

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS  
AGENDA ITEM  
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM**

**DEPARTMENT:** Fire

**AGENDA DATE:** July 31, 2012

**CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER:** Otto Drozd III, Fire Chief: 485-5605

**DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED:** 1

**SUBJECT:**

**APPROVE a resolution / ordinance / lease to do what? OR AUTHORIZE the City Manager to do what? Be descriptive of what we want Council to approve. Include \$ amount if applicable.**

Review and discussion on the Downtown Risk Assessment as conducted by the El Paso Fire Department, Fire Marshal's Office and presentation of findings by the Environmental Services Code Enforcement Division.

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:**

**Discussion of the what, why, where, when, and how to enable Council to have reasonably complete description of the contemplated action. This should include attachment of bid tabulation, or ordinance or resolution if appropriate. What are the benefits to the City of this action? What are the citizen concerns?**

Presentation of findings of the Downtown inspections conducted by the Fire Marshal's Office and the Code Enforcement Division of environmental Services.

**PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one?**

N/A

**AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

**How will this item be funded? Has the item been budgeted? If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer?**

N/A

**BOARD / COMMISSION ACTION:**

**Enter appropriate comments or N/A**

N/A

\*\*\*\*\*REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION\*\*\*\*\*

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

*(If Department Head Summary Form is initiated by Purchasing, client department should sign also)*

CITY CLERK DEPT.  
2012 JUL 23 PM 4:33

*Information copy to appropriate Deputy City Manager*

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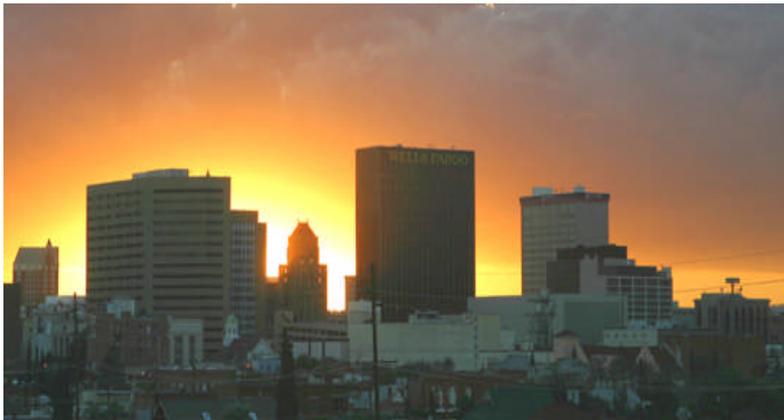
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# City of El Paso, Texas Downtown Risk Assessment

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City Council  
Meeting  
July 31, 2012



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# Downtown Risk Assessment Presentation Agenda

- Background
- Methodology
- Results
- Recommendations
- Next Steps
- Questions and Comments





# Background

## Hardin Building Structure Fire April 19, 2012

### •Challenges

- Access - Fuel Load - Inspections
- Building Systems





# Background

## Hardin Building Structure Fire April 19, 2012

### •Fire Cause Determination

- Size and Intensity
- Building Collapse





# Methodology

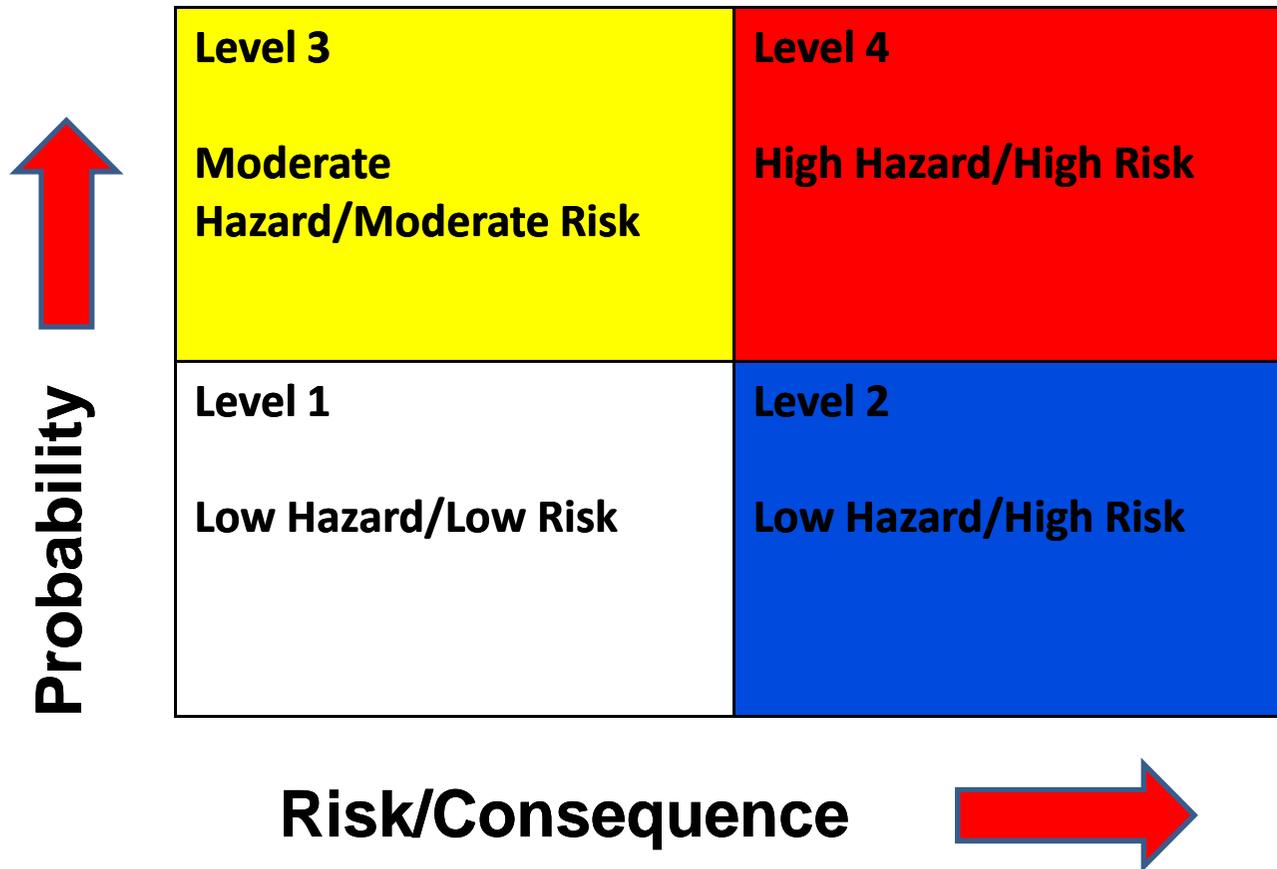
## ● Risk Based Evaluation

- Hazards : fire potential or other life safety concern
- Risk : potential for significant loss in case of a fire emergency



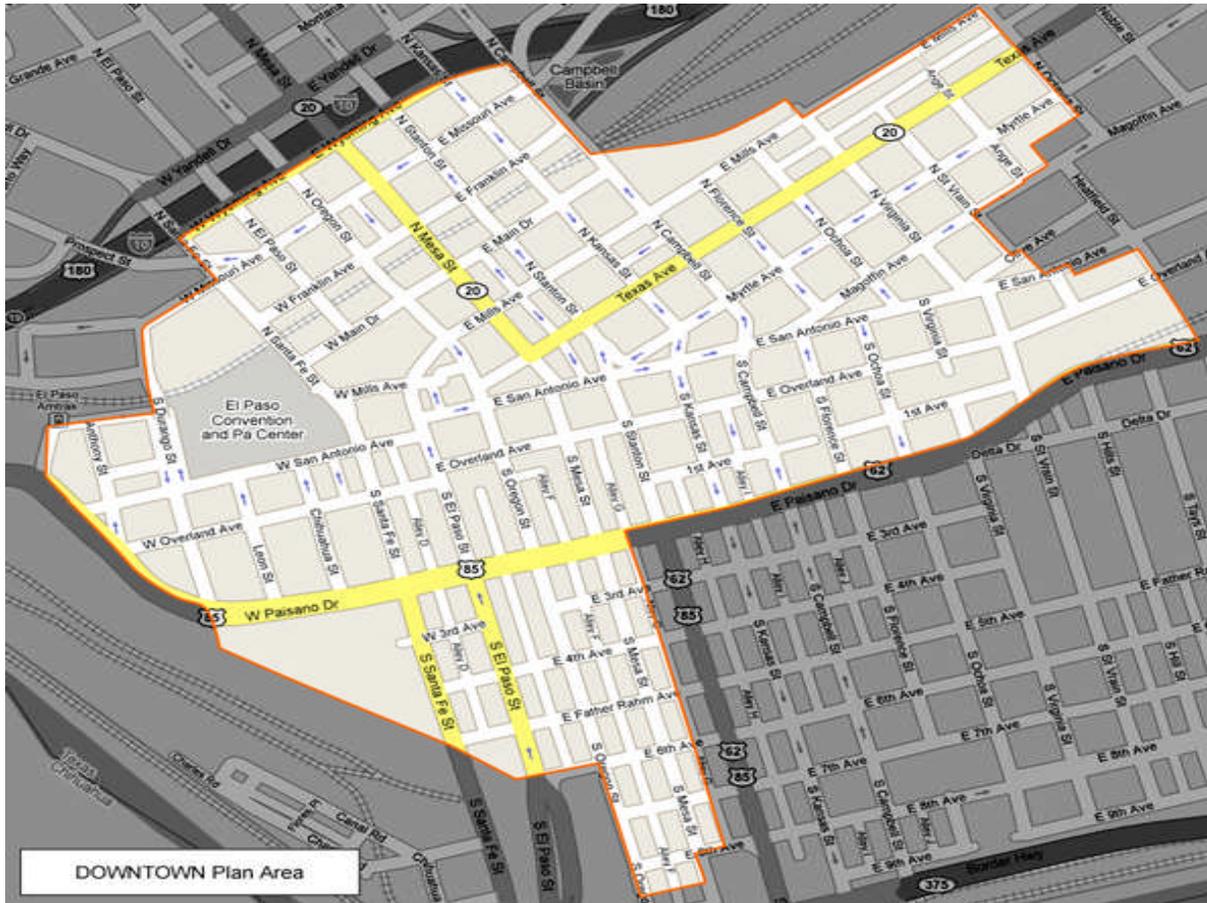


# Methodology





# Methodology





# Results

## ● Building Age

- Positive: built with strong elements and solid barrier walls between structures.
- Negative: maintenance and some original structural elements deteriorated or missing.
- Codes not generally retroactive





# Results

- **Proximity/Density**

- Closer buildings, greater fire spread potential

- **Tenant Related**

- Unintended uses





# Results

- **Structural Issues**



300 San Antonio



329 N. Stanton





# Results

- **Structural Deterioration**



112 N. Stanton



315 S. El Paso



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# Results

- **Construction Breach**



603 S El Paso



306 Overland





# Results

- **Tenant Issues – Unapproved Construction**



401 Santa Fe

410 S. El Paso





# Results

- **Structural and Tenant Issues**



118 E San Antonio



1001 Myrtle



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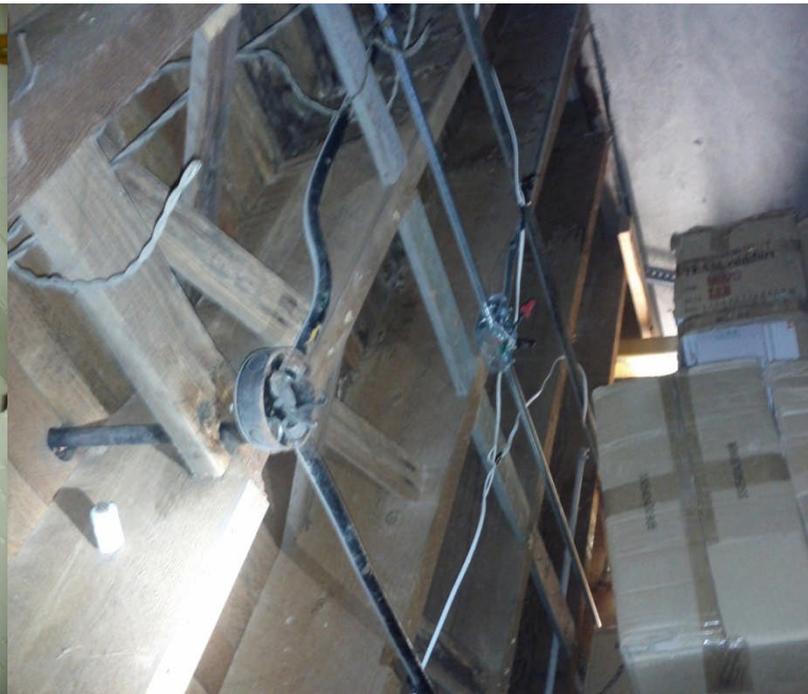


# Results

- **Electrical Issues**



400 San Antonio



326 S. El Paso



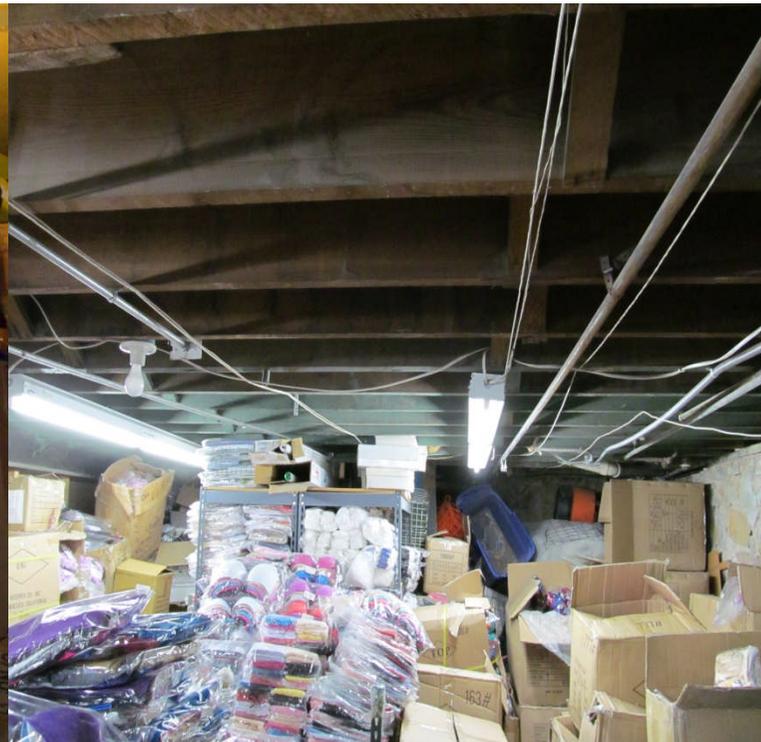


# Results

- Storage Issues



603 S El Paso



702 S El Paso





# Results

## Level 4 – High Hazard/High Risk

- There were 7 structures that had 20 total violations noted that required IMMEDIATE corrective action.

Examples:

- Improper electrical
- Obstructed emergency egress
- Locked exit doors



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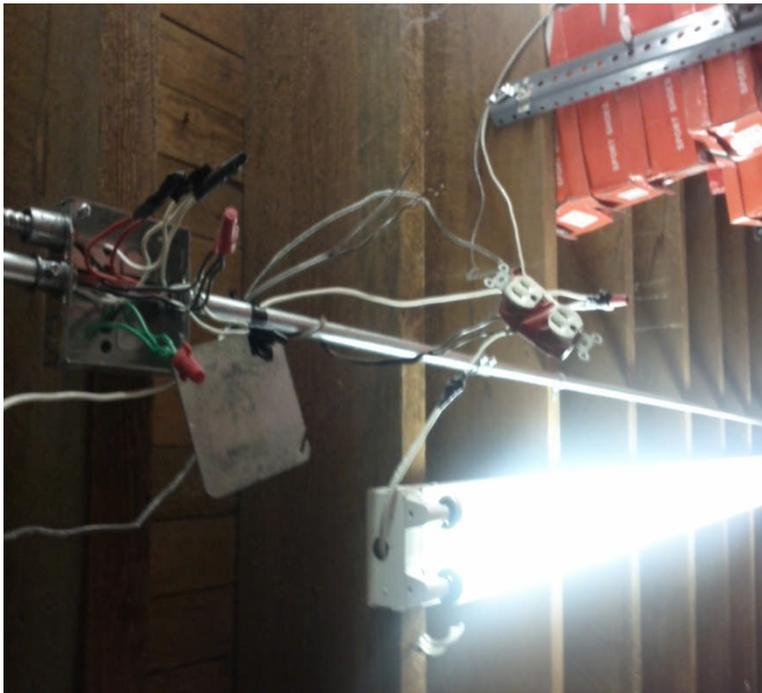
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# Results

## Level 4 – High Hazard/High Risk



326 S. El Paso



116 S. Stanton



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# Results

**Level 4 – High Hazard/High Risk**



201 E 9th





# Results

## Level 3 – Moderate Hazard/Moderate Risk

Violations for which there is a current code provision in place to address the issue.

There were 190 level 3 structures.

- Electrical
- Egress
- Storage
- Fire-related systems
- Access
- Occupancy



**Most prevalent violations**



# Results

## Level 3 – Moderate Hazard/Moderate Risk



300 E. San Antonio



400 San Antonio



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# Results

## Level 3 – Moderate Hazard/Moderate Risk



300 San Antonio



706 S El Paso





# Results

## Level 2 – Low Hazard/High Risk

Level 2 indicates that the structure is code compliant at time of construction, but wouldn't be under newer code

\*Code compliant but with identified risk which could lead to significant loss.

Alternatively, change of use may cause non-compliance

Certificate of Occupancy issues





# Results

## Level 2 – Low Hazard/High Risk

The primary issues with Level 2 structures are:

**Sprinkler systems not required**

Rated separations not in place

Secondary egress needs

Large fire loads

Unprotected paths of fire growth

No fire protection system requirements

How the code may apply to these buildings

- Adaptive Reuse
- Change of use





# Results

## Level 2 – Low Hazard/High Risk

Commonly found concerns in buildings that fall under “existing building” provisions.

**Unsprinklered basements or areas** that would require them under current provisions (12,000 sq.ft. storage/mercantile floor areas).

**Unprotected vertical enclosures:** stairwells, elevator shafts, pipe chases

**Inadequate secondary egress:** particularly in high rise occupancies.



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# Results

**Level 2 – Low Hazard/High Risk**



317 E Mills



317 E Mills





# Results

## Level 1 – Low Hazard/Low Risk

There were 348 Level 1 Structures: currently code compliant.

There were 112 vacant buildings identified. This means vacant as of the date of the inspection, not necessarily vacant per the ordinance definition.





# Results

## Code Compliance Summary

<b>Level 3</b>  <b>-190 – 26%</b>  <b>Moderate Hazard/Moderate Risk</b>	<b>Level 4</b>  <b>-7 – 1%</b> <b>(20 violations)</b>  <b>High Hazard/High Risk</b>
<b>Level 1</b>  <b>-348 – 48%</b>  <b>Low Hazard/Low Risk</b>	<b>Level 2</b>  <b>-69 – 10%</b>  <b>Low Hazard/High Risk</b>





## Code Compliance Summary

- Additionally, 112 building were assessed as vacant and need further follow up
- Of the 726 businesses assessed - 101 issues in 77 structures have been forwarded to Environmental Code Compliance and/or the Health Department for further review





# Recommendations

● **Operational Permits:** Given the hazards encountered related to excess storage of combustible merchandise one of three types of permits should be considered.

1. Mercantile Occupancy Permit
2. Miscellaneous Storage Permit
3. Central Business District Permit

Benefits: Each permit type would assure annual inspections and address common issues of storage, housekeeping, electrical, current usage, etc.





## Recommendations

● **Certificates of Occupancy:** Require all businesses city wide to have a **current certificate of occupancy**. A current certificate of occupancy will provide for the appropriate application of the applicable code.

● **Level 2 Structures:** These structures represent one of the greatest risks to the community and represent a segment of occupancies that we currently have no ability to address.

Options:

1. Continue to apply existing provisions and classify them as an acceptable level of community risk
2. Require Compliance with life safety provisions of the current code to designed to reduce risk of significant loss (sprinkler systems, fire rated construction).
3. Require an operational permit that would provide for annual inspections by all building services.





# Recommendations

Internally, the El Paso Fire Department will undertake:

- Suppression crew refresher training for building hazards
- Suppression crew training for coordinating state-certified building inspections
- Greater suppression crew coordination with fire prevention inspectors for risk assessment and pre-planning emergencies





## Next Steps

- Provide for stakeholder meetings over the next 30 to 45 days
- Develop draft ordinances based on staff recommendations and stakeholder input 30 to 60 days
- Implement internal refresher training for Operations personnel
- Present formal recommendation i.e. draft Legislation to Council within 90 days.



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# Questions and Comments

