



VACANT BUILDING ORDINANCE

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OVERVIEW OF PROPOSAL

Requires property owner to fence the perimeter within 10 days of vacancy

- Exceptions
 - Active permitting project
 - Code Enforcement determination
 - Council/Mayoral unanimous determination

City of Houston Ordinance No. 2025-_____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, HOUSTON, TEXAS, ADDING ARTICLE XXV THERETO TO REQUIRE SECURING OF VACANT COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS WITH PERIMETER FENCING.

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that vacant commercial buildings present a significant risk to public safety and welfare through unauthorized entry, vandalism, illegal dumping, graffiti, and accumulation of waste and nuisances; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to establish minimum standards for securing such vacant commercial buildings to protect surrounding neighborhoods; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS:

Section 1. The findings contained in the preamble of this Ordinance are determined to be true and correct and are adopted as a part of this Ordinance.

Section 2. Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances, Houston, Texas, is amended by adding a new Article XXV as follows:

ARTICLE XXV. SECURING VACANT COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Sec. 10-1001. Definitions

As used in this article, the following words and terms shall have the meanings set forth below:

- **Vacant Commercial Building:** A structure plated or used for commercial purposes that has been unoccupied and not used for any legal business activity for 7 non-consecutive days in a 30-day period.
- **Owner:** Any individual, corporation, partnership, joint venture, limited liability company, or other legal entity with a recorded legal or equitable interest in commercial property.
- **Perimeter Fence:** A continuous, secure barrier not less than six feet in height, constructed of a chain link fence or another material approved by the director.
- **Director:** The director of Houston Public Works or their designee.

Sec. 10-1002. Fencing Requirement for Vacant Commercial Buildings

(a) The owner of any vacant commercial building shall, within ten (10) calendar days after the



PAST PRACTICE

- No fencing has been required for vacant commercial buildings

POTENTIAL ORDINANCE IMPACT

CHALLENGES

If the owner does not install a fence



Vacancy Status

- Establish seven non-consecutive days within 30
- Challenge to measure
- Requires reoccurring site visits
- Documentation of violation notices |photos



Property Perimeter

- Multiple structures on the same property or parcel
- Some buildings may be occupied or operating a business
- Establishing property boundaries



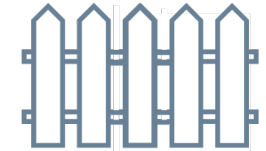
Owner Identification

- Challenging to identify
- Often LLC's out of state and international owners



Exemption Guidelines

- Need documented criteria for exemptions
- Need process for requesting exemption
- Legal partnership



Fencing

- Vendor sourcing
- Establishing contract(s)
- Funding identification
- Ongoing fence maintenance

CHALLENGES

Community Code Enforcement Team



Resource Strain

- Dangerous building team workload
- Currently staffed at 14 out of 18 funded positions
- Current workload need +10
- Additional workload impact of fencing TBD



Cost Recovery

- Citations
- Liens
- Legal partnership
- Houston Police Department partnership for warrant issuance
- Administrative and Financial Standard Operating Procedure's



Competing Priorities

- Abatements
- Prohibited yard parking
- Storage containers
- Apartment Standards Enforcement Committee (ASEC)
- After hours task force

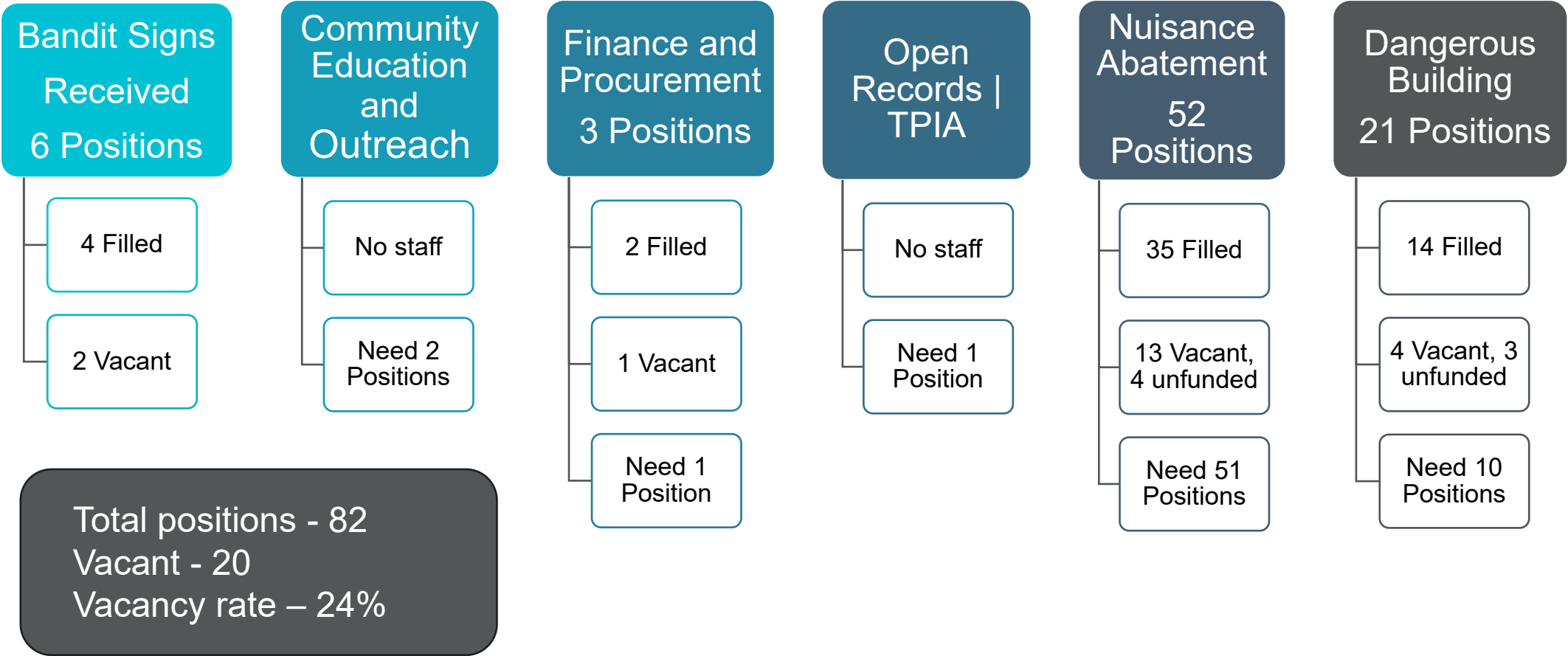


Exemption Guidelines

- Need drafted criteria for exemption
- What exemption documentation required
- Need process for requesting
- Consistency in usage

CURRENT RESOURCES

Insufficient staffing for current workload



QUESTIONS

thank you!



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