



EXISTING FACILITY CONDITIONS



Photo above: Front elevation of the existing Jackson County Animal Shelter, Sylva, North Carolina

A site visit to evaluate and visually inspect the existing shelter and to observe its functionality and condition was done between February 24 and 25, 2016. The existing facility was constructed about 30 years ago, or around 1986, and consists of two basic function areas. The first function area includes the lobby, administration, breakroom/restroom, etc. The second function area includes the dog and cat housing, grooming, and animal receiving. Both functions are in one structure built with load bearing masonry walls, wood truss roof structure and shingle roofing. The lobby area is of stud construction with gypsum board finish. The HVAC system in the dog housing was added later and not part of the original construction.

The shelter was designed using some concepts that are no longer recommended for modern animal shelter construction, such as the open trench drains located at the front of the runs and in the public the walkway. There is insufficient separation of animal populations for adoption, healthy holding, isolation and quarantine. There are very limited acoustical design measures to help control noise within the dog housing area.

Additionally, the condition of the building has declined largely due to age and the extreme wear common in animal shelters that are in heavy use on a 24 hour basis for 365 days per year. Some examples of outdated design features and deterioration include the following.



RECOMMENDATION REGARDING RENOVATION OF THE EXISTING SHELTER

The existing Jackson County Animal Shelter is not a good candidate for renovation or expansion. This conclusion is based on a visual inspection of the shelter and site, knowledge of current animal facility standards including the *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* published by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and the current physical condition of the building.

The site does not lend itself to additional building or parking or facility functioning such as a sally port addition. Further, the separation in the dog kennels and cat housing, to accommodate adoption animals from animals in healthy hold, isolation and aggressive dogs, would be difficult.

Based on the list of improvements (below) that would be required, the consultants believe that to renovate or expand the shelter would not be good use of County funds.

Improvements that would be required, should renovation be attempted, include:

- Bring the structure up to current building and energy codes, which includes the required thermal insulation, structural integrity and handicapped accessibility as dictated by law.
- Reconfigure space to achieve better functional spaces for proper flow and function of the public, staff and deliveries.
- Replace the kenneling system with a stainless steel system, which is easier to clean and maintain and lasts longer.
- Create a new trench drain system with covers on the trench drains.
- Resurface the kennel floors with a seamless epoxy flooring system that will make it easier to clean and sanitize the kennels.
- Install an impervious finish on the dog kennel walls.
- Install new finish materials including flooring and paint, etc., as appropriate for specific function areas.
- Install new HVAC system in the interior portion of the dog kennel and provide appropriately zoned ventilation for cat areas.



separation of animals into groups for isolation, quarantine, or aggressive and healthy hold and adoptions. These categories help maintain a healthy and safe environment. Also, there is a certain number of temporary housing spaces needed to accommodate animals during the intake process and for veterinary treatment or recovery.

Current Shelter Program Related Influences on Housing Capacity: Finally, it is most important to consider what is currently happening at the shelter and how animal housing capacity affects the services being provided to the community. This is housing capacity that is needed to serve current programs or any growth in programs.

A review of recent Length of Stay (LOS) reports, which document how long animals remain in the shelter, demonstrates that the LOS is longer than the 3 day mandatory period. The average LOS for all dogs run 6.7 to 9.8 days. For cats the LOS is much longer at 15.3 to 18.5 days. In one instance, there were 2 dogs that combined had a LOS of 69.7 days. This exemplifies how a situation, such an animal abuse or neglect court case, can tie up otherwise available housing for animals that are healthy and adoptable or eligible for transport.

Jackson County does a good job transferring adoptable animals to other local shelters such as Catman2 and the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society or through the ARF transport program. In 2015, 70 animals, mostly cats, were transferred to other local shelters for adoption. This cooperative practice is helpful in efforts to increase live release rates and lower euthanasia rates. However, both Catman2 and Cashiers-Highlands are limited-admission shelters and cannot be expected to provide housing space for all adoptable animals entering the Jackson County Animal Shelter.

Table 4 below shows the shelter capacity recommended to provide sufficient animal housing to accommodate growth in demand for services to meet statutory requirements of the 3 day holding period, to provide proper separation of animal population, and to meet the current programs operating at the shelter.

Table 5: Animal Housing Capacity					
	Average Daily Intake	Minimum Housing Required to Meet 3-Day Holding Period	Minimum Housing Required to Meet 25% Growth	Program Housing	Housing Desired to Sustain Programs
Cats	4	12	15	35 cats 5 kittens	50 cats 5 kittens
Dogs	5	15	19	26 dogs 5 puppies	45 dogs 5 puppies

Current Services Needing More Animal Housing: A review of programs / services through the Jackson County Animal Shelter showed that additional housing is needed for the following activities:

- **Dog housing for healthy and adoptable dogs as they wait for transport to other shelters.** Jackson County has a surplus of adoptable dogs while the population of the area is not large enough to generate enough adoptions for these dogs. In order to increase its live release rate and lower euthanasia rates, the Animal Control department participates in a transport program for the dogs to other shelters. It is preferable for these dogs from Jackson County to be



A site of approximately 2-1/2 to 5 acres should be adequate for development. The site should also have access to adequate water, sewer and power utilities.

Animal Housing Capacity and Shelter Size to Accommodate Current Needs and Growth: An animal shelter should be adequately sized to accommodate all the functions required to house and care for the animals and conduct the business of animal services. Animal housing capacity is needed for approximately 50 cats and 45 dogs. These housing units do not include temporary holding, such as for intake, isolation or veterinary treatment, that is required to in-process and access animal health.

The capacity was determined by averaging the yearly intake for four years, assigning a percentage of the total housing requirement to separate housing types (adoption, holding, isolation, etc.) and applying a 25% growth factor to accommodate an increase in demand for services. A mandatory three (3) day animal holding period was used for stray and healthy holding animal housing categories and an extended 14 day holding period was used when possible for adoptable animal housing categories. Whenever possible adoptable animals should be held for extended periods to increase their chances for re-homing or transfer to partner groups.

Total square foot size of the new spaces as shown on the conceptual floor plan is estimated at approximately 17,012 square feet. This area includes 981 square feet of training/classroom/meeting room which may be considered for possible future expansion. It also provides additional cat housing up to a total of 76 cats. The spaces for cats are maximized because this is where there is the greatest shortage of housing.

PROGRAM FUNCTION SPACES

The program requirements established by Jackson County during the programming design charrette emphasize seven separate function areas. The areas and square feet (SF) are listed below.

1. Lobby and Public Spaces	1,561 SF
2. Dog Housing	5,286 SF (44 dogs, 10 small dogs/puppies)
3. Cat Housing	973 SF (74 – 76 cats)
4. Staff Office and Service Spaces	
Administrative Spaces	390 SF
Animal Care	629 SF
Facility Support Space	1,039 SF
5. In Processing / Field Operations	1,841 SF
6. Classroom / Multi-purpose Room	981 SF
7. Wellness and Spay / Neuter Clinic	<u>1,470 SF</u>
Subtotal square foot function space	14,170 SF
Circulation space required	1,796 SF
Estimated wall area	<u>1,046 SF</u>
Grand Total	17,012 SF

Please refer to the spread sheet of Jackson County Animal Shelter Area Tabulation in the Appendix to review the individual room sizes.



Table 2: Projected County Population Growth		
5 Year Increments	Jackson County Population	% Growth since 2010
2010	40,480	
2015	43,697	
2020	46,915	15.8
2025	50,129	
2030	53,347	31.7

Source: Jackson County, NC, Planning Department

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Pet Ownership Calculator (2012) estimates the number of pet owning households and pet population in a community based on population. Using the population projections provided by the U.S. Census and the Jackson County Planning Department (Table 2), the potential for growth in human population and growth in the pet population are considered indicators for the likelihood of an increase in demand for services from the Animal Control Department and shelter.

Jackson County Pet Owning Households and Number of Pets Owned in 2015

According to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts (www.census.gov/quickfacts), the population estimate for Jackson County as of July 1, 2015 is 41,265. Using the AVMA Pet Ownership Calculator (www.avma.org), the estimates for the number of pet owning households and pet population in Jackson County as of July 1, 2015 is shown below:

Table 3: Jackson County Pet Owning Households and Pet Population in 2015		
	Number of Pet Owning Households	Pet Population
Dogs	5,793	9,269
Cats	4,825	10,126
Birds	492	1,127
Horses	238	651

Jackson County Pet Owning Households and Number of Pets Owned Growth Projection

According to the population projection in Table 2, Jackson County’s population by 2030 will increase to 53,347. Using that projected population figure and the AVMA Pet Ownership Calculator, the number of pet owning households and pet population in Jackson County is estimated to increase as shown below.

Table 4: Jackson County Pet Owning Households and Pet Population in 2030		
	Number of Pet Owning Households	Pet Population
Dogs	7,489	11,983
Cats	6,237	13,091
Birds	636	1,457
Horses	308	841