

# Department of Code Compliance

## Code Compliance Operations AND 100-Day Plan Update

*Presented to the Quality of Life and  
Government Services Committee*

*November 26, 2007*



**City of Dallas**

# Purpose

- Overview / Background
- Typical Code processes / 3 specific examples
- 100-Day Plan Update
- What do we know?
- What actions will we take?
- Future City Council Briefings

# Overview

- The Department of Code Compliance is a General Fund Department with a budget of \$26.5 million and 400 employees
- On average, 217,000 service requests are generated annually, of which, Code proactively initiates approximately 80,000
- During FY 06/07 a record high number of service requests were received totaling 345,568

# Overview

- Responsible for enforcement of portions of the Dallas City Code that deals with residential, multi-tenant, commercial properties, and animal-related ordinances
- Compliance is necessary to provide the highest level of public safety and maintain property values

# Overview

## FY 07-08 Budget Summary

Neighborhood Services (General Code)	\$12,195,189
Multi-Tenant Program	\$ 2,773,022
Neighborhood Nuisance Program (Mow-Clean)	\$ 4,511,244
Animal Services	<u>\$ 7,030,726</u>
<b>Total FY 07-08</b>	<b>\$26,510,181</b>

# Overview

## Dallas City Code

- The Dallas City Code consists of 3 volumes, 46 chapters, and more than 1300 pages
- The Department of Code Compliance is responsible for 15 of those 46 chapters
- There are over 900 ordinances that govern the activities for these 15 chapters

# Overview



## Dallas City Code – Code Compliance

### Volume I

•**Chapter 7**

Animal Control Ordinances

•**Chapter 7A**

Anti-Litter Regulations

•**Chapter 15A**

Temporary Political Campaign  
Signs

•**Chapter 16**

Life Hazard – Gas Leaks

•**Chapter 18**

Municipal Solid Waste

•**Chapter 19**

Unwholesome Premises (Sewage)  
Scrap Tire Enforcement Program

•**Chapter 27**

Minimum Urban Rehabilitation &  
Multi-Family

•**Chapter 28**

Parking Oversized Vehicles in  
Residential Areas

### Volume II

•**Chapter 31**

Graffiti Abatement

Lock, Take, Hide

Life Hazard - Refrigerator

•**Chapter 39A**

Relocation Assistance

•**Chapter 40**

Rat Control

•**Chapter 43A**

Swimming Pools

Building Number

•**Chapter 47**

Trailers, Trailer Parks &  
Tourist Camps

•**Chapter 49**

Water Conservation

•**Chapter 50**

Consumer Affairs

### Volume III

•**Chapter 51A**

Signs

Interpretations &  
Definitions

Zoning Regulations

Usage Regulations

Yard Lot & Space  
Regulations

Fences

Screening

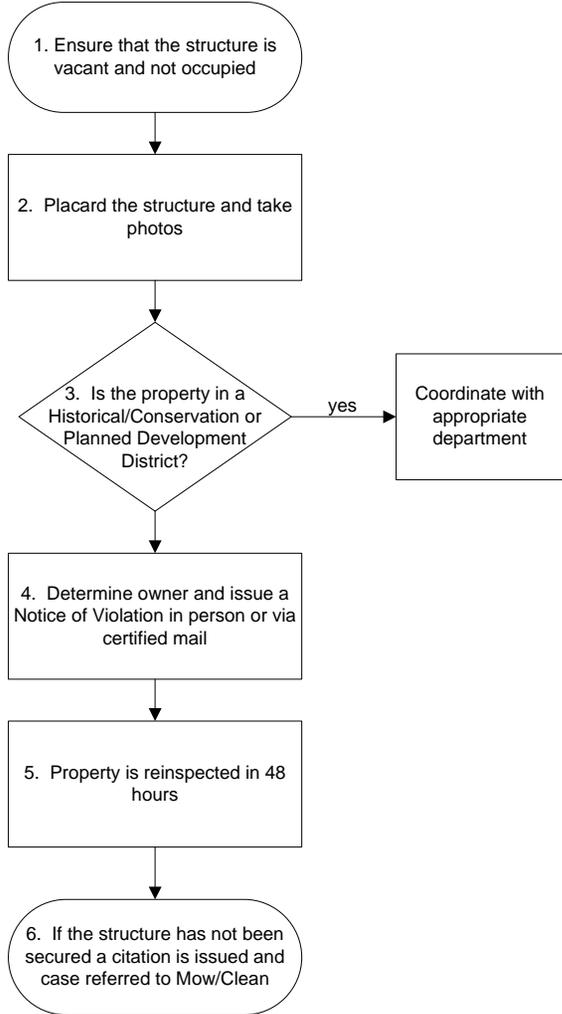
Visibility Obstructions

# Typical Code Processes for 3 Specific Cases

# Process Map: Boarded-Up Structures

## 308 N. Montclair

### Case Notes

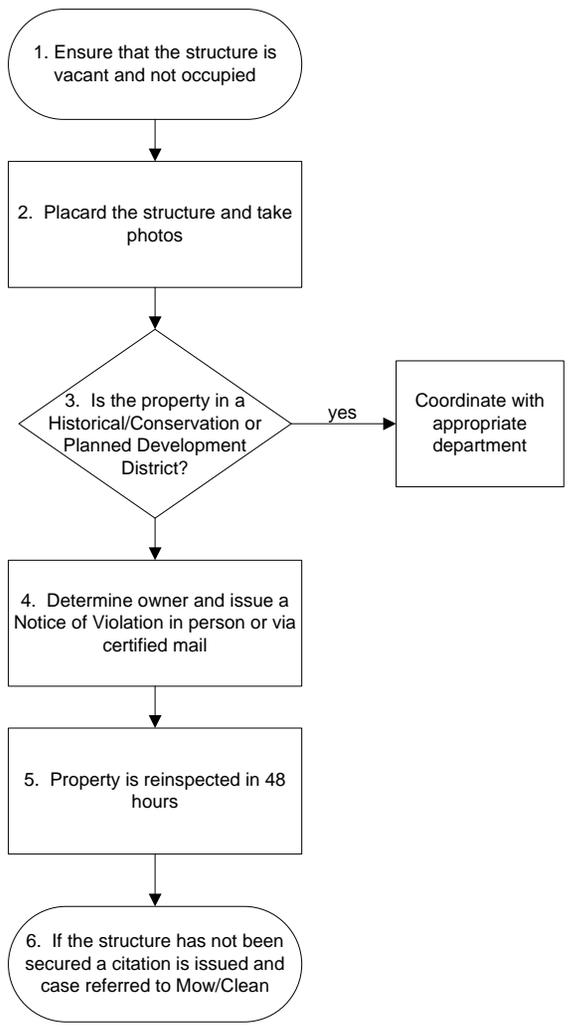


- Steps 1-5 completed
- Late 2004 – Compliance actions began; Code officer issued numerous citations on the property; property owner refused to comply with the Code or respond to citations
- Since property owner failed to comply, Mow/Clean division secured the structure, cut high weeds and attached appropriate liens
- 2005 – Property owner failed to bring structure into compliance, continued to ignore notifications and refused to respond to citations; Code continued to secure structure, cut high weeds and attach appropriate liens
- 2006 – City Attorney’s Office proceeded with a lawsuit to seek demolition of the structure; when a lawsuit is filed, enforcement activity is stopped as to not interfere with the case

# Process Map: Boarded-Up Structures

## 308 N. Montclair, continued

### Case Notes

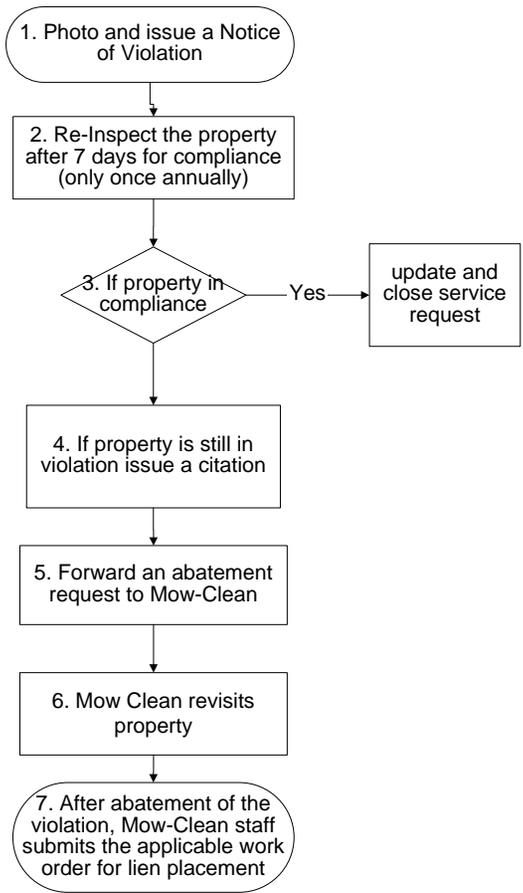


- Late 2006 – Ownership changed and Chapter 54 procedures were stopped; Code reissued the Notice of Violation to the new owner
- Early 2007 – New owner applied for Certificate of Appropriateness (CA) to begin remodeling the structure, add space and bring the structure into compliance
- The application was incomplete and the CA was not granted
- October 2007 – City Attorney began to pursue a second Chapter 54 lawsuit against the new owner

# Process Map: High Weeds

3243 Hillglenn Road

## Case Notes



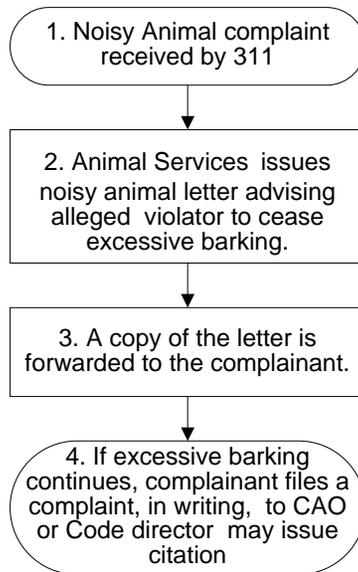
- June 2007
  - Resident submitted request to 311
  - Steps 1 – 3 completed
  - A civil citation was issued to the property owner for failure to comply
  - After the citation was issued, the property was referred to Mow/Clean division to correct the violation; the property was mowed, cleaned and a weed lien was attached (met Service Level Agreement)
- August 2007
  - Another service request was generated for high weeds at this location
  - Property referred to Mow/Clean again for clean up; an additional weed lien was placed on the property
- Currently in compliance, but Code may be dealing with problem again in growing season

Note: Once the initial Notice of Violation is issued for a property, no additional notices are required; any subsequent violations will result in immediate citation, property is referred to Mow/Clean division for clean up and a weed lien is attached.

# Process Map: Noise Nuisance

## 3508 Oak Creek Circle

### Case Notes



- Steps 1-3 completed – Neighbors reported approximately 25 dogs at the single-family residence
- Animal Services Officers have visited the residence on multiple occasions to monitor noise – no excessive noise has been recorded
- Neighbors have filed complaints to the City Attorney’s office, but complaints lacked sufficient evidence to proceed
- September 5, 2007 – Neighbor registered complaint at City Council meeting
- Environmental & Health Services visited residence to address complaints of flies/fleas and ticks, but found no violations
- Code offered to transport pets to no-kill shelter and the owner declined
- Behavior did not change - problem still exists

# Code Process

- In dealing with Code violations, Code Compliance Department may follow long, complex procedures and still not solve the systemic problem
- The real solution is a holistic approach to community problem solving – not simply Code Compliance

ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2007, THE 100-DAY PLAN WAS OUTLINED TO IDENTIFY URGENT NEEDS AS LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WERE BEING DEVELOPED.

## 100-DAY PLAN UPDATE: STATUS THROUGH 82 DAYS

# Loose Animal Controls

- Six Special Operations Officers began patrolling areas known to have loose dogs between 6 am – 9 am. Since September 6<sup>th</sup>, 517 dogs have been picked up during the early morning hours
- Deployed five vehicles geographically to enhance rapid response – November 1, 2007 with 2 officers per vehicle who are on-site in geographic areas with high call volumes
- Schedule planning workshop for the Animal Shelter Commission to explore and develop long-term strategies to address animal control

# Mow/Clean Operations

- Began a thorough business process mapping review of all mow/clean operations
- Began GIS mapping of all city-owned lots in order to create a mowing schedule
- Increased staffing for contract day-labor while evaluating the need for contracted services
- Mowed and cleaned 8,293 properties over the last 82 days (5,084 properties mowed and cleaned during the same timeframe last year)
- Amended the City Manager's budget to provide an additional \$412,052 for more significant cleaning of vacant lots (i.e., curb appeal and tree-trimming)
  - Code Compliance is in the process of acquiring these services and equipment; scheduled to go to Council in January 2008

# Boarded-Up Structures

- Changed the Service Level Agreement in the 311 Customer Response Management System (CRMS) from 72 hours to 48 hours to ensure buildings are secured in a timely manner and we are meeting the new service level agreement
- Need to re-examine the recent changes to Chapter 27 - Dallas City Code – Minimum Urban Rehabilitation Standards

# Initiatives/Pilot Projects

- Frazier/Dolphin Heights Initiative
- Lake Highlands Area Improvement - Volunteers in Code Pilot
- Foreclosed Properties Task Force
- Neighborhood Storefront Sign Project
- Neighborhood Partnerships

# Frazier/Dolphin Heights Initiative

- Coordinate effort between City of Dallas, volunteer groups and civic organizations
- Deliver city services for an extended period of time in a concentrated way
  - November 1, 2007 – February 29, 2008 – 120 days
- Increase compliance and improve curb appeal and sustainability
- Address public service needs in this community
  - Crime
  - Code violations
  - Infrastructure needs – streets, sidewalks and housing
  - Litter, graffiti, alley maintenance
- Delivered services to 150 properties since November 1
  - Received positive feedback from citizens on our approach
  - Have removed litter from 79 sites; cut high weeds from 78 sites; secured 34 structures and picked up 20 animals

# Volunteers in Code Pilot

## *Lake Highlands Area Improvement – Volunteers in Code Pilot*

- Modeled after the Dallas Police Department's Volunteers in Patrol program
- To increase compliance, residents patrol their neighborhoods and report code violations to their neighborhood code representative
- Training class to be held January 15 and 17, 2008

# Foreclosed Properties Task Force

- Identify areas where there are significant numbers of single-family homes in foreclosure
- Contact banks/lenders to offer assistance to accomplish mutual goal – neighborhood preservation
- Abate violations as related to unsecured structures;  
Mow/Clean will abate and bill the lienholder
  - Liens substantially delay closing on sales

# Neighborhood Storefront Sign Project

- Identify convenience stores located along selected major thoroughfares to eliminate unsightly signs, posters and placards
- Work with store owners to remove signs and visual clutter from storefront windows to enhance customer appeal
- Create enhanced sense of safety while cleaning the neighborhood
- Explore strengthening the ordinance to ensure compliance

# Neighborhood Partnerships

## *City of Dallas Partnerships:*

Clean South Dallas, Inc.

Maple Avenue Neighborhood Alliance

Allow groups to:

- identify their top 10 priorities
- improve areas based on their needs
- choose their level of involvement

# What do we know?

- Ordinances, policies and procedures can be administered exactly as defined by the Code and the **problem** may not be solved
  - A holistic approach is needed to solve code problems
  - Communities must be involved in the problem solving
- Geographic accountability for Code concerns need to be strengthened
- Code officers and field personnel are not deployed geographically to respond to workload

# What do we know?

- Internal procedures and the department structure should be put through the “ZIP process” for efficiency improvement
- Specific ordinances need to be reviewed/may be changed to be more effective
  - Storefront signage
  - High weed violations
  - Chapter 27 - Minimum Urban Rehabilitation Standards
  - Limiting the number of dogs per household
- An improved long-range strategy for Animal Control is needed

# What immediate action will we take?

- Establish Geographic Service Delivery
  - Create five Community Code Areas and within each designate three smaller, targeted sub-areas
    - NE, NW, SE, SW, Central
  - An area manager will be responsible for delivery of general code services within the Community Code Area
  - The area manager will have a full complement of code enforcement officers, field personnel, support staff and associated equipment assigned to and officed within the area
    - Within each community code area will be three Neighborhood Code Representatives, who know both the problems and the people in the community and will work towards a solution prior to enforcement

# What immediate action will we take?

- Establish Geographic Service Delivery, continued
  - This structure represents a consolidation of resources to carry out general code enforcement and mow/clean operations, located geographically within the community code area
  - The area manager will have two city-wide specialty units to call on for support
    - Multi-Tenant operations
    - Rapid Intensified Inspection Program (RIIP)
  - All area managers will conduct joint weekly accountability meetings with executive staff
- Timeline:
  - Reassignment and restructure to occur by January 1, 2008
  - Physical relocation of staff to occur by April 1, 2008

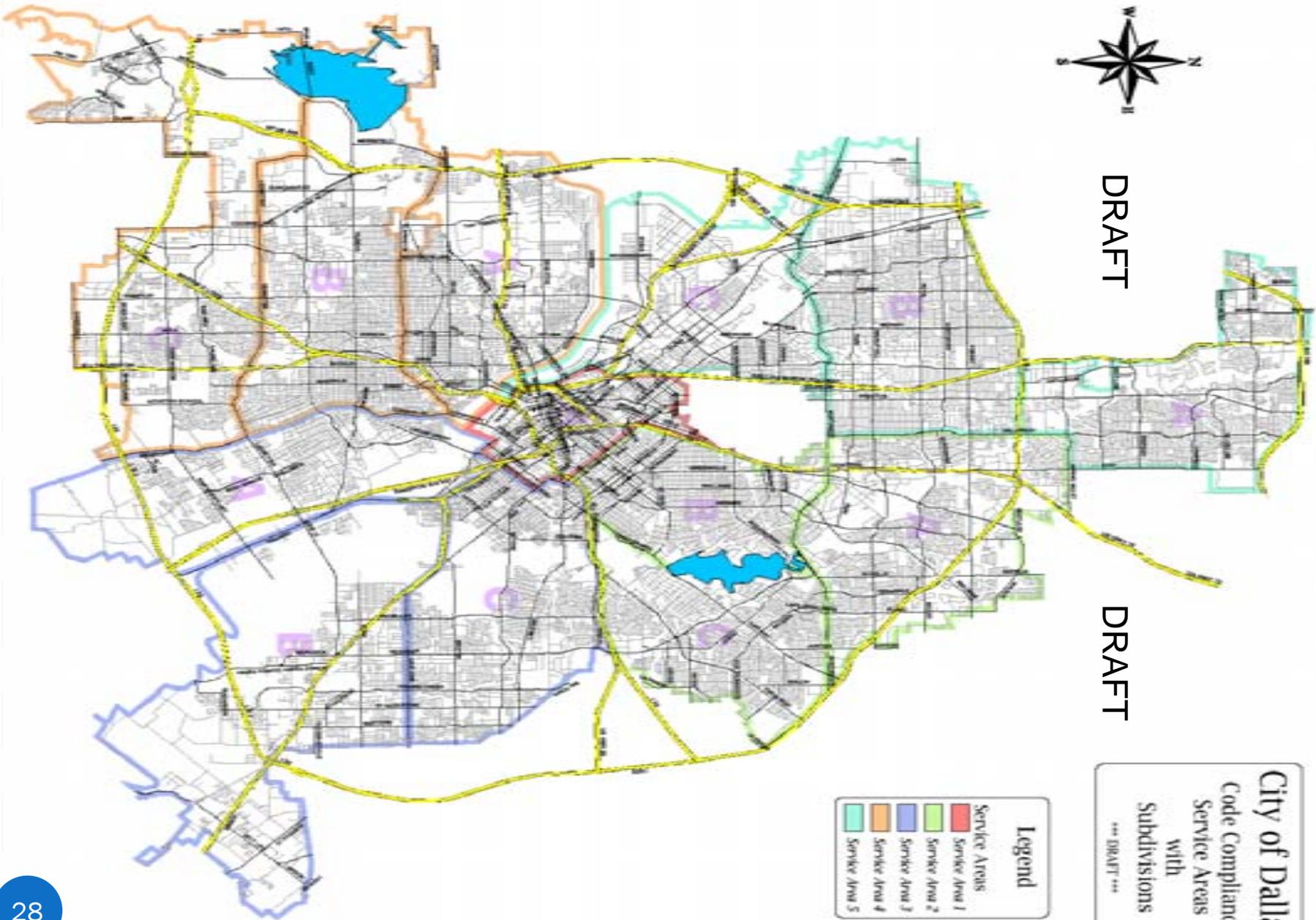


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**City of Dallas**  
Code Compliance  
Service Areas  
with  
Subdivisions  
\*\*\* DRAFT \*\*\*

- Legend**
- Service Areas
  - Service Area 1
  - Service Area 2
  - Service Area 3
  - Service Area 4
  - Service Area 5



# What immediate action will we take?



- Continue to benefit from a multi-department “think-tank” to assist with problem-solving:
  - inter-departmental cooperation
  - information exchange with residents
  - referral process to other departments
  - Timeline: Monthly meetings – on-going
- Utilize newly formed ZIP Teams to process map critical code activities for improvement:
  - apartment registration/inspection process
  - development of lawsuits against chronic violators
  - abatement of litter complaints/violations
  - relocation services
  - Timeline: Results by June 2008

# What immediate action will we take?



- Fast-track review of selected ordinances
  - Storefront signage
  - High weeds violations
  - Chapter 27 - Minimum Urban Rehabilitation Standards
  - Limiting the number of dogs per household
  - Timeline: To begin mid-December
- Code Compliance is included in the next group of departments to begin ISO 9001 certification process
  - Timeline:
    - Process to start January 2008
    - Certification scheduled for December 2009

# Future Council Committee Briefings

- Topics to be briefed include:
  - Overview of Historic, Conservation and Planned Development districts
  - Animal Control Strategies
  - Multi-Tenant Inspection operations
  - Mow/Clean operations
  - Potential ordinance/statute changes
  - Timeline: Over the next 6 months

# Next Steps

- March 1, 2008 – Progress briefing to Quality of Life and Government Services with recommendations for possible budget changes