

Issue Focus: Code Compliance

Austin Apartment Association

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Austin Apartment Association



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The Austin Apartment Association shares community concerns about residential health and safety in certain rental properties, as well as blight and crime in neighborhoods where these problems persist. Something should be done to address these problems and improve the wellbeing of those affected. Below is a list of guiding principles for a successful program:

1. The Austin Apartment Association supports Councilmember Spelman's and Mayor Pro Tem Cole's resolution to increase fines and penalties, and to create a registration and inspection program for repeat offenders. Code Compliance Department (CCD) Staff should provide stakeholders with draft language as early as possible so that feedback and amendments can be considered.
 2. All rental housing should be included in any program to mitigate blight or health and safety concerns. Neighborhoods and city staff have indicated properties of concern, including single family, duplex and larger multifamily communities. To bring all rental housing into compliance, all rental housing should be addressed on an equal basis.
 3. CCD should create a clear and concise "matrix of offenses" for public record, ensuring that health and safety violations are clearly understood. All programs should be careful to not incentivize the issuance of citations, rather, to encourage responsible property management and upkeep.
 4. A repeat offender registration and inspection program should focus on bringing properties into compliance as quickly and efficiently as possible. Compliant registration should be free and streamlined. Inspections and penalties should be set at effective and appropriate levels, and the program should include an appeals process.
 5. Blanket rental registration and universal property inspections should be recognized as diverting valuable city resources. Such measures could delay or prevent the mitigation of serious problems at hand, and would negatively impact responsible landlords and tenants. Targeted and timely action on the part of CCD, Municipal Court, and the Building and Standards Commission is the best way to address health and safety violations.
 6. CCD should demonstrate accountability. Existing policies and tools should be reasonably implemented before adding additional resources to achieve the same goals.
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