

# DRAFT CODE ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

## Mission Statement

The purpose of Code Enforcement is to protect the health and safety of El Dorado County residents by enforcing minimum standards for property maintenance as well as procedures for abatement of public nuisances.

## Operational Context

The Code Enforcement Division (CE) consists of nine (9) FTEs, six (6) of whom are Code Enforcement Officers (Officers) representing enforcement regions and special assignment areas. The Board approved two of these Code Enforcement Officers in the FY 2021-22 Budget, one of which is funded by Transient Occupancy Tax to provide enhanced enforcement on Vacation Home Rentals (VHR). Officers are assigned to their regions with some moderate crossover with the cannabis and VHR special assignment areas. As established in Title 9 of the County Ordinances, the Code Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing building and zoning regulations related to health, life, and safety across all El Dorado County Unincorporated Communities.

The Board has requested increased enforcement on chronic health, life, and safety cases and the Code Enforcement Division has responded with a more robust caseload, including working towards curing a historic backlog of cases. In 2022, Officers worked on over 1,000 cases, opening 380 cases and closing 649. Additionally, 290 Notices to Correct were recorded along with 79 Notices of Compliance. With stepped up enforcement comes an increase in constituent contacts and an increase in complicated cases, many of which rise to individual Board offices.

## Philosophical and Procedural Approach

Code Enforcement utilizes a “reactive” approach to enforcement. No “proactive” code enforcement occurs on properties throughout the County. A “reactive” approach means that Officers will respond to complaints from a reporting party but will not canvas neighborhoods searching for violations. Complaints must be received to trigger enforcement activities. The exception to this is the utilization of Host Compliance and VHR marketing platforms to assist in identifying and enforcing on unpermitted VHRs.

Once a complaint is received, Officers utilize the “progressive enforcement” approach. Officers receive a complaint from a reporting party and conduct a site visit to investigate. If a violation is discovered, a Notice to Correct (NTC) is issued. When applicable, the Officers will walk the property owner through their findings and discuss

## DRAFT CODE ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

available options to remedy the violation. So long as there is consistent contact with the owner and they are showing progress towards fixing the violation, no further action will be taken by the Officer. If no progress is made staff will record an NTC, with the County Recorder. This effectively, clouds the title of the home. An NTC can be removed upon completion of all required remediation. If no progress is being made towards curing a violation, Officers may elect to issue an Administrative Citation (Admin Cite). An Admin Cite levies daily fines for non-compliance. These are appealable to an Administrative Hearing Officer. Throughout this process, it is fairly common to arrive at a negotiated settlement of the case.

### Strategic Context

Code Enforcement is charged by the Board of Supervisors with protecting life, health, and safety of all El Dorado County residents. The role of Code Enforcement, and authority thereof, has increased over the past three years, as has the size of the staff to engage in this expanded authority. There are additional policy efforts underway that will result in the need for more Code Enforcement activities. As the breadth of activities continues to increase for the Division, strategic objectives will need to be met through targeted activities and projects.

Code Enforcement's foundational strategic objectives are as follows:

- 1) Fully carry out the vision and mission of the Board of Supervisors on Code Enforcement activities
- 2) Maximize compliance while minimizing intervention; concurrently build additional tools to address the most egregious health, life, and safety cases
- 3) Continual improvement of customer service to the residents of El Dorado County
- 4) Build a sustained staff development program

To this end, Code Enforcement has identified numerous activities and projects to support these strategic objectives. These are enumerated below. Activities and projects are labeled as either short-term, mid-term, long-term, or ongoing.\*

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\* Short-term = to be completed within six months. Mid-term = to be completed within six to twelve months. Long-term = to be completed within twelve to twenty-four months. Ongoing = is a continuous program or activity.

# DRAFT CODE ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

## Strategic Objectives

### Objective 1: Fully carry out the vision and mission of the Board of Supervisors on Code Enforcement activities

- 1A) Assist with prevention of future code cases by expeditiously recording Notices to Correct (Ongoing)
- 1B) High priority case monitoring (Ongoing)
- 1C) Development of an Amnesty Program for certain code case types (Short)
- 1D) Notice and Order administrative procedures integration into Section 9.02 (Short)
- 1E) Staffing - Additional adjustments to be made based on increasing workflows as directed by the Board (Ongoing)
  - Exploration of a Senior CEO Allocation or additional Officer(s)
  - Manager Position
- 1F) Increased enforcement on illegal VHR activities (Short, Mid, and Ongoing)
  - Exploration of two additional officers and CE Supervisor to work weekend and evening shifts
  - Develop tactics for how to effectively deploy these officers to cover both VHRs and Ranch Marketing activities
  - Enforcement of unpermitted VHRs identified by Host Compliance
  - Outreach to VHR stakeholders through Brown-bag lunches
  - Social media presence
  - Increased data reporting

### Objective 2: Maximize compliance while minimizing intervention; concurrently build additional tools to address the most egregious health, life, and safety cases

- 2A) Development of Additional Tools to enhance enforcement (Long)

## DRAFT CODE ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

- Summary Abatements
- Warrants
- Receiverships

### 2B) Revenue Recovery (Short)

- Accounts that remain in a delinquent status will be sent to Revenue Recovery for additional action

### 2C) Case Management (Mid)

- Improvement in case notes and actions
- Reviewing existing/older cases
- Cases recorded if immediate compliance is not gained

## Objective 3: Continual improvement of customer service to the residents of El Dorado County

### 3A) Host Compliance Integration for VHRs (Ongoing)

- Short-term Rental Hotline in effect and coordination with Treasurer/Tax-Collector, as appropriate

### 3B) Credit Card Payments (Mid)

- Staff are working with eTrakit & in-house to explore credit card payments for CE fees.

### 3C) CE webpage (Mid)

- Updating continuously
- More Officer contact information

### 3D) VHR Open House – quarterly ‘get-togethers’ (Short)

- Owners, property managers, Sheriffs

## Objective 4: Build a sustained staff development and training program

### 4A) Continuous Training (Ongoing)

## DRAFT CODE ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

- Training of new staff (5 in the last year)
- Continuous training in codes and their applications
- Training for newest enforcement authorities and actions
- Training with other County departments for cross-interest issues
  - Monthly 1-on-1 meetings with County Counsel

### 4B) Team Building Exercises (Ongoing)

- Weekly and monthly

### 4C) Job Shadowing with the Building Division – In process for Division Administration and Officers, both (Mid)

- Admin are shadowing Dev. Techs
- Officers will be riding with Building Inspectors

### 4D) Improve CE / Building Relationship (Ongoing)

- Building Inspectors and CE working together on many cases
- Dev. Techs and CE working together to ensure consistent information is given to property owners