

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE June 7, 2024

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Responses to Questions for Code Compliance on May 20, 2024, Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee Briefing**

As requested by the Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee on May 20, 2024, below are answers to questions related to the Department of Code Compliance Services posed during the Committee budget briefing.

- **Why is Nuisance Abatement revenue reduced from previous years?**
 - Code's Nuisance Abatement Division's revenue budget was not reduced from previous years. The change in dollars on slide 9 was the difference between FY22-23 Actual Revenue, FY23-24 Forecasted Revenue, and FY24-25 Planned Revenue. The Planned Revenue has remained constant. The difference can be attributed to a fluctuation in receipt of abatement lien payoffs,
- **How can we help build the Keep Dallas Beautiful after its implementation and Bloomberg grant?**
 - The Bloomberg grant will be instrumental in providing additional resources, which will be prioritized toward establishing and maintaining partnerships with stakeholders. These partnerships with groups like UNT Dallas, FC Dallas, AT&T, Amazon, Salesforce, DISD, and Young Men's Leadership Academy help to keep our engagement high, and volunteerism active. Our advertising efforts with DART and Clear Channel billboards will also see an increase with additional resources, gaining added exposure for the KDB program.
- **How can we get volunteers involved in Keep Dallas Beautiful?**
 - We are currently interviewing for a volunteer coordinator position to help manage our volunteer lists and coordinate clean-up events for continuous, sustained engagement from our stakeholders and partners. Thus far, we have had substantial success in this area, with a 53% increase in volunteerism from FY22 to FY23. FY24 is on pace to eclipse the FY23 volunteer participation by more than 50%.
- **Why are food inspections down so much?**
 - During previous reporting periods dating back to FY 2018-2019, other inspections were being captured in this metric (i.e. Mobile Food Unit inspections, swimming pools, temporary event inspections, etc.), which has since been refined to capture fixed food establishments only in subsequent years, to date. Simultaneously, we experienced consecutive years of

DATE June 7, 2024

SUBJECT **Responses to Questions for Code Compliance on May 20, 2024,
Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee Briefing**

PAGE **2 of 4**

turnover, losing key senior sanitarians, resulting in decreases in overall inspections, due to the lead time associated with training and development of new sanitarians-in-training personnel replacements.

- **Has the Scrap Tire Enforcement Program been effective after last year's ordinance changes?**
 - Yes, the Scrap Tire Enforcement Program has been effective. It has contributed to a 36% reduction in scrap tires removed by our abatement teams over the last fiscal year. That downward trend is continuing in the current fiscal year.

- **How is Code's retention and ability to hire at necessary levels?**
 - Hiring and retention remain challenging for Code as with other departments. Code has staffed a hiring team that assists with job fairs, job postings, and internal administrative processes. We are also proactively making strides to increase the speed and effectiveness of our promotional processes to increase retention. Our implementation of a Career Series program to streamline the promotional process for our Sanitarians, Code Officers, and Equipment Operators is an essential part of our retention strategy. We have recently seen an improvement in our vacancy rate, which currently stands at 4.5% (once current new hires are onboarded), down from a yearly average of approximately 14%. This improvement can be attributed to an increased focus on recruitment efforts through multiple job fairs and more frequent advertising through multiple sources, including social media outlets.

- **Are you keeping up with training for new recruits?**
 - Yes, Code's training programs are robust, and we provide effective training related to technical skills, leadership, and safety, among other topics. Incoming candidates go through an intense three-month Code Academy and receive mandatory training throughout the year, which is managed and tracked by our Management Systems Team.

- **What is the reasoning behind the new Proactive Graffiti Abatement Team budgeted for next FY?**
 - The Proactive Graffiti Abatement Team in the FY24-25 Planned Budget is for an increased capacity to identify and resolve graffiti concerns throughout the city. The team identified a growing need to address graffiti concerns that were not being reported, yet were visible on major thoroughfares, private property, and TXDOT underpasses and service ramps.

DATE June 7, 2024

SUBJECT **Responses to Questions for Code Compliance on May 20, 2024,
Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee Briefing**

PAGE 3 of 4

- **Do we abate TXDOT property graffiti?**
 - Yes, occasionally to expedite removal and improve community aesthetics.
- **For the requested expansion of the Nighttime Entertainment Team, explain the scope of that program and how we get weekend responses for complaints, rather than having to wait until Monday morning?**
 - The Nighttime Entertainment Team is dedicated to enforcement of nighttime entertainment venues for concerns such as noise, certificates of occupancy violations, and parking. When there is additional capacity with the team, there have been times when inspections for other concerns throughout the City have been possible. Code Compliance also has staff every weekend from 7am-6pm resolving concerns as throughout the week.
- **What are the staff members for Short-Term Rental Program doing while waiting the court process?**
 - Members of the Short-Term Rental enforcement team have been recruited, hired, and trained in the recent months. While the legal process continues, the staff have been assisting our Multitenant and Single-Family Rental Inspection teams in their complaint responses and graded license inspections. These efforts serve to both assist the efforts of current teams and to effectively train them for their pending STR roles. These teams will be ready to begin their assigned duties when the legal hold is lifted.
- **Are there programs that we are not recovering costs for via fees due to the program not being online, like STRs?**
 - Apart from Single-Family Rental and Garage Sale fees, Code Compliance's fees have been set at 100% cost recovery during the last fee study.
- **Is there anything that can be attached to the MuniRev system such as a processing fee to add to the current program to provide additional cost recovery while we await the court process?**
 - "CCO decided it is best to not charge any fees for processing the hotel occupancy tax returns. Any fee would probably need approval from the City Council, and the GovOS software would need reprogramming along with making changes to the interface with the Advantage financial system. We think these changes would take a minimum of six months to complete in a best-case scenario. Also, the CCO's cost is already being recovered through the current hotel occupancy taxes." – Lance Sehorn
- **Why are we asking for more staffing levels for graffiti teams and yet setting a lower performance target than we are currently achieving?**
 - Additional staff for the Graffiti Abatement Team would increase Code's capacity to resolve graffiti concerns proactively and quickly. The target for the team was not reduced, rather it was increased. Initially, the SLA for

DATE June 7, 2024
SUBJECT **Responses to Questions for Code Compliance on May 20, 2024,
Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee Briefing**
PAGE **4 of 4**

graffiti to be abated was within ten (10) days but was reduced to five (5) days to improve service delivery expectations. If the proactive team is implemented, the SLA will be adjusted to two (2) days to abate.

For any additional questions or concerns, please contact Director Chris Christian at chris.christian@dallas.gov



Alina Ciocan
Assistant City Manager

c: Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, City Manager (I)
Tammy Palomino, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Dominique Artis, Chief of Public Safety (I)
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Donzell Gipson, Assistant City Manager (I)
Robin Bentley, Assistant City Manager (I)
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Elizabeth Saab, Chief of Strategy, Engagement, and Alignment (I)
Directors and Assistant Directors