Building and Community Standards

City of Brooklyn Center

A great place to start, a great place to stay.

2015 Annual Report

The Blueprint for a Thriving Community

February 2, 2016

6301 Shingle Creek Parkway | Brooklyn Center, MN 55430 | 763.569.3330

Table of Contents

Department Overview 3
Year In Review 7
General Achievements 8
Home Purchase & Improvement Programs 9
Ownership Services 10
Community Engagement and Rental Management 11
Customer Service and Financial Information 12
Continual Learning and Improvement 13
Rental Licensing Program 15
Case Studies 18
Housing Redevelopment Authority 21
Case Studies 23
Construction Regulation Program 27
Case Studies 31
Foreclosures and Vacant Building Program 33
Neighborhood Maintenance 39
Case Studies 43

Annual Report Overview

This report provides highlights of programs and activities performed by the Building & Community Standards Department during 2015. This report is not intended to be all inclusive. It is through people, technology, and collaboration that the department accomplishes City priorities. The efforts of department employees, other departments, the City Manager, City Council, commissions, residents, businesses, community organizations, and other partners are greatly appreciated as we work together to keep Brooklyn Center a great place to start and great place to stay.

Clean, safe, and attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods are the foundation of a vibrant community. The Building & Community Standards Department works to ensure the community is clean, safe, and attractive, a place where people *want* to live and do business.

Department Overview

The Building & Community Standards Department provides services to residents and businesses to ensure the community is built and maintained in a clean, safe, and attractive manner—a community where people want to live and do business. The department collaborates with a diverse customer base to accomplish this primary goal.

We will stabilize and improve residential neighborhoods.

We will ensure all residential and commercial buildings are designed, built, and maintained in a safe and sound condition.

What We Do

Development and Construction Regulation Program—Monitoring residential and commercial building construction through consultation, plan review, permitting, and site visits.

Property Maintenance Program—Investigating and responding to neighborhood nuisance complaints and proactive property maintenance, zoning, and signs.

Rental Program—Inspecting residential rental properties to ensure health and life safety standards are met. The department tracks rental license category requirements to promote long-term responsible management to ensure high quality rental housing. Education is a priority and the City hosts bi-monthly meetings for landlords, distributes newsletters, and performs a variety of other educational activities.

Vacant Building Program—Monitoring, securing, and promoting the improvement of vacant houses. Staff addresses health and life safety hazards at vacant homes through abatement procedures, and engages the community through Vacant Watch.

Housing Programs—Sponsoring Fix-Up Fund home improvement loans, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, and the ReNew Home Buyer Program with loans and grants to foster owner-occupied home ownership and proper home maintenance. Monitoring housing trends ensures programs address current and future needs.

Ownership Services—Ensuring homestead status, property information, and special assessment information is accurate and available for the public and city departments. This improves communication lines between the property owners and the City and financial options for property owners.

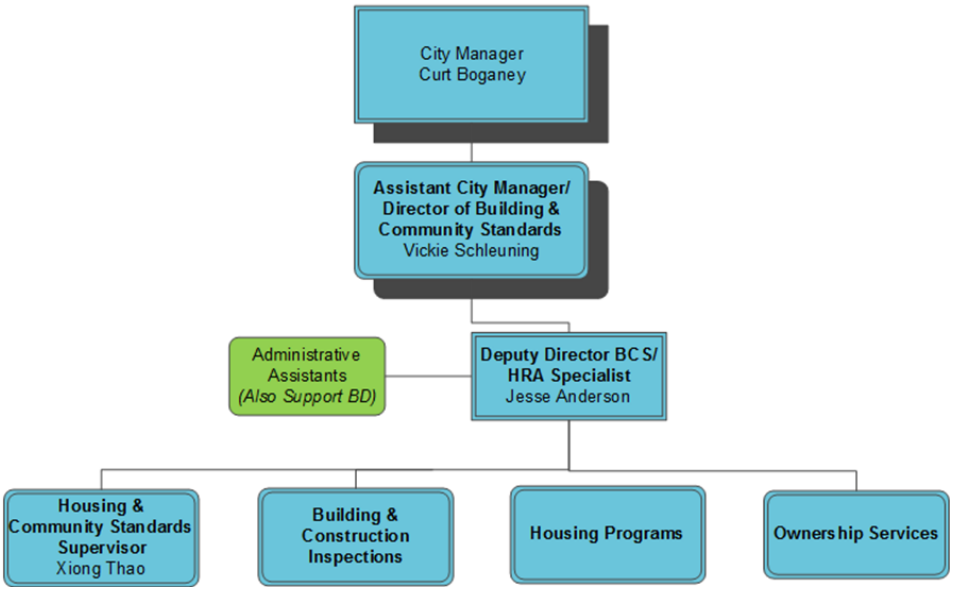
HOUSING NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING MAINTAIN QUALITY
HOME CONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION CODE
COMPLIANCE RESIDENTS RENTAL CODE SAFE DIVERSE IMPROVE
SAFE MAINTAIN BUILDING SPECIAL ASSESSMENT QUALITY
FINANCIAL INVESTMENT
RENTAL OWNER
TENANTS COMMUNITY DIVERSE
QUALITY OWNERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT CONSULTATION BUSINESS ACCOUNTABILITY
ASSISTANCE PRIDE FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Mission

Quality service is provided through the use of modern technology and practices, and quality assurance management. This is accomplished with a team of people dedicated to professional excellence and customer satisfaction. We strive to accomplish these tasks efficiently, effectively, and with accountability to the community we serve. The department works closely with the public, other departments, and agencies on community initiatives.

Staff

Vickie Schleuning—Assistant City Manager/Director
Jesse Anderson—Deputy Director/HRA Specialist
Xiong Thao—Housing & Community Standards Supervisor
Kelsey Montgomery—Administrative Assistant
Sue Remjeske—Permit Technician
Myly Fung—Administrative Assistant
Lisa Mott—Administrative Assistant
Mallory Holmen—Building Official
Dan Grinsteinner—Building & Housing Inspector
Chris Cady—Building & Housing Inspector
Dan Jerzak—Property Code Specialist
Nathan Buska—Building & Housing Inspector
Seasonal Code Enforcement Interns



We will provide diverse housing opportunities for responsible ownership through cost-effective programs and initiatives.

We will provide effective communication and public education about neighborhood and community initiatives.

Ensuring clean, safe and attractive neighborhoods where people want to live and do business.

This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

Year In Review

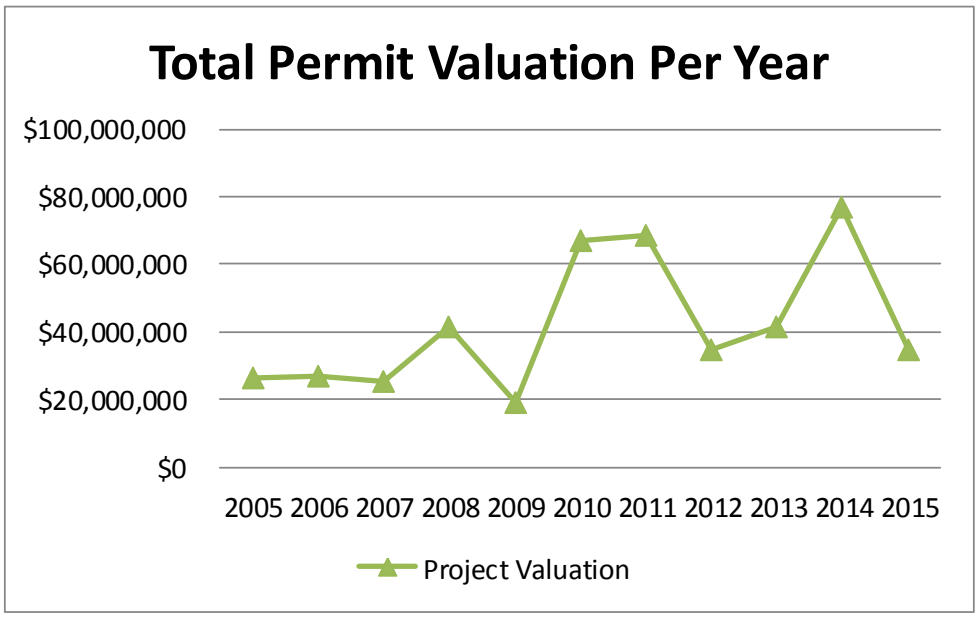
The Building & Community Standards Department carefully coordinates work activities in order to meet City priorities and customer expectations. Functions are carried out in consideration of City priorities and four perspectives—that of the customer, operations, financial responsibility, and organizational learning. The following are a few activities that address these perspectives at a department level. More details are provided in the program sections of this report.

General Achievements

2015 was a year of change and learning for the Building and Community Standards Department (BCS). In 2014 responsibility for property appraisal, previously under the Business and Development Department, was transferred to Hennepin County. Responsibility for homestead functions, special assessments, and property information was delegated to BCS under Ownership Services. New software programs, part-time staffing, and resources was managed through the department. Integration and streamlining of

Minneapolis Business Center II (former Howe site)

The City continues to experience a high number of construction projects in new commercial construction, commercial remodels, new single family home construction, and home remodels. A high number of residential



Recently remodeled house

renovations occurred with vacant houses. In addition, we continue to see success with our performance-based rental program. Owners and managers are taking more responsibility for rental properties, creating a safe and healthy rental community. Further, the federal funding through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), has produced fourteen remodeled houses that sold within a few days of being placed on the market. To date, there are two houses added to the program through excess program funds.

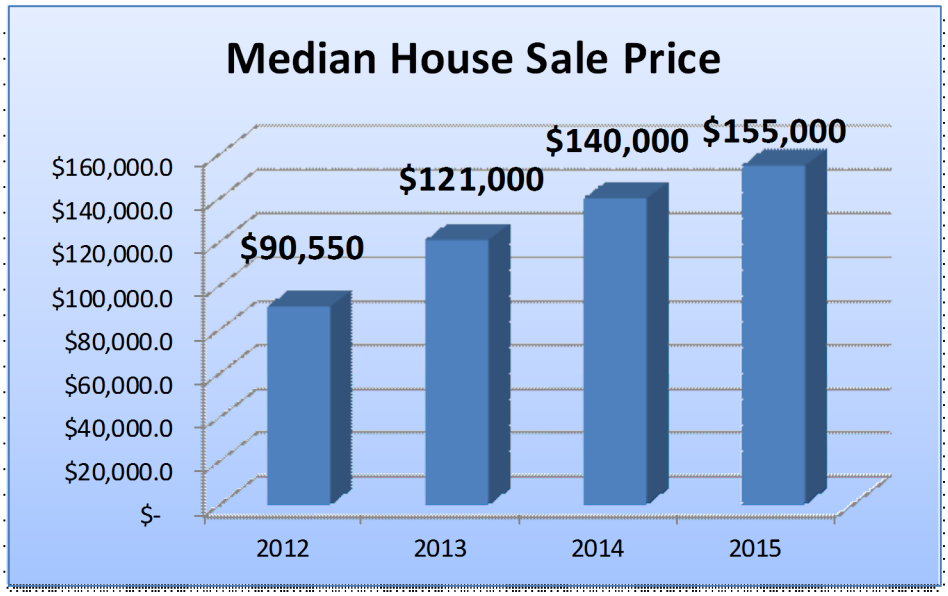
A remodeled NSP house sold for more than $170,000 in 2015.

Strategic focus on problem properties and community initiatives has resulted in several successes. Through careful coordination of work schedules, prioritizing tasks, team work, and collaboration, many projects were completed. Staff resources were frequently shifted between different program areas in order to meet immediate needs in workload. Program costs were effectively controlled while revenues continued to be high. Overall service levels were managed to ensure high quality customer service as indicated by positive customer feedback.

Home Purchase and Improvement Programs

The ReNew Home Purchase program helps transform foreclosed, vacant homes into reoccupied homes with responsible, informed homeowners. The program is designed for people who can afford to purchase and maintain a home, along with managing the responsibilities of home ownership. As part of the City's foreclosure strategy, the program was created to provide down payment assistance (up to $10,000) to qualified buyers. Since the program started in 2009, the City has provided assistance to 136 buyers, the majority of which are at 50 percent to 80 percent of AMI (Area Medium Income). The Fix Up Fund program provides a low-interest loan option for homeowners looking to make home improvements. The improvements can range from in price from $2,000 to $50,000.

The City is leveraging federal funds to assist in the rehabilitation of substandard and strategically located homes within neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Stabilization Programs (NSP) 1, 2, and 3 are part of the effort to stabilize and revitalize foreclosed properties. Staff have been able to revitalize outdated and substandard housing to meet current housing trends and attract todays homebuyers. Almost $2 million in federal funds have been used to completely renovate substandard homes into modernized homes or attract new homeowners.



In 2015, seven homebuyers committed to home ownership in Brooklyn Center using the ReNew Home Purchase Program.

An open kitchen concept attracts todays homebuyers made possible by the NSP program.

Fix-up funds helped five homeowners make home improvements in 2015.

Ownership Services

In 2014, the City began contracting property appraisal services with Hennepin County. This agreement is expected to save the City $150,000 annually. As a result, the Building & Community Standards Department assumed responsibility for the remaining services from the Business & Development Department. These functions include processing homestead applications, maintaining ownership and property records, and managing special assessments for the City. The County is now responsible for property evaluations and classifications.

As part of the transition, the part-time position was eventually transferred to the department to process homestead applications and act as a liaison between the City and Hennepin County Assessing Department. Other administrative duties have shifted to provide the capacity for the increased workload due to special assessments.

Several processes and procedures have been modified to allow more accurate, efficient, and customer-friendly information regarding special assessments for the general public as well as staff. This includes email options for outstanding special assessments for property closings, weekly online special assessment lists, and revised public form to improve clarity of payments.

Department staff processed more than 250 homestead applications during 2015 as house sales continue to be strong in Brooklyn Center.

Homestead status can save homeowners money on their property tax each year.

I appreciated you working so hard to get my paperwork to my loan officer. Your hard work did not go un-noticed.
Cindy, New Resident

OFFICE USE ONLY
Applicant Name
Assessment Year
Assessor or Representative's Signature
Date
Type of Application
Determination
CR-H
Owner Occupied
Relative/Residential
Relative/Agricultural
Approved
Denied
Homestead Application
Applications are due to your county assessor's office by December 15. For manufactured homes assessed as personal property, applications are due May 29. Please read all instructions before completing this application. NOTE: Each applicant must complete a separate form to apply for homestead (see Section 2 for married couple applicant instructions).
This section MUST be completed. Please provide the following information on the property you are claiming homestead.
SECTION 1: PROPERTY INFORMATION
Address of Property
Property ID Number (Found on the Property Tax Statement)
City
Date Purchased
State
Zip Code
County
Date Occupancy Established by Applicant(s)

Community Engagement

Throughout the summer months, staff participated in four neighborhood meetings. At the neighborhood meetings, staff members have the opportunity to engage with residents and provide information about city services. Residents become more aware of neighborhood programs and what they can do to improve their neighborhood. The ability to get feedback about the neighborhoods from residents allows us to provide better services. Staff also participated in the 2015 Northwest Suburban Home Remodeling Fair.

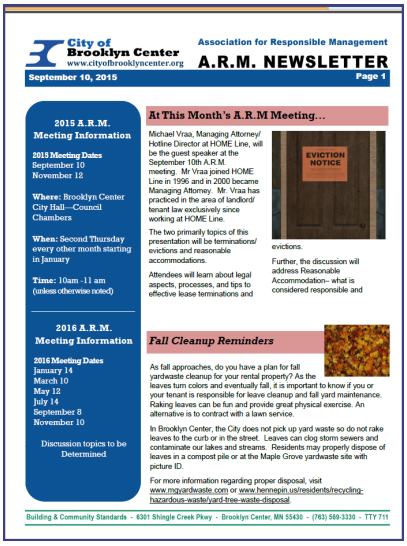
Neighborhood meetings allow City staff and residents to educate and engage each other in a meaningful way.

The City will consistently seek the input from a broad range of stakeholders from the general public, non-profit and for profit sectors.

Association for Responsible Management (ARM)

City staff host bi-monthly meetings for owners and managers of rental properties in Brooklyn Center. The ARM meetings and newsletter help provide a discussion of topics that are useful to property management. The goal is to foster a respectful, safe, and attractive rental community.

In 2015, ARM topics included tenant screening, what to expect during rental inspections, smoke free housing, proposed legislative changes, evictions and reasonable accommodations, crime prevention and homeless prevention. Staff prepared videos and presentations regarding requirements for rental properties. Other topics included guest presenters who provided specialized knowledge to property managers. Feedback of topics and presenters at ARM meetings has been positive.



City of Brooklyn Center
www.cityofbrooklyncenter.org

Association for Responsible Management
A.R.M. NEWSLETTER

September 10, 2015 Page 1

2015 A.R.M. Meeting Information

2015 Meeting Dates
September 10
November 12

Where: Brooklyn Center City Hall—Council Chambers

When: Second Thursday every other month starting in January

Time: 10am -11 am (unless otherwise noted)

2016 A.R.M. Meeting Information

2016 Meeting Dates
January 14
March 10
May 12
July 14
September 8
November 10

Discussion topics to be Determined

At This Month's A.R.M Meeting…

Michael Vraa, Managing Attorney/ Hotline Director at HOME Line, will be the guest speaker at the September 10th A.R.M. meeting. Mr Vraa joined HOME Line in 1996 and in 2000 became Managing Attorney. Mr. Vraa has practiced in the area of landlord/ tenant law exclusively since working at HOME Line.

The two primarily topics of this presentation will be terminations/ evictions and reasonable accommodations.

Attendees will learn about legal aspects, processes, and tips to effective lease terminations and evictions.

Further, the discussion will address Reasonable Accommodation– what is considered responsible and

Fall Cleanup Reminders

As fall approaches, do you have a plan for fall yardwaste cleanup for your rental property? As the leaves turn colors and eventually fall, it is important to know if you or your tenant is responsible for leave cleanup and fall yard maintenance. Raking leaves can be fun and provide great physical exercise. An alternative is to contract with a lawn service.

In Brooklyn Center, the City does not pick up yard waste so do not rake leaves to the curb or in the street. Leaves can clog storm sewers and contaminate our lakes and streams. Residents may properly dispose of leaves in a compost pile or at the Maple Grove yardwaste site with picture ID.

For more information regarding proper disposal, visit www.mgyardwaste.com or www.hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/yard-free-waste-disposal.

Building & Community Standards - 6301 Shingle Creek Pkwy - Brooklyn Center, MN 55430 - (763) 569-3330 - TTY 711

September 2015 ARM Newsletter

Online services provide an additional way for customers to access City services. 606 ePermits were issued in 2015,

City videos about department projects helped educate residents and business about property maintenance and property information.

Visit the Channel 12 online City video library.

Customer Service

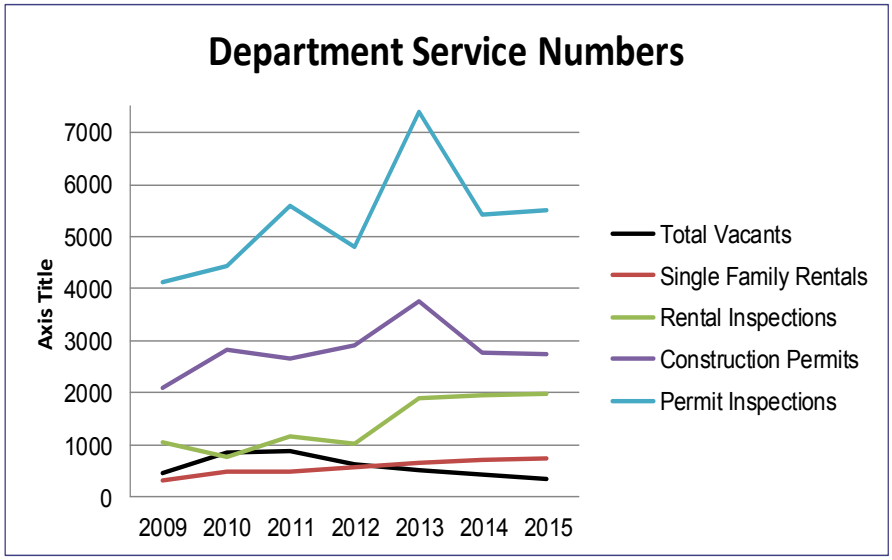
The use of technology has improved customer service. More information is available on the City's website, certain permits can be obtained online through ePermits, concerns about properties or services can be requested through Request Tracker, and City videos provide information for residents and businesses.

Education and communication is a priority for the department. Educational materials continue to be updated, in addition to developing new brochures for property code information and construction information. In cooperation with Channel 12, staff has been able to participate in educational videos about various property subjects and ownership services.

Financial Considerations

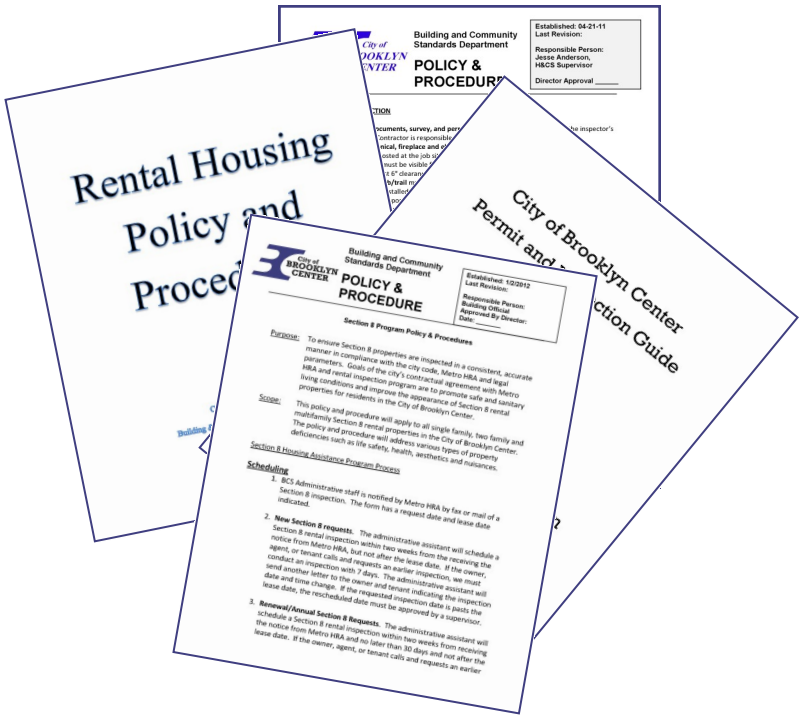
Costs of service have been calculated and implemented in accordance with legal parameters to recover some of the City's costs for service. Revenue is generated from construction plan review and permits, vacant building registrations, re-inspections, abatement service charges, rental licenses, rental conversions, and the administrative penalty system. These fees help offset the cost of administering neighborhood and community programs. In addition to ensuring appropriate use of services, fees also encourage compliance.

Costs of service and fees are reviewed annually. Staff continues to research options to improve the cost effectiveness of our programs.



Continual Learning and Improvement

More sophisticated and performance-based programs require higher levels of training and performance from the organization and staff. The department is committed to ongoing improvement and learning. Staff training and standardization continues to be crucial to ensure quality services and maintain professional certifications. Both internal and external training is conducted, as well as internal quality assurance activities.



Staff attended continuing education courses offered by professional organizations, government agencies, and local building and housing agencies. This training helps enhance skills, share program information among cities, and provide updates about code changes and trends.

Several policies, procedures, and program manuals were developed or modified to ensure the work is performed in a consistent, equitable, and quality manner.

ICC INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL®
People Helping People Build a Safer World™

Minnesota Association of Housing Code Officials

National Fire Protection Association
The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety

This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

Rental Licensing Program

The rental licensing program aims to maintain the City's rental housing in a safe and attractive manner, so they are assets to the community. As part of the Rental Housing Improvement Strategy, extensive research was conducted to determine the health of the city's rental properties. The increase in number of rental properties, demands for City services, and concerns by residents necessitated the need for a different type of program. Since the implementation of the new performance-based rental housing program in April 2010, property owners and tenants are appropriately held accountable for the management and maintenance of their rental properties and tenant behaviors. The program provides incentives for properties that are well-managed and well-maintained. It also incorporates effective enforcement tools and best practices to ensure rental properties are safe, healthful, and well maintained.

1,967 rental dwelling inspections were performed in 2015 resulting in reduction of health, safety, and nuisance situations.

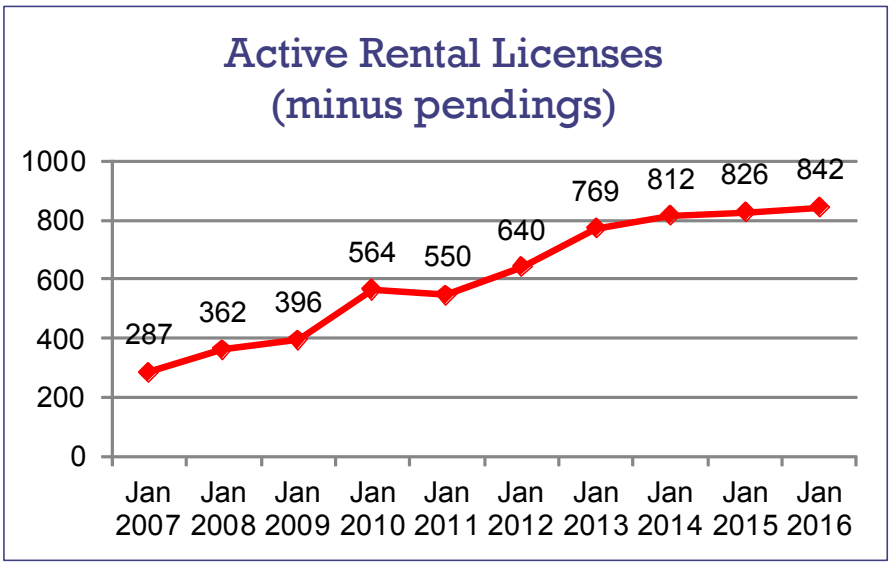
Rental inspectors were able to provide training and insights through self-made videos and presentations during 2015 ARM meetings.

79 new rental dwelling applications were processed in 2015 in coordination with the Administration Department and Police Department.

Highlights

Internal enforcement processes were refined to address managers/owners of properties who are not meeting their license type requirements, including penalties for landlords who fail to meet their Type III and IV license requirements. Staff has increased education and assistance to guide property owners with successful compliance with city regulations and best practices, including Action and Mitigation plans for Type III and Type IV licenses. This multi-departmental program also relies on staff from Administration and Police Department for successful implementation. A few accomplishments for the year are highlighted below.

- Public education materials were developed and distributed to property owners and tenants, including the Association of Responsible Managers (ARM) newsletters. Landlord and tenant education efforts continue through the licensing process, landlord meetings, publications and other means. Many licensing forms and handouts were updated and improved for clarity.
- Many landlords are taking more time preparing their property for the inspections as indicated by the high percentage of Type I and II Rental Licenses. Landlords are continuing to monitor their properties on an regular basis, helping to reduce the number of police and nuisance calls.
- As indicated by program revenue, the program continues to recover significant City's cost associated with monitoring rental properties and administering programs.
- The results of the new performance-based rental license program continue to show improvement in the condition and management of rental properties.
- Staff utilized a team inspection approach in order to improve efficiency for multi-family rental property inspections. The number of rental properties continues to grow, demanding more staff time and staff

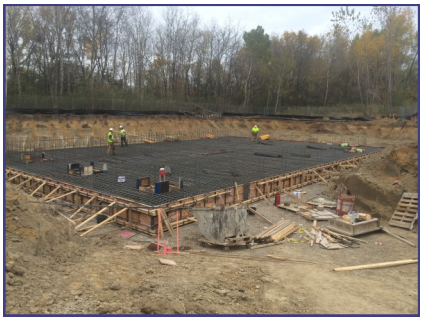


resources to ensure that health and life safety code violations are corrected and units are safe for occupancy.

- Staff members from other program areas in the department have been cross-trained to assist on time sensitive inspections and activities and better manage workload demands.
- Automated invoice billing for re-inspection fees has been implemented to improve the accuracy and efficiency of collection procedures to ensure accountability and financial responsibility.
- Some department staff members were trained to perform Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) inspections in order to assist the Police Department when inspection volume is high or to offer to residents as a proactive service.

Strong neighborhoods will attract responsible homeowners.

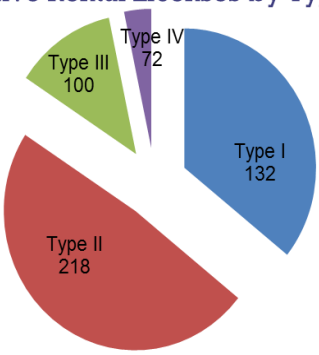
Number of Licensed Rental Properties				
Number	Single Family/ Duplex	Multifamily	Total	Percentage Difference
Jan. 1, 2008	287	~75	362	
Jan. 1, 2009	321	~75	396	9.39
Jan. 1, 2010	489	75	564	42.42
Jan. 1, 2011	478	72	550	-2.48
Jan. 1, 2012	569	71	640	16.36
Jan. 1, 2013	700	69	769	16.77
Jan. 1, 2014	750	64	814	6.6
Jan. 1, 2015	748	63	811	-.3
Jan. 1, 2016	775	67	842	3.8
**Does not include pending licenses that average 40-60 licenses*				



Number of Rental Inspections Yearly Comparisons

Year	# of Inspections
2008	894
2009	1,055
2010	757
2011	1,157
2012	1,005
2013	1,885
2014	1,961
2015	1,967

Active Rental Licenses by Type



Case Studies

6221 Shingle Creek Pkwy. | The Crest Apartments

The Crest Apartments in Brooklyn Center is the most recognizable rental property located off Shingle Creek Crossing and Interstate 94 in Brooklyn Center with 122 units. In 2012, Aeon worked with Minnesota Housing, Hennepin County, and the City to purchase the property. Prior to Aeon purchasing the property, it had fallen into tax forfeiture, and was in need of physical and mechanical updates. In 2014, The Crest completed a major remodel totaling $1.4 million to update the exterior (old exterior right, new exterior below), interiors and commons spaces, and improve mechanical equipment. The City has worked closely with Aeon management to help improve the image and housing quality of the property, police activity, resulting in a higher rental license category.

Before

After

After

6331 Beard Ave. N. | The Avenue Apartments

The Avenue Apartments were previously foreclosed and eventually sold to a new owner. During the transition period, there were multiple administrative citations issued due to city code violations. However, the new owner worked closely with the City to correct various property issues and made significant renovations to the apartment units.

After

This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA)

In July of 2012 the Building & Community Standards Department assumed responsibility of the HRA functions. The focus of the programs has been to improve the current housing stock and make houses and neighborhoods more desirable. Programs include the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP1, NSP2, and NSP3) and certain Code Enforcement/Neighborhood Revitalization tasks through CDBG funds. Other programs providing financial incentives consist of Hennepin's County Rehab Loan program through CDGB funds, ReNew home loan program, and low interest Fix-up Fund loan program administered through the City's developer.

"I love the new floor plan for this house. I want to do this to [my house]."
NSP Open House Feedback:

456 house sales were closed in 2015.

The average time on the market in 2015 for a house in Brooklyn Center was 62 days.

Highlights of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

The City capitalized on the use of federal funds in addition to private investments. The following is a summary of the successful implementation of NSP federal funds to spark neighborhood improvements. Staff works with the City's developer, Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC) to achieve the program goals.

a) The NSP2 program has ended.

b) The NSP1 and NSP3 Program objective is to fully renovate substandard or antiquated properties. Renovations often include flooring, kitchens, bathrooms, and mechanical systems. The program incorporates energy efficiency improvements such as insulation and high efficiency appliances, as well as healthy home products. Funding shifts occurred to include city priorities such as public safety improvements (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design CPTED), landscaping standards, and curb appeal improvements to improve the overall safety and appearance of properties. In many cases, floor plans were changed to create spaces more marketable to today's homebuyers.

- Phase I of the program consisted of 10 property renovations with NSP 1 funds. NSP1 allocation was $1,905,250.
- Phase II of the program consisted of 14 property renovations with NSP3 funds and some remaining NSP program funds. NSP3 fund allocation was $1,190,250.
- Phase III of the program will consist of two properties recently acquired for rehab. Phase two is a combination of NSP1 and NSP3 funds made possible through program income. Phase III includes an additional $125,287 in funding reallocated to Brooklyn Center as a combination of unspent program income from other cities.

c) CDBG funds were allocated to Neighborhood Stabilization/Code Enforcement, Hennepin County Home rehabilitation program, and three public services.

Highlights of Financing Programs

The ReNew Home Program has continued to be a beneficial program to assist with minimizing the negative effects of foreclosed and vacant properties in Brooklyn Center. The program encourages owner-occupancy by responsible buyers. The program also provides funding for a new buyer to fix up the property. Since the program started in 2009, the City has provided assistance to 136 buyers. In 2015, 8 applications were received and 7 loans were closed.

Case Studies

5831 Dupont Ave N. | NSP House

The house located at 5831 Dupont Ave N was an outdated house in need of major repairs and updating. Through the NSP program it was transformed into a more modern, beautiful home. The house was purchased in 2014. In partnership with GMHC, the non-functional layout was reconfigured to a more open, modern concept. This house sold for more than $173,500 after only four days on the market. The City may not make a profit from the sale of NSP houses.

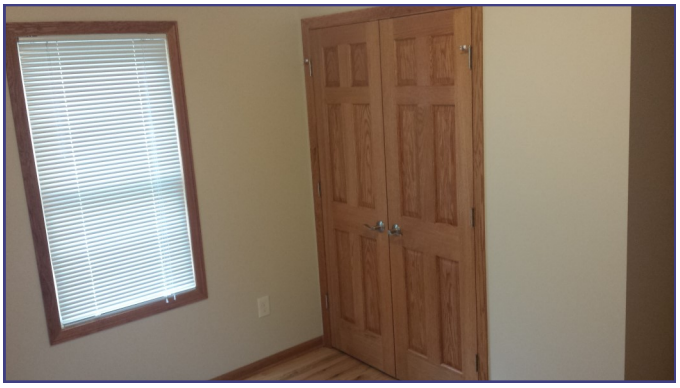
Case Studies

5651 Dupont Ave. N. | NSP3 House

The house located at 5651 Dupont Ave N started off as an outdated house in need of major updating, but became a high selling NSP house. The house was donated to the City, It had significant water damage and the interior of the house was demolished down to the framing. This house received fully updated appliances, exterior finishes, interior finishes, and updated floor plan. The two bedroom, one bathroom house sold for $148,000. The City may not make money from the sale of NSP houses.

Before

After



This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

Construction Regulations Program

The Construction Regulation Program assists homeowners, contractors, design professionals, and businesses with their construction projects to ensure projects are completed in compliance with construction and building codes, are safe, and structurally sound. Staff coordinate development projects to facilitate the construction process internally and for external customers. 2015 was another booming year with a significant amount of commercial construction and housing improvement projects.

261 plan reviews were performed in 2015 to ensure projects met codes for safe and sound construction.

5,509 permit inspections were completed by the City in 2015 to ensure health and safety compliance.

Highlights

As the community continues to experience new development and remodels, the department continues to work with internal and external customers to refine processes and procedures. The following are a few highlights of activities for 2015.

a) Internal systems were developed to improve workflow processes within the department and to coordinate other City departments involved in the development and construction process.

b) Public educational materials were developed to guide developers and residents through the City development and construction process. This information is available at City Hall and on the City's website. Businesses are often interviewing staff about processes to ensure a consistent and open process before undertaking extensive remodels.

c) Extensive training and cross-training occurred to ensure staff were able to meet the needs of the developers, contractors, and public, as well as the aggressive construction project schedules.

d) ePermits were advertised through the City's website and newsletters, resulting in an increase of 606 permits in 2015 compared to 563 permits in 2014. Staff have received positive responses from the use of ePermits.

e) Steps to reduce plan review time were taken. Most initial residential plan reviews are completed within two days and limited commercial projects within two weeks.

f) Construction trade leads were established for plan reviews to improve the plan review process and quality of inspections.

Construction Permits Issued and Project Valuations

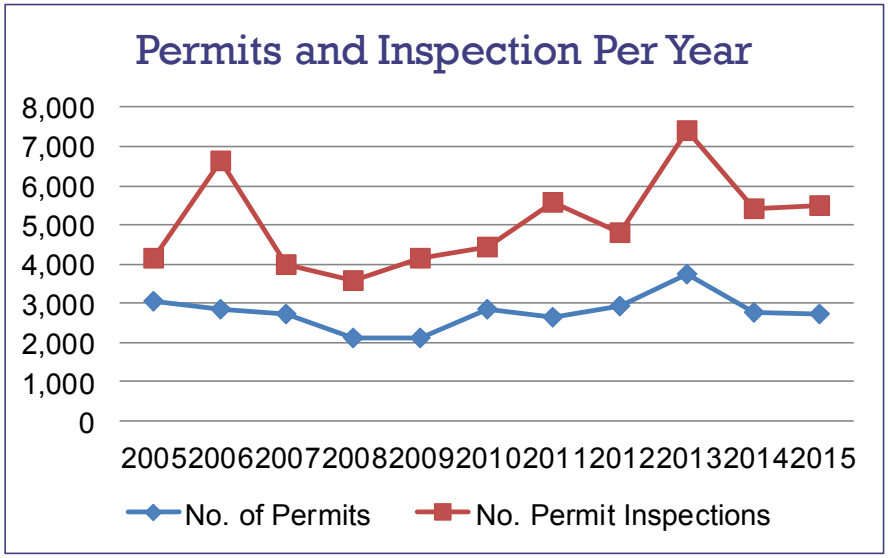
	No. of Permits	No. Permit Inspections	Project Valuation	No. Plan Reviews
2005	3,058	4,147	$26,606,427	245
2006	2,825	6,635	$26,761,529	209
2007	2,741	3,968	$25,230,574	175
2008	2,095	3,567	$41,410,517	121
2009	2,094	4,132	$19,283,350	146
2010	2,828	4,442	$67,207,191	172
2011	2,653	5,580	$68,494,550	214
2012	2,909	4,794	$34,497,097	250
2013	3,754	7,397	$41,257,040	297
2014	2,777	5,416	$76,834,893	273
2015	2,739	5,509	$34,749,801	261

g) A contract with the City of Minnetonka continues to allow plan review services for plumbing systems to keep the services effectively at the city level for quicker processing and cost-effectiveness.

Significant Construction Projects Beginning or Completed in 2015

In addition to construction projects still underway from 2014, the following projects are the highest value projects initiated in 2015.

Location	Project	Valuation
Health Partners	Remodel	$460,000
Brookdale Luther Chevrolet	Remodel	$383,830
Water Treatment Facility	New	$33,714,383
Brookdale Luther Volkswagen	New	$8,833,390
Michael's Craft Store	Tenant Build-out	$1,810,796
River Glen Apartments	Fire Repairs	$1,134,378
Interscapes Custom Cabinets	Tenant Build-out	$373,700
New Millennium Academy	New School	$3,945,059
Cass Screw	Addition	$1,336,951
TJ Max	Tenant Build-out	$663,427
Fuji Film	Tenant Build-out	$910,371
ALC School	Tenant Build-out	$820,190
Amphitheater	New	$412,151
Community Center	Remodel	$3,916,969



Construction project valuations in 2014 were the highest values in 10 years. Inspections for these major projects often continued into 2015.

2015

Construction Permits

# of Permits	2739
# of Inspections	5,509
Valuation	$34,749,801
# Plan Reviews	261

Significant Construction Projects during 2010-2013

2014		
Location	Project	Valua-tion
Odyssey Academy	Updates	$1,170,206
America's Best Eyeglasses	Tenant Build-out	$170,000
Target Pharmacy	Remodel	$193,243
Kidney Specialists of MN	Tenant Build-out	$425,785
The Crest Apartment	Remodel	$1,803,294
Sign Zone	Remodel	$3,014,652
Brookdale Christian Center	Repairs	$1,305,303
Social Security Office	Remodel	$52,000
Aspen Dental	Tenant Build-out	$217,965
North Memorial Health Care	Tenant Build-out	$759,706

2013		
Location	Project	Valuation
Qdoba Restaurant	Tenant Build-out	$250,000
LA Fitness	New	$4,800,000
Footlocker	Tenant Build-out	$96,000
A T & T	Tenant Build-out	$70,000
T Mobile	Tenant Build-out	$57,000
Pro Cuts	Tenant Build-out	$19,800
Sprint	Tenant Build-out	$37,000
Maranatha	Remodel	$260,000
Restaurant Depot	Remodel	$2,000,000
Medafor	Remodel	$750,000
Jammin Wings	Remodel	$160,000
MN State High School League	Remodel	$96,000
Popeye's	Remodel	$81,000
Bernick's	Tenant Build-out	$350,000

2012		
Location	Project	Valuation
BC High School	New Rec. Center	$355,000
Dollar Store	Tenant Build-out	$160,000
NW Family Services	Tenant Build-out	$7,140,000
Katadyn Products	Tenant Build-out	$220,000
Pepperidge Farm	Tenant Build-out	$100,000
Taco Bell	New	$660,000
Best Buy Mobile	Tenant Build-out	$120,000
Health Partners	Remodel	$200,000
Shingle Creek Crossing	New Shell Buildings	$3,200,000
U of M Physicians	Tenant Build-out	$260,000

2011		
Location	Project	Valuation
Evans Nordby	Remodel	$510,000
Luther Brookdale	New	$8,050,000
Luther Brookdale	New	$7,950,000
Walmart	New	$13,461,699
AutoZone	New	$225,000
Brown College	Tenant Build-out	$875,000
Precision, Inc.	New	$935,000

2010		
Location	Project	Valuation
Target	Remodel	$1,200,000
Gateway Commons	New Pool	$500,000
FBI Regional Office	New	$42,200,00
ITT Technical	Tenant Build-out	$900,000
Home Depot Office	New	$530,000
Savvy Sherpa	Tenant Build-out	$270,000

Case Studies

7110 Camden Ave. | Water Treatment Facility

The largest construction project to take place during 2015 was the City's water treatment facility. This facility started construction in late 2014. This project is utilizing multiple staff from Building & Community Standards and Public Works/Engineering. Staff worked to develop positive relationships with the contractors by visiting the worksite daily and compiling an inspection project manual.

6801 Brooklyn Blvd. | Luther Brookdale Volkswagen

The northern part of Brooklyn Blvd has become the home of multiple Luther Brookdale automotive dealerships during the past few years. The newest dealership to be built is the Luther Brookdale Volkswagen dealership. This new dealership started construction in late 2014 and opened in 2015.

This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

Foreclosures and Vacant Building Program

With the high number of foreclosures experienced in Brooklyn Center, as well as the nation, the vacant building program was created to monitor foreclosures, vacancies, and re-occupancies in neighborhoods. Vacant properties are at risk of becoming targets for vandalism and illegal activity. Measures are in place to ensure properties are maintained in safe, healthful conditions, and do not become public nuisances or blight. The vacant building program also provides mechanisms to promote the community and these properties in partnership with the private sector, leveraging private reinvestment. As a result, the City's aging housing stock is improved and property values are stabilized.

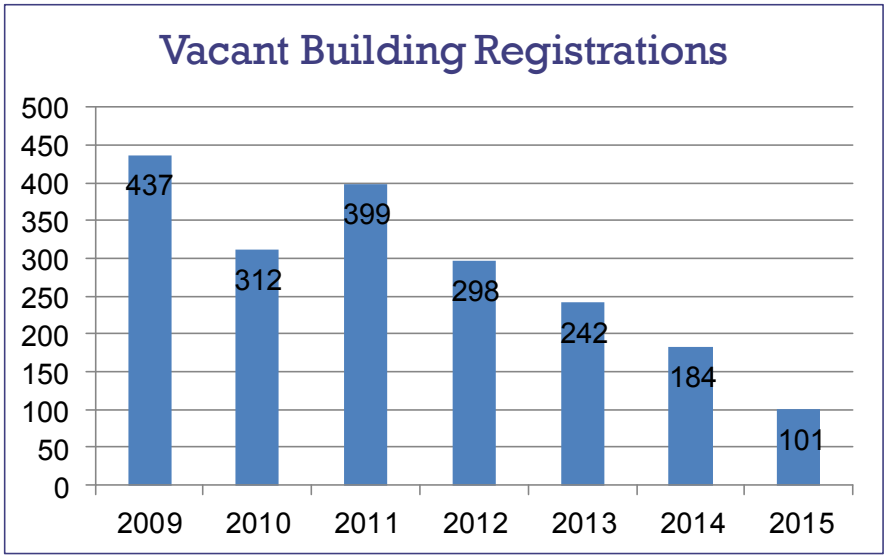
During 2015, the number of vacant buildings decreased, while the median house value increased in Brooklyn Center.

During 2015, foreclosures in Brooklyn Center were at the lowest level since the housing recession of 2008 began.

Foreclosures

The City of Brooklyn Center experienced more than 2,044 foreclosures since 2006, prompting increased monitoring and enforcement of the properties once vacant. Most properties are single family properties; however, some multi-family complexes have also been foreclosed. Although the trends have changed over the years, the housing sales have been favorable compared to similar cities as the housing market recovers.

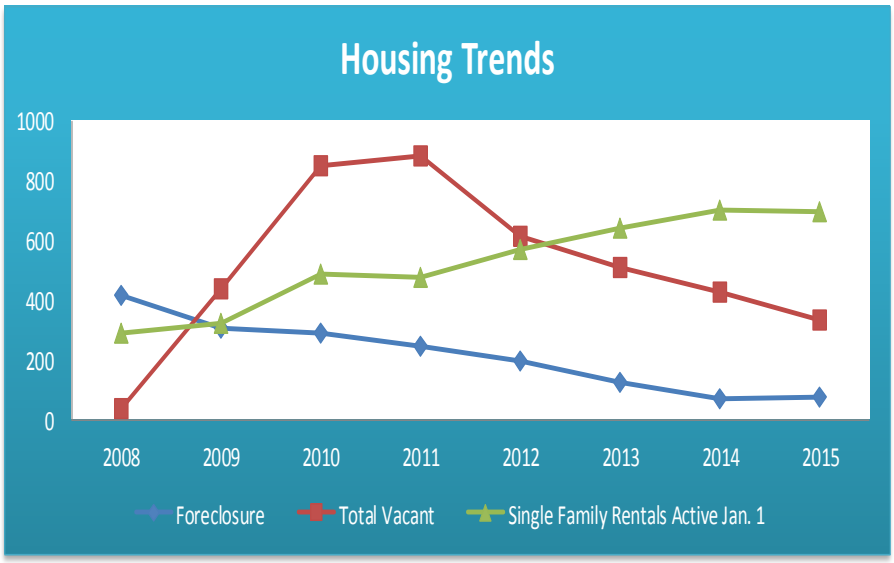
Highlights of the Vacant Building Program



- While the number of vacant properties has remained high, the number of complaints from residents has decreased. Residents are proactive in monitoring and reporting nearby vacant properties through Vacant Watch.
- Vacant properties are identified more quickly through coordination with other City departments and system processes.
- Proactive monitoring from staff and residents has decreased the number of vandalisms and copper thefts, break-ins, and other activity in vacant units. A quicker response time has been achieved in notifying owners and securing the property due to collaboration with Police Department, Hennepin County Crime Lab, and realtors and property servicers.
- A higher number of vacant properties are voluntarily registered and inspected in a timely manner.
- Through city-facilitated abatements, hazards and nuisance violations such as junk, garbage, long grass/weeds, and unsecured property are addressed quickly. This has improved the safety and appearance of vacant properties during the transitional period improving the safety

and conditions of neighborhoods.

- Re-occupancy inspections ensure properties are in a safe condition and are more appealing to the prospective buyers and the neighborhood.
- Revisions of policies and procedures improved consistency and enforcement of building codes, and included ongoing cross-training among staff in all functions of the department.
- The continued use of Administrative Penalties has increased the response and compliance with existing ordinances.
- More than 43 water shut-offs were performed at at-risk vacant properties. Proactive water shut-offs has helped prevent health and safety hazards, property damage, and wasteful City water consumption. The amount of staff time and City resources was also reduced due to fewer "condemnation" actions and follow up.
- Re-occupancy inspections are conducted in a timely manner, posted at the property immediately, and sent to the known owner. Flexible schedules allow time sensitive inspection requests and emergency response.
- Informational flyers are provided to residents adjacent to vacant properties and when a City-facilitated abatement has been conducted to inform them of city actions and encourage participation in Vacant Watch.
- Coordination of inspections types has increased efficiencies by reducing the number of inspections required at a property.



Vacant Watch

Vacant watch makes neighbors aware of vacant properties in their neighborhood and engages them in the monitoring process to help prevent vandalism and blight. Residents and neighbors are notified of a vacant property and provided information regarding monitoring and reporting suspicious activities or nuisances. The City of Brooklyn Center has active neighborhood watch groups and involved residents and businesses.

Proactive monitoring and water shut-offs have helped prevent health and safety hazards, and property damage from occurring at vacant properties.

Many realtors who routinely work in Brooklyn Center voluntarily register vacant properties and ensure the exterior of the properties are maintained.

In 2012, staff implemented a new neighbor notification system. This system consists of the inspector visiting the immediate neighboring properties and the adjacent properties. The neighbors are provided with information and asks them to report suspicious activity at the vacant property.

The City has implemented a Four-Step Foreclosure Strategy that includes:

a) Data collection to identify the extent and severity of the problem.
b) Neighborhood stabilization including regular and ongoing surveys of neighborhoods and assuring property maintenance.
c) Prevention and intervention including promotion of education and counseling relative to foreclosure prevention.
d) Reinvestment returns foreclosed/vacant properties to occupancy and encourage homeownership.

Neighbors regularly report suspicious activity around vacant properties to the City.

Annual Active Vacant Building Statistics

Year	Active Vacants
2009	335
2010	356
2011	392
2012	287
2013	271
2014	216
2015	141

This house became vacant in 2010 after being foreclosed. The property was burglarized repeatedly and eventually boarded up. In 2014, the City, in partnership with GMHC, took ownership of the house and the property has been remodeled with NSP funds.

This page intentionally left blank

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

This page intentionally left blank.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER

Neighborhood Maintenance

Proactive monitoring of properties in neighborhoods and responding to complaints improves the conditions of the residential and commercial neighborhoods. Properties are reviewed for health/life safety hazards and public nuisances. Maintaining the housing stock and building conditions also enhances the overall appearance of the neighborhoods, which maintains and attracts responsible homeowners and businesses. Proactive inspections are performed to address property code violations that are visible from the street or public area.

Neighborhood maintenance can reduce illnesses, injuries, and death, while promoting public safety.

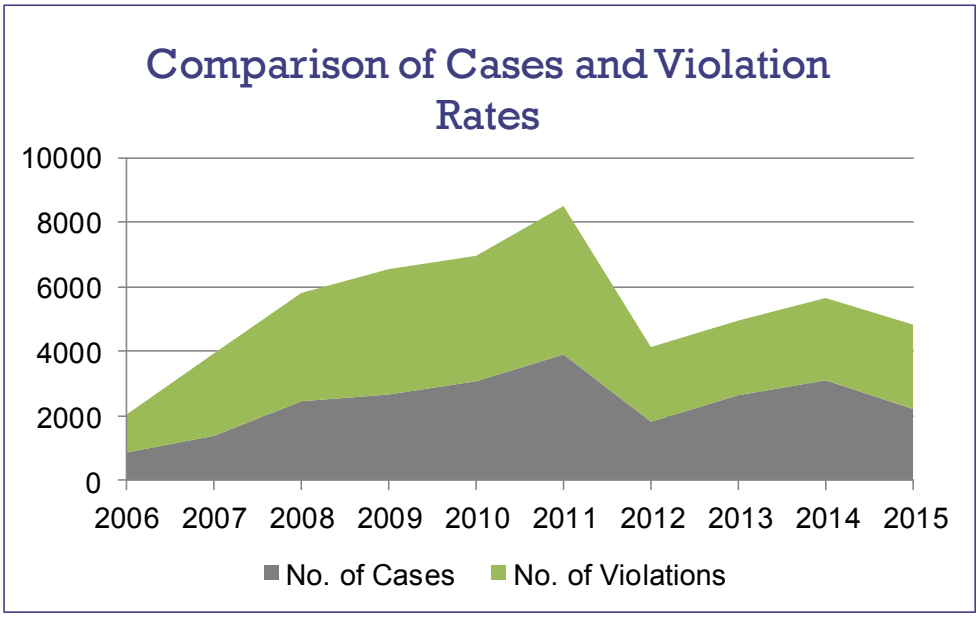
Proactive neighborhood compliance sweeps during the summer reviewed approximately 80% of the City's neighborhoods to ensure city standards are met.

During the summer months, the department hires interns to help with the added workload and provide a positive work experience.

Highlights

While the City's property maintenance codes promote attractive neighborhoods, they also are rooted in safety. For example, grass taller than eight inches can attract insects and rodents. Weekly trash pick-up is required with approved containers to prevent blowing trash, pests getting into the garbage, and breeding of disease-causing flies. The department works with property owners, tenants, businesses, community groups, and other departments to resolve community concerns.

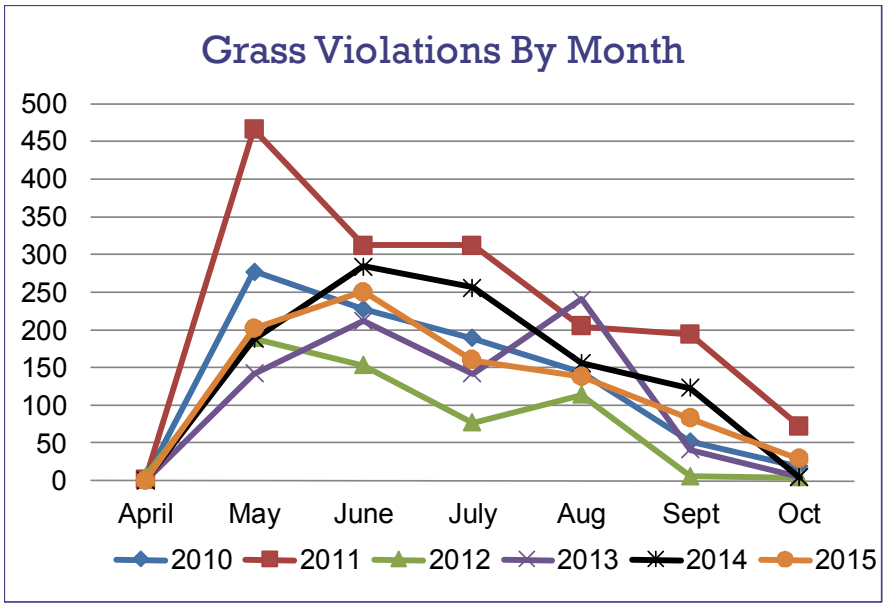
- Staff and residents have seen a positive change in the neighborhoods where properties are showing signs of improvement. Proactive improvements made by property owners have resulted in the decrease in the number of property code cases and improvements in housing values.
- Problem properties are identified and a coordinated multi-department plan is implemented in order to remedy neighborhood situations.
- The efficiency of inspections increased through coordination with office staff and improved processes and procedures
- The majority of compliance is obtained through voluntary compliance. However, several enforcement tools exist such as administrative citations, city-facilitated abatements, and formal complaints through the Hennepin County court system.



Long Grass and Noxious Weeds Regulation

For many residents, long grass and weed violations are one of the most apparent and detracting public nuisances in a neighborhood. Because of ongoing resident feedback and neighborhood assessments, additional efforts were taken to streamline the regulatory process and more quickly identify and eliminate the blight caused by unmaintained yards. Mortgage foreclosures and vacant properties have increased the number of long grass/weed violations. Additional monitoring of repeat violators has been instituted.

During the summer months, proactive neighborhood sweeps are often completed by seasonal help to prevent long grass/weed violations.



The City also proactively sweeps neighborhood trees to prevent the spread of Dutch Elm Disease.

Grass Violations 2015	
April	0
May	202
June	250
July	160
Aug.	138
Sept.	83
Oct.	29

Long Grass and Noxious Weeds Highlights

The responsibility for administering the long grass and weed program became the responsibility of Building & Community Standards staff in 2009, gaining efficiencies by coordinating property maintenance efforts. For example, when a vacant property is identified with long grass and junk outside, abatement orders are issued and clean-up is conducted simultaneously and the notice to register as a vacant building is posted.

Depending on the growing season and inspection needs, staff is deployed from multiple programs to address the onset of long grass/weeds.

Annual Long Grass Violation Statistics

Year	Grass Violations
2008	617
2009	490
2010	908
2011	1561
2012	543
2013	782
2014	1011
2015	862

Staff resolved more than 2,215 code enforcement cases in 2015 reducing health and safety risk, as well as nuisances.

Examples of Common Property Code Cases

Case Studies

5331 Camden Ave N
Staff had been working with the owner and occupant since 2013. $7,250 dollars in administrative citations were issued and specially assessed to the property taxes. After a public hearing for special assessments, the owner and occupant agreed to meet with staff and work out an agreement for compliance. The City Council was very supportive and instrumental in obtaining the owner's cooperation. This is another example where teamwork resulted in the improvement of the community. A phased clean up and visits started in February 2015, with compliance achieved in May 2015.

Before

After Substantial Completion

Case Studies

5355 Emerson Ave N

This property was abandoned after the owner passed away. It was declared vacant on 01/08/2013. After notice, the relative gave the key to City staff. The City's Prosecuting Attorney worked with staff to declare the property as a hazardous building through the Hennepin County court system. As a result, the unsafe, blighted house was demolished on 10/30/2015. The cost of demolition will be specially assessed to the property.

After

Before

Before

For more information about community standards
and how you can help your community, contact the
Building & Community Standards Department.
Thank you.

City of
BROOKLYN
CENTER