A Task Force with Teeth?

Driving City Performance in Lawrence, MA

LISA COX, JORRIT DE JONG, ALEX GREEN, AND WARREN DENT

After we had a fire last summer, which displaced about 55 to 60 people, I brought every bureaucrat involved in housing and processing into a meeting, and I said, 'We could have stopped this fire.' Which is true, because it was one building . . . that took down three multi-family units. And it was a day from going before court to get demolished. What's a day to somebody sitting behind a desk?

- Daniel Rivera, Mayor of Lawrence, Massachusetts, May 2017 Presentation

In May 2017, Mayor Daniel Rivera of the City of Lawrence, Massachusetts sat in his City Hall office preparing for his weekly meeting with the distressed properties task force he had established one year earlier. The task force convened to discuss a growing list of properties including substandard housing, vacant lots, and abandoned buildings. Aside from Mayor Rivera and his chief of staff, the group included representatives from departments for inspectional services, business and economic development, community development, treasury, legal, police, and fire. Tackling problem properties was a priority for the mayor: the task force meetings were one of only three standing meetings on his calendar.

Rivera's campaign platform had not included a pledge to address distressed properties, but when he took office, the mayor quickly discovered that blight was at the nexus of many interconnected problems facing the city. Data showed that problem properties posed a number of public safety risks, including an increased risk of fire—especially dangerous in a densely populated city. Sixty fires were recorded in Lawrence in 2016, more than 9 percent of which took place at distressed properties, presenting double the risk of non-distressed properties. In addition, abandoned properties were havens for drug-related crime and prostitution.[1] And, they were typically eyesores—a single distressed property could decrease real estate values on a block by thousands of dollars.[2] Many distressed properties were also behind on their taxes, resulting in lost revenue for the city. By combatting blight, Rivera had a real chance at improving life for the residents of Lawrence.

The mayor took a quick look at the task force agenda: a long list of addresses, names, problems, actions taken, and unresolved issues. Many were familiar because they had been discussed in previous meetings. Rivera worried that as usual, the task force would not get through the entire list within the scheduled ninety minutes. In fact, only 11 percent of the distressed properties on the list had been resolved since Rivera became mayor. Frustrated by the slow progress, he had grown to dread the meetings. "It's the most painful meeting I have," he sighed.[3]

The meetings were no picnic for Rivera's staff, either. As the mayor went down the list asking for updates, many felt put on the spot, unable to present the results he wanted to see. Resolving distressed properties was a slow, expensive, and complicated process over which the city had limited control. To move forward with demolition or rehabilitation, the city often depended on other entities, including courts and banks, to make its case for taking action. The resources and time required to deal with all properties on the list vastly over-extended the mayor's team.

The problem was not just the list, though. The mayor felt that within his City Hall, there was significant room for improvement. The task force members, each of whom represented different departments, needed to learn to streamline the process, share information, and coordinate actions. Rivera did not have much confidence that the group would do this by themselves. He had tried to reduce his own attendance at the meetings so that he could remain at a high level and not get bogged down in details. But according to the mayor, it did not work: "I came back, and absolutely nothing had happened."

Raised in Lawrence, Rivera felt he owed it to the community to address the issue of distressed properties as best he could, but he could barely hide his frustration. As he prepared for the weekly meeting, he commented, "It feels like cooking a meal with someone else's hands and without the right ingredients. And still, everyone expects it to come out well."

Inside Lawrence, Massachusetts

Located twenty-five miles from Boston near the New Hampshire border (see Appendix 1 for map), Lawrence, Massachusetts was termed the "Ellis Island of the Merrimack Valley" because of its ethnic diversity.[4] The city was a "once-bustling mill city whose flourishing factories attracted immigrants from all over the world."[5] In 1912, its textile workers were credited with having increased mill wages throughout New England after organizing one of the largest strikes in the country, involving 23,000 workers.[6] But many of the textile mills closed in the post-World War II industrial decline of the 1950s.[7] By the twenty-first century, the local economy still had not recovered, but there were sporadic signs of renewal, such as a redeveloped river walk with mixed-use properties of loft apartments and retail. The 2008 financial crisis hit the city especially hard, and in 2009, unemployment reached 16.6 percent.[8] In 2014, one columnist wrote that Lawrence was "a troubled underdog, where unemployment is high, the schools are in receivership, and drugs are a constant problem."[9]

Figures from 2015 showed the median household income in Lawrence was nearly half the state average, and the high school graduation rate was more than 20 percent under the state average.[10] Three-quarters of the city's 80,209 residents were Hispanic (compared to under 10 percent in Massachusetts),[11] and the population had grown 22 percent from 1980 to 2012, although only 494 housing units were built over the same period.[12]

Several interconnected issues resulted in distressed properties in Lawrence. The city had a high poverty rate (28.4 percent in 2015, compared to 11.5 percent statewide),[13] and 53.5 percent of households lived in unaffordable housing, according to affordability estimates by the census.[14]

Many residents struggled to maintain their properties and make mortgage payments, which led them to abandon buildings or foreclosure, leaving properties deteriorating across the city.

Other issues attributed to poverty were overcrowding and tenants leaving their homes without paying the last two months' rent, resulting in high turnover of occupancy and a volatile, transient community of renters. Old housing stock was another issue. Over half of Lawrence's housing was built prior to World War II and 83 percent was built before 1980,[15] resulting in high maintenance costs. Finally, crime, often drug-related, was thought to be both a cause and a consequence of vacant, dilapidated, or otherwise neglected buildings in the city.

Distressed properties spanned a range of physical conditions and legal situations. For example, dramatically named "zombie foreclosures" were buildings abandoned by the owner before officially being repossessed, meaning that the property lingered in legal limbo until ownership could be reestablished. Other problem properties simply did not comply with zoning laws. For example, overcrowded properties exceeding the legal limits of occupancy might have contained added walls and locked interior doors to increase the number of sleeping quarters in a unit while breaking zoning laws and blocking egress in the case of fire. Problem properties could have been in good physical condition but foreclosed upon or in deteriorating condition with high resale potential—or anywhere in between.

Lawrence's dense population (more than 12,000 residents per square mile)[16] made neighborhoods vulnerable to being affected by just one abandoned building on a street, reducing property values, fire safety, and general quality of life in an area.

Mayor Daniel Rivera

Mayor Rivera, who had lived in Lawrence most of his life, had firsthand experience with the city's conditions. He and his three siblings were raised by a single mother from the Dominican Republic. They lived in public housing and subsisted partly on food stamps. Rivera gained early leadership skills with the Boy Scouts and was the first college graduate in his family. He joined the US Army and served in operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield. Upon returning to Massachusetts, he earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst on the GI Bill and then later, working nights and weekends, earned his MBA from Suffolk University.

Rivera served as a city councilman in Lawrence for four years, beginning in 2010. In 2012 he served as Elizabeth Warren's senior statewide advisor on Latino affairs during her successful bid for US Senate. In November 2013, Rivera defeated his predecessor William Lantigua—a state legislator whose four-year mayoral reign was dogged by headlines of corruption, political struggles, and accusations of nepotism, according to *The Boston Globe*—by eighty-one votes.[17] [18] Soon after, Lantigua supporters made two attempts to petition a recall election; both failed.

Rivera was not surprised by the opposition he faced in the city. He was a new, energetic, businesslike mayor driving an agenda of change and accountability for performance. Explaining the recall attempts, he said at the time, "You make people pay taxes, you hold people

accountable for their job, you expect people work at a higher standard—you change the way people do business in the city for a long time, this is expected. It makes people very scared."[19]

A state fiscal overseer said of Rivera, "He's certainly willing to have discussions and get away from the old 'this is how we do things.'"[20] A former interim police chief commented, "He's a hands-on mayor and holds people who work for him accountable."[21] Although elected to lead a city facing enormous challenges, Rivera remained optimistic, saying on the day he took office, "We're supposed to leave stuff better than we found it. We're not going to duck big problems."[22]

Early in his term, Rivera committed to "clean house" in City Hall. Within six months, he had hired a new comptroller, planning director, and business development director, and he put the former deputy police chief—who had stopped working in 2012, when he was indicted for multiple corruption charges—on unpaid leave.[23] Rivera was a self-proclaimed subscriber to Stanford University business professor Jim Collins' theory, outlined in his book *Good to Great*, that "leaders of companies that go from good to great start . . . with 'who.' They start by getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats."

The Distressed Properties Task Force

In the case of the distressed properties task force, Collins' theory turned out to be more difficult to apply. Hiring more people was impossible due to a lack of resources and firing people was difficult because of an abundance of constraints. The mayor tried to make a difference with what he had. Rivera reflected, "If I could hire maybe four additional real estate experts, including dedicated attorneys and inspection people, I could tell them just to focus on this and get it done. But to piece together resources to address this with just what I have—I feel like I can't do what I'm supposed to do." He quipped, "The biggest lie in America is 'You're the mayor, you can do what you want.'"

When Rivera took office, Lawrence had two main task forces related to processing distressed properties: one for receivership[i] and one for tax-title[ii] properties. (See Appendix 2 for a timeline.) In general, problem properties were flagged through calls or emails to the city, comments made to the mayor, or when noticed by a city government employee. Different departments had different definitions for distressed properties.

Data were kept by separate departments and stored in documents ranging from electronic spreadsheets to paper records. Each property was addressed on a case-by-case basis, and priorities varied by department. For example: The inspection services department prioritized the conditions of inhabited properties; the department of community and economic development prioritized uninhabited properties and properties that could provide high tax revenues; the fire department was interested in properties posing the largest fire risk; the police department

---

[i] Receivership occurred when a company or individual was given custodial rights over a building or parcel of land with the aim of rehabilitating the property for sale.

[ii] Tax-title was a claim of city ownership, subject to the right to redeem (i.e., the owner could pay off delinquent taxes within six months). The city could take ownership of a property by starting a foreclosure process in court.

prioritized properties that generated the most citizen complaints; and the legal department focused on properties that were in court.

Progress was measured by sharing status updates on properties that were either in receivership or in the tax-title process. The task forces' performance was informally evaluated in terms of the ability to get through the list of problem properties before the end of the fiscal year. Each year, the task forces were able to address half a dozen properties that had generated the most calls or problems. Abel Vargas, director of business and economic development, said, "At first I thought that if we could just up that to one property a month, twelve per year, that would be a huge win for us."[24]

Becoming More Data Driven

If the city was going to resolve more properties and act more swiftly upon detecting problems, they quickly realized they would need better data. External support was enlisted to gather information and enhance the capacity to identify problem properties and track progress of the city's response.[iii] The database that tracked problem properties was called the distressed properties tracker. "The tracker was basically a 'souped up' spreadsheet available in a shared drive so more people could access it," said Vargas. Their hope was to coordinate actions taken by each department, shifting from reactive to proactive decision-making, and allocating resources more effectively and efficiently. This would be accomplished by aggregating and analyzing data to increase knowledge and reduce the number of problem properties.

To begin populating the tracker with useful information, a standard definition of a distressed property was agreed upon: "a physically distressed residential property that cost more than one city department excessive resources."[25] These resources might be multiple inspectional services calls, police calls for service, or excessive taxes owed. It was also a problem property if it endangered the health and safety of residents, such as containing excessive trash. The tracker aimed to include all properties that posed serious problems, were neglected, foreclosed, undergoing the tax-title process, were frequent topics of police calls, or were in receivership. To that end, the tracker collected data on forty-one areas of interest per property. (See Appendix 3 for a list.) More and more properties were identified, totaling 633 problem properties by the end of 2016 (representing nearly 5 percent of the city's total properties).[23] While the task force had made changes to its process, it had also multiplied its workload by a factor of ten.

In 2016, Rivera merged the tax-title and receivership task forces into one that was dedicated specifically to distressed properties, and he demanded improvements to the working process. He tried to instill a sense of urgency, but he still felt the team lacked the ability to steam ahead toward a common goal. His outrage about the city's fragmented and slow response to problem properties reached fever pitch in August 2016 when a massive fire at a distressed property, which was to have gone before court the next day to approve its demolition, displaced dozens of people. He decided enough was enough. "That's when I really saw that the stakes were high and

---

[iii] A team of Harvard graduate students working in the Innovation Field Lab helped with data cleaning, analyses, and process improvements.

the gains were great," said Rivera. The mayor underlined how seriously he took the issue by personally leading the weekly meetings.

Overwhelmed by the large number of distressed properties on their list, the task force mostly reacted to pressing problems. Much of the dreaded meetings were spent reviewing properties from a shorter list of properties that had been prioritized based first on anecdotal evidence, and then on a scoring system that incorporated, among other categories: fire hazard, vacancy, abandonment, whether it was connected to another building, and whether it had been the subject of constituent or councilperson calls. (See Appendix 4 for a screenshot of the prioritized list.) The group generally discussed status updates and next steps. On average, the tracker data showed that it took 634 days to resolve a distressed property.

Some on the task force found collaborating difficult. "We had to excommunicate some people, because they were ineffective and never prepared," said Rivera. The city's attorney, Charles Boddy, noted that "in between meetings, communication is lacking" and departments took actions on a property without notifying others or updating the tracker. Despite the common overall goal of reducing blight, each department had a stake in a different aspect of the process. Duplication of efforts and an overburdening of certain productive players ensued.[24] Additionally, if key players—such as the city attorney or the head of inspection—were absent from a meeting, major backlogs and inaction resulted. Task force members felt understaffed for the magnitude of the problem in front of them, one too big to get their hands around.

To keep people accountable, the mayor preferred to oversee all decision-making with respect to individual properties. "Very little gets pushed unless I'm in the room," he said. Evelyn Urena of the community development department described Rivera's management style: "He's very driven. He doesn't like waiting; he just wants results. He will push and push until you say, 'OK, it's done.'"[26] Vargas said of Rivera's leadership position, "Being mayor in Lawrence requires a big personality. You have to communicate, inspire, motivate, and put on pressure."

Some task force members said that along with the mayor's strong involvement, other motivating factors were at play that had been leading to some progress. Urena said in the spring of 2017, "I think everyone is really into the distressed properties issue now. People are more prepared for meetings. At first, if the mayor wasn't there, everyone would drag their feet. But now people will assign themselves things. Everyone has homework after the meeting. I think it's because a lot of people in the room are from Lawrence, and they drive around, see the properties that have been rehabilitated, and citizens call and say they are so happy a property on their street was cleaned up. It inspires us."

Eileen O'Connor Bernal, chief of staff to the mayor, said, "Now that there are representatives from more departments, like the fire and police departments, we have more comradery, especially for tough interventions when you might need to confront a landlord or tenants. Going on a building inspection is hard with just one person. But when you have the police and the fire departments and a whole team behind you, you feel there are new ways to approach a problem and make progress."[27]

For example, one problem property—a mansion from the turn of the century that had been divided into four units—was in disrepair. The owner, who lived in a well-maintained single-family home across the street, owed $30,000 in back taxes. "We went the receivership route," said Vargas, "and it was a big victory. Now it's fully rehabbed, caught up on taxes, looking great, and is fully occupied with new tenants."

There was little doubt about the mayor's demands for performance, but there were few explicit metrics for success besides resolving cases as quickly as possible. Unofficially, a staff member's failure to deliver could result in embarrassment in front of the other task force members, but few repercussions for underperformance existed. O'Connor Bernal said, "Once we learn more about what works and what doesn't, new metrics will emerge to help manage performance of the task force moving forward. It's not as simple as getting the list to zero. With the age of the housing stock in Lawrence, new properties pop up all the time."

Although valuable city data were being collected, they were still largely in disparate locations. For example, permitting data, court updates, the fire incident reports, and inspection violations were all gathered by different departments. (See Appendix 5.) Furthermore, the datasets were not mapped or otherwise connected to one another. At the weekly task force meetings, attempts at analysis were made, and a member of the task force would toggle between screens on a computer in real time, pulling up photos that the inspection services department had taken, Google maps for locations, and the tax assessor's website, depending on which property in the tracker was being discussed.

A Way Forward?

During his first term, Rivera had put blight on the agenda, restructured and refocused the task force, and made it more data driven. From the deeper integration of departmental perspectives, more preparedness in meetings, and broader support for tough interventions, the city's task force efforts had become slightly more efficient and effective. Still, a giant leap in productivity had not occurred yet, and the workload had become bigger as more of the 'iceberg' had become visible. (See Appendix 6.)

While progress had been made, it was not enough. Rivera still dreaded the weekly task force meeting, and as he prepared for yet another, he collected his thoughts. He knew that resolving problem properties would move the needle in half a dozen policy-interest areas, including public safety, crime reduction, poverty reduction, and economic development. Success in any of these areas would help improve the quality of life for residents, build community, restore trust in government, increase tax revenues, and save government expenditures. And, of course, it would not hurt his chances of re-election. But he was frustrated by the slow resolution time of nearly two years per property, and he worried that the problem was bigger than it needed to be because landlords were undeterred by a city government that moved so slowly.

Rivera believed that if he pressed hard and held his staff accountable for their actions, this would result in a more competent, swift and aggressive task force that would "instill the fear of God" in non-compliant property owners. Still, despite his tireless efforts, he felt that the cases where the

city had been most effective were mostly because of luck. "Every once in a while, luck breaks our way, and we're prepared to take advantage of it," he said of resolved properties.

Big questions remained: If the city would just keep improving data-quality and task force efficiency under relentless supervision of the mayor, would they eventually get through the list of existing problem properties or would it always remain a Sisyphean task?[iv] Had they really done all they could to reduce blight and the chances of another major fire, or were there opportunities they were not seeing?

Rivera wished he did not have to get in the weeds as much as he did, but at the same time, he saw no other way to galvanize the task force to make progress. He took a deep breath before walking into the room. "I know everyone hates this meeting," he said to himself.

As the task force members assembled, shuffling papers, Rivera looked at the tracker-generated list and called the group to order. "2216 Elm Street,"[v] he said in a commanding voice, "What's going on?"

[iv] In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was known for rolling a large boulder up a hill only to have it roll back down again.
[v] Address has been changed to anonymize data.

Appendices

Appendix 1   Map of Lawrence
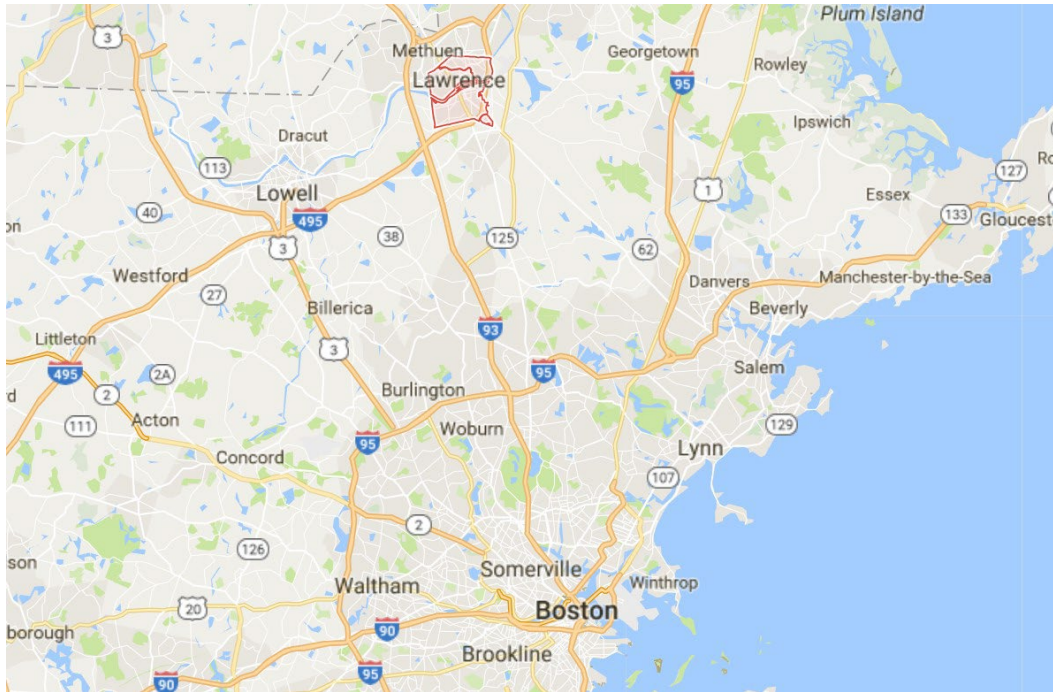
Source: Google Maps

Appendix 2   Timeline of Distressed Properties Task Force

Date	Action
January 2014	Rivera takes office. Distressed properties are addressed by two different task forces: • the tax-title task force (which included the finance director, treasury, legal, land use planning, business and economic development, and the mayor's office), and • the receivership task force (which included thecommunity development department and the mayor's chief of staff
Summer 2015	The community development department, with outside assistance, builds and populates a distressed properties tracker from across city departments to prioritize and track city action.
August 2016	Serious fire spurs urgency for mayor to resolve distressed properties more quickly.
Summer 2016	Rivera calls for creation of an overarching distressed properties task force (including business and economic development, community development, inspectional services, treasury, legal, police, and fire).
May 2017	Mayor is frustrated by lack of progress.

Source: City of Lawrence

Appendix 3   Data Collected for each Property within the Distressed Property Tracker

- Census Track
- Property ID Number
- St. Number
- St. Name
- Unit Number
- Description
- Owner
- Owner Type
- Registered
- Registry Date
- Petition Foreclose Date
- Affidavit Date
- Foreclosed Date
- Foreclosure Book Page
- Deed Date
- Community Development Dept. Research Notes

- Community Development Dept. Inspected
- Community Development Dept. Insp. Date
- Occupancy Status
- Inspection Status
- Community Development Dept. Insp. Notes
- Only Bad House on St. (y/n)
- Next to City Owned Property (y/n)
- Near School (y/n)
- Citizen Complaint (y/n)
- Police Calls
- Zero Water
- Zero Water Date

- Inspection Services Dept. Inspected
- Inspection Services Dept. Insp. Date
- Code Violations
- Fire Damage
- Tax Title
- Land Court
- Receivership
- Neighborhood Impact Score
- Total Score
- Status
- Next Steps
- Neighborhood
- Date Added
- Date Updated
- Days to Resolve

Source: City of Lawrence

Appendix 4 Spreadsheet Used to Guide Task Force Meetings

ADDRESS	NEIGHBOR-HOOD	HOUSING TYPE	OWNER	REQUIRED ACTION	STATUS	TRACK
1 Nightingale Ct	Tower Hill	Single	John Doe/ Joe Smith	Receivership petition to be filed due to drug activity	Petition ready to be filed on 5/1/17	Receivership
2 Arlington St	Arlington	Multi	Jean Doe/ Bob Brown	Lane to check with Jose on request letter to appear in front of board of health	Brian to draft petition to have ready for after the board of health meeting on 5/2/17	Receivership
3-4-5 Maple St	Arlington	Multi	Bill White	ISD-Demand letter to be sent for receivership; tickets continue being sent; court target 3/1/17; specific violations provided for legal	Gill ask for status report from Paul Bellweather to clarify permits and demo recommendation	Receivership
6 Holly St	Prospect Hill	Single	City of Lawrence	RFP June/July 2017; redemption period to expire 8/2/2017	Personal property in storage; constable to provide list of items; surplus to be declared and RFP prepared $44,507.65	RFP
7 Haverhill St	No Common		Rose Whitney	Receivership petition after response from BKRT Court	Fire lien recorded; motion for relief filed 5/1/17; trustee from bankruptcy onboard to sell property to third party $14,824.24	Receivership
8 Union St	So Common	Multi	Yin La/Jim Martin		Motion from receiver to buy property denied by court; must come up with different strategy $88,154.41	Receivership
9 Park St	Arlington	Single	Rebecca and Tom Powers/Bank/ Polanski Law	Receivership hearing scheduled for 4/1/2017	Bank working on short sale; follow up court date 6/1/17	Receivership
10-11 Pleasant Terr	Prospect Hill	2-family	Carlos Serrano/ Rosa Prado	Receivership motion scheduled for 4/2/2017	Owners working with broker to sell property case, continue to 6/16/17; $5,920.18	Demo
12 Beaconsfield St	Mt Vernon	Single	Saint Ignatius Properties LLC	Receivership hearing scheduled for 4/3/2017	Jose to follow up on smoke certificates and work	RFP

Source: City of Lawrence (Facts have been changed to anonymize data.)

Appendix 5   Data Sources Mined to Populate the Distressed Properties Tracker
- Citizen/neighbor and/or city official
  - Complaints and referrals
- Community Development Department
  - Windshield inspections
- Registry of Deeds, *Banker & Tradesman* (a real estate weekly publication in Massachusetts), tax assessor's office, multiple listing service (MLS), municipal website
  - Ownership information
  - Foreclosure information
  - Abandonment information
  - Tax-title properties
- Sewage and Water Department
  - Zero-meter water readings
- Inspectional Services Department
  - Code violations
- Fire Department
  - Unresolved Fire Damage
- Crime Analysis Unit Director in Police Department
  - Police service call numbers
- Legal Department
  - Land court properties
  - Receivership properties

Source: City of Lawrence

Appendix 6   General Statistics of Problem Properties in Lawrence, 2014 to 2016

	2014	**2015**	**2016**
No. of problem properties added	151	202	236
No. of properties resolved annually	5	31	30
No. of properties resolved-running total	5	36	66
No. of properties monitored	0	0	103
No. of distressed properties addressed	194	390	432
No. of properties tracked	195	397	633

Source: City of Lawrence

Endnotes

[1] Alan Mallach, *Bringing Buildings Back*, 2006, A National Housing Institute book distributed by Rutgers University Press.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, quotes by Mayor Rivera were spoken during a phone interview conducted on June 13, 2017.

[4] Jess Bidgood, "After Seeing a Dismal Reflection of Itself, a City Moves to Change," *The New York Times*, May 29, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/30/us/a-massachusetts-city-tries-to-change-its-image.html?mcubz=2, accessed June 2017.

[5] Maria Cramer, "Daniel Rivera is sworn in as Lawrence's new mayor," boston.com, January 3, 2014, https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2014/01/03/daniel-rivera-is-sworn-in-as-lawrences-new-mayor, accessed June 2017.

[6] "Lawrence Strike of 1912," Harvard University Library Open Collections Program, undated, http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/lawrencestrike.html, accessed June 2017.

[7] Joanna Weiss, "How Dan Rivera aims to reshape Lawrence," *The Boston Globe*, August 8, 2014, https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/08/07/how-dan-rivera-aims-reshape-lawrence/7fz7Wp2GqiIKk1yh0tugFL/story.html, accessed June 2017.

[8] David J. Lynch, "Labor market takes toll on industrial towns across USA," *USA Today*, July 21, 2009, accessed via Factiva in June 2017.

[9] Maria Sacchetti, "Veteran of Lawrence's lean times to take over as mayor," *The Boston Globe*, January 3, 2014, https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/01/03/lawrence-inaugurate-new-mayor-after-years-turmoil/v1pAvziXlfkT1qPhSOuaKK/story.html, accessed June 2017.

[10] QuickFacts, Lawrence City, Massachusetts, United States Census Bureau, 2015, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/IPE120215/2534550,00, accessed June 2017.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Bruce Mohl, "Lawrence facing housing crisis, report says," *CommonWealth*, August 26, 2015, https://commonwealthmagazine.org/housing/lawrence-facing-housing-crisis-report-says/, accessed June 2017.

[13] QuickFacts, Lawrence City, Massachusetts, United States Census Bureau, 2015, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/IPE120215/2534550,00, accessed June 2017.

[14] Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, Charleen Regan Consulting, Abacus Architects + Planners, "Comprehensive Housing Study, City of Lawrence, Massachusetts," August 2015, http://www.cityoflawrence.com/housing-study-2015.aspx, accessed June 2017.

[15] Bruce Mohl, "Lawrence facing housing crisis, report says," *CommonWealth*, August 26, 2015, https://commonwealthmagazine.org/housing/lawrence-facing-housing-crisis-report-says/, accessed June 2017.

[16] Jay Atkinson, "Lawrence, MA: City of the Damned," *Boston Magazine*, March 2012, http://www.bostonmagazine.com/2012/02/city-of-the-damned-lawrence-massachusetts/, accessed June 2017.

[17] Maria Sacchetti, "Veteran of Lawrence's lean times to take over as mayor", *The Boston Globe*, January 3, 2014, https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/01/03/lawrence-inaugurate-new-mayor-after-years-turmoil/v1pAvziXlfkT1qPhSOuaKK/story.html, accessed June 2017.

[18] Steven A. Rosenberg, "New Mayor Dan Rivera working to revitalize Lawrence", *The Boston Globe,* May 22, 2014, https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/north/2014/05/21/new-mayor-dan-rivera-working-revitalize-lawrence/qrzUM5t7W0Z5UUTcj6Zd6L/story.html, accessed June 2017.

[19] Adam Reilly, "Can Lawrence's Withstand another Mayoral Recall?" *WGBH News*, October 6, 2015, https://www.wgbh.org/news/post/can-lawrences-withstand-another-mayoral-recall, accessed June 2017.

[20] Bruce Mohl, "Rivera's old-school push for change," *CommonWealth Magazine*, July 7, 2015, https://commonwealthmagazine.org/politics/rivera-pushes-for-change/, accessed June 2017.

[21] Steven A. Rosenberg, "New Mayor Dan Rivera working to revitalize Lawrence", *The Boston Globe,* May 22, 2014,

https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/north/2014/05/21/new-mayor-dan-rivera-working-revitalize-lawrence/qrzUM5t7W0Z5UUTcj6Zd6L/story.html, accessed June 2017.

[22] Maria Sacchetti, "Veteran of Lawrence's lean times to take over as mayor," *The Boston Globe*, January 3, 2014,

https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/01/03/lawrence-inaugurate-new-mayor-after-years-turmoil/v1pAvziXlfkT1qPhSOuaKK/story.html, accessed June 2017.

[23] Steven A. Rosenberg, "New Mayor Dan Rivera working to revitalize Lawrence," *The Boston Globe*, May 22, 2014,

https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/north/2014/05/21/newmayordanriveraworkingrevitalizelawrence/qrzUM5t7W0Z5UUTcj6Zd6L/story.html, accessed June 8, 2017.

[24] Unless otherwise noted, quotes by Mr. Vargas were spoken during a phone interview conducted in June 20, 2017.

[25] City of Lawrence.

[26] Unless otherwise noted, quotes by Ms. Urena were spoken during a phone interview conducted in June 20, 2017.

[27] Unless otherwise noted, quotes by Ms. O'Connor Bernal were spoken during a phone interview conducted in June 2017.