



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 8

Agenda Date: March 12, 2024

In Control: Audit Committee

DEPARTMENT: Office of the City Auditor

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Kevin Barthold

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Acceptance of the Office of the City Auditor Report AU23-009 Audit of DSD Code Enforcement.

SUMMARY:

Determine if Code Enforcement processes are consistent, sufficiently documented, and in compliance with statutes, ordinances, and internal policies, and Property Abatements are handled in accordance with relevant statutes, ordinances, and internal policies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Background

The Development Services Department (DSD) Code Enforcement division is responsible for enforcing regulations related to:

- Property use (zoning and other development requirements)
- Building and premises maintenance

- Dangerous structures, including emergency demolitions
- Inoperable vehicles
- Other quality of life related codes

Code Enforcement personnel respond to complaints about code violations made directly from citizens via the 311 customer service line, the 311 app, or via other means. They also proactively enforce violations they discover without a citizen complaint. Code Enforcement is comprised of the following teams and units:

- Field Enforcement Units
- Graffiti Abatement
- Neighborhood Enhancement Team
- Zoning/Permitting Unit (not included in our scope)

There are 88 enforcement officers assigned to 10 Field Enforcement Units (Unit). Each Unit provides inspection and enforcement services across the City. Graffiti personnel use paint, chemicals, and power-washing to remove graffiti from public rights of way, City properties, and private property (as allowed by the owner). The Neighborhood Enhancement Team also provides inspection and enforcement services across the City but does so by focusing on neighborhoods or corridors with high complaint volumes in a single sweep within a short amount of time.

Scope & Methodology

The audit scope was the Development Services Department Code Enforcement division operations from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022 (FY 2022), with older or more recent information as necessary.

Conclusion

The Code Enforcement Division is conducting property abatements in accordance with relevant statutes, ordinances, and internal policies. Our testing found that violations were appropriately handled, with notices of violations being placed on the doors/properties and mailed as required. Moreover, tested cases involving structural violations brought before the Building Standards Board were supported by the necessary documentation. We also conducted tests to determine whether contractors were assigned abatement work equitably and confirmed that such assignments were indeed fair.

However, there are areas within the Code Enforcement Division that require improvement. Code Enforcement lacks up-to-date standard operating procedures (SOPs) hindering consistent operations. Additionally, personnel have not implemented a cohesive strategy for organizing and retaining relevant documentation impeding efficient retrieval. Lastly, we identified coding errors in the automated reports used by Code Enforcement during the audit scope period to calculate performance measures as well as an instance of employees sharing a system account.

Management agreed with the findings and recommendations and developed positive corrective action plans.

ISSUE:

This item is presented for acceptance by the Audit Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

NA

ALTERNATIVES:

NA

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends acceptance of this report.