

Dog & Cat Demographics and Animal Welfare: Seattle, King County and Washington State

*Andrew N. Rowan, D.Phil.
President, WellBeing International®
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Brief Background

- **WellBeing International was founded in 2018 but I have been tracking dog and cat demographics and shelter intakes and outcomes since 1980.**
- **Today – hope to provide insights and context to inform your strategic thinking and planning.**
- **In particular, I will be emphasizing the uncertainties in national dog and cat population statistics and the importance of tracking trends.**



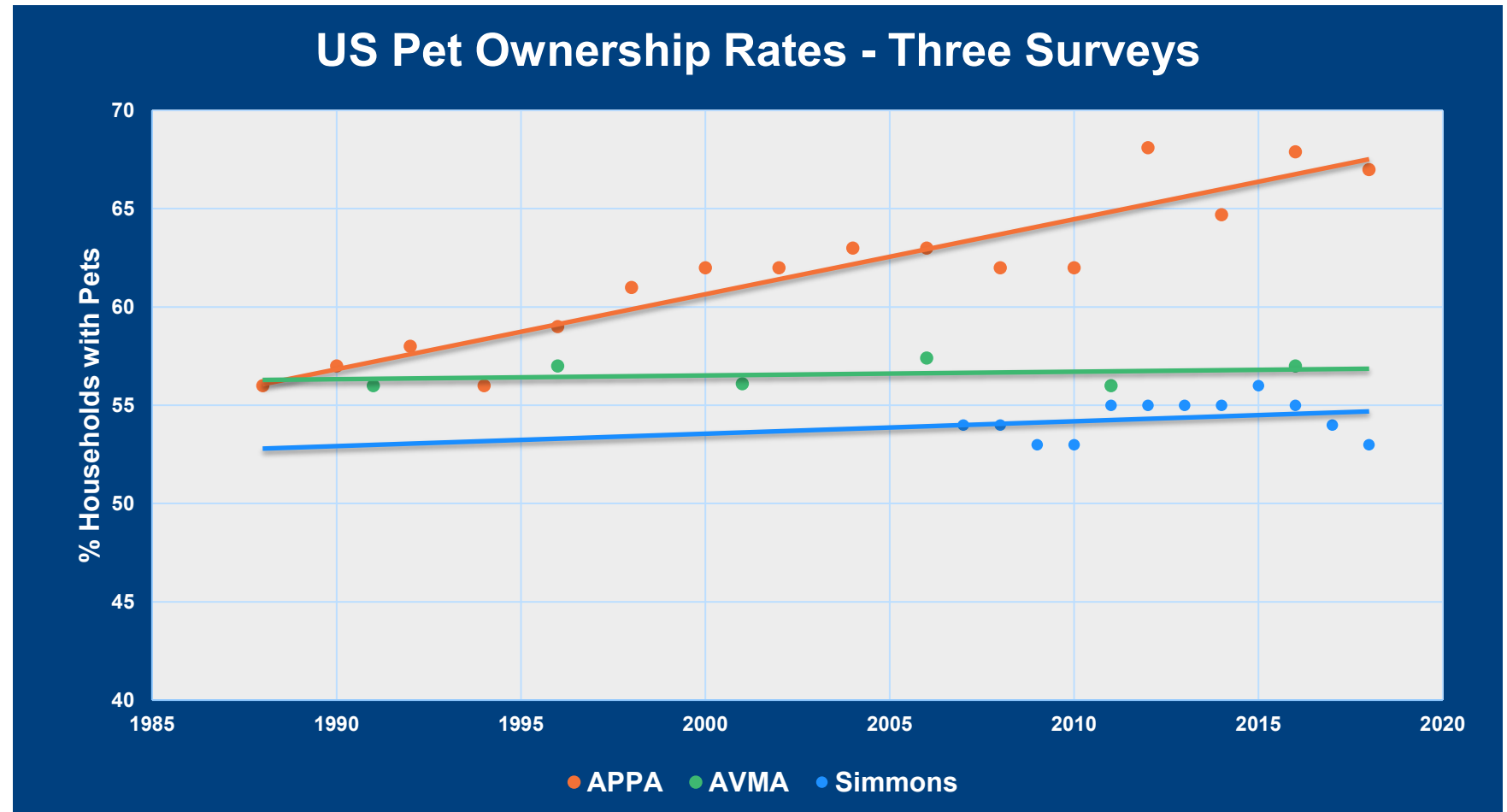
Outline of Talk

- **US Pet Demographics**
 - Trends – 1980 to Present
 - State by State Differences
 - Urban-Rural Differences
- **US Shelter Intakes and Outcomes, 1973 to Present**
 - Suggested Reasons for Changes
- **Washington & Seattle – Companion Animal Specifics**
 - Washington State
 - King County & Seattle
- **Animal Protection Income**
- **Concluding Comments**



US Pet Ownership Rates

The chart shows the percentages of US households with pets over time. Note that two of the national surveys find no/little change in ownership rates. One reports significant increases.

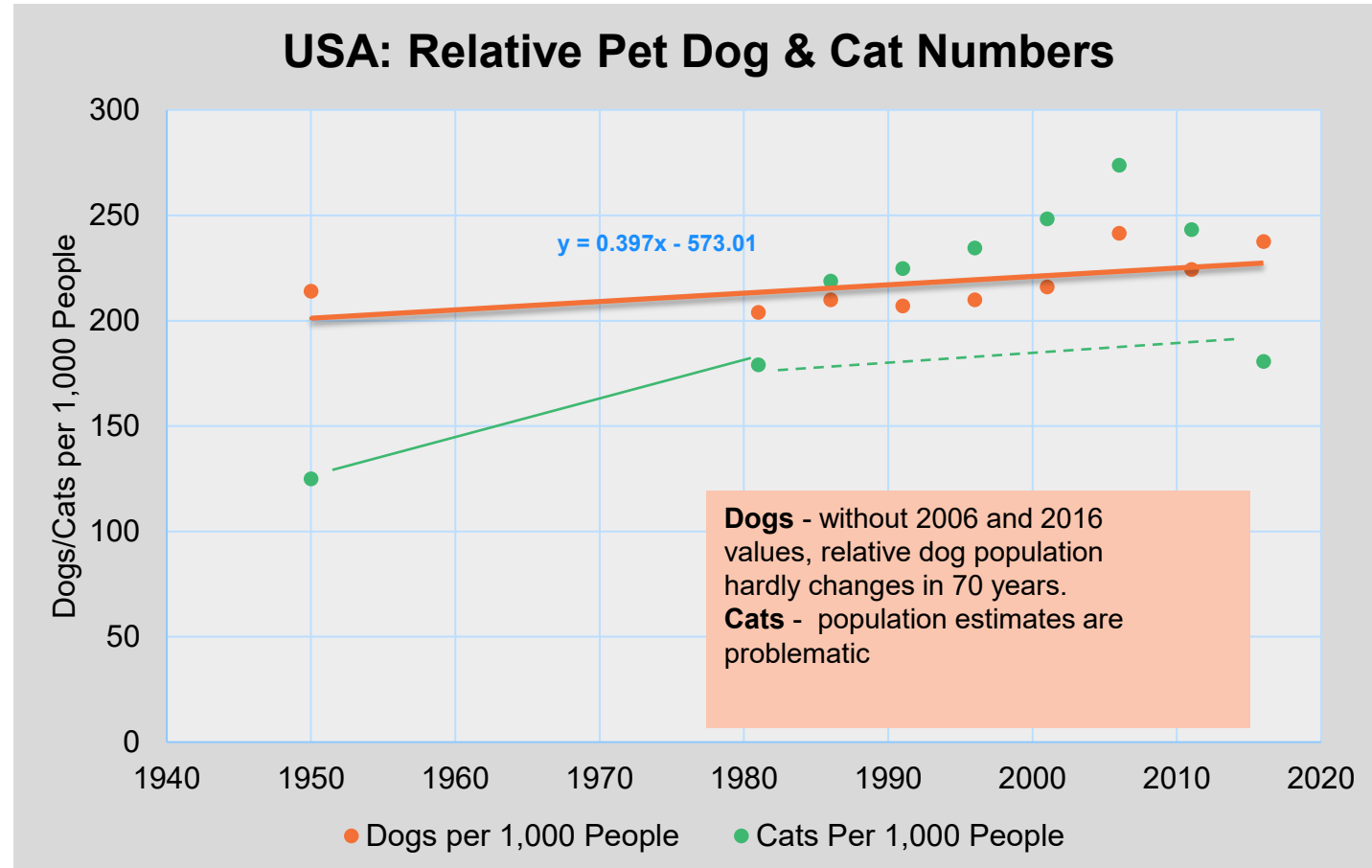




Tracking **RELATIVE** Pet Populations

(dogs and cats per 1,000 people)

- People routinely take the latest survey estimate and then assume that reflects the correct dog/cat population.

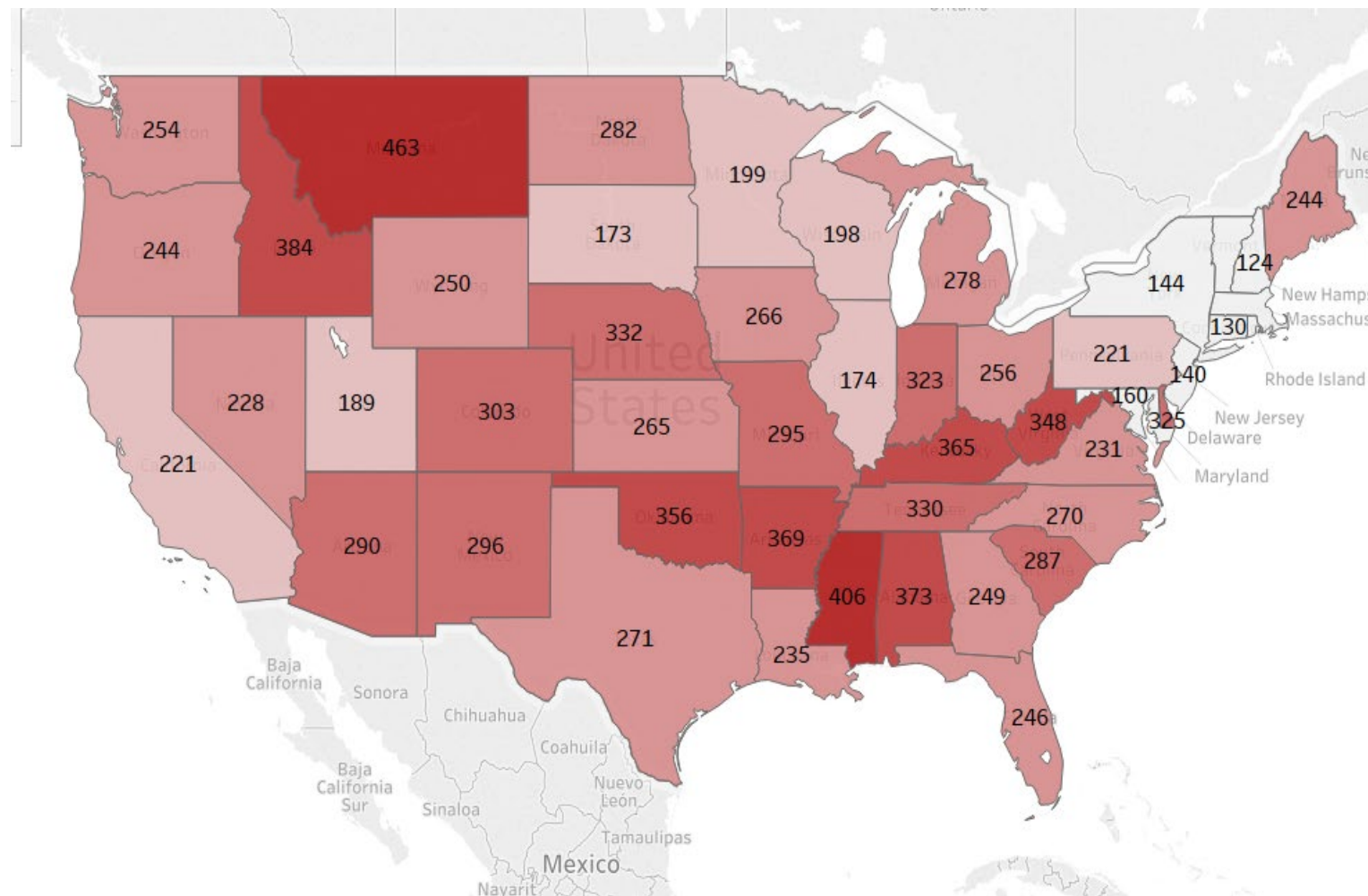




RELATIVE Dog Numbers

(dogs per 1,000 people)

- According to the 2016 AVMA survey of US dog and cat populations, the map at right shows dogs per 1,000 people for each state.

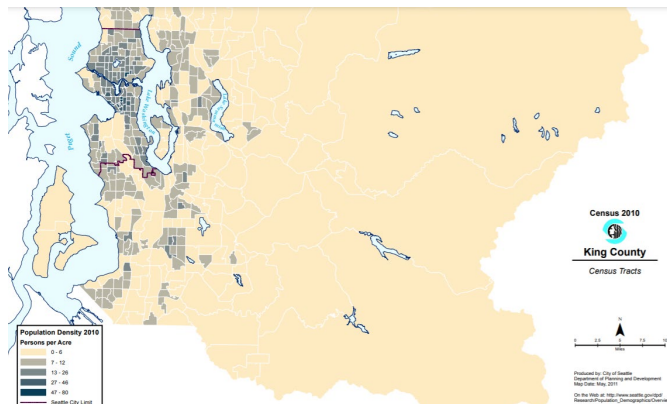
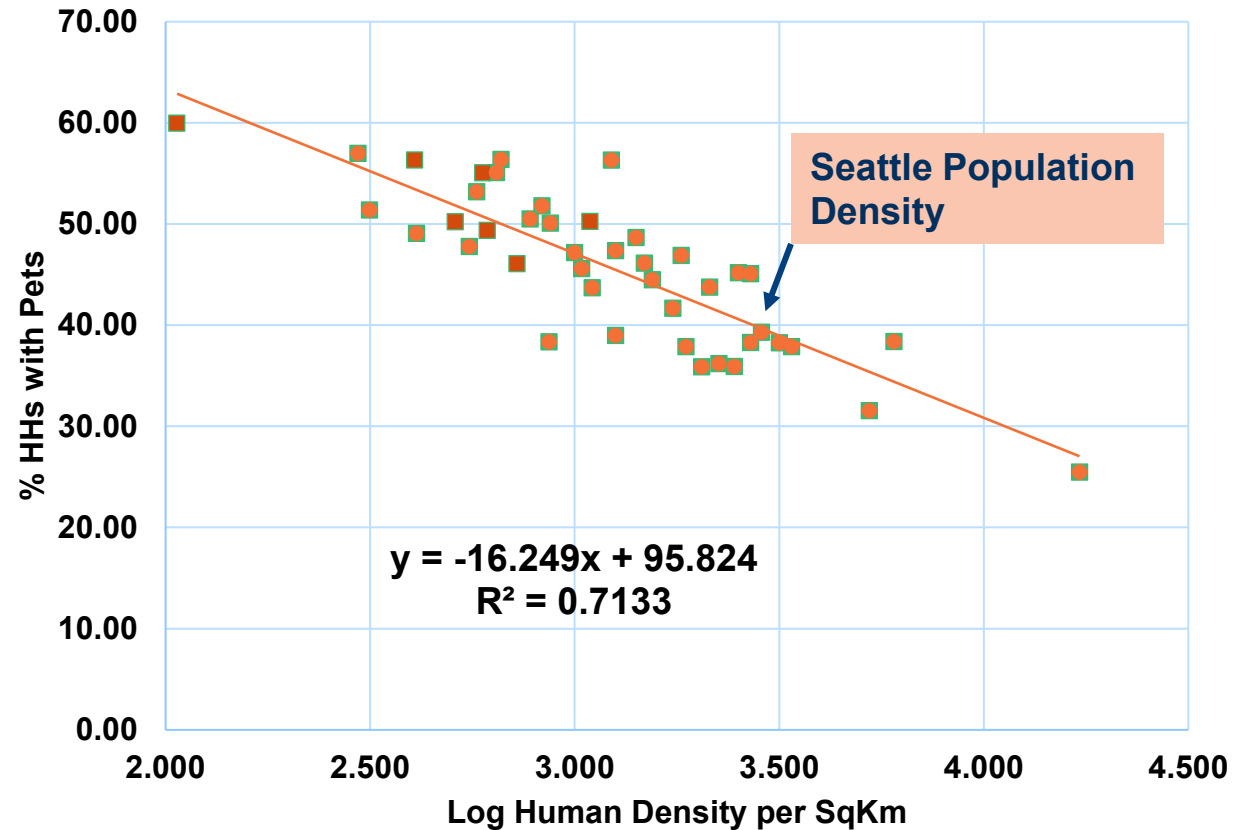




Pet Ownership RATES & Human Density

(data from US Census Housing Surveys, 2013 & 2107)

The plot of pet ownership rates against log human density produces a strong trend line. Predicts 40% of Seattle HHs have pets.





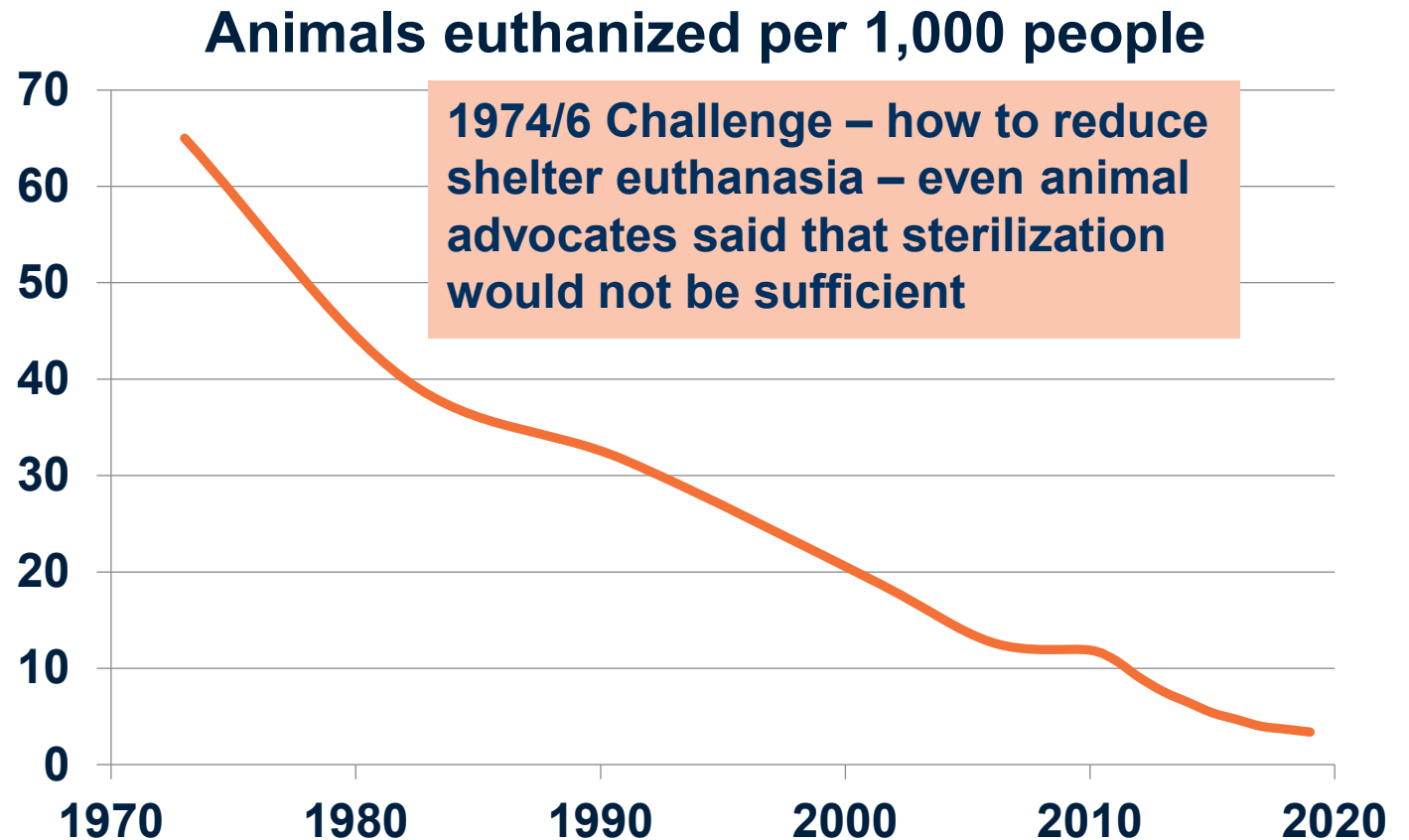
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Tracking Shelter Trends in the USA

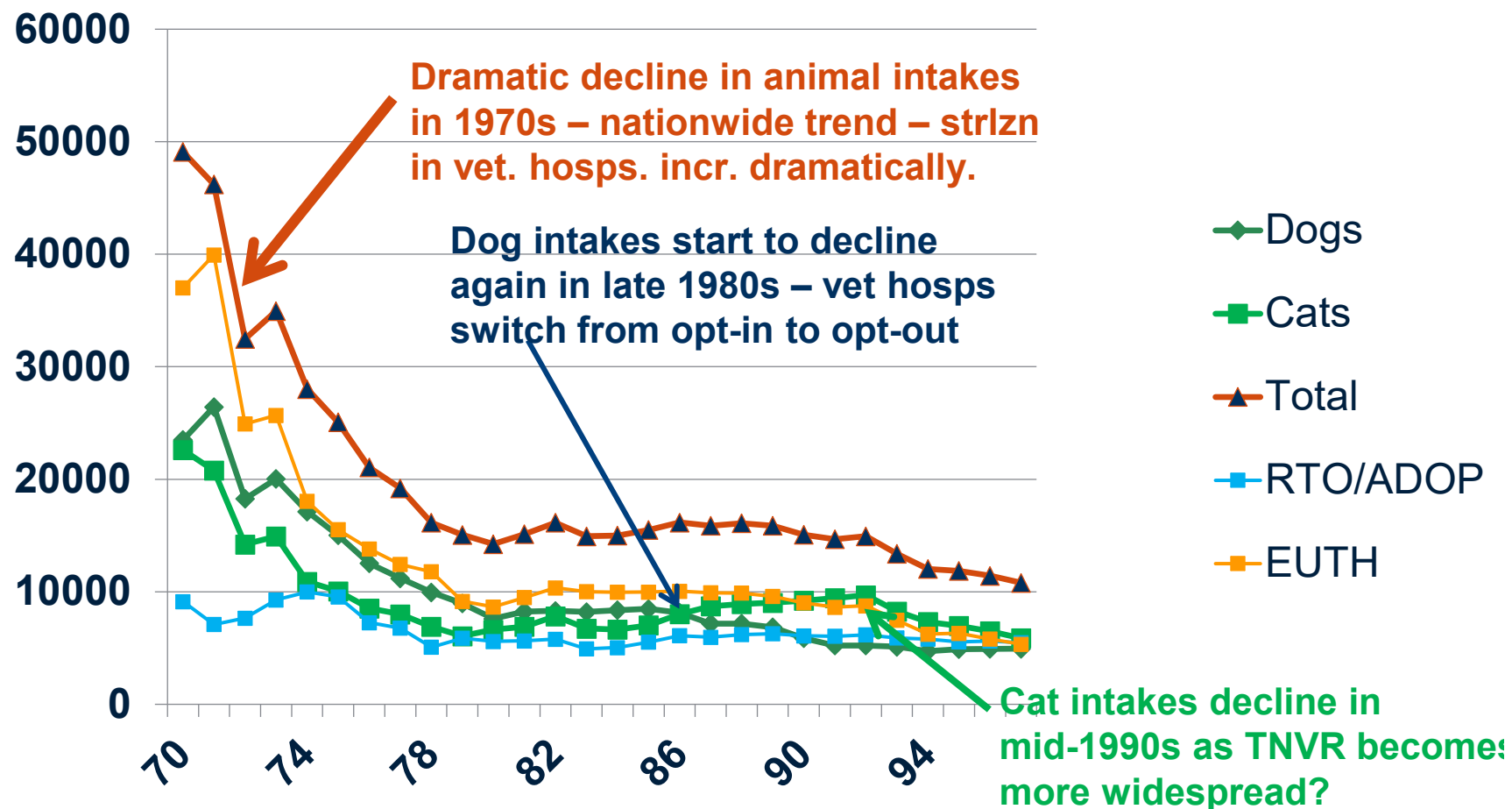
- **Nationally, 3.4 dogs and cats were euthanized in shelters per 1,000 people in 2019. In King County, it was 0.5 in 2015.**





Shelter Trends & Causes

The data at right comes from a CA shelter that had records going back to 1970. The big decline in the 1970s is observed in other shelter records in the USA.





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Shelter Intake and Euthanasia (standardized to per 1,000)

- **Big changes in animal sheltering numbers in Washington state in last thirty years. State euthanasia numbers for 2017-2019 (data from Pre-read) were 0.81, 0.68 & 0.77 per 1,000**

Washington State	1991	2005	2015
Human Population	4,314,437	5,371,544	6,544,170
Shelter Intake/1,000	38.0	26.5	14.0
Shelter Euthanasia/1,000	23.2	11.2	0.9
King County Intake/1,000	18.8	14.0	14.0
King County Euth/1,000		4.2	0.5



King County Shelter Numbers: 2017-2020

- Numbers from Shelter Animals Count. The 5 main shelters in King County reported in each of the four years below.

King County	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number Reporting Orgs	14	13	13	12
Total Intake	19,990	20,931	20,131	11,566
Adjusted intake (not transfers)	11,261	12,588	12,130	7,503
Live Outcomes	18,799	19,937	19,081	11,175
Adjusted Live Outcomes	16,346	17,933	17,314	9,845
Other outcomes	1,043	934	901	719
Seattle Humane Intake	6,700	8,200	7,300	2,600
Estimated Cats/Dogs	1,000,000			



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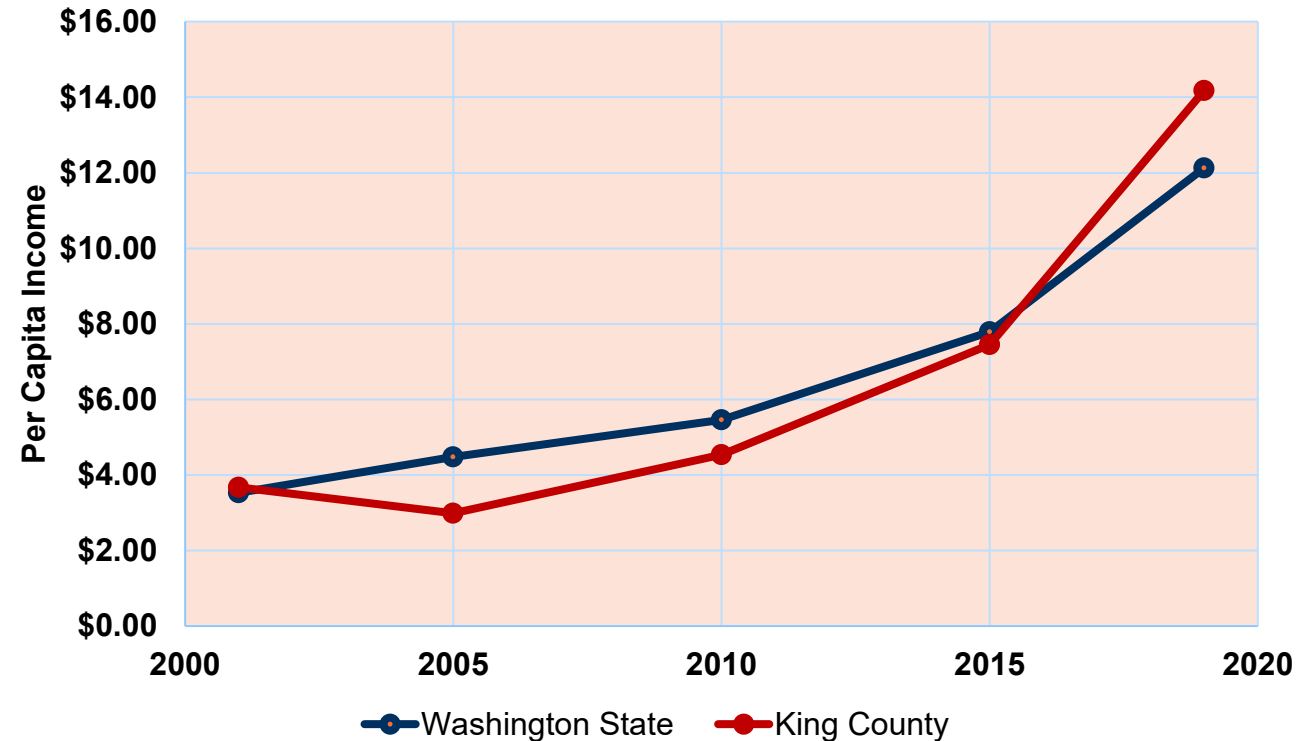
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Animal Protection Income Trends in Washington & King County

- The chart shows per capita income raised/generated by the larger companion animal groups in 2001, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2018/2019

Washington & King County Per Capita APO Income





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Some Observations

- **Three-fold income growth in Washington State Animal Protection movement in last twenty years. Will this continue? Do Seattle Humane and other animal groups have to do anything to continue this growth? Did they do anything to prompt this growth?**
- **In 50 years, only **ONE** major animal group in the US has, to my knowledge, taken the trouble to survey its catchment area. If you do not know how many dogs and cats there are in your community, where they are, what welfare challenges they experience nor how many experience such challenges – how can you claim to be addressing the critical welfare needs of King County/Washington animals?**
- **The lack of attention to animal data and demographics, to data anomalies and to the insights that such data brings (think of tracking Covid if we did not know how many people there are and where they are) is just stunning.**
- **Nearly all US animal sheltering attention is focused inwards.**

Concluding Comments

- In 1973, around 20-25% of the US dog and cat population was passing through an animal shelter every year.
- Today, only 5% are. In King County, only 1.5% of local pets (maybe less) are passing through the animal shelter/rescue system. Seattle Humane is handling less than 0.5% of local animals.
- The bulk of the animal welfare challenges are out in the community, and not among Seattle Humane's animal intake.