

City Council Agenda
March 17, 2009
Police
Agenda Item C.1

Reviewed by
City Mgr's office: /SJP

Memo to: Manteca City Council
From: Dave Bricker, Chief of Police
Date: February 24, 2009
Subject: Spay and Neuter Ordinance

Recommendation:

Waive the first reading by substitution of the title and introduce Ordinance No. 1434, amending Section 6.10.010 through 6.10.130 of the Manteca Municipal Code pertaining to the spaying and neutering of all breeds of dogs.

Background:

In September 2008, the City Council adopted Sections 6.10.010 through 6.10.150 of the Manteca Municipal Code pertaining to the mandatory spaying and neutering of pit bull breed dogs. At that time, the Mayor directed staff to develop a mandatory spay and neuter ordinance for all dogs and bring that ordinance forward for Council's approval. Staff has prepared the attached proposed ordinance for Council's consideration.

The goal of a mandatory spay and neuter ordinance for all breeds is to reduce the number of animals that ultimately end up at the animal shelter, and the corresponding rate of euthanasia for those animals. The ASPCA supports the position that spaying and neutering of pets is an effective way to accomplish this. In its 2007 position paper on the subject, the ASPCA made the following statement:

"The ASPCA recognizes that sterilization is currently the best method to reduce companion animal overpopulation, and therefore to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia. The most important step a humane community can take to decrease companion animal overpopulation is to make a safe, effective, voluntary spay/neuter program available and readily accessible to the community, with programs and incentives

targeted to the populations known to be contributing disproportionately to shelter intake and euthanasia."

The proposed ordinance requires the spaying or neutering of all dogs over the age of six months. It provides exceptions for police, livestock, and health service working dogs, as well as licensed show dogs and dogs that, due to age or medical condition, the procedure would be life threatening. The ordinance retains the permit process for maintaining an unaltered dog that exists in the current ordinance.

Currently the cost of spaying or neutering a dog ranges from \$60 to \$130, depending on the size of the dog. This cost will be borne by the dog owner and is not subsidized by the City. It would be staff's intent to give dog owners a reasonable period of time to come into compliance with the ordinance before beginning strict enforcement.

Mandatory spay and neuter ordinances have been enacted in many communities throughout California, including Los Angeles County, Sacramento County, Laguna Hills, and Watsonville. Staff is requesting Council implement the proposed ordinance.

This ordinance has been reviewed by the City Attorney and approved as to form.

Fiscal Impact:

Unknown. Currently the City licenses about 3,000 dogs each year, resulting in approximately \$37,000 in revenue. In some communities where this type of ordinance was enacted, there was a reduction in the number of dogs licensed in subsequent years, primarily by individuals who could not afford to have the dogs altered. The Police Department currently uses SHARP volunteers to contact dog owners who have not renewed their licenses to determine if they still possess the dog. We intend to continue this process, which should minimize the reduction in licensing. There are no increases in hard costs to the Department resulting from this ordinance. Over time, staff anticipates the ordinance will result in a reduction in the Animal Shelter's intake and authorization of dogs resulting in a corresponding reduction in operating costs.