

Codes Compliance Damage Assessment Monitoring Cases

City Council

February 13th, 2024





Timeline

- September 26 – Helene Landfall
- October 6th – Milton Landfall
- Codes, Housing, and Social Services conducts Street Team outreach in affected communities after each storm event.
- Construction Services and Permitting conducts damage assessments after each storm event.
- November 7th – Presentation to HLUT regarding FEMA Requirements (49% Rule)
 - Codes provides overview of plan to monitor properties for compliance with FEMA regulations to committee members.
- December - finalized damage assessment lists for each storm event received.



Damage Assessment

- Completed by Construction Services and Permitting staff after each storm event.
- Property to property inspections identifying indicators of damage.
 - Waterlines
 - Structural disrepair
 - Debris
- Data entered into a County damage assessment application via smartphone in the field.
 - Allows photos and notes to be geotagged to specific properties.
- County utilizes the data to assist in emergency declaration process.
- County then releases damage assessment data back to the municipalities.



Damage Assessment Results

	Flood Hazard	Non-Flood Hazard
Destroyed	198	78
Major	4794	309
Minor	4075	1013
Affected	2029	547
Totals	11,096	1947

Affected: Cosmetic damage only. EX: shingles and/or siding missing, one or two broken windows, damage to non-living spaces/structures (fence, garage, carports, porches/screened rooms), some flooding on property but not in the home.

Minor: Slight flooding or structural damage. Your home may require some minor repairs. EX: large portions of roofing material and/or siding damaged, several broken windows, minor flooding inside the home.

Major: Significant structural damage or flooding. Extensive repairs are needed to make your home livable again. EX: portions of roof and/or walls are missing or breached by trees, debris, etc., major shifting or settling of foundation, significant flooding inside home (more than 18 inches).

Destroyed: Home is a total loss and is beyond repair. EX: total collapse of home or home has shifted off foundation, catastrophic flooding inside home (greater than 4 feet).



Why monitor these properties?

- Maintain compliance with FEMA regulations and the City's Floodplain Ordinance by:
 - Ensuring permits are pulled for all necessary repairs.
 - Ensuring all required inspections are completed and up to Florida Building Code.
- Failure to adequately monitor these properties could result in:
 - Loss of Community Rating System (CRS) Policy discounts.
 - Being placed on probation from the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Lessons Learned from other municipalities:
 - A lack of required permits when comparing permit records vs. damaged properties.
 - Insufficient code enforcement cases to capture work without permits.



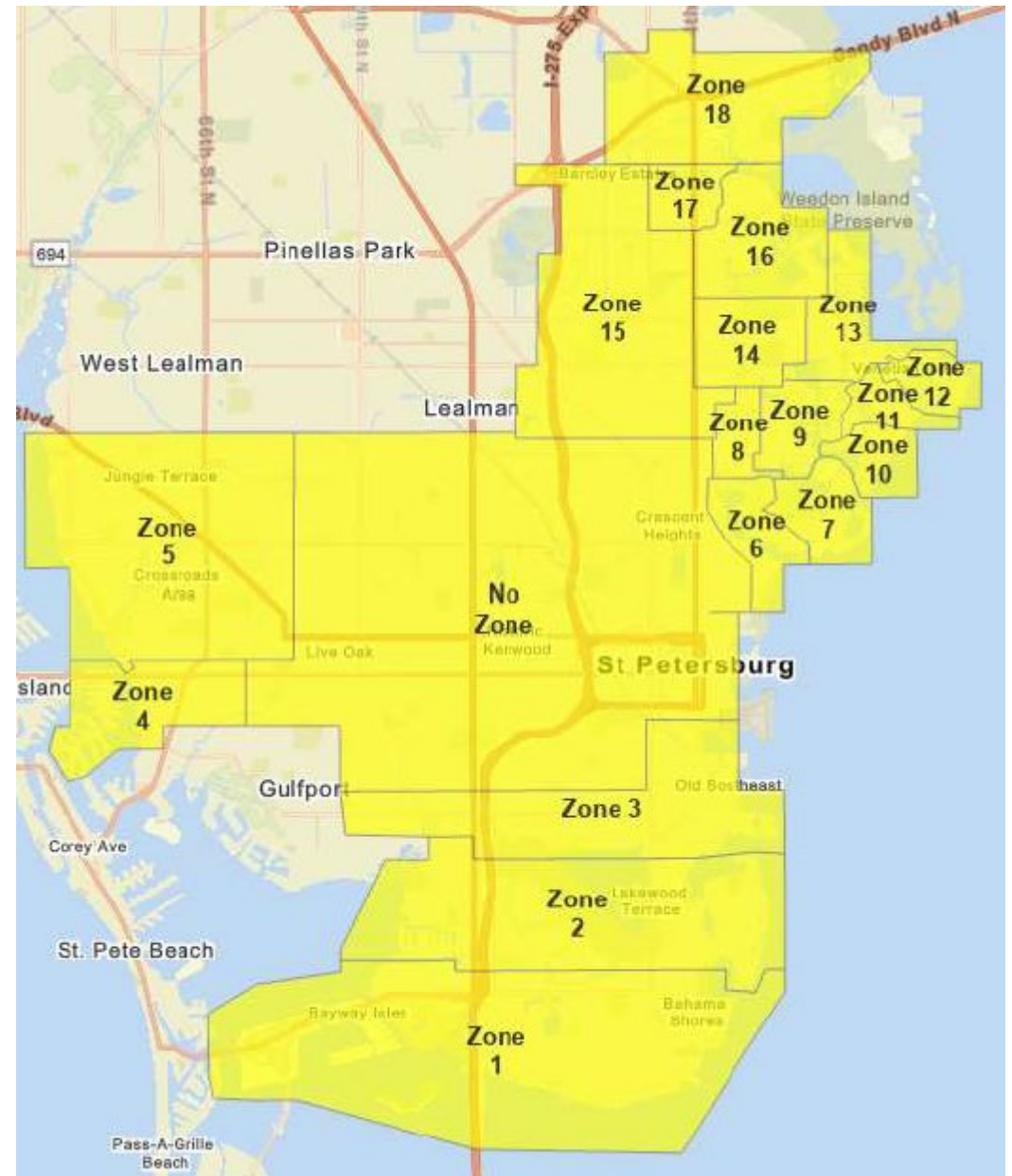
Developing the process

- Challenges:
 - Balancing Recovery Efforts
 - Focus on Street Team outreach to assist residents was immediate priority.
 - Multiple unfit/unsafe structures impacting hundreds of tenants.
 - Record number of tenant complaints in October and November.
 - Began to see properties being rehabbed and listed for sale without permits in late December.
 - Case Management System (Naviline) limitations.
 - Increased Workload
 - 10,000+ cases is over 1/3 of our yearly caseload.
 - Data Validation
 - Some data was incomplete.
 - More efficient to validate in the field.



Developing the process

- Problem solving:
 - Established workarounds with Naviline.
 - 18 new Inspector identifications created to distribute workload.
 - Allowed staff to keep work processes separate to reduce potential for errors.
 - Worked with GIS team to map all damage assessment properties.
 - Created 18 new geographic zones that evenly distributed case counts while keeping them near one another for efficiency.



Flood Hazard Damage Only



Developing the process

- Implementation:
 - Developed detailed processes and procedures supplemented with flow charts for investigative staff.
 - Dedicated staff meetings prior to inspections starting to review process, answer questions, and establish thorough understanding.
 - All communication through codes@stpete.org and main office phone lines to maintain prompt response to questions/concerns.
 - Provided talking points to administrative support staff to maintain consistency and clarity for citizens inquiring about cases and what they meant.
 - All escalations directly to management team.



Key Processes

- Physical inspections completed for each case.
 - Initial inspections consist of drive-by inspections, with more detailed review if evidence of work without permits is suspected.
 - More detailed inspections will be completed as workload is reduced.
- A violation notice is issued if work is completed/in-process without the required permits.
 - Found via physical inspections and review of real estate/rental listings.
- Properties with active permits for repairs are changed from a “Flood Hazard” case to a “Post Disaster Emergency Permit” case.
 - If work is already complete and all inspections approved, case is closed.
 - Other cases are checked once a month and closed once permits receive all required inspections.



Key Processes

- Process established to review “affected” properties after 90-days.
 - Higher potential for these cases to not require permitted repairs based on lower level of damage.
 - Inspection notes, damage assessment details, and insurance claims will be reviewed prior to closure based on FEMA guidance.
- Cases reviewed by management as requested if citizen indicates no damage occurred.
- If cases are closed after a more detailed review has found storm remediation is not required, they are closed as “invalid”.
 - Case record is clearly documented with determination that no storm remediation was required.
 - Closure as “invalid” provides clarity without needing to review details of case.



Inspection Results

- January 27 – February 8th
 - Inspections Completed: **4,480**
 - Violation Notices Issued: **69**
 - Cases with active permits: **806**
 - Cases closed – all repairs complete and permits inspected: **59**
 - Closed as invalid: **23**



What's special

DESIGNER UPDATED POOL/SPA HOME! This home offers 3 bedrooms, 2 baths with heated POOL/SPA located in quiet St. Petersburg neighborhood of Shore Acres. NEW ROOF (2024). NEW HVAC (2024). Newly resurfaced pool with new pool equipment and heater (2024). Newer Windows! Park your BOAT/RV directly on your front parking pad for easy access. Arriving to your future home you will be drawn in with the natural curb appeal from the modern fresh paint, wood finish accents, and professional landscaping. Welcoming entryway reveals mosaic tile leading to your contemporary glass door that immediately sets the tone for the luxurious updates that this home has to offer. Inside you will find an open concept living space featuring new interior paint, new luxury waterproof vinyl plank flooring, and modern fixtures throughout. The centrally located DREAM kitchen has been beautifully updated with custom 42" shaker cabinets offering plenty of storage, huge center island featuring dazzling QUARTZ countertops with cascading waterfall edges and inviting breakfast bar, stainless steel appliances, and modern tile backsplash. The dining space flows into the living room - making it easy for entertaining! Split bedroom floor plan for privacy and convenience. Escape to your bright and spacious Primary's suite, featuring waterproof vinyl flooring, ample closet space, en suite bathroom, and private backyard pool access. Luxurious en suite bathroom includes tile flooring,



Monitoring Case Facts

- An active codes case is not a code violation.
- An active codes case with no violations does not create an encumbrance on the property that would affect real estate transactions or refinancing.
- Title companies have never expressed concern or communicated that a monitoring case has held up a closing.
 - Vacant and Boarded monitoring cases have been used for over 10 years.
- No fines or liens have been placed against any property because of one of these cases.
- Owners are notified once a violation is found.
 - Thousands of cases are initiated each year that do not result in violations.
 - Property owners have never been proactively notified in these circumstances.



Communication

- Overview of plan was provided at HLUT Committee Meeting on November 7th.
- One-on-One meetings as requested by Councilmembers.
- Letter mailed to all properties within flood hazard areas by Development Review Services, providing details on 49% rule, permit requirements, and potential consequences for not obtaining permits.
- Direct communication with impacted members of the community, including neighborhood association leadership.



Lessons Learned

- Take a more proactive approach to communicating new process with affected residents through targeted marketing efforts and communication with impacted neighborhood associations.
 - Facts that we know, but average citizens don't, can easily cause concern and fuel misinformation.
 - Develop Frequently Asked Questions that is readily available upon rollout.
- Develop a more efficient process to validate information from various sources that cross multiple departments/agencies.



FEMA Technical Assistance

- Monitoring process was outlined for FEMA during a technical assistance meeting on January 30th.
 - "FEMA's review indicates the City of St. Petersburg current processes do not demonstrate potential program deficiencies that may impact resilient and compliant storm recovery."
 - "We have submitted this process for a FEMA write-up as a best practice."
 - "Failing to enforce your regulations could result in the loss of the Community Rating system policy discounts and result in CRS downgrade. Additionally, failure to administer and enforce minimum standards, address program deficiencies, or remedy NFIP violations may result in probation."



Next Steps

- All flood hazard monitoring cases have been entered into the system with initial inspections scheduled through February 17th.
- Staff will begin to review damage assessment data that was outside of the flood hazard area and initiating cases.
 - Permitting requirements outside of the flood hazard area is less stringent but many repairs would trigger permit requirements including:
 - Roof Replacement
 - Mechanical Equipment Replacement (HVAC, Water Heater, etc.)
 - Structural Repairs
 - Drywall replacement beyond minor repairs

THANK YOU



Codes Compliance Assistance Department

P.O. Box 2842

St. Petersburg, FL 33731

727.893.7373

www.stpete.org/codes