

**CODE COMPLIANCE DIVISION**

# **MULTI-FAMILY PROPERTY INSPECTIONS**

**CHRIS BARACK**

**CODE COMPLIANCE SUPERVISOR**

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION**

**AUGUST 12, 2019**

Department of Community Development

Planning • Building • Development Engineering • Permit Center  
Sustainability • Community Services • Code Enforcement

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VALUES

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C H A R A C T E R

S U S T A I N A B I L I T Y

W E L L N E S S

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# INTRODUCTION

- During the April 22, 2019 Study Session staff provided City Council with a presentation on multifamily programs and tenant protections.
- The presentation included an overview of state laws that allow for mandatory multifamily inspection programs and nearby cities that have implemented such programs.
- City Council expressed interest in understanding what a program would look like in Auburn.
- Staff requested that Council allow further research in the following areas:
  - Code enforcement data and experience with respect to complaints about multifamily living conditions.
  - Tools that code enforcement believes would improve the city's ability to address multifamily living conditions.
- The presentation is the follow up to the April 22, 2019 Council discussion.

# WHERE WE ARE TODAY

There are approximately 470 licensed multi-family properties (duplex or greater) in the City of Auburn. Prior to 2016, these properties operated with no real direction or expectation from the City. In 2016, the City implemented the S.A.F.E.R program. This program not only required the owners and/or manager to attend a mandatory 8 hour training, but set the ground rules and expectations that the City had on them.

Over the past three years, we have achieved approximately 98% voluntary compliance with this training program and just 2% were mandated to attend through Code Enforcement action.

Through the years of working collaboratively with property owners and managers, the Code Compliance Division has built a solid rapport.

Currently, multi-family property owners and managers can participate in a voluntary inspection program through the City (See Exhibit A). The inspection is conducted by the Code Compliance division and focuses on the exterior of the property only. To date, we have conducted 25 voluntary inspections. Of the 25 inspected properties, all had 1 or more “violations.” Even though the violations on these properties took time and money to correct, there were all done without formal code enforcement action.

The Code Compliance division also requires mandatory inspections of properties that are referred to us by Auburn Police Department. This inspection also focuses on only the exterior of the property.

# NATIONAL HEALTHY HOUSING STANDARDS & IPMC

## Examples of “enhancements” to the current codes

### IPMC

- 304.18 Security – lockable doors/windows required
- 404.2 Kitchen – size requirement, cook/sleep area separated, light required
- 302.5, 304.5 Rodents – extermination from structure/exterior, no approved methods of extermination

### HEALTHY HOUSING STANDARDS

- 3.2 Security – rekey locks with change of tenancy
- 2.4 Kitchen – range/vent, oven required
- 6.3 Pest Management – Professional Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

# MANDATORY INSPECTIONS



## PRO'S

- All multi-family properties will be inspected every 3-5 years
- Better living conditions for all Auburn multi-family residents
- Vulnerable populations are less likely to report



## CON'S

- Penalizes compliant/model properties who embrace healthy housing standards
- Added costs to properties that could be passed onto residents
- Unhealthy living conditions could lead to homelessness
- Tenant induced conditions could penalize property owners

# COMPLIANCE BASED INSPECTIONS



## PRO'S

- Will not adversely affect compliant/model properties
- Better living conditions for Auburn multi-family residents living in unhealthy conditions
- Will promote best management practices with property owners

## CON'S

- Added costs to properties that could be passed onto residents
- Unhealthy living conditions could lead to homelessness
- Vulnerable populations are less likely to report

# WHAT NOW?

## What are our options?

### Option #1

- Adopt National Healthy Housing Standards
- Require mandatory inspections of all multi-family properties duplex and larger every 3-5 years
- Hire additional resources for implementation and management of the program

### Option #2

- Adopt National Healthy Housing Standards
- Require mandatory inspections for properties that are referred by Auburn Police or have 3 or more code violations in any 12 month period
- Amend Title 5 and/or 15 to support Healthy Housing Standards
- Current Code Compliance staff will oversee cases involving mandatory inspections
- Continue to promote Healthy Housing Standards through outreach and education

# RECOMMENDATION

- Bring forward to Mayor and Council amendments to Title 5 and/or Title 15 which support Healthy Housing Standards
- Adopt National Healthy Housing Standards
- Require mandatory inspections for properties with 3 or more confirmed code compliance violations in a 12 month period



# THANK YOU!

# QUESTIONS?

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