



County of Santa Cruz

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PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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ALVIN D. JAMES, DIRECTOR

September 11, 2001

Agenda: September 18, 2001

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

SUBJECT: MOBILEHOME PARK INSPECTIONS

Members of the Board:

Last Spring, your Board directed staff to prepare an analysis the costs associated with the County assuming responsibility for building inspections of mobile home parks in the unincorporated area of the County and in the incorporated cities. In the intervening months, County staff has contacted the four jurisdictions to ascertain their interest in pursuing this approach and we have not received any formal responses at this time. In addition, staff has prepared the attached spreadsheets on program costs and revenues. (Attachments 1 and 2)

Based on our preliminary analysis of the County assuming responsibility for this program, County Cost estimates range from \$170,000 to \$322,000. The lower range assumes County responsibility is limited to the 50 parks within the unincorporated County, and the higher \$322,000 figure assumes the County program would encompass all 70 parks throughout the County.

By way of background, operating this program involves the following activities:

- Plan check of the design and specifications for new parks and additions, expansions or alterations to existing parks.
- Issuance of permits to construct, and, inspection of construction of new parks and additions, expansions, or alterations to existing parks.
- Issuance of installation permits and inspection of the installation of mobilehomes and manufactured homes to ensure that installations conform to manufacturers' installation instructions and the regulations adopted by the HCD which now must include an anchoring system when a home is installed on piers and pads.

- Plan checking as necessary; permitting, and inspection of the installation of mobilehome and manufactured home accessory structures
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- Evaluation of design data and certification of earthquake resistant bracing systems for mobile homes and manufactured homes, and issuance of standard plan approvals (SPA) for foundation systems, engineered tie down systems and accessory structures.
- Permitting and inspecting the installation of earthquake resistant bracing systems.
- Investigating complaints of violations of any of the provisions the Mobilehome Parks Act.
- Periodic performance of maintenance inspections in mobilehome parks to identify violations of the Mobilehome Parks Act.

While there may be specific features of the program that Board members believe may be better handled by the County rather than the State Department of Housing and Community Development, State law requires that either the County or the State be responsible for all aspects program operations. As a result, our analysis assumed that the County takes on full administrative a financial responsibility for the program. (Attachment 3) In addition, State law establishes the building inspection and permit fees the County could charge to help finance the program, thus limiting potential program revenues. Attachment 3 includes a more thorough discussion of the following activities associated with the County undertaking this program:

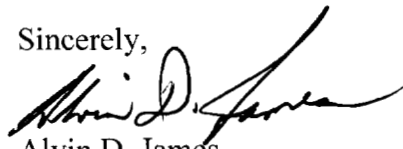
- Permit Issuance
 - Inspections
 - Code Compliance
 - Performance Standards
 - Training Issues
- Additional Administrative Considerations
- Costs and Fees

Based on our evaluation of these issues, the County assuming responsibility for mobile home park inspections would lead to staff increases necessary to handle increased volume of activity for: 1) discretionary permit processing; 2) building inspections; 3) code compliance activities; and 4) additional training resources. In addition, there are a number of potential administrative issues if parks in the incorporated cities were included. As noted above, the estimated annual County Costs range from \$170,000 to \$322,000

It is worth nothing that in the 1970's and 1980's, County of Santa **Cruz** was responsible for operating this program. However, in 1991, the State expanded the areas of program responsibility, and shortly thereafter, Santa Cruz County, as well as many other jurisdictions in the State, returned program operations to the State. This decision was based, in large part, on the greater level of responsibility mandated by the State, combined with limitations on program financing. Both of these issues remain important and key factors in our staff analysis.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board accept and file this report and direct staff to send a letter to HCD discussion our local concerns with the program that they manage.

Sincerely,



Alvin D. James
Planning Director

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RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

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ATTACHMENT 3**PROGRAM ANALYSIS**Background

In 1973, the County of Santa Cruz assumed responsibility for the enforcement of Part 2.1, Division 13 of the State Health & Safety Code (Mobile Home Parks Act). The responsibilities assumed by the County at that time included: issuing mobile home installation and addition permits, inspecting new installations and construction, enforcing Title 25 code requirements, investigating complaints, and verifying the correction of health and safety violations. Beginning in 1991, the County's responsibilities were expanded, as a result of change in state law, to include the performance of a health and safety inspection to be conducted for each mobilehome park and each mobilehome space in the County's jurisdiction on what was then a 5 year rotating basis. Section 18400.1(a) currently requires that health and safety inspections be conducted every 7 years. Based on staff research of the history of this program, Shortly after the imposition by the State of additional mandated responsibilities, combined with limitations on program financing, Santa Cruz County, as well as many other jurisdictions in the State, returned program operations to the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

Permit Issuance

Proposed plans for mobilehome parks and/or units would be reviewed by county planning staff to insure compliance with State and Federal standards for the work performed, and for compliance with the jurisdiction's (County or City) land use regulations. Reviews would also be required by Building and Zoning, and other agencies who administer ordinances which may apply, including Public Works, Environmental Health, and the local Fire Agency. Fees would need to be charged for these reviews, and when the plans are approved, a permit would be issued based upon an approved set of plans.

Inspections

Inspections by the county would be performed to insure that the proposed work is done in accordance with the approved plans. In addition, State Law requires that an inspection of each unit be done a minimum of every seven years to insure that basic health and safety standards are maintained. Pre-inspection meetings with park management and occupants are required by law, as well as follow-up inspections. Fees for both Building Permits and required maintenance inspections are set by State Law, as explained in detail below in "Costs and Fees."

Code Compliance

Complaints received would be investigated by County Code Compliance staff. In addition, the State mandated inspections would generate Code Compliance activity when hazards to life and safety or work without a permit become evident. Title 25 provides that fees are double the permit fees. Cases may also require adjudication in Superior court which would require involvement by County Counsel.

Performance Standards

To determine the resources necessary to resume mobilehome park inspections administration, it is necessary to establish minimum standards for the activities discussed earlier. If we assume that these standards should be the same as those which currently apply to building permit and code compliance activity within the county, these standards would be:

Time to complete the first review of building permit application: **4-6** weeks.

Advance notice required for building permit inspection: 1 day.

Time for initial code compliance response to complaint: 5 working days.

Training Issues

The code standards for installation of and work performed on mobilehomes are different than standards for other buildings. To do an adequate job, the reviewers and inspectors need to be experts in these regulations. Currently there are no County staff who meet this requirement. If the county assumes responsibility for the mobilehome parks in the cities, planning and code compliance staff would need to be trained in the city mobilehome land use policies, regulations, and procedures.

Additional Administrative Considerations

If County Staff performs the functions listed above for both the county and the cities, several complex administrative issues arise.

The governing bodies of the County and cities would need to take the necessary actions respectively to take permitting authority from the State HCD. The County and cities would then need to enter into individual agreements concerning the above functions. This raises several added questions which do not apply to County permit applications when the parcels are always within the unincorporated area of the County, including:

How would permits be processed and issued?

How would reviews and inspections be recorded?

Who would make decisions on administrative and technical issues?

How would the fees be distributed?

How would expanded costs arising from a joint cities/county program be underwritten?

Similar questions arise for code compliance functions.

Code Compliance is probably the most complex issue raised by this proposal. In the recent past, the County has become involved with this issue in several cases (Marmos and Golden Torch), and the process was protracted, complicated, and extremely time-consuming. Complaints received and the compliance issues raised by the mandatory inspections will likely cause a significant increase in required code compliance activity, and this activity may adversely impact the largest single inventory of low cost housing units in the County.

The present building and discretionary permit processes would also likely be impacted. In the year 2000 the Planning Department processed 1390 minor building permit applications (applications for permits which require plans but are not entire structures or room additions greater than 500 sq. ft.). Mobilehome permits would be processed as minor permits, and the estimated 800 additional permits would represent a **63%** increase. It is not clear how many of these would require a discretionary permit, but some discretionary permits would likely be required. This increase, if it were in fact to occur, would represent a substantial additional burden on the present system.

In many cases, coach owners would still be required to obtain a separate permit from the state. State law requires a permit from State HCD whenever an HCD approved coach is altered. For decks, additions, and cabanas, County jurisdiction would necessitate getting two permits when one is now required.

An additional administrative responsibility is imposed on local jurisdictions that choose to assume enforcement responsibility. Health and Safety Code Sec. 18400.1(h) requires each local enforcement agency that has assumed enforcement authority provide the State Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department with status reports on its specific inspection program to enable that agency to complete reports to the Legislature. The status reports are due prior to September 1, 2002, and prior to September 1, 2005. Each report must include information on the number of parks and spaces in the jurisdiction, number of **parks** and spaces inspected, number and types of notices of violations issued against the parks, number and types of notices of violations issued against mobilehome owners, number of appeals, amount of fees collected and expended for the purpose of the inspection program for the period covered by the report.

Costs and Fees

The attached spreadsheets provide an analysis of the costs and fees of resuming jurisdiction over mobilehome parks in the County and cities and in the County only. There are approximately 70 parks with 3700 mobilehome spaces in the unincorporated

area of the county and approximately 50 parks with 3300 spaces in the cities. The following analysis is based on:

Performing the required maintenance inspection of each space every seven years.

Issuing and inspecting a building permit for 10% of the spaces each year

Code compliance activity for 10% of the spaces each year.

The method used to estimate the costs was to calculate the number of hours needed to perform these functions, the number of full time equivalent staff needed, and the cost of these staff and associated overhead.

The method used to estimate the fees which could be collected to offset these costs was to estimate the fees associated with the construction permits plus the fees associated with the yearly operating permits. These fees are set by Title 25 of the California Code of Regulations.

The annual net County cost is estimated to be \$322,140 if inspection responsibility were assumed for the County and cities and \$169,949 if inspection responsibility were assumed for the County only