Dear future Multnomah County Animal Services Community Advisory Committee members,

Congratulations on joining this important committee to help Multnomah County Animal Services (MCAS) accomplish its goals and better serve the community. As a liaison between MCAS and members of the public, you have a unique opportunity to improve awareness and understanding for both and improve outcomes for people and pets in our county.

As the inaugural MCAS CAC, we spent the last year together building a foundation for the MCAS CAC so that the committee can go on to have its intended impact and function as an advisory body for the MCAS director.

Our time spent together has highlighted some timely issues that we believe warrant your attention during your next 2-year term. Below are those recommendations and our reasons for handing them over to you. It will now be up to you to review this work plan, make changes as you see fit, and approve this work plan for your own term.

Operating assumptions:
- All work is related and none of these topics will be isolated from one another.
- These recommendations are being made by CAC members and should be further explored with community members whenever possible.
- It is important to recognize that some voices may be missing from this group. We can't be limited by the voices at the CAC table, we need to actively seek the feedback of those who are not a part of the committee but still are impacted by the work of MCAS.
- These recommendations have been made based on the current climate. As the budget and other external forces shift this landscape, the work of the CAC will change, too.
- Multnomah County as a government entity has certain unique responsibilities and limitations. The CAC will need to work with these in mind.
- Ideas that come at the CAC meetings are added to the knowledge base of staff and leadership and have the potential to initiate real change.

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Issue 1: Improvements to the Adoptions Process

The current pet adoption process presents several barriers, including limited access to information about adoptable pets, inequitable adoption opportunities (due to economic, geographic, or disability-related factors), adoption mis-matches, and wanting post-adoption support.

As an approach, we recommend first learning all aspects of the current adoptions process, potentially by going through a mock adoption. Reviewing adoption data and demographics to the extent possible will be an important part of learning who accesses this service through MCAS. Next steps could include gathering resources available to adopters currently, identifying gaps, and understanding what resources have been available in the past as well as why they were discontinued.

Recommendations could include:
- Process improvements for the adoptions process
- Improved ways to connect adopters with resources to remove barriers to adoption when possible
- Communications improvements with the public to help them better understand what adoption is and why it might be a good fit for them.

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Issue 2: Reuniting More People with their Pets

Protecting and maintaining the human-animal bond is a primary goal and responsibility for MCAS. Staff at MCAS work tirelessly to reunite pets and their people of origin. Despite this, there is still room for improvement. We recommend considering ways to make this process more streamlined, accessible and compassionate.

Some important considerations will be:
- Data and information such as percentage of pets reclaimed, duration of time for pets to be reclaimed by owners, demographics for owners who reclaim pets successfully, and percentage of pets that go unclaimed.
- Anecdotal stories of people's experience with the reclaimed pet process, including those who have reclaimed a pet and those who have not, for various reasons. Understanding public perception of this process may illuminate opportunities for improvement.

A recommended approach could be to first identify the data that is most valuable to discover and track related to this issue as well as current practices for reunification. Once the data has been collected, we recommend that you identify the most significant issues indicated by the data that is collected. Finally, we recommend that you advise on practices that address these issues that make reunification more difficult and set metrics and goals related to what you'd want to impact, such as percentage of pets reunited or an improved perception of how easy it is to reunite.

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Issue 3: Keep people and pets together.

Acquiring a pet and regaining access to a pet after it has been lost are only pieces of the story when it comes to protecting the human-animal bond. There are a number of challenges for pet owners when the pet is in their possession that can be difficult to solve. Companionship between pets and people is important. MCAS may be able to improve accessibility and feasibility of pet ownership and fostering for Multnomah County Residents.

Some important considerations include:
- Understanding the biggest challenges with pet ownership such as affordable veterinary care, behavioral support, pet friendly housing, and other ongoing financial costs for pet owners and fosters.
- Reviewing any data available that explains surrenders, returns or other health issues for intakes is also an advised next step.

A recommended approach could be to first identify the data that is most valuable to discover and track related to this issue. Once the data has been collected, we recommend that you identify the most significant challenges associated with owning a pet. Finally, we recommend that you advise on resources that exist in the community to combat these challenges, and offer creative solutions for expanding these resources or offering other resources that better meet the ongoing needs for MCAS clients.

Thank you for volunteering your time and resources to make MCAS the best possible municipal shelter that it can be. We look forward to following your work and supporting you as best we can.

Sincerely,

The 2024-2025 Multnomah County Animal Services Community Advisory Group

Membership:

Leah Bookner	Natalie Mesa-Smith
Nancy Yull	Andrew Beckman
April Milan	Denise Holmes
Kelly Peterson	Gray Bouchat
Tara Martin	Laura Lambruschi
Sharon Methvin	

Margaret Clement