

RESIDENTIAL RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM

OCTOBER 2014



RRI PROGRAM

- Pursuant to the ordinance, the commissioner of DNS shall evaluate the results and effectiveness of the pilot program and report to the common council these results, as well as improvements to be made.

PURPOSE

- To ensure that rental properties comply with existing building maintenance, fire, and zoning codes.
- Focused on two areas that are particularly susceptible to deterioration, especially given the density of rental units, age of buildings, percentage of complaints occurring at rental units, and the condition of the units in the area.
- The RRI program strives to put an end to pervasive code violations before they have a chance to negatively affect the fabric of the entire neighborhood.

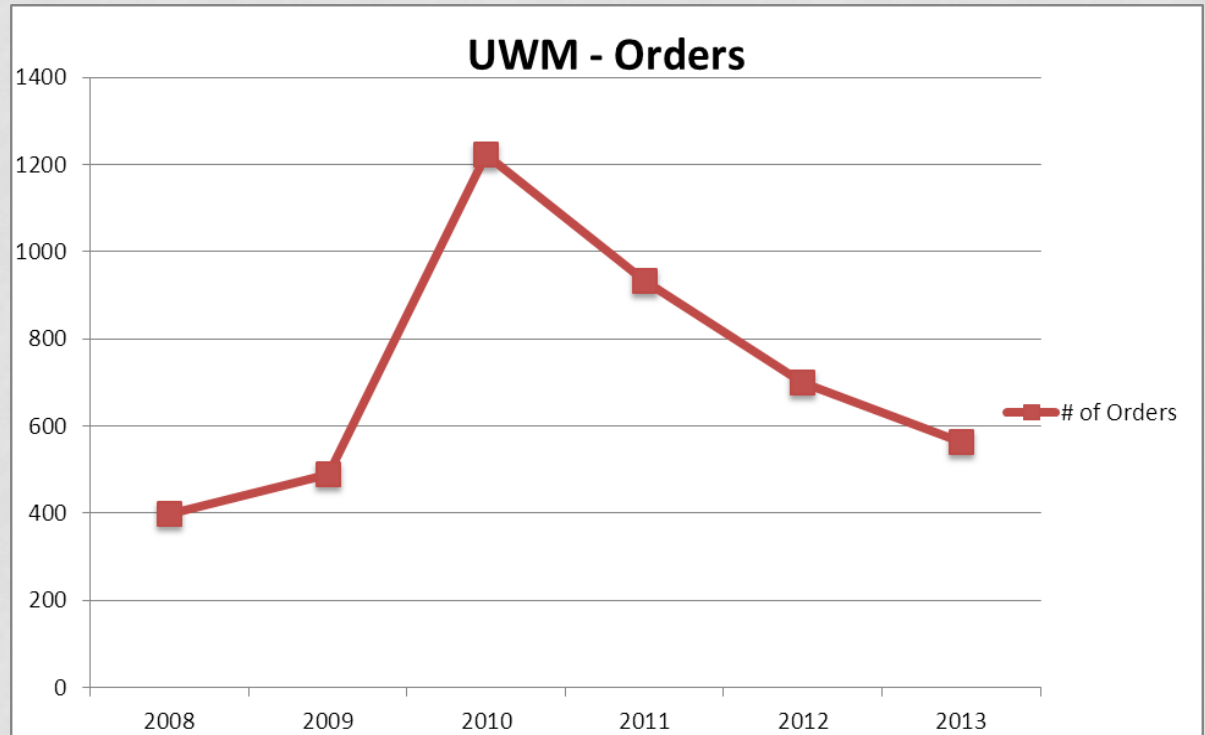
RRI SUCCESSES

EXPOSES VIOLATIONS

- Exposes violations that have previously gone unreported.
- Systematic, mandatory inspections ensure rental housing stock is maintained without having to rely on tenant reporting, as is the case for complaint-based inspection programs.

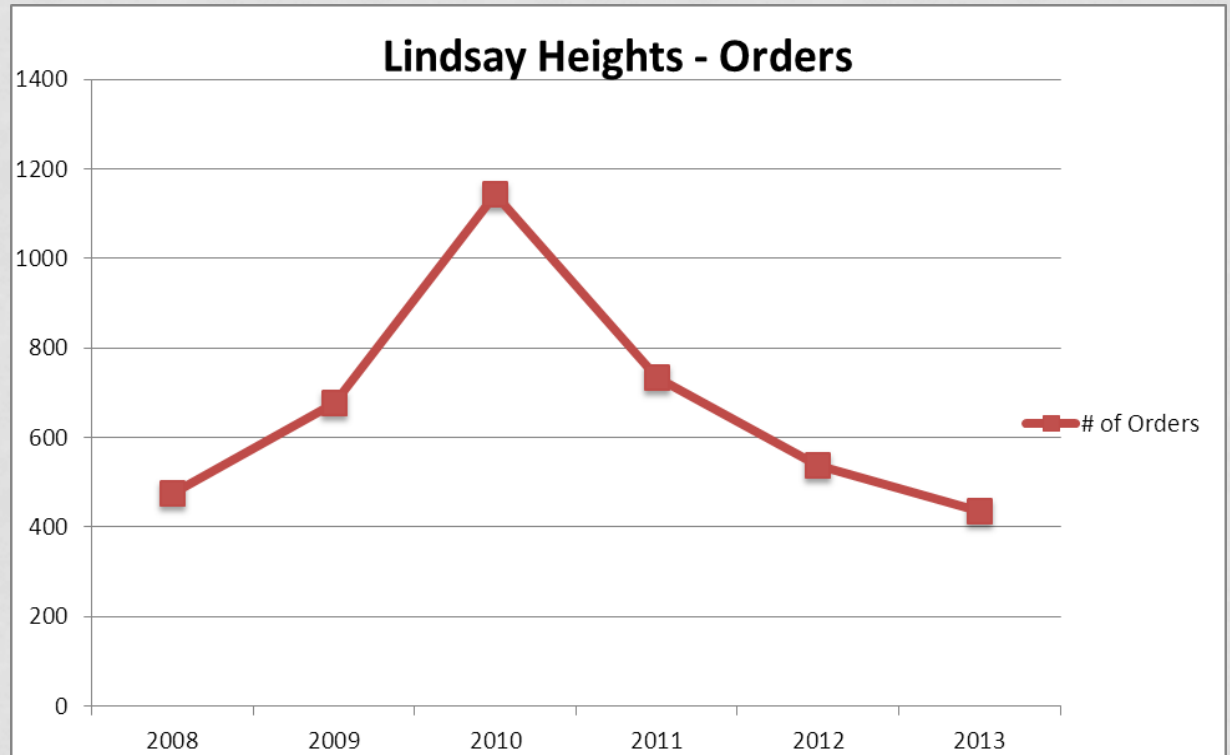
ORDERS WRITTEN - UWM

Year	Orders Written
2008	399
2009	489
2010	1223
2011	934
2012	701
2013	564



ORDERS WRITTEN - LINDSAY HEIGHTS

Year	Orders Written
2008	475
2009	677
2010	1143
2011	733
2012	537
2013	435

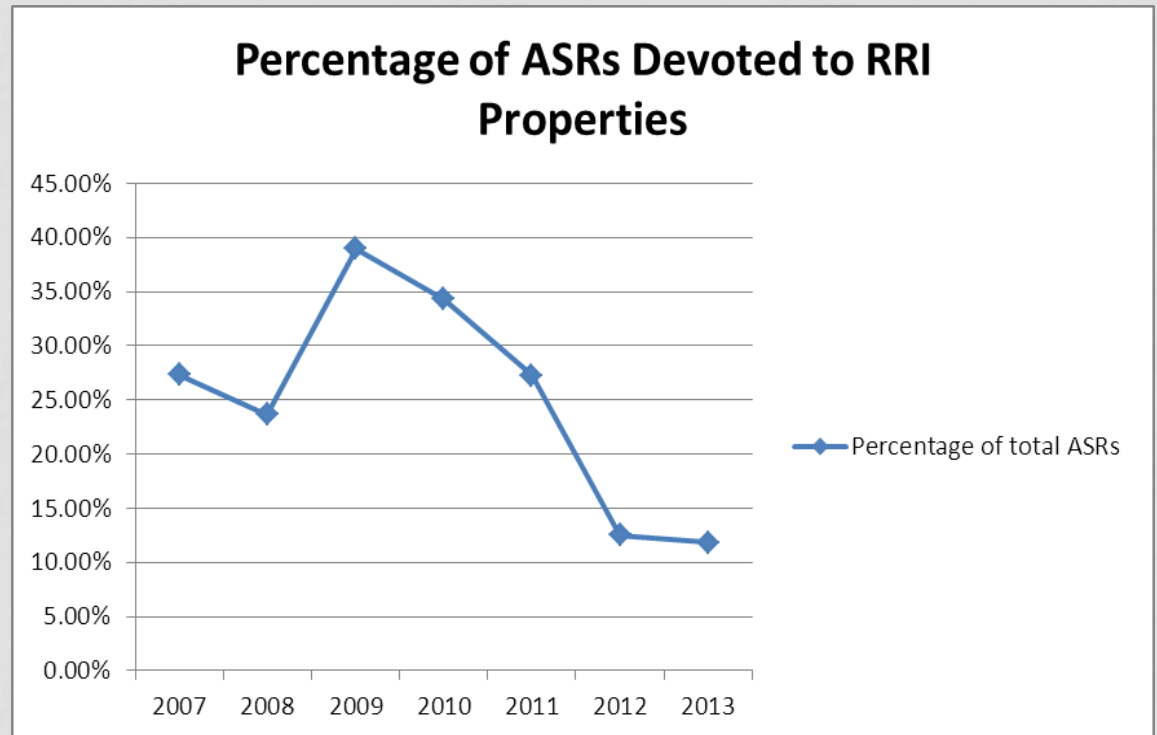


DECREASED ASRs

- The RRI program has successfully lowered the number of Aldermanic Services Requests submitted for properties enrolled in the program.
- In the years since the program began, the percentage of the ASRs associated with RRI properties has decreased. The properties that would eventually be included in the RRI program used to be a frequent source of Aldermanic Service Requests. The percentage of ASRs devoted to this group of rental properties has decreased.

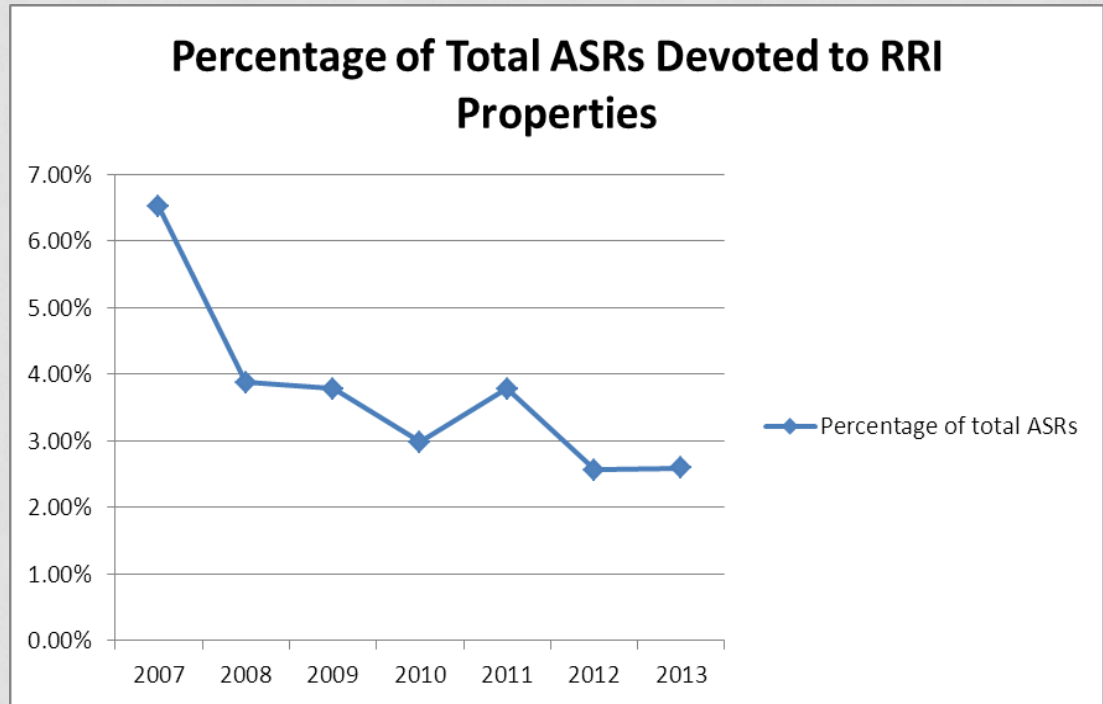
ASRs - UWM

	ASR Complaints on RRI Properties/ Eventual RRI Properties	% of ASRs devoted to RRI Properties
2007	44	27.33 %
2008	31	23.66 %
2009	60	38.96 %
2010	35	34.31 %
2011	24	27.27 %
2012	7	12.50 %
2013	7	11.86 %



ASRs – LINDSAY HEIGHTS

	ASR Complaints on RRI Properties/ Eventual RRI Properties	% of ASRs devoted to RRI Properties
2007	24	6.52 %
2008	19	3.88 %
2009	12	3.79 %
2010	11	2.98 %
2011	11	3.78 %
2012	8	2.56 %
2013	2	2.60 %



INCREASED COMMUNICATION

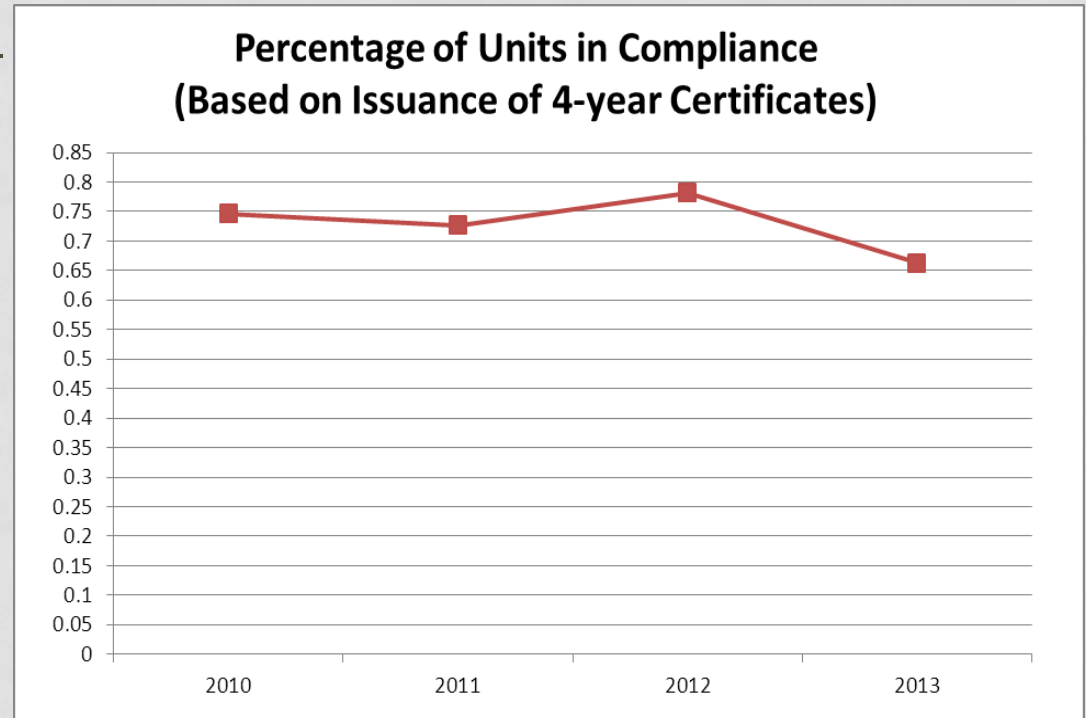
- Specific inspectors assigned to each RRI area. Residents and landlords know exactly who to contact with concerns.
- Inspectors can advise owners on how to prioritize maintenance dollars and help create spending plans to focus on preventative maintenance while ensuring compliance and tenant safety.

INCREASED FIRE SAFETY

- Fire inspections now occurring in single family homes and duplexes.
- This leads to fire safety features, such as smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, being installed in these buildings.
- Fire safety issues are addressed to avoid future fires.
- Inspectors are providing valuable fire safety education to owners and tenants.

VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE

- Majority of units inspected receive 4-year certificate.
- In the first year, 75% of units qualified for the 4-year certificate.
- Not once has DNS had to obtain an inspection warrant to enter a unit!



CITIZEN CONCERNS

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- At the October 27, 2009 meeting of the Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development committee, a number of citizens shared their concerns regarding the implementation of the new RRI program. Most of these fears were not realized.

A sampling of common complaints follows:

CITIZEN CONCERNS

- *“Good landlords will be prosecuted along with the bad.”*

The majority of units qualified for the 4-year certificate. A minority of landlords had disqualifying violations that kept them from earning the 4-year certificate.

- *“Property values on the East Side are already high, this means the properties are better maintained”*

High property values does not necessarily mean that properties are free of code violations. RRI inspections turned up numerous existing violations that had gone unreported.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

- *“Most issues are limited to exterior violations or violations in common areas and these can be addressed with existing laws”*

RRI inspections routinely expose interior violations. Examples include: improperly vented clothes dryers, defective electrical switches, defective toilets, windows incapable of being locked, improper wiring, and missing fire safety alarms.

- *“DNS inspectors should not be granted authority to enter my property”*

Not once did DNS require an inspection warrant to enter a property. The RRI Program encountered high levels of voluntary compliance.

CITIZEN REQUESTS

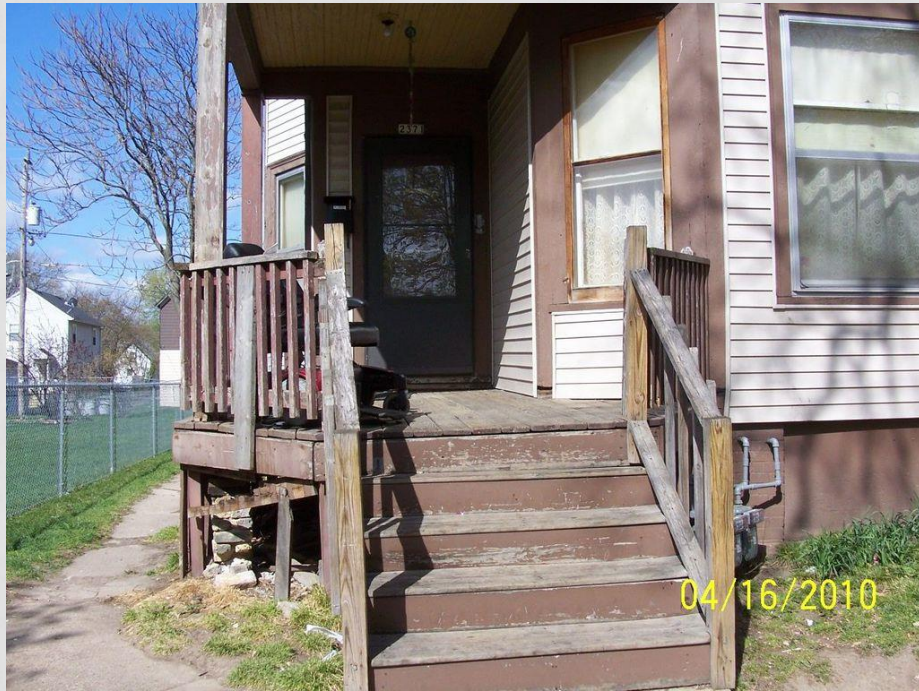
- At the same October 27, 2009 meeting, many citizens came to show their support of the proposed legislation.
- The RRI Program incorporates many of the hopes and pleas that were expressed:
 - *“This ordinance is an important step in protecting students and neighbors from unscrupulous landlords”*
When code violations are uncovered through systematic inspections rather than tenant complaints, tenants don't have to live in fear of retaliation.
 - *“This neighborhood needs something proactive”*
RRI inspections are proactive rather than reactive.

BEFORE AND AFTER RRI

3129 N. BARTLETT AVE.



2371 N. 15TH STREET



2225 N. 16TH STREET



1943 N. 24TH PL



1836 N. 26TH ST



2423 N. 20TH STREET



JOSEPH PETERS ET AL VS. CITY
OF MILWAUKEE ET AL

CITY OF MILWAUKEE PREVAILS IN LAWSUIT

- Three landlords filed a lawsuit in 2009 to challenge the RRI ordinance.
- Plaintiffs alleged a number of claims including that the ordinance was unconstitutionally vague and failed to provide for impartial review.
- The City of Milwaukee prevailed in court when summary judgment was granted in their favor.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- DNS recommends reduced fees for property owners who are active in multiple programs with inspection requirements.
- It could be possible for one inspector to address both code compliance and fire safety issues during one inspection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PERMANENT RRI PROGRAM

- DNS recommends making the ordinance permanent in the two pilot areas.
- The RRI program has been effective in allowing DNS inspectors access to rental units in areas that are particularly vulnerable to pervasive code violations and it has caused property owners to bring their properties up to code in anticipation of the RRI inspection.
- The two pilot areas will continue see benefits from the RRI program for years to come.

PERMANENT RRI PROGRAM

- DNS asks that the timeline for making the program permanent be extended to allow for changes to the ordinance. The language of the ordinance must be redrafted to reflect changes in state law.

RRI EXPANSION

- The Department believes that the results of the RRI pilot program support expanding the program into additional neighborhoods.
- DNS has identified the neighborhoods surrounding St. Josaphat Basilica as one that could benefit most immediately from the RRI Program.

