



**Snohomish County  
Office of County Performance Audit**

**AUDIT FOLLOW UP: Code Enforcement**

**August 24, 2007**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1 BACKGROUND.....2**
- 2 OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY .....2**
- 3 FOLLOW UP.....3**
- 3.1 **SNOHOMISH COUNTY’S CODE ENFORCEMENT PHILOSOPHY MUST BE CLEAR AND WIDELY ACCEPTED.** ..... 4
  - 3.1.1 Identify a central code enforcement philosophy-**Recommendation 1** .....4
  - 3.1.2 Develop policies and procedures - **Recommendation 2**.....4
- 3.2 **CODE VIOLATIONS MUST BE PRIORITIZED.** ..... 5
  - 3.2.1 Prioritize violations - **Recommendation 3**.....5
  - 3.2.2 Match resources to priorities - **Recommendation 4**.....5
- 3.3 **PERFORMANCE MEASURES SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE AND UTILIZED.** ..... 5
  - 3.3.1 Develop performance measures - **Recommendation 5**.....5
  - 3.3.2 Track performance measures - **Recommendation 6**.....5
- 3.4 **THE CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION NEEDS STRONG LEADERSHIP.**..... 6
  - 3.4.1 Manager/Supervisor need tools to manage - **Recommendation 7**.....6
  - 3.4.2 Communication systems need improvement - **Recommendation 8**.....6
- 3.5 **THE COMMUNITY MUST BE TREATED AS A PARTNER AND CUSTOMER.** ..... 6
  - 3.5.1 Educational tools for violators - **Recommendation 9** .....6
  - 3.5.2 Community resource list - **Recommendation 10**.....7
  - 3.5.3 Online code enforcement complaints - **Recommendation 11**.....7
  - 3.5.4 Additional data on complaint form - **Recommendation 12**.....7
  - 3.5.5 Increase communication with complainants - **Recommendation 13**.....7
  - 3.5.6 Clear correspondence with complainant - **Recommendation 14**.....8
  - 3.5.7 Survey of complainants - **Recommendation 15**.....8
  - 3.5.8 Informative code enforcement brochure - **Recommendation 16**.....8
- 3.6 **STAFF CULTURE SHOULD BE CONDUCIVE TO EFFICIENT, HIGH QUALITY WORK.** ..... 8
  - 3.6.1 Minimize turnover - **Recommendation 17**.....8
  - 3.6.2 Staff involvement in policy development - **Recommendation 18**.....9
  - 3.6.3 Performance evaluations - **Recommendation 19**.....9
  - 3.6.4 Leadership communication with staff - **Recommendation 20**.....9
  - 3.6.5 Staff professional development - **Recommendation 21**.....9
- 3.7 **APPROPRIATE TOOLS SHOULD BE USED TO GAIN COMPLIANCE IN AN EFFECTIVE, TIMELY AND EFFICIENT MANNER.**..... 10
  - 3.7.1 Code enforcement process information for violator - **Recommendation 22**.....10
  - 3.7.2 Determine effectiveness of VCA - **Recommendation 23**.....10
  - 3.7.3 Prosecuting Attorney’s Office involvement in cases - **Recommendation 24**.....10
  - 3.7.4 Postpone abatement until P & Ps in place - **Recommendation 25**.....10
  - 3.7.5 Examine the use of liens - **Recommendation 26**.....11
  - 3.7.6 Develop a citation process - **Recommendation 27**.....11
  - 3.7.7 Determine use of Certificate of Non-Compliance - **Recommendation 28**.....11
  - 3.7.8 Review cases more than 6 months old - **Recommendation 29**.....11
  - 3.7.9 Strategically choose enforcement tools - **Recommendation 30**.....12
  - 3.7.10 Process Retreat with all parties - **Recommendation 31**.....12
  - 3.7.11 Improve impact of enforcement tools - **Recommendation 32**.....12
- 3.8 **SECTIONS OF THE CURRENT SNOHOMISH COUNTY CODE SHOULD BE REVISED AND CLARIFIED.**12
  - 3.8.1 Track junkyard conditions - **Recommendation 33**.....12

3.8.2	Reevaluate travel trailer code - Recommendation 34	13
3.8.3	Utilize internal grading expertise - Recommendation 35	13
3.9	<b>FINANCIAL INFORMATION SHOULD BE HANDLED IN A CONSISTENT, FAIR AND TIMELY WAY. . .</b>	<b>13</b>
3.9.1	Put pre-04 penalties into AMANDA and bill - Recommendation 36	13
3.9.2	Separate CE receivables from each other - Recommendation 37	13
3.9.3	Monitor judgments - Recommendation 38	14
3.9.4	Track all judgments in Amanda and bill - Recommendation 39	14
3.9.5	Bill judgments before sending case to collections - Recommendation 40	14
3.9.6	Record judgments with the Auditor's Office - Recommendation 41	14
3.9.7	Promptly bill penalties and judgments - Recommendation 42	15
3.9.8	Task delineation regarding billing and collections - Recommendation 43	15
3.9.9	Send cases to collections promptly after 120 days - Recommendation 44	15
3.9.10	Phone calls prior to sending cases to collections - Recommendation 45	15
3.10	<b>THE HEARING EXAMINER PROCESS SHOULD BE MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE. . . . .</b>	<b>16</b>
3.10.1	Meet with Hearing Examiner about process - Recommendation 46	16
3.10.2	Monthly Hearing Examiner status reports to CE - Recommendation 47	16
3.10.3	Review need for Status Conferences - Recommendation 48	16
3.10.4	Review timeliness of Hearing Examiner cases - Recommendation 49	16
3.10.5	Consider assessing a fee for CE appeals - Recommendation 50	16
3.10.6	Develop a penalty schedule - Recommendation 51	17
3.11	<b>THE CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION MUST COLLABORATE. . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>
3.11.1	Process and content experts - Recommendation 52	17
3.11.2	Agreement to provide technical expertise - Recommendation 53	17
3.11.3	Agreement with Sheriff to provide authority for CE - Recommendation 54	17
3.11.4	Training on dangerous dogs - Recommendation 55	18
3.11.5	Prosecuting Attorney involvement in cases- Recommendation 56	18
3.11.6	Monthly updates on cases the PA is handling - Recommendation 57	18
3.11.7	Hold periodic meetings with Health District - Recommendation 58	18
3.11.8	NW Counties Interagency Enforcement Cooperative- Recommendation 59	18
3.12	<b>ACCURATE DATA NEEDS TO BE COLLECTED AND UTILIZED. . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
3.12.1	Data entry training and evaluation - Recommendation 60	19
3.12.2	Utilize data reports to inform decision making - Recommendation 61	19
3.12.3	Centralize case data - Recommendation 62	19

## 1 BACKGROUND

The audit of the Code Enforcement Division of Snohomish County's Planning and Development Services was completed in November of 2005. This audit follow up report reflects the degree to which recommendations made in the audit have been addressed by Code Enforcement.

Management and staff associated with the Code Enforcement Division have worked diligently in the last year and a half to address the recommendations made in the audit report. Many positive changes have been made or are in the process of being made to enhance and improve code enforcement.

The Division is currently participating in a comprehensive revision of the enforcement code which once implemented will improve the entire code enforcement process. A number of recommendations required the cooperation and involvement of other offices and departments in order to fully address the recommendation. In these cases, the Code Enforcement Division has made much progress in collaborating with others in order to address the issues raised.

### Color Coding

The Office of County Performance Auditor uses the following color system to show progress on audit recommendations:

	The audit recommendation has been addressed or the issue has been resolved by alternate means.
	Resolution of the audit recommendation has been initiated or plans are in place to resolve the issue.
	Little or no progress has been made toward addressing the recommendation.

### Recommendation Status

When recommendations are fully addressed (color coded green), they are considered "closed." This means that unless the audit issue is part of the objectives of a further audit or project it will not be reviewed by the auditors again. "Open" recommendations (color coded yellow or red) will be evaluated yearly until closed.

## 2 OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this audit follow up is to determine if the recommendations made by the Performance Auditor in the Code Enforcement Audit were addressed.

We obtained this information through:

- Meetings with Code Enforcement Division management and project personnel
- Interviews with Code Enforcement Division staff
- Interviews with other county entities associated with code enforcement
- Review of Division supplied documents, reports, plans and assessments

### 3 FOLLOW UP

The Code Enforcement Division has addressed or partially addressed all audit recommendations. Of the 27 recommendations that remain open, the Division reports that full completion is anticipated by the first quarter of 2008. The Division provided sufficient rationale to withdraw five recommendations.

Rec #	Was the recommendation addressed?	Rec #	Was the recommendation addressed?	Rec #	Was the recommendation addressed?
1	Yes	22	Partial	43	Yes
2	Partial	23	Partial	44	Partial
3	Yes	24	Yes	45	Withdrawn
4	Yes	25	Withdrawn	46	Yes
5	Yes	26	Yes	47	Withdrawn
6	Partial	27	Partial	48	Yes
7	Yes	28	Partial	49	Yes
8	Yes	29	Partial	50	Partial
9	Partial	30	Yes	51	Partial
10	Yes	31	Yes	52	Yes
11	Yes	32	Yes	53	Partial
12	Yes	33	Withdrawn	54	Partial
13	Partial	34	Withdrawn	55	Yes
14	Partial	35	Yes	56	Yes
15	Partial	36	Yes	57	Yes
16	Partial	37	Partial	58	Partial
17	Yes	38	Yes	59	Yes
18	Yes	39	Partial	60	Partial
19	Partial	40	Partial	61	Partial
20	Partial	41	Partial	62	Yes
21	Yes	42	Partial		

#### New Code Enforcement Initiatives

Code enforcement has taken on a number of new initiatives since the audit including:

- Abatement - Code Enforcement implemented an abatement program which resulted in the clean up of an egregious junkyard condition. Since then, eleven other junkyards slated to be abated by the county have been voluntarily cleaned up by the owners. Code enforcement is also looking to expand the abatement program to other violations.

- Graffiti – Code Enforcement now serves as the clearinghouse for graffiti complaints in the county. The Division will be responsible for public education and will enforce the anti-graffiti ordinance once adopted.
- Community Outreach – Code enforcement staff have attended a number of community meetings and events in several neighborhoods throughout the county.
- Proactive Code Enforcement – Plans are underway to proactively pursue certain violations as opposed to relying solely on a complaint-based enforcement system.
- Geographic Assignment – Code enforcement officers have been assigned to geographic areas in order to utilize staff hours more efficiently, to increase community presence, and to more efficiently use county vehicles.

**3.1 Snohomish County’s code enforcement philosophy must be clear and widely accepted.**

3.1.1 Identify a central code enforcement philosophy - **Recommendation 1**

*We recommend that the Planning and Development Services Director, Code Enforcement Division leadership, Code Enforcement Division line staff, and the Executive’s Office undertake a planning process to identify a central code enforcement philosophy.*

A Code Enforcement Strategic and Business Plan was written and approved by Planning and Development Services and submitted to the Executive’s Office for review. The Plan contains the Division’s mission, values and operating principles, as well as goals and objectives. The Plan also contains timetables for task implementation.

3.1.2 Develop policies and procedures - **Recommendation 2**

*Thorough documented policies and procedures should be developed for the Code Enforcement Division.*

A number of policies exist (flex time, mineral lands, environmental) and a number of procedures are in writing (submitting a complaint, stop work order, AMANDA processes, file set-up, staffing guidelines, etc.), however, there is not yet one set of comprehensive policy guidelines and procedures for the Division, i.e. a code enforcement handbook. Recently two senior code enforcement officers were asked to design a framework from which to develop comprehensive policies and procedures.

### 3.2 Code violations must be prioritized.

#### 3.2.1 Prioritize violations - Recommendation 3

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division develop and document priorities for violation types and communicate these priorities to the Executive, Council, PDS staff and management, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and the Hearing Examiner.*

Complaint Priority Response Guidelines for all code violations have been developed and documented by the Division and communicated to staff and management. These guidelines categorize violations into high, medium and low priority responses subject to resource limitations. Staff will be trained on how to utilize AMANDA in prioritizing violations. Plans are underway to post the Priority Response Guidelines on the Division's website and to include the Guidelines as part of the general information brochure on code enforcement. In addition, much work has been done on determining priorities and criteria for junkyard abatement.

#### 3.2.2 Match resources to priorities - Recommendation 4

*We recommend that once the enforcement priorities are established, the Code Enforcement Division should allocate its resources to match the priorities.*

Additional resources have been allocated to code enforcement. Since the audit was released three new code enforcement officers and one additional support staff have been added to the Division and additional funding has been allocated to the abatement and graffiti programs.

### 3.3 Performance measures should be put in place and utilized.

#### 3.3.1 Develop performance measures - Recommendation 5

*The Code Enforcement Division should develop appropriate performance measures.*

Five performance measures have been selected that can be easily tracked by the Division's existing data system (AMANDA).

#### 3.3.2 Track performance measures - Recommendation 6

*The Code Enforcement Division management should partner with staff to consistently track the chosen measures.*

Staff currently inputs case file data into AMANDA but has not received regular reports on outcomes or performance measures. Staff will be briefed on the performance measures selected.

### **3.4 The Code Enforcement Division needs strong leadership.**

#### **3.4.1 Manager/Supervisor need tools to manage - Recommendation 7**

*We recommend that the Planning and Development Services Director make the Code Enforcement Division a priority by ensuring that management obtains the additional tools they need to manage the complex nature of the program, address foundational program development and lead the enforcement team.*

Planning and Development Services emphasizes the importance of training and efforts have been made to provide supervisors and managers with various types of training. A new supervisor was hired in 2007 who has years of Code Enforcement experience and additional planning staff have been assigned to assist Code Enforcement with strategic planning and with the enforcement code re-write project.

#### **3.4.2 Communication systems need improvement - Recommendation 8**

*We recommend that effective systems for communication be put into place and utilized both up and down the chain of command.*

Weekly staff meetings occur with the supervisor and staff, and occasionally the Division manager attends. In addition, each senior officer now provides guidance and expertise to three code enforcement officers and oversees their assigned areas.

### **3.5 The community must be treated as a partner and customer.**

#### **3.5.1 Educational tools for violators - Recommendation 9**

*Code Enforcement Officers should bring brochures, copies of pertinent code language (e.g., definition of junkyard) and other educational information with them into the field and provide them to violators for educational purposes.*

Code enforcement officers provide potential violators with PDS Bulletins on topics including home occupations, residential fences, critical areas regulations, etc. when appropriate. An informational brochure describing the enforcement process for potential violators will be developed once the enforcement code re-write is completed.

### 3.5.2 Community resource list - Recommendation 10

*To help encourage compliance, the Code Enforcement Division should develop a list of community resources including towing companies, nonprofits who will tow donated vehicles, contractors who may tear down structures for free in exchange for the materials, and social service resources.*

A resource notebook has been developed for the enforcement staff. The notebook contains information useful for code enforcement officers in the field as well as offers assistance to potential violators to comply with code.

### 3.5.3 Online code enforcement complaints - Recommendation 11

*Citizens should be able to submit Complaint Investigation Requests online.*

Citizens are now able to submit code violation investigation requests to the Division online. The supervisor reported an increased number of complaints received once the online form was operational. The Division also processes online reports of graffiti vandalism.

### 3.5.4 Additional data on complaint form - Recommendation 12

*The Code Enforcement Officers should have additional information to assist them in their prioritization and approach to complaints. This could be accomplished by phone screening of complaints and/or revision of the current complaint form.*

Changes were made to the complaint form which asks the complainant to provide additional details about the potential violation. The additional data can be used to help code enforcement staff determine the priority response to the complaint.

### 3.5.5 Increase communication with complainants - Recommendation 13

*The Code Enforcement Division should make communication with complainants a priority. Policy should be developed which reflects this priority.*

The Strategic and Business Plan states that complainants are a priority. Draft operating procedures state that calls and emails from complainants should be returned within two business days. The Division plans to develop material that will be sent to complainants describing the enforcement process once the code re-write is completed.

3.5.6 Clear correspondence with complainant - Recommendation 14

*The Code Enforcement Division should review all correspondence sent to complainants to ensure that the information conveyed is clear, helpful and professional.*

The Strategic and Business Plan states that improving communication with complainants is a goal. Effort has been recently made to update the notification that complainants receive when they file a code violation complaint with the Division. Additional communication will be reviewed for clarity, tone and effectiveness as it is developed.

3.5.7 Survey of complainants - Recommendation 15

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division conduct a random survey of complainants in order to generate baseline data about how the code enforcement process is perceived and identify areas for customer service improvement.*

Customer service surveys for both the complainant and the violator have been drafted. The survey is scheduled to occur in 2008 after code revisions are put in place.

3.5.8 Informative code enforcement brochure - Recommendation 16

*An informative brochure that discusses the county's enforcement process could be developed as a community outreach tool.*

A code enforcement brochure will be drafted after the code re-write is complete. It will discuss the role of citizens in keeping neighborhoods clean and safe and what the code enforcement division has the authority to do. Recently, staff designed two new brochures on the county's graffiti efforts. The Division plans to disseminate these brochures to community groups and businesses.

**3.6 Staff culture should be conducive to efficient, high quality work.**

3.6.1 Minimize turnover - Recommendation 17

*We recommend that the Planning and Development Services Department work to minimize the Code Enforcement Division management turnover in order to maintain continuity and progress.*

PDS has demonstrated its commitment to code enforcement by increasing personnel and resources that will assist the Division in fulfilling its mission. A new code enforcement supervisor was recently hired who has extensive code enforcement experience and who will take advantage of management/supervisor

training. PDS has demonstrated that it is supportive of training and professional development for its management staff.

### 3.6.2 Staff involvement in policy development - **Recommendation 18**

*Code Enforcement Division employees should be included in development of procedures and asked for their input and feedback.*

Staff members have been involved in discussing enforcement code changes, selection of jackets and shirts, designing a staffing schedule for the Division, editing the Strategic and Business Plan and participating in writing procedures for the abatement process. Recently, senior staff members have been asked to coordinate the development of comprehensive policies and procedures for the Division.

### 3.6.3 Performance evaluations - **Recommendation 19**

*After clear, written, and measurable performance expectations are in place, regular feedback should be given by the Code Enforcement Division management to its staff both formally through regularly scheduled performance evaluations and informally by providing feedback during the day-to-day course of work.*

The Code Enforcement supervisor stated that new personnel have received a three month performance evaluation and plans to conduct six and twelve month reviews. Plans are underway to establish an evaluation process for all staff in the Division.

### 3.6.4 Leadership communication with staff - **Recommendation 20**

*The Code Enforcement Division leadership should be accountable to their staff by taking time to discuss with them how and why decisions are being made.*

The Division management has made efforts to include staff in policy decisions and the Department Director met with the Division staff shortly after the audit was released. The current and previous supervisors have been working on improving the level of communication within the Division. In addition, the new supervisor plans to conduct a 360' review of his leadership with Division staff.

### 3.6.5 Staff professional development - **Recommendation 21**

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division leadership commit to the success of their staff by increasing opportunities for staff members' professional development.*

Planning and Development Services state that they are committed to providing employees with the training they need to perform their jobs well. In recent months, all CEOs received training on a number of topics, including; junk car affidavits, storm water best practices, environmental crimes awareness, and dangerous dogs.

**3.7 Appropriate tools should be used to gain compliance in an effective, timely and efficient manner.**

3.7.1 Code enforcement process information for violator - **Recommendation 22**

*Develop one clear, succinct and informative enforcement document that describes the code enforcement process to violators once philosophy is identified and policy is written.*

The Division will address this recommendation after the enforcement code re-write is completed. At that time, the Division plans to develop additional materials to help educate violators about the code enforcement process.

3.7.2 Determine effectiveness of VCA - **Recommendation 23**

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division begin collecting data to determine the effectiveness of the VCA and eliminate its use if it does not add value as an enforcement tool.*

The usefulness of the voluntary compliance agreement is being discussed as part of the code re-write process currently underway.

3.7.3 Prosecuting Attorney's Office involvement in cases - **Recommendation 24**

*The PA and Code Enforcement Division should continue working together to determine which cases meet the threshold for Prosecuting Attorney involvement.*

The PA's Office is more engaged with code enforcement cases since the audit and is working on further clarifying their role in the code enforcement process via code changes.

3.7.4 Postpone abatement until P & Ps in place - **Recommendation 25**

*We recommend that prior to implementation of an abatement process policies and procedures for the other processes being performed by the Code Enforcement Division be developed.*

This recommendation was withdrawn. Leadership chose to pursue the implementation of an abatement process as a priority project. To date, one junkyard property was successfully abated by the county. Eleven other properties that were on the abatement list have been voluntarily cleaned up by the owners prior to official action being taken by code enforcement to abate.

3.7.5 Examine the use of liens - **Recommendation 26**

*Planning and Development Services, with advice from the Prosecuting Attorney, should fully examine the use of liens as an additional tool to gain compliance.*

According to the PA's Office, the county does not have authority under state law to foreclose properties due to an enforcement action. A change to state law would be needed prior to the county utilizing liens as an enforcement tool. Special assessments have recently been used in abatement cases, but they do not include the ability to foreclose on a property.

3.7.6 Develop a citation process - **Recommendation 27**

*For cases that are non-permitted in nature, we recommend that Planning and Development Services and the Prosecuting Attorney develop a citation process as an additional enforcement tool.*

A citation process is currently under consideration in the code re-write.

3.7.7 Determine use of Certificate of Non-Compliance - **Recommendation 28**

*We recommend Planning and Development Services evaluate the Certificate of Non-Compliance and either amend current code to include it or discontinue its use as an enforcement tool.*

The Certificate of Non-Compliance is not in the current code and is no longer used as an enforcement tool. However, the code re-write committee is debating whether to add the Certificate of Non-Compliance back into the enforcement code as a mechanism to help recoup penalties and fees.

3.7.8 Review cases more than 6 months old - **Recommendation 29**

*We recommend that management review cases quarterly that have been open more than six months to determine how to resolve them as quickly as possible.*

The supervisor is currently analyzing old enforcement cases to determine criteria for action. Once that analysis is completed, the senior code enforcement officers will be responsible for managing and determining how to resolve these cases.

The Division has been taking steps to substantially reduce the time it takes for cases to be resolved, including: reducing the amount of time for voluntary compliance, involving the PA's Office earlier in the process when needed, streamlining the Hearing Examiner process, and re-evaluating the enforcement code for efficiency and effectiveness.

### 3.7.9 Strategically choose enforcement tools - Recommendation 30

*Following the development of a code enforcement philosophy, the department should choose tools that meet those goals.*

Much progress is being made regarding enforcement tools. Staff have been actively involved in initial discussions as to effective enforcement tools. The code re-write committee is making suggestions as to ways to streamline and improve the appropriate tools for code enforcement.

### 3.7.10 Process Retreat with all parties - Recommendation 31

*Plan a "Process Retreat" so that all Code Enforcement Officers, the Code Enforcement Division management, Hearing Examiner, and Prosecuting Attorney can devise an enforcement process that is effective.*

Though a "process retreat" has not occurred with all parties involved with code enforcement, efforts have been made to meet separately with all offices that play a role in code enforcement. The ultimate goal of the code re-write is to make the code enforcement process more effective.

### 3.7.11 Improve impact of enforcement tools - Recommendation 32

*We recommend that when enforcement communications are utilized that they are official, forceful and direct.*

CEOs have recently been given jackets, badges (shirts are on order) and all code enforcement vehicles are now marked as such. In addition, a number of brochures are planned that will be used to better educate both the complainant and the violator.

## **3.8 Sections of the current Snohomish County Code should be revised and clarified.**

### 3.8.1 Track junkyard conditions - Recommendation 33

*We recommend tracking data in AMANDA pertaining to UGA junkyards and if these cases continue to consume a large percentage of Code Enforcement*

*Officer caseloads, consider amending the code to reflect a higher threshold for junkyards in UGA's.*

This recommendation was withdrawn. The abatement program has focused increased attention on junkyards in the county, and assigning code enforcement officers to geographical areas may reduce staff hours spent investigating UGA junkyards.

3.8.2 Reevaluate travel trailer code - **Recommendation 34**

*We recommend that Planning and Development Services and Council reevaluate the current travel trailer code taking into consideration the issues facing individuals with limited means to live in a county with increasing housing costs.*

This recommendation was withdrawn. As part of the code re-write process, the committee determined that the travel trailer code would not be included. The issue of travel trailer occupations could benefit from a thorough policy discussion.

3.8.3 Utilize internal grading expertise - **Recommendation 35**

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division utilize internal expertise on grading violation cases.*

The Division now regularly utilizes internal PDS biologists to assist with grading violation cases. A biologist makes every Friday available to assist code enforcement officers with grading related issues.

**3.9 Financial information should be handled in a consistent, fair and timely way.**

3.9.1 Put pre-04 penalties into AMANDA and bill - **Recommendation 36**

*Penalties ordered before 2004 should be entered into AMANDA, tracked, and promptly billed.*

The penalties that were assessed for code enforcement violations prior to 2004 were put into AMANDA and billed.

3.9.2 Separate CE receivables from each other - **Recommendation 37**

*Planning and Development Services' Accounting should ensure that the Code Enforcement Division penalties, fines, and judgments are identified separately from other receivables.*

PDS Accounting and Financial Services is working on providing separate identifiers for cases that result in fines/penalties versus cases that require cost recovery for the county.

3.9.3 Monitor judgments - **Recommendation 38**

*Judgments should be carefully monitored by the Code Enforcement Division to ensure that they do not pass the 10 year mark without action from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office to renew them.*

Code enforcement personnel are more closely monitoring judgments and are aware that the Prosecuting Attorney requires lead time in order to renew 10-year old judgments that still remain open. Judgments in general are being reviewed as part of the code re-write process. In addition, the Division will be meeting with the PA's Office to discuss how cases progress through the judicial system and how the process can be made more efficient.

3.9.4 Track all judgments in Amanda and bill - **Recommendation 39**

*Past and current judgments should be entered into AMANDA, tracked, and billed.*

The Code Enforcement Division and PDS Accounting and Financial Services are in the process of designing a policy on how best to enter, track and bill judgments. To date, judgments are still tracked separately from penalties and fees, but efforts are underway to establish an accounting policy for judgments.

3.9.5 Bill judgments before sending case to collections - **Recommendation 40**

*Violators owing judgments should not be sent to collections without first receiving bills from the Code Enforcement Division.*

The Accounting Division is in the process of developing a credit and collections program for the department, which will detail how best to bill violators owing judgments.

3.9.6 Record judgments with the Auditor's Office - **Recommendation 41**

*Code enforcement judgments are posted against an individual and attached to personal property by the County Clerk. The Code Enforcement Division should also routinely file judgments with the Auditor's Office to help ensure that the county receives payment on judgments.*

PDS Accounting and Financial Services are in discussion with the PA's Office on how best to record judgments with the Auditor's Office.

3.9.7 Promptly bill penalties and judgments - Recommendation 42

*When a violator owes a penalty or judgment to the county they should be promptly billed.*

All penalties to date have been billed and PDS Accounting and Financial Services states that in the future they will be billed promptly. Policies pertaining to billing, tracking and collecting on judgments are in development.

3.9.8 Task delineation regarding billing and collections - Recommendation 43

*There should be clear, documented delineation of tasks addressing which office tracks payments of penalties and judgments as well as who is responsible for sending cases to collections.*

In recent months, improvements have been made and are continuing to be made regarding billing and collections. The Code Enforcement Division is clear in its role in the process and PDS Accounting and Financial Services is working to improve its processes to more easily track billing, payments and collections.

3.9.9 Send cases to collections promptly after 120 days - Recommendation 44

*Billing and sending cases to collections when they pass the 120 day mark should be prompt.*

PDS Accounting and Financial Services is in the process of developing a credit and collections program for the department, which will detail this policy further.

3.9.10 Phone calls prior to sending cases to collections - Recommendation 45

*Planning and Development Services' Accounting should continue making phone calls to those owing penalties or judgments before sending the accounts to collections.*

This recommendation was withdrawn. The new Manager of PDS Accounting and Financial Services stated that sending written notices to violators about the status of overdue bills is more easily documented than are phone calls. The Accounting Division is in the process of developing a credit and collections program for the department, which will detail this policy further.

### 3.10 The Hearing Examiner process should be more efficient and effective.

#### 3.10.1 Meet with Hearing Examiner about process - Recommendation 46

*There should be regular process meetings between the Code Enforcement Division and the Hearing Examiner.*

The Division met with the Deputy Hearing Examiner and made changes to the hearing process designed to benefit all parties involved in code enforcement cases. Recently, code enforcement representatives met with the newly appointed Hearing Examiner regarding the enforcement process and all parties are anticipating consistent, fair and timely decisions in the future.

#### 3.10.2 Monthly Hearing Examiner status reports to CE - Recommendation 47

*The Hearing Examiner should provide a monthly report on their decisions, monetary penalties, status conferences and upcoming hearing dates to the Code Enforcement Division to serve as an ongoing communication tool.*

This recommendation was withdrawn. These reports were requested and upon analysis were determined to not be necessary. The Division reported that hearing status data is now available on AMANDA.

#### 3.10.3 Review need for Status Conferences - Recommendation 48

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division thoroughly review the status conference process with the Hearing Examiner to identify when and how it should be used.*

The Division and the Deputy Hearing Examiner determined that Status Conferences offered little benefit to the enforcement process. Status Conferences are now rarely scheduled.

#### 3.10.4 Review timeliness of Hearing Examiner cases - Recommendation 49

*The Council should review timeliness of Hearing Examiner cases and the use of indefinite continuances.*

County Council recently appointed a new Hearing Examiner who does not anticipate utilizing indefinite continuances.

#### 3.10.5 Consider assessing a fee for CE appeals - Recommendation 50

*The Council should reconsider implementing a fee for appeal for code enforcement cases.*

Assessing a fee for an appeal is being considered as part of the code re-write. The revised code will be presented for Council approval in the coming months.

3.10.6 Develop a penalty schedule - **Recommendation 51**

*The Code Enforcement Division should develop a penalty schedule to improve consistency and appropriateness in penalties and fees requested.*

A penalty schedule is being discussed as part of the code re-write.

**3.11 The Code Enforcement Division must collaborate.**

3.11.1 Process and content experts - **Recommendation 52**

*The Director of Planning and Development Services must make clear his intention to change the way in which Code Enforcement Officers investigate and process cases.*

The Division understands the need for content experts and utilizes individuals from throughout county departments when needed. In addition, the Division reaches out to experts in state and federal agencies when appropriate.

3.11.2 Agreement to provide technical expertise - **Recommendation 53**

*As the Code Enforcement Division moves toward a system of utilizing technical experts both within and external to the Planning and Development Services Department, it should develop a documented agreement to govern these collaborations.*

Collaborations have improved with content experts within and external to the county. For example, a biologist from within PDS makes time available every Friday to assist with grading and other environmental enforcement cases. This agreement was documented via email correspondence. Additional written agreements may prove useful for the Division.

3.11.3 Agreement with Sheriff to provide authority for CE - **Recommendation 54**

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division enter into an agreement with the Sheriff's Office to collaborate on targeted cases to increase authority of Code Enforcement Officers and to increase their safety in the field.*

The Sheriff's Office participated in the Division's abatement process and other enforcement actions recently. The Division plans to pursue a formal MOU in the

future. Collaboration with the Sheriff's Office has improved dramatically and the Division will continue to utilize their expertise when needed.

3.11.4 Training on dangerous dogs - [Recommendation 55](#)

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division work with Animal Control Officers for training on dangerous dogs and for backup in targeted cases.*

Code enforcement officers participated in a training on dangerous dogs conducted by the county's Animal Control Division.

3.11.5 Prosecuting Attorney involvement in cases - [Recommendation 56](#)

*The Code Enforcement Division should continue to work closely with the Prosecuting Attorney as new processes and procedures are developed, including abatement, to ensure that liability is limited and important cases are being built sufficiently for court involvement if that becomes warranted.*

Good progress has been made with the involvement of the PA's Office on code enforcement cases. Though limited resources preclude speedy resolution of some cases, an increased level of cooperation exists between the two offices.

3.11.6 Monthly updates on cases the PA is handling - [Recommendation 57](#)

*The Prosecuting Attorney should provide monthly updates to the Code Enforcement Division on the status of all code enforcement cases it is pursuing.*

Weekly updates are now being provided on code enforcement cases that the PA is handling.

3.11.7 Hold periodic meetings with Health District - [Recommendation 58](#)

*The Code Enforcement Division should hold periodic meetings with Snohomish County Health District to collaborate on code enforcement cases that require health department attention.*

Though no meetings have been held to date, the Division communicates with the Health District when necessary. The Code Enforcement supervisor plans to hold a joint staff meeting in the future.

3.11.8 NW Counties Interagency Enforcement Cooperative- [Recommendation 59](#)

*The Code Enforcement Division should take a leadership role in the development of the new Northwest Counties Interagency Enforcement Cooperation Team.*

The Division continues to be active in this multi-jurisdiction enforcement group.

### 3.12 Accurate data needs to be collected and utilized.

#### 3.12.1 Data entry training and evaluation - Recommendation 60

*We recommend the Code Enforcement Division management provide regular training to staff on data entry and follow up to ensure that data is being entered appropriately.*

The previous supervisor trained staff, wrote training manuals, and consistently worked with code enforcement officers on inputting correct and complete data into AMANDA. Accurate data entry and evaluation must continue in order for the data to be useful to the Division.

#### 3.12.2 Utilize data reports to inform decision making - Recommendation 61

*The Code Enforcement Division management should identify data reports that they would like to review monthly, arrange to receive those reports and regularly act on the findings.*

The Division is starting to utilize data from AMANDA to inform decision making, and have requested various reports to be made available on a regular basis.

#### 3.12.3 Centralize case data - Recommendation 62

*The Code Enforcement Division management should explore possibilities for compiling all the data on a case in one place rather than having multiple parallel systems.*

The Division has begun working to improve file management and must rely on other divisions within PDS and departments to assist in this effort as well.