



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Health System



Date: June 9, 2016
Board Meeting Date: July 12, 2016
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Louise Rogers, Chief, Health System
Heather Forshey, Director, Environmental Health

Subject: Measure A: Augmented Housing Inspection Program Pilot Report Back

RECOMMENDATION:

- A) Accept the report on the status of the Measure A Augmented Housing Inspection Program Pilot; and
- B) Approve a request to reallocate \$81,660 in existing funds to expand the Healthy Home outreach efforts in FY 2016-17.

BACKGROUND:

San Mateo County's housing inspection program oversees approximately 3,700 complexes, with 43,000 units. The County has implemented mobile technology in which inspection and violation data are captured electronically, in the field.

The Environmental Health Services Division of the San Mateo Health System inspects all multi-family dwelling buildings with four or more units for health and safety violations, with a routine inspection frequency of once every four years. The four year inspection cycle is consistent with similar programs in other counties throughout the state. Historically, approximately 50% of complexes received additional inspections during the four year cycle. These non-routine inspections were triggered by staff follow-up on identified issues and tenant complaints. The most frequent complaints were vermin, such as rodents, roaches and bed bugs (40%); plumbing/sewage issues (20%); and other complaints such as appliances, electrical issues and windows and screens (40%). Ten percent of the housing inventory required at least 4 visits by staff during the last 4 years. This portion of the housing inventory has had chronic issues that warrant more oversight and education.

On September 22, 2015, your Board approved \$450,000 in Measure A funds for an Augmented Housing Inspection Program Pilot. The funds support enhanced and more frequent inspections for the 10% (348 total) of apartment complexes that have historically required significantly more inspection oversight. The funds also enhance compliance through education and outreach. The Pilot includes an emphasis on integrated pest management, a combination of enhanced education and outreach to tenants and landlords, and more direct involvement in violation resolution to ensure compliance is reached in a timely manner.

DISCUSSION:

In January 2016, Environmental Health Services began conducting enhanced routine inspections of the complexes identified for the Pilot. All 348 complexes were inspected by April 30, 2016, with 70% (244 complexes) requiring re-inspections to ensure correction of observed violations. Inspection staff documented 1,194 violations for the complexes in the Pilot. Currently, all but 287 violations have been corrected.

Using a modified and more in-depth inspection approach, the top 5 most frequently-cited violations were:

1. Vermin/Pest Exclusion: focuses on the structural integrity of the building to prevent the entrance and/or harborage of vermin (e.g., holes in walls and unkempt, overgrown vegetation).
2. Overall Maintenance of the Exterior Grounds: primarily directed to the cleaning and removal of garbage and rubbish accumulation on/around the property (e.g., discarded items throughout the property and overflowing dumpsters).
3. Weather Protection: deteriorated building siding, roof, foundation or floors (including broken windows and doors).
4. General Exterior: focuses on maintenance of carport areas for structural integrity and cleanliness, damaged/missing gutters and downspouts and peeling paint throughout the buildings.
5. Fire Safety: blocked exit routes and working fire extinguishers.

All re-inspections were completed by June 30, 2016. All but 24 complexes have completed required corrections. The majority of these outstanding violations require permits and contract work; compliance efforts by property owners is underway for these complexes with outstanding violations.

In addition to enhanced inspections, the Pilot has developed an outreach component to tenants called Healthy Homes. During the first 6 months, bilingual outreach materials were developed for tenants and property managers. Materials were mailed to all apartment complex owners and provided to management subsequent to inspections. Outreach has already been initiated with tenants who have identified problems in their units, called Environmental Health Services with pest problems, or when the complex is identified by the inspector as requiring pest control. The pilot's Outreach Coordinator has been meeting with individual tenants and providing them with guidance on how to help mitigate issues they are encountering in their units, such as the presence of mold,

pests, and pertinent repairs. Additionally, as part of the outreach campaign, staff has reached out to community stakeholders, such as North Fair Oaks Forward, Legal Aid, EPA Community Law, Tri-County Apartment Association, and CORE Services to identify additional approaches to assist tenants address concerns about their living conditions. Over the next fiscal year, the staff will be present at community events, organizing resource fairs, increasing our direct outreach with tenants, educating property owners, and promoting Healthy Homes Principles through numerous media channels such as online neighborhood forums, social media and other web based outreach.

The Outreach Coordinator for the Healthy Homes work is currently working half time based on the original Measure A funding. To better meet both the need for this information within the tenant community and the demand from community and other groups, it is recommended that the Outreach position be funded full-time for FY 2016-17.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The allocation of \$450,000 (\$153,228 for FY 2015-16 and \$296,772 for FY 2016-17) for the Augmented Housing Inspection Program Pilot was approved in September 2015. To cover the cost of increasing the unclassified Outreach Coordinator position from part-time to full-time in FY 2016-17, an additional \$81,660 will be added to the Environmental Health budget in the FY 2016-17 Final Budget through a reallocation of existing funds.