



STAFF REPORT	
SUBJECT: Discussion and Consideration of Ordinance No. 279-2025, An Amendment to Section 9-4 of the Clearlake Municipal Code Regarding Residential Rental Registration and Inspection	MEETING DATE: March 20, 2025 6:00 p.m.
SUBMITTED BY: Michael Taylor, Associate Planner	
REPORT PURPOSE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only	

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

The City Council is being asked to consider the first reading of Ordinance No. 279-2025 (Attachment A) amending Section 9-4, Rental Housing Unit Registration, Inspections, and Inventory, Chapter IX, Building and Housing, of the Clearlake Municipal Code; Municipal Code Amendments, and corresponding environmental filing, Categorical Exemption, CE 2025-02.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

Section 9-4, was adopted by City Council on October 25, 2001, and came into effect on November 24, 2001, as Ordinance No. 102-01 (Attachment B). The ordinance mandates that landlords register their rental housing units and comply with required inspections to ensure safe, decent, and sanitary living conditions. Requiring registration and inspections of rental housing units aid in realizing those units that do not meet acceptable living standards and requires landlords to improve their properties offered for rental or lease.

The code's intent is to identify and correct violations of City codes, the California Building and Fire Codes, State Housing Law, and other applicable regulations that apply to rental properties. It aims to address conditions that pose immediate hazards or threats to the safety and welfare of residents and the public. Furthermore, conditions leading to severe dilapidation will be subject to strict enforcement. However, landlords will be given time to comply with code requirements, aiming to ensure all rental housing meets minimum standards set by local and State laws.

By establishing regulations for maintaining, sanitizing, and ensuring the safety of all residential rental properties, including single and multi-unit structures, motels, hotels, and their common areas, this section aims to safeguard public health and welfare. However, the code does not

mandate retrofitting of units built to earlier standards unless required by State or local laws, provided the units are maintained safely.

While the ordinance has been on the books for a number of years, the City stopped administering the program around 2008, probably as a result of staffing reductions with the Great Recession. In 2020 the City Council received a presentation regarding reimplementation of the program. Staff have been looking at various options for several years and finally believe there is a path forward to implement the program, if some ordinance amendments are made.

Through these measures, the code seeks to achieve rental housing that meets the minimum housing and property maintenance standards, contributing to better living conditions for all residents.

Proposed Code Changes

As part of staff's ongoing efforts to enhance city municipal codes and ensure alignment with current standards, city staff is proposing several revisions for review (see "Attachment C", for specific text amendments).

1. Inspection Responsibility and Enforcement:
Transition of the responsibility for inspections and enforcement from the Code Department to the Building Department Official. This change aims to streamline processes and improve efficiency in code enforcement.
2. Updates to Code References:
Update references to state building, fire, and residential codes, along with corresponding definitions. These updates ensure our codes are consistent with state regulations.
3. Clarification of Registration and Inspection Requirements:
Update text to clarify registration requirements, inspection protocols, and procedures for reinspection. These revisions aim to provide clear and consistent guidelines for inspections.
4. Online Registration Portal:
Update text to include rental registration through a secure website.
5. Value of Rental Unit Inspections:
Add a discussion section to highlight the value of rental unit inspections. Emphasizes that data collected from these inspections can inform future policy decisions and contribute to better housing standards.

Resolution No. 01-84

Resolution No.01-84 was adopted on November 8, 2001, to amend, at the time, the Clearlake Schedule of Fees establish fees for the rental property inspection program (Attachment D).

Current Rental Property Inspection Program Fees:

Annual Inspection	\$40.00 (site and 1st unit) \$15.00 (each additional unit)
Noncompliance re-inspection	\$30.00 (site and 1st unit) \$10.00 (each additional unit)

Under subsection 9-4.12 Fees-Adopted by Resolution of the Rental Housing Unit Inspection and Registration section, the City may adopt, and amend, from time to time, by resolution, the fees required to address current costs, future regulations and programs that may be related to the section.

Staff has determined that the adopted program fees are outdated and may no longer cover the costs necessary to effectively implement and administer the program. The operational costs associated with the program should align with current economic conditions. Since the existing fees have not been updated to reflect these changes, an adjustment is necessary. Staff have prepared under resolution proposed modification to adopted fees.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impacts associated with updating the existing code fees and implementing changes are not fully known and anticipated costs, which include developing an online registration portal, creating a database, City staffing-related expenses, compliance efforts, and legal assistance, need to be aligned with current economic conditions. Since the current fees were adopted by resolution in 2001 and have not been updated to reflect current costs, this adjustment is necessary. While some variability in costs may be expected in subsequent years, annual operating costs are likely to remain close to the implementation level. This matter is anticipated to be discussed at future meetings and is subject to direction from the City Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA):

Staff has made the determination pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Sections 15060(c)(2), the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, 15060(c)(3) the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378, and Section 15061 (b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title

14, Chapter 3 because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly. Additionally, the proposed text amendment serves to establish general standards and regulations. Individual projects that are subject to the Ordinance would require individual review for conformance with CEQA. Therefore, the proposed amendments are exempt from CEQA.

LEGAL NOTICE & PUBLIC COMMENT:

The public hearing was noticed at least ten (10) days in advance in an electronic publication of the Lake County Record Bee on Saturday, March 8, 2025, in accordance with the City Municipal Code, including posting a copy of the notice on the City's Bulletin Board.

MOTION/OPTIONS:

1. Hold first reading of Ordinance No. 279-2025, read by title only, waive further reading and set second reading for next Council Meeting.
2. Move to continue the item and provide alternate directions to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A (Ordinance No. 279-2025)
- Attachment B (Ordinance No. 102-01, Adopted October 2001)
- Attachment C (Ordinance No. 102-01 - Redline)
- Attachment D (Resolution No. 01-84)