

## **What are the current assignments and capabilities of the Community Development, Neighborhood Enhancement Division?**

### **SUMMARY**

City Departments have taken on new and different programs and responsibilities over the last twelve years because of budgetary reasons and reorganizations. The Community Development Department is no exception.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Division (NED) has adapted over this period to provide the best service that can be delivered with the resources available. NED has reduced some services, and expanded and added some roles to make a larger impact on the community. Like any division in the City organization, NED would be capable of more with additional resources.

What follows are brief descriptions of NED programs, the current state of their capability, and possible improvements to each of these programs.

### **FACTS AND FINDINGS**

The Neighborhood Enhancement Division is entrusted to operate seven distinct programs for the City, as follows below. An administration group supports all of these programs.

#### **Administration**

The NED Administrator with support from an Office Assistant and a Staff Assistant oversee and support the division. A Code Compliance Supervisor assists with that group and overall leadership.

#### **Possible Changes**

- Funds generated from liens placed by the division have been designated for deposit into the Blight to Bright trust and agency account for further use in abating dangerous and derelict properties. It would be useful to the division (and department) if excess funds generated in this way could be deployed to enhance neighborhoods, partnership program, youth development efforts, planning outreach, historic preservation, and perhaps some library concerns. We are working with the Budget office and others to explore possibilities.
- Because of work flow and responsibilities it is apparent that the single Office Assistant position needs to be reclassified as a second Staff Assistant. This will allow for either one of the Staff Assistants to be sick, or otherwise take leave and not dramatically affect the performance of the division. We aren't quite ready to build this out but we're exploring the idea with our current recruitments.

#### **Code Compliance**

Code Compliance cases are prioritized at three possible levels (1, 2, and 3). See

attachment #1. Priority 1 cases being the most important. At present, the Code Compliance section is unable to consistently or effectively respond to cases with a lower priority than 2.

### Possible Changes

- Enforcement of sign code requires a specific set of knowledge that can best be described as a cross between a planner and a code officer. The intricacies of the UDC as a whole, SRC Chapter 900, and City enforcement processes would seem to call for a single dedicated position. It is possible that alterations of SRC Chapter 900 and some other code provisions would enable the position to be self-funded through issuing of permits. Having this position, in whatever location suits it best operationally, should allow for a more stringent response to signs placed in the public right-of-way, and the additional reported sign violations.
- NED also envisions a change where the Code Officer position becomes a flex position, allowing for internal advancement based on experience, initiative, and effort. We are presently working with HR to provide this for the officers.
- The success of the Blight to Bright enterprise program is dependent on having funds available to actually perform demolitions if necessary. The continued availability of this funding is imperative to continue this work into the future. To that end it is desirable that funds received from liens placed on properties by NED be directed back to the division to fund more enforcement opportunities, and advance the objectives of the division. It is of note that at the writing of this report, two Dangerous Buildings have been demolished at little or no cost to the City. Additionally, more than \$80,000.00 has been recovered in payment of liens that NED had placed on these properties. We're working with the Budget Office and others to develop a means for replenishing the fund.
- The Code Compliance case management software is obsolete, creating enforcement delays. There is also no way to generate meaningful measurements or statistics from this program. Currently IT is working on a replacement, but there are delays in development and if successful will only provide a "bare bones" system. It is tentatively scheduled for completion sometime in 2019. Our hope is that we can make the operation as efficient as possible with new software. Doing so will then allow us to expand our staffing with confidence.
- Creating a Senior Code Officer position (Code Officer 3) has been an identified need for creating a field command and control presence; and more consistent and timely response to complaints. We envision this position as being assigned oversight on all high priority or complex cases. We will develop this potential job class in the coming months.

### Abandoned Vehicles

The Abandoned Vehicle program provides service to the entire City, and is responsible in part for Parking Enforcement outside the downtown area. This program concentrates on junk and/or abandoned vehicles, but also vehicles that are ordinarily legally parked but that have not moved for a week or more. At present we have barely enough resources to keep up with complaints.

#### Possible Changes

- A good portion of the work done by this section is in the consignment paperwork associated with towed vehicles transferred to the towing companies for disposition. This work is required under the current tow contract the City has agreed to. Very few municipalities in Oregon perform this service for the tow companies. When the new tow contract is negotiated, this group will realize an approximate 30% increase in capacity if vehicle consignments are no longer required of NED.

#### **Multi-Unit Licensing and Inspection**

The Multi-Unit Licensing and inspection program is responsible for the inspection and licensing of approximately 21,000 dwelling units and hotel rooms in the City. This program is presently in the best position it's been in the last 8 years. The study of the program conducted two years ago recommended raising the licensing fees and creating a second inspector position at no additional cost to the general fund; which we have done.

#### Possible Changes

- There are presently several IT issues with the licensing and inspection tracking programming that have delayed an accurate billing for the 2019 year. This is a version of the program that IT is developing for Code Compliance. Overcoming these issues has required all the additional resources this program received last year, and is delaying further the work that new planning code requires with Air BnB units, and the general Code Compliance issues that this section was to begin to cover at all their licensed properties. The effort continues with us and IT working together.
- Along with upgrades to the software, we intend to budget for updates, purchases, and replacements for some additional existing equipment; tablet, and testing devices (\$3,000 estimated).

#### **Neighborhood Associations**

At this time the 18 Neighborhood Associations are supported by a single full-time Neighborhood Specialist. Our staff person assists NAs in their routine efforts of holding meetings, publishing agendas and minutes, track communications money, account for NA trust and agency accounts, and communicate effectively. This is the lowest level of support the program has enjoyed since its creation in 1972. This is not necessarily a weakness. Advances in technology have enhanced communications over the last 47 years, and over-all support to each Neighborhood Association is presently similar to the support they enjoyed over the last 4 years.

Our current strategy of Neighborhood Association maturity will also help mitigate the need for additional staff support in the future. We plan to continue with the NA Chair Meetings, and the NA Training opportunities like those we provided for last year.

#### Possible Changes

- Marketing resources would help the NAs and the Neighborhood Specialist alike. Access to graphic design assistance or software & training would enhance each of the NAs and their events. More attendance by City Staff at NA meetings and events will also help make NAs more effective and involved. We will pursue those options with Communications and others.
- We will also explore the idea of hiring a part-time Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator to assist Neighborhoods staff with events and outreach, serve on City Communications Team, and manage neighborhoods social media and news stories. This is still a concept to consider further but, again, we're working on it.
- Purchase a "Neighborhood Bus" for special events and outreach efforts. This would benefit any Department that wanted to participate. Many cities have used this model to bring City Hall to under-represented areas. This is solely an idea at this point but one we're going to explore further.

#### **Neighborhood Partnership**

The Neighborhood Partnership Program supports two partnerships at a time. Other than salary, there is a very small amount of dedicated to this program. A total of \$5,600 is allocated for program support each year. The Neighborhood Partnership Program works to build community and neighborhoods by partnership with activist neighbors, businesses, churches, schools, and sometimes the neighborhood associations to strengthen the entire neighborhood, perform some particular service program, or advance a neighborhood initiative. In addition to supporting the Partnership Areas, the Partnership Coordinator assists with outreach directed at higher level organizations and contacts that will benefit the entire City instead of a specific neighborhood. This includes tabling at events, participating in meetings with a wide variety of community partners, managing social media, writing stories and other duties as assigned.

#### Possible Changes

*These are offered in addition to changes already mentioned under the Neighborhood Associations category*

- The return on investment of the \$5,600 annual budget for each partnership has been greater than 60 to 1. Doubling Neighborhood Partnership grant money from \$5,600 per year to \$11,200 may dramatically increase the ROI for the two supported partnerships; or allow annual funding to the existing North, South, East, and West Partnership Teams.

#### **Youth Development**

Youth Development (YD) seeks to engage, equip, and empower young adult community

members to take an active role in improving the Salem community. Through YD's "Teen Action Team (TAT) Initiative," NED provides fun, service-learning and leadership opportunities in schools and neighborhoods encouraging advocacy and action on issues that matter to youth. This initiative is both a local teen service movement and a collective of programs and projects thanks to collaborative efforts between the City of Salem and local agencies and organizations. Best practices in teen service-learning and adolescent development and prevention helps younger community members learn civic responsibility, increase college and career readiness, build neighborhood pride which can increase safety and lower crime, develop as healthier adolescents, forge positive youth-adult partnerships, and engage all community sectors in strengthening Salem.

Successful programs include the year-round One Thousand Soles shoe resource program and it's Shoe Battle of the Schools, ILEAD Youth Leadership Summit, CAREcorps summer service leadership camp, school-based TAT service leadership clubs, and the Graduation Service Honors recognition program for high school seniors.

YD directly serves between 250-400 teen leaders from Salem and surrounding areas each year which in turn has a significant tertiary impact increasing the City's engagement of additional youth. Collaborations are essential to the success of YD in part because of the Youth Development Coordinator position acting as the sole City employee devoted to YD efforts.

#### Possible Changes

*These are offered in addition to changes already mentioned under the Neighborhood Associations category*

- Additional staff would allow programs to scale up and increase outreach and impact of Salem's young people. This may be in the form of paid intern, seasonal employee, or part-time.
- Additional funding allocated to YD programs would also benefit these efforts.

#### **Park Ranger**

The Salem Park Ranger is presently assigned to patrol four of Salem's parks; Minto Brown, Riverfront, Wallace Marine, and Marion Square. He operates primarily as a City ambassador, but is authorized to enforce; dogs off leash, smoking in a park, and write parking tickets for vehicles illegally parked in park lots.

#### Possible Changes

- Re-Classify the Park Ranger from Code Officer 1 to Code Officer 2. This would enable the Park Ranger to address a more broad number of issues that occur in parks, including many violations in SRC Chapter 94 (offenses in parks) which have never been cited for.

#### **BACKGROUND**

This report has been provided upon request of City Councilor/s. The information contained is a combination of the NED manager view, and information provided by staff. The self-examination process, and the writing of this report has been a good exercise in Divisional self-evaluation, and has benefitted staff in ways that were not anticipated.

Brady Rogers  
Administrator, NED

Attachments:

1. Compliance Priority Response Policy

## **Enforcement and Priority Response Policy**

Date Issued: April 04, 2018

Approved By: Brady Rogers, Administrator

### **A. Policy Statement:**

The community expects Code Compliance Services to address code violations and respond to calls within a reasonable time. Due to limited resources, in terms of staffing and funding, the extent of the service may necessarily be limited. Cases are generally opened on the basis of citizen complaint. However, an officer may initiate a case based on personal observation of un-reported circumstances that have an adverse effect on life, health, and safety, or if the apparent violation is in the immediate vicinity of case that is complaint initiated, and it would be more efficient to address similar apparent violations in the vicinity while responding to the original complaint.

### **B. Citizen Initiated Complaint Procedure:**

It is not always possible for Code Compliance Services to respond to every call in a timely basis; therefore, we must prioritize available resources to give the highest level of efficient service possible. The priority of a call is dependent upon many factors. Such determination should be based upon the comparative urgency, the risk to life and property, and the impact of the violation on the total community. Prioritizing on follow-up cases is based on the appropriate criteria listed for remaining conditions as defined for each priority. This list should not be considered exclusive, nor would it be unreasonable for an officer, while exercising reasonable judgment, to reclassify any of the listed items to a higher or lower priority if exceptional circumstances exist.

#### **1. Priority #1 Response**

- a. Any complaint that involves an imminent risk to public health and/or safety, where the immediate response is necessary, or creates an immediate long term detrimental impact to livability.
- b. Ideally, officers shall respond to Priority #1 incidents upon receipt of the information, and under the Call Out Policy for nights and weekends; or depending upon the circumstances, officers may respond within one working day of receipt of the complaint.
- c. The following is a list of priority #1 calls; The two highest priorities are:
  - In-Progress Criminal Offenses where our presence is required,
  - Reports of new, or imminently Dangerous Buildings where public safety is at stake.

Other High Priority Calls are:

Health Hazards	Attractive Nuisances
Abandoned Ice Boxes	Dangerous Excavations
Derelict Buildings	Existing Dangerous Buildings
Drug Lab Abatement	Large Accumulation Garbage
Urgent Zoning Violations †	Other Public Nuisances
Fire Investigations †	Active cutting Tree Violation †

2. Priority #2 Response

Any complaint that involves an immediate threat to the livability of the community, or perception of the same. Ideally, these complaints shall be responded to within three working days of receipt. The following shall, unless exceptional hazards exist, be considered priority #2 calls:

Junk & Debris	Rubbish & Bulk Waste
RV Occupancy	Industrial Noise Violations
Small Accumulation Garbage	General Zoning Violations
Housing Code Violation	Building & Safety Enforcement
Pest Infestations	Multi-Unit Inspection*
Abandoned Vehicles	Other Nuisances

3. Priority #3 Response

Any complaint that involves a code violation that has been in existence for some time, and whereby a delayed response would not increase any detrimental impacts on the livability of the community, or any violation that by its mere existence has very little impact on the community, and whereby a delayed response would not have any additional impact on the livability of the community. Such violations may exist to a reasonable degree based on community expectations and the lack of citizen complaint. Response to such complaints shall be based on the availability of staff resources and at the direction of a supervisor. Ideally, these complaints shall be responded to within five working days of receipt.

Licensing Enforcement  
Licensing Inspections\*  
Lighting Violations



General Exterior Building and Structure Maintenance

Illegal Signs in Public Right-of-Way

Abandoned Shopping Carts

Tall Grass & Weeds

Chicken / Duck / other animal violations

\* Requires previous appointment to conduct inspection. Officers will not respond without appointment, but issue is listed to show approximate importance in terms of response

† Such cases may not pose imminent hazard to the community, but must be responded to quickly because of the nature of the complaint, method of correction, and process of investigation.

**Code Compliance Officers shall respond to calls as soon as practicable. In cases where workload exceeds available time, the response to initial complaints and case follow-up will be based on the priority of the call. Unless given specific direction to respond otherwise, officers shall respond according to the hierarchy of priority.**

**A supervisor shall have the authority to re-prioritize a call if in their sole judgment; it would be in the public's best interest to do so.**

**Nothing in this procedure prevents an officer, while exercising reasonable judgment, to modify their response if circumstances warrant deviation.**

**C. Officer Initiated Enforcement.**

An officer may initiate an enforcement action based on the officer's personal observation of apparent violations of the Salem Revised Code. Officers should only self-initiate an action if the apparent violation has an imminent adverse effect on life, health, or safety, or if the apparent violation is in the immediate vicinity of a complaint initiated case, and it would be more efficient to address similar apparent violations in the vicinity while responding to the complaint. Officer initiated actions are subject to the priority response hierarchy set forth above.