

CDBG Code Enforcement Plan

City of Orem



July 2020

Overview

The City of Orem's Neighborhood Preservation Unit (NPU) enforces city code and nuisance ordinances to protect the health and safety of the public; to foster neighborhood stability; to preserve the appearance, character, and beauty of neighborhoods; to encourage community pride; to preserve property values; and to protect the general welfare of the City and its residents, businesses, and visitors.

The City of Orem uses federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to fund enhanced code enforcement efforts in deteriorating low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. With CDBG funding, the NPU is able to provide enhanced support in these areas by proactively responding to existing violations and taking additional steps to give residents the resources they need to prevent future violations.

The City of Orem created this CDBG Code Enforcement Plan in order to outline a plan for the NPU's CDBG-funded code enforcement efforts and neighborhood improvement efforts. This plan was developed in consultation with the City's NPU Committee, which consists of NPU officers in addition to representatives from Development Services, Adult Protective Services, DCFS, Housing Authorities, SVU, and other community organizations.

CDBG-Funded Code Enforcement

Orem's NPU enforces city code and nuisance ordinance violations, concentrating on drug/party houses, illegal accessory apartments, cluttered and junky yards, abandoned vehicles, health issues, and illegal or unlicensed businesses.

In most areas, the NPU responds to potential violations on a complaint basis. However, the City of Orem uses federal CDBG funding to fund enhanced code enforcement efforts in specific areas. According to HUD, CDBG grantees are able to use CDBG funding for code enforcement when the areas in which the enforcement occurs meet one of the three national objectives: 1) low and moderate income (LMI) area benefit, 2) prevention or elimination of slum/blight, or 3) activities designed to meet community needs by having a particular urgency. In Orem, 14 primarily residential census block groups qualify for HUD's first national objective of low and moderate income (LMI) benefit. In these 14 census block groups, a minimum of 51 percent of the residents are LMI. This is based on the data provided by CPD's 2018 LMISD.

Orem funds its code enforcement efforts in these 14 LMI census block groups using CDBG funds. This enables the City's NPU to concentrate its most proactive code enforcement efforts in the areas that need it most. The population in these 14 LMI census block groups represents approximately 27% of the total City population, but a much higher proportion of the NPU's total calls occur in these 14 areas.

All NPU officers respond to code enforcement issues in these 14 census block groups, and the City has also hired an additional flex-time civilian code enforcement officer who is singularly dedicated to patrolling and inspecting these 14 census block groups to find code and nuisance ordinance violations, and identify needed areas of improvement. This has enabled the NPU to more proactively discover and resolve violations in these areas.

Additionally, the City recently appointed an administrative law judge to help the NPU enforce ordinance violations in these 14 census block groups (and in the City as a whole). The addition of the administrative law judge has provided legitimate financial and/or legal consequences for code violations, which encourages residents to actually fix the problems. While the administrative law judge is responsible for cases in *all* areas of the City, they have provided an additional benefit to these 14 census block groups as a disproportionately high number of ordinance violations occur in these areas.

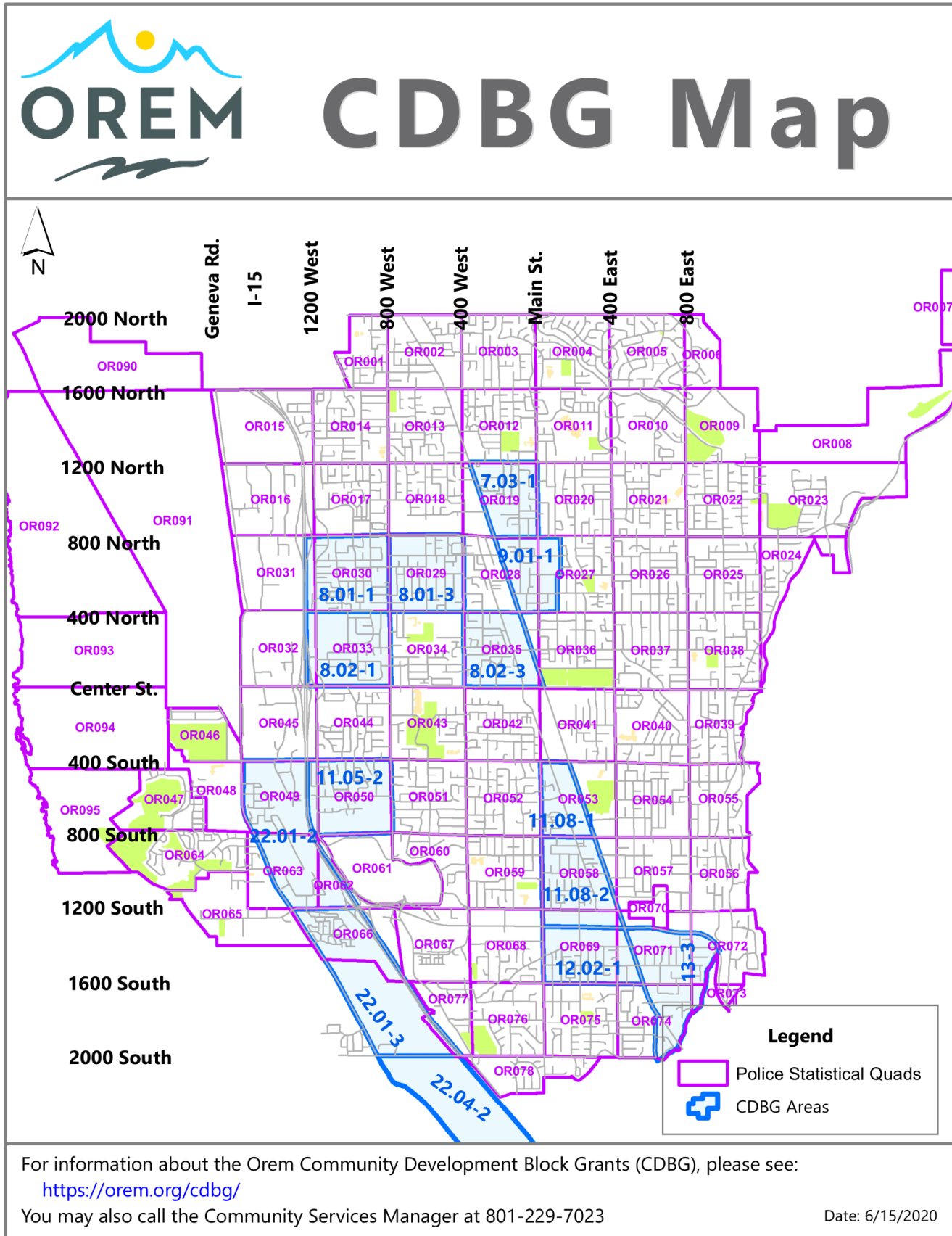
See Table 1 for a list and Figure 1 for a map of the 14 LMI census block groups in Orem, and see the appendix for additional statistics regarding these areas.

Table 1: CDBG-Funded Code Enforcement Census Block Groups

Tract	Block Group	LMI Households
7.03	1	61.9%
8.01	1	73.2%
8.01	3	58.9%
8.02	1	56.8%
8.02	3	52.2%
9.01	1	68.8%
11.05	2	74.6%
11.08	1	55.1%
11.08	2	74.3%
12.02	1	58.2%
13	3	60.3%
22.01	2	86.6%
22.01	3	71.9%
22.04	2	54.8%

The City of Orem funds its code enforcement efforts in each of these 14 census block groups using CDBG funds.

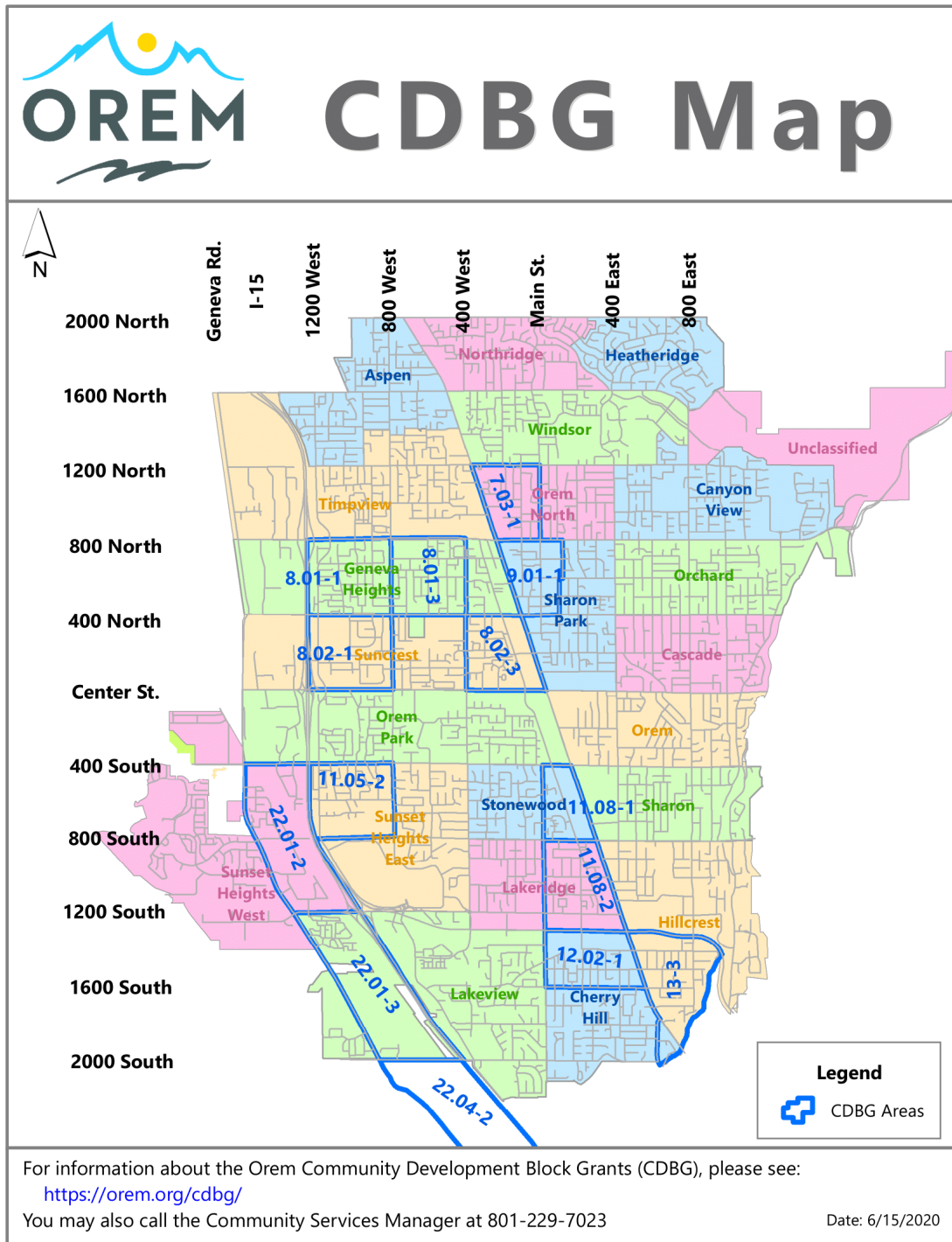
Figure 1: CDBG-Funded Code Enforcement Census Block Groups



Neighborhood Improvement Efforts

The City of Orem is split into 22 total neighborhoods (which roughly align with the City's census tracts). The map below displays all of the City's 22 neighborhoods, along with the 14 CDBG code enforcement areas outlined in blue on the map.

Figure 2: City of Orem Neighborhood Map with CDBG Areas



To focus on the areas that need it most, the City has chosen to perform additional neighborhood improvement efforts in six of the City’s twenty-two neighborhoods (these six neighborhoods all contain at least one of the CDBG-eligible census block groups). These six neighborhoods are 1) Sharon Park, 2) Geneva Heights, 3) Suncrest, 4) Stonewood, 5) Lakeridge, and 6) Hillcrest. The City of Orem has the following current and planned initiatives to provide a higher level of support in these six neighborhoods and/or in the City as a whole.

Current Initiatives

- The City created a “Neighborhood Preservation Resource Guide” to provide information about resources that are available to residents (such as home improvement and rehabilitation programs, building material resources, citywide clean-ups, and much more). The City also created a “Good Neighbor” brochure that identifies common property issues and the city codes that refer to these issues. For example, the brochure includes explanations of city codes surrounding issues such as abandoned vehicles; snow removal; illegal accessory apartments; and many more issues. These brochures are distributed to residents in these neighborhoods at community events and in schools.
- The City sent a letter to all landlords who own homes in these neighborhoods to better inform them of state and city codes concerning their rental properties, and notify them of the consequences of failing to keep their properties up-to-code (i.e. receiving a citation or fine). This letter also included a copy of the Neighborhood Preservation Resource Guide so landlords can be more informed about available resources. The City is also sending quarterly updates to the landlords in these areas to make this an ongoing effort.
- The City recently instituted a landlord licensing program in an effort to address ongoing issues in regards to rental properties. One of the major benefits of this program will be that it will provide up-to-date contact information for all landlords in Orem, which will enable the City to quickly contact landlords if there are any issues with their properties and ultimately resolve these issues. Though this program will be instituted city-wide, it will be of particular benefit to these neighborhoods, as these neighborhoods generally have higher rates of rental properties than other neighborhoods in the City.
- The City partners with local religious groups, Home Depot, the Utah Valley Home Builders Association, the Fuller Center for Housing, and and other community organizations to provide renovation and beautification services to homes and properties in these neighborhoods to keep them safe, beautiful, and up-to-code.
- The NPU holds “Police Picnics” in these neighborhoods to enable residents to interact with neighbors and NPU personnel, share concerns, and ask questions.
- The NPU collaborates with the City’s Public Works Department to hold public community workshops and programs addressing property maintenance and other community needs.
- The NPU has implemented a Police Reading Program where police officers read to and form positive relationships with elementary school children in these neighborhoods. The NPU also has strong partnerships with local schools in these neighborhoods, and provides each school with resources they specifically need. For example, NPU officers recently built an outdoor 9-square game at one of the elementary schools at their request.

- The City writes monthly articles for the Senior Center newsletter to provide information about home maintenance, landscaping, safety, etc. to the City's senior residents.
- The City recently amended an ordinance to reduce the required amount of front yard grass in the City from 70% to 50% to encourage xeriscaping. This will encourage residents to implement xeriscaping to reduce their water usage, improve property maintenance, and benefit the environment.
- The City has a Critical Home Repair & Housing Rehabilitation Program that provides homeowners with grant and/or loan funding up to \$15,000 to repair critical damage to homes or eliminate specific and immediate hazards to health, safety, and/or sanitation. This program is available to all homeowners making less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (based on HUD's yearly MSA numbers) living in the City of Orem. Depending on the homeowner's income, different grant or loan amounts and repayment terms are available.
- The City holds annual citywide spring and fall cleanups to provide residents with ample opportunities to dispose of household waste (regular trash, green waste, and metal recycling bins). This very successful program allows residents to dispose of waste that might otherwise clutter their homes and/or yards.
- The NPU holds semi-annual meetings with neighborhood leaders in each of the qualifying areas to discuss and resolve code issues that are specific to each of the neighborhoods.
- As of April 2020, the City has launched a "Property All-Star Program" to show appreciation to and recognize homeowners / landowners that have worked hard to improve their once-blighted properties and have brought them up to a community standard or beyond. Winners will be awarded with generous prizes and other recognitions. This program will incentivize property owners and renters to improve and maintain their once-blighted properties.
- The City has created a neighborhood-related page on its website providing all neighborhood information in one place (orem.org/neighborhoods). Orem residents can use this page to find out information about neighborhood programs, events, and codes; apply for the Critical Home Repair and Home Rehabilitation Program; learn about home improvement tips; find neighborhood-related resources; view the City's neighborhood plans; report code violations; and more!
- The City has created a resident resources page on its website (orem.org/residentresources) to help residents in need find beneficial community resources.
- The City has created a magnet that outlines important neighborhood-related codes. This magnet is provided to all new Orem utility customers and will be distributed at school and community events. An email with the same information is also provided to all new utility customers that apply for utilities online.

Planned Initiatives

- The City plans to create a mobile tool library to bring tools (including yard tools, paint equipment, power tools, and more) to residents. This will enable residents in these

neighborhoods to more easily access the tools they need to improve their homes and property.

- The NPU will work with the City’s Community Services Manager to plan and carry out neighborhood cleanups in these specific neighborhoods as needed.
- The NPU plans to provide locks, lights, and other crime prevention items to residents so they can keep their homes and properties safe.
- The City is in the process of developing a volunteer “Preservation Team” that will assist those in need (such as seniors, disabled individuals, etc.) in resolving existing code violations or warnings. This will help ensure that those who need help will be able to resolve code problems in a timely manner.

These initiatives aim to create a pipeline into the City’s community development program by connecting residents with resources they need to preserve the appearance and value of their homes and property, to encourage community pride, and to make the City a safe and clean place to live.

Importantly, while the initiatives that directly deal with code enforcement in the CDBG-qualifying areas (e.g. the employment of the civilian ordinance officer) have been or will be funded using dedicated CDBG code enforcement funds, all of the remaining initiatives will be funded or provided by general CDBG funds; private and in-kind donations; individual, foundation, or corporate partnerships; or other city funds.

Conclusion

With the assistance of CDBG funds, Orem’s NPU is able to provide a high level of proactive code enforcement and corresponding rehabilitation efforts in deteriorating LMI neighborhoods. This enables the NPU to efficiently discover and alleviate code violations in the areas that need it most and significantly improve these neighborhoods and our City.

As our CDBG-funded code enforcement program continues to develop, we seek to set benchmarks and discover which of these activities are the most effective at arresting decline in the City’s deteriorating areas, and ultimately enabling the NPU to achieve its purpose. Though this plan outlines proactive strategies based on current information and data, we will re-evaluate this plan each year to ensure that we have appropriate plans and goals. We will adjust this plan as needed to make the City’s use of CDBG funds for code enforcement as effective as possible. Orem’s Community Services Manager and the NPU will keep records to document the City’s initiatives in these neighborhoods to ensure that we are using resources effectively.

In addition, the City plans to re-evaluate the areas where we use CDBG funding for code enforcement activities after the new census data is collected and released in 2020. This will ensure that we are using CDBG funding in the areas that need it most.

As we improve our record-keeping and additional rehabilitation efforts to address specific types of issues in each of these neighborhoods, we believe the City will be able to improve the efficiency of the code enforcement program, help property owners reduce code violations, improve neighborhoods, and ultimately protect the general welfare of the City and its citizens, businesses, and visitors.

Appendix

Neither the City of Orem nor the State of Utah have a definition of “deterioration.” Thus, to determine which areas of the City are “deteriorating” and thus eligible to use CDBG funds for code enforcement, the City relied on the HUD definition of “slum, blighted, deteriorated, or deteriorating...under state or local law”:

- At least 25 percent of properties throughout the area experience one or more of the following conditions:
 - Physical deterioration of buildings or improvements;
 - Abandonment of properties;
 - Chronic high occupancy turnover rates or chronic high vacancy rates in commercial or industrial buildings;
 - Significant declines in property values or abnormally low property values relative to other areas in the community; or
 - Known or suspected environmental contamination.

The remainder of this appendix includes data about the city’s 14 LMI census block groups and how they meet this definition of “deterioration” and are thus eligible to use CDBG funding for code enforcement.

Deterioration Based on Home Age and Values

First, we used 2016 5-year estimates from the United States Census Bureau’s American FactFinder data² to estimate the median age of homes, median value of homes, and median household income in Orem’s 14 LMI census block groups. See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Supplemental Data for 14 LMI Census Block Groups

Tract	Block Group	LMI Households	Median Year Built	Median Home Value (Dollars)
7.03	1	61.9%	1986	\$182,100
8.01	1	73.2%	1984	\$167,100
8.01	3	58.9%	1973	\$168,500
8.02	1	56.8%	1976	\$162,700
8.02	3	52.2%	1979	\$152,500
9.01	1	68.8%	1972	\$146,600
11.05	2	74.6%	1988	\$211,300
11.08	1	55.1%	1984	\$117,800
11.08	2	74.3%	1973	\$154,900
12.02	1	58.2%	1981	\$158,300
13	3	60.3%	1971	\$202,300
22.01	2	86.6%	2006	\$197,300
22.01	3	71.9%	1998	\$145,300
22.04	2	54.8%	1992	\$204,800

Vacancy (Abandonment of Properties)

We also used data from the University of Utah’s Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute³ to estimate overall occupancy, owner occupancy, renter occupancy, and vacancy rates for each of the census tracts where the 14 identified LMI census block groups are located, and for the City of Orem as a whole. The data in Table 2 reflects estimates as of July 1, 2017.

Table 2: Supplemental Data for Census Tracts

Census Tract	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Renter-Occupied Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units
Code Enforcement in Some or All Block Groups Funded by CDBG Funds (Deteriorating Areas)					
7.03	1,657	1,585 (95.65%)	839 (50.63%)	746 (45.02%)	72 (4.35%)
8.01	1,747	1,667 (95.42%)	1,023 (58.56%)	644 (36.86%)	80 (4.58%)
8.02	2,019	1,930 (95.59%)	1,143 (56.61%)	788 (39.03%)	89 (4.41%)
9.01	1,961	1,851 (94.39%)	724 (36.92%)	1,127 (57.47%)	110 (5.61%)
11.05	1,012	987 (97.53%)	581 (57.41%)	406 (40.12%)	25 (2.47%)
11.08	1,306	1,250 (95.71%)	292 (22.36%)	958 (73.35%)	56 (4.29%)
12.02	1,840	1,759 (95.60%)	680 (36.96%)	1,079 (58.64%)	81 (4.40%)
13	1,673	1,618 (96.71%)	601 (35.92%)	1,017 (60.79%)	55 (3.29%)
22.01	4,193	4,036 (96.26%)	2,518 (60.05%)	1,519 (36.23%)	157 (3.74%)
22.04	1,057	1,031 (97.54%)	880 (83.25%)	152 (14.38%)	26 (2.46%)
Orem Average					
All in Orem	30,015	28,785 (95.9%)	17,064 (56.85%)	11,721 (39.05%)	1,230 (4.10%)

Table 2 shows that with some exceptions, the census tracts where the 14 CDBG-eligible census block groups are located generally have a lower overall occupancy rate, lower owner occupancy rate and higher renter occupancy rate, and higher overall vacancy rate than the respective Orem averages. This data serves to reinforce that the occupancy patterns in the top census tracts (with lower owner occupancy, higher renter occupancy, and higher vacancy rates) serve as indicators of deterioration.

Spot Survey in 6 Neighborhoods

The City recently worked with local university students to conduct a spot survey of homes in the 6 neighborhoods where we employ efforts to go “above and beyond” to improve neighborhoods. Students gathered information about 60 homes in each of the 6 neighborhoods. See Table 3 for information gathered from the spot survey.

Table 3: Data from Spot Survey of 6 Neighborhoods

Neighborhood	Average Property Build Year (Survey of 60 Homes)	% of Rental Properties (Survey of 60 Homes)
Sharon Park	1982	25%
Geneva Heights	1982	22%
Suncrest	1981	28%
Stonewood	1985	12%
Lakeridge	1982	23%
Hillcrest	1982	35%

While this data only represents a sample of each of the 6 neighborhoods, it demonstrates that these neighborhoods tend to have older homes, and a high percentage of rental properties. Additionally, the students documented that at least 20-30% of the homes they surveyed in each neighborhood were not well-maintained and/or had some sort of code violation issue.

NPU Call Statistics

Over the past 2 years, the NPU has evaluated its call data to ensure that the higher level of support they are providing in the 14 CDBG-eligible census block groups is justified. The following charts illustrate the NPU's calls in the 14 CDBG-funded areas compared to the from the rest of the City.

The population in the CDBG-funded neighborhoods represents approximately 27% of the total City population. The statistics below demonstrate that the City is generally experiencing significantly more than 27% of its total calls in these 14 census block groups neighborhoods, which illustrates that the City is going "above and beyond" to provide support in terms of code enforcement in these areas.

Table 4: NPU Statistics for Eligible Areas: July – September 2018

	CDBG-Funded Areas	Total Citywide	% in CDBG-Funded Areas
Nuisances	46	157	29.3%
Abandoned Vehicles	91	248	36.7%
Mental Health	75	218	33.0%
Abatement	8	20	40.0%

Table 6: NPU Statistics for Eligible Areas: January – March 2019

	CDBG-Funded Areas	Total Citywide	% in CDBG-Funded Areas
Nuisances	25	95	20.8%
Abandoned Vehicles	50	148	25.3%
Mental Health	84	255	24.8%
Abatement	15	35	30.0%

Table 7: NPU Statistics for Eligible Areas: April – June 2019

	CDBG-Funded Areas	Total Citywide	% in CDBG-Funded Areas
Nuisances	41	130	31.5%
Abandoned Vehicles	52	160	32.5%
Mental Health	63	245	25.7%
Abatement	22	49	44.9%

Table 8: NPU Statistics for Eligible Areas: July – September 2019

	CDBG-Funded Areas	Total Citywide	% in CDBG-Funded Areas
Nuisances	7	11	63.6%
Abandoned Vehicles	92	237	38.8%
Mental Health	70	271	25.8%
Abatement	8	18	44.4%

Table 9: NPU Statistics for Eligible Areas: October – December 2019

	CDBG-Funded Areas	Total Citywide	% in CDBG-Funded Areas
Nuisances	6	9	66.7%
Abandoned Vehicles	86	218	39.4%
Mental Health	72	384	18.8%
Abatement	7	17	41.2%

Table 10: NPU Statistics for Eligible Areas: January - March 2020

	CDBG-Funded Areas	Total Citywide	% in CDBG-Funded Areas
Nuisances	3	4	75.0%
Abandoned Vehicles	63	193	32.6%
Mental Health	84	383	21.9%
Abatement	27	34	79.4%

Table 11: NPU Statistics for Eligible Areas: April - June 2020

	CDBG-Funded Areas	Total Citywide	% in CDBG-Funded Areas
Nuisances	5	11	45.5%
Abandoned Vehicles	86	221	38.9%
Zoning	40	153	26.1%
Mental Health	84	293	28.7%
Abatement	21	28	75.0%

Conclusion

The City funds its code enforcement area in the 14 LMI census block groups of the City. The data in this appendix shows that these areas are also “deteriorating” based on home age, home value, rental rates, and vacancy rates. The City plans to continue to work with university students in the area to conduct a more complete inventory of these neighborhoods to determine the true amount of “deterioration” in each of these neighborhoods. As we are able to identify the areas in Orem with the most deterioration, we will focus our CDBG-funded code enforcement efforts and neighborhood improvement efforts in these areas to improve the City’s code enforcement program and improve our neighborhoods and City as a whole. We are committed to the NPU goals to protect the health and safety of the public; foster neighborhood stability; preserve the appearance, character, and beauty of neighborhoods; encourage community pride; preserve property values; and protect the general welfare of the City and its residents, businesses, and visitors.

Notes

¹ Eligible Rehabilitation and Preservation Activities, 24 C.F.R. 570.202(c).

² “American FactFinder.” United States Census Bureau, <https://factfinder.census.gov/>.

³ “Salt Lake and Utah County Subcounty Estimates, 2010–2017.” Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, <http://gardner.utah.edu/demographics/salt-lake-and-utah-county-subcounty-estimates-2010-2017/>.