

MEMORANDUM



TO: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
FROM: CHARLES BOULARD, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: UNFIT/UNSAFE DWELLING UNITS
DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2026

Mayor and Council –

FYI, our team from Community Development is seeing a trend across the city (not centered in one specific area).

- Victor

Background:

Over the last 8 months, the Community Development team has become aware of and has or is currently addressing a number of unfit and/or unsafe occupied dwelling units. These units are owner-occupied homes, attached condominiums, or mobile homes and are typically occupied by mature adults. While many of these residents have health or mobility challenges, some do not.

Dwellings with potential issues may be referred for follow-up from Novi Public Safety staff responding to welfare checks, emergency medical response visits, and/or concerned neighbors.

Response:

Regardless of the source of the concern, Code Compliance staff have made contact and have been granted access. Assuming the conditions are not immediately hazardous to life, occupants receive a correction notice specifying a completion date and a reinspection date.

Depending on the severity of the concerns, the inspection date may be scheduled out anywhere from 3 days to 2 weeks. Where resources may be an issue, our team works to provide occupants with all available potential options. Next steps up to and including posting of the premises as unfit/unsafe for occupancy are also carefully explained. Novi Public Safety teams are kept informed of hoarding situations due to the increased risk in responding to incidents with high fire load.

Unfortunately, many situations do not improve measurably, and dwellings are posted as unfit/unsafe, requiring occupants to find housing elsewhere for their safety. Once again, residents are provided with available resources and Adult and Child Protective Services (APS/CPS) are kept up to date where appropriate.

Recent situations include the following:

- An attached condominium with hoarding, some non-functioning plumbing, an unsanitary kitchen, and human waste due to the resident being unable to access bathroom facilities due to mobility challenges. The occupant agreed to be transported to the hospital for evaluation and was referred to a rehab facility. A local church assisted with donations toward the owner hiring a contractor to clean

out the unit, replace damaged finishes, install working appliances and restore operation of utilities. The resident is currently back in the home with some work still to be completed.

- A mobile home with pet and human waste, filth, trash, plumbing leaks and severely damaged floor structure. The resident agreed to be transported for evaluation, is currently in rehab, and will not be returning to the unit while actively working to secure housing elsewhere. The home will be demolished and removed by the park management.
- Single-family home occupied by an individual with mobility issues that was filled with apparent hoarding, filth, and pet waste. The owner agreed to be admitted to the hospital, spent time in rehab, and is currently back in the home with the intention to sell and move out of state with family. Friends and a local church cleaned out and repaired the home.
- Single-family home with an inoperable furnace and no hot water, being heated with kerosene heaters. The home is filled with stacked trash, rubbish, hoarding and combustibles. Owner is currently residing with friends until the hazards can be abated.
- Mobile home with pet waste, hoarding, filth, inoperable plumbing fixtures, compromised wiring and insect infestation. Novi PD assisted in arrangements for shelter. The home was demolished and removed by the park.
- Attached condominium with pet feces, trash, and debris, as well as a significant pest infestation. Occupants remain in the unit as significant clean up progress has been made.

The Novi Public Safety team has been extremely helpful in both identifying and documenting areas of need as well as assisting by transporting at-risk residents for medical evaluation, identifying excessive fire loads and testing of potentially hazardous environments. The problem dwellings are typically owner-occupied as opposed to rentals, and most do not exhibit more than minor maintenance issues from a street view perspective.

Resources:

The following potential sources of assistance are shared with occupants depending on needs:

- Minor home Repair Program: City CDBG Funds administered by McKenna. These are currently exhausted except for limited emergencies and applications are in the queue when funding becomes available.
- APS/CSP: APS can help with hoarding issues provided individuals recognize the problem and agree to counseling in conjunction with clean out assistance. APS also can provide assistance and potential guardianship for those individuals

unable to manage their affairs but typically decline to get involved until an individual hospitalized and unable to return home.

- Oakland County programs: Depending on the situation, some temporary shelter assistance may be available. Interest free home repair loans also available for actual repairs.
- Lighthouse of Oakland County: Rehousing
- Ageways Non-profit Senior Services (fka Area Agency on Aging 1-B): Caregiver assistance, meals on wheels, home care resources
- OLSHA: Utility assistance and weatherization assistance, connection to Community Housing Network
- PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) Southeast Michigan: Medical support for seniors
- Samaritas: Emergency Housing