



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date:

Item Creation Date:

HPD - Catalytic Converter Ordinance

Agenda Item#:

Background:

The City Attorney and Chief of Police for the Houston Police Department recommend that City Council approve an Ordinance amending Chapter 7 of the Code of Ordinances and adding Section 7-63 relating to metal recyclers and secondhand resellers. The proposed amendment to Chapter 7 would make it unlawful for any individual or entity other than a metal recycler to possess a used catalytic converter that was severed from its original vehicle unless the individual or entity provides the required information. Each catalytic converter in an individual or entity's possession shall constitute a separate offense. The proposed amendment would also close a reporting requirements gap in the current legal framework for sales involving secondhand resellers.

As background, the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) has reported a nationwide crime trend of catalytic converter thefts. These thefts are attributed to the surging value of their precious metals. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting global supply chain issues have drastically increased the price of the precious metals in catalytic converters. In Houston, during the first three months of 2022, HPD recorded 3188 thefts of catalytic converters in the City of Houston, a 123% increase over the same period in previous year. Catalytic converter thefts can also be associated with violent crimes, with 34 aggravated assaults and aggravated robberies associated with catalytic converter theft in 2021 and 15 in the first three months of 2022.

As part of Mayor Sylvester Turner commitment to *One Safe Houston*, the Administration requested that the City's Legal Department, in consultation with HPD, craft an ordinance to outlaw the possession of severed catalytic converters without appropriate documentation and requiring documentation for all sales of catalytic converters to metal recyclers. *One Safe Houston* is a comprehensive violence reduction initiative focused on:

- (1) Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention
- (2) Crisis Intervention, Response and Recovery
- (3) Youth Outreach Opportunities, and
- (4) Key Community Partnerships; and,

Fiscal Note:

There is no impact to the fiscal budget or no additional spending authority. Therefore, no Fiscal Note is required as stated in the Financial Policies.

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