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Two-day code sweep concludes in Franklin Twp.
as city works to halt illegal auto sales

INDIANAPOLIS – City of Indianapolis, Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) code inspectors today will complete a two-day enforcement sweep in Warren and Franklin Townships to crack down on illegal auto sales and educate the public about city code. City inspectors yesterday worked in Warren Township to catalog locations where illegal auto sales are taking place and began notifying property and car owners who are in violation of the city’s zoning ordinance. Today, the city will perform a similar sweep in Franklin Township.

The townships targeted for sweeps are often selected based on input from residents and community groups. These sweeps add code enforcement resources to the targeted area in addition to the regular city inspector assigned to that township.

“Over the last four years, these sweeps have been part of the city’s efforts to step-up code enforcement in our neighborhoods,” DMD Director Maury Plambeck said. “Through working with the community, the city has been able to target areas where violations are most often occurring, making these sweeps an effective tool in bringing violators into compliance.”

Car sales are only permitted on property that is zoned for that use. Sales cannot take place in the public right of way or on private property that is not zoned for auto sales.

By law, property owners can be cited and issued a $50 ticket per violation. If the owner does not come into compliance, the city can take legal action in environmental court, which can mean a fine of up to $2500 for each violation.

While citations are issued to those who refuse to comply with the code, achieving voluntary compliance is a goal in the city’s code enforcement efforts.

“We want to work with property owners whenever possible to correct any violation and bring them into compliance,” Plambeck said. “These sweeps are meant to enforce the code and also educate residents and property owners about the code.”

This year, the city has performed six other code enforcement sweeps focusing on illegal signs and transient merchants. Targeted efforts by city code enforcement inspectors will likely increase as illegal outdoor sales and sign posting activities escalate in the warmer weather.

Since taking office in 2000, Mayor Bart Peterson has made code enforcement a focus of his administration.
In cooperation with the City-County Council, the Mayor beefed up the city’s code enforcement efforts by adding inspectors and prosecutors and providing better technology.