

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Ballot Measure Proposal Submission Form

Thank you for ensuring that Denver’s ballot referral process adheres to good governance principles. Please provide thoughtful and well researched responses to the following questions.

Responses to each question are limited to 250 words. Please contact CM Herndon with any questions or concerns.

1. Is the ballot measure proposal an amendment to the Charter or the Code?

Charter Amendment

Code Amendment

2. Topic or title of ballot measure proposal.

Shall the voters for the City and County of Denver adopt an ordinance authorizing the city to grant a provisional permit to owners or keepers of a pit bull, provided the owner microchips the animal and complies with additional requirements set by Denver Animal Protection?

3. What problem are you trying to solve?

Modernizing Denver’s animal ordinances to reflect current science and best practices

4. How will the proposed amendment address this problem?

The proposed amendment updates Denver’s animal ordinances to modify the city’s breed-specific legislation (BSL). BSL is no longer considered best practice or effective policy. The proposed amendment modifies the city’s existing BSL to allow owners to apply for permits and once the conditions are fulfilled, to license their animals the same as any other dog in Denver. This reflects a modernized, data-driven approach to policymaking to move the city toward more effective, equitable animal ordinances.

5. Explain the origins and background of your proposal.
Denver passed its breed-specific legislation in 1989 in an effort to protect the community from dangerous dogs. While well-intentioned, BSL has since been proven ineffective at achieving its goal of keeping communities safe and can even lead to negative outcomes, including a false sense of security. Research tells us that the most effective ordinances are those that focus on dog behavior and responsible ownership, not breed. The proposed updates modify the existing ordinance to reflect current best practices in policymaking.
6. Describe the stakeholders (internal and external) and the stakeholder process.
Stakeholders include the community at-large, animal welfare organizations including the sheltering and veterinary communities, and Denver Animal Protection. This proposal was developed with input from both expert and community stakeholders.
7. What city agencies will be impacted? Provide the agency feedback.
Denver Animal Protection does not anticipate a significant impact as a result of this bill.
8. What is the fiscal impact to the city?
There will be a minimal fiscal impact as a result of implementing permitting and the anticipated increased efficiency in dealing with reports of pit bulls in the city illegally. We do not anticipate significant financial impact either in revenues or expenses as a result of modernizing the ordinance.
9. Provide any appropriate legal analysis. Are there any possible legal problems? Are there any relevant state laws?
The State of Colorado currently prohibits breed-specific legislation, however Denver has continued to carry the legislation on its books because of home rule status. Counsel has not expressed concern about possible legal problems.
10. Will the proposal have an effect on neighboring cities or the state?
None is anticipated

11. Provide examples from other cities if possible.

Castle Rock, CO

12. Who opposes the proposal and why?

Individuals and organizations who oppose the proposal do so on the basis of their belief that pit bulls are inherently more dangerous than other breeds, despite the science and research that indicates otherwise.

13. Term/duration (Will this item need a sunset clause? If so, why?)

No.