Animal Shelters: Economic and Community Impact

Design Features of Modern Animal Shelters

Modern animal shelters, differ greatly from the “warehouse-style” dog pounds of the past. Today’s shelters are designed to protect animal and human health by reducing the spread of communicable diseases. These features also help reduce the mortality rate of animals at the shelter and, by hindering the spread of disease, reduce the risk of a mass infection that would necessitate euthanizing a large number of animals. With the goal of restoring the health of abandoned animals so they can be placed with their forever families, these shelters have many ‘hospital-like’ characteristics. Such highly specialized features include:

- Separate HVAC systems to prevent the spread of airborne diseases;
- Plumbing that can handle the waste of large numbers of animals;
- Seamless, disease-resistant flooring and walls that will not harbor deadly disease;
- Individual, sanitary kennels and cages;
- Properly equipped veterinary facilities for shelter animals and spay/neuter surgeries;
- Ability to segregate the animal populations, including sealed-off isolation rooms for the treatment and healing of sick animals.¹

For additional information on recommended standards of care, including facility requirements, see “Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters” written by The Association of Shelter Veterinarians, available at http://oacu.od.nih.gov/disaster/ShelterGuide.pdf

Economic Impact of Pet Ownership

The economic impact of the pet industry has grown dramatically over the last decade with the increase in pet ownership. At the national level total pet industry expenditures rose from $17 billion in 1994 to $60.28 billion in 2015 according to the American Pet Products Association. A Dog owner spends an average of $1,896 per year/per dog on food, veterinarian bills, grooming services, boarding and other items. Cat owners spend $1,227 per cat each year. In Haywood County, which has an estimated 13,358 dogs and 14,593 cats, it is estimated pet owners spend over $43.25 million dollars each year (data compiled by Haywood Spay/Neuter, April 2016). Utilizing a conservative economic multiplier effect of 1.2, pet ownership contributes $51.88 million to the local economy. A rise in pet adoptions will result in increased economic impact. While pet ownership generates about $765 in per capita economic impact for the county, the anticipated cost to service a USDA loan ($150,000 over 40 year time span) is $2.50 per capita. Additionally, based on the numbers of persons on the social media, donor and mailing lists of local groups such as Sarges, Haywood Spay Neuter, FUR, Friends of the Haywood County Animal Shelter and STAR, there are approximately 14,115 people who are actively interested in Animal Welfare in Haywood County. (This total is from the self-reported, composite numbers of the groups to the Animal Services Director in April 2016 and this total may not count spouses and other members of the household.)
Cost of Animal Shelter Construction

In recent years many communities have replaced aging facilities that had deteriorated and did not meet current standards of care. The estimated square foot construction costs for these 16 shelters range from $172 to $507. The average construction cost was $306 per square foot.

Often communities and local governments enter into public private partnerships to mitigate the cost to taxpayers of new shelter construction. In these partnerships nonprofit animal advocacy organizations execute fundraising campaigns to raise money to support shelter construction. The Friends of Haywood County Animal Shelter recently announced a $1 million fundraising campaign to support a new shelter.

Table 1: Recent Animal Shelter Construction Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
<th>Cost (Estimated) $ Millions</th>
<th>Estimated Cost per Square Foot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspen Animal Shelter (Colorado)</td>
<td>9,261</td>
<td>$3.500</td>
<td>$378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broward County Animal Shelter (Florida)</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>15.200</td>
<td>$380</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Animal Control Facility (Connecticut)</td>
<td>8,250</td>
<td>2.520</td>
<td>$305</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dekalb County Animal Shelter (Georgia)</td>
<td>33,400</td>
<td>8.600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harford County Humane Society (Maryland)</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>6.000</td>
<td>$316</td>
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<tr>
<td>Havasu’s Western Arizona Humane Society Shelter (Arizona)</td>
<td>16,547</td>
<td>5.670</td>
<td>$343</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humane Society of Douglas County (Wisconsin)</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>2.450</td>
<td>$389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent County Animal Shelter (Michigan)</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>4.725</td>
<td>$205</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Richland Hills Animal Services (Texas)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>4.170</td>
<td>$417</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oakland County Animal Control &amp; Pet Center (Michigan)</td>
<td>30,500</td>
<td>15.450</td>
<td>$507</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peninsula Regional Animal Shelter (Virginia)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>7.200</td>
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<td>Pine Bluff Animal Shelter (Arkansas)</td>
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<td>$350</td>
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<td>Putnam County Animal Shelter (West Virginia)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>2.300</td>
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<td>Porter County Animal Shelter</td>
<td>13,758</td>
<td>2.900</td>
<td>$211</td>
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<td>Washington County - Johnson City Animal Control Center (Tennessee)</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>3.100</td>
<td>$172*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuba City Animal Shelter (California)</td>
<td>12,300</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>$407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*cost does not include any equipment beyond basic fixtures

For additional information see:

American Pet Products
http://americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp

Aspen Animal Shelter
http://www.aspentimes.com/article/20050723/ASPENWEEKLY/107220049

Broward County Animal Shelter

Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Animal Control Facility

Dekalb County Animal Shelter
http://www.wsaz.com/home/headlines/Putnam_Animal_Shelter_Site_Work_to_Begin_Tuesday_104748444.html

Humane Society of Douglas County
http://hstcpets.com/new-animal-shelter-opens-tuesday/

Humane Society of Harford County

Kent County Animal Shelter, Grand Rapids, MI
http://www.triangle-inc.com/kent-county-animal-shelter/

North Richland Hills Animal Shelter

Pine Bluff Animal Shelter

Oakland County Animal Control and Pet Adoption Center
Pawmetto Lifeline, Columbia, SC
http://pawmettolifeline.org/donate/campaign/why_does_a_new_shelter_cost_so_much/

Peninsula Regional Animal Shelter

Pine Bluff Animal Shelter

Porter County Animal Shelter

Putnam County Animal Shelter
http://www.wsaz.com/home/headlines/Putnam_Animal_Shelter_Site_Work_to_Begin_Tuesday_104748444.html

Washington County-Johnson City Animal Control Center

Yuba City Animal Shelter