

2013

Annual Report

Department of Code Enforcement

City of South Bend, IN



Department of Code Enforcement

2013 Annual Report

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Background

The City of South Bend, Indiana’s Department of Code Enforcement is responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Activities include:

- **Inspections and citations.** Staff members evaluate and cite unsafe buildings and ordinance violations such as abandoned vehicles, tall grass and excessive trash.
- **Animal care and control.** South Bend Animal Care and Control is the part of Code Enforcement that responds to complaints regarding dogs, cats, wildlife, animal bites, and pet licenses.

Introduction

In 2013, the Department of Code Enforcement addressed multiple areas, including:

- **Community outcomes.** Through the 1,000 Houses in 1,000 Days effort, the Department of Code Enforcement contributed to the inspections, documentation and legal evaluation of more than 1,100 unsafe buildings in the city. The Department held three bid openings, and awarded more than 200 properties to contractors for demolition.

- **Operational effectiveness.** Code Enforcement engaged in an extensive effort to improve its information technology infrastructure, staff skill sets, transparency of information, and data quality. This work involved consultants and staff from multiple departments.
- **Team building.** Code Enforcement staff began working in depth with the departments of Community Investment, Legal, Public Works, Mayor’s Office, and Administration and Finance in order to improve processes related to demolitions, public hearings, inspections, GIS mapping, and data analysis.
- **Data quality.** Staff were trained on rigorous data collections and analysis techniques. We consolidated information from multiple departmental sources, pushed online information to improve constituent information access and prepared to undergo file scanning processes scheduled for 2014.
- **Animal care and control.** South Bend Animal Care and Control represents the biggest accomplishment for Code Enforcement in 2013. From overhauling operations to dramatically increasing community involvement, SBACC successfully met the challenge of improving public safety, community relations and animal welfare. The SBACC team codified site-specific standard operating procedures, improved training procedures, increased donations and in-kind services, were key contributors to municipal ordinance revisions, and tried more criminal cases than in previous years.

Department Funding

DEPARTMENT	FUND	2011		2012		2013	
		BUDGET AMOUNT	ACTUAL EXPENSES	BUDGET AMOUNT	ACTUAL EXPENSES	BUDGET AMOUNT	ACTUAL EXPENSES
CODE ENFORCEMENT	CIVIL CITY	\$1,578,360	\$1,391,519	\$1,793,013	\$1,747,390	\$2,060,819	\$1,867,082
	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$32,000	\$31,160	\$0	\$0	\$158,000	\$71,482
HEARING OFFICER	CIVIL CITY	\$46,000	\$44,848	\$48,000	\$46,231	\$40,399	\$38,977
JUNK	CIVIL CITY	\$64,126	\$59,470	\$65,740	\$58,901	\$65,580	\$58,901
VEHICLE	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$73,000	\$61,666	\$2,834	\$2,834	\$0	\$2,834
UNSAFE BUILDING	CIVIL CITY	\$102,587	\$64,621	\$107,684	\$68,704	\$53,684	\$26,052
	CDBG/EDIT (City)	\$238,606	\$238,606	\$761,658	\$422,820	\$1,633,588	\$356,484
ANIMAL CONTROL	CIVIL CITY	\$523,697	\$501,584	\$563,679	\$523,695	\$596,111	\$550,747
	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$17,000	\$7,754	\$7,754	\$7,050	\$0	\$0
SUB-TOTAL		\$2,675,376	\$2,401,228	\$3,350,362	\$2,877,625	\$4,608,181	\$2,972,560
SURPLUS		\$274,148		\$472,737		\$1,635,621	

Revenue

The Department of Code Enforcement seeks to continuously improve its collections procedures. In 2013, Code Enforcement activities yielded \$523,885 in revenue, an increase of \$91,288 over 2012. For 2014, Code Enforcement will increase its billing and collections activities to further recover operational costs. Part of this effort involves a closer partnership with the Legal Department.

2013 REVENUE

		2011	2012	2013
ABANDONED VEHICLES		\$20,605	\$19,977	\$6,886
ANIMAL CONTROL		\$61,417	\$53,684	\$49,625
CODE CLEAN-UPS		\$53,326	\$83,416	\$78,985
SUBSTANDARD HOUSING	Demolitions & Boardings	\$20,162	\$12,156	\$48,747
	Civil Penalty	\$161,247	\$219,883	\$285,704
CASH PERFORMANCE BONDS		\$16,613	\$35,500	\$48,500
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME		\$174	\$7,981	\$5,438
GRAND TOTAL		\$333,544	\$432,597	\$523,885

Inspections, Clean-Ups and Legal Process

In 2013, the Department conducted 26,550 inspections. We anticipate that in 2014 time spent per inspection (both in the field and, significantly, related processes in the back office) will drop as the result of a mobile application for inspectors as well as an improved case management system.

There were 1,136 cases brought to public hearing; an increase from 964 in 2012. The additional hearings reflect the increased effort to take action on vacant and abandoned houses in South Bend.

	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL INSPECTIONS	20,611	22,495	26,550
TOTAL NUMBER OF LETTERS SENT TO PROPERTY OWNERS	12,536	13,024	18,146
PROPERTIES SENT TO SOLID WASTE, PARKS AND CREW	6,518	3,622	2,727
CASES BROUGHT INTO HEARING	864	964	1,136
TOTAL AMOUNT COLLECTED	\$271,953	\$370,932	\$468,822

Unsafe Buildings Data

		2011	2012	2013
NEW HOUSING CASES		874	910	863
CLOSED HOUSING CASES		461	525	304
V&A ACTIVITY	New V&A Properties Identified			1045
	V&A Cases Closed			115
	Demolished by City			32
	Demolished by Private			10
	Repaired by Private			29
	Repaired & Occupied by Private			44
STRUCTURES SECURED		650	458	261
TOTAL AMOUNT COLLECTED FOR DEMOLITION AND BOARDINGS		\$10,619	\$12,156	\$48,747
TOTAL AMOUNT COLLECTED FOR CIVIL PENALTIES		\$161,247	\$219,883	\$285,704
TOTAL AMOUNT COLLECTED FOR CASH PERFORMANCE BONDS		\$15,100	\$32,500	\$48,500

Vacant and Abandoned Properties

On February 27, 2013, Mayor Buttigieg called for 1,000 abandoned houses to be addressed in 1,000 days. Through this effort, 1,000 properties would be addressed through a combination of programs focused on both rehabilitation and demolition. The goal completion date is November 24, 2015. The Department of Code Enforcement is a key implementer of the Vacant and Abandoned (V&A) initiative through inspections and public hearing contributions.

As part of the V&A initiative, the Department of Code Enforcement staff worked as part of a multi-disciplinary team to:

- Receive training in asbestos inspections to allow the demolitions process to meet state and national environmental protection standards.
- Work with the Department of Public Works, Department of Community Investment, Legal Department, and Mayor's Office to review demolition bidding and contracting processes

and improve effectiveness where possible. Ultimately, this involved centralizing the bidding process and creating a uniform process for demolitions in 2014.

- Hold bid openings in March, August and November 2013.
- Conduct a super hearing in August to address the backlog of Code Enforcement cases which had expired demolition orders.
- Evaluate and adopt the best technology tools available to increase data transfer from field to office, and improve data analysis and transparency.
- Incorporate clover grass seeding into bid specs to prevent Code Enforcement maintenance of properties down the road.

Abandoned Vehicles

The Department of Code Enforcement also cites and tows abandoned vehicles. In 2013, the volume of tows decreased as a result of shifts in staff organization and departmental prioritization of vacant and abandoned properties as well as illegal dumping.

	2011	2012	2013
TAGGED	595	690	594
TOWED	53	53	26
AUCTIONED	34	39	11
RECLAIMED	16	10	9
SCRAPPED	3	4	6
REVENUE	\$20,605	\$19,977	\$6,886

South Bend Animal Care and Control

In 2013, South Bend Animal Care and Control (SBACC) reached significant milestones, including:

- **10% reduction in euthanasia rate from 2012 to 2013.** Staff reduced euthanasia numbers through increased adoption numbers, outreach to rescues, sanctuaries, rehabilitators, as well as raising public awareness of the importance of spaying and neutering pets. Stricter standards in internal procedures and policies aided in the decreasing numbers in overall euthanasia.
- **South Bend municipal code revisions.** Revisions are ready to be presented to the South Bend Common Council in the coming months. Animal Control management is providing opportunities for city residents to give feedback through “town hall” meetings, neighborhood organization outreach and general publicity of ordinance revisions.
- **Partnership with local veterinarian, Mariah Covey.** Dr. Covey comes in once a week for four hours to administer Rabies vaccinations, perform wellness exams on all animals entering the adoption center and to provide guidance and care to all sick or injured animals at SBACC.
- **Spay and neuter services.** In 2013, SBACC secured 104 donated spays/neuters through Roseland Animal Hospital for a savings of \$26,000 in alteration (surgery) costs in 2014. ABC Clinic donated 100 spays/neuters in March of 2013 saving an additional \$6,500 in alteration costs. ABC Clinic has also donated 104 spays/neuters for 2014 saving SBACC another \$6,760 in alteration costs.

- **New adoption “perks.”** Previously, animals were adopted out unaltered and without rabies vaccinations (with an additional fee to have the rabies vaccinations given by a local veterinarian). SBACC now offers the following “perks” with an adoptable animal:
 - Spay or neuter
 - In-house Rabies vaccination by licensed veterinarian
 - In-house wellness check by volunteer veterinarian
 - Microchip
 - Deworming
 - Flea Treatment
 - Free Sample of wellness dog food
 - Up-to-date kennel vaccinations
 - Basic obedience training through Project 360
 - “Pals for Pets” adoption program

SBACC Statistics

	2013
ANIMALS SENT TO RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS	371
PET LICENSES SOLD	1,299
COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED	3,584
AFTER-HOURS CALLS	420
WILDLIFE INTAKE	219
CRIMINAL AND CIVIL CASES	6
RECLAIMED PETS	342
ADOPTIONS	257
REVENUE	\$49,625
CHICKEN PERMITS	19
OWNER SURRENDERS	563
STRAY INTAKE	2,112
BITE CASES	144