

Hitchcock Road Animal Services



Referral 2025.10 Update

Presented by:

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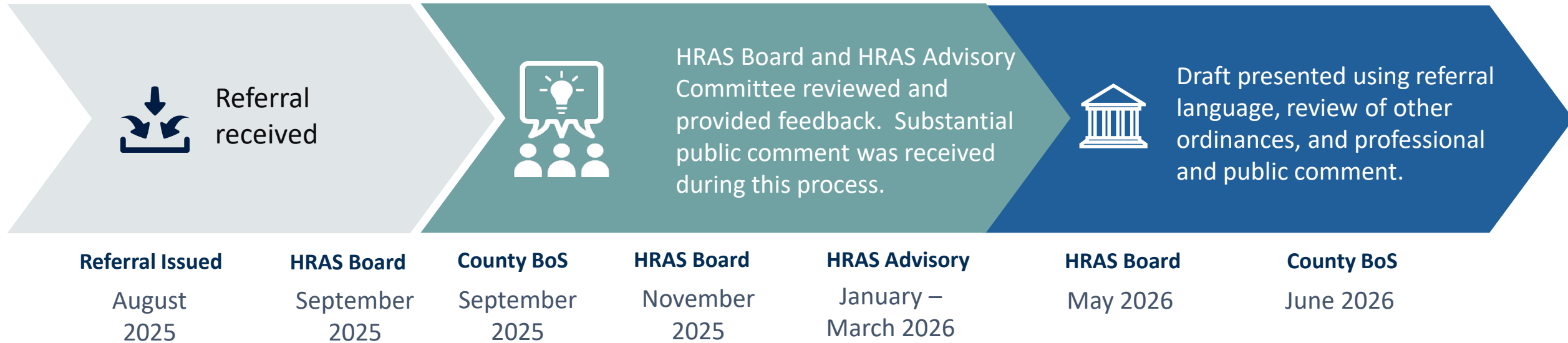
Title:

Introduce, waive first reading, and set June 23, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. as the date and time to consider adoption of an ordinance amending Chapters 8.04 and 8.08 of the Monterey County Code to require spaying and neutering of dogs and cats, while allowing certain exceptions.

Summary:

Board Referral No. 2025.10 was issued by Supervisor Alejo and assigned to the Health Department on August 26, 2025. This is an update on the referral process to date and the first hearing of the attached draft mandatory spay/neuter ordinance in the unincorporated areas of Monterey County as requested by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeline for Referral 2025.10



Draft Ordinance Key Elements

Amend 8.04.010 –
defines “Spayed”
and “Neutered”

Amend 8.08 –
inserts “Mandatory
Spaying and
Neutering”

Key Provision

No person shall own, harbor or keep within the unincorporated area of the County, a dog or cat over the age of six months, which has not been spayed or neutered unless such person qualifies for an exemption.

- “Mandatory” is used given the purpose of ordinance to mandate compliance. (Noted in Santa Cruz, Seaside uses both words).
- Age: 6 months is a commonly used age in ordinances and practice. Note that in individual cases where 6 months might be too early for the procedure, there is an exemption for veterinarian certified health reasons.
- Does not include an “unaltered animal certificate” licensing process. Requires compliance, breeder/kennel permit or an exemption.
- Does not include feral cats as defined by MCC 8.04. Recommended to address separately in the adoption of a “Community Cat” related ordinance when other ordinances are updated.

Exemptions

1. Dogs or cats documented as having been appropriately trained and currently being used by public law enforcement agencies for law enforcement activities, including search and rescue or service agencies that assist disabled persons.
2. Dogs and cats certified by a licensed veterinarian as having a health reason for not being spayed or neutered.
3. Dogs and cats residing in a kennel, boarding or pet shop holding a valid permit issued pursuant to Chapter 8.12,
4. Dogs and cats which are owned or kept and, in the custody and control of a nonresident of the unincorporated area of the County and who are temporarily visiting or traveling through the unincorporated areas of Monterey County for a period of less than 30 consecutive days.

Note: Dogs that have been deemed Potentially Dangerous or Vicious OR dogs and cats that are repeat offenders of other Title 8 sections do not qualify for an exemption.

Enforcement and Management

HRAS will conduct a public awareness campaign to inform the public and pet owners of new ordinance and share available resources for spay/neuter services in the County.



Pet owners in the unincorporated County area will have the option to comply, receive a breeder's permit, or qualify for an exemption.



When applicable, HRAS may issue citations.

Potential barriers to success.

- **Continued veterinarian shortage** – Collaboration amongst all eligible agencies to make s/n services readily available is essential for making a meaningful impact.
- **Rising economic/housing pressures** – Places substantial financial cost on pet owners, disproportionately burdening lower-income communities.
- **Staffing Capacity** – Current and proposed staffing level and resources may not be sufficient for robust enforcement.

**Consider
adoption of
ordinance set for:**

**June 23, 2026, at
10:30 am**

Thank you

