

# “A NEW WAY FORWARD”

*A Business Case for “Strategic” Code Enforcement*

Cora D. Wright, Director  
Austin Code Department  
City of Austin, Texas



American Association of Code Enforcement Conference  
November 2018

# About this Session...



To present a business case model for “*Strategic*” *Code Enforcement* in a progressive and growing urban city.

**Section 1:** About Austin & Austin Code

**Section 2:** Conducting an Organizational Scan

**Section 3:** Charting A New Way Forward

**Section 4:** Strategic Tools and Practices

**Section 4:** It's All About Results...







**Austin Code Department**  
Departamento de Códigos de Austin

Click the image below to view the  
"Telling Our Story" video





# *About Austin...*



## Telling Our Story

*[Excerpt from 60-Page Original]*

*Presented to*  
American Association of Code Enforcement  
Cora D. Wright, Director  
Austin Code Department  
November 2018





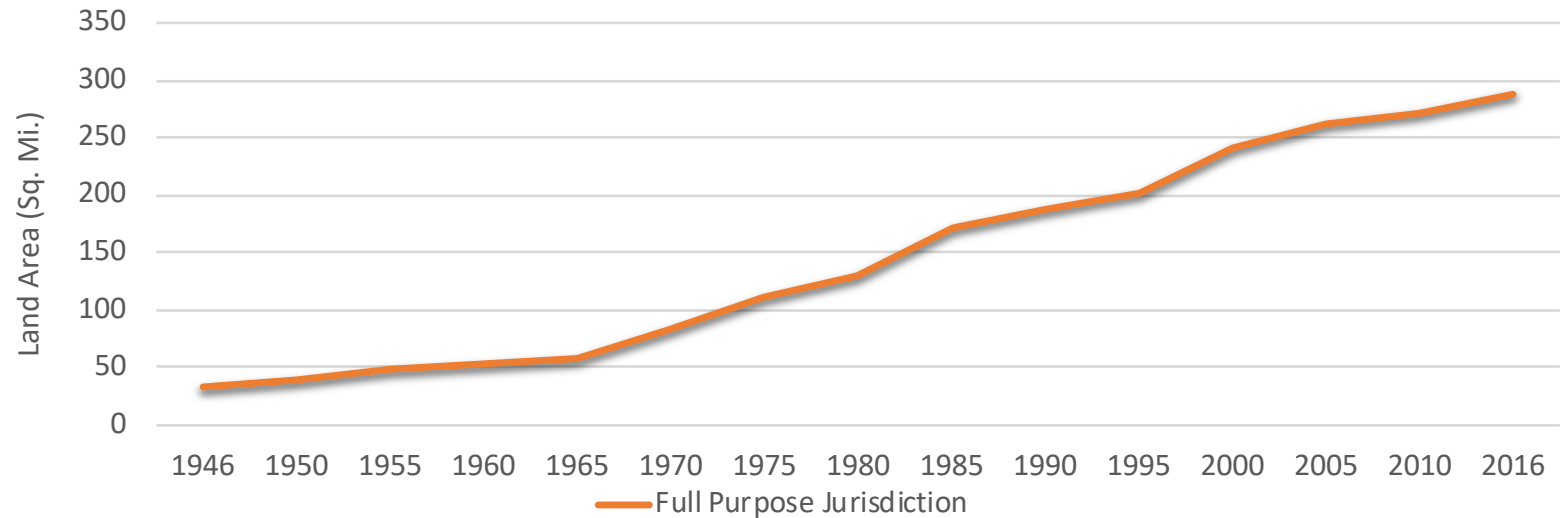
## Historical Growth

Since 1946, examining full-purpose jurisdiction alone, land area has increased over 700% - a rate of around 4.5 square miles per year.

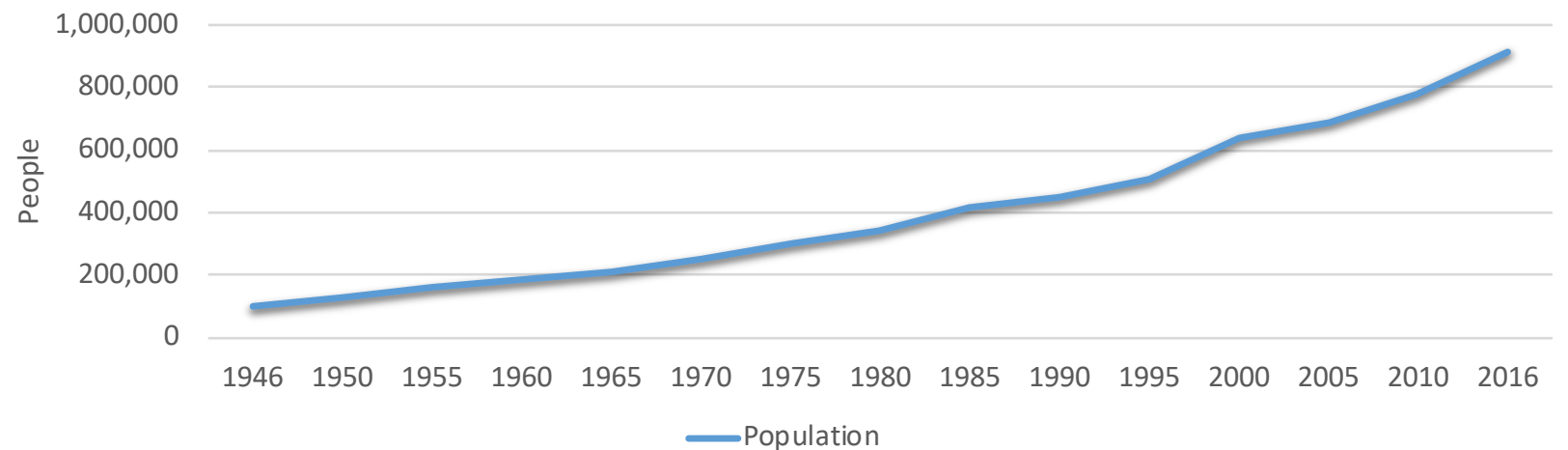
Population has also kept pace.

In 1946, the City of Austin's population was around 101,000. Today the estimate is 913,000 (full-purpose jurisdiction). That's around an 800% increase.

Total Land Area (Full-Purpose Jurisdiction)



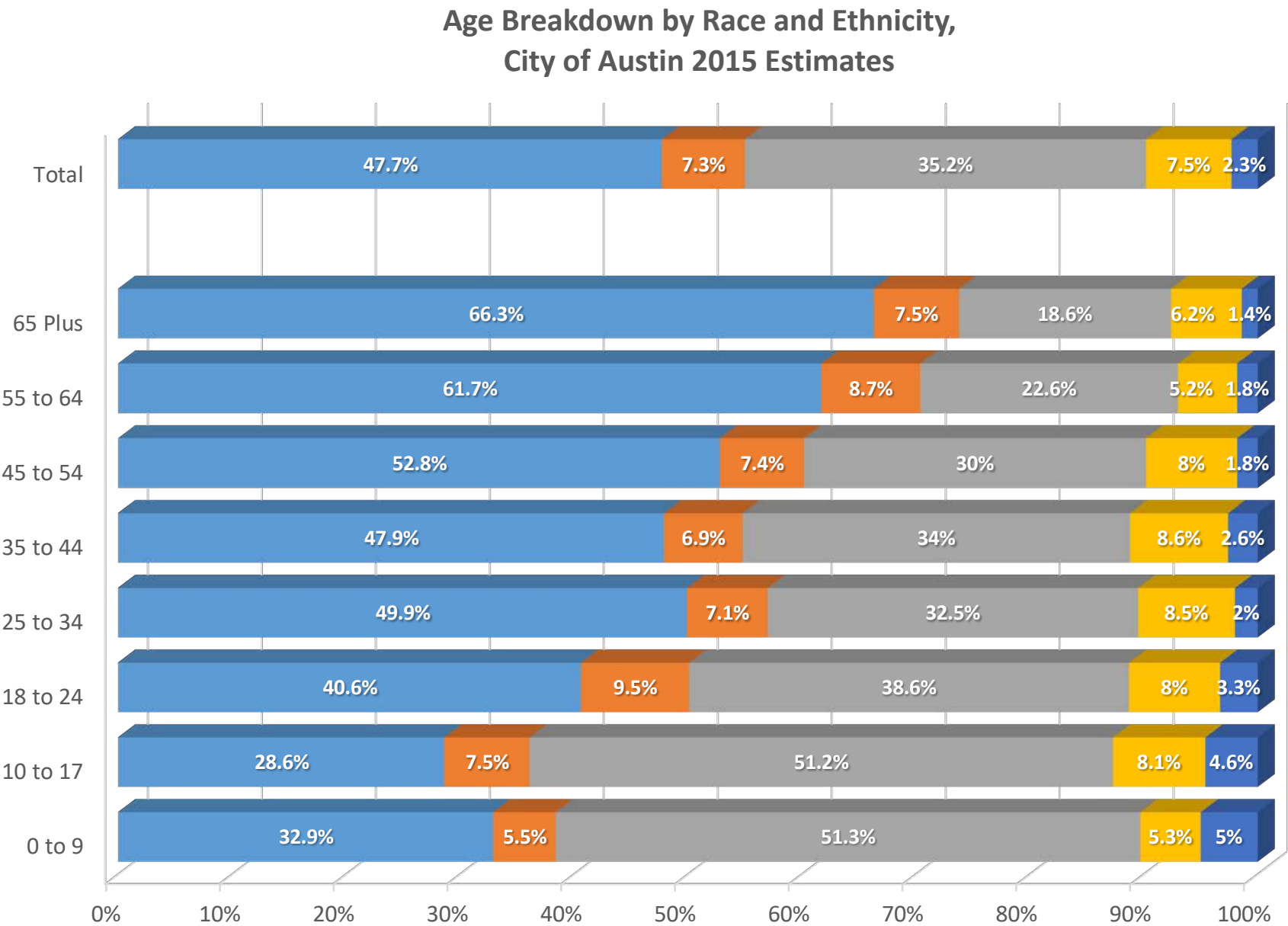
Total Population (Full-Purpose Jurisdiction)



# Current Demographic Age Breakdown

When we break down demographics by age, we see an emerging Hispanic youth majority.

- Anglo/White
- African-American
- Hispanic--Latino
- Asian
- Other



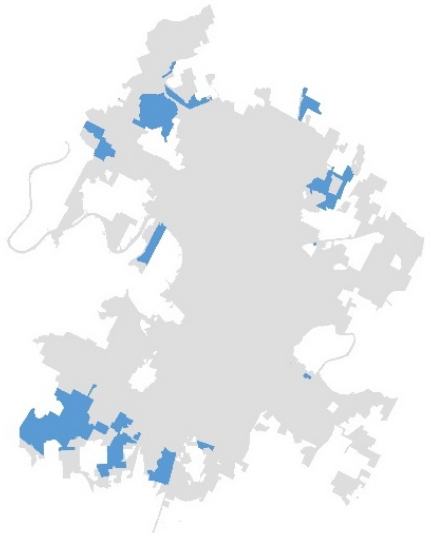
Source: Ryan Robinson, City Demographer, Department of Planning, City of Austin - pulled from Demographic Presentation "[Demographics snapshot Dec 2016.pptx](#)"



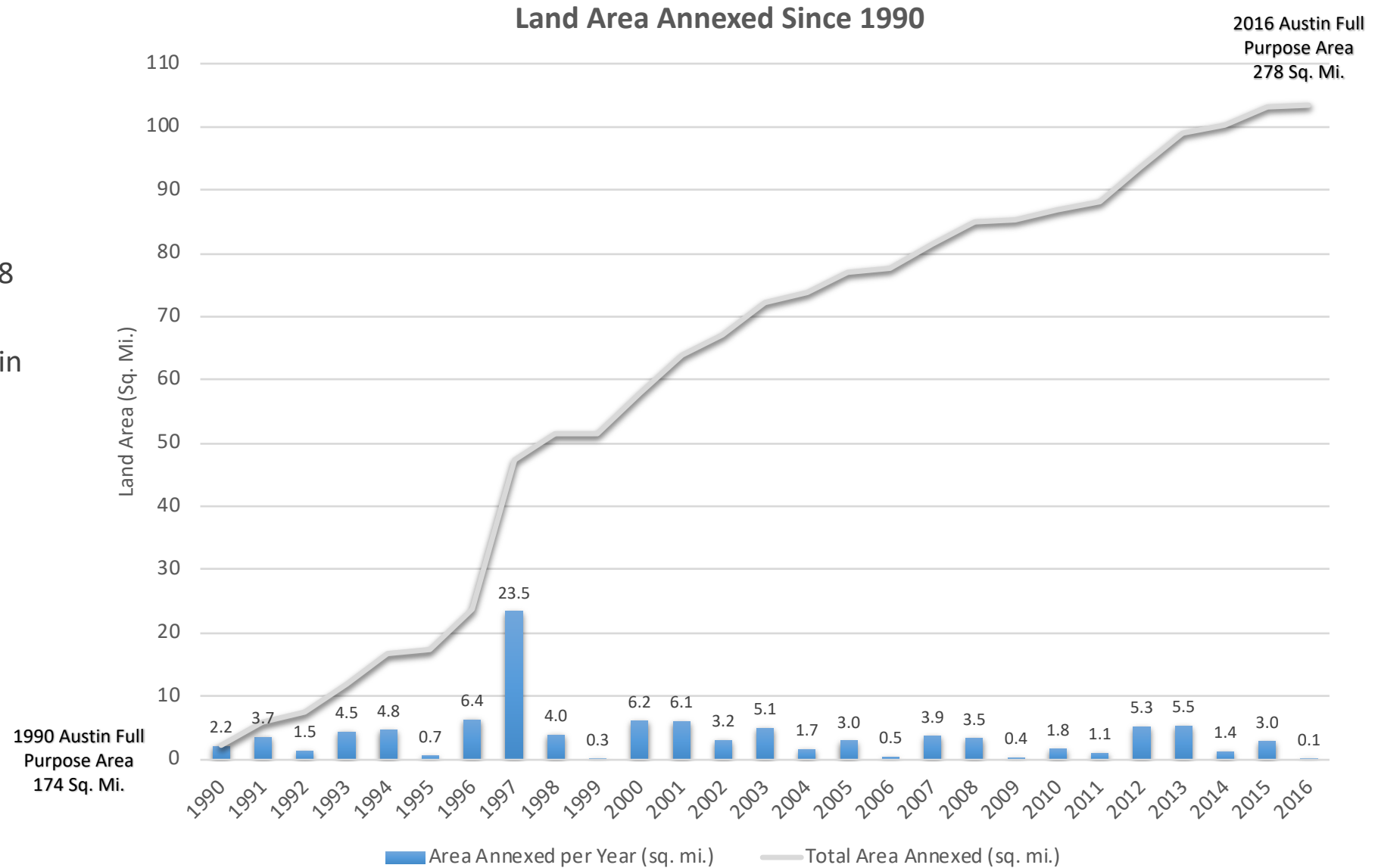
## Land Expansion

Since 1990, here's a look at land annexation:

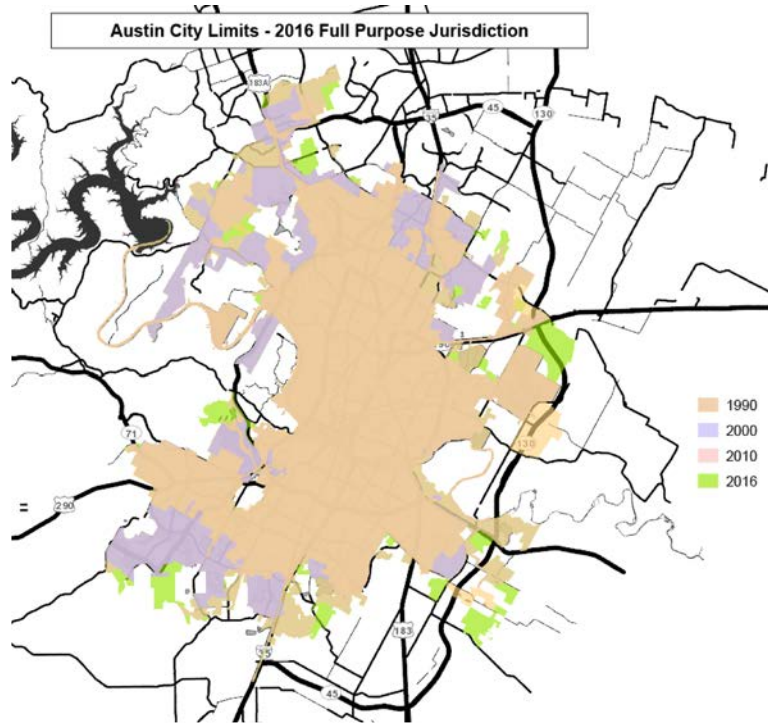
- On average, Austin annexed 3.8 square miles of land per year.
- Austin annexed the most land in 1997 at 23.5 square miles



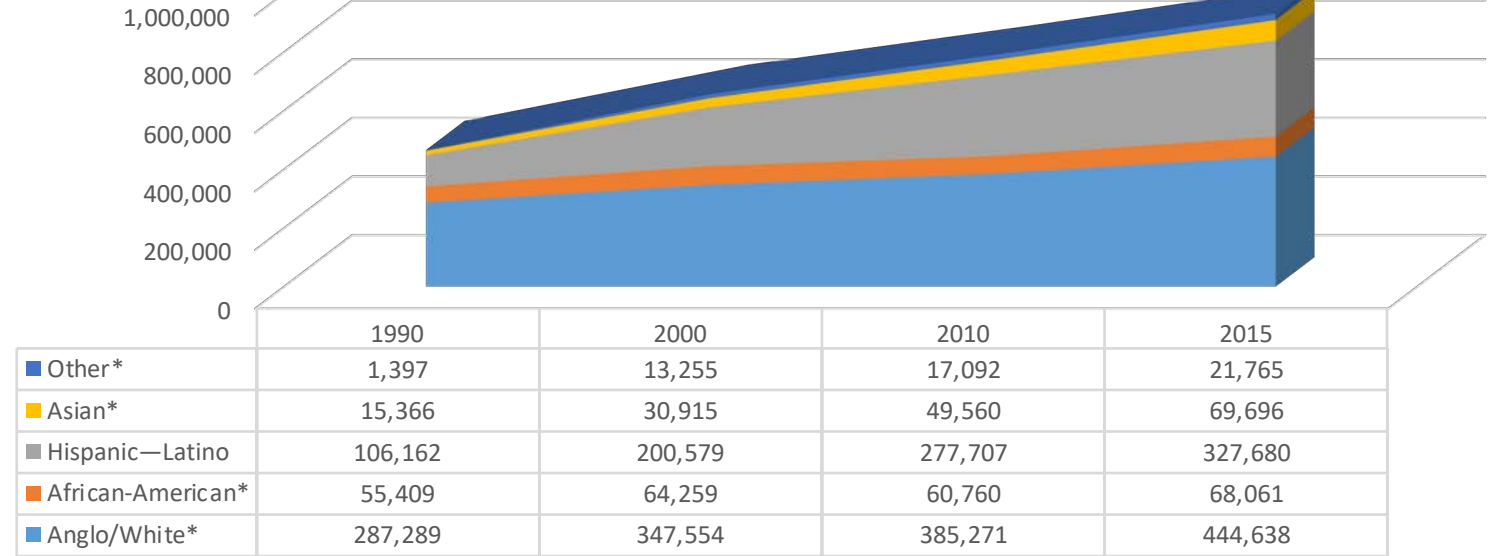
■ 1997 Land Annexations  
■ 2016 Full Purpose Jurisdiction



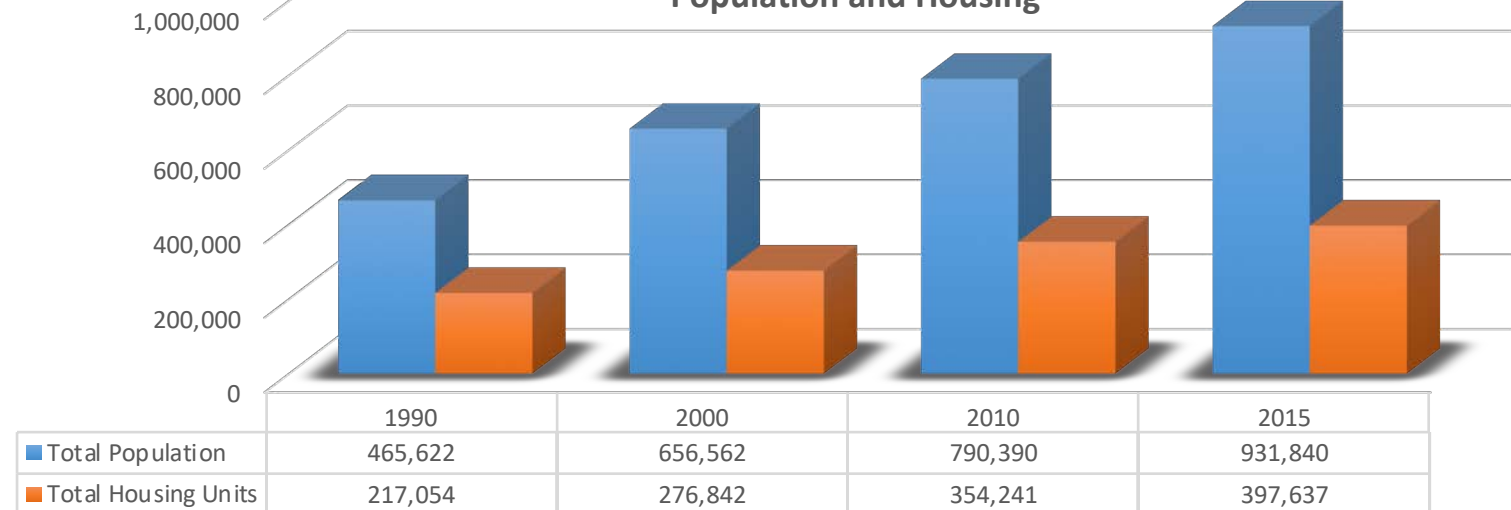
# Current Demographics and Boundary Growth



## Race and Ethnicity



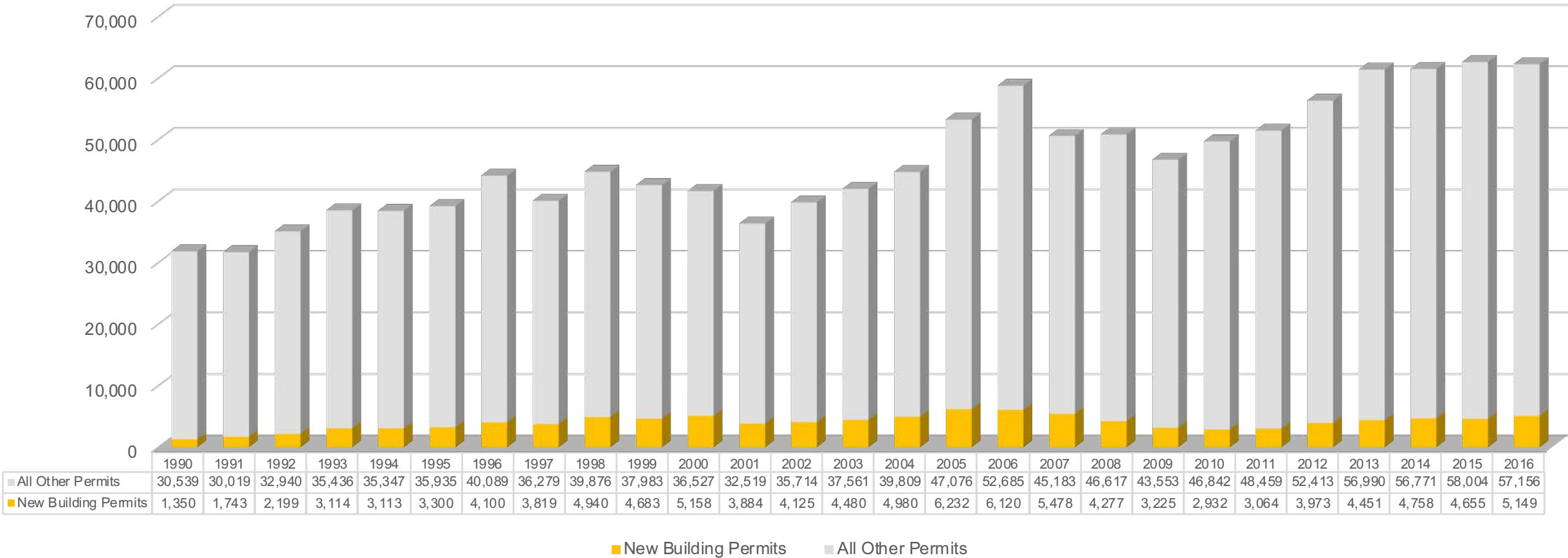
## Population and Housing





# Measuring Building and Construction Activity

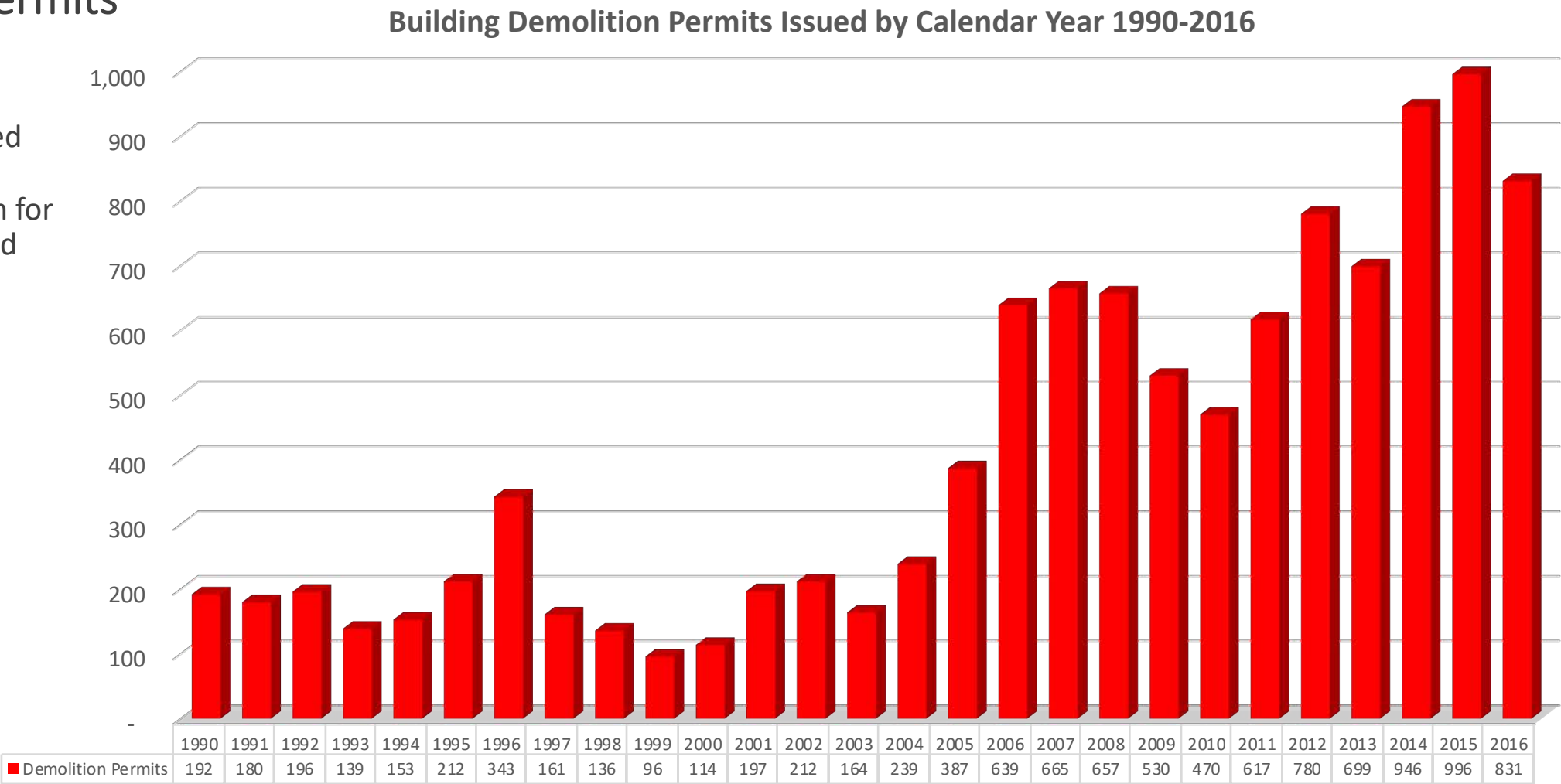
Permits Issued by Calendar Year 1990-2016



Source: Annual Number of Building Permits – COA Department of Development Services

# Demolitions Permits

In the context of a growing city, increased demolitions typically point to making room for new development and new construction.



Source: Annual Number of Building Permits Issued from Jan 1, 1990 to December 8, 2016 – COA Department of Development Services

# Looking Ahead

So with what we know, where does that leave us moving forward?

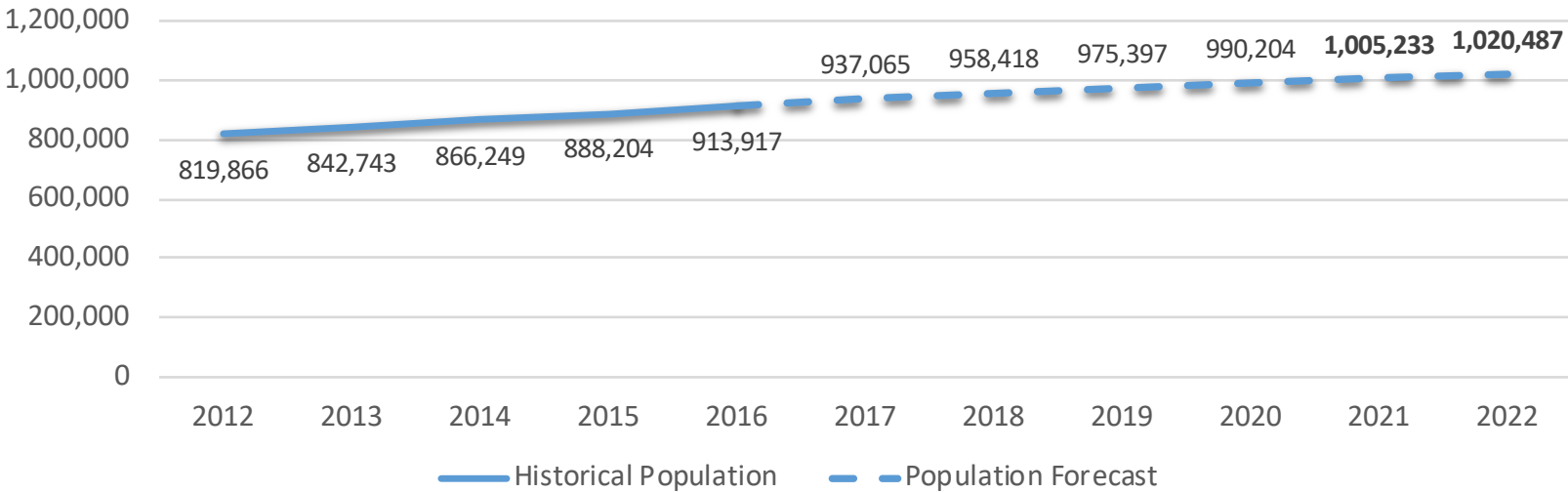
## Population

- Expected to reach 1 million people within full-purpose jurisdiction by 2021.

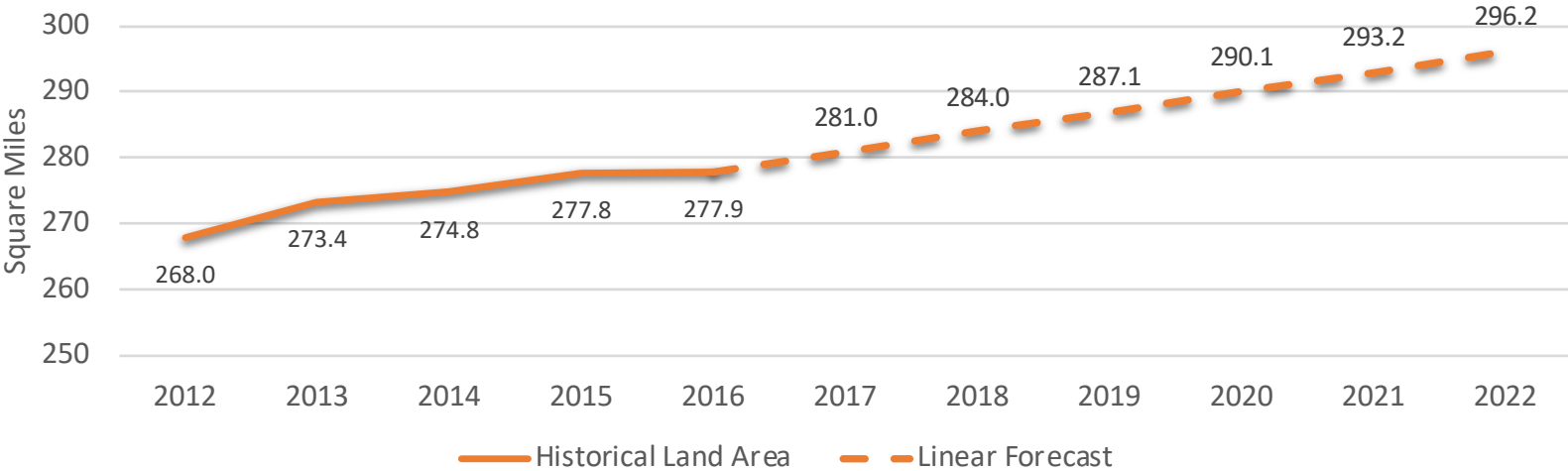
## Land

- Austin city limits currently covers over 325 square miles. (COA Planning and Zoning Dept.)
- If historical trends continue, the full purpose jurisdiction will pass 300 square miles by 2020.

Population, Austin Full-Purpose Jurisdiction 2012-2022



Land Area, Austin Full-Purpose Jurisdiction 2012-2022





## Forecasting into the Future

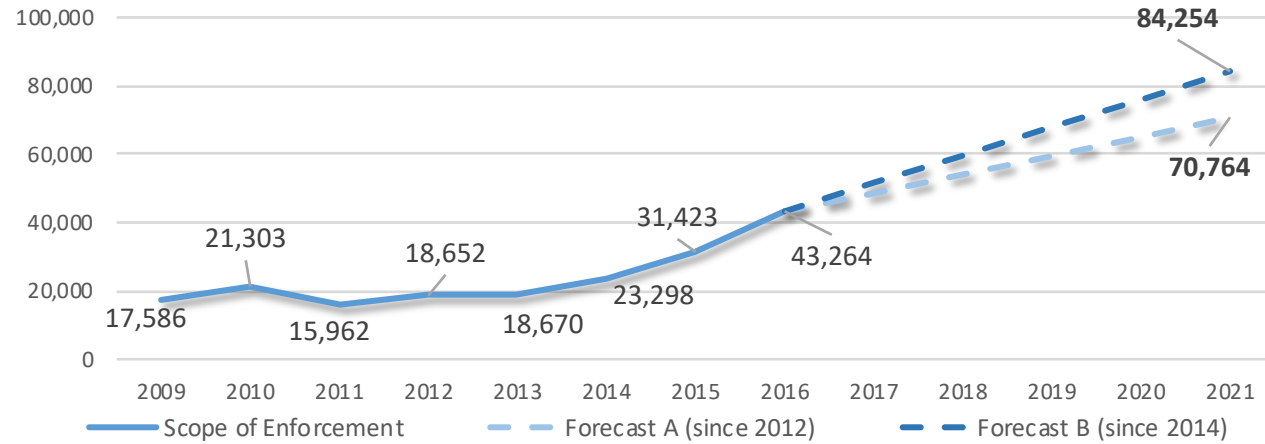
Given seven years worth of data, our team created two average linear forecasts, looking five years out.

One forecast assumes the next few years will be similar to the last 4 (Forecast A).

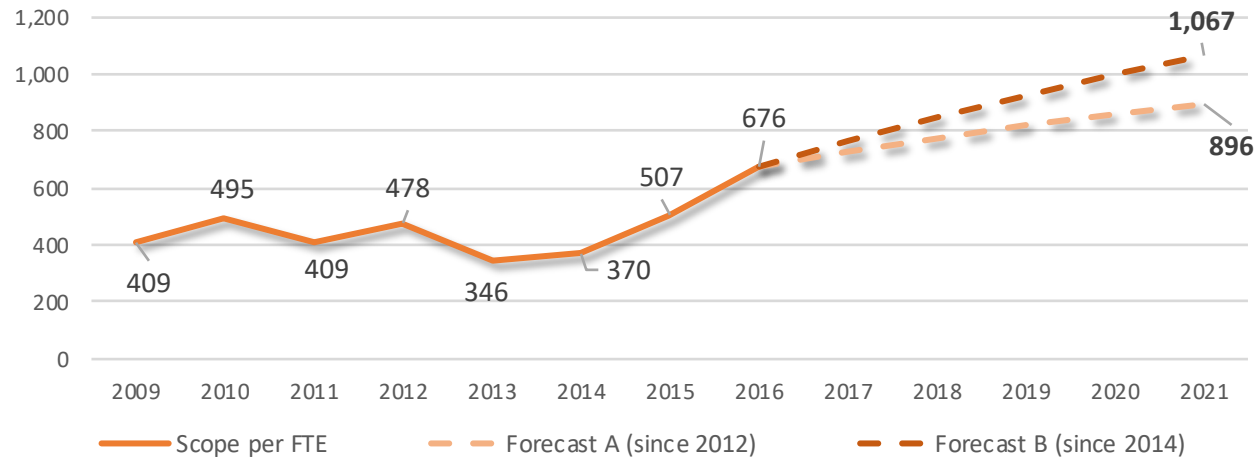
The other forecast considers the next few years will be similar to the last 8. (Forecast B).

To “flat-line” the average caseload per inspector, given the current trend, we would need to take on an additional 6 FTEs per year.

Scope of Enforcement  
FY2017 - 2021



Average Caseload per Inspector  
FY2017 - 2021

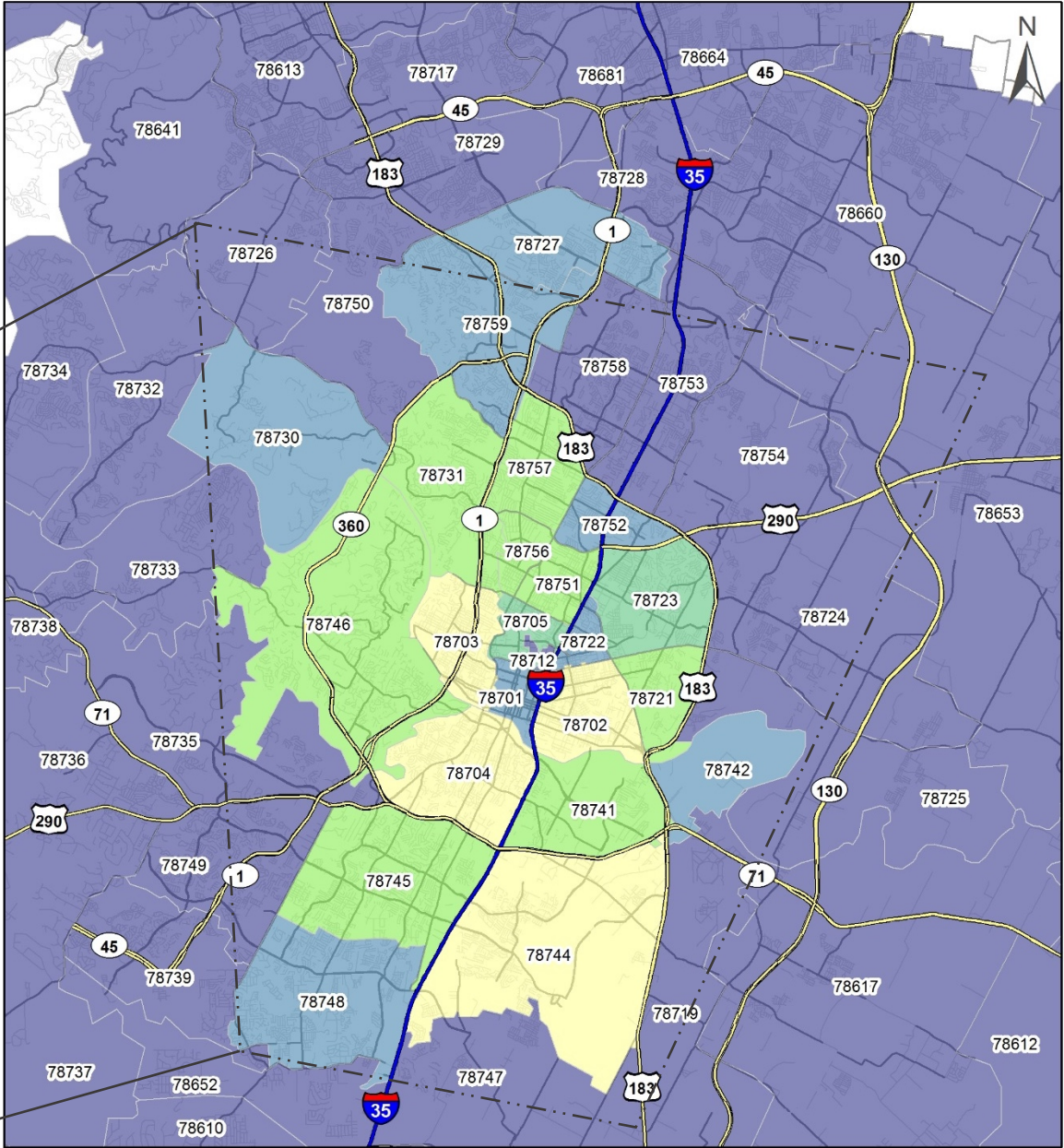
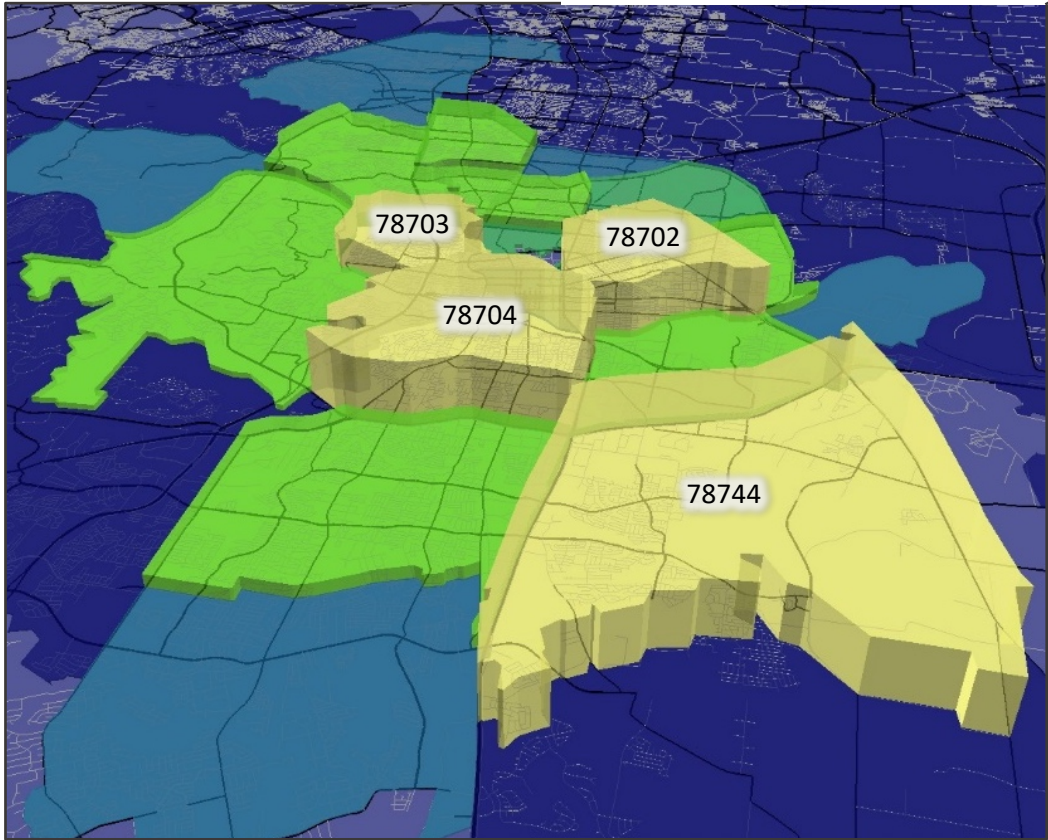
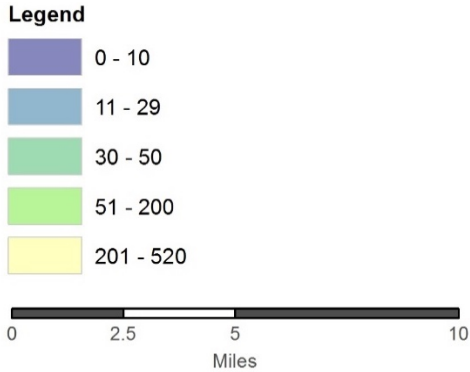


Austin Code – Draft – PM Only

Single Family Demolitions  
by Zip Code

This map looks at all demolition permits from January 1, 2010 to December 8, 2016 with a permit class of "R-645 Demolition One Family Homes" (i.e. Single Family).

Total SF Demolitions Permits = 2,938



Source: Annual Number of Building Permits Issued from Jan 1, 1990 to December 8, 2016 – COA Department of Development Services



“Keeping Pace”

Your Most  
Valuable Resource

--*The Staff*--





# ORGANIZATIONAL SCAN

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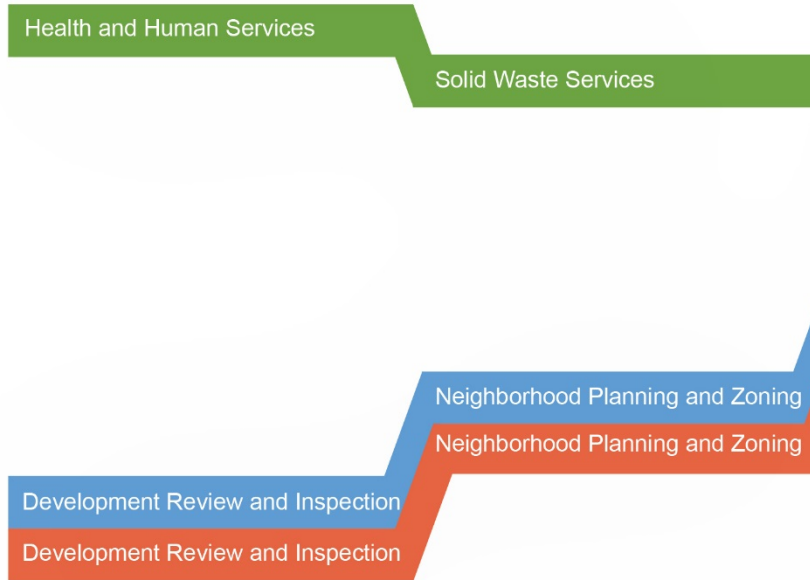
## Is the Department Positioned for High Performance?

- About Austin....
- Leadership Capacity and Level of Follow-ship?
- Organizational Challenges and Opportunities?
- Ability to Keep Pace w/ Growing City Demands?
- Are Desired Results Achieved?
- Recurring Organizational Issues?



# EVOLUTION OF AUSTIN CODE

2002



2009

Code Compliance  
Standalone Department<sup>a</sup>

AMANDA  
Software Upgrade

IPMC Adopted<sup>c</sup>

Austin Code  
Rebranding<sup>d</sup>

Establishes  
Commercial Team

Austin 311  
Integration<sup>e</sup>

2016

Carts at Curb  
Enforcement<sup>3</sup>

Work Without/Expired  
Permits Enforcement<sup>1</sup>

“Bandit” Sign  
Enforcement<sup>2</sup>

Licensing &  
Registration programs:  
Billboards, Mobile Home  
Park, Hotel/Motel, and  
Rooming and Boarding  
House<sup>4</sup>

Rest Break  
Ordinance  
Enforcement<sup>5</sup>

Launched  
Short Term  
Rental Program<sup>6</sup>

Launched  
Private Waste  
Hauler Program<sup>7</sup>

Universal  
Recycling  
Enforcement<sup>8</sup>

Special Events  
Team  
Protocol<sup>9</sup>

Develops  
Neighborhood  
Officer Program<sup>10</sup>

Deerfeeding  
Ordinance  
Enforcement<sup>11</sup>

After-hours  
Concrete Pouring  
Enforcement<sup>12</sup>

Emergency Tenant  
Response Plan<sup>13</sup>

Repeat Offender  
Program<sup>14</sup>

Gender Neutral  
Ordinance  
Enforcement<sup>15</sup>

New Administrative  
Hearing Process<sup>16</sup>

City-Owned Property  
Enforcement<sup>17</sup>

Community Initiated  
Projects<sup>18</sup>

Reasonable  
Accommodations<sup>19</sup>

Boat Dock Development  
Registration<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> § 10-7-21

<sup>2</sup> § 25-10-103

<sup>3</sup> § 15-6-17

<sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ordinance 20100729-047

<sup>6</sup> Ordinance 20120802-122

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance 20120628-012

<sup>8</sup> Ordinance 20101104-018

<sup>9</sup> Resolution 20120524-089

<sup>10</sup> Resolution 20120524-089

<sup>11</sup> Resolution 20130627-079

<sup>12</sup> Ordinance 20141120-056

<sup>13</sup> Resolution 20121101-039

<sup>14</sup> Resolution 20130606-049

<sup>15</sup> Ordinance 20141211-211

<sup>16</sup> Ordinance 20141023-056

<sup>17</sup> City Auditor Report Rec. 04-11-16

<sup>18</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ordinance 20160204-046

<sup>20</sup> Ordinance 20140626-113

<sup>a</sup> City Memo May 29, 2009

<sup>b</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Ordinance 20130926-145

<sup>d</sup> Press Release Oct. 2, 2014

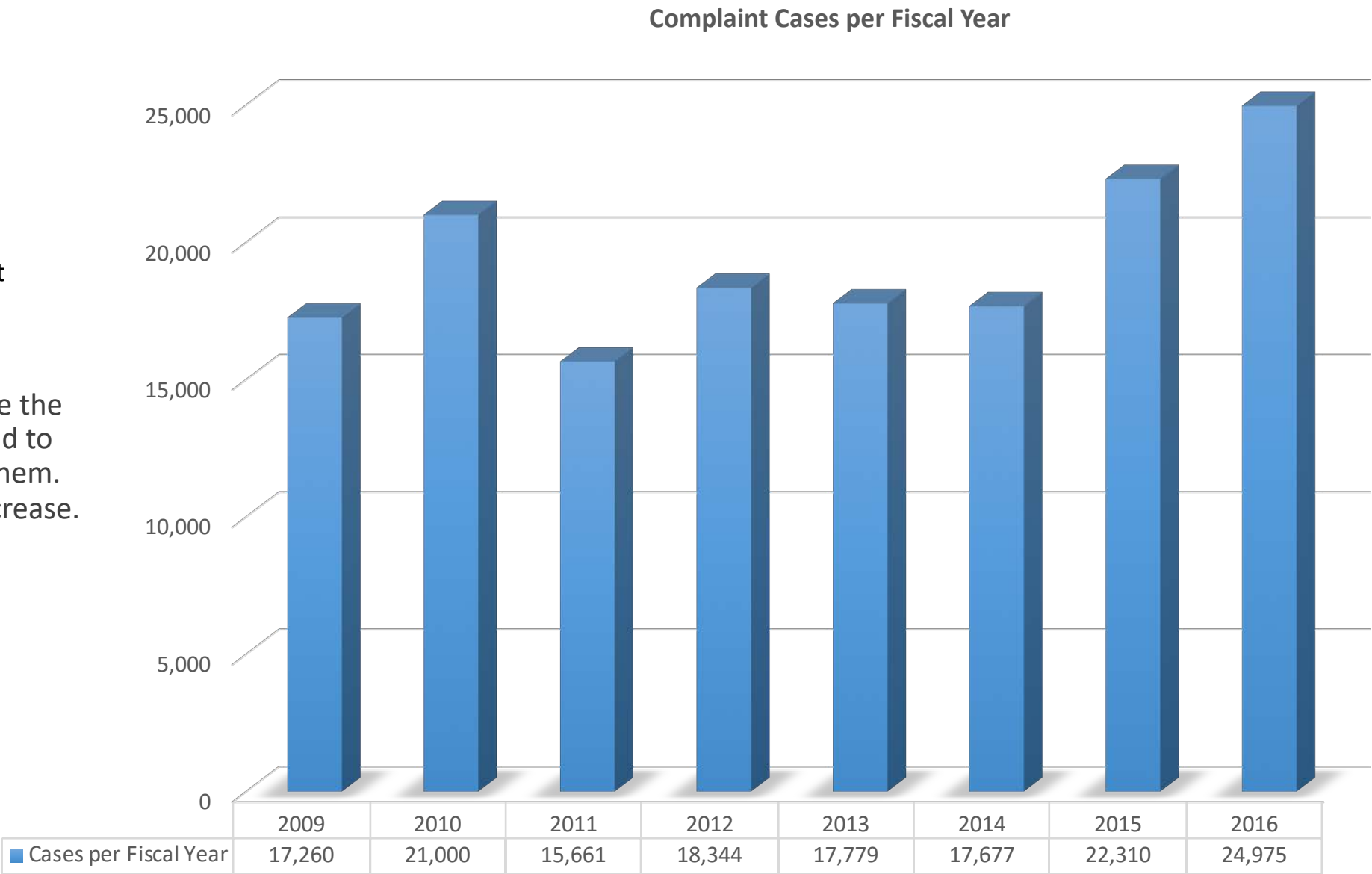
<sup>e</sup> City Auditor Report Rec. 04-11-16

# Complaint Cases

First, Complaint Cases:

- Property Abatement
- Land Use Enforcement
- Structure Condition

These cases, traditionally, are the bulk of our work. We respond to complaints and investigate them. From 2009 to 2016, 45% increase.

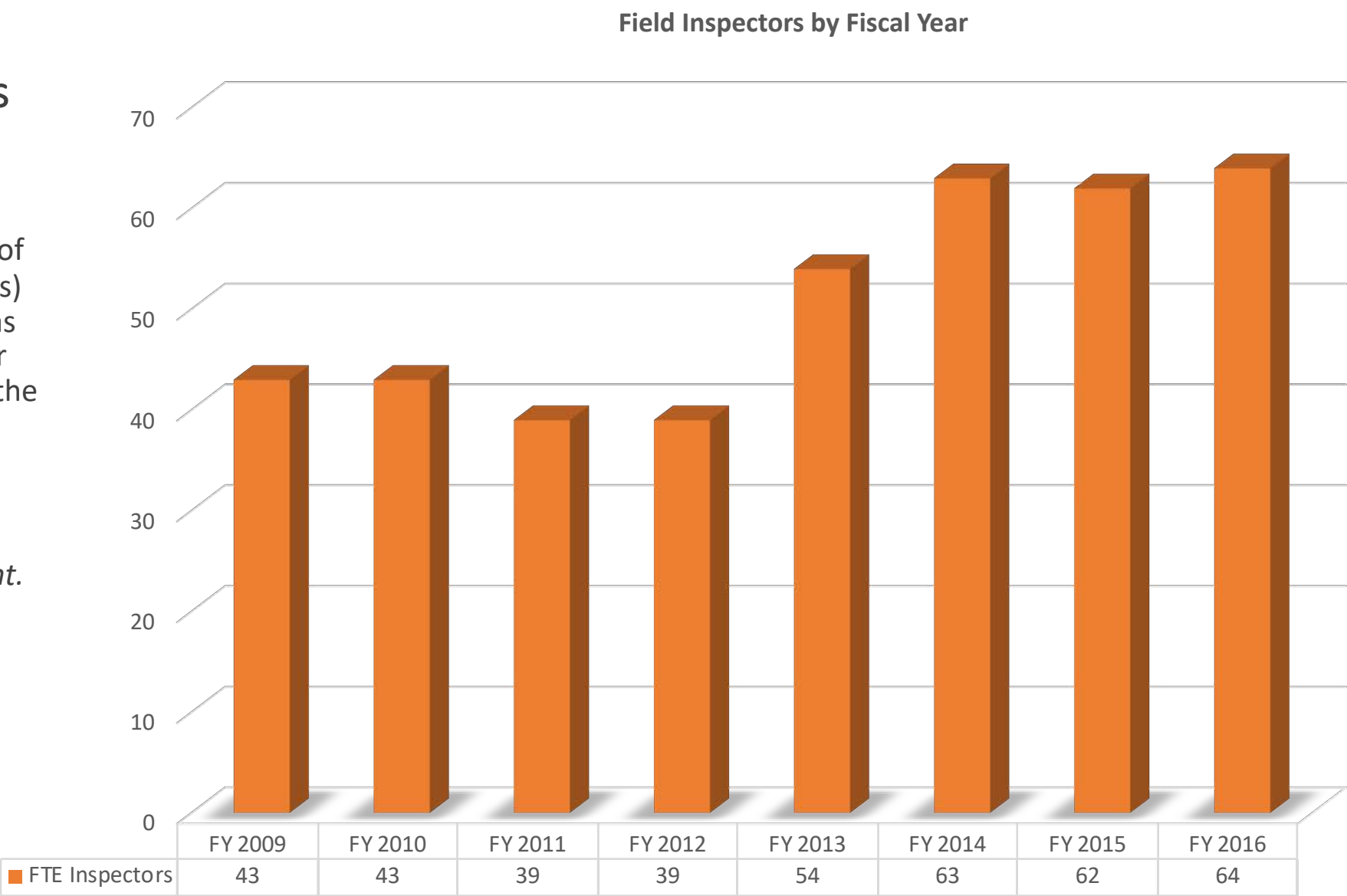


Source: 2007 – 2016 Cases – Reported by City of Austin Budget Office.

# Keeping Up with Cases

From 2009 to 2016, the number of Full Time or Equivalent Staff (FTEs) devoted to case investigations has risen by around 50% (about 3 per year), but has it risen relative to the increasing caseload?

The following slides will examine the *full scope of case enforcement*.



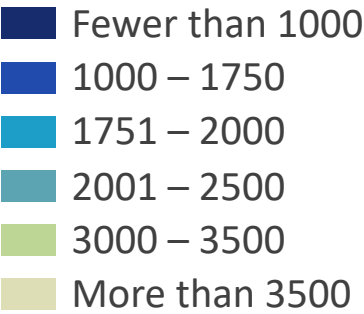
Source: FTEs (Inspector C’s and above , not including Mgmt) as reported by COA Finance – eCombs Personnel Data from 2007 – 2016



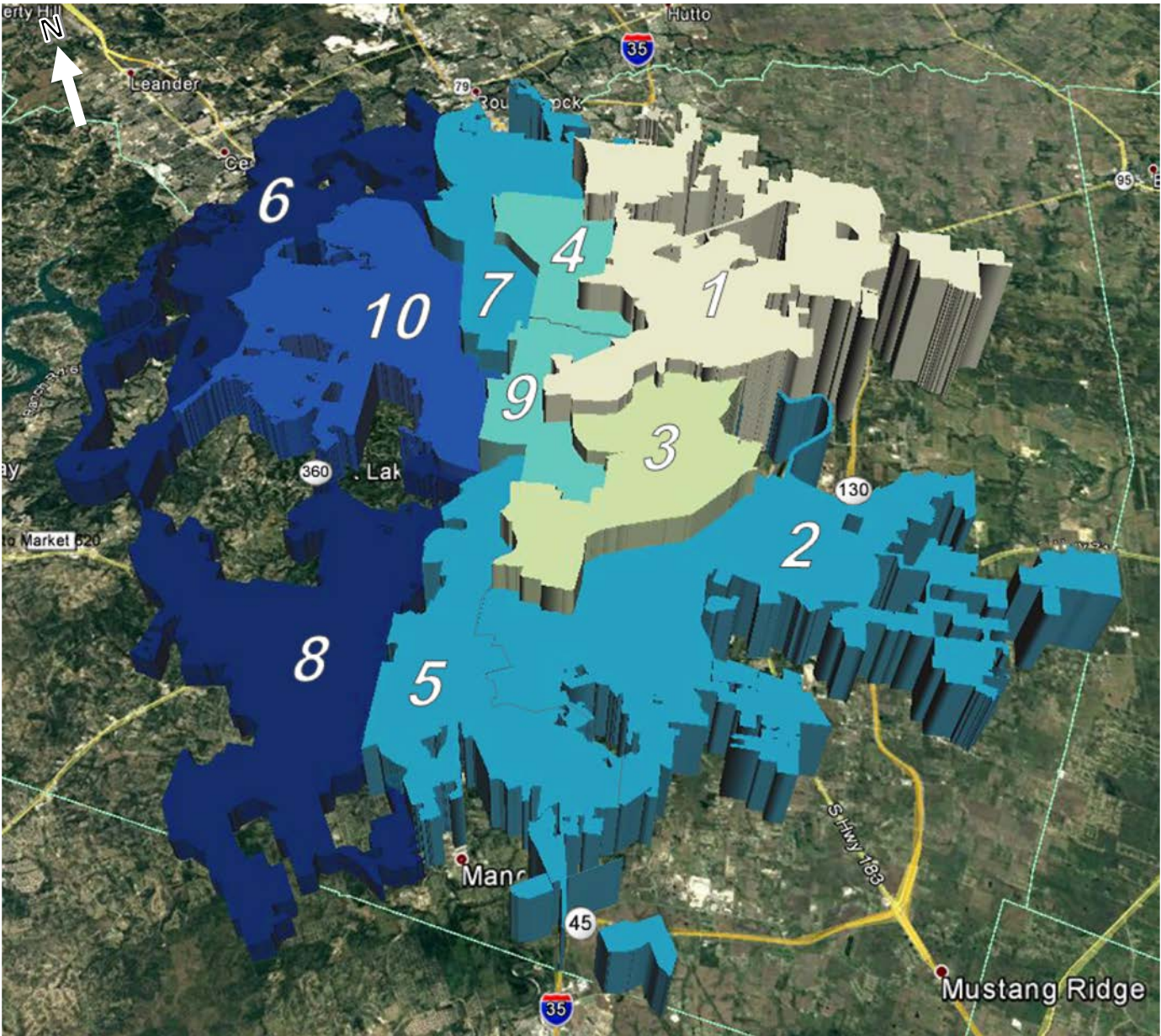
# Complaint Cases by Council District

Here is a look at Calendar Year cases from Jan 2016 to Dec 2016.

## Complaint Cases in 2016

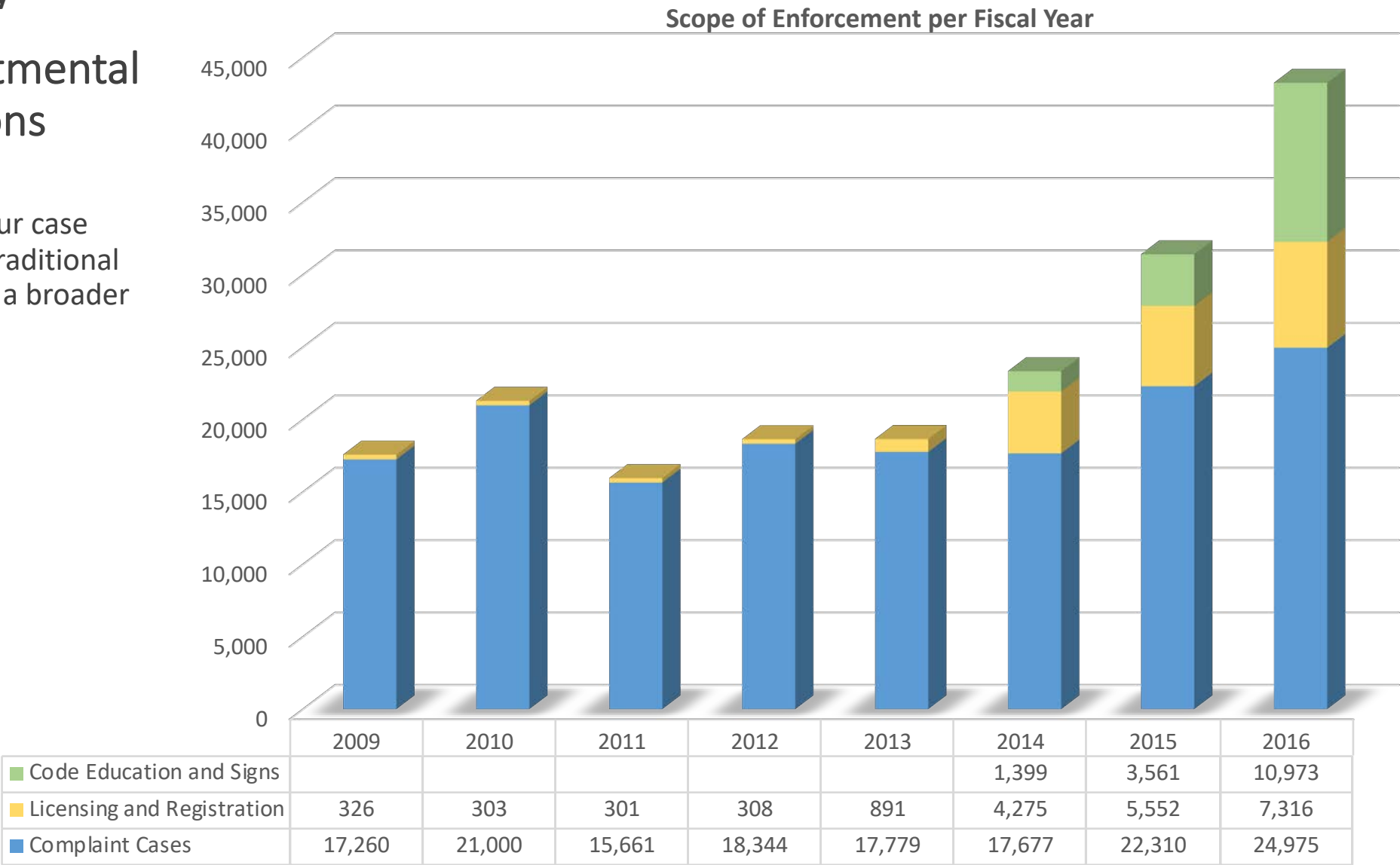


Top 5 Districts	Complaints In 2016
1	3,901
3	3,354
4	2,759
9	2,656
2	2,300



# Measuring Departmental Scope of Operations

When we combine all of our case data, we see a shift from traditional complaint enforcement to a broader scope of enforcement:

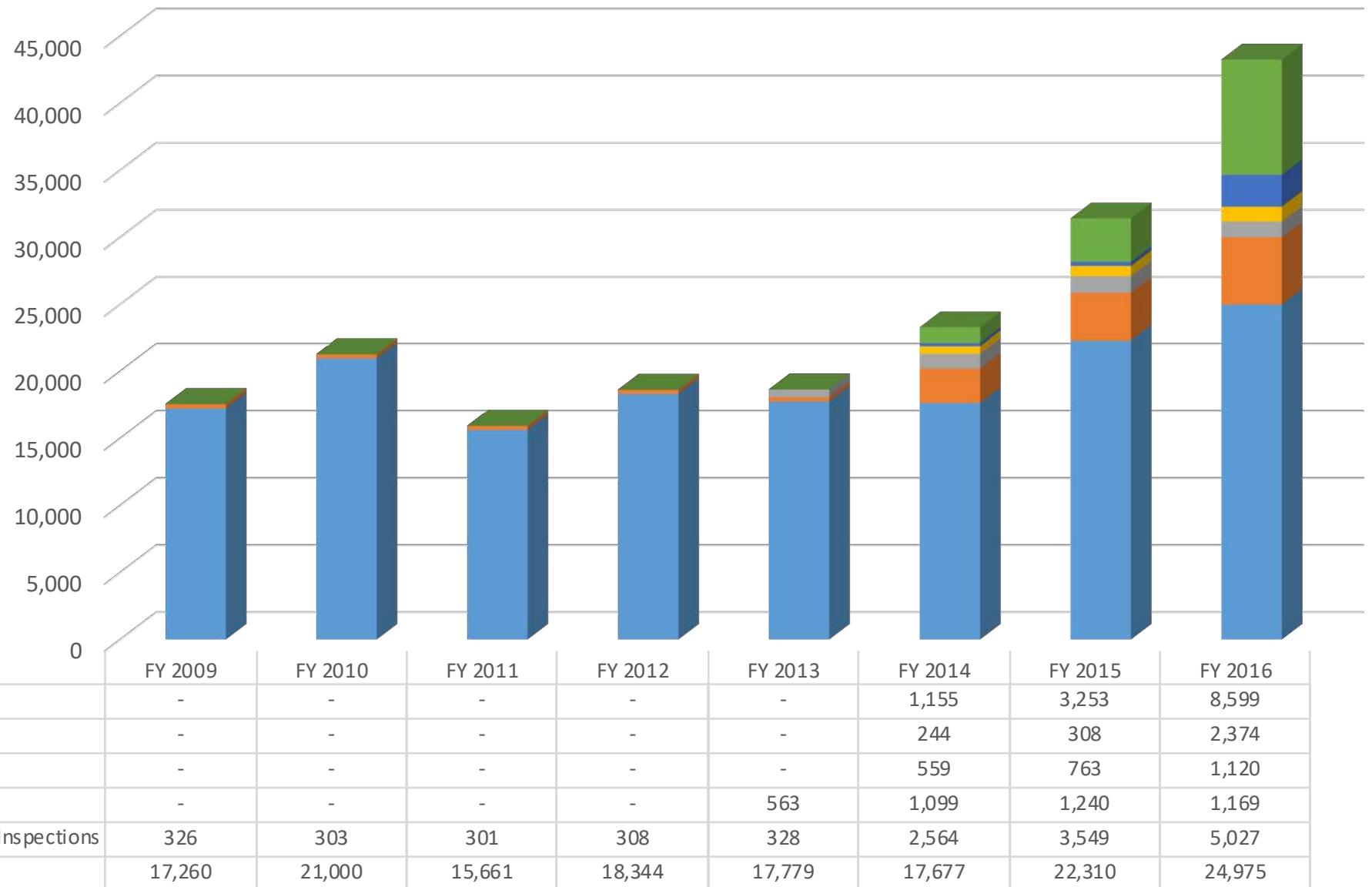


Source: 2007 – 2016 Complaint Cases – Reported by City of Austin Budget Office. 2009 to 2016 - Austin Code Amanda DB Management System. OL, UR, and OP Folders, and ROP Listing. Short Term Rentals 2014-2016 from CBO.

## Inspector Activities per Fiscal Year

## Another Look

When we add complaint cases, we can better see the growing addition of duties not related to cases as it relates to overall Code inspector and investigator activities.

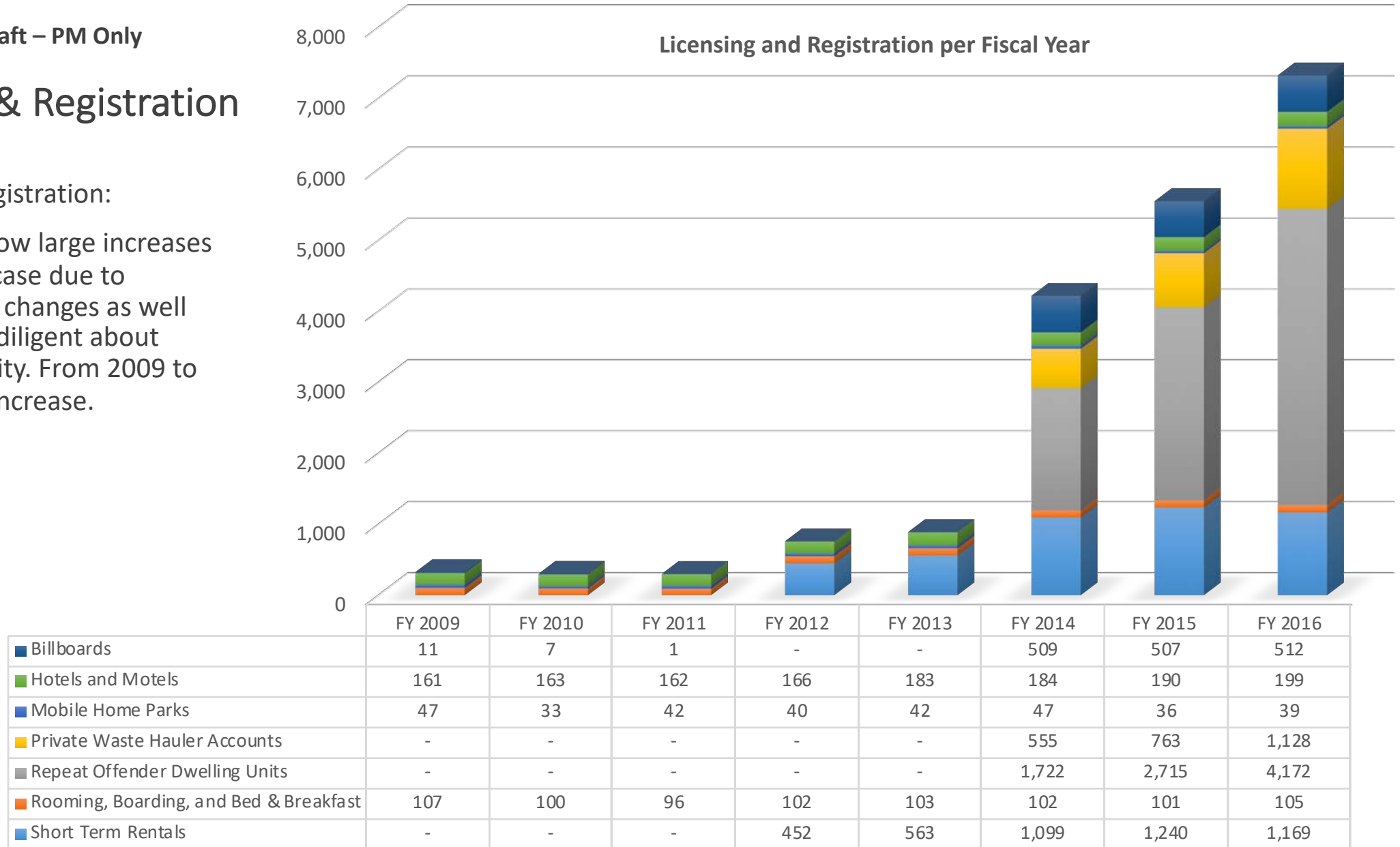


Source: 2007 – 2016 Complaint Cases – Reported by City of Austin Budget Office. 2009 to 2016 - Austin Code Amanda DB Management System. OL, UR, and OP Folders, and ROP Listing. Short Term Rentals 2014-2016 from CBO.

## Licensing & Registration

### Licensing & Registration:

Our records show large increases in this type of case due to citywide policy changes as well as being more diligent about recording activity. From 2009 to 2016, 3,538% increase.



Source: 2009 to 2016 - Austin Code Amanda DB Management System. OL, UR, and OP Folders, and ROP Listing. Short Term Rentals 2014-2016 from CBO.



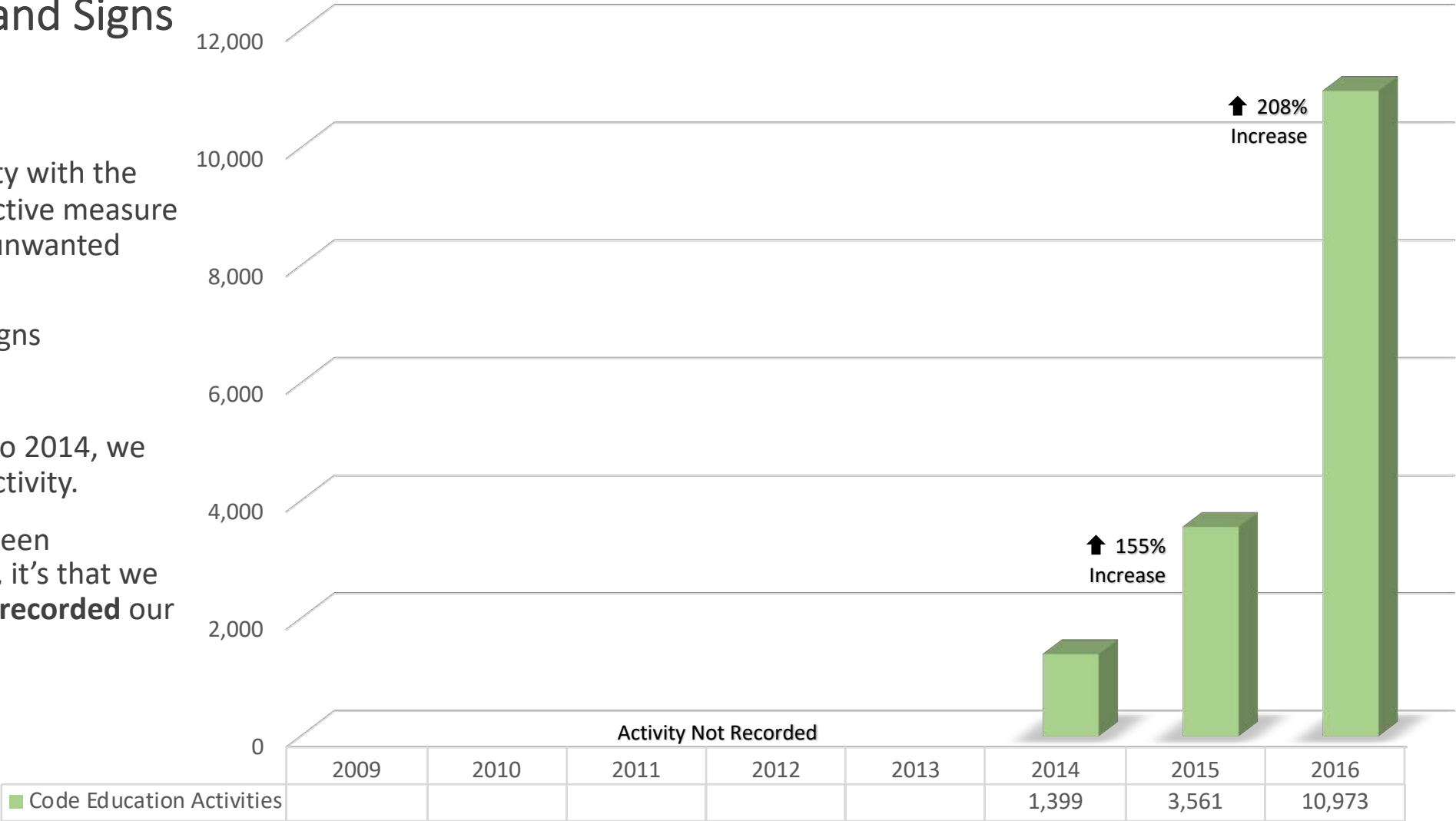
# Code Education and Signs

Next, Code Education:

- Engagement or activity with the community as a proactive measure to teach and reduce unwanted behavior.
- Collection of Illegal Signs

Our records show, prior to 2014, we haven't always tracked activity.

It's not that we haven't been educating or been active, it's that we haven't always diligently **recorded** our activity.



Source: 2009 to 2016 Cases - Austin Code Amanda DB Management System. CE Folder.



# Charting the Course

*To A High Performing Organization*

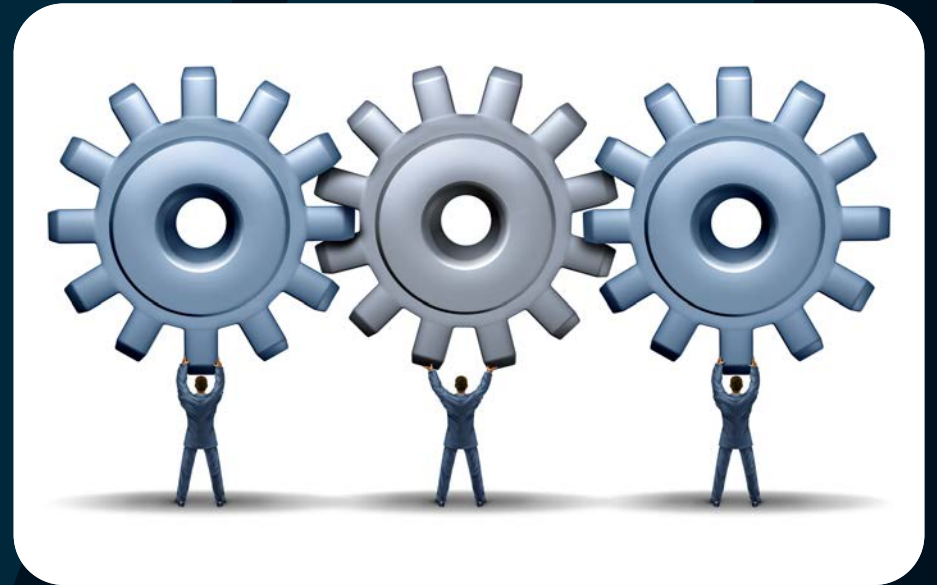
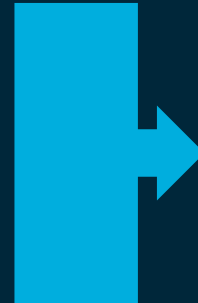
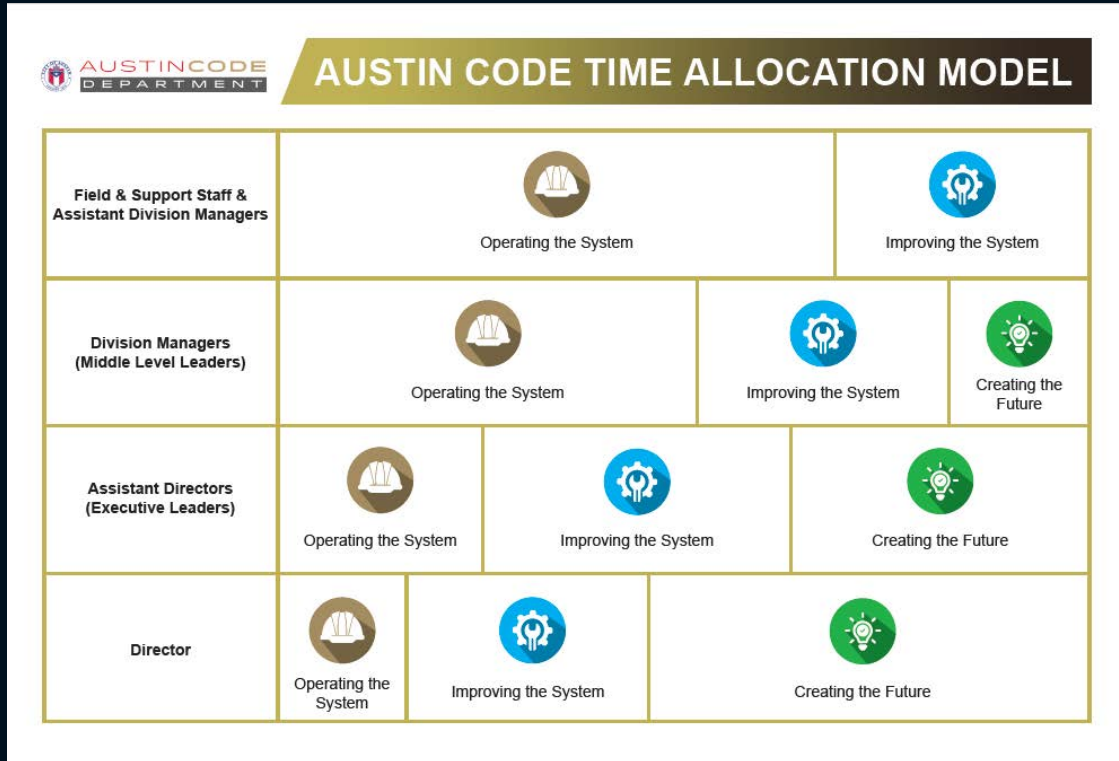
Never forget where you've been. Never lose sight of where you're going. And never take for granted the people who travel the journey with you.

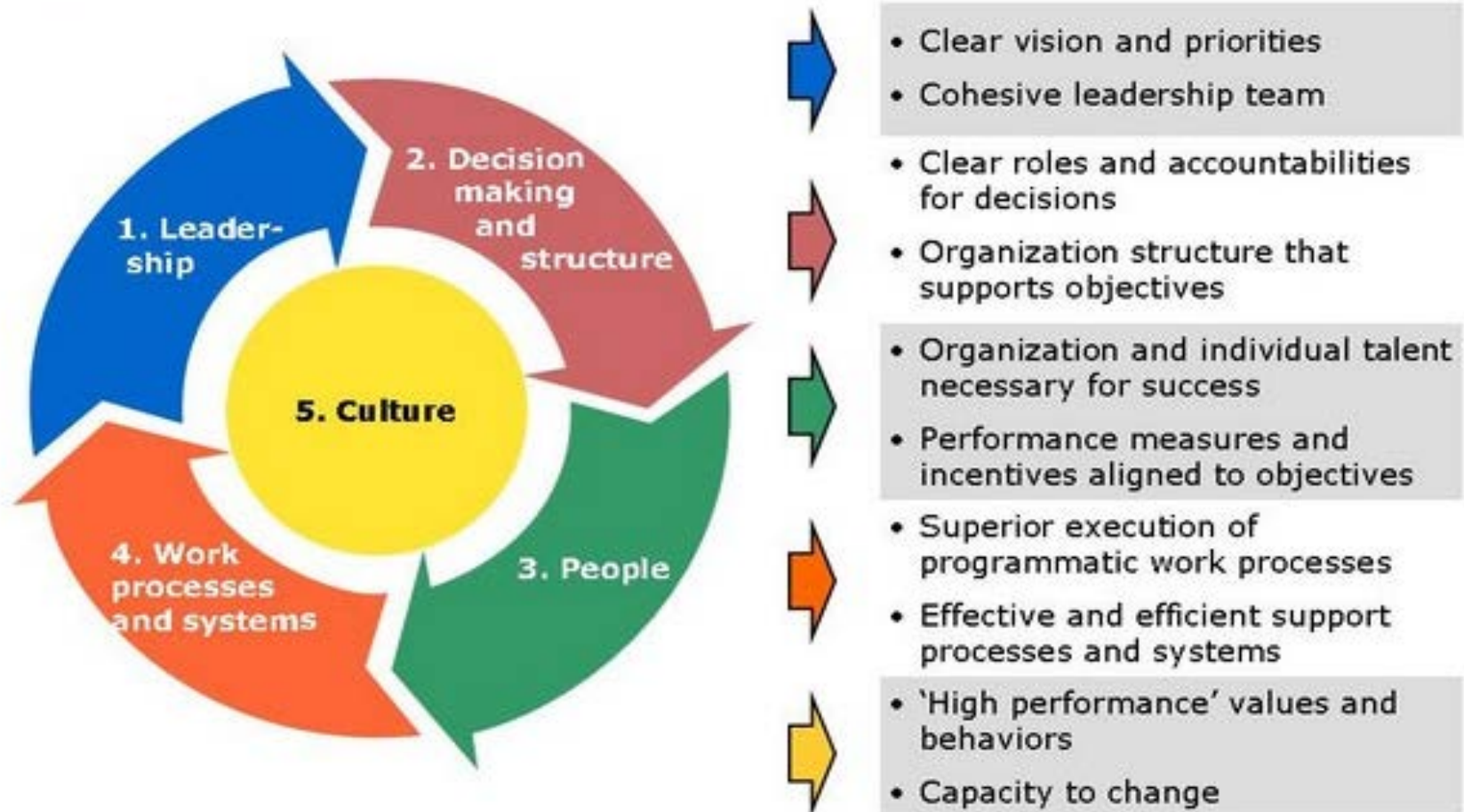
- Susan Gale

boardofwisdom.com



# LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL





Source: Framework developed by Bain & Company and adapted by Bridgespan



# RE-SET VISION & INTENT

Clear vision aligns leadership, which in turn, aligns the organization.....





# RE-SET VISION & INTENT

FY 2015-16

## Prior Vision

*"To become the premier Code Enforcement program in the nation"*

## Prior Mission

The mission of Austin Code Department is to provide quality education and enforcement of codes and ordinances to our citizens for Austin to be the most livable city.

## Prior Goals

Achieve an average initial complaint response time of 2 working days for all cases by FY2017-18.

Achieve non-judicial compliance on all cases within 107 days from when complaints are first reported.

Maintain an average of 70 hours of training per investigative FTE per fiscal year.

FY 2016-17

## Proposed Strategic Direction

## New Vision

*"Building a Greater Austin together through Code Education, Collaboration & Enforcement"*

## New Mission

The mission of Austin Code Department is to provide effective community education and fair and equitable enforcement of local property maintenance, land use and nuisance codes in order to gain and maintain compliance, so that Austin will be safe and livable.

## New Strategic Goals

Improve community awareness and basic understanding of Local Code Requirements.

Improve safe, healthy and legal uses of Austin lands and properties.

Provide fair, equitable and expedited enforcement of City codes.

# RE-SET VISION & INTENT

FY 2016-17

## Proposed Strategic Direction

### New Vision

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The mission of Austin Code Department is to provide effective community education and fair and equitable enforcement of local property maintenance, land use and nuisance codes in order to gain and maintain compliance, so that Austin will be **safe and livable**.

### New Strategic Goals

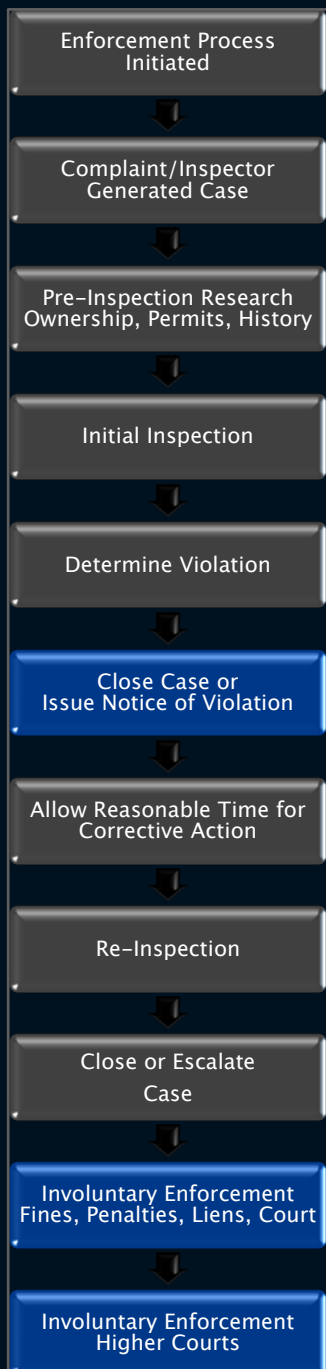
Improve community awareness and basic understanding of Local Code Requirements.

Improve **safe, healthy and legal uses** of Austin lands and properties.

Provide **fair, equitable and expedited** enforcement of City codes.

# STRUCTURAL & STAFF REALIGNMENT

- Re-set Leadership Roles & Expectations
- Structural Alignment of Programs & Services
- Demand-Driven Staff Alignment
- Case Leveling & Workflow Alignment
- Set Professional Standards & Practices
- Performance Management & Evaluation



# HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATIONS

**Dr. Bart Sayle, Breakthrough Thinking**  
<https://social.eyeforpharma.com/users/dr-bart-sayle>

## 1. Management Quality– First and Foremost!

- Build trust relationships with staff on all levels of the organization
- Value employee loyalty; show respect; treat fairly
- Exemplify strong ethics and standards
- Apply decisive action–focused decisions
- Hold people responsible for intended results
- Promote knowledge exchange and learning → performance-driven

## 2. Openness and Action Orientation!

- Value the opinion of every employee
- Engage in frequent dialogue with employees

## 3. Focus on the “Long-Term”

- Enhance customer value creation by learning what customers want; by being responsive
- Create mutually-beneficial partnerships (stakeholder & community) relations
- Hold needs of organization > self-interest
- Grow leaders

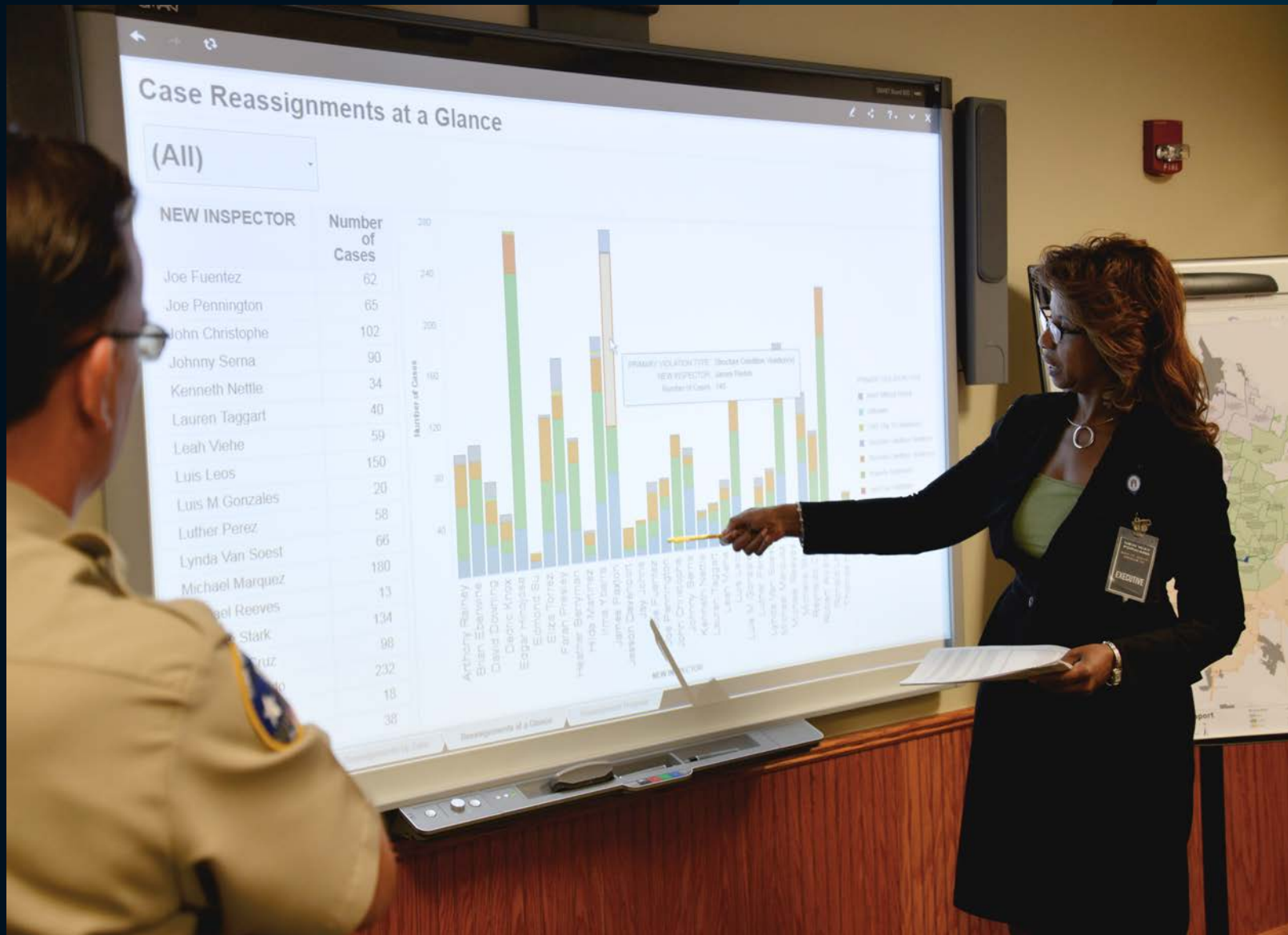
## 4. Continuous Improvement and Innovation

- Simplify, improve and align all processes → improve the ability to respond



# STRATEGIC ENFORCEMENT TOOLS & PRACTICES

- “C-TERM”—Tiered Code Enforcement Response Matrix
- Case Leveling & Competency-based Assignment
- Special Teams—↑ Efficiency & Effectiveness
- *CodeConnect* Line— Technical Code Assistance
- Weekend/Evening Code Enforcement
- Enhanced Fines for Repeat Offenders
- Expand Administrative Hearing Capacity
- Clarify Inspector Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Re-set Supervisory & Management Oversight
- Expand Code Academy Program//Accreditation





## AUSTIN CODE & PERMIT TRACKER

<https://austin.civicinsight.com/>

DRAFT

## Austin Code Department (ACD)

DRAFT

### 2017 Tiered Code Enforcement Response Matrix

**ACD Tiered Enforcement Response Matrix:** The purpose of the *ACD Tiered Enforcement Response Matrix (C-TERM)* is to establish a priority inspection scheduling system for City of Austin code enforcement and nuisance abatement services sequenced by the level of risk and complexity of work to be performed. The C-TERM is a progressive scale of enforcement ranging from basic enforcement that is achieved typically through education and non-judicial voluntary compliance to complex enforcement that typically require forced compliance through quasi-judicial enforcement methods.



<b>PRIORITY 1</b> <b>Imminent Danger/Life-Safety</b> <i>Response Time: 1 hour</i> <b>Compliance Period: TBD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EOC Activated/Natural Disaster</li> <li>• Emergency Responses</li> <li>• Structural Failures</li> <li>• Evacuation/Displacements</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 2</b> <b>High-Risk Hazards/Time Sensitive</b> <i>Response Time: 24 hours</i> <b>Compliance Period: TBD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Events, Temporary Structures, Over Occupancy and Blocked Egress</li> <li>• Open/Accessible Dangerous Buildings &amp; Pools</li> <li>• Potential Dangerous Nuisances</li> <li>• Occupied Substandard Conditions w/ reported Gas, Electric, Plumbing and Structural Failures</li> <li>• Short-Term Rentals</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 3</b> <b>Land Uses/Structural</b> <i>Response Time: 3 Working Days</i> <b>Compliance Period: TBD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of Use/CO</li> <li>• Site Plan Violation</li> <li>• Prohibited Use</li> <li>• Substandard Structural Conditions</li> <li>• Permitting: Expired/Work without or No Final Permit</li> <li>• Conditional Overlays/Adopted Neighborhood Plan</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 4</b> <b>Property Maintenance/Use</b> <i>Response: 4 Working Days</i> <b>Compliance Period: TBD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Occupations</li> <li>• Setback Violations</li> <li>• Fencing/Screening</li> <li>• Parking/Storage/Impervious Cover</li> <li>• Hoarding/Infestations</li> <li>• Lodging Establishments/Licensing Inspections</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 5</b> <b>Other Abatement</b> <i>Response: 5 Working Days</i> <b>Compliance Period: TBD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High weeds/Tall Grasses</li> <li>• Standing Water</li> <li>• Trash/Debris/Illegal Dumping</li> <li>• Deer Feeding</li> <li>• Illegal Signs/Billboards</li> <li>• Universal/Demolition Recycling</li> <li>• Carts at Curb</li> </ul>



DRAFT

Junk Vehicles on Private Property  
City-Wide Enforcement by Austin Police Department  
§ 9-1-9 - JUNKED VEHICLE.

DRAFT

*If a junked vehicle is located on property in violation of this chapter, the police chief shall mail by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, a written order to the owner or the occupant of the property, or if the vehicle is located on a public right-of-way, to the owner or occupant of the property adjacent to the right-of-way...*



# CLOSE CRITICAL FUNDING GAPS

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Identify critically needed resources, staffing and tools, then create a multipronged funding strategy.

- Determine your management strategy
- Demonstrate a commitment to optimize efficient and effective operations
- Establish a pattern of success or movement in the right direction
- Continually build commitment from Leadership Team to drive outcomes



# It's All About Results....





# About Results...

SAY IT...

DO IT...

PROVE IT...

IMPROVE IT!

	2016	2017	2018
Approved Budget <i>(expense)</i>	\$20,133,957	\$19,963,066	\$23,151,668
FTEs	117	119	146
Total Inspections Performed	37,436	38,092	63,845
BSC Cases & Win Rates	63 / 100%	34 / 100%	55 / 100%
Administrative Hearing Cases & Win Rates	125 / 97%	122 / 94%	212 / 95%
Average Inspection/Day	149	153	256
Citations Issued	193	226	439
Short Term Rental Licenses	1,169	1,696	2,016
Repeat Offender Program Insp.	1,920	3,639	7,952
Weekend/Evening Enforcement	No Data	No Data	1,395
Code Education & Outreach	86	83	97
CodeConnect Line <i>(Inspector TA Calls)</i>	See 2018	See 2018	953
Inspector Caseloads	25,873	24,787	32,971
Department Revenue	\$18,233,885	\$18,142,202	\$23,225,935



# Enhanced Enforcement

Structural and strategic alignment coupled with the use of strategic enforcement tools and practices results in greater operational efficiency, effectiveness and results.

## License & Registration

- 420%↑ Short Term Rental (STR) Citations Issued
- 24%↑ STR Operating Licenses
- 14%↑ STR Revenue
- 87%↑ Repeat Offender Properties (ROP) to BSC
- 200% ROP Revenue

## IPMC/Zoning/Other

- 520%↑ Voluntary Property Abatement Compliance
- Reduced Inspector Caseloads by 35 Cases/Average
- *CodeConnect* Line-↑ 1000 Code Assistance Calls
- 95% Administrative Hearing Win-Rate
- Improved Revenue

# Acknowledgements...

## An Awesome Team of People...

- Austin Code Executive Team
  - Cora D. Wright, Director
  - Angela Means, Assistant Director
  - Ricardo Ramirez, Assistant Director
  - Jose Roig, Assistant Director
- IT & Strategic Planning
  - Terri Roberts, Division Manager IT
  - Nathan Brigmon, IT Geospatial Analyst Sr.
- City Demographer
  - Ryan Robinson, Planning and Zoning
- Austin Code Program Evaluation
  - Andrew Williams, Business Process Consultant, Sr.



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# Thank You!!

An aerial photograph of a city skyline at dusk, featuring numerous illuminated skyscrapers and buildings. The image is framed by several thick, red diagonal stripes that cross the entire scene. The sky is a mix of blue and orange hues from the setting or rising sun.

*"Please Don't Text and Drive"*

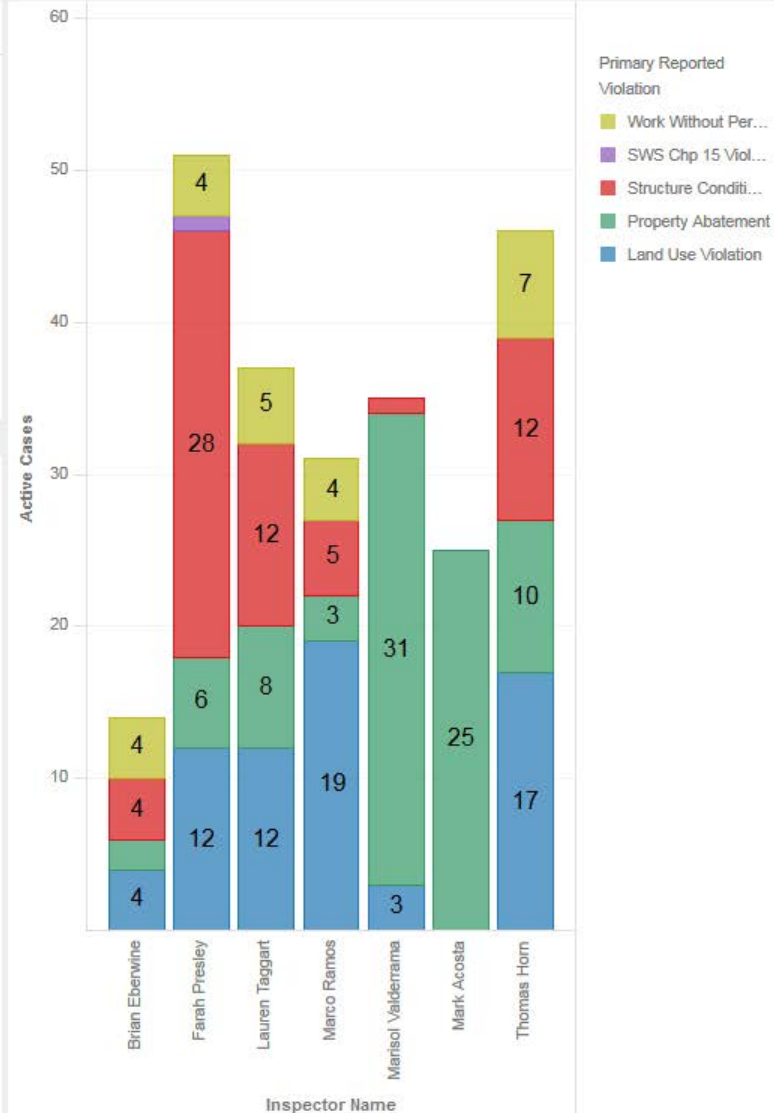


(All) Central Neighborhood-RBJ Central Neighborhood-RLC Commercial Extended Hours Legal Licensing North Neighborhood

- ☒ (All)
- ☒ Brian Eberwine
- ☒ Farah Presley
- ☒ Lauren Taggart
- ☒ Marco Ramos
- ☒ Marisol Valderrama
- ☒ Mark Acosta
- ☒ Thomas Horn

## Active Cases as of 10/25/18 3:00 AM

Supervisor	Inspector Name	Cases
Michael Reeves	Brian Eberwine	14
	Farah Presley	51
	Lauren Taggart	37
	Marco Ramos	31
	Marisol Valderrama	35
	Mark Acosta	25
	Thomas Horn	46
Total		239



Active Cases for any given Inspector. Updated Daily.