Austin

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Dr. Eric Anthony Johnson, Assistant City Manager EAJ

From: Keith Mars, Director, Austin Development Services KM

Date: October 30, 2026

Subject: **Emergency Demolition Process**

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the creation of a new Emergency Demolition Process for the City of Austin. This process provides a proactive mechanism to rapidly address unsafe structures that pose an imminent danger to the community, filling a critical gap where expedited action is required.

Background

The City's standard demolition process requires Austin Development Services (DSD) to work with Austin Facilities Management to complete all subsequent steps, including permitting, utility disconnections, environmental and hazardous materials assessments and abatement, contractor coordination, state notifications, and on-site oversight. When a code violation goes unaddressed and a demolition order is issued, the case is escalated to the Building and Standards Commission, which only meets once a month, resulting in significant delays.

When a property presents an immediate, significant hazard to the community, the City's standard demolition process is not designed for emergency response and can take months to complete due to extensive procedural and administrative requirements.

Emergency Demolition Process

To address this challenge, DSD collaborated with partner departments to develop an Emergency Demolition Process. A new interdepartmental Dangerous Premises Team will rapidly assess structures that pose an imminent danger, with the goal of authorizing demolition to begin within 96 hours. In support of that work, the team:

- Conducted research and benchmarking with peer cities.
- Partnered with the City Attorney's Office for legal analysis, precedent review, and risk mitigation.

- Formalized a Memorandum of Understanding with Facilities Management, Fire, Police, Water, Austin Energy, and the City Attorney's Office.
- Conducted stakeholder engagement.
- Received a recommendation from the Building and Standards Commission in support of the new process.

This process strengthens public safety by preventing further damage, improving compliance, reducing repeat service calls, and accelerating community recovery. It is reserved for structures requiring rapid demolition and is consistent with best practices long used in other major Texas cities to address dangerous structures.

Next Steps

To implement the Emergency Demolition Process, an amendment to the 2024 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) is required, which necessitates City Council action. The timeline is as follows:

- November 5, 2026 – Set a Public Hearing.
- November 19, 2026 – Conduct a Public Hearing.
- December 3, 2026 – City Council consideration of IPMC amendments, followed by a 30-day implementation period for staff training and communications.
- January 7, 2027 – Program implementation.

After City Council approval, the department's Standard Operating Procedures and supporting documentation will be finalized and published. Once established, this new process will ensure the City can rapidly address unsafe structures that pose an imminent threat to the community.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Keith Mars, Director of Austin Development Services at Keith.Mars@austintexas.gov or 512-466-4598.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
Jason Hadavi, City Auditor
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk
Judge Sherry Statman, Municipal Court
CMO Executive Team
Department Directors