City of Kansas City, Missouri

Docket Memo

Ordinance/Resolution #: 260498
Submitted Department/Preparer: Neighborhoods
Revised 01/30/25

Docket memos are required on all ordinances initiated by a Department Director. More information can be found in Administrative Regulation (AR) 4-1.

Executive Summary

Calling an election on August 4, 2026, for the purpose of submitting to the voters of Kansas City a question authorizing City to establish semiannual vacant property registration fees not to exceed $200.00 for chronically vacant nuisance property, $1,000.00 for vacant commercial property and $200.00 for vacant unimproved property; directing the City Clerk to notify the responsible election authorities on or before May 26, 2026; enacting the vacant property registration fees ordinance contingent upon voter approval; and recognizing this ordinance as having an accelerated effective date because it calls an election.

Discussion

The City of Kansas City currently maintains a vacant property registry to identify and monitor properties within the City that are vacant and may pose risks to public health, safety and welfare. There are currently an estimated 12,200 privately owned vacant parcels in Kansas City. Vacant properties that are left unmanaged contribute to neighborhood deterioration, depress surrounding property values, attract criminal activity, and place disproportionate burdens on adjacent property owners and the broader community. The City currently expends significant public resources periodically inspecting vacant properties to ensure compliance with applicable codes at a cost that is not currently reimbursed by property owners. In May 2025, City Council passed Resolution No. 250396, which established the Vacant Land Activation Initiative to develop recommendations for addressing vacancy across the City. One recommendation from the VLAI is to develop a vacant property registration fee system with a tiered fee structure for residential with structure, residential without structure, and commercial. Expanding registration to unimproved parcels, which makes up 87% of the total vacant parcels, closes a significant gap in the current system. The establishment of a vacant property registration fee structure will encourage owners of vacant properties to return such properties to productive use. A tiered fee structure tied to property type is designed to place a meaningful incentive on owners of larger and higher-value properties while avoiding undue financial

burden on owners of smaller residential properties. Jefferson City has an existing fee structure for vacant property registration that includes a semi-annual fee of $200 for residential structures and $1,000 for commercial structures. The Council finds it in the best interest of the City to call a special election on August 4, 2026 for the purpose of submitting this question to qualified voters of Kansas City.

Fiscal Impact

1. Is this legislation included in the adopted budget? ☐ Yes ☒ No

2. What is the funding source?
   The legislation leads to a public vote, that if passed, would generate revenue.

3. How does the legislation affect the current fiscal year?
   The legislation leads to a public vote, that if passed, would generate revenue.

4. Does the legislation have a fiscal impact in future fiscal years? Please notate the difference between one-time and recurring costs.
   This legislation allows for a public vote to approve the fee structure being proposed to support the vacant land registration program. Thus would impact next fiscal year and recurring fiscal years as these collected fees would help support a more robust ins[ection program.

5. Does the legislation generate revenue, leverage outside funding, or deliver a return on investment?
   The legislation leads to a public vote, that if passed, would generate revenue.

Office of Management and Budget Review
(OMB Staff will complete this section.)

1. This legislation is supported by the general fund. ☐ Yes ☒ No

2. This fund has a structural imbalance. ☐ Yes ☒ No

3. Account string has been verified/confirmed. ☐ Yes ☒ No

Additional Discussion (if needed)
Click or tap here to enter text.

Citywide Business Plan (CWBP) Impact

1. View the Adopted 2025-2029 Citywide Business Plan

2. Which CWBP goal is most impacted by this legislation?
   Housing and Healthy Communities (Press tab after selecting.)

3. Which objectives are impacted by this legislation (select all that apply):

   ☒ Utilize planning approaches in neighborhoods to reduce blight, ensure sustainable, affordable housing, and improve resident wellbeing and cultural diversity.
   ☐ Maintain and increase housing supply to meet the demands of a diverse population.
   ☐ Address the various needs of the City's most vulnerable population by working to reduce disparities.
   ☐ Promote healthy residents by ensuring basic sanitation and living needs are met.
   ☐ Ensure all residents have safe, accessible, quality housing by reducing barriers.
   ☐ Protect and promote healthy, active amenities such as parks and trails, play spaces, and green spaces.

Prior Legislation

Resolution No. 250396 – Vacant Land Activation Initiative
Proposed Ordinance No. 260401 – Registration of Vacant properties

Service Level Impacts

This ordinance itself does not affect service level impacts.

Staff Recommendation

Neighborhood Services Department

Select One: ☒ Sponsored
☐ Directive: Res/Ord # Click to enter Res/Ord. No.

Select One: ☒ Recommend
☐ Do Not Recommend
☐ Not Applicable

Legal counsel recommends that fee structure of a registration program could be viewed as a tax, and therefore, a public vote would be required.This ordinance would put the question on the ballot for voters to consider.

Other Impacts

1. What will be the potential health impacts to any affected groups?
   NA

2. How have those groups been engaged and involved in the development of this ordinance?
   NA

3. How does this legislation contribute to a sustainable Kansas City?
   Not directly, but puts question on ballot that if approved, supports activating vacant properties for potentially sustainable uses.

4. Does this legislation create or preserve new housing units?
   No (Press tab after selecting)

   Click or tap here to enter text.
   Click or tap here to enter text.

5. Department staff certifies the submission of any application Affirmative Action Plans or Certificates of Compliance, Contractor Utilization Plans (CUPs), and Letters of Intent to Subcontract (LOIs) to CREO prior to, or simultaneously with, the legislation entry request in Legistar.

   No - CREO's review is not applicable (Press tab after selecting)
   Please provide reasoning why not:
   Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Does this legislation seek to approve a contract resulting from an Invitation for Bid?

   No(Press tab after selecting)

   Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Does this legislation seek to approve a contract resulting from a Request for Proposal/Qualification (RFP/Q)?

No(Press tab after selecting)