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City Council Considers Changes to Strengthen Code Enforcement Regulations

NEW ORLEANS - The New Orleans City Council is considering City Code changes to strengthen and expedite tools available to Code Enforcement, with the overall goal to help stop slumlords and repeat code breakers from gaming the system. This effort, led by District A Councilmember Joe Giarrusso, seeks to clarify gaps in the existing City Code. While enforcement is the primary means for addressing blight, the Council can give Code Enforcement more tools through City code amendments and more efficient and productive inspections.

“My office has been actively working on those improvements with the other district offices for the best - and most effective - results,” said **District A Councilmember Joe Giarrusso**. “It is important we give Code Enforcement the necessary tools to pursue code cheaters without unnecessarily punishing someone who made a simple, first-time mistake.”

“We must sharpen our tools to address quality of life issues across the City, especially where landlords sidestep enforcement or abuse the system to the detriment of those around them,” said **Council President Helena Moreno**. “We also need the City to step up and address its own properties, many of which are in disrepair. That is unacceptable and I will be filing legislation shortly to direct the City to do its part in fighting blight across our city.”

“Code Enforcement is the City’s first line of defense against violations and bad-faith actors. With the tremendous backlog of complaints that Code Enforcement has compiled, it is evident that adjustments must be made,” said **Council Vice President JP Morrell**. “This City Council will take any and all appropriate measures to improve the quality of life of residents, and these amendments will do just that.”

“Blight across District B and the city as a whole seriously interferes with residents’ quality of life and businesses’ ability to thrive,” said **District B Councilmember Lesli Harris**. “Neighbors who have had to tolerate languishing properties know too well the problems they pose, from rodents to crime to the deterioration of beautifully historic homes. My office works daily to get these kinds of buildings and lots back into commerce. I dedicated today’s Quality of Life Committee meeting entirely to discussing blight and neglect - identifying problematic properties for Code Enforcement to resolve, and discussing City Code changes that would facilitate the City’s future ability to step in. I cannot overstate how meaningful these updates could be, and I am grateful for Cm. Giarrusso’s ongoing partnership on this issue.”

“Litter and blight have exploded all across our city. These new amendments are meant to tackle blight and litter head-on and are a part of our ongoing commitment to clean up our city,” said **District C Councilmember Freddie King III**.

“I am pleased to work with my fellow members of the New Orleans City Council to address the significant concerns relative to blight and code violations that keep some neighborhoods in a state of peril,” said **District D Councilmember Eugene Green**. “It is only fair that our citizens, who maintain their properties, should not have to be confronted with unsafe and unhealthy conditions relative to both vacant parcels and blighted structures. Today’s actions and proposals will help the city to employ more tools to positively impact our neighborhoods and city. Those who neglect their responsibilities to help maintain order and a healthy environment, with their properties, must be advised that the city is taking very seriously our responsibilities to enhance the quality of life for citizens across the city.”

“Thank the Leadership of our Committee and Councilman Giarrusso for bringing together our District Colleagues in an effort to improve our City,” said **District E Councilmember Oliver Thomas**. “Code enforcement regulations are an intricate part of creating the quality of life that our constituents deserve. I am happy to collaborate with my District Colleagues to advance code enforcement amendments that will support providing a better quality of life for the citizens of New Orleans.”

The Council, in concert with Code Enforcement officials and Mayor Cantrell’s administration, are considering the below changes:

- Setting daily fines hearing date at the initial violation hearing, speeding up the remediation process;
- Marking each violation on each structure separately, rather than as a whole lot. This would lead to more individual violations for slumlords in apartment buildings and multi-family structures;
- Requiring those with commercial licenses to keep their properties clean and in compliance with the city codes as a condition for license renewal;
- Focusing on commercial establishments and large-scale residential buildings that generate more litter and graffiti than single- or double-family homes; and,
- Expanding the definition of property owner to include “occupant” and “resident.”

Alongside our changes, Councilmembers Thomas and Green filed [legislation](#) to increase littering and dumping fines and rewards for those who report.

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New Orleans City Council
 The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of the New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has the final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish. Streaming video and video archives of the City Council’s Regular and Committee meetings can be found on the City Council [website](#).

The City Council is comprised of five districts and Councilmembers-at-large: Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Helena Moreno; Council Vice President and Councilmember-At-Large JP Morrell; District "A" Councilmember Joseph I. Giarrusso, III; District "B" Councilmember Lesli D. Harris; District "C" Councilmember Freddie King III; District "D" Councilmember Eugene J. Green, Jr.; and District "E" Councilmember Oliver M. Thomas, Jr.

