

## APPENDIX C: Enforcement Strategic Plan

Enforcement Policies and Procedures  
Adopted as Supplementary to the Rexburg City Development Code

Implemented within City Limits

### 1.0 POLICY

The following program governing enforcement within the City Limits and area of City Impact is hereby adopted.

### 1.1 PURPOSE

The Code Enforcement staff will work with Rexburg residents in an effort to make the City of Rexburg a clean, safer, and healthier place to live. The methods used will primarily be through education in conjunction with enforcement as needed. While serving the public, Code Enforcement staff will treat the public with dignity and respect, with a positive attitude, and a collaborative spirit. Code enforcement staff will develop processes and procedures to effectively serve the public. Code enforcement staff will stay informed and educated on current issues with code enforcement and develop needed skills to deliver professional services. Code enforcement will work in cooperation with a variety of other agencies and take part in community events to serve the public.

### 1.2 OFFICERS RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBJECTIVES

#### Objective One

Educate property owners and renters of their responsibilities to maintain their property as it pertains to the standards set forth in City of Rexburg codes.

#### Objective Two

Enforce the codes in accordance with established policies and procedures. Seek compliance through education and enforcement.

**Objective Three** Work with individual property owners, landlords, occupants, renters and businesses.

#### Objective four

To maximize our service to the community, we have analyzed the most common code violations that have the most negative impact on a neighborhood. The Code Enforcement Division will focus on the most common violations listed below.

- Debris and garbage on properties
- Inoperative vehicles
- Weeds
- Illegal Housing Units.

### 1.3 ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Code enforcement activities will help individuals and families to improve their properties. Referring to The “Window Theory” as written By James Wilson and George Kelly, Sandi Bucher stated in an article in the LA times...

*“A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other’s children and confidently frown on unwanted intruders, can change, in a few years or even a few months into an inhospitable and frightening jungle...A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed... Families move out, unattached adults move in. Litter accumulates...it is more likely that here, rather than in places where people are confident they can regulate public behavior by informal controls, drugs will change hands...and crime and decay goes on”. “It has been proven in case studies that anywhere a community stops caring about their neighbor, their property, their children and their*

*neighbor's children, a broken window is bound to show up”.*

Code enforcement will help improve safe and sanitary living conditions, and neighborhood aesthetics. It is anticipated through education and involvement; many residents will take self-initiative to correct code violations on their properties.

#### **1.4 EDUCATION**

Education is an important and proactive component effecting code enforcement. Education empowers citizens to make decisions about their individual properties, neighborhoods, and community. Educational opportunities will be provided to residents on code enforcement and neighborhood cleanup activities with the cooperation and support of the Community Development Director and Public Information Officer. Information will be disseminated through:

- Flyers, newsletters
- Monthly activities in coordination with specific seasons of the year
- Newspaper features on “things to know about code enforcement”
- Workshops and seminars
- TV news stories
- Surveys and Questionnaires
- Web Page information

#### **1.5 COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

Code enforcement activities will be coordinated with the Police, Fire, Building, District Health Departments, and other entities. Coordination will include:

- Police Department---illegal activities in or around properties, graffiti, and abandoned vehicles etc.
- Fire Department--unsafe structures, burnt structures, home addressing and size of letters, hydrants, access issues, etc.
- Animal control—number of dogs allowed per household
- Building Department--dangerous buildings
- Health Department—safety and unsanitary conditions in or around homes or businesses, and infestations
- Neighborhood Associations
- Civic and Service Organizations
- Church Groups

#### **1.6 COURTESY NOTICE**

This is the initial step in communicating violations to residents and property owners regarding their property. This notice is a door hanger notifying the property owner or occupant of code violations on the property. If the property owner or occupants are available, we will work directly with them to help resolve code violations. Attempts will always be made to have face to face contact between the officer and the occupant prior to the notice being left on the door. Code officers can offer solutions and advise of programs which may be available to get help if needed. The door hanger has two perforations. Part of the door hanger is to be filled out by the property owner/occupant and sent back to Code Enforcement within ten days. This is to acknowledge receiving the notice and to show a plan of action to correct the problem. The other portion is information for the officer to track the case.

#### **1.7 ABATEMENT PROCESS**

When an individual, either homeowner or renter, fails to comply with city codes and the violation is of a nature that can be cleaned or cleared, i.e. weeds, debris, trim bushes, trees, etc., the abatement process goes into effect.

### **1.8 PROSECUTION PROCESS**

The Prosecution Process is used in cases where a violation consists of items that may be deemed of value, i.e. vehicles, parts of vehicles, appliances, furniture, etc. The Abatement Process is not used due to the fact that the city does not have the ability to store these items nor desires the liability that could accompany transporting and storage. The Prosecution Process is to be followed as a last resort after the Abatement and Citation Process have been exhausted. The Prosecution Process is as follows:

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### **1.9 CITATIONS**

One avenue to resolve violations is to issue citations. The issuance of a citation is much more serious in nature than an Abatement Notice and tends to directly impact the point of view of the violator. This gives the Division an opportunity to resolve violation in a more direct and expeditious manner.

### **2.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Measuring the impact of code enforcement activities is not always precise. Some activities can be tabulated numerically, while others will come with a less tangible result. The Code Enforcement Department maintains a computer tracking system allowing for activities to be recorded and tabulated.

It is believed by using the Block-by-Block Inspection and the new notice system we will be able to track more closely any time we have interaction with residents directly or indirectly. Code Enforcement will be able to evaluate the efforts from the information gather from each inspection.

Other less tangible ways to evaluate the program will be to:

- Increase self-initiative by the residents to take their own actions to correct code violations
- Observe the improvements of safe and sanitary living conditions
- Aesthetic improvements of structures and landscaping
- A decline in out-migration of residents and businesses from the neighborhoods
- Stabilize property values

With this strategic plan, the needed intervention will take place. This plan has the base to succeed. Nevertheless, it will be an evolving plan, and it can and will be modified where needed to successfully serve the residents of the City of Rexburg.

Code enforcement activities will help individuals and families to improve their properties. This Strategic plan will assist in helping improve safe, sanitary, living conditions, and neighborhood aesthetics. Through education and code officer involvement, residents will take the self-initiative to maintain their property, neighborhood, and community.

### **3.1 PROCEDURES**

#### **Block by Block Inspection Process**

Code enforcement officers will work to achieve the goal and objectives of this plan by initiating a Block-by-Block Inspection Process. This Inspection Process will be a systematic sweep of the entire area as divided into zones. There are four zones within the City of Rexburg. The zones are geographically sectioned, delineated by major traveled arteries. This effort will give the officer the opportunity to go door-to-door reviewing thoroughly each property for code violations and whenever possible, meet with the property owners or occupants and educate them on city codes. Properties will be evaluated for the target violations of debris, inoperative and/or unlicensed vehicles, weeds, and graffiti. Education materials will be distributed, communication will take place, and relationships based on trust, will be built. Although the officer will be concentrating their efforts in one specific block area at a time, they will continue to follow up on all complaints, abandoned vehicles, and active cases within the city.

### **3.2 THE FOLLOWING ARE NOTICES AND PROCEDURES USED BY CODE ENFORCEMENT**

1. Courtesy Notice
2. Correction Notice
3. Final Notice
4. Re-Occurring Violation Notice
5. Citation process (as needed)
6. Abatement process (as needed)
7. Prosecution process (as needed)
8. Process for open and accessible vacant buildings
9. Dangerous building abatement process
10. Code enforcement money handling procedure
11. Voluntary community service
12. Recognition awards
13. Code Enforcement development
14. Coverage and statistics

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#### **3.4 CORRECTION NOTICE**

This notice is mailed on the same day as the Courtesy notice. The Notice will be a reminder of the agreement to bring property into compliance or that a notice was posted on the door. They will have ten days to respond to the notice or correct the violation. The ten days will include those from the Courtesy notice.

#### **3.5 FINAL NOTICE**

The final notice is the last effort to get the property owners attention before further action is taken i.e. abatement or prosecution. Ten more days are given for a response or remedy.

#### **3.6 RE-OCCURRING VIOLATION NOTICE**

This notice is utilized when a property owner has been notified repeatedly of code violations and the violation continually re-surfaces. With this notice, the responsible party is given 10 days to comply. If property is not in compliance by the 10-day deadline, all other notices are forfeited and the case will go directly to the abatement, citation, or prosecution process.

City of Rexburg Development Code Title, Authority, Purpose, Intent