

DPD proposal—Rental Housing Registration and Inspection Program

Program Implementation

Start-up and Outreach

- DPD develops program tools (staffing, computer tools, outreach materials, rule making, etc.)
- Community outreach program in advance of registration program
- DPD partners with community based organizations to provide landlord-tenant education

Registration

- All properties with rental units, as defined by Ordinance, must be registered
- Registration program implemented over three years to manage process to identify and register approximately 42,000 rental properties, and in excess of 147,000 rental units
- Registration requires an application by a property owner supported by their declaration that all rental units on subject property meet certain housing code standards
- City issues registration; provides basis for City-maintained database documenting location, ownership, number and general condition of rental units
- Registration fee generates revenue to fund and sustain program (including community education, inspections, and relocation assistance)
- Existing complaint-based system and civil warrant program not altered with this program

Inspections

- Ordinance currently requires all properties to be inspected prior to receiving authorization to rent units; allows for random selection of 20% of rental units on a property to meet requirement
- Proposal would tailor inspections to:
 - * properties with history of violations,
 - * properties subject to a complaint after registration
 - * randomly selected properties from a to-be-determined number of all rental properties
- Either third-party inspections or DPD staff available for randomly selected properties; DPD will conduct inspections on properties with a history of violations
- Random inspections to begin after end of three-year registration start up;
- Inspections target same housing code elements in adopted ordinance; proposal expands list to add additional habitability, safety and security standards

Enforcement and Monitoring

- When unit fails inspection, owner has 60 days to bring into compliance; additional time is available
- If compliance is not achieved, or owner fails to address deficiencies, and a registration is revoked, a unit is not eligible for rental
- Civil fines may be imposed when properties are rented without a valid registration and required inspection or when declaration is found to be inaccurate, incorrect or fraudulent
- DPD to audit both property owner declarations and third party inspections to
 - * Highlight patterns with code deficiencies
 - * Evaluate effectiveness of declaration
 - * Promote quality and consistency of third-party inspections

Program Goals

- City builds a record of all property owners that rent units
- City can get better information on the extent to which there are illegal and substandard rental properties
- City develops reliable information on the location and extent of rental housing by neighborhood; useful for long-range planning initiatives
- Greater equity in housing: fewer Seattle residents live in substandard housing
- Jobs creation through private inspection industry
- Deterrent effect of inspections improves Seattle housing stock rapidly; creates incentives for owners to implement best property management practices
- Self-sustaining, revenue-neutral program—registration fees fund the program
- Revenue generated for emergency relocation assistance, which prevents homelessness in event that unit must be vacated

YR 1

start up

YR 2

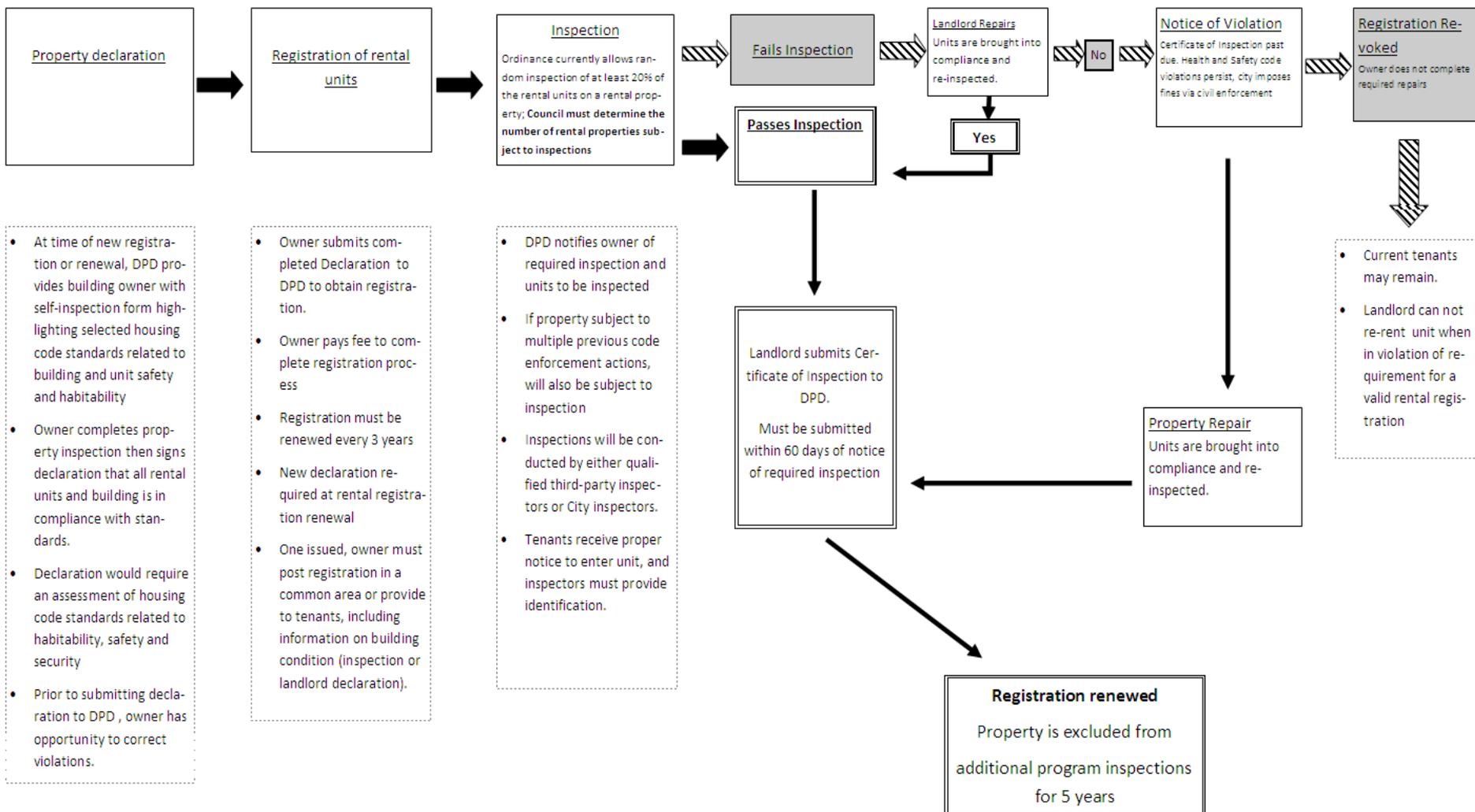
Target properties with 3 or more

YR 3-4

Target properties with 1-2 units

YR 4 and on

DPD proposal—registration of a rental property



- At time of new registration or renewal, DPD provides building owner with self-inspection form highlighting selected housing code standards related to building and unit safety and habitability
- Owner completes property inspection then signs declaration that all rental units and building is in compliance with standards.
- Declaration would require an assessment of housing code standards related to habitability, safety and security
- Prior to submitting declaration to DPD, owner has opportunity to correct violations.

- Owner submits completed Declaration to DPD to obtain registration.
- Owner pays fee to complete registration process
- Registration must be renewed every 3 years
- New declaration required at rental registration renewal
- One issued, owner must post registration in a common area or provide to tenants, including information on building condition (inspection or landlord declaration).

- DPD notifies owner of required inspection and units to be inspected
- If property subject to multiple previous code enforcement actions, will also be subject to inspection
- Inspections will be conducted by either qualified third-party inspectors or City inspectors.
- Tenants receive proper notice to enter unit, and inspectors must provide identification.

- Current tenants may remain.
- Landlord can not re-rent unit when in violation of requirement for a valid rental registration

Proposed rental housing registration and inspection program

All rental properties must be registered and owners must provide a declaration that adopted housing standards are met

Rental properties subject to inspections by third party or City staff

DPD audits both owner declaration and inspections