



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

SHARON F. OWENS, MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

CITY OF SYRACUSE ISSUES ALERT ON NATIONWIDE ZONING AND PLANNING SCAM TARGETING RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

SYRACUSE, NY — The City of Syracuse is warning residents and businesses about a rapidly spreading nationwide zoning and planning scam that is targeting communities across the United States. The scheme involves fraudulent notices, emails, and phone calls claiming to be from local government planning or zoning offices and pressuring recipients to take immediate action.

The scam has been reported in multiple states, with individuals and business owners receiving official-looking communications that cite false zoning violations, demand “urgent compliance fees,” or instruct recipients to schedule mandatory inspections. Some messages threaten fines or legal action if payments are not made immediately.

“These communications are designed to look authentic, and many include fabricated case numbers, municipal seals, and signatures,” said Mayor Sharon F. Owens. “We want residents and business owners to know these messages are fake. The City Zoning Administration will ever demand immediate payment or threaten penalties without proper verification and due process.”

The City is urging the public to take the following precautions:

- Verify any zoning or planning related communication by contacting the Syracuse Zoning Administration directly by emailing zoning@syr.gov or calling 315-448-8640.
- Be suspicious of unsolicited emails, phone calls, or mailed notices demanding quick payments or sensitive personal information. Do not initiate a wire transfer or send alternative forms of payment based on an email request.
- Report any suspicious zoning or planning notices with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at ic3.gov.
- Do not click links or download attachments from unverified emails claiming to be related to zoning or compliance issues.

– more –

The City is coordinating with state and federal authorities to monitor the spread of the scam and ensure timely public warnings. Residents are encouraged to stay alert and share this information with neighbors, colleagues, and local business owners. To learn more and see examples of fake invoices, residents can visit syr.gov/Zoning-Scam-Warning

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