

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
June 17, 2008

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Animal Care and Regulation

Subject: Report Back On The Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic

Supervisory
District: All

Contact: Pat Claerbout, Director, (916) 875-5051

On June 10, 2008, the Board requested a report back on the operational cost and impacts if the mobile spay/neuter clinic is reduced or deleted.

BACKGROUND

On October 18, 2005, the Board approved the contract for architectural design work to begin on the new Animal Care Shelter and at the same time received basic cost estimates on the operation of satellite spay/neuter clinic options. As a result of interest from Board members and the public, the Department was directed to further study the cost to purchase and operate a mobile spay/neuter clinic.

That study brought before the Board on July 18, 2006 resulted in approval of the Mobile Spay/Neuter Program and the purchase of the Mobile Clinic. The report discussed:

Of foremost consideration in the decision to implement a mobile spay/neuter clinic program is the question: "Can the County continue to fund the program in the coming years"? To see a marked reduction in the surplus animal problem, an effective program needs to operate over several years and have the ability to grow with the community's needs. If not, then startup money will not be well spent. Adding the spay/neuter clinic program to the Department should not be done if it would impact funding levels for current programs in the future.

A mobile spay/neuter clinic program operated within Animal Care & Regulation (AC&R) would entail the purchase of the mobile unit, purchase of additional medical equipment, the addition of three staff positions and contracting with a Veterinarian.

The original estimate as stated in the July 18, 2006 report to run the program was \$301,752 per year with revenue assumptions of \$147,600 for a net General Fund allocation of \$154,152. This cost included staffing for the clinic consisting of one Veterinarian, one Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT) and two assistants. Although the original proposal had the Veterinarian and RVT as contract employees (these were not County job classifications), the Board has since

approved those classifications and added the positions to the Department. The two Veterinarian assistant positions utilize the Animal Care Attendant classification currently used in the Shelter. Start up costs for purchase of the Mobile Clinic and Medical Equipment totaled \$122,418.

DISCUSSION

Due to a national shortage of Veterinarians and very competitive salary packages and incentives from the private sector, it has been extremely difficult to retain a Veterinarian. Recently, a Veterinarian was hired into the newly created permanent Veterinarian position thus allowing the Mobile Clinic to reach full implementation. Prior to this hire, the program has only been able to operate on a limited part-time basis.

The response to the program from the public has been very high with surgery bookings filling up 2 - 3 weeks in advance. In 90 days of operation, 682 surgeries were performed. While the Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has opened a high volume spay/neuter clinic, they are also booked 6 - 8 weeks in advance. Obviously, the need for low cost spay/neuter services is extremely high in the community.

Elimination of this program will result in limiting spay/neuter access to the low income community. Five full-time positions would be cut:

1.0 Veterinarian	Status: Hiring
1.0 Registered Veterinary Technician	Status: Filled
2.0 Animal Care Attendant	Status: One Filled, One Vacant
1.0 Administrative Services Officer I	Status: Filled

The equipment used in this program will be used at the new shelter facility, and the trailer would be used for off-site adoption events and response to disasters. The complete Mobile Clinic could also be offered for sale, although a sale price has not been determined, and it is unlikely that the County would recoup its full investment.

Low-Income Spay/Neuter Program

The County would still operate the Spay/Neuter Incentive Program (SNIP). This program has provided 1,690 surgeries to low income residents; the County does not offer any other spay/neuter program to the general public.

Financial Analysis

The Fiscal Year 2008-09 budget for this program is \$473,026. Positions included are one Veterinarian, one Registered Veterinary Technician, two Animal Care Attendants, and one Administrative Services Officer I, for a total salary cost of \$378,006. Services, medical supplies and light equipment (truck to pull the clinic) is budgeted at \$51,141. Administrative/overhead personnel costs spread to this program are \$43,879.

CONCLUSION

The elimination of the Mobile Clinic would make available \$473,026 resulting in the deletion of three full-time filled and two full-time vacant positions.

PAT CLAERBOUT, Director
ANIMAL CARE & REGULATION