

Property Maintenance Code Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Property Maintenance Code?

A Property Maintenance Code is a tool used by governments to improve the condition of properties that have fallen into disrepair. While traditional zoning and nuisance abatement regulations may help in many areas, such a code would regulate building condition and safety. Common examples of property maintenance issues that could be addressed with such a code include missing siding, gutters hanging off a structure, or the presence of badly peeling paint. Property maintenance regulations enable a community to spur owners to address these issues, for both residential and commercial properties.

Why is the Township considering a Property Maintenance Code?

Anderson Township has been considering the adoption of a Property Maintenance Code for over five years. During that time, extensive research has been done about the impact and operations of codes in other communities, as well as surveying Anderson residents about their desire for such a Code. These surveys, conducted at the Anderson Days Festival in 2002, 2005, and 2006 have shown strong citizen support for such a Code. In addition, in 2005, the Township adopted the Anderson Plan, one of the key goals being to preserve existing neighborhoods. It is hoped that this Code, in conjunction with existing nuisance and zoning regulations, will help to maintain the integrity of Township neighborhoods as attractive places to live.

Do other communities have such a Code?

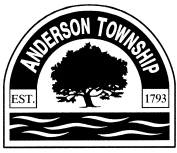
Many other communities in the region have such a code, especially cities and villages; however, codes exist in some of the larger Townships in the area (Miami in Clermont County, West Chester in Butler County, and Springfield in Hamilton County), and are being considered in others. It is estimated that over 80% of political jurisdictions in Hamilton County enforce some form of property maintenance codes.

Is the proposed Code similar to that in these other communities?

The Township is considering adopting sections of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), which is a universal tool for the effective enforcement of property maintenance and housing violations. This code provides for the enforcement of both commercial and residential properties and is a model code that is used by communities through the nation. Anderson Township is considering adopting sections of this code, primarily those relating to exterior building conditions.

What are some of the regulations that would be in the Code?

The intent of Anderson's version of the Code would be to maintain the exterior of properties and would address those areas not currently covered in the Township's zoning and nuisance regulations. Typical examples of violations would include the prohibition of boarded up windows, gutters or downspouts that are not secured to a structure, missing siding, shingles falling from roofs, or shutters not secured to a home.



Property Maintenance Code Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Who would enforce such a Code, and how would this process occur?

The Code would be enforced through the Township's Planning & Zoning Department, much like existing zoning and nuisance violations. It is envisioned that the Township will not seek violations, but would accept anonymous complaints, as it currently does with the aforementioned regulations. After a complaint is received, a property would be inspected to determine if any property maintenance, zoning, or nuisance violations exist.

What happens to properties that are in violation of the Code?

Properties in violation of the Code, like with nuisance and zoning violations, would be notified via mail of the violation, and provided with a time frame to make the repairs. We typically ask that the repairs be started within 20 days, or that an owner at least contact the Township during that time period to discuss their repair timeline. Like with other codes, the Township will work with property owners who need additional time, provided there is progress being made on the property. In situations where no improvements have occurred within the allotted time frame, a 2nd notice would be sent, to be followed (if necessary) by a citation to the Hamilton County Municipal Court. An appeal process also exists, through a Township Appeals Board (fees do exist for this option), if an owner does not agree with staff's interpretation of the Code.

What about property owners who are on a fixed income or unable to make repairs?

Like with other codes, the Township will attempt to work with owners on a case by case basis. If a financial situation exists that limits the ability to take action, the Township will work with a property owner and other organizations (government, non-profit, and for profit) to seek volunteers to help abate a situation. However, this can only occur with the property owner's support, and organizations or businesses that are willing to assist.

Where can I view the proposed Code?

The proposed code may be viewed at the Planning & Zoning Department in the Anderson Center (7850 Five Mile Road) on Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 4:30, or on the Township's website at www.andersontownship.org (click on "Quick Links").

Questions and comments may be directed to Anderson Township Planning & Zoning – 513-688-8400