

Code Enforcement Department – State of the City 2023

The Code Enforcement Department strives to fairly and efficiently enforce and uphold the Codes and Ordinances while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of our residents, businesses, owners, and visitors. The City of Wilmington accepts complaints from citizens as well as other local departments and agencies regarding violations of the City’s Property Maintenance and Zoning Codes. The department then investigates each complaint and determines a course of action.

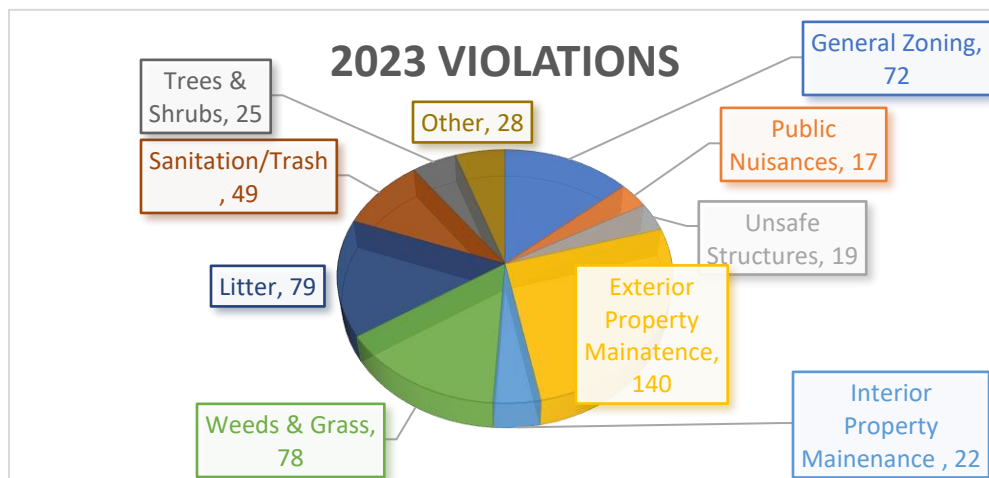
Cases and Violations

The number of new violations decreased this year from 532 to 529. Those 529 violations resulted in 399 new cases being opened with some cases consisting of multiple violations at one address. Continuing to make record keeping and organization a priority has helped streamline many aspects of enforcement.

Code Enforcement Case History (YTD 12/05/2023)	
Code Enforcement Cases Opened 2023	399
Code Enforcement Cases Opened 2022	382
Code Enforcement Cases Opened 2021	263
Cases Closed 2023	375
Cases Closed 2022	260
Open Cases from 2022	27
Open Cases from 2021	19
Open Cases from 2020	4
Open Cases from 2019	1
Open Cases from 2018	4
Open Cases from 2017	3
Open Cases from 2016	1
Total Open Cases (As of 12/05/2023)	129

Violations of the zoning and property maintenance codes are addressed by issuing warnings or formal violation notices (depending on the type and severity of violations) and working with the property owner and/or tenants to bring their property into compliance within a specified time frame. If property owners are not compliant, the cases are then turned over to the City Prosecutor and criminal charges are filed in Municipal Court.

This department handles a variety of violations regarding exterior property maintenance, junk vehicles, litter, grass and weeds, infestations, interior property issues, and other property issues. Below is a chart of the various violations opened in 2023.



Court Action

When property owners fail to comply with City Ordinances, it becomes necessary to file criminal zoning charges in Municipal Court. Five cases were filed in 2023, three cases were carried over from 2022, and two cases were carried over from 2021. To date, seven of the cases have received a guilty verdict, two have been dismissed by the Prosecution due to compliance, and one is still pending a final pre-trial. This department reserves filing criminal charges as a last resort after all efforts to achieve compliance have been exhausted.

Special Projects



Continuing the work from 2021, the “Clean-Up Wilmington” program started by this department has continued to address littering, dumping and other blight, while working with other departments, agencies, donors, and volunteers. Since April of 2021, 520 volunteers have removed 424 bags of litter from Downtown Wilmington and surrounding areas.

This year, Clean-Up Wilmington also started a Community Service Program for those assigned to mandatory hours with the court system. To date 34 participants have completed 139 hours of mandatory service hours cleaning and beautifying downtown areas.

Clean-Up Wilmington 2023 By the Numbers:



Collaboration and Community Support

This year the Code Enforcement Department has been privileged to collaborate with several City and County Departments, as well as individual project donors, and volunteers:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinton County Regional Planning/ Land Bank• Clinton County Juvenile Court Community Service Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wilmington Fire Department• Wilmington Sanitation Department• Wilmington Street Department• Sugartree |
|---|--|

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinton County Solid Waste and Recycling District • Clinton County Prosecutor's Office • Clinton County Treasurer's Office • City Prosecutor's Office • Clinton County Dog Warden • Wilmington Police & Communications Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugartree Ministry Center • Main Street Wilmington • Clean-Up Wilmington Volunteers • Amazon Air • Wilmington College • Clinton County Visitor's Bureau
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Without the support of these departments, agencies, donors, and volunteers, this year's progress and success would not have been possible. A big thank you to all the willing volunteers who have participated in our clean-up activities, "Many hands make light work"!

Looking forward to continued success and collaboration in 2024.

Annen Vance, Code Enforcement Official