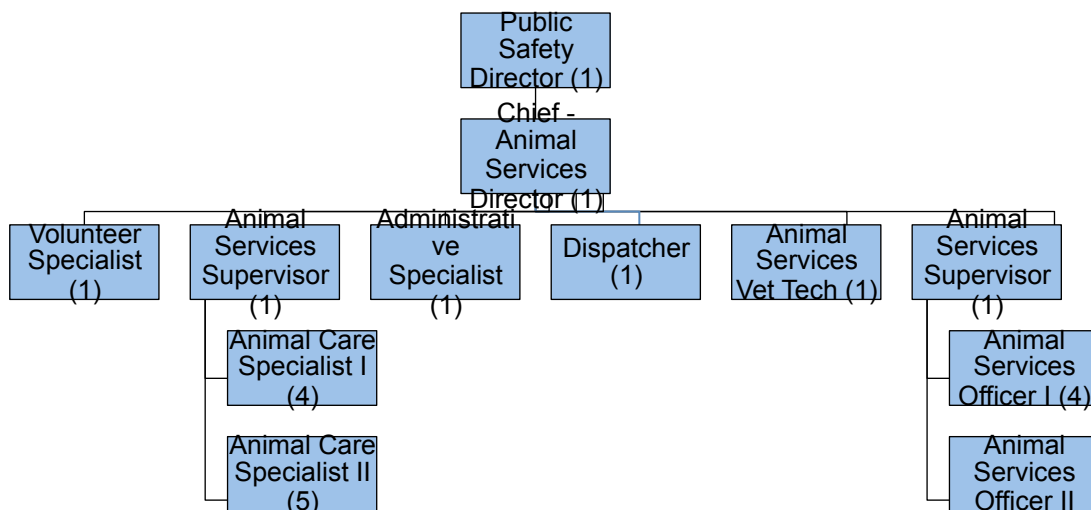
The implementation of many of these programs and practices over the last several years has significantly increased the MCAS save rate.

Volunteers significantly augment staff operations of the Center and are principally responsible for walking dogs, ensuring playtime outside of the kennels, and limited assistance with adoptions. While MCAS has a volunteer roster of several hundred individuals who have been through training and orientation, there is currently an active volunteer force of approximately 20 to 25 individuals who routinely volunteer at the shelter.

2. ORGANIZATION OF ANIMAL CARE

The following organization chart shows the staff by function, number and reporting relationship within Manatee County Animal Services.

Manatee County Animal Services Organizational Structure



3. KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AT MCAS.

The following table highlights the key roles and responsibilities of personnel, as well as the number of authorized staffing, in the Animal Services Division of the Public Safety Department.

Budgeted Staffing by Classification	Auth. #	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Administration		
Chief – Animal Services Division	1.0	• Oversees operation of the Manatee County Animal Services Division. • Plans, organizes, markets and implements various animal center programs and services. • Develops and implements goals, objectives and policies related to Animal Care for Manatee County. • Administer and monitors the MCAS budget. • Handles personnel issues related to MCAS staff. • Serves as liaison to the Manatee County Animal Services Advisory Committee. • Reviews and approves all requests for euthanizing animals (with the exception of owner requests). • Reports to the Public Safety Director.
Animal Services Volunteer Specialist	1.0	• New position implemented in the last several months. • Coordinates the MCAS Volunteer Program including volunteer recruitment, orientation, training, and work assignments. • Develops programs to effectively integrate volunteers into the MCAS services and programs. • Develops meaningful opportunities for volunteer service. • Responsible for public education regarding volunteer opportunities. • Develops or assists with various MCAS programs including public education, volunteer programs, fostering programs and adoption programs. • Reports to the Chief of Animal Services Division.
Administrative Specialist	1.0	• Develops MCAS statistical data and responds to public requests for information. • Conducts research for MCAS. • Assists with service to the public at reception. • Backs up the dispatcher, as necessary.

Budgeted Staffing by Classification	Auth. #	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Animal Services Veterinarian Technician	1.0	- Responsible for conducting health assessments on all incoming animals including vaccinations, heartworm testing, blood testing of cats, deworming and flea prevention protocols, full physical exam, etc. - Conducts daily walk through with Animal Services Supervisor (Animal Care) to evaluate condition of animals and triage daily care requirements. - Treats sick or injured animals within MCAS in accordance with the adopted medical protocols. - Determines animals which must be isolated from general population due to infectious diseases. Administers medical protocols to treat animals. - Determines animals needing advanced medical treatment and coordinates transfer and treatment by County Veterinarian. May assist with transport of animals to County Veterinarian as needed. - Reports to the Chief – Animal Services Division.
Animal Care		
Animal Services Supervisor (Animal Services)	1.0	- Reports to the Chief of Animal Services Division. - Oversees the operations of the Animal Shelter including oversight, management, scheduling and work assignments of Animal Care Specialists. - Handles all personnel issues for assigned staff including evaluations, work scheduling, and assignments. - Assists with the development of policies and procedures for the Animal Care unit. - Assists with service delivery including animal care, shelter cleaning and adoptions as needed. - Administers budget for assigned area, including purchasing supplies and equipment. - Conducts daily rounds and general assessment of animal welfare (in conjunction with Vet Tech). - Prepares daily listing of animals at shelter. - Ensures staff are appropriately trained in the performance of duties.
Animal Care Specialist I	4.0	- Reports to Animal Services Supervisor. - Care of animals: clean kennels, feed, and water. - Adoption assistance. - Front desk assistance. - Respond to requests via radios. - Assist Vet Tech. - Move animals from impound to adoption. - If not certified in euthanasia, will assist by holding animals. - Assist Animal Services Officers. - Clean facility in non-kennel areas.

Budgeted Staffing by Classification	Auth. #	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Animal Care Specialist II	5.0	• Reports to Animal Services Supervisor. • Care of animals: clean kennels, feed, and water. • Adoption assistance. • Respond to requests via radios. • Assist Vet Tech. • Maintain computer system (Chameleon). • Chips/tags (forthcoming). • Euthanasia. • Clean kennels.
Field Enforcement		
Animal Services Supervisor (Field Operations)	1.0	• Reports to the Chief of Animal Services Division. • Oversees the field operations of MCAS including supervision, oversight, scheduling and work assignments for Animal Services Officers. • Assists with resolution of field calls as needed. Conducts or oversees complex investigations regarding animal cruelty. • Assists with operations of Shelter as needed. • Handles all personnel issues for assigned staff including evaluations, work scheduling, and assignments. • Assists with the development of policies and procedures for the Animal Services Officers. • Administers budget for assigned area, including purchasing supplies and equipment. • Ensures staff are appropriately trained in the performance of duties.

Budgeted Staffing by Classification	Auth. #	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Animal Services Officer I	4.0	• Reports to Animal Services Supervisor. • Enforce animal ordinances and conduct public education. • Respond to assigned calls (e.g., bites, animal fights, at-large, barking): monitor call queue, take action, update computer system (Chameleon), and report writing. • Patrol for strays; off leash violation, will provide leash to owner if needed. • Only one ASO I responds to animal cruelty/neglect (e.g., tethering/sheltering) cases, the other two animal cruelty/neglect staff are ASO II. • Transport animals to/from veterinarian. • Maintain vehicle condition: interior, exterior, fuel. • Intake: unload animal, verify kennel/cage availability, photograph animal, find kennel staff to vaccinate, hold for vaccination, and kennel animal. • Follow-up to prior calls. • Attend staff meetings: Tuesday staff meeting and roll call meetings. • Take animal care donations to low-income people known to Animal Services. • Assist coworkers as needed (e.g., no calls in own queue, call for back up).
Animal Services Officer II	4.0	• Reports to Animal Services Supervisor. • Enforce animal laws and education public. • Assist Law Enforcement Offices with calls related to sick, injured or vicious animals and animal welfare situations. • Respond to assigned calls (e.g., bites, animal fights, at-large, barking): monitor call queue, take action, update computer system (Chameleon), and report writing. • Patrol for strays; off leash violation, will provide leash to owner if needed. • Maintain vehicle (e.g., interior, exterior, fuel). • Intake: unload animal, verify kennel/cage availability, photograph animal, find kennel staff to vaccinate, hold for vaccination, and kennel animal. • Transport animals to/from veterinarian. • Hurricane shelter coordinator: identify shelters, which are pet friendly, coordinate staffing of shelters by Animal Services employees. • Dangerous dog investigations. • Two ASO IIs respond to cruelty/neglect (e.g., tethering/sheltering) cases. • Educate the public. • Assist coworkers as needed. • One ASO II is currently assigned to the administrative offices and handles all calls for services, logging complaints and service requests, and dispatching ASOs.

4. CALLS FOR SERVICE HANDLED BY ANIMAL SERVICES OFFICERS.

The following table summarizes the calls for service (shown by priority assigned to each call) handled by the Animal Control Officers of Manatee County Animal Services for 2013 and 2014 (through July).

	2013					2014				
	1	2	3	4	Total Calls	1	2	3	4	Total Calls
January	50	209	368	12	639	75	244	227	6	552
February	80	252	254	0	586	102	199	261	0	562
March	71	243	331	0	645	104	236	273	0	613
April	73	259	281	0	613	135	217	212	0	564
May	54	264	313	0	631	121	257	192	0	570
June	76	314	277	0	668	118	222	213	0	553
July	95	235	278	0	608	111	235	168	0	514
August	61	251	289	0	601					
September	50	210	269	0	529					
October	78	256	314	0	648					
November	71	197	259	0	527					
December	76	202	277	0	555					
Average	69.6	241.0	292.5	6.5	604.2	109.4	230.0	220.9	6.0	561.1
TOTAL	835	2,892	3,510	13	7,250	766	1,610	1,546	6	3,928

As shown, the total call volume for animal services officer has decreased by just over 7.7% from 2013 to 2014. Note that this is based upon the average call volume for 2014 only through July. While total call volumes appear to be trending slightly downward, the number of priority one calls has increased from an average of 69.6 per month in 2013 to 109.4 per month in 2014. This represents a 57% increase in priority one calls.

Over the last five years, calls for service have been trending down by small percentages each year for a variety of reasons. These reasons include TNR programs proving to be effective resulting in fewer calls related to feral trapped cats, and charging fees for trapped wildlife and dead animal removal. The reason for an increase in priority

one calls include an increased emphasis on animal cruelty and neglect calls for service. Overall, these numbers reflect that more time is being spent by officers on higher-priority calls and non-emergency calls are trending down.

5. OPERATING BUDGET.

The following table shows the MCAS annual operating budget for a three-year period (2012 through 2014) and the change over this time period.

Manatee County Animal Services Budget				
Object Description	2012	2013	2014 Amended	% CHANGE (2012-14)
Regular salaries and wages	\$693,594	\$719,564	\$749,850	8.1%
Other salaries and wages	\$-	\$-	\$10,015	-
Overtime	\$32,681	\$45,082	\$38,000	16.3%
FICA Taxes	\$51,516	\$54,772	\$51,855	0.7%
Retirement contributions	\$34,691	\$42,934	\$47,453	36.8%
Health insurance	\$229,504	\$186,182	\$195,348	-14.9%
Life insurance	\$1,918	\$1,973	\$2,032	5.9%
Long-term disability	\$1,292	\$1,298	\$2,032	57.3%
Flex benefits	\$4,933	\$3,072	\$4,202	-14.8%
Unemployment compensation	\$17,657	\$4,099	\$-	-100.0%
Personnel Total	\$1,067,786	\$1,058,976	\$1,100,787	3.1%
Professional services	\$99,082	\$131,954	\$117,714	18.8%
Medical Services	\$2,040	\$-	\$-	-100.0%
Other contractual services	\$750	\$4,080	\$140,000	18566%
In-house billed services	\$-	\$659	\$-	-
Travel and per diem	\$2,477	\$4,980	\$2,040	-17.6%
Telephone	\$12,169	\$13,731	\$13,983	14.9%
Postage	\$371	\$374	\$500	34.8%
In-house communication charges	\$10,664	\$3,064	\$2,150	-79.8%
800mghz radio charges	\$-	\$8,524	\$8,241	-
Utility services	\$42,906	\$45,694	\$61,500	43.3%
Rents and leases	\$9,155	\$4,127	\$6,399	-30.1%
Vehicle recovery charge	\$31,116	\$31,116	\$31,116	0.0%
DataSystem recovery charge	\$11,415	\$5,945	\$14,540	27.4%
Insurance subrogation	\$14,590	\$18,628	\$19,781	35.6%
Equipment repair and maintenance	\$5,362	\$1,336	\$5,472	2.1%
Vehicle maintenance	\$23,283	\$21,880	\$22,338	-4.1%
Automated systems maintenance	\$6,836	\$7,811	\$13,867	102.9%
Building repair and maintenance	\$18,004	\$-	\$5,000	-72.2%
Software support	\$9,840	\$10,110	\$13,160	33.7%
Printing and binding	\$5,000	\$-	\$500	-90.0%
In-house copying and print	\$2,429	\$2,883	\$1,500	-38.2%
Other current charges	\$344	\$-	\$-	-100.0%
Advertising	\$-	\$72	\$-	-
Office supplies	\$7,720	\$4,937	\$7,800	1.0%

Manatee County Animal Services Budget				
Object Description	2012	2013	2014 Amended	% CHANGE (2012-14)
Operating supplies and expenses	\$113,298	\$88,866	\$111,234	-1.8%
Software	\$-	\$289	\$-	-
Uniforms	\$6,701	\$6,437	\$7,248	8.2%
Gas, oil, and tires	\$101	\$195	\$200	98.0%
In-house fuel charges	\$49,395	\$49,068	\$49,044	-0.7%
Books/pub/subscript/membership	\$1,768	\$1,150	\$1,235	-30.1%
Education	\$1,961	\$749	\$3,000	53.0%
Operating Expenses Total	\$488,777	\$468,659	\$659,562	34.9%
Machinery and equipment	\$8,262	\$-	\$-	-100.0%
Major Object Total	\$8,262	\$-	\$-	-100.0%
Aid to private organizations	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	0.0%
Grants and Aid Total	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	0.0%
BUDGET TOTAL	\$1,570,825	\$1,533,635	\$1,766,349	12.4%

Overall, the MCAS annual operating budget increased a total of \$195,524 (12.4%) over the three years. The majority of this increase (\$140,000) was due to increased contractual services budgeted in 2014. Historically the County charges \$15 for its registration license fee. Records of these issued licenses are mandated by Florida statute to be kept in a database so that renewal notices can be sent among other things. The County did not have the staff or manpower to adequately meet this statutory requirement and was several years behind in its compliance. In 2014 the County contracted with Pet Data to manage the collections of fees from veterinarians for sale of these licenses through the veterinarian's office, and the records would be "key punched" into a database which the County would then own and that would enable the County to achieve compliance with the statute.

The cost to the County for this service is \$3.90 per license sold and recorded. The \$140,000 projected expense is generated from an estimated and approximate 36,000 records entered into the system. This number includes records of licenses going back to March of 2013. A determination was made that older records would not be entered into the system due to cost.

3. BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT

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While the organizational assessment of Animal Services for Manatee County is designed to provide an analysis of operations, organizational structure, and staffing, a comparison to “best practices” represents an important step for the project team to report its preliminary findings and issues. In order to make the assessments of operational strengths and improvement opportunities, the project team developed a set of performance measures that we call “best management practices” against which to evaluate this division.

The measures utilized have been derived from the project team's collective experience, as well as from professional associations, and represent ways to identify departmental strengths and improvement opportunities:

- Statements of "effective practices" based on the study team's experience in evaluating operations in other agencies or “industry standards” from other industry or research organizations.
- Identification of whether and how departments meet the performance targets.
- A brief description of potential alternatives to current practice.

This assessment does not preclude other opportunities for improvement to be added following further analysis and review, but provides an overview of currently identified issues / opportunities.

1. SEVERAL STRENGTHS WERE IDENTIFIED DURING THE BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT.

The following are key strengths that were identified within the Manatee County Animal Services Division during the best practices assessment:

- Standard Operating Procedures are in place – though updates are needed.

- The Shelter has an adopted mission statement.
- MCAS, until recently, has operated a satellite adoption center to increase visibility and access to adoptable pets.
- MCAS has an appropriate organizational structure with two main divisions – shelter services and field operations.
- Staff performing key specialized duties have appropriate certifications and training to provide the service (for example, euthanasia certification, incinerator training, ACO certification). Selected staff has been training on cruelty investigations and are pursuing certification.
- A volunteer coordinator position was recently added to staff to provide a more comprehensive focus on developing a robust volunteer program.
- Animal Control Officers use time in the field, when appropriate, to educate citizens regarding public laws regarding animal control and pet ownership.
- MCAS has a website that provides extensive information and access to view adoptable pets. The website is utilized to disseminate information regarding the current save rate being achieved by the community.
- MCAS has developed relationships with numerous rescue groups and sanctuaries to assist in the placement of animals.
- MCAS has implemented Chameleon, an animal services software program, to automate operations of the shelter.
- A volunteer manual and training program are in place.
- Within constraints of the existing facility, MCAS maintains a clean facility to meet minimum needs of animals in their care. Though limitations exist that make it difficult to effectively isolate larger numbers of infectious animals.
- MCAS has a small but core group of volunteers who provide critical support to the MCAS staff in providing various services (principally dog walking) at the shelter.
- A well defined set of medical protocols have been implemented at MCAS to enable the Veterinarian Technician to address encountered medical conditions by animals at the shelter.
- A principal contract veterinarian and several contracts for after-hours and emergency veterinarian services are in place that enable MCAS staff to get treatment or medical attention for all animals needing such on a 24/7 basis.

- MCAS and partner groups have developed and implemented programs to provide spay and neuter programs and to implement a feral cat trap and release program.

These strengths and others provide a strong foundation for building a more well run MCAS and addressing the improvement opportunities that are identified in the following section.

2. MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT WERE IDENTIFIED DURING THE BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT.

The following improvement opportunities were identified during the project teams conduct of the best practices assessment.

- Existing standard operating procedure manual needs to be comprehensively updated and all staff trained on the adopted policies and procedures. The number of ad-hoc changes to policies should be limited. An initial and on-going training plan should be developed to ensure all staff are trained on the new SOPs and any future updates.
- A training plan should be developed focused on customer service skills for the staff at MCAS to ensure a consistent and high-quality experience for customers and the public.
- Evening hours should be adopted to increase access for the public for adoption of animals.
- Increase staff access to training related to their specific duties at the Animal Shelter (i.e. – animal care for shelter staff, and field operations for Animal Control Officers).
- Continue efforts to improve the volunteer program including expanding the number of volunteers utilized, the duties performed by volunteers, and training provided. A clear definition of the role and responsibilities of volunteers should be developed to eliminate friction in the workplace.
- Improve public information and education regarding the operations, services and service levels provided by the Animal Services Division. The Division has achieved significant improvements in the save rate over the last several years but little recognition of this effort has been achieved.

- Provide additional training to staff in the use of Chameleon to ensure that it is appropriately utilized to track key data and that required and necessary reports can be developed. This may require training in Crystal reports for several MCAS staff members.
- Implement a comprehensive behavioral screening program for animals that are received at the shelter.
- A more effective working relationship with Rescue Groups is required in order to achieve the No Kill Community goal that was adopted by the County Commission.
- An inspection program must be implemented for all Rescue Groups and similar organizations that are approved to receive animals from MCAS that requires at least quarterly inspections of each Rescue Groups facilities and operating practices, and that requires these groups to provide immediate access to their facilities by County staff to inspect and investigate complaints received.
- The level of on-site veterinarian oversight must be significantly increased. The most effective solution would be the presence of an on-staff veterinarian with alternatives being a part-time staff veterinarian or a contract veterinarian that is required to be onsite for a set number of scheduled hours per week. This would require addition of a surgical suite for minor surgeries.
- Longer-term, a new animal shelter needs to be constructed. There are serious deficiencies in the existing shelter that impact operations including most notably inadequate space for all animals received and layout issues that impact the ability to effectively isolate sick and infectious animals.
- Implementation of field canvassing program to increase pet licensing.
- Expansion of public outreach and adoption events to increase the visibility of adoptable pets. This effort can be supplemented with the increased focus on volunteer usage and support to MCAS.
- Implementation of a non-profit foundation to accept tax-deductible contributions for the County.

These improvement opportunities are addressed in more detail in the final two chapters of this report.

3. DETAILED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ASSESSMENT.

The following table provides the more detailed assessment of best management practices that was developed and which is summarized in the preceding sections.

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
ANIMAL SERVICES		
Administration		
Mission, vision, and goal statements exist to guide Animal Services.	Animal Services operates in accordance with a mission of providing a no kill shelter.	Clear link to MCAS' mission, vision, and goal statements which guide Animal Services should be adopted and readily available on the website. Ensure consistency of mission, vision, and goal statements across media outlets (e.g., MCAS webpage, print materials, petfinder, etc.).
A management system encompassing enterprise risk management, performance indicators, and a compliance and audit program.		Create a standardized management system modeled after accepted frameworks. Utilize enterprise risk management to plan for and control the implication of systemic risk on the operations of Animal Services. Develop performance metrics to support data driven understanding of operations, accountability and target achievement. Develop compliance criteria for an Animal Services management system. Conduct internal audits at scheduled intervals to determine compliance with criteria and validity of data. Institute corrective action development and control plan monitoring to address internal audit findings.

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
Clearly defined policies and procedures are in place for all operations at Animals Services.	A policy and procedure manual is in place, however, it is not routinely updated and formalized training on changes is insufficient.	While SOPs exist, there is minimal training on the policies in the short-term or ongoing. SOPs are not true procedures – they are general policies/guidelines; however, no detailed procedures to get a reader from point A to point B. SOPs are constantly changing which makes assimilation/implementation difficult for staff. SOPs are not consistently implemented. The perception is that top administrators have been the worst offenders of inconsistent SOP implementation. Increase ongoing training regarding SOPs to assist with understanding, consistent implementation, and maintenance of staff accountability.
SOP Document Control		Develop SOP document control to include: • Approval prior to release • Review, update, and re-approve documents • Changes and revisions are clearly identified • Relevant versions of applicable documents are available at point of use • Legible and identifiable • External document control • Obsolete document control
Customer service policies are in place and supported by staff training.		Create customer service policies and procedures to support acceptable service levels for internal and external customers. Train dispatch on proper call techniques to ensure both call experience quality for the citizen and to ensure quality information is collected and input into Chameleon to support field officers. Create a professional environment in the adoption/kennel lobby focused on visitors, not on staff socialization or animal vaccinations.

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
Customer service is maximized through accessibility (location), hours of service, online and telephone assistance.	MCAS is open Monday through Friday for adoptions, 10am – 5pm and Saturday, 10am – 5pm at one location in Palmetto, FL. MCAS does have an internet present via the County website, petfinder.com, petharbor.com, and Facebook. Provides telephone assistance via a mainline, dispatch, after-hours/emergency, and directly to field officers (cell phones).	Maintain accurate information across all media outlets regarding contact information, location, and hours of operation. Improve Animal Services website so it has a better and more logical flow for information access. Review services accessible online – call logging by citizens, scheduling visits with specific animals, etc. Evening hours to accommodate citizen work schedules.
The organizational structure makes authority, responsibility and accountability clear.	An organizational chart exists depicting lines of authority.	Create function specific teams, with assigned team leads responsible for ensuring the team lead and their assigned colleagues complete explicitly defined responsibilities/daily tasks. Develop and monitor workload and performance measures that each team will be accountable for achieving.
A continuing education/training program is in place for all staff in Animal Services.	Staff receives: euthanasia certification, incinerator training, and ACO certification, where required. Selected staff is receiving Cruelty certification.	Diversify staff who attend offsite training/conferences. When staff returns from offsite training/conferences, attendees should share what was learned with the rest of MCAS. Utilize existing employees to develop and implement internal training programs, which could include certificates of completion. Example training opportunities: SOPs, dog handling, use of equipment, customer service techniques, maximization of available technology.

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
A volunteer program is in place to assist staff efforts in Animal Services operations, adoptions, etc.	A volunteer coordinator was added to MCAS staff. A volunteer SOP and a volunteer manual exist. A core volunteer dogwalker program exists. The number fluctuates based on season (e.g., snowbirds). A photo/handler team creates animal montages to assist with promoting adoptable pets. Community service/workforce people assist with kennel cleaning duties. There are volunteer appreciation efforts and events.	Develop a comprehensive volunteer recognition program: Commission acknowledgment; volunteer 'spotlight' in the newspaper, and a potluck. Implement cleaning standards and accountability for community service/workforce people. Create a structured volunteer training program requiring review of SOPs, waiver signature, specific hands-on training on tasks volunteer will complete, and feedback on volunteer performance. Allow volunteers to assist in tasks beyond dog walking, animal holding, and photography. Develop a more positive relationship between staff and volunteers. Create volunteer performance indicators.
A public education program is in place.	Some field staff make an effort to educate the community during their interactions with the public regarding animal control laws and responsibilities.	Greater public information, both on animal care and adoption opportunities must be implemented to enhance the service delivery goals of Animal Services.
A comprehensive website is in place to foster knowledge of Animal Services, its programs and services.	MCAS has an internet presence.	Redesign the MCAS website to allow for better user interface including: call logging/customer support, knowledgebase, direct link to adoptable animals, direct link to euthanasia list, easier access to organizational information (e.g., strategic plan, performance indicators). Maintain the MCAS website with up-to-date and accurate information.

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
Coordination in place with other local/state agencies (especially as regards exotics, endangered species, etc.).	The Shelter coordinates with other entities (including sanctuaries and rescues) to handle exotic animal placements.	
Internal controls exist for cash handling and accounting.	Appropriate cash handling policies are in place and followed by staff. Pickup and delivery of cash for deposit is done by County Sheriff's personnel.	
Statistics are maintained on animal populations and health issues.		Develop documentation (SOP) for data collection/input methodology. Design the software (Chameleon) to support MCAS work processes, reflect intuitive user interactions, and increase accuracy of user input. Identify key indicators which monitor high priority outcomes/outputs. Train staff on proper data collection protocol and input SOPs. Create categories/factors (field/drop down menus) supporting data collection, data analysis and data reporting. Monitor data input accuracy and completeness. Analyze data on regular basis (e.g., weekly, monthly, or quarterly). Utilize data analysis findings to make data driven decisions which influence operational changes, training, staffing, and communication to stakeholders.

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
Technology is utilized to create efficiencies and provide a better animal database.	Chameleon, an animal services software solution, is utilized. Laptop computers are used in the field. Printers are available in-vehicle.	Review utilization of in-vehicles printers. Modify Chameleon's database architecture to reflect MCAS workflows and desired reporting outcomes. If Chameleon cannot support MCAS workflow/technology needs, evaluate alternative animal services software solutions. Provide ongoing Chameleon training to ensure data entry quality and timeliness. Provide ongoing Crystal reporting training to enable more advanced data reporting and analysis.
Kennel Operations		
Hours of operation are conducive to public access with evening and weekend opening hours.	Adoption hours are not offered in the evenings. Adoption hours are offered on Saturday from 10am – 4pm.	Consider evening adoption hours during the week.
Part-time staff members are utilized for peak hours and to flex coverage.	Two types of part-time staff are utilized who can work different total hours per week.	
Volunteer roles are codified and responsibilities are clear.	A volunteer SOP exists. A manual, Volunteer Manual for Manatee County Animal Services, exists.	Improve clarity between volunteers and staff about authority, roles and accountability for services.
At intake, animals are evaluated for health and behavioral issues.	A procedure exists for animal evaluation upon arrival at the shelter that includes health screenings.	Behavioral screening are not routinely conducted. Health screenings are not always conducted upon arrival at the shelter but often are conducted by staff as time permits.
At intake, animals are provided with unique identifiers to facilitate appropriate care and identification by pet owners (microchip and visual).	All animals are uniquely identified to enable tracking within the shelter and on the software system.	

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
The facility is clean and provides for an adequate amount of space and meets appropriate state and professional association standards.	Shelter space is maintained in a clean condition.	The existing facility has many design features that make it less than optimal for operation and staffing. The age of the facility, and its design, do not make it ideal for the current service levels and operating practices of Manatee County Animal Services. Isolation space is inadequate to easily contain / control infectious disease spread. Kennel space is limited especially in light of the no kill policy which has resulted in animals remaining at MCAS longer.
Dogs are walked at least on a daily basis.	A core group of dog walkers contribute an estimated 38 – 43 hours per week and ensure that all dogs are walked on a daily basis.	
Standards are in place for the visual assessment of animals on a regular basis.	Daily walk-through are conducted to visually inspect the condition of each animal at the Shelter.	
Effective partnerships are maintained with Rescue Groups and Sanctuaries to support adoption and placement.	The County has an extensive listing of and relationships with various rescue groups in the region and state to aid in placement of animals.	Many of these relationships have been impacted by events over the last year or two and require a rebuilding in order to have an effective adoption program that is critical to success as a no kill shelter. No formal selection criteria nor inspection program are in place to ensure rescues and sanctuaries meet minimum requirements prior to establishing or maintaining working relationships. This should be changed and require minimum service standards and periodic inspections.
Veterinary Services		

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
Clearly defined veterinary protocols in place at Animal Services.	A well-defined set of medical protocols have been developed by the veterinarian for use by the Vet Tech. The veterinarian is available for consult as needed to ensure quality and appropriate treatment of all animals.	
A veterinarian is in charge of the clinic.	The County has a contract veterinarian that oversees medical protocols. A vet tech leads the daily operations of the shelter and care for animals.	The veterinarian is only on-site once per month for several hours. This level of on-site presence is insufficient to maintain highest quality oversight and requires many transports to off-site veterinarian offices to deal with medical issues.
Part-time or contract veterinarians are utilized to handle overflow services.	The County has several veterinarians on contract to provide services on nights and weekends.	
A system is in place to deal with sick and injured animals on an emergency basis.	Veterinarian services are available, as needed, 24/7 to provide care to the sick and injured animals.	Onsite care is limited due to the presence of only one vet technician and no veterinarian.
Sick animals can be isolated from the general population.	The shelter provides space for isolation of a small number of animals.	Space is limited, and somewhat inadequate, to provide highest level of isolation for sick animals.
Aggressive program in place to spay and neuter domesticated animals.	The County has several programs in place, directly and in concert with partner entities, to provide spay and neutering programs. Of note, the County has a trap and release program for feral cats.	Expanded efforts must be made to further increase spay and neutering programs as they are a fundamental element of population control and the no kill philosophy.
Licensing		
Maximizing animal licensing through public events.		Greater public education and events should be undertaken to maximize animal licensing efforts.
Field canvassing program in place to maximize licensing.	Animal Services officers check status of the animal licensing when encountering animals in the field.	No field canvassing program is utilized.

Performance Target	Strengths	Improvement Opportunities
Use of veterinarians to license/re-license animals.	The County had engaged veterinarians for assistance in licensing animals.	Current regulations do not require licensing prior to treatment or vaccination.
Renewals can be accomplished online.	Residents can license and renew licenses online through petdata.com with proof of rabies vaccination.	
Cats are licensed as well as dogs.	The County requires licensing of both cats and dogs.	
Adoptions		
Programs and events exist to maximize the adoption rather than euthanization of animals, through public information, use of volunteers, accessibility (time and location).	The County has adopted a variety of programs to increase adoptions including partnering with rescues, a downtown Bradenton adoption facility (currently temporarily closed), and public events.	A more extensive public outreach and participation in adoption events should be undertaken to increase visibility of adoptable pets. The new volunteer program should explore options to utilize volunteers to assist in this effort.
MCAS has taken steps to ensure that an adoption is a success and a long term human/animal bond is established.	MCAS has a goal of successful placements for all animals.	However, there are limited screenings and criteria for determining whether an individual is an appropriate candidate to adopt an animal from the shelter.
Costs and Cost Recovery		
Cost recovery program in place – licensing fees and fines designed to recover at least 25% operating costs.		There is no formal policy adopted regarding cost-recovery for Animal Services.
Low cost services are provided to the community (e.g., spay/neuter and micro-chipping).	Various low-cost spay and neutering programs are offered to the public. Many of these are funded by partner groups.	
A foundation is in place for making tax-deductible donations.		The County has no independent foundation to providing residents a method of contributing tax-deductible donations to Manatee County Animal Services.

4. EMPLOYEE SURVEY SUMMARY

4. EMPLOYEE SURVEY SUMMARY

The Matrix Consulting Group conducted a survey of the Manatee County Animal Services Division's employees in order to gauge their attitudes and opinions on a number of organizational and operational issues. The survey was distributed to 20 employees, and 16 of them responded for a response rate of 80%.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY

The survey consisted of three sections. The first section contained 11 positively phrased statements about animal services delivery to which respondents were asked to select one of the following responses: "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." For purposes of discussion, agreeing and strongly agreeing responses have been grouped in some places (such as tables) in this document, as have disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses. The second section contained statements about the Division's organization and management, and respondents were given the same set of possible responses. In the third section, respondents were given three open-ended prompts and had the opportunity to give their opinions on the Division's strengths and weaknesses, as well as any other thoughts they wanted to share, in their own words.

While survey responses were confidential, respondents were asked at the beginning of the survey to indicate their employment status (either part-time or full-time), their assignment (administration, the shelter, or field work), and the length of time they have worked for the Division. All respondents indicated that they are full-time

employees. The following tables break down the assignments and tenure of respondents.

Employees by Assignment	
Assignment	% Respondents
Administration	12.5%
Shelter	62.5%
Field Work	25.0%
Total	100%

Employees by Tenure	
Number of Years	% Respondents
< 2 Years	50.0%
2-10 Years	18.75%
> 10 Years	31.25%
Total	100%

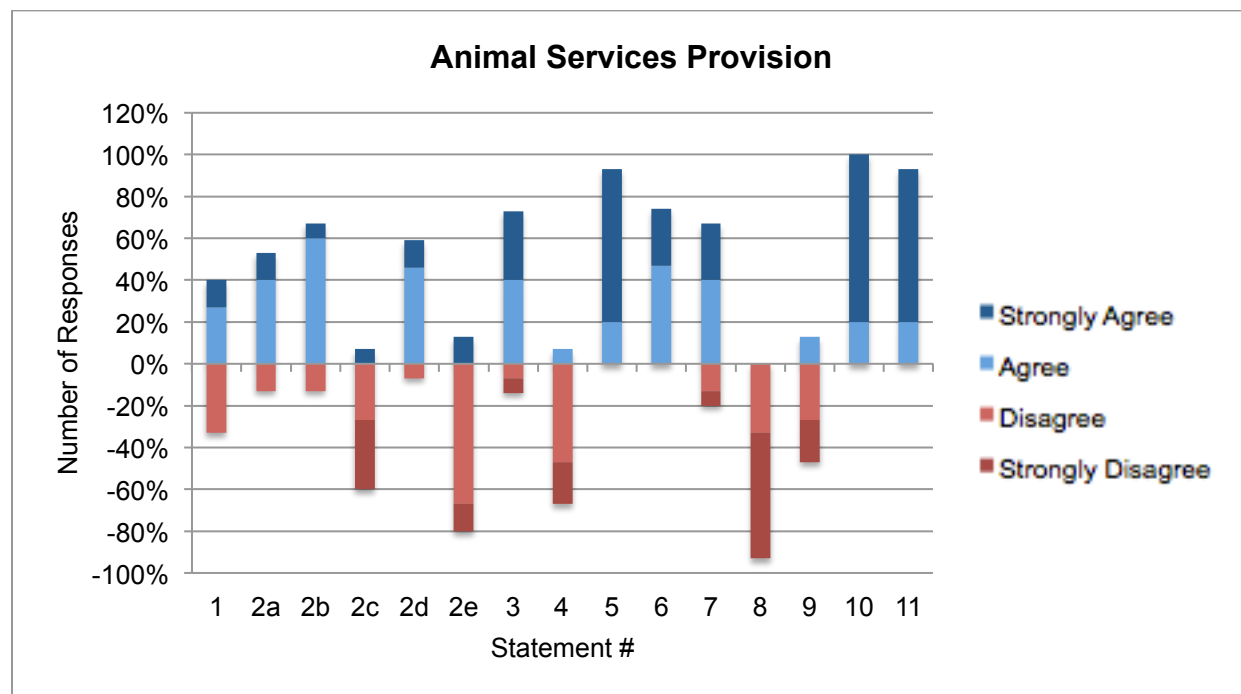
2. EMPLOYEES FEEL POSITIVELY ABOUT THE DIVISION'S SERVICE PROVISION CAPABILITIES BUT PERCEIVE A LACK OF SUPPORT FOR SOME AREAS OF THEIR WORK

The first section asked employees to respond to statements about the provision of animal services by the division. The following table provides the statements in this section and the responses by employees.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
1. In general, Manatee County's animal services meet the service expectations of the County.	40.0%	26.7%	33.3%	0.0%
2a. Our field services meet the expectations of the County.	53.3%	26.7%	13%	6.7%
2b. The animal care provided in the shelter meets the expectations of the County.	66.7%	20.0%	13.3%	0.0%
2c. The veterinary services we provide meet the expectations of the County.	6.7%	33.3%	60.0%	0.0%
2d. Our adoption services meet the expectations of the County.	60.0%	33.3%	6.7%	0.0%
2e. Our public education services meet the expectations of the County.	13.3%	6.7%	80.0%	0.0%
3. County residents view animal care as a high priority.	73.3%	13.3%	13.3%	0.0%
4. Our philosophy of animal care (i.e., No Kill) is the right one for the County.	6.7%	26.7%	66.7%	0.0%

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
5. We demonstrate compassion for the animals in our care.	93.3%	6.7%	0%	0.0%
6. The use of rescue organizations and the Humane Society contributes to the success of animal services in the County.	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%
7. Recent changes we have made at the shelter have resulted in no animal being euthanized unnecessarily.	66.7%	6.7%	20.0%	6.7%
8. The County supports the Animal Services Division.	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	0.0%
9. Animal Services has a clear vision/direction for the future of its services to the County.	13.3%	40.0%	46.7%	0.0%
10. The shelter would benefit from an on-site veterinary presence.	100%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11. Animal Services should remain a County-provided service to the community.	93.3%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%

The following chart depicts the varying degrees of agreement and disagreement with statements in this section.



The stark differences from statement to statement in the chart above make it clear that the statements in this section elicited a wide range of responses. The

following points clarify these responses and explore trends and relationships in these responses.

- Statement #1 – Level of service: Opinions leaned slightly positive on this statement, with neither agreement or disagreement receiving more than half of employees' responses. Administrators remained neutral on this statement, while shelter employees (10% strong agreement, 50% total agreement, 10% neutral, 40% disagreement) split their responses. Field employees' three responses were also split between strongly agreeing, neutral, and disagreeing. Employees with less than 2 years of experience provided all of the disagreeing responses, while half of responses from more experienced employees were neutral, and the rest were positive.
- Statement #2a – Field services: Responses were generally positive to this statement. The three field employees responded one with agreement, one with strong agreement, and one with disagreement. Both administrators agreed, and shelter employees leaned toward agreement also (10% strong agreement, 40% total agreement, 40% neutral, 10% disagreement). All disagreeing responses came from relatively new employees, while more experienced staff provided one neutral response and the rest positive.
- Statement #2b – Animal care: Responses were very positive to this statement; only two disagreeing responses were received. Both administrators agreed, shelter staff were positive (10% strong agreement, 70% total agreement, 20% neutral, 10% disagreement), and field staff were split between agreeing, disagreeing, and neutral. Staff with less than 2 years of experience gave varied responses, but were generally neutral or agreeing. Staff with more longevity were all positive except for one disagreeing response.
- Statement #2c – Veterinary services: Responses in general were very negative to this statement, with only one agreeing response received. Administrators were split between neutrality and strong disagreement, as were field staff. Shelter staff gave varied responses, but mostly disagreed (10% strong agreement, 30% neutral, 40% disagreement, 20% strong disagreement). Opinions were similarly distributed among staff of varying experience levels.
- Statement #2d – Adoptions: Attitudes were very positive on this statement, with only one disagreeing response received. Administrators agreed, and shelter staff were positive as well (10% strongly agree, 40% agree, 50% neutral). Field staff were split between strong agreement, agreement, and disagreement. Employees of varying longevity presented a similar distribution of responses.
- Statement #2e – Public education: This statement received a very negative response, save two strongly agreeing employees. Administrators both disagreed, as did 7 of 10 shelter workers. Field staff were disparate, selecting disagree,

strongly disagree, and strongly agree. Employees of varying degrees of longevity were united in their disagreement, responding with similar response distributions regardless of the length of their employment.

- Statement #3 – County view of animal care: This statement was met with a great degree of positivity. Administrators were split between agreement and neutrality, and shelter staff were also positive (30% strong agreement, 40% agreement, 10% neutral, 20% total disagreement). Field staff were even more so, with 2 strongly agreeing responses and 100% total agreement. While new staff provided both disagreeing responses, they were entirely in agreement otherwise. More experienced staff provided a mix of neutral and positive responses.
- Statement #4 – Animal care philosophy: This statement received a very negative response, with only one employee agreeing. Administrators were split between neutral and strongly disagreeing, while shelter staff mostly disagreed (70% total disagreement, 20% neutral, 10% agreement). Field staff were also negative, with one neutral and two disagreeing responses. Employees with 2-10 years of experience were split between agreeing and disagreeing, while both newer and more experienced employees leaned heavily toward disagreement.
- Statement #5 – Compassion for animals in care: Aside from one neutral response, every employee agreed with this statement. Employees in every assignment and of all longevities combined to produce 73.3% strong agreement and 93.3% total agreement.
- Statement #6 – Contributions of rescue organizations: This statement received no disagreeing responses amid heavy agreement (25% strong agreement, 50% agreement, 25% neutral). Field staff produced 2 neutral responses and one agreeing, while administrators were split between strongly agreeing and neutral. Shelter staff were very positive (30% strong agreement, 90% total agreement, 10% neutral). Employees' length of employment did not affect their responses to this statement.
- Statement #7 – Recent changes and euthanasia: This statement was met with general positivity. Both administrators agreed, as did both responding field staff. Shelter staff were more divided (30% strong agreement, 30% agreement, 10% neutral, 20% disagreement, 10% strong disagreement). There was no discernible trend in responses between employees of varying longevities.
- Statement #8 – County support for the Division: This statement received the strongest level of disagreement of any in this section. The responses of employees in every assignment category were dominated by disagreeing and strongly disagreeing opinions. Regardless of the length of employment, employees expressed disagreement.

- Statement #9 – Clear vision/direction for the Division: - Employees responded to this statement with general disagreement. While field staff were all neutral, administrators were split between neutral and disagreeing. Shelter staff also leaned toward negativity (20% agreeing, 20% neutral, 30% disagreeing, 30% strongly disagreeing). Staff with more than 10 years of experience responded with neutrality or disagreement, while relatively recent hires were generally negative but widely varied.
- Statement #10 – Benefit of on-site veterinarian: - No statement met stronger support than this one, with 100% total agreement. 80% of employees strongly agreed. No negative or neutral responses were received.
- Statement #11 – County provision of animal services: - This statement received almost unanimous (93%) total agreement. One employee remained neutral, but 73% strongly agreed.

Staff responses to statements in this section revealed that employees have a generally positive view of the Division's ability to provide high-quality animal services to meet the expectations of County residents, but they feel under-supported in a number of capacities. Statements #4 and #9, for example, indicate that employees feel they would benefit if the Division's general philosophy and direction, as well as its no-kill policy, were revisited. Additionally, staff perceive a disconnect between the priorities of County residents and the County administration. They believe that county residents prioritize animal services (#3), but that the County does not adequately support the Division (#8). Employees with less than 2 years of experience (all but one of whom work at the shelter) have generally less confidence in the Division's ability to provide animal services, particularly field services, at a level that meets County expectations.

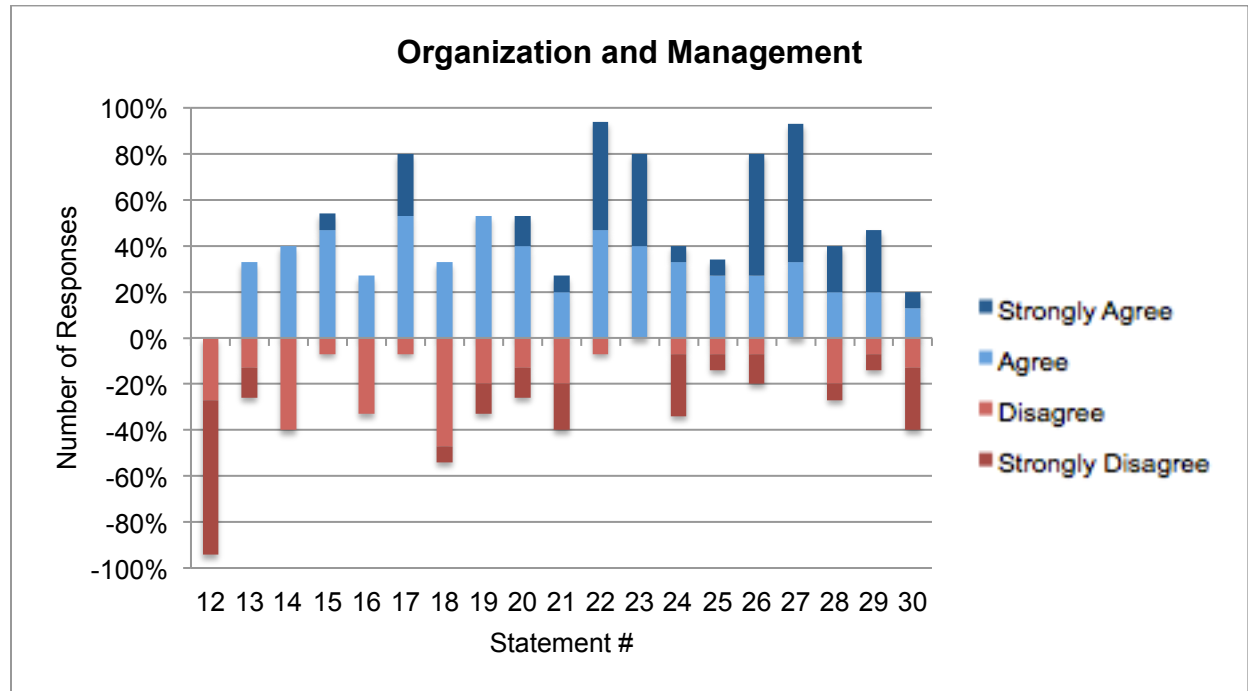
The widely negative response to #2c and the unanimously positive response to #10 indicate that staff feel improvements in the Division's veterinary services are urgently needed.

3. EMPLOYEES HAVE A NUMBER OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE DIVISION, PARTICULARLY REGARDING STAFFING, COMMUNICATION, AND INTERACTION WITH VOLUNTEERS AND THE PUBLIC.

The survey's second section asked employees to respond to a set of statements about the organization and management of the Animal Services Division. The following table shows the statements and employees' responses to them.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
12. We have the staff we need to perform effectively.	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	0.0%
13. We operate in a safe environment for staff and volunteers.	33.3%	40.0%	26.7%	0.0%
14. We operate in a safe environment for animals.	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%
15. Volunteers are an essential part of Animal Services operations and services.	53.3%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%
16. We utilize volunteers effectively.	26.7%	40.0%	33.3%	0.0%
17. Volunteers can do more in Animal Services.	80.0%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%
18. I am kept informed of important information in the Division.	33.3%	13.3%	53.3%	0.0%
19. My opinions are listened to and considered.	53.3%	13.3%	33.3%	0.0%
20. When problems and issues arise among staff, they are resolved quickly.	53.3%	20.0%	26.7%	0.0%
21. When problems and issues arise between staff and volunteers, they are resolved quickly.	26.7%	33.3%	40.0%	0.0%
22. We treat the public with respect when they communicate with us.	93.3%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%
23. Responding to the public consumes a large amount of my time.	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
24. Staff at all levels of the organization are held accountable for their actions.	40.0%	26.7%	33.3%	0.0%
25. Policies and procedures are adequate to guide day-to-day operations.	33.3%	46.7%	13.3%	6.7%
26. Public scrutiny of Animal Services is impacting the way I feel about my job.	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
27. We need to find ways to involve the public in a positive manner.	93.3%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
28. My morale about my job is good.	40.0%	33.3%	26.7%	0.0%
29. I can make a career in Manatee County's Animal Services Division.	46.7%	26.7%	13.3%	13.3%
30. Sufficient training opportunities are made available to me in order to maintain and improve my job-related skills and abilities.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%

The chart below details employees' levels of agreement and disagreement to the statements in this section.



As evident in the chart above, responses varied significantly from statement to statement, reflecting a wide variety of employee opinions on various topics. Please note the following points:

- Statement #12 – Staffing: This statement received the most negative response of any in this section. Field staff issued one neutral response and two disagreeing, while shelter staff responded with 90% strong disagreement and 100% total disagreement. Staff responded similarly regardless of their length of employment.
- Statement #13 – Staff safety: This statement received mixed responses, and a number of staff chose to remain neutral. Administrators and field staff divided their responses between neutral and agreeing, while shelter staff were more negative (30% agreeing, 30% neutral, 20% disagreeing, 20% strongly disagreeing). Staff with less than 2 years of experience were inclined to disagree with this statement more than those who had worked for the Division for a longer period of time.
- Statement #14 – Animal safety: Opinions were split evenly on this statement, with neither strong agreement or disagreement present. Both administrators

chose to agree, but their responses were balanced by the less optimistic shelter staff (30% agreement, 20% neutral, 50% disagreement). Field staff were split three ways between agreement, neutrality, and disagreement. The longevity of staff bore little correlation to the nature of their responses.

- Statement #15 – Volunteer necessity: This statement was met with a very positive response. Field staff were split between 2 agreeing responses and one disagreeing, while shelter staff were tended to see volunteers as more decidedly necessary (10% strongly agree, 40% agree, 50% neutral). Administrators were split between agreement and neutrality. Staff with less than 2 years of experience produced varying responses, while more experienced employees responded mostly with agreeing opinions.
- Statement #16 – Volunteer utilization: Opinions were split on whether volunteers are used more effectively. Administrators were split between neutral and disagreeing, while two field staff agreed and one disagreed. Shelter staff had few strong opinions (20% agree, 50% neutral, 30% disagree). Employees' length of service had little impact on their responses.
- Statement #17 – Volunteers can do more: Most employees agreed that volunteers can do more for the Division. Employees in all three capacities and at all lengths of service trended toward agreeing with this statement (27% strongly agree, 53% agree, 13% neutral, 7% disagree).
- Statement #18 – Communication of decisions: This statement was met with more negative responses than positive ones, and nobody strongly agreed. Administrators and field staff were mostly optimistic, but shelter staff were less so (20% agree, 1% neutral, 60% disagree, 10% strongly disagree). Employees with fewer years of service tended to be less positive on this statement than those with 10 or more.
- Statement #19 – Agency of opinions: Responses varied to this statement. Administrators were split between agreeing and neutral, while two field staff agreed and one strongly disagreed. Shelter staff were also divided (50% agree, 10% neutral, 30% disagree, 10% strongly disagree). Staff with more experience tended to have more confidence than recently hired employees that their opinions were heard and considered.
- Statement #20 – Conflict resolution among staff: Responses to this statement leaned slightly toward positive. Administrators agreed, and two field staff strongly agreed while the other disagreed. Shelter staff produced mixed responses (40% agree, 30% neutral, 10% disagree, 20% strongly disagree). Staff with more than 10 years of experience had very positive opinions on this statement, while less experienced employees tended to be more negative.

- Statement #21 – Conflict resolution between staff/volunteers: Responses to this statement shaded toward negative. Administrators split responses between agreeing and neutral. Field staff responded with one strongly agree, one neutral, and one disagree. Shelter staff gave disparate responses (20% agree, 30% neutral, 20% disagree, 30% disagree). While opinions in general were less positive than the previous statement, the trend of more disagreement among employees with less experience continued, and no employee with more than 10 years of service disagreed with this statement.
- Statement #22 – Treating public with respect: Responses to this statement were very positive. Administrators both chose to agree, and field staff all strongly agreed. Shelter staff were, for the most part, similarly positive (40% strongly agree, 90% total agreement, 10% disagree). There was such widespread agreement that no difference could be seen between employees of varying lengths of service.
- Statement #23 – Time spent responding to public: Responses to this statement were extremely positive – no negative responses were received. All groups of employees responded with heavy agreement (40% strongly agree, 40% agree, 20% neutral). Employees' length of service had no significant impact on their responses.
- Statement #24 – Staff accountability: Responses to this statement varied widely. Administrators split their choices between agreeing and neutral. Field staff gave one strongly agree, one neutral, and one strongly disagree. Shelter staff also varied (40% agree, 20% neutral, 10% disagree, 30% strongly disagree). All of the strongly disagreeing responses came from staff with less than 2 years of experience, whereas those with more than 10 years did not give any disagreeing responses.
- Statement #25 – Adequacy of policies and procedures: This statement received somewhat positive responses. Administrators were split between neutral and agreeing, and field staff were divided between one strongly agreeing response and two neutral ones. Shelter staff averaged neutral (30% agree, 40% neutral, 10% disagree, 10% strongly disagree, 10% no response). The years of service for staff had no statistically significant impact on their responses.
- Statement #26 – Impact of public scrutiny: Responses to this statement were primarily positive. Both administrators and all field staff agreed or strongly agreed. Shelter staff were also positive, but with some outlying disagreement (60% strongly agree, 10% agree, 10% disagree, 20% strongly disagree). All 3 disagreeing responses came from employees with less than 2 years of service; more experienced employees agreed unanimously.
- Statement #27 – Need for positive public involvement: Responses to this statement were wholly positive. Administrators agreed, and field staff all agreed

strongly. Shelter staff were similarly in agreement (60% strong agreement, 90% total agreement, 10% neutral). Employees of all levels of longevity agreed with this statement.

- Statement #28 – Job morale: Opinions were mixed on this statement. Administrators gave one neutral and one disagreeing response, while field staff did the same and added one agreeing response. Shelter staff were mixed but leaned toward positive (30% strong agree, 20% agree, 30% neutral, 10% disagree, 10% strongly disagree). There was no discernible difference in the responses of staff based on their length of service.
- Statement #29 – Plausibility of animal services career: This statement received generally positive responses. Two field staff strongly agreed and one remained neutral. Shelter staff gave mixed responses (20% strongly agree, 20% agree, 30% neutral, 10% disagree, 10% strongly disagree). There was little difference in employees' responses based on their longevity.
- Statement #30 – Training opportunities: Responses to this statement leaned toward disagreement. Administrators were split between neutral and agreeing, while field staff had one strongly agree, one neutral, and one strongly disagree. Shelter staff trended toward disagreement (10% agree, 40% neutral, 20% disagree, 30% strongly disagree). Among staff with less than 10 years of experience, more than half of them disagreed or strongly disagreed, while more experienced employees gave no disagreeing responses.

The responses to the statements in this section showed that employees of the Division see the need for changes in a number of operational and managerial capacities. Interaction with the volunteer workforce was one key point of concern, with responses to several statements indicating that volunteers are essential to the Division's operations and need to be positively involved, but that 1) they could be better utilized, and 2) conflicts with volunteers are more of a concern than conflicts between staff members. Staff with less experience, in particular, were concerned about the ability of the Division to resolve conflict, both among staff and between staff and volunteers.

Another area of disagreement for staff was the Division's relationship with the public; while staff affirmed that they remain polite when dealing with the public, they admitted that public scrutiny is affecting their opinion about their job. Experienced staff

felt particularly susceptible to this impact, although they tended earlier in the survey to believe more than staff with fewer years of service that the level of service provided by the Division meets County expectations.

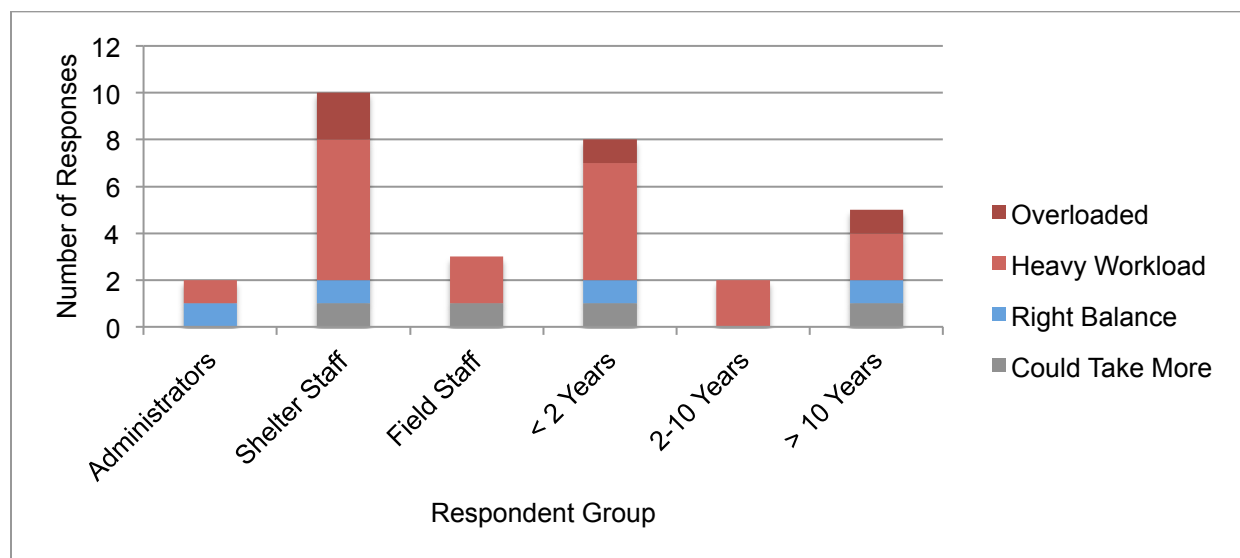
Additionally, staffing was a concern across the board, and younger staff expressed the opinion that they are not kept well informed of important information in the Division.

4. MOST EMPLOYEES BELIEVE THEY HAVE A HEAVY, BUT MOSTLY MANAGEABLE, WORKLOAD.

Between the 2nd and 3rd sections of the survey, employees were asked a question about their workload. They were asked to choose one of four statements that best represented their workload with the Division. Their choices were:

- I am overloaded. I can never catch up.
- Sometimes my workload is heavy, but most of the time I can keep up.
- I have about the right balance between time available and the amount of work.
- I could handle more work without being overloaded.

The following chart and tables detail employees' selections regarding their workload.



Current Assignment	Overloaded	Heavy Workload	Right Balance	Could Take More
Administration	0	1	1	0
Shelter Staff	2	6	1	1
Field Staff	0	2	0	1
Total	2	9	2	2

Length of Employment	Overloaded	Heavy Workload	Right Balance	Could Take More
< 2 Years	1	5	1	1
2-10 Years	0	2	0	0
> 10 Years	1	2	1	1
Total	2	9	2	2

The majority of employees claim to have a workload that is sometimes heavy but generally allows them to keep up. This paints a different picture than the responses to #12, when the Division staff unanimously disagreed with the statement that the current staffing situation is sufficient. Responses do not appear to vary in a statistically significant way across different lengths of service, but employees in the shelter gave responses that indicated a heavier workload than employees in administrative or field roles.

5. RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS.

The final section of the employee survey asked employees to provide, in their own words, their thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of the Division, in addition to any further comments they wished to share with the project team.

(1) Employees Believe That Compassionate, Capable Staff Are The Greatest Strength Of The Division.

The first question in this section asked employees what they perceived as the Division's strengths. The major themes of their responses (any topics that were listed more than once) are outlined below:

- Compassion and high quality care for animals (9 responses)
- Customer service (4 responses)
- High performing staff (3 responses)
- Cooperation/teamwork (2 responses)
- Division leadership (2 responses)
- Quick responses to maintain public safety (2 responses)

Strengths perceived by the division were dominated by topics that reflect on the quality of staff. By far the most common strength listed was the degree of compassion and care demonstrated by employees toward animals in their care. Customer service was another strength, as was a high-performing and motivated staff. The Division's leadership, teamwork and cooperation, and ability to quickly respond and remove dangerous animals were also lauded by employees.

(2) Employees Hope To See Veterinary Improvements, Staffing Increases, and Facility Upgrades.

The second question in this section asked employees to list the things that they believe are opportunities for improvement in the Division. Themes from their responses that were mentioned more than once are listed below:

- Improved and/or on-site veterinary care (9 responses)
- Staffing increase (9 responses)
- New/improved facilities (6 responses)
- More training opportunities (4 responses)
- Volunteer and public education (3 responses)

Employees made it clear that they see two, possibly three main opportunities for improvement. They believe that bringing a veterinarian on-site would be a significant improvement and would allow for better animal care (as well as on-site spaying and neutering). They also want to see an increase in the number of staff. Expansion or improvement of facilities (or construction of new ones) was another item brought up by

several employees, and increased training opportunities and public education were also mentioned multiples times.

(3) Employees Have A Number Of Other Serious Concerns.

Employees had the opportunity at the end of the survey to list their own additional thoughts. Several responses echoed sentiments expressed previously in the survey. Responses that brought up new themes are listed below:

- There is a perceived need for a boost in morale and commitment to delivering compassionate care to animals.
- Employees would like to see staff re-allocated to take advantage of their skills, knowledge, and abilities.
- Some employees are concerned about the new division chiefs and are disappointed that they have not visited the shelter to speak with staff.
- Some employees feel that they have not gotten the chance to make their voice heard or defend themselves in the midst of allegations and investigations, and that the truth of how the Division operates has not been widely publicized.

Employees brought up a number of concerns in this final section. In addition to hoping for changes in staffing allocation and attitudes, they are concerned about whether their voices are being heard and the truth of the Animal Services Division is being made known, both to the public and to their own directors. Ensuring that employees feel valued, trusted, and heard is essential to improving their morale.

5. VOLUNTEER SURVEY SUMMARY

5. VOLUNTEER SURVEY SUMMARY

The Matrix Consulting Group conducted a survey of individuals who volunteer their time in the Manatee County Animal Services Division in order to gauge their attitudes and opinions on a number of organizational and operational issues. The survey was distributed by email to 442 volunteers, and 81 of them responded for a response rate of 18.3%. While this is a relatively low response rate for the surveys sent out, the vast majority of individuals who were on the distribution listing are not active volunteers at the shelter.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY

The survey consisted of three sections. The first section consisted of 21 positively-phrased statements about the Animal Services Division to which respondents were asked to select one of the following responses: “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neutral,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” For purposes of discussion, agreeing and strongly agreeing responses have been grouped in some places (such as tables) in this document, as have disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses. The second section included five open-ended prompts and provided respondents the opportunity to give their opinions on the Division’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as any other thoughts they wanted to share, in their own words.

While survey responses were confidential, respondents were asked at the beginning of the survey to indicate how long they have been volunteering with the division, and the average number of hours each week that they volunteer. The following tables break down their responses.

Volunteers by Length of Service	
Length of Service	# Respondents
<1 year	14
1-2 years	40
>2 years	15
Total	69

Volunteers by Hours Per Week	
Hours Per Week	# Respondents
<3 hours	22
3-8 hours	26
>8 hours	10
Total	58

2. MULTIPLE CHOICE STATEMENT RESPONSES

The first part of the survey asked volunteers to respond to statements about the operations, practices, and volunteer experience in the division. The following subsections detail the statements and responses by volunteers.

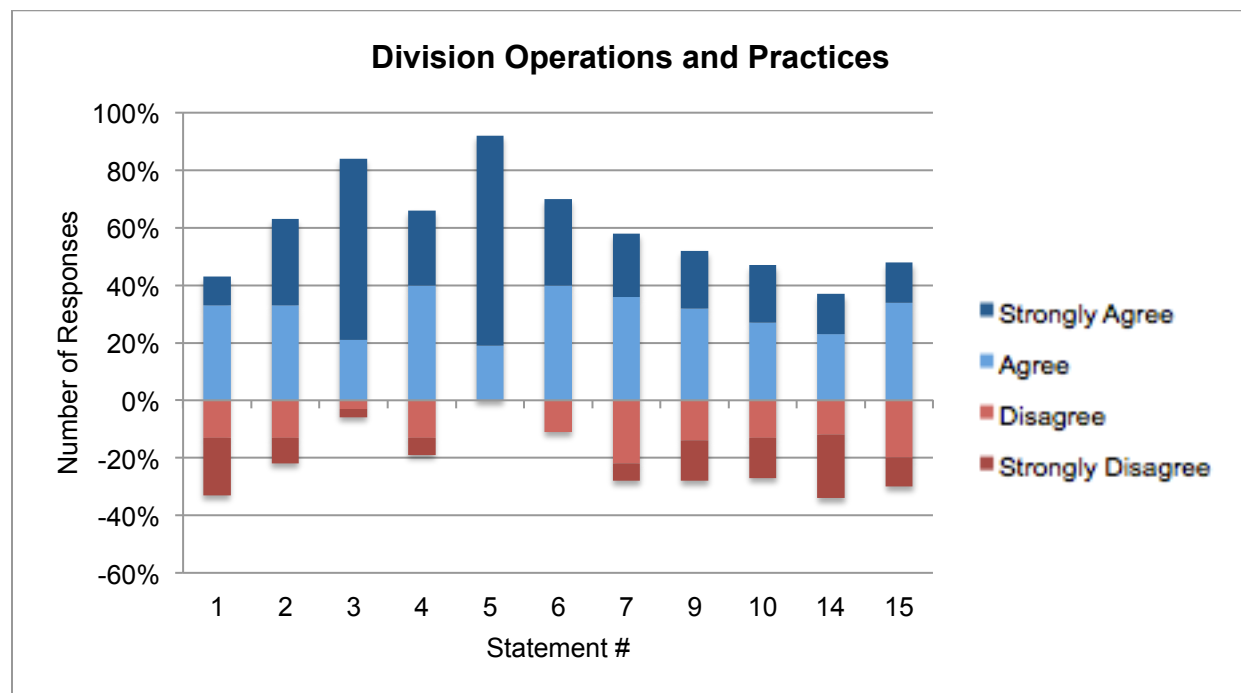
(1) Volunteers Have Generally Positive Opinions Of The Division's Operations And Practices, Especially Toward The Policies And Approach To Animal Care That The Division Employs.

Several of the statements in this section dealt with the Division's operations and practices. The following table provides volunteers' responses to those statements.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
1. Manatee County Animal Services meets the service expectations of the community.	43.5%	21.7%	33.3%	1.5%
2. County residents view animal care as a high priority.	63.8%	11.6%	21.7%	2.9%
3. Our philosophy of animal care (i.e. "No Kill") is the right one for the County.	84.3%	5.7%	5.7%	4.3%
4. We demonstrate compassion for the animals in our care.	65.7%	15.7%	18.6%	0.0%
5. The use of rescue organizations and the Humane Society contribute to the success of animal services in the County.	91.4%	5.7%	0.0%	2.9%
6. We operate in a safe environment for volunteers and staff.	70.0%	18.6%	11.4%	0.0%
7. We operate in a safe environment for animals.	58.0%	14.5%	27.5%	0.0%

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
9. I am kept informed of important information at Manatee County Animal Services.	52.2%	17.4%	29.0%	1.4%
10. My opinions are listened to and considered at Manatee County Animal Services.	47.1%	20.0%	27.1%	5.7%
14. Staff are held accountable for the work that they perform.	37.7%	20.3%	33.3%	8.7%
15. Policies and procedures are adequate to guide me in my work at Manatee County Animal Services.	48.6%	20.0%	30.0%	1.4%

The following chart depicts the amount of agreement and disagreement received by each statement.



As the charts shows, volunteers have somewhat positive opinions about the operations and practices of the Division, but they provided mixed responses to several of the statements. The following points examine the variations in responses to these statements based on volunteers' length of service and workload.

- Statement #1 – Animal services meeting County expectations: While there was slightly more agreement than disagreement with this statement, respondents with less than a year of service were much more positive (80% total agreement) than those with 1-2 years of service (37% total agreement, 37% total disagreement,

23% strongly disagree) and more than 2 years (31% total agreement, 39% total disagreement). Additionally, volunteers with less than 3 hours per week were positive (58% total agreement), while those with 1-2 years (42% total agreement) and 3+ years (20% total agreement, 60% total disagreement) were less so.

- Statement #7 – Animal safety: This statement was met with generally positive responses. Volunteers with less than a year's experience were very positive (80% total agreement), while those with 1-2 years were less so (50% total agreement, 37% total disagreement). Volunteers with 3+ years of experience were in the middle (69% total agreement, 23% disagreement). Similarly, volunteers with less than 3 hours weekly were positive (69% total agreement), while those with 3-8 hours were less so (50% total agreement, 38% disagreement).
- Statement #9 – Communication of important information: This statement received more positive than negative responses. Volunteers with less than a year's experience were very positive (80% total agreement), while those with 1-2 years were less so (50% total agreement, 33% total disagreement), and volunteers of 3 or more years were in the middle (62% total agreement, 31% total disagreement).
- Statement #10 – Agency of opinion: This statement also received more agreeing responses than disagreeing. While volunteers of less than a year or 1-2 years were similarly optimistic (50%+ total agreement and less than 25% total disagreement for both), those with 3+ years of experience were tempered with more disagreeing responses (53% total agreement, 39% total disagreement).
- Statement #14 – Staff accountability: Opinions were mixed on this statement. Volunteers with less than a year of experience were positive (10% total disagreement), while those with 1-2 years of experience (27% total disagreement) and 3+ years of volunteering (54% total disagreement) disagreed increasingly. A similar trend was seen based on volunteers' weekly hours – those with few hours agreed (53% total agreement), while those with 3-8 hours (46% total agreement) or more (10% total agreement, 50% strongly disagree) were less inclined to agree.
- Statement #15 – Adequacy of policies and procedures: This statement was met with more agreement than disagreement, but a trend could also be seen based on volunteers' length of service. More recent volunteers with less than a year's experience gave only 10% disagreement, while those with more experience gave responses balanced between agreement and disagreement.

Volunteers' answers to these statements demonstrate that volunteers have a high opinion of the practices and approach used by the Division toward animals, lauding

the compassion shown for animals, the County residents' prioritization of animal services, the involvement of rescue and adoption organizations, and the "No-Kill" philosophy. While still receiving more agreement than disagreement, statements about the operations of the Division and its environment elicited more mixed opinions. Communication, listening to volunteers, staff accountability, and the safety of the environment for animals all drew their share of negative responses.

Volunteers with fewer years of experience or fewer hours per week of volunteering repeatedly answered more positively than those with heavier or more long-standing involvement in the Division. Again, these variations primarily related to the operational effectiveness of the division rather than its policies, practices, and approach toward animal services work.

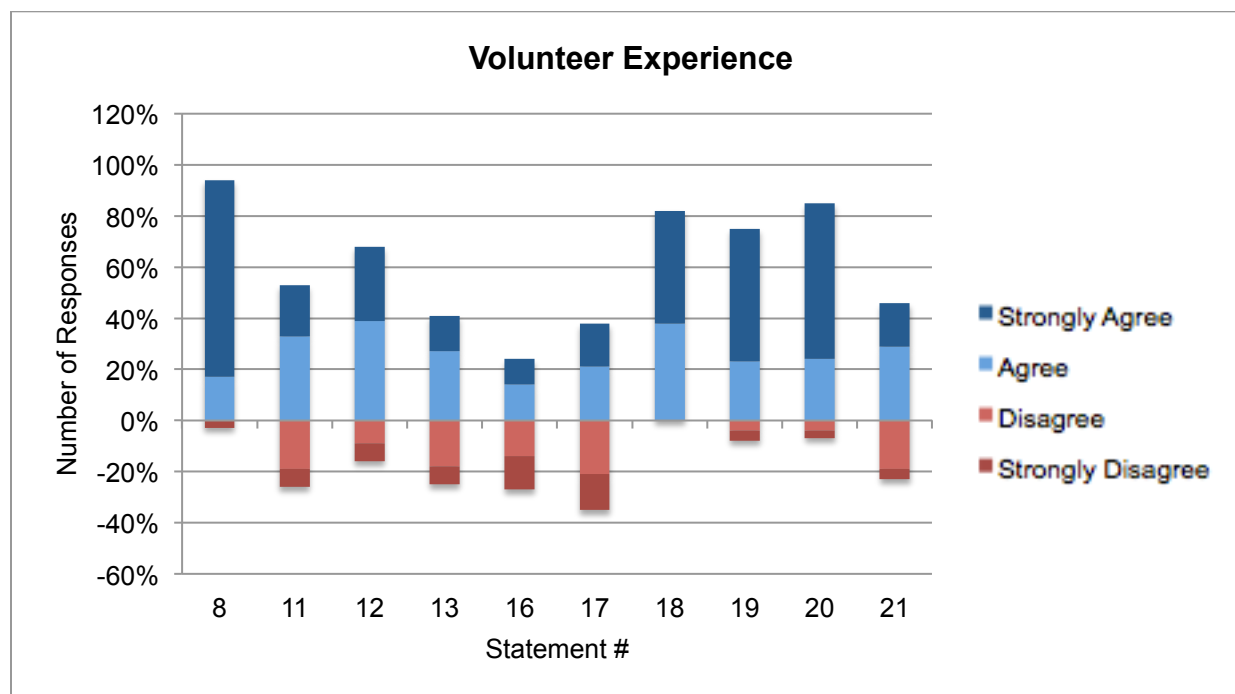
(2) Volunteers Are an Essential Component of the Animal Services Division's Service Delivery Approach.

The following table outlines the responses of volunteers to multiple-choice survey statements regarding the volunteer experience within the Division.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
8. Volunteers are an essential part of MCAS operations and services.	94.3%	1.4%	2.9%	1.4%
11. As a volunteer at Manatee County Animal Services it is clear what is expected of me.	53.6%	17.4%	26.1%	2.9%
12. I have the opportunity to contribute at Manatee County Animal Services in the way that I want to contribute.	67.1%	14.3%	15.7%	2.9%
13. Volunteers are held accountable for the work that they perform.	41.4%	28.6%	25.7%	4.3%
16. When problems occur between staff and volunteers they are dealt with fairly.	24.3%	35.7%	27.1%	12.9%
17. Volunteers are utilized well by Manatee County Animal Services.	38.6%	22.9%	35.7%	2.9%
18. Volunteers can do more at Manatee County Animal Services.	82.4%	10.3%	0.0%	7.4%
19. I like volunteering at Manatee County Animal Services.	75.4%	13.0%	8.7%	2.9%
20. I would like to continue to volunteer my services at Manatee County Animal Services.	85.7%	5.7%	7.1%	1.4%

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
21. Volunteers are effectively trained prior to beginning service at Manatee County Animal Services.	45.7%	27.1%	22.9%	4.3%

The following charts depicts the amount of agreement and disagreement received by each statement.



As evident in the chart, volunteers have generally positive opinions about the Division's operations and practices, but some statements elicited mixed responses. The following points investigate differences in the responses to these statements based on volunteers' varying lengths of service and workloads.

- Statement #11 – Clarity of volunteer expectations: This statement was met with more agreement than disagreement. Respondents who spend more than 2 hours per week volunteering agreed more with this statement (60%+ total agreement) than those with less than 3 hours weekly (47% total agreement).
- Statement #16 – Staff/volunteer conflict resolution: While this statement received a large number of neutral responses, it was clear that Respondents with less than a year of experience agreed more (40% total agreement) than those with 1-2 years of volunteering (23% total agreement, 30% total disagreement), and

volunteers of 3+ years were the most negative (15% agreement, 54% total disagreement). Similarly, the levels of agreement with this statement decrease for volunteers as they spend more hours per week with the Division.

- Statement #17 – Volunteer utilization: Opinions were split on this statement, and the familiar trend emerged: Volunteers with less than a year's experience felt well-utilized (70% total agreement), those with 1-2 years less so (37% total agreement, 37% total disagreement), and a large segment of volunteers of 3+ years, least of all (39% total agreement, 54% total disagreement). Volunteers with lighter workloads also tended to feel better utilized, and agreement levels sank for volunteers with more and more hours per week.
- Statement #21 – Volunteer training effectiveness: This statement received more agreement than disagreement. Agreement was especially strong among volunteers with less than 3 hours per week (63% total agreement, 11% disagreement), but less so for those spending 9+ hours per week at the Division (50% total agreement, 30% total disagreement). Those in the middle with 3-8 hours per week were the most negative (39% total agreement, 33% disagreement).

Volunteers' responses showed that they have a very positive opinion of volunteering itself – they believe they are essential, they like volunteering, and they want to do more – but have varying opinions on the way the Division handles volunteers – some see themselves as under-trained, under-utilized, and poorly supported in terms of direction and conflict resolution.

Again, volunteers with less experience or fewer hours per week tended to be more positive about their volunteering experience, believing that their conflicts are better resolved, they are better utilized, and their training is sufficient. The lone exception was the statement about knowing what is expected of volunteers, which naturally drew more agreement from volunteers with more experience and more weekly hours spent in the Division.

3. RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS.

The second section of the survey provided volunteers an opportunity to respond to a set of open-ended questions in their own words. The following subsections describe their responses.

(1) Volunteers View Compassion, Personnel, Adoption Services, And The Volunteer Workforce As The Division's Greatest Strengths.

The first prompt asked volunteers to describe what they believed to be the greatest strengths of the Division. The following items were mentioned as strengths in multiple responses:

- Compassionate employees (17 responses)
- Commitment to the "No-Kill" policy (12 responses)
- Adoption services (11 responses)
- The Division's facilities, animal play areas, and shelter location (10 responses)
- Good volunteer workforce (8 responses)
- Training and communicating with volunteers (8 responses)
- High-performing employees (6 responses)
- Animal care at the shelter (6 responses)
- Division management (5 responses)
- Keeping stray animals off the street (5 responses)
- Working with rescue organizations (5 responses)
- Improving save rate (5 responses)
- Willingness to be flexible and adaptable/new organizational structure (5 responses)
- The new volunteer coordinator (4 responses)
- Support of a caring community (3 responses)

Volunteers are most impressed with the compassion displayed by the Division toward the animals in their care. Between responses praising the caring nature of staff, the quality of animal care in the shelter, and the high-performing employees, half of all respondents listed this as a strength. The Division's commitment to saving animals and finding adoptive homes for them was another strength identified by many volunteers –

at least half of respondents lauded the adherence to the “No-Kill” policy, the adoption services, or the improving save rate.

The Division’s volunteer program was also identified as a strength, both for the work ethic and compassion of volunteers, and for the Division’s ability to train and communicate with volunteer workers. Additionally, the Division’s recent changes to organizational structure, willingness to be flexible, and new volunteer coordinator also were listed as strengths by multiple volunteers.

The Division’s facilities received recognition for their animal play areas, cleanliness, and convenient location. The management, and the relationships the Division maintains with the community and rescue organizations, are also recognized as strengths.

(2) Volunteers Feel They Could Be Better Used If They Received More Training And Assistance, Were Welcomed At The Shelter, And Were Utilized At Off-Site And Adoption Events.

The second open-ended prompt asked volunteers to provide their ideas for how they could be better utilizes. The following list is composed of items that appeared in multiple responses.

- Could be used at off-site and adoption events (9 responses)
- Need more training, structure, and clear expectations for their work (8 responses)
- Should be readily welcomed at the shelter (7 responses)
- Could perform animal behavioral assessments, training, socialization and obedience work (5 responses)
- Could be used more extensively as foster caretakers for animals (3 responses)
- Could do community outreach and adoption follow-up calls (3 responses)
- Would be more able to volunteer if hours were expanded (2 responses)

Volunteers’ suggestions focused primarily on three things: they believe they could be better utilized for off-site and adoption events (transporting animals to those events was mentioned as a possibility), they believe that increased training and

structure to the volunteer program would be beneficial (the recent hiring of a paid volunteer coordinator will likely help in this area), and they want to be welcomed at the shelter and treated as teammates rather than as disturbances.

Other suggestions included an expanded role in animal training, socialization, and behavioral assessments, longer shelter hours, using volunteers as foster caretakers, and utilizing volunteers for community outreach and post-adoption follow-up calls.

(3) Volunteers Believe Advertising And Changes In The Attitude Toward Volunteers Would Increase The Number Of Volunteers.

The third prompt asked volunteers what could be done to increase the number of volunteers at Manatee County Animal Services. The following list includes themes that were present in multiple responses:

- Improving community awareness through active recruitment, as well as flyers, social media, and advertising (22 responses)
- Make volunteers feel welcomed and appreciated (9 responses)
- Improve the public image and physical environment of the shelter (5 responses)
- Provide more support/direction for volunteers (5 responses)
- Expand hours to be more convenient for volunteers who work during the day (2 responses)
- Develop partnerships with community organizations and schools to recruit volunteers (2 responses)
- Survey other shelters with high volunteer rates (2 responses)

Volunteers overwhelmingly suggested community outreach and advertisement as the best means of increasing volunteer rates. According to their responses on the previous question, there are many volunteers who are willing to participate in flyer distribution and community advertising. They also reiterated their point that volunteers should be welcomed and appreciated, and suggested that improving the public image and the physical appearance of the shelter might help lift volunteer rates. Expanded

hours, community partnerships, and surveys of other animal shelters were also suggested.

(4) Volunteers Would Like To See Improvements Primarily In The Publicly Visible Aspects Of The Division And Its Care For Animals.

The fourth prompt in this section asked volunteers to recommend items that they saw as opportunities for improvement. The themes that appeared in multiple responses have been compiled below:

- Facilities upgrades, including suggestions for larger buildings, improved cleanliness, more accommodating animal areas, etc. (21 responses)
- Increased public awareness and involvement with the shelter, including speaking engagements, advertising, and public relations efforts (14 responses)
- Improvements to animal care, including toys, gathering animal info, handling of animals, etc. (11 responses)
- Improved customer service (8 responses)
- Division leadership changes (6 responses)
- More adoption events, including off-site events (6 responses)
- Improved volunteer and staff training (6 responses)
- More staff (6 responses)
- Expanded or more convenient hours (6 responses)
- Better communication with rescues and community groups (6 responses)
- On-site veterinary care (5 responses)
- Increased pursuit of the “No-Kill” goal (5 responses)
- More volunteers (5 responses)
- Re-opening of the downtown Bradenton shelter (5 responses)
- Increased accountability and transparency for the Division (4 responses)
- Robust foster program (4 responses)
- Value and appreciate volunteers (3 responses)
- Increased emphasis on spay and neuter programs (3 responses)
- Increased funding (3 responses)
- Participation in local animal-friendly events (2 responses)
- Improved staff morale (2 responses)
- Better utilization of volunteers (2 responses)
- Strong and clear standard operating procedures (2 responses)

Volunteers had numerous suggestions for improving the Division, with most responses having to do with the most publicly visible aspects of the Division and its care for animals – suggestions for upgrades to the shelter, public relations promotions,

animal care practices, customer service, adoption events, changes to operating hours, and communication with auxiliary animal care groups comprised more than 60 responses.

Volunteers also recommended changes in the Division's leadership (and praised the ones recently made), asked for more staff and volunteers, suggested increased training for those staff and volunteers, and expressed a desire to see the shelter closely pursue its goal of being a fully "No-Kill" shelter. The re-opening of the downtown Bradenton shelter was also advocated by several volunteers.

(5) Volunteers Are Pleased With Recent Changes And Optimistic That The Division Is Headed In The Right Direction, And They Have Ideas And The Willingness To Help.

The final section of the survey asked volunteers to provide any final thoughts to the project team. While many comments in this section echoes sentiments that had already been expressed elsewhere in the survey, the following new opinions were presented:

- The survey was difficult to answer at times because there are so many changes occurring in the Division that it is hard to gauge the status of many aspects of its operations.
- The recent Napier investigation has cast a shadow on the Division, but they have otherwise done a great job.
- There should be signage to make the shelter easier to find.
- The shelter should adopt all of the guidelines in the "No-Kill" equation.
- There are social media efforts aimed at subverting or discrediting the Division, and they should be addressed.
- The Division needs to renew an emphasis on enforcing existing laws.

The results of the survey show that volunteers believe the changes occurring in the Division are positive, and they are optimistic that Manatee County will be able to focus on animal care and adoptions going forward, preferably with renewed appreciation for their volunteer workforce. While the Division's facilities and public relations are cause

for concern among many volunteers, they believe that Manatee County has a caring staff of animal caretakers, and they hope to be utilized effectively to help the shelter become truly “No-Kill” by increasing public awareness and adoption efforts.

6. COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

6. COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

The Matrix Consulting Group conducted a survey of Manatee County stakeholders in order to gauge their attitudes and opinions on a number of organizational and operational issues. The survey was distributed by web link, and 714 residents chose to respond to it.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY

The survey consisted of two sections. The first section consisted of 17 positively-phrased statements about the Animal Services Division to which respondents were asked to select one of the following responses: “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neutral,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” For purposes of discussion, agreeing and strongly agreeing responses have been grouped in some places (such as tables) in this document, as have disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses. The second section included an open-ended prompt providing residents the opportunity to give their opinions and thoughts to the project team in their own words.

While survey responses were confidential, respondents were asked at the beginning of the survey to provide some information about themselves. This included the length of time that residents have lived in the County, the area in which they live, whether they have had contact with the Division in the last year, and in what capacity that contact has been. The following tables break down their responses.

How long have you lived in Manatee County?	
Length of Residence	% Respondents
< 3 years	2.9%
3 - 10 years	26.6%
11 - 20 years	22.3%
> 20 years	48.3%
Total	100%

Please list the area of the County in which you live:	
Location	% Respondents
Anna Maria	1.7%
Bradenton	49.6%
Bradenton Beach	1.6%
East of I-75	21.3%
Holmes Beach	1.4%
Palmetto	10.7%
Unincorporated County	13.7%
Total	100%

In the past year have you had any contact with the Animal Services Division?	
Location	% Respondents
Yes	71.6%
No	28.4%
Total	100%

If you have had contact with the Animal Services Division, in what capacity has it been?	
Location	% Respondents
Enforcement in the Field	9.5%
At the Shelter	57.5%
Other	33.0%
Total	100%

2. MULTIPLE CHOICE STATEMENT RESPONSES

The first part of the survey asked residents to respond to statements about the service delivery, operations, and practices of the Animal Services Division. The following subsections detail the statements and their responses.

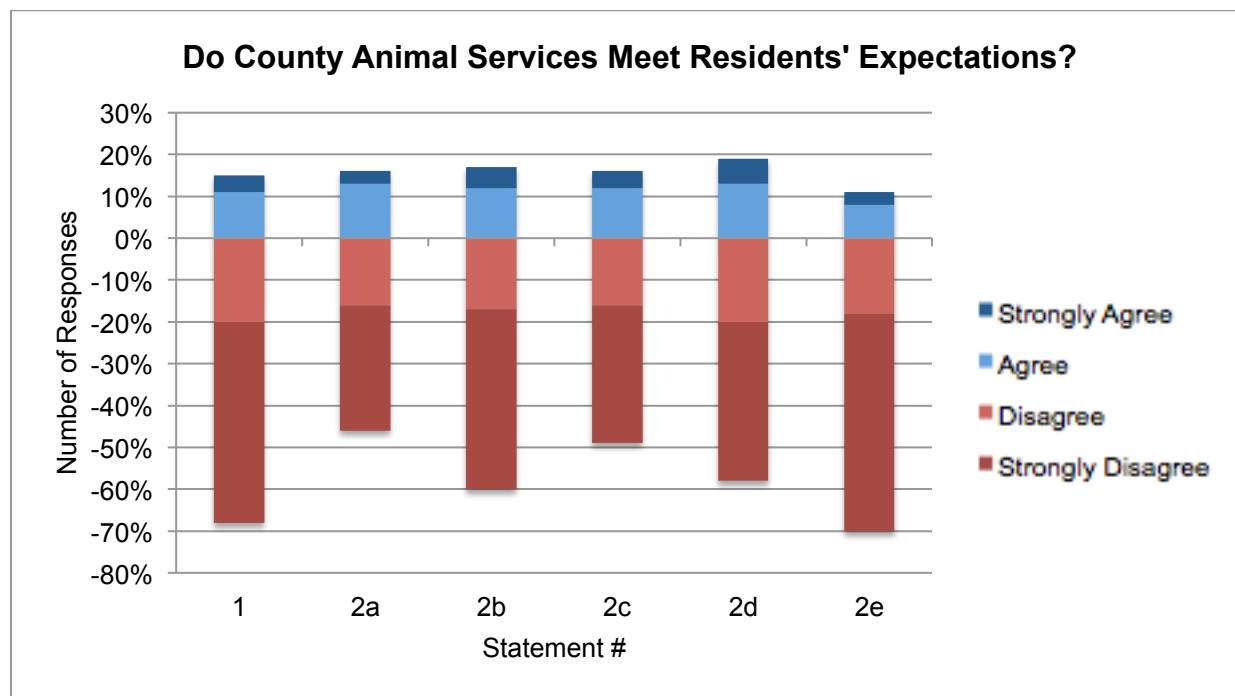
(1) Residents Do Not Feel That The Division Meets Their Expectations For Animal Services, Especially In The Area Of Public Education.

The first group of statements in this section had to do with the degree to which Animal Services meets the expectations of County residents. The following table provides residents' responses to those statements.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
4. In general, Manatee County Animal Services meets my expectations.	15.4%	11.8%	68.3%	4.4%

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
5a. MCAS meets my expectations for field services.	16.2%	19.9%	46.1%	17.9%
5b. MCAS meets my expectations for animal care in the shelter.	16.9%	15.2%	60.0%	7.9%
5c. MCAS meets my expectations for veterinary services.	16.8%	17.6%	49.1%	16.6%
5d. MCAS meets my expectations for adoptions.	19.1%	14.2%	57.5%	19.4%
5e. MCAS meets my expectations for public education.	10.7%	10.7%	69.9%	8.8%

The following chart depicts the amount of agreement and disagreement received by each statement.



As the chart above indicates, most residents feel strongly that the Division is not meeting their expectations for animal services in any area. The points below explore the differences in responses based on residents' recent experiences with the Division.

- Statement #4 – “*In general, Manatee County Animal Services meets my expectations.*” Respondents who had contact with the Division within the last year were more opinionated than those who did not; they were about 5% more likely to agree with this statement, and they were also about 9% more likely to disagree. Those without recent contact with the Division were more likely to

remain neutral or choose not to respond. While “strongly disagree” was the most popular response, residents who had experience at the shelter (46% strongly disagree) or with field staff (54% strongly disagree) were less likely to disagree than those listing their experience as “other” (61% strongly disagree).

- Statement #5a – “*MCAS meets my expectations for field services.*” Of those with recent experience, residents who had contact with field experience had stronger opinions in both agreement and disagreement than those with shelter or “other” experience.
- Statement #5b – “*MCAS meets my expectations for animal care in the shelter.*” Respondents who had recent contact with the Division were slightly more positive about this statement (6% strong agreement), although their higher levels of strong agreement were also matched by higher levels of disagreement. Of those with experience, residents who had contact with field services or the shelter tended to agree more than those listing their recent contact as “other”.
- Statement #5c – “*MCAS meets my expectations for veterinary services.*” Among residents who had recent experience with the Division, those who had contact with field staff were more positive than those with shelter experience, and more positive still than those listing their experience as “other”.
- Statement #5d – “*MCAS meets my expectations for adoptions.*” Of residents claiming to have recent experience with the Division, those with experience in the shelter were more positive than those who had contact with field services, and both of these groups were more positive than those who listed their experience as “other”.

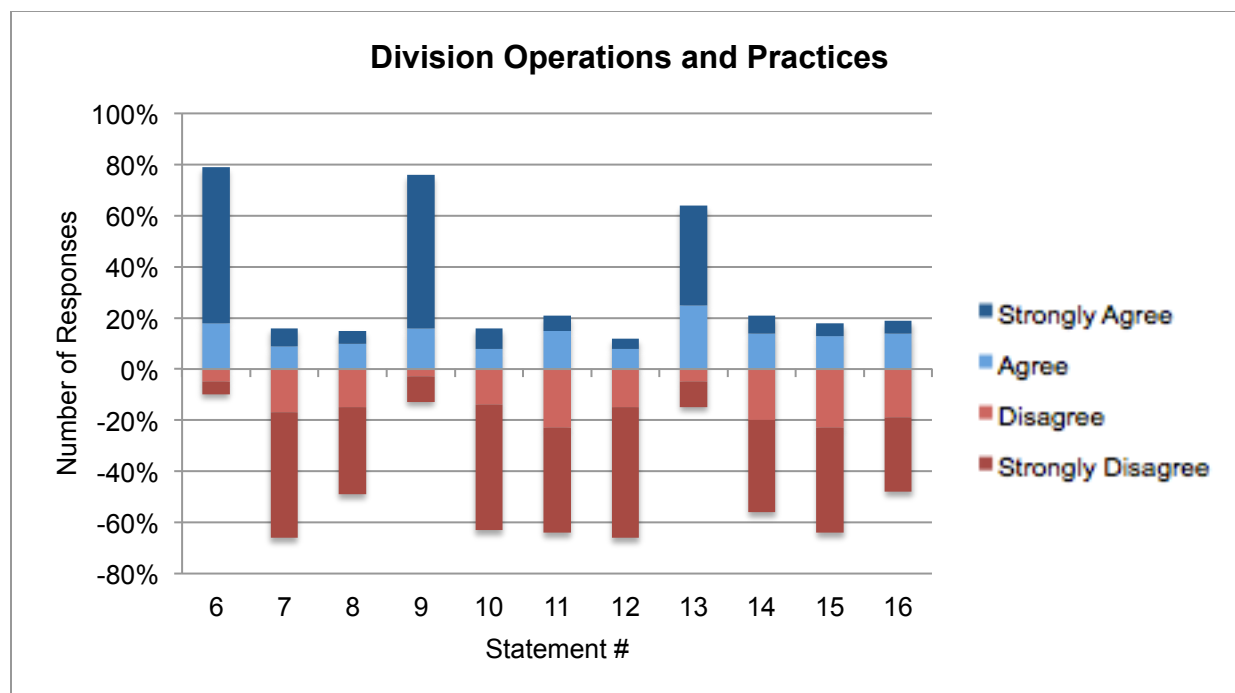
Throughout each statement on this topic, respondents with recent experience had stronger opinions on every statement, offering higher levels of both agreement and disagreement. Some small variations could be seen depending on which branch of the Division residents had contacted (residents who had contact with field services had a higher opinion of field services, and those with experience at the shelter were more dissatisfied with the level of veterinary care there). Although these differences were small, they are significant because of the large number of respondents. Residents tended to agree, regardless of recent contact with the Division, that the current level of public education is unacceptable.

(2) Residents Want The County To Provide No-Kill Animal Services, But They Do Not Believe The Division Is Currently Performing Well.

The second group of statements within this section focused on the operations and practices of the Division. The following table outlines residents' responses to each of the statements on these subjects.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Response
6. I view animal services as a high priority for Manatee County.	79.7%	4.7%	14.5%	1.1%
7. I have a high opinion of the County's Animal Services Division.	16.2%	15.5%	55.4%	2.9%
8. Animal Services Division staff are responsive to our law enforcement needs.	14.9%	21.6%	48.1%	15.4%
9. The County's philosophy of animal care (i.e., "No-Kill") is the right one for the County.	76.7%	4.9%	13.1%	5.4%
10. Recent changes made at the shelter have resulted in no animal being euthanized unnecessarily.	16.2%	11.6%	63.0%	9.2%
11. Animal Services does a good job of promoting adoptions.	20.6%	12.4%	63.8%	3.1%
12. Animal Services is prompt in responding to problems raised by the community.	11.8%	12.3%	66.0%	10.0%
13. Animal Services should remain a County-provided service to the community.	64.6%	15.1%	14.1%	5.1%
14. Animal Services makes effective use of partnerships with community groups and rescue organizations.	20.8%	17.5%	55.7	6.1%
15. Animal Services effectively utilizes available resources (community events, social media, foster programs, etc.) to place animals.	17.4%	14.1%	63.7%	4.8%
16. Animal Services effectively utilizes volunteers to support service provision.	19.2%	23.4%	48.5%	8.9%

The following chart shows the amount of agreement and disagreement received by each statement.



Residents widely agree that animal services should be a high-priority service provided by Manatee County with a No-Kill approach. They believe, however, that the Division is currently ineffective in every area about which they had the opportunity to respond. The following points investigate the differences in responses based on residents' recent experiences with the Division.

- Statement #8 – *“Animal Services Division staff are responsive to our law enforcement needs.”* This statement received mostly negative responses. Among residents with a recent MCAS experience, those who had contact with field staff tended to agree slightly more (8% strong agreement) than those who had contact with the shelter (5% strong agreement), and more still than those who listed their contact as “other” (2% strong agreement).
- Statement #9 – *“The County’s philosophy of animal care (i.e., “No-Kill”) is the right one for the County.”* Although this statement received lots of strong agreement, respondents who had recent contact with the Division were less positive (58% strong agreement) than those who had not (66% strong agreement). Respondents who had a recent encounter with the Division were more likely to agree if their experience was with field staff (63% strong agreement) than if it was with the shelter (59% strong agreement) or listed as “other” (54% strong agreement).

- Statement #10 – *“Recent changes made at the shelter have resulted in no animal being euthanized unnecessarily.”* Residents having recent experience with the Division were more negative (53% strong disagreement) than those who did not have a recent encounter (37% strong disagreement). Among those who had contact with the Division in the last year, those who listed their encounter as being with field staff had a more positive response (10% strong agreement) than both those who had experience with the shelter (4% strong agreement) and those who listed the nature of their encounter as “other” (7% strong agreement).
- Statement #11 – *“Animal Services does a good job of promoting adoptions.”* This statement received mostly disagreement, and residents having recent experience were more likely to disagree (44% strong disagreement) than those without a recent MCAS encounter (32% strong disagreement). Among respondents who had experience with the Division in the last year, those who listed their contact as being with field staff again had a more positive response (10% strong agreement) than both those who had experience with the shelter (5% strong agreement) and those who listed the nature of their encounter as “other” (4% strong agreement).
- Statement #12 – *“Animal Services is prompt in responding to problems raised by the community.”* For respondents that had recent contact with the Division, those who encountered field staff had a more positive impression (8% strong agreement) than those who had experience at the shelter (4% strong agreement), and more positive still than those who listed the nature of their contact as “other” (2% strong agreement).
- Statement #13 – *“Animal Services should remain a County-provided service to the community.”* This statement received widespread agreement. Among respondents who had contact with the Division in the last year, those who had an encounter with field services tended to agree (44% strong agreement) more than those who had contact with the shelter (39% strong agreement), and those who had “other” experiences (39% strong agreement).
- Statement #15 – *“Animal Services effectively utilizes available resources (community events, social media, foster programs, etc.) to place animals.”* This statement received heavy disagreement, and residents who had recent experience with the Division were more vocal in this response (45% strongly disagree) than those who did not (30% strongly disagree). Respondents who had a recent experience with MCAS were more likely to respond positively if they had contact with field services than with the shelter, and both of these points of contact produced more positive responses than those classified as “other”.
- Statement #16 – *“Animal Services effectively utilizes volunteers to support service provision.”* This statement received mostly disagreement. Among respondents who had contact with the Division in the last year, those who listed the encounter as “other” disagreed (38% strong disagreement) more than those who had an experience with the shelter (35% strong disagreement), and more

still than those who had an experience with field services (21% strong disagreement).

As in the other part of the multiple-response section, respondents who had recent experience with the Division gave stronger opinions on most statements, and the type of experience they had informed the type of response they gave (Those who have been to the shelter in the last year disagreed more with the idea that fewer animals have been euthanized recently, and those who have contacted field staff have a better impression of their promptness in responding to problems).

These trends, while significant, are minute compared to the consistent disapproval residents expressed for the performance of the Division's operations, policies, responsiveness, efficiency, and recent changes. This level of disapproval, combined with residents' poor assessment of the public education provided by Animal Services, suggests that additional public relations efforts may be required to expose the community to the shelter's successes, the changes and improvements being made in the Division, and the animals available for adoption.

3. RESIDENTS WANT TO SEE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT, PARTICULARLY IN ADHERENCE TO THE NO-KILL POLICY

The second section of the survey asked respondents to provide any additional comments that they wanted to share with the project team. The following list summarizes the most common themes of residents' responses.

- The No-Kill standard should be fully implemented so that the number of euthanizations is next to zero, and the shelter should not call itself "No-Kill" until this is the case.
- The shelter should make greater efforts to network animals and adopt them out.
- The care and compassion shown for animals at the shelter needs to improve.
- Customer service at the shelter, particularly for potential adoptive families, must improve.
- Field enforcement needs to be more responsive and effective.

- Volunteers should be welcomed and utilized.
- The Division should seek new leadership and recruit new staff members to begin taking it in a positive direction.

Each of these themes appeared in multiple responses by residents, and were backed in many cases by personal stories and anecdotes about visiting or volunteering at the shelter, adopting pets, observing the treatment of animals, and calling the Division to handle stray animals.

Residents also brought up the need for better advertising, community outreach and public education, facilities upgrades, and spay and neutering programs. Several respondents also said that the Bradenton shelter should re-open.

By far the most common response was that the shelter should not claim to be No-Kill if they euthanize animals, especially healthy, adoptable animals, on a regular basis. Several residents stated that this is currently the case, and that they want to see expanded publicity and adoption efforts to reduce the number of animals that must be euthanized.

7. ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONS AND STAFFING

7. ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONS AND STAFFING

During the review and evaluation of the current operational practices of the Manatee County Animal Services Division, several improvement opportunities were identified that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of staff, the care of animals under control of MCAS, and improve the general level of services provided to customers. It is important to keep in mind, in reviewing these recommendations, several key issues that impact the operations of MCAS. These include:

- **MCAS operates under an “open admission” approach.** All animals acquired through field pick-ups and those brought to the shelter for surrender by owners are accepted without regard to current animal populations, space limitations, or staffing impacts. This service delivery approach provides greater challenges to managing animal populations at the shelter than organizations operating under a “limited admission” methodology.
- **In 2011, Manatee County adopted the No Kill Community approach.** In 2011, Manatee County adopted a resolution supporting the implementation of a No Kill Community approach to providing animal services. This approach, as will be discussed in more detail shortly, supports approaches that limit euthanasia and supports caring for and sheltering all adoptable animals until they are placed. It is critical for all parties to remember that achievement of a No Kill Community status is not entirely dependent upon MCAS but the entire county community including residents, rescue groups and charities that support animal care.
- **No additional resources were allocated to implement the No Kill service approach.** The No Kill Community philosophy approach was implemented without any additional resources (staff or financial) to support the enhanced services, programs or shelter modifications.
- **A save rate over 90% is the typical benchmark utilized for achieving No Kill status.** The No Kill Advocacy Center is describing achievement of No Kill status states in one publication that: “Successful No Kill communities are proving that roughly 95% of animals entering a shelter are savable”. Many within Manatee County have a perception that no kill means the complete elimination of euthanasia at the shelter. This is a misunderstanding of the concept. It is acknowledged that a set percentage of animals handled are not suitable for adoption (i.e. – dangerous animals, those with untreatable illness or injuries,

severely behaviorally challenged animals where rehabilitation is not possible) and will be euthanized. The plan developed for Manatee County established 90% of animals saved as their goal.

- **MCAS has significantly increased the save rate to almost 90% in the last 3 years.** In October of 2011, the save rate at MCAS was approximately 61%. The save rate increased to 79% for 2012, 88% for 2013, and is at 86.8% for 2014 (YTD). This represents substantial improvements in the save rate over this time period.
- **Significant public perception challenges have impacted MCAS's ability over the last year to develop and maintain the necessary partnerships and relationships with key constituency groups.** During the last year, MCAS has been under considerable scrutiny due to public events that has negatively impacted to some measure public support, perception, and in some cases relationships with key stakeholders.

Despite these challenges, since the time when the County adopted the No Kill community approach to Animal Services, MCAS has significantly increased its save rate from 61% to 86.8% in a three year period. This is a significantly impressive achievement that has in many cases been overlooked due to other negative situations that have garnered more public attention.

Historically, or at least since Animal Services has been reporting publically through its dashboards, the live release rate has been calculated reflecting the euthanasias performed at the county shelter, and omitting euthanasia cases that the County was not responsible for performing (i.e. euthanasia performed at animal ERs or outside contract veterinarians). Several residents of the County objected to the logic of this calculation, believing that the County should report on all euthanasia cases when it calculates its live release rate. In an effort to acknowledge this point of view, the County began to report the save rate based upon this new methodology. The County also recalculated all the previous months of 2014 so that an annual live release rate for the year -- using the new formula -- could be calculated. Using this approach the

County live release rate for the year was determined to be 86.8%. The County will continue to report using the new formula, however a consensus has been reached with all the major shelter programs in the County (Bishop, Humane Society, Honor Sanctuary, etc.) to begin reporting "community-wide" data. A group is currently and actively working on this methodology and it is hoped that consensus will permit full community reporting beginning in January 2015

In developing the recommendations contained in this report, the project team used as its strategic guide the eleven core tenets of the No Kill philosophy. These are summarized in the following table (Source: <http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org/shelter-reform/no-kill-equation/>):

Tenet	Description
Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR)	Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) programs for free-living cats allow shelters to reduce death rates.
High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter	No- and low-cost, high-volume spay/neuter reduces the number of animals entering the shelter system, allowing more resources to be allocated toward saving lives.
Rescue Groups	An adoption or transfer to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, and killing, and improves a community's rate of lifesaving.
Foster Care	Volunteer foster care is a low-cost, and often no-cost way of increasing a shelter's capacity, caring for sick and injured or behaviorally challenged animals, and thus saving more lives.
Comprehensive Adoption Programs	Adoptions are vital to an agency's lifesaving mission. The quantity and quality of shelter adoptions is in shelter management's hands, making lifesaving a direct function of shelter policies and practice. If shelters better promoted their animals and had adoption programs responsive to community needs, including public access hours for working people, offsite adoptions, adoption incentives, and effective marketing, they could increase the number of homes available and replace killing with adoptions. Contrary to conventional wisdom, shelters can adopt their way out of killing.

Tenet	Description
Pet Retention	While some surrenders of animals to shelters are unavoidable, others can be prevented—but only if shelters work with people to help them solve their problems. Saving animals requires shelters to develop innovative strategies for keeping people and their companion animals together. And the more a community sees its shelters as a place to turn for advice and assistance, the easier this job will be.
Medical & Behavior Programs	To meet its commitment to a lifesaving guarantee for all savable animals, shelters need to keep animals happy and healthy and keep animals moving efficiently through the system. To do this, shelters must put in place comprehensive vaccination, handling, cleaning, socialization, and care policies before animals get sick and rehabilitative efforts for those who come in sick, injured, unweaned, or traumatized.
Public Relations/Community Development	Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers and partnering with community agencies comes down to increasing the shelter's public exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of a shelter's activities and success.
Volunteers	Volunteers are a dedicated “army of compassion” and the backbone of a successful No Kill effort. There is never enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.
Proactive Redemptions	One of the most overlooked areas for reducing killing in animal control shelters are lost animal reclaims. Shifting from a passive to a more proactive approach has allowed shelters to return a large percentage of lost animals to their families.
Compassionate Director	A hard-working, compassionate animal control or shelter director not content to continue killing, while regurgitating tired clichés about “public irresponsibility” or hiding behind the myth of “too many animals, not enough homes.”

Each of these tenets must be fully adopted and supported by all employees at Manatee County Animal Services and serve as the basis for all service approaches employed by MCAS for the County to be successful in achieving No Kill status on a long-term and consistent basis.

The following sections address, for each of these tenets, a brief summary of the project teams assessment of where Manatee County stands at the current time in

addressing each tenet. Additionally, where applicable, further improvement opportunities are noted that will improve the County's ability to strengthen their focus and further implement each tenet to continue their achievement as a No Kill Community.

1. FERAL CAT TRAP-NEUTER-RELEASE (TNR) ASSESSMENT.

The County has partnered to provide a Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) program to address the feral cat population. This effort should remain a high priority and be expanded based upon available funding. MCAS should continue to seek funding and implement the feral cat trap and release program in conjunction with their community partners. Continued public education regarding the purpose and benefits of a feral cat trap and release program should be given high priority to minimize the negative public perception that sometimes arises from individuals who want the animals removed or destroyed rather than released back into the community.

Recommendation: MCAS should continue a strong feral cat trap and release program to reduce community populations of feral cats.

Recommendation: MCAS should publicize the purpose, goals and rationale of the trap and release program to educate the public about this program.

2. HIGH-VOLUME, LOW-COST SPAY AND NEUTER PROGRAM ASSESSMENT.

At the present time, MCAS has implemented and partnered with several community partners to implement low-cost spay and neuter programs within the community. All animals adopted from MCAS have been either spayed or neutered and limited programs are available to assist residents who have a need for financial assistance in spaying or neutering pets. The primary program in place is a joint effort between Manatee County Animal Service, Support No Kill Manatee County, and the Animal Network.

The County should prominently publicize their efforts on their website including providing information relative to other community resources that are available to residents to spay or neuter their pets. Additional community support and funding should be sought to ensure that all responsible pet owners seeking to have their pets spayed or neutered, but are without financial means to accomplish this, have financial support to do so. The County should hold periodic public events focused on educating the public regarding the benefits of and availability of support for spaying and neutering pets.

Recommendation: MCAS should prominently publicize existing spay and neutering programs both on its website and through public education events.

3. RESCUE GROUP PARTNERSHIPS ASSESSMENT.

The County currently works with an extensive listing of rescue groups to assist in the housing, care and adoptions of animals. While the number of rescue group partnerships is large, relationships with several have become strained over the last several years for a variety of reasons. A concentrated effort much be undertaken to rebuild these relationships.

Rescue groups are a critical component of achieving success in reaching status as a no-kill community. The current volume of intakes at MCAS routinely exceeds available kennel space at the shelter. Intake volume also at times exceeds the ability of MCAS to either shelter or place with rescue groups all animals that are processed resulting in some animals being euthanized due to space limitations. While this is much lower than in the past, it indicates the need for additional kennel space either from an expanded shelter or increased support from rescue groups. Since October 2013 through August 2014, MCAS transferred approximately 2,152 animals to rescue groups demonstrating the vital nature of this relationship.

MCAS must continue to develop and improve working relationships with all interested rescue groups (and similar organizations) as a high priority. These are fundamental partners in achieving a No Kill Community. The No Kill philosophy is based upon a strong foundation of these public-private partnerships and without them in place, the County, as a whole, has little chance of achieving and maintaining a No Kill Community. Considerations should be given to having a quarterly coordination meeting sponsored by MCAS that is attended by representatives of all rescue groups. This meeting should focus on and discuss options and alternatives for strengthening working relationships, implement effective communication methods for informing rescue groups when the animal population is nearing capacity at the shelter (so rescue groups can assist in housing and caring for animals), and ensuring that a frequent and on-going dialogue regarding ways to further improve and achieve the No Kill Community can be achieved. This public-private partnership is one of the most critical elements that must be in place to achieve the County's desired goal.

With the future changes that will be made at MCAS, including a new Director in the future, this is an opportune time for all parties to step back and reflect on their common goal and develop the working relationship necessary to achieve this goal. In developing the new working relationship with rescue groups, MCAS must implement a new partnership contract that addresses several issues that have caused concern in the recent past. The issues that must be addressed include:

- Providing for clear criteria that must be met to become an approved partner of MCAS who is eligible to receive animals from the shelter. These criteria should outline basic animal care and treatment guidelines.
- All rescue groups should be inspected prior to approval and at least annually during their partnership with MCAS. Animal Control Officers and MCAS Managers should be trained on how to appropriately evaluate rescue groups and conduct a pre-approval inspection and at least an annual inspection to ensure each organization is complying with a standard of care for the animals placed with them.
- The agreement between approved rescue groups and MCAS must provide a requirement that in the event MCAS is investigating a complaint regarding animal care or is conducting a required inspections that the organization fully cooperate by providing required information regarding where animals are housed, the care provided to them, identity and location of fostering partners, and access to the rescue groups facilities (if any).

These minor modifications to the agreements between MCAS and rescue organizations will ensure that MCAS staff provides the necessary oversight to ensure animal welfare for all animals they have under their control (either at the shelter or placed with rescue groups). It is critical that staff conduct the annual inspections to ensure compliance by their partners.

Recommendation: MCAS must strengthen the working relationships with all rescue groups. A quarterly coordination meeting should be held between MCAS and representatives of each rescue group to develop strategies for working together, increase dialogue, and address issues that arise in a timely manner.

Recommendation: MCAS should modify the agreement that it enters into with rescue groups who are being provided with animals from the shelter to ensure an appropriate standard of care is provided and that provides access by MCAS staff to facilities and information regarding the care, placement and location of animals placed with the rescue groups.

Recommendation: MCAS staff should conduct pre-approval inspections prior to entering into agreements with rescue groups and at least annual inspections thereafter.

4. FOSTER CARE ASSESSMENT.

MCAS does not currently have an active foster care program for animals under its direct control; although many of the rescue groups that receive animals from MCAS have extensive foster care programs as a major component of their program. MCAS should develop, as part of its improved volunteer program, a foster care program for suitable animals to increase the number of animals it can care for. This is one opportunity to increase animal care capacity without modification to the existing facility. Fostering programs have many benefits in addition to providing relief on overcrowding. Animals that are fostered can develop better socialization skills through more frequent interaction with humans than is provided at the shelter.

As part of future efforts, MCAS should develop a foster program for suitable animals at the shelter. This program should develop a contingent listing of individuals suitable for providing foster homes, provide training and education to these individuals regarding their roles, and actively place animals waiting for adoption with these individuals. This program can provide relief for MCAS in dealing with capacity issues at the existing shelter. There are extensive models available throughout the nation on developing such programs and, as noted, many of the rescue groups currently working with MCAS have these programs in place. They would be a good resource to assist in

developing this program for MCAS. Volunteers – many who are looking for alternative ways to assist MCAS other than walking dogs – may be suitable candidates for this program.

Recommendation: MCAS should work in collaboration with the rescue groups to develop a foster program to be administered by MCAS to provide an additional avenue for placement of animals, on a temporary basis, to provide relief for overcrowding at the shelter.

Recommendation: MCAS should, as part of its volunteer program, seek to determine if individuals who have already expressed interest in volunteering for the shelter have an interest and capabilities to participate in the foster program.

5. COMPREHENSIVE ADOPTION PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT.

The County has implemented a strong adoption program including the implementation of a satellite adoption center located in downtown Bradenton. However, this satellite adoption center has been closed due to facility maintenance issues. The current satellite facility may not be the suitable future location or facility for this but the need exists to maintain a satellite facility.

Additionally, the County should include in future plans to reopen a satellite adoption center for the convenience of the public. Additionally, MCAS staff participate in various community adoption events also throughout the year to publicize available animals and inform the public of the availability of MCAS when they are seeking a pet. When funding is available, the County should employ adoption incentives including reduced or no cost adoptions. Many progressive shelters across the nation conduct frequent incentive programs to place animals – while there is a cost to this approach (i.e.- reduced revenue from adoption fees), it furthers the goal of placing animals and reduced costs of care (food, medical, etc.) provided for animals at the shelter.

Manatee County Animal Services provides access to shelter services six days a week (Monday through Saturday) and enforcement by Animal Control Officers Monday through Friday. Animal Control Officers are on call evenings and weekends to address emergency situations. The following table outlines the specific service hours by function:

Center Location / Function	Operating Hours
Palmetto Center – Adoptions	Monday – Friday: 10:00 am. To 4:00 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Downtown Bradenton – Adoption Center (currently closed)	Tuesday – Friday: 11:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Field Services	Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Manatee is providing a high level of access to service by operating six days a week and providing services on at least one of the weekend days. Providing variety in operating hours provides greater access for residents of Manatee County to take advantage of the services available at a time convenient to their personal schedules.

The operating hours of the Animal Services Division are generally in line with those endorsed by national animal welfare organizations with the exception of evening hours. The following table summarizes guidelines related to operating hours and access to service and details how Manatee County's operation compares to the guideline. It should be noted that the guidelines referenced are those applicable to full-service shelter operations of similar size and service level.

Operating Guideline:	Manatee County's Operation:
Shelter Services should be provided six days per week; with the shelter closed to the public one day per week.	Manatee County meets this standard with most services available Monday through Saturday.

Operating Guideline:	Manatee County's Operation:
Evening hours and weekend hours should be provided for adoption and claiming of dogs to accommodate various working schedules of residents.	The only areas where Manatee County does not meet this standard relates to evening hours for adoptions and claiming of animals by owners.
Animal Control Services should be provided at least 5 days per week with access during evenings and weekends for emergencies.	Manatee County is in compliance with this guideline. There is some potential to improve services by altering the current Animal Control Officer work schedule to include some evening or weekend availability.

As noted in the table, the County is currently meeting most of the operating guidelines regarding hours of operation and access to services. The project team recommends that the County consider implementing, at least on a pilot project basis, the provision of evening hours for adoption and claiming of dogs. Due to individual work schedules, many residents may not be able to easily access services during the current operating hours. The shelter hours should be modified one evening per week to provide adoption and reclamation services until 7:30 p.m. This can be handled by adjusting work schedules for that particular day for several positions to enable staffing during evening hours.

Recommendation: MCAS should continue its strong focus on adoption programs including maintaining a satellite adoption center.

Recommendation: MCAS should employ various adoption incentive events throughout the year.

Recommendation: MCAS should implement evening hours for adoptions at least one night per week at the shelter and/or satellite adoption center.

6. PET RETENTION ASSESSMENT.

MCAS has started to discuss with individuals who are surrendering a pet at the shelter the reasons for the decision. This provides an opportunity for them to understand if there are addressable issues that would result in the owner not seeking to

surrender the animal. There are times where individuals are facing medical issues, financial difficulties or lifestyle changes that have resulted in them being temporarily unable to maintain their companion animal. All MCAS staff should be trained on appropriate techniques for discussing with individuals the reason they are relinquishing their pet and how to discuss alternatives. Staff must be well trained in order to deal with the public in a professional and caring manner while they are dealing with a difficult and often emotional situation. Staff should also conduct a relinquishment questionnaire with all individuals bringing animals to the shelter to document past behavioral issues and enable a more comprehensive evaluation by staff.

If MCAS staff is well trained to identify these issues, and have appropriate referral resources available they may be able to prevent the relinquishment from occurring. However, this requires them to have resources to draw upon (such as donations to provide food or medical care the owner is unable to provide, temporary fostering for owners with temporary medical issues that prevent them from providing appropriate care). Animal Care charities, volunteers, and rescue groups are a key resource for providing support and resources in this area. A comprehensive listing of community resources to assist individuals with personal needs related to their ability to provide animal care (i.e. – organizations that would provide support for: food, medical care, temporary fostering, dog walking assistance, etc.) should be developed and available in the adoption center.

Recommendation: MCAS staff should develop a training program for all staff on how to appropriately discuss pet relinquishment with individuals bringing animals to the shelter.

Recommendation: MCAS should develop a resource handbook that outlines community resources available to individuals who may need temporary

assistance to support their ability to maintain their pet rather than choosing relinquishment.

7. MEDICAL AND BEHAVIOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT.

A well developed medical program and behavior program is essential to the maintenance of animal health and ensuring that suitable animals are placed for adoption and not euthanized due to perceived behavioral issues.

(a) Medical Program.

In evaluating the medical protocols, shelter cleaning protocols, and similar policies and procedures related to animal care, disease management, and infection control, MCAS is generally compliant with recognized industry practices in these areas. The medical protocols utilized at MCAS were developed by the County's contract veterinarian and provide comprehensive guidance to staff in handling independently animal care that does not require veterinarian intervention. The current facility has limitations, due to layout, size, and current condition, that create some difficulties for staff in maintaining an ideal shelter environment - animals are provided with an appropriate shelter space that is clean and medical care as needed.

In general, MCAS has the resources in place to provide the necessary medical care needed for animals under its control. Daily walk-throughs are conducted to assess and identify potential health issues early. Additionally, MCAS has contracted veterinary services to provide routine care to all animals under its control, contracts for emergency veterinarian service on a 24/7 basis, and has partnered with rescue groups to provide more extensive medical care to injured or sick animals where the cost of the treatment is beyond the allocated budget for MCAS. External funding for expanding care for high-cost injuries or infections should be sought to enable expansion of this effort. While

suitable medical care is available, MCAS is limited to what can be provided on-site since it is only staffed with one vet technician who relies on support from animal care staff or volunteers to supplement what she can provide. All medical care that must be provided by a veterinarian is handled off-site. This involves extensive staff time (approximately 1 to 2 hours per day per trip to the veterinarians office) to transport animals to and from the veterinarian's office.

(b) Intake Program.

MCAS has a well-defined and comprehensive protocol for the processing of animals as they are admitted to the shelter. However, due to staffing and time constraints, these protocols are not always followed with the specified time period and animals are not comprehensively assessed and treated immediately upon intake. In fact, the recommended vaccinations required at intake are not always conducted during intake. It may be the next day, or in some cases several days, before intake vaccinations are conducted due to staffing levels. This creates a significant risk for problems to develop regarding management of disease and maintaining healthy animals. These issues can be addressed through the following staffing changes at MCAS.

(c) Staffing Changes.

After review of the staffing requirements at MCAS, an alternative approach for the provision of medical care should be considered. The current allocation of a single veterinarian technician for MCAS is insufficient to provide the needed services and care for animals in a timely manner all the time. While MCAS has performed well under existing limitations (limited staffing and poor facilities), there is an opportunity to provide

a higher level and more timely service to all animals under control of MCAS. There are several approaches to achieving this higher and more appropriate level of care:

- **Maintain existing contract veterinarian services but add an additional certified vet technician.** The least costly approach, while still increasing significantly the ability to provide timely and effective services, is the addition of a second veterinarian technician position. This position will enable timely processing, treatment and assessment of all animals upon intake and a more effective ongoing treatment and care of all animals being housed at the shelter. It also provides a qualified individual to provide back-up support. At the present time, if the vet technician is off work, all MCAS medical treatment is being handled by other shelter staff and volunteers who are not vet technicians. It is estimated that the addition of this position would result in an increase in cost of approximately \$75,000 including all benefits.
- **Modify the existing veterinarian contract to require onsite hours to enable treatment of minor medical issues onsite.** At the present time, the contract veterinarian is only onsite at MCAS approximately once per month for an estimated 4 hours. Some of this time is spent on administrative and policy discussions. Virtually no time is spent in direct medical care to animals at the shelter. MCAS could modify the contract to require a set number of hours per week to be provided onsite (i.e. – 4 hours per day). Under this approach it is still likely that a second veterinary technician position would be required to assist with the duties outlined in the prior section as the veterinarian would likely be focusing on duties that are not currently being performed in-house (i.e. – medical care that is currently being done at the veterinarian's office). A change of this nature would likely also require some capital investment to provide a suitable room and equipment for providing the minor medical care directly at the shelter. This approach would also require an increase in the contract to cover time spent at the shelter. It is estimated that this approach could result in an increase of approximately \$30,000 to \$60,000 annually depending negotiated rates and hours required. The estimate is based on no more than 4 hours – 5 days per good.
- **Hire a veterinarian on staff at MCAS.** The most effective way to increase care currently provided to animals under the control of MCAS is to hire a staff veterinarian. Many shelters utilize this approach including several in the greater Manatee area including Hillsborough, Lee, Polk, and Pasco Counties. The addition of a full time staff veterinarian at MCAS would not eliminate the need for contract veterinarian services – those contracts would still be required for evening and weekend coverage; as well as, to provide relief if there if additional resources or specialty services are needed. However, the addition of a full-time veterinarian would negate the need for a second veterinarian technician position. Based upon salaries paid by other counties, it is expected that a base salary for

this position would fall in the range of \$70,000 to \$125,000 depending upon experience.

Based upon our review of the alternatives and the needs identified at the shelter, the recommendation is to add a staff veterinarian to the workforce allocation at MCAS. This will provide a significantly greater focus on animal care on a daily basis, more timely provision of service, and on-going daily oversight of staff to ensure compliance with the established medical protocols.

(d) Intake Program.

At the present time, MCAS does not have staff trained or available to routinely provide behavioral modification programs for animals under its care. The further development of the volunteer program, as well as training and certification of some shelter staff, can provide the ability and resources to begin focusing on this area that is not currently fully utilized. At best, MCAS does a high-level behavioral screening when animals are moved to adoption – though not all animals are assessed. This is an important element that is not being addressed appropriately.

Key components to a comprehensive shelter behavior program, as advocated by Maddie's Fund, include several components including:

- Behavioral assessment test,
- Behavioral history / relinquishment questionnaire,
- Shelter behavioral guideline or plan,
- Trained professional behaviorist on staff (or available on contract),
- Foundation behavior and training program,
- Behavioral problem modification program,
- Adoption screening,

- Behavioral counseling (pre and post adoption), and
- Post-adoption follow-up.

MCAS should develop a comprehensive behavioral program with the most critical immediate short-term component needed being the behavioral assessment test and relinquishment questionnaire. These two elements will enable MCAS staff to assess an animal behavioral temperament quickly and identify issues that must be addressed for suitability for adoption. This will require that staff receive appropriate training on conducting these assessments.

Longer-term MCAS also needs to focus on providing resources to addressing behavioral problems that can develop from animals that have spent a significant amount of time housed at the shelter and to provide counseling and assistance to individuals pre and post adoption. With the potential for some animals to be held at the shelter for an extended period of time, the need for greater focus on socializing and preventing them from developing behavioral problems increases. Again, volunteers – specially trained – can provide a supportive role in implementing this program.

Recommendation: All animals should be timely assessed for behavioral and medical condition upon intake.

Recommendation: Staffing adjustments need to be made at MCAS to provide the appropriate level of resources to provide medical care in a timely, effective, and cost appropriate manner. A staff veterinarian should be added to the MCAS staffing allocation.

Recommendation: MCAS should develop and implement a comprehensive shelter behavior assessment program (based upon the criteria outlined by Maddie's Fund or a similar program).

8. PUBLIC RELATIONS / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT.

A strong, consistent and frequent public relations and community awareness campaign is recommended for all communities that are desiring to achieve no kill status. It is vital that the public has awareness of MCAS, the services available, understands how and where to access services, and can easily determine animals available for redemption or adoption. While MCAS has several key components of this program in place, such as a website, facebook presence, and utilization of press releases and other public education campaigns, a more strategic use of these should occur.

MCAS has not lacked for public exposure in the recent past. However, the amount of negative publicity has likely created a barrier to developing the necessary support for MCAS from the community at large that is needed to achieve the No Kill goal of the community. MCAS management must develop a strong public relations campaign to get out the message about the improvements in the save rate that have been achieved, and proactively promote MCAS. MCAS can more effectively distribute information through the website with a redesign of its current approach. While there is extensive information available on the website, it is not always well laid out or easy to find. Additionally, MCAS should develop a series of newsletters and community meetings to publicize the achievements that have been made in substantially increasing the save rate over the last 3 years.

Recommendation: A strategic communications plan should be developed for MCAS that outlines approaches to be utilized to increase transparency, enhance public awareness, and promote available animals for adoption. This should include development of periodic newsletters, community meetings and a redesign of the website.

9. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ASSESSMENT.

Manatee County Animal Services has recently added a Volunteer Coordinator position to MCAS focused on enhancing and increasing the services provided by volunteers at the Shelter. As noted in the survey conducted of volunteers, they are a dedicated group of individuals but as a group do not feel fully utilized, welcomed or recognized for their efforts at MCAS.

At the present time, MCAS has about two dozen routinely active volunteers providing services at the Shelter. Based upon experience and discussions with other shelters, this number should be at least twice to three times the existing level to fully meet the needs of MCAS based upon size and animal volume. The majority of their work is related to walking dogs. There are many more opportunities to expand the use of volunteers including:

- Facility cleaning,
- Animal Fostering,
- Animal Socialization,
- Animal Screenings (with some limitations),
- Public Education Support and Event Attendance, and
- Staffing adoption centers to supplement full-time staff.

There are many other opportunities to further utilize volunteers in manner that will supplement the time and efforts of MCAS staff and improve the well-being of animals under care. MCAS has a very well defined volunteer orientation and training program. Historically the problem has involved getting the volunteers actively engaged in providing services, matching volunteer interests and skills with the needs of MCAS, and

clearly defining the role of volunteers. The project team believes that MCAS has taken an important step forward to creating a more robust volunteer program by dedicating an individual to staff this function.

The County should require that MCAS develop an annual volunteer work program for the Volunteer Coordinator so that a coordinated approach is utilized to recruiting, training, developing and deploying volunteers in a manner that will support the needs of the shelter. This has been an extremely underutilized resource in the last several years.

Recommendation: An annual work program should be developed for the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure a coordinated effort is in place to improve the recruitment, training and utilization of volunteers within MCAS.

10. PROACTIVE REDEMPTION ASSESSMENT.

Currently MCAS places all animals received on their website upon intake to make the public aware of animals at the shelter. However, this approach requires owners to search the website to determine if their pet is at the shelter. Additionally, staff proactively search licensing data, Chameleon, and scan for microchips to see if ownership can be determine. From October 2013 through August 2014, MCAS returned 577 animals to their owners. MCAS should explore other opportunities to be proactive in redemptions including more aggressive pet licensing approaches, proactive canvassing to identify unlicensed pets, and additional public outreach and notifications.

At the present time, Manatee County does not have an active canvassing program / effort for the identification of unlicensed pets within the County. While the Shelter makes effective use of educational programs and provides multiple methods for acquiring licenses (including at veterinarian offices), there will always remain a segment

of the population that does not comply voluntarily. The County should allocate a proportion of Animal Control Officers work hours, when not responding to active cases, to the proactive canvassing of the County to identify unlicensed dogs. The Department should target the allocation of a minimum of 4 hours per week (less than one hour per day) per Animal Control Officer for field canvassing activities. An increase in the number of licensed pets, increases the likelihood of reuniting pets to their owners if they end up at the shelter.

Recommendation: A proactive field canvassing program should be instituted for Animal Control Officers and volunteers to identify unlicensed pets.

11. COMPASSIONATE DIRECTOR ASSESSMENT.

Many of the publications advocating for and providing background on the implementation of a No Kill Community approach to Animal Services indicate that the most critical element of all those outlined is the person that is placed in charge of implementing and administering animal care in the community. This individual is critical to the success of the effort.

(a) MCAS Needs a New Shelter Director.

At the present time, MCAS is without a permanent Director. Running a No Kill Shelter requires an individual who has the interest, desire, and ability to develop effective relationships with community partners, that is flexible in finding solutions to saving animals, and that can proactively develop and implement a variety of programs and efforts to achieve and maintain a high save rate. The search for a new Director by the County should focus on finding an individual with extensive understanding, commitment, and prior experience (preferably) in running a No-Kill Shelter. The effort

should be undertaken with a national search in an attempt to find the best individual possible for Manatee County.

(b) Consideration of a Public-Private Partnership.

Earlier this year a study was conducted entitled “Manatee Animal Partnership Study” that explored community perceptions regarding a different model for providing animal services by the County. The model considered was a public private partnership. The study found extensive community support for a public private partnership in this area “if it were done right”. As noted in several areas, the County has a shelter that needs to be replaced in the foreseeable future. This will require significant financial investment on behalf of the County.

Given the strong community support coupled with the fact that the Director position is vacant, the County should take advantage of this opportunity and issue an RFP for the provision of Animal Care by a private entity. A competitive RFP process will enable the County to determine if this is truly viable option, provide information regarding the financial investment required of the County, and compare an alternative service delivery approach against the current model in place. It makes sense to explore this option prior to undertaking a national search for a new Director.

If it decision is made to explore the public private partnership, the County should include within the RFP some limited parameters regarding what services are required and a set of requirements and key criteria for evaluating the proposals received. The project team recommends that the County consider the following split of duties between the County and the private provider:

- **County Retains Responsibility for Field Services.** As an enforcement agent, Animal Control Officers should remain employed by and managed by the County.

They would retain their current duties of handling all field activities including picking up of animals. The only difference in the future would be that the County would transfer all animals to the private provider for shelter services. The County may desire to contribute to operations through the provision of a shelter or contributing a set amount towards a new facility.

- **Private Contracting Entity.** Would be required for handling all shelter services, including medical care for animals, redemptions, adoptions, coordination with rescue groups, etc. All services provided would be based upon service guidelines and parameters set forth by the County in the RFP. These would be tailored based upon practices consistent with the implementation of the No Kill philosophy.

Two major policy decisions regarding the implementation of a public-private partnership of this type are: (1) what annual contribution is the County willing to make to support operations; and (2) who provides the facility for the service. The current facility is not ideal – either in the facility infrastructure itself or its location. The County could lease, at market rate or at minimal cost (dependent on the proposals received), the existing facility to the private provider as part of the contracting effort. Alternatively, and more ideally, the proposals would outline an approach to build a new facility in conjunction with the implementation of the new public-private partnership. The proposals should clearly outline the proposed contribution from the county for infrastructure costs.

The County would also need to make a policy decision at some point, regarding the level of financial support it is willing to commit to support a public private undertaking. It would not be uncommon for some annual contribution to be made to support the operations of the shelter even under a public private partnership. This could be established at the current annual budget for the services provided or some other amount that is determined during the RFP process. Obviously, the financial benefit to the County from this partnership is greatest if the annual contribution is less than what is

currently being spent to provide the service. Otherwise, issues may arise regarding loss of control over service provision with no offsetting financial cost reduction.

The RFP responses should be required to demonstrate that the proposer demonstrates:

- Their understanding of, committed to, and experienced with the No Kill Community philosophy.
- A clear delineation of the expected financial contribution from the County during the term of the agreement and documented financial backing of the entity to demonstrate the entity is financial capable of assuming the provision of services.
- A clear indication of the individuals that will be responsible for managing the effort.
- Demonstrated ability to provide the services as outlined.

One model for the County to explore prior to pursuing the RFP process, is the approach utilized in Ashville, NC. This would enable a better understanding of approaches that can be utilized in developing the RFP criteria and outlining potential financial arrangements to increase the potential for the RFP process to be successful. The Buncombe County and Ashville Humane Society public private partnership was established in 1990. This is a long-standing and successful public private partnership between the Ashville Humane Society and Buncombe County. Similar to MCAS, this is an open admission shelter. The partnership achieved in Ashville included the County providing the facility to the Ashville Humane Society and outsources animal sheltering to the Society who run and operate it entirely.

If the County implements a public private partnership for the provision of Animal Shelter services currently performed as a County function provided by the Animal Services Division of Manatee County, the County should review the purpose and role of

the Animal Services Advisory Committee. Since implementation of the public private partnership will be subject to a contract that outlines the approaches and standards to be utilized in providing services, the ongoing oversight and administration of this contract will be an administrative function. The Advisory Committee can play an important role in ensuring that the RFP process utilized appropriately details the scope of services to be contracted with the private provider and establishes relevant performance metrics. Once a contract is entered into, the Advisory Committee would not have a role in ongoing administration and oversight of the contract. Their role should either be refocused to serving either as a means of maintaining community support and involvement in the no kill community philosophy or the County could consider the abolishment of this advisory committee.

Recommendation: At the time the County fills the MCAS Director position, it should conduct a national search and seek an individual with an understanding, commitment, and prior experience with the No Kill philosophy.

Recommendation: The County should undertake an RFP process to determine feasibility of outsourcing the animal sheltering function of MCAS through a public-private partnership.

Recommendation: If the County enters into a public private partnership for delivery of Animal Services shelter and adoption operations, the County should reevaluate the need for a continued Animal Services Advisory Board and/or modify the role of the board.

The following recommendations address issues that do not as easily fall into one of the eleven No Kill tenets above. They are just as important to address as the recommendations above in ensuring a comprehensive improvement plan is in place for MCAS. The specific recommendations are outlined in the following sections.

12. AN UPDATED POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL IS NEEDED.

While the Manatee County Animal Services Division has a policy and procedure manual, it needs to be comprehensively reviewed and updated to provide a solid basis for the training of staff and ensuring the consistent application of procedures in running the Animal Shelter. During our interviews with staff, some significant concerns were noted regarding policy changes being implemented frequently, without full training of staff on the changes, or clear communication regarding the policy to be enforced.

With a significant number of short-tenured staff at the shelter, the need for clear, up-to-date and comprehensive policies is even more critical to ensure that staff have the guidance needed in the performance of duties. Once the manual is updated, a training session should be held with all staff to ensure their understanding. Each weekly staff meeting should devote a portion of time to the overview, review or discussion on a different policy or procedure to maintain understanding and identify future changes that are needed.

Many MCAS staff have not reviewed or received training on the SOPs recently. For those who indicated they received training, it involved sitting down, reading the new policy, and in some circumstances signing the policy. Signatures on SOPs are not always required. Severity of the issue may influence whether an SOP is signed or not (i.e., leaving animals in vehicle). No consistent training is received on supplements to policies and procedures.

A team of ACOs was created to develop new field SOPs. The team was meeting on Fridays to discuss concerns, situations, and outline procedures. The Animal

Services Supervisor was tasked with writing the procedures; however, none have been written. The team is currently on indefinite hiatus.

Recommendation: The Animal Services Division policy and procedure manual should be comprehensively reviewed and updated to ensure that all policies are in compliance with current operational practices.

Recommendation: After updating, a training session should be held for all staff to ensure understanding of the new policy manual. Additionally, a portion of each staff meeting should be devoted to policy review and discussion.

13. AN INCREASED FOCUS ON TRAINING FOR STAFF MUST BE IMPLEMENTED.

Training is how MCAS ensures competency and awareness is gained by staff and volunteers. Training can be formal or informal. Formal training for the purpose of this study would be training provided by an outside individual or organization. Examples may include Animal Control Officer training, euthanasia training, attendance at conferences, cruelty training, and animal handling training. Informal training constitutes training by MCAS, other County staff or volunteers; free webinars, or other online services provided by professional associations.

The following table outlines some typical types of training provided by each method.

Representative Training Topics	
Type	Description
Informal	New hire training
Informal	SOPs
Informal	SOPs – revisions
Informal	Free webinars/youtube
Formal	Incinerator training
Formal	Euthanasia certification
Formal	Animal Control Officer training
Formal	Dog handling – Animal behaviorist
Formal	Conferences
Formal	Cruelty training
Formal	ASPCA how not to get bitten training

Formal	FEMA
Formal	SART

The development of a formal training planning for each position would be beneficial to ensure consistent gains in competency and awareness. Staff interviews indicate training opportunities are not consistently provided to all employees. Animal Care Specialists generally receive euthanasia training; however, not all have yet to be trained on euthanasia. Animal control officers must attend officer training through FACA. Cruelty training is being provided to three Animal Control Officers; however, this is impacted by available funding. There is a perception only three positions receive ongoing training/conference attendance.

Areas of training staff believes are needed: cruelty, officer, animal holding, animal behavior, chemical capture, ASP certification, snare use, hazmat/health and safety. Unfortunately, staff interviews indicate most believe there are no opportunities for additional training and they think this is a big problem. Only 20% of employees agreed there was sufficient training opportunities made available to maintain and improve their job-related skills abilities while 40% disagreed with the statement. Forty-six percent of volunteers think they are effectively trained prior to beginning service at MCAS, while 23% disagree with the statement. Volunteers believe they need more training, structure, and clear expectations for their work. Volunteer training consisted of talking about how to take a dog out, but it is a lot different in reality. It is suggested volunteer dog walkers should do hands on training.

Staff believes strongly that an in-house training program should be created and they are confident MCAS staff are more than capable and competent to design and deliver training to colleagues if it is made a priority. The MCAS in-house training

program should include certificates/documentation of received training. As part of in-house training, individuals attending training/conferences should return to MCAS and share what was learned during training/conference attendance.

Given the current state of training at MCAS, it is suggested a training policy and procedure to address new hire and ongoing training be developed by MCAS. Having a formal policy and procedure in place should encourage improvement in training opportunities provided to MCAS staff and volunteers.

To create value for MCAS stakeholders, MCAS needs to develop a competent and aware staff and volunteer contingent and to provide new hire and ongoing training to MCAS staff and volunteers. MCAS should focus on identifying competence and awareness gaps, developing appropriate SOPs, and designing a training plan.

Recommendations: MCAS should develop a comprehensive training program covering all staff and each unique position. Key areas of focus should be on: new hire training and on-going training for each position including volunteers.

13. MINOR STAFFING CHANGES ARE NEEDED AT MCAS.

In conducting this study, an evaluation was conducted of required staffing for the provision of services. Some staffing changes have been addressed in prior recommendations earlier in this report; however, there are two other minor changes that should be considered to increase effective use of staff and ensure an adequate staffing allocation. Overall, the project team concluded that with the changes previously outlined (addition of Veterinarian or additional Vet Technician, the recently added Volunteer Coordinator), the staffing allocations for shelter services staffing and field officer staffing are generally in alignment with the existing workloads.

It should be noted that the animal care staffing is tight and one additional position could easily be warranted (under existing operational practices) to provide more adequate animal care and cleaning of the shelter. However, due to the other changes that are recommended, the time spent by these individuals supporting the Vet Tech and others should be reduced. So an additional position is not recommended at this time until MCAS can realize the impact that will be achieved from the other staffing changes.

The only additional personnel change being recommended at this time is the filling of the MCAS dispatcher position at the appropriate level. Currently the dispatcher position is filled with an Animal Control Officer. This position does not need the skills, experience and background of an Animal Control Officer to complete the assigned duties. Additionally, a position of this nature is typically classified at a lower level than an Animal Control Officer. Having an ACO assigned to this position, reduced the number of individuals in the field to handle fieldwork, calls for service, and proactive efforts. No additional positions are recommended for ACO. The existing complement is sufficient to handle the existing workloads that the County has experienced in recent years. MCAS should fill the dispatcher position at the classified level with an individual who is not an ACO.

Recommendation: MCAS should fill the dispatcher position at the appropriate level rather than with an individual classified as an Animal Control Officer.