

Topic: Abandoned Inoperable Vehicles from Nuisance Properties

Issue: Nuisance properties in unincorporated neighborhoods often contain inoperable, abandoned vehicles on their premises. Currently Lake County code enforcement staff can declare these vehicles a nuisance and levy a fine on property owners for failure to dispose of the vehicles, which are often in an advanced state of deterioration. However, the Lake County Sheriff's Office is currently prohibited from removing inoperable motor vehicles from unincorporated property without first serving notice to the property owner upon which the vehicle has been abandoned. If the vehicle owner cannot be located in cases of property vacancy, the Sheriff's Department must apply for a junking certificate from the Illinois Secretary of State prior to arranging for the abandoned vehicle's removal which may take several months.

Recommendation: Sponsor legislation providing county authority in the unincorporated areas to declare inoperable motor vehicles as "hazardous, dilapidated" motor vehicles which, under current law, would allow the Sheriff's Office to immediately remove any such vehicle upon its identification. Such authority would assist Lake County in preventing and eliminating blight in unincorporated areas through improved property maintenance tools. Such authority has been granted to the City of Chicago in previous legislation (per 65 ILCS 5/11-40-3.1) in support of its property maintenance policies.