

Code Connection

Message from our Director

Approved this May 4 by City Council, San Antonio now has a new Sign Code that became effective this month on Jul. 3.

Back in Sept. 2015, then District 10 Councilman Mike Gallagher filed a Council Consideration Request, or CCR, requesting out staff to review, update and amend Ch. 28 (titled "Signs") in the City's Code. The goals of this CCR were to provide: (1) flexibility in the code to deal with industry changes; (2) provide clarity for signage requirement within the city; and (3) a city code that addresses questions and demands in today's sign industry.

Signs are either *off-* (billboards) or *on-premise* (commercial signs) and can be *permanent* or *temporary*. To discuss changes needed, we created a stakeholder group with a diverse makeup that included neighborhood associations, San Antonio and Texas Sign Associations, billboard operators, Real Estate Council, Greater San Antonio Building Association, San Antonio Board of Realtors, Scenic San Antonio, engineers and architects, San Antonio Conservation Society and others.

Beginning Feb. 2016, the group met 21 times to discuss multiple issues including safety, buffer between commercial and residential properties, and multiple types of signage (digital, ground-mounted, garage sales, builders, portable, bandit signs). The result was a Sign Code that clarifies grey areas of the

code, adds flexibility, allows for new industry technology, coordinates City and State licensing requirements, increases enforcement for violations, clarifies removal for safety purposes, adds regulations for flag/feather type signs, provides consistency for measuring brightness of digital signs, increases buffer from residential homes. In addition, two garage sale signs will be allowed with each permit purchased.

The process for updating this code section is a true reflection of our mission - "Partnering with our Community to build and maintain a safer San Antonio." A sincere thank you to all the members of the Sign Code Update Committee.

As always, if you have any compliance issues, there are a few ways you can let us know:

- Call 311
- Download the free "311" app onto your smart phone

Please continue to send your comments, ideas and suggestions to us at:

CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov

Best Regards,



Michael Shannon, PE, CBO
Director, Development Services
Department

Inside this issue:

Homeless Encampments	2
Beacon Hill NCD	3
Buffer Yards	3
Did You Know?	4
Performance Measures	4
Graffiti Corner	4

Contact Us:

Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Center
1901 S. Alamo
San Antonio, Texas 78204

Hours: Monday - Friday
7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

To report Code Compliance issues call 311 or download City's "311" Phone App.

"Partnering with our Community to build and maintain a safer San Antonio."

Homeless Encampments - Denise Hastings

Over the last few years, the number of homeless encampments found in San Antonio have grown tremendously. There are more people choosing to live off the land and “off the grid,” the term commonly used by the homeless.

In early May, our team was involved in the clean-up of one of the largest encampments we’ve ever seen. Located on the north-west side of town, the encampment spanned over 65 privately

owned vacant lots. This site was brought to our attention by the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), who were contacted by adjacent business owners having issues with loitering, drug use and prostitution behind their businesses.

Code Officers work very closely with SAPD in identifying and inspecting homeless encampments, a safety precaution because encampments are usually deep within vacant lots and the inhabitants can be unpredictable in their behavior.

At first glance, it was overwhelming. Right away at least 20 tents were visible, along one large structure made of pallets, housing a freezer operating off car batteries that also serviced makeshift light fixtures hanging from a tree. Designated toilet areas were not in place, and there was no nearby water source.

It took the efforts of multiple City de-

partments to assess and clean this encampment. SAPD escorted all of us through the camp, Department of Human Services (DHS) brought Haven for Hope staff out, and Transportation & Capital Improvement Department (TCI) assisted with a lot of the debris removal. We, Code Enforcement, were given the responsibility of coordinating with a contractor to have load after load of debris removed and of researching and notifying property owners of the conditions of their properties

so they can be cut and cleaned within 10 days. For situations like these, property owners have an option of signing a *No Trespass Agreement* with SAPD to give officers permission to have transients removed from privately owned properties.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), there are two categories of homelessness: “sheltered” and “unsheltered.” A *sheltered* homeless person lives in an emergency shelter or transitional housing, like Haven for Hope or a domestic violence shelter. Someone *unsheltered* lives in a place not really meant for human habitation. An interesting statistic is that almost half of the homeless population fall under the *unsheltered* category, with the majority

being single men.

Homeless encampments violate the City’s health and safety code. They also have a negative impact to the neighborhoods and businesses located in the area. Chronic public intoxication, panhandling, loitering, trespassing, shoplifting, drug dealing and erratic behavior are just some of the most common problems associated with these encampments. Not to mention the piles of trash and debris throughout the area attracting rodents and other creatures, the makeshift structures that pose a safety issue as well as a possible fire hazard, and the fact there are no provisions for toilet facilities or running water, thereby create an unhealthy and unsanitary condition for all.

It’s our main goal to make sure resi-

dents of San Antonio have a safe and healthy environment, with a good quality of life. We will continue to monitor these locations to safeguard unsafe and un-

healthy conditions don’t reappear.

Denise Hastings has been a code enforcement supervisor for twelve years and has worked in every council district throughout the City. She is dedicated to her job and enjoys training new code officers.



HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT
NEAR INGRAM ROAD.



PILES OF TRASH IN AREAS WITHOUT
TENTS

Beacon Hill NCD - Staff

In March of last year, District 1 Councilman Roberto C. Treviño submitted a Council Consideration Request (CCR) asking our department to review and amend the section (Sec. 35.335 c) of the City’s Unified Development Code (UDC) that directly relates to the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD).

The Beacon Hill NCD was created in 2005. Since then it has experienced different growth patterns for multifamily developments, something not currently reflected in the language of the NCD.

NCD’s are a zoning classification addressing new construction and renovations through enforceable design standards in order to: protect, define unique characters and features, promote compatible infill development,

allow for a fair and objective and administrative review process, and be a proactive planning tool. It’s important to highlight that an NCD *doesn’t*: require owners to rehabilitate existing structures to conform to standards, enforce deed restrictions, change the underlying zoning of a property, nor prevents demolition.

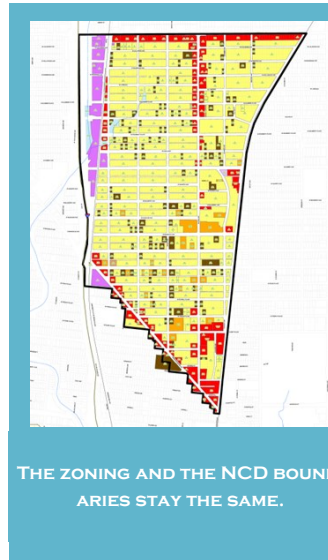
We’ve been working with residents and business owners as of August, 2016. After receiving input on the existing guidelines, we presented draft versions of the revised ordinance to both groups and invited them to send in their com-

ments. These comments were then incorporated into a final draft presented to and approved by each.

A key change in the residential standards was changing the multifamily building height from 3 to 2 1/2 stories. For commercial standards, a definition of Building to include walls was added to maintain a streetscape along commercial corridors.

The Beacon Hill NCD ordinance was presented to City Council on June 22,

and was approved. If you would like more information on an NCD, please call (210) 207- 8208.



Buffer Yards - Michael Uresti

Buffer yards are simply landscaped separations between residential and commercial properties used to screen from view certain land uses that can create a visual clutter or be distracting. The City of San Antonio requires buffer yards, per Sec. 35-510 of the Unified Development Code (UDC).

The more intense the use of a property, for example a commercial shopping center, the wider and the denser the buffer needs to be. These buffers eliminate or minimize potential negative impacts like dirt, litter, noise,

glare of lights, signs and unsightly buildings between different land uses.

In zoning, the term *land use* refers to the use of the land: agricultural, residential, industrial and commercial.

Failure to maintain these buffer yards result in Code Enforcement citations. Taking care of these landscapes promote

positive and sustainable development in San Antonio.

Requirements differ depending on land use and other variables. If you have questions about compliance with buffer

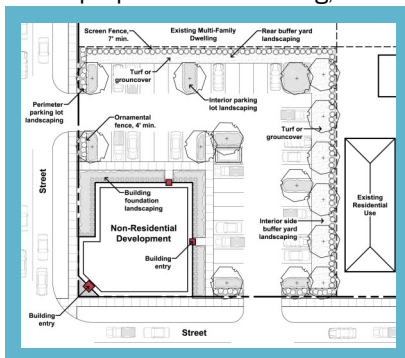
yards, call us (210) 207-1111.

Michael Uresti, J.D., has been with the City 10 years and is currently the Zoning and Permitting Supervisor.



Become the voice for your neighborhood!

- We’re looking for more volunteers to work with us in developing effective solutions and strategies to those issues that matter the most in your neighborhood.
- The Neighborhood Code Enforcement Task Force (NCETF) is comprised of multiple representatives from each Council District.
- Become part of the process of revising the San Antonio Property Maintenance Code. Meetings start this summer!
- Call your City Council Office to become a member!

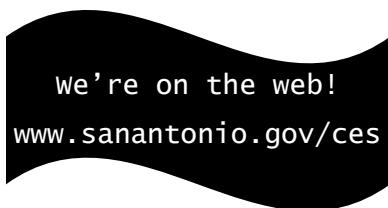




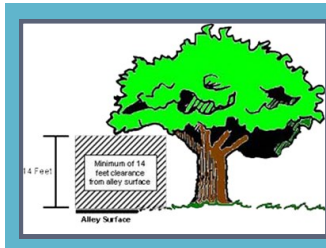
**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

Cliff Morton Development & Business
Services Center
1901 S. Alamo

To report Code Compliance issues call:
311 or download City's "311" Phone App



Did You Know...



Homeowners are responsible for maintaining tree limb height clearance of at least 14 feet high over alley bed by 15 feet wide for vehicles to enter. The alley bed must be reasonably free of debris and passable to vehicles. (City code Ch. 14-64). Low overhanging tree limbs need to be trimmed to 8 feet above the sidewalk. Don't try to trim tree

limbs that are growing onto power lines. It's dangerous and you could be electrocuted. If you find yourself in this situation, call City Public Service at 210-353-2222 to report the situation.

To see San Antonio's Property Maintenance Code, visit sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes. For all of San Antonio's Codes, go to: www.municode.com/library/TX/San_Antonio

Performance Measures - May/June 2017

	MAY	JUN.	TOTAL	FY 2017 (FY = Oct. 2016 - Sept. 2017)
Cases initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	8,052	7,721	15,773	69,351
Cases initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	1,909	1,896	3,805	13,741
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	78%	77%	77%	81%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.3
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	97%	96%	97%	97%
Graffiti locations abated	3,890	5,231	9,121	38,279
Graffiti response rate (Goal of 3 days)	1	1	1	1

What You're Saying

"As an associate of the JBSA/Ft. Sam Houston customer services division, it was a pleasure to meet and coordinate with your field and admin support team. I look forward to working & pro-acting again with your teams in the near future. Thank You!" - *JBSA/Ft. Sam Houston*

"Lori Campos (Graffiti Abatement Team) was very helpful and cordial. Took care of the concern in a timely manner. Very professional job!" - *Resident*

"Code Officer Wills went above and beyond in helping us address a tree issue on our property. The trees were in the city right-of-way and were a hazard due to aging and deterioration. Our neighborhood brush pickup started the 12th. He helped coordinate with the city arborist to determine that the trees needed to be removed due to core decay, dry rot, and disease. He promptly notified us and initiated the paperwork so the trees could be removed. He then coordinated with the public works supervisor so they could return to the property and then stayed to ensure public works came to remove the trees after we removed them. This enabled us to remove the trees promptly at a much lower expense than it would have been otherwise. It also helped remove a significant safety hazard as the trees had already dropped a few limbs. Thank you!" - *Resident*

Graffiti Corner

The Graffiti Abatement Program (GAP) was invited to present at the 50th Anniversary Keep Texas Beautiful Conference held June 12-14, 2017, at the Westin Hotel in downtown San Antonio. *Graffiti Going Green*, highlighted the environmentally friendly efforts our program uses to fight graffiti such as biodegradable chemicals, recycled paint, repurposed rags and reusing roller frame covers.



FUN FACT: If we threw away every cover that our 2,500 annual volunteers use every time, it would equal 3 1/2 lengths of the Tower of the Americas! Fortunately, every cover is washed and reused as many as 10 times.

Help us stay green! Donate any unwanted, water-based latex paint to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Call 311 for locations and hours of operation.