



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** OCTOBER 22, 2013
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT **WARDS:** ALL
CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE REQUIRING
THE MANDATORY SPAY AND NEUTER OF PIT BULL BREEDS

ISSUE:

The issue for City Council consideration is whether to adopt an amendment of the Riverside Municipal Code ("RMC") requiring the mandatory spay and neuter of pit bull breeds.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council introduce and subsequently adopt the attached ordinance amending Chapter 8.21 of the RMC requiring the mandatory spay and neuter of pit bull breeds.

BACKGROUND:

Cities are authorized to enact dog breed-specific ordinances pertaining to mandatory spay or neuter programs and breeding requirements, provided that no specific dog breed, or mixed dog breed, shall be declared potentially dangerous or vicious under those ordinances. (Health & Safety Code § 122331.) Cities implementing such programs shall measure the effect of the program by compiling statistical information of dog bites and submitting the information quarterly to the State Public Health Veterinarian. (*Ibid.*)

Currently, the RMC requires the sterilization of dogs only under circumstances when citations are issued for other violations. This is known as secondary enforcement, meaning a pet owner can only be cited for failure to spay and neuter their animal if they are simultaneously cited for violating another law associated with owning or possession a dog. Some examples of common citations accompanying spay/neuter violation are when a dog is a stray-at-large, unvaccinated, or unlicensed.

Pit bull and pit bull mixes significantly impact the health and safety of Riverside residents and their pets. The media frequently reports incidents of human injury and death from attacks by this type of dog. Additionally, this breed of dog represents 20 percent of the dogs impounded in Riverside County and 30 percent of the dogs euthanized in Riverside County. Historically, pit bulls and pit bull mixes have very low redemption or adoption rates.

The purpose of this ordinance is to protect the health and welfare of the public from irresponsible owners of pit bulls by mitigating the over population of pit bull breeds, and to reduce the rate of euthanization of pit bulls by reducing the number of unwanted dogs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no significant adverse fiscal impact anticipated with introducing and adopting the proposed ordinance.

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Gregory P. Priamos, City Attorney
Approved by: Deanna Lorson for Scott C. Barber, City Manager
Approved as to form: Gregory P. Priamos, City Attorney

Attachment:
1. Proposed Ordinance