

2024 CODE ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT



CITY OF BREMERTON



SUMMARY

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This is the first Code Enforcement Annual Report published in recent years. Going forward, City staff will regularly review internal code enforcement data to identify trends and track changes over time. The 2024 report covers data collected from January 1 to December 31, 2024, and provides an overview of the Code Enforcement Division's activities throughout the year. It includes the number and types of code enforcement complaints received within the city.

2024 REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- 640 total cases opened in 2024; an increase from 612 in 2023
- 83% of cases complied or were closed
- Fewer than 5% of cases remained open
- 4 nuisance residential properties were abated through the legal process
- 2 nuisance commercial buildings demolished
- Looking back on 2023, there were no significant changes in the types of complaints received in 2024

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CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

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The City of Bremerton code enforcement program was created to help enforce the laws and ordinances of the City of Bremerton, that include zoning, building, and property maintenance codes. Well maintained properties help to protect property values of homes and businesses in our community. Our goal is to improve the quality of life for Bremerton residents and visitors through education and enforcement of various codes and standards.

PROACTIVE CODE ENFORCEMENT

Before 2018, the City of Bremerton had just one Code Enforcement Officer who responded to complaints as they came in. When Mayor Wheeler took office in 2018, he and the City Council began to prioritize a more proactive approach to code enforcement and added the Code Enforcement Specialist position. This role focused on nuisance violations like overgrown weeds, garbage, and graffiti, with an emphasis on addressing these issues before complaints are made.

Proactive code enforcement has been in place since 2018 and continues to be a key part of the Mayor’s strategic initiatives, which for 2024 include:

Proactive Code Enforcement

- Continue proactive code enforcement to further address issues in the City and work on strategies to assist tenants living in substandard housing units
- Continue court-appointed receiver program (RCW 7.60) and abatement program (RCW 35.80) to clean up nuisance properties



STAFFING

In 2024, the Code Enforcement division consisted of two full-time employees. One Code Enforcement Officer and one Code Enforcement Specialist.



ANNUAL SUMMARY

NUMBER OF CASES AND STATUS

In 2024, the City of Bremerton’s Code Enforcement Division opened 640 new cases—a mix of complaints from the public and violations observed directly by staff. This marks a slight increase from 612 cases in 2023. Of the 640 cases opened, 530 have been closed, either due to compliance or other resolutions.

Over the past few years, the number of complaints has continued to rise, and it now appears that handling 600 to 650 cases per year is becoming the new normal. If this trend continues, the total number of annual cases could exceed 700 in the near future.

Several of the cases being addressed are more complex and require more involvement by the City’s legal office. In 2024, several cases were resolved through the abatement process, working in coordination with the City Attorney’s Office. Most other cases were presented to the Administrative Hearing Examiner, who issued formal orders. As of the end of 2024:

- 26 cases remain open and have been carried over into 2025
- 28 cases have Hearing Examiner Orders and may be pending legal action or abatement and fines are accruing daily

2024 Cases by Status

STATUS	NUMBER OF CASES
Complied / closed	530
Stop Work	37
Hearing Examiner Order	28
Open	26
No Violation / Withdrawn	19



TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

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The table below shows the types of complaints received in 2024. Most categories stayed consistent with 2023, with most complaints falling under the nuisance category—including issues like overgrown weeds, garbage, junk vehicles, and graffiti.

The second most common type of complaint involved permitting violations. These usually relate to construction or building work that was started or completed without the proper permits. In these cases, a Stop Work Order is posted, and a code enforcement case is opened. The property owner is then required to apply for the appropriate permit, and the case stays open until the permit is approved and finalized.

Together, nuisance and permitting complaints made up the majority of code enforcement cases opened in 2024.

2024 Cases by Violation Type

TYPE OF VIOLATION	NUMBER OF CASES
Nuisances (weeds, garbage, cars, graffiti)	431
Permitting	127
Tax and Licensing	35
Zoning	21
Housing Issues	11
Unsafe Structures	5
Right of Way	5
Other	5



CASE HIGHLIGHTS

ABATEMENTS AND LEGAL ACTION

In 2024, Code Enforcement—working closely with the City Attorney’s Office— the City addressed several high-profile nuisance properties through receivership and abatement. Three residential properties were placed into receivership under RCW 7.60 and ultimately had to be demolished due to severe disrepair. These homes had become chronic nuisances and were negatively impacting their neighborhoods. A fourth property required emergency abatement after a fire left the structure unstable and at risk of collapsing onto nearby properties. For safety reasons, the City stepped in to demolish the remaining structure.

In addition to these major cases, several other properties were abated for issues like excessive trash and debris. These efforts highlight the strong coordination between Code Enforcement and the City Attorney’s Office in tackling problem properties.

Code Enforcement also partners with other key agencies, including the Bremerton Police Department, Commonstreet Consulting, Public Works and Utilities, and the Kitsap Public Health District, to address community concerns and improve neighborhood conditions.

COST OF ABATEMENT AND LEGAL ACTION

The City sets aside an annual budget to help cover the costs of abating properties or taking legal action when code violations aren’t resolved. These funds are used for things like attorney fees, contractor services, and other expenses related to enforcement or lawsuits.

In 2024, the City spent approximately \$350,000 on these efforts and has recovered about \$140,000 so far. In many cases, the City is only able to recover these costs when a property is sold or changes ownership. Regardless of recovery of funds, there is a real net-benefit to the quality of life in neighborhoods when properties are cleaned up.

DEMOLITIONS

In 2024, two commercial properties became significant nuisance concerns due to ongoing issues like trash, graffiti, fires, and the presence of unhoused individuals. These properties—the Bay Bowl building at 2313 Wheaton Way and the Eagles building at 205 6th Street—had both deteriorated into unsafe and chronic problem sites.

Working closely with the City Attorney’s Office, Code Enforcement followed the proper legal process for each case. As a result, both properties were demolished by the property owners.



BEFORE ABATEMENT – 1241 8th St

This structure was found to be in poor condition due to long-term neglect and lack of maintenance. The property had generated numerous complaints, and the City made several efforts to bring it into compliance through the Hearing Examiner process. When those efforts were unsuccessful due to owner non-compliance, the case was referred to the City's legal department, which filed a lawsuit in Superior Court. As a result, the property was placed under the control of a court-appointed receiver, who then addressed and resolved the issues on the site.



AFTER ABATEMENT

This property is now ready for the development of a clean, safe residence.



BEFORE DEMOLITION – BAY BOWL BUILDING

This property was declared a public nuisance due to the presence of garbage, graffiti, and an unsecured structure that allowed unauthorized access. The Hearing Examiner issued an order requiring all violations to be corrected and the building to remain secure. As daily fines began to accumulate, the property owner chose to demolish the structure in preparation for future development.



AFTER DEMOLITION

This parcel now has an issued permit for a 180-unit apartment building. (Rendering below)





BEFORE DEMOLITION – EAGLES BUILDING

Due to extensive fire and water damage, the building had become structurally unsafe. The property owners worked with the City by signing a Voluntary Correction Agreement. After securing the site, they proceeded with demolishing the building, successfully fulfilling the terms of the agreement.



AFTER DEMOLITION

The unsafe structure was demolished, and the site is now ready for development. See rendering below of the project that was permitted for this parcel (permit has expired).

