

Animal Services Board-Directed Initiative Report

February 2019

Damon L. Sanders-Pratt, Deputy County Manager
Phyllis Russell, Budget & Management Analyst

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Forsyth County Commissioners' Fiscal Year 2019 adopted budget requested that County staff provide a report on "benefits and detriments" of three types of Animal Services delivery methods: 1) Standalone, 2) the administrative framework of the Sheriff's Office, and 3) the administrative framework of the Public Health Department.

Information Considered

Performance and workload measures for Forsyth County Animal Services were reviewed using data prior to the County entering into a shelter maintenance and adoption program agreement with the Forsyth Humane Society as well as reviewing data since the agreement took effect in January of Fiscal Year 2019.

Each North Carolina county that operates an Animal Services program annually submits outcome reports to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Comparative data published by the Department of Agriculture has been included representing counties that operate using the different delivery methods referenced above.

County management and Animal Services program managers in Buncombe, Cabarrus, Durham, Orange, Pender, Randolph, and Wake counties have offered their basic perceptions of what works well in their county's program and what are challenges. Additionally, on Thursday, January 17, 2019 at the Forsyth Humane Society's Country Club location, Animal Services representatives from Cabarrus, Durham, and Pender counties' Sheriff's offices made presentations on their respective programs at the invitation of a local animal welfare advocacy focus group. In addition to the focus group members, in attendance were Forsyth County staff from Animal Services, Budget & Management, Management Information Services, the Manager's Office, and the Sheriff's Office.

Each county that was contacted or that gave presentations believed their current method of operation was satisfactory, whether operated out of the Sheriff's Office, the Public Health Department, or as a standalone department. Each management framework had advantages and disadvantages.

Forsyth County's Hybrid Arrangement

Forsyth County operates a "hybrid" program where the enforcement staff includes both sworn Animal Services Officers and unsworn civilian Animal Care Officers, disposition of domestic animals deemed "dangerous" or under rabies observation remain in County custody, disposition of non-canines and felines (e.g. rabbits, guinea pigs, snakes, bats, livestock) are the responsibility of the County, maintenance of a large part of the shelter and the domestic animal

adoption program is operated by the Forsyth Humane Society through a service contract, and the Public Health Department retains its notification and protocol management of the rabies program.

Forsyth Humane Society Agreement Early Results

The statistical results from Forsyth County's service agreement with the Forsyth Humane Society appear to bear out the County Commissioners' anticipated benefits from entering it: humane euthanasia is down, Animal Services' staff has improved results in fines collected and enforcement, and the Forsyth Humane Society assists County staff in humane euthanasia determinations and is making efforts toward certifying staff to assist in this sometimes necessary procedure.

Issues Raised

Concerns often expressed to County staff by citizens and elected representatives fall within the categories of having to call repeatedly for service, "slow" response time, and disagreement with "abuse and neglect" determinations. Staff's conclusion is that a review of the data available and a comparison with some of our peers seems to suggest Forsyth County's program is not "broken."

Although the 2018 Annual Report from the Animal Services Advisory Board indicates, for example, an average response time of 1 hour 57 minutes for an "urgent call," a review of the individual response times reveals that 95% of calls are answered within the 2-3 hour goal with an average response time of 34 minutes. The remaining 5% of "outlier" calls drag the average up to the 1 hour 57 minute timeframe from 34 minutes.

Community Standards

Counties deliver Animal Services (animal welfare, rabies control, redemptions, and adoptions) through a variety of delivery mechanisms, each with benefits and challenges. The Animal Services' program often reflects the values of the community with respect to treatment of domesticated animals and their individual public health standards and expectations.

While a number of Animal Services' calls result in criminal violations, the majority of calls answered by Animal Services' field officers are not criminal in nature and don't require a law enforcement presence.

Dispatch

In Forsyth County, because most animal-related calls are not handled by law enforcement dispatch, call response data recorded is not comparable with the call data recorded in a computer-aided dispatch system used by communities where Animal Services agencies are managed by law enforcement.

Preventive Education

In communities where Animal Services are led by Public Health agencies, education becomes a larger, more focused component of the department.

Abuse & Neglect Determinations

Abuse and neglect determinations and when and whether to make criminal charges are judgement calls made by professional field officers and, when appropriate, in consultation with the District Attorney's Office. Forsyth County staff did not extract any better approach or technique from the communities noted in this report that were demonstrably different than Forsyth County's field tactics and determinations on abuse and neglect.

General Conclusion

Every community, no matter the administrative framework used, is constantly seeking to balance Animal Services with other local government services (law enforcement, public health, social services, parks and recreation, libraries, etc.) in the competition for limited resources. Each county is striving to provide a level of service that garners compliance with state and local laws, minimizes euthanasia, respects individuals property rights, and remains conscious of community concerns.

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Scale of the Animal Services Issue

The American Veterinary Medical Foundation estimates that in the United States there are 1.6 dogs per household and 2.1 cats. Forsyth County's population in 2017 was 376,320 people which extrapolates to approximately 96,830 "Pet Owning Households" and an estimate of 84,527 dogs and 92,343 cats in the county limits.

Below are the municipalities in Forsyth County and their impact on the pet population using the American Veterinary Medical Foundation pet calculation tool:

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Dogs</u>	<u>Cats</u>
Forsyth County	376,320	96,830	84,527	92,343
Winston-Salem	244,605	62,939	54,942	60,022
Kernersville	24,386	6,274	5,477	5,984
<i>(Winston-Salem & Kernersville represent 71.4% of total population & pet estimate)</i>				
Clemmons	20,420	5,255	4,587	5,011
Lewisville	13,913	3,580	3,125	3,414
Walkertown	5,120	1,318	1,150	1,256
Rural Hall	3,196	823	718	784
Tobaccoville	2,663	685	598	653
Bethania	356	92	80	87
Uninc./King/High Point	61,661	15,864	13,850	15,132

Winston-Salem and Kernersville combined represented 71.4% of the population of Forsyth County in 2017, and the American Veterinary Medical Foundation pet estimating tool attributes that same percentage of the estimated households and animals to those two municipalities. In addition to Animal Services staff, both Winston-Salem and Kernersville provide their own municipal law enforcement service to their residents while the Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement coverage for the rest of the County.

With this pet population, Forsyth County Animal Services' 12 field officers worked just under 18,000 service calls of all types. These calls ranged from those initiated by phoned-in or in-person allegations, to unreported violations observed by a field officer, to self-initiated dangerous dog or rabies quarantine follow-up visits to confirm that an owner is complying with the applicable provisions for a pet to remain at home and not impounded.

Forsyth County Animal Services exercises primary responsibility for domestic animal calls throughout the County, in municipalities and unincorporated areas. Forsyth County is the 60th largest county in the state in square miles at approximately 408 square miles. When

fully-staffed, the lowest weekday deployment during the first two shifts is 4 Animal Services field officers with responsibility for approximately 102 square miles or the equivalent of 80% of Winston-Salem per officer. During the week, the maximum deployment at any given time is 11 field officers with responsibility per officer for approximately 37 square miles, three times the size of Clemmons per officer.

To manage the workload, the Animal Services field officers use a triage system to prioritize calls by severity. For example, an attack in progress is considered a "Priority 1: Imminent Danger" coded call with a 10-minute response time in calendar 2018. On the other end of the spectrum, a call to field check an unlicensed animal is coded as a "Priority 5:General" and may be scheduled as far out as 7 days.

Understandably, those calling in complaints perceive their issue as somewhere between "Priority 1: Imminent Danger" and "Priority 2: Urgent," and when Animal Services coding is inconsistent with that, frustration can result. Additionally, when Animal Services' communications' staff is off-duty, callers are directed to call local law enforcement's 24-hour dispatch in emergency situations. If local law enforcement communications doesn't classify the nature of a call as an "emergency" and requests that callers contact Animal Services when it is available, this also can result in frustration to the caller.

Board Directed Initiative

As part of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Forsyth County, North Carolina budget document, the following directive was included:

"Evaluate benefits and detriments of a stand-alone Animal Services department compared to housing these services in a separate department such as the Sheriff's Office or Public Health."

The Animal Services department has changed significantly in the last eighteen months, and a high-level assessment of the department would be helpful in determining future initiatives. The most significant changes to the provision of animal services in Forsyth County over that period of time are a) Forsyth County Government contracting with the Forsyth Humane Society for care and custody of canines and felines at the Sturmer Park Shelter, b) enhanced tethering restrictions and c) participation in the "North Carolina Debt Setoff" program for the collection of civil penalties.

FORSYTH HUMANE SOCIETY SHELTER MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

On January 10, 2018, Forsyth County contracted with the Forsyth County Humane Society to provide care, custody, and make disposition decisions for canines and felines at the County's animal shelter on Sturmer Park Circle. Forsyth County staff retain care, custody, and disposition decisions for all other animals including, for example, livestock, exotic animals, and non-canine and non-feline domestic animals such as rabbits, hamsters, ferrets, and so forth. Also, the

County retains responsibility for canines and felines as it pertains to rabies control and dangerous dog state statute and local ordinance provisions.

As part of the agreement between the two agencies, The Forsyth Humane Society and the County are jointly responsible for daily shelter maintenance of contractually designated areas in the facility. Each entity, Forsyth County Local Government and the Forsyth County Humane Society, are licensed and inspected by the State Department of Agriculture accordingly.

Adoptions/Humane Euthanasia

Under this arrangement with the Forsyth Humane Society from February 1, 2018 - November 30, 2018, the number of animals adopted, reclaimed, or transferred to a no-kill facility have increased to 3,674 from 3,511 as compared to the same period prior to the merger agreement, a 4.6% improvement.

Prior to the agreement between the County and the Forsyth Humane Society, from February 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017, Forsyth County Animal Services and the Forsyth Humane Society humanely euthanized 2,878 animals. Over that same period, 6,367 animals went through intake between the two organizations. This provides an overall euthanasia rate of 45%. The County performed 2,874 of the 2,878 euthanization procedures over that period, and 5,011 of the 6,367 animals taken in were received by Forsyth County, so the County's rate of humane euthanization alone was 57% (2,874/5,011) during that period of time.

From February 1, 2018 to November 30, 2018-- after the County and the Forsyth Humane Society entered into a contractual agreement-- there were 5,774 animals taken into the shelter and 1,734 humanely euthanized for a euthanization rate of 30%. The decrease from 45% to 30% speaks to the extensive community resources and advocacy of the Forsyth Humane Society and its supporters.

Minor Surgery Suite

Additionally, discussions are underway on efforts to outfit a suite for minor surgical procedures to take place at the Sturmer Park Shelter using a veterinarian under the employ of the Forsyth Humane Society.

The Forsyth Humane Society, per the agreement with the County, has been a partner in humane euthanization decisions. The Humane Society has been preparing to assist in this sometimes necessary component of animal services in the public shelter arena.

Both Forsyth County Government and Forsyth Humane Society staff consider the agreement to be working effectively. Although the statistics above appear to reflect this shared perception, it is important to not place overemphasis on public shelter statistics.

Outcome statistics are, in no small part, reflective of the mix of animals received at the shelter. More "adoptable" animals taken in will result in a higher percentage of positive outcomes. More

“aggressive,” less adoptable, animals taken in may result in a lower percentage of positive outcomes. It is important to bear in mind that the County’s public health and public safety policy-- now shared by the Forsyth Humane Society-- is to take “all comers,” not just adoptable animals.

TETHERING ORDINANCE ENHANCEMENT

Since the 2016 Animal Services study completed by County staff, enhanced ordinances on tethering have been implemented. In short, and with few exceptions, dogs may not be tethered unless the owner or responsible person is outside *and* in visual sight of the tethered animal.

A social media, bus advertisement, and literature handout campaign was conducted with the help of interested citizens and the City of Winston-Salem Public Information Office to increase public awareness of the more restrictive tethering provisions prior to and after their going into effect. The tethering ordinance adopted on 2nd reading by the Forsyth County Commissioners November 14, 2017 also included a year-long period where field officers wrote “warning” tickets for tethering violations.

Generally, when new animal services ordinance provisions are adopted, there is an uptick in complaints and citations. Implementation of the more stringent tethering ordinance seems to hold to this pattern with 20 tethering citations issued in 2015 versus 143 in 2018.

Complaints and citations for tethering are anticipated to decrease over time as dog owners become increasingly familiar with the ordinances and compliance increases.

NORTH CAROLINA DEBT SETOFF

A persistent topic with enforcement has been getting those issued citations to pay the associated fines. Until participation in the North Carolina Debt Setoff program, the penalty for not paying fines was more fines. The chart below summarizes the progression:

Initial civil citation.....	\$50 to be paid within 72 hours.
Day 4.....	\$75
Day 5.....	\$150
Day 6.....	\$200
Day 7.....	\$500 and Animal Services may seize the animal.

In the first six months of Fiscal Year 2019 alone, there were 488 civil citations issued, addressing 1,426 violations. It is an administrative challenge to track and collect on this volume of accounts. Where the County had been relatively effective in collecting these fines was when pet owners came to redeem an animal for whom a citation had been issued or to redeem or attempt to adopt a different animal. At that time, the pet owner was presented with their past due account before being able to redeem the animal currently in custody or adopt another

animal. Even in these cases, there were many instances where the pet owner chose to forfeit their animal in lieu of paying the past due fines resulting in more occupied shelter space and higher euthanasia.

Civil citations can be issued for relatively minor offenses like a dog house with an unsecured roof, inadequate water available to an animal, running at large, or even expired tags. In these instances, it has been staff practice to compel compliance rather than seize as soon as possible, exceed space available in the shelter, and increase euthanasia rates. However, the monetary fines associated with civil penalties are designed to serve as the teeth in garnering compliance, and when fines are disregarded by those to whom they're issued, enforcement suffers.

Debt Setoff Program Impact

In an effort to improve enforcement while minimizing seizures and euthanasia, Animal Services staff investigated and implemented the North Carolina Debt Setoff program for delinquent fines in June 2018. In the Debt Setoff program, delinquent citation accounts are submitted to the State Debt Setoff Clearing House Office which, in turn, generates a letter to the person owing the fine. If the person then comes in and pays the account in full or partially, County staff enter this payment amount to the Debt Setoff Clearing House Office, and the individual's account is modified accordingly. Whatever balance is left, the Debt Setoff Clearing House Office deducts that amount from any State tax refund or lottery proceeds due to the individual owing the civil penalty.

At this time, only accounts from prior years have been submitted to the Debt Setoff Clearing House for collection. This ensures that those receiving civil penalty fines have received significantly more than the allotted 10-day period to appeal before being submitted for collection. During this 10-day period, people receiving citations may only appeal that the original violation occurred. By the time the debt setoff letter is sent to the individual owing the fine, well after the initial 10-day appeal period, they may no longer appeal the offense itself. The only appeal available to them at that time is a 30-day period to show the fine in question has already been paid.

Forsyth County Animal Services' participation in the North Carolina Debt Setoff program appears to be effective in having civil penalties satisfied. In the Fiscal Year 2018 year end results-- the year prior to the County's participation in the Debt Setoff program-- Animal Services collected a total of \$10,602 in citations. In the *first 6 months* of County Animal Services' participation in the Debt Set Off program in Fiscal Year 2019, the County has already collected \$12,415.

More important than the dollar amount collected is the number of accounts impacted which reinforces that non-compliance with Forsyth County ordinances has consequences. In Fiscal Year 2018, prior to County participation in the Debt Setoff program, 95 individuals paid citations

to the County. In the first 6 months of the County participating in the program, 80 individuals have already paid their citations.

Ultimately, it is staff's belief that once those out of step with County ordinances realize there is a 100% likelihood of their having to pay fines issued, there will be an increase in voluntary observation of ordinances pertaining to animal welfare in Forsyth County. Perhaps more importantly, once word-of-mouth that ordinance violations and subsequent citations have consequences, more people will make pre-emptive efforts to get in compliance or take issued warnings more seriously.

CRIMINAL & CIVIL CHARGES

Criminal Charges

Animal Services making criminal charges is not an end in itself. Instead, as with participation in the Debt Setoff program, compelling compliance with local ordinances is the desired end. Criminal charges are another way to impact compliance.

What follows is a table showing the last four calendar years' criminal charges:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
Criminal Cases	12	8	19	29
Misdemeanor Charges	11	16	23	35
Felony Charges	4	13	0	29

A single case can, and often does, include multiple charges. That is why the number of *charges* will almost always exceed the number of *cases* in a given year. In 2018, there is a noted increase in both the number of criminal cases made and criminal charges filed. In 2018, some of the 29 cases are still active and the outcome of the charges not known. However, in 2017 of the 19 cases taken to court, 3 plead or were found guilty, 6 were sentenced to pay court costs, 2 paid a fine plus court costs, 3 received deferred prosecution, 2 had their charges reduced, and 3 were dismissed.

Criminal activity is initiated by the perpetrator, and in that sense the number of cases made in a given year is somewhat reliant upon community behavior and is not necessarily a department performance measure. However, the calendar 2017 and 2018 case numbers appear to reflect a more aggressive stance by the Animal Services division.

It is also important to note that it is always staff's objective to only bring valid charges and not "symbolic" ones. A valid charge is one where the County's professional staff believe a violation has occurred and there is evidence to substantiate Animal Services making the charge and enough evidence for the District Attorney's Office to successfully prosecute it if it ends up in court. Symbolic charges unsubstantiated by evidence or supported by inadequate evidence border on state-sponsored harassment, and that is not the goal of Forsyth County law enforcement.

As noted above, between 2015 and 2018, Forsyth County Animal Services issued between 15 and 64 criminal charges. By comparison, Durham County noted that it issued 29 charges in 2018 while noting their objective is to educate first and cite and seize second.

Civil Citations

Civil citations are the principal tool used by Forsyth County Animal Services to compel compliance with state and local law. Citations begin at \$50 and progressively increase with subsequent days out of compliance. Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018, Forsyth County Animal Services issued 1,089 civil citations. By Comparison, in 2018, Durham County reported

issuing 61 civil citations. As noted above, due to the County's participation in the North Carolina Debt Setoff program, virtually all those cited will ultimately pay the associated fine. In contrast, Durham County practices a different philosophy. Durham takes the stance that its objective is for owners to take care of their animals, and taking \$50 or more out of the pocket of pet owners makes them less able to properly feed, house, or restrain their animal. They have chosen a less punitive approach than Forsyth County by directing owners how to better take care of their animals as opposed to issuing civil citations for violations.

COMMENTS ON ANIMAL SERVICES OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Staff participated in public meetings or made individual phone contact with other North Carolina county personnel to gather data and their high level, anecdotal impressions on animal services operations in their communities, what they believe works well and what challenges they perceive. These meetings and phone calls included county management staff and/or Animal Services staff in Cabarrus County, Durham County, Orange County, Pender County, Randolph County, and Forsyth County's Public Health Director who is the former Public Health Director for Caldwell County.

Sentiments shared by these officials on advantages and limitations of animal services falling under different departmental umbrellas are summarized below.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Preventive Education

A key aspect of Public Health departments is public education. They educate on disease prevention, proper dental care, neonatal care, and the importance of flu vaccines among other things. Although county involvement in Animal Services is related primarily to Public Health state statutes on rabies and dangerous dog provisions, when Animal Services departments are located outside of the Public Health umbrella, relatively little emphasis is given to preventive public education on animal issues.

Locating Animal Services under Public Health management makes their education outlets available to inform their clients on the importance of altering animals, adequate care, how to properly restrain animals, vaccinating animals, and so forth.

A greater emphasis on prevention is potentially fostered when housing Animal Services within a Public Health department according to the respondent from Randolph County and the former Caldwell County health director.

Also, Animal Services' licensing management, abuse and neglect determinations, extreme temperature determinations, dangerous dog capture, bat capture, rabies testing and other activities are examples where a law enforcement officer with a service weapon may not be necessary and which may instead be appropriate for a non-sworn Public Health employee.

Public Health Model Challenges

A potential limitation of field officers operating under the auspices of the Public Health department is a lack of law enforcement presence and training for instances that may call for that level of expertise. Rules regarding search and seizure, acquisition of warrants, authorization to use long guns for tranquilizing animals, and the like are less straightforward when Animal Services does not fall within the parameters of law enforcement.

Public Health dispatch will generally not operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. There are not adequate field resources or calls to justify this level of dispatch under this model.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Public safety is the primary goal of local law enforcement and, in many instances, the goal of Animal Services. Law enforcement already protects people from threats to their personal safety. Animals running at large are particular threats to walkers, joggers, children, and automobile operators. Rabid animals are threats to public safety due to increased exposure to contracting rabies and the aggressiveness symptomatic of that disease.

Law enforcement are called to deal with conflicts between neighbors, and animal disputes often are expressions of neighborhood conflict.

Law enforcement officers are trained on how to exercise authority, to de-escalate situations, on marksmanship, and on the rules regarding search and seizure. There is a law enforcement aspect to Animal Services where Basic Law Enforcement Training is particularly helpful.

There is a level of respect for law enforcement that places weight behind their directives and garners compliance. Non-sworn employees may not be perceived with having the force of law behind them.

Communications/Dispatch

A Public Health or standalone department's communications center tends to operate during normal business hours, when the regular field officer contingent is working. After regular business hours, when Animal Services' positions are operating on an "on-call" basis, these communications centers are off duty since there are relatively few calls, and even fewer resources to dispatch, to justify operating an Animal Services specific communications center. This results in repeat calls for service where citizens call in and get a message and are compelled to call repeatedly in an effort to talk to a person or people leave messages and call back to confirm their message was received.

Law enforcement dispatch operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Incoming calls are answered and an officer dispatched at the time calls are made. In counties where Animal Service calls are answered by law enforcement dispatch, there are fewer total calls because repeat calls are virtually eliminated since the original call is addressed when originally made.

Response Time

Also, when law enforcement dispatch receives an after-hours call, in addition to Animal Services' on-call resources, the law enforcement patrol officer contingent is available to assess and handle calls. Both Cabarrus and Durham County noted this as the primary means to achieve average animal call response times of 20-minutes and 31-minutes respectively.

Law Enforcement Model Challenges

Unlike a Public Health departments' emphasis on preventive education, law enforcement often becomes involved after violations in identifying, citing, and/or arresting violators. Law enforcement departments have the ability to educate though. Preventive education in the law enforcement field, for example, can take the form of public information officers who share information on how to avoid unsafe situations, school resource officers with access to school children, and government access channel infomercials on various topics.

Not every instance requires the substantial backing of law enforcement. In instances of "... licensing management, abuse and neglect determinations, extreme temperature determinations, dangerous dog capture, bat capture, rabies testing" and so forth, a step-down level of service may be appropriate. Introducing a handgun into certain animal-related service calls may seem heavy-handed.

STANDALONE

There are a variety of standalone models. Durham County's animal services were once provided out of its "General Services," facilities division, without sworn officers. In Durham, General Services managed the animal shelter operation. (Today, the Sheriff's Office manages a contract for a private outfit to manage its animal shelter.)

In Cabarrus County animal services were provided as a standalone department under the County Manager, also with no sworn officers. The shelter in Cabarrus was located at the landfill before being moved to a new facility once the Sheriff's Office incorporated the service. (The Sheriff's Office ran the new shelter facility before contracting management of it to their local Humane Society. Eventually, the Humane Society tired of the operational challenges of running a public shelter and was unable to manage that shelter with the funding agreed upon and opted to discontinue operating Cabarrus' facility. The Sheriff's Office took back operation of that facility.)

Forsyth County Operates a "Hybrid"

Forsyth County's standalone Animal Services department is made up of both civilian and sworn field staff and civilian office staff. Currently, the County contracts with an outside operator to manage its shelter and adoptions program, but prior to this arrangement taking effect in 2018, the County operated its own shelter.

There isn't a standard "standalone" model. Forsyth County's is a hybrid of the law enforcement and County administration managed standalone department. It has equal contingents of sworn and unsworn field officers with the logic being that not every call requires a sworn law enforcement officer, while other calls exceed the authority of unsworn Animal Care Officers.

Leadership of the department was always by a civilian until the most recent appointment of a sworn officer to the lead position. Sworn field officers are required to do annual training through

the Sheriff's Office, and recently sworn officers have been required to go through the Sheriff's Office's "Patrol Training" program.

Forsyth County Animal Services manages a 3-person communications center staff. Animal Services communications operates from 8am-5pm, 7 days a week. During weekdays and when fully-staffed, there are 2 to 3 telecommunicators working. On weekends, one telecommunicator is scheduled to work. During off-hours, a message directing people to call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency or to call back during working hours is provided.

Below is a 2018 summary of three categories of calls that Animal Services uses. The reader will observe that 95% of the "Urgent" responses fall within the 3-hour goal, and the average response time for these calls is just under 34 minutes. For calls prioritized as "Today," 70% of these calls are responded to within the goal of less than 10 hours, and the average response to these types of calls was 1 hour and 56 minutes. Calls designated as "Normal" have a response time goal of 48 hours, and approximately 48% of calls of this type met or came in under the goal.

That "Urgent" and "Today" designated calls on average were significantly below the established response goals while "Normal" calls exceeded the goal half the time which implies that precedence is being given to the more pressing calls. Also, it is instructive to note that "Priority" and "Today" calls totaled 5,870 or 78% of total of Priority, Today, and Normal calls while the category Normal only represented 22%.

Priority = Urgent	Calls	% of Total	Avg Response
Response < 3 hours	905	95.16%	0:33:58
Response > 3 hours	46	4.84%	28:12:51
Total Activities:	951	100.00%	1:54:00

Priority = Today	Calls	% of Total	Avg Response
Response < 10 hours	3,487	70.89%	1:56:42
Response > 10 hours	1,432	29.11%	110:33:16 4 days 14 hr 33 min
Total Activities:	4,919	100.00%	33:33:47

Priority = Normal	Calls	% of Total	Avg Response
Response < 48 hours	782	47.98%	13:06:08
Response > 48 hours	848	52.02%	374:26:18 15 days 14 hr 26 min
Total Activities:	1,630	100.00%	201:05:08 8 days 9 hr 5 min

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Some animal services strategies implemented in the communities contacted included the following. (A check mark (✓) has been included next to strategies where Forsyth County does something similar.):

- Every community operates an adoption program either directly or through a contracted provider.✓
- Cabarrus County Manager's Office made note of its online shelter that has been helpful in owners reclaiming lost animals and with its adoptions efforts.✓
- Cabarrus County Manager's Office employs someone to coordinate with private adoption and breed-specific rescue organizations.✓
- Cabarrus County operates a program to transfer animals to adoption services/shelters in the northeast where there is a shortage of adoptable animals.✓
- Cabarrus County provides \$5,000 toward spay and neuter activities to reduce the number of unwanted animals.✓
- Cabarrus County's Detective division assists the Animal Services division on cases where substantial investigative work may be applicable.
- Durham County Sheriff's Office contracts for the operation of its shelter and empowers the shelter operator to serve as their private adoption and breed-specific rescue organization.✓
- Durham County Sheriff's Office noted implementation of an aggressive microchipping program that enables officers to return animals to their homes from the field as opposed to them having to enter the shelter first.
- Durham County Sheriff's Office prefers to educate people who are out of compliance as opposed to seize immediately.✓
- Durham County Sheriff's Office refers pet owners to resources like "Beyond Fences" to assist people directed to take their animals off a tether.✓
- Durham County Sheriff's Office dispatches the Animal Services Division. As a result, they have a 24-hour day, 7-day a week dispatch capacity. Although normal operating hours of the Animal Services Division are 7am-10pm, M-F and 10:30am-10pm, S-Su, there is an on-call position during the Division's off hours. The Sheriff's Office Watch Commander is able to dispatch patrol deputies or the on-call Animal Services Officer during the off-hours period. This helps with average response time.
- Orange County Public Health offers a spay/neuter grant program for low-income pet owners and periodically operates a spay/neuter mobile unit.✓
- Orange County Public Health has "deepened and broadened" its veterinary services.
- Orange County noted it operates a "robust" volunteer program to help "walk dogs, socialize cats (and) perform community outreach."✓
- Randolph County Public Health's representative said they have a new, more inviting adoption center.✓
- Randolph County Public Health emphasizes educating pet owners about county ordinances and state laws.
- Randolph County implemented an anti-tethering ordinance.✓

- Randolph County Public Health extended its operating hours by an hour and a half, closing to the public at 5:30pm as opposed to 4:00pm.

PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

- Cabarrus County noted the importance that participating agencies in the animal adoption community perceive they are being treated fairly when it comes to transfer of animals.
- Cabarrus County noted ongoing challenges with access to Animal Service specific training for officers.
- Both Cabarrus and Durham County Animal Services officials noted that a challenge is animal welfare advocacy preferences exceeding County ordinance stipulations, i.e. "community standards" and law being out of sync.✓
- Durham County submitted that large numbers of tethering ordinance violations were a challenge, but the issue has improved significantly from when the ordinance first took effect.✓
- Orange County Public Health noted it used to have an issue with feral cats but has managed the issue by working with community partners on "catch and release" spay/neuter programs.✓
- Randolph County Health Department said that animal welfare advocates "don't always believe we are doing enough" to people who violate the ordinance.✓

OPERATIONAL ENHANCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

What was discovered during the generation of this report was that Forsyth County's Animal Services' program was not "broken," and counties were satisfied with the administrative framework under which their programs were housed, whether that was under Public Health, the Sheriff's Office, or standalone. Counties periodically sought to implement initiatives or operational changes that would improve the agreement between community standards and ordinances, improve responsiveness, improve public awareness, and increase compliance with animal welfare ordinances while balancing these efforts against budgetary constraints and priorities.

Reviewing the list of "Effective Practices" used in other counties, Forsyth County has already implemented many of them to some extent. Below are strategies that other counties implement in delivery of Animal Services:

a) Sheriff's Office communications fields animal service calls, potentially decreasing the number of annual calls for service. Sheriff's Office dispatch operates 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. As a result, it is staffed to receive and dispose of every call for service at the time it is made. The need for repeat calls goes away.

Animal Services' communications operates seven days a week from 8am-5pm. It would be very inefficient to staff an around the clock Animal Services dispatch because the volume of calls during "third shift" hours, for example, wouldn't justify the expense. Plus, there is only one Animal Services field staff officer available after 9pm Monday through Saturday and after 5pm on Sunday until the next morning. The volume of animal service calls alone would result in a very costly cost per call measure, and the number of resources available to dispatch would still result in extended response times.

b) Law enforcement participation (municipal police and Sheriff's Office) in responding to calls for service significantly reduces response times. Cabarrus and Durham counties reported that they had average response times of "20 minutes" and "31 minutes" respectively. These impressive average responses times are achieved by supplementing the Animal Services divisions with law enforcement officers. When a call is received, Animal Services is dispatched, and when these Animal Services officers are unable to respond immediately to a call because they, for instance, are already on another call, a patrol deputy will initially respond and either complete the call or mitigate it and pass it on to Animal Services to complete at a later time. But a field officer-- Animal Services or law enforcement-- responds on average in under an hour.

In comparison, in 2018, for example, Forsyth County's average response time to a scene after receiving an "attack in progress" report was 10 minutes. For "attack in progress" calls, field officers drop what they are doing to respond to these very infrequent occurrences. However, response times to the more common voluminous number of "neglect" reports or to respond to a low-priority animal trap call was 12 hours and 23 minutes. Forsyth County's response time to a report of a non-aggressive "stray" averaged over 3 days. Due to the volume and disparate nature of calls, staff triage them into priority codes 1 through 5 resulting in the varied response times.

c) Enhance Animal Services public education component through a stronger collaboration with Public Health. Both Durham and Cabarrus counties emphasized educating the public on what is and is not allowed in caring for one's dog or cat. When arriving at a scene, their first inclination is to educate the owner on how to get in compliance, not seizure or citations.

Statistically, Forsyth County appears to have a comparatively aggressive enforcement arm with a minimal preventive education piece. This results in more seizures, increased intake at the shelter, and, potentially, more euthanasia.

Alternative Methods of Implementation

Developing future operating changes, a number of alternatives could be considered. For example:

- a) Animal Services' Communications dispatches during normal working hours, and then after 5pm, calls automatically transfer to law enforcement communications for dispatch, or
- b) Animal Services' Communications' staff are reallocated to law enforcement communications, and law enforcement receives all animal-related calls for service.

With respect to law enforcement participation in animal-related service calls, alternative ways of operating can be developed too:

- a) Animal Services' field officers are first-in on all animal-related calls-- other than emergencies-- until 5pm when Animal Services' communications goes off-duty. In one scenario, after 5pm, law enforcement communications could dispatch Animal Services' calls. Depending on the nature of the call, the watch commander would assign the service call to an Animal Services field officer or, if no Animal Services field officers are free to respond, then a patrol deputy would respond, assesses the situation, and either resolves the matter or pass on what they've found to the on-duty or on-call Animal Services field officer to respond when available, or

- b) Another level of law enforcement participation in Animal Services is a structure where Animal Services is first-in on all animal-related calls-- other than emergencies-- and patrol deputies respond to calls when Animal Services field officers are already on calls, not just after 5pm. Patrol deputies assess, resolve, or mitigate the situation and pass it on to Animal Services when appropriate for follow-up. This model would be most effective if municipal law enforcement participated since most of the population in Forsyth County lives in two municipalities (Winston-Salem and Kernersville) with their own local law enforcement presence.

Providing preventive education to the public on animal-related ordinances and practices can also be achieved in alternative ways:

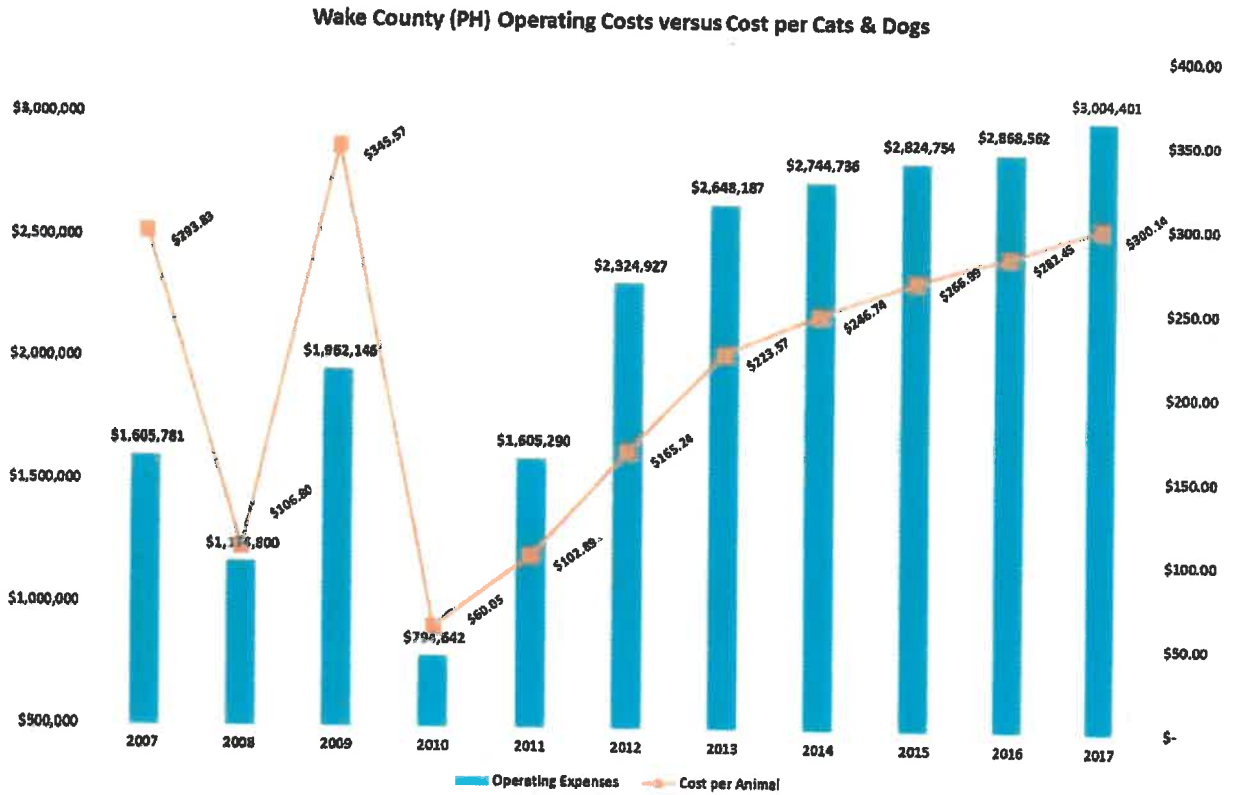
- a) Animal Services can coordinate a standard curriculum with the assistance of Public Health staff to improve public health and safety as well as animal welfare in Forsyth County. The curriculum could target the importance of licensing, regular vaccinations, tethering restrictions, protecting animals from the elements, indications an animal may be rabid, when to dial 9-1-1, and so forth. Animal Services has a minimal non-field officer staffing level, and to effectively carry a curriculum out to the Forsyth County community, additional resources would likely be necessary, or
- b) Alternatively, the same method of establishing a curriculum could be used, but the Public Health Department's health educators could add animal welfare education to their current materials and presentations. Where animal welfare would fit in to Public Health's current program would need to be determined. The breadth and depth of the information on animal-related public health, safety, and welfare issues would inform whether Public Health is staffed adequately to take on this role.

APPENDIX I.

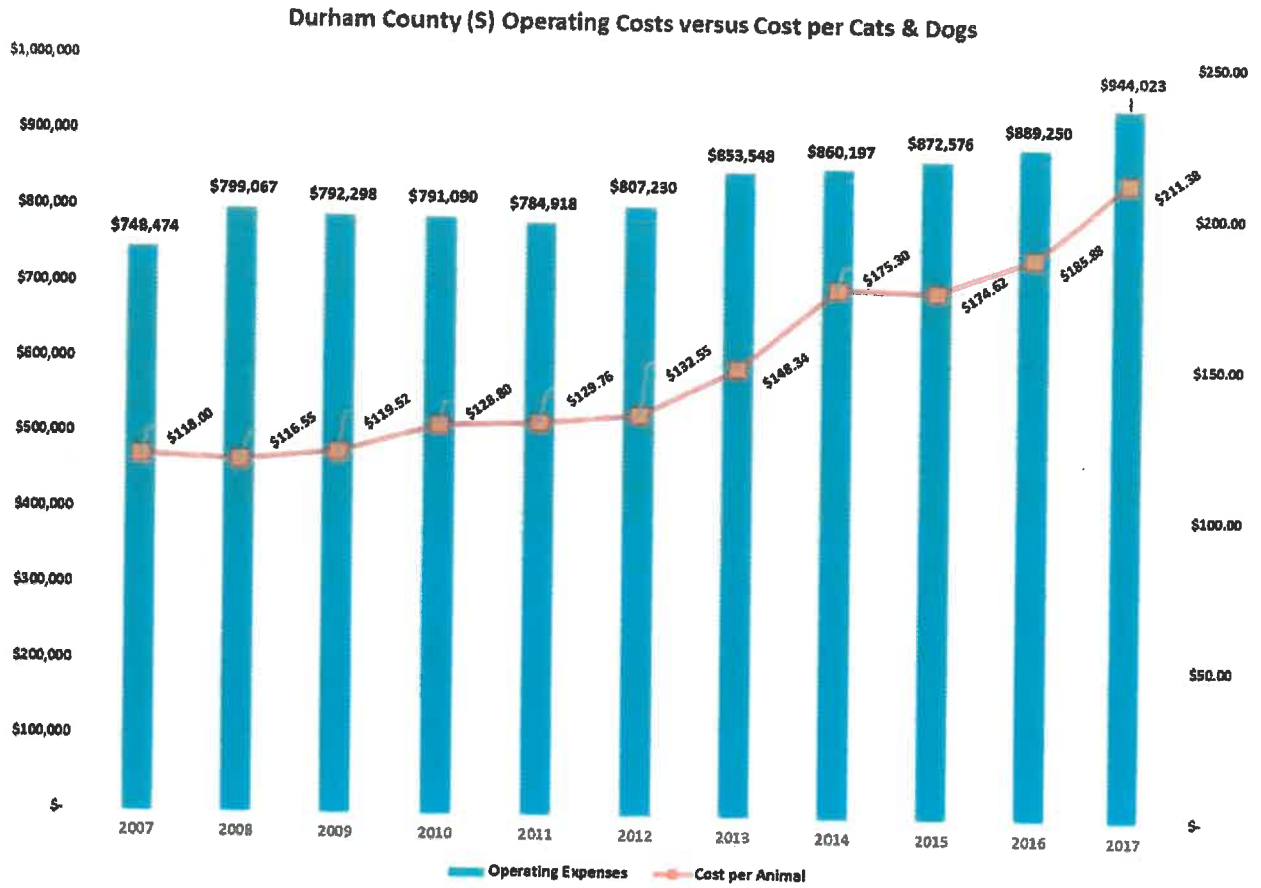
(Charts)

i.

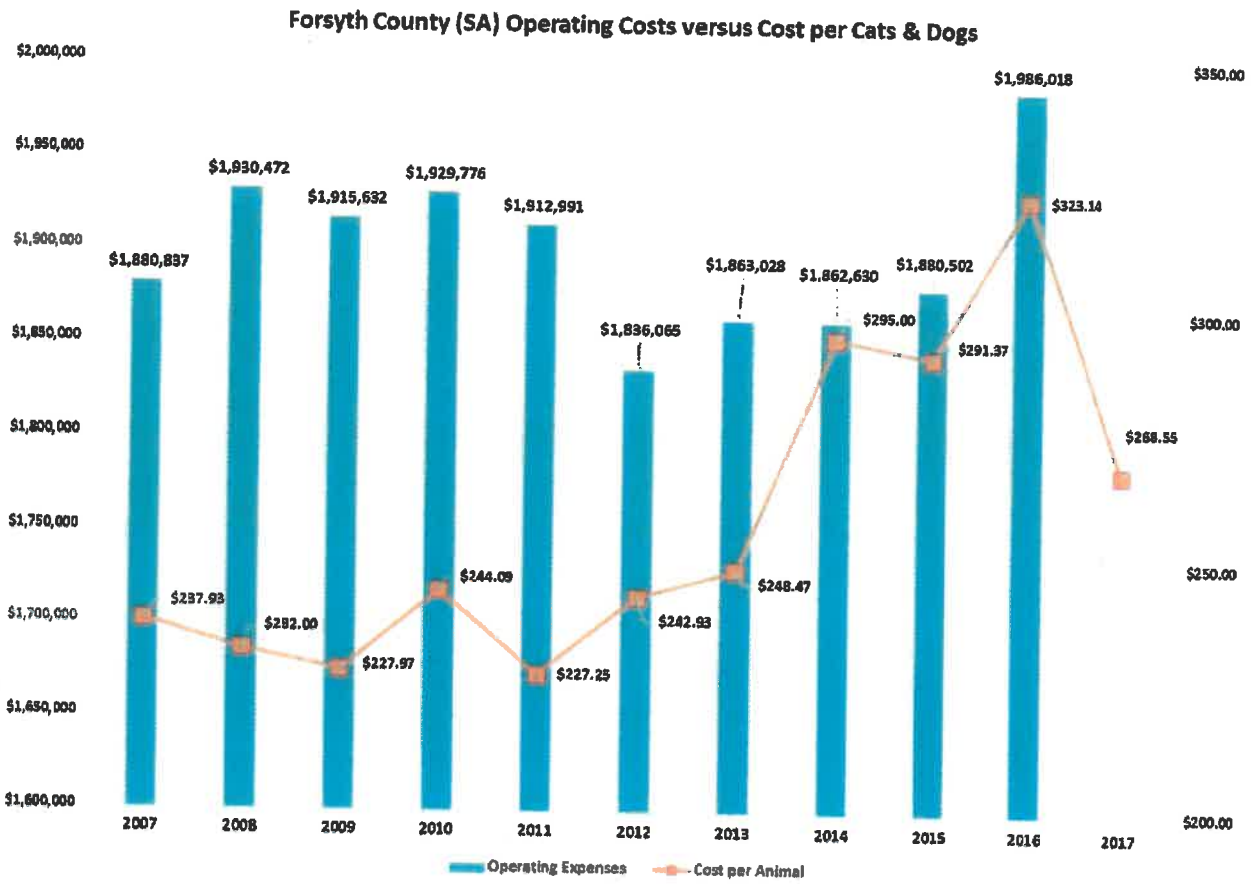
The following charts show county operating expenditures per cat and dog admitted to the shelter. From 2007 to 2017, Wake County averaged \$217.66, Durham County averaged \$149.15, and Forsyth County averaged \$258.06 in expenditures per animal.



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018

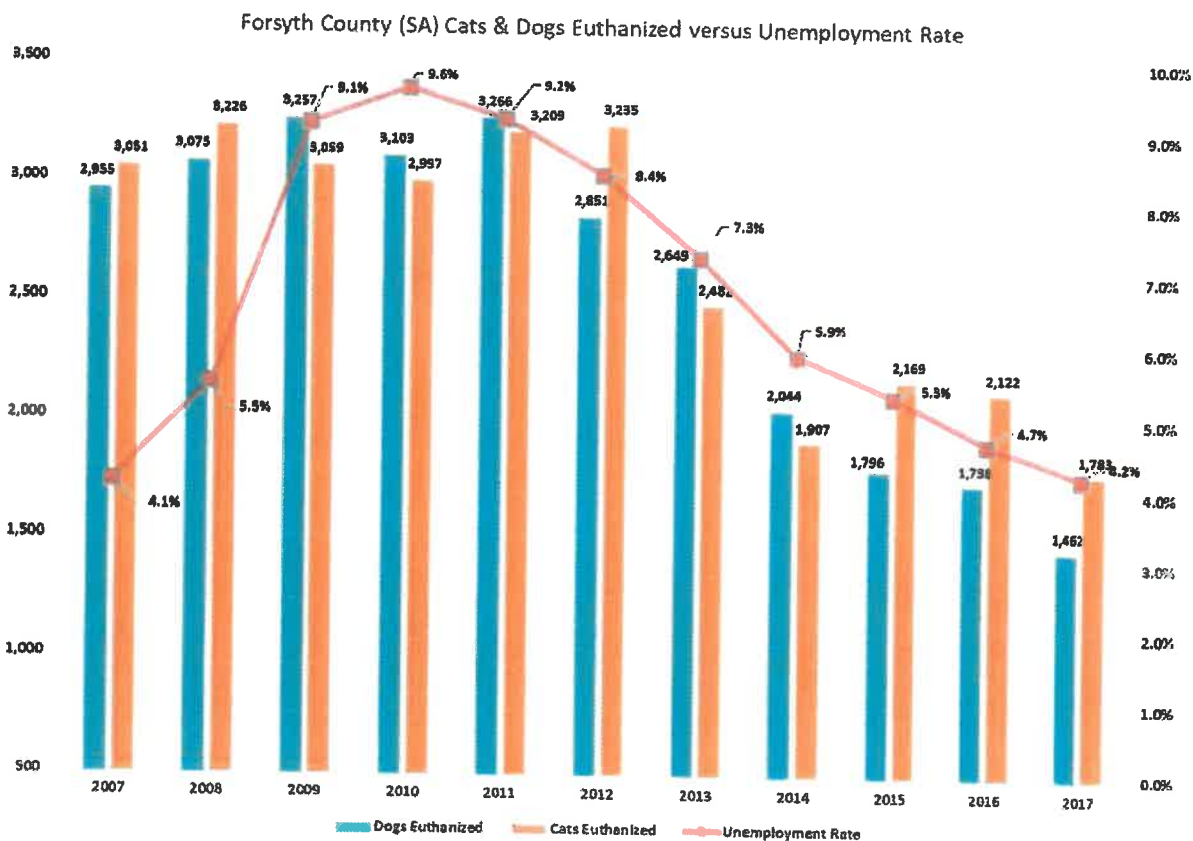


*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018

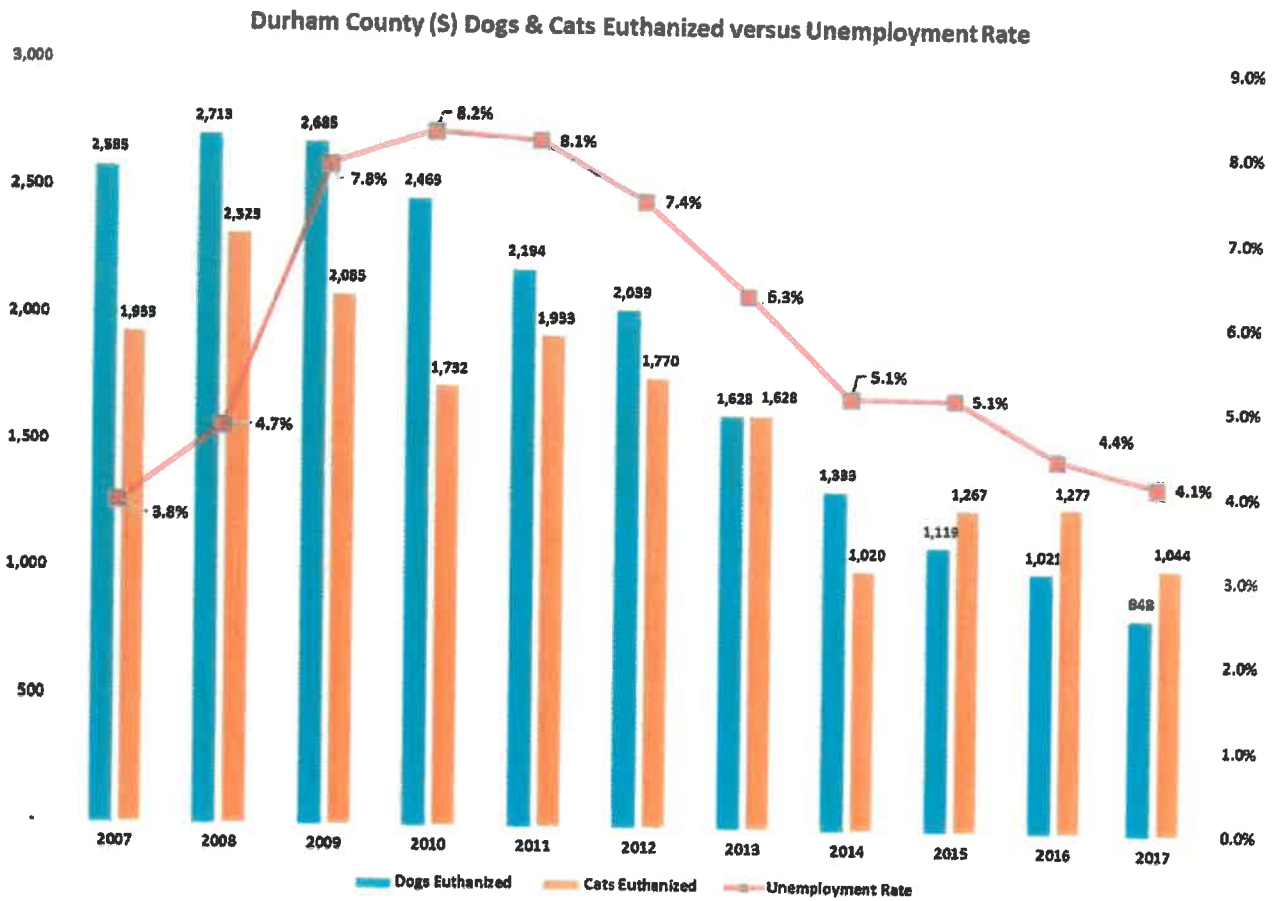


*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018

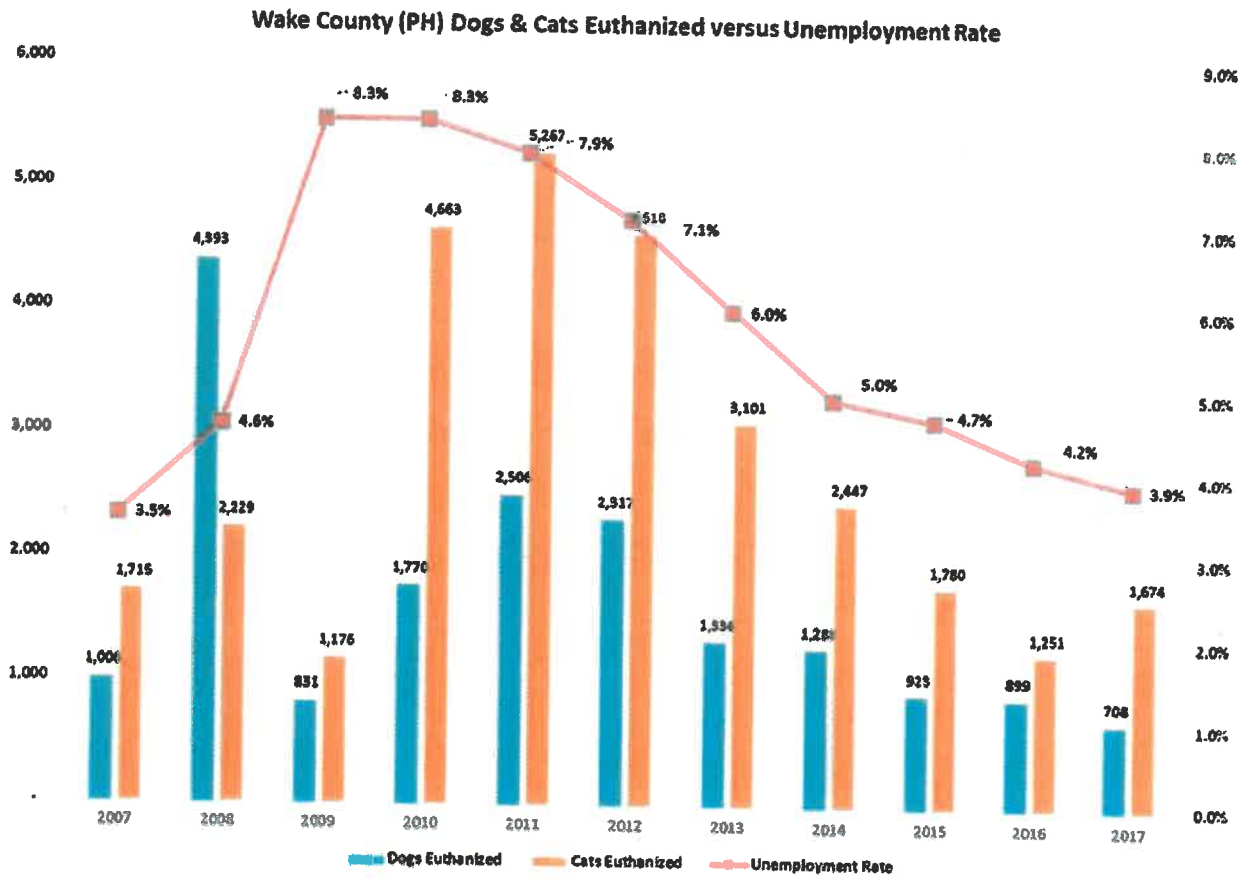
Policy decisions on whether, for example, to educate first or seize first, humanely euthanize for space, transfer animals out of state to no-kill facilities, add additional animal welfare ordinance provisions, or practice feral cat “catch & release” programs can impact shelter occupancy and resultant euthanasia rates. However, the following charts imply a correlation between strong economies, low unemployment, and reduced rates of euthanasia. This relationship appears to hold true whether the administrative management of a shelter resides in a Sheriff’s Office model (Durham), Public Health model (Wake), or Standalone model (Forsyth).



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services “Public Animal Shelter Report,” 2007-2018



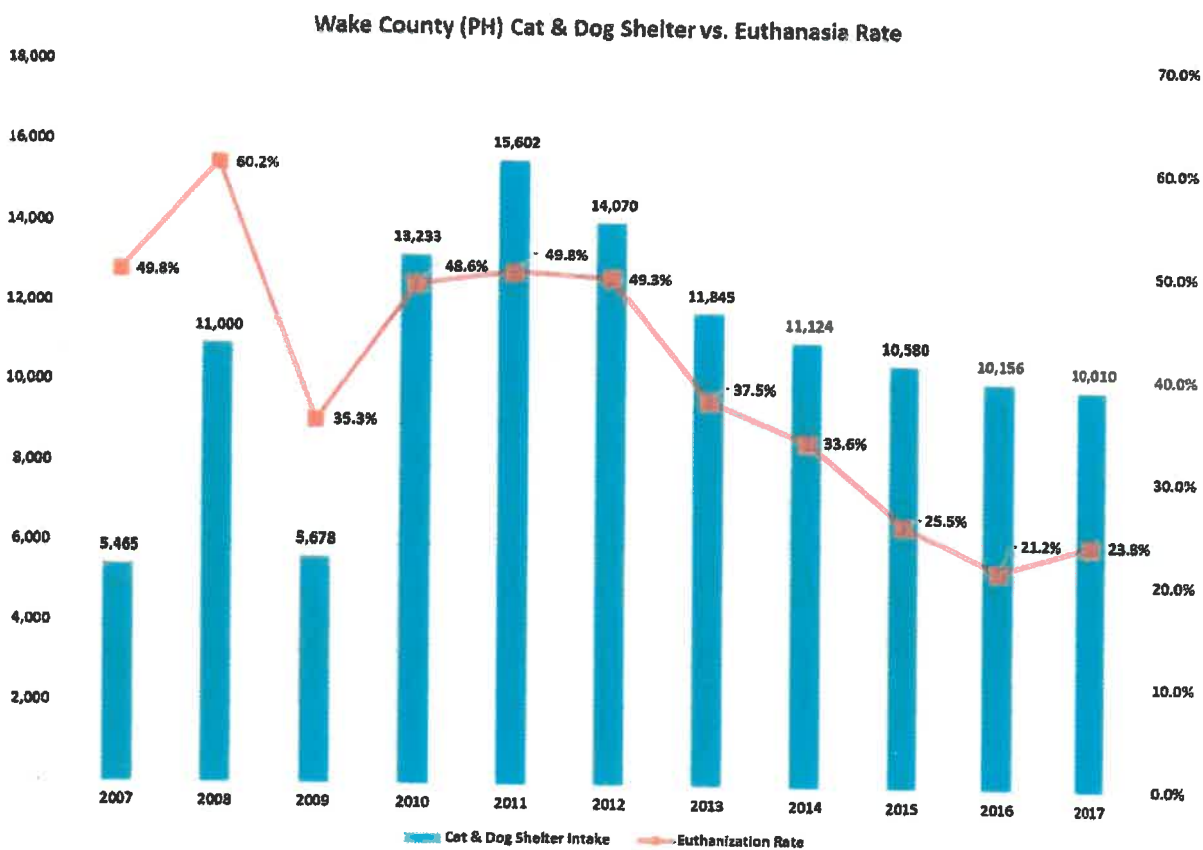
*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018



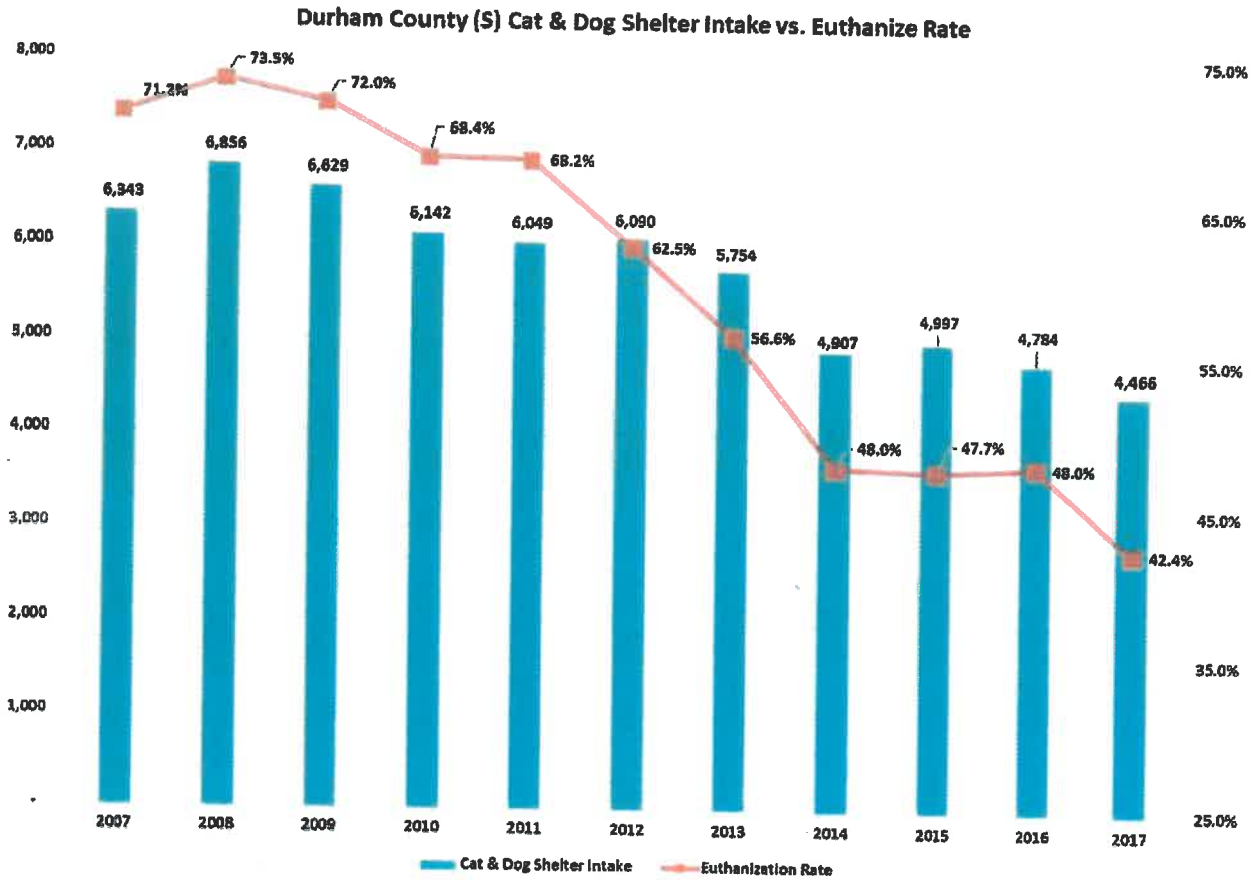
*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018

Humane euthanasia in a public shelter that accepts “all comers” is a necessary aspect of operations. Animals subject to this procedure may be severely injured, aggressively dangerous, rabies infected, or have some other condition necessitating humane euthanasia. Less frequently, animals are humanely euthanized for space due to overcrowding.

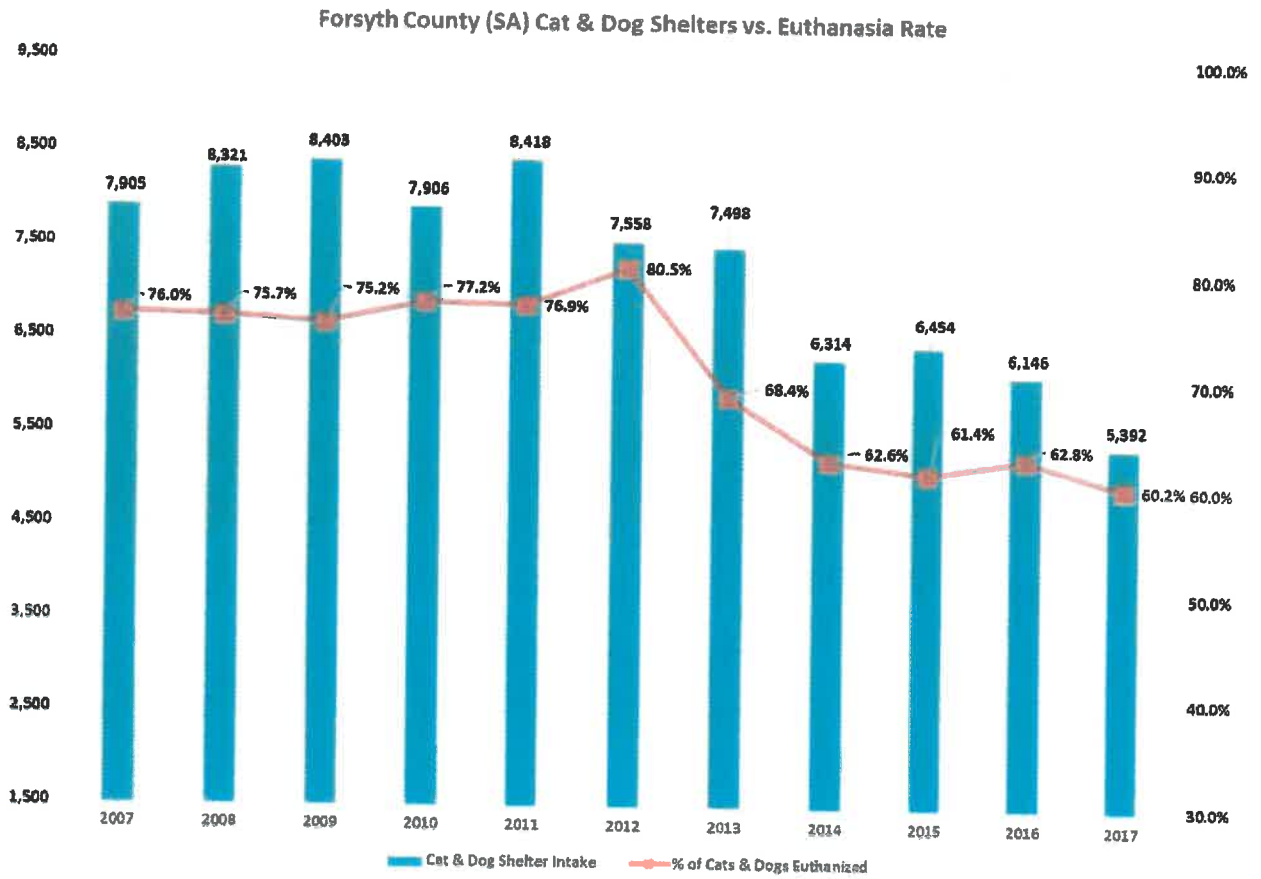
The following charts indicate that each respective agency (Wake, Forsyth, and Durham) experienced reductions in humane euthanasia rates whether administratively managed through a Public Health model (Wake), Sheriff’s Office model (Durham), or a Standalone model (Forsyth). Wake County’s rate decreased from a high in 2008 of 60.2% to a low of 21.2% in 2016. Durham County’s humane euthanasia decreased from a high of 73.5% in 2008 to a low of 42.4% in 2017. Forsyth County’s rate decreased from a high of 80.5% in 2012 to a low of 60.2% in 2017. (Forsyth County’s rate may reflect a relatively aggressive enforcement and seizure stance as well as the County’s practice of not turning away voluntary surrenders).



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services “Public Animal Shelter Report,” 2007-2018

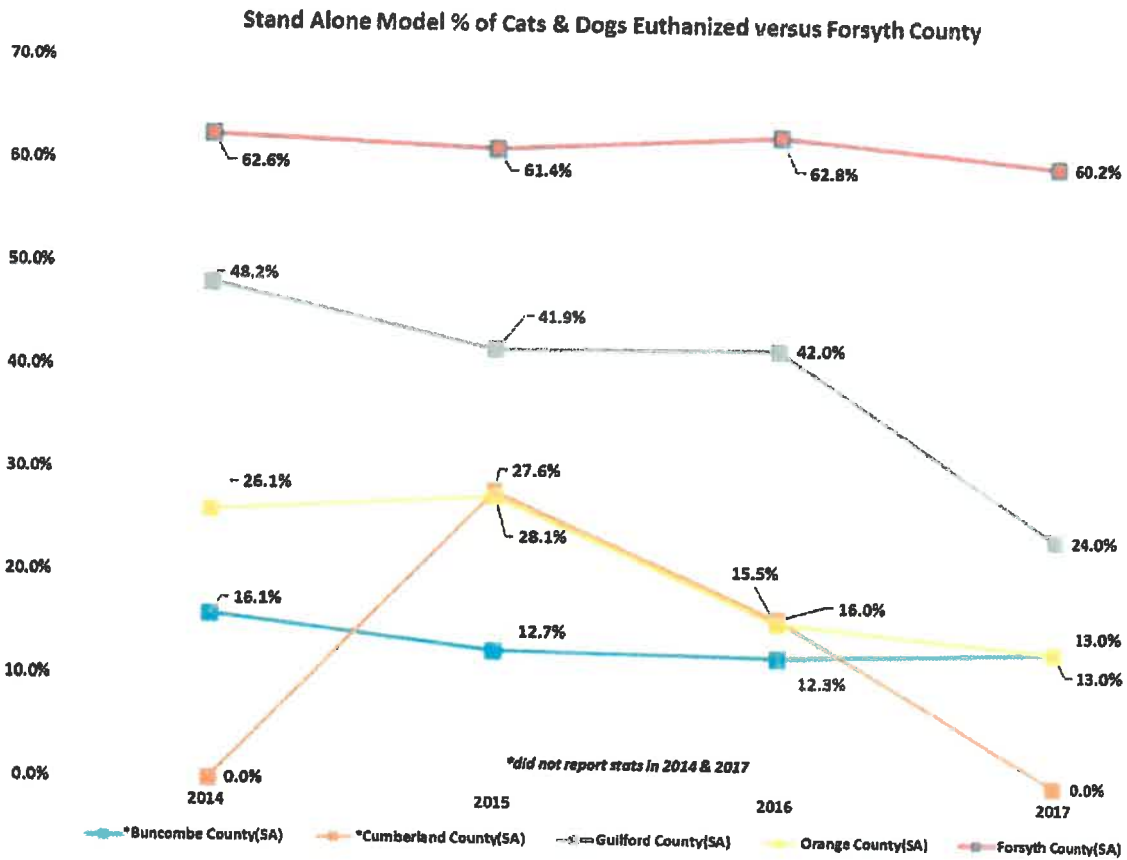


*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018

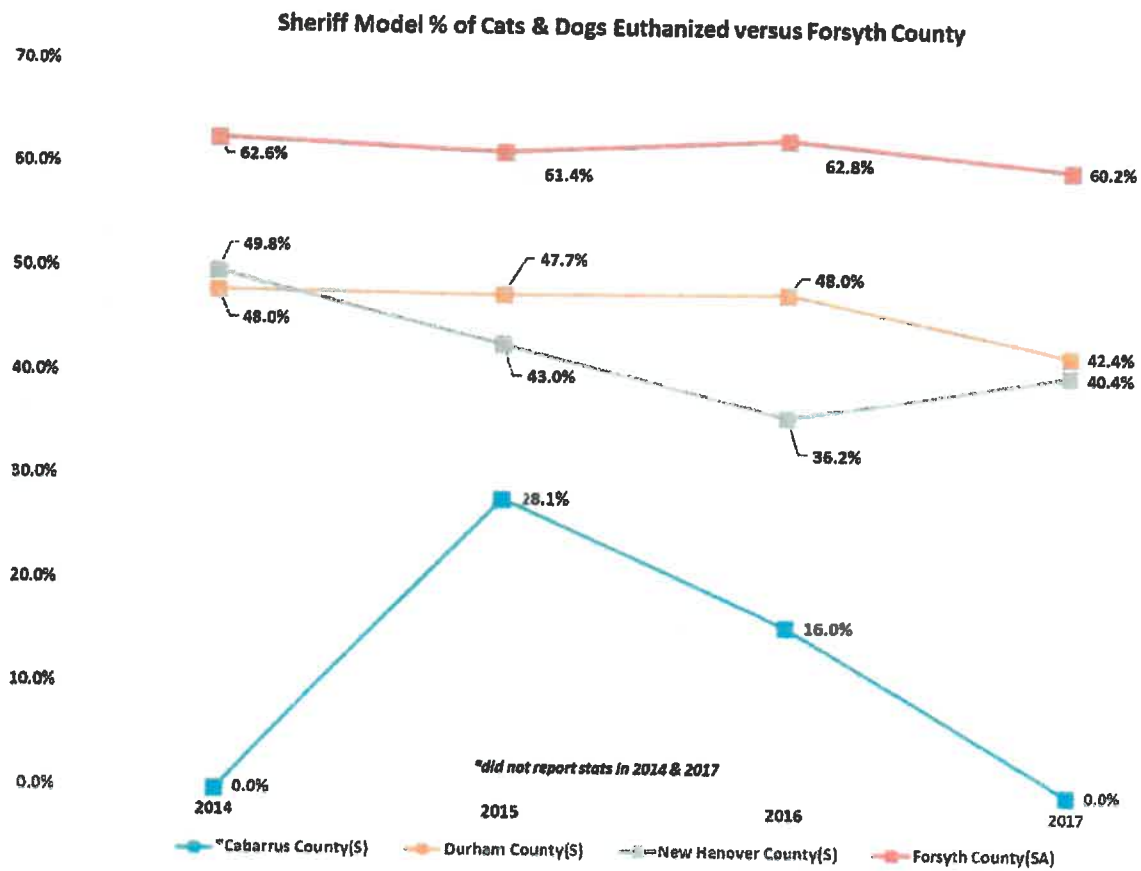


*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2018

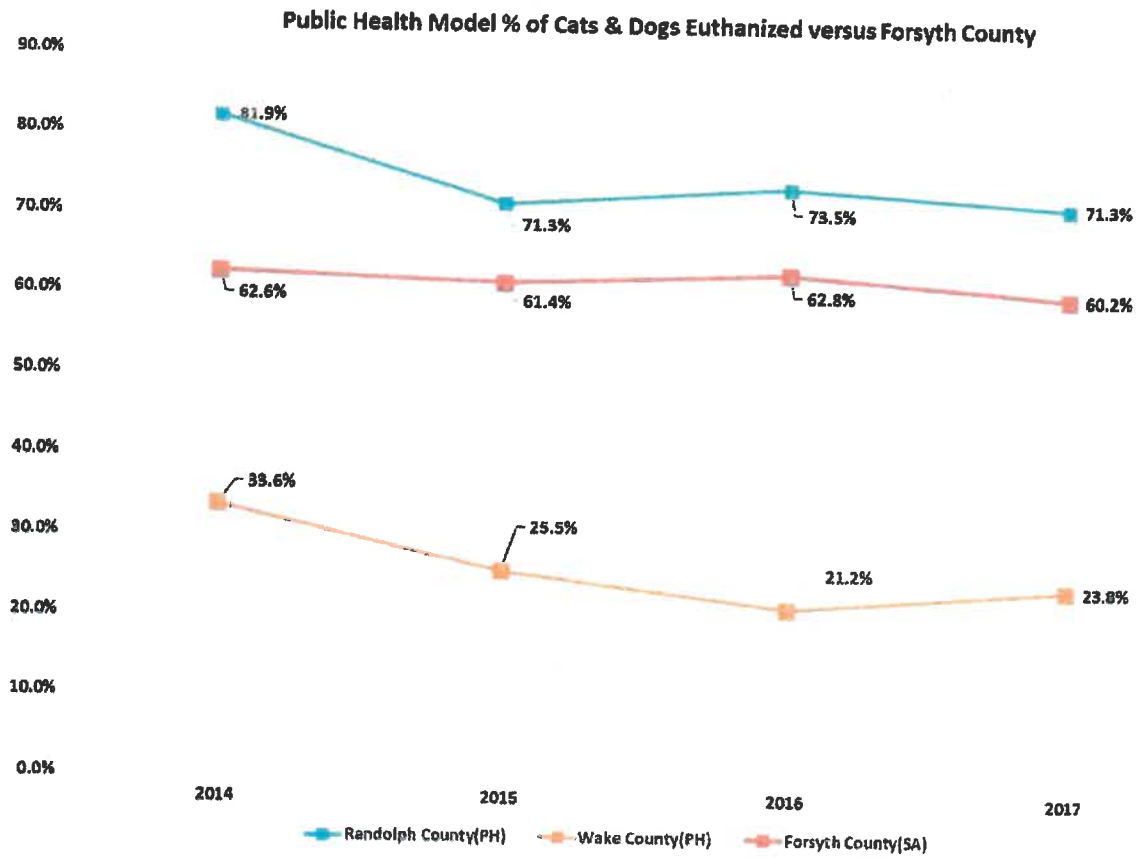
The following charts are comparisons of Forsyth County's euthanasia rate compared to a) counties with Animal Services as a Standalone model, b) with Animal Services under the administrative management of law enforcement, and c) with Animal Services under the administrative management of a Public Health Department.



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2007-2018

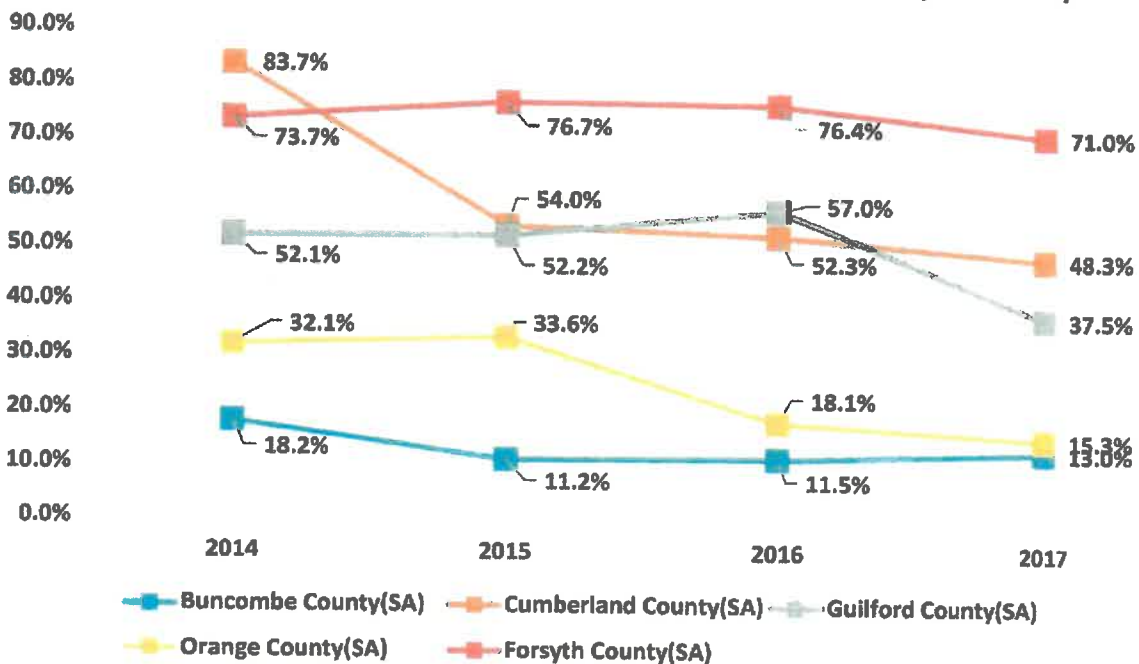
The following charts show the humane euthanasia rates for dogs and cats in Animal Services Standalone, Sheriff's Office, and Public Health management models. These charts reveal that, with the exception of Buncombe in 2015, the humane euthanasia rate for cats in each community exceeds that for dogs in that same community.

Efforts to tame feral cats at a shelter for adoption are ineffective resulting in higher rates of humane euthanasia relative to stray dogs. To thin the feral cat population, some communities have adopted programs where feral cats are caught, altered, tagged, and returned to the neighborhood colony from which they were removed. Cats are territorial, and other cats are restricted from joining an established colony. With no new cats admitted to a colony, once enough colony members are altered and returned, the colony eventually dies off.

Catch and release programs are particularly effective in rural areas where property owners agree to participate and are more spread out. In urban settings, the program is more challenging because one neighbor may want to participate in a "catch and release" program while another wants cats trapped and removed because of the nuisances they cause, altered or not.

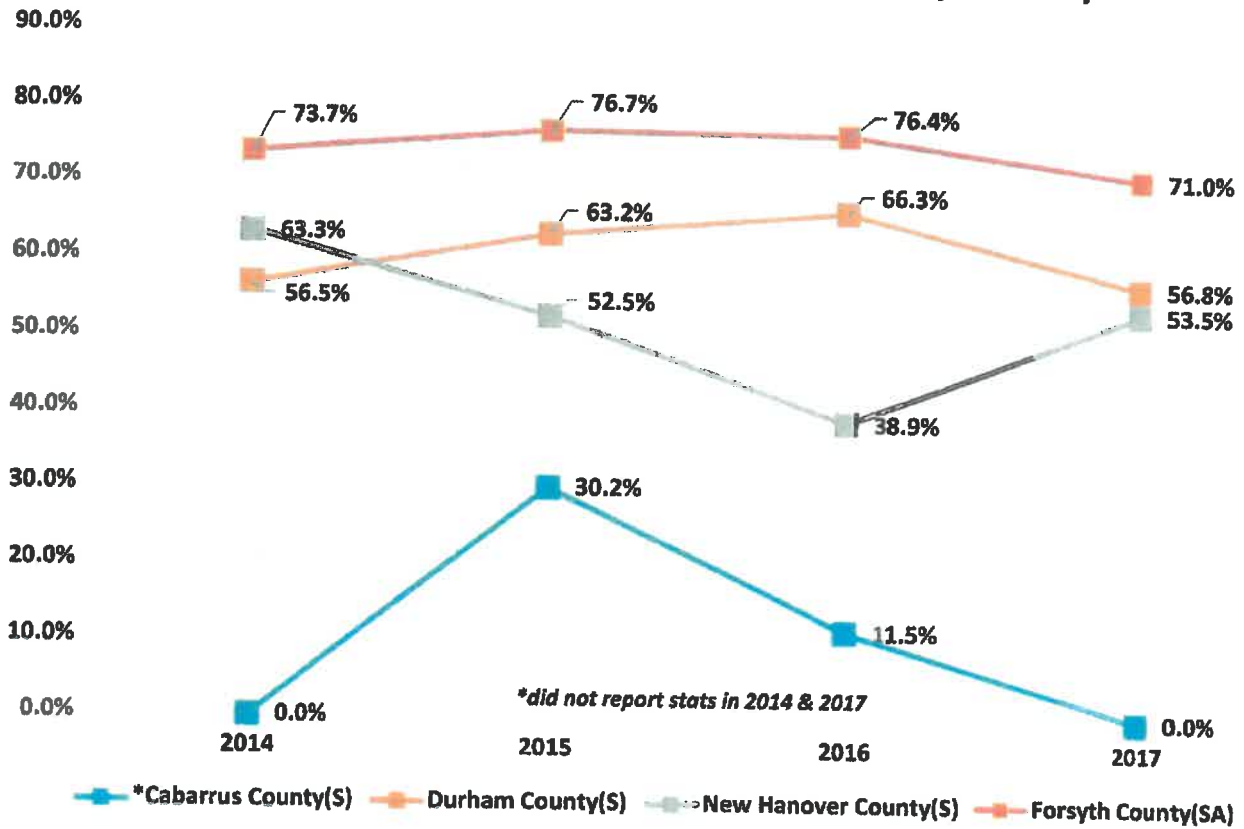
Catch and release programs can positively impact the workload of Animal Services' departments because officers are not expected to spend inordinate amounts of time trapping and transporting cats. In any case, catch and release programs are more appropriate for private organizations to conduct. There is some liability involved in local government authorities reintroducing feral cats into communities where they are subject to disease and damaging property.

Stand Alone Model % of Cats Euthanized versus Forsyth County



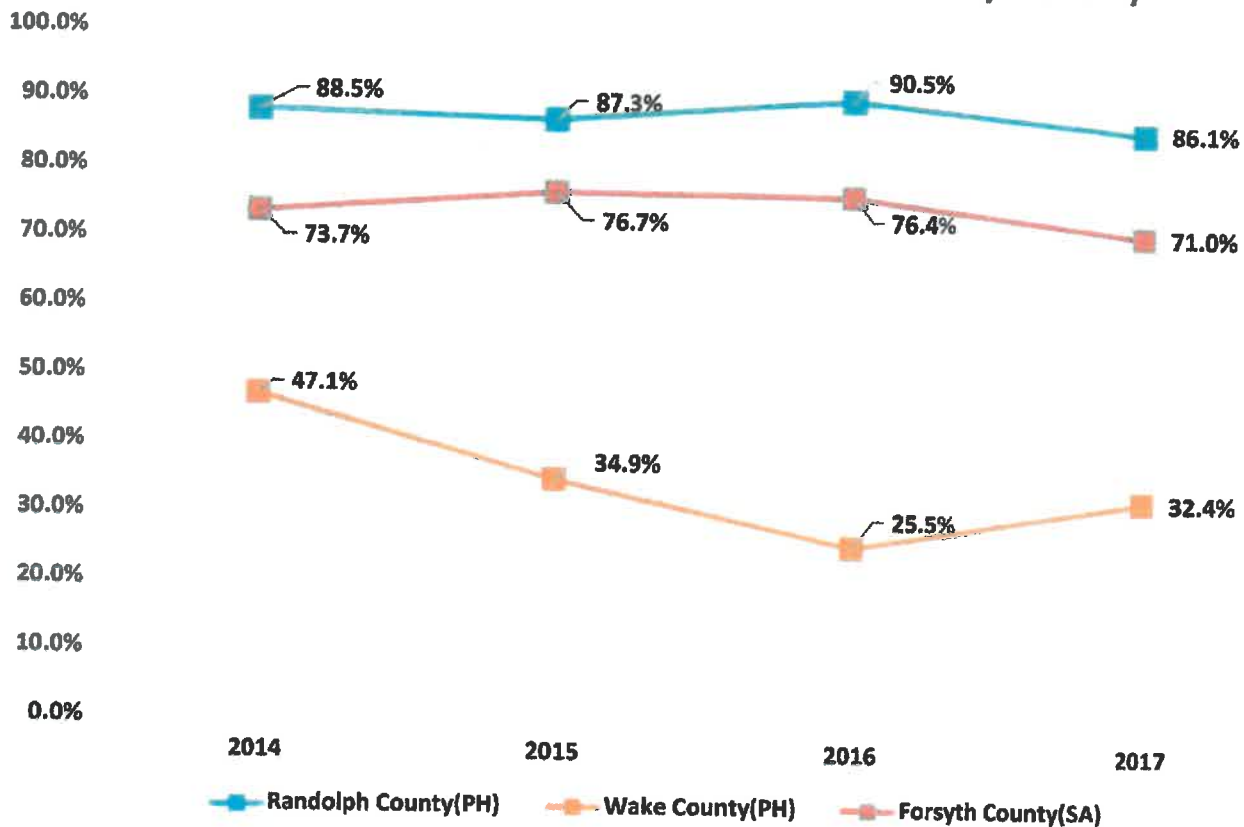
*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2015-2018

Sheriff Model % of Cats Euthanized versus Forsyth County



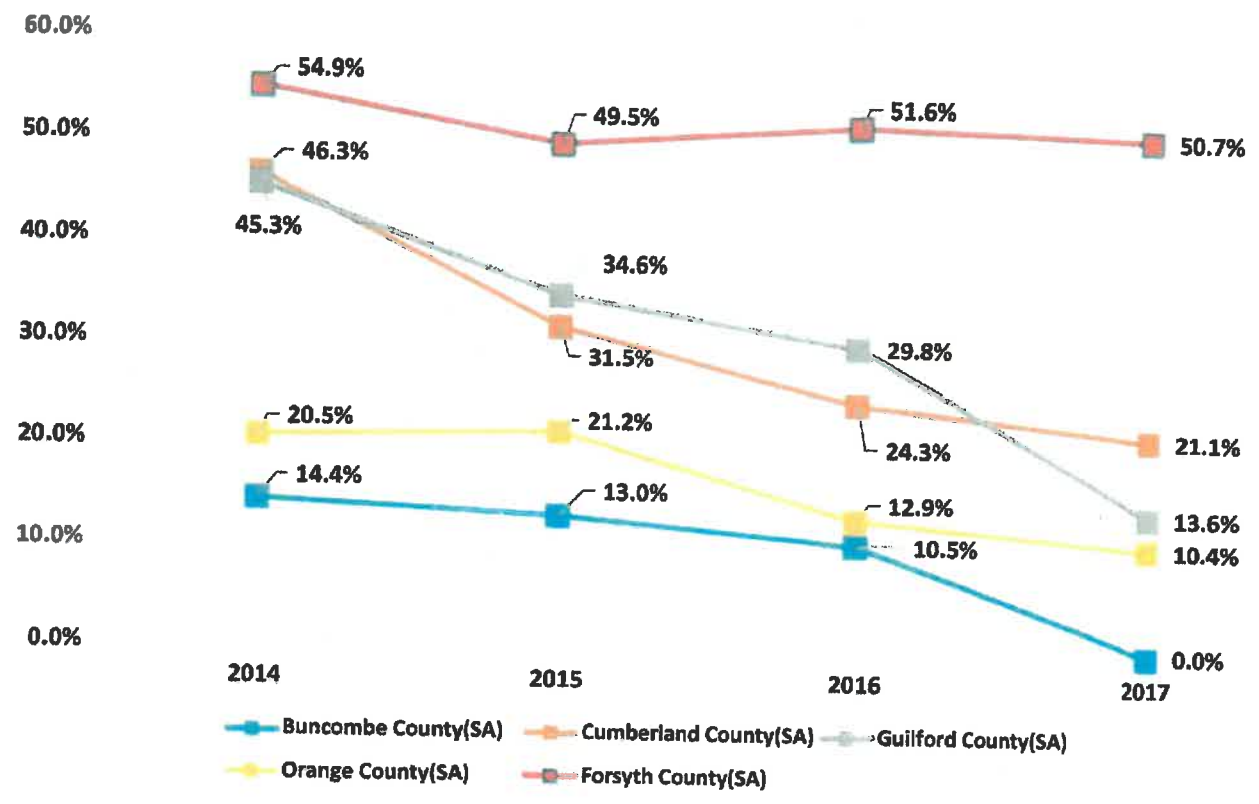
*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2015-2018

Public Health Model % of Cats Euthanized versus Forsyth County



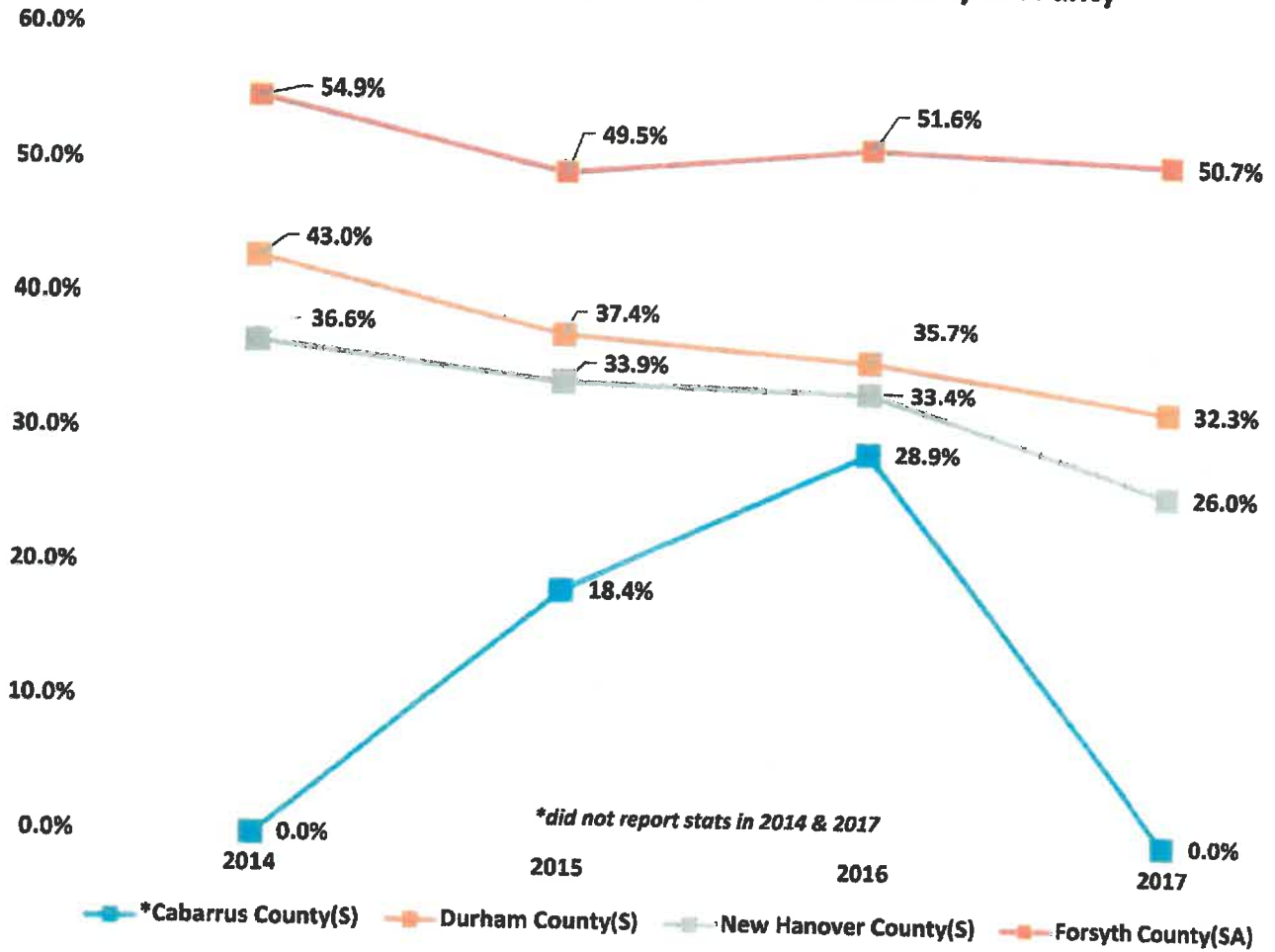
*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2015-2018

Stand Alone Model % of Dogs Euthanized versus Forsyth County



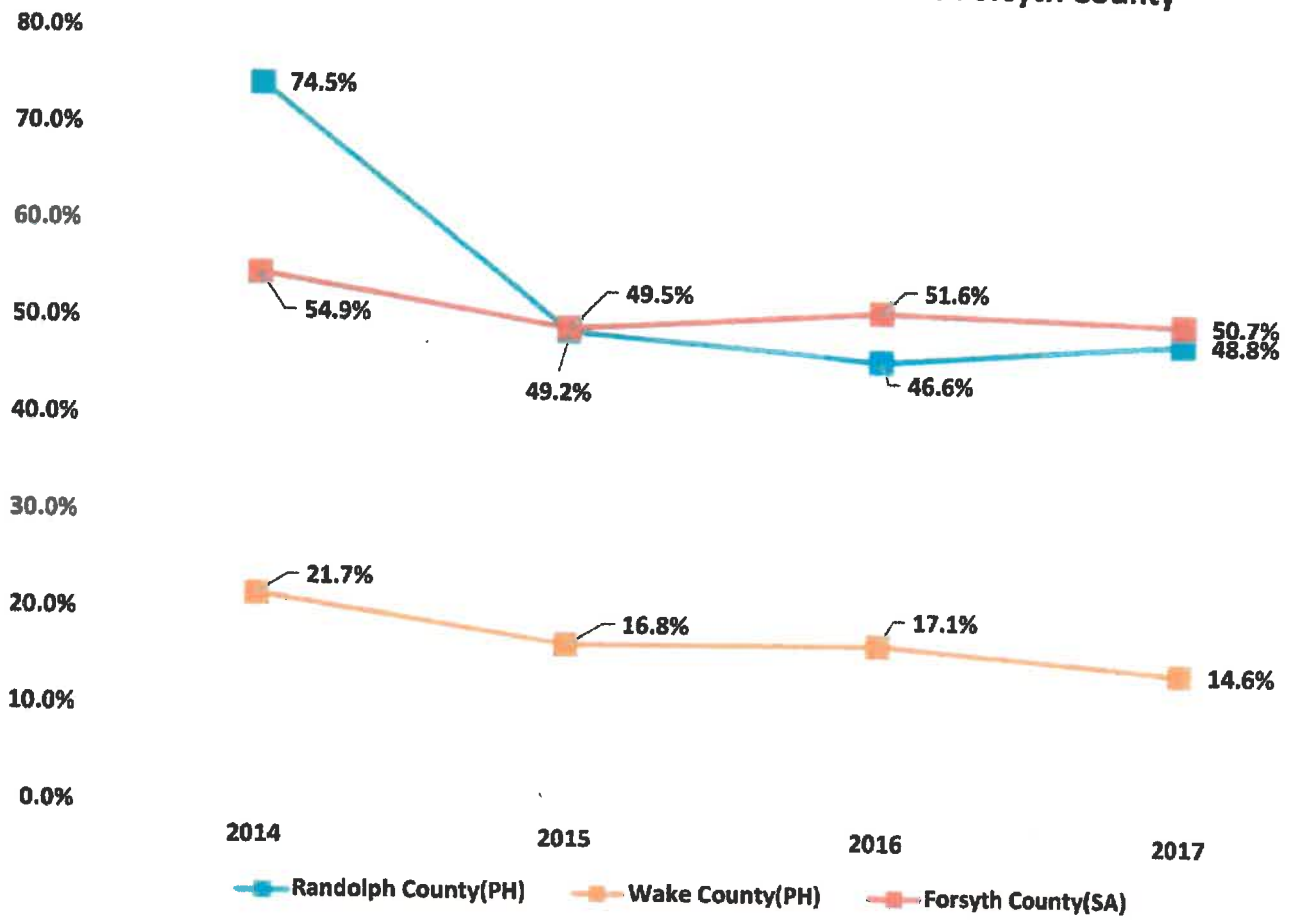
*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2015-2018

Sheriff Model % of Dogs Euthanized versus Forsyth County



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2015-2018

Public Health Model % of Dogs Euthanized versus Forsyth County



*North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services "Public Animal Shelter Report," 2015-2018

APPENDIX II.

**(2017 Pre-Humane Society Agreement & 2018 Post-Humane
Society Agreement Statistics)**

Forsyth Humane Society/FCAS

2018

	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total (Feb-Nov, 2018)
Intake (Dogs)	282	303	271	295	295	361	297	336	312	318	3,070
Intake (Cats)	181	182	191	339	398	272	384	246	301	210	2,704
Subtotal	463	485	462	634	693	633	681	582	613	528	5,774
Adoptions (Dogs)	164	107	107	112	114	92	99	89	75	95	1,054
Reclaims (Dogs)	46	54	55	37	54	71	38	59	69	70	553
Transfers (Dogs)	20	51	30	49	62	66	106	81	69	78	612
Subtotal	230	212	192	198	230	229	243	229	213	243	2,219
Adoptions (Cats)	78	54	34	45	114	93	155	90	103	126	892
Reclaims (Cats)	10	4	6	7	11	11	4	4	5	11	73
Transfers (Cats)	53	78	35	78	70	41	73	39	2	21	490
Subtotal	141	136	75	130	195	145	232	133	110	158	1,455
Euthanasia (Dogs)	31	110	75	81	84	92	94	82	91	97	837
Euthanasia (Cats)	68	56	50	49	72	105	172	67	120	138	897
Subtotal	99	166	125	130	156	197	266	149	211	235	1,734

FCAS

2017

	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total (Feb-Nov, 2017)
Intake (Dogs)	247	259	266	289	300	290	339	298	235	251	2,774
Intake (Cats)	140	97	155	274	345	279	285	255	249	158	2,237
Subtotal	387	356	421	563	645	569	624	553	484	409	5,011
Adoptions (Dogs)	90	83	71	71	53	45	47	29	14	24	527
Reclaims (Dogs)	45	55	36	44	53	44	54	60	55	45	491
Transfers (Dogs)	25	12	7	14	32	62	94	72	72	76	466
Subtotal	160	150	114	129	138	151	195	161	141	145	1,484
Adoptions (Cats)	31	19	19	26	28	36	42	32	18	11	262
Reclaims (Cats)	5	4	1	8	10	5	2	7	7	5	54
Transfers (Cats)	4	6	31	13	6	7	13	13	60	77	230
Subtotal	40	29	51	47	44	48	57	52	85	93	546
Euthanasia (Dogs)	98	107	114	176	141	149	134	143	95	87	1,244
Euthanasia (Cats)	106	63	82	186	307	208	217	222	163	76	1,630
Subtotal	204	170	196	362	448	357	351	365	258	163	2,874

Forsyth Humane Society

2017

	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total (Feb-Nov, 2017)
Intake (Dogs)	44	46	46	39	53	96	94	101	146	158	823
Intake (Cats)	45	50	28	63	26	55	94	71	84	17	533
Subtotal	89	96	74	102	79	151	188	172	230	175	1,356
Adoptions (Dogs)	81	102	57	58	75	88	86	96	96	73	812
Reclaims (Dogs)	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	3	3	4	21
Transfers (Dogs)	0	0	2	0	2	3	8	3	14	13	45
Subtotal	82	103	61	59	78	94	96	102	113	90	878
Adoptions (Cats)	36	39	36	35	39	51	54	85	99	62	536
Reclaims (Cats)	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	6	4	1	15
Transfers (Cats)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	50	52
Subtotal	36	40	36	36	40	52	56	91	103	113	603
Euthanasia (Dogs)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Euthanasia (Cats)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Subtotal	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4

Fund	100	General Fund						
OCA	360000	CenterPoint Human Services						
Object 3		PY Actual	CY Original	CY Estimate	Total Request	Total Recommend	Adjustments	Adopted
3409	CenterPoint Ht	1,542,251	1,542,425	0	0	0	0	0
3410	CenterPoint Ht	0	510,000	0	0	0	0	0
3506	Winston-Salerr	25,000	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	0
3510	Coalition for Di	60,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
3602	Greentree Pee	40,200	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	0
3603	Mental Health .	20,000	20,000	20,000	0	0	0	0
3604	Financial Path	30,000	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	0
3613	NAMI NW	0	6,000	6,000	0	0	0	0
3614	MOJI Coffee	0	62,500	62,500	0	0	0	0
7901	Budget reserve	0	886,033	0	0	0	0	0
Total: OCA	360000	1,717,451	3,111,958	173,500	0	0	0	0
Total: Fund	100	1,717,451	3,111,958	173,500	0	0	0	0