



Board Agenda Item 10

DATE: March 11, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Nerland, County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Receive Presentation regarding Code Enforcement Division and Provide Direction

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Receive verbal presentation from County Administrative Office (CAO) staff in regards to the Code Enforcement program; and**
2. **Direct staff to proceed with the assignment of Program, Staffing, and Location.**

The Board of Supervisors (Board) has provided prior direction to the CAO's staff to make functional improvements to the Code Enforcement program. The Board has specifically requested improved responsiveness and customer service, greater follow through, and tracking to ensure violations are remediated in a timely manner. This item is to update the Board with a verbal presentation of findings made by the CAO's staff and to obtain direction from the Board on how to proceed with the Code Enforcement program.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

This item is to receive a verbal presentation from CAO staff and to have direction be provided from the Board in terms of next steps for the Code Enforcement program. Alternatively, the Board could decide that there should be no changes to the program and that the Program will remain staffed and located as is organizationally and physically.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions as this item is to receive a verbal presentation and provide direction to staff for next steps. Potential direction could create fiscal impacts and would be addressed in future Board Agenda Items (BAIs).

DISCUSSION:

The Board has provided direction to the CAO to make functional improvements to the Code Enforcement program. The Board has specifically requested improved responsiveness and customer service, greater follow through and tracking to ensure violations are remediated in a timely manner.

In August 2024 the Code Enforcement program was temporarily placed on the operational control of the CAO and the employees were relocated to a new work location within the Internal Services Department. Over the last six months this office has actively worked to create a focused team of employees that are accountable, responsive and focused on customer service and driven to ensure code compliance issues are resolved quickly. Since August there has been a number of personnel changes including the departure of all of the Code Enforcement Officers.

Code Enforcement has previously used the Planner job description series to conduct inspections and enforcement actions. To better align the position to the duties and expectations of the work, Human Resources created a new Code Enforcement Officer job description. Our first recruitment under this series in January resulted in more than 230 applicants.

The CAO has worked to establish a strong work ethic by reviewing all open code enforcement cases with each Officer on a routine basis and the development of action plans to remediate challenging and large enforcement cases. We meet weekly with County Counsel and have taken a strong enforcement posture with historically non-complying property owners. Every Code Enforcement case is evaluated and tracked closely. Officers are required to respond and take enforcement actions on an aggressive timeline.

Code Enforcement's productivity and efficiency has also been limited due to the use of a database that is not designed for their workflow or their function. This broad, generic database has proven difficult to navigate and adapt to our expectations and does not have any ability for the public to submit concerns or track our progress. The CAO is finalizing a request for proposals (RFP) that seeks a product that is structured for code enforcement activities, that can track enforcement actions and link with other county databases.

The CAO team is also working to implement a more effective Code Enforcement program to include clear guidelines on enforcement, financial deterrents for non-complying property owners and consistent collections for fines and administrative costs. Staff will work closely with County Counsel and the Auditor-Controller/Treasure-Tax Collector to ensure a successful program.

These improvements are making a difference but there remains a high outstanding caseload that needs additional resources to make sustained and ongoing improvements. In addition, there are a number of large properties that remain out of compliance and present significant concerns that need to be remediated. The CAO is seeking direction from your Board and is recommending the following actions. Depending on your Board's direction we will bring back these recommendations for final approval.

1. Assign Code Enforcement to CAO

Reassign the Code Enforcement program to the CAO. This will allow ongoing oversight and ensure the program is successful.

2. Code Enforcement Officers

The Code Enforcement program is currently authorized five Code Enforcement Officer positions. This allocation of positions is not adequate to keep pace with the code enforcement cases. The CAO is recommending the addition of five additional Code Enforcement Officer positions.

3. Division Manager & Administrative Analyst

Add a new division manager position within the CAO to provide greater oversight and leadership. Change a vacant Office Assistant position to an Administrative Analyst position to assist with enforcement activities and work closely with County Counsel.

4. Relocate Code Enforcement

Relocate Code Enforcement to a new work location downtown to provide easier access and coordination with the CAO and other related Departments.

The recommendations above are all to adhere to prior Board Direction to prioritize Code Enforcement within the County of Fresno. A follow up item will be presented to the Board for final approval, reflecting the direction made today, whether that includes the recommendations as presented, modifications to those recommendations, or maintaining the Code Enforcement program's current structure.

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino