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City of Atlanta

HOUSING CODE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

Policy and Procedure Guide

January 1, 1967

I. Goals:

- A. Maximum efforts immediately to secure public understanding of the goals and benefits of the Housing Code Compliance Program through use of personal contact, pamphlets, press releases and other public information media.
- B. Maximum coordination immediately with all other public agencies who will be affected by, and need to assist in, the conduct and results of this program.
- C. Conservation of those residential structures in good condition to prevent the spread of blight and decay through encouragement of maintenance efforts and protection from those conditions such as overcrowding and unauthorized conversion which lead to blight.
- D. Rehabilitation of all substandard residential structures which are presently unsuitable for human habitation but where improvements can be made at a reasonable cost to bring them up to standard and where such rehabilitation does not conflict with other community goals by 1971.
- E. Demolition within the City limits of Atlanta of all residential structures which are unfit for human habitation and where rehabilitation would be prohibitively expensive or would otherwise conflict with other community goals by 1971.
- F. Review and re-evaluation beginning in 1967 on a continuing basis of those

rehabilitation areas which have been treated in previous years to determine their need for possible future systematic reinitiation of total rehabilitation effort.

II. Areas and Priorities:

A. The Housing Conditions Map reflecting the survey made in 1963 has been brought up-to-date. In this revision, close coordination has been developed between the Planning Department, the Housing Code Division and the Director of Governmental Liaison. This has resulted in an improved plan for a city-wide, systematic, comprehensive Housing Code Compliance Program. The basic map of the revised survey indicates on a block basis the following categories.

1. Conservation (Areas which principally require either no improvements or only minor improvements with occasional rehabilitation).
2. Intensive Conservation (those areas which because of certain factors such as age, transition in occupancy or use, or adverse fringe influences, etc., require a greater amount of surveillance in order to forestall blight and decay. These areas will normally require only minor improvements and spot rehabilitation).
3. Rehabilitation (those areas in which the majority of structures require rehabilitation which does not exceed 50 percent of their value; some spot clearance is anticipated).
4. Clearance - Code Enforcement (predominately smaller areas where the majority of structures should be cleared and the area redeveloped. It is anticipated that these areas would be cleared

through code compliance with emphasis on demolition. The only other corrective actions to be taken are those to alleviate hazards and to protect the health and safety of residents in the area).

5. Clearance - Title I Urban Renewal (those areas in which the majority of structures should be demolished, with some rehabilitation, and where the size and cost of the contemplated action justifies the use of Title I federal funds).

B. The map also shows division of the city into halves, for supervisor responsibility; each of these halves is sub-divided into five Sectors. Each of these Sectors is assigned to a Housing Code Inspector, as his area of individual responsibility.

C. The map also has on it areas of various sizes outlined showing the neighborhood designation with numbers ranging from '65 to '69. These areas indicate where and when an intensive program of systematic housing code compliance is to be undertaken on a house to house basis. The target date assigned to a particular area indicates its relative priority. Those with a high priority have an early date; those with a lower priority, a later date.

Priorities for the areas have been based on:

1. The number of compliance inspections which the Housing Code division can undertake in one year, while maintaining full city-wide coverage.
2. The relationship of rehabilitation areas to surrounding or internal community activities, community facility development or Title I Urban Renewal Projects.

3. General conditions in the particular area. Those with the most pressing rehabilitation needs will be undertaken first.
4. The long range goal of complete housing code inspection of substandard dwellings by 1970 and compliance in all designated rehabilitation areas by 1971.
5. An additional consideration in subsequent revisions will be the need in the future for more treatment in areas previously covered as blight reoccurs. This item represents the first step in the changeover from a program with a fixed completion date to one on a continuing basis.

D. Proposed Community Facility Locations:

A map has been prepared which indicates the location of all proposed community facilities and highways (exclusive of urban renewal projects) in the City of Atlanta. The locations have been indexed and color coded to identify them and to indicate the agency responsible for their execution.

III. Organization and Administration

A. Organization and Personnel for Housing Code Compliance, Department of Buildings

1. Supervisor of Inspection Services
2. Personnel, Housing Code Division
 - a. Chief Inspector (1)
 - b. Field Supervisors (2)
 - c. Housing Code Sector Inspectors (10)
 - d. Housing Code Inspectors General (6)
 - e. Housing Code Inspector II (1) (assigned to Codes Compliance Officer)
 - f. Concentration Area Inspectors (10)

g. Clerical Personnel (8)

3. Related Personnel

a. Rehabilitation Specialist (1)

b. Codes Compliance Officer (1)

B. Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Supervisor of Inspection Services. Overall supervision of all forms of code enforcement such as plumbing and building with primary emphasis on Housing Code Enforcement, including coordination with other Departments.

2. Personnel, Housing Code Division:

a. Chief Inspector

(1) Overall supervision of inspections, field work and administration.

(2) Coordination of relocation efforts with Atlanta Housing Authority.

(3) Pursuit of resolution of difficult cases.

(4) Direct supervision of clerical personnel

(5) Coordination with Codes Compliance Officer; Rehabilitation Specialist.

(6) Training program for new Housing Code Inspectors.

(7) Coordination with other Divisions of Department of Buildings.

b. Field Supervisors

(1) Direct supervision of five inspectors and their sectors comprising one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the City.

- (2) Supervision of intensive program teams and Inspectors General when operating in their one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the City.
 - (3) In-Service training for inspectors to include principles of Housing Code Enforcement, selection and scheduling of work, and standardization of requirements and acceptances.
 - (4) General conduct of housing code compliance program within their one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the City.
 - (5) Assistance in resolution of difficult cases.
 - (6) Assistance in preparation of court cases when requested by Code Compliance Officer.
 - (7) Other special duties as assigned by Chief Inspector.
- c. Housing Code Inspector II
- (1) Assigned to Codes Compliance Officer to assist in preparation of cases for Court.
- d. Housing Code Sector Inspectors:
- (1) Conduct of Housing Code Compliance Program in their sector.
 - (2) Primary responsibility for resolution of all cases and compliants in their sectors.
 - (3) Prepare cases for presentation before the Better Housing Commission and City Attorney.
 - (4) Assist in preparing court cases.
- e. Housing Code Inspectors General
- (1) Investigate, document and prepare cases for presentation to Court and appear as witness at time of trial (three inspectors and one Housing Code Inspector II assigned for this purpose)
 - (2) Preparation of cases for "In Rem" proceedings and Demolition Grant Program (three inspectors assigned to these functions.

f. Intensive Program Housing Code Inspectors

- (1) Operate as team members
- (2) Conduct housing code compliance program in rehabilitation areas according to scheduled priorities.

g. Clerical Personnel

- (1) Process notices, letters, records and prepare periodic reports.
- (2) Receive telephone calls, prepare lists for Better Housing Commission hearings, City Attorney hearings and Court.
- (3) Record minutes of Better Housing Commission meetings.

h. Related Personnel

- (1) Rehabilitation Specialist
 - (a) Public relations--(promoting good maintenance and Housing Code Enforcement).
 - (b) Inspection of apartment developments (30 units and up).
- (2) Codes Compliance Officer
 - (a) Responsible for preparation and conduct (including attendance in Court) of Housing Code Court cases with assistance from Housing Code Inspectors and Supervisory Personnel.
 - (b) Advises Housing Code Division on requirements for prosecution of cases in court, appropriateness of specific cases for Court action and preparation of charges.

(c) Prepares Court calendars and reports on results of Housing Code Court hearings.

C. Notices and Follow-up Action

Inspectors will use standard methods and prescribed time intervals as a guide for their processing of cases. Written procedure is on file in the Housing Code Division.

D. Coordination

1. Relocation:

Inspectors will fill out slips (on AHA standard form) to be signed and forwarded by the Chief Inspector to the Housing Authority for relocation assistance to the families threatened with displacement by Housing Code Enforcement, such as placarding occupied units, when a directive is issued to reduce the number of occupants and/or units, when demolition is imminent, and for other reasons.

2. Community Facilities

Chief Inspector will consult map showing location of proposed and scheduled community facilities; will determine agency responsible for execution; and consult and coordinate with that agency to determine exact extent and status of project and the appropriate Housing Code Compliance Program for the areas at that time.

3. Public Housing

No Housing Code Inspections required. (Existing units 8874; under construction 650; planned 1140).

4. Municipal Services

In conduct of the Housing Code Compliance Program, Inspectors will

be alert for needed improvements in municipal services and other such problems. Need will be recorded and referred by the Chief Inspector to the appropriate governmental agency.

Possible referral agencies are:

- a. Sanitary Department
- b. Construction Department
- c. Traffic & Street Lights Department
- d. Police Department
- e. Water Department
- f. Fire Department
- g. Parks Department
- h. Board of Education
- i. County Departments of Family and Children Services
- j. County Health Departments

5. Data Bank

The Housing Code Division will participate continually in furnishing certain types of information, obtained in connection with its normal activities, to be placed in the data bank.

E. Complaints

All Housing Code complaints received will be recorded on forms provided and investigated within one week and appropriate action initiated immediately. Written procedure is on file in the Housing Code Division.

F. Handling Unresolved Cases

At the end of each quarter, Sector Inspectors will thoroughly review their unresolved case files and determine what positive action should be taken.

Procedure for handling unresolved cases is on file in the Housing Code Division.

IV. Area Housing Code Compliance Policies

A. General:

1. Placard promptly vacant substandard units and structures considered unfit for occupancy and cause utility services to be discontinued.
2. Promptly report to the Better Housing Commission and to the Atlanta Housing Authority Relocation Housing Office (for relocation of families) those occupied units and structures considered unfit for occupancy.
3. In order to keep abreast of changing conditions conducive to deterioration and blight, each Inspector will endeavor to observe his entire Sector and initiate corrective action as needed.
4. It is anticipated that each Sector Inspector will process a minimum of 20 new Housing Code major improvement cases per calendar month, and comply an equal number per month outside of rehabilitation areas in which teams are working. Effort should be made where feasible to keep each Sector Inspector's workload of uncompleted active notices to approximately 200. All Sector Inspectors combined should comply at least 3500 units per year.

B. Conservation Areas (See Housing Map):

1. Inspector will encourage maintenance and conservation

verbally where early signs of blight appear but no valid code violation exists.

2. Housing Code inspection to be made primarily on a complaint basis.

C. Intensive Conservation Areas (See Housing Map)

1. Housing Code inspections to be made based on an apparent need. Accent to be conservation rather than waiting until rehabilitation is necessary; Inspector will give more attention to details to discover any significant changes conducive to blight in these areas.
2. Inspector will encourage maintenance and conservation verbally where early signs of blight appear but where no valid code violation exists.
3. These areas will be closely examined for consideration as possible future federally assisted code enforcement projects under the 1964 Housing Act.

D. Rehabilitation Areas (See Housing Map)

1. These areas have been designated according to priority of need and placed on a schedule. (See Map)
2. These areas will be intensively covered house by house by inspectors of an intensive program team (2 - 4 men).
3. Conduct of Compliance Program
 - a. All Housing units in rehabilitation areas will be inspected and necessary compliance notices issued or statement issued that property is in satisfactory condition.

b. It is anticipated that three large areas (approximately 7000 units) and three small areas (approximately 1900 units) will be covered this year (approximate total 8900). Any cases remaining unresolved at the end of this year will be assigned to Sector Inspector for resolution.

c. It is anticipated that each Team Inspector will make approximately 7 new inspections or 7 first follow-up inspections per day.

4. These areas will be closely examined for consideration as possible future federally assisted code enforcement projects under the 1964 Housing Act.

E. Clearance - Code Enforcement Areas (See Housing Map)

1. Enforce Code only to:

- a. Placard where warranted and seek demolition.
- b. Correct hazards.
- c. Reduce overcrowding.
- d. Vacate unfit units.
- e. Clean up premises.

2. Discourage rehabilitation action in industrially zoned areas, especially in marginal cases.

3. Seek maximum coordination with other divisions of Building Department to discourage improvements other than to correct hazards of any housing units and structures in areas.

F. Clearance - Title I Urban Renewal

1. Proposed and Planning Stage Projects (See Housing Map):

Enforce Code only to:

- a. Placard where warranted and seek demolition.
- b. Correct hazards.
- c. Reduce overcrowding.
- d. Vacate unfit units.
- e. Clean up premises.

2. Urban Renewal Projects in Execution (See Housing Map):

- a. Issue no notices unless instructed otherwise by Chief Inspector (usually upon request of Atlanta Housing Authority).

G. Community Facility Locations, including Public Housing (See Community Facility Map):

1. Scheduled for construction or property being acquired

- a. Chief Inspector will consult map showing location of proposed and scheduled community facilities; will determine agency responsible for execution; and consult and coordinate with that agency to determine exact extent and status of project and the appropriate Housing Code Compliance Program for the areas at that time.
- b. Normally Inspector will issue no notices unless instructed otherwise by Chief Inspector.

2. Planned - construction anticipated but not scheduled
 - a. Chief Inspector will consult map showing location of proposed and scheduled community facilities; will determine agency responsible for execution; and consult and coordinate with that agency to determine exact extent and status of project and the appropriate Housing Code Compliance Program for the areas at that time.
 - b. Normal action will be to enforce Code only to:
 - (1) Placard where warranted and seek demolition.
 - (2) Correct hazards.
 - (3) Reduce overcrowding.
 - (4) Vacate unfit units.
 - (5) Clean up premises.