



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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In Control: Audit and Accountability Committee

AUDIT COMMITTEE SUMMARY

March 17, 2020

Audit of City Attorney's Office Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART)

Report Issued February 10, 2020

Audit Objective

Determine if the Dangerous Assessment Response Team program is managed effectively and efficiently and in compliance with laws and regulations.

Background

The City Attorney's Office (CAO) coordinates the Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART). DART actively targets and works to abate the "worst of the worst" nuisance properties within the City. Its mission is to reclaim, restore, and revitalize neighborhoods plagued by properties that are safety threats due to habitual criminal or code violations of at least two years. These properties may be residences or commercial properties. Examples of the types of problems at these properties include prostitution, drug-related activity, dilapidated structures, hoarding, animal neglect and abuse, lack of utilities, liquor law violations, and health and safety standards.

DART is composed of inspectors, investigators, and officers from the Development Services Department (DSD) Code Enforcement Division; officers from several units of the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD); the Fire Marshal's Office; San Antonio Metro Health; Housing and Neighborhood Services; and Animal Care Services. Since its inception in 2007, DART has addressed more than 450 nuisance properties.

Scope & Methodology

The audit scope included DART properties and related documentation from October 2017 through September 2019. We interviewed staff of the CAO, Code Enforcement, and SAPD, observed a DART inspection, and reviewed relevant laws and regulations in coordination with the CAO.

Conclusions

DART is managed effectively and efficiently in compliance with laws and regulations. We found that it has methods to identify appropriate targets, ensure that targeted properties meet established criteria, address targets in a timely fashion, and monitor properties for new or continuing issues. However, we noted that the CAO should improve its case file management for targeted properties.

We recommend that the City Attorney ensure good record keeping for all DART properties by:

- Creating a checklist of all relevant documentation that should be kept in a centralized case file for each DART target.
- Using that checklist to ensure those documents are received from DART team members and subsequently filed in the appropriate place for each DART property.

CAO management agreed with the audit finding and has developed a positive action plan to address it.