



FOLLOWING THE FIRE

ANALYSIS OF 2024 VACANT STRUCTURE FIRES



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SYRACUSE CITY AUDITOR**

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Message From The City Auditor

July 28, 2025

Vacant structure fires cost the City dearly: injuries to firefighters, massive inter-departmental responses, millions of dollars in damage and demolition costs. Couple this with reductions in housing units that rarely get replaced quickly, if at all. Getting to the root causes of this issue, and helping prevent these fires from happening at all, could save serious resources and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.



This report began in early 2024 as a problem in search of a cause – fires at vacant structures. Our office wondered – if we look at the breath of available city data (police calls, fire calls, code violations and fines, water service, tax and water payments, and the vacant property registry) can we identify any common themes or similarities in these properties to create an early warning system which helps prevent them?

We sought data from departments including Fire, Police, Finance, Assessment, Water, and Neighborhood and Business Development. We tried to ascertain the number of vacant properties, what the City's response is after a fire, and what circumstances led to the house becoming in that condition. This took a tremendous amount of data from different entities and put it all together – for the first time.

After looking at all the available data, we started to see common threads emerging from these fires: unsecured premises, a history of code violations, water and utilities having been shut off, and being near the site of previous vacant structure fires. While some of this may sound obvious, the data tells a remarkable story. The next chapter is already written: the vacant structures most at risk of fire are easily predicted, and the City must take steps now to intervene. That includes better board-ups, stronger information sharing between City departments and private utility providers, and stronger legal action to hold slumlords accountable. We also must have longer-term strategies to move these properties from abandoned to occupied generating tax revenue – once again.

While I believe the problem of vacant structure fires is pervasive, I do not believe it is intractable. It can be solved, and I hope this report lays out a suite of potential solutions. I am hopeful that, by doing this, we can begin a serious conversation about how the City of Syracuse can prevent these dangerous, expensive fires and improve the quality of our neighborhoods and housing supply.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander Marion". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Alexander Marion, MPA
Syracuse City Auditor

Executive Summary

Vacant and abandoned buildings and vacant lots are some of the most noticeable indicators of a neighborhood in decline. These properties are dangerous, unsightly, and a scourge on our city. And in 2024, local news reports and press releases from the Syracuse Fire Department began highlighting a disturbing trend among these properties – they were catching fire at an alarming rate.

This report represents months of research and is the most comprehensive report yet undertaken by City Auditor Alexander Marion. For each vacant structure fire, Audit Department staff examined details of the fire and pieced together each property's unique history, both before and after the blaze, using a variety of data collected from across departments and software programs, including records from Code Enforcement, BAA, Permits, Water, Finance, Fire, Police, and more.

Each vacant property fire in 2024 had a unique story but several common themes were present in those properties.

Many properties with vacant fires were behind on either water charges and/or property taxes; the overwhelming majority had inactive domestic water service, some for decades. Nearly all had open code violations and four out of five faced some sort of legal action from the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication. Not a single property was properly registered on the Vacant Property Registry at the time of their fire.

The report finds that of the 87 structure fires during 2024, nearly 30% of all fires (25 of them) were in structures or units determined to be vacant, with 19 of those (76%) occurring in buildings which were vacant and unsecured. The average vacant property fire in 2024 drew a response of 49 fire personnel, took 3 ½ hours to clear, and had potentially reimbursable costs of \$10,000; those blazes has estimated damages of \$1.12 million.

The report also found that the SFD failed to complete a notification code to Code Enforcement following an April 2024 fire on Rich Street which caused structural damage. Fire officials verbally requested an emergency demolition but as of June 2025, this property has not been demolished and remains standing showing signs of a significant fire. The property next door, 501 Bellevue Avenue, was the site of Signal 99 vacant house fire on June 3rd, 2025.

Many of the property fires in vacant buildings resulted in significant damage. Eleven (11) out of the 25 fires resulted in demolitions, with several being deemed emergency demolitions by the Syracuse Fire Department or Code Enforcement.

In reviewing those demolitions, the report found the City paid nearly \$160,000 for emergency demolition work and a City employee waived a demolition permit fee of nearly \$15,000 without the

legal authority to do so. Demolition contractors also repeated understated construction costs on permit applications which reduced their fees by hundreds of dollars; despite these errors, the permits were issued. In the case of 153 Seymour Street, which was demolished in early 2025, no city systems show that a demolition permit was ever pulled.

Finally, the review confirmed that a multitude of software programs, including AS/400, IPS, Camino, eTAX, and AIMS are being used by the City to track valuable property information and none of the mentioned programs have any automatic sharing capabilities. Reporting varies program to program and any information transferred from one system to another must be manually keyed; the review found most information does not get transferred.

The report makes a series of recommendations which are aimed at improving the outlook for vacant and blighted buildings before they become fire victims.

First among them, is the implementation of an early warning system which can alert City officials to potential problem properties to stage early interventions.

City leaders should also update the City Code in several ways. Among them, require all vacant structures and lots to get a Vacant Property Certificate, add a new category for "Blighted Property" which goes beyond vacant and describes a property which is no longer being maintained, and adopt the FEMA U.S. Fire Administration Board Up Procedure, commonly referred to as the "Tension" or "Brace and Bolt" method. This method uses carriage bolts and two-by fours to more securely board up vacant structures, reducing the opportunity for trespassing.

The City should also seek permission from New York State to enact a Vacant/Abandoned Tax Rate for these structures. Funds from this tax should be directed to the Land Bank or the City's emergency demolition fund.

The Fire Department should make spotting dangerous houses easier by adopting the FEMA United States Fire Administration recommended "Red X" markings for vacant properties and doing away with the current "Unfit" placards, which are inadequate.

The report also recommends professionalizing the Division of Code Enforcement and requiring these employees to wear uniforms, use body cameras, and perform work in marked City vehicles. The Division should also issue rent holds for all vacant properties and not release the hold until the property owner has proven they have been issued all property permits, licenses, and registrations to operate.

The Division should also be more aggressive with inspections and automatically inspect properties following fires, inspect the full portfolio of any property owner who has a unit declared unfit, and inspect any property which has a utility shut off. Lawmakers should require private utility companies to supply the City with notice of any changes to service at a City property.

Abbreviations and Terms Used In This Report

This report includes several terms and abbreviations which may be unfamiliar to readers, including some software programs used by City departments to manage property data. This guide provides readers with a list of the various terms used and includes a brief definition or explanation of each.

Active Water Service – term used when City water service is turned on to a property and flowing into the building through the water main, opposed to “Inactive” Water Service.

AIMS – short for “Automated Issuance Management System,” AIMS is a software product by local Syracuse company EDC Corporation. It is a fully-integrated parking management system which has been used by the Syracuse Police Department for years to issue and manage parking tickets. In recent years, the program has been modified for the City’s use, and it is now used to issue health and sanitation violations.

AS/400 – short for “Application System/400,” a software tool created by IBM now commonly known as IBM Power Systems, it is a legacy City program, used for years to manage employee timekeeping as well as water, tax, parking ticket, and code enforcement records. Use has dwindled in recent years with the implementation of new software programs; nowadays, it is used primarily for employee timekeeping and by the Water Department for service and billing records.

BAA – short for “Bureau of Administrative Adjudication,” the bureau is part of the Department of Law and is responsible for processing, handling appeals and holding adjudication hearings for City violations including parking tickets, health & sanitation violations, and other code violations.

Camino – a software tool owned by Clariti, it is used by the Division of Code Enforcement and the Central Permit Office to intake, process, and issue certain permits, certificates, and permissions. The City of Syracuse helped the original developer create the program and has been using the program for several years.

Code Enforcement – refers to the Division of Code Enforcement, a function of the Office of Neighborhood and Business Development, this division enforces federal, state, and local laws, codes, ordinances, and regulations including state building and fire codes and housing laws, and local property conservation codes and zoning regulations. The division fields complaints from the public, issues permits, licenses, and certificates, performs inspections, and verifies project completion.

DPW – short for “Department of Public Works,” the City’s general services department which handles a variety of tasks including street cleaning and repair, garbage and recycling collection, snow plowing, street signals and markings, and more.

EMS – short for “Emergency Medical Services,” refers to care and services rendered to individuals experiencing medical incidents.

eTAX – a software tool by Hamer Enterprises, which allows City staff to manage property tax information and provide internet-based property tax billing and collection which enables local and state governments to collect taxes and provide tax and appraisal information online.

FPB – short for “Fire Prevention Bureau,” this division of the Syracuse Fire Department is responsible for enforcement of State and City building and fire codes and working with all facets of the public to create fire prevention and safety programs in our community.

GSPDC – short for “Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation,” and often referred to by its more common name – the Land Bank – this non-profit organization works with the City to take possession of tax delinquent properties, acting as a holding company and clearing house for those properties to be re-sold, or before they are demolished.

IPS – short for “Integrated Property System,” a software tool designed by Business Automation Services, Inc., used by multiple City departments to track property complaints, permit applications, inspections, and violations. The City has used the program for more than a decade.

Inactive Water Service – term used when City domestic water service has been shut off at the water box and water is no longer flowing into a property, opposed to “Active” Water Service.

Kill At The Main – This term, sometimes used in the past tense as “killed at the main,” is used when the Department of Water permanently disables water service to a property by digging out the water box and capping the water service.

NFIRS – short for “National Fire Incident Reporting System,” this database collects information about fires and other incidents across the nation and assists governments analyze that data, develop reporting tools, and assess fire safety efforts. Following each fire, the SFD completes a report using NFIRS forms. In 2026, this nationwide system will sunset and be replaced by “NERIS” – the National Emergency Response Information System.

SFD – short for “Syracuse Fire Department,” the City of Syracuse’s professional firefighting department.

Signal 99 – term used by the Syracuse Fire Department to declare a working structure fire.

SPD – short for “Syracuse Police Department,” the City of Syracuse’s professional police force.

VRP – short for “Vacant Property Registry,” a registry of known vacant properties maintained by the Office of Neighborhood and Business Development.

Introduction

Vacant and abandoned buildings and vacant lots are some of the most noticeable indicators of a neighborhood in decline. And while many issues with these properties start small, like minor code issues including overgrowth and accumulations of trash and debris, some have festered for years, with boards over windows and water service cut off, and years of unpaid taxes piling up.

These properties are dangerous, unsightly, and a scourge on our city. And in 2024, local news reports and press releases from the Syracuse Fire Department began highlighting a disturbing trend among these properties – they were catching fire at an alarming rate.

In January 2024 alone, four properties – all determined to be vacant – caught fire, causing tens of thousands of dollars in damage, and putting the life and safety of fire personnel in danger. In February, this trend continued – three more vacant house fires. By year's end, 25 vacant properties had caught fire, a sizeable percentage of the City's 87 total structure fires.

This report represents months of research and is the most comprehensive report yet undertaken by City Auditor Alexander Marion. For each vacant structure fire, Audit Department staff examined details of the fire and pieced together each property's unique history, both before and after the blaze, using a variety of data collected from across departments and software programs.

Records reviewed included:

- Code Enforcement complaints, violations, photographs, and notes
- Bureau of Administrative Adjudication tickets, photographs, and notes
- Permit Office permits, certificates, and registrations
- Rental Registry and Vacant Property Registry certifications
- Water Department billing and service records
- Finance Department Property Tax records and special charges
- Onondaga County Property Tax records
- Assessment roll data
- Zoning reviews
- Fire Department incident reports
- Police call data
- Fire scene photographs
- City Line requests

Staff from the Audit office also visited the site of each property fire and observed the progress on either returning the property to service or demolishing it.

Each property fire includes a unique story neatly divided into sections about what happened on the day of the fire, what led up to the blaze, and what's happened since. It's a deep dive, including information about how the fire started, the fire department response, and the damage caused. Various records are pieced together to show how these properties fared prior to their blaze.

The data will reveal common themes about these properties – they often had open Code Violations, many had faced BAA action, and most had inactive water service. The fires were also geographically centered in some of the City's most impoverished neighborhoods.

The fires themselves also included similarities – most properties were found unsecured, and they usually didn't have working smoke detectors. The firefighting efforts ranged from quick knock downs to full blown fires impacting nearby properties. Damage ranged from minimal to massive, and the Department response ranged by hours of time, and by dozens of personnel depending on the fire.

Since the fires, the properties have had a mix of fortunes with most still standing, charred, and having a blighting impact on their neighborhoods. Eleven of the 25 have been demolished, with several more seemingly in need. And while work has taken place at least one property to bring the units back online, the owner has failed to acquire the necessary permits and registrations needed to lawfully bring the unit back into service.

The report includes a summary of the various City laws which have been created or amended to specifically mention vacant lots and buildings. Of note is the City's Vacant Properties section of the Property Conservation Code. This section was enacted with a statutorily defined purpose because these structures were subject to unlawful entry, vandalism, and fire and they had potential health and safety hazards.

The report concludes with a series of noteworthy findings followed by recommendations aimed at improving the way the City government views and handles vacant properties, with measures recommended to reduce the number of vacant and blighted properties and prevent them from catching fire.

Syracuse Fire Department 2024 Year In Review

2024 was a busy year for SFD. According to departmental records, SFD responded to roughly 25,000 incidents, ranging from alarm activations to emergency medical situations, to hazardous material spills and fully-engulfed structure fires. This number is down from more than 26,000 in 2023, and up from 2022.

Despite being *firefighters*, the most common response for the department is EMS calls. Nearly half of the incidents (11,507) were coded as EMS calls. The Department also responded to nearly 3,000 unintentional activations involving an alarm, sprinkler, or smoke detector with no fire.

TOP FIRE DEPARTMENT INCIDENT RESPONSES 2024		
Rank	Code	Count
1	321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	11507
2	745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	1617
3	611 - Dispatched and cancelled en route	1311
4	622 - No incident found on arrival at dispatch address	1003
5	554 - Assist invalid	998
6	743 - Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	886
7	311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	659
8	322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	653
9	324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	603
10	550 - Public service assistance, other	380
11	551 - Assist police or other governmental agency	351
12	735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	315
13	744 - Detector activation, no fire - unintentional	274
14	412 - Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	262
15	740 - Unintentional transmission of alarm, other	262
16	733 - Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	245
17	353 - Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator	237
18	651 - Smoke scare, odor of smoke	185
19	111 - Building fire	175
20	323 - Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)	167
21	113 - Cooking fire, confined to container	163
22	746 - Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	163
23	511 - Lock-out	151
24	440 - Electrical wiring/equipment problem, other	125
25	151 - Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	120

While any call for service to 911 in an emergency, some of the most serious incidents for the department are working structure fires, referred to as "Signal 99s." These calls indicate a building – residential, commercial, or industrial – which has an active fire. Typically, they involve significant suppression personnel and apparatus to extinguish the blaze.

In 2024, the Syracuse Fire Department responded to more than 800 calls involving a fire – in buildings, vehicles, brush, or other blazes. While most could easily be extinguished, 87 of those fires were declared a "Signal 99," including 25 (nearly 29%) which were in structures deemed to be vacant. Twice, firefighters had to battle vacant structure fires on back-to-back nights.

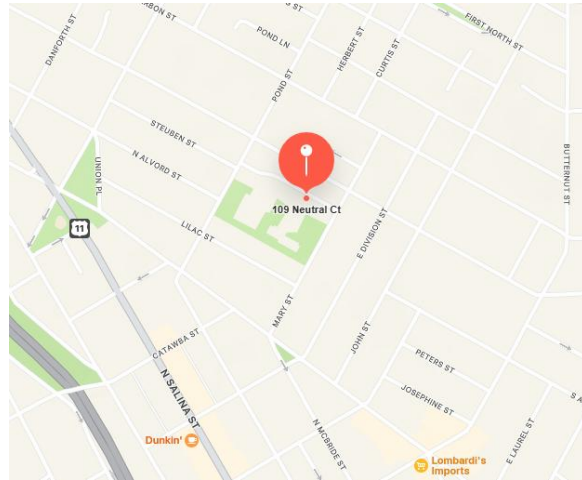
Below is a list of the 87 "Signal 99" structure fires which occurred in Syracuse in 2024, compiled using SFD data. Those highlighted yellow were deemed to have occurred in vacant structures or units.

2024 SIGNAL '99' FIRES								
#	Date	Address	#	Date	Address	#	Date	Address
1	1/3/2024	109 Neutral Ct.	30	4/11/2024	1119 W. Onondaga St.	59	8/16/2024	1200 N. Glencove Rd.
2	1/6/2024	124 Mayar St.	31	4/23/2024	744 E. Laurel St.	60	8/26/2024	112 Niven St.
3	1/8/2024	128 Spencer St.	32	4/25/2024	430 Burnet Ave.	61	8/27/2024	827 Lancaster Ave.
4	1/12/2024	211 Kirkpatrick St.	33	5/3/2024	226 Holland St.	62	8/29/2024	1309 Lodi St.
5	1/14/2024	100 Beard Pl.	34	5/19/2024	625 Lemoyne Ave.	63	8/31/2023	107 Mary St.
6	1/15/2024	403 Bear St.	35	5/21/2024	230 Leon St.	64	8/31/2024	232 Seeley Rd.
7	1/20/2024	156 Mary St.	36	5/22/2024	634 E. Division St.	65	9/5/2024	605 Turtle St.
8	1/27/2024	112 Hope Ave	37	6/9/2024	108 Kirkwood Pl.	66	9/6/2024	835 Livingston Ave.
9	2/1/2024	100 Lydell St.	38	6/16/2024	229 E. Colvin St.	67	9/8/2024	225 Riverdale Dr.
10	2/4/2024	1021 W. Genesee St.	39	6/19/2024	923 Park Ave.	68	9/11/2024	115 Neutral Ct.
11	2/9/2024	1113 S. Townsend St.	40	6/19/2024	107 Hier Ave.	69	9/15/2024	272 Taft Ave.
12	2/12/2024	2002 E. Fayette St.	41	6/27/2024	128 Wayne St.	70	10/6/2024	342 Elm St.
13	2/13/2024	305 Seward St.	42	6/29/2024	820 Wadsworth St.	71	10/12/2024	1114 S. Geddes St.
14	2/14/2024	204 S. Alvord St.	43	6/30/2024	728 Park Ave.	72	10/17/2024	153 Seymour St.
15	2/21/2024	621 Park St.	44	6/30/2024	2017 South Ave.	73	10/17/2024	247 Furman St.
16	2/21/2024	701 E. Genesee St.	45	7/6/2024	331 Primrose Ave	74	10/19/2024	145 Croly St.
17	2/22/2024	1228 Park St.	46	7/7/2024	217 Webster Ave.	75	10/20/2024	122 Dablon Ct.
18	2/29/2024	212 Seward St.	47	7/11/2024	151 Ballantyne Rd.	76	11/13/2024	111 Lynch St.
19	3/2/2024	334 Richmond Ave.	48	7/13/2024	308 Lexington Ave.	77	11/13/2024	359 Forest Hill Dr.
20	3/4/2024	400 Seeley Rd.	49	7/18/2024	1310 Willis Ave.	78	11/23/2024	519 Burnet Ave
21	3/5/2024	753 James St.	50	7/20/2024	223 Fitch St.	79	11/24/2024	119 Beverly Rd
22	3/8/2024	511 E. Laurel St.	51	7/28/2024	100 Chatham Pl.	80	11/24/2024	107 Brooklea Place
23	3/9/2024	122 W. Seneca Tpke.	52	8/2/2024	405 Pond St.	81	11/29/2024	383 N. Edwards Ave.
24	3/10/2024	104 Carlton Rd.	53	8/8/2024	2500 Grant Blvd	82	12/14/2024	469 James St. Apt. 20
25	3/15/2024	953 Emerson Ave.	54	8/9/2024	159 Ballantyne Rd.	83	12/15/2024	127 Huntley St.
26	3/15/2024	220 S. Edwards Ave.	55	8/12/2024	215 Green St.	84	12/15/2024	516 Barnes Ave.
27	3/29/2024	310 Palmer Ave	56	8/13/2024	708 N. Alvord St.	85	12/21/2024	615 North McBride St.
28	4/9/2024	610-612 Oneida St.	57	8/14/2024	101 Oakley Dr. E	86	12/24/2024	243 Mosley Drive
29	4/10/2024	310 Rich St.	58	8/14/2024	151 Fitch St.	87	12/29/2024	108 Hier Ave.

Vacant Fire #1 – January 3, 2024, 11:12 PM 109 Neutral Court



109 Neutral Court pre-fire (Source: Google Images, June 2011)



Map of Area. 109 Neutral Court is Shown by the Red Pin.

109 Neutral Court, a one-family home on the City’s Northside, caught fire the evening of Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024, resulting from a blaze which began in the kitchen. The fire caused heavy damage to the rear of the first floor and damages were estimated at \$30,000.

Fire investigators were unable to determine the cause but found the home to be vacant and unsecured. Neighbors in the area reported squatting activity. No smoke detectors were present in the home.

In total, 35 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene in 14 apparatus. Crews remained at the scene for nearly four hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of January 3, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Inactive Since 2023 and Current
Code Violations	No Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by David Hunter, Jr who had previously been cited for minor code violations in 2020 and 2023 (including foundation problems and overgrowth). All violations were closed out prior to the fire.

In July 2023, with all water charges current, the property had the water shut off by the City Water Department, who identifying the property as vacant. The owner was also current on all property taxes.

Following The Fire

109 Neutral Court is one of the rare examples of a vacant home, burned in 2024, which has been renovated. Unfortunately, that path did not come easily.

Two months following the fire, the property was sold to MAA Petroleum Inc., which according to State records is owned by Moajjem Hossain. On May 2nd, a complaint for trash and debris at the property was investigated and several citations were issued for property maintenance issues, and for failing to register the property on the vacant property registry. City records show these violations were not re-inspected until September 11th when they were passed and closed.

On July 17th, the Division of Code Enforcement investigated another complaint at the property and issued a "Stop Work Order" for repairs which were taking place without having building permits or approved drawings. The following week, Hossain applied for a general construction permit and for the rental registry. He paid \$150.00 for the Rental Registry and \$40.00 for a general construction permit for sheetrock repairs; however, that permit was not issued until October 1st. No physical copy of the permit was uploaded to City systems. Additionally, Palmer Electric pulled two electrical permits between late-July and early-August and was charged \$106.00 in permit fees. Certificates of Completion were uploaded for all three permits.

On November 14th, Hossain's violations were referred to the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA). On December 4th, Hossain paid a \$150 fine for the construction documents violation but took no action on the building permits violation. On March 18th, the BAA issued a default judgement for \$300 for that violation; Hossain paid the fine and penalty on May 9th. In the meantime, a new complaint 2025-02678 was opened for failure to comply with the Rental Registry, noting open BAA action. In May, he was issued a violation for failing to be registered with the rental registry, stating that the resolution was to get proper permits for the repair work.

As of June 2025, violations for building permits and construction documents, and the new rental registry violation, all remain open. Water service is active and current at the property, but the owner is now in arrears on taxes, with April 2025's payments for both City/Schools and County taxes past due. As of June 15th, 2025, with fees and penalties, the owner owes about \$500 in back taxes.

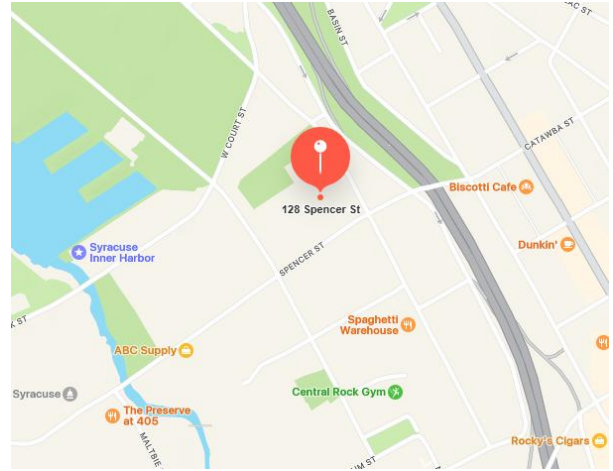


March 2025. House has had renovations since the fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #2 – January 8, 2024, 1:23 PM 128 Spencer Street



128 Spencer Street pre-fire (Source: Google Images, July 2023)



Map of Area. 128 Spencer Street is Shown by the Red Pin.

128 Spencer Street, a commercial shell building in the Inner Harbor neighborhood, and site of the former Syracuse Washing Machine Company, caught fire the afternoon of Monday, January 8th, 2024. Firefighters encountered heavy smoke and multiple fires throughout the structure. Damages were estimated at \$10,000.

The site was previously known to building owners and fire personnel for squatting activity. Upon arrival, fire teams found the building to be vacant and unsecured with multiple squatters inside the building; no one encountered any injuries. Investigators determined the cause to be an incendiary fire, started by the homeless to keep warm.

In total, 40 fire personnel attended the fire in 20 apparatus. The fire was extinguished, and the site was cleared in just over two hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of January 8, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Inactive Since 2003 and Current
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

The property was owned at the time of the fire by Cor Spencer St Co LLC, a subsidiary of COR Development Company. Taxes and water charges were current on the property; however, domestic water service had been inactive since 2003. The structure was not listed on Vacant Property Registry.

The building had previously been cited for multiple code between 2020 and 2023, and at the time of the fire, the property had open code violations from March 2023. These violations involved windows, foundations, structural problems, and graffiti, and were being handled by the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA). In April 2023, BAA issued 7 tickets to the owner, fining them \$975 and giving them 6 months to pay. Despite having 6 months, no payment was made by the December 7th due date.

Following The Fire

Following the fire, the structure was turned over to the owner to secure. It ultimately sat vacant until its demolition started in late-2024 but was the subject of BAA action during 2024.

After defaulting on their fines due December 7, 2023, in April 2024, BAA issued a default order against the owner, issuing a judgement in the amount of \$1950 with a May 15th due date to pay or request a stay of the decision. On May 15th, the owner requested a stay, citing miscommunication. The owner noted ongoing talks with key officials in the Office of Neighborhood and Business Development and felt issues had been resolved through those conversations. They stated an interest in demolishing the property and noted they had recently registered the structure on the Vacant Property Registry (VPR), despite admitting the City made that request during a November 20, 2023 meeting. City records confirm they paid \$100.00 in May 2024 and noted they would demolish the building.

Following a BAA hearing in August, all the charges were sustained but all the fines and penalties were waived.

A month later, Camino, a City permit software tool, shows demolition permit 2024-186 was issued on September 9th to Lion Construction Supply & Services, out of East Syracuse. The permit identified the demolition cost at \$1,400,000 with a permit fee of \$14,965.00. City records, however, show a full fee waiver for the permit, approved by Brian Eisenberg, Asst. Director of Code Enforcement. Cross-referenced records in IPS, a Code Enforcement software tool, did not show any information about the property's demolition.

Demolition work began on the property in late-2024 and was completed in 2025. No signed Certificate of Completion was uploaded to city records. As of May 2025, piles of debris remain at the site. The property remains current on water charges and property taxes; however, water service remains inactive.

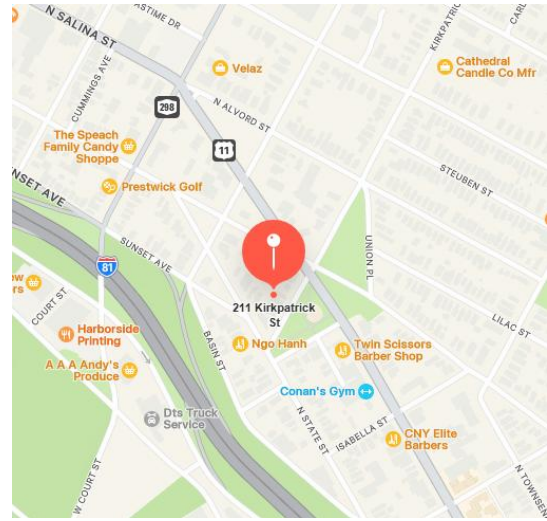


March 2025. The warehouse was demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #3 – January 12, 2024, 12:56 AM 211 Kirkpatrick Street



211 Kirkpatrick Street pre-fire (Source: Google Images, November 2020)



Map of Area. 211 Kirkpatrick Street is Shown by the Red Pin.

211 Kirkpatrick Street, a single-family home on the City’s Northside, caught fire in the early morning hours of Friday, January 12th, 2024. Firefighters encountered heavy fire from a blaze which began in the living room. Damages were estimated at \$15,000.

Firefighters arrived at the scene noting that most of the windows were boarded, however, the building was determined to be vacant and unsecured. A male civilian was being treated by emergency medical technicians on site for smoke inhalation. Investigators were unable to determine the cause of the fire, but human involvement was not ruled out. No smoke detectors were present in the home.

In total, 35 personnel assisted at the fire, arriving in 13 apparatus. The last crew left the scene three hours, 21 minutes after the fire began.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of January 12, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Inactive Since 2023 and Current
Code Violations	No Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

The Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (The Land Bank) was the owner of the property at the time of the fire, having acquired the home in February 2023. The property has previously

received several code violations in the last, including for failing to register for the rental registry in 2022. At the time of the fire, all code violations were closed.

The City Water Department turned off service to the structure in September 2023, listing the property as vacant.

At the time of the fire, the outstanding no property taxes were owed.

Following The Fire

According to Camino, a City permit software tool, permit 2024-198 was issued on September 12th to Crisafulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners. The permit identified the demolition cost at \$17,200. Cross-referenced records in IPS, a Code Enforcement software tool, did not show any information about the property's demolition. Records show the contractor paid a permit fee of \$320 for this demolition. Water service was killed at the main in August prior to the demolition.

On October 3rd, following receipt of the demolition permit, Code Enforcement uploaded one post-demolition photo of dirt at the property and issued violations for failure to obtain building permits and failure to have approved drawings, seemingly related to that demolition. IPS shows these violations were then closed on Monday, October 7th with the systems indicating only that an inspection occurred and the property passed. No additional notes or photos were provided. No signed Certificate of Completion for the demolition was ever uploaded to city records, however, the 2025 assessment roll show now identifies the property as a vacant lot.

On April 10th, 2025, according to IPS, the property has a new complaint for Vacant Property Registry for the vacant lot. The Current City code does not require vacant lots to be registered. On May 29th, 2025, Code Enforcement closed the complaint. The vacant lot is current on property taxes and water charges.

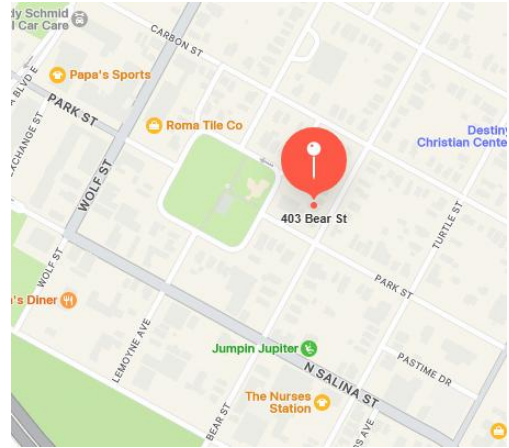


March 2025. House was demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #4 – January 15, 2024, 1:32 PM 403 Bear Street



403 Bear Street (Source: Google Images, September 2021)



Map of Area. 403 Bear Street is Shown by the Red Pin.

403 Bear Street, a four-unit apartment building on the City’s northside, caught fire on the afternoon of Monday, January 15th, 2024. The fire originated in and was contained to a vacant second-floor apartment which was undergoing renovations. The fire was deemed to have caused an estimated \$45,000 in personal and property damage.

Investigators determined the unit was vacant and secured, and were unable to determine the cause but did not rule out renovation-related causes or smoking by contractors. It was undetermined if smoke detectors were present in the home.

In total, 40 fire and EMS personnel attended the fire in 15 apparatus. The blaze was put out and the scene cleared just under two and a half hours after the original alarm.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of January 15, 2024, Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Active and Current
Code Violations	Open Code Violation
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, Stefan Giangliuliani, of Laguna Niguel, California, owned the property. Water was active at the property and the owner was current on water charges and property taxes. One open code violation was active at the time of the fire, coincidentally enough for failure to provide an annual Smoke Detector Certification. That complaint was entered into the City’s database on December 15th, 2023, just weeks before the fire.

Following The Fire

The day after the fire, Code Enforcement sent a violation notice to Giangiuliani at a California address for failure to provide fire alarm certifications. This may have been an automatic notification a month after the certification was sent and unrelated to the fire.

On January 22nd, code enforcement deemed the property Unfit following the fire. They also affixed a copy of the smoke detector violation letter to the mailbox and noted a tenant was residing at the property against the advisement of codes, fire, and police. There is no evidence or photographs of this in City records. On the 22nd, they also wrote to the Onondaga County Department of Social Services requesting a rent hold due to the Unfit notice. Following a discussion with the property manager stating the property was vacant, code enforcement sent a rent release to DSS on March 13th and requested the owner apply for the Vacant Property Registry (VPR). The owner applied for a one-year VPR certificate on March 15th and paid a \$100.00 fee. The application indicated they would rehabilitate the property.

BAA action continued with a warning letter sent on February 28th. On March 26th, BAA issued a ticket, fining the owner \$50, giving 30 days to pay. Unlike other notices, this was sent to a PO Box in East Syracuse. On July 26th, BAA issued a Default Decision and Order, imposing a \$50 penalty on top of the fine. August 7th BAA notes show mail had been returned to sender. On September 6th, BAA noted that "no payment or stay request was received" and closed the case, but an October 15th inspection with no progress lead to a new BAA warning letter to be mailed on October 17th.

On October 31st, a Certificate of Compliance application was received by the City for the property. The owner paid a \$95 fee. Additional records show the owner provided lead testing results (within allowable thresholds) in December. On December 6th, the owner provided an electronically signed copy of the Smoke Detector Certification form with his signature and Code Enforcement issued the Certificate of Compliance.

On January 23rd, 2025, Giangiuliani transferred the property to Finubiel II LLC, of Liverpool, NY for \$242,000. City records show no new building permits since the fire, including none to repair or renovate following the fire. Property taxes are current; however, the most recent water bill is unpaid. The property is no longer active on the VPR and has not filed for a Rental Registry Certificate.

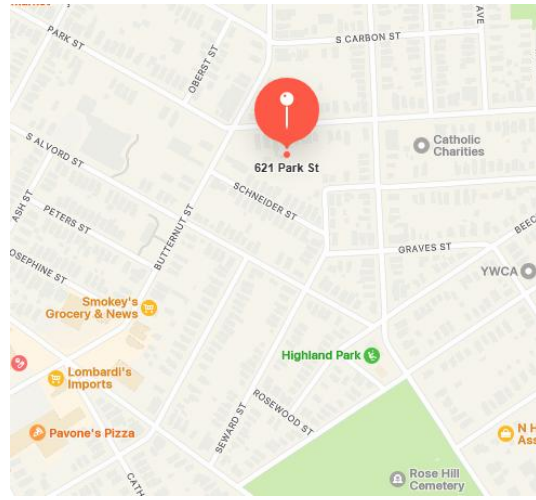


March 2025. Home appears renovated and inhabited following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #5 – February 21, 2024, 6:21 AM 621 Park Street



621 Park Street (Source: Google Images, September 2021)



Map of Area. 621 Park Street is Shown by the Red Pin.

621 Park Street, a two-family home on the City’s Northside, caught fire the morning of Wednesday, February 21st, 2024 following a fire in the second floor living area. The fire caused significant damage to the upper level resulting in an estimated \$45,000 in property damage.

Fire investigators were not able to determine the cause of the blaze but evidence of squatters for found in the structure. No smoke detectors were found in the building.

In total, 56 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene, arriving in 14 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for just under two and a half hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of February 21, 2024, Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Active and Current
Code Violations	No Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the structure was owned by Aye Maryam Cham. The property had prior code violations but none since 2020. All violations were closed at the time of the fire. The property was not listed on the Vacant Property Registry.

Water was active at the property and the owner was current on water charges and property taxes.

The owner successfully filed for a Rental Registry Exemption as Owner Occupied, on June 23rd, 2022.

Firefighters reported that gas and electric utilities had been cut to the building before the fire.

Following The Fire

With utilities already cut before the fire, immediately following the blaze, crews from National Grid removed the gas meter from the basement and informed the Syracuse Fire Department of their intent to remove the underground line.

City records show no new building permits, or code violations since the fire.

The property remains current on property taxes and water charges.

The property is not listed on the Vacant Property Registry or the Rental Registry.

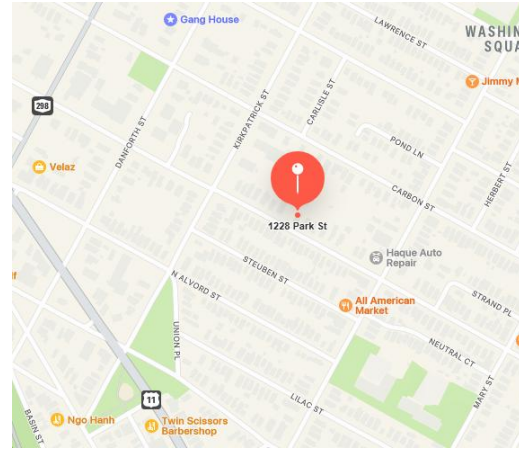


March 2025 Photo. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #6 – February 22, 2024, 8:45 PM 1228 Park Street



1228 Park Street (Source: Google Images, August 2019)



Map of Area. 1228 Park Street is Shown by the Red Pin.

1228 Park Street, a two-family home on the City’s Northside caught fire the evening of Thursday, February 22nd, 2024, causing heavy damage. It was the second fire on Park Street in as many days. Property loss was estimated at \$98,140, with an additional \$40,000 of personal property lost.

The fire report shows the building status to be “in current use” and an occupant interviewed by fire investigators stated the furnace was inoperable and the fire was started by a space heater. It’s unclear if that individual was a squatter or a tenant.

Investigators spoke with squatters at the scene who indicated an individual set the fire, but they were unable to positively substantiate those claims. Due to the building’s condition following the fire, crews were unable to complete their investigation. It was undetermined if the building had smoke detectors.

In total, 60 firefighters and EMS personnel attended the fire, arriving in 23 apparatus. The last crew left the scene more than three hours after the original alarm. Two firefighters were injured while fighting the blaze. One suffered burns to his knee requiring a hospital visit; the other sustained an eye injury and was treated and able to continue working.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of February 22, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Active and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the structure was owned by Hassan Muse & Bintu Abdi. The property had prior code violations in 2021 including for failure to register with the Rental Registry, as well as for smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detector/alarm violations. These violations were closed out by the time of the fire. A May 2023 complaint was opened due to a lead paint inspection finding interior and exterior hazards but no backup documentation is included in City records. A Rent Hold was placed on the property by the County Health Department shortly after the fire.

Water was active at the property but no payments had been made since August, 2021, with more than \$1400 of charges transferring to the tax bill since then. The owner was also behind on property taxes, having not paid those since 2021. As of the fire, \$9,243 in back taxes had accrued on the property.

Following The Fire

Fire reports indicate that after the blaze, fire commanders ordered a board-up of the building from DPW. City records indicate \$653.15 in board-up charges was added to the building's taxes in 2025.

Several weeks following the fire, on March 25th, Code Enforcement cited the property, deeming it unfit for human habitation. They also noted the property was not on the Vacant Property Registry and violated the house for various other issues including its roof condition, windows, trash and debris. Over the next year, Code Enforcement inspectors note an inspection every 1-2 months, but no evidence of these visits was uploaded to City records.

Finally on April 17th, 2025, more than a year after the property was originally cited, the owners were sent a letter warning them that failure to address issues may result in action by the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA). A month later, on May 23rd, Code Enforcement requested BAA to issue tickets. In response, a series of tickets for the April 2024 violations were issued, resulting in fines exceeding \$1,000. The tickets give the owner until June 30, 2025 to comply.

No property taxes or water charges have been paid to the City since the fire. Both are now more than three years in arrears with more than \$17,000 owed in property taxes, fees, and fines, along with \$766 more in back water charges and penalties. Water service remains active. As of May 2025, the building remains vacant and standing, showing signs of heavy damage from the blaze. City records indicate no new building permits have been issued since the fire. The building is not listed on the Vacant Property Registry.

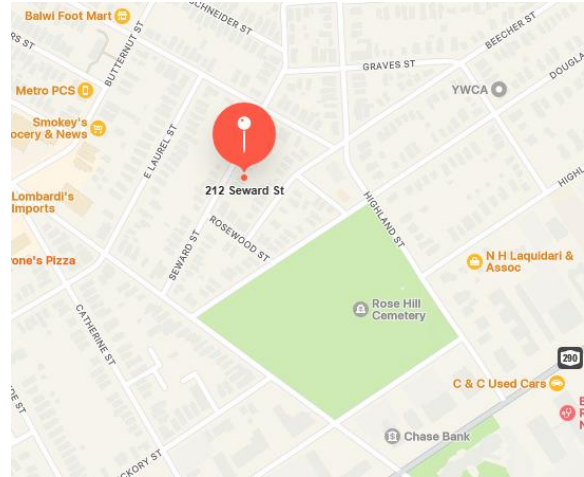


March 2025. Rear of property shows significant fire damage. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #7 – February 29, 2024, 8:45 PM 212 Seward Street



212 Seward Street (Source: Google Images, November 2020)



Map of Area. 212 Seward Street is Shown by the Red Pin.

212 Seward Avenue, a two-family home on the City’s Northside, caught fire the morning of February 29th, 2024. Alerted to the blaze by neighbors, fire crews encountered heavy fire coming from both the front and back of the structure. The fire caused extreme damage to both levels of the home, including a roof collapse, and was deemed to be a total loss.

Neighbors interviewed at the scene confirmed squatter activity and an occupant interviewed following the fire indicated they had been residing at the home for several months. That individual stated that the fire began after an argument with another squatter over drugs. Due to the condition of the home, investigators were unable to conduct a complete interior examination, however, determined the fire was intentionally set. It was undetermined if smoke detectors were present in the building.

Crews remained at the scene for more than eight hours. In total, 65 fire and emergency medical personnel attended the scene, arriving in 27 apparatus.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of February 29, 2024, Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and Current
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by Marlon Simmons who purchased the property from the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (the Land Bank) in 2021 for \$2,508.

The property was a long-time vacant with inactive water service since 2017. It was previously owned by the Land Bank. Simmons owed no past due water charges. Tax payments for 2024 were paid, however, prior year taxes were not paid.

The property had open code violations at the time of the fire that were issued on February 9th, 2023, which included a Vacant Property Registry violation, along with lead abatement, protective treatment, roofs and drainage, window, skylight, and door frames violations. Despite being referred to the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA) on May 31st, 2023, no action was taken by BAA before the fire. That code violation remains open.

Following The Fire

Syracuse Fire Department crews at the scene requested a board-up of the building from DPW and immediately requested an emergency demolition.

According to Camino, a City permit software tool, permit 2024-39 was issued on March 12th to Crisafulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners who paid a permit fee of \$410. The permit identified the demolition cost at \$22,300. Cross-referenced records in IPS, a Code Enforcement software tool, show permit "D2024-004" issued on February 29, 2024, with a demolition cost of \$30,150. In both IPS and Camino, the complaint remains open with no certificate of completion signed or uploaded to either database. There is also no rationale provided for the discrepancy between the demolition amounts.

In March 2024 water service was killed at the main prior to the main just prior to the demolition. No application or proof of payment is attached to the demolition application or permit in Camino.

Shortly after demolition, on June 4th, 2024, the property had a new code violation for overgrowth of grass and weeds. It was added to the open violation from 2023 instead of being a new violation. As noted before, this violation remains open and has not faced any BAA action.

Since the fire, the owner has continued to pay the current property taxes, however some 2023 and 2024 taxes remain unpaid and past due. As of June 2025, \$2,234 is owed in back taxes, fees, and penalties.

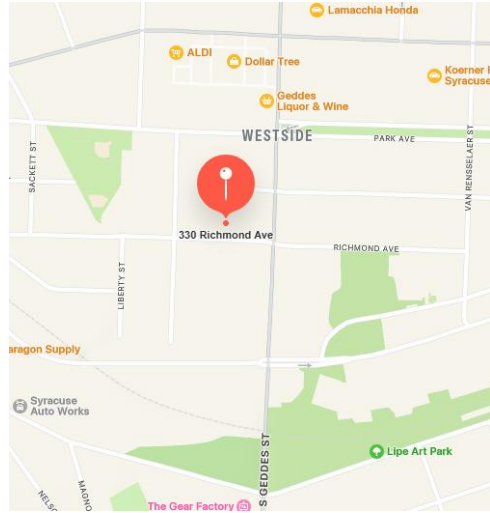


March 2025. Home was demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #8 – March 2, 2024, 2:08 AM 330 Richmond Ave



330 Richmond Ave (Source: City of Syracuse Records, May 2022)



Map of Area. 330 Richmond Ave is Shown by the Red Pin.

330 Richmond Avenue, a one-family home on the City’s Westside, caught fire in the early morning hours of Saturday, March 2nd, 2024. Fire department records identify this property as 334 Richmond Ave; however, City assessment and County Clerk records indicate the correct address as 330 Richmond Ave.

A well-known vacant structure, when firefighters arrived, they encountered heavy fire coming from the front of the home. Neighbors stated squatters had been occupying the porch area, but investigators were not able to interview anyone to confirm that information. No smoke detectors were present in the building. Damages were estimated at \$12,000.

In total, 37 firefighters and EMS personnel attended the fire, arriving in 13 apparatus. Crews fighting the blaze remained on scene for nearly three hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of March 2, 2024, Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

This property was a well-known vacant structure, with a significant history of squatting and property maintenance complaints. The house showed a pattern of accumulation of trash and debris with reports of dumping on the front porch as well as people kicking doors open and using drugs at the property.

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by Per Hudlund, with a secondary company "A&M Properties" listed in City records. It appears this is A&M of CNY Properties, LLC, a property management company from Solvay. Hudland was severely delinquent on property taxes with \$31,829 owed dating back to 2014. Water service was made inactive in 2019; charges owed at the time of the fire were over \$1500.

One open complaint in City records shows an August 8th, 2023 violation for trash & debris and overgrowth had not addressed before the fire.

Additionally, according to IPS, a Code Enforcement software, a demolition complaint was opened on February 27th, 2024, just days before the fire, but no documents are uploaded to validate this date. The first available item, a Notice and Order of Demolition, is dated March 8th, following the fire. It's unclear if the City had begun emergency demolition proceedings prior to the fire or if the complaint was backdated.

Following The Fire

Narratives on fire reports indicate that SFD crews requested a board-up of the building from DPW. City records indicate \$923.17 in board-up charges, added to the property taxes in 2025.

The City's demolition order proceeded as well. An Administrative Hearing was held on March 26th, 2024; the owner failed to show, and the City sent a series of legal notices over the coming months before activity on the property stopped.

Sales records show the property was transferred to the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (the Land Bank) in November 2024.

In late-February 2025, Bronze Contracting, a demolition company from Remsen, NY began an application in Camino to demolish the property. In their application on a pre-set field labeled "Construction Cost" Bronze wrote 27.035 instead of \$27,035. Permit fees for this work are charged at \$15.00 per thousand dollars of construction cost, so a demolition of this value would be permitted for about \$405. Bronze paid a permit fee of just \$15 by using a period instead of a comma when typing the cost of the work. Despite this error, City officials approved the application and issued the permit on March 3rd, 2025. A Certificate of Completion, dated May 1st, 2025, is available in City records.

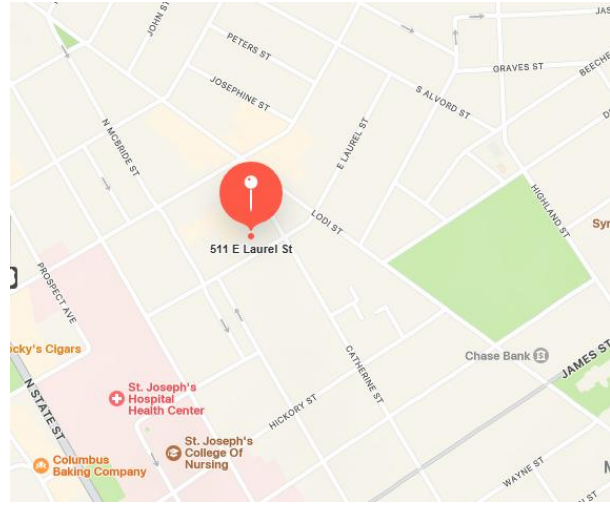


May 2025. Home was demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #9 – March 8, 2024, 4:57 AM 511 E Laurel Street



511 E. Laurel Street (Source: City of Syracuse Records, February 2024)



Map of Area. 511 E. Laurel St is Shown by the Red Pin.

511 E. Laurel Street, a two-family home on the City’s northside, caught fire just before 5am on Friday, March 8th, 2024. Fire department reports indicated the property was a known vacant property, also frequented by squatters. When firefighters arrived, they found a fully-engulfed structure showing signs of a potential roof collapse; commanders at the scene ordered an outside operation. Crews also dealt with a water main break which impacted firefighting efforts. The fire caused significant damage totaling nearly \$100,000. The home was considered a total loss.

Fire investigators were not able to enter the home following the blaze due to a roof collapse and were unable to determine the origin or cause.

In total, 47 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene, arriving in 16 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for nearly eight hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of March 8, 2024, Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by Deborah Smith, who bought the home in May 2011. A secondary name for the owner is A&M Properties, LLC – identified as “A&M of CNY Properties, LLC,”

a property management company from Solvay. It is the same property manager used by the owner of the 330 Richmond Street property which caught fire just days earlier.

The property had a history of Code Enforcement violations including several in 2023 for failure to register with the Rental Registry, and another for trash and debris. On February 6th, 2024, Code Enforcement cited the property for a variety of structural problems, including foundation walls, damaged porch, windows, doors, chimney, and deterioration of structural members. The property was also cited at this time for not being on the Vacant Property Registry.

When the fire occurred, the property was more than \$2200 in arrears in water charges. Water service was made inactive on in May 2023. The property was also significantly in arrears on property taxes, with no payments, going back to 2019.

Following The Fire

On March 10th, 2024, the Syracuse Fire Department declared the property to be unsafe and unfit and wrote to Code Enforcement requesting a demolition.

In IPS, a Code Enforcement software tool, demolition permit "D2024-005" was opened immediately following the fire. City records show multiple companies bid on the demolition work, which was awarded to Crisafulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners, who was awarded the work with a bid of \$34,350, despite Scanlon Trucking & Excavating LLC being the low bidder at \$29,290. Two weeks later, on March 21st, City permit software Camino shows Crisafulli Trucking paid a permit fee of \$438 for demolition permit 2024-44, on a demolition was a cost of \$24,200. In both IPS and Camino, this incident remains open, with no certificate of completion signed or uploaded to either database.

Since the demolition, there have been no new code violations at the property.

City records indicate \$3,303 in board-up and cut and clean charges were added to the 2025 property taxes. Water was killed at the main in April 2024 but no evidence of payment of the fee is included in Camino records.

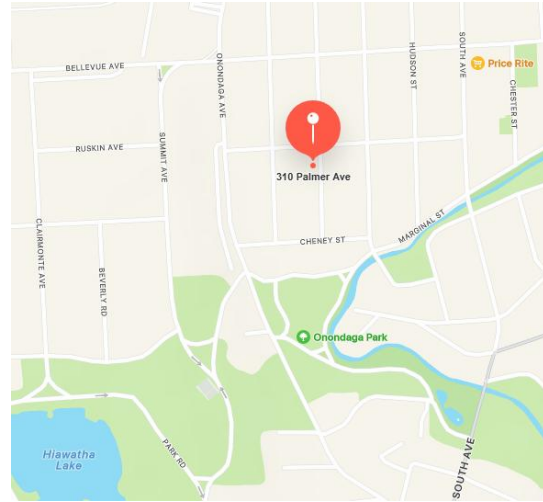


March 2025. Home was demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #10 – March 29, 2024, 7:00 PM 308-10 Palmer Ave



308-10 Palmer Ave (Source: Google Images, July 2023)



Map of Area. 308-10 Palmer Ave is Shown by the Red Pin.

308-10 Palmer Avenue, a two-unit home on the City's Southside, caught fire the evening of Friday, March 29th, 2024; the home had previously caught fire in 2022. Fire department reports show the address of this fire to be 310 Palmer Avenue, but property tax records show the correct address to be 308-10 Palmer Avenue.

The 2024 blaze was heavily involved when firefighters arrived, resulting in an outside operation. The fire caused a roof and chimney collapse with damages estimated at \$75,000.

Due to the condition of the building, investigators were unable to determine a cause or if the building at smoke detectors, but neighbors interviewed at the scene reported children playing around the structure from time to time.

In total, 43 firefighters and two EMS employees arrived in 18 apparatus to extinguish and secure the scene. The fire took roughly three hours to control, and the last unit left the scene just before midnight.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of March 29, 2024, Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violation
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by Khaled Jawad Alkhayat, who purchased the home in 2016. Mr. Alkhayat fell behind on water payments in 2018 and service was inactivated in 2022 due to a previous fire. Property taxes were also in arrears dating to 2019. In total, Alkhayat owed tens of thousands at the time of the blaze. The property also had an open code violation for trash and debris.

Following The Fire

Quickly after the fire, the property was demolished. According to Camino, a City permit software tool, Code Enforcement awarded demolition to Crisafulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners, citing an emergency demolition order. Permit 2024-66 was issued on April 18th, indicating the demolition cost at \$22,200. Cross-referenced records in IPS, a Code Enforcement software tool, show permit D2024-006 issued with a stated demolition cost of \$29,785. Records show the contractor paid a permit fee of \$408 for this demolition.

Water service was killed at the main in June 2024.

After the demolitions, a Certificate of Completion was not uploaded to the City's records until 2025 when one was uploaded to Camino on May 5th, 2025. The 2025 assessment roll now identifies the property as a vacant lot and independent verification from the Office of the City Auditor confirms this information.

City records also indicate board up charges, cut and clean charges, and illegal set out charges were all added to the property taxes in 2025.

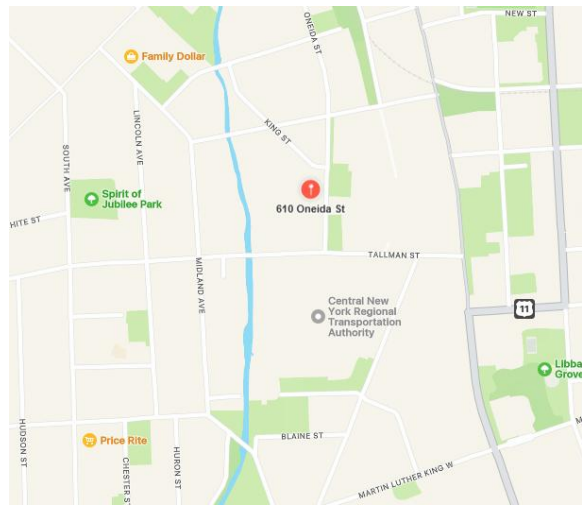


June 2025. Home was demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #11 – April 9, 2024, 10:57 PM 610-12 Oneida St



610-12 Oneida St (Source: Google Images, July 2023)



Map of Area. 610-12 Oneida St is Shown by the Red Pin.

610-12 Oneida Street, a two-family house on the City’s Southside, caught fire late in the evening on April 9th, 2024. Fire crews estimated property damage to be \$45,000.

The fire was found to have two sources of origin – one in the first-floor rear stairway and a second in the front room on the first floor; as a result, investigators deemed the fire intentionally set. The building did have smoke detectors which activated during the fire.

The blaze required assistance of 38 fire personnel, two EMS staff, and one other personnel resource. These individuals arrived to the scene in 17 apparatus. Two firefighters were injured fighting the blaze, including one who required a trip to hospital. Fire crews were finally able to clear the scene after about four hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of April 9, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

When the house caught fire, it was owned by Dwell Equity Group LLC, who purchased the property in 2023. The property was in arrears on property taxes and water charges and water service was shut off

to the property in November 2023. At the time of the fire, the property owed more than \$8,000 in back water charges and more than \$20,000 in back property taxes.

A May 2023 inspection resulted in multiple code enforcement violations including infestation, overgrowth and rubbish, and lead violations. The case was referred to the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA) in July 2023 and BAA issued tickets in August. Unfortunately, several attempts to serve the owner failed at multiple addresses.

During this process, in June 2023, the property was sold to Dwell. On February 28th, 2024, just weeks before the fire, the new owners told Code Enforcement they were intending to keep the property vacant.

Following The Fire

On October 25th, 2024, Code Enforcement cited the property for a variety of violations, including trash and debris, issues with doors, windows, and the roof, as well as for failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry. A week later the trash and debris were removed and that issue closed, but the other violations remained open. A December 10th notice to the owner warned of BAA action.

The owner eventually registered the property on the Vacant Property Registry on December 27th, 2024, indicating their intention to rehabilitate the property over the coming year.

As of June 2025, none of the other code violations have been addressed and despite a December 10th, 2024 letter warning of potential BAA action, no tickets have been issued by BAA since.

According to City Water records, \$878 will be transferred to the 2025-26 City/Schools tax bill. Those records also indicate that the property was sold in June 2025 to JMA TECH PROPERTIES. As of June 2025, all back taxes and outstanding water charges have been paid.

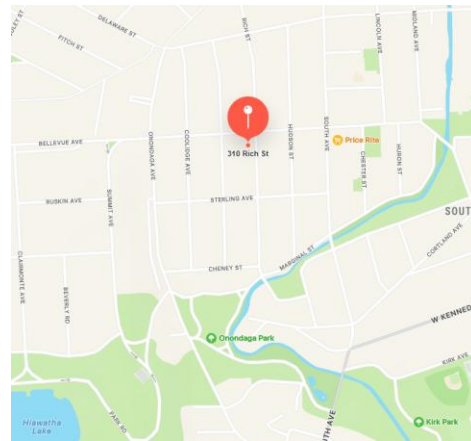


March 2025. Home remains boarded up following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #12 – April 10, 2024, 1:20 AM 310 Rich St



310 Rich St (Source: City of Syracuse Records, April 2023)



Map of Area. 310 Rich St is Shown by the Red Pin.

For the second night in a row, fire crews were dispatched to an alarm on the city’s Southside. 310 Rich Street, a one-family home, caught fire in the early morning hours of Wednesday, April 10th, 2024. Fully engulfed from arrival, firefighters were forced to fight the blaze from outside. Damages were estimated at \$40,000.

Investigators could not determine the cause of the blaze but were able to identify the front porch as its origin. Due to the condition of the building following the fire, investigators were unable to enter.

The blaze required 45 firefighters and five additional personnel who arrived at the scene in 21 apparatus. Crews needed nearly three hours to fully extinguish the fire and clear the scene.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of April 10, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violation
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

Owned by Misty and Carmen Rivas since 2011, this property has a checkered history. Property taxes have not been paid since 2007, and water charges have accumulated since 2018. At the time of the fire, the property owed more than \$50,000 in back taxes, fees, and penalties.

The property had open code violations at the time of the fire from April 2023, including failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry, lead violations, and window issues. Despite being warned June 1st, 2023 and then referred to the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication on July 28th, 2023. Following referral to BAA, code violation issued additional violations for door issues on September 28th, 2023, and a trash & debris violation on February 12th, 2024. Despite all these violations, BAA took no action on the property prior to the fire.

Following The Fire

On November 6th, 2024, BAA finally issued five tickets to the property owner with fines totaling \$650. Unfortunately, they were unable to properly serve the property owner and on December 16th, 2024, BAA closed the case.

Syracuse Fire Department notes from the fire indicate they requested an emergency demolition of this property. Nothing in Code Enforcement or Permit records indicate any intention to demolish the structure. In fact, on May 29th, 2025, Code Enforcement issued a violation to the property for failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry.



March 2025. Property remains standing heavily damaged (Office of the City Auditor)

On June 2nd, 2025, 501 Bellevue Avenue, another vacant property located next door to this property, also caught fire.

According to City records as of June 2025, the property has now been sold to the GSPDC.

Following The Fire

Water service was turned off at the curb in June 2024. At some point in late-2024, the owner fell into arrears on property tax payments.

Since the fire, the two violations remained open until August 19th, 2024 when the infestation complaint was closed. No evidence is provided to show the owner addressed the infestation issue. The same day, the property was cited for failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry.

On September 12th, 2024, the property manager, Primari Properties, submitted a Vacant Property Registration for the property, a paid \$100 fee, and indicated they would seek to demolish the home within the next 12 months. Despite having registered on the vacant property registry, complaint 2023-08211 remains open. As of June 2025, the property has not been demolished, and no new permits have been issued for work at the house.

On May 13th, 2025, the property was again cited by Code Enforcement for overgrowth and trash & debris. The violation letter was sent on May 14th, followed by a BAA warning letter on May 22nd. BAA issued a ticket to the property for trash & debris but did not act on the overgrowth issue. The owner has until June 30th, 2025 to respond to the ticket.

According to City records as of June 2025, all past due tax payments have been made and the property is now current on taxes.

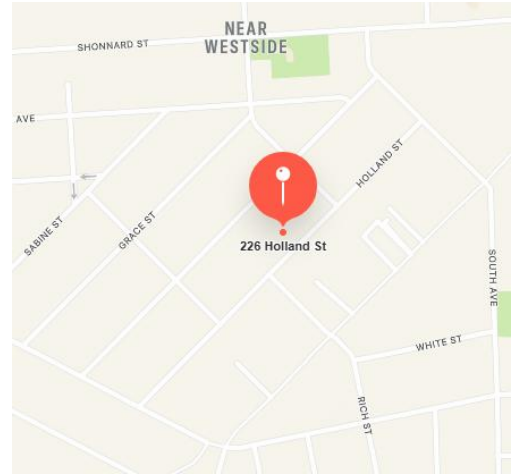


March 2025. Property still boarded after fire damage. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #14 – May 3, 2024, 11:48 PM
226-28 Holland St



226-28 Holland St (Source: City of Syracuse Records, May 2023)



Map of Area. 226-28 Holland St is Shown by the Red Pin.

226-28 Holland Street, a three-family home on the City’s Near Westside was the 14th vacant fire of 2024, catching fire late in the evening on Friday, May 3rd, 2024. Fire crews encountered difficulty entering the building due to boarding but were able to extinguish the fire quickly. The fire report estimated damages at just \$2,000.

Investigators spoke with two squatters who remained at the scene following the blaze. It was determined the fire was accidental and began in a bottomless can on the second floor, resulting from the improper disposal of smoking materials.

In total, 38 fire and EMS personnel were dispatched to the scene in 14 apparatus. Crews spent left the scene after just under two and a half hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of May 3, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and Current
Code Violations	Open Code Violation
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

Owned by Ricky Bursch at the time of the fire, water service to the property has been inactive since 2018. It is assumed the property was in arrears on property taxes at the time of the fire because it has since been sold to the GSPDC.

At the time of the fire, an open complaint from April 2023 included a series of violations for property maintenance issues including windows, stairs, and porches, as well as for failure to register the property on the Vacant Property Registry. Despite no progress on the violations, it wasn't until April 1st, 2024 when a BAA warning letter was sent.

On April 18th, 2024, a Code Enforcement note shows a caller stated he witnessed individuals removing boards from windows at the vacant home and there were needles around the property. The next day the property was cited for overgrowth and trash and debris and referred to the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA). On April 22nd, 2024, BAA issued tickets. Two days later on April 24th, another caller reported activity at the home. Service of the tickets was successfully completed on May 3rd, just hours before the fire.

Following The Fire

After the fire, the BAA case continued. No response was ever made to the service in May, and on July 31st, 2024, BAA issued a Default Decision & Order in the amount of \$1300. On October 1st, having not received payment or a request for stay (appeal), BAA closed the case.

A month later, however, on November 7th, 2024, a second round of BAA tickets were issued to Bursch with doubled fines. Just a week later, the property was transferred to the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (the Land Bank). Due to the transfer of ownership, the City law department requested a dismissal of all tickets in a decision dated December 20th, 2024. Despite this dismissal, and no longer owning the property, Bursch was mailed a new BAA warning letter on December 26th, 2024 for all the same violations.

Several weeks later, the Land Bank had been updated as the new owner and the process started over with a series of violation notices sent to the Land Bank beginning in January 2025.

According to Camino, a City permit software tool, in February 2025, Crisafulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners, applied for a demolition permit at the site. They paid a permit fee of \$565 and a hydrant use permit fee. The Land Bank paid a water kill fee of \$1000. The permit was issued on February 25th. A photo of completed demolition was uploaded to IPS, a Code Enforcement database, dated March 6th, but no Certificate of Completion is in either City database. Water records indicate the service was killed at the main in February 2025.

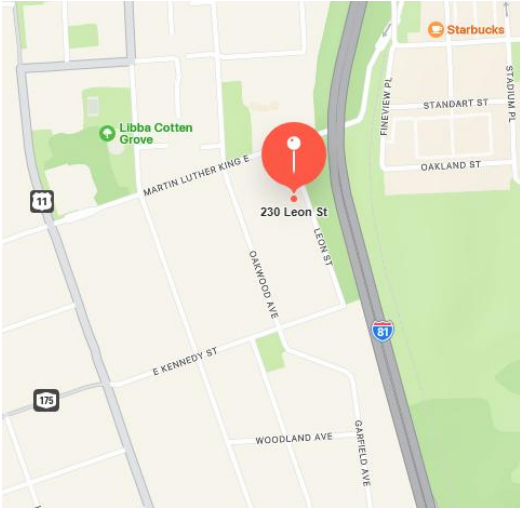


March 2025. Home was demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #15 – May 21, 2024, 8:00 PM
230 Leon St



230 Leon St (Source: City of Syracuse Records, May 2024)



Map of Area. 230 Leon St is Shown by the Red Pin.

230 Leon Street, a one-family home on the City’s Southside, caught fire at 8pm on Tuesday, May 21st, 2024. Upon arrival, firefighters noticed heavy fire from the second floor. Damages to the property were estimated at \$40,000.

Investigators determined the fire began in a second-floor bedroom, and was likely intentionally set, possibly by a group of kids who had been spotted in the area prior to the fire.

In total, 44 members of the Syracuse fire Department attended the scene, arriving in 16 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for nearly two hours putting out the blaze and securing the scene.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of May 21, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and Current
Code Violations	Open Vode Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by Gerald Seals, Karen Seals, and Emmanuel Williams, since 2021. According to fire investigators who spoke with Gerald Seals following the fire, he stated he inherited the home from his parents. The house was not on the Vacant Property Registry.

When the fire occurred, the property was in arrears on property taxes going back to 2022, with partial payments made. Water service had been inactive since 2020, with no back water payments due.

City records indicate \$779 had been added to prior years' property taxes for cut and clean charges.

The property has a history of Code Enforcement violations. On February 10th, 2023, multiple violations were issued, including lead paint violations, along with several other property maintenance issues. The property was also cited for failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry.

After being warned of potential referral to the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication (BAA) on March 29th, 2023, Code Enforcement referred the matter to BAA on April 10th, 2023. BAA issued Violations tickets for all the February 2023 violations on April 12th, 2023, but despite this, did not try to serve the owners for months until September 28th, 2023.

On October 13th, 2023, City notes show owner Karen Seals spoke with City staff who explained the tickets, how to submit pleas, and noted the property needed to be on the Vacant Property Registry. Following several months of no action, BAA issued a Default Decision & Order for the tickets on February 12th, 2024, ordering the owner to pay \$1300. After no payment or stay request was received by May 16th, 2024, BAA closed the case. In the meantime, Code Enforcement issued a new citation to the property on April 17th, 2024 for trash & debris. That matter was closed on May 17th, just prior to the fire.

Following The Fire

Just days after BAA closed their case, the house caught fire. On September 4th, 2024, a second BAA warning letter was sent to owners, followed by a second round of tickets on October 2nd. After two attempts, BAA was unable to properly serve the property owners and on May 22nd, 2025, the matter was referred to Law. Just five days later on May 27th, 2025 the owners were cited again for Overgrowth. That matter was closed on June 4th.

City records indicate board-up charges added to the 2025 property taxes. Water remains inactive at the property and more than \$6,000 in property taxes is currently or past due.

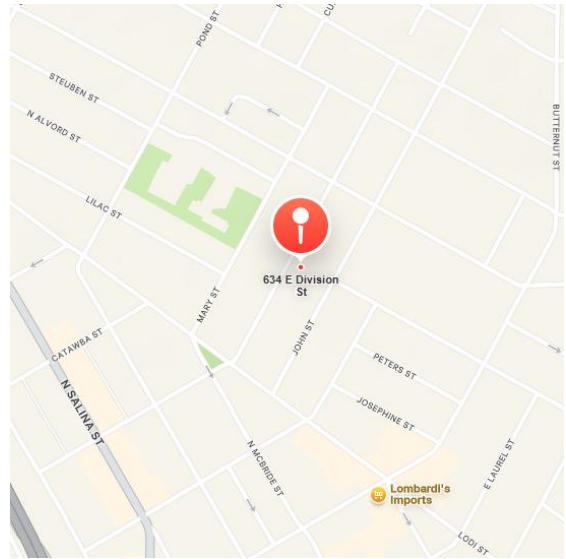


March 2025. Home vacant and boarded. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #16 – May 22, 2024, 12:38 AM 634 E Division St



634 E Division St (Source: City of Syracuse Records, May 1, 2024)



Map of Area. 634 E Division St is Shown by the Red Pin.

634 E. Division Street, a two-story wood frame house on the City’s northside, with a history of previous fires, caught fire at 12:38 am on Wednesday, May 22nd, 2024. Fire Department reports indicated the property was a known vacant property, with homeless people and drug users frequently squatting at the property. When firefighters arrived, they found a fully-engulfed structure, with heavy fire through the roof, which collapsed shortly after arrival. Commanders at the scene ordered an outside operation. The collapse of the roof and eventually the second floor made extinguishing the trapped fire difficult.

Fire investigators were not able to enter the structure due to further collapse hazard. There was some damage to neighboring properties on either side of the structure. The origin appeared to be the second floor, and the cause was undetermined with incendiary indicators.

In total, 60 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene, arriving in 25 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for nearly four and a half hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of May 22, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by The Estate of Theresa Wede, who passed away in 2016.

The property had a history of Code Enforcement Violations, relating to trash & debris, overgrowth, foundation walls and structural members issues, as well as not being listed on the Vacant Property Registry. It also had a history of cut and cleans being charged to taxes.

When the fire occurred, the property was in arrears in water charges more than \$800 and water service had been inactive since 2020. The property was also significantly in arrears in property taxes, more than \$20,000, dating back to at least 2019.

Following The Fire

The property was recommended to be boarded following the fire by SFD but was unable to be due to its structurally unstable condition. An emergency demolition was requested. City permit software Camino shows that a demolition permit was issued to Crisafulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners, on July 11th, 2024, who paid a permit fee of \$390, on a demolition slated to cost \$20,500. Cross-referenced records in IPS show a demolition complaint entered, noting demolition was completed September 4th. The only supporting documentation is post-fire photographs of the charred home. A Certificate of Completion for the work was issued on September 16th, 2024 and the property is now listed as vacant land in assessment records.

As recently as May 13th, 2025, the property has received a new violation, this time for Overgrowth, originating from a complaint to Cityline. That complaint remains open and a cut and clean was ordered.

The property continues to be in arrears in both water and taxes, owing the City more than \$23,000 as of June 2025.

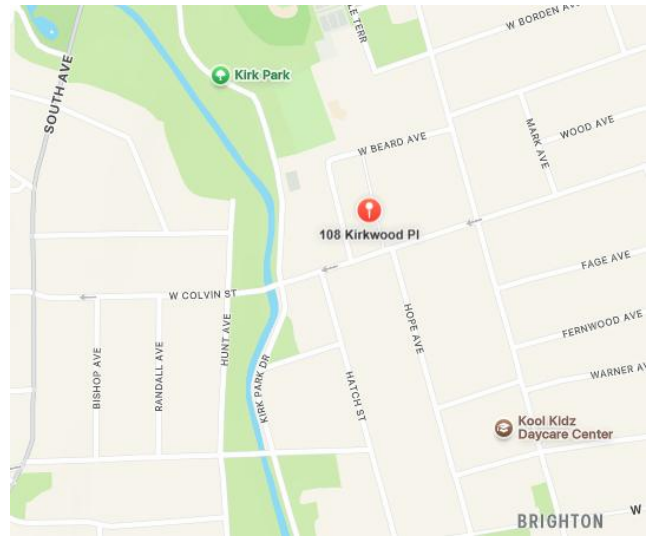


March 2025. Home demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #17 – June 9, 2024, 5:25 PM 108 Kirkwood Pl



108 Kirkwood Pl (Source: Google Images, June 2014)



Map of Area. 108 Kirkwood Pl is Shown by the Red Pin.

108 Kirkwood Place, a long-vacant one-family home on the City’s Southside, caught fire at 5:25 pm on Sunday, June 9th, 2024. When firefighters arrived, moderate smoke and fire was issuing from the second floor. They encountered a forcible entry problem with all windows and doors on the first floor except for one window. Once access was gained onto the first floor, the fire on the second floor was a quick knockdown. Property damage was estimated at \$40,000.

The fire investigator’s final examination of the structure’s interior and exterior lead him to develop several hypotheses related to origin and cause of the fire. He concluded that the fire originated in a second-floor bedroom, caused by an incendiary act.

In total, 39 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene, arriving in 14 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for just under two hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of June 9, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Inactive and Current
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (the Land Bank), who acquired the property in 2022. The property had a history of minor trash and debris violations.

Water had been inactive at the property since 2010 and was killed at the main in August 2023. The property was current on water and taxes due to being owned by the Land Bank.

The property was not on the Vacant Property Registry.

Following The Fire

The property remains owned by Land Bank. On April 3rd, 2025, a Trash & Debris violation was issued following many tires being dumped at the property. City records show a cut & clean was requested on May 2nd, and the matter was closed.

The property continues to not be registered with the VPR.

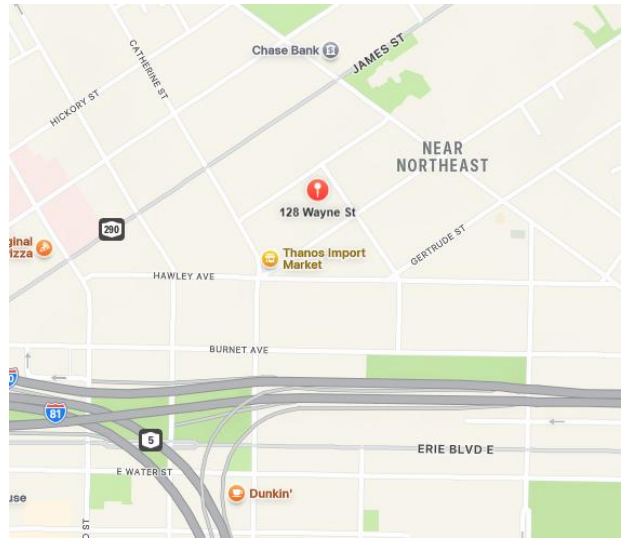


March 2025. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #18 – June 27, 2024, 1:44 PM 128 Wayne St



128 Wayne St (Source: Google Images, August 2019)



Map of Area. 128 Wayne St is Shown by the Red Pin.

128 Wayne Street, a one-family house, in the Hawley Green neighborhood, caught fire at 1:44 pm on Thursday, June 27th, 2024. Firefighters arrived to find a basement fire, with no one home at the time. The structure was vacant, with rehab being done. National Grid stated there was no electricity to the house due to unpaid bills.

The fire was extinguished quickly, with the origin determined to be in the basement. In the basement, investigators noted the smell of gasoline and found evidence of flammable liquids and magazines. Investigators believe the fire may have been intentionally set.

Property damage was minimal, at \$1,000 with additional contents valued at \$1,000 lost. In total, 42 members of the Syracuse fire Department attended the scene, arriving in 17 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for nearly two and a half hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of June 27, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Active and Current
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property owner was listed as Stephen A. Piascik; however, it was determined Maria Roach, had been appointed administrator of the property, stating that the owner had died in July 2023. All property taxes were current. Water service was active and current as well.

The property has had trash & debris complaints and violations, including an open Trash & Debris Violation issued on March 11th, 2024 noting gas canisters strewn across the property. An Overgrowth violation received on May 14th, 2024 was addressed and closed the following week.

Following The Fire

The fire investigator spoke with Maria Roach after the fire, who stated that she was notified earlier in the day that someone had found her birth certificate on Townsend St. She sent her nephew to check on the house due to other belongings that were supposed to be there, having been found elsewhere. He was on scene at the fire, but left before the investigator could speak to him.

On August 22nd, 2024, the property was issued a violation for Overgrowth. Following a series of back-and-forth conversations, that matter was closed in September.

On June 3rd, 2025, the property received another violation for Overgrowth. The next-door neighbor, who spoke with inspectors, confirmed the property remains vacant. The violation was addressed within the week and closed on June 10th.

The property remains unregistered on the Vacant Property Registry, but it is current on all water charges and property tax payments.

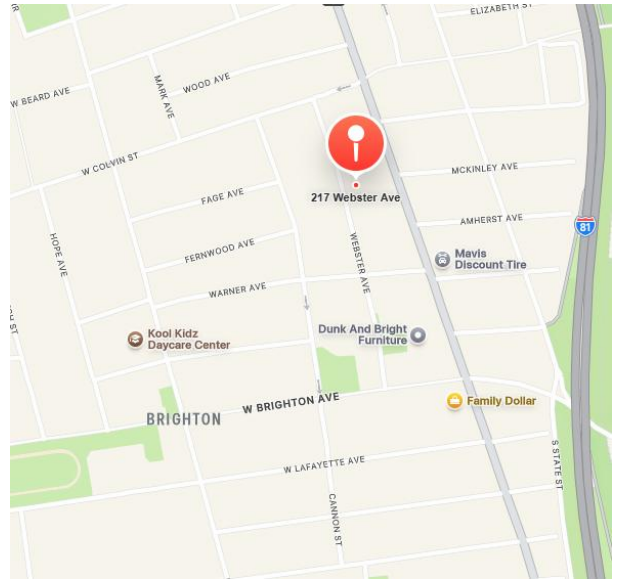


March 2025. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #19 – July 7, 2024, 7:48 PM 217 Webster Ave



217 Webster Ave (Source: Google Images, August 2021)



Map of Area. 217 Webster Ave is Shown by the Red Pin.

217 Webster Ave, a three-family house on the City’s Southside, caught fire at 7:48 pm on Sunday, July 7th, 2024. Firefighters arrived to find a small fire showing inside a second-floor window, and a small fire on the first floor. There was not a large volume of fire, but a large volume of smoke from all windows. The fires were extinguished quickly. Property damage was estimated at \$10,000.

The house appeared to be unoccupied and under renovation. The fire was reported to be intentional, with the first-floor origin in a 40-gallon plastic trash can, and the second-floor origin in a bag of trash in the front room.

In total, 37 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene, arriving in 14 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of July 7, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Active and Current
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

The property has been owned by Home Headquarters since January 2024. All property taxes were current, and water charges were current at the time of the fire, but water service was inactive since May 2024, two months before the fire. The property was not listed on the Vacant Property Registry.

On November 11th, 2023, the prior owner was issued a violation for failing to provide a smoke detector certification. In May, A BAA Warning Letter was written, but it was never sent. A March 15th, 2024 violation for trash & debris has been open and in progress since it was issued.

Following The Fire

On the day after the fire, July 8th, 2024, Home Headquarters was identified as the new owner, and was issued code violations for Structure Unfit for Human Occupancy, damaged windows, and exterior wall damage. These violations remain open and in progress. On July 17th, they received a violation for failure to submit a smoke detector certification. This matter was referred to BAA, with tickets being issued on August 30th. Following no action from the owner, BAA issued a Default Decision and Order on December 10th, charging Home Headquarters the original \$150.00 fine, plus a \$150.00 penalty. On January 27th, 2025, having not received a request for stay (appeal) or payment, BAA closed the case; however, the complaint remains open. A second warning letter was sent to Home Headquarters on April 17th.

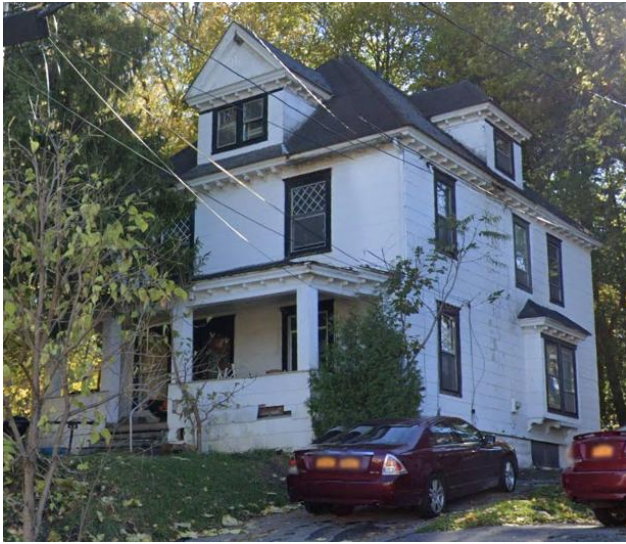
On February 26th, 2025, Home Headquarters applied for the Vacant Property Registry and paid a \$100 fee, indicating they would rehabilitate and reoccupy the property within 12 months.

As of June 15th, no permits have been pulled for any work at the property. The property is current on water charges and property taxes.

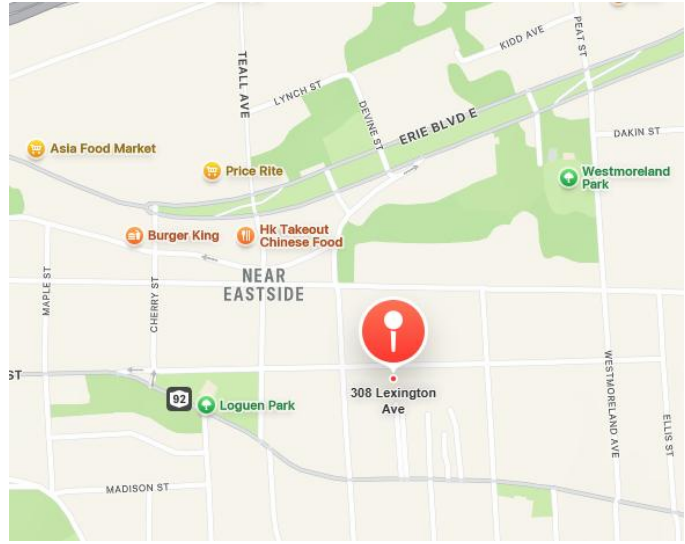


March 2025. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #20 – July 13, 2024, 11:45 PM 308 Lexington Ave



308 Lexington Ave (Source: Google Images, November 2020)



Map of Area. 308 Lexington Ave is Shown by the Red Pin.

308 Lexington Ave, a one-family vacant residence, on the Near East side, caught fire at 11:45 pm on the evening of Saturday July 13th, 2024. Firefighters arrived to find heavy fire in the rear of the structure. Metal bars found on the first-floor windows were removed. The bulk of fire was knocked down quickly, but extensive venting was required due to the number of holes in the structure. Overhaul was needed to knock down several hot spots as well. DPW was called for a board-up after the fire was extinguished. The cause of the fire is undetermined.

Property damage was estimated at \$10,000. In total, 36 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene, in 13 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for nearly four hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of July 13, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property owner was listed as Stuart Miller, since 2009, with A&M Properties LLC appearing to be a property management company associated with the property. The property had a long history of code violations since 2015, and in the lead up to the fire, including failure to apply for the Rental Registry and the Vacant Property Registry, as recently as May 24th, 2024.

The owner is severely delinquent on property taxes and water charges, with delinquent taxes going back to at least 2019. Water service has been inactive at the property since 2022, and charges are owed going back to 2020. Currently over \$900 was due and more than \$200 has transferred to property taxes.

After The Fire

City records show no new building permits, or code violations since the fire.

The property is not listed on the Vacant Property Registry nor the Rental Registry.

The property also continues to be in arrears in both water charges and property tax payments, owing more than \$16,000 in delinquent taxes, more than \$3,000 in current year taxes, and over \$900 in water charges.

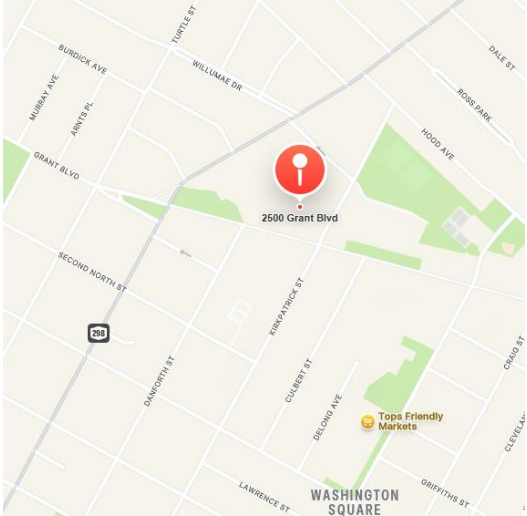


March 2025. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #21 - August 8, 2024, 8:16 PM
1024-1124 Court St & Grant Blvd



2500 Grant Blvd. (Source: Google Images, August 2021)



Map of Area. 2550 Grant Blvd. is Shown by the Red Pin.

The old gymnasium of the former Franciscan Campus of Maria Regina College at 1024-1124 Court St & Grant Blvd, caught fire on Thursday, August 8th, 2024 at 8:16 pm. Black smoke was reported to come from the roof of the vacant Gingerbread House School. No one was reported to be inside the building and the fire was put out after 15 minutes. Firefighters discovered a rubbish fire in the center of the gymnasium, which was extinguished and contained quickly. The cause of the fire was determined to be intentionally set and classified as incendiary. Fire reports list the property address as 2500 Grant Blvd, but Onondaga County property tax records confirm the Court Street address.

In total 54 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene, in 19 apparatus. Crews remained on the scene for just over an hour.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of August 8, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

The sprawling campus was a well-documented site for vandals and thieves. At the time of the fire, the property was owned by The Kimberly at Grant Blvd LLC, who purchased the property in 2015, and had been in discussions with City and State officials about rehabilitating the site into affordable housing. The property was current on taxes; however, water charges had accumulated on the property. In 2024,

more than \$2700 in water charges was transferred to the property taxes and an additional \$15,000 was still currently due at that time. The charges which transferred to the tax bill were then paid. The domestic water service had been inactive since 2018, but the fire service was active at the time of blaze.

City records show a March 2022 complaint received a series of violations on April 27th, 2023 for various property maintenance issues and failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry. Those citations resulted in a referral to BAA on April 1st, 2024. Tickets were issued on April 2nd and served on April 10th, ultimately resulting in BAA issuing a Default Decision and Order in the amount of \$1,600 on July 25th, 2024, just weeks before the fire.

After The Fire

On September 12th, a new Certificate of Compliance record was created in IPS, a Code Enforcement software. Attached to the item is an application from Camino, a permit software, from Our Lady of Lourdes, Ltd, a company applying for a Certificate of Compliance, showing a \$55 payment. The matter was closed on September 24th with no additional information. Staff from the Auditor's Office could not locate this submission in Camino during an independent check and it is unclear if the payment was processed.

Just three days later, on September 27th, BAA closed the open case against the owner noting no payment nor request for stay (appeal) were received.

On March 21st, 2025, firefighters were called to battle a catastrophic blaze at the property, which began at 6:30 PM. Due to structural concerns, firefighters began outside operations almost immediately, and shortly thereafter, a chimney collapsed through the roof. Water pressure issues complicated the efforts as more of the building collapsed. Firefighters were needed to stay at the scene for nearly 26 hours. According to IPS, a Code Enforcement software, on March 28th, 2025, a Demolition Complaint was opened by Code Enforcement, but no additional action has been taken. Cross-referenced records in Camino, a permit software, do not show any permits being pulled for this work. As of June 2025, no demolition work has taken place at the property.

Currently, more than \$16,000 in outstanding water charges are still due, and April 2025 taxes are now past due.

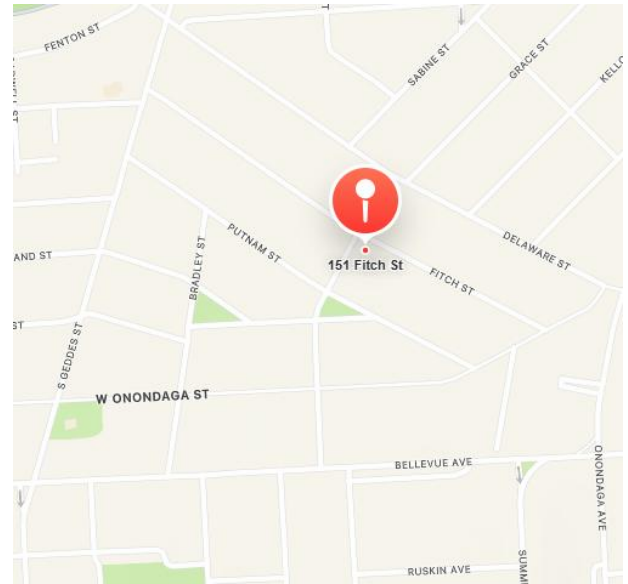


June 2025 photo following the March fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #22 – August 14, 2024, 6:08 AM 151 Fitch St



151 Fitch St (Source: Google Images, August 2019)



Map of Area. 151 Fitch St is Shown by the Red Pin.

151 Fitch St., two-family vacant home on the City’s West side, caught fire at 6:08 am on Wednesday, August 14th, 2024. The fire quickly spread from the vacant home to a home next door at 153 Fitch St. and firefighters requested additional resources to the scene. As additional units arrived, crews were split between the two buildings into what essentially became two different structure fires. Firefighters fought the vacant house fire from the outside, while crews moved hoses inside the home next door to stop the flames that were spreading into the second floor and attic.

The building of origin, 151 Fitch St, was declared unsafe for fire personnel to enter due to structural stability issues. Police and private cameras in the area yielded no information about the origin of the fire. Damages were estimated at \$100,000 in property and \$10,000 in contents.

In total, 86 members of the Syracuse Fire Department attended the scene in 22 apparatus. Crews remained at the scene for nearly three and a half hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of August 14, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	Current
Water	Inactive and Current
Code Violations	No Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

At the time of the fire, the property was owned by GSPDC, the Land Bank, who acquired the home in 2016. The property received a violation for accumulation of trash and debris in 2021 but has not been subject to any other code violations.

The long-vacant house had been boarded up with water service to the property inactive for more than a decade. Despite being vacant for so long, taxes and water charges were both current at the time of the fire.

Following The Fire

An application to terminate water service at the address was submitted by the Land Bank and received by the City on August 22nd, 2024. The Land Bank paid a \$1,000 fee and the service was killed at the main in September in advance of a demolition of the structure.

City permit software Camino shows that a demolition permit was issued to Crisafulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners, on October 29th, 2024, who paid a permit fee of \$345, on a demolition slated to cost \$17,800. Cross-referenced records in IPS do not show a demolition complaint entered, but various open items were closed in November noting the building has been demolished. Photographs from November 14th show the demolition in progress; however, a Certificate of Completion was not uploaded into either system and it's unclear if one was issued.

The property currently has no unpaid taxes or water charges.

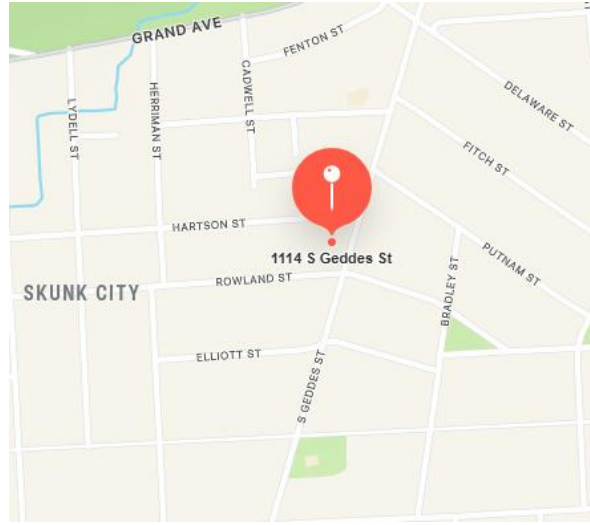


March 2025. Building demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #23 - October 12, 2024, 8:02 AM 1114 S Geddes St



1114 S. Geddes St (Source: Google Images, July 2024)



Map of Area. 1114 S. Geddes St is Shown by the Red Pin.

1114 S. Geddes Street in Skunk City caught fire the morning of Saturday, October 12th, 2024. The home had been the site of a previous fire in 2023. Firefighters encountered heavy flames from the roof and fought the blaze from outside the house due to structural concerns. A roof collapse deemed the property a complete loss; the home was valued at \$32,000.

Investigators could not enter the building due to it being structural unstable; however, they did ascertain the fire began in the attic. No one was injured but properties on both sides of the fire sustained moderate fire damage.

45 firefighters and two EMS personnel attended the fire in 17 apparatus. The blaze took three hours to control and clear the scene.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of October 12, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

The property was subject to a previous fire which heavily damaged the structure in June 2023.

Rufus Kears, the owner at the time, was cited on June 20th following the fire for lead issues, failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry, unsafe conditions, and more. The matter was referred to BAA on August 10th, 2023 and tickets were issued to Kears on August 25th. Service was insufficient because the property was sold on August 10th to Marc Paige. The tickets were dismissed on September 8th and re-issued to Paige on September 13th.

Like with Kears, the matter was referred to BAA on November 1st, and tickets were issued on November 2nd with service several days later. Service was successful, and Paige did not comply or request stay; BAA issued a Default Decision and Order on April 15th, 2024, charging Paige \$3,100 in fines and penalties. Second BAA tickets were issued on July 9th but BAA addressed 11 out of 12 tickets to an incorrect owner. All were dismissed and attempted re-service on Paige was not successful and BAA closed the case on November 6th.

Kears was heavily behind on water and tax payments when he sold the home, and Paige never paid any as owner.

Following The Fire

The property was deemed structurally unsound following the fire and deemed an emergency demolition. Water service was turned off in October 2024 and killed at the main in December. Code Enforcement's IPS software seems to capture that information after the demolition with record D2024-016 created on December 2nd, 2024. It notes a permit issuance for DEMO 2024-223 on October 29th but provided no backup.

Cross referenced records in Camino, a permit software, show Crisfulli Trucking, a demolition company out of Warners, applied for a demolition permit and paid a \$440.00 fee. Records show that a permit was issued on October 24th, but no Certificate of Completion is uploaded to either software. The City's tax roll now shows this parcel as a vacant lot, still owned by Paige.

More than \$8,000 in water charges are still owed, along with more than \$30,000 in past due property taxes.

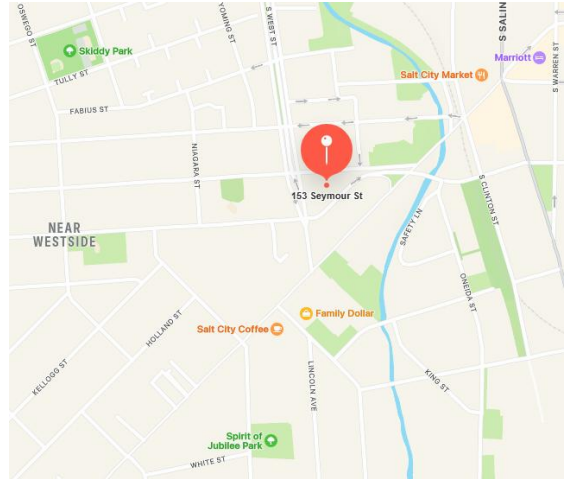


March 2025. Home demolished following fire which caused extensive damage to neighboring homes
(Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #24 – October 17, 2024, 5:25 AM 153-57 Seymour St to West Street Arterial



153-57 Seymour St (Source: Google Images, July 2023)



Map of Area. 153-57 Seymour St is Shown by the Red Pin.

153-57 Seymour Street, recently known as Peace Manor, was a 40+ unit apartment building on the Near Westside. The location of several previous fires, the building caught fire again in the early morning hours of Thursday, October 17th, 2024. Fire crews found a well-known vacant and unsecured building with heavy fire; structural concerns required firefighters to fight the blaze from outside. Damages were estimated at \$300,000.

Commanders at the scene advised that interior investigation posed an unacceptable risk to life and health so a complete assessment could not be conducted.

In what was the largest response of all vacant property fires in 2024, this incident, in which a second alarm was called, brought out 97 fire and EMS personnel. In total 26 apparatus arrived at the scene. The blaze burned for hours; crews finally left the scene after more than five and a half hours.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of October 17, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

Seymour Luxury Residence, a Brooklyn-based LLC, purchased the property for \$2.8 million in recent years. City records show contacting this owner in 2022, but Onondaga County Property tax records show the ownership change in March 2023.

Between 2021 and 2023, the building received regular complaints from tenants about deplorable conditions which lead to citations for an extensive list of issues, including lead violations, lack of working carbon monoxide detectors, smoke detector certifications, infestations, heat, electrical, and plumbing problems, and more. The property was cited for being Unfit for Human Habitation in 2022 and again in 2023.

Only one of these matters resulted in BAA tickets – March 16th, 2023 violations for window issues, graffiti, and exterior walls generated tickets being issued April 28th, 2023, however service did not get attempted until August and was unsuccessful. Despite this, on September 27th, two days after the due date, the City received a \$375.00 payment for the amount due. BAA accepted the payment and closed the case.

Water service was made inactive in August 2024 when more than \$4,000 was owed in back water charges. More than \$50,000 in back property taxes was also owed.

Following The Fire

After the fire, the Fire Department deemed the structural concerns at the property an emergency and deemed the property unfit. They wrote the Code Enforcement requesting an emergency demolition.

In neither IPS, a Code Enforcement software, nor Camino, a permit software is there any information about a permit pulled to demolish this property; however, staff from the Office of the City Auditor witnessed the demolition in person during a site visit in March, 2025. A Water Department note indicates water service was killed at the main this same month.

All open complaints for this addressed were closed on April 7th, 2025.

As of June 2025, the property owes more than \$80,000 in delinquent and past due taxes and several hundred in back water. More than \$4,000 in water charges transferred to the tax bill in 2024.

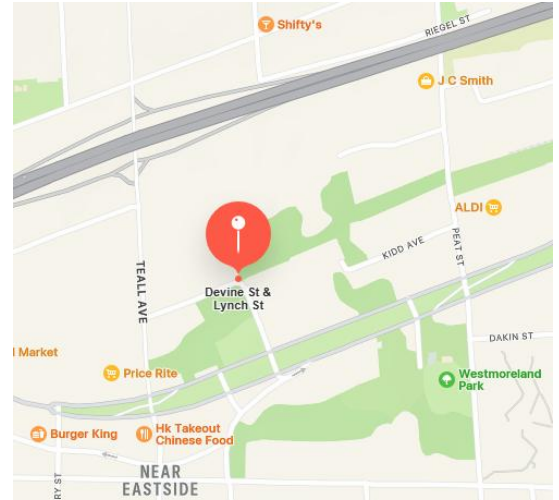


March 2025. Building being demolished following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Fire #25 – November 13, 2024, 8:43 AM 101-13 Greenway Ave



103-13 Greenway Pl (Photo by Bryant Neal, April 2019)



Map of Area. 101-13 Greenway Pl is Shown by the Red Pin.

The D.W. Winkleman building, located at 101-13 Greenway Ave, caught fire the morning of Wednesday, November 13th, 2024. The Syracuse Fire Department report for the fire lists 111 Lynch St as the fire address; however, Onondaga County property tax records confirm the Greenway Ave address. The former industrial warehouse had been vacant for years and had been the site of previous fires. Arriving firefighters reported a large plume of thick black smoke. No damage estimate was put on the building.

Investigators found the building vacant and unsecured. The site is a known regular hangout for occupants of the men’s shelter nearby. Fire crews determined the fire began in a pile of tires and was intentionally set.

39 members of the SFD responded to the scene, including 37 firefighters; they arrived in 16 apparatus. Crews needed just 90 minutes to put out the blaze and clear the site.

Before The Fire

STATUS OF CITY SERVICES As of November 13, 2024 Fire	
Property Taxes	In Arrears
Water	Inactive and In Arrears
Code Violations	No Open Code Violations
Vacant Property Registry	Not Registered

The building has been owned by GSI of Virginia, Inc since 1991. The property is the number one most tax delinquent property in the City of Syracuse, owing more than \$3 million in back taxes since 1984. The property has had inactive water service since 1997 and owes more than \$40,000 in water charges

and penalties for their fire service system. The owner has also been subject to complaints and legal action from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Despite the condition of the property, no record of code violations could be found at either the Greenway Ave or Lynch St addresses in IPS, a Code Enforcement software.

The property has never been registered with the Vacant Property Registry.

Following The Fire

Since the November 2024 fire, there has been no notable action at the site. Past due water charges and property taxes continue to climb ever higher.



March 2025. The building remains vacant and deteriorating following fire. (Office of the City Auditor)

Vacant Property Fires By The Numbers

Each vacant property fire in 2024 had a unique story but several common themes were present in those properties.

Many properties with vacant fires were behind on either water charges and/or property taxes; the overwhelming majority had inactive domestic water service, some for decades.

Nearly all had open code violations and four out of five faced some sort of legal action from the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication. Despite the time and expense by BAA, proceeds from those tickets resulted in just \$375.00 revenue, and little, if any, noticeable corrective actions. Not a single property was properly registered on the Vacant Property Registry at the time of their fire.

In battling the blazes, thirteen were so intense, or in properties so structurally unsound, that firefighters could only battle the fires from outside. Four firefighters were injured in these fires, including two which required hospital visits and two which needed time off from work. Using the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursable rate schedule, City firefighters could have billed more than a quarter million dollars for the personnel and apparatus response to these blazes.

In properties where proper investigations were able to be conducted, just one (1) property was found to have working smoke detectors and none had sprinkler systems. To date, 11 out of 25 properties have been demolished, at a cost of roughly \$1.5 million (including the \$1.1 million demolition of 128 Spencer Street – the Easy Washer Factory.)

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
In Arrears On Property Taxes	14
In Arrears On Water Charges	12
Inactive Water Service	19
Open Code Violations	22
Faced BAA Legal Action	20
Total BAA Collections	\$375
Active Vacant Property Registrations	0
Estimated Property Damage	\$1.12 Million
Estimated Cost of SFD Operations	\$250,000
Required Outside Operations	13
Found Vacant & Unsecured	20
Intentional Cause	8
Smoke Detectors Present	1
Sprinkler Systems Present	0
Demolished	11
Cost of Demolitions	\$1.58 Million

Laws Governing Vacant Properties and Lots

This section provides the City's laws covering vacant property and lots, derived from the City Charter, Revised General Ordinances, Miscellaneous Laws, and Local Laws, with a summary of each. The full laws are compiled and included in this report as Appendix D.

Revised General Ordinances

Chapter 14 – Health and Sanitation

Article 1 – Health Nuisances

Section 14-4 – Accumulating garbage, rubbish or similar substances on premises. (April 1963)

Summary: Makes illegal the deposit, accumulation, or collection of garbage and waste on any lot, including vacant lots, and makes this offense punishable by a fine of up to \$100 per day.

Revised General Ordinances

Chapter 14 – Health and Sanitation

Article 2 – Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

Section 14-22 – Construction and demolition debris. (October 2001)

Summary: Identifies materials defined as construction and demolition debris and outlines the process for City removal of such materials. Expressly requires contractors remove their own debris and forbids accumulation of this debris on vacant lots unless authorized by DPW.

Revised General Ordinances

Chapter 24 – Streets and Sidewalks

Article 2 – Snow and Ice

Section 24-3 – Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks. (January 1978)

Summary: Requires and places time limits on owners of structures and vacant lots fronting a roadway or park to clear their sidewalks of snow and ice.

Revised General Ordinances

Chapter 24 – Streets and Sidewalks

Article 7 – Other Obstructions and Encumbrances; General Prohibitions

Section 24-30 – Cleaning and maintenance of sidewalks; duty of abutting occupant and owner. (June 1974)

Summary: Requires landowners to keep sidewalks in good repair and safe condition, and clear from obstructions, grass, and weeds.

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 26 – Zoning Board of Appeals
Article 4 – Exception Appeals
Section 26-19 – Minimum area requirements. (August 1958)

Summary: Allows the Zoning Board of Appeals to allow certain construction on lots which do not meet the minimum area requirements and expressly forbids permission if the applicant is the owner of adjoining vacant property.

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 27 – Property Conservation Code
Article 1 – General Provisions
Section 27-2 – Purpose. (June 1993)

Summary: The provisions of this Code were established to create basic and uniform standards for the condition, occupancy, and maintenance of all premises in the City, including vacant lots.

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 27 – Property Conservation Code
Article 1 – General Provisions
Section 27-10 – Definitions. (July 2013)

Summary: Provides various definitions for use in the Property Conservation Code, including vacant buildings and vacant lot

Vacant building. *A building or portion of a building which meets one or more of the following criteria:*

- *Unoccupied and unsecured;*
- *Unoccupied and secured by other than normal means;*
- *Unoccupied and unsafe, or unfit, as determined by the division;*
- *Unoccupied and in violation of federal, state or local laws, ordinances and/or regulations; and/or*
- *Unoccupied and one (1) or more violations of this chapter or the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code exist on the building, parcel or property.*

Vacant lot. *A lot, other than park lands, which is not improved by a structure and is not regularly maintained.*

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 27 – Property Conservation Code
Article 7 – Property Maintenance Requirements
Section 27-72 – Open areas. (June 1993)

Summary: Requires yards, courts, and vacant lots to be kept free of hazards and any accumulation which would cause a fire hazard or breeding place for vermin.

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 27 – Property Conservation Code
Article 7 – Property Maintenance Requirements
Section 27-73 – Buildings and structures. (June 1993)

Summary: Requires owners of vacant buildings to take steps as directed to them by Code Enforcement to ensure their building and yard are safe and secure and not a hazard, and sets forth board-up standards, should that be required.

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 27 – Property Conservation Code
Article 8 – Administration
Section 27-116 – Vacant properties; demolition. (July 2013)

Summary: Enacted due to vacant structures being subject to unlawful entry, vandalism, and fire and the potential health and safety hazards to the public, neighbors, and city employees delivering services there, the law set forth the responsibilities of owners to maintain and secure their vacant buildings and property (including vacant lots), authorizes Code Enforcement to cut and clean properties and bill the owner and allows them to order demolitions, and creates and establishes registration procedures and fees for the vacant property registry.

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 27 – Property Conservation Code
Article 9 – Rental Registry
Section 27-137 – Conversion to vacant registry. (December 2010)

Summary: An owner of any unit covered by a rental registry certificate which becomes vacant must notify code enforcement of the change and convert the registration to the vacant property registry, at no charge; however, the owner must comply with all provisions of Section 27-116(e), including registration and fees.

Revised General Ordinances
Chapter 51 – Public Art
Section 51-3 – Definitions. (July 2007)

Summary: Permits vacant land owned by SURA or SIDA, with their permission, to be useable for public art, including paintings, sculptures, other visual art, landscapes, and earthworks.

Revised General Ordinances

Chapter 54 – Lead Abatement and Control

Section 54-13 – Exemptions. (July 2020)

Summary: Exempts properties taken by a governmental entity in a foreclosure proceeding which are vacant and secured and scheduled for demolition or sale from the lead control and abatement requirements.

Miscellaneous Laws

Chapter 1 – Administration

Article 1 – In General

Section 1-8 – Residential antidisplacement and relocation assistance plan. (November 1995)

Summary: Provided that the City of Syracuse would replace all occupied and vacant occupiable dwelling units which were demolished or converted to a non-low-income use as the result of activities assisted with funding provided by a 1974 law.

Miscellaneous Laws

Chapter 16 – Water – Rules, Regulations and Rates

Article 3 – Abatements

Section 16-66 – Vacant dwelling units. (April 1974)

Summary: Provides a rebate opportunity to the owner of a multiple dwelling unit building if, when one or more units become vacant, the owner gives notice to the water finance department, the billing for that property will only be based on occupied dwelling units; the owner forfeit's their right to the rebate if they do not immediately notify the water department of the unit becoming reoccupied.

Local Laws

Chapter 14 – Taxation

Article 2 – Tax Exemptions

Division 12 – Exemption for Total Rehabilitation of Vacant Residential Structures and New One- and Two-Family Residences (December 2013)

Summary: Outlines the applicability, exemption schedule, application, approval, and cessation of a tax exemption for total rehabilitation of vacant residential structures and other buildings.

Vacant Property Registry

As established by Section 27-166, part 'e' of the City of Syracuse Property Conservation Code, as amended, the Vacant Property Registry (sometimes referred to as "VPR") requires the owner of any vacant building which has one or more exterior code violations to apply for and obtain a Vacant Property Registry Certificate from Code Enforcement.

Both commercial and residential buildings are required to be registered, but the Registry law makes no mention of any requirements for vacant lots or other buildings which do not have exterior code violations. The registration certificate is valid for one year, is non-transferable, and must be renewed annually for as long as the property is vacant.

In applying for the certificate, owners must provide key property information and details, pay a fee, and identify a vacant building plan for the property's future.

Required Information for Vacant Property Registry Certificate:

- Building Address
- Name, Address, and Telephone Number of the Owner(s)
- Photocopy of Owner(s) Photo Identification
- Names and Addresses of All Lienholders
- Name, Address, and Telephone Number for Local Property Manager
 - Only Required for Properties Owned by Individuals Who Reside Outside of Onondaga, Madison, Cayuga, Oswego, or Cortland Counties.

Fees for Vacant Property Registry Certificate:

The fee for a Vacant Property Registry Certificate must be paid annually at application and is based on several factors, including the building's use, square footage (for commercial buildings), number of residential units, the building's future use plan, and the length of time the building has been vacant. Fees range from \$100 a year to thousands of dollars, depending on these factors.

Identifying a Vacant Building Plan:

The legislation requires Registry applicants to submit a vacant building plan which must be approved by Code Enforcement prior to certificate issuance. Plans fall into three categories:

Plan A – Rehabilitate and Reoccupy

The owner agrees to renovate and return the building to an appropriate use within one year, unless an extension is granted by Code Enforcement, detailing the reason for the extension. All repairs and improvements must comply with relevant zoning and building codes and properly secured during the period of rehabilitation. A registered building which does not apply for any building permit within one year should be notified by Code Enforcement of their non-compliance. Year one of vacancy is billed at a lower fee, but owners found to be non-compliant in their Vacant Building Plan pay maximum fees in future years.

Plan B – Stabilize and Maintain

For buildings which will remain vacant, owners can select Plan B which requires the owner to submit a plan for securing, monitoring, and maintaining the building in accordance with City code, along with a statement as to why the building will remain vacant.

Plan C – Demolish

Owners who intend to demolish their vacant building shall submit a demolition plan to include a timeline and must secure or board up their building in accordance with the City's Property Conservation Code. A registered building which does not apply for a demolition permit within one year should be notified by Code Enforcement of their non-compliance. Code Enforcement may issue an extension upon the request of the owner explaining the reasons. Year one of vacancy is billed at a lower fee, but owners found to be non-compliant in their Vacant Building Plan pay maximum fees in future years.

Conversion to Rental Registry

If a building with a Vacant Property Registry Certificate is converted to a residential non-owner-occupied dwelling, that change triggers the requirement to register the property on the Rental Registry (Article 9 of the Property Conservation Code). As such, the owner is required to notify Code Enforcement when this conversion occurs. Following notification, Code Enforcement shall convert the building's Vacant Property Registration Certificate to a Rental Registry Certificate with no additional charges or requirements; however, following the conversion, the owner of the building is required to comply with all the provisions of the Rental Registry law, including applying for and obtaining future Rental Registry Certificates.

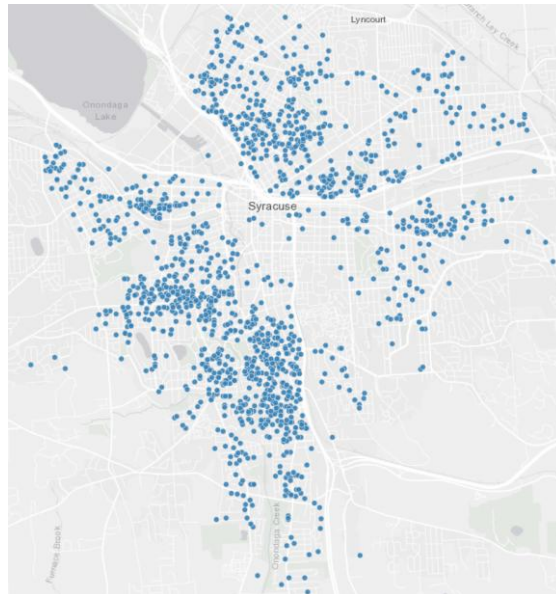
Failure to Apply for Vacant Property Registry

Building owners who fail to apply for the Registry are in violation of the City of Syracuse Property Conservation Code and may face fines and civil and criminal penalties as laid out in Section 27-120 of the Code.

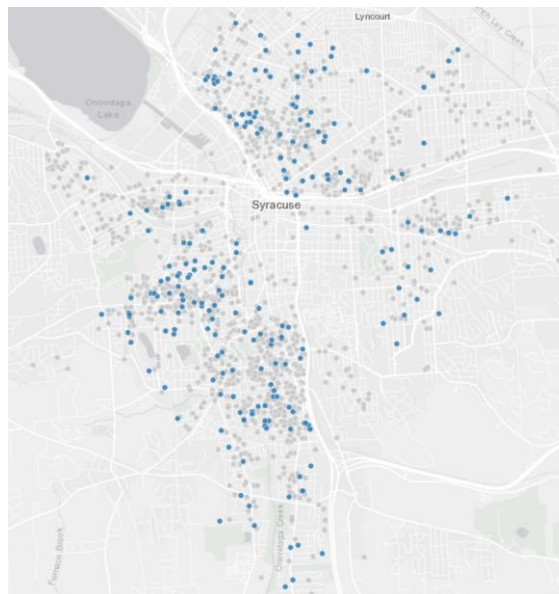
Mapping Vacant Properties

According to Open Data Syracuse, the City's Open Data Portal and only available public resource identifying vacant properties, the City has more than 1,500 vacant buildings spread around the City, largely clustered in areas on the Northside, Southside, and in the Southwest (As of July 7, 2025).

Despite the Vacant Property Registry law, when you narrow or filter the results, the data shows only 413 of those properties have associated data – either an active or expired certificate. More than 1,100 buildings (73%) have no registration information attached to the dataset. Of the 413 with data, only 288 buildings (only 18.8% of all vacant buildings) are shown to have *active* Vacant Property Registry certificates.



Map of Vacant Properties, Each blue dot represents a property. (Source: Open Data Syracuse, July 7. 2025)



Map of Active VPR Certificates. Each blue dot represents a property with an active certificate. Grey dots represent those without an active certificate (Source: Open Data Syracuse, July 7. 2025)

Findings

GENERAL FINDINGS

FINDING #1: 29% (25 Out of 87) of all 2024 Structure Fires Were in Vacant Properties

A seemingly disproportionate number of structure fires occurred in vacant properties across Syracuse in 2024. Of the 87 structure fires during 2024, nearly 30% of all fires (25 of them) were in structures or units determined to be vacant.

FINDING #2: More than 75% of Vacant Property Fires Occurred in Properties Which Were Unsecured

According to reports from the Syracuse Fire Department, of the 25 vacant structure fires in 2024, 19 of them (76%) occurred in buildings which were vacant and unsecured. In many of those reports, fire crews indicate finding plywood sheathing removed from one or more windows or doors, allowing unauthorized access to the building.

FINDING #3: Twenty-Two (22) Properties Had Open Code Violations At Time Of Fire

According to City records, 22 out of the 25 properties which had structure fires in 2024 had open code violations at the time of the fire.

FINDING #4: Twenty (20) Properties Had Been Ticketed by Bureau of Administrative Adjudication; Tickets Only Generated \$375 in Fine & Penalty Revenue

According to notes in IPS, the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication had initiated action against twenty out of the twenty-five properties (4 out of 5) which had vacant property fires in 2024. The tickets issued ranged from minor trash and debris violations to failure to register with the Vacant Property Registry to notices of being unfit for human habitation.

Despite having initiated action against twenty properties, resulting in dozens of tickets and thousands of dollars in fines and penalties, the City was only able to collect \$375 from the owner of the 153-157 Seymour Street building, when they received payment in September 2023.

FINDING #5: Four Firefighters Were Injured Battling Vacant House Fires in 2024

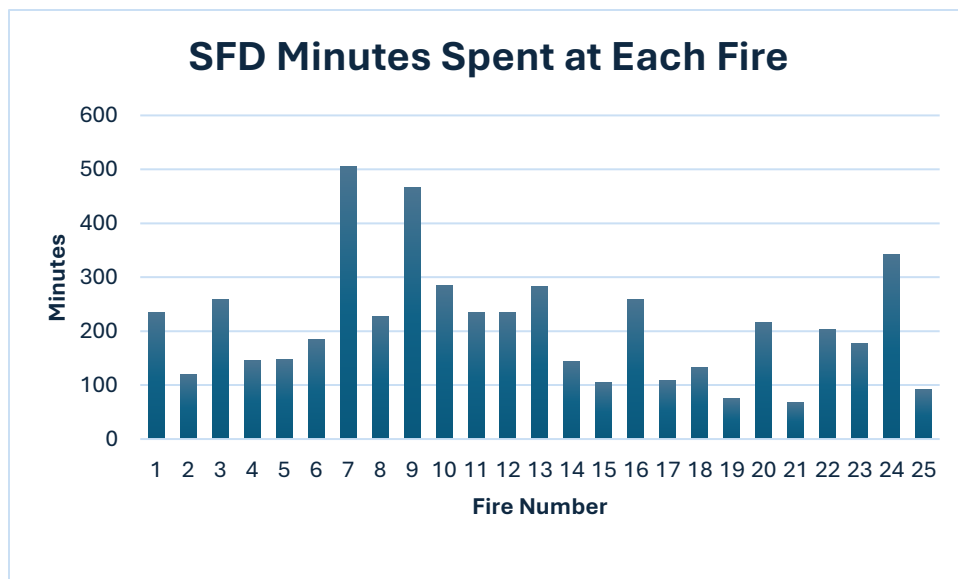
Firefighting is dangerous work and sometimes those working to save lives and properties are injured in the line of duty. Unfortunately, four members of the SFD were injured battling vacant blazes in 2024.

- Two firefighters were injured at the 1228 Park Street blaze, with one suffering a minor burn requiring treatment at the local hospital.
- One firefighter was injured in the 610-12 Oneida Street fire, suffering a burn which required hospitalization and lost time.
- One firefighter twisted an ankle at the 230 Leon Street fire, resulting in time off from work.

FINDING #6: Vacant Structure Fires Drew Average Response of 49 Fire Personnel; Crews Spent Average of 3 ½ Hours At Each Fire

Firefighting efforts require significant personnel who arrive in expensive apparatus. In the northeast region of the United States, these efforts are made more difficult by the age of the housing stock (often 100+ years old) and the construction materials (often wood). Oftentimes, these buildings also contain other dangers like asbestos and lead. As a result, fire crews work quickly to extinguish blazes fast before they can grow and spread. This approach to firefighting leaves no time to waste and results in heavy responses of significant resources.

Depending on the incident, firefighters spent between 75 minutes and 8 hours fighting each fire, with an average time of three and a half hours to fight the blaze and clear the scene. On average, 49 personnel responded to each fire, including command and support staff. The Seymour Street fire drew a response of more than 90.



FINDING #7: Average Fire Had \$10,000 in Potentially Reimbursable Fire Department Costs

Personnel and apparatus usage were identified using the SFD incident reports, which provide details including which employees were at a fire scene and when, along with which vehicles.

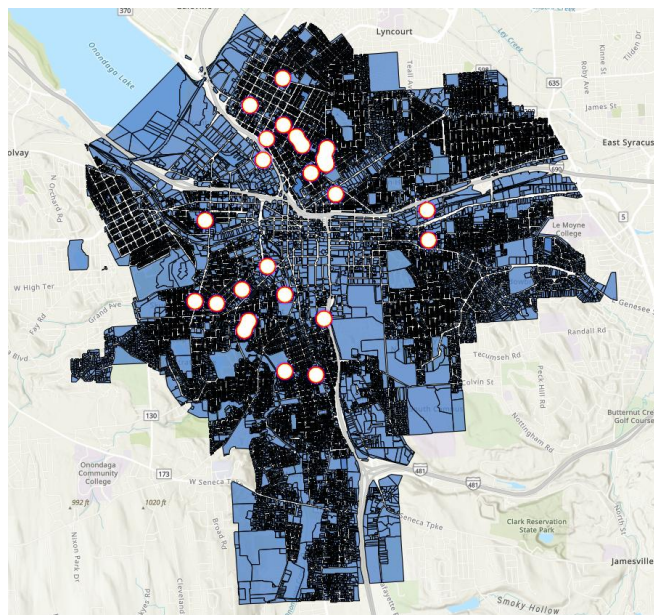
To calculate reimbursable costs for emergency operations, fire departments use the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Schedule of Equipment Rates, coupled with their departmental payrate schedule which incorporates salary and fringe benefits.

Using these schedules, it was determined the potentially reimbursable costs for vacant house fires in 2024 was at least a quarter million dollars, or \$10,000 per incident. Data omissions on incident reports made exact calculations impossible (see Finding #11).

FINDING #8: Vacant Property Fires Caused an Estimated \$1.12M in Damages

According to reports from the Syracuse Fire Department, the collective damages caused by fires in vacant structures in 2024 was roughly \$1.12 million, with the largest being \$300,000 in damages at the Seymour Street fire on November 17th.

FINDING #9: Most Vacant Fires Were Concentrated in Handful of Areas



Each white dot represents a vacant property fire in 2024.

Vacant structure fires were most common on the Northside, near Washington Square, and the Near Westside and Southwest neighborhoods.

FINDING #10: Vacant Property Registry Has Only 18.8% Compliance; More than 1,100 Vacant Buildings Not Properly Registered

Data from Open Data Syracuse, the City's only publicly available tool to identify vacant buildings, shows more than 1,500 vacant buildings across Syracuse. Yet, upon review, only 218 of these buildings, less than 20%, had current and active Vacant Property Registry certificates. More than 1,100 properties (73%) do not have the legally-required certificate.

REPORTING FINDINGS

FINDING #11: Some Fire Department Incident Reports Use Incorrect or Incomplete Addresses

Following each fire, the Syracuse Fire Department completes a report using a system called the National Fire Incident Reporting System or NFRIS. Each report has a series of sections outlining basic fire details, personnel used, apparatus used, and a supplemental report with narratives provided by each apparatus responding to the fire.

In the review of these reports, the Office of the City Auditor found several with addresses which do not match legal addresses for the properties. In one case, vacant fire #8 on Richmond Avenue, the report identifies the address as 334 Richmond Ave, when in fact 334 is the house next door to the house which caught fire – number 330. Another fire, vacant fire #25, is identified as occurring at 111 Lynch Street; however, Onondaga County property tax records confirm the actual address as 101-13 Greenway Ave.

In multiple other incidents, the address was incomplete. 612 Oneida Street is correctly 610-612 Oneida Street and 153 Seymour Street is 153-57 Seymour Street to West Street Arterial.

We note that fire calls are often dispatched to incorrect addresses and software limitations impact the department's ability to enter proper legal addresses. That said, department leadership should confirm addresses are accurate prior to signing off on reports. When system limitations impact the ability to enter a prior address, notes should be added to the report which identify the property's correct legal address and Section/Block/Lot number for accuracy and continuity of City records.

FINDING #12: Fire Department Incident Reports Provide Incomplete Data on Personnel Used

On each fire incident report, personnel and apparatus used are tracked, including the time of their dispatch, arrival, and departure from the fire scene.

In a review of fire reports, personnel arriving on fire suppression apparatus consistently tracked arrival and clear times, but department leadership times are routinely missing one or the other time. According

to SFD officials, trucks arriving at fire scenes push a button which tracks their time at a scene, but this equipment is not standard in officer vehicles. Instead, those officers announce their arrival over the air to the dispatch crew. Oftentimes, those times do not make it to the actual report.

Failure to include arrival and departure times made it so that a reimbursable cost for those personnel could not be calculated in full.

FINDING #13: SFD Failed to Complete Fire Notification Report Following Rich Street Fire

According to Section 112 of the 2020 Fire Code of New York State, a “fire chief shall notify the building official of any fire or explosion involving any structural damage, fuel-burning appliance, chimney, flue or gas vent.”

Based on records reviewed, the Syracuse Fire Department completes this notification using a form called the “FPB-Codes Fire Notification Form.” The form collects significant information and includes specific fire information, including details, a narrative, photos, and unsafe conditions. The review found that despite multiple properties suffering structural issues as the result of a fire, including 11 properties which required demolition, only one of the vacant properties which experienced a fire (out of 25) had this form completed and uploaded into either IPS or Camino. Other records included letters from the Fire Department to Code Enforcement identifying structural issues and recommending demolitions, but these were not found consistently among the records for properties with notable structural concerns.

Of particular concern, are notes from SFD calling for an emergency demolition of 310 Rich Street. This property was badly burned and included a porch collapse – notable structural damage. Records in Camino and IPS for this property do not include either the Fire Notification Form or a formal letter to Code Enforcement regarding the property’s compromised status; fire officials indicated this request was made verbally.

As of June 2025, this property has not been demolished and remains standing showing signs of a significant fire. The property next door, 501 Bellevue Avenue, was the site of Signal 99 vacant house fire on June 3rd, 2025. It will be standing for over 15 months since the fire, despite demolition orders.

ORGANIZATIONAL & OPERATIONAL FINDINGS

FINDING #14: Board-Up Crew Operates within Department of Public Works, Not Code Enforcement

Anytime a property requires a board up, those requests are directed to the Department of Public Works who dispatches a crew to perform that work. Neither Code Enforcement nor the Fire Department maintains a board up crew. This is the only function DPW performs with respect to vacant properties.

FINDING #15: Vacant Property Registration Certificates Do Not Prominently Show Expiration Dates

Registration is required for some vacant structures, according to Section 27-116 of the City's Property Conservation Code. Only structures must be registered; vacant lots are not required to be registered, and according to code, structures must register if they have one or more exterior code violations. The VPR registration is good for one year and requires the owner to identify the future use of the property – either Rehabilitate and Reoccupy, Stabilize and Maintain, or Demolish.

Certificates for the VPR are required to be prominently displayed but during physical inspections, not one could be located, even at properties which had registered. The certificates also only includes an issuance date and statement that it expires one year following the issue date.

FINDING #16: SFD "Unfit" Notices Not Large Enough; Not Adequately Maintained or Tracked

When the SFD declares a property unsafe and unfit for habitation, they place an "Unfit" placard, measuring 8.5x11 inches (the size of a regular sheet of paper), at entrances to the building. This notice is meant to warn firefighters of potential health, safety, or structural concerns, and warn potential trespassers or squatters of those same concerns.

OFFICIAL NOTICE:
310 RICH STREET
DO NOT ENTER
THIS STRUCTURE IS UNSAFE
AND ITS OCCUPANCY HAS BEEN
PROHIBITED BY THE CHIEF OF THE FIRE
PREVENTION BUREAU.

ED-704

Elton Davis, Deputy Chief
Fire Prevention Bureau, Syracuse Fire Department

Dated: April 1, 2024

This OFFICIAL NOTICE has been posted in accordance with the Sections 108.1.1[Unsafe Structure] and 109.1 [Imminent Danger] of the 2020 Building Code of New York State.

Entry into this premises is prohibited until further notice pursuant to Section 108.2 of the 2020 Fire Code New York State.

Pursuant to Section 108.4.2 of the 2020 Fire Code New York State, this OFFICIAL NOTICE **SHALL NOT BE REMOVED** until this premises has been inspected and approved for occupancy by the Division of Code Enforcement.

The notice states that the property is unsafe and that entry and occupancy is prohibited by the Chief of the Fire Prevention Bureau. It also states that the notice “**SHALL NOT BE REMOVED** until this premises has been inspected and approved for occupancy by the Division of Code Enforcement” (The emphasis included appears on the notice and is not added for effect).

Following several fires in 2024, fire officials generated and posted this placard at the property entrances, including for the fire at 310 Rich Street in April 2024. Despite this serious warning and the dangers associated with non-compliance, the Office of the City Auditor notes that this notice was nowhere to be seen on several visits to the Rich Street property in 2025, despite being declared unfit more than a year prior.

Further, this notice does not appear to be consistently uploaded to IPS, which is a database used by Code Enforcement to track complaints and violations. Nowhere in the property record for 310 Rich Street can this notice be found. The Office of the City Auditor received a copy of this notice directly from SFD.

FINDING #17: Property Owner Submitted Self-Attested Smoke Detector Certification Forms

Section 27-43 of the City’s Property Conservation Code requires property owners to install smoke detectors according to specific regulations depending on the size of the property and number of units. Those detectors then must be tested regularly, and for some properties, a smoke detector certification is required to be provided to Code Enforcement.

That certification, according to Section 27-43(e), is required for all properties larger than a two-family property. Part (2) of that section of Code indicates that this certification, when required, is to be completed by a licensed electrician unless the property exceeds 24 units in which a trained maintenance staffer may perform the inspections and certification.

Despite these rules, the owner of 403 Bear Street, a four-unit rental property, submitted an annual smoke alarm certification signed by the property owner (a resident of California) and not a licensed electrician. That form was accepted by the City.

Smoke Alarm Certification Form

I hereby certify that the smoke alarms located at:
403 Bear Street, Syracuse, NY 13208
were tested on 12/06/2024 and are all operable maintaining their
intended level of safety. Section 15.9
Building Owner Stefan Gianguliani
Number of Dwelling Units 4 Number of Building Stories 2
Number of Dwelling Unit Detectors Tested 14 Type A (10 yr)
Number of Common Area Detectors Tested 1 Type A (10 yr)
Authorized Signature *Stefan Gianguliani*
State License # _____
Types: A - Single Station Battery B - Single Station AC C - Interconnected AC
Note: All systems that are supervised require form FACH-2 to be submitted
Note: ***Effective January 1, 2003 all rooms used for sleeping purposes, in every
dwelling unit, are required to have a single station smoke detector installed.

This certification form, self-attested to by the then-property owner of 403 Bear Street, was accepted by Code Enforcement despite not being tested by a licensed electrician.

FINDING #18: Multiple Vacant Properties with Fires Has Same Property Management Company

According to records reviewed, three properties which burned in 2024 listed A&M Properties as a contact. In City records, this company appears to be incorrectly named and instead is known legally as A&M of CNY Properties, LLC based in Solvay, New York.

FINDING #19: Other Necessary Permits May Not Be Issued and Fees May Not Be Collected

Application records in Camino provide the opportunity to upload a variety of documents which are required and necessary prior to the issuance of a permit. The review of demolition permits found that the City does not consistently provide documentation and proof that other required City permissions – Water Kill Fees and Hydrant Permits – are granted and paid prior to issuance of a demolition permit.

FINDING #20: Partner Agency Did Not Respond to Summons, Pay Fines; Properties Slow to be Cited with Code Violations

A vacant property owned by the City’s partner agency, Home Headquarters, was victim to fire in 2024. 217 Webster Avenue, owned by Home Headquarters, received code violations. Home Headquarters did not correct the violations by their comply-by date, did not respond to a summons issued by the BAA, and did not pay a fine levied on them accordingly.

Entities the City has a relationship with are not exempt from Code violations and they should be cited. Their compliance with all local laws is a requirement of contracts to do business with the City of Syracuse.

Should the City wish to exempt partner agencies like Home Headquarters (or the Land Bank, Housing Visions, or others) from codes, fines, or fees, legislation would need to be adopted by the Common Council expressly exempting these entities from specific policies and delineated fees.

FINDING #21: Less than 25% Compliance with Vacant Property Registry; Potential Missed Revenue Opportunity Over \$300,000.

The Vacant Property Registry is an important tool to identify and track vacant and abandoned properties. According to the City’s open data portal, there are 1,621 properties identified as VPR candidates. Only 394 of them have active VPR registrations.

The remaining properties are out of compliance this law – and likely other City codes – and the City is losing out on more than \$300,000 in annual revenue for these registrations (assuming the lowest rate of \$250 for a 1–3-unit property in the first year of registration). That amount of revenue lost grows exponentially when the time of vacancy and size of the property grows. Better compliance with this law may have prevented some of these fires, and this revenue stream alone would have supported the response service costs and demolition fees associated with all vacant structure fires last year.

SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SHARING FINDINGS

FINDING #22: Relevant City Data About Vacant Properties Spread Across Multiple Software Systems; Water, Police, Fire, Codes, Permits, Assessment, and Tax Information Maintained In Different Programs

The review confirmed that a multitude of software programs, including AS/400, IPS, Camino, eTAX, and AIMS are being used by the City to track valuable property information.

While using various systems may not be a concern in and of itself, it does become concerning when the user inputs are insufficient or incorrect and the systems don’t communicate with one another. In the

City's case, none of the mentioned programs have any automatic sharing capabilities; reporting varies program to program and any information transferred from one system to another must be manually keyed. The review found most information does not get transferred.

Concerns about the use of software have been previously highlighted by the City Auditor. In "Working For A Living Wage," the Auditor's 2025 audit of the Syracuse Living Wage Ordinance, Marion noted issues with recordkeeping in City programs: "[program capabilities are] only as valuable as the quality and quantity of information input into [them]. Proper use requires training, continuing education, manager oversight, and regular audit." Further, "data entry and backup documentation lacked consistency and was missing information."

In "A License May Be Required," the City Auditor's 2024 audit of the City of Syracuse license and permit operations, Auditor Marion noted "software redundancy and siloing are too common," highlighting multiple programs, including IPS and Camino, being used for permit issuance. In the Administration's response to that audit, they noted more can be done to avoid siloed applications. The Office of the City Auditor concurs and appreciates the administration's awareness of this issue; more can be done in the short term to maximize the utility of existing systems and coordination between stakeholders before the purchase or implementation of new software products is done.

FINDING #23: Information Sharing Is Limited Following Fires

During the review, multiple City programs were inspected for notes, backup documentation, notice of violations and complaints, payment details, and more. Unfortunately, it was rare to find notes which transferred from one program to another. Typically, if notes were available, they were part of demolition notes which were transferred from the originating application in Camino into IPS.

This report aims to emphasize that information sharing is critical to improving the chances of success for vacant and blighted structures. Information collected by one department is often valuable to others, and dissemination of that information is essential to tracking problem properties and helping to prevent further issues. While the City continues to reevaluate programs and begin using new ones, until programs fully and completely replace their predecessors, transferring of key property information from one system of record into another is still necessary.

Key property data about water usage, non-payment of taxes and water charges, utility shut-offs, demolitions, code violations, BAA tickets, and more are tracked in separate programs and not consistently shared across departments. Examples of information which should be shared but currently has no clear information sharing policy:

- Structure fires often result in code violations but not every property receives an inspection or violations following a fire.

- Demolition permits are issued through Camino but are not always transferred to IPS or AS/400 where key property details are stored by Code Enforcement and Water.
- When a property has a fire or is demolished, Assessment and Zoning should be notified to consider a reassessment or to change the land use.
- Details about water use, especially shut offs and inactivity, are an indicator of a vacant property but those notes are maintained in AS/400 and are not transferred to Code Enforcement records.
- Details about gas and electric service shut offs and inactivity are also indicators of a property which may be vacant and should trigger inspections.
- Failure to pay property taxes is tracked by Department of Finance in eTAX but notes don't appear in AS/400 or IPS.

DEMOLITION FINDINGS

FINDING #24: 44% of Properties Which Had Vacant Fires in 2024 Have Been Demolished

Many of the property fires in vacant buildings resulted in significant damage. Eleven (11) out of the 25 fires resulted in demolitions, with several being deemed emergency demolitions by the Syracuse Fire Department or Code Enforcement.

Demolished Properties:

128 Spencer Street (Demo by Private Entity)
 211 Kirkpatrick Street (Demo by Land Bank)
 212 Seward Street (Emergency Demo by City)
 511 E. Laurel Street (Emergency Demo by City)
 330 Richmond Avenue (Demo by Land Bank)
 308-310 Palmer Avenue (Emergency Demo by City)
 226 Holland Street (Demo by Land Bank)
 634 E. Division Street (Emergency Demo by City)
 151 Fitch Street (Demo by Land Bank)
 1114 S. Geddes Street (Emergency Demo by City)
 153 Seymour Street (Demo by Private Entity)

FINDING #25: Employee Waived \$14,965 Permit Fee Without Legal Authority To Do So

The former Easy Washing Machine Co. building at 128 Spencer Street was demolished in late-2024 and early-2025 following its fire on January 8th, 2024. The demolition was completed by Lion Construction Supply & Services, LLC who, according to Camino records, completed an application for the demolition on September 5th, 2024.

The cost of a City permit varies based on the project details and is largely driven by the cost of the construction or demolition. These types of transactions include several different charges, including a Base Fee, a Plan Review Fee, a Certificate Fee, and a Permit Fee. Lion Construction identified the cost of this demolition as \$1.2 million, which generated a Permit Fee of \$14,000.00, in addition to the Base Fee for Commercial Renovation of \$40.00, a Plan Review Fee of \$900.00, and a Certificate Fee of \$25.00. In total, the demolition permit charges totaled \$14,965.

According to records reviewed in Camino, a note in the payment file for this transaction states, "Per email from B Eisenberg ALL fee (sic) are waived." Despite this apparent waiver, the item is marked "Paid" in Camino. No copy of the email, nor any justification for the waiver or authority to waive this fee was included as part of the record in Camino or IPS. The City issued permit DEMO-2024-186 on September 9th.

Unless specified in statute, only the Common Council has legal authority to waive monies owed to the City, not a City employee. This contractor still owes the City of Syracuse \$14,965 and the City should pursue this payment or ask the Common Council to pass legislation exempting them from this fee.

FINDING #26: City Paid Demolition Contractor Nearly \$160,000 for Emergency Demolition Work at Five Properties; Land Bank Also Demolished Four Properties Costing \$130,000.

Following the 2024 vacant fires, 11 properties were ultimately demolished with five (5) of those ordered as emergency demolitions by Code Enforcement after consultation with the Syracuse Fire Department. All five emergency demolitions were awarded to Crisafulli Trucking, Inc., a demolition company out of Warners, New York. In total, the City paid Crisafulli \$158,535 to demolish these properties, more than \$31,000 for each demolition.

In addition, the Land Bank ordered the demolition of four properties which had vacant fires at a cost of \$130,000, or more than \$32,000 each. The Land Bank used Crisafulli Trucking and Bronze Contracting to perform this work.

FINDING #27: Demolition Contractor Repeatedly Understated Construction Costs on Permit Applications, Saved Hundreds of Dollars in Permit Fees

Crisafulli Trucking was awarded five (5) emergency demolition awards from the City to tear down structurally unstable homes following their fires. City records show that the company bid on the work and those bids match their final invoices; however, permit applications for these demolitions show the company paid permit fees based on significantly lower costs of construction.

Construction cost dictates a large portion of the permit fee, which is charged at \$15 per \$1,000 of construction value for the first half million dollars of construction value. In each instance of filing permits for this work, Crisafulli indicated a much lower construction cost (25-30% less) than their bid. By lowering the construction cost, Crisafulli was able to reduce the cost of their permits. In total, Crisafulli underpaid permit fees by \$660 (\$44,000 multiplied by \$15.00 per thousand dollars of value.)

Address	Permit	Permit Construction Value	Amount Billed to City	Difference
212 Seward Street	DEMO-2024-39	\$22,300	\$30,150	(\$7,850)
511 E. Laurel Street	DEMO-2024-44	\$24,200	\$34,350	(\$10,150)
308-10 Palmer Avenue	DEMO-2024-66	\$22,200	\$29,785	(\$7,585)
634 E. Division Street	DEMO-2024-132	\$20,500	\$28,250	(\$7,750)
1114 S. Geddes Street	DEMO-2024-223	\$26,000	\$36,000	(\$10,000)
		\$115,200	\$158,535	(\$43,335)

Understating actual construction costs appears to be a pervasive issue. Crisfulli also understated construction costs on three permit applications for properties demolished at the Land Bank’s expense. Likewise, Bronze Contracting also applied for a permit with a construction cost lower than the amount they billed the Land Bank. These understatements lowered permit charges by nearly \$1,000.

Address	Permit	Permit Construction Value	Amount Billed to Land Bank	Difference	Contractor
211 Kirkpatrick Street	DEMO-2024-18	\$17,200.00	\$26,566.00	(\$9,366.00)	Crisafulli
330 Richmond Avenue	DEMO-2025-21	\$27.00	\$30,518.00	(\$30,491.00)	Bronze
226-28 Holland Street	DEMO-2025-20	\$31,000.00	\$45,894.00	(\$14,894.00)	Crisafulli
151 Fitch Street	DEMO-2024-236	\$17,800.00	\$27,308.00	(\$9,508.00)	Crisafulli
		\$66,027.00	\$130,286.00	(\$64,259.00)	

FINDING #28: Contractor for Land Bank-Ordered Demolition Paid Incorrect Permit Fee; City Issued Permit Anyway

The demolition of 330 Richmond Avenue was called for following the blaze which occurred on March 2nd, 2024. According to City records in Camino, the demolition was completed by Bronze Contracting LLC out of Remsen, NY, who completed an application for the demolition on February 27th, 2025.

The cost of a City permit varies based on the project details and is largely driven by the cost of the construction or demolition. These types of transactions include several different charges, including a Base Fee, a Plan Review Fee, a Certificate Fee, and a Permit Fee. Camino has two separate field for construction cost, one labeled “Cost of Construction” and another identified as “Construction Cost” with the latter being the figure used to calculate the permit fee.

On the application, Bronze wrote, "\$27,035" on the "Cost of Construction" line, but used a period instead of a comma on the "Construction Cost" line, indicating a cost of just \$27.035. As a result, Bronze was charged a Permit Fee of just \$15.00, in addition to the base fee and plan review fee for a total demolition permit charge of just \$65.00. They did not pay a Certificate Fee, either. Had the permit charges been calculated correctly, the total cost would have exceeded \$400.

Records indicate a \$65.00 payment, plus a credit card processing fee, was charged on March 3rd. That same day, despite the glaring error, the City issued permit DEMO-2025-21.

While this appears to have been the City's error, Bronze Contracting, LLC is still responsible for making the full payment unless the Common Council chooses to retroactively waive this charge.

FINDING #29: One Property Ordered By SFD to be an Emergency Demolition Still Standing

The property at 310 Rich Street burned on April 10th, 2024, causing significant damage to the structure including a porch collapse. Following the blaze, the Syracuse Fire Department declared the building unfit and verbally communicated to Code Enforcement issues with the structure which they felt should result in a demolition.

Despite this request, as of June 2025 the property remains standing, badly burned, and is a nuisance property for the neighborhood.

On June 2nd, 2025, at 501 Bellevue Avenue, a vacant house directly next door to 310 Rich Street, a fire broke out making that property the City's latest vacant property fire.

FINDING #30: No Demolition Permit Pulled for 153 Seymour Street Demolition

Demolition of a structure in the City of Syracuse requires a permit, even if it's an emergency. Despite that requirement, no City records show an application, permit, or certificate of completion for the demolition of the building at that property.

During an inspection of the property in March 2025, staff from the Office of the City Auditor personally witnessed the demolition of the building which has now been completed.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION #1: Develop an Early Warning System to Alert City Officials to Potential Problem Properties

Based on the analysis, the City can identify properties which are most likely to become nuisances and potential fire hazards. Many of these properties share similar characteristics, including being near the site of other recent vacant structure fires, having inactive water service, having open code violations or previous violations referred to BAA, or being in arrears on their taxes or water charges. This data was difficult to pull together, and the City should work to centralize this information and better utilize it to predict which properties could fall victim to fires and stage early interventions.

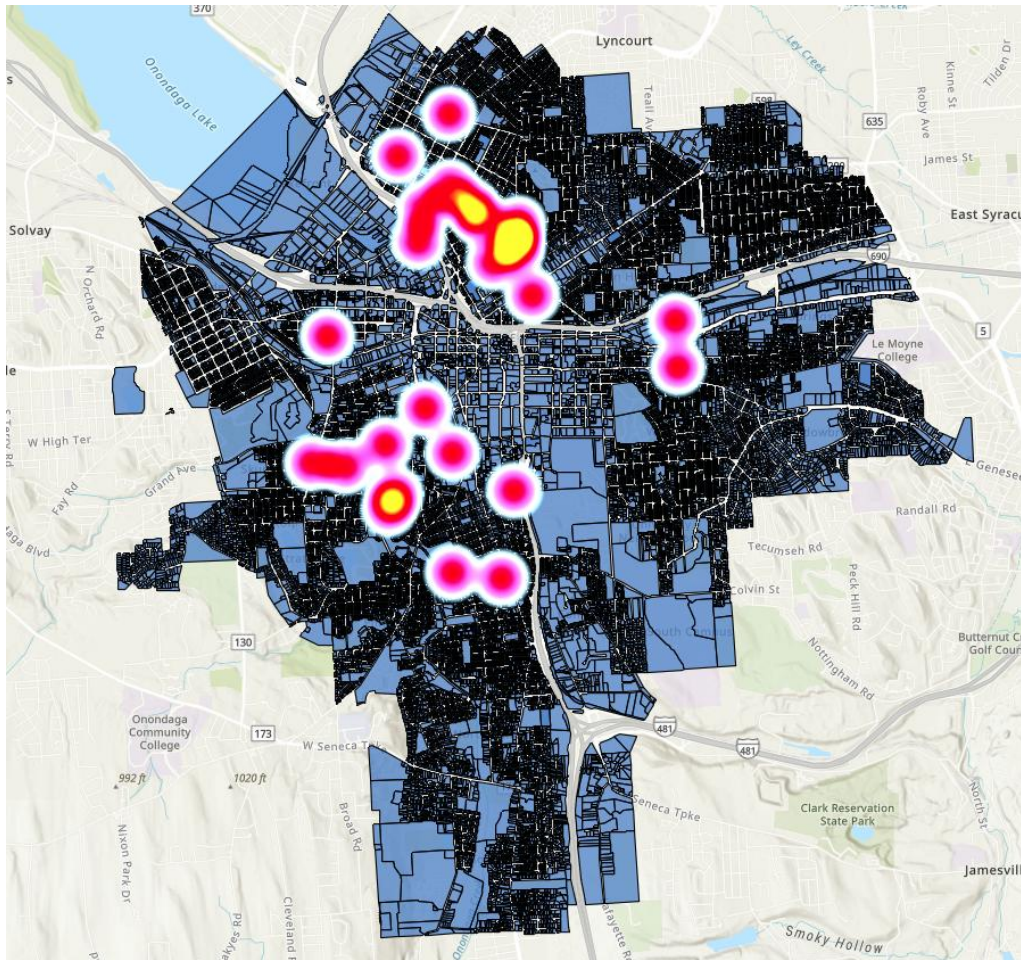
Using the available data; however, the City should institute a “three strikes” rule for placement on a Problem Properties List. Any property which meets three of following criteria would become automatically placed on the list:

- Within half-mile of vacant structure fire within past 18 months
- Inactive water service
- Inactive National Grid service
- In arrears on taxes
- In arrears on water
- Open code violations/Previous violations sent to BAA

Properties placed on the Problem Properties List should receive immediate and frequent early intervention tactics, including prioritizing it for additional, regular code inspections, having the City perform board-ups, or prioritizing the property for potential seizure and sale to the Land Bank or other entities.

Legal action should be taken against owners of these properties to ensure compliance, beyond simply referring the matter to BAA. Further legal action should be prioritized if the owner, or a beneficial owner, has a history of abandoned and/or fire-prone properties. It should also trigger inspections at other property holdings of the owner.

Additionally, the City should fund weatherization, structural condition work, or preventive demolition for some of these properties, using funds from the Housing Strategies Corporation or new streams of revenue.



This heat map of vacant property fires in 2024 shows how these incidents were largely concentrated in several City neighborhoods, showing how proximity to other fires is relevant.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Update Vacant Property Registry, Fees; Require All Vacant Properties and Lots to Register; Add “Blighted Property” Category; Create Problem Properties List

Under current law, only structures which have one or more exterior code violations are required to register with the Vacant Property Registry. The Common Council should amend the City Code to expand registration requirements to require all vacant properties to be registered, even if they have no exterior code violations or are vacant lots.

A new “Blighted Properties” category which goes beyond “Vacant Property” should also be added to identify properties which are vacant and no longer being maintained. These unsightly properties require special attention and should be watched carefully for squatters and violations.

The City should also maintain a Problem Properties List which centralizes property data relevant to a property’s status, like code enforcement info, BAA action and water and tax records.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Seek Home Rule Permission for Vacant, Abandoned Tax from New York State; Create Renewing Syracuse Fund for Demolitions and Site Prep

The Syracuse Common Council should pass a Home Rule resolution and request New York State give the City permission to impose a vacant and abandoned property tax, on top of a property's regular property taxes.

Since 2011, Washington, DC has had a similar tax that imposes a higher rate of tax for properties known or determined to be vacant or abandoned. The nation's capital imposes a tax of \$5.00 per \$100 of assessed value on vacant buildings and \$10.00 per \$100 of assessed value on blighted, abandoned property (Washington, DC Office of Tax and Revenue n.d.).

Funds from this tax should be directed to a new fund – the Renewing Syracuse Fund – that would support emergency demolitions, zoning changes, and site prep for new construction to help defray the costs and increase housing supply faster.

RECOMMENDATION #4: Require Property Management Companies to be Licensed by the City.

Property management companies are often hired by landlords to take care of day-to-day management issues at investment properties. Regular tasks include building maintenance, collecting rents, trash removal, and working with code enforcement on permitting matters. Property managers are often the first line of communication with tenants. Property managers are also a requirement for properties on the City's rental registry owned by entities based outside Central New York.

A simple internet search turns up dozens of area companies offering a wide array of services at different prices and scales. Property managers are available to handle everything from a two-family house in a residential neighborhood to a 100-unit apartment block. These managers also provide inconsistent levels of quality service and may choose to vet their employees and staff differently.

As the Office of the City Auditor called for in "A License May Be Required," property managers should be licensed by the City of Syracuse. Property owners who seek to use these services should only be allowed to use a City-licensed firm. As part of licensure, the City should require insurance and background checks for all employees. Additionally, City-licensed firms should be required to submit a list of all customers in the City of Syracuse, so the City can have appropriate contact information for properties if problems, like Fires or Code Violations, arise. Licenses could be revoked if the management firms were also property owners and fall behind on taxes or water charges or have tax warrants issued by local or state government.

This would guarantee property managers are properly insured for the work they do and prevent firms from hiring employees with a history of criminal sex offenses to work around children or serious financial offenses from handling tenants' rent payments.

RECOMMENDATION #5: Amend Board Up Policy in City Code; Adopt FEMA Board Up Procedures

The City's board up procedure was last amended in 1993 and requires an update. The current law requires doors to be secured with a padlock and painted plywood to be applied to first-floor openings with screws, leaving a gap at the top for natural light. Too often, though, this gap presents an opportunity to pull a board down, and the use of screws often proves insufficient to keep squatters out.

The Common Council should amend the Code and update the board up procedure, instead adopting the United States Fire Administration's (an agency of the Federal Emergency Management Agency) method of board ups, commonly known as the "Brace and Bolt" or the "Tension" method. Under this procedure, the carpenter firmly affixes plywood to the exterior of a home much like the current method, but the entire window is covered and additional 2x4 bracing is added to the interior of the structure which is then securely fastened to the plywood using carriage bolts. Following the last installation, the carpenter then uses a ladder to exit the property from a second story opening. The FEMA Board Up Procedure is included as Appendix C.

This method makes removal significantly more difficult, decreasing the opportunity for a potential squatter. It eliminates the City Code-required gap which can be used to gain leverage, and it uses stronger bolts for installation, which makes pulling a board off more difficult. The counter-bracing on the inside further strengthens the installation.

RECOMMENDATION #6: Issue Rent Holds on Any Property Vacant Property Until Vacancy Is Over; Do Not Lift Rent Holds Until Rental Registry Inspection Occurs.

The City of Syracuse will request stop rent orders from Onondaga County Department of Social Services for properties that are declared unfit for human habitation or have other major code violations. These orders are often lifted when a property becomes vacant or abandoned. This creates a loophole whereby unscrupulous landlords can bring in tenants to properties not meeting code and collect rents.

Stop rent orders should be continued while properties are abandoned. They City should only lift those orders when a proper rental registry inspection is conducted, and the property is deemed safe for human habitation once again.

RECOMMENDATION #7: Fire Department Should Adopt FEMA Vacant Property Markings; Require SFD and Code Enforcement to Inspect and Maintain These Properties

The SFD should stop using their current "Unfit" placard at vacant properties and instead adopt the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s recommendation of building markings. Under FEMA's recommendations, properties which are vacant should be marked using a set of large, clear red boxes, indicating the status of the property. Homes which are vacant, but secured and stable, should receive a red box, but as safety concerns increase, 1-2 slash lines are added to form either a "/" or an "X." Properties marked with an X should only be entered if known life hazards exist. These placards should measure 24x24 inches, more than 5 times bigger than the current "Unfit" placard, giving a clear visual indication



An X in the box on a building denotes that only exterior operations should be performed. Enter the dangerous building only if there is a known life hazard.



A single line in the box on a building denotes that any interior operations should be done using extreme caution.



An empty box on a building denotes that there was normal stability at time of marking.

RECOMMENDATION #8: Utilize Property Tax Maps to Confirm Addresses for Fire Incident Reports

When fire investigators and commanders are completing incident reports, particularly those where a fire occurred, they should be sure to capture the legal street address for validity of City records. Some of the structures with fires have hyphenated house numbers (such as 610-612 Oneida Street) or corner properties (153-57 Seymour Street to West Street Arterial).

Tax map numbers or SBL (Section/Block/Lot) numbers should be included on all reporting documents for Fire and Code Enforcement to make it easier to cross reference with other City records.

RECOMMENDATION #9: Deactivate Water Service At Vacant and Abandoned Propertie

Water service should be deactivated at properties known to be vacant or abandoned as a standard procedure. Structures with active water services are subject to billing, which went unpaid in most of these properties. This would ensure the City is not billing accounts that are likely not to be collected and that potential squatters would not be able to cause leaks or other damage to abandoned properties.

RECOMMENDATION #10: Require Utility Shut Offs At “Blighted Properties” By Law; Mandate Gas & Electric Utilities Notify City of All Service Changes; Utility Shut Offs Should Trigger Inspection

Blighted properties are made more unsafe when utility services – water, gas, electric – are active. That makes it harder to fight fires and more dangerous for firefighters, code enforcers, and other essential responders. Blighted properties, which the Office of the City Auditor recommended earlier in this report be defined by law, should be required to have their utilities shut off.

The Common Council should pass an ordinance requiring utility shutoffs in vacant and abandoned properties and do their part by shutting off water service at these properties. They should also mandate the local gas and electric provider (National Grid) to provide notice to the City anytime any gas or electric service has any change in service, including change of account holder, property owner, shut off, or removal.

Additionally, when utility services have been shut off at a property, that should trigger an automatic code inspection to determine the quality of the property and to see if it is inhabited or there are any violations that need to be addressed. Additionally, the Water Department should use that opportunity to begin the process to shut off service to the vacant property.

RECOMMENDATION #11: Ensure Interoperability Of Codes, Fire, Police, Water, And Tax Records

The City’s ongoing siloed information structure leads to delayed responses and inefficient coordination. Ensuring that data including code violations, notes from code inspectors, fire reports, police calls, and water billing can be concurrently viewed is critical to the City’s ability to investigate the owners of problem properties, prevent structure fires from happening, and hold slumlords accountable.

City records should note anytime a property experiences a change and be updated simultaneously. Be it a utility service change, a code violation, a police call, a fire, or a board up, these data points (while

useful on their own and to the department which is primarily responsible for tracking that information) often provide valuable information for other departments.

RECOMMENDATION #12: Professionalize Code Enforcement Operations – Require Uniforms, Use Body Cameras, and Perform Work In Marked Cars

Staff with the Division of Code Enforcement are currently required to use their own personal vehicles to travel the city and perform inspections. Code inspectors are provided with a flat \$2,200 car allowance. Employees wear personal clothing and only have a City issued identification badge to prove their identity or workplace.

NOTE: A draft version of this report incorrectly stated the method and amount of the reimbursement provided to inspectors. The final version has been updated to reflect the actual reimbursement amount.

Code Enforcement is a dangerous job and ensuring these employees are safe is paramount. When these critical employees are performing inspections, they should be outfitted with matching City-issued uniforms which clearly display their affiliation along with a body camera which captures their interactions and inspections. They should also be driving marked vehicles issued by the City of Syracuse.

The Administration has proposed equipping Code Inspectors with body cameras, with a startup cost of \$53,000 and an annual cost of \$24,000 (Boyer 2024). The equipment would be purchased from Axon, the same provider that supplies the Syracuse Police Department with body cameras. This use of this technology was approved by the City's surveillance technology oversight working group, conditioned on the approval of a policy governing their use (Boyer 2024). Ultimately, no legislation enabling this was put forward by the administration for a vote.

RECOMMENDATION #13: Request Weekly Property Sales and Deed Transfers Report from Onondaga County Clerk's Office

The Onondaga County Clerk's office is a wealth of data and information which can and should be accessed by City government. This is where property sales and deed transfers are recorded. The City should have a standing request for property sales and deed transfers and use that information to regularly update City tax, water billing, and assessment records.

The office is managed capably by County Clerk Emily Bersani and the City should use this important resource to its full potential.

RECOMMENDATION #14: Require Inspections of Entire Property Owner Portfolio Anytime Unfit Property Designation Issued, Property Becomes Vacant or Abandoned

Syracuse has a longstanding problem with prolific slumlords owning a series of sub-standard properties. When unfit designations are issued at one property, that is an indication of potentially systemic problems for the property owner's other holdings. Anytime unfit designations are issued at a property, all the owner's other properties should be subject to inspections. Additionally, the City should use this as an opportunity to pursue administrative warrants to conduct interior inspections of these properties.

This can be accomplished both by the administration enacting this as policy but also through an ordinance passed by the Common Council to ensure future administrations must continue this action.

RECOMMENDATION #15: Create More Public Dashboards to Show Program Effectiveness

The City should develop dashboards which show the effectiveness of various City operations, including Code Enforcement and the Bureau of Administrative Adjudication. Online portals could track and display average permit issuance times, average code violation closure times, and revenue raised from BAA. More public tools are always better when helping to make informed policy decisions.

RECOMMENDATION #16: Codify in Local Law that Chief of Fire May Request and Require Emergency Demolitions, Enforce New Laws Requiring Demolition Within Certain Time Limits

The City Code should mirror New York State Fire Code and expressly name the Chief of Fire as having the ability to declare and require emergency demolitions of structurally-compromised properties. It should also set specific timelines for conducting that demolition and require the Chief of Fire to ensure the work is completed within those legally-mandated timeframes.

RECOMMENDATION #17: Require Code Inspections Of All Properties Within 48 Hours Of Structure Fires

All properties where structure fires occur should be subject to automatic code inspections. Too often, these properties become eyesores in neighborhoods, many of which receive no repairs or delayed repairs. Code inspections within 48 hours of a fire would ensure the City begins the process of holding property owners accountable for making needed improvements and restoring quality of life for neighbors.

RECOMMENDATION #18: Mandate Gas & Electric Utilities Notify City of All Service Changes

The Common Council should enact a law which mandates the local gas and electric provider (National Grid) provide notice to the City anytime any gas or electric service has any change, including change of account holder, property owner, shut off, or removal.

RECOMMENDATION #19: Vacant Property Fires Should Trigger Automatic Reassessments Of Blocks

Fires at vacant structures are often symptoms of decline and turmoil on individual blocks. When fires occur, and damage is left behind, supporting a solid quality of life is more difficult for neighbors. Neighboring properties do, unfortunately, become less desirable on the market. The City should pursue a policy of requiring reassessments in the immediate vicinity of vacant structure fires to ensure area residents, who may already be facing depressed property values, are not being inappropriately overtaxed on their property.

Earlier this year, the Syracuse Common Council voted to withdraw funding for a proposed Citywide reassessment that would address some of these disparities. That decision would have corrected some of the inequities that have arisen over the years from quality-of-life challenges in neighborhoods. While that reassessment is unlikely to go forward, spot reassessments when conditions change are a smart, equitable way to ensure homeowners in distressed neighborhoods are not being unfairly penalized by outdated and inaccurate assessments.

RECOMMENDATION #20: Use Demolitions As an Opportunity For Rezoning And Increases In Density; Develop A Municipal Side Lot Purchase Program

When properties are demolished following vacant structure fires, as about half this past year were, this should be viewed as an opportunity to enable more development, especially in areas where the housing supply may face challenges. This provides the opportunity for the property's owner to create more density and may also create more opportunities for rebuilding, with an owner having greater options to maximize the lot for any vacant structure that is demolished in an R1 zone should be immediately rezoned to be an R2 or R3, which are designed as follows:

The R2 Zone District was established to provide for residential neighborhoods made up of single-unit detached and two-unit dwellings with green space, street trees, front porches and sidewalks. This Zone District may include attached single-unit dwellings, and multi-unit dwellings in compliance with the Mixed Income Development regulations. Complementary uses such as parks, open space, schools, places of assembly, minor utilities, accessory dwelling units, and accessory structures may also be allowed.

The R3 Zone District was established to provide for residential neighborhoods made up of single-unit detached and two-unit dwellings on smaller lots with green space, street trees, front porches, and sidewalks. This Zone District may include single-unit attached dwellings. Complementary uses such as parks, open space, schools, places of assembly, minor utilities, accessory dwelling units, and accessory structures may also be allowed.

When demolitions occur, the City should also examine if adjoining lots are vacant and potentially able to be seized. They should then be combined into a single parcel where feasible. Combined lots could offer opportunities for even denser housing options, such as small apartments or townhouses, and offer an attractive opportunity for a builder or buyer.

If lots are not suitable for construction in the future, they should immediately be offered at a low cost to immediate neighbors, with the City providing support for creating a single parcel of land. Known as side lots, these are ways for owner-occupants to expand their own properties with a yard they can enjoy, but also ensure these lots are placed back on the tax rolls quickly with homeowners paying taxes on these parcels. The Land Bank offers a similar program for purchasing side lots, with some notable success.

RECOMMENDATION #21: Require LLCs to Register with City and Provide Key Member Information

A Limited Liability Company (LLC) is a business organization set up to provide certain legal and tax benefits to owners. Many landlords purchase rental properties through an LLC to take advantage of these benefits. While seemingly understandable, many properties, all owned by different LLCs on paper, may be passively owned by the same landlord. Landlords can use this loophole to avoid granting protections to tenants.

As previously recommended in "There's No Place Like Home," there are more than 3,900 rental properties owned by LLCs in Syracuse. The City should maintain more information about owners to pursue legal remedies. The New York State LLC Transparency Act will likely be inadequate and is still several years away from implementation. The City should require LLC owners to disclose beneficial ownership information, as well as identify a local point of contact and/or property manager, for purposes including the Rental Registry, water billing, and property tax collections.

The Common Council should pursue a local ordinance modeled on the LLC Transparency Act to mandate this compliance and ensure City officials have immediate access to those records.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

MAYOR BEN WALSH

To: Hon. Alexander Marion, City Auditor
Fr: Sharon Owens, Deputy Mayor
Cc: Hon. Ben Walsh
Michael Monds, Chief of Fire
Michael Collins, Commissioner of Neighborhood and Business Development
Jake Dishaw, Deputy Commissioner, Zoning and Code Enforcement
Re: Administration Response to “Following the Fire” Report
Date: July 22, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Audit Department’s analysis of 2024 vacant structure fires, “Following the Fire.” The Syracuse Fire Department and Division of Code Enforcement appreciate your office’s interaction and collaboration with their department regarding the report.

Reducing the harmful impact of vacant structure fires on residents, neighborhoods and city government involves collaboration between multiple city departments, most notably Fire and Code Enforcement. As such, these departments have reviewed your analysis and collaborated on the response on behalf of the Administration. For clarity, it is organized by department.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Update Vacant Property Registry

The Division of Code Enforcement (DOCE) intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the current Vacant Property Registry (VPR) in Fiscal Year 2026 and make the appropriate changes to the code to address the desired increase in effectiveness.

Amend Board-up Policy

The Auditor’s recommendation may reduce break-ins at boarded properties. The recommended method is significantly more time-consuming and costly, and requires someone to be on the interior, exiting through the second floor, creating additional safety concerns for the board-up crew.

Professionalize Code Enforcement Operations

DOCE appreciates the recognition of the need for our inspectors to be safe. For clarification, inspectors are reimbursed a flat-rate \$2,200 annually for car allowance; there is no mileage reimbursement. Unfortunately supplying the inspector team with cars has proven to be cost prohibitive, and the body camera proposal was eliminated with the enacted budget cuts for FY26. Should funding become available for vehicles and cameras, DOCE supports these recommendations.

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Create More Public Dashboards

DOCE supports clear public access to information, as has been a hallmark of the Walsh administration. The recent creation of the “Look Before You Rent” tool that allows the public to look up code violations at rental properties through an easy to use map is the latest codes data access tool created by City staff. Neighborhood and Business Development will consider what other tools are possible and useful in relation to codes data.

Require Code Inspections of All Properties with 48 Hours of Structure Fires

This is the current practice on an informal basis with the Department of Fire. The Deputy Commissioner of Code Enforcement and Zoning alerts area inspectors as soon as they are made aware of a fire. Code Enforcement will work with Fire to establish a formal process regarding inspections within 48 hours of structure fires. (See P. 3, “Coordination with Code Enforcement.”)

Use Demolitions as Opportunity to Rezone; Develop Municipal Side Lot Purchase Program

The rezoning proposed here is known as “spot zoning.” Urban planning best practices recommend against this. The City being more proactive with offering unbuildable lots to the immediate neighbors is a recommendation that will be examined.

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE

Despite the condition or presumed vacancy of a structure, Syracuse firefighters operate under the principle that life safety is the highest priority. Each incident is treated as though it may involve occupants, and our personnel respond accordingly with full resources. A systematic and comprehensive search is conducted until it can be conclusively determined that no individuals are inside. This approach reflects our department’s unwavering commitment to public safety.

The audit identifies opportunities to improve both operational efficiency and record-keeping. Our administration has carefully reviewed the findings and recommendations, and we have developed a plan to implement the suggested improvements.

Incident Reporting System – Address Inconsistencies

The report highlights inconsistencies within our incident reporting system, particularly for addresses involving hyphenated numbers (e.g., 153–157 Seymour Street). These types of addresses cannot currently be recorded accurately in our reporting software. To address this, we will implement a procedure to verify and document the correct address in the notes section of each incident report prior to final submission.

Documentation of On-Scene Times

Discrepancies in the documentation of on-scene times for personnel and apparatus were noted. These are primarily due to the lack of dispatching terminals in some support vehicles, which limits automatic time logging. While support units play a vital role, their precise time documentation is less critical to the integrity of incident reporting. It is also important to note that support staff may continue to contribute to incident management after leaving the scene, and complex incidents may involve shift changes with overlapping crews—factors that inherently challenge precise timekeeping. Nonetheless, we acknowledge the need for improved accuracy and will evaluate solutions, including expanding terminal installation where feasible.

Coordination with Code Enforcement

The report references occasional miscommunication and inconsistencies between the Fire Department and the Department of Code Enforcement regarding vacant structures. Currently, placarding of such properties has been identified as insufficient or unclear. While past efforts to adopt more visible systems—such as the FEMA Vacant Placarding System or the 2020 New York State Fire Code Section 311.5—met resistance due to concerns about aesthetics. This is an issue we are prepared to revisit. A more effective placard system will be evaluated and implemented in coordination with the appropriate departments.

Communication procedures between the Fire Department and the Codes Department, particularly regarding fire incidents and demolition requests, have been timely but, historically, have relied on informal methods. We recognize the need for a more structured communication system and will establish a formal protocol, including the assignment of responsibility to ensure timely and consistent notifications (See P. 2, “Require Code Inspections of All Properties with 48 Hours of Structure Fires.”).

Commitment to Public and Firefighter Safety

The Syracuse Fire Department remains firmly committed to protecting both our residents and our firefighters. Vacant structure fires represent a significant portion of our emergency responses, and addressing the associated challenges is a priority. We appreciate the comprehensive review provided in this audit and will use it as a foundation to enhance our processes and interdepartmental coordination.

HON. ALEXANDER MARION, MPA
CITY AUDITOR



July 23, 2025

Auditor's Response to Administration Review of Draft Report

The Office of the City Auditor appreciates the thoughtful response to Following The Fire: Analysis of 2024 Vacant Structure Fires from the Administration with the help of the Syracuse Fire Department and Division of Code Enforcement.

Following review of the Administration's comments, Recommendation #12 has been updated to correctly identify the method and amount of Code Inspector car allowances.



U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

Reducing Arson at Vacant and Abandoned Buildings

Abandoned and vacant structures can be extremely treacherous to firefighters as they lack structural integrity and may contain other hazards.

Did you know:

There are 4 actions communities can take to reduce the negative impact and blight associated with unsecured vacant and abandoned buildings and keep firefighters safe:

Monitor

Secure

Inspect

Mark

Review this page for actions communities can take to reduce arson in vacant and abandoned buildings and associated firefighter injuries.

Vacant versus abandoned: What's the difference?

The difference between vacant and abandoned buildings is primarily related to the availability of an owner.

Vacant

Unoccupied buildings with an owner who is interested in the property and easily contacted are considered vacant. A vacant building usually has current taxes.

Abandoned

A property is considered abandoned if there is no owner or the landlord is absent. In addition, the building taxes are not paid and the building is not legally occupied.

Buildings and homes can become vacant or abandoned for a multitude of reasons, including: destroyed in a disaster, foreclosure, failed business or disinvestment by the owners. Unfortunately, these structures attract illicit activity, such as drug use, vandals and prostitution.

Abandoned property is the most striking indication of neighborhood decline. Large-scale abandonment threatens the stability of neighborhoods and undermines the value of investments made by other property owners.

Actions to take: monitor, secure, inspect and mark

Monitor

Monitor all vacant properties. Properties that are secure and well-maintained, even though they are unoccupied, are not the problem. Those that have no viable owner and are unsecured and accessible to unauthorized entry require immediate attention to prevent fires and other criminal activity.

Secure

Keeping unauthorized occupants out of vacant and abandoned buildings is key to preventing fires. Unsecured vacant or abandoned buildings are intrinsically more dangerous than occupied structures.

Boarding buildings

While there are many ways to secure properties, [this board up procedure PDF](#) is one of the most effective. Done correctly and coupled with a surveillance program, buildings secured using this method are very difficult to enter. Using this method also makes buildings resistant to deterioration due to weather and other elements.

Security and surveillance

Where physical security is required, it must be done well to be effective. Once secured, the building must be patrolled with some frequency to make sure it remains secure. High visibility police patrols can also be effective. The effectiveness of security measures should be evaluated during building inspection.

Inspect

Inspect and evaluate vacant or abandoned buildings to identify potential safety issues that first responders would face if they responded to a fire. The evaluation data can also be used in the decision-making process when limited funds must be allocated to address the most significant problems.

The authority to inspect comes from building codes and ordinances adopted by the jurisdiction. It is important to check department policy and know what the inspector must do to legally enter a property.

Personnel assigned to inspect vacant or abandoned buildings should use extreme caution when entering and moving throughout these structures. Potential hazards for both inspectors and first responders include the following:

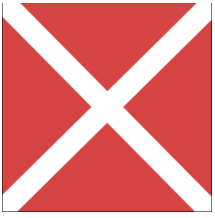
- Fall and trip hazards
- Hazardous materials on property
- Ongoing criminal activity
- Standing water in basements
- Vermin
- Unauthorized occupants
- Unstable structure

Inspectors should wear proper protective clothing and carry a radio and flashlight when operating in these buildings. It is always good practice to inform dispatch when you are entering and leaving a building so that they can account for your location should you need assistance.

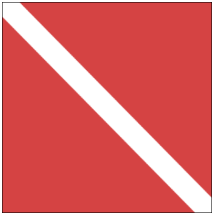
Mark

Mark buildings after they are secured and inspected. This provides a visual cue to firefighters responding to a fire, indicating that the property is vacant, was evaluated and found to contain hazards to firefighters.

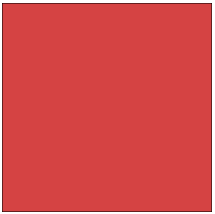
An example of a marking system is the one established in Worcester, Massachusetts, after the loss of 6 firefighters in the Cold Storage Building.



An X in the box on a building denotes that only exterior operations should be performed. Enter the dangerous building only if there is a known life hazard.



A single line in the box on a building denotes that any interior operations should be done using extreme caution.



An empty box on a building denotes that there was normal stability at time of marking.



An X in the box on a vacant building in Worcester, Massachusetts, tells firefighters to only perform exterior operations and not to enter the dangerous building — unless there is a known life hazard.

How to evaluate an abandoned or vacant building

“Basic Evaluation Procedures for Abandoned and Vacant Buildings” shows fire service officials how to collect information about an abandoned or vacant property that emergency responders can use to:

- Determine if the building is secure.
- Identify hazards that require immediate corrective action.
- Evaluate the fire growth potential of the building.
- Evaluate the potential for structural collapse.
- Identify conditions that could be hazardous to personnel.

The guide also gives you tips on how to spot indications of problems involving the site, the building and its contents.



U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

Basic Evaluation Procedures for Abandoned and Vacant Buildings

April 2018

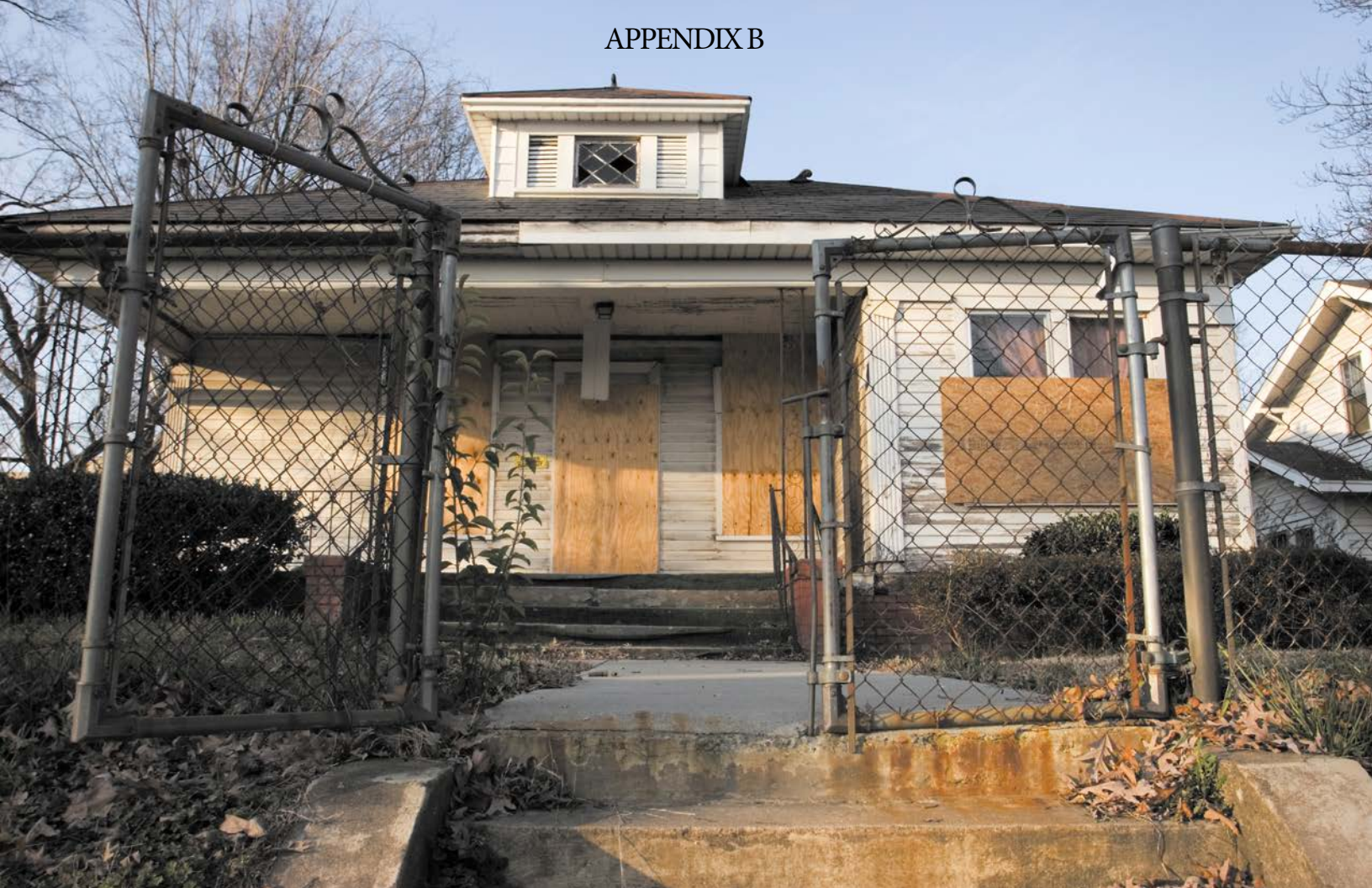


FEMA

 English PDF

Other suggested resources

[IAAI Certified Fire Investigator Trainer \(CRITRAINER\)](#). The course “Vacant and Abandoned Buildings: Hazards and Solutions” provides fire investigators with an awareness of the unique characteristics of vacant and abandoned structures. How these characteristics contribute to the ways these structures burn and special challenges in investigating these fires are explored.



U.S. Fire Administration
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Basic Evaluation Procedures for Abandoned and Vacant Buildings

April 2018



FEMA

Mission Statement

We provide national leadership to foster a solid foundation for our fire and emergency services stakeholders in prevention, preparedness and response.



U.S. Fire Administration
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Basic Evaluation Procedures for Abandoned and Vacant Buildings

Collecting property data

The evaluator should be provided with basic information regarding the property they are assigned to inspect. That information will almost always include the address of the property. However, there may be times when the evaluation is driven by an incident or event involving the building, then the first responder will have to gather as much of the basic information listed at the top of the evaluation form as possible. In situations where the owner is not known, the evaluator may be able to obtain information from neighbors or materials found during the inspection.

Right of entry

Under nonemergency conditions, the evaluator must have permission from the owner prior to entering the property to conduct the inspection. The authority to inspect is typically outlined in the codes and ordinances adopted by the jurisdiction. The evaluator should know the right of entry procedures applicable to the jurisdiction and should carefully follow them. Where permission cannot be obtained from an owner, many jurisdictions have the ability to obtain administrative warrants that allow legal entry to properties.

Where permission to enter a property has not been granted, and an evaluation is deemed necessary, basic information should be collected without trespassing — by making observations from the public way or from adjacent properties that the evaluator has been granted entry.

Conducting the evaluation

The evaluator should keep in mind that the purpose of the inspection is to obtain basic information that can be used by emergency responders and in the decision-making process regarding the disposition of a specific property. The International Association of Arson Investigators/U.S. Fire Administration Vacant/Abandoned Building Evaluation Form is designed to serve as a guide to the collection of essential information regarding the vacant property. The amount of time required to complete the evaluation will depend on the size and complexity of the structure. The evaluation process outlined in this manual is primarily a survey of the property. It is not intended to provide an engineering analysis of the structure. The evaluator is looking for obvious indications of problems involving the site, the building, and its contents.

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- ❖ Determine that the building is secure.
- ❖ Identify hazards that require immediate corrective action.
- ❖ Evaluate the fire growth potential of the building.
- ❖ Evaluate the potential for structural collapse.
- ❖ Identify conditions that could be hazardous to personnel entering the building under emergency conditions (fire, police, Emergency Medical Services).

The evaluation should begin with a walk around the outside of the building to determine the general layout, security and condition of the structure. Other information, such as the type and status of utilities, as well as signs of unauthorized entry, should be noted during the initial walk around. If the evaluator determines that the structure is safe to enter, and they have permission to do so, the interior of the structure should then be examined.

As part of the evaluation, a simple diagram of the building should be drawn. The diagram should include a floor plan of the building with the location of hazards, utility entrances, fire suppression system control valves and connections, and other potentially useful information.

Based on the procedures of the local jurisdiction, the evaluator may also elect to use a camera to document conditions and hazards found during the evaluation. Photos are very useful in developing preplans for emergency responders, as well as tracking the deterioration of a property that remains unoccupied for a long period of time. If photos are taken, the location photographed should be noted on the diagram for future reference.

Safety

Personnel conducting evaluations on vacant and abandoned properties should be aware that these structures are inherently more dangerous than occupied properties. Evaluators should use extreme caution while working in and around these properties. Potential hazards that the personnel should consider include the following:

- ❖ Unstable structure.
- ❖ Unprotected holes or shafts.
- ❖ Fall and trip hazards.
- ❖ Standing water in basements.
- ❖ Vermin and potentially dangerous animals.
- ❖ Hazardous materials abandoned on the property.
- ❖ Unauthorized occupants.
- ❖ Ongoing criminal activity in, or adjacent to, the property.

Evaluations of vacant and abandoned properties should be conducted by teams, not individuals. The teams should have a means of emergency communication, and their location should be known by a responsible party, such as a supervisor or dispatcher.

Personnel entering buildings should have personal protective equipment, including the following:

- ❖ Flashlight.
- ❖ Hard hat.
- ❖ Work boots.
- ❖ Gloves.
- ❖ Eye protection.
- ❖ Radio or mobile phone.

Prior to entering a building to conduct an evaluation, the team should use information from the exterior survey to identify potentially dangerous areas that should be avoided during the interior survey. While in the structure, the team should constantly evaluate its stability and safety. Any area that appears to be unstable should be avoided. If the stability of the structure is questionable, the team should not enter the building.

Building security

Upon evaluation of a building, it should be classified as:

- Secure.
- Open/Unsecured.
- Signs of recent activity.

The security of the building being evaluated is a key factor in the evaluation process. Buildings that are open to the elements with unauthorized access will degrade more rapidly than those that are intact and secure. While a vacant property is waiting for demolition or re-use, it must be properly secured to prevent unauthorized entry. The importance of proper security is demonstrated by the National Fire Protection Association's estimates: more than 72 percent of fires reported in vacant or abandoned structures are of incendiary or suspicious origin. An additional 5 percent of the fires result from children playing with matches.

A structure that is located in a reasonably stable neighborhood may be secured by simply closing and locking all exterior doors and windows. Where unauthorized entry is an issue, more stringent security measures, including fencing and board up, may be required to prevent entry.

During the evaluation, it should be easy to determine the security of the building during the initial walk around. The evaluator should be looking for open, broken or missing doors and windows, or holes in the exterior walls that can be used to gain access to the building. If the building is boarded up, the evaluator should look for openings where the security measures have been breached or damaged.

When conducting the interior assessment, the evaluator should be alert to signs of recent entry into the building: trash and litter, furnishings in an empty building, and signs of recent heating or cooking fires. Looking at dates on empty food or drink containers found in a building can be an indication of when the unauthorized activity has occurred.

Utilities

Determine the status of utilities connected to the building. During the exterior survey, observe the status of utility meters and valves on the outside of the building. During the evaluation of the interior, the status of the remaining utilities should be determined.

The importance of collecting information regarding utilities is to determine if these are potential sources of ignition in the building from heating or power distribution systems and to document the location of devices that emergency responders can use to control the utilities. Additionally, if fire detection and suppression systems are provided, it is important to know if there is electricity and water available and if the building is heated to prevent freezing.

The point of entry of each utility provided should be noted on the building sketch.

Building use

The original use of a structure and/or how it was last used will provide the evaluator with clues to potential hazards that may be present. For example, when inspecting an industrial building, the evaluator can expect to find pits or shafts for machinery, as well as hazardous materials, including asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls in transformers, or oil contamination.

If the building has had other uses prior to becoming vacant, the evaluator should look for modifications to the structure or interior finish that could create a hazard, such as removal of fire barriers and walls, removal of equipment that creates unprotected pits or fall hazards, the addition of combustible interior finishes, or the storage of materials that could be hazardous in the event of a fire.

Building construction

Building construction is a key component in the evaluation of a vacant or abandoned building. The primary objective of the evaluator is to document the observable construction elements of the building. The information collected will be used in the evaluation of the potential for the building to withstand fire impingement, and the potential for structural collapse as a result of fire or the deterioration of the structure. This evaluation is not intended to be an engineering analysis of building construction.

The information collected during the exterior survey should include the following:

- ❖ The number of floors and indications of basements and sub-basements.
- ❖ The type of construction used for the exterior walls of the building.
- ❖ Components that could lead to early structural failure in the event of a fire (e.g., metal tie rods with star anchors).
- ❖ The type and number of openings in the exterior of the building (for use in evaluating security, potential for fire exposure, and firefighting operations).

Once the initial observations are made on the outside of the structure, the evaluator should attempt to collect and record the remainder of the information detailed in the building construction section of the form. If the building is safe to enter, additional information should be collected during the interior survey. If it is determined that it is too dangerous to enter the building, collect as much information as possible from the outside.

The second element in evaluating construction of vacant and abandoned buildings is the assessment of the condition of the structural components. The evaluator should look for indicators of deterioration or instability, such as deformed walls or obvious deterioration of structural members. Conditions that lead to deterioration in these properties include the following:

- ❖ Exposure to the elements.
- ❖ Damage done during the removal of contents, such as machinery.
- ❖ Removal of pipes, wiring and other building systems — urban mining.
- ❖ Intentional damage by vandals and unauthorized occupants, such as cutting holes in the floors and walls.

Fire protection systems

When buildings are evaluated early in the vacancy cycle, there is a good chance that installed fire protection systems will be found intact. Many local codes and ordinances require that existing systems be maintained by the building owner. The evaluator should determine if there are fire detection, alarm or suppression systems in the building and if they are operational. If there are operational systems, are the alarms they generate monitored or local only?

This portion of the evaluation will relate to the availability of utilities and building services, such as electricity, water and heat in the case of automatic sprinklers.

Where automatic sprinkler systems are installed, it should be determined by visual inspection if the system is intact. If the supply valves are closed, could it function by feeding the fire department connection? This information could be critical in the decision-making process in the event of a fire in the structure. Where sprinkler and standpipe systems are not intact, and a fire department connection is provided, marking the connection as out of service should be considered as a follow up to this evaluation.

Fire growth potential

This portion of the evaluation is designed to collect information about the potential for a fire to be ignited and grow within the structure. Keeping in mind that a fire needs an ignition source, as well as fuel and oxygen to grow and develop, the evaluator should collect information that will assist in determining the fire growth potential of the building.

The term “fuel package” is used to describe the fuel that is available in a space or compartment. A fuel package is a discreet unit of fuel that will generate energy in the form of heat and light, as well as smoke and fire gases, if it is ignited.

A typical fuel package in a living room of an occupied dwelling would be a sofa. In a compartment fire where the sofa is the first item ignited, the material it is constructed of, where it is located, and the proximity of other fuel packages will determine the fire growth in the space. It is common to find unusual fuel packages in vacant and abandoned buildings, including large accumulations of debris or trash, furniture, and mattresses used by unauthorized occupants. When buildings are not secure, the potential for unauthorized disposal of hazardous materials also exists. Trash accumulation in a compartment is not a normal fuel arrangement. Should these materials be ignited, fire growth and development may be more rapid and larger than normally expected.

Other fuels that the evaluator should watch for during the evaluation include combustible interior finish or exposed structural components. These components may have been covered when the building was in use and will add to the available fuel in the building. Watch for exposed insulation or other materials, such as plastics, that may ignite and burn rapidly.

Collecting information on room size is important when evaluating the fire growth potential, as it will impact the magnitude of a fire in the building. Compartmentalization plays an important role in limiting the growth of a fire in occupied buildings. Large noncompartmented spaces that are part of the building design, or the result of the removal of walls, floors, doors and other structural components, can allow a fire in one part of the building to rapidly travel to other rooms or spaces.

The last element in this section is to estimate the potential for a delay in the notification of the fire department in the event of a fire. Time is a critical factor in fire growth and development. The longer a fire is allowed to burn, the more fuel it will consume. Delays in alarm often result in large fires that challenge the ability of the fire department to control and may require significant resources to fight.

Exposures

This element of the evaluation is closely related to the fire growth section. This section asks the evaluator to look at potential exposures, should the building burn. This information can be used to evaluate the potential for a fire to extend to adjacent structures. The identification system used is based on the fire service’s common system of identifying sides of a fire building.

Information regarding the distance between exposures is used to evaluate the potential for fire extending to the exposed building. The greater the separation, the better chance that the fire will not extend to the exposed structure. The number and types of exposures and openings in the exterior walls determine the potential for an exposure fire.

Fire suppression operations

This element of the evaluation is designed to collect information regarding conditions in and around the vacant or abandoned structure that could present a hazard to firefighters in the event of a fire.

As the exterior and interior surveys are conducted, the evaluator should identify potential hazards in the structure, such as holes in floors, missing stairs, and open shafts and pits. These conditions are hazardous whenever the building is entered, but they present a significant hazard to firefighters operating with very low visibility due to smoke and steam.

The building access data provides basic information regarding the deployment of personnel and equipment, as well as the ability to get rescue personnel into the structure, should firefighters require assistance.

Evaluating the interior layout is also related to the ability of firefighters to navigate through a building when visibility is reduced as a result of a fire. Be alert for unusual or maze-like layouts that could cause firefighters to become disoriented.

The available water supply is included in this section, as it is an important prefire planning consideration. The evaluation of the adequacy of the water supply should include the volume of water required to control the maximum potential fire at this location, including exposures. The location of fire hydrants or other water sources should be indicated on the sketch of the building site.

Hazardous materials

Vacant and abandoned properties are frequently used as a dumping spot for hazardous materials. Additionally, when a property is vacated, the owner or former occupants may leave behind potentially hazardous materials. Should potentially hazardous or dangerous materials be observed during the evaluation, the findings should be documented so that corrective action can be taken.

Evaluators should expect to find potentially hazardous materials in these buildings and should operate accordingly during the evaluation process. That includes the use of proper personal protective clothing, adequate lighting during the evaluation, and avoiding contact with any material that could prove hazardous.

Conditions that require immediate action

Once the evaluation is complete, conditions that require immediate corrective action should be identified. Conditions flagged for immediate action include the following:

- ❖ Serious collapse potential.
- ❖ Accumulations of trash or debris in or near the structure that could serve as an initial fuel package for an intentionally set fire.
- ❖ Hazardous materials located on the site.
- ❖ Lack of security that permits unauthorized access to the building.
- ❖ Indications of criminal activity on the site.

Any condition on the property that could put civilians or emergency responders at risk should be identified in this section. Checking the yes box for this item serves as a flag for the evaluator that immediate action should be taken. The jurisdiction should implement a procedure to address these circumstances.

Analysis of the building

The analysis section of the form provides the evaluator with the opportunity to use the information collected to rate the building. The ratings of **high**, **moderate** and **low** are assigned to each of the listed conditions based on the knowledge and experience of the evaluator. A **high** potential assigned to any of the conditions should trigger an in-depth review of the property and implementation of precautions to reduce the threat to the safety of emergency responders and the public.

Completing the evaluation

To complete the evaluation form, the evaluator should write a brief narrative that describes the property and any hazards found. The narrative provides the evaluator with an opportunity to address issues that are not included on the evaluation form and to expand on issues that are identified but require additional information.

The final step in the process is developing a readable sketch of the property to be included with the evaluation form. This is not intended to be a building plan, but a simple sketch that shows the basic layout of the property. Information needed to develop a fire operations preplan or to make decisions regarding the disposition of the building should be included on this diagram. Where the evaluators have access to computer-based drawing programs, the rough sketch can be used to create a clean diagram that is annotated. Based on the jurisdiction, the diagram or building file may also include photos of the structure and property that can be used in the preplanning and decision-making process.



U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

Board Up Procedures

April 2018



FEMA

Mission Statement

We provide national leadership to foster a solid foundation for our fire and emergency services stakeholders in prevention, preparedness and response.



U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

Board Up Procedures

Materials list and specifications

Security measures

1. All openings in the basement; all first floor doors and windows; and all points of entry accessible from a porch, fire escape or other potential climbing point must be barricaded with plywood, 2-by-4 braces, carriage bolt sets, and nails. Particle board, waferboard, Masonite, or other similar materials should not be used for purposes of boarding up a building.
2. Openings that are at least 10 feet above ground level and are not accessible from a porch, fire escape, roof or other climbing point can be secured with nails in each brace and every 12 inches around the perimeter. For all openings, the plywood should be fitted so that it rests snugly against the exterior frame, butting up to the siding on wood-frame buildings and up to the brick molding edge on brick buildings. It may be necessary to remove the staff bead so the fit is flush and tight.
3. The structure must be posted with a “No Trespassing” sign at the completion of the board up.

Materials

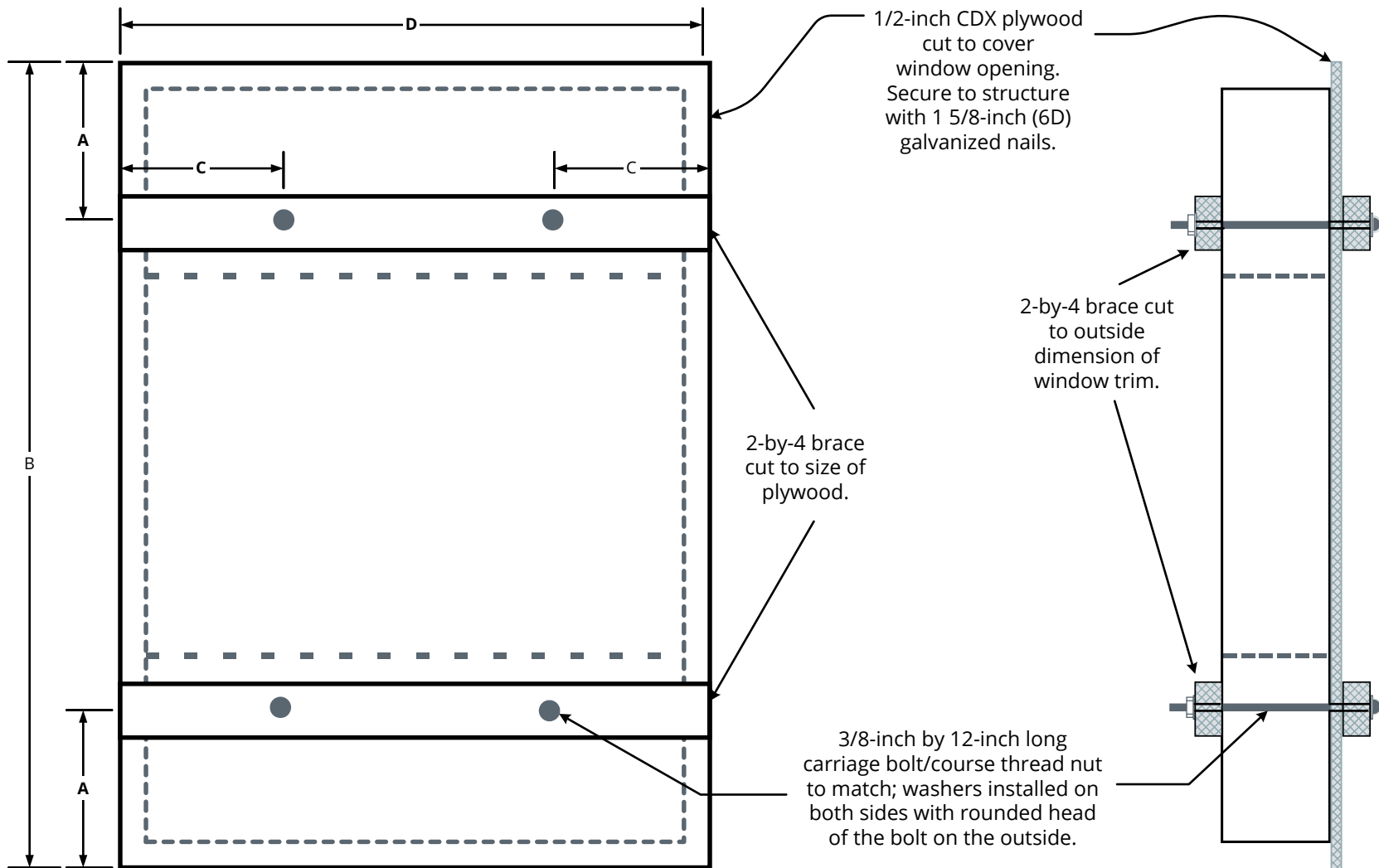
1. 1/2-inch (4 ply) CDX plywood, exterior grade.
2. Braces — 2-by-4 by 8 feet of construction-grade lumber.
3. 3/8-inch (coarse thread) by 12-inch long carriage bolts (rounded head on weather side).
4. 3/8-inch (coarse thread) construction-grade nuts.
5. 1/2-inch (USS standard) flat washers with an inside diameter large enough to bypass the wrench neck inside the carriage bolt head so that no lift edge is available beneath an installed carriage bolt head.
6. 3/8-inch (USS standard) diameter flat washers for installation beneath the nut inside the building.
7. 1 5/8-inches (6D) galvanized or stainless steel ring-shank nails or comparable deck nails.

Barrier assembly

1. Applying barriers is accomplished by a carpenter using appropriate tools and supplies. The carpenter will need a light. His or her exit is made with a ladder once the last window is boarded.
2. Plywood must be cut to fit over the window and door openings, flush with the outside of the molding/trimmer stud. Application of barriers should be completed so that all lift or pry points are avoided.
3. The 2-by-4 braces must be cut to fit the horizontal dimension of the plywood. Two exterior and two interior 2-by-4 braces must be provided for each window, as well as three sets for each door.
4. Window assembly — Braces are located horizontally, approximately one-third of the distance from the top and the bottom of the window. Bolt holes are located at one-third of the brace's length from the outside edge of the window jambs. Prior to installation, the assembly should be pre-assembled, and 3/8-inch holes should be drilled through all of the components.
5. Door assembly — Door braces will be placed horizontally: one in the center of the doorway, one at one-half the distance from the center to the top of the doorway, and one at one-half the distance from the center to the bottom of the doorway. Bolt holes are located at one-third of the brace's length from the outside edge of the door frame. Prior to installation, the assembly should be pre-assembled, and 3/8-inch holes should be drilled through all of the components.
6. Plywood used to cover exterior openings must be nailed every 12 inches along the window or door frame perimeter.
7. The 2-by-4 braces on the interior and exterior of the assemblies should be secured using carriage bolt assemblies that are 3/8 inch by 12 inches. Bolts should be inserted from the exterior with a 1/2-inch washer placed against the exterior brace and a 3/8-inch washer placed against the interior brace. The bolt is tightened from the inside so that it slightly compresses the interior brace.
8. To minimize the appearance, the barrier's exterior surfaces must be painted or stained the same color as the structure.

Should the through-bolt compression method be impossible, due to the size or condition of the opening, the opening must be covered with plywood and secured with deck or wood screws (minimum of 3-inches long) installed on 4-inch centers around the circumference of the opening.

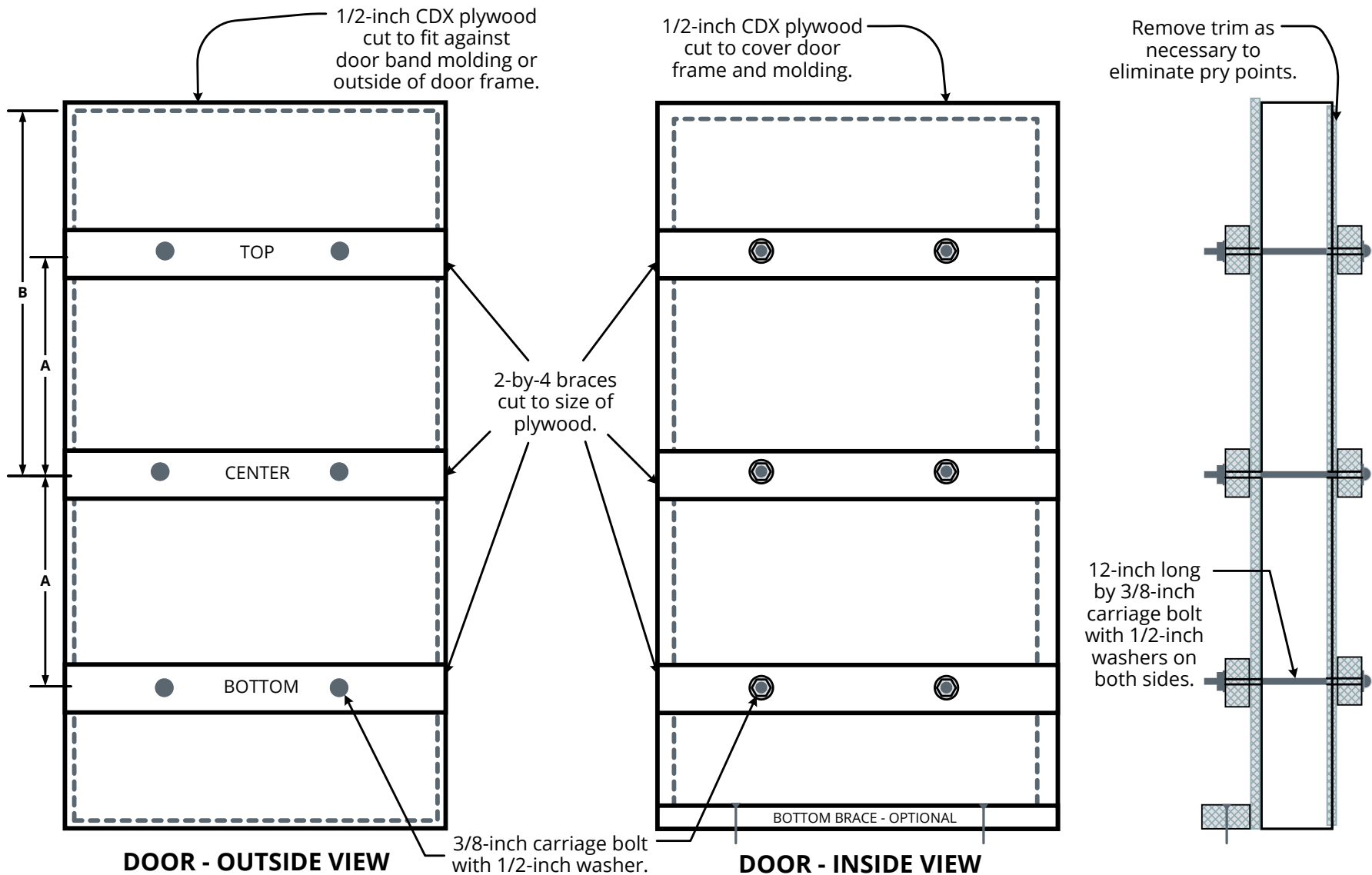
For buildings that require access by authorized personnel, a single door that is visible from the street may be secured using a solid-core wood or steel door. There should not be any windows or other openings in this door. The door should be securely locked using a padlock and hasp assembly that is bolted through the door. The lock loop portion of the hasp is attached to the door frame using wood screws that are a minimum of 3-inches long.



WINDOW - OUTSIDE VIEW

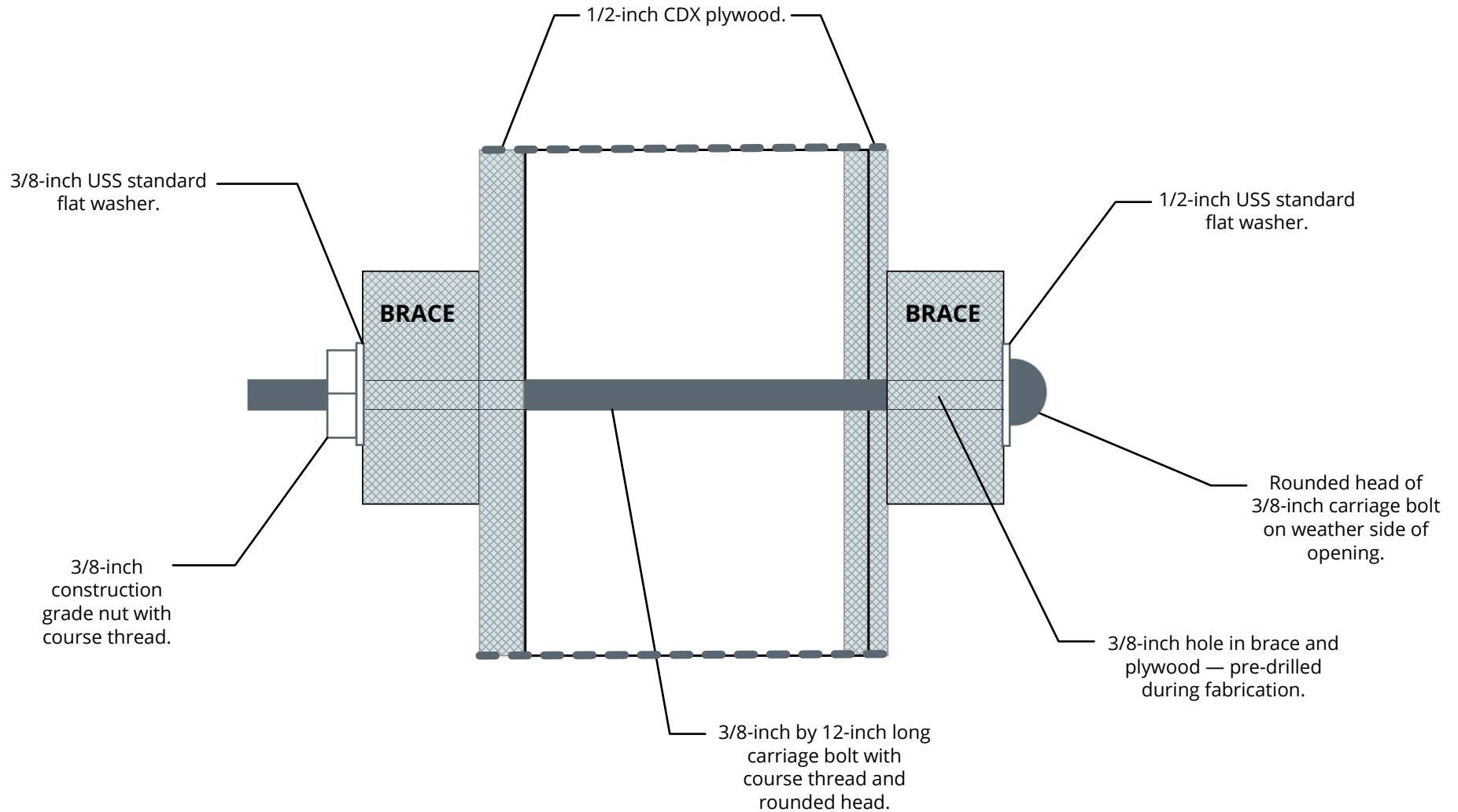
Notes:

1. For double hung windows, slide sash to center of unit and pass bolts through openings at top and bottom.
2. Storm windows should be removed and stored inside structure.
3. Outside trim may have to be removed to accommodate a flush and tight fit.
4. Tighten nuts from inside, enough to slightly compress the 2-by-4 brace.
5. Brace locations: $A = 1/3 B$ (see dimension locations on drawing).
6. Bolt hole locations: $C = 1/3 D$ (see dimension locations on drawing).



Notes:

1. Door is removed and stored inside building.
2. Use 3/8-inch by 12-inch long carriage bolts — rounded head on outside of building.
3. Tighten nuts from inside, enough to slightly compress the 2-by-4 brace.
4. If plywood can not be butted against band molding, cut to cover outside edge of door frame.
5. Bolt holes are located as they are for windows (see window detail).
6. Center brace located in center of doorway opening. Top and bottom braces are positioned where $A = 1/2 B$ (see dimension locations on drawing).



Notes:

1. Use 3/8-inch by 12-inch long carriage bolts — rounded head on outside of building.
2. Tighten nuts from inside, enough to slightly compress washer into the 2-by-4 brace.
3. Use 1/2-inch washer on weather side to accommodate the wrench neck of the bolt and eliminate pry points.

Window assembly

Materials required per window

One 1/2-inch CDX plywood sheet — cut to dimensions of window frame (weather side).

Four 2-by-4 braces — cut to width of plywood.

Four carriage bolt assemblies.

Door assemblies

Materials required per door

One 1/2-inch CDX plywood sheet — cut to dimensions of door frame (weather side).

One 1/2-inch CDX plywood sheet — cut to outside dimensions of door frame trim (inside).

Six 2-by-4 braces — three cut to width of outside plywood, three cut to width of inside plywood.

One 2-by-4 bottom brace — cut to width of door trim (optional).

Six carriage bolt assemblies.

Carriage bolt assemblies

One 12-inch by 3/8-inch carriage bolt — course thread.

One 1/2-inch USS standard flat washer (weather side).

One 3/8-inch USS standard flat washer (inside).

One 3/8-inch construction grade nut — course thread.

Number of windows to be secured (N_w): _____

Number of windows braces required: ($N_w \times 4$) _____

Carriage bolt assemblies required (B_w): ($N_w \times 4$) _____

Number of doors to be secured (N_d): _____

Number of door braces required: ($N_d \times 6$) _____

Number of bottom braces required: (N_d) _____

Carriage bolt assemblies required (B_d): ($N_d \times 6$) _____

Total carriage bolt assemblies required: ($B_w + B_d$) _____

APPENDIX D

Sec. 14-4. - Accumulating garbage, rubbish or similar substances on premises.

No person, or owner, agent or occupant of a lot or premises upon which a building may exist or of a vacant lot shall deposit, accumulate or collect or allow to be deposited, accumulated or collected, any garbage, rubbish, waste matter, filth, or any similar substance or object upon, in or around such lot or premises, except as otherwise provided in this chapter. Violation of this provision shall be deemed an offense and shall be punishable by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00). Each day such violation shall continue shall give rise to a separate offense. Proceedings undertaken for enforcement of this provision shall not preclude separate enforcement of applicable provisions of other codes, ordinances and local and general laws.

(Ord. of 4-29-63)

Sec. 14-22. - Construction and demolition debris.

Construction and demolition debris includes bricks, concrete, other masonry materials, soil, rock, wood, wall coverings, plaster, drywall, plumbing fixtures, nonasbestos insulation, non-asbestos roofing shingles, asphaltic pavement, glass other than recyclable containers, plastics that are not sealed in a manner that conceals other waste, electrical wiring, and components containing no hazardous liquid, such as fluorescent light ballasts or transformers.

- (a) The city shall provide for removal of construction and demolition debris from household waste generators only on a limited basis. Material not greater than two (2) cubic yards (3 feet by 3 feet by 6 feet) may be set out curbside after notifying D.P.W. to arrange for special pickup. Debris must not encroach into the road, cover sewer vent pipes, or block any sidewalk. Removal of construction and demolition debris shall be provided by D.P.W. a maximum of two (2) times annually upon notifying D.P.W. Debris must be generated from property abutting the curb line.
- (b) Quantities greater than two (2) cubic yards or quantities generated by commercial waste generators must be disposed of privately. At no time shall loose debris be accumulated at the curb. Permits to use the right-of-way by private waste haulers providing containers shall be provided upon application by D.P.W.
- (c) Notwithstanding any provision herein contained, any construction and demolition debris generated by a private contractor performing work on any real property must be removed by the contractor at his sole expense.
- (d) Failure to comply with the provisions listed above shall be a violation and result in the application of penalties provided in section 14-15.
- (e) Accumulation of construction and demolition debris or fill on any vacant lot or parcel in the city is a violation unless otherwise approved and permitted by D.P.W.

(Gen. Ord. No. 48-2001, 10-22-01)

Sec. 24-3. - Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks.

1. The owner, agent or occupant of any structure or vacant lot fronting upon any park, street or alley, shall clear or cause to be cleared, the sidewalk along the said premises from all snow and ice that may fall or accumulate thereon every day by six o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, except as hereinafter provided.
2. The owner, agent, or occupant of any structure or vacant lot fronting upon any park, street or alley within the area of the special assessment district, as described in chapter 38 herein, shall within four (4) hours after snow ceases to fall clear or cause to be cleared the sidewalk along the said premises from all snow and ice; the time between 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. the following day not being included in the above four-hour period nor shall the foregoing be applicable to Sundays. In the event of the accumulation of snow and snow ceases to fall:
 - a. Between 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. the following day, such snow shall be removed by 12:00 p.m. of said day, except Sundays;
 - b. On Sundays, such snow shall be removed by 12:00 p.m. the following Monday.
3. In case the snow and ice on the sidewalk shall be frozen so hard that it cannot be removed without injury to the pavement, the owner, agent or occupant of any structure or vacant lot fronting thereon may within the time specified in the preceding paragraphs cause the sidewalk to be strewn with salt, sand or some similar suitable material and shall thereafter as soon as the weather shall permit, thoroughly clean such sidewalk.

(Ord. of 1-6-64; Gen: Ord. No. 1-1978, 1-9-78)

Sec. 24-30. - Cleaning and maintenance of sidewalks; duty of abutting occupant and owner.

No owner of any land within the city limits shall allow any sidewalk adjoining said land to be at any time other than in good repair and in a good and safe condition. The occupant of each and every tenement or building in the city fronting upon any park, street or alley, or the owner or the agent of the owner of any vacant lot fronting as aforesaid, shall at all times keep the sidewalk along the said premises clean and free from all obstructions of any kind and shall keep closely cut all grass or weeds along said sidewalk.

No owner of any land within the city limits fronting upon any street shall permit weeds, flowers, bushes, shrubs or grass along said street to grow to such a height as shall constitute, in the opinion of the commissioner of transportation or his designated representative, a visual obstruction to persons operating motor vehicles upon said street and in such event, the commissioner of transportation or the director of the division of home improvement may order the owner to cut said weeds, flowers, bushes, shrubs or grass to a height of two (2) feet above the ground level.

(Ord. of 8-1-66; Gen. Ord. No. 26-1974, 6-17-74)

Sec. 26-19. - Minimum area requirements.

The board may permit the construction of a building on a lot which does not meet the minimum area requirements of the zoning rules and regulations of the city, provided that the lot is owned by the applicant, and provided further that the ownership was of record prior to the adoption of the zoning rules and regulations as amended. No such permit shall be granted if the applicant purchased said property after the adoption of the zoning rules and regulations as amended, or if the applicant is the owner of adjoining vacant property so that he could comply with the requirements of the zoning rules and regulations.

Sec. 27-2. - Purpose.

The city of Syracuse has numerous residential, commercial and industrial buildings which are substantially sound and habitable structures providing decent housing and commercial resources for residents and businesses in the city. The city also has vacant areas and lots. Their condition and maintenance are vital to the protection and enhancement of the well-being of residents and businesses in adjacent residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. In order to conserve these valuable property resources, to enhance the residential neighborhoods and to protect the safety, health and welfare of the persons who live, work and recreate in the city, the provisions of this Code are established, to provide basic and uniform standards, in terms of performance objectives implemented by specific requirements governing the condition, occupancy and maintenance of all premises and the responsibilities of every person concerned therewith.

(Gen. Ord. No. 30-1993, 6-28-93)

Sec. 27-10. - Definitions.

As used in this Code, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Accessory structures and uses. A structure or use which:

- (1) Is incidental to and serves a principal building or a principal use;
- (2) Is usually subordinate in area, extent and purpose to the principal structure or principal use served;
- (3) Contributes to the comfort, convenience or necessity of the occupants, business or industry in the principal structure or principal use served, except as otherwise expressly authorized by the provisions of this chapter.

Apartment or suite. A room or suite of two (2) or more rooms, one (1) of which is a bathroom, used solely as a residence in a building not used as a hotel, rooming or boarding house, or for other transient occupancy.

Approved. Approved by the director of code enforcement or approved by an authority designated by law or this Code.

Approved material and construction. Approved by generally accepted standards or the director of code enforcement under the provisions of this Code or the Building Code of the city of Syracuse, or approved by any other authority so authorized by law.

Assembly. Space within a building for public use, such as reception, ball, meeting, lecture and recreation rooms, banquet and dining rooms and their kitchens, and swimming pools.

Balcony. A platform projecting from a building and enclosed by a railing. This shall include a porch or deck.

Basement. That space of a building that is partly below grade, which has more than one-half (½) of its height, measured from floor to ceiling, above the average established finished grade of the ground adjoining the building.

Bathroom. Enclosed space containing a minimum of one water closet, one lavatory and either one bathtub or shower. See separate definition of "toilet room."

Building. A structure wholly or partially enclosed within exterior walls, or within exterior or party walls, and a roof, affording shelter to persons, animals or property.

Cellar. That space of a building that is partly or entirely below grade, which has more than one-half (½) of its height, measured from floor to ceiling, below the average established finished grade of the ground adjoining the building.

Certificate of adequacy. Document issued as provided hereunder by the division of code enforcement certifying that as of a specified date an inspection was made of a one-family or two-family dwelling structure which was found to be in substantial compliance with the substantive standards set forth in [section 27-16](#) of this Code.

Certificate of suitability. The certificate of suitability issued by the city's zoning administrator or planning commission pursuant to Part C, Section VIII of the city's zoning ordinance.

Child or children. Any person ten (10) years of age or younger.

Commissioner. The Commissioner of the Department of Neighborhood and Business Development for the city of Syracuse.

Conditional certificate of adequacy. Document issued as provided hereunder by the division of code enforcement certifying that as of a specified date an inspection was made of a one-family or two-family dwelling structure which was found to be in violation of the substantive standards set forth in [section 27-16](#) of this Code and enumerating the conditions which must be met to bring the premises into substantial compliance therewith.

Certificate of compliance. Document issued as provided hereunder by the division of code enforcement certifying that as of a specified date an inspection was made of a multiple dwelling or a building of mixed occupancy which includes residential occupancy which was found to be in substantial compliance with this Code and other applicable laws and regulations.

Conditional certificate of compliance. Document issued as provided hereunder by the division of code enforcement certifying that as of specified date an inspection was made of a multiple dwelling structure which was found to be in violation of this Code and/or other applicable laws and regulations, and enumerating the conditions which must be met to bring the premises into substantial compliance therewith.

Court, inner. An open, uncovered, unoccupied space surrounded on all sides by the exterior walls of a building or structure or by such walls and an interior lot line of the same premises.

Court, outer. An open, uncovered, unoccupied space which has at least one (1) side opening on a legal open space.

Department. The Department of Neighborhood and Business Development of the city of Syracuse.

Director. The director of the division of code enforcement of the department of community development of the city of Syracuse.

Division. The Division of Code Enforcement of the Department of Neighborhood and Business Development of the city of Syracuse.

Dwelling. Any building or part thereof, used and occupied for human habitation, or intended to be so used, and includes any appurtenances belonging thereto.

Dwelling, one-family. A building containing not more than one (1) dwelling unit occupied exclusively for residential purposes.

Dwelling, two-family. A building containing two (2) dwelling units occupied exclusively for residential purposes.

Dwelling unit. Any room or grouping of rooms located within a dwelling forming a single habitable unit with facilities which are used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking, eating and sanitation by one (1) family.

Equitable owner. The person who is recognized in equity, as the result of a lease, contract or other formal written agreement, as the owner of the property even though bare legal title to the property is in someone else.

Exit. A way of departure on foot from the interior of a building or structure to the exterior at street or grade level accessible to a street, consisting of:

- (1) Corridors, stairways and lobbies enclosed in construction having a fire resistance rating, including the door openings thereto from a habitable, assembly or occupied space;
- (2) An interior stairway;
- (3) A horizontal exit;
- (4) A door to the exterior at grade; or
- (5) An exterior stairway or ramp.

Exploration shall mean geologic or geophysical activities related to the search for natural gas or other subsurface hydrocarbons including prospecting, geophysical and geologic seismic surveying and sampling techniques, which include, but are not limited to, core or rotary drilling or making an excavation in the search and evaluation of natural gas deposits.

Extermination. Control and elimination of insects, rodents and vermin by eliminating their harborage places; by removing or making inaccessible materials that may serve as their food; by poisoning, spraying, fumigating, trapping; or by any other approved means of pest elimination.

Extraction. The digging or drilling of a well for the purposes of exploring for, developing or producing natural gas or other hydrocarbons.

Family:

- (1) A householder plus one or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoption living together in a family-like arrangement as a single, not-for-profit housekeeping unit sharing one common kitchen facility; or
- (2) A group of persons headed by a person or persons responsible for providing care for a reasonable number of individuals, sharing one common kitchen facility, in a family-like living arrangement which is the functional and factual equivalent of a family of related persons; or
- (3) One or more persons occupying a premises and living together as a single housekeeping unit, subject to a limit of not more than five (5) unrelated persons eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Floor area. The horizontal areas of a building which are enclosed by the exterior walls of the building.

Garbage. The animal, vegetable and mineral waste resulting from handling, preparation, cooking and consumption of food.

Generally accepted standard. A specification, code rule, guide or procedure in the field of construction or related thereto, recognized and accepted as authoritative.

Grade, finished. Natural surface of the ground, or surface of ground after completion of any change in contour, abutting a building or premises.

Graffiti. Any etching, painting, covering up, drawing upon or other mark upon public or private property so as to deface said property.

Habitable space. Any room or enclosed space used or intended to be used for sleeping, living, cooking or dining purposes, excluding, however, restaurants for employees and occupants, kitchens serving them, kitchenettes, and other enclosed spaces such as utility rooms, closets, pantries, baths or toilet rooms, hallways, cellars, storage spaces, garages and similar spaces.

Hotel. A building used for the housing of the transient public in single rooms or suites of rooms. Also provided with dining rooms, kitchens, serving rooms, ballrooms and other facilities for the accommodation of the public.

Hydrofracking. High volume hydraulic fracturing which is the process of drilling wells vertically into the ground then horizontally from the well head then the fracturing of shale and other natural structures by using millions of gallons of fluid mixed with multiple chemicals for the purpose of stimulating natural gas or oil for any purpose in low permeability natural gas reservoirs.

Infestation. The presence of insects, rodents, vermin, birds or other pests.

Installation of balcony guards. Proper installation and maintenance of balcony guards in a manner approved by the director.

Kitchen. A space used for cooking or preparation of food containing sixty (60) or more square feet of gross floor area.

Kitchenette. A space used for cooking or preparation of food containing less than sixty (60) square feet of gross floor area.

Lodging house. A multiple dwelling used primarily for the purpose of furnishing lodging, with or without meals, to transient occupants, for compensation.

Lodging unit. A room or group of rooms forming a single habitable unit, or intended to be used for lodging.

Lot. An area contained within lot lines shown on a properly recorded subdivision map or similar document approved pursuant to the zoning rules and regulations of the city of Syracuse or described in a deed recorded prior to March 19, 1962, or approved as a lot by any applicable regulation. Areas shown on maps or described in deeds which are contiguous shall be deemed separate lots unless otherwise specified as one lot in said instrument.

Mixed occupancy. Occupancy of a building in part for residential use and in part for some other use not accessory thereto.

Motel. A multiple dwelling not over two (2) stories in height, intended primarily for motorists, in which the exit from each dwelling unit or sleeping room is directly to the exterior.

Multiple dwelling. A dwelling which is designed or intended to be occupied, or is occupied, as a temporary or permanent residence or home of three (3) or more families living independently of each other, including but not limited to the following: a tenement, flat house, maisonette apartment, apartment house, apartment hotel, tourist house, bachelor apartment, studio apartment, duplex apartment, kitchenette apartment, hotel, lodging house, rooming house, boarding-house, boarding and nursery school, furnished-room house, club-sorority house, fraternity house, college and school dormitory, convalescent, old-age or nursing home or residence. It shall also include a dwelling two (2) or more stories in height and with five (5) or more boarders, roomers or lodgers residing with any one family.

Natural gas. Any gaseous substance, either combustible or non-combustible, which is produced in a natural state from the earth and which maintains a gaseous or rarified state at standard temperature or pressure conditions, and/or gaseous components or vapors occurring in or derived from petroleum or other hydrocarbons.

Natural gas exploration and production wastes. Any garbage, refuse, sludge, or other discarded materials, including solid, liquid, semisolid or contained gaseous material that results from the exploration, drilling or extraction of natural gas.

Nonowner occupied dwelling. Any dwelling that is not occupied by the owner of the dwelling.

Occupied space. Space within a building wherein persons normally work or remain for a period of time.

Owner. The term "owner" shall mean and include the owner or owners of the freehold of the premises or lesser estate therein who appears as the owner of record with the Onondaga County Clerk's Office, as well as any person, agent, firm, entity or corporation having any legal or equitable interest in the property at the time a notice, order or other document is issued by the division.

Parking garage. A building or structure, or part thereof, in which a structural level, other than a slab on grade, is used for parking, storage, or maintenance of motor vehicles.

Person. An owner, occupant, mortgagee or vendee in possession, assignee of rents, receiver, executor, trustee, lessee, agent, operator or any other person, firm or corporation directly or indirectly in control of a building, structure, premises or part thereof and is deemed to include all of the offices and directors, if such person be a corporation.

Plumbing system. The water supply system, the drainage system, the vent system, fixtures and traps, including their various connections, devices and appurtenances within the property lines of the premises.

Pollution. The contamination or other degradation of the physical, chemical or biological properties of land, water or air that will or is likely to create a nuisance or render such land, water or air harmful, detrimental or injurious to the public health, safety or welfare, or harmful, detrimental or injurious to domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational or other beneficial uses, or to humans and animals, birds, fish or other aquatic or wild life.

Potable water. Water which is approved for drinking, culinary and domestic purposes.

Premises. A lot, plot or parcel of land including the building or structures thereon.

Public space. Space within a building for public use, such as lobbies, lounges, reception, ball, meeting, lecture and recreation rooms, banquet and dining rooms and their kitchens, and swimming pools.

Refuse. All cardboard, plastic, metal or glass food containers, wastepaper, rags, sweeping, small pieces of wood, excelsior, rubber, leather, ashes and similar waste material that ordinarily accumulates around a home, business or industry.

Rooming house. A dwelling other than a hotel, fraternity, sorority, dormitory or chapter house, where lodging and/or meals for three (3) or more roomers or boarders or guests are served for compensation.

Rooming unit. Any habitable room or group of rooms with not more than (2) habitable rooms forming a single habitable unit used or intended to be used for living and sleeping, but not for cooking or eating purposes, for not more than two (2) persons.

Rubbish. All combustible and non-combustible waste, except garbage.

Screened. An assembly of approved materials installed in an approved manner designed to deter illegal entry and to permit the flow of a required volume of air. As applied to parking garages, the area screened shall include access gates of a size and in a location to be approved by the fire department.

Secure. To render inaccessible to unauthorized entry by closing, bolting, repairing, boarding or otherwise fastening all doors, windows and other openings through which unauthorized entry may be gained (see section 27-73(d) for board up standards).

Secured by other than normal means. To secure a building by means other than those used in the design of the building or in accordance with section 27-73 of the Code.

Senior citizen. Senior citizen shall mean a person who is sixty-two (62) years of age or older.

Sewage. Liquid waste containing human, animal or vegetable matter in suspension or solution, and which may include industrial wastes and liquids containing chemicals.

Structure. An assembly of materials, forming a construction framed of component structural parts for occupancy or use, including buildings, paving and surfacing of the ground.

Studio unit. A living unit containing one habitable room with provisions for living, cooking, eating and sleeping facilities arranged for the use of one family. See definition of "dwelling unit."

Substantial renovation/modeling. When the cost of such renovation or remodeling made within any six-month period exceeds fifty (50) percent of the cost of replacement of the building at the beginning of that six-month period; or, whenever more than fifty (50) percent of any building system, measured in units appropriate to that system, is replaced within any twelve-month period.

Tenant. Lessee or other occupant regularly residing within a dwelling unit, regardless of whether said occupant is a party to a lease agreement.

Toilet room. Enclosed space containing a minimum of one water closet and one lavatory. It may also contain additional plumbing fixtures serving similar purposes. See definition of "bathroom."

Unoccupied. A building which is not occupied, used or lived in by an owner or a person authorized by the owner.

Unoccupied hazard. Any building or structure or a substantial part thereof which remains unoccupied for a period of more than one year with either doors, windows or other openings broken, removed, boarded or sealed up.

Vacant building. A building or portion of a building which meets one or more of the following criteria:

Unoccupied and unsecured;

Unoccupied and secured by other than normal means;

Unoccupied and unsafe, or unfit, as determined by the division;

Unoccupied and in violation of federal, state or local laws, ordinances and/or regulations; and/or

Unoccupied and one (1) or more violations of this chapter or the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code exist on the building, parcel or property.

Vacant lot. A lot, other than park lands, which is not improved by a structure and is not regularly maintained.

Ventilation. Supply and removal of air to and from a space by a natural or mechanical means.

Ventilation, mechanical. Ventilation by power-driven devices.

Ventilation, natural. Ventilation by opening to outer air through windows, skylights, doors, louvers or stacks, with or without wind driven devices.

Weeds. All grasses, annual plants and vegetation, other than trees or shrubs provided, however, this term shall not include cultivated flowers and gardens.

Workmanlike. Performed in a skilled manner in accordance with generally accepted standards, generally, plumb, level, square, in line, undamaged, and without marring adjacent work.

Yard. An open space on the same lot which contains a building, and located between the building line and the lot line which the particular building line faces.

(Gen. Ord. No. 30-1993, 6-28-93; Gen. Ord. No. 42-1993, § 6, 9-13-93; Gen. Ord. No. 29-1995, § 1, 7-10-95; Gen. Ord. No. 31-1995, § 1, 8-21-95; Gen. Ord. No. 46-2005, 10-24-05; Gen. Ord. No. 38-2011, 10-24-11; Gen. Ord. No. 17-2012, 7-9-12; Gen. Ord. No. 31-2013, 7-15-13)

Sec. 27-72. - Open areas.

- (a) Storm water shall be properly drained to prevent recurrent entrance of water into any basement or cellar.
- (b) Surface and subsurface water shall be appropriately drained to protect buildings and structures and to prevent development of stagnant ponds. Gutters, culverts, catch basins, drain inlets, storm water sewers, approved combined storm and sanitary sewers or other satisfactory drainage systems shall be utilized where deemed necessary.
- (c) Fences, retaining walls and other minor structures shall be maintained structurally sound, in good repair, and with appropriate protective coating for wood surfaces (see 27-32(d)(1))
- (d) Steps, sidewalks, driveways, parking spaces and similar areas shall be kept in a proper state of repair and maintained so as to afford safe passage under normal use and weather conditions.
- (e) Yards, courts and vacant lots shall be kept free of physical hazards, accumulations of loose, illegally stored or illegally containerized trash and debris, garbage and other material which would cause a fire hazard or act for a breeding place for vermin or insects. They shall be maintained in a manner that will prevent dust or other materials from being blown about the neighborhood.
- (f) All premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds or grasses in excess of eight (8) inches. All noxious weeds shall be prohibited.
- (g) Heavy undergrowth and accumulations of plant growth noxious or detrimental to health shall be eliminated.
- (h) Exterior property areas shall be free from conditions which might create a health, accident or fire hazard.
- (i) Exterior property areas shall be reasonably free from holes and excavations, sharp protrusions, and other objects or conditions which might cause personal injury. Walks, steps and driveways that contain holes or tripping hazards shall be filled, repaired or replaced as the need indicates. Open wells, cesspools or cisterns shall be securely closed. Trees or limbs of trees that constitute a hazard shall be removed.
- (j) Sewage must be discharged into a public sewer system except as specially permitted by the authority having jurisdiction in accordance with the New York State Public Health Law and the Onondaga County Plumbing and Sanitary Code. Discharge of inadequately treated sewage shall not be permitted upon the surface of the ground, or into natural or artificial surface drainways.
- (k) For the protection of the general public, all permanently installed outdoor swimming pools shall be effectively fenced by an artificial enclosure not less than four (4) feet in height. Gates provided in the enclosure shall be self-closing and self-latching with the latch handle located within the enclosure and at least forty (40) inches above grade.
 - (1) A wall of a structure is permitted to serve as part of the enclosure under the following conditions:
 - a. Windows in the wall shall have a latching device at least 40 inches above the floor;
 - b. A swinging door in the wall shall be self-closing and self latching; and
 - c. A sliding door in the wall shall have a self-latching device.
 - (2) Above-ground pools which are self-enclosed by the exterior projection thereof, shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of this provision, provided:
 - a. Said enclosure is not less than four (4) feet in height above the average adjoining grade of the ground within four (4) feet of the enclosure; and
 - b. Any openings in the enclosure affording access to the pool shall be provided with a gate containing a self-latching device affixed in such a manner as to exclude small children.

(Gen. Ord. No. 30-1993, 6-28-93)

Sec. 27-73. - Buildings and structures.

- (a) Exterior surfaces of buildings and structures not inherently resistant to deterioration by the natural elements shall be periodically treated by appropriate means and materials suitable for preservation of said exterior.
- (b) Graffiti shall be removed from all exterior surfaces, upon all buildings and structures and all interior surfaces in public space.
- (c) Buildings and structures shall be maintained in such condition so that they shall not become an unoccupied hazard.
- (d) The owner of a vacant building shall take such steps and perform such acts as may be required of him by the director from time to time to ensure that the building and its adjoining yards remain safe and secure and do not present a hazard to adjoining property or the public. If a board up is required by the director the standards shall be:
 - (1) The first floor front entry door to the structure shall be secured with a padlock and any windows therein shall be boarded as hereinafter provided;
 - (2) All other door, window and other openings below the second floor level shall be covered with one-half (½) inch CDX plywood sized to fit the window or door frame, leaving a two-inch opening at the top of said opening for natural light, painted with an earth tone exterior paint, and secured to the frame of the opening with No. 8 coated nails, every twelve (12) inches on center.

(Gen. Ord. No. 30-1993, 6-28-93)

Sec. 27-116. - Vacant properties; demolition.

- (a) *Purpose.* In the city of Syracuse there are vacant structures which do not possess the protective measures normally provided by legal occupants, making such structures subject to unlawful entry, vandalism and fires. Therefore, these vacant structures present a potential health and safety hazard to the general public, immediate neighbors and residents and public employees performing municipal duties and services in the area or at the site of the vacant structure.
- (b) *Owner's duties.*
- (1) Vacant buildings. It shall be the duty of every owner or person responsible for a property which has a vacant building thereon:
 - a. To maintain the building in a safe and sanitary condition and in compliance with this Code.
 - b. To secure the building to prevent unauthorized entry.
 - c. To maintain the yard free of trash, debris, high grass and overgrown weeds.
 - (2) Vacant lots. It shall be the duty of every owner or person responsible for a vacant lot to maintain the lot in a safe and sanitary condition and in compliance with this Code. It shall also be the duty of every owner or person responsible for a vacant lot to maintain the lot free of trash, debris, high grass and overgrown weeds.
- (c) *Maintenance and securing of vacant building and clearing of vacant lots.*
- (1) Notification of owners. If the director determines that a vacant building or a lot is in violation of this Code, he shall notify the owner or person responsible therefor of that determination and order the owner or responsible person to maintain and secure the building or maintain or clear the lot. Notice shall be sufficient if said notice is posted on the property affected and a copy sent to the owner or person responsible therefor by mail addressed to the owner's last address known to the division.
 - (2) Discharge of owner's duties by city.
 - a. If the owner or person responsible therefor fails to comply with the notice within five (5) days after the notice is sent, the director may have the owner's duties discharged by city employees or contractors. It shall be the personal obligation of the owner to reimburse the city for its expenses incurred in discharging said owner's duties.
 - b. If the owner has previously disregarded the order of the director and thereafter the property again is in violation of this section the director may again discharge the owner's duties, at the owner's expense, without notice to the owner.
 - (3) The director may utilize any other remedies available to him to obtain compliance with his order.
- (d) *Demolition.* Whenever the director shall determine that a building or structure constitutes an unoccupied hazard or is unfit for human habitation or dangerous to human life or detrimental to health, and after having determined that the building or structure or part of said building or structure should be demolished, he shall cause to be issued a notice and order which would require demolition of same addressed to the property owner in a manner pursuant to section 27-114.
- (1) If the owner fails to comply with such order of demolition within the time provided for compliance in said order the corporation counsel may upon notice to the property owner, mortgagees, tenants and lienors, present said order to demolish and the records and papers of all prior proceedings upon which said order is based before a justice holding a special term of the supreme court for the county of Onondaga for review of said determination and confirmation thereof at which time the court may either annul or confirm wholly or in part or modify the determination reviewed.
 - (2) If the owner fails to comply with such order of demolition within the time provided for compliance in said order and the director has determined that the condition of the structure constitutes an imminent danger which, in his opinion, requires immediate action to abate a hazard or to eliminate the imminent danger or menace to the public health, safety and welfare, then in such case he may exercise his emergency powers to cause said building to be immediately demolished.
- (e) *Vacant property registry.*

(1) *Registration.*

- a. Effective July 1, 2013, the owner of any vacant building in the city of Syracuse, whether residential or commercial or of some other nature, which has one or more exterior code violations shall be required to apply for and obtain a vacant property registry certificate from the division of code enforcement. A vacant property registry certificate shall be valid for one year from the date of issuance, and must be renewed annually for as long as the building remains vacant.
- b. The vacant property registry certificate application forms shall be provided by the division of code enforcement and shall request information relevant to the property being registered, including but not limited to, the following:
 1. The address of the vacant building;
 2. The name, address, and telephone number of the owner(s) of the building;
 3. A photocopy of the owner(s) government issued photo identification;
 4. The names and addresses of all known lienholders and all other parties with an ownership interest in the building;
 5. For owners who reside outside of Onondaga, Madison, Cayuga, Oswego or Cortland County, the name, address and telephone number of the individual responsible for the property in Onondaga County;
 6. If the owner is a corporation, general or limited partnership, or a limited liability company, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all officers, partners and/or members; and
 7. A vacant building plan in accordance with subsection (3) below.
- c. Addresses on the application must be physical addresses, no post office box addresses will be accepted.
- d. A separate vacant property registry application shall be submitted along with the applicable fee for each vacant building the owner needs to register. Any application containing information for more than one property shall not be accepted by the division of code enforcement.
- e. Application forms should be submitted to the division of code enforcement with the applicable fee as laid out below. Failure to remit the fee will result in the application being returned to the owner as incomplete.
- f. The vacant property registration certificate shall be valid for one year from the date of issuance and must be renewed annually as long as the property remains vacant. Each certificate shall contain the expiration date to insure owners are aware of when they need to renew.
- g. The Vacant Property Registry Certificate is non-transferable.
- h. Upon transfer of a vacant building the new owner, shall be required to apply for a vacant property registry certificate within ninety (90) days of transferring title, if the property owner's intent is for the property to remain vacant.
- i. Incomplete registration forms will not be accepted and shall be returned to the owner. If thereafter a complete registration form is not submitted it will result in the owner being cited for lack of compliance and prosecution under Section 27-120 of the Property Conservation Code.

(2) *Fees for a Vacant Property Registry Certificate.*

- a. The annual fees for a vacant property registry certificate for each vacant building regulated by this section shall be in accordance with the fee schedule in the chart below. This fee shall be payable by check or money order to the commissioner of finance and is due at the time of filing of the annual vacant property registry certificate application.
- b. Failure to pay the annual fee will result in the owner being in violation of this section of the Property Conservation Code of the city of Syracuse and thereby subject to fines and penalties and prosecution under Section 27-120 of the Syracuse Property Conservation Code.

Property Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Each Subsequent Year
Plan A or C below	\$100	If no extension is granted, then the maximum fee for the relevant property type will be charged each subsequent year.		
1—3 unit residential	\$250	\$500	\$750	\$1,000
4—6 unit residential	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000
7+ unit residential	\$250/unit	\$500/unit	\$750/unit	\$1,000/unit
Commercial (whichever is greater)	\$1,000 or \$.05/sq. ft.	\$2,000 or \$.10/sq. ft.	\$3,000 or \$.15/sq. ft.	\$4,000 or \$.20/sq. ft.*

* = gross square footage

- c. The above fee schedule chart shall not apply to the following:
 - 1. All non-profit entities that own ten (10) or more properties which require registration under this section; and/or
 - 2. All entities that are subject to the New York State Public Authorities Law that own ten (10) or more properties which require registration under this section.
 - d. Non-profit entities that own ten (10) or more properties which require a vacant registry and/or all entities that are subject to the New York State Public Authorities Law that own ten (10) or more properties which require registration under this section shall each pay a flat fee of \$1,000.00 per year to register all properties pursuant to this section.
 - e. Failure to pay the flat fee will result in the owner being in violation of this section of the Property Conservation Code of the city of Syracuse and thereby subject to fines and penalties and prosecution under Section 27-120 of the Syracuse Property Conservation Code.
- (3) *Vacant building plan.* Included with their vacant property registry certificate application, the owner must submit a vacant building plan to the division of code enforcement for approval. In order for a vacant property registry certificate to be issued the director or the individuals designated by the commissioner must first approve the owner's vacant building plan. Acceptable plans must contain at a minimum, the elements of at least one of the plans outlined below:

PLAN A: Rehabilitate and Reoccupy

If the building is to be returned to an appropriate occupancy or use, a rehabilitation plan for the property must be submitted. The rehabilitation plan shall not exceed three hundred sixty-five (365) days, unless the director or the individuals designated by the commissioner grants an extension upon receipt of a written statement from the owner, detailing the reasons for the extension. Any repairs, improvements, or alterations to the property must comply with applicable zoning (including historic preservation) and building codes. The property must be secured in accordance with the maintenance standards below during the period of rehabilitation. If no building

permit has been applied for within the one-year period, the owner will be notified of their noncompliance. The owner will be required to file an extension with a revised rehabilitation plan and reasons for non-compliance. If this is not satisfied, the owner may be prosecuted under Section 27-120 of the Syracuse Property Conservation Code.

Applicants who select Plan A will pay a lesser fee in year 1 (see registration fee schedule in subsection (2) above), but will be required to pay the maximum fee for their property type if they are found to be in non-compliance for lack of progress on the rehabilitation plan.

All properties being rehabilitated under Plan A must be secured by normal means or in accordance with board up standards set forth in article 7, section 27-73 of this chapter.

PLAN B: Stabilize and Maintain

If the building is to remain vacant, a plan for securing the building in accordance with the maintenance standards below must be submitted. This must include the procedure that will be used to monitor and maintain the building in accordance with these standards, and a statement of the reasons why the building is to remain vacant.

All properties being stabilized and maintained under Plan B must be secured by normal means or in accordance with the board-up standards set forth in article 7, section 27-73 of this chapter.

PLAN C: Demolish

If the building is to be demolished, a demolition plan indicating the proposed time frame for demolition, including timeline to obtain the necessary permits.

If no demolition permit has been applied for within the one-year period, the owner will be notified of their noncompliance. The director or the individuals designated by the director have discretion to grant an extension, upon receipt of a written statement from the owner, detailing the reasons for the extension, if extenuating circumstances have prevented the demolition of the property or if the plan for the property has changed for reasons deemed legitimate by the enforcement officer. If no extension is granted, the property owner will be required to pay the maximum fee for their property type in all subsequent years and the owner may be prosecuted under Section 27-120 of the Syracuse Property Conservation Code.

Applicants who select Plan C will pay a lesser fee in Year One, as shown in the registration fee schedule outlined in subsection (2) above, but will be required to pay the maximum fee for their property type if they are found to be in non-compliance for lack of progress on the rehabilitation plan.

All properties being demolished under Plan C, prior to demolition, must be secured as defined in section 27-10 of this chapter or boarded in accordance with the board-up standards set forth in section 27-73 of this chapter.

- (4) *Conversion to rental registry.* Should the owner of a vacant building that is registered pursuant to this section convert the vacant building to a non-owner occupied dwelling, the owner shall notify the division of code enforcement immediately of the occupancy and the director or individuals designated by the director shall convert the vacant property registry certificate to a rental registry certificate. No additional fees shall be required from the owner at the time of the conversion. However, after the conversion and issuance of the rental registry certificate, the owner of the now converted vacant building will be required to comply with all the provisions of article 9 of this chapter, including obtaining a rental registry certificate every two (2) years from the date of issuance of the rental registry certificate and paying all applicable rental registry fees.

(5) *Failure to apply for a vacant property registry certificate.* Failure to comply with this section shall be a violation of the Property Conservation Code of the city of Syracuse and subject to the fines, penalties and prosecution outlined in Section 27-120 of the Syracuse Property Conservation Code.

(Gen. Ord. No. 30-1993, 6-28-93; Gen. Ord. No. 16-2007, 5-7-07; Gen. Ord. No. 11-2013, 4-15-13; Gen. Ord. No. 31-2013, 7-15-13)

Sec. 27-137. - Conversion to vacant registry.

Should the owner of a one-family or two-family non-owner occupied dwelling that has a rental registry certificate pursuant to this article convert the dwelling to a vacant one-family or two-family structure, the owner shall notify the division immediately of the vacancy and the director or designated representative shall convert the rental registry certificate for the non-owner occupied dwelling/vacant structure to a vacant registration. No additional fees shall be required from the owner at the time of the conversion. However, after the conversion, the owner of the now converted one-family or two-family vacant structure will be required to comply with all the provisions of section 27-116(e), including registering the vacant one-family or two-family vacant structure every three (3) years and paying all applicable vacant registry fees at times of subsequent registrations.

(Gen. Ord. No. 16-2007, 5-7-07; Gen. Ord. No. 45-2010, 12-20-10)

Sec. 51-3. - Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms are defined as follows:

Commission shall mean the public art commission for the city of Syracuse.

Coordinator shall mean the public art coordinator for the city of Syracuse.

Public art shall mean either of the following:

- (1) All forms of visual art that do not constitute a sign as defined and regulated by Part C, Section VI of the zoning ordinance of the city of Syracuse, and are located within the city right-of-way, on public land owned by the city of Syracuse or on vacant land owned by the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency or Syracuse Industrial Development Agency with the permission of SURA or SIDA, respectively. The aforesaid forms of visual art include but are not limited to the following mediums of art:
 - a. Paintings of all media, including both portable and permanently affixed works such as frescoes and murals;
 - b. Sculpture of any form and in any material or combination of materials, including statues, monuments, fountains, arches, structures intended for ornamentation or commemoration, reliefs, mobiles, kinetic, electronic and neon sculptures;
 - c. Other works of visual art, including inscriptions, stained glass, fiber works, carvings, mosaics, photographs, drawings, collages, textile works, prints and crafts, both decorative and utilitarian, in clay, fiber, wood, metal, glass, stone, plastic and other materials;
 - d. Artist-designed landscapes and earthworks, including the artistic placement of natural materials or other functional art objects.
- (2) All murals that do not constitute a sign as defined and regulated by Part C, Section VI of the zoning ordinance of the city of Syracuse, and are located on premises that do not have a one-family or two-family dwelling.

(Gen. Ord. No. 27-2007, 7-9-07)

Sec. 54-13. - Exemptions.

- (a) This article shall not apply to properties taken by a governmental entity in a foreclosure proceeding which are vacant and secured and:
 - (1) Scheduled for demolition; or
 - (2) Scheduled for sale within twelve (12) months.
- (b) The requirements of section 54-5 through section 54-8 which are applicable to residential buildings shall not include single-family owner-occupied dwellings.
- (c) A building complex with six (6) or more units, any housing development or complex designated for seniors, and all studio apartments shall be exempt from the requirements for dust sampling established in section 54-6. A "building complex" for the purposes of this section includes any proximately related grouping or combination of units or buildings that is structured under a single ownership or management contract, regardless of whether such buildings are contiguous. This exemption does not exempt a property from a dust sampling required by any other local, state, or federal law or regulation.

(Gen. Ord. No. 23-2020, 7-13-20)

Sec. 1-8. - Residential antidisplacement and relocation assistance plan.

- (a) The city of Syracuse will replace all occupied and vacant occupiable low/moderate income dwelling units demolished or converted to a use other than as low/moderate income housing as a direct result of activities assisted with funds provided under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, as described in 24 CFR 570.606(b)(1).
- (b) All replacement housing will be provided within three (3) years of the commencement of the demolition or rehabilitation relating to conversion. Before obligating or expending funds that will directly result in such demolition or conversion, the city of Syracuse will make public and submit the HUD Field Office the following information in writing:
 - (1) A description of the proposed assisted activity;
 - (2) The general location on a map and approximate number of dwelling units by size (number of bedrooms) that will be demolished or converted to a use other than as low/moderate income dwelling units as a direct result of the assisted activity;
 - (3) A time schedule for the commencement and completion of the demolition or conversion;
 - (4) The general location on a map and approximate number of dwelling units by size (number of bedrooms) that will be provided as replacement dwelling units;
 - (5) The source of funding and a time schedule for the provision of replacement dwelling units; and
 - (6) The basis for concluding that each replacement dwelling unit will remain a low/moderate income dwelling unit for at least ten (10) years from the date of initial occupancy.
- (c) The city of Syracuse may provide relocation assistance to each low/moderate income household displaced by the demolition of housing or by the conversion of a low/moderate dwelling to another use as a direct result of assisted activities. However, no relocation assistance shall be provided by the city of Syracuse when either the relocation is necessitated by conditions or violations caused by any member of the household or such assistance would duplicate in whole or in part relocation assistance provided by another governmental agency. Relocation assistance will include the following:
 - (1) Timely notice of relocation to another dwelling.
 - (2) Referral to replacement housing opportunities of comparable size and condition within the city of Syracuse and, preferably, within the same neighborhood.
 - (3) Relocation and replacement housing financial assistance that is reasonable and minimized financial hardship to the household. Prior to the disbursement of any financial assistance, the household shall submit written receipts and/or invoices for eligible reimbursable expenses.
- (d) Consistent with the goals and objectives of activities assisted under the Act, the city of Syracuse will take the following steps to minimize the displacement of persons from their homes:
 - (1) Prior to demolition, all residential units will be inspected by the department of community development division of code enforcement to determine structural integrity and repairability. Only those units certified as structurally unsound or unfit for repair will be slated for demolition. However, funds provided to the city of Syracuse under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, shall not support the city's demolition activities.
 - (2) All city owned, or tax delinquent, vacant, repairable residential units will be actively marketed by the city of Syracuse for rehabilitation and occupancy. Priority is given to owner occupants pursuant to guidelines established by the common council, and financial assistance for property rehabilitation is provided through the Homestead Program, funded under the city's community development block grant program.
 - (3)

CDBG funds provided to non-owner occupants who are eligible for and accepted into the city's rehabilitation loan program shall be determined by and for and serve to act upon addressing major code violations. Funds shall not be made available for improvements which would encourage conversion to other than low/moderate income housing.

- (4) CDBG-funded Rehabilitation Loan Program assistance shall not, to the extent practicable, involve displacement of tenants. The intake and loan approval process, including on-site inspections shall determine occupancy status prior to, during and following planned rehabilitation.
- (5) Developers requesting CDBG or Rental Rehabilitation funds must sign an agreement certifying that, following rehabilitation, units shall be available to low/moderate income households to levels mandated under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.

(Ord. No. 11-1995, 3-27-95)

Sec. 16-66. - Vacant dwelling units.

When there are one or more vacant dwelling units in a multiple dwelling, notice must be given to the bureau of water, department of finance where a record will be kept. The bill will then be based on the number of occupied dwelling units after at least ninety (90) days have passed since notification of the existence of the vacancy or vacancies by the owner to the bureau of water. Anyone who fails to immediately notify the bureau of water, either by letter or by signing a certification at the office of said bureau, that the premises are again occupied, will forfeit their right to a rebate for vacancy.

(Ord. No. 206-1974, Art. 45, 4-9-74)

DIVISION 12. - EXEMPTION FOR TOTAL REHABILITATION OF VACANT RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES AND NEW ONE- AND TWO-FAMILY RESIDENCES

Sec. 14-50.50. - Applicability.

The real property tax exemption for total rehabilitation of qualified vacant residential structures and construction of new one and two family residences authorized by Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 shall be applied to such qualified residential real property in the city of Syracuse for city and school district real property taxes in accordance with the terms of said Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 and the specific terms of this Local Law.

(L.L. No. 13-2013, § 1, 12-2-13)

Sec. 14-50.51. - Exemption schedule and requirements.

(a) (1) ;hg:Such (2) Construction of qualified LEED certified new residential structures.

qualified
residential

Percentage of exemption

real

property

shall

be

exempt

in

accordance

with

the

applicable

exemption

schedules

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forth

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and

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exemption

shall

be
computed
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respect
to
the
"exemption
base".
The
exemption
base
shall
be
the
increase
in
the
assessed
value
due
to
qualified
improvements
as
determined
in
the
initial
year
of
the
applicable
exemption
following
the
filing

of
an
original
application,
provided
that
the
application
relative
to
the
rehabilitation
of
a
qualified
vacant
residential
structure
determined
to
be
an
unoccupied
hazard
shall
be
pre-
approved
by
the
city
as
provided
in
this
section.

Year	Certified/Silver	Gold	Platinum
1	100%	100%	100%
2	100%	100%	100%
3	100%	100%	100%
4	100%	100%	100%
5	100%	100%	100%
6	100%	100%	100%
7	100%	100%	100%
8	100%	100%	100%
9	80%	100%	100%
10	60%	80%	100%
11	40%	60%	100%
12	20%	40%	75%
13	0%	20%	50%
14	0%	0%	25%

(3) Construction of qualified new residential structure or total rehabilitation of pre-approved qualified residential structure determined to be an unoccupied hazard.

Year	Percentage of exemption
1	100%

2	100%
3	100%
4	100%
5	100%
6	100%
7	100%
8	75%
9	50%
10	25%

- (4) Any application submitted by the property owner for the exemption relative to the rehabilitation of a residential structure determined to be an unoccupied hazard shall require pre-approval by the commissioner of assessment and the director of code enforcement which pre-approval shall be in writing and shall certify that the structure to be totally rehabilitated qualifies as an unoccupied hazard. The failure of the applicant to apply or receive such pre-approval for any exemption relative to the total rehabilitation of a qualified residential structure determined to be an unoccupied hazard shall disqualify the subject property from eligibility for any exemption pursuant to Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 and this Local Law.
- (5) For purposes of eligibility for the total rehabilitation of a residential structure, a qualified residential structure determined to be an unoccupied hazard, an unoccupied hazard shall be defined as any residential building or structure or a substantial part thereof which remains unoccupied for a period of more than one year with either doors, windows, or other openings broken, removed, boarded or sealed up.
- (6) For purposes of eligibility for the construction of a qualified new residential structure, the new residential property must be a one- or two-family residence. New residential real property constructed which is greater than a one- or two-family residence shall in no event be eligible for real property tax exemptions authorized by this Local Law.
- (7) (A) For the purposes of eligibility under a LEED certification standard the term "LEED" shall mean the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Building Rating System published by the United States Green Building Council. Such residential real property which is certified under a LEED certification standard which is determined to be for the categories of certified, silver, gold or platinum as meeting green building standards, as determined by a LEED accredited professional shall be exempt as provided in subparagraph (2) of paragraph (a) of subdivision two of this Local Law for the respective percentages provided that a copy of the certification for a qualified category is filed with the city's commissioner of assessment and the commissioner of assessment approves the application for the applicable category as meeting the requirements of Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 and this Local Law.

(B) Construction of a qualified new residential structure which does not meet the certified, silver, gold or platinum standard as determined by the city shall be exempt under subparagraph (3) of this paragraph (a) provided it meets the applicable requirements of Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 and this Local Law.

(8) Exemptions granted pursuant to this Local Law shall apply to real property taxes imposed for both city and school district purposes.

(b) No such exemption shall be granted unless:

(1) Such construction of a qualified new residential real property or the total rehabilitation of a qualified residential structure determined to be an unoccupied hazard commenced on or after the first day of January, two thousand thirteen;

(2) The qualified residential real property is situated in the City of Syracuse;

(3) The value of such construction exceeds the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00); and

(4) Such construction is documented by a building permit, if required, for the improvements, or other appropriate documentation as required by the Commissioner of Assessment.

(c) For purposes of this section the term "construction of improvements" shall not include ordinary maintenance and repairs.

(L.L. No. 13-2013, § 2, 12-2-13)

Sec. 14-50.52. - Application—Filing.

Such exemption for the construction of a qualified new residential real property shall be granted only upon application by the owner of such real property. Such exemption for a total rehabilitation of a qualified residential structure determined to be an unoccupied hazard shall be granted only upon application by the owner of such real property who has been pre-approved in accordance with the requirements of subparagraph (4) of paragraph (a) of section 14-50.51 of this Local Law. Such application shall be filed with the Commissioner of Assessment for the city of Syracuse, on or before the taxable status and within one year from the date of completion of such construction of qualified residential structure improvements.

(L.L. No. 13-2013, § 3, 12-2-13)

Sec. 14-50.53. - Approval.

If the commissioner of assessment is satisfied that the applicant is entitled to an exemption pursuant to Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 and this Local Law, he or she shall approve the application and such real property shall thereafter be exempt from taxation and special ad valorem levies by the city of Syracuse, as provided in this Local Law commencing with the assessment roll prepared after the taxable status date referred to in subdivision three of this Local Law. The assessed value of any exemption granted pursuant to this Local Law shall be entered by the commissioner of assessment on the assessment roll with the taxable property, with the amount of the exemption shown in a separate column. In any case where there is an additional partial exemption based on a LEED certification, a copy of such certification shall be filed in the subject real property file.

(L.L. No. 13-2013, § 4, 12-2-13)

Sec. 14-50.54. - Cessation of exemption.

In the event that real property granted an exemption pursuant to this Local Law ceases to be used primarily for purposes as provided in subparagraph (6) of paragraph (a) of section 14-50.51 of this Local Law the exemption granted pursuant to this section shall cease.

(L.L. No. 13-2013, § 5, 12-2-13)

Sec. 14-50.55. - Code violations.

In addition to the cessation of the exemption pursuant to section 14-50.54 of this Local Law the commissioner of assessment shall be authorized to eliminate the exemption granted to any eligible property pursuant to Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 and this Local Law, which eligible property is determined by the commissioner of assessment and the director of code enforcement to have serious code violations at any time subsequent to the approval of the application for real property tax exemptions pursuant to Chapter 441 of the Laws of 2013 and this Local Law and which serious code violations have not been corrected and any judgments and/or fines, penalties and costs, if any, have not been paid in accordance with the applicable laws, local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. The elimination of any such exemption shall take effect on the assessment roll based on the next taxable status date subsequent to the city's determination to eliminate the exemption. For purposes of this Local Law, the term serious violations shall be any serious violation as designated in the Property Conservation Code of the city of Syracuse or any violation of the Property Conservation Code which the commissioner of assessment and director of code enforcement determine to be a serious threat to life, health and safety of occupants of such real property.

(L.L. No. 13-2013, § 6, 12-2-13)

Sec. 14-50.56. - Effective.

This Local Law shall take effect immediately subject to the provisions of the Municipal Home Rule Law and shall be applicable to qualified real property for construction initiated on or after January 1, 2013.

(L.L. No. 13-2013, § 7, 12-2-13)



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