

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM: 2.2
(ID # 11852)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, February 4, 2020

FROM : TLMA-CODE ENFORCEMENT:

SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY: Receive and File Code Enforcement 2019 Annual Report. All Districts. [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. RECEIVE AND FILE the Code Enforcement 2019 Annual Report.

ACTION: Consent

Juan C. Lopez, Director of Transportation & Land Management 1/30/2020

2020
FEB 22
10:11 AM
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Hewitt, seconded by Supervisor Jeffries and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Hewitt
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: February 4, 2020
xc: TLMA-Code Enforcement

Kecia R. Harper
Clerk of the Board
By: Deputy

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

| FINANCIAL DATA | Current Fiscal Year: | Next Fiscal Year: | Total Cost: | Ongoing Cost |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| COST | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| NET COUNTY COST | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A | | | Budget Adjustment: No | |
| | | | For Fiscal Year: 19/20 | |

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

Our Code Enforcement Department is one of the key Quality of Life service providers for the nearly 400,000 residents throughout the unincorporated area.

Code is the primary service provider for a very wide variety of property related health and safety activities. These include cleaning up excess rubbish; dealing with unsafe electrical connections, unfenced pools, and open excavations; reducing blighted conditions such as removing abandoned vehicles; and issues that affect neighbors such as illegal grading that may contribute to flooding, abandoned structures, and noise and traffic impacts from unpermitted special events, just to name a few. Code enforces 32 County Ordinances dealing with Quality of Life, which work to enhance the livability of our neighborhoods and preserve property values.

Additionally, our Code Department is an extremely active enforcement partner with our Public Safety Departments. Close partnerships include teaming with the Riverside Sheriff's Office on activities including cannabis enforcement and trespassing issues; working with County Fire and others on the Combustible Materials Reduction Task Force to tackle mulch fires; and actively participating in the District Attorney's Cannabis Reduction Task Force. Code is also an important partner with several County Departments in addressing our Homeless crisis. Code Enforcement often closely teams with our Office of the County Counsel to pursue civil enforcement actions.

Code Enforcement has suffered severely from the economic impacts of the recession as it has undergone very deep cuts in the last 10 years, more so than any other County Department. This has resulted in substantial layoffs and staff reductions through attrition. This is primarily due to a significant portion of the Code budget coming from the General Fund. Realizing the need to change our business model in order to rebuild this critically important quality-of-life service, we have made significant structural changes to our Code Enforcement Department. These include establishing a lower salary structure for new staff; creating special enforcement teams for cannabis, tire disposal, and abandoned vehicle enforcement (frees up our three regional offices to focus on neighborhood enforcement), establishing a new flat fee collection system; and reorganizing our leadership team.

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Our Code workforce has been reduced from a high of 149 budgeted positions in FY 08/09 to a low of 38 in FY 18/19. Given the Board and the public's desire to enhance our Code Enforcement services, we now have 50 budgeted positions, several of which are being actively recruited for. This past year, the Board restored \$500,000 of the proposed cut of \$1 million to Code as part of the budget hearing process, which Code staff is most grateful for. As a separate item in the Mid-Year budget report on this same Board agenda, Code Management and the Executive Office are recommending to restore a further \$300,000 out of the \$500,000 that was cut, which will allow Code to add 4 additional officer positions. This will put the Code staffing position total at 54.

It is our belief that a Code Department workforce of 50-60 will provide an effective team that can adequately meet the County's Code needs for the next few years. As such, we will be requesting that the Code General Fund allocation be increased to a total of \$7.4 million annually for the next 2-3 years (currently at \$5.7 million). This will provide Code a stable fiscal base, while we look to grow revenue through various sources, as well as reduce per-capita staffing costs.

The attached report serves as an Annual Report to summarize the changes and activities that the Department has put into motion during this past year, as we face a critical time of looking ahead to the start of the FY 20-21 Budget process. It is intended to provide the Board and the public with a status on the State of the Department; programs and efficiencies that have been put in place; and a look ahead to the needs for the next couple of budget cycles, as we try to align our budget and policy priorities. We sincerely hope that you find this report useful and informative as a guide to future decisions concerning this small, but critically important, Department that is so closely connected with the quality of life of close to 400,000 unincorporated area residents spread out over more than 80 separate communities.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

An effective, well organized, and appropriately staffed and resourced Code Enforcement Department can make a very meaningful impact to enhance the Quality of Life of our unincorporated communities, reduce public health and safety risks, enhance neighborhood livability, and protect property values.

Additional Fiscal Information

N/A

Contract History and Price Reasonableness

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

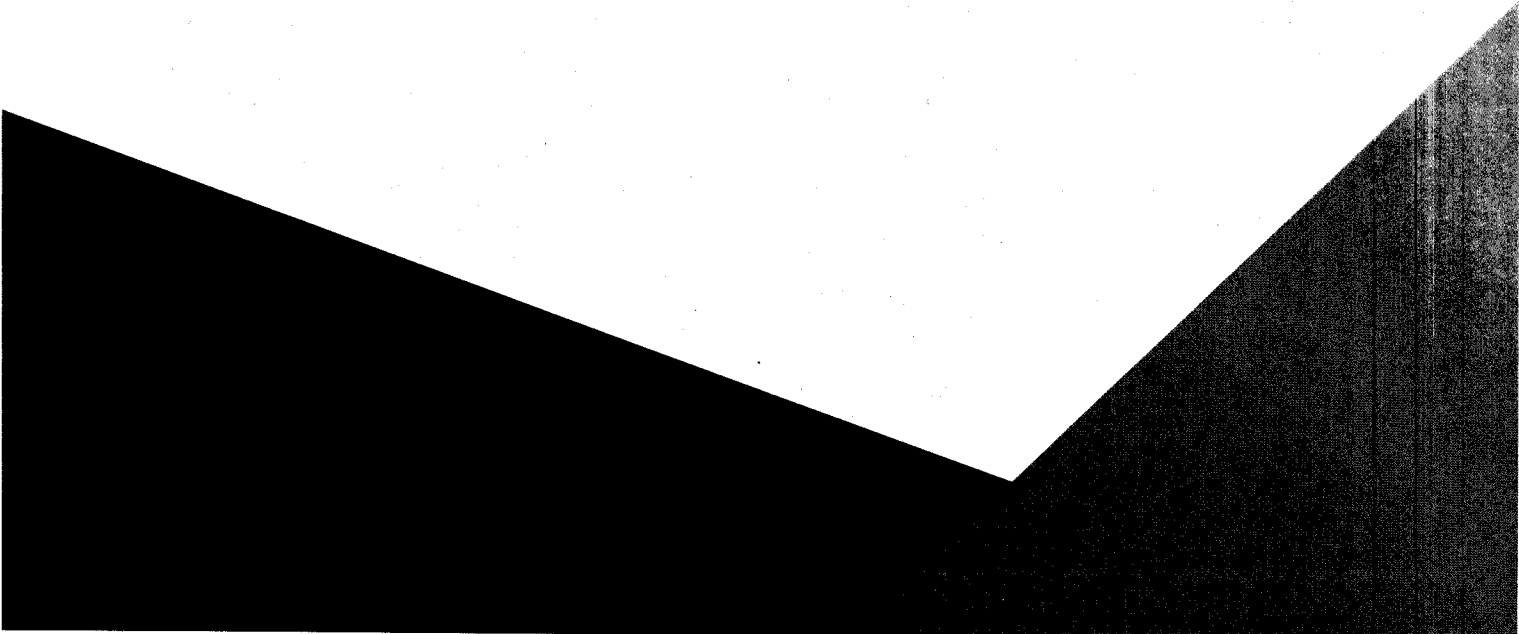
SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ATTACHMENT A. Code Enforcement 2019 Annual Report


Jason Farin Senior Management Analyst 1/30/2020

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY CODE
ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT**

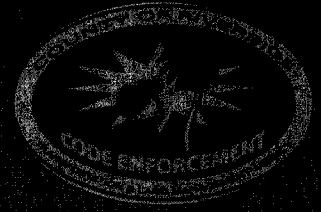
**Annual
Report | 2019**



A TIME OF POSITIVE CHANGE

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

Socrates



➔ MISSION

To enhance public safety and the quality of life in partnership with communities through fair enforcement of the law and codes:





➔ About Us

The Riverside County Code Enforcement Department is responsible for the regulatory and compliance functions related to land use activities in the unincorporated communities of Riverside County. We are responsible for enforcing 32 County Ordinances and codes for public safety, environmental protection, land use, and construction. We currently have an annual budget of \$9.8 million and 38 employees. You can find us on the 12th and 2nd floors of the County Administrative Center, in offices located in Palm Desert, San Jacinto and the Lake Matthews area and in your community.

Code Enforcement Staffing at a Glance

- Agency Director: Juan C. Perez, Asst. CEO/TLMA Director
Director: Charissa Leach, Asst. TLMA Director, Code Director
TLMA Adm. Services Managers:
 Brian Black – Field Operations
 Mary Ortiz – Admin. & Special Programs
Code Enforcement Supervisors:
 Jamison Cole – Western Regional Office
 Marr Christian – Mid County Regional Office
 Lorena Diaz - East County Regional Office
 Jennifer Morris – Cannabis Enforcement Team
 Manny Acueto – Special Funding Team
Budgeted positions FY 19/20: 50, Filled: 38
 5 Senior Code Enforcement Officers
 14 Code Enforcement Officer II
 3 Code Enforcement Officer I
 3 Code Enforcement Technicians
 1 Code Enforcement Aides
 1 Executive Assistant
 4 Office Assistants

Executive Summary

The Code Enforcement Department's top priority is to enhance the safety and quality of life of our communities in the unincorporated areas of the County of Riverside. As part of the Transportation and Land Management Agency (TLMA), which includes partnering with the Transportation, Planning, and Building and Safety Departments, Code Enforcement staff work collaboratively with a wide range of partners including our residents, businesses, property owners, and community groups. The Department works closely with Board Offices, the Executive Office and other County departments including the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney, County and Cal-Fire, Environmental Health, Animal Services and the Office of County Counsel. The Code Enforcement Department addresses quality of life issues that our residents and business owners care about.

Positive relationships between Code Officers and community members are consistently recognized as one of the most vital and productive components of our compliance and enforcement program. When our staff are integrated into the communities that they serve, they can work more effectively to better understand community needs and priorities and achieve voluntary compliance whenever possible. These relationships are nurtured, and trust is built, as officers regularly attend community meetings and special events and report on progress, are more directly accessible to the public, and work with community members during neighborhood cleanups. Through Code Enforcement's efforts and successful partnerships, our communities benefit from improved health and safety, quality of life and neighborhood livability, and maintenance of property values – creating trust in the effectiveness of the Code Enforcement Department.

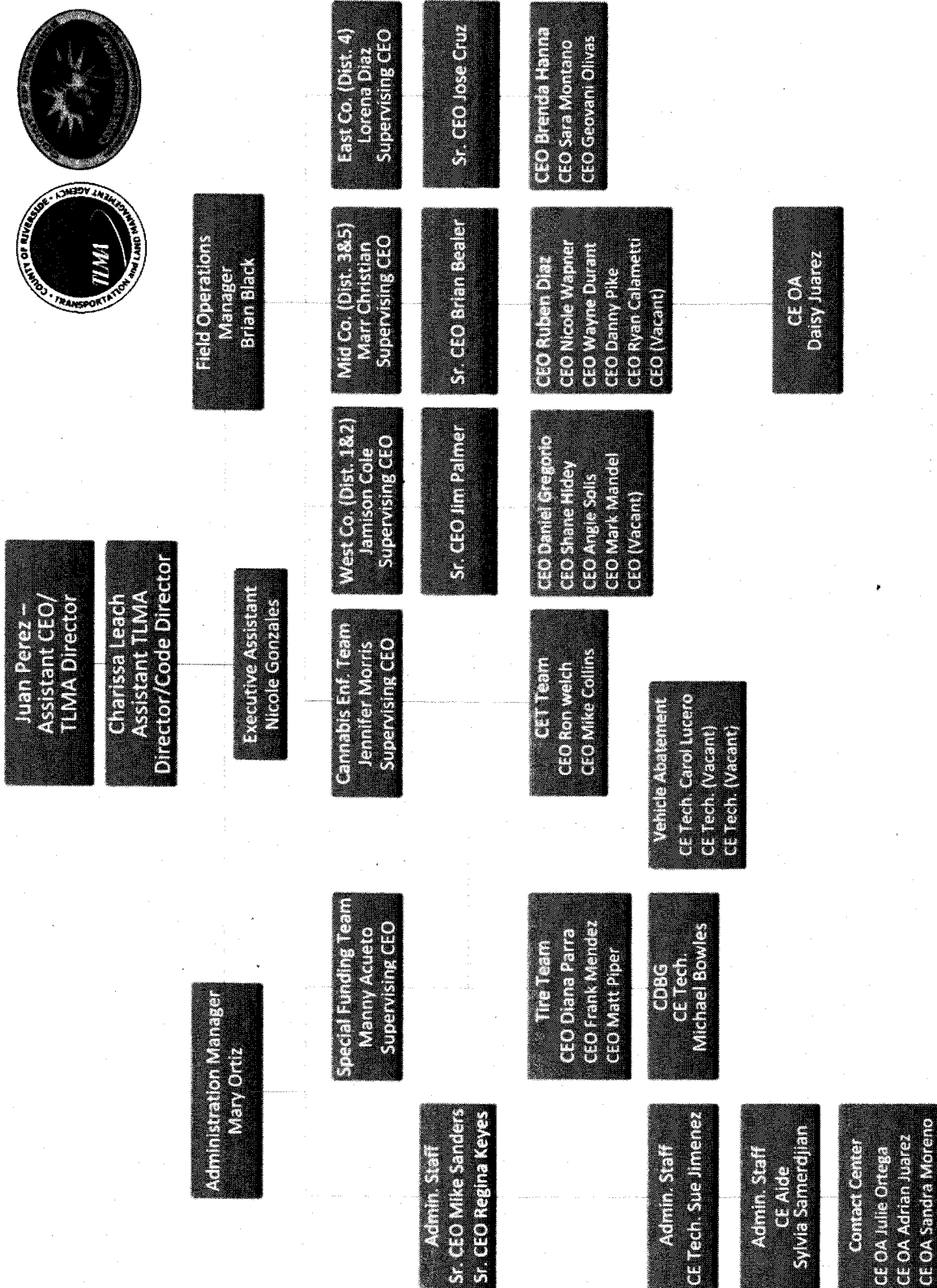
Our Code Enforcement Department has struggled to provide our communities the support that they need given the substantial decline in staffing over the last 10 years, including a \$3 million cut in funding in FY 17/18. These reductions resulted in an overwhelming caseload for each caseworker, leaving them with minimal time to follow-up and resolve past cases, while also being responsive to open new cases to address community concerns. We are committed to restoring community trust, expanding the value of Code through our partnerships with public safety and other service departments, and building a more fiscally sustainable and efficient operation as we implement major changes to rebuild our operation.

The Department worked steadily during 2019 to implement major operational changes in the short, medium and long term in five critical areas:

- Reorganization
- Staffing Rebuild
- Fiscal Sustainability
- Caseload Management
- Case Priorities

While these changes continue to be developed and implemented, our Code Enforcement staff continues to do outstanding and important work with the resources that they have. We are on a path to rebuilding our Code Enforcement with the support of our communities, Board of Supervisors, and our County partners.

➔ Organization



➔ Reorganization
Changes in the Department

In May 2019, TLMA implemented a restructuring of Department leadership, including the elimination of the Code Enforcement Director position and adding those responsibilities to the Assistant TLMA Director, Charissa Leach, who also serves as the Planning Director and oversees the Department of Building and Safety. This has better integrated Code with the other land use Departments, increasing its effectiveness, while also providing Code greater access to all the resources of TLMA, and saving on the cost of a separate Director position.

In June, given the need to focus on illegal cannabis activities due to growing community concerns, a Code Enforcement Cannabis Enforcement Team (CET) was created. The CET works closely with the District Attorney's Cannabis Regulation Task Force (CRTF), the Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) and County Counsel. As law enforcement tackles the criminal aspects of cannabis illegal activities, the CET and County Counsel focus on the civil enforcement of illegal land use. This two-pronged criminal-civil enforcement partnership effort has made Riverside County into a leader in effectively tackling illegal cannabis activities and yielded impressive results. The CET is supervised by Jennifer Morris, who was promoted in 2019.

In August, two TLMA Administrative Services Manager positions were filled to serve as essentially division managers over the field and administrative functions. Mary Ortiz oversees the Code Administrative Team that includes the fiscal management, cost recovery and the Special Funding Programs Team. Brian Black oversees Field Operations, responsible for the department's three Regional Offices, as well as the Cannabis Enforcement Team (CET), Combustible Materials Task Force, and field training for the entire department. Both Ortiz and Black have been instrumental in the Department's efforts to hire new staff and restructure.

In September, a Special Programs Funding Team was established. This consolidated programs that receive grants, including the State Tire Grant, Abandoned Vehicle (AVA), and Community Development Block Grant. This will allow the Department to take full advantage of these outside funding sources to deliver improved results for these needed and very visible programs. This team will also pursue grants and other funding sources. The Special Programs Funding Team is supervised by Manny Acueto.

The creation of the Special Programs Funding Team and the CET is allowing our three Regional Offices to focus their attention to neighborhood quality-of-life cases, and not have to juggle those with the cannabis and special program case load.

The Department continues to perform Neighborhood Enforcement from three Regional Offices. This allows staff to be centrally located near those neighborhoods that rely on their support, becoming better integrated with their communities, and reduce driving time to cases.

The West County Regional Office, located in the Lake Matthews Community, is responsible for enforcing land use violations in the entire unincorporated area of the 1st and 2nd Supervisorial Districts. This office is supervised by Jamison Cole, who was promoted in 2019.

The Mid-County Regional Office, located in shared space at the San Jacinto Animal Shelter, is responsible for enforcement activities in the unincorporated areas of the 3rd and 5th Supervisorial Districts. This office is supervised by Marr Christian.

The East County Regional Office is responsible for enforcement throughout the vast 4th District area of unincorporated communities. This office is supervised by Lorena Diaz, who was promoted in 2019.



Staffing

Changes in the Department

Code Enforcement’s staffing level hit a peak of 149 positions in FY 08/09, at which time the Department was receiving \$17 million in General Fund support. After the incorporation of the Cities of Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Menifee and Wildomar (which concluded in FY 11/12), Code’s staffing dropped to 112 positions. Under the new salary structure and replacing previous designated positions to the new structure, Code’s staffing currently stands at 50 budgeted positions, of which 38 are filled. This includes 17 recruitments this year; including both new staff and promotional opportunities, the first time in over a decade since Code has brought on new staff, as part of a gradual rebuilding process.

Department management sees a staffing count of 50-60 positions to be a reasonable, fiscally sustainable, and responsible staffing model. It would provide for a case load of about 250 cases per officer, which is a high but manageable number, and allows for follow up of cases on a basis of about once a month. It also recognizes limitations on the amount of General Fund that Code may be able to expect, given other County needs.

As we manage our staffing plan, it is important to have an appropriate mix of support staff (such as Code Enforcement Technicians and Aides, and Office Assistants) that can help free up our Code Officers to focus their time on investigations, customer response, and the more complex aspects of cases. Having support staff, in lower-cost classifications, can increase the overall effectiveness of the organization in a more fiscally prudent and sustainable way.

An example of this our Call Center, which is staffed with Office Assistants, that was set up in 2019. By centralizing our intake system for Code calls, this has freed up our Regional Offices to not need to keep field staff in the office for call intake, while providing a more consistent method to monitor incoming calls

and make sure that they are appropriately logged and followed up on. Our Contact Center (3 Office Assistants) has been taking in about 3,000 calls per month on average since it was created in December 2017. Many of those calls ending in the Assistant researching a property, opening a case and alerting the applicable officer.

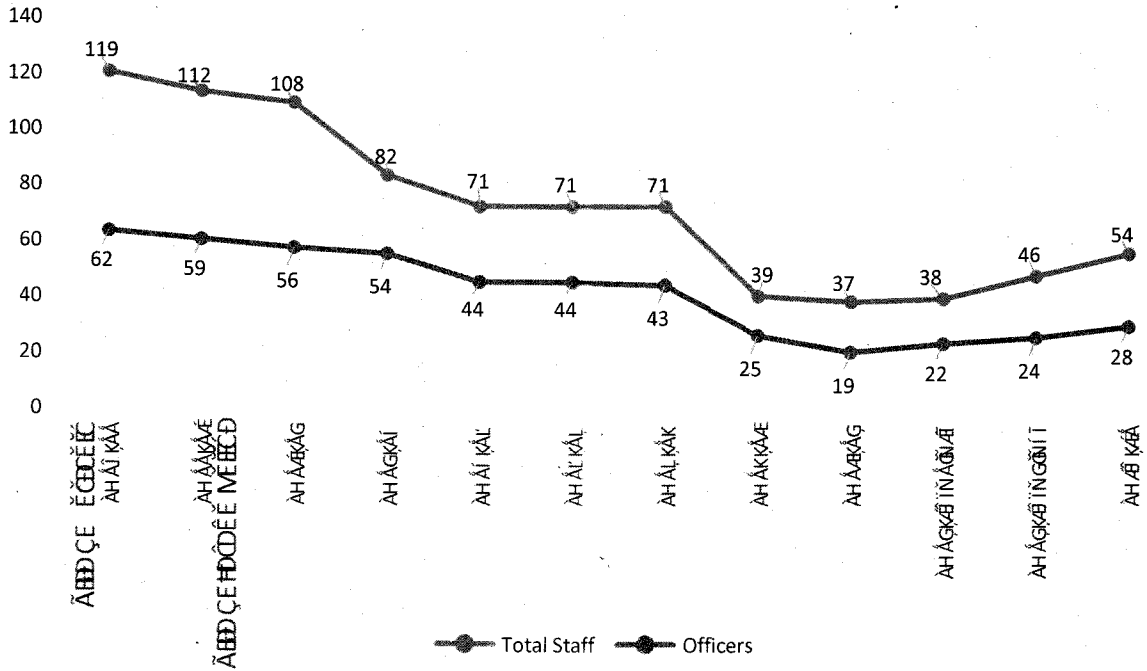
The Contact Center Staff received 37,381 calls in 2019, during business hours and after hours. Staff also processes online complaints – receiving 2,625 in 2019.

Our case-load-per officer has been as high as 600 in FY 18/19. Juggling this many cases makes it all but impossible for Code officers to follow-up in a reasonable time frame to see if progress is being made. This means that cases continue to accumulate with little progress. There is a direct correlation between staff’s availability to follow-up on cases and the level of satisfaction in our communities as to the timeliness of our service. We also note that the flat fee model, discussed in more detail in the Fiscal Sustainability section, requires that officers be able to monitor cases on about a monthly basis to see them through to completion. In addition to managing existing cases, officers are also expected to investigate and open up new cases as issues arise.

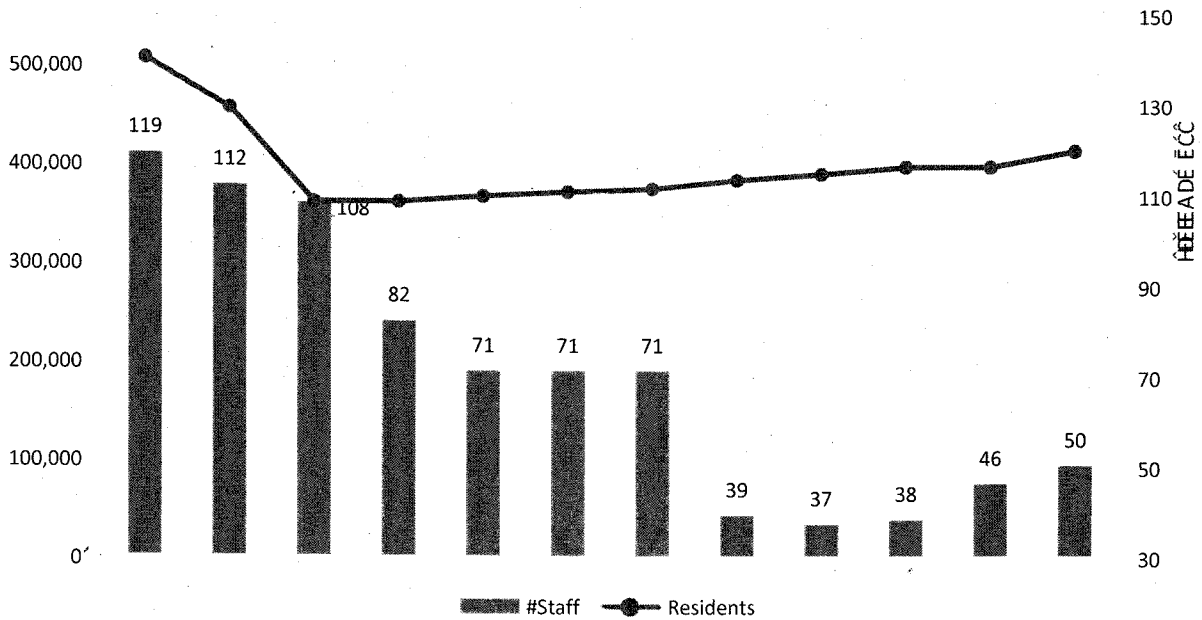
The Department is continuing to develop a system that can train entry-level hires to grow with the organization and expand their roles. Instituting a program to retain employees and groom tomorrow’s leaders is a best practice goal for our Department leadership. On-the-job training is part of the Department’s core values, and a practice that will be prominently and consistently reaffirmed.

As part of this, the Department is also updating training programs in order to prepare officers and support staff to be the best representatives of our County that they can be. A well-trained officer is an effective officer that is able to follow policy, yet use discretion when warranted.

Code Enforcement Staffing



Staffing Levels



➔ Fiscal Sustainability
Changes in the Department

Code's approved budget for FY 19/20 is a total of \$9.8 Million. This includes \$5.7 Million in General Fund support (Net County Cost – NCC) – about 60% of the revenue. The remainder of the funding comes from a variety of sources including cost recovery billed for time spent on cases; special assessments levied on uncollected cost recovery that goes into the abatement fund; grants such as the State Tire Program and Abandoned Vehicle Abatement fund; illegal cannabis litigation cost recovery and penalties; a small portion of the Waste tipping fee, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other sources.

Given the decreases in General Fund support that the Department has experienced over the years, we have worked to reduce our dependence on that source and recover more funding from those properties causing the need for the service. Code has also worked actively to reduce operating costs whenever possible through various means.

On the cost reduction side, in 2019 we implemented a reduced salary structure for new staff being hired into the Code officer classifications, with a recognition that existing staff that was hired under the past salary structure should remain within the ranges that they were hired into, and if they promote upward. Over time, as we see staff turnover through retirements, this will accrue into a reduced staffing cost per position. About 6 years ago we also consolidated from 5 district offices that we used to staff and pay upkeep on into the current 3 Regional Office model. The changes in leadership structure described earlier have also contributed to a lower comparative management cost than in the past.

On the revenue side, in 2019 Code implemented a new Flat Fee cost recovery structure. This structure provides for staff to conduct an initial inspection, at no cost to the property owner, and generally issue an advisory notice, giving the property owner 30 days to correct violations that are discovered (unless there are significant health and safety issues requiring a

more immediate response). The property owners are also notified that there will be a cost for the issuance of a Notice of Violation if the matter has not been resolved when a follow-up inspection is done, with subsequent progressively increasing costs should further inspections be needed after that.

The main intent of this approach is to provide affected property owners with clear notice of the fiscal consequences for lack of compliance, so that they can take steps to remedy the situation. It is also meant to lead to faster compliance, rather than cases lingering as multiple visits to a property are made. This approach is meant to recover more of the costs involved with bringing a property into compliance on the property owners causing the need for the Code services, rather than the general tax-payer. It will also simplify the billing and administrative time spent under the prior model.

The Flat Fee model is still in its infancy stage, given that we have been on-boarding the staff necessary to decrease the case load in order to provide for the intended 30-day follow-up; there is a training and familiarity aspect that is still growing; and staff is still working through a back-log of cases set up under the prior cost recovery system. However, early returns seem to suggest that is having the desired effect of leading to a higher percentage of voluntary compliance during the advisory period, and cases being closed faster, which is a tremendous positive. The related financial aspect though is that since the first advisory inspection is not charged for, our cost recovery estimates appear to be well below target at this early stage in the Flat Fee program.

Code is expected to serve as the primary regulatory entity for commercial cannabis businesses going through the approval and permitting process in the unincorporated area. As such, a portion of the regulatory fee component in the structure that the County has approved for regulated businesses will be going back to fund Code. This funding will provide a



Fiscal Sustainability

Changes in the Department (cont.)

means for Code to regularly inspect approved businesses and follow-up on public concerns, while also being used to help fund enforcement efforts against illegal businesses that are unfairly competing with the regulated market.

It is important to note that, although Code will continue to explore other revenue enhancement opportunities to reduce our reliance on the General Fund, there will always be a need for a baseline of General Fund support to fund an effective Code operation. This is due to several factors. These include our voluntary compliance model that is based on providing no-cost advisory notices; the fact that not all complaints result in verifiable violations; general customer service and public education that Code provides to our communities; and a reasonable fee structure that is directly connected to the service cost and not overly burdensome on properties out of compliance.

We have identified a General Fund baselline amount of \$7.4 Million annually as providing the needed structural revenue to sustain Code’s proposed staffing level at 54 for the next few years. This takes into account that Code will be absorbing pension and labor contract increases, and increases in costs from other County Departments that affect the Code budget. This amount will be requested by Code for the FY20/21 Budget, and will be re-evaluated annually as we have more information on the actual revenue from the Flat Fee and cannabis regulatory fee component, as well as continue to explore other grants and outside funding opportunities.

As a side, but important, revenue note – Code has traditionally been a beneficiary of the use of CDBG funds to help pay for activities that reduce blight in our neighborhoods. The Department could historically expect to receive about \$300,000 annually, which reached a high of \$460,000 in FY 14/15. The current FY19/20 budget reduces that amount to \$78,000. Consideration should be given to increasing Code’s CDBG allocation when possible.

Flat Fee Process

On December 11, 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted the recommendation from TLMA-Code Enforcement to adopt a change to our fee structure for Code by shifting to a Flat Fee model. The goals of enacting the Flat Fee approach are as follows:

Encourage voluntary compliance by providing an initial Advisory Notice, at no cost to the property owner, and making them aware of the costs associated with progressive enforcement should they not bring the property into compliance.

Reduce the time to resolve cases by consolidating inspection and enforcement time-lines.

Set expectations for Code staff that cases are to be pursued on a certain time-frame and not allowed to linger when dealing with uncooperative property owners, creating a more consistent and systematic enforcement approach.

Recover the cost of issuing a Notice of Violation, and subsequent steps in the enforcement process, from the property owners causing the need for Code interaction, to reduce impacts on the General Fund.

Simplify and reduce the administrative cost of preparing Code billings, scheduling hearings, and other cumbersome administrative actions associated with the old cost recovery system.

The Department had KPMG prepare an analysis to determine the appropriate fee structure based on time studies, and to estimate potential revenue recovery once the program was fully up and running. The KPMG study identified a revenue potential of \$1.7-\$2.3 million annually under a fully implemented and mature program.

For the Flat Fee program to work effectively, we need to have sufficient staffing that can do follow-up

➔ Fiscal Sustainability
 Changes in the Department (cont.)

inspections on about a 30 day cycle. At the time of Board approval of the Flat Fee ordinance change, Code staff positions were approved to be increased by up to ten positions.

During 2019, Code has been working diligently to enact the Flat Fee model, but it is still very much a work in progress. We have rolled it out while also simultaneously undergoing a tremendous amount of transformational change in our organization. Change efforts in 2019 have included:

- Implementing new code classifications to lower staffing costs for new staff before we could begin the hiring process
- Creating a new management and organizational structure
- Filling 2 TLMA Admin. Manager positions
- Filling 3 Supervising Code Enforcement Officer positions
- Filling 1 Senior Code Enforcement Officer
- Filling 8 Code Enforcement Officer positions
- Filling 3 Office Assistant positions
- Recruitments are under way for another 12 vacant positions
- Creating a Cannabis Enforcement Team
- Creating a Special funding programs team for waste tires, abandoned vehicles, and CDBG
- Creating a Combustible Materials (mulch) task force
- Programming the Flat Fees into our accounting and case management system
- Working with County Counsel to develop the new Advisory Notice, Notice of Violation, and subsequent notices
- Working to train staff on this new system while all of the above change efforts, and more, are going on.
- Staff having to work cases under two completely different fee structures – legacy cases under the old structure, new cases opened under the Flat Fee structure – and shifting back and forth.

Not all case types can be processed utilizing the Flat Fee process, such as:

- Vehicle Abatement
- Illegal Vending
- Illegal dumping
- Cannabis violations
- Public Nuisance

This has been a daunting task to process this much organizational change at one time, while also changing an enforcement culture and department philosophy that was embedded for many years into a different way of doing business using citations, burdensome cost recovery processes, and other techniques that were not yielding the desired result.

Further, we began the FY 19/20 Budget process facing another potential cut of \$1 million, which was reduced to a cut of \$500,000 through the Budget hearings.

Given all of this change being processed at one time, filling multiple levels of staffing positions that are all interconnected going through the recruitment process, and absorbing the cultural change efforts, it is much too soon to draw any lasting conclusions from the effectiveness of the Flat Fee approach, since it is very much a work in progress. However, the data that we have collected on Flat Fees since the start of the fiscal year (July 2019), shows the following:

Flat Fee Statistics - FY 19/20 to date

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Flat Fee cases opened: 2,480 | |
| Closed Cases: | 764 (31%) |
| Closed in Compliance: (30 days) | 520 (21%) |
| Closed (No Violation found) | 237 (10%) |
| Other: | 7 |
| | |
| Amount Billed Total: | \$71,705 |
| Notice of Violation (\$450.04): | \$42,754 |
| Noncompliance Fee (\$630.24): | \$18,907 |
| Extension Fees (\$247.40): | \$7,917 |
| Other: | \$2,127 |

➔ **Fiscal Sustainability**
Changes in the Department (cont.)

As our new staff is on-boarded, and we implement an enhanced training program for all staff on the Flat Fee, we expect to see significant increases in the number of cases opened and revenue billed. We note that not all revenue billed is collected within the same fiscal year – uncollected amounts are placed as a tax lien on the property and collected over time. Our current estimate is that we will bill for about \$200,000 this fiscal year, with a significant increase expected next fiscal year as this new process is normalized in our operations and organizational follow a more routine re-inspection timeline.

We note, however, that these early returns are highly promising in the ultimate goal of the program, which is not revenue recovery, but rather achieving voluntary compliance at a fast pace. We are seeing properties cleaned up by the property owners, rather than the more costly process for the County to abate. The limited data points to these conclusions:

We are seeing a much higher percentage of cases closed through positive actions from the property owners in about 30 days (about 20%) than we have seen in the past under the old system.

Cases that are unfounded (i.e. – no violation observed) – about 10% of the total – are getting closed more quickly, and not lingering.

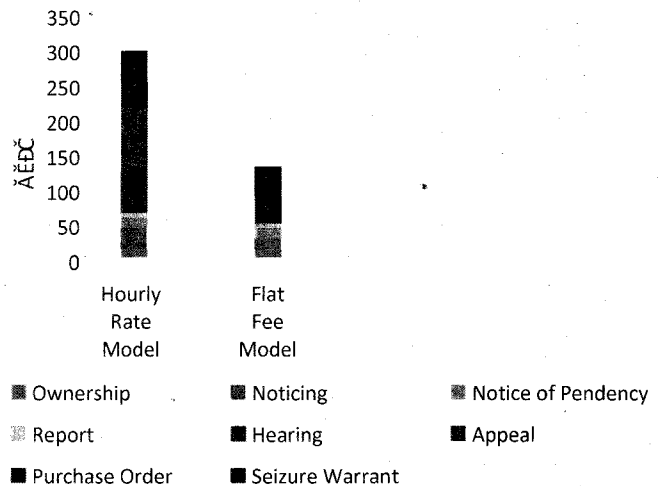
In cases where the Advisory Notice is not having the desired effect of compelling compliance, the Notice of Violation (\$450.04) appears to be effective in achieving compliance without need of further inspections.

These are all early conclusions, and this data will be closely monitored and reported on as this program evolves. What does appear to be evident at this point is that it may take several years, if at all, for the program to reach the revenue potential estimated by KPMG. Again – this needs to be viewed as a very positive trade-off if it leads to faster voluntary compliance. In the next couple of years, however, we see an increased need for additional General Fund support to cover for this – which is tied to the

requested baseline of about \$7.4 million annually starting with the FY 20/21 budget

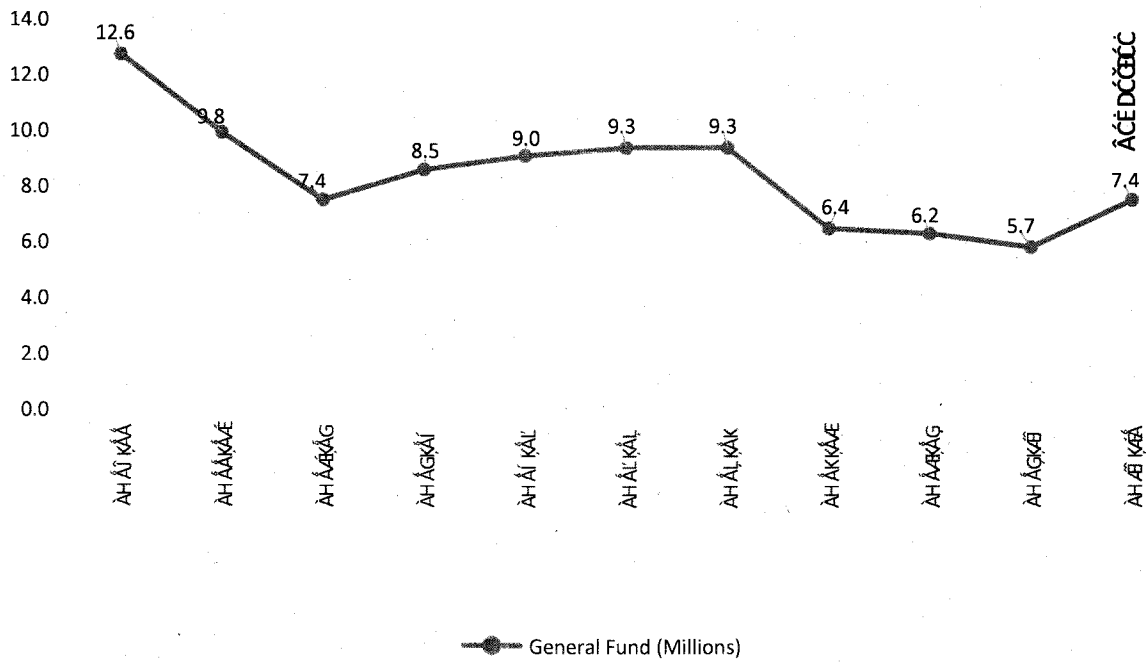
Flat Fee vs. Historical Hourly Rate Process
The Flat Fee process allows Officers to spend their valuable time on inspections and coordinating with property owners and reporting parties, reducing administrative time.

Process Comparison
Best Case Scenario

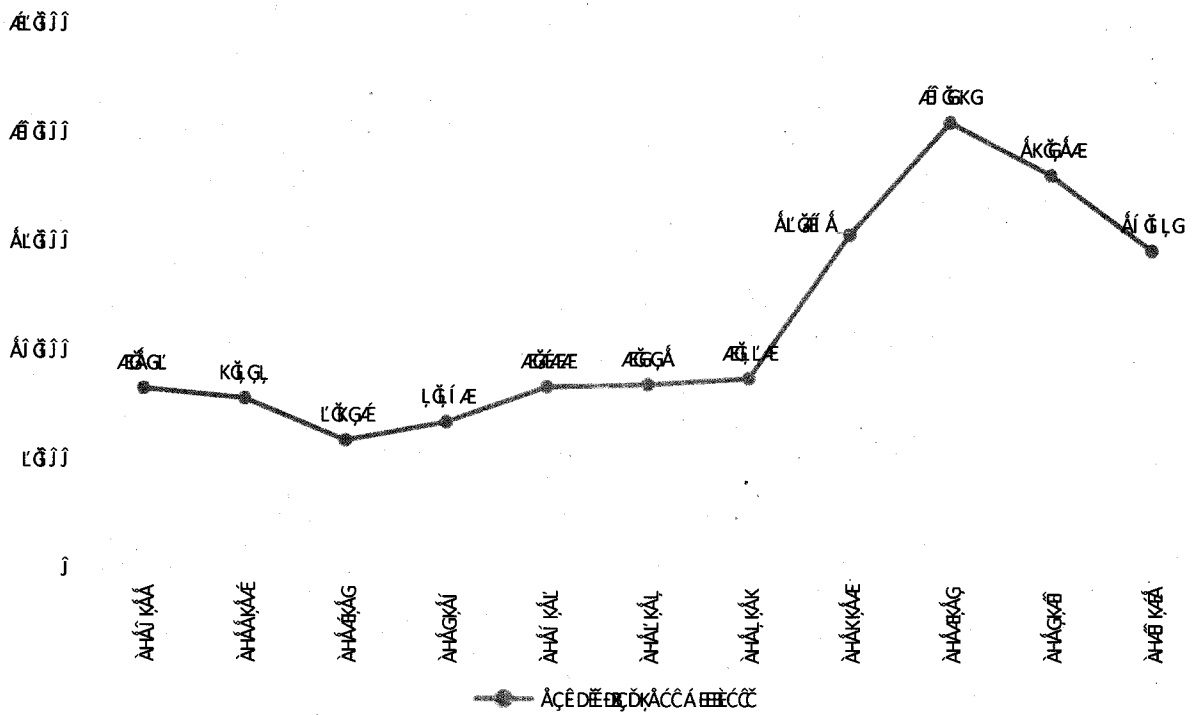


The Historical Hourly Rate Model was generally an eight step process, in a best case scenario, that cost the County and property owner additional time and money through a mandatory hearing process. It consisted of lengthy compliance timeframes and took almost 300 days to complete, at best. The adopted Flat Fee Method is generally a five step process, gives property owners definitive costs through the abatement process, still allows property owners to request a hearing, saves on administrative time, allows a property owner with a non-health and safety violation to come into compliance within 30 days with no cost and takes about 135 days to complete, if properly followed. This reduces case compliance time by about 50%.

Code Enforcement General Fund Allocation



Code Enforcement General Fund Allocation



➔ Caseload Management
Changes in the Department

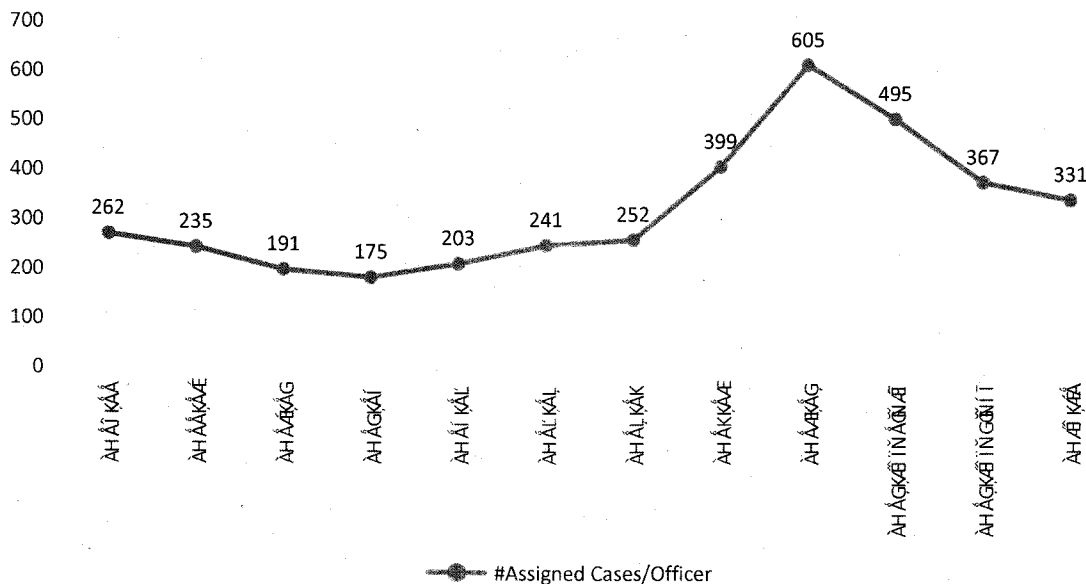
Proper case load management is an integral component of our ability to provide timely service. In 2017 alone, to achieve the \$3 million budget cut we had a staff reduction of close to 50%. This decrease in staff created a case overload for the Department, as we continued to respond to the code enforcement demands in our unincorporated communities. In FY 18/19 our officers were overwhelmed with a legacy caseload together with those cases that were opened that year, equating to average of about 600 cases per field officer. That number of cases waiting for an investigator’s attention is daunting for even the most experienced.

At the close of 2019, in an effort to reduce the number of cases per officer to a more manageable level, the Department took a hard and strategic look at our capacity to keep pace with increasing calls for service while processing older cases. Given the huge workload, some older cases, especially minor ones that have accrued less than \$500 in costs and have not been actively worked in over a year, were closed. These are considered “legacy” cases – most of them date back to well over a year.

The Department has worked to close 2,274 of these older legacy cases in the last 90 days. Should some of these cases involve conditions that still warrant attention, a new case will be opened and tracked based on the latest field conditions. Following this case closure process and with the additional staff onboarded this year, the average number of cases per officer sits at about 370, a 40% reduction in caseload from the peak two years ago.

Adding the 4 new positions being requested in the Mid-Year Budget Report will reduce that down to about 330 cases per officer. Although still higher than optimum level, this will be a marked reduction of about 50% from where we were two years ago. As the flat fee program goes fully into effect, we will monitor over the next year if we are able to reduce the case load to close to the 250 per officer as our target. With a more manageable caseload we can now reset the organization for higher performance. We are in a better position to make strategic decisions that are designed to improve community response and overall organizational performance.

Workload Per Officer



➔ Case Priority
Changes in the Department

In general, the Department operates on a “complaint based” basis, with multiple avenues for the public to report issues of community concern, including our website, call center, through Board offices, and through accessing staff in the field and at community meetings. The Department’s policy is to achieve voluntary compliance whenever possible, and our flat fee structure is specifically set up to be very transparent in the progressive enforcement steps and the costs associated, so that property owners can make better informed decisions.

It is also recognized that not all violations have the same degree of severity. Generally, the greater the threat to public health and safety, and to the environment, the higher the priority. Since each case is unique, officers must use their best judgment to combine all factors and determine an appropriate response and level of enforcement. Based on the urgency and priority of the complaint, officers will determine which investigations may take precedence.

The Department has historically used a priority ranking and procedure to help guide our response time frames. This procedure, embedded in Board Policy F-5, is in need of updating to better reflect our current Board and community priorities. This policy was created in 2002 and last revised in 2007. The intent is to allow the level of enforcement that best fits the type and circumstances of the code violation(s) within clear and objective criteria, consistent with the established priorities, and maximize available resources.

Although there is a general desire to investigate and attempt to resolve all reported and verified valid code violations, our limited staffing resources drive us to focus on those priority cases that best serve the public good. In such circumstances the most serious violations will be addressed before the less serious violations are addressed, regardless of the order in which the complaints are received. With updated priorities in place the Department will be able to

function in a more consistent manner, provide clearer expectations on response time, and increase efficiency.

PRELIMINARY PRIORITY LIST

Priority 1 – High Priority Violations, ie:

- Dangerous unsafe buildings**
- Homeless encampments - occupation of parcel w/o utilities**
- Unfenced pools**
- Open vacant buildings**
- Unprotected excavation**
- Dangerous illegal dumping**
- Illegal cannabis cultivation in residential areas**
- Illegal cannabis dispensaries**

Priority 2 – Regulated Activities, ie:

- Occupied RV**
- Construction w/o permit**
- Grading w/o permit**
- Illegal dumping**
- Excessive outside Storage**
- Accumulated rubbish**

Priority 3 – Neighborhood Preservation, ie:

- Illegal vending**
- Homelessness – health/safety**
- Five or more separate complaints on a property with violation**
- Excessive animals**

Priority 4 – Land Use/Zoning Violations, ie:

- Failure to meet Conditions of approval**
- Unapproved use for zoning**
- Unpermitted ADU**
- Public nuisances**
- Noise**
- Graffiti**

Recommendations

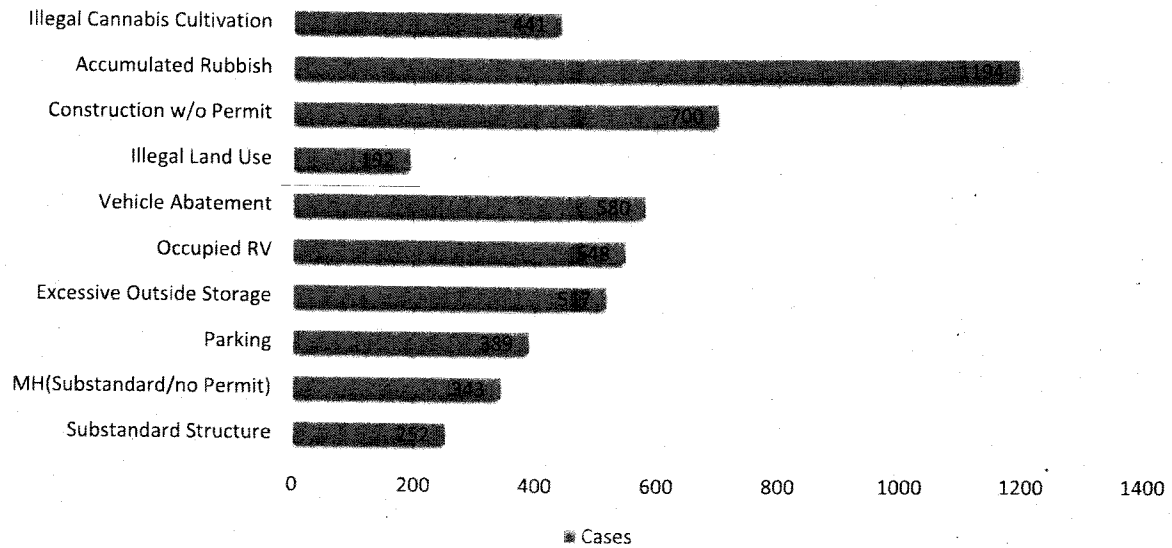
The Code Enforcement Department is highly appreciative of the support provided by the Board and the public as we look to gradually re-build this critically important service. The following recommendations are being provided to help assist the Board and the public as we look to the year ahead to help guide this on-going re-building process:

1. Authorize the increase of \$300,000 in General Fund included in the Mid-Year Budget Report and the addition of 4 additional Code Officer Positions.
2. Maintain Code staffing levels at 54 positions (including the additional four positions described above) for FY 20/21 in order to allow the Department to continue the re-build of staffing and services.
3. Consider as part of the FY 20/21 Budget, and subsequent budget years, the request from Code to provide \$7.4 million in General Fund as the annual baseline to structurally balance Code's budget.
4. Continue to build our public outreach to the communities that we serve through regular participation in forums like Municipal Advisory Councils, Community Councils, and special events.
5. Work with the Board to evaluate and reset Code enforcement priorities through an update of Board Policy F-5.
6. Continue to work with, and expand where possible, our law enforcement partnerships with the Riverside Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's Cannabis Regulatory Task Force, and with County Counsel to tackle illegal cannabis operations and other areas of common interest.
7. Continue to work with, and expand where possible, our partnerships with County and Cal-Fire, Environmental Health, and County Counsel on the Combustible Materials Task Force to reduce the health risks from mulch fires.
8. Stay the course with the implementation of the Flat Fee program, and monitor and evaluate over time as this program stabilizes.
9. Stay the course with our cannabis regulatory program fee component to Code, and monitor and evaluate over time as this program stabilizes.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide this annual report for the Board and the public's consideration, and look forward to our ongoing dialogue as we look to rebuild our Code Enforcement Department together.

2019 Year in Review

Top Ten Violations FY 18/19



Administrative Citations: 124

Property Abatements: 46

Excessive Outside Storage/Accumulated Rubbish NET Tons: 92 Tons

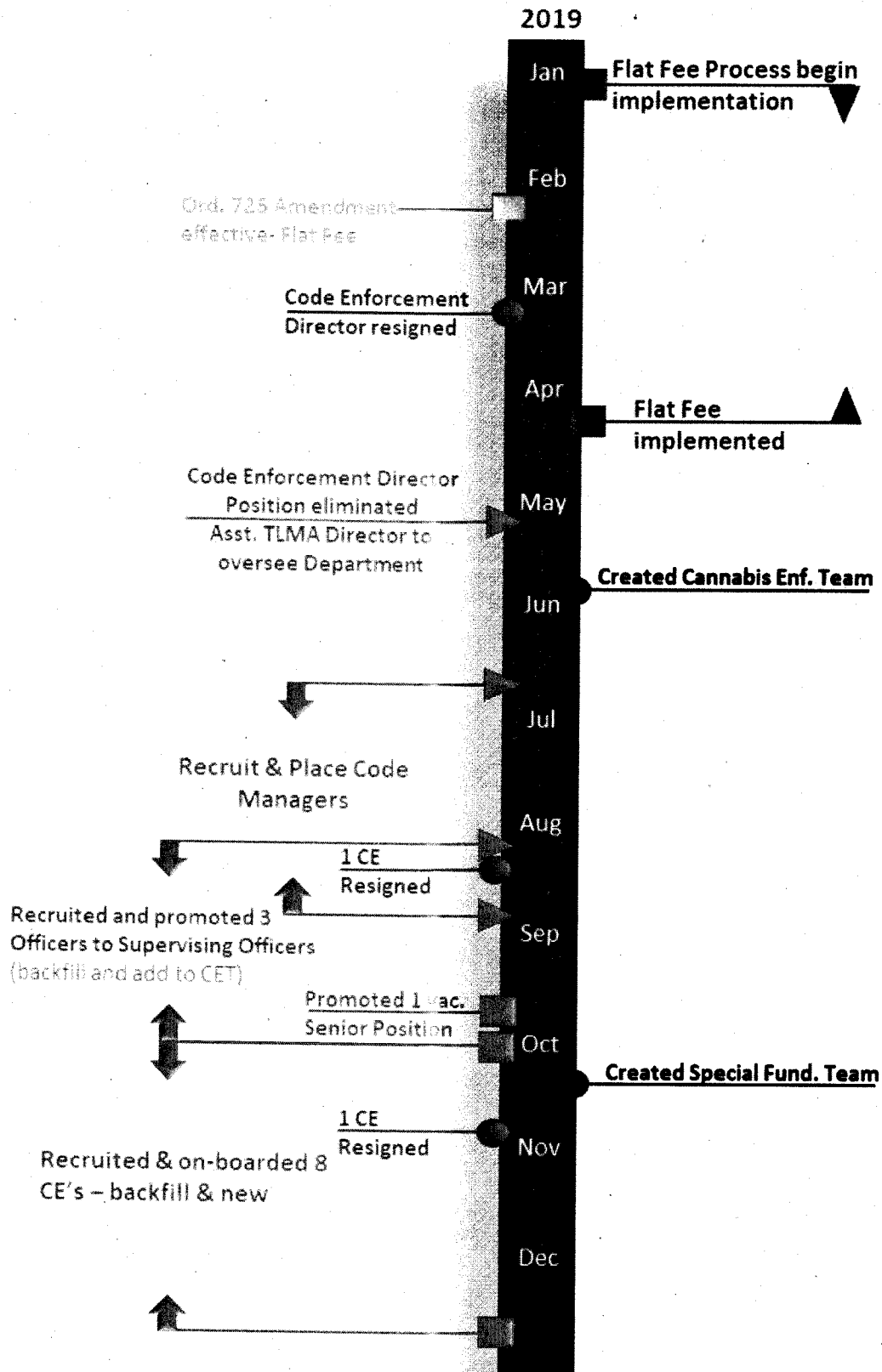
Parking Violation: 389

Community Meetings/Events attended: 79

Community Cleanups worked: 14

Homeless Outreach Contact: 237 Properties

Homeless Related Cases (Rubbish): 87



Growing the Value of Code Enforcement Through Partnerships

➔ Partnerships – The Eastern Coachella Valley Combustible Materials Taskforce

The illegal accumulation of flammable and combustible materials presents a real fire hazard and threatens the health and safety of our communities. Riverside County Code Enforcement has partnered with Riverside County Fire, CALFIRE and the Department of Environmental Health to identify properties that have an illegal accumulation of combustible materials like landscape clippings, palms fronds and grindings. The intent is to work with property owner to clear the property of the inherent hazard to the community.

33 properties were identified and inspected on the initial task force sweep.



Of those 33 properties, 17 were found to be in violation, and a Notices of Violation was issued to each. Three of those properties were referred over to tribal authorities and six of those properties were referred to the Riverside Office of County Counsel for litigation. All six properties were issued a cease and desist letter compelling the property owner to start cleaning up their properties, and to immediately stop accumulating new materials, or face litigation, where the County would removals and recover our costs. Clean-up efforts are proceeding on these properties, with immediate results already visible.



The Environmental Health Department has created an informational brochure, in English and Spanish, about green waste fire prevention, which is being distributed throughout the valley. Our TLMA Transportation Department also jumped in on the fire suppression efforts by providing equipment to assist.

The Task Force continues its efforts to identify and clean up properties in the Coachella Valley that could present hazards to the public.

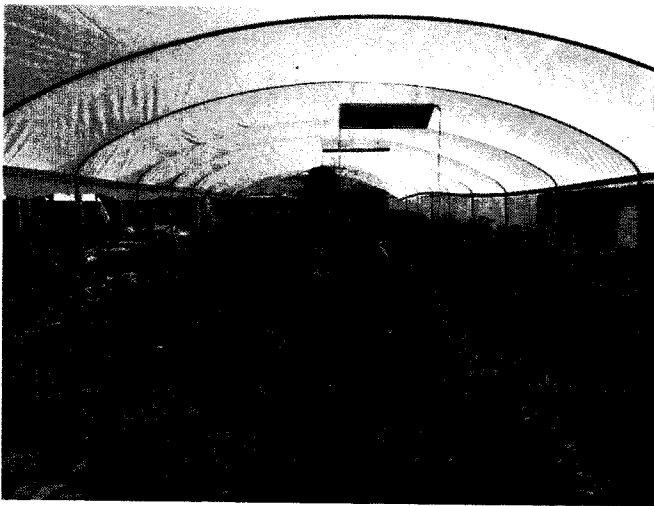
➔ Partnerships – RSO & PSEC Radios

2019 was not only a year of re-building but also presented us an opportunity to enhance safety measures for our Code Officers. Until this year our officers relied on Code Enforcement Staff to alert Law Enforcement partners when assistance was required through the 911 system.

With the assistance of, and training, from our partners at the Riverside Sheriff's Office, Code staff now has the ability to immediately connect to dispatch using our PSEC radios, providing much faster notification and coverage in the remote areas that our staff has to respond in. We sincerely appreciate RSO's partnership and willingness to assist Code on this critical Officer-safety issue.



➔ Partnerships - Illegal Cannabis Enforcement

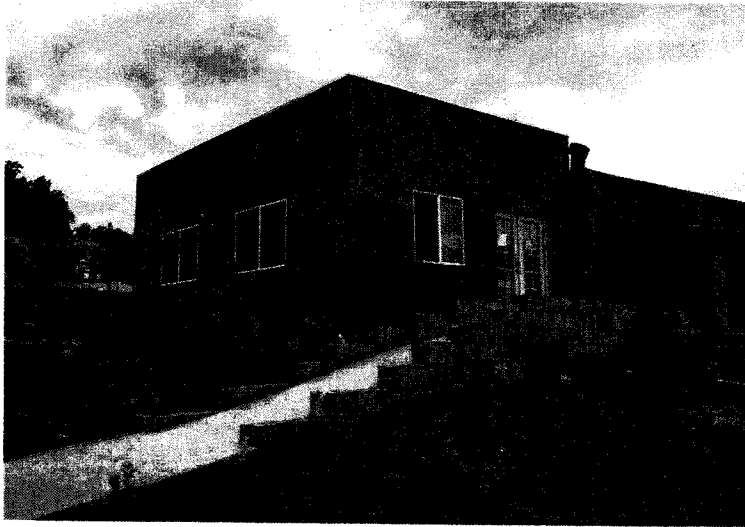


The Code Enforcement Department partners with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department (RSO), the District Attorney's Cannabis Regulations Task Force (CRTF) and the Riverside County Office of County Counsel (County Counsel) to protect the health, safety, and well-being of County residents by enforcing the applicable County Ordinances, and State Law. In 2019, the County's efforts to diminish illegal cannabis activities intensified. With RSO leading the way, hundreds of illegal cultivation sites were eradicated. While the RSO and CRTF enforce criminal activity, Code Enforcement regulates the land use aspects of the illegal activities. Attorneys in

the County Counsel team provide the Code Enforcement Department legal representation and advocacy in civil litigation and administrative hearings. In 2019 Code Enforcement forwarded 167 cultivation cases to the team. Of these, 131 have come into compliance through Code Enforcement contact or from Counsel.

In one example, Code Enforcement Officers discovered a parcel in the Goodhope area that had a very large marijuana grow in several greenhouses. The property is located very close to the local Community Center. After Code Enforcement prepared their investigation report, County Counsel successfully obtained a Temporary Restraining Order from the Superior Court. Within 24 hours of obtaining the order, Code Enforcement, assisted by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department Marijuana Enforcement Team, responded to the property to execute the order. Over 700 illegal marijuana plants were seized and destroyed by the Sheriff's Department. A

stolen handgun was also seized. The property was then secured by Code Enforcement until all greenhouses and elements of the illegal growing operation were removed. County Counsel obtained a court judgement against the property owner for all fees and costs with civil penalties.



This year Code Enforcement officially joined the Riverside County District Attorney's Cannabis Regulation Task Force (CRTF). The team was successful permanently closing, 14 illegal dispensaries in the unincorporated County area.

A successful example of this close collaboration involved a dispensary in the Temescal Valley area. There were numerous complaints from the neighbors. CRTF, Code Enforcement and the Office of County Counsel collaborated together and County Counsel

lock out in Superior Court. Over 20 neighbors showed up to the Temporary Restraining Order hearing to show their support for the County. The County prevailed and within 24 hours, Code Enforcement responded to the property with the CRTF and the Riverside County Marijuana Enforcement Team to permanently shut down the illegal business.

Code Enforcement Contractors boarded up the building to prevent re-occupancy. The illegal dispensary did not reopen and the County came to a settlement with the property owner to remain closed and pay negotiated abatement fees and costs with civil penalties.



➔ Partnerships - Homelessness

Homelessness continues to be one of the most critical priorities for the County. The Code Enforcement Department works collaboratively with the community, Board offices, the Executive Office, the Riverside Sheriff's Office, the Environmental Health Department, the Riverside University Health System – Behavioral Health Department, Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and often, Waste Management District staff. to identify and provide services to the homeless; while dealing with trespassing, removing excessive trash, and illegal occupation of vehicles. Balancing the needs of the homeless as well as those of the community is a challenge that we will continue to face, as we look for a variety of methods to tackle each unique situation.

In June, 2019, Code staff discovered a homeless Veteran, living on a vacant right-of-way property along Ramona Expressway. Finding him a place to stay was crucial, as his proximity to the Expressway put him in a very dangerous situation. Our staff stayed in touch with him on several occasions to help build trust and allow him to seek assistance. Behavioral Health outreach workers also made contact to offer assistance.



Code and behavioral Health staff requested assistance for him through various homeless resources at a Home Connect meeting in July,

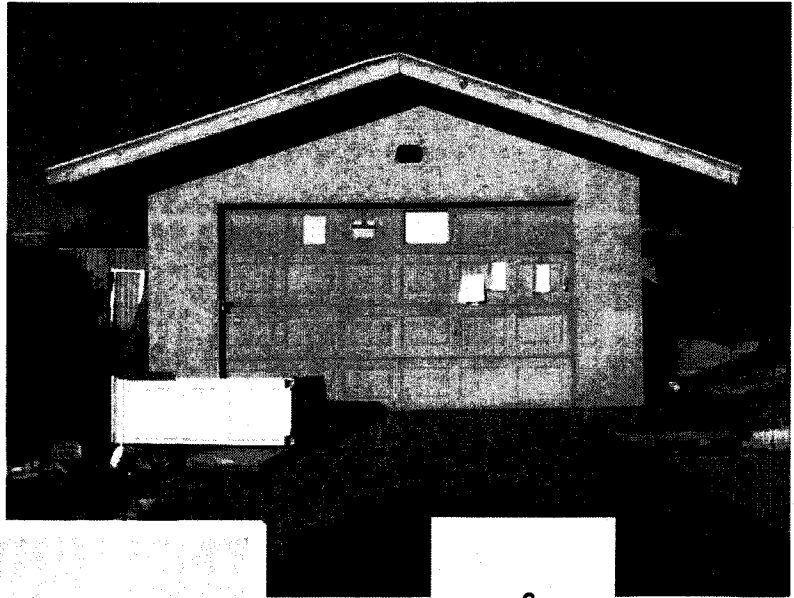
and communicated with County Veterans Outreach as well as homeless outreach at the VA - Loma Linda. The Veteran was eventually approved for VASH, a one year permanent housing program through the VA. Despite the team's efforts, the Veteran initially refused to go to temporary housing at VA Loma Linda while he awaited VASH housing.

In December, with the help of the Code team he obtained his CA ID and Social Security card and agreed to go to temporary housing. The Veteran is currently in temporary housing that is provided by VA Loma Linda, and is looking forward to permanent housing. Code staff has maintained communication with the Veteran and will continue to support him through his housing process.

➔ Neighborhood Enhancement

In 2019, the Code Enforcement Department completed 46 large scale property abatements in 2019.

Due to the health and safety risks posed by blighted properties, the Code Enforcement Department was posing health and safety risks.



Before



During

The Department works diligently with property owners to provide various options before considering structure demolition. In cases where it is necessary, we follow a comprehensive legal process through the Court system.



After

The abatement costs will be placed on the property as a tax lien in order to reduce the overall cost to the public.

➔ Special Funding Programs

Abandoned Vehicle Abatement

The Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program (AVA) was implemented pursuant to State Law, as a means to remove abandoned vehicles that create a public nuisance and a health and safety hazard from private and public property. Voluntary compliance is generally achieved as a result of collaborative efforts from the property owner, registered vehicle owner and Code staff.

In cases resulting in County Abatement, our caseworkers verify violations, mark vehicles, post notices of intent to remove, and arrange tows for abandoned, wrecked, or inoperative cars, trucks, RVs and trailers. In 2019 the Department opened **580 cases** involving abandoned vehicles and **closed 427** legacy and current year cases. As a result, **1,341 inoperable vehicles were removed from the unincorporated area.**



Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding

The Code Enforcement Department's CDBG funding level decreased from FY17/18 of \$268,000 and \$150,000 in FY18/19, to \$78,000 in FY19/20. In FY19/20, to date the Department worked 106 Code Enforcement cases in Grant Funded Communities throughout the County unincorporated areas, helping to clean-up properties and remove blight.

Waste Tire Enforcement Grant

The Code Enforcement's Tire Team is responsible for the administering the Cal Recycle Waste Tire Enforcement Grant, an annual funding level of \$600,000. The grant funds are utilized to inspect tire-related businesses throughout the entire County (not just the unincorporated area) of behalf of the State, and ensure these business are appropriately storing and hauling waste tires as required by law. We have a dedicated team of three Code staff members that conduct tire shop inspections, educate business owners on the proper disposal method, and referring violations to the appropriate governing agency. In FY 18/19, the team of three (3) Code Enforcement Officers completed **1,413 inspections County-wide.**