

## 14.0 SANTA CLARA COUNTY VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT

The vector control services that are provided by the District are evaluated within this service review.

### 14.1 LOCATION, ADMINISTRATION, AND OPERATIONS

The Santa Clara County Vector Control District was formed in May 1988 pursuant to Government Code Section 25842.5, Health and Safety Code Section 2200, et seq., Health and Safety Code Section 1800, et seq., California Penal Code, Title X, and Uniform Housing Code Section 1001 (b) 12. The District provides mosquito and general vector control. The District encompasses the entire County. The District's SOI is coterminous with the District's boundary. The District is the largest of the 10 Bay Area mosquito and vector control districts.

The District is governed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. The Board meets regularly on the first and third Tuesday of each month. When the District has public matters to be heard at the meetings, the Chair of the Board announces that they are acting as trustees of the District. On more routine matters, the Chair announces at the beginning of the meeting that they are sitting as the County Board of Supervisors and the governing board for the various special districts in the County. District meetings and activities are held pursuant to the Brown Act. Meeting agendas are posted on the County's website and outside of the County Board Chambers. If special noticing is required a local newspaper is also utilized.

#### **Mission Statement**

Santa Clara County Vector Control District's mission is to detect and minimize vector-borne diseases, to abate mosquitoes, and to assist the public in resolving problems with rodents, wildlife, and insects of medical significance. Primary services include the following:

- Detection of the presence/prevalence of vector-borne disease through planned tests, surveys, and samples
- Inspection and treatment of known mosquito and rodent sources
- Response to customer-initiated service requests for identification, advisory, and/or control measures for mosquitoes, rodents, wildlife, and miscellaneous invertebrates (e.g., ticks, yellowjackets, cockroaches, bees, fleas, flies)
- Promotion of public awareness through outreach and educational services

The District ensures disease and illness prevention by ensuring that sources of vector development are identified, inventoried, inspected, and treated as often as needed. This includes 300 miles of streams, 5,000 acres of marshlands, and 27,000 storm drain catch basins. Prevention focuses on eradicating the water and vegetative conditions that are conducive to breeding. Mosquito fish are used as a control

technique and, as a last resort, chemical agents are used. The District also conducts disease surveillance activities for such vector-borne diseases as encephalitis, plague, hantavirus, Lyme disease, and other insect and animal-borne pathogens. The District conducts education and outreach activities to inform the community about vector-borne diseases. The District has 32.5 professional and technical staff members who are responsible for providing services.

For its operations, the District divides the County into 13 smaller districts. Field workers target between 500 and 600 inventory sources of mosquitoes in the County; these are places where, based on historical data, mosquitoes are likely to breed. Staff members visit high-risk sources once a week, sometimes checking strategically located traps; other sources are visited once or twice a month. ABAG projects the County to experience a moderate growth rate of 1.19 percent annually through 2025. This is not expected to impact the District's service operations.

The Vector Control District is required to report its activities to the County's Department of Environmental Health. The District also submits an annual report to the County Board of Supervisors in their role as the District's Board of Trustees. The District's financial activities are also independently audited on an annual basis. In addition, the 2003–2004 Grand Jury evaluated District activities and concluded that the District has a well-developed plan to meet the threat of West Nile Virus.

The County provides many administrative services to the District, and the District's annual budget is contained within the County's budget. This structure provides cost savings for the District because it only needs to pay for the District's portion of administrative overhead expenses. The District also participates in joint financing and purchasing efforts to minimize costs. For example, the District has a new Vector Control Service Yard that was partially financed by the County, and the District participates in the County's buying power by utilizing the County Procurement Department for all purchases. The District does not have specific arrangements for sharing facilities with other agencies; however, the District does (from time to time) share equipment and staff with the County of Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health. In addition, the District has an unwritten mutual-aid agreement with respect to materials and supplies from other mosquito and vector-control districts within the region.

The District's revenue is limited to benefit assessments (97.8 percent of revenue) and interest income. The District has been facing budget constraints as expenditures have exceeded revenues for several years. Due to the budget constraints, the District has utilized a small "temporary facility" since 1992. Funding issues have constrained the move into a new facility. In FY 2003-2004 the District's revenues totaled \$2,692,162 and expenditures totaled \$3,169,551; meaning that expenditures exceeded revenues by \$477,389. Approximately 98 percent of the District's fund balances at the end of FY 2003-2004 (\$1,990,977) consisted of unrestricted fund balance, which is available to meet the District's needs. The remainder of the fund balance (approximately \$35,000) is reserved for encumbrances. The District's most recent audit states that this reserve amount is sufficient for the next several years to adjust for economic uncertainty and anticipated increases to staff salaries and benefits.

The Vector Control District uses a system of assessment units, benefit zones, benefit units, and benefit factors to determine what each property owner pays. Depending upon the use of the property

and the amount of service dispensed, a parcel receives a specific level of vector-control benefit. Assessment units are assigned in proportion to the benefit received. These different assessments are reflected in annual rates that vary from \$.67 to \$27.02. However, the great majority of landowners currently pay \$5.08 annually per parcel on their property tax bill. The District has recently implemented a benefit assessment increase that was approved by voters in August 2005. This is the first increase in rates since 1997. The new assessment begun in 2006 and is \$8.36 annually for the majority of landowners. The increase will provide the District with an additional \$4 million in funding annually. In addition to other uses, this funding would allow the District to begin to look for a more permanent facility that would better accommodate the District's activities.

## **14.2 SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS FOR THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT**

The Service Review guidelines prepared by the State Office of Planning and Research recommend that issues relevant to the jurisdiction be addressed through written determinations called for in the CKH Act. Based on the above information, following are the written determinations for the District.

### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

1. The District moved into a small "temporary facility" in 1992, and funding issues have constrained the move into a new larger facility. However, the recent passage of the increased assessment will provide financing to obtain a larger, more functional facility.

### **Growth and Population**

1. Based upon ABAG projections, the County is expected to experience a moderate growth rate of 1.19 percent annually through 2025. This growth is not expected to impact the District's service provision capabilities.

### **Financing Constraints and Opportunities**

1. The District has been facing budget constraints. Expenditures have exceeded revenues for several years. However, voters have recently approved a benefit assessment increase. The increase will provide the District with an additional \$4 million in funding annually.
2. The District's revenue is limited to benefit assessments and interest income. No additional financing opportunities have been identified.

### **Cost-Avoidance Opportunities**

1. The County provides many administrative services to the District, and the District's annual budget is contained within the County's budget. This structure provides cost savings for the District because it only pays for the District's portion of administrative overhead expenses.

2. The District participates in several joint financing and purchasing efforts to minimize costs.

### **Opportunities for Rate Restructuring**

1. The District has recently implemented a benefit assessment increase that was approved by voters in August 2005. This is the first increase in rates since 1997.
2. Increases to benefit assessments, which are the only rates that the District levies, must be approved by two-thirds of the voters. Hence, no opportunities for rate restructuring have been identified.

### **Opportunities for Shared Facilities**

1. The District shares equipment and staff with the County of Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health.
2. The District has an unwritten mutual-aid agreement with respect to materials and supplies from other mosquito and vector-control districts within the region.

### **Government Structure Options**

1. The District is governed by the County Board of Supervisors. No government structure options have been identified.

### **Evaluation of Management Efficiencies**

1. The 2003–2004 Grand Jury evaluated District activities and concluded that the District has a well-developed plan to meet the threat of West Nile Virus.
2. An evaluation of management efficiencies of the District is implemented through activity reports to the County Department of Environmental Health. The District also submits an annual report to the County Board of Supervisors in their capacity as the Board of Trustees.

### **Local Accountability and Governance**

1. The County Board of Supervisors is the governing body for the Vector Control District in addition to other various special districts in the County. Meeting agendas are posted on the County's website and outside of the County Board Chambers along with the Board's other agenda items. Local accountability and governance standards are met through this established process.

### **14.3 SOI RECOMMENDATION FOR THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT**

#### **Current SOI Boundary**

The District encompasses the entire County and has an existing SOI that is coterminous with the County boundaries.

#### **SOI Recommendation**

As the existing SOI for the Vector Control District is coterminous with the County boundaries, no further outward expansion is possible. Therefore, it is recommended that LAFCO reaffirm the existing SOI for the Santa Clara County Vector Control District.

### **14.4 SOI DETERMINATIONS FOR THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT**

As detailed previously in Section 1.1.2, Government Code section 56425 requires written determinations with respect to the following four factors to update an agency's SOI. Based upon the information above, the following determinations are provided to update the existing District's SOI.

#### **1. The Present and Planned Land Uses in the Area, Including Agricultural and Open-Space Lands**

The District encompasses the entire County. The County of Santa Clara contains a wide range of land uses, including all types of urban uses to large areas of hillside, open space, and agricultural uses. Generally, unincorporated areas within the County are designated Rural County. However, numerous unincorporated pocket areas exist that are developed with urban uses. Development within the cities ranges from fully developed urban areas to expansive hillside, open space, and agricultural lands.

Finding: Planned land uses throughout the County are generally similar to those of the existing uses, with the exception of the proposed Coyote Valley Specific Plan area located in the unincorporated area south of San Jose. The Specific Plan Area is currently undeveloped. If implemented, the Specific Plan would create an urban community comprising a minimum development of 50,000 jobs and 25,000 dwelling units.

#### **2. The Present and Probable Need for Public Facilities and Services in the Area**

The County is expected to experience a moderate growth rate of 1.19 percent annually through 2025. The need for vector-control services may grow in the future. However, this is largely dependant upon the potential creation of new water and vegetative and other conditions that are conducive to vector breeding.

Finding: The need for vector-control services may grow in the future depending on the creation of conditions that are conducive to vector breeding.

### **3. The Present Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services That the Agency Provides or Is Authorized to Provide**

The District's "temporary facility" is inadequate; however, passage of an increased assessment will provide financing to obtain a larger, more functional facility.

Finding: The present level of services provided by the District appears to be adequate.

### **4. The Existence of Any Social or Economic Communities of Interest in the Area if the Commission Determines That They Are Relevant to the Agency**

The District encompasses the entire County.

Finding: The District currently encompasses all of the communities of interest in the County.