As 2017 wraps up as our most successful year at Loudoun County Animal Services (LCAS), we are looking forward to launching a comprehensive Strategic Plan to move our Department forward through the next four years.

Our staff developed this plan over the course of six months, with the expectation of identifying strengths, long-term goals, deficiencies and solutions, and we are very proud of the end result. Employees at LCAS worked together to determine that the best way to demonstrate our embrace of Loudoun’s dedication to progress would be to adopt the County leadership team’s values of Accountability, Customer Service, Excellence, Integrity and Professionalism, while defining how these values are exemplified in our everyday work.

We also revamped our Mission and Vision to better encompass the remarkable progress that has happened for people and animals in our community over the years, and are looking forward to realizing the achievement of both of these crucial statements.

Our team continues to speak for those without voices, while holding public safety and compassionate initiatives on the forefront. But we recognize that next steps may be going where few public animal care agencies have gone before, and we cannot wait to go into this uncharted territory.

In order to best map out the future, we have broken our plan into five primary objectives:

- Create a staffing framework that fosters success and enables growth;
- Determine the wants and needs of Loudoun’s citizens and ensure delivery of those services;
- Expand and optimize outreach programs;
- Develop and sustain lasting partnerships with animal welfare stakeholders; and
- Develop and execute a plan for transition to the new Animal Services facility in Leesburg.

We know that success starts from within and we are committed to ensuring that our volunteers and staff are developed and provided with the best possible tools to serve our citizens. We also know that there are many questions out there as to what Loudoun’s citizens really want from our Department. However, we are committed to a permanent path of progress and partnership and are eager to unfold the steps of this plan, and will be reaching out to solicit feedback from everyone who is a part of what we do.

Every day, our team follows the words of Margaret Mead, in being “the change you wish to see in the world,” and every day, we are grateful for a community that supports our work. If you want to take a role in our efforts over the next four years, please reach out to me. I would love your ideas and your participation as we experience a new era of life-saving and life-changing for animals and humans alike. Thank you for supporting Loudoun County Animal Services.

Sincerely,

Nina Stively
Nina.stively@Loudoun.gov
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Mission Statement
We resolve to serve our community by promoting public safety and the compassionate treatment of all animals through humane education, community outreach, sheltering and law enforcement.

Vision Statement
We will inspire Loudoun through proactive programming and thoughtful application of resources in order to lead the community’s commitment toward progressive animal services and public safety.
<table>
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<th>County Leadership Values</th>
<th>How LCAS embodies these values</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong>: Taking ownership of our decisions and our actions</td>
<td>Our Department operates with a persistent theme of transparency. We post all statistics publicly, address challenging questions with direct answers (no matter how difficult), communicate with citizens on the front end and are not afraid to admit when we can improve. Throughout our operations, we use a system of internal checks and balances through routine case reviews and record audits.</td>
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<td><strong>Customer Service</strong>: Meeting the needs of all we serve in a timely, dependable and compassionate manner</td>
<td>Training priorities for front line staff provide a continuous reflection of our dedication to customer service. We strive to focus on citizen care without judgment, adhere to dedicated standards for response time and continue to recognize the human element in animal services. We demonstrate a commitment to justness by treating all people and animals with respect and consideration; appreciating individuality and cultural differences by approaching all people and situations with a fair and fresh perspective.</td>
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<td><strong>Excellence</strong>: Striving to achieve the best results</td>
<td>Our Department maintains a focus on exceeding the goals set forth in all performance measures while utilizing internal policies and trainings to support achievement. We seek to become leaders in the animal welfare industry through setting examples for compassionate progressive programs. We demonstrate our commitment to excellence by providing exceptional customer experiences, progressive education programs and support services to meet the needs of our customers, and the animals in our community.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Integrity</strong>: Adhering to honest and ethical behavior</td>
<td>Throughout all levels of the Department, we emphasize the elements of full transparency and disclosure. As a team, we commit to acknowledging that we may not always know the answer, but are always willing to connect people with the best resources to get the answers that they need. We will uphold local and state laws, and adhere to professional codes of ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalism</strong>: Demonstrating expertise, credibility, and respect for others</td>
<td>We value our employees and volunteers and place the highest priority on preparing and encouraging ongoing training, education and professional development to assist us in meeting the needs of our community. We have a commitment to treating the public and coworkers with respect. As an agency, we demonstrate the development of our credibility as a resource to the public and our peers through professional accreditation, staff development and training.</td>
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Loudoun County Animal Services was established more than forty years ago to serve the people and animals of Loudoun County, Virginia. In the time since its inception, LCAS has evolved to become a progressive leader in the animal welfare field. A team of sworn animal control officers work to uphold the laws as they pertain to companion animals, wildlife and livestock, while dedicated staff at the Waterford-based animal shelter provide compassionate care to more than 2,000 animals a year, engaging the community in all aspects of the Department’s mission.

The mission, vision and values, re-established in 2017, provide guidance to the team of 35 as we work to keep Loudoun County Animal Services at the forefront of the animal control and sheltering industry. The staff maintain a focus on using progressive adoption tools and sheltering methods, with critical attention paid to key philosophies such as:

- capacity for care (sheltering only as many animals as you have the ability to provide humane daily interactions with),
- quality of life, including a focus on mental enrichment for sheltered animals,
- transparent reporting of programs, statistics and challenges,
- public safety,
- education as a foundation for all law enforcement activities, and
- compassion for all citizens.
LCAS works to serve as an animal welfare leader in the region, offering support, training and animal transfer opportunities to empower growth and development in surrounding communities. As a part of this effort, LCAS refrains from using divisive, critical language, such as “no-kill,” in an effort to build up solidarity amongst animal welfare agencies, rather than create potentially misleading and hurtful divides. Regardless of language, in 2017, the Department saw a live release rate of 93% in which 93% of all animals received left the facility alive through adoption, transfer to rescue or reunion with owners. The remaining 7% of animals were deemed to be irremediably suffering or a threat to public safety, and were humanely euthanized after evaluating all options. LCAS will continue to accept all companion animals from Loudoun County, and believes that a pet in need should never be turned away. While some animals arriving at the shelter have manageable or treatable medical or behavioral conditions, the team at LCAS will continue to utilize available resources to ensure that those animals are given the tools or treatment needed for success in an adoptive home.

In 2017, the team at LCAS developed a four year strategic plan for launch in 2018, in which priorities were listed to further cement the long term plans and goals for the Department. A series of five primary objectives were established, addressing internal needs and customer-focused initiatives. Those goals are as follows:

1. **Create a staffing framework that fosters success and enables growth**
2. **Determine the wants and needs of Loudoun’s citizens and ensure delivery of those services**
3. **Expand and optimize outreach programs**
4. **Develop and sustain lasting partnerships with animal welfare stakeholders**
5. **Develop and execute a plan for transition to the new Animal Services facility in Leesburg**

In order to align with the overall focus of the County, each goal has been assessed for applicability of the core values, and objectives have been assigned to best reach these goals within the four year timeframe.
Objective 1  
Create a staffing framework that fosters success and enables growth

1. Develop standardized processes for staff and volunteer training methodology
   a. Assemble a system of basic trainings, accompanied by checklists ensure that all new hires and volunteers are given the same foundational skills.
   b. Develop reference materials and flowcharts for ongoing use, in order to assist staff and volunteers with policy-based decision making and process support.
   c. Establish quality control measures to offer unbiased recognition of proficiency, training completion and observation of safety protocols.

2. Develop the volunteer corps to support and expand staffing capabilities
   a. Train volunteers to create staff redundancy where it does not currently exist.
   b. Evaluate the use of volunteers in other communities and County Departments to learn from successful models and apply best practices.

3. Develop redundancy plans for all key players and roles
   a. On a continual basis, review job components for all staff with unique positions and develop cross-training opportunities to ensure that absence of individuals does not have a lasting negative impact on the team and Department as a whole.

4. Focus FY 18 on basic skill development to provide all staff with standardized training
   a. Utilize staff with demonstrated skills, knowledge and abilities to conduct internal trainings on foundational professional skills, such as equipment usage and animal handling.
   b. Involve external trainers and programs to improve on advanced professional skills, such as customer service and compassion fatigue management.
   c. Encourage staff to embrace training and a model of ongoing learning to establish a continuous loop of education and training support for employees at all levels in the Department.
Objectives

**Objective 2**

Determine the wants and needs of Loudoun’s citizens and ensure delivery of those services

1. Identify underserved communities with the goal of gathering information to recognize and address unique needs for service.

2. Implement a multi-year survey to solicit feedback from Loudoun residents
   
   a. Utilize GIS to understand geographic trends in requests for service, animal control responses, and animal intake outcome patterns.
   b. Target initial survey to Loudoun County residents in order to drive program development and allocation of resources and develop a multi-year service planning model. Later, additional surveys will target residents who are not in the current audience for receiving information on LCAS programs and services in order to best understand obstacles to access.
   c. Offer survey in multiple formats and in languages most frequently spoken in targeted areas.
   d. Utilizing survey results, reassess all performance measures to determine if they are accurate metrics for desired services.
   e. Offer additional surveys to established audiences in the community and those visiting the Shelter to utilize services.

3. Establish a post-service follow up plan, to understand and improve customer service throughout all divisions of the Department

4. Review long-term call and traffic patterns to evaluate hours of operation, response needs and minimum staffing levels. Tailor services to echo demands identified
Objective 3  Expand and optimize outreach programs

1. Develop and present improved, cohesive branding for the Department
   a. Establish a uniform and personal appearance policy to create a singular look throughout all levels and positions in the Department.
   b. Through language, marketing and storytelling, define a picture of unity in the Department.
   c. Utilize one logo throughout the Department while considering revision of the current logo for optimal impression in the community.
   d. Develop a comprehensive external communications policy, to include a media release flow chart, handling FOIA requests, website management and branding expectations.

2. Promote transparency in all aspects of the Department’s operations
   a. Provide annual reports and infographics to engage and inform the community.
   b. Implement consistent messaging on difficult topics such as euthanasia, feral cats and dangerous dogs.

3. Establish tools to empower citizens
   a. Review and revamp Loudoun.gov/animals for improved accessibility and appearance.
      i. Display a Department organizational chart, complete with “Contact Me” links on the website to better enable customers to understand who can best assist them with their needs.
   b. Develop social media kits and digestible print material for recurring messages.
   c. Maximize use of Laserfiche as a way to better serve customers through online forms.
Objective 4

Build lasting relationships with animal welfare stakeholders (veterinarians, animal-centric businesses, shelters/rescues and partners within Loudoun County Government).

1. Develop business specific survey/feedback plans for these stakeholders with the goal of understanding previous hurdles to engagement and identifying their needs and wants from the Department

2. Create an informal coalition of stakeholders who seek a lasting relationship with LCAS and foster the growth of these entities through a model of service

3. Develop and plan regular education or training opportunities, when possible, offering CEUs for animal professionals. Include agencies that have indirect interactions with animals in the community, such as meter readers and mail carriers

4. Restart and expand the veterinary training program to empower veterinarians to recognize signs of abuse or neglect and understand available law enforcement opportunities

4. Utilizing County demographic data, ensure that we are “meeting people where they are”
   
a. Implement a “Community Paw-licing” effort to humanize the Animal Services Officers, educate the community on resources available through LCAS and enable greater numbers of families to retain their pets, rather than surrender them through proactive efforts in targeted communities.
   
b. Ensure that various cultures and languages are taken into account with outreach efforts.

5. Develop or refine pre-planned curricula for outreach presentations

6. Offer all programs from a menu of services, allowing selection of most appropriate program for each consumer’s needs and re-evaluate these curricula on a regular basis for efficacy and demand
Objective 5

Develop and execute a plan for transition to the new Animal Services facility in Leesburg

1. Develop a marketing strategy to inform the public of the new location
   a. Create a timeline and content for press releases and social media to include regular “live” updates of progress on construction.
   b. Schedule soft openings, grand opening, and ribbon cuttings to be inclusive of key stakeholders along with the general public.
   c. Partner with DTCI to ensure material is available (photos, design updates) for marketing and roadway signage.
   d. Develop roll out plan for Department webpage to include a tab dedicated to updates on construction and opening dates.

2. Establish programs to stabilize and strengthen the volunteer pool
   a. Using early, frequent communication with volunteers, staff must estimate the anticipated loss of volunteers from geographic transition.
   b. Implement a volunteer retention plan for those volunteers considering maintaining their roles in the Department.
   c. Develop a timeline and program for re-orientation of existing volunteers in the new building.
   d. Recruit and train a new volunteer pool in close proximity to the new facility, to serve expanded needs and programs.
3. Establish a plan to ensure logistical preparedness
   a. Evaluate what resources are being provided to us, and understand what the Department will need to coordinate independently and what roles will be delegated to other Departments for the move.
   b. Develop a concrete timeline for “downtime” of all services including dispatch, intake and adoptions.
   c. Work closely with contractors to ensure adherence to Commonwealth requirements for facility licensure and specialty inspections.

4. Complete a comprehensive review of Departmental policies
   a. Review all established policies and determine which may require revision based on change of location, expansion of services and facility structure.

5. Establish a fully developed plan for intake and care of livestock at Waterford property

6. Create a retraining program for staff to establish and adhere to progressive, humane policies that coincide with new facility and expanded programs