

Fridley will double policing fee for its pawn shops

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Cash-N-Pawn and Pawn America in Fridley will soon be forking over more money to the city to help police activity in the stores, despite their protests.

The City Council voted 4-1 last week to double the fee pawn shops pay on transactions. Instead of a \$1.50 transaction fee, there will be a \$3 fee, and \$2 of each transaction will go to pay for an additional officer devoted full time to pawn work.

Pawn shop owners say the fee and increased regulation are unnecessary.

Fridley Police Department officials say the businesses do a good job but still require more resources from the city and should help pay for the additional law enforcement.

Part of the way officers track criminals is through a database called the Automated Pawn System (APS), which Fridley and several other cities require pawn shops to use. Customers have to show photo identification, have their picture taken and sign a contract saying they are the rightful owner of items they pawn. Then employees record that information in the database along with a description of the item.

There is also a national database that records information on stolen goods across the country. If someone steals something and takes it to a pawn shop, it can be matched and the person can be identified.

An officer devoted to pawn shop work will audit the information entered into the Automated Pawn System to ensure that it's descriptive and accurate, work on investigations that involve the pawn shops, and oversee day-to-day operations.