

**TITLE:**

**RECEIVE REPORT OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE "VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION"**

**ISSUE:**

Currently there are over 200 identified vacant parcels within the city limits, including lots, residences, and commercial properties. Many, if not most, appear unkempt, dilapidated, and with identifiable nuisances. Currently there is little motivation for these properties to be developed, rehabilitated, and the enforcement of the identified nuisance conditions are difficult, especially with out of area or corporate property owners. This lack of motivation negatively affects available housing and the general appearance of property in the city.

**ANALYSIS:**

The existing Ford Bragg Municipal Code (FBMC) Section 6.12.040 identifies Nuisance Conditions and complaints to code enforcement are made on a regular basis. It is difficult at times to identify a responsible party because online property indexes are not up to date, there is no open utility account, and insufficient history with the property that would identify a current property owner. Many of these properties would appear to a reasonable person to be abandoned or not in a state of maintained care.

An ordinance requiring the registration of these parcels on an annual basis would allow for quicker identification of responsible parties, require a local contact person or contractor when an owner resides out of the area, authorize inspections to verify a property is free of nuisance conditions and its security is up to date. It would provide for closed or unused businesses to maintain their property up to a standard, resulting in beautifying the commercial zoned districts and requiring the owners to act in a responsible manner when it comes to their vacant properties.

One would conclude that with over ninety undeveloped lots and with the identified housing shortage there should be more residential development now occurring within the city. With many of these properties having a history of long-time ownership within a family, it is an easy conclusion there is little motivation to develop a property when there is only a minimal property tax obligation each year. This ordinance would cause many of these owners to consider development of the property or sale of the property to a new owner willing to develop.

In researching information for this proposed ordinance, a large number of municipalities and counties have enacted a vacant property ordinance in some form. Most ordinances were enacted in 2008 in response to the sudden increase in property foreclosures and the subsequent reality of

increased, corporate, non-local owners. Municipalities reported increased blight from lack of maintenance and security of these properties and took these steps to counter those issues. Municipalities reported great success in requiring non local owners to provide maintenance and security. Ordinances were modified and adopted to include all vacant properties, again, with reported great success. Costs of the program are offset by registration and inspection fees.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The fiscal impact of implementing this ordinance needs to be studied further. The implementation of the Annual Registration Fees and Inspection Fees will offset the program costs with predictable revenue. Other long term revenue gains and increased local economic impact can be reasonably anticipated with; 1. Increased property taxes from the development of vacant lots and reassessment of sold properties; 2. Potential increases to local population resulting in additional tax revenue from positive economic growth; 3. Potential increased revenue from additional licensing fees for new business.

**CONSISTENCY:**

The proposed change could positively impact the General Plan's 2019 Housing Element Introduction D, to add 200 single family homes, townhouses, and low to moderate income development over the next 8 years. Additionally this ordinance will work hand in hand with Program H-1.6.1 by continuing to update the vacant parcels map in order to provide information to potential developers regarding infill opportunities. Goal H-5 may be positively impacted with potentially improving existing housing supply through housing rehabilitation and housing preservation.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1 Proposed Ordinance Text with Proposed Codification
- 2 Suggested Fee Schedule