

Problem Properties Case Study

Based on findings that there were significant costs to resourcing problem properties from the multiple agencies involved, a case study was conducted on 31 properties. Data collected was shared with the Edmonton Community Development Company for its Insights into the Socio-Economic Costs of Edmonton's Problem Properties report.

Selection of Properties

Residential Inspection Safety Compliance team / Approach to Problem Properties selected properties - Group A (14 properties)

The properties selected were some of the properties that have taken the most time to address and involved at least three but up to seven agencies (i.e. all of the agencies involved in problem properties initiative). They represent 13 of the 486 properties that Residential Inspection Safety Compliance team has dealt with over the past four years. The properties are spread throughout the city. The 13 properties selected could be described as the highest touch/frequency problem properties or some of the most resource-intensive for the initiative:

- Inspections/reinspections/enforcement calls ranged from 5 to 17;
- Took between 6 months and two years to close their files; and,
- Had between 35 and 119 touchpoints from the Residential Inspection Safety Compliance team perspective

Additionally, another property was included that has not been in the scope of the Residential Inspection Safety Compliance team but has caused significant community concern. Of note is that, currently, derelict properties are not checked by the Residential Inspection Safety Compliance team.

Edmonton Community Development Company selected properties - Group B (9 properties) & Group C (cluster of 8 properties on one block)

The properties selected by Edmonton Community Development Company represent properties that may currently not be within the scope of the Residential Inspection Safety Compliance team for inspections, but are of significant concern to the community, including derelict/vacant properties that have a long history and a cluster/block with multiple challenging properties that are causing community pain. The properties selected were in McCauley, Alberta Avenue and Eastwood. Edmonton Community Development Company has approximately 250 properties that it considers to be problematic, mostly in the Alberta Ave, McCauley, Parkdale and Eastwood communities, including some commercial properties. A number of these properties were from 2015 to 2017 before the Residential Inspection Safety Compliance team was created.

Findings

The case study of these 31 properties showed significant total costs of inspections from the City, Edmonton Police Service and Alberta Health Services, but also wider systems costs from fire suppression deployment and fire investigations, cleanups, needle pick-ups, demolition orders, legal services, 311 calls, taxation (fees/costs added to property taxes and uncollected taxes) and police responses (other than inspections, including tactical team response and other calls for service). The results of this case study provide further evidence of the high resource intensity of problem properties and also provide evidence for implementing new initiatives and continuing to explore other options and means for bringing properties into compliance. This would further improve safety and well-being for those affected by problem properties, including those addressing problem properties through compliance and enforcement, people living and/or working in these properties, and the communities affected. The case study also provides evidence to support exploring predictive analytics (requiring improved data) with the potential for more upstream solutions for the future (for example, analytics to look at predictors of decline and associated targeted interventions to prevent decline).

Cost per call (approximate by agency)*

City inspections/reinspections/enforcement (including bylaw, fire, safety codes, development and compliance)	\$474
Edmonton Police Service inspections/reinspections/enforcement	\$131
Alberta Health Services inspections/reinspections/enforcement	\$88

* Costs included inspection time, travel time, and administrative time (warnings, tickets, orders). Some agencies were able to include training time.

Total Costs (2017 - 2020): \$1,381,806

Includes inspections/reinspections/enforcement visits, fire suppression, fire investigations, other police responses, and taxation fees/costs and value of uncollected taxes. These costs may not include other administrative costs associated with dealing with problem properties.

Case Study Results Breakdown					
	Group A (14 properties)	Group B (9 properties)	Group C (cluster of 8 properties)	Groups B + C (17 properties)	Groups A + B + C (31 properties)
Bylaw					
# of inspections/ reinspections	548	264	163	427	975
Cost (approximate) of inspections/ reinspections	\$49,320	\$23,760	\$14,670	\$38,430	\$87,750
# of enforcement actions	129	79	37	116	245
Cost (approximate) of enforcement actions	\$11,610	\$7,110	\$3,330	\$10,440	\$22,050
# of clean-ups	20	18	7	25	45
# of needle pick-ups	9	85	0	85	94
Fire					
# of inspections/ reinspections	239	67	3	70	309
Cost (approximate) of inspections/ reinspections	\$32,265	\$9,045	\$405	\$9,450	\$41,715
# of enforcement actions	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Cost (approximate) of enforcement actions	\$135	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$135
# of times fire suppression deployed - other than inspections/ reinspections	104	13	13	26	130
Total cost of fire suppression calls	\$102,010	\$9,608	\$25,116	\$34,724	\$136,734
# of fire investigations	4	0	3	3	7

Attachment 4

Cost of fire investigations (may include costs to neighbouring properties if there was a fire)	\$16,596	\$0	\$4,480	\$4,480	\$21,076
Safety Codes					
# of inspections/ re-inspections	55	21	2	23	78
Cost (approximate) of inspections/ re-inspections	\$5,830	\$2,226	\$212	\$2,438	\$8,268
Development Compliance					
# of inspections/ re-inspections	50	5	10	15	65
Cost (approximate) of inspections/ re-inspections	\$7,150	\$715	\$1,430	\$2,145	\$9,295
# of enforcement actions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	76
Cost (approximate) of enforcement actions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$10,868
# of sites fenced	0	0	0	0	0
# of demolitions ordered	1	0	0	0	1
Edmonton Police Service					
# of inspections/ re-inspections	129	8	2	10	139
Cost (approximate) of inspections/ re-inspections	\$16,899	\$1,048	\$262	\$1,310	\$18,209
# of police responses (other than for inspections/ re-inspections)	1,783	429	457	886	2,669
Cost (approximate) for the police responses (other than for inspections/ re-inspections)	\$233,573	\$56,199	\$59,867	\$116,066	\$349,639

Attachment 4

Alberta Health Services					
# of inspections/ reinspections visits	867	178	38	216	1,083
Cost (approximate) of inspections/ reinspections visits	\$76,330.68	\$15,671.12	\$3,345.52	\$19,016.64	\$95,347.32
# of enforcement visits	22	0	1	1	23
Cost (approximate) of enforcement visits	\$1,936.88	\$0.00	\$88.04	\$88.04	\$2,024.92
Law					
# of legal opinions	2	1	0	1	3
# of lawyer court appearances for the property	3	4	0	4	7
# of subpoenas served to officers related to bylaw offences	5	13	0	13	18
Hours of court time spent on the property	5	13	0	13	18
Taxation					
Value of fees/costs added to the property taxes	\$8,618.61	\$4,047.12	\$0.00	\$4,047.12	\$12,665.73
Value of uncollected taxes	\$376,600.00	\$103,655.00	\$85,774.00	\$189,429.00	\$566,029.00
311 Calls					
# of calls to 311	217	79	58	137	354