



# Property & Premises

## ENFORCEMENT & IMPROVEMENT

May 26, 2021

# Goals

- ▶ Safety of People
- ▶ Protection of Structures
- ▶ Maintenance of an attractive environment and property values

# Operational Goals

- ▶ Straight-forward, Kind, and Fair
- ▶ Cost-Effective
- ▶ Fully integrated with other departments and services

# Current & Potential Departments

## Current Departments

- ▶ Property Maintenance
- ▶ Forestry
- ▶ Engineering (sidewalks)
- ▶ Fire
- ▶ Police
- ▶ Zoning

## Potentially Should Be Involved

- ▶ Executive
- ▶ Community Engagement
- ▶ Development Services
- ▶ KDOT
- ▶ Neighborhood Associations
- ▶ Others

# Aspirational Goal

Bring up the quality of structures and premises so that structures and premises violations are the exception, rather than the rule. Our number of substandard properties is never over 500. Owners are motivated to take care of properties before City Enforcement Departments are even called.

# Challenges:

- 1) Reduce current substandard structures by 50% within 5 years
- 2) Reduce deterioration in vacant structures
- 3) Reduce the expense/revenue gap on abatement cases by 50%
- 4) Improve community appearance through management of uncultivated & overgrown vegetation

# 1) Reduction of Substandard Structures

- ▶ Establish a single-visit complete inspection system, within existing laws
  - ▶ Complete interior inspections of all structures upon need or request
  - ▶ One inspection and one comprehensive write-up
  - ▶ Allow extensions to parties actively working on issues
  - ▶ Create system to refer volunteer/paid laborers who can assist
  - ▶ Activate section in Code that allows for courtesy inspections
- ▶ Establish processes and consequences
  - ▶ Goal to have citizens address issues without requiring Code to request access
  - ▶ Community-wide or neighborhood-wide campaigns – Option

## 2) Reduce Deterioration in Vacant Structures

- ▶ Establish procedures to advise owners of long-term/soon-to-be vacant structures about “mothballing” – via Staff and others
- ▶ Establish strategy with TPD to optimize vacant structure security – via Staff



## 3) Reduce Expense/Revenue Gap

- ▶ Reduce on abatement cases by 50%
- ▶ Establish system and culture clearly outlining COT expectations of owner regarding property maintenance to include:
  - ▶ Implementing current capacity to increase fines for extended or repeat violations, where good-faith efforts are not made
  - ▶ Referral system for paid or volunteer laborers who can assist
  - ▶ Neighborhood or Block initiatives for maintenance – Option

# 4) Improve Appearance

- ▶ Manage uncultivated and overgrown vegetation
  - ▶ Average resident or visitor would score Topeka's property appearance at least 7/10
  - ▶ TPD would rate 80%+ as "in compliance" with CPTED within 3 years
  - ▶ Reduce amount of tree/shrub abatements by City Depts by at least 50% within 3 years
- ▶ Minor amendment (or new legal interpretation) of Code about vegetation that is over 12" that has turned into shrubs, trees or vines
  - ▶ Synch-up with non-IMPC section of the TMC that addresses the same issue
- ▶ Will require a major community education campaign and major volunteer assistance campaign
- ▶ Partnership with all departments who deal with exterior maintenance issues
- ▶ Combined ticketing, billing, and collections system – Option



Questions?