



MEMORANDUM

To: Redevelopment Authority of the City of Racine (the "RDA")
From: Amy Connolly, Director of City Development
Date: May 11, 2017
RE: Request for Technical Assistance from the Center for Community Progress

Many buildings within Racine are in need of repair, either due to abandonment/foreclosure or ownership by individuals or businesses without the funds to make repairs. A number of community issues are caused by these buildings including increased crime, health and safety concerns, lowered City tax revenue, and a lower amount of redevelopment near buildings perceived as unattractive or unsafe.

To develop a strategic approach to improving the City of Racine's building stock, the Department of City Development requests permission to seek a quote for technical assistance from the Center for Community Progress (CCP) related to strategic code enforcement, land banking, and neighborhood housing markets.

Strategic code enforcement:

The City of Racine's code enforcement team includes three inspectors who are tasked with inspecting building exteriors, handling solid waste & weeds issues, and nuisance vehicle orders. The number of code issues during summer months often outstrips the capacity of three inspectors and results in the city not being able to effectively enforce the orders in a timely fashion.

The City hopes to identify issues with our current systems of code enforcement and helps us identify:

1. Codes and policy that could improve compliance;
2. Processes and systems for code enforcement that would improve compliance;
3. Best practices for collaboration with other City Departments to ensure an integrated approach;
4. Communication methods to communicate code enforcement efforts with the public and elected officials.
5. Best practices for code enforcement management and use of technology

We would like to learn current strategies being used to combat similar code enforcement problems that other upper Midwest cities are experiencing. The result of the training should

help bring closure to an overwhelming number of vacant and nuisance properties for our code enforcement team.

Land banking:

A large number of abandoned properties are located within the city with high tax delinquency that could be deeded to the City of Racine by Racine County.

Racine County has expressed interest in working with the City on tax foreclosures. However, they have expressed that they would like to see the City of Racine ready with a land banking structure to sell/donate/develop these properties. Because of the volume of properties that could potentially be land banked, the City will need a solid set of land banking policies, procedures, and structure.

Center for Community Progress

The Center for Community Progress (CCP) is a national nonprofit based in Flint, Michigan, with a mission to help communities transform problem properties (those that are vacant, abandoned, tax delinquent) into assets that support neighborhood vitality. The CCP provides municipalities and other groups with technical assistance to help them develop solutions for vacant, abandoned and problem properties.

CCP's areas of expertise for technical assistance includes:

- Comprehensive Assessment of Policies and Systems Related to Vacancy and Abandonment
- Property Data Collection and Management Practices
- Strategic Code Enforcement
- Property Tax Enforcement and Foreclosure Reform
- Land Banks and Land Banking
- Vacant Land Maintenance, Open Space Planning, and Reuse Strategies

If recommended by the RDA, Staff will bring a cost proposal for technical assistance by CCP to the RDA Board for discussion and recommendation at a later date. Additionally, City staff will seek grants and private participation in funding this effort.