



**Diane N. Tradd**  
*Assistant City Manager/DPD Director*

**R. Eric Slagle**  
*Director of Development Services*

**Shaun Shanahan**  
*Building Commissioner*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Kevin J. Murphy, City Manager  
Diane Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

**FROM:** R. Eric Slagle, Director of Development Services

**SUBJECT:** MOTION OF 1/23/18 BY COUNCILOR ELLIOTT  
REQUEST CITY MANAGER HAVE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES INITIATE  
NEIGHBORHOOD "SWAT" TEAM TO ADDRESS CODE VIOLATIONS AT DILAPIDATED  
PROPERTIES IN CITY

This memorandum addresses the request from Councilor Elliott to address code violations at dilapidated properties throughout the City.

Development Services has stepped up its efforts to address problem properties throughout the City in a variety of ways, using a collaborative, interdepartmental approach. The following are a few of the highlights of our program to address such properties.

First, through the efforts of the Building Commissioner, along with the assistance of the Lowell Police and Fire Departments, we continue to have success with the NEED Program to target problem landlords. As the Council is aware, a large percentage of the problems that our inspectors address results from a relative minority of the landlords in the City. NEED targeted properties show a large rate of continued compliance, and many have changed ownership to new, more responsive landlords as a result of this effort.

Second, the Lowell Police Department and Development Services have successfully implemented multiple phases of the DART Program. The DART Grant Program, which uses grant funds to target properties with drug activity, is another multidisciplinary tool to bring relief to neighborhoods, and we have found that properties with drug activity are often problem properties for code compliance as well.

Third, with the coordination of Mike Demaras in the Neighborhood Services Office, Development Services has continued and increased our neighborhood sweeps. In these daylight task force exercises, Development Services staff, along with LPD and LFD officials, canvas a problem section of a neighborhood to identify and target properties with code issues. Inspectors then follow-up with targeted inspections of identified properties in an effort to increase compliance.

Finally, as was presented to the City Council earlier this month, for the past several months, Development Services staff has been working with the Attorney General's Office on a new pilot program of targeted receivership. With the assistance of Middlesex County Registrar of Deeds, Richard Howe, Jr., City staff has worked with the Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative to compile a list of properties in the Centralville neighborhood which are vacant and otherwise potentially eligible for receivership. The AG's Office has performed all of the title work on the properties and will be initiating the receivership process in the coming weeks.

Overall, Development Services has been proactive in taking a multi-pronged approach to addressing dilapidated properties in the City, and will continue to work with our City and State partners to combat the problem property issue.

ES  
1/25/2018