Internal Audit Office
City of Shreveport

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

AUDIT REPORT NO. 26-01

Property Standards-City Violations Process

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS: **PAGE:**

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The Council
City of Shreveport

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February 12, 2026

Councilwoman Tabatha Taylor
Chairman, Shreveport City Council

Dear Councilwoman Taylor:

Subject: Audit No. 26-01 – Property Standards-City Violations Process

Attached please find the report mentioned above. Management comments are included in the report.

Sincerely,

Leanis L. Steward

Leanis L. Steward, CPA, CIA
City Internal Auditor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Property Standards-City Violations Process

Why We Did This Audit

We have completed an audit of the Property Standards-City Violations Process. This audit was conducted on City Council Request. Our objectives were to determine:

a) Whether complaints related to Property Standards violations are appropriately received, documented, investigated, and resolved in a timely and consistent manner,
b) Whether violations are identified, and fines are properly recorded, collected, and reported in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures, and
c) If there is adequate oversight, monitoring, and tracking of personnel costs.

What We Recommended:

- Develop and implement a standardized procedure and timeframe for complaints.
- Contact IT if the Port City 311 and MGO systems can be integrated.
- Update the Property Standards webpage.
- Improve GPS and documentation integration.
- Provide mobile devices for on-site violation entry and photo upload.
- Automate MGO for follow-up reminders.
- Streamline billing with automated lien reminders and engage a collection agency and reconcile payments.
- Train staff on updated procedures, standards, and system use.
- Develop a digital workflow that allows immediate issuance of court orders.
- Departments should strengthen oversight of overtime.

What We Found

Property Standards plays a vital role in maintaining the safety, health, and overall appearance of neighborhoods by enforcing the City's Code of Ordinances. When properties fail to comply with housing, environmental, or building requirements, violations are issued to ensure corrective action is taken. Property Standards operates on both a ***reactive*** and ***proactive*** basis to enforce compliance.

Reactive Enforcement: The department uses Port City 311, the City's public reporting system, to receive complaints submitted online or by phone. Inspectors follow up on these complaints, and when a violation is confirmed, it is entered into MyGovernmentOnline (MGO) the case management system used to document violations, upload photos, record abatement actions, and track case progress. Together, these systems form the foundation of the City's Property Standards workflow—from the initial citizen complaint to final violation resolution.

Proactive Enforcement: Inspectors also conduct proactive inspections to identify potential violations before they are reported by residents. These findings are entered into MGO, ensuring that all violations, whether complaint-based or proactively identified, are documented, tracked, and monitored within the same system. This approach helps address recurring issues, maintain neighborhood standards, and promote timely corrective action.

Our audit focused on weed abatement, demolition, and care of premises activities. While the process showed areas of effectiveness, we identified opportunities to improve system integration, case tracking, documentation, follow-up, collections, and automation within the environmental court and overtime reporting processes.

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Introduction

Property Standards plays a vital role in maintaining the safety, health, and overall appearance of neighborhoods by enforcing the City's Code of Ordinances. When properties fail to comply with housing, environmental, or building requirements, violations are issued to ensure corrective action is taken. The violation process is designed to promote timely resolution of unsafe conditions, thereby protecting the community and preserving property values. Violations are either abated by the property owner or, when necessary, by the City. When the City performs the abatement, the property owner is billed for the cost of the work performed. If a property is adjudicated, the City absorbs the cost of *weed abatement* and *care of premises* activities only; costs related to *demolition*, *securing structures*, and *inoperable vehicles* remain the owner's responsibility. For this audit, our review focused on **weed abatement**, **demolition**, and **care of premises** activities. A summary of the total dollar amounts billed for demolition for fiscal years January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2025, is provided in **Appendix B**. Below is an illustration summary of the process, for a more detailed review see **Appendix C**.

The objectives of this audit were to determine:

- Whether complaints related to Property Standards violations are appropriately received, documented, investigated, and resolved in a timely and consistent manner
- Whether violations are identified and fines are properly recorded, collected, and reported in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures
- Whether there is adequate oversight, monitoring, and tracking of personnel costs

Scope and Methodology

The scope of this audit was limited to Property Standards Violations. The period reviewed was January 1, 2023, to July 31, 2025. To answer our objectives, we reviewed relevant internal controls and developed audit procedures that included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Interviewed staff to enhance the understanding of the process,
- Reviewed City Ordinances pertaining to Property Standards Operations,
- Observed staff in work environment,
- Reviewed applicable documentation and performed test work on data,
- Selected a judgmental sample of 60 violations to review for completion and to review the GPS tracking system,
- Reviewed January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2024, Demolitions billed and paid,
- Selected a judgmental sample of 17 employees overtime whose overtime payment was more than $10,000 between January 1, 2023, to July 31, 2025, to document if overtime was supported with documentation,
- Considered all five internal control components (control environment, risk assessment, monitoring, information and communication, control activities) of the Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government. Internal controls are a process used by management to help an entity achieve its objectives.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on our audit objectives.

The Internal Audit Office expresses appreciation to the management and personnel of the Property Standards Department for their cooperation and assistance provided during the audit.

Objective: To determine whether complaints related to property standards violations are appropriately received, documented, investigated, and resolved in a timely and consistent manner.

Finding 1: Incomplete Tracking and Management of Complaints

Departments should have documented procedures to ensure all complaints are consistently recorded, tracked, and resolved in a timely manner. Property Standards uses Port City 311 to receive complaints submitted online or by phone. However, we noted that Property Standards has not established a defined response timeframe for acknowledging or resolving complaints within its policies and procedures. Between January 2023 and July 2025, Port City 311 recorded a total of 4,617 complaints. Complaint volume increased significantly over time, an average of ***52 complaints per month in 2023***, ***194 per month in 2024***, and ***239 per month through July 2025***, placing 2025 on track to surpass the prior year.

However, management confirmed that not all complaints were entered into the system, meaning the reported total is incomplete. When complaints are made by phone, only the Office Assistant has access to enter them into the system. If she is unavailable, phone calls or emails are forwarded to the Property Standards Director, and those complaints are not entered into the system. In addition, the complaint system is not integrated with MyGovernmentOnline (MGO), which is the system used to record inspections and enforcement activity.

Furthermore, the Property Standards webpage does not provide instructions for citizens on how to submit complaints or concerns. Without clear public guidance, some issues may go unreported, resulting in citizen concerns not being captured or addressed.

Incomplete complaint entry, the lack of integration between Port City 311 and MGO, and the absence of a defined response timeframe, limit management's ability to monitor complaints and ensure they are addressed consistently. These weaknesses increase the risk of unresolved issues, reduced customer satisfaction, and reputational harm to the City.

Recommendation 1:

a. Develop and implement a standardized procedure for entering complaints that includes assigning backup personnel to ensure all phone complaints are recorded in the system. Provide regular staff training on the updated complaint management process to promote consistency, compliance, and effective handling of citizen concerns.

b. Contact IT to determine if Port City 311 and the MGO system can be integrated. If integration is not possible, explore other software options that provide an all-in-one solution to streamline complaint tracking, improve coordination between complaint intake and enforcement activities, and enhance the overall resolution process.

c. Update the Property Standards webpage to include clear instructions on how citizens can submit complaints or concerns, ensuring accessibility and clarity.

d. Establish a defined timeframe for complaint responses to facilitate consistent monitoring and timely resolution. Risk: Medium

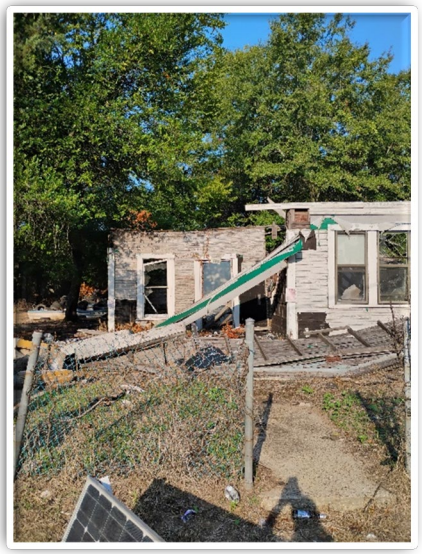
Management Response:

We are utilizing the complaint system with the City for all complaints. We have implemented weekly training for staff. We are in the process of updating the webpage to add a tab for complaints.

Due Date: 1 Year or More

Objective: Whether violations are identified and fines are properly recorded, collected, and reported in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures.

Finding 2: Issuing Violations



Source: Photo taken by auditor

Property Standards officers are responsible for inspecting and investigating any dwelling, dwelling unit, premises, or property within the City limits to enforce applicable ordinances (*Chapter 38 HOUSING AND PROPERTY STANDARDS*). When a violation is observed, the officer must leave or post an official notice on the property and document the action (photos, location, date/time) in the case record. Violations may include but are not limited to, demolition (dangerous structures), weed abatement, care of premises, securing structures, and inoperable vehicles. Property Standards requires follow-up after notice and documentation sufficient to verify field activity and support subsequent billing and enforcement actions. The property owner is billed if the City of Shreveport abates the property.

During a ride-along, we observed inspectors photographing violations with a phone or camera, tagging inoperable vehicles on site (in one instance, 17 vehicles), and then returning to the office to enter violations into MGO, as their devices are not equipped with Wi-Fi connectivity. After entry, office specialists prepare notification letters, which inspectors then post to the property. Inspectors are expected to follow up 10 days after posting and 30 days for demolitions, but MGO does not generate automatic reminders, and staff rely on manual reminders. We also noted that drones are not currently used to document or verify large or inaccessible properties, which limits the ability to obtain comprehensive site imagery and location verification.

Source: Photo taken by auditor

Subsequently, we judgmentally selected 60 violations (demolition, weed abatement, and care of premises) to review ***GPS traceability***, ***documentation***, and ***billing***.

GPS Traceability

Based on this review, we noted that photos are often uploaded one to three days after capture; photos may be taken by someone other than the assigned inspector. GPS data appears on a separate screen and is not linked to the violation project or address record. As a result, we could not reliably verify that the assigned inspector was present at a specific location on a specific date and time.

Documentation

We found that documentation was consistently uploaded for demolition and care of premises; however, 5 (36%) out of 14 weed abatement violations did not have pictures. We also noted case fragmentation within MGO, where multiple projects can be tied together. One cause of this issue is that when an inspector leaves the department, a new inspector starts a separate project for the same violation instead of continuing the existing one. The MGO system includes an audit log that tracks user activity, allowing management to see which inspector performed each action and to reassign projects when staff change. Using this feature would allow new inspectors to continue existing cases rather than create duplicates, improving record accuracy and case continuity.

In addition to documentation and case management limitations, we also noted significant variation in the time it took to complete abatement activities:

Abatement Category	Completion Time Range
Demolition	73–563 Days
Weed Abatement	7–106 Days
Care of Premises	18–260 Days

Source: MyGovernmentOnline (MGO) System

The lack of defined or consistently applied timeliness standards increases the risk of backlogs, delays in revenue collection, and uneven enforcement outcomes.

Billing

Owners are billed when Property Standards performs the abatement. If a bill is not paid within 30 days, a lien should be filed within 45 days. In practice, liens were filed much later—averaging 143 days. For example, one demolition was billed on February 5, 2024, but the lien was not filed until January 31, 2025. In our sample of 60 violations, outstanding balances totaled:

Abatement Category	Outstanding balances total
Demolition	$146,106
Weed Abatement	$0
Care of Premises	$8,900

Source: MyGovernmentOnline System

There are no established processes or controls in place to monitor or reconcile the collection of funds. The City does not use a collection agency, and we noted no follow-up efforts after liens are recorded. We also learned that for adjudicated properties, demolition, inoperable vehicles, and securing violations continue to be billed (based on damage), whereas Care of Premises and Weed Abatement violations are not billed because owners are not notified. ***However, Sections 38-61 and 38.5-8 of the City Code requires the City to assess costs and penalties for all abatement services performed, indicating that current practice is inconsistent with ordinance requirements.*** The City's payments to contractors for Care of Premises and Weed Abatement are not tracked by adjudicated versus non-adjudicated properties; therefore, we could not determine the exact contractor cost attributable to adjudicated cases. However, total program costs were:

Abatement Category	2023 Cost	2024 Cost
Weed Abatement	$340,298	$504,817
Care of Premises	$838,937	$1,060,024

Source: Property Standards Management (These numbers are not audited)

Delayed lien filing and the absence of post-lien collection efforts reduce recoveries, increase the risk that debts age beyond practical collectability, and shift costs from owners to taxpayers. Not billing certain adjudicated services without an authorizing ordinance creates inconsistency and weakens deterrence for noncompliant properties.

Furthermore, we could not rely on the reports generated from the MGO system, so we reviewed each demolition violation directly within MGO (See Appendix B). The table below illustrates demolitions total amount billed and the total amount paid in 2023 and 2024, based on our review:

Year	Total Amount Billed	Total Amount Paid
2023	$ 1,079,107.75	$ 41,294.09
2024	$ 1,295,505.25	$ 85,982.45

Due to the system's inability to retain original billing amounts and the inconsistencies between available reports, we could not independently verify billed versus collected revenues for demolition violations. Once payments are received, they are posted to the City's financial system (LOGOS); however, receivables may be grouped, and property or violation numbers are not linked to individual payments. As a result, there is no unique identifier to reconcile payments recorded in MGO to postings in LOGOS, preventing proper reconciliation between systems. These system design deficiencies represent a significant control weakness and hinder the City's ability to ensure accurate financial reporting, perform reconciliations, and monitor revenue collections.

Recommendation 2:

a. Improve GPS and Documentation Integration:

- Integrate GPS data directly into the violation project/address record to ensure reliable verification of inspector presence.
- Equip inspectors with managed mobile devices with Wi-Fi and require on-site creation of violations with immediate photo upload, after capture to improve timeliness and accuracy.
- Incorporate the use of drones to capture aerial photos or videos of large, hazardous, or difficult-to-access properties to strengthen documentation, verify location accuracy, and provide comprehensive visual evidence for enforcement and case review. Additionally, management and staff should ensure understanding and compliance with all applicable legal, privacy, and regulatory requirements governing drone operations.

b. Standardize Case Management:

- Develop a process to maintain continuity in case management when inspectors change roles. Utilize the existing audit log for reassignment to prevent project fragmentation.

c. Establish Timeliness Standards:

- Define clear, consistent timeliness standards for each type of violation to reduce the variability in abatement completion times and minimize backlogs.

d. Automate Follow-Up Reminders:

- Modify the MGO system to generate automatic reminders for follow-ups at 10- and 30-day post-notification, ensuring consistent enforcement actions.

e. Enhance Billing and Collection Processes:

- Implement a streamlined billing system with automated reminders to ensure liens are filed within the designated timeframe.
- Engage a collection agency to pursue outstanding balances and improve recovery rates.
- Modify the MGO billing module to retain and display the original billed amount for each violation and incorporate a unique identifier that allows payments recorded in MGO to be reconciled to postings in LOGOS.
- Ensure compliance with Sections 38-61 and 38.5-8 of the City Code by assessing costs and penalties for all abatement services performed or formally update the City ordinance to align with current practices related to adjudicated care of premises and weed abatement cases.

f. Conduct Staff Training:

- Provide comprehensive training to ensure all inspectors and office specialists understand and adhere to the updated procedures and standards.

These actions aim to enhance operational efficiency, improve enforcement consistency, and increase the effectiveness of revenue collection. Risk: High

Management Response:
We are in the process of improving GPS and documentation integration with MGO. We are working with IT to get updated equipment for the inspectors. We do not collect money that is due to the City. Finance is responsible for collecting the debt.

Due Date: 1 Year or More

Finding 3: Environmental Court -Violations hearing

The owner has the right to appeal a violation to Environmental Court, which is a specialized municipal court responsible for hearing cases related to property standards, environmental violations, and public nuisance issues within the City. If the owner is dissatisfied with the outcome in Environmental Court, they may further appeal to the 1st Judicial District Court (1st JDC). If the owner files an appeal within 10 days of receiving notification, the case must be prepared for Environmental Court. The Environmental Court is held at 505 Travis Street. Shreveport, LA.

Source: Photo obtained from the City of Shreveport

During our observation of Environmental Court, key processes were fully manual. When the judge issued a decision, the order was not provided to the defendant on-site; staff stated it would be mailed later. Likewise, inspectors cannot update case outcomes in MyGovernmentOnline (MGO) while at court and must return to the office to change the status. The manual, mail-only process introduces delay and uncertainty. Citizens may dispute when the appeal window began ("I never received it" or "it arrived late"), increasing the risk of continuance request and procedural challenges. Additionally, MGO does not have a status field if the violations are in Environmental Court, only a comment section.

According to the contract with South Central Planning & Development Commission (SCPDC) also known as MGO, "SCPDC will provide remote support for the storage of photos, building and permit documents, inspection reports, plan review files, and associated miscellaneous records." However, staff informed us that the templates in MGO are outdated. Although a request for updates was submitted to MGO, no feedback has been received. This issue, along with other system limitations noted in the prior finding *(**Finding 2: Issuing Violations**)*, continues to affect the efficiency and consistency of documentation within MGO.

Recommendation 3:
Coordinate with the MGO system administrator to add a specific "Environmental Court" status field and update templates.

- Develop a digital workflow that allows immediate issuance of court orders (e.g., electronic copies or printed on-site).

- Management should evaluate alternative software solutions or enhancements to MGO that could improve functionality, responsiveness, and documentation

efficiency. This review should include assessing other municipal code enforcement systems to determine whether they provide better integration, data storage, and support capabilities.

Risk: Medium

Management Response:
We are working with the Tolemi Group to develop a system for Environmental Court.

City Attorney Response:
We began providing in-court Judgments to defendants on-site in November of 2025.

Due Date: In Progress

Objective: Whether there is adequate oversight, monitoring, and tracking of personnel costs resources.

Finding 4: Overtime Oversight

In accordance with City policy and Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) best practices, departments should establish and enforce formal procedures for managing overtime. Supervisors should review and approve all overtime in advance, when possible, ensure that overtime is distributed equitably based on operational needs, and maintain adequate documentation supporting the justification for additional hours worked. Regular monitoring and reporting of overtime expenditures should also be performed to promote accountability and budgetary control.

In our review, we found that Property Standards exceeded their 2024 budget appropriation by approximately $51,000, primarily due to excessive overtime expenditures. According to Section 7.02(f)–(g) of the City Charter, "No funds shall be expended and no obligation incurred other than in accordance with the operating budget ordinances." Expenditures beyond the authorized budget appropriation therefore represent noncompliance with Charter provisions and indicate weak fiscal oversight.

To understand the drivers of this overage, we reviewed overtime activity and selected the employees using a judgmental sampling method, focusing on those whose overtime exceeded $10,000 during the period January 1, 2023 – July 31, 2025. See top employees in the chart below:

Employee	2023	2024	2025 (July)	Overtime Total (January 1, 2023-July 31, 2025)
A	$ 26,350.14	$36,362.33	$23,062.12	$85,774.59
B	$ 19,395.23	$ 29,396.59	$11,651.58	$60,443.40
C	$ 16,421.67	$ 24,099.45	$15,723.08	$56,567.17
D	$ 16,421.67	$ 21,462.45	$16,132.70	$54,016.82
E	$ 12,635.64	$ 19,743.08	$15,766.25	$48,145.69

Source: City Financial System (LOGOS)

Based on the top employees, we reviewed the pay period with the highest overtime hours. We found that all sampled 17 overtime records had consistent deficiencies in documentation, justification, and timing of approvals. While all entries were approved, records showed that overtime hours were entered after the approval date and the forms lacked required details such as explanations or start/stop times. See below:

Deficiency Type	Count	Percentage
No explanation of overtime worked/supporting documents	10	59%
Overtime added after approval date/signature	4	24%
Missing start/stop times	8	47%

Source: Absence Request Forms/Forms 24

Inadequate management of employee overtime has been identified, contributing to potential operational inefficiencies and increased labor costs. The audit found that overtime activity is not consistently monitored or reviewed. In several instances, overtime was approved without sufficient documentation or justification demonstrating the necessity of additional hours. This issue may lead to budget overruns and decreased employee morale due to inconsistent work hours.

Recommendation 4:
The Department should strengthen fiscal oversight to ensure that expenditures remain within authorized budget appropriations, in compliance with Section 7.02(f)–(g) of the City Charter by implementing monthly budget-to-actual monitoring reports that include overtime activity. Additionally, ensuring that the Form 24 is completed consistently, including a clear explanation of the work performed, start and stop times, and that overtime hours are not added after the approval date. Risk: High

Management Response:

We have instructed all personnel to include dates, times, and reasons on all P24's.

Due Date: Complete

Prepared by:

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Staff Auditor II

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Associate Auditor

Approved by:

Leanis L. Steward

Leanis L. Steward, CPA, CIA
City Internal Auditor

nd:pj:ts

c: City Council
Clerk of Council
Mayor
Chief Administrative Officer
Carr Riggs and Ingram
City Attorney
Property Standards

Appendix A: Findings Risk Ranking Criteria

The chart below summarizes our evaluation of risk for the recommendations outlined in the report. Each recommendation was assessed at a high, medium, or low risk level based on a qualitative assessment of exposure and/or corrective action priority.

Risk Levels	Risk Description
High Risk	Represents a **significant** level of risk exposure to City assets, public safety, or achievement of objectives or mission. Corrective action should have the highest priority.
Medium Risk	Represents a **moderate** level of risk exposure to the City from extensive operating inefficiencies or high-level non-compliance issues. Corrective action should occur expeditiously.
Low Risk	Represents a **minimal** level of risk exposure to the City from inefficiencies or low-level non-compliance issues. Corrective action should occur as appropriate.

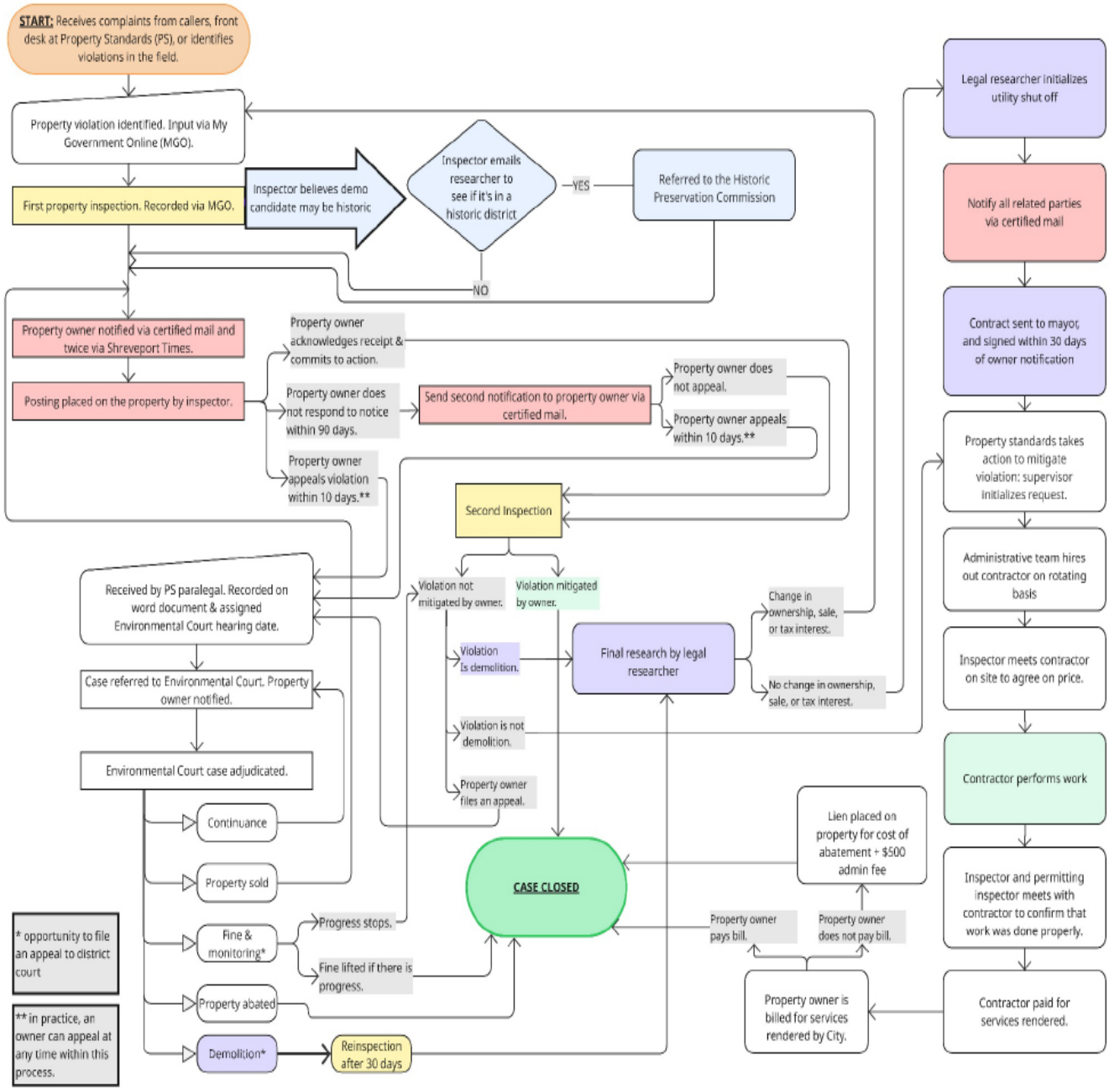
Appendix B:

Actual Demolished Structures per Council District
January 1, 2023 – July 31, 2025

Year	Council District	Total Demolished Structures	Total $Amount
2023	*Council District A – T. Taylor*	64	$ 354,938.85
2023	*Council District B – G. Brooks*	52	$ 325,442.37
2023	*Council District C – J. Taliaferro*	6	$ 31,778.00
2023	*Council District D – G. Boucher*	0	$ -
2023	*Council District E – Dr. A Jackson*	9	$ 34,070.90
2023	*Council District F – J. Green*	51	$ 192,332.87
2023	*Council District G – U. Bowman*	12	$ 52,752.60
Total		**194**	**$ 991,315.59**
2024	*Council District A – T. Taylor*	57	$ 264,903.34
2024	*Council District B – G. Brooks*	52	$ 301,720.25
2024	*Council District C – J. Taliaferro*	4	$ 36,245.00
2024	*Council District D – G. Boucher*	0	$ -
2024	*Council District E – Dr. A Jackson*	19	$ 74,593.25
2024	*Council District F – J. Green*	54	$ 245,587.75
2024	*Council District G – U. Bowman*	43	$ 220,231.20
Total		**229**	**$ 1,143,280.79**
2025	*Council District A – T. Taylor*	60	$ 280,609.75
2025	*Council District B – G. Brooks*	53	$ 263,913.30
2025	*Council District C – J. Taliaferro*	2	$ 8,230.00
2025	*Council District D – G. Boucher*	0	$ -
2025	*Council District E – Dr. A Jackson*	6	$ 22,435.50
2025	*Council District F – J. Green*	54	$ 246,840.25
2025	*Council District G – U. Bowman*	26	$ 118,847.50
Total		**201**	**$ 940,876.30**

Source: Property Standards provided this information.

Appendix C: *Department of Property Standards Workflow Process*



Source: Building Blocks: Strengthening Enforcement for Revitalization