

# **REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

## ***City of Salinas, California***

DATE: December 13, 2016

FROM: Megan Hunter, Director of CDD

BY: Lorenzo Sanchez, Senior Code Enforcement Officer

SUBJECT: **2016 CODE ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an informational report on the Code Enforcement Division and provides an opportunity for the City Council and the public to provide feedback on the Code Enforcement program currently in place.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **Staffing**

The most significant positive change for the Department and Division, and its ability to provide for the needs of customers, which occurred with the unfreezing of positions that began in 2015 and the subsequent adoption and implementation of the 2015-16 Budget. Additional budget resources in 2015 allowed for the hiring of a new department Director, Revenue Officer, and a Code Enforcement Officer I.

In 2016, the Code Enforcement Division hired a new Senior Code Enforcement Officer, one (1) Administrative Aide, one (1) part time Code Enforcement Officer, and created two (2) Code Enforcement Officer II positions that were filled from within, creating a “Career Ladder” for advancement within the Division.

Currently, the Division is fully staffed with:

- 1 - Senior Code Enforcement Officer
- 2 - Code Enforcement Officer II
- 1 - Part time Code Enforcement Officer II
- 3 - Code Enforcement Officer I
- 1 - Administrative Aide
- 1 - Administrative Clerk

#### **Training**

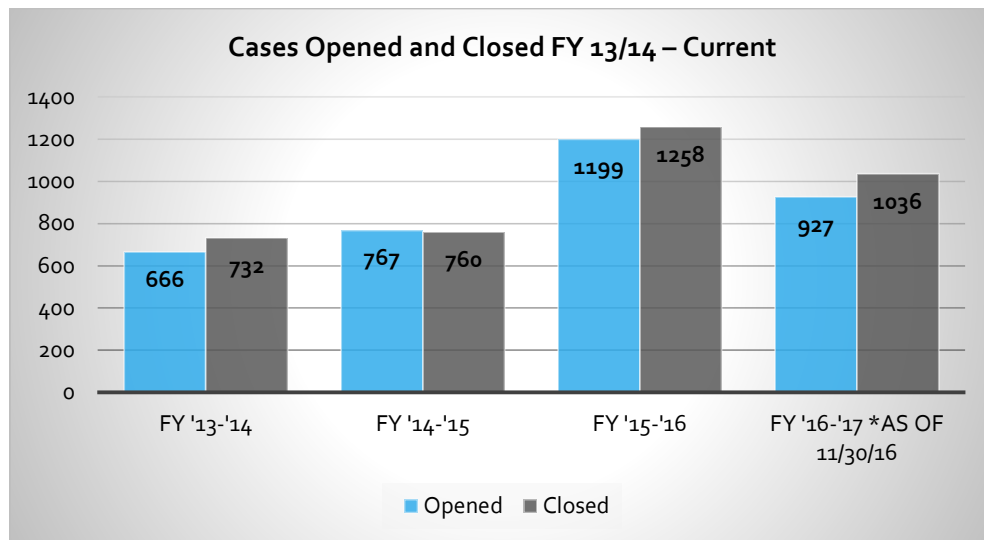
Department-wide customer service training was implemented and measures have been taken to ensure staff is providing the best customer service possible. The Code Enforcement Division has implemented weekly meetings creating opportunities for Officer training and collaborative discussion of more complex cases. Staff has been trained in using new software and technology, and they continue to attend annual Code Enforcement Conferences to improve their knowledge and obtain necessary credits to maintain their certification.

## Accomplishments

Currently, Code Enforcement efforts in the City are implemented by several departments and divisions, including Code Enforcement (CDD), Fire Prevention (Fire), Abandoned Vehicles (Police), Building Inspections (CDD), Stormwater (DPW), the City Attorney's Office, and other departments and divisions of the City. Additional staffing has allowed for an improved capacity to address violations citywide and allowed for Code Enforcement to take the lead on collaborative enforcement efforts. The creation of new Code Enforcement Officer positions has allowed for a part time Code Enforcement Officer focused on weekend enforcement. Beginning in August 2016, the weekend officer has focused primarily on enforcement of unpermitted Garage Sales along with proactive blight inspections.

In late 2015, a Kaizen event was held to evaluate the Code Enforcement process and allowed for the streamlining of procedures and improved responsiveness. In addition to the Kaizen, the Division has established clearer policies and procedures for staff, incorporated new technologies and software to increase time spent and efficiency in the field, and has implemented processes to allow for shorter response times to complaints. Response times to complaints have been reduced from 4-6 weeks down to 1-2 business days. Case management has improved as a result of these established processes, leading to an increase in permits issued and finalized to remedy code violations, an increase in cases closed, and a more consistent Administrative Remedies Process when necessary.

The table below indicates the case opened and closed each budget year and demonstrates the impact of staffing increases and improved processes.



The Code Enforcement Division has also improved and increased its collaboration with other departments, divisions, and agencies. Permit Center coordination meetings have been established between the Code Enforcement Division, Permit Services, Planning Division, Engineering Division (PW), and the Fire Prevention Bureau to facilitate dialogue and collectively address code violations. This is reflected in the Valentine's Day and Mother's Day vendor enforcement that occurred in collaboration with the Engineering Division (PW), along with enforcement of the Social Host ordinance in relation to Illegal Fireworks discharged during the month of July, in collaboration with the Police Department and Fire Department. Code Enforcement has also been working with the City Attorney's Office on three additional receivership cases, worked with the City Attorney's Office, Fire Department, and Police Department on enforcement of several nuisance properties in Chinatown, and more recently, done joint enforcement at three motels.

The division has adopted a new motto of Compliance through Education and Outreach. Staff has been actively working with the Laurel Heights and Hebbbron Heights communities for proactive outreach and enforcement. They have attended multiple community events to provide valuable information to residents.

An ongoing issue for Code Enforcement is dealing with mobile vendors, and particularly enforcing regulations for catering trucks on city streets. The City Attorney's Office, Community Development, and Public Works Departments are undertaking a comprehensive review of the existing ordinance with the intent of having better enforcement and fewer complaints, while allowing the catering trucks to continue operations.

### **Goals**

- Conduct a pilot program allowing Code Enforcement Officers to take on a few abandoned vehicles cases. Steps have been taken towards initiating the program and we have begun the necessary training to provide support to the Abandoned Vehicles (AV) Unit and assisting the Community Service Officers.
- Assess the feasibility of implementing a residential rental registration and inspection program in Salinas.
- Establish an ordinance requiring registration of vacant, abandoned, and/or foreclosed properties.
- Establish an ordinance prohibiting recreational vehicles in the public right-of-way.
- Modify the bail schedule to allow for Code Enforcement Officers to cite individuals in cases where it proves necessary.

### **ISSUE:**

This report is informational and no formal action is requested of the City Council.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The operating budget for the Code Enforcement Division is \$896,932. Of that, \$115,670 is funded through the General Fund; \$384,455 is funded through Measure V; and \$396,807 is funded through Measure G. Code Enforcement also hopes to establish a policy to create an Enterprise Fund to allow all revenue generated to be retained by the Division.

### **TIME CONSIDERATIONS:**

There are no time considerations with this report.

### **ALTERNATIVES/IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no issues or alternatives being considered and acted upon with this report.

### **CITY COUNCIL GOALS:**

The Code Enforcement Division promotes the Council goals of a "Safe, Livable Community" and "Quality of Life" by promoting a safe and blight-free community, and by addressing substandard

housing, dangerous buildings, unauthorized land and building uses, zoning violations, unpermitted work, and other Health and Safety code violations.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

With the additional budgetary resources provided, as well as increased staffing, reorganization, and streamlined processes, the Code Enforcement Division has made great strides towards more effective enforcement throughout the City. Code Enforcement serves a vital need in the community, enhancing the safety, quality of life, and general well-being of residents by ensuring compliance with the Zoning Code, Property Maintenance code, and other City and State regulations. The Code Enforcement Division foresees additional opportunities for growth and progress through continued collaboration with other departments and agencies and through implementing new programs that will contribute to improving the quality of life and safety in the City of Salinas.