



**PIMA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
3950 S. COUNTRY CLUB, SUITE 100 • TUCSON AZ 85714  
Phone: (520) 243-7770

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June 2, 2014

Greg Caton, Town Manager  
Town of Oro Valley  
11000 North La Canada Drive  
Oro Valley, Arizona 85737

RE: Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Animal Services Update and Projection

Dear Mr. Caton:

Thank you for taking the time recently to visit the Pima Animal Care Center. I hope you found it informative and helpful.

Staff has also shared with me your interest in a regional jurisdiction council on Animal Care. Staff concurs that increased collaboration with the Town of Oro Valley on Center operations and to encourage Town residents to license dogs, spay neuter pets and increase responsible ownership would be beneficial. Health Department staff will reach out to you and your staff in developing this collaborative effort with Oro Valley and the other jurisdictions the Center serves.

Currently, the Health Department and the County are setting the course to minimize the number of stray dogs and cats and eliminate the euthanasia of impounded pets with treatable illnesses, injuries and behavior issues. The Center is collaborating with County agencies, non-profit rescue organizations, private business and other local agencies and individuals to share the burden of eliminating the homeless pet population and its associated public health and safety costs.

Key steps for reducing the euthanasia of our pets and minimizing the homeless pet population include minimizing animal intake through aggressive spay/neuter of all unaltered pets, treating the treatable shelter pets and establishing a new, state of the art facility designed for modern animal sheltering operations. As you may know, the Pima County Board of Supervisors has voted to place the bond initiative to accomplish the last step on the November 2014 ballot.

According to experience from other successful jurisdictions as well as our own experience over the last three years with a nominal investment into spay/neuter, the County has found providing affordable and accessible spay/neuter to our pet owners and for the free roaming cats in our communities is most effective in reducing the number of free roaming cats and stray dogs. Spay/neuter is also less expensive than sheltering these homeless pets.

The average cost to humanely care for pets is approaching \$120 per pet. Over the last three fiscal years through the current nominal \$110,000 County general fund support to the program, the Center has reduced its animal intake from over 27,000 pets to nearly 24,000 animals annually. Reducing the intake by over 3,000 pets has reduced shelter costs over \$200,000, which translates into savings for all jurisdictions served. The single significant change in Center operations effectuating the intake reduction was this general fund investment combined with a similar amount from grants and donations.

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Thus, increasing annual efforts to this program remains critical to mitigating the homeless pet population in Pima County, and concurrently reducing the number of pets impounded and the associated costs of caring for them. Therefore, the County will increase this program budget from \$220,000 to \$600,000 per year. Staff is tasked to fund the program as much as possible through donations, grants, sponsorships and in kind donations

Any remaining expense for the expanded spay neuter program will be shared by the jurisdictions on a per capita ratio to County population. Therefore, assuming \$130,000 in first year donation support to the program and based on the Town of Oro Valley 2012 per capita ratio of 4.15%, Oro Valley's share of the remaining \$470,000 additional projected animal services expenses in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 is estimated at \$19,500.

The County is also ceasing euthanasia of treatable and saveable pets cared for at the Center. Therefore the average stay time and cost per pet may increase. However, the Center is also on course to minimize impact to the jurisdictions through additional significant increases in medical donor, sponsor and grant fund development programs.

The attached projected Fiscal Year 2014-2015 budget incorporating the projected expenses associated with the changes outlined above is provided for your consideration.

As you may recall on November 5, 2013, the Pima County Board of Supervisors authorized additional budget allocation for expanding shelter services. According to County Finance staff, expenses associated with this action are to be shared by and expensed to the jurisdictions from the inception of the emergency action. County staff interprets the action to authorize the allocation of the current year operating expenses and the allocation of the cost to construct and equip the facility as part of the charges to be billed next fiscal year. The Town of Marana's share of these costs from FY 2013-2014 is projected to be \$6,200 and will be included in the July invoices to be sent in August.

The County's ultimate goal through effective spay neuter combined with other progressive shelter management programs is to, in the nearer future, eliminate the homeless pet population and associated expenses leaving only the abused and neglected pet population to humanely care for.

Should you have any other questions, please contact me at 243-7776.

Sincerely,



Foid K. Janes  
Chief of External Affairs  
Pima Animal Care Center

Attachment