Mission

On September 6, 2007, City Manager Michael C. Van Milligan convened a meeting of various city departments to discuss ways to enhance the city’s code enforcement efforts. At that meeting, a multi-department task force was established to accomplish the following mission:

To identify and develop initiatives, programs, processes and resource needs to enhance City of Dubuque code enforcement activities.

Appendix A lists the participants in the initial September 6 meeting and the members of the interdepartmental task force.

Process

The City Manager requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) of the University of Iowa to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps (work products resulting from the steps are included in the referenced appendices):

- Identify general purpose/task/mission of committee.
  - Identify expectations of committee members.
  - Assure communication (two-way) to department personnel regarding committee activities/actions.

- Identify specific activities/aspects of code enforcement to be evaluated by the committee (Appendix B).

- For each activity/aspect of code enforcement, identify under the current system (Appendix C):
  - Strengths
  - Weaknesses/Constraints
  - Trends
  - Opportunities
  - Threats
• From foregoing analysis, identify issues or problems to be addressed. For each issue or problem, identify potential initiatives/programs/processes/resource needs to address the issue or problem (Appendix D).

• Select recommended initiatives/programs/processes/resource needs.

• Preparation of final report.

Recommended Initiatives/Programs/Processes

The following initiatives/programs/processes were recommended by the committee to be implemented to enhance City of Dubuque code enforcement activities:

OVERALL ISSUES

COMMUNICATION/COORDINATION/INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
1. All departments involved in code enforcement should utilize Incident Tracking System software.
   a. Provide training to appropriate departments and employees, including:
      i. Training on use of software and its applications,
      ii. Training on applicable enhancements,
      iii. Training on application of data for program/management analysis.

2. Explore whether Incident Tracking System can interface better with other department data bases.
   a. Explore whether Permits Plus software can interface with Incident Tracking System to enhance interdepartmental coordination and communication.

3. Reinstate weekly inter-department tele-conferencing coordination meetings including Health, Planning, Solid Waste, and Housing Departments. Include other departments on an as-needed basis.

4. Require licensing or registration of businesses so that departments have accurate and current information regarding business/property ownership and contact information. Licenses may or may not have a fee associated with them.

CUSTOMER SERVICE
1. Establish centralized call-in center to receive citizen complaints/calls for service.
   a. If call-in center is not established, provide information regarding which departments/phone numbers to contact regarding specific code enforcement issues to citizens. Publicize through newsletters, web site, neighborhood association meetings, and similar sources.

2. Assure that current city policy regarding handling of citizen complaint calls is consistently implemented in all departments.
3. Provide information to citizens regarding reasons and processes for code compliance through newsletters, web site, neighborhood association meetings, and similar sources. Areas of emphasis include: littering, dead animal removal, illegal dumping, illegal burning, placement of hazardous materials in the trash, illegal depositing of materials (snow, grass clippings) in street, tracking of mud onto city streets from construction sites, and rental housing codes.

4. Make presentations at meetings of neighborhood associations, landlord associations, tenant associations, school districts, colleges, homebuilders associations, Chamber of Commerce, and similar stakeholders regarding any changes to code enforcement being made.

5. Provide more complete informational materials to new residents regarding Dubuque services and rules, especially regarding trash collection and recycling.

STAFFING/TRAINING

1. Prepare a list showing which departments handle which types of functional complaint. Distribute the list to all call takers, line employees, and supervisors in all departments handling or potentially handling citizen complaints/calls for services.

2. Establish inspection outcomes (for example, all rental units inspected within X years, all commercial/institutional properties inspected every Y years) expected for all departments involved in code inspection. Determine staffing levels necessary to accomplish inspection outcomes. Develop staffing plan with priorities to meet identified needs.
   a. Involve citizens/stakeholders in developing outcome measures.

3. Implement IT/wireless applications to enhance inspectors’ productivity and provide more field inspection time by reducing “paperwork.”

4. Train front line “field” employees to work with citizens to encourage voluntary code compliance; include this function in applicable job descriptions.

5. Train employees who are “in the field” on key code compliance concerns (e.g., illegal dumping in storm sewers); provide digital cameras so that designated employees can document violations that they observe.
   a. Consider training and using employees on “restricted duty” to enhance “in the field” inspection/enforcement of certain designated code enforcement activities.

6. Provide training to departments/employees to achieve more consistency in departmental policies and procedures regarding key processes of code enforcement, including:
   a. Training on Dubuque’s Nuisance Ordinance, enforcement/abatement processes, public vs. private nuisances,
   b. Notification of violators – serving of notice,
   c. How much time to give violators for compliance,
d. Follow-up/enforcement actions,
e. Training in municipal infractions process.

7. Establish on-going customer service/code enforcement training program.

PROCESS/POLICY

1. Target areas for more intensive code enforcement but recognize:
   a. Targeting specific areas requires additional resources/staffing so as to not
      negatively impacting performance levels city-wide,
   b. Requires multi-department application/coordination,
   c. Develop criteria by which areas would be evaluated for more intensive
      code enforcement.

2. All departments should require complete set of detailed building plans before
   processing applications.

3. Develop program for communication/coordination with institutions (e.g. colleges)
   regarding key code enforcement issues.

4. Establish or take advantage of current ordinance provision that allows for fees to
   be charged for multiple re-inspections of properties.

5. Continue those programs/services identified as ‘strengths’ in Appendix C.

6. Review all recommendations/proposals six months after implementation (and
   periodically thereafter) to assure they are meeting their intended purpose; modify
   as needed.

7. Amend housing ordinance to allow fees to be charged for "no-show" inspections.
   We talked about this at the last meeting; this is an increasing problem for
   inspection productivity, as landlords cancel or don’t show for scheduled
   inspections.

8.---

FUNCTIONAL AREAS

“PROBLEM PROPERTIES”

1. Develop and implement “Chronic Offenders Ordinance” (in process).
3. Utilize weekly inter-departmental coordination meetings to focus on status of
   “problem properties” code compliance (see Communication/Coordination #3).
4. Consolidate monthly “Problem Property” and Historic Preservation Commission
   Property Task Forces into “Property Enforcement Teams,” to meet on monthly
   basis.
5. Determine political will and support for aggressive enforcement actions regarding
   “problem properties:”
   a. Council/Manager
   b. Neighborhood groups
c. Landlord associations
d. General public
6. Submit budget proposal to increase funding to acquire/condemn additional
   “problem properties” in FY 08-09.
7. Undertake Process Improvement methodology to evaluate, improve and shorten
code enforcement process.

ADA ISSUES
1. Provide additional training for inspectors.

ILLEGAL BURNING
1. Authorize on-duty firefighters to issue citations regarding illegal burning
   violations, especially on weekends and evenings (in process).

ILLEGAL DEPOSITING OF MATERIALS (GRASS, SNOW, ETC) IN STREET/
ILLEGAL DUMPING/LITTERING
1. Authorize designated employees of appropriate departments (including Public
   Works and Leisure Services) to issue municipal infractions.

JUNK-PRIVATE PROPERTIES
1. Use Public Works Department to clean up if private contractors not available.

LICENSES/PERMITS-FAILURE TO OBTAIN
1. Increase penalties for failure to obtain license/permit.
2. Require Building Permit card to be prominently displayed on exterior of structure
   for which Building Permit has been issued. Any building permit should have a
   “complete by” date to give definite violation date. Provide training and
   encourage City employees to report building construction activities on sites for
   which building permit card is not displayed.

LIQUOR LICENSES
Review policies and procedures regarding processes when project is not complete prior to
Council meeting or when new establishment is under construction.

NON-PAYMENT OF UTILITY BILLS
1. Institute program of wireless remote meter reading.

BROKEN/INOPERABLE WATER STOP BOXES
1. Institute more aggressive shut-off policy regarding property owners with
   unrepaird stop boxes.

NUISANCE TREES (PRIVATE PROPERTY)
1. Confirm policy that complaints regarding trees on private property are private
   nuisance and not public nuisance, therefore not a City concern.

RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTIONS
1. Establish “chronic offenders” program involving more frequent inspections
   (included in “Chronic Offenders Ordinance – see Problem Properties #1).
2. Suspend or revoke rental housing license for non-compliance to make property owners more responsible for their properties.

GARBAGE/TRASH PLACED EARLY/NOT COLLECTED IN RIGHT-OF-WAY
   1. Reduce time frame for enforcement/abatement of garbage/trash in right-of-way.
   2. Expand use of “chronic offenders/red tag” process for repeat violators.

ILLEGAL SEWER/WATER CONNECTIONS/SEWER LATERAL BREAKS
   1. Authorize designated employees of appropriate departments (including Public Works, Engineering, and Water Departments) to issue municipal infractions (instead of Health Department).

Resource Needs
The following recommended initiatives/programs/processes are recognized as potentially requiring resource needs for consideration with respect to the upcoming FY 08-09 budget:

- Establish centralized call-in center to receive citizen complaints/calls for service.
- Establish inspection outcomes (for example, all rental units inspected within X years, all commercial/institutional properties inspected every Y years) expected for all departments involved in code inspection. Determine staffing levels necessary to accomplish inspection outcomes. Develop staffing plan with priorities to meet identified needs.
- Implement IT/wireless applications to enhance inspectors’ productivity and provide more field inspection time by reducing “paperwork.”
- Establish on-going customer service/code enforcement training program.
- Submit budget proposal to increase funding to acquire/condemn additional “problem properties” in FY 08-09.
- Undertake Process Improvement methodology to evaluate, improve and shorten code enforcement process, especially regarding problem properties.
- Institute program of wireless remote meter reading.

Final Comments
It was a pleasure to assist the City of Dubuque with this process of enhancing code enforcement activities. I was extremely impressed with the level of cooperation and positive attitudes of the staff involved in this project.

Jeff Schott
Institute of Public Affairs
University of Iowa
November 1, 2007
APPENDIX A
CITY OF DUBUQUE
CODE ENFORCEMENT PARTICIPANTS

The following employees participated in the initial meeting. Those marked with an asterisk continued to participate in the inter-departmental task force.

City Manager’s Office
Mike Van Milligan
Jerelyn O’Connor
Jenny Larson
Cori Burbach*

Planning
Melinda Rettenberger
Susan Brennan*
Dave Johnson*

Police
Kim Wadding*
Russ Stecklein*

Finance
Ken Tekippe*
Jean Nachtman
Rick Till
Rose Hoerner (Utility Billing)*

Public Works
Paul Schultz*
Dave Sitzmann
Don Vogt
Teresa Behnke*

Water
Michael Brekke*
Brant Schueller
Ken Metcalf
Chris Kennedy*
Bob Green

Housing
David Harris*
Roger Benz*
Tami Ernster
Kathy Lamb

Fire
Dan Brown
Mark Ludescher*
Mike McMahon*

Building
Rich Russell*
Jeff Zasada*
Jean Noel

Legal
Crenna Brumwell*

Health
Mary Rose Corrigan*
Tim Link*
Chris Johnson
Rich Miller

Engineering
Deron Muehling
Jon Dienst
Jane Smith
APPENDIX B
ACTIVITIES/ASPECTS OF CODE ENFORCEMENT

ABANDONED VEHICLES/STREET STORAGE ON CITY PROPERTY
Direct: Police
Indirect: Fire, Parking
Consult: Legal

ADA ISSUES
Direct: Building Services, Engineering, Planning, Human Rights
Indirect: Fire, Health, Housing, Neighborhood Development, Parking
Consult: Legal

ALTERNATE SIDE OF STREET PARKING
Direct: Police
Indirect: Public Works

ANIMALS-LIVE
Direct: Police, Legal
Indirect: Health

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES-INSPECTIONS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS
Direct: Fire
Indirect: Building Services, Water
Consult: Legal

CRIME PROPERY ORDINANCE
Direct: Housing, Legal, Police

DUMPING IN STORM SEwers
Direct: Engineering, Police
Indirect: Fire, Health
Consult: Legal

DUMPSTER PLACEMENT
Direct: Engineering (in ROW)
Indirect: Fire, Police, Public Works
Consult: Legal
FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS
Direct: Health
Indirect: Building Services
Consult: Legal

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS (IN TRASH)
Direct: Public Works
Indirect: Fire, Health, Police
Consult: Legal

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Direct: Building Services
Indirect: Housing, Planning
Consult: Legal

ILLEGAL BURNING
Direct: Fire
Consult: Legal

ILLEGAL DEPOSITING OF MATERIALS (GRASS, LEAVES, SNOW) IN STREET
Direct: Engineering (Stormwater Management), Police
Indirect: Building Services, Public Works
Consult: Legal

ILLEGAL DUMPING/LITTERING
Direct: Engineering (Stormwater Management), Health, Police
Indirect: Public Works
Consult: Legal

JUNK VEHICLES-PRIVATE PROPERTY & OFF-STREET STORAGE
Direct: Planning, Police (Towing)
Consult: Legal

JUNK/GARBAGE (PRIVATE PROPERTY)
Direct: Engineering (Stormwater Management), Health, Housing
Indirect: Building Services, Public Works (Abatement)
Consult: Legal

JUNKYARDS/SCRAP YARDS
Direct: Planning
Consult: Legal

LEAD PAINT INSPECTIONS
Direct: Housing
Indirect: Health
Consult: Legal

LICENSES/PERMITS-FAILURE TO OBTAIN
Direct: Building Services, Engineering, Health, Housing, Parking, Parks, Police
Indirect: Fire, Water
Consult: Legal

LIQUOR LICENSES
Direct: Police
Indirect: Building Services, Fire, Health
Consult: Legal

NEW CONSTRUCTION-COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS
Direct: Building Services, Engineering, Fire, Planning, Water
Consult: Legal

NEW CONSTRUCTION-OTHER TYPES
Direct: Building Services, Engineering, Planning
Indirect: Water
Consult: Legal

NOISE
Direct: Health, Police
Consult: Legal

NON-PAYMENT OF UTILITY BILLS
Direct: Finance
Indirect: Building Services, Engineering, Health, Public Works, Water
Consult: Legal

NUISANCE TREES
Direct: Building Services, Engineering (Stormwater Management), Fire, Health, Housing, Parks, Public Works (in ROW)
Consult: Legal

NUISANCES
Direct: Building Services, Engineering, Fire, Health, Housing
Indirect: Police, Public Works (abatement)
Consult: Legal

PARKING IN FIRE LANE
Direct: Fire, Parking, Police
Indirect: Public Works
Consult: Legal

REMODEL CONSTRUCTION
Direct: Building Services, Fire
Indirect: Health, Housing, Water
Consult: Legal

RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTIONS
Direct: Building Services, Fire, Housing
Consult: Legal

RIGHT-OF-WAY PERMITS
Direct: Engineering
Consult: Legal

SEWERS:
  ILLEGAL SEWER CONNECTIONS
  Direct: Engineering, Health
  Indirect: Building Services, Housing, Public Works
  Consult: Legal

  SEWER CONNECTIONS
  Direct: Building Services, Health
  Indirect: Engineering
  Consult: Legal

  SEWER LATERAL BREAKS
  Direct: Health, Housing
  Indirect: Building Services, Engineering
  Consult: Legal

SIDEWALK CAFES
Direct: Engineering
Indirect: Fire, Health
Consult: Legal

SIGNS (PRIVATE)
Direct: Building Services, Planning, Public Works
Indirect: Engineering
Consult: Legal

SPECIAL EVENTS
Direct: Parking, Parks, Police, Public Works, City Manager’s Office
Indirect: Fire
Consult: Legal

STAGNANT WATER
Direct: Engineering, Health
Consult: Legal

STOCKPILED REFUSE IN ROW
Direct: Public Works
Indirect: Health
Consult: Legal

STORAGE CONTAINERS
Direct: Building Services, Fire
Indirect: Engineering  
Consult: Legal  

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT/EROSION**  
Direct: Engineering, Water  
Consult: Legal  

**SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT**  
Direct: Engineering, Planning  
Indirect: Building Services, Fire  
Consult: Legal  

**SWIMMING POOLS-PRIVATE**  
Direct: Building Services  
Consult: Legal  

**SWIMMING POOLS-PUBLIC**  
Direct: Health  
Consult: Legal  

**UNSAFE BUILDINGS**  
Direct: Buildings, Housing  
Indirect: Fire  
Consult: Legal  

**UTILITY SHUTOFFS**  
Direct: Finance, Housing  
Indirect: Fire, Health  
Consult: Legal  

**VACANT COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES**  
Direct: Building Service  
Indirect: Fire  
Consult: Legal  

**VACANT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**  
Direct: Housing  
Indirect: Fire, Health  
Consult: Legal  

**WATER DEPARTMENT:**  
  **ACCESS TO METERS**  
  Direct: Finance, Water  
  Indirect: Building Services  
  Consult: Legal  

  **INOPERABLE STOP BOXES**  
  Direct: Finance  
  Consult: Legal
SERVICE LINE REPAIRS
Direct: Housing, Water
Indirect: Building services, Engineering
Consult: Legal

WATER METER/BACKFLOW COMPLIANCE
Direct: Building Services, Water
Consult: Legal

WEEDS/TALL GRASS
Direct: Health, Housing
Indirect: Engineering
Consult: Legal

MINOR CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

ANIMALS-DEAD
Direct: Health, Police, Public Works
Consult: Legal

CONNECTION FEES-WATER/SEWER
Direct: Engineering, Finance
Indirect: Building Services, Police, Water
Consult: Legal

FENCES
Direct: Building Services
Indirect: Engineering, Planning
Consult: Legal

FIREWORKS
Direct: Fire, Police
Consult: Legal
APPENDIX C
STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES/OPPORTUNITIES/THREATS/TRENDS RELATED TO CODE ENFORCEMENT

ABANDONED VEHICLES/STREET STORAGE-ON CITY PROPERTY
- Vehicles full of garbage (minor trend)
- Prompt attention (strength)
- Complaint-driven, not pro-active (weakness)
- Allow too much time for removal (72 hours)

ADA ISSUES
- Lack of training for all building inspectors (weakness)
- Time consuming (weakness)
- User friendly (strength)
- Inconsistency among departments (weakness)

ALTERNATE SIDE OF STREET PARKING
- Frustrated violators when they receive ticket and snow plow/sweeper never makes it to that street (weakness)
- Purpose is to clean streets adequately; more streets need to be added and more equipment and employees budgeted as in pre-1980s (weakness)
- Signage needs to be changed for shorter alternate periods for sweeping as too many are posted now (sweeper will never be able to get to all posted streets in designated time frame) (weakness)
- Weak enforcement & lack of adequate sweeping will contaminate water in Bee Branch daylighting project and possibly be in violation of Clean Water Act (threat)

ANIMALS-DEAD
- Quick pickup by Public Works (if in ROW) (strength)
- Property owners want Health to pickup (weakness)
- No weekend help (weakness)
- Sometimes hard to cleanup/dispose of (weakness)

ANIMALS-LIVE
- Well-trained staff, good equipment (strength)
- Effective enforcement and processes (strength)
- Very busy (many wild animal calls) (weakness)
- Lack of quick response time. Sometimes, animal is gone when we arrive. (weakness)
- Evicted people leave pets behind (trend)
- More people owning multiple pets (trend)
- Do we need to limit the number of pets a person/household can hold? Do we require a business license for over x animals?
- Police respond to these calls and have equipment available at the DLEC, which is sometimes not timely enough.

ASSISTED HOUSING INSPECTIONS

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES-INSPECTION OF EXISTING BLDGS
- Difficult to track new businesses; if they don’t take out building permit we don’t know they’ve opened (weakness)
- Need to coordinate with Fire/Building on changes in occupancy requirements
- Need regular inspections (weakness)

CONNECTION FEES-WATER/SEWER

CRIME PROPERTY ORDINANCE
- Needs tweaking to be more applicable and effective
- Very useful for police. Upgrade in progress.

DUMPING IN STORM SEWERS
- Often called after fact (weakness)
- Violates BMP’s and stormwater plan (trends)
- 16th St Detention Basin has filled with materials and sediments that will test as toxic when scheduled to be removed for landfill disposal, causing significantly higher tipping fees and transportation costs for taxpayers.

FENCES

FIREWORKS

FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS
- Local program; enforcement process outlined by State Code & rules (strength)
- Increased workload/number of establishments (weakness)
- Growth and many ownership changes (trends)
- Education of operators (opportunities)
- State mandates (threats)

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN TRASH
- Most serious problems & volumes under control (strength)
- More promotion needed for overlooked items buried in trash

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
- Enforcement issues (weakness)
ILLEGAL BURNING
- Difficult to catch violators (weakness)
- Educate on alternative disposal for items wanting to be burned (opportunities)
- Possibly allow 2 wk burning period (threat)
- More enforcement needed; burning is evident in most neighborhoods, especially in fall (weakness)
- How many citations issued?
- The seriousness of related health concerns is not grasped by the public (weakness)

ILLEGAL DEPOSITING OF MATERIALS (GRASS, SNOW, ETC) IN STREET
- Difficult to catch offenders (weakness)
- In lieu of paying for yard waste disposal, people look for other places to dispose of it (trend)
- Strong promotion enforcement needed
- Customers who bag yard waste complain about cheaters who blow into the street
- How many citations issued in last 12 months?
- No real progress seen in controlling mud in streets eroding from residential building sites and trucks tracking it into streets; BMP needs to be used (weakness)

ILLEGAL DUMPING/LITTERING
- New organization formed this year: Keep Dubuque County Clean & Green- pilot state-wide program. Anti-littering billboards and hotlines promoted (strength)
- Needs more police enforcement
- Recognition & awards available to enforcement personnel
- How many tickets written in last year?

ILLEGAL USES-ZONING VIOLATIONS

JUNK VEHICLES-PRIVATE PROPERTY
- Keep complainant informed of process, status of complaint, outcome (strength)
- Communication w/ violator to resolve problem quickly (strength)
- Send written notice and order to owner in simple English to avoid misunderstandings (strength)
- Timely follow-up to ensure compliance w/ specified timeline (strength)
- Will issue citation if violator does not comply within reasonable time (strength)
- Obtain continuing Court Order to quickly resolve subsequent violations for some infractions (strength)
- Some violations take longer to resolve due to appeal process, special exceptions, Court continuances, etc. (weakness)
- Some take longer due to lack of info about property owner/occupant
- Varied nature of violations, severity of offenses, cooperation of violator and complainant means that you can’t apply one process to all situations

JUNK-PRIVATE PROPERTIES
- Process works if it’s followed (strength)
- Multiple departments working on this; inconsistency in enforcement (weakness)
- Who will clean up problems on private property? What is junk vs treasures? (weakness)
- More foreclosures (trend)
- Refusal to pick up certified mail (trend)
- More informing, enforcement & staff needed

**LICENSED JUNKYARDS/SCRAPYARDS**
- Consistency in enforcement (strength)
- Standard procedures applied uniformly (strength)

**LEAD PAINT INSPECTIONS**

**LICENSES/PERMITS-FAILURE TO OBTAIN**
- Behind in data entry, mistakes in data entry/records (weakness)
- Difficult to police (weakness)
- More people not getting proper permits; decreasing revenue (trend)
- Pet owners trying to circumvent system (trend)
- Effectiveness (animals): Don’t license impounded. We give animal back because people license them. Process needs to be modified.
- Many unlicensed rentals; databases need to be integrated between Utility Billing, Housing, Solid Waste, Assessor, & made available through GIS.

**LIQUOR LICENSES**
- 2 City Council meeting per month; oftentimes project is not complete prior to Council mtg (weakness)
- Approve before construction is complete/Code is met (trend)
- Violations are not corrected or plans are not followed if license is approved prior to completion (threat)

**NEW CONSTRUCTION-ALL OTHER TYPES**
- Permits late/not at all. No inspections called for (weaknesses)
- Green City Initiative (opportunity)
- More inspections needed (weakness)

**NEW CONSTRUCTION-COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL BLDGS**
- Green City (opportunity)

**NOISE**
- Code limits times for various noises (strength)
- Lack of scientific expertise to mediate (weakness)
- Difficult to enforce if not present (weakness)
- Neighbors use noise complaints to retaliate on zoning, new bldgs, etc (trend)

**NON-PAYMENT OF UTILITY BILLS**
- Ability to put service in landlord’s name after tenant becomes delinquent (strength)
- Landlords don’t always cooperate (weakness)
- No outdoor meter access (weakness)
- Broken/inoperable stop boxes (weakness)
- Process of civil citations, etc. very time-consuming (weakness)
- Hire company to repair stop box, shut it off, and refuse service until balance is paid (opportunity)
- Assess amount of repairs to property tax (opportunity)
- Need to try something different with landlords & tenants
- Special solid waster services refused (Large Item Collection) if bills are not paid to current. This takes up significant time for Public Works staff. (weakness)
- Most IA municipal utilities require a deposit under certain circumstances; this may help cut our losses especially from renters moving out (trend)
- Water shut-offs appear to be used more assertively in other IA municipalities to reduce past-due balances and reduce long-term costs to good paying customers (trend)

**NUISANCE TREES**
- Time commitment is large & expensive; expensive to remove/trim (weakness)
- Not tree expert (weakness)
- Often need professional survey to determine ownership (weakness)
- More & more complaints (trends)
- Private matter (opportunities)
- Expectations that City needs to solve health/safety issue between property owners (threat)
- We can’t/don’t want to be involved. Ordinance being tweaked.

**NUISANCES**
- Current ordinance (strength)
- Impossible to define (weakness)
- More foreclosures (trend)
- Everything is a health/safety hazard (trend)
- Abatement is handled in a timely manner (strength)

**PARKING IN FIRE LANE**
- Police response is good on alley blockage for garbage collection

**POLLUTION-AIR**
- IDNR (strength)
- Need IDNR to investigate; local staff not qualified to inspect (weakness)

**POLLUTION-WATER**
- Need IDNR to investigate (weakness)

**REMODEL CONSTRUCTION**
- We can address ADA. We need more stringent time frames.

**RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTIONS**
- We can adjust standards to require better maintenance
- Need to revoke some licenses and inspect more often
SEWERS:
- Coordination of multiple dept. records (weakness)
- Lack of accurate records (weakness)

ILLEGAL SEWER CONNECTIONS
- Multiple depts. enforcing (trend)
- Public Works enforce (opportunities)

SEWER CONNECTIONS
- More sewer connections (strength)
- Expensive for citizens (weakness)

SEWER LATERAL BREAKS
- Health enforces based on information from Public Works (weakness)
- Health does enforcement for correction (trend)

SIGNS (PRIVATE)
- Never-ending removal process

STAGNANT WATER
- Community education (strength)

STOCKPILE REFUSE IN ROW
- Improvements being made (strength)
- Biggest problems during college move-ins and move-outs (trend)
- New tenants require significant education (opportunity).

STORAGE CONTAINERS
- Has cleaned up community, 99% compliance (strength)
- May eliminate all containers (trend)

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT/EROSION
- The importance of these management issues and relevant laws must be promoted and enforced.
- How many citations issued in last year?

STREET TREES
- Little staff to enforce/educate community (weakness)

SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT
- Development rules i.e. grass & mud upkeep (weakness)

SWIMMING POOLS-PUBLIC
- Effective enforcement program through contract w/ IDPH (strength)
- Emerging infectious diseases & existing bather behavior (threat)

UNSAFE BUILDINGS
- Safer community (strength)
- Slow process (weakness)
- Fire dept access (opportunity)
- Need more inspections, tighter schedules

**UTILITY SHUT-OFFS**
- Need greater compliance
- Need to consider deposits, maybe only in property owner’s name if x number of problems w/tenants
- Ability to put service in landlord’s name after tenant becomes delinquent (strength)
- Landlords don’t always cooperate (weakness)
- Broken/inoperable stop boxes (weakness)
- Need to be enforced more assertively for non-payment as seems to be practice in other IA communities (trend)

**VACANT COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES**
- Will help clean up community (strength)
- Difficult to define, many gray areas, slow process (weakness)

**VACANT RESIDENTIAL INSPECTIONS**
- Can’t determine if foreclosure or owner (weakness)
- Need to be more active in purchasing or condemning

**WATER DEPT:**
**ACCESS TO METERS**
- Consistency among departments – Communication.

**INOPERABLE STOP BOXES**
- Consistency among departments – Communication.

**SERVICE LINE REPAIRS**
- Consistency among departments – Communication.

**WATER METER/BACKFLOW COMPLIANCE**
- Consistency among departments – Communication.

**WEEDS/TALL GRASS**
- Ordinance & written procedures (strength)
- Effective process by Health Dept (strength)
- Rentals & vacant abandoned buildings (weakness)
- No length limit makes it subjective & some complaints/disagreements w/judgments (weakness)
- Large fields/lots, areas on edge of farmland, steep hillsides (weakness)
- Rainy months (weakness)
- Half cut areas (weakness)
• Unable to find contractors to cut because of insurance premiums requirements (weakness)
• Subdivisions: developers don’t cut lots or follow covenants (weakness)
• City-owned properties, IDOT properties (weakness)
• Inconsistent enforcement (weakness)
• State Code for notification/publication (weakness)
• More foreclosed properties (trend)
• Citizens want quick action/resolution (trend)

OVERALL ISSUES
• Inspectors need more/better backing from upper management. Difficult to enforce code without backing.
• Tracking
• Communication
• More smoothly run process
• Consistency
• Inspections
• Public knowledge: many initial complaints are directed to police and then referred to proper enforcement agencies.
• Prioritize code areas with greatest problems or with potential for greatest impact
• Incidents need to be logged into Incident Tracking by all departments that can help contribute to an understanding of the problems and past actions taken at problem locations.
• Most chronic issues relate to low-income rental properties, their landlords and tenants. Behavior change, not just education is needed.
• Increased street sweeping is needed to help maintain sanitation, care for downtown environment, and help improve perceived quality of life in some neighborhoods.
• College students are another demographic that are involved in a number of chronic code enforcement areas.
• What do our citizens/stakeholders see as the greatest code enforcement problems? Would a survey be appropriate?
APPENDIX D
POTENTIAL INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS/PROCESSES/RESOURCE NEEDS
TO ADDRESS PRIORITY POLICIES/ISSUES/PROBLEMS/WEAKNESSES

OVERALL ISSUES

COMMUNICATION/COORDINATION/INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- All departments involved in code enforcement to utilize Incident Tracking System software
  - Provide training to appropriate departments and employees, including:
    - Training on use of software and its applications
    - Training on applicable enhancements
    - Training on application of data for program/management analysis

- Reinstate weekly inter-department tele-conferencing coordination meetings including Health, Planning, Public Works, and Housing Departments – include other departments on an as-needed basis

- Designate a staff person to monitor the status of code enforcement activities to assure appropriate department(s) are following through, assure inter-departmental coordination, collect and manage overall data collection and analysis related to code enforcement

- Explore whether Incident Tracking System can interface better with other department data bases

- Adopt ordinance requiring licensing of businesses so that departments have accurate and current information regarding business/property ownership and contact information

CUSTOMER SERVICE
- Establish and emphasize policy that departments taking calls from citizens will take the necessary information from the citizen and be responsible for forwarding the information to the appropriate department for action (as opposed to telling the citizen to contact the appropriate department)

- Establish policy to notify complainants (who provide names and phone number or e-mail address) with periodic updates regarding the status of their case.

- Establish centralized call-in center (311?) to receive citizen complaints/calls for service.

- Provide information regarding which departments/phone numbers for citizens to contact regarding specific code enforcement issues. Publicize through newsletters, web site, neighborhood association meetings, and similar sources.
• Provide information to citizens regarding reasons and processes for code compliance through newsletters, web site, neighborhood association meetings, and similar sources. Areas of emphasis include: littering, dead animal removal, illegal dumping, illegal burning, placement of hazardous materials in the trash, illegal depositing of materials (snow, grass clippings) in street, tracking of mud onto city streets from construction sites, rental housing codes.

• Make presentations at meetings of Neighborhood Associations, landlord associations, tenant associations, Chamber of Commerce, and similar stakeholders regarding any changes to code enforcement being made.

• Provide informational materials to new residents regarding Dubuque services and rules, especially regarding issues such as trash collection.

STAFFING/TRAINING

• Prepare a list showing which departments handle which types of functional complaint. Distribute the list to all call takers, line employees, and supervisors in all departments handling or potentially handling citizen complaints/calls for services.

• Establish inspection outcomes (for example, all rental units inspected within X years, all commercial/institutional properties inspected every Y years) expected for all departments involved in code inspection. Determine staffing levels necessary to accomplish inspection outcomes. Develop staffing plan with priorities to meet identified needs.
  o Involve citizens/stakeholders in developing outcome measures

• Implement IT/wireless applications to enhance inspectors’ productivity and provide more field inspection time by reducing “paperwork”.

• Train front line employees to work with citizens to encourage voluntary code compliance.

• Train employees who are “in the field” on key code compliance concerns (e.g., illegal dumping in storm sewers); provide digital cameras so that employees can document violations that they observe.

• Provide training to departments/employees to achieve more consistency in departmental policies and procedures regarding key processes of code enforcement, including:
  o Training on Dubuque’s Nuisance Ordinance, enforcement/abatement processes, public vs. private nuisances
  o Notification of violators – serving of notice
  o How much time to give violators for compliance
  o Follow-up/enforcement actions
  o Training in municipal infractions process
PROCESS/POLICY
- Target areas for pro-active more intensive code enforcement but recognize:
  - Targeting specific areas requires additional resources/staffing without negatively impacting performance levels city-wide
  - Requires multi-department application/coordination
- All departments to require complete set of building plans before processing applications.
- Clarify policies pertaining to issuance of enforcement actions (municipal citations) versus seeking voluntary compliance
- Develop program for communication/coordination with colleges regarding key code enforcement issues

FUNCTIONAL AREAS

“PROBLEM PROPERTIES”
- Develop and implement “Chronic Offenders Ordinance”
- Utilize weekly inter-departmental coordination meetings to focus on status of “problem properties” code compliance (see Communication/Coordination)
- Continue monthly “Problem Property” and HPC Property Task Forces
- Determine political will and build political support for aggressive enforcement actions regarding “problem properties”
  - Council/Manager
  - Neighborhood groups
  - Landlords
  - General public
- Submit budget proposal for funding to acquire/condemn ___ “problem properties” in FY 08-09 (or per year)
- Issue citations on a daily or continuing basis (“each day a violation”) regarding “problem properties”
- Educate decision-makers and public regarding issues/obstacles/time frame involved due to state laws and due process with regard to code enforcement of “problem properties”
- Undertake Process Improvement/LEAN methodology to evaluate, improve and shorten code enforcement process

ADA ISSUES
- Provide additional training for inspectors

ILLEGAL DUMPING IN STORM SEWERS
- Provide training and encourage city employees to report any instances of illegal dumping in storm sewers they may observe in the City.
ILLEGAL BURNING
- Authorize on-duty firefighters to issue citations regarding illegal burning violations, especially on weekends and evenings (in process)

ILLEGAL DEPOSITING OF MATERIALS (GRASS, SNOW, ETC) IN STREET
- Authorize employees of appropriate departments (including Public Works) to issue citations

ILLEGAL DUMPING/LITTERING
- Authorize employees of appropriate departments (including Public Works) to issue citations

JUNK-PRIVATE PROPERTIES
- Identify private contractors who can provide clean-up services regarding junk on private properties, especially large quantities
- Use Public Works Department to clean up if private contractors not available

LICENSES/PERMITS-FAILURE TO OBTAIN
- Increase penalties for failure to obtain license/permit
- Require Building Permit card to be prominently displayed on exterior of structure for which Building Permit has been issued; provide training and encourage city employees to report building construction activities on sites for which building permit card is not displayed.

LIQUOR LICENSES
- Review policies and procedures regarding processes when project is not complete prior to Council meeting or when new establishment under construction

NON-PAYMENT OF UTILITY BILLS
- Increase special fee for properties without outside meters (no outdoor meter access)
- Institute program of wireless remote meter reading

BROKEN/INOPERABLE WATER STOP BOXES
- Hire private company to repair stop box, shut it off, and refuse service until balance is paid
- Institute more aggressive shut-off policy regarding homeowners with unrepai red stop boxes

NUISANCE TREES (PRIVATE PROPERTY)
- Confirm policy that complaints regarding trees on private property are private nuisance and not public nuisance, therefore not a city concern

RENTAL HOUSING INSPECTIONS
- Establish “chronic offenders” program involving more frequent inspections
- Take advantage of current ordinance provision that allows for fees to be charged for multiple re-inspections of rental property
• Revoke rental housing license for non-compliance to make property owners more responsible for their properties
• Require education/training regarding Housing Code and other city requirements in order for landlords to obtain housing license

GARBAGE/TRASH PLACED/NOT COLLECTED IN RIGHT-OF-WAY
• Reduce time frame for enforcement/abatement of garbage/trash in right-of-way
• Establish “chronic offenders” process for repeat violators
• Increasing inspection requirements (Vacant & Abandoned Buildings, lead paint, storm water management – leads to more extended period for conducting regular inspections (weakness)

ILLEGAL SEWER/WATER CONNECTIONS
• Authorize employees of appropriate departments (including Public Works) to issue citations
• Public Works to enforce illegal sewer connections (instead of Health Dept.)

SEWER LATERAL BREAKS
• Authorize employees of appropriate departments (including Public Works) to issue citations
• Public Works to enforce (instead of Health Dept.)

VACANT RESIDENTIAL INSPECTIONS
• Need to be more active in purchasing or condemning

WEEDS/TALL GRASS
• Amend ordinance to specify length of tall grass to become a violation???
• Other initiatives?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

ALTERNATE SIDE OF STREET PARKING
• Increase fines for illegal parking
• More aggressive towing of illegal parked vehicles policy
• Revise regulations and signage to specify specific days for sweeping specific streets; establish shorter alternate periods for sweeping; more vigorous enforcement of illegal parking on those specified days