



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: MAY 5, 2026**

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC **WARDS: ALL**
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 1.17.230(A) OF THE
RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION
AMOUNTS

ISSUE:

Adopt an ordinance amending section 1.17.230(A) of the Riverside Municipal Code (“RMC”) Administrative Citation amounts to \$100.00, \$500.00, and \$1,000.00.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council adopt an Ordinance amending section 1.17.230(A) of the Riverside Municipal Code Chapter 1.17.

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION:

On April 21, 2026, the City Council, with Councilmember Cervantes absent, unanimously approved introduction of an ordinance amending section 1.17.230(A) of the Riverside Municipal Code (“RMC”) Administrative Citation amounts to \$100.00, \$500.00, and \$1,000.00.

LAND USE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 12, 2026, the Land Use Committee voted unanimously to support staff’s recommendation to adopt an ordinance increasing Administrative Citation fine amounts to \$100.00, \$500.00, and \$1,000.00. The committee also directed staff to return in one year with an update on the effectiveness of the changes and any recommended adjustments.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

Unless otherwise provided, violations of the RMC are imposed and assessed by means of an administrative citation set per ordinance 6479 § 1 (1999) at \$100.00 for the first occurrence of a violation, \$200.00 for the second occurrence of the same type of violation, and \$500.00 for the third and each subsequent occurrence of the same type of violation.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of administrative fines is to enforce rules, promote compliance, and deter violations without requiring criminal prosecution. These fines hold individuals and businesses accountable for breaking regulations, helping to maintain public safety, health, and community standards. They also serve as a financial incentive for timely compliance while covering enforcement costs, reducing the burden on taxpayers.

The current violation fine structure of \$100.00, \$200.00, and \$500.00 was adopted in 1999. Over the past 26 years, these amounts have become outdated, contributing to a decline in compliance. To address this issue, increasing code enforcement fines to \$100.00, \$500.00, and \$1,000.00 is necessary to ensure stronger adherence to local regulations and discourage repeat violations.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed amendment aims to strengthen the City’s enforcement measures and ensure greater compliance with the Riverside Municipal Code (RMC). Current fines of \$100.00, \$200.00, and \$500.00 often do not serve as an effective deterrent, particularly for repeat offenders who continue to ignore regulations. When violations persist, they create ongoing concerns for residents, such as hazardous property conditions, public nuisances, including public health & safety concerns, all of which negatively impact the community.

By increasing fines, property owners and businesses will have a stronger financial incentive to address violations promptly, rather than risk accumulating higher penalties. This proactive approach will not only improve compliance rates but also reduce the burden on city staff, who often must repeatedly address the same violations. With fewer repeat offenses, enforcement resources can be allocated more efficiently, allowing the City to focus on broader community improvements rather than spending excessive time on non-compliant cases.

Moreover, raising fines would help offset the costs associated with enforcement efforts. Code enforcement involves inspections, administrative processing, and legal actions, when necessary, all of which require funding. Without adequate penalties, the cost of enforcement falls on taxpayers. By adjusting fines to reflect current economic conditions and the seriousness of violations, the City can ensure that those responsible for non-compliance contribute to the cost of maintaining community standards.

Ultimately, strengthening penalties promotes greater accountability among property owners and businesses. It encourages a culture of compliance, leading to cleaner neighborhoods, improved property values, and a safer, more livable environment for all City of Riverside residents. This amendment is a necessary step to protect the integrity of the community, ensure fairness in enforcement, and enhance overall quality of life..

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact is undetermined as this time, since it is based on non-compliance with the updated fine structure.

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