



City of Arts & Innovation

Safety, Wellness and Youth Committee Memorandum

TO: **SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND YOUTH COMMITTEE** **DATE:** **FEBRUARY 18, 2026**

FROM: **POLICE DEPARTMENT** **WARDS:** **ALL**

SUBJECT: **ORDINANCE REGULATING OR PROHIBITING THE SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF KRATOM PRODUCTS**

ISSUES:

Review and provide recommendations on adopting an ordinance for the regulation of kratom product sales and distribution within the City of Riverside, modeled after Riverside County Ordinance 1004 (adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 28, 2025), or alternatively, consider prohibiting the sale and distribution of kratom entirely.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee:

1. Receive and discuss the proposed ordinance regulating the sale and distribution of kratom products.
2. Receive and discuss the proposed ordinance prohibiting the sale of kratom products entirely; and
3. Forward their recommendation to the City Council for final consideration.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside Police Department (RPD) is the local agency responsible for conducting regulatory compliance enforcement at tobacco retail establishments, including Smoke Shops, gas stations, grocery stores, and minimarts in the City of Riverside. The RPD Vice Unit is charged with investigation and enforcement and consists of a Sergeant, 6 Detectives and a Community Service Officer.

The Vice Unit is also responsible for regulation of massage parlors, firearms dealers, pawnshops, secondhand dealers, fortune tellers, driver services, entertainment services, adult entertainment establishments and cannabis sales, along with alcoholic beverage enforcement (ABC) and investigations of illegal gambling, prostitution, and human trafficking.

There are currently 215 known locations (grocery stores, mini marts, gas stations) selling tobacco in the City of Riverside with 28 of those classified as Smoke Shops. Between March 2025 to January 2026, the Vice Unit has observed most gas stations, mini marts and smoke shops selling kratom and synthetic based kratom products that exceed 2% of 7-OH in concentration.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Kratom (*mitragyna speciosa*) is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. Consumption of kratom leaves produces both stimulant effects (in low doses) and sedative effects (in high doses) and can lead to psychotic symptoms and psychological and physiological dependence. Kratom is most often used by oral ingestion in the form of a tablet, capsule or extract. The psychoactive ingredient in kratom is the alkaloid 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), which naturally occurs in a concentration of about 2% of the total alkaloids in the plant. Kratom vendors have developed methods to increase/synthesize the concentration of 7-OH above 2% in many kratom products, leading to their harmful effects and the nickname "gas station heroin." Per the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), these products are extremely dangerous and may lead to addiction, serious harm, overdose, and death.

Concentrated kratom products are sold in gas stations, smoke shops, and other retail and online venues. They come in various forms such as tablets, gummies, drink mixes, and concentrated liquid extracts or shots for drinking. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has connected this synthetic kratom to multiple fatal overdoses in 2025.

In July of 2025, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration requested the DEA formally review kratom derivatives and consider placing them on the federal list of controlled substances. The DEA is still in the review process.

The state of California sought to regulate kratom and kratom products in 2025 by means of Assembly Bill 1088. However, despite unanimous support from the Assembly, AB 1088 was referred to the state Senate Committee on Health and failed to become law. According to the Riverside County Executive Office, the failure of AB 1088 motivated the Board of Supervisors to adopt Riverside County Ordinance 1004.

Riverside County (2025), La Quinta (2026), Anaheim (2026), Huntington Beach (2025), Laguna Niguel (2025) and Buena Park (2026) adopted ordinances prohibiting the sale and distribution of kratom products exceeding 2% 7-OH concentration.

Newport Beach (2024), Oceanside (2016), City of San Diego (2016) and Stanton (2025), passed ordinances prohibiting the sale of kratom entirely.

On January 16, 2026, Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) launched a compliance effort to ensure its licensees do not have kratom products on their shelves. Following guidance issued by the California Department of Health (CDPH) and coupled with an extensive campaign to educate licensees, ABC will take strong enforcement action against businesses that continue to sell kratom products. Licensees must cease sales of these products immediately and those in violation will be subject to administrative disciplinary action that may result in the suspension or revocation of their ABC license.

DISCUSSION:

Kratom products are sold in gas stations, minimarts, and smoke shops throughout the City. To address the public health risks posed by these unregulated products, the City should consider adopting an ordinance similar to County of Riverside Ordinance 1004 that limits sales to adults

21 and older and bans concentrated or synthetic kratom products containing more than 2% 7-OH, or alternatively, prohibit kratom sales and distribution entirely.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the proposed Ordinance.

Prepared by: Charles Payne, Deputy Chief

Approved by: Larry V. Gonzalez, Chief of Police

Certified as to

availability of funds: Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director

Approved by: Mike Futrell, City Manager

Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Ordinance Kratom Regulate – Redline
2. Ordinance Kratom Ban - Redline
3. Riverside County Ordinance 1004
4. DEA Fact Sheet
5. Assembly Third Reading of AB 1088
6. Presentation