



Office of the City Manager · 555 Santa Clara Street · Vallejo · CA · 94590 · 707.648.4576

August 24, 2018

Sent via Email: cdclower@solano.courts.ca.gov

Mr. Terry Riddle
Foreperson, Grand Jury
Hall of Justice
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

RE: **2017-2018 Grand Jury Report Entitled: Code Enforcement**

Dear Mr. Riddle,

The Mayor and I have received your correspondence requiring a written response to the above-entitled Findings and Recommendations contained in the Grand Jury report. A review of the report requires our response on Findings 1, 2, 4. Please see our response to those items here:

FINDING 1 – “City Code Enforcement Departments generally seek voluntary code compliance.”

Response: *The City of Vallejo agrees with the finding.*

RECOMMENDATION 1 – “Cities continue instituting fines as a last resort to achieve compliance.”

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented. Since approximately July of 2015, the City of Vallejo reorganized and moved the code enforcement division under the command of the police department. By direction of the Chief of Police, the goal of the code enforcement division is to address blighted properties which negatively contribute to the quality of life for those who live, work or visit the City of Vallejo. The code enforcement division's preferred method is voluntary compliance utilizing administrative fines only as a last resort, when it's evident that the property owners are uncooperative or dismissive in complying with the property maintenance laws as outlined in 7.54.030 of the Vallejo Municipal Code. Typically, upon initial inspection by a code enforcement officer, the property owner is sent a formal warning notice and allowed 30 days to respond to that warning notice. In the vast majority of cases, the property owner(s) respond to the warning notice by correcting the violation prior to the re-inspection date, which often extends beyond 30 days. In such cases where the property owner is unable to comply within the timeline for whatever reason i.e., health, monetary hardships, time constraints, family emergency etc., code enforcement has routinely allowed for reasonable extensions so long as the property owner has reached out to code enforcement and requests an extension and remains in communication with code enforcement.*

FINDING 2 – “The majority of municipal code enforcement is reactive rather than proactive and relies on citizens to report suspected code violations.”

Response: *The City of Vallejo agrees with the finding.*

RECOMMENDATION 2a – “Municipal Code Enforcement officers become more proactive in identifying and educating the public on code violations (i.e. Coffee with Code Enforcement).”

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented. The code enforcement division attends the regularly scheduled “Coffee with the Cops” events in Vallejo. At such events, members from*

the code enforcement division make themselves available to mingle with members of the public, to educate citizens on the property maintenance laws, and look for ways to work cooperatively together. Code enforcement has hosted numerous community engagement outreach events hosting a booth to intake complaints, answer questions related to blighted properties and to properly guide citizens in accordance with existing laws. Code enforcement has also hosted educational seminars to reach a wide swath of various community groups to include those groups where English is not their primary language. Recent examples of these efforts include National Night Out, where 43 separate neighborhoods participated. Code Enforcement has also participated in "Picnic with the Cops" where code enforcement staff interacted with the public during an outreach event and handed out lunch to families visiting our local parks. Code enforcement has also hosted educational seminars with Diaz and Loera Centro Latino, Filipino Cultural Center, Florence Douglas Senior Center and several faith based organizations.

RECOMMENDATION 2b – "Work with refuse companies to inform the public of additional programs."

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. Code enforcement has an annual budget that allows for rental of dumpsters from Recology that we then offer to community neighborhoods. Code enforcement offers free dumpster days to any organized neighborhood who wish to clean up their block and discard unwanted garbage and refuse. Code enforcement has also proactively initiated and hosted neighborhood cleanup events in certain problematic/blighted neighborhood, where code officers monitor and supervise voluntary clean-ups. The hope is that such events deter and prevent unlawful dumping on public streets.

FINDING 4 – City of Vallejo has a pamphlet, "Neighborhood Resource Brochure" detailing resources for citizens to refer to concerning code enforcement issues.

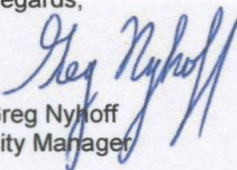
Response: The City of Vallejo agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – "City Code Enforcement officials of all cities consider developing a comprehensive brochure using Vallejo's "Neighborhood Resource Brochure" as a prototype to better inform citizens of available resources."

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The Vallejo Police Department's Code Enforcement Division utilizes multiple portals and methods in which to spread the word about the available resources that we offer. Some of the brochures include an information resource card, outlining all of the violations listed under 7.54.030 of the Vallejo Municipal Code, illegal dumping investigation information and general overview of the services offered by code enforcement. The Vallejo Police Department also advertises various community engagement, training and outreach events on social media i.e. Facebook, "Nextdoor" (social media app) and the Vallejo Police Department's mobile phone app which is free to download and use.

Please let us know if there is anything further that we can do to assist you.

Regards,


Greg Nyhoff
City Manager

cc: Vallejo City Council
Claudia Quintana, City Attorney