The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. We created a video report to communicate our findings. This document is a printer-friendly version of our video transcripts.

Overview of Findings

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. This video is an overview of our audit. You can find videos with more detailed information by visiting our website.

Slide 2

We want to thank the employees and volunteers at Animal Services for their assistance during this audit. We found the employees and volunteers to be incredibly hardworking and dedicated.

Slide 3

Based on months of observation and analysis, we recommend that Animal Services:
•Improve record keeping and data quality.
•Improve shelter operations to protect animal health and safety.
•Improve planning and performance measurement.
•Improve operations to protect human health and safety.

Slide 4

First we will discuss record keeping and data quality.

Slide 5

We looked at a 5 year period and found a few thousand animals with incorrect or missing information. For example, some animals have no record of what happened to them after they left the shelter or how they ended up at the shelter in the first place.

Slide 6

We also found that staff didn't record all instances when they used euthanasia drugs. Because these are controlled substances, it is necessary that Animal Services keeps good records.

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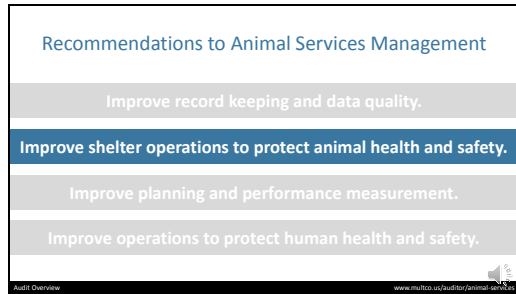
Next, we will discuss improving shelter operations to protect animal health and safety.

Slide 8

We found that there were not enough employees to properly feed the animals and clean their housing. We found that they needed 18 additional hours per day to meet the staffing guideline. Staff work very hard to feed and clean, but there are simply not enough employees. The animal housing areas appeared clean despite the staffing challenges they faced.
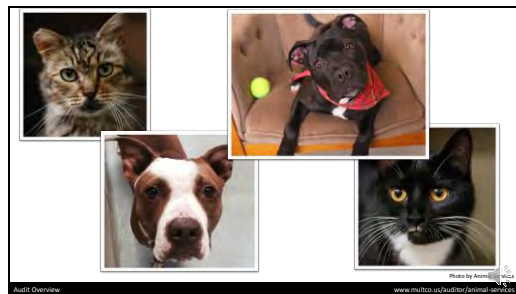
Slide 9

We were also concerned about the lack of consistent animal enrichment.

Slide 10

For example, this is Gotham. During the time we observed him, he only received 1 walk in 9 days.
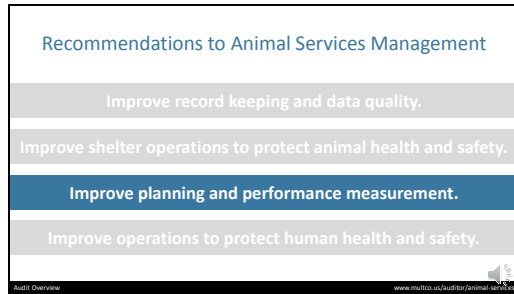
Slide 11

In addition to Gotham, we found that most animals did not receive the recommended amount of enrichment. This lack of enrichment can be mentally and physically taxing on dogs and cats. It also makes them less likely to be adopted because they may be less sociable than normal. Many people work hard to provide social contact and physical activity, but there are simply not enough volunteers and employees.

Slide 12
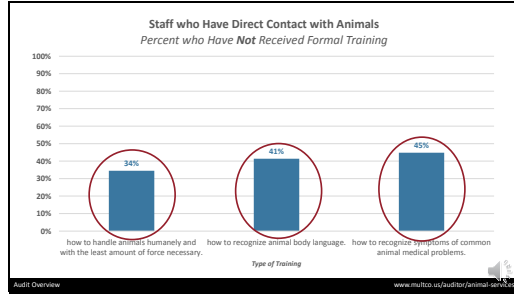
We were also concerned about inconsistent training. In a survey of employees who have direct contact with animals, many of them said that they have never received training in important areas. For example, 34% had never been trained how to handle animals humanely with the least amount of force, 41% had not been trained in how to recognize animal body language, and 45% had not been trained in how to recognize common animal medical problems.

Slide 13

Next we'll discuss improving planning and performance measurement.

Slide 14
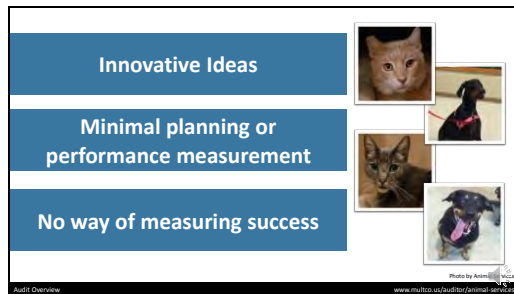
One of Animal Services' strengths is their ability to generate innovative ideas to help animals in our community. That said, many programs did not involve plans for employee training, sufficient budgeting, or development of long term goals. We identified several programs that were well-intended, but because they lacked planning and goals, we could not measure if they were successful.

Slide 15

Next we will move on to improving operations to protect human health and safety.

Slide 16

One of our concerns was that the shelter has adopted out animals who have injured people and other animals. Not all adopters have been informed of the animal's bite history. This practice presents a risk to public safety.
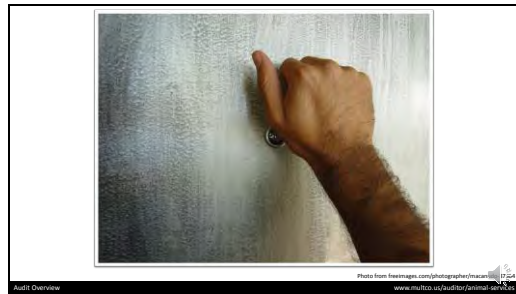
Slide 17

We also believe that management could work to make the shelter a more professional and respectful workplace. The shelter work environment has negatively affected the well-being of some employees.

Slide 18

Another area of concern is the safety of Animal Control Officers.

Slide 19

When an Animal Control Officer responds to a call, they do not have access to criminal background information, so they have no idea about the potential risks behind the door. Animal Control Officers do not carry firearms and have limited ways to protect themselves.

Slide 20

The Oregon Humane Society also has officers who respond to animal cruelty complaints, but they have access to criminal background information. It seems that since Animal Services offers the same services, plus has more of an enforcement role, that the same criminal background information should also be granted to Animal Services.

Slide 21

Because of the kinds of health and safety issues we observed, we recommend that the Board of County Commissioners:

- Establish a policy that provides parameters for when it is safe to re-home animals.
- Support Animal Services in getting access to criminal background information.
- Provide Animal Services with the funding to increase staffing to meet national standards.

Slide 22

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find more videos that go into greater detail by visiting our website.

About Animal Services

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. This video is background information about Animal Services. You can find more videos by visiting our website.
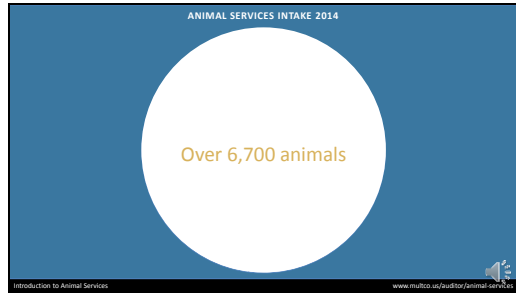
Slide 2

The mission of Animal Services is to protect the health, safety and welfare of people and pets throughout Multnomah County.

They provide many services, including:

- An animal shelter
- Veterinary care accredited by the American Animal Hospital Association
- A foster program
- Lost and found animal services
- Animal adoptions
- Pet and facility licensing
- Community-based trap neuter release services
- Animal control, with services such as 24 hour emergency response, dead animal removal, nuisance complaints, and bite and cruelty investigations.
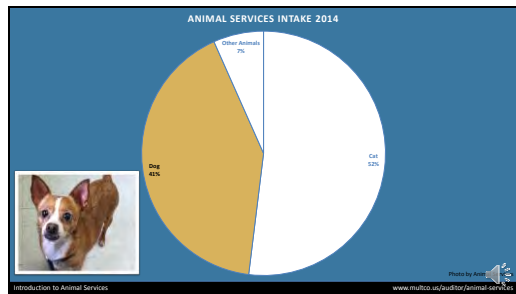
Slide 3

According to Animal Services' records, Animal Services took in over 6,700 animals in 2014.
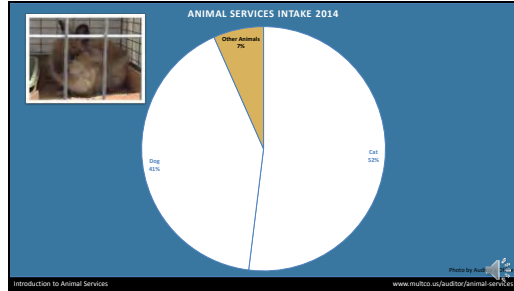
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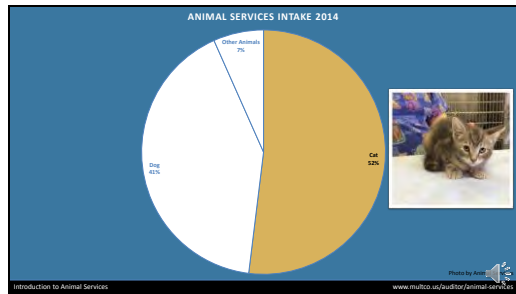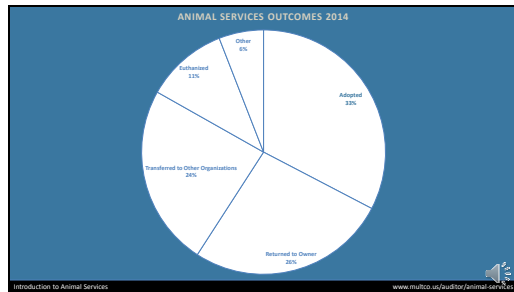

Over half of these were cats,
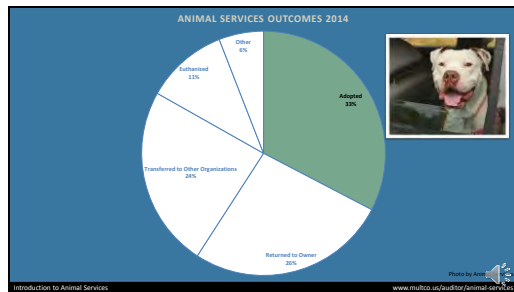
Slide 5

41% were dogs,

Slide 6

and the rest were other animals such as rabbits, birds or reptiles.
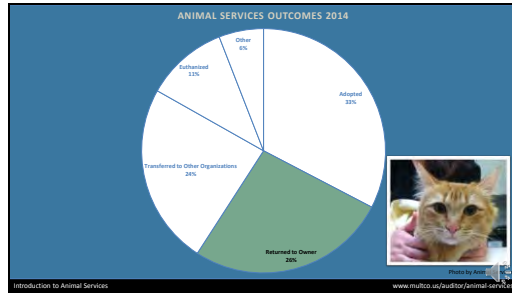
Slide 7

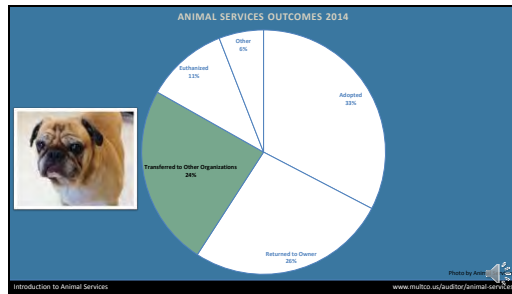Next we move on to what happened to these animals.

Slide 8

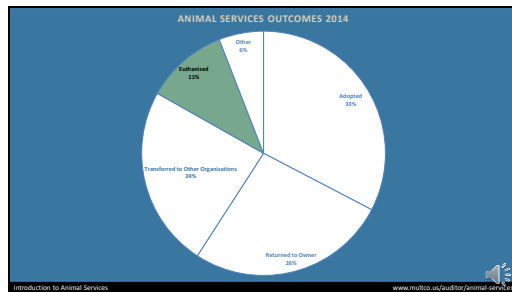About one-third of animals were adopted by new owners.

Slide 9

Animal Services returned about a quarter of the animals to their owners,
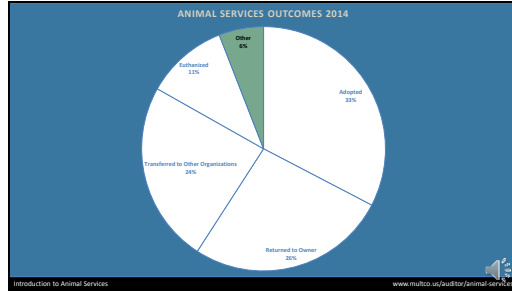
Slide 10

Animal Services transferred 24% to other organizations,

Slide 11

Animal Services euthanized 11% of animals. According to their records, Animal Services has made huge strides and has euthanized fewer animals every year. For example, in 2010, they euthanized nearly 4,000 animals and in 2014, they euthanized just over 700.

Slide 12

The remaining animals in 2014 had outcomes such as being returned to their natural habitat or their outcome was unknown. As we'll mention in another video, their current record keeping system is quite old and lacks many controls to ensure that accurate and complete information is entered. Thus, Animal Services' records are not entirely accurate, so these numbers may be subject to error.
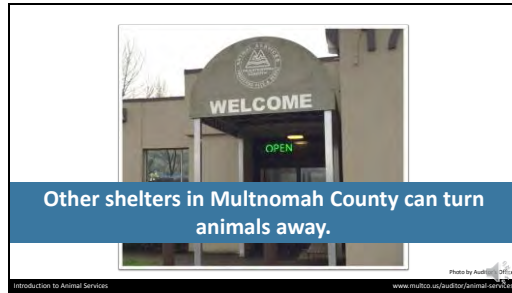
Slide 13

Animal Services is one of the founding members of the Animal Shelter Alliance of Portland, which brings together various animal welfare organizations in the area. The organizations meet regularly to come up with solutions to save the lives of all shelter pets that can be humanely and responsibly re-homed. Multnomah County Animal Services has many shared goals with other organizations in the area. But there is one thing that makes Animal Services unique within Multnomah County.
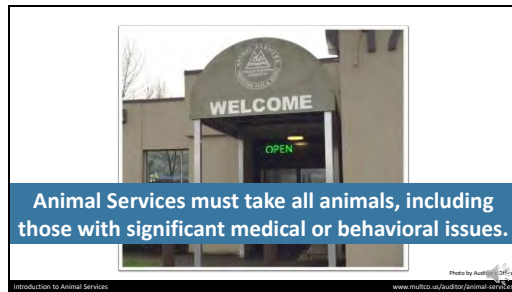
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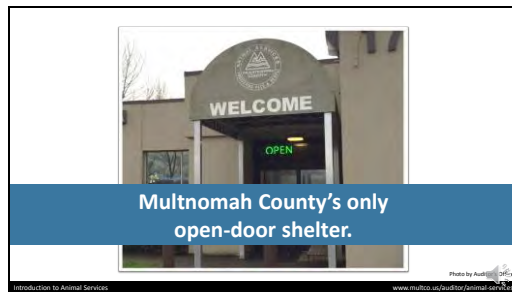
And that's because Animal Services is Multnomah County's only open door shelter. This means Animal Services is mandated by County Code to accept all animals brought to the facility. While other organizations work hard to help as many animals as they can,

Slide 15

They sometimes turn animals away or refuse to accept adoption returns.

Slide 16

In contrast, Animal Services must take all animals, including those with significant medical or behavioral issues. Like other open-door shelters, Animal Services cares for these animals within budgetary constraints that can affect the quality of care.

Slide 17

The Animal Shelter is located in Troutdale and serves all of Multnomah County.

Slide 18

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find more videos by visiting our website.

Improve record keeping and data quality.

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. This segment is part of our video report. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
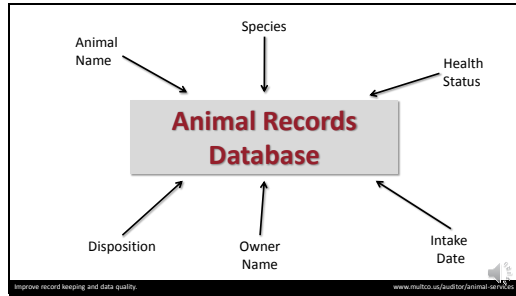
Slide 2

In this video we'll discuss the need for Animal Services to improve their record keeping and data quality.
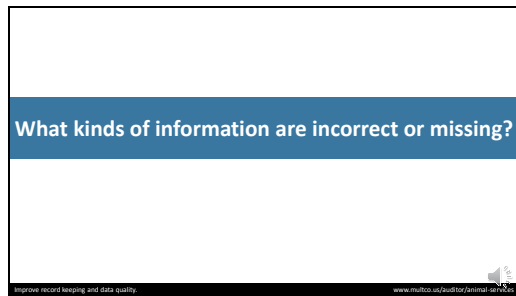
Slide 3

Multnomah County Animal Services uses an animal records database, which keeps track of all of the animals in their care. When an animal comes to the shelter, they enter as much information into the system as they can. However, their current system is quite old and lacks many controls to ensure that accurate and complete information is entered.

Slide 4

So, what kinds of information are incorrect or missing?

Slide 5

We looked at a 5 year period and found a few thousand animals with incorrect or missing information. For example, some animals have no record of what happened to them after they left the shelter or how they ended up at the shelter in the first place.

Slide 6

In addition to missing information, we also found some information to be incorrect. For example, we found one animal whose outcome was listed as escaped, but the notes say that the animal was euthanized.

This error is significant because this information goes into the reports they issue to the public about the number of euthanized animals. The report would count this as an escaped animal, even though it was euthanized.

We found over 700 examples of animal records with conflicting information. Since we are not able to look at every record, there are likely more incorrect records.

Slide 7

We also looked at the euthanasia drugs. When an animal is euthanized, they use powerful drugs that are considered to be a controlled substance. Animal Services does a good job of keeping euthanasia drugs locked up.

Slide 8
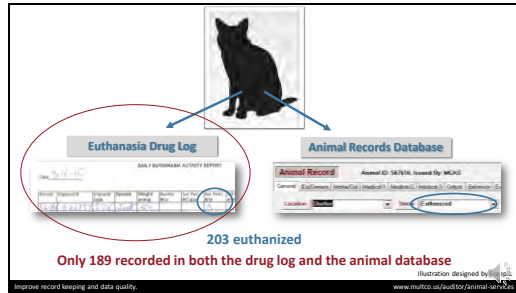
Every time an animal is euthanized, information must be recorded in two places: the Euthanasia Drug Log and the Animal Records Database. The Euthanasia Drug Log keeps a record of how much of the drug was used. One of the vet technicians does periodic checks to make sure that the amount of drugs left in the vials matches what is in the records.

When an animal is euthanized, this information is also put into their animal database. This data is used to keep track of euthanized animals and goes into the reports they issue to the public.

We looked at a 3 month time period and found that Animal Services euthanized 203 animals, but they only recorded 189 in both the drug log and the animal database. Because both data sources appear to have some errors, it is possible that there are additional euthanized animals we did not find or fewer euthanized animals due to a data entry mistake.
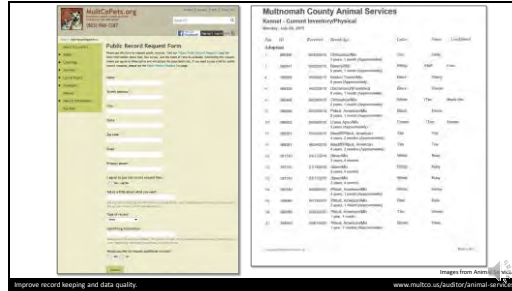
There are some serious impacts when animals aren't recorded on the euthanasia drugs logs.

Slide 9

For example, an injured cat was found by an animal control officer on May 11th. The cat was euthanized the next day, but there is no record of this cat in the daily euthanasia activity report. This means that euthanasia drugs were used, but no one recorded it.

Slide 10

We are also concerned about public records issues. Since staff have to manually pull reports, they spend 15-18 hours per week responding to public records requests.

Slide 11
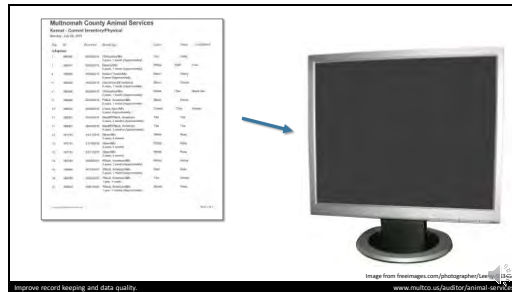
We know that Animal Services is in the middle of an animal database redesign. If this new system could produce online reports that are accessible to the public, it would free up staff to perform other duties and allow the public to more quickly access the information they want.

Slide 12
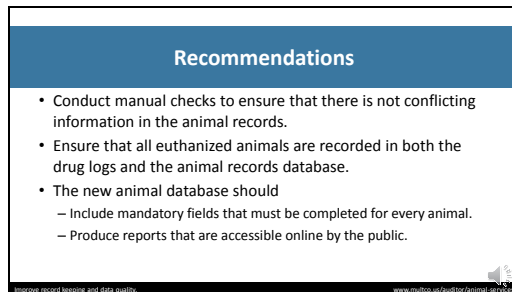
We recommend that Animal Services
- Conduct manual checks to ensure that there is not conflicting information.
- Ensure that all euthanized animals are recorded in both the drug logs and the animal records database.
- The new animal database should
    - Include mandatory fields that must be completed for every animal.
    - Produce reports that are accessible online by the public.

Slide 13

www.multco.us/auditor/animal-services

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
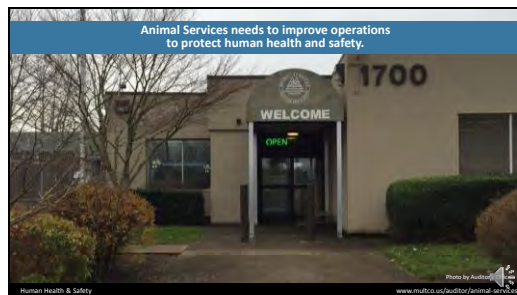
# Improve operations to protect human health and safety.

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. This segment is part of our video report. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.

Slide 2

We found that Animal Services needs to improve operations to protect human health and safety.
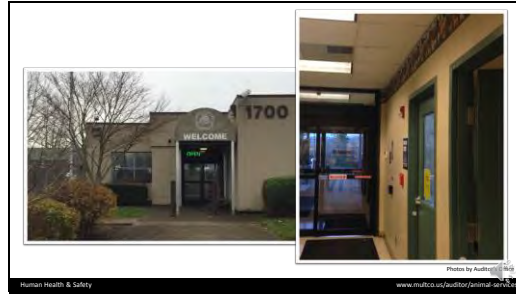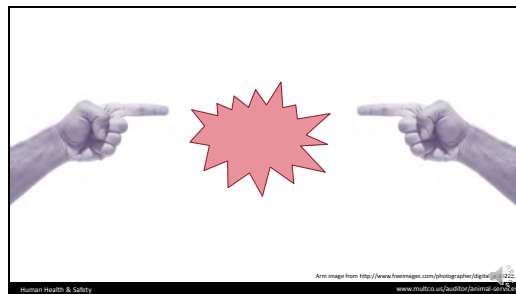
Slide 3

Members of the public who visit the shelter may be in distress.

Slide 4

They may be trying to find a lost pet or find out they have to pay fines.
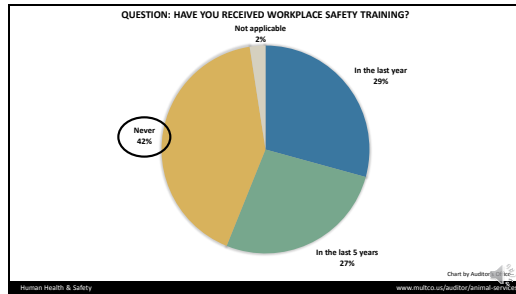
Slide 5

We observed people in these situations who appeared to become angry or raise their voices at Animal Services employees.

Slide 6

In one instance, a man ran throughout the shelter while yelling at employees, volunteers, and other members of the public. While this appeared to be an out-of-the-ordinary incident, it suggested that there is the potential for real safety issues at the shelter.

Slide 7

And employees appeared to need more training to handle security issues. In a survey we sent to employees on training they have received, over 40% reported that they had not received any training on workplace safety.

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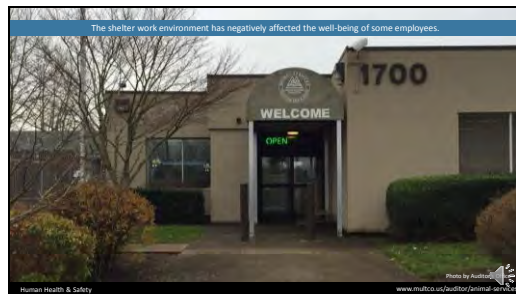
We also determined that the shelter could better support the health and safety of its employees by making the shelter a more professional and respectful workplace. Shelter workplace issues appeared to exacerbate the stress that would be inherent to shelter work, and in our opinion, the shelter work environment has negatively affected the well-being of some employees. We were so concerned about how the work environment was affecting employees that before we finished the audit, we reported our concerns to County Central Human Resources and to the director of the Department of Community Services, who oversees the Animal Services Division.
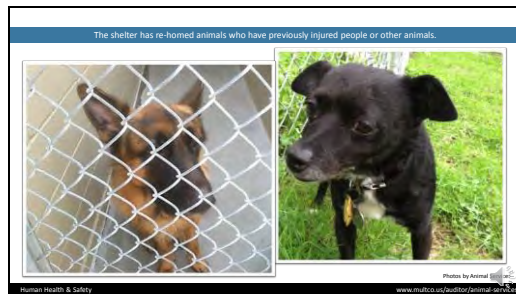
Slide 9

Shelter operations not only affect animals and people within the shelter, but they also have a potential impact on health and safety of people in the community.

Slide 10

The shelter has re-homed animals who have previously injured people or other animals. While there may be some cases in which it would be unlikely that an animal would hurt someone again, adopting out animals with these histories should include stringent safeguards. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' guidelines state that animals believed to be dangerous should not be re-homed.

Slide 11

The guidelines also state that shelters should document all behavioral concerns and discuss them with potential owners before adoption. But it did not appear that these disclosures consistently took place.

Slide 12
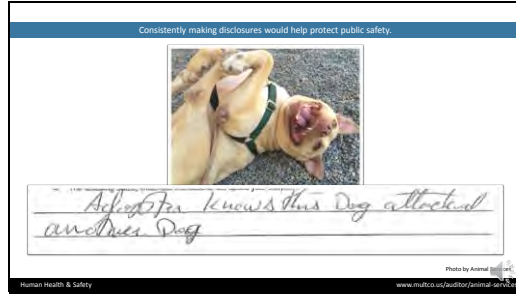
For example, we reviewed a sample of records for animals with bite incidents. One of the records we reviewed was for Big Gus. He first came to the shelter after attacking another dog. When he was subsequently adopted, the paperwork included the note that the "adopter knows this dog attacked another dog." Big Gus was returned to the shelter soon after this adoption. He was adopted again, and the paperwork for that adoption did not include a note about Big Gus attacking another dog.

Consistently making disclosures would help protect public safety by ensuring that all adopters know as much as possible about the animals they are taking home. And documenting these disclosures helps reduce risk to the County.

Slide 13

Another area of concern is the safety of Animal Control Officers, who respond to a wide variety of calls including animal cruelty complaints, animal nuisances, and stray animals.

Slide 14

When an Animal Control Officer responds to a call, they do not have access to criminal background information, so they have no idea about the potential risks behind the door. Animal Control Officers do not carry firearms and have limited ways to protect themselves.

Slide 15

The Oregon Humane Society also has officers who respond to animal cruelty complaints, but they have access to criminal background information. It seems that since Animal Services offers the same services, plus has more of an enforcement role, that the same criminal background information privileges should also be granted to Multnomah County.
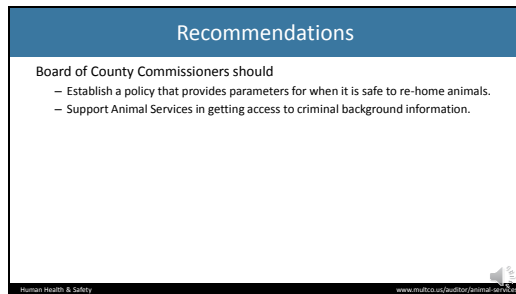
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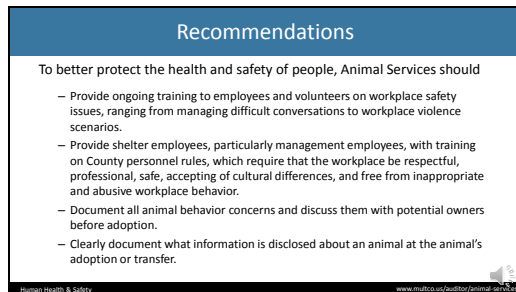
To better protect the health and safety of people, Animal Services should

- Provide ongoing training to employees and volunteers on workplace safety issues ranging from managing difficult conversations to workplace violence scenarios.
- Provide shelter employees, particularly management employees, with training on County personnel rules, which require that the workplace be respectful, professional, safe, accepting of cultural differences, and free from inappropriate and abusive workplace behavior.

- Document all animal behavior concerns and discuss them with potential owners before adoption.
- Clearly document what information is disclosed about an animal at the animal's adoption or transfer.

Slide 17

The Board of County Commissioners should

- Establish a policy that provides parameters for when it is safe to re-home animals.
- Support Animal Services in getting access to criminal background information.

Slide 18

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.

Improve planning and performance measurement.

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services in 2015. This segment is part of our video report. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
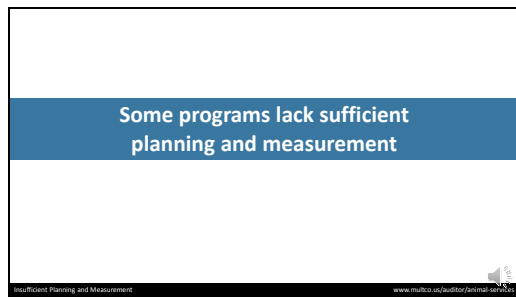
Slide 2

In this video we'll discuss that some Animal Services programs lack sufficient planning and measurement.
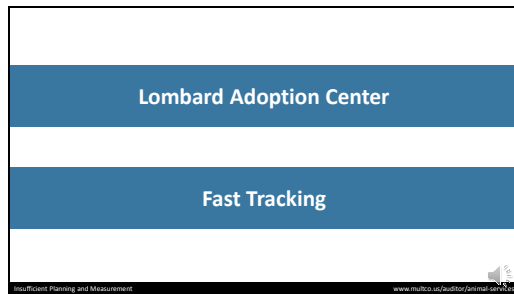
Slide 3

We were motivated to explore the topic of planning and measurement because of feedback from staff. One Animal Services employee told us, "We need a real plan of action that is engineered and built and runs as designed. I'm tired of flying by the seat of your pants type management."
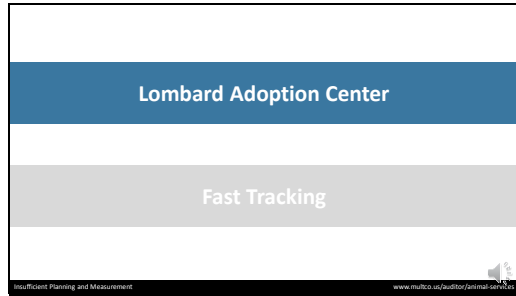
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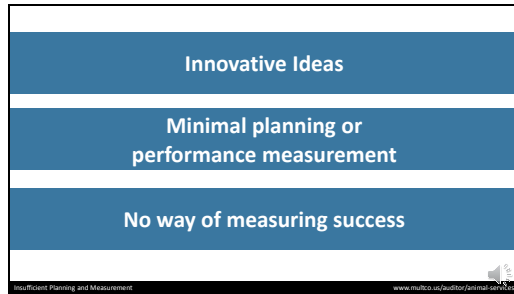
One of Animal Services' strengths is their ability to generate innovative ideas to help animals in our community. However, many of these ideas included minimal planning or performance measurement. Many programs did not involve plans for employee training, sufficient budgeting, cost/benefit analysis, or development of long term goals.

We've identified a few programs that are well-intended and potentially doing well, but because they lacked goals, we cannot determine if they are successful.
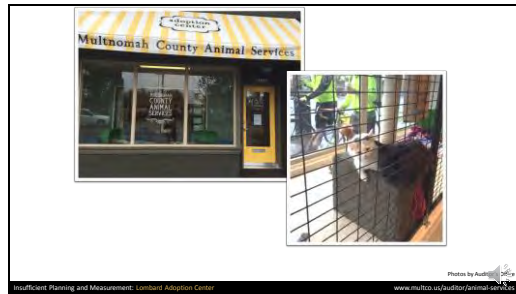
Slide 5

Two of the programs that exemplify the planning issues are the Lombard Adoption Center and Fast Tracking.

Slide 6

First we'll start with the Lombard Adoption Center.

Slide 7

In the summer of 2015, Animal Services opened a new adoption center in North Portland. Six months later, Animal Services closed it. There were many positive aspects about the adoption center, such as attractive street front signage and a display window to showcase adoptable animals. However, poor planning ultimately led to its closure.

Animal Services did not designate a specific project manager for the adoption center and they only held two planning meetings for the management team. We applaud the new management's decision to close the Lombard Adoption Center. Next, we will discuss some of the issues that plagued this project so that these issues may be avoided for any future adoptions centers.

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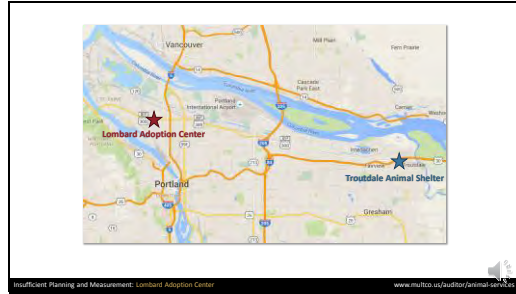
Due to insufficient staffing, the Lombard Adoption Center was only open three days a week, so the animals were transported back and forth from the main shelter in Troutdale.

Slide 9

Due to poor planning, Animal Services did not develop a staffing plan for the Lombard Adoption Center, so they decided to put the Community Outreach Manager in charge of the adoption center. This was a poor utilization of his skills and he lacked the animal handling background necessary to be successful in that role.

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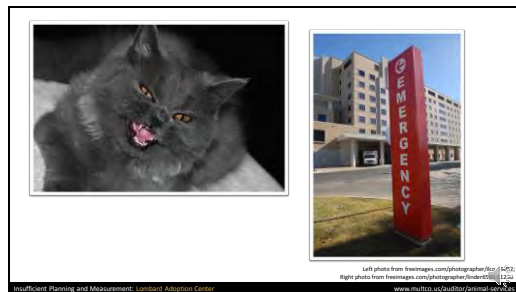
They were also ill-prepared for a cat attack that occurred, which put a volunteer in the hospital for 3 days. The employee who was usually there had not been trained to respond to this kind of incident and there was no safety equipment onsite.
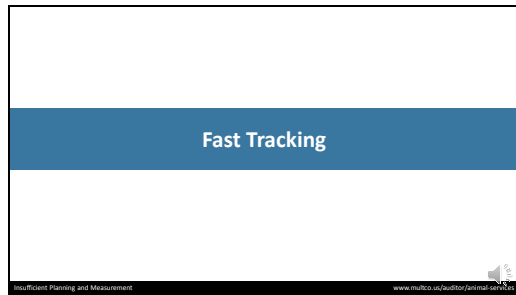
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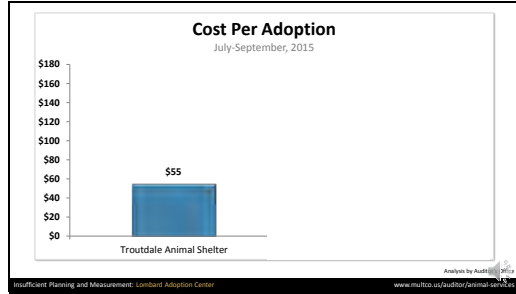
According to our calculations, it cost Animal Services about $55 per animal adoption at its main shelter in Troutdale. In contrast, the Lombard Adoption Center cost Animal Services nearly 3 times as much per animal adoption. While Animal Services management had no way of knowing how many animals would be adopted at Lombard, they did have the ability to estimate their costs. Given that the adoption center was only open three days per week and had a limited number of cages, decision makers might have been able to guess that the cost per adoption at the Lombard location would be significantly higher than at the main shelter.

Slide 12

Next we'll discuss Fast Tracking.

Slide 13

In late summer of 2015, Animal Services introduced the Fast Tracking process, which is supported by the ASPCA.
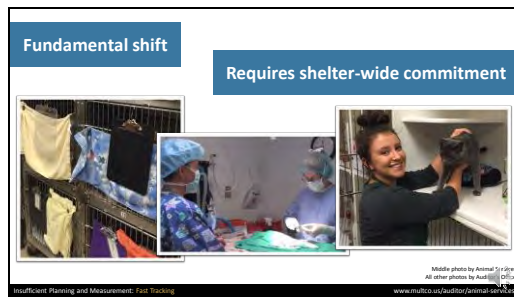
Slide 14

The goal of Fast Tracking is to get animals adopted more quickly in order to minimize the stress of being in a shelter.

Slide 15

In order to do this, shelters put high demand cats, such as kittens, at the front of the adoption area in highly visible cages. These cages are smaller and staff spend less time here since the cats will move quickly in and out of the shelter. Cats with less demand, such as those with chronic illness, are placed in the back of the adoption area. These cats take more time to find the right owner, so they need to be made comfortable during their longer stay. Their cages should be larger and staff should spend more time with them.

Slide 16

Fast Tracking is also a fundamental shift in how you operate and requires a shelter-wide commitment because it changes the intake process, when you schedule surgeries, and impacts the process flow of adoptions.

Slide 17

Many organizations have had success with Fast Tracking. One example is the Placer SPCA which had its length of stay decrease from 25 to 13 days. Also, 25% fewer cats needed medication because the less time spent in a shelter means less exposure to illness.

Slide 18
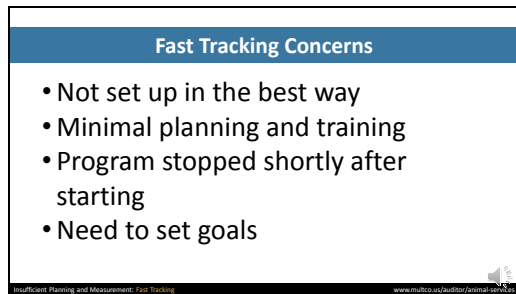
We have several concerns about the implementation of the Fast Tracking program. We believe they have not set up the cat adoption area in the best way. They kept the small cages in the back, which is where the cats with longer stays belong and put the larger cages in the front, which is where the fast-track cats should go.

We also believe that they did not set aside enough time to plan or train staff. Management provided staff with one presentation about the concept and then had one more meeting with staff. Because Fast Tracking is a fundamental shift in how you process animals, it requires significantly more planning and training.

Another concern we have is that during the month of December they decided to stop doing the Fast Tracking program because they were running a price promotion. We believe that the price promotion and Fast Tracking are compatible. Fast Tracking should be a full-time commitment.

Our final concern is that Animal Services management needs to set goals for Fast Tracking. If they don't set realistic goals, they will not be able to measure if Fast Tracking has been successful.

Slide 19

Recommendations

Planning documents should include:
- Clear and specific project mission that fits into the larger strategic goals
- Sufficient and appropriate staffing
- Staff training
- Realistic and measurable goals
- Cost/benefit analysis

Insufficient Planning and Measurement   www.multco.us/auditor/animal-services

For all future projects, we recommend that management should prepare planning documents that include:

- Clear and specific project mission that fits into the larger strategic goals
- Sufficient and appropriate staffing
- Staff training
- Realistic and measurable goals
- Cost/benefit analysis

Slide 20

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Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.

Improve training.

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. This segment is part of our video report. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
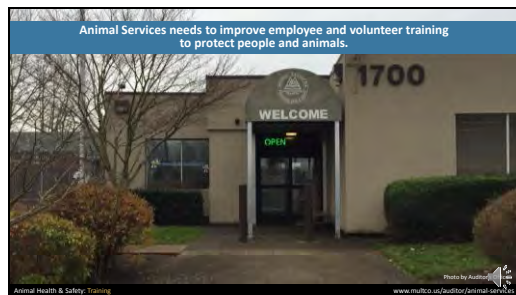
Slide 2

We found that Animal Services needs to improve employee and volunteer training to protect people and animals.

Slide 3
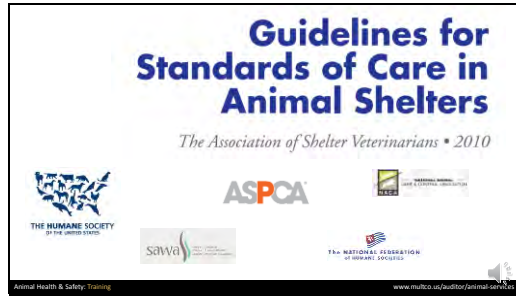
We used the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters to assess training.

Slide 4

The guidelines state that shelters should train employees and volunteers prior to them taking on responsibilities. Critical skills include:
- Understanding animal body language
- Handling animals humanely
- Recognizing symptoms of illness

Slide 5

We found that some employees received training. For example,
- Some employees attended national conferences
- Some employees were trained by coworkers
- Some watched educational videos
- And a few of employees received National Animal Care and Control Association training.

Slide 6
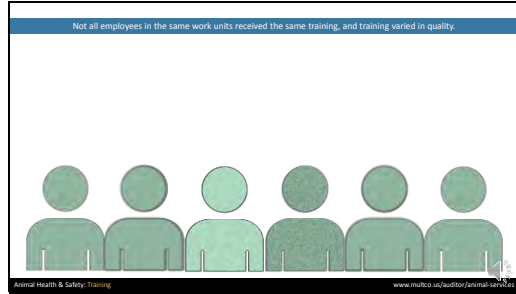
But it appeared that not all employees received the same training and that training varied in quality. We heard frequent comments about a lack of training in many areas.

Slide 7

In response, we sent a survey to all employees about the level of training they had received. One of their responses summed up the employee training experience overall:
"It really ends up being one employee training another and training being only as good as that employee. Everyone gets trained a little differently. People end up with different and varying amounts of knowledge and there isn't a singular place to go to that has all current updated information and policies."

Slide 8
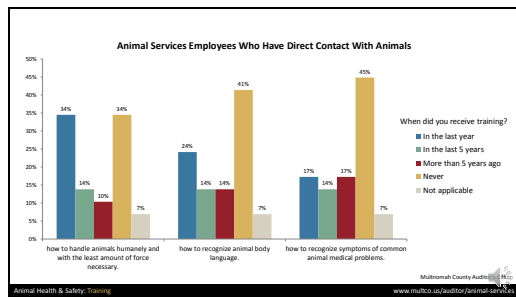
This chart shows the survey results for employees who have regular direct contact with animals. In our survey, we asked employees if they had received formal training on how to

Slide 9
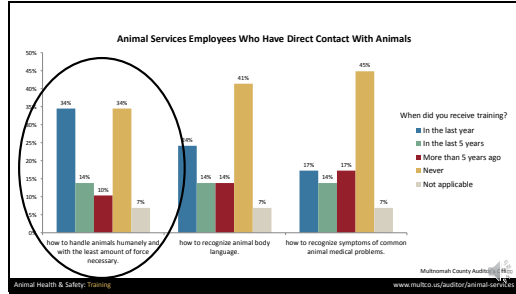
handle animals humanely,

Slide 10
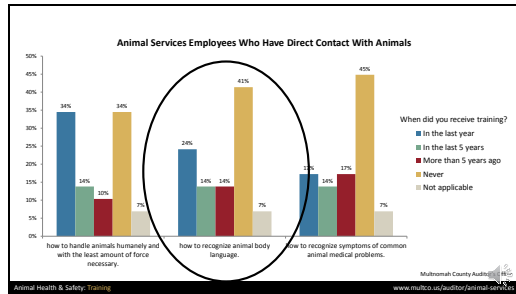
how to recognize animal body language,

Slide 11
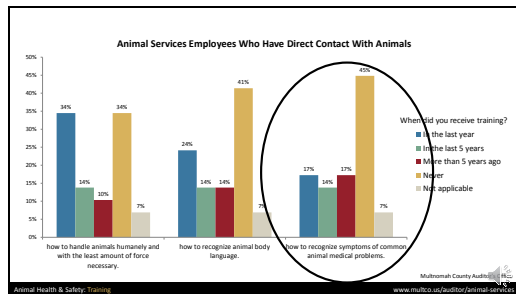
and how to recognize symptoms of common animal medical problems.

Slide 12
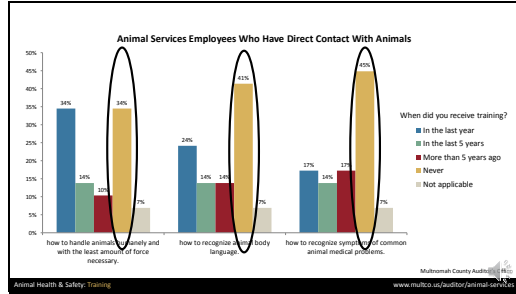
For each topic area, the gold columns represent employees who said they had never received formal training in the topic area. A large percentage of employees who worked directly with animals did not receive formal training that would help them ensure the health and safety of the animals in their care.
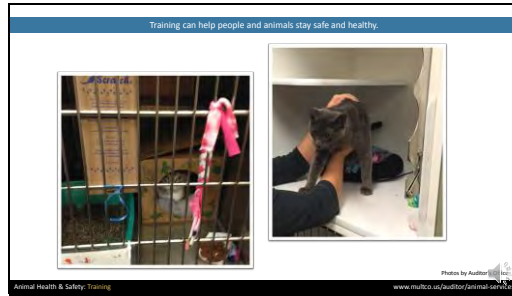
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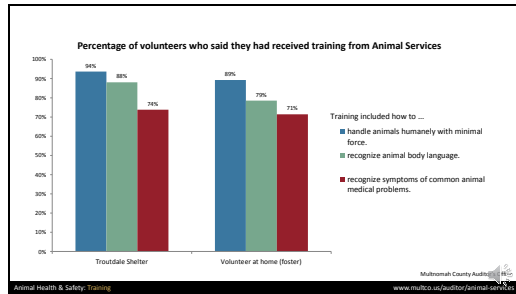
We also sent a survey to Animal Services' volunteers and asked them similar training questions.

Slide 14
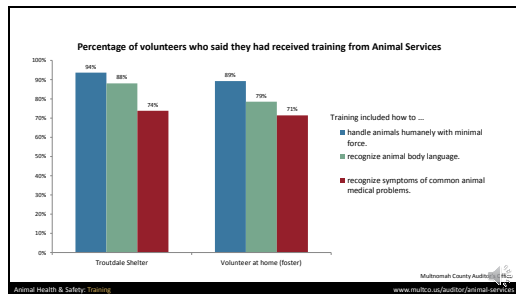
While the majority of volunteers said they have been trained, it appeared that there was still some room for improvement.

Slide 15

For example, we studied a random sample of bite incidents. This sample included several instances in which shelter cats in foster care injured their foster parent. The descriptions of these bites suggested that the foster parent may have handled the cats in ways that were not safe for the cats, and the cats bit out of a fear response. Better training on how to handle animals safely could reduce injuries to people and animals.

Slide 16

Employees and volunteers also need better training on how to recognize symptoms of common animal illnesses. In at least one instance, a foster parent and their other pets were exposed to an illness that can cross animal species. If Animal Services had provided better training to volunteers and employees on recognizing the symptoms of illnesses, this exposure could have been reduced and treatment could have been provided earlier.

Slide 17
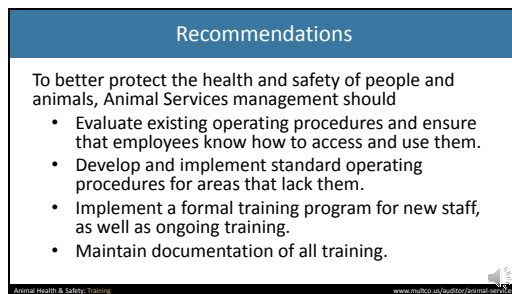
To better protect the health and safety of people and animals, Animal Services management should
- Evaluate existing operating procedures and ensure that employees know how to access and use them.
- Develop and implement standard operating procedures for areas that lack them.
- Implement a formal training program for new staff, as well as ongoing training.
- Maintain documentation of all training.

Slide 18

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
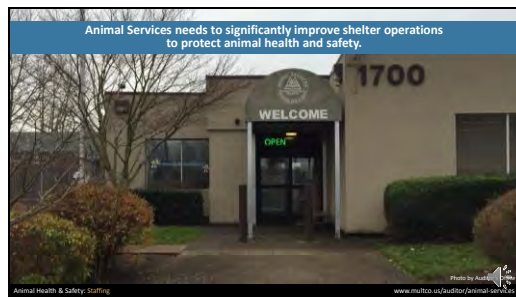
# Increase shelter staffing to improve animal care.

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. This segment is part of our video report. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
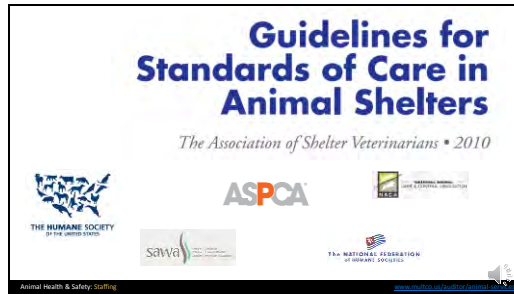
Slide 2

We found that Animal Services needs to significantly improve shelter operations to protect animal health and safety.
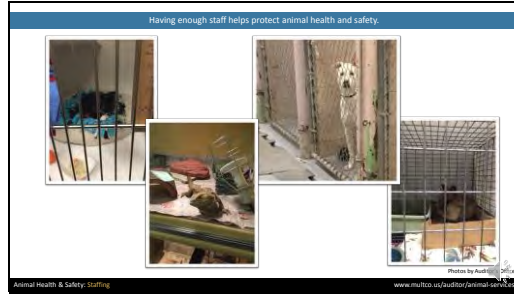
Slide 3

In this segment, we will talk about shelter staffing because having enough staff helps protect animal health and safety.

Slide 4

We used the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters to assess staffing.

Slide 5

Based on the guidelines, we looked at whether there were enough work hours to make sure that animals' daily basic needs were met. And we analyzed whether there was enough staffing to make sure that critical services, such as medical exams, were delivered promptly. We found that Animal Services needs to improve staffing to care for the animals in its shelter.

Slide 6
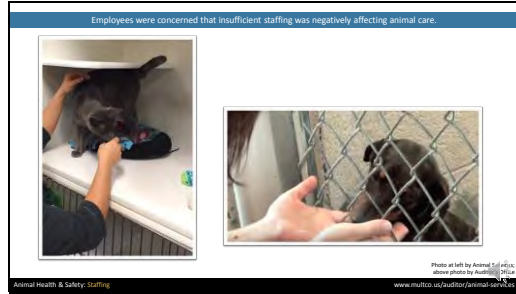
Shelter employees appeared extremely dedicated. During our audit, they repeatedly told us the shelter did not seem to have enough staff, which negatively affected animal care. The employees described the situation as difficult because it meant they could not give animals the quality care they wanted to provide.

Slide 7
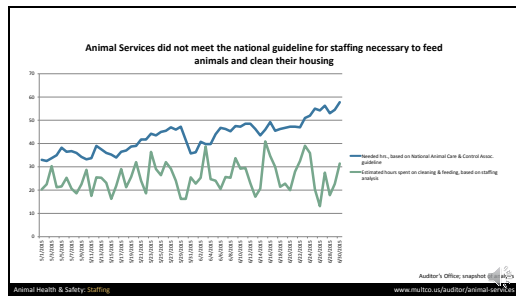
Staffing data confirmed this feeling. We compared estimated employee hours for feeding and cleaning to the national guideline. The chart here shows a two-month snapshot of our analysis.

Slide 8
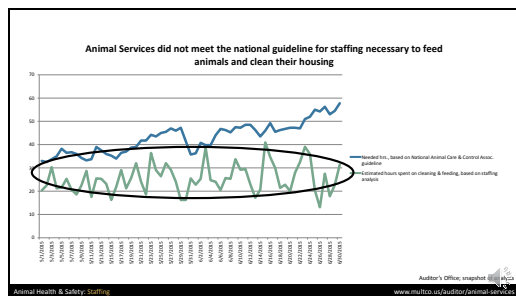
The green line on the chart shows the estimated hours spent on cleaning and feeding at the Animal Services shelter.

Slide 9
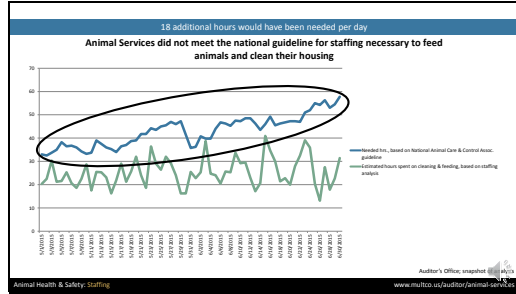
The total hours needed, based on the national guideline, are shown in the blue line. We found that an average of 18 additional hours would have been needed per day to meet the staffing guideline for cleaning and feeding.

Slide 10
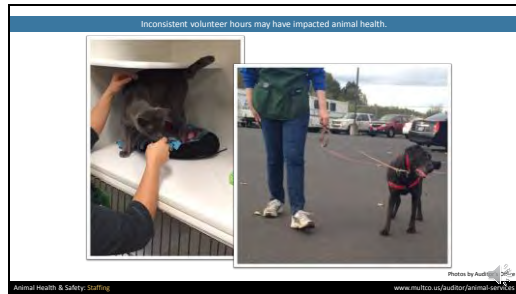
Animal Services relies on both paid employees and volunteers, whose service includes caring for foster animals in their homes and working in the shelter. For example, shelter management had assigned responsibility for animal enrichment to volunteers. But volunteers appeared to have inconsistent hours. Days without enough volunteer hours could negatively impact animal health.

Slide 11
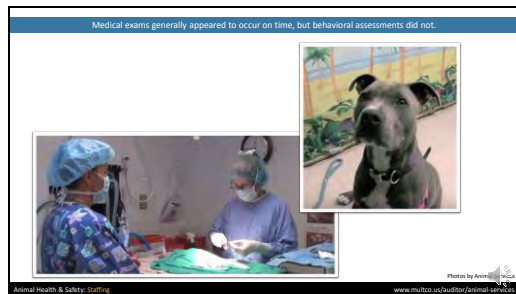
When we looked at whether the shelter provided critical medical and behavioral services on time, we found that medical exams generally occurred when expected, but behavior assessments did not.

Slide 12

One reason for the delay in providing behavior assessments appeared to be that the shelter did not have sufficient resources for behavioral care.

Slide 13
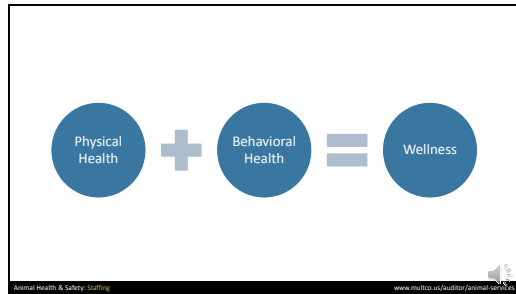
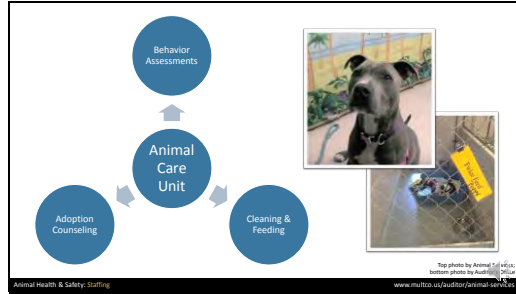Behavioral health and physical health are closely linked.

Slide 14
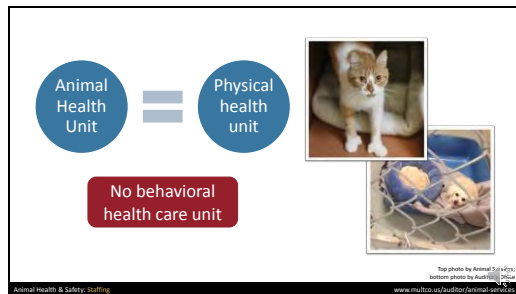
While the shelter's Animal Health unit focused on caring for the animals' physical well-being, it did not have clear responsibility for the animals' behavioral health, and the shelter did not have a separate behavioral health care unit.
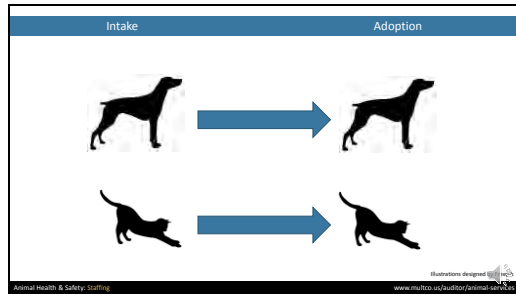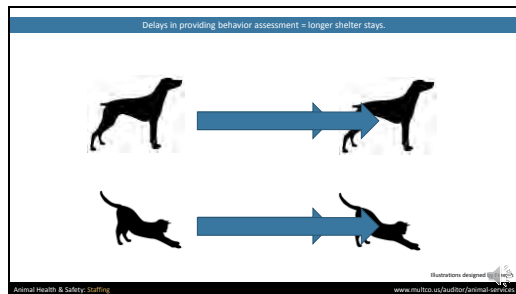
Slide 15

Without a behavioral health unit, Animal Services had provided for some behavioral care needs through its Animal Care unit. This unit had the behavioral health responsibility of assessing cat and dog behaviors, but was also responsible for tasks like cleaning and feeding and adoption counseling. Due to apparent understaffing, Animal Care staff members had been pulled away from assessments to perform their other duties.

Slide 16

Delays in providing behavior assessments were a problem because assessments have to take place before an animal can move to the adoption side of the shelter.

Slide 17

So any delay in receiving a behavior assessment can extend the amount of time the animal will be at the shelter. And the longer animals are at the shelter, the greater their risk of developing physical and behavioral problems.

Slide 18

Based on our evaluation of shelter staffing, we recommend that Animal Services should

- Comprehensively study total staffing needs, and advocate to the Board of County Commissioners for increased staffing as necessary to help protect the health of the animals in shelter care, including
    - Increasing staffing for cleaning and feeding to meet National Animal Care & Control Association guidelines.
    - Ensuring adequate staffing to provide the shelter's animals with daily enrichment and consistently prompt behavioral health care.

and the Board of County Commissioners should

- Provide Animal Services with the funding to increase staffing as needed to meet minimum national standards for providing care to shelter animals.

Slide 19

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
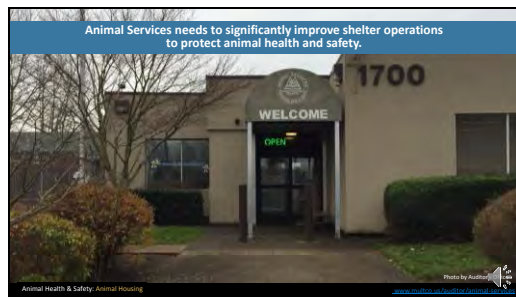
Improve animal housing and capacity.

Slide 1

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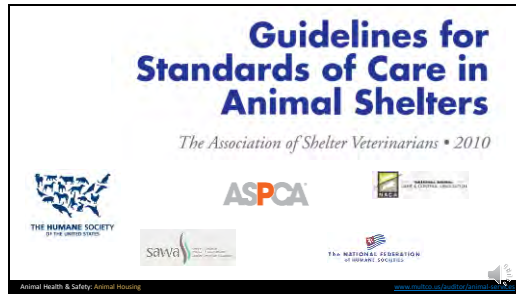
Slide 2

We found that Animal Services needs to significantly improve shelter operations to protect animal health and safety.
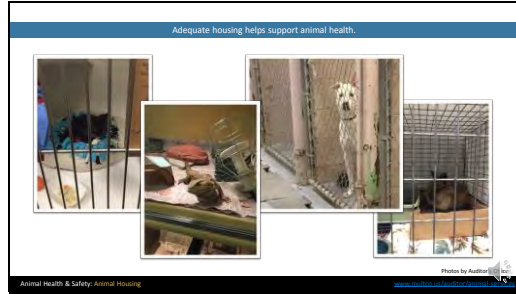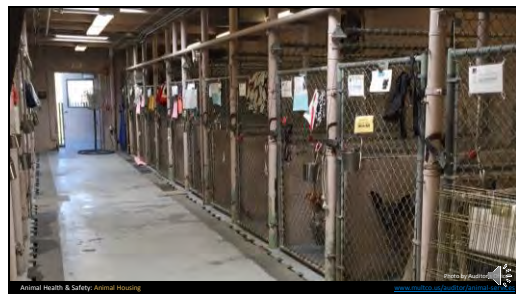
Slide 3

In this segment, we will talk about animal housing because appropriate housing helps support animal health.

Slide 4

We used the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters to assess housing.
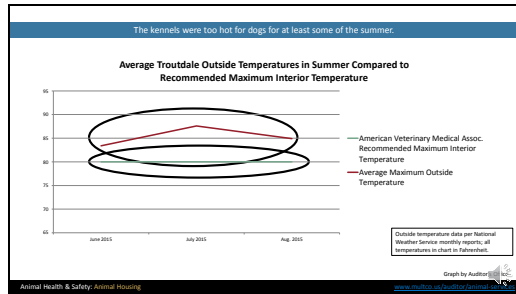
Slide 5


First we will look at housing for dogs.

Slide 6

We found that dogs could eat and sleep away from where they used the bathroom, which the shelter guidelines advise.
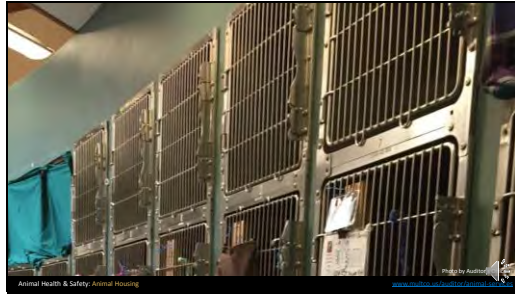
Slide 7

But the housing could be too hot in the summer because there is no air conditioning in the kennels. The red line on this chart shows the average outside temperatures between June and August 2015 for Troutdale, where the shelter is located. Each month, the average temperature was well above the 80 degree interior temperature that the American Veterinary Medical Association recommends.

Slide 8
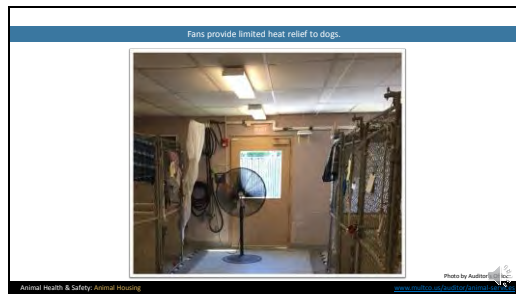
Fans were used in the kennel walkways, which can help people feel cooler because fans evaporate sweat from our skin, but dogs can only sweat through their paws, so fans provide them with little relief. Management has informed us that they are addressing this issue by installing cooling mechanisms by June 2016.

Slide 9

Now let's turn to the housing for cats.

Slide 10
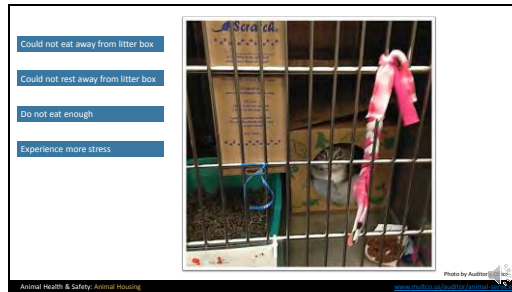
One of the most common housing problems at animal shelters is cat housing that is too small, and so it was not surprising that we found this problem at the Animal Services shelter. When cat housing is too small, like the space shown here, there is not enough room for cats to eat and sleep away from their litter boxes. As a result, they tend not to eat enough and experience more stress, which can lead to medical and behavioral issues.

Slide 11
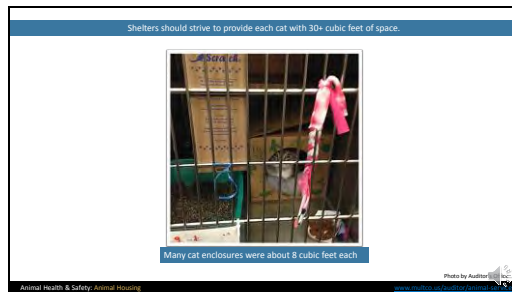
The shelter care guidelines advise that shelters should provide each cat with 30 cubic feet of space or more. The shelter's limited space would make it difficult to meet this standard. We found that many cat enclosures at the shelter were about 8 cubic feet each.

Slide 12
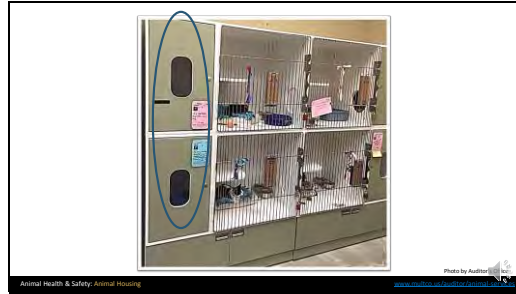
The guidelines also advise that shelters can improve cat housing by using enclosures that are double-sided or compartmentalized.

Slide 13
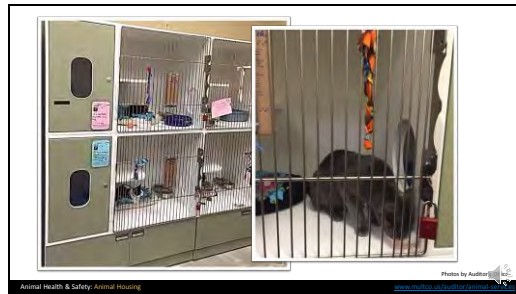
The shelter recently purchased a number of enclosures that meet this guideline by providing separate litter box areas. This is a positive step. We encourage Animal Services to continue purchasing more of the compartmentalized enclosures, and to meet the shelter guidelines' space recommendations.

Slide 14

Now we will turn to keeping animal species separate. Keeping species like cats and dogs separate throughout their shelter stay is important because it helps reduce the stress they experience.

Slide 15
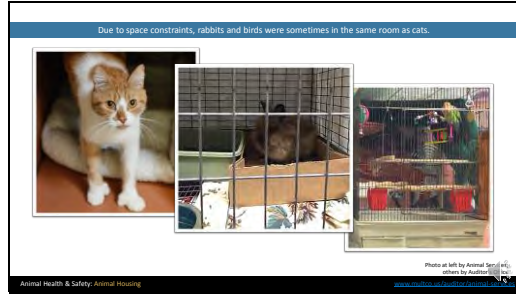
Predatory animals like cats should not be housed with prey species, such as rabbits and birds. At Animal Services' shelter, we observed that these prey species were sometimes housed in the same intake area as cats, apparently because the shelter did not have enough space to house them away from one another.

Slide 16

During our observations, the shelter was not full.

Slide 17

But at times in the past, the shelter has been full and had to turn away animals brought in by Animal Control Officers. This can be a problem particularly when there is an animal hoarding situation and a large number of animals need to come in at once. There needs to be better contingency planning to make sure animals are not turned away.
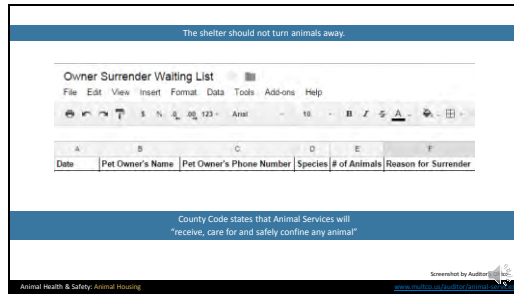
Slide 18
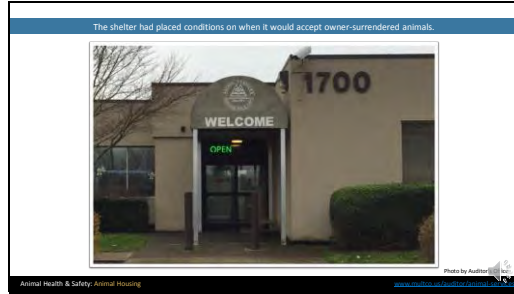
There are also instances when people can no longer care for their pets and bring them to the shelter. In 2010, Animal Services passed an internal policy that it would accept owner-surrendered animals only under specific conditions.

Slide 19

As a result, Animal Services has put animals on a waitlist when there was room at the shelter. This practice appeared to conflict with the County Code, which states that Animal Services needs to "receive, care for and safely confine any animal" delivered to them.

The practice also seemed at odds with how Animal Services markets itself, which is as the County's only open-door shelter—the only shelter in the County that does not turn away animals. When space is available at the shelter, Animal Services should not turn animals away. And when space is an issue, contingency housing could help the shelter address its legal obligation.

Slide 20
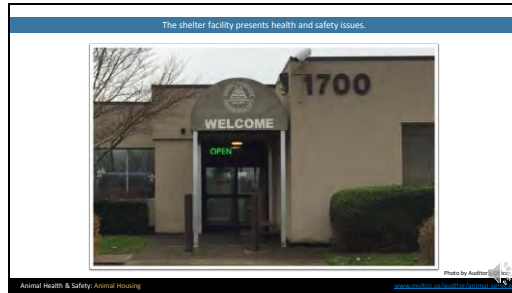
The shelter facility plays a part in the housing issues we identified. We did not focus our audit on the facility because it appeared well-known that it is beyond its years of useful service. Our focus on animal health and safety obligates us to note that the shelter presents serious safety concerns. During our audit, we alerted Risk Management and that office conducted a shelter visit and issued a Safety Site Visit report.

Slide 21
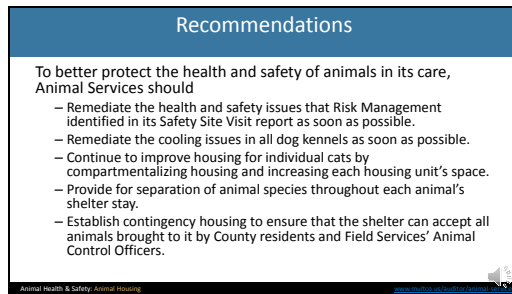
We recommend that Animal Services take a number of housing-related steps to better protect animal health and safety:

- As soon as possible, remediate the health and safety issues that Risk Management identified in its Safety Site Visit report.
- As soon as possible, remediate the cooling issues in all dog kennels.
- Continue to improve housing for individual cats by compartmentalizing housing and increasing each housing unit's space.
- Provide for separation of animal species throughout each animal's shelter stay.
- Establish contingency housing to ensure that the shelter can accept all animals brought to it by County residents and Field Services' Animal Control Officers.

Slide 22

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
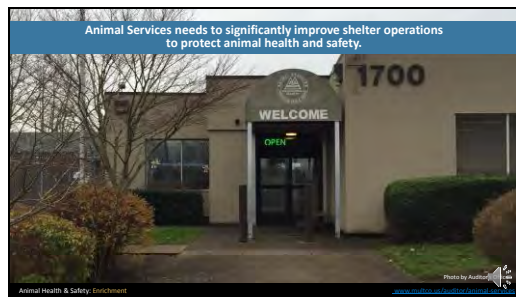
Provide daily animal enrichment.

Slide 1

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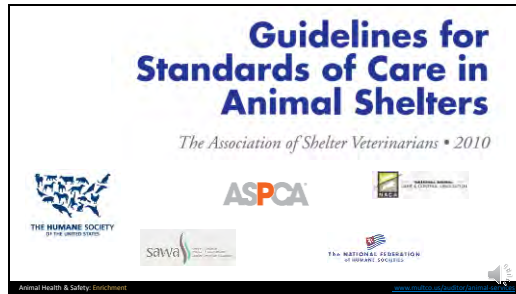
Slide 2

We found that Animal Services needs to significantly improve shelter operations to protect animal health and safety.

Slide 3

In this segment, we will talk about animal enrichment because providing animals with regular enrichment helps protect their health.
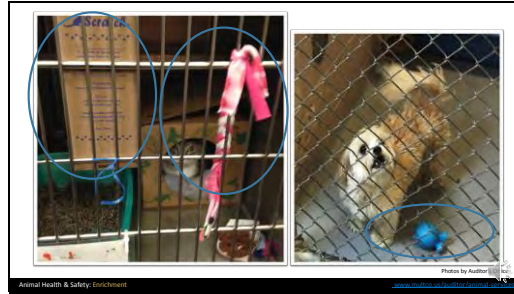
Slide 4

We used the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters to assess enrichment.
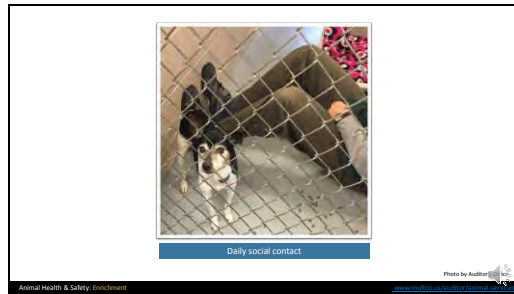
Slide 5

Enrichment is a process for improving shelter animals' environment and behavioral care. We found that Animal Services had taken steps to improve the environment. For example, housing included comfortable resting places
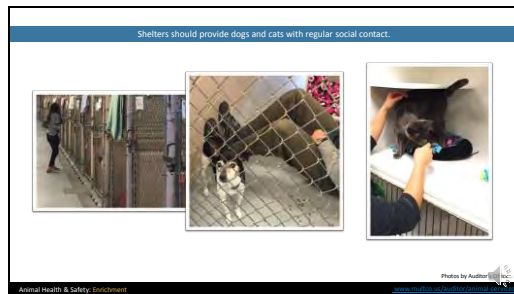
Slide 6

and the shelter provided animals with items for species-typical behaviors. Cats had scratching posts and toys, and dogs had toys to chew on.
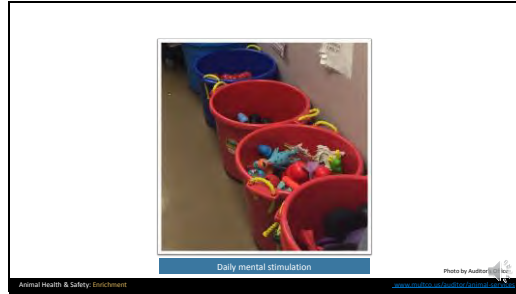
Slide 7

But, we also found that Animal Services provided poor enrichment overall. According to the guidelines, at a minimum, enrichment for cats and dogs should include regular daily social contact with people.

Slide 8

Even in cases where the shelter has to confine animals for behavioral reasons, it should still provide them with positive social interactions without removing them from their enclosures.
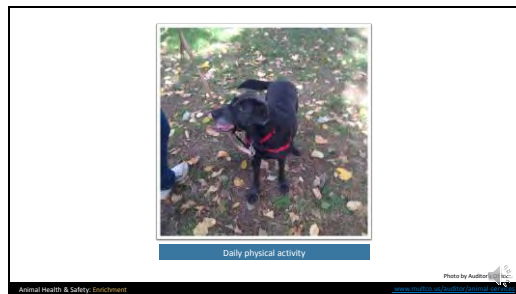
Slide 9

Enrichment should also include regular daily mental stimulation
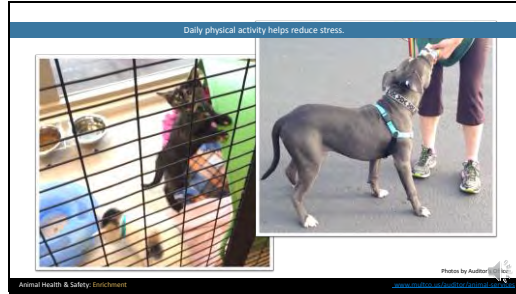
Slide 10

like the food acquisition challenges shown here, which provide animals with chances for learning and help reduce boredom.

Slide 11

And enrichment should include regular physical activity

Slide 12   in each animal's enclosure, or outside.

Slide 13   When shelter animals do not receive regular social contact, mental stimulation, or physical activity,

Slide 14   they are more likely to experience long-term stress, which can lead to serious medical and behavior problems and affect their adoptability.
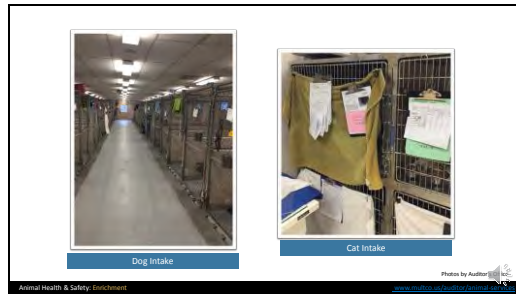
Slide 15

Animal Services did not appear to meet these minimum requirements for all cats and dogs. Insufficient staffing appeared to be an underlying cause.

Slide 16

First, we will talk about the shelter's intake areas, which is where animals stay when they enter the shelter.
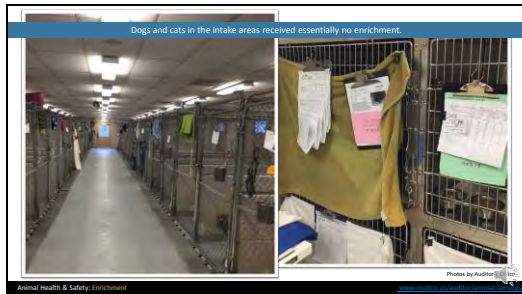
Slide 17

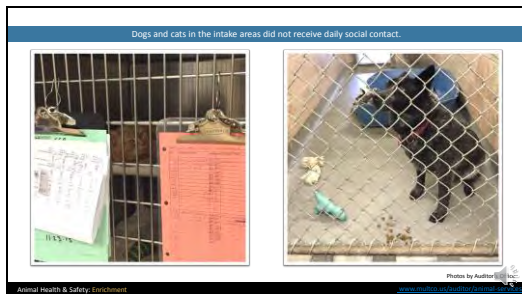An animal's time in intake can be several days or less

Slide 18

or as long as several weeks.

Slide 19

Regardless of the length of time they were in intake, we found that dogs and cats in these areas appeared to receive essentially no enrichment.

Slide 20

Animals in intake did not receive daily social contact. They saw people during cleaning and feeding, but the shelter care guidelines state that daily cleaning and feeding activities are not ways to provide social contact to animals.
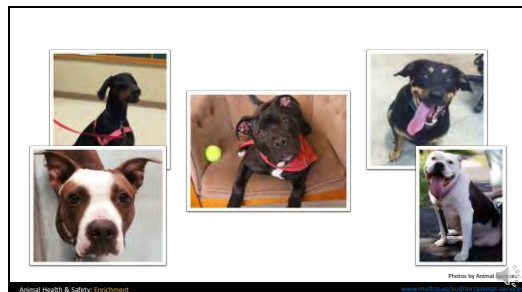
Slide 21
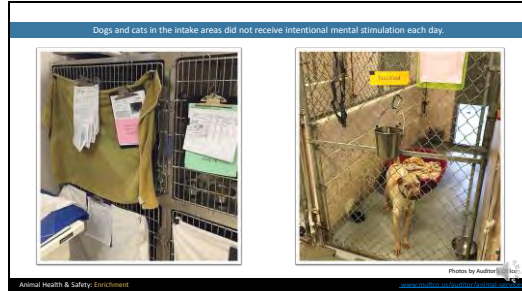
They did not receive intentional mental stimulation each day. Each animal had at least one toy, but Animal Services did not change the toys regularly, which can help prevent boredom and stress. Sometimes Animal Services played music for the cats in intake, but this was not consistent.
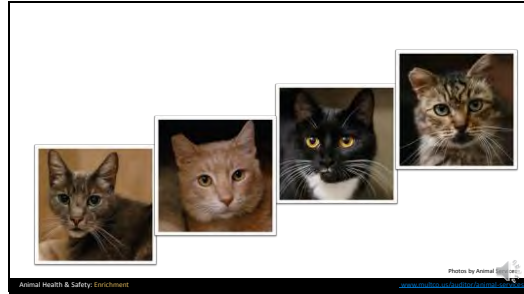
Slide 22
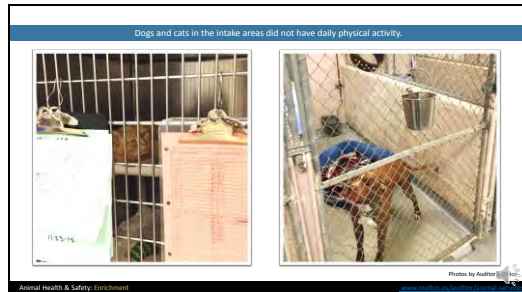
The animals in intake did not have daily physical activity. A few dogs had gone on walks with employees or experienced volunteers, but this was not a common practice. Cats did not leave their enclosures for physical activity, and in the majority of these enclosures, there was not enough space to move more than a couple of steps.
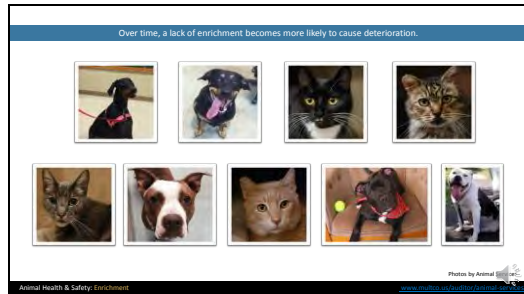
Slide 23

Some of the dogs we observed were in intake for one week or more.

Slide 24

As were some of the cats we observed.

Slide 25

As an animal's shelter stay gets longer, the potential for stress increases, which means there is greater potential for physical and mental deterioration. Enrichment can help reduce this potential. Unfortunately, we observed firsthand how the lack of enrichment over time affected animals.
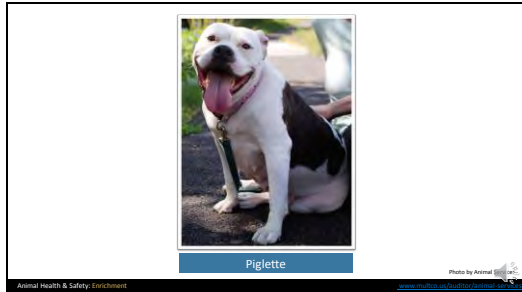
Slide 26
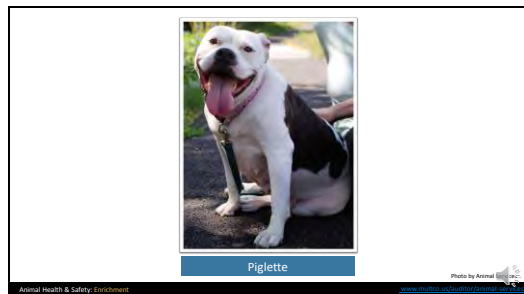
For example, this is Piglette. She had been in intake with no documented enrichment for a month prior to our observation.   During our visits to intake, she was always huddled toward the front of her kennel. Due to her behavior, Animal Care employees were concerned she was deteriorating.

Slide 27
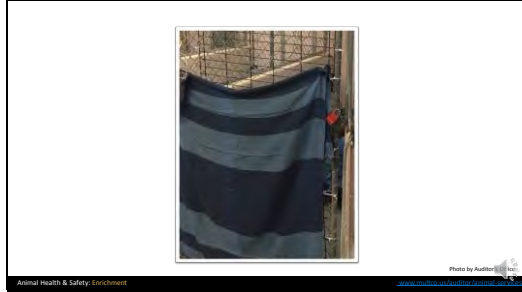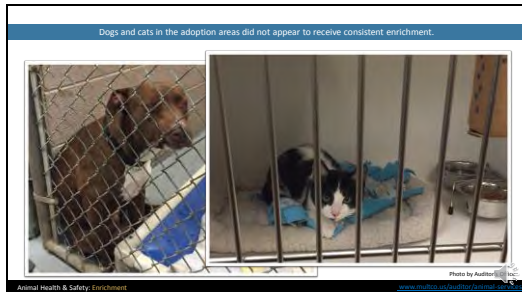

They hung a sheet like this one to help block her view of the other dogs to reduce visual stimulation and provide some stress relief.

Slide 28

They also notified Animal Health about their concerns. At the end of our observation, Piglette moved to the shelter's adoption side.

Slide 29

While animals on the adoption side were more likely to receive enrichment, it was still inconsistent.

Slide 30

Some dogs in the adoption area appeared to go multiple days without a walk.

Gotham
1 walk in 9 days
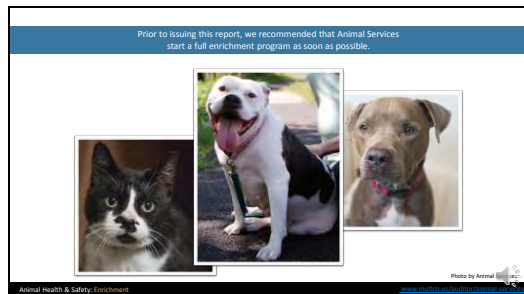
Animal Health & Safety: Enrichment

For example, Animal Services told us that all dogs up for adoption went on 2 walks per day. This did not appear to be the case for the majority of dogs. Some dogs had multiple days without documented walks. For example, we observed Gotham on the Adoption side for 9 days. During this period, Gotham appeared to go on only 1 walk.

Slide 31

Some cats appeared to go multiple days without enrichment.

Donovan
4 enrichment sessions in 10 days

Animal Health & Safety: Enrichment

Adoptable cats also appeared to receive inconsistent enrichment. Some cats had multiple days without documented enrichment sessions. For example, we observed Donovan for 10 days. During this period, he appeared to have 4 enrichment sessions.

Slide 32

Prior to issuing this report, we recommended that Animal Services start a full enrichment program as soon as possible.

Animal Health & Safety: Enrichment

Because these findings made our office very concerned for the welfare of the shelter's animals, we reported them to Animal Services before completing our audit. We also recommended at that time that Animal Services institute a full enrichment program for all shelter animals as soon as possible.

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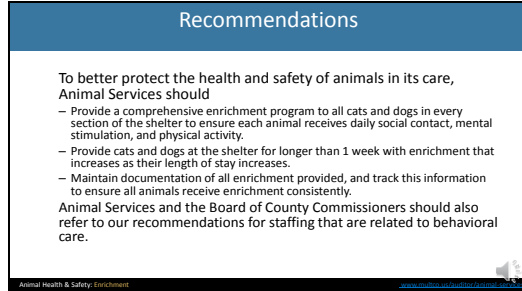
With this report, we want to reiterate that earlier recommendation and build on it. We recommend that Animal Services

- Provide a comprehensive enrichment program to all cats and dogs in every section of the shelter to ensure each animal receives daily social contact, mental stimulation, and physical activity.
- Provide cats and dogs at the shelter for longer than 1 week with enrichment that increases as their length of stay increases.
- Maintain documentation of all enrichment provided, and track this information to ensure all animals receive enrichment consistently.

Animal Services and the Board of County Commissioners should also refer to our recommendations for staffing that are related to behavioral care.

Slide 34

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
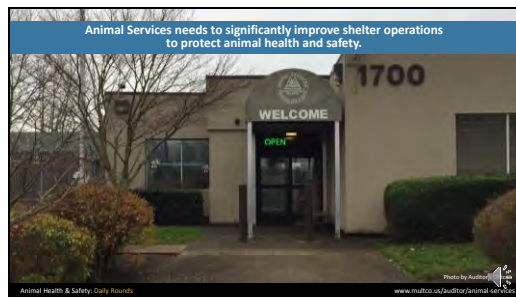
Institute daily shelter rounds.

Slide 1

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office conducted a performance audit of Multnomah County Animal Services. This segment is part of our video report. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.
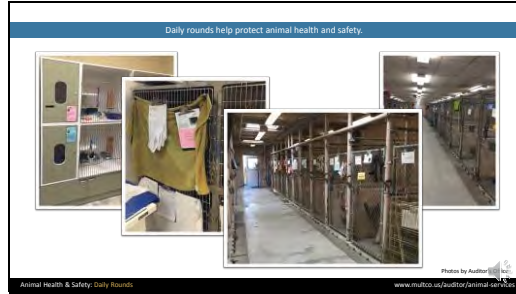
Slide 2

We found that Animal Services needs to significantly improve shelter operations to protect animal health and safety.
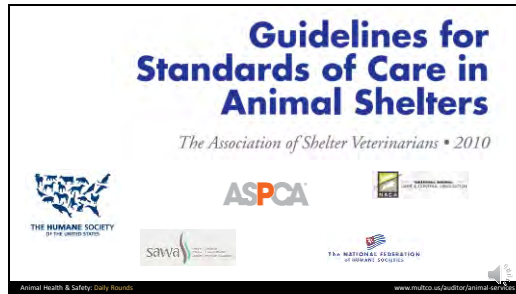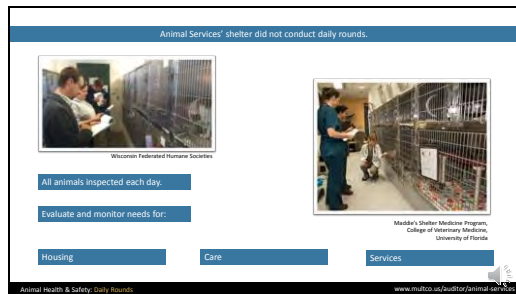
Slide 3

In this segment, we will talk about daily rounds. They help protect animal health and safety by ensuring all animals receive the daily care they need.

Slide 4

We used the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters to assess daily inspections and rounds.

Slide 5

Based on the guidelines, we'd expect to find that the shelter inspected each animal each day to evaluate and monitor needs for housing, care, or services.
We found that the Animal Services shelter did not conduct daily inspections or rounds. Successfully instituting daily rounds would require commitment from shelter management and sufficient staffing.

Slide 6

According to the guidelines, daily inspections or rounds are important because they enable the early recognition of problems or needs,
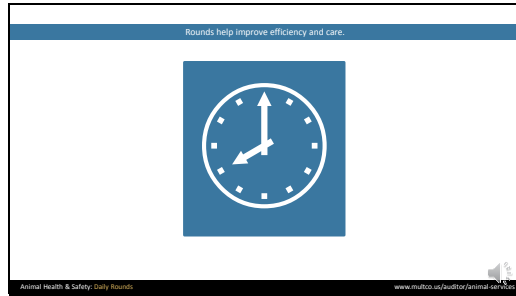
Slide 7

as well as prompt animal evaluation and movement through the shelter.
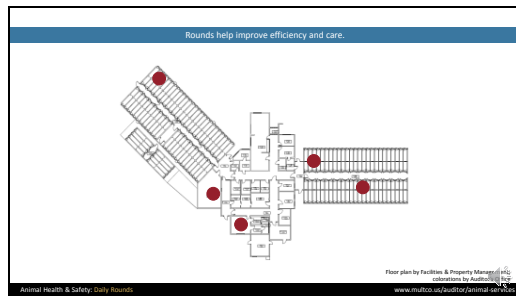
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The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or ASPCA, advises that shelter daily rounds are a best practice with many benefits.
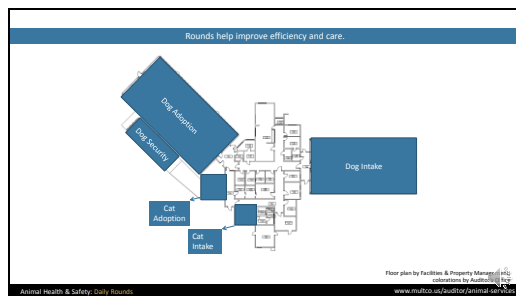
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For example, they help improve efficiency and ultimately result in time savings because,
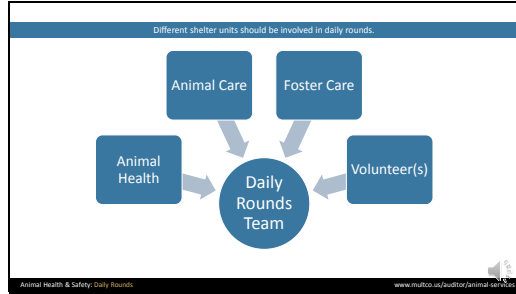
Slide 10

rather than constantly putting out fires all over the shelter,

Slide 11

shelter staff have an organized process for attending to animals in each section of the shelter.
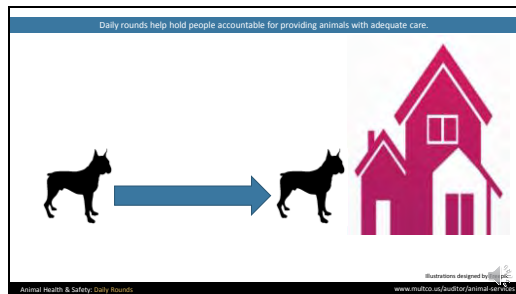
Slide 12

The ASPCA recommends that people from different units in the shelter conduct rounds together. This supports communication among the units, enables shared input, and supports shared responsibility and accountability for decisions.
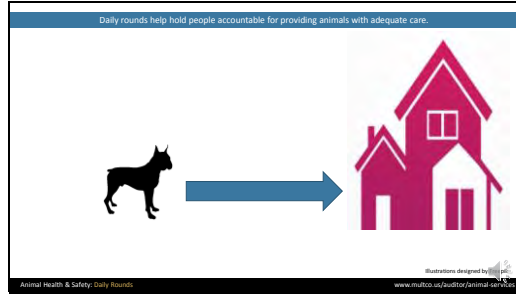
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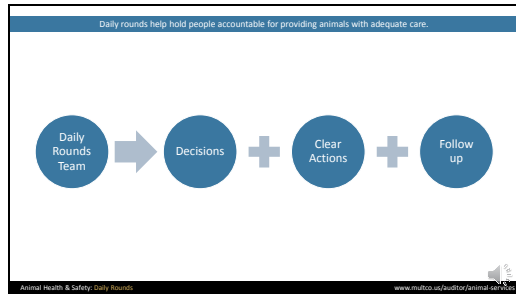
And the ASPCA also recommends that daily rounds should result in clear and specific decisions with deadlines. The purpose of these deadlines is not to give an animal a time limit for a specific action, but to hold people accountable for making things happen.

Slide 14

For example, if a deadline for an animal is that he be put into foster care by the end of the week,

Slide 15

and he isn't in foster care by then, this should set off some kind of alarm in the shelter that more needs to be done to help the animal.

Slide 16

Without a daily process for assessing every animal's needs for medical health and behavioral health, it is more likely for problems to go unnoticed.

Slide 17

For example, this is Bowie. He came to the shelter as a stray on May 17, 2015. He was at the shelter until August 4, 2015, for a total length of stay of 79 days. The standard is that a long-term stay is one to two weeks or more, so Bowie clearly had a long-term stay. And as length of stay increases, the risk of problems occurring for animals also increases.

Slide 18
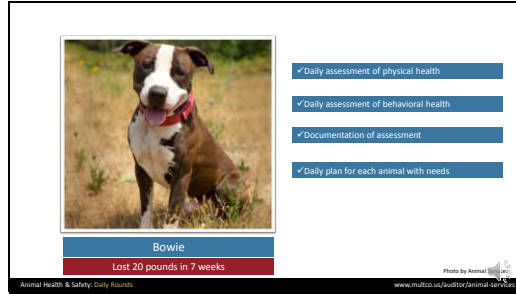
Due to his behavior in his kennel, only one volunteer appeared comfortable working with Bowie. That volunteer noted that Bowie appeared to be losing weight. In early July, she weighed him. Bowie had lost 20 pounds in about 2 months. It is likely that with a daily rounds program in place, Bowie would not have experienced such a significant weight loss. This is because daily rounds include assessment of each animal's physical and behavioral health, documentation of that assessment, and developing a plan for action for each animal with needs that day.

Slide 19
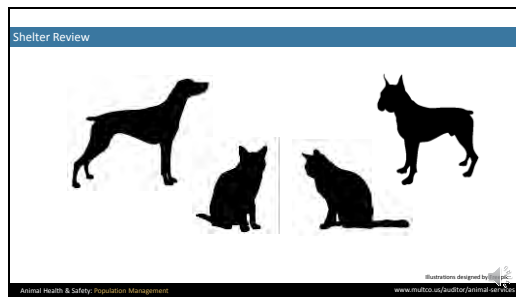
Daily rounds might also have reduced the need for the shelter review process. The shelter instituted the shelter review process to evaluate all animals who may constitute a potential risk to people or animals in the community, or a condition of health that compromises the animal's quality of life.

Slide 20
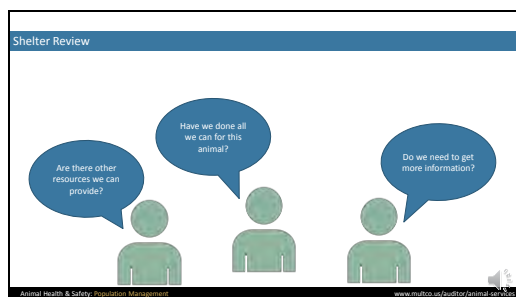
During a shelter review meeting, staff discussed the particular animal's case and determined if they had done everything they could for the animal.

Slide 21
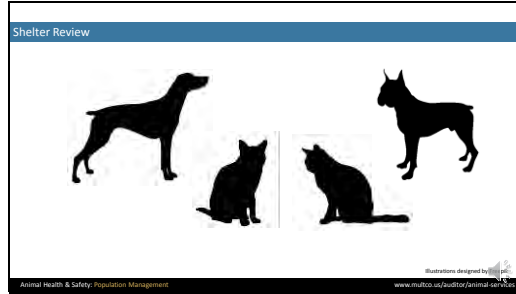
In our opinion, the shelter review process occurred too late in an animal's stay. If the shelter implemented daily rounds, they would likely detect problems earlier and when they were more likely to be treatable, rather than attempting to deal with problems after animals had deteriorated to the point where the shelter considered euthanasia.

Slide 22
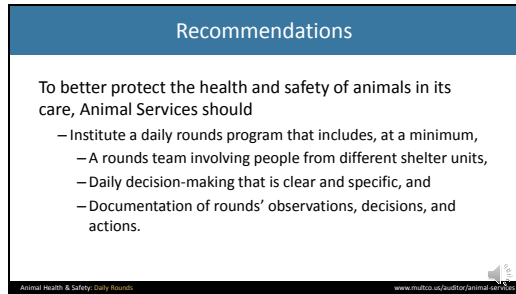
Daily rounds help ensure animals receive the care they need. Therefore, we recommend that Animal Services should

- Institute a daily rounds program that includes, at a minimum,
  - A rounds team involving people from different shelter units,
  - Daily decision-making that is clear and specific, and
  - Documentation of rounds' observations, decisions, and actions.

Slide 23

Thank you for viewing this segment. You can find other segments of our report by visiting our website.