



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City of West Allis License & Health Committee

**FROM:** Bob Leischow, Health Commissioner, and members of the Nuisance Abatement Team

**DATE:** September 20, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Communication regarding Nuisance Abatement Program – Action Plan Progress

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### **PLAN FOCUS: GARBAGE CART STANDARDIZATION**

*(Strategic Plan item: 1.4.4)*

Summary: Require all residential properties to have a city issued garbage cart. If they do not currently have one, they can purchase a cart at 50% off the total cost.

Progress to date: The Department of Public Works has sold or issued 2,643 garbage carts since January 1, 2022. As of August 1, 2022, all residential properties having 3 or less living units have in their possession a city provided garbage cart.

### **PLAN FOCUS: CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS – CONSOLIDATED/REORGANIZATION**

*(Strategic Plan item: 1.4.5)*

Summary: Improve quality of life through code enforcement. The City has multiple departments engaged in various aspects of code enforcement and nuisance abatement. Restructuring of how code enforcement is accomplished through increased collaboration, streamlining and efficiencies. All code enforcement processes and complaints completed through OpenGov.

Progress to date: Further strides have been taken to increase rodent tracking within OpenGov. Internally, staff flag 'Let Us Help' entries as rodent related and can indicate if rodent information was discussed on non-rodent related follow up. We are in the final stages of rolling out our internal rodent nuisance record in OpenGov to issue letters and abatement orders directly through OpenGov.

The multiagency Rodent Task Force continues to meet bi-weekly to discuss progress and plan for next steps. Public Works recycling/refuse crews continue to report observed rodent activity during collection routes for Code Enforcement/Health Department staff to review. The municipal code addressing refuse and recycling collection continues to be enforced relating to storage and collection issues at residential properties. Since January 2022, approximately 900 violations and bulk collection service requests relating to non-contained garbage, improper containers and carts have been issued or addressed.

Code Enforcement Director hired and on-boarded in September.

### **PLAN FOCUS: RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP**

*(Strategic Plan item: 1.4.6)*

Summary: Engage with neighborhood residents to increase awareness of causes for a rise in the presence of nuisance animals and organize neighborhood clean-ups to eliminate locations for nuisance animals to inhabit and eliminate access to food sources.



Progress to date: Phase one of the social media campaign has concluded and a total of 67,927 people were reached through the WAHD FB Rodent Posts. These posts were also shared by the City of West Allis, WI Government Facebook page and a total of 51,175 people were reached. This social media campaign was successful in increasing the awareness of the causes for a rise in the presence of rodents as well as provided the public with information on the actions that have been taken by the city. Our next steps are to explore what phase two of the social media campaign will look like. After some preliminary discussions our posts focus will probably be on bait station updates, a finalized rodent PSA video, and possibly some date sharing from the actions that have been taken.

The neighborhood walk-throughs were a great success and residents enjoyed being able to interact with city staff and have their questions answered. Letters were mailed to residents in these areas inviting them to join the walkabouts.

### **PLAN FOCUS: NUISANCE ANIMAL ABATEMENT/MITIGATION PLAN + METRICS**

*(Strategic Plan item; 1.4.2/1.4.7)*

Summary: In conjunction with the previous three initiatives and the previous and current programs focused on nuisance animal abatement, implement a plan to mitigate the issue. Provide increased funding for nuisance animal abatement and control, explore options to disrupt the reproductive cycle and possible involvement of a pest control company, and advanced trapping tools.

Progress to date: We are tracking resident complaints/communications and neighborhood rodent outreach including neighborhood walk-throughs, door hangers and mailings.

- 580 properties fell under the umbrella of the walk-through areas.
  - 28 people joined the 1<sup>st</sup> neighborhood walk-through and 12 people for the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> walk-through.
- 155 Rodent related complaints were received (As of 8/31/2022) compared to 116 in all of 2018. Annual average is approximately 80 complaints; already doubled in 2022.
- 1,069 letters and educational information packets provided directly to residents in response to confirmed rodent issues and complaints (As of 8/31/2022).
- 98 rodent bait stations placed in 3 different zones identified as hot spots for rodent activity and in Income Eligible Neighborhoods, funded by \$16,000 in CDBG grants. The area north of 61<sup>st</sup> and National shows the most activity, 50% of the bait stations having been frequented.
  - Zone 1: 57<sup>th</sup>-66<sup>th</sup> between Mitchell and Burnham
  - Zone 2: 60<sup>th</sup>-66<sup>th</sup> between National and Mineral
  - Zone 3: Liberty Heights neighborhood
- One Enforcement related walk through was conducted in Zone 2 where historically there are the greatest number of complaints each year.
- Between May – September 16<sup>th</sup>, Code Enforcement Department issued:
  - 427 tall grass and weeds orders
  - 362 proactive inspection letters
  - Approximately 125 letters regarding rodent harborage issues

Requested additional CDBG funding for next year to continue to implement the activities of the Nuisance Abatement Plan.

### **PLAN FOCUS: ORDINANCE CHANGES**

*(Strategic Plan: 1.4.8)*

Summary: Work with the Common Council to adopt summary abatement laws to allow for immediate removal of items that cause nuisance animal harborages.



Progress to date: West Allis Code Section 7.145 – Rodent Control was adopted by the Common Council implemented into the code on August 2, 2022. The intent of the code update is to provide various code enforcement departments with the ability, authority, and discretion to issue citations, summarily abate remedial problems, or require abatement practices be employed for more nuanced issues.