

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE September 23, 2022

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Public Safety Initiatives**

This memorandum provides an update to the City Council on two initiatives that city staff were requested to prioritize as part of [Mayor Johnson's Public Safety Initiatives](#) request that were shared with me in July.

City staff have worked collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to develop and implement two new proactive public safety strategies:

1. *"Cleaning & Greening"* proactive blight remediation process that utilizes modelling to swiftly and markedly remediate blight and improve neighborhood safety without relying on service requests and;
2. *City Coordination with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC)* to protest applications for new or renewal permits to sell alcohol at businesses that create neighborhood safety concerns in nightlife districts.

Specific details on both initiatives are attached to this cover memorandum.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager.



T.C. Broadnax
City Manager

[Attachments]

c: Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Deputy City Manager
Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Robert Perez, Assistant City Manager
Carl Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Directors and Assistant Directors

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE September 23, 2022

TO T.C. Broadnax, City Manager

SUBJECT **Cleaning & Greening Blight Remediation Strategy**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the *Cleaning & Greening* blight remediation strategy.

The *Cleaning & Greening* strategy will enhance current blight remediation efforts that are informed by:

- 3-1-1 service requests and a 14 to 30-day correction period or;
- Specific focus areas identified by the Risk Terrain Model
 - Currently: Malcolm X & Marburg and Illinois & Bonnie View areas

Cleaning & Greening will utilize the Risk Terrain Model as an objective measure to generate a list of city blocks where proactive blight remediation efforts can lower public safety risks. Rather than the current 14 to 30-day notice period, owners of vacant or abandoned lots in the identified high-risk areas through this program will be given seven (7) days to correct observed code violations or respond to notices. If no action is taken, city staff will be able to immediately remediate the lot. The authority to implement this strategy is provided by Dallas City Code, Chapter 31-10: Abatement of Nuisances.

BACKGROUND

The City of Philadelphia (PA) operates a nationally recognized blight remediation program which has invested in vacant lot revitalization since 1999. As part of this program, the city of Philadelphia partners with a local nonprofit organization to remove debris, plant grass and trees, add post-and-rail fencing, and maintain the lots owned by individuals who have failed to comply with city code following citation. Researchers identified 5,112 abandoned sites that had been rehabilitated and analyzed the outcomes of the interventions. The research illustrates a causal link between blight at a city-block level and gun violence. Following implementation of Philadelphia's program, firearm violence dipped 5% in and around the lots that were rehabilitated.

As a part of the City's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Safer Communities, a working group including Code Compliance, Office of Integrated Public Safety Solutions, the City Attorney's Office, and Child Poverty Action Lab, has developed an initial "Cleaning and Greening" strategy detailed below modeled on the Philadelphia program. This initial phase can be implemented by city staff without changes to the city code.

PROPOSED APPROACH

The "Cleaning and Greening" strategy modifies the current vacant lot remediation efforts by switching from a largely service request dependent process to a proactive block-by-block approach reducing wait time and increasing impact. To implement this strategy, the Office of Integrated Public Safety Solutions will utilize Risk Terrain Modelling to identify city blocks within each police patrol division where vacant lot remediation should be prioritized.

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Following block identification by OIPSS, Code Compliance's Nuisance Abatement Division will begin remediation efforts, including mowing and removing overgrown vegetation and debris. The code currently provides owners seven (7) days following notice to correct the violations.

Remediations may include:

- Mowing overgrown lawns
- Removing debris
- Installing basic wood fences
- General beautification
 - o Replacing boarded up windows and doors with functional substitutes
 - o Providing a fresh coat of paint to the home's exterior
 - o Cleaning the building's facade (e.g., graffiti removal)

FUTURE ACTION

The working group will continue to work towards scaling the "Cleaning and Greening" strategy to allow for:

- o Additional remediation following the seven (7) day notice period including, plant grass and trees, add post-and-rail fencing, general beautification;
- o Ongoing maintenance; and
- o Expansion from vacant lots to vacant structures.

CONCLUSION

The end goal of this effort is to remediate the blight more expeditiously than current processes allow and reduce future incidents of criminal activity. This program will be funded utilizing general funds to remediate blight in a timely and effective manner that makes neighborhoods safer. With this approach, the City's blight remediation efforts will serve the public interest as an investment in community safety.

The working group intends to continue meeting to assess the impacts of this program and determine if future policy changes will be needed to achieve goals.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kevin Oden, Interim Director of the Office of Integrated Public Safety Solutions at kevin.oden@dallascityhall.com



Jon Fortune
Deputy City Manager

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CITY OF DALLAS

DATE September 9, 2022

TO Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee
Adam McGough (Chair), Cara Mendelsohn (Vice Chair), Tennell Atkins, Jesse Moreno, Jaime Resendez, Casey Thomas, Gay Donnell Willis

SUBJECT **City Coordination with Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC)**

In his July 5, 2022, memorandum, Mayor Eric Johnson asked the City Attorney's Office and the Dallas Police Department to prioritize challenging alcoholic beverage licenses of businesses that have acted irresponsibly and created public safety issues in our city's vibrant and thriving nightlife districts.

This memorandum provides an update to Public Safety committee members on city efforts to address neighborhood safety concerns caused by violent incidents in these districts.

City staff, including the City Attorney's Office and the Dallas Police Department, have been working together to ensure a strategic plan is in place to protest applications for new applications or renewals of permits to sell alcohol from the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC). The three main strategic plan elements are:

- **Shared Data and Communication:** Representatives from both TABC and city departments will meet every other month to collaboratively review crime data; track active permits; and establish specific public safety goals and objectives for businesses that fall within DPD's strategic priorities.
- **Strategic Inspection and Referral:** For properties which fall within the strategic priorities, city departments will coordinate inspections to ensure compliance with both the city code and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code and to verify implementation of crime prevention measures. Members of the Dallas Police Department, Code Compliance, and the City Attorney's Office have, and will continue to, participate in cross-training opportunities with the TABC.
- **Escalated Enforcement:** Businesses that fail to address code violations or implement necessary crime prevention measures will be referred to Community Prosecution for escalated enforcement. Escalated enforcement will include: (1) challenges to any renewals of TABC permits/licenses to sell alcohol; (2) habitual criminal/nuisance property designation; or (3) litigation.

Addressing public safety issues at alcoholic beverage establishments requires a holistic and collaborative plan. In addition to the City Attorney's Office and DPD, the Office of Special Events, Dallas Fire Rescue, Code Compliance Services, Planning and Urban

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Design, external stakeholders, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, Public Improvement Districts, and 24Hour Dallas have been working collaboratively to address these public safety issues.

- **Commercial Promoter Ordinance:** On June 22, 2022, Council approved the Commercial Promoter Ordinance (Chapter 38A) requiring all commercial promoters to register with the Office of Special Events and provide safety plans for all commercially promoted events. Failure to comply with Chapter 38A of the Dallas City Code may result in criminal citation not to exceed \$500, a designation of the property as a Habitual Nuisance Property, and/or financial liability for any emergency response.
- **Amended Land Use Definitions:** Potential future amendments to Chapter 51/51A of the Dallas Development Code include reexamining the definitions and regulations for the restaurant and commercial amusement (inside) land uses, as well as adding regulations for a new music entertainment establishment land use. Amendments to the Dallas Development Code must go to the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee and the City Plan Commission before final action by city council.
- **Collaboration & Education with Industry:** City staff continues to collaborate with organizations and industry groups to identify issues, develop solutions, and implement strategies. For example, city staff has been meeting regularly with 24HourDallas's Good Neighbor Initiative to host the Clubs, Pubs & Bars (CPB) Kick-Off Meeting on July 19, 2022. Additionally, city staff is hosting quarterly meetings with the representatives of the City's public improvement districts to support their efforts in address public safety issues.

Should you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (214) 670-5299.



Jon Fortune
Deputy City Manager

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