



Legislation Text

File #: 2024-0729, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Tina Rivera, 707-565-4774; Johannes Hovertsz, 707-565-3585

Vote Requirement: Informational Only

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma County Animal Services Facility Rehabilitation Plan Update

Recommended Action:

Receive report on the Sonoma County Animal Services Facility Rehabilitation Plan.

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Animal Services plays a crucial role in safeguarding the well-being of people and animals within the community. This report provides an update on current operations of the Sonoma County Animal Services, examines the existing facility, highlights the pressing issues faced, and recommends solutions for improvement.

Discussion:

The Department of Health Services (hereinafter “the Department” or “DHS”) Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) unit is entrusted with safeguarding the welfare and proper care of animals within the region. The organization's duties span a wide spectrum, from animal control and shelter management to resolving public concerns related to animals. However, the current facility, while dedicated to animal welfare, faces limitations that hinder its optimal functionality. Chief among these challenges is the oversubscribed shelter which poses operational difficulties.

SCAS Facility Upgrade

To address these issues effectively, a comprehensive scope of improvements is necessary:

- **Kennel Area Upgrade:** The kennel area, initially designed as an open-air space to promote airflow and reduce illness among dogs, has faced limitations since the addition of a cinder block wall in the 1990s. The current system of intake fans exacerbates temperature extremes, necessitating better ventilation and climate control solutions.
- **Play Yard Shelter:** The inadequate coverage of play yards at the back of the building poses safety concerns for animals and volunteers. Temporary measures such as car ports and popup awnings are insufficient, highlighting the need for permanent shelter solutions.
- **Storage Area Improvement:** The use of large shipping containers as storage spaces has proven problematic, with instances of leaks and excessive heat causing damage to stored materials and posing risks to staff. Upgrading storage facilities to mitigate these issues is essential.

- **Office Space and Lobby Expansion:** The interior of the building lacks sufficient space for staff offices and private meeting areas, leading to privacy concerns and operational inefficiencies. Additionally, the cramped front lobby poses safety risks and detracts from the overall customer experience. Expanding office space and the lobby area is crucial for addressing these issues.

In response to the above challenges, on October 17, 2023, the Department presented an update to the Board highlighting the SCAS facility needs to address the overcrowding and estimating approximately \$4 million for enhancements to the overall functionality of the facility. The Board and CAO directed the Department to work through the County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process to make the request for the necessary facility improvements.

As part of the October 17, 2023, Facility Needs Assessment, staff noted as next step to coordinate with Public Infrastructure on facility improvement estimates and return with a formal request. At this initial stage, staff is estimating a \$4 million total project estimate.

On April 23, 2024, Sonoma Public Infrastructure staff as part of Budget Workshops presented Capital Projects General Government Projects recommended for funding, which includes \$300,000 for SCAS Facility Improvement Design Phase. Subsequent to design efforts, construction funding will be identified to include a search for outside funds.

Estimated Project Timeline

1. Conceptual Planning - completed in 2023
2. CIP Funding - June 2024 (anticipated)
3. Architect Selection - July (1 month)
4. Design phase - August - March 2025 (8 months)
5. Permitting Process - April - May 2025 (2 months)
6. Project Bidding - June 2025 (1 months)
7. Contract Award - July 2025 (1 month)
8. Construction Phase - August 2025 - March/July 2026 (8 -12 months)

Animal Services Staff

In addition to facilities updates, expanding our current operational capacity will be needed to meet increased demands for community and in-shelter assistance. With the projected surge in housing developments within the County, it is prudent for Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) to enhance its capacity future community growth.

The Department is exploring the addition of several positions, including 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Animal Control Officers, 0.5 FTE Account Clerk II, and 1.0 FTE Animal Tech, to foster a more resilient and responsive structure. In 2023 and 2024, the Department engaged Wohlford Consulting to conduct an objective analysis of the full costs incurred by SCAS and associated fees to determine proposed FY 2024-2025 fees. The studies reviewed annual volumes of each fee, the amount of time spent by staff on each fee activity and the annual costs of each staff member and the unit's overhead costs. Further analysis of the studies revealed that specialized patrols and special projects such as Humane Education, participation in adoption-impacting events, and disaster response initiatives have been challenging to sustain with current staffing levels.

Recent fee adjustments and the addition of new future fees are anticipated to partially offset the increased staffing requests. The Department will present a formal staffing request to your Board for consideration in Fiscal Year 2024-2025, aligning with our commitment to delivering effective and responsive animal services to the community.

The proposed investments in facility upgrades will help support SCAS in its mission to ensure the welfare of animals and foster positive community relationships. This initiative will contribute to a more effective and compassionate organization, making it better equipped to address the evolving needs of both animals and residents.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

April 22, 2024: the Board received FY 2024-2025 Department Budget Presentations

October 17, 2023: the Board received an informational report on Animal Services Facility Needs.

September 12, 2023: Board of Supervisors authorized contingency set aside to FY 23-24 adopted budget in the amount of \$173,862 including \$54,071 to support Animal Services.

May 17, 2022: Board of Supervisors accepted a report on Animal Services organizational placement and recommendations to keep Animal Services within Department of Health Services and add Animal Services Director.

October 6, 2015: Board of Supervisors directed General Services to approve Animal Services facility design funds in the amount of \$175,000.

August 21, 2012: Board of Supervisors received a report from DHS titled *Sonoma County Animal Care and Control Services- Governance Model Review and Best Practices*; reaffirmed the transfer of Animal Services to DHS; directed DHS to work with cities, partners, and other interested organizations to develop a local governance model; directed DHS to implement best practices; authorized DHS to work with County Counsel and CAO to identify financial resources to develop a proposed governance model; and directed DHS to identify financial and other resources needed to implement best practices.

September 28, 2010: Board of Supervisors approved report on Budgetary and Operational Impacts of moving Animal Control to the Department of Health Services

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			

Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Informational only. Staff will return in FY 2024-25 with funding recommendations.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Presentation

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None