

Memorandum

TO: Economic Development Authority
FROM: Will Harris , Housing Program Specialist
DATE: December 1, 2025
SUBJECT: Revisions to Administrative Citation Fines
ITEM NUMBER: 5.a
SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

To support and recommend to the city council, approval of revised administrative citation fines to improve the city's ability and effectiveness in enforcement of certain code violations.

INTRODUCTION

Staff is presenting recommended adjustments to the fines for administrative citations to improve our ability to effectively enforce code violations. The administrative citation mechanism was implemented as a method of ensuring compliance with City Codes without expending City resources to issue expensive and time-consuming criminal citations for items that do not inherently require that level of enforcement. However, the city's administrative citation fee amounts have fallen behind, and therefore, have been failing their purpose and rarely inspire owners to comply. This leads to lengthy court battles with homeowners on items that could be solved with issuing a harsher penalty up front. In addition, the city has had issues with contractors skipping zoning or building permits and doing so multiple times in a row throughout the year, even after being caught.

To update this, staff have researched around 12 different cities in the metro area that use administrative citations to bring Shoreview's code enforcement procedure and citation amounts more in line with other metro cities. What the research showed was that the City could move to update its system in a few different ways to ensure quicker compliance. These include the number of notices that an owner receives, updating the fine amounts, and having harsher punishments for repeat offenders.

DISCUSSION

Number of Notices

In the current system, Shoreview allows homeowners 30 days and three notices via letter before any kind of citation or fee is issued to the owner. While time to remedy is helpful for those who need it, our letters specify that the City will allow owners to request extensions or create a work plan to reach compliance should they need it. With both of these in place, if a homeowner requests an extension and fails to correct their violation, it can take months before any kind of enforcement action can be taken that carries a penalty.

Other Cities like Coon Rapids, Maple Grove, and Rosemount only send one letter or notice before moving to an administrative citation, but allow for extensions upon request. I spoke

with the City Administrator at Columbia Heights, who recently implemented a new citation program in 2024, which sends two notices before the citation is issued and also allows for extensions. Shortening the timeline or number of notices, but retaining the ability for owners to request additional time, allows for the best of both. Quicker enforcement actions on those who do not make the effort to either correct the violation or ask for additional time, and the ability to extend timelines for those who are dealing with complications. This would be especially helpful for repeat offenders who are familiar with our process and use it to their advantage by dragging things out until the 3rd notice, which wastes staff time.

Fine Amounts - Leveling System

Cities like Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, and Columbia Heights utilize a level system to classify the severity of enforcement and determine the fine amounts. Level 1 violations involve things like overnight parking and garbage can storage; higher level violations are items like work without a permit or violations of the property maintenance code. Costs for level one violations range from \$50-\$100, level two costs range from \$100-\$250, and level three violations range from \$250 to \$300, and so on.

The current fees suggest that we would issue fines in tandem with our three-letter system, which has not been City policy. So, replacing our current administrative citations with this leveling system would eliminate confusion within our own fee schedule to ensure that the right amount is issued for an administrative citation and allow transparency for residents. Please see the attachments which shows our current Code citation amounts and a draft of what a Shoreview leveling system could look like.

Repeat Offenders

Our current fees in addendum A suggest that citations will increase based on the number of administrative citations issued in the same year. However, the current increases for both property maintenance violations and work without permits are not sufficient. Cities in the metro take differing approaches to their increase policy. Some cities will increase the enforcement level to one level of violation for repeat offenders. So if someone continues to violate the garbage cans ordinance, which is listed as a level one violation, they would be bumped to a level two violation the second time with a 12 or 24-month period, and so on. Cities then cap the maximum fee at somewhere between \$1000-\$2000. Other cities choose to double the existing fee amount upon repeat violations to a set maximum.

Either of these steeper increase capabilities would be beneficial, especially for repeat offenders who are at the point of violating multiple times, have been educated on the code, and continue to break it. Ideally, this would allow us to avoid misdemeanor citations because it provides a stricter administrative punishment that can be followed up on quickly and lead to compliance sooner.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending EDA review and approval of the updated schedule for administrative citation fines. This proposal would significantly improve the city's ability and effectiveness in enforcement of certain code violations. If supported by the EDA, the proposal would be presented to the city council for their consideration at the December 15, 2025 meeting as part of the ordinance approving fee schedule updates for the coming year.

ATTACHMENTS

Shoreview Administrative Citation Fee Schedule Draft

Shoreview Current Admin Citation Fees