

## **Memorandum**

**To:** Public Safety Committee  
**From:** Takashi Wada, MD MPH, Director/ Health Officer  
**CC:** Stephanie DeWolfe, Assistant City Manager  
**Date:** July 15, 2008  
**Re:** Dog spay and neutering

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On March 10, 2008, the Pasadena City Council directed the City Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance requiring the spaying and neutering of pit bulls and pit bull mixes in the City of Pasadena. The prepared ordinance was scheduled to be heard for first reading on May 5, 2008; however, the item was held and staff was directed to follow up with additional information to be presented at a future Public Safety Committee meeting.

The primary question to staff was whether it was feasible and desirable to extend the mandatory spay and neuter requirement to all dogs in Pasadena, rather than focus on specific breeds. The challenge with breed specific regulation is in defining and identifying breeds, especially those of mixed pedigrees. In the draft ordinance prepared by the City Attorney's Office, the responsibility for determining the breed of a particular dog is left to the City Poundmaster. In Pasadena, this entity is the Pasadena Humane Society. While identifying breeds can be difficult, there are several reasons why the initial agenda report focused on pit bulls and pit bull mixes.

First, pit bulls and pit bull mixes disproportionately occupy space in the Humane Society impound and records indicate that they are seldom adopted by the public. While no specific breed of dog can be labeled as inherently more dangerous, several of the more well publicized incidents, including attacks in Pasadena and San Francisco, involved pit bull breeds. San Francisco implemented a pit bull specific spay and neuter program with success. Second, Pasadena does not have the capacity to spay and neuter the increased volume of animals should the ordinance be immediately extended to all dog breeds. This would result in the pit bull owners having to compete with all dog owners for scarce appointments, thus delaying the intended focus on pit bull overpopulation. Lastly, the Pasadena Humane Society would require a significant increase in their animal control contract in order to accommodate the increased staffing and operational costs associated with enforcing the ordinance. While there are a minimal number of legitimate breeders of pit bulls, there are a large number of show dogs of other breeds that would be submitted for exemptions. The process of verifying pedigree information, show dog registration, and inspecting breeding quarters is time intensive. The attached document from the Pasadena Humane Society details the costs involved in enforcing a new spay and neuter requirement in Pasadena.

Extending the proposed mandatory spay and neuter ordinance to all dog breeds is feasible, but would require an additional significant cost to the city.



Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA  
 361 South Raymond Avenue  
 Pasadena, California 91105

626/792-7151  
[www.phsspeca.org](http://www.phsspeca.org)

**PIT BULL INFORMATION FOR PASADENA CITY ORDINANCE CHANGE**

The Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA supports the City of Pasadena in its efforts to guarantee public safety. Although the ordinance before City Council is specific to pit bulls and pit bull mixes, the Pasadena Humane Society feels that the City of Pasadena would be best served by an ordinance that includes all breeds and mixes.

**Field Services**

One of the exceptions pursuant to Section 9.19.040 is that Pit bull owners obtain a Breeding Permit from the Pasadena Public Health Department. Pursuant to Section 9.19.080 when a dog owner applies for a Breeding Permit our officers would be required to visit the dog owner's address to verify that the applicant has adequate space in which to breed Pit bulls and raise the puppies, and that we (PHS) are satisfied that such space will contain the animals as well as provide them with safe, sanitary, and humane conditions. Section 9.19.080 would also require that once the permit has been approved, our officers conduct follow-up visits to the address to ensure continued compliance with the ordinance.

Undertaking such task would require that PHS hire an additional Animal Control Officer, and purchase a portable communications radio for the officer. PHS would also need to purchase an additional pick-up truck, along with the animal transport bed, truck radio and emergency light-bar.

Animal Control Officer	\$35,000
new portable radio	\$5,000
new pick-up truck	\$27,000
animal transport bed	\$18,000
truck radio, and emergency light-bar	\$10,000

<b>Set up Cost Year One</b>	<b>\$95,000</b>
<b>Recurring Cost</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>

**Pasadena Pit Bull Population**

Average stay of Pit Bulls 2006-2007 = 18 days  
 Average total number of Pit Bulls Impounded = 340  
 PHS charges \$20.00 per day for boarding  
 Expected increase in Impounded Pit Bulls = 15% = 51 (total number of impounds) = 390

**Boarding Fees:**

51 (expected increase pit bulls impounded) x 18 days = 918 days  
 \$20 per day x 918 days = \$18,360

**Cost of Care**

\$25 per animal  
 51 X \$25 = \$1275

**Euthanasia Fees:**

51 x .305 (average % pit bulls euthanized) = 15.55  
 \$30.00 (euthanasia fee) x 15.5 = \$466

**Staffing**

New Health Staff Member \$30,000  
 Part time Adoption Staff \$18,000

**Estimated Total Care in Shelter:**

\$18,500 Shelter & Food  
 \$500 Euthanasia  
 \$1300 vaccines & standard care  
 \$30,000 additional health technician  
 \$18,000 additional part time adoption counsellor

**TOTAL \$79,300**

**Public Spay/Neuter Program (SNIP PROGRAM)**

In 2007, 64 pit bulls and pit bull mixes were booked for surgery through the SNIP program. A cursory review shows that this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular large breed dog booked in—the first is Labrador or lab mixes. The cost of a neuter is \$65 and a spay is \$127 if there are no complications. A dog that is cryptorchid, in heat, pregnant or overweight also costs more because the surgery is longer and more difficult.

At this time PHS is booked 6-8 weeks out.

The estimates below assume that the population of animals in the shelter is a sample of the dog population as a whole.

Pasadena Population	147,000
AVMA Est of Dogs per Pop.	37.20%
Est Number of Dogs	37,616
Percentage of Pit Bulls	16%
Est Number of Pit Bulls	5,920
Percentage of Intact Pit Bulls	44%
Est Number of Intact Pit Bulls	2,596

Average cost to spay estimated number of intact pit bulls @ \$100 per surgery is \$259,600.

The Pasadena Humane Society currently does not have the facilities available to serve the spay/neuter needs of the general public. The cost of sterilization surgery depends upon the veterinarian, clinic and health of the animal. The general cost for a healthy animal can run between \$100 to \$500.