



# AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS

## Code Enforcement Operations

January 29, 2021

Audit Report No. 2108

### WHY WE DID THIS AUDIT

This audit of Code Enforcement Operations was included on the City Council-approved fiscal year (FY) 2020/21 Audit Plan. The audit objective was to assess the management controls and operation of the City's code enforcement program.

### BACKGROUND

Code Enforcement is responsible for identifying, investigating and resolving a variety of City Code violations related to property maintenance, housing, zoning, signage, graffiti and construction activity. The program also maintains the City's Rental Registration list for short-term rentals.

Code Enforcement, within the Community & Economic Development Division, is staffed with a Director, three teams composed of a Supervisor and two to three Code Inspectors, a Senior Code Inspector for the Downtown area, an Administrative Secretary, and two Code Specialists, including one dedicated to graffiti abatement.

### City Auditor's Office

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### WHAT WE FOUND

#### Code Enforcement lacks effective performance standards and oversight.

- Performance measures are not designed to evaluate whether violations are appropriately and timely resolved.
- Inspectors' levels of activity vary greatly, and Saturday sign duty overtime appears unnecessary.
- Supervisory oversight is lacking, and policies and procedures are outdated.

#### Code Enforcement has a high management and administrative staff to field staff ratio, and institutional knowledge may be lost as staff retire.

The program has more supervisory staff compared to the number of field staff than similar City inspection programs have, and institutional knowledge may be lost due to specialization and lack of documentation.

#### Code Enforcement can improve its receivables management, system access, and performance measures.

- Code Enforcement has not been effectively collecting unpaid fees.
- More users than necessary have access, and particularly administrative access, to the Code Enforcement Tracking System.
- Performance measures are not calculated effectively.

### WHAT WE RECOMMEND

We recommend the Code Enforcement program:

- Develop performance goals and reports to accurately measure program effectiveness and provide supervisory oversight, update policies and procedures, and improve employee safety.
- Consider consolidating offices and reclassifying supervisory positions to working leads.
- Improve collection of delinquent accounts, limit system administrative access, and correct performance measure calculations to include only relevant data.

### MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The department agreed and provided estimated completion dates for its proposed actions in the Management Action Plan.