

**Agenda**

Ad Hoc Committee on Blight

November 5, 2014

10 a.m.

Lynwood Roberts Room

**Committee:** E Denise Lee, Chair; Council Member Jim Love; Council; Council Member John Crescimbeni, Council Member Bill Bishop, Council Member Warren Jones, Council Member Bill Gulliford, and Council Member Greg Anderson.

Call to order

Approve minutes from October 22, 2014 meeting

**Old Business:**

- Discuss the status of the Fight Blight App – Paul Martinez Usha Mohan
- Report from the Neighborhood Organization Sub-Committee – Bill Gulliford, subcommittee chair
- Truancy Report on Top 10 Schools with highest truancy numbers – Paul Soares, Duval County School Board
- Report on possibility of the DCPS Community Family and Engagement Division organizing students in area clean ups. -- Paul Soares, Duval County School Board
- 

**New Business****Public Comment****Adjourn**



## OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**CHERYL L. BROWN**  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE (904) 630-1452  
FAX (904) 630-2906  
E-MAIL: CLBROWN@coj.net

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425  
4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, CITY HALL  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

### SPECIAL AD HOC COMMITTEE ON JACKSONVILLE'S NEIGHBORHOOD BLIGHT MEETING MINUTES

**October 22, 2014**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**City Hall**  
**117 W. Duval St., 1st Floor**  
**Lynwood Roberts Room**

**Attendance:** Council Members Denise Lee (Chair), Greg Anderson, John Crescimbeni (arr. 10:28a), Bill Gulliford

**Excused:** Council Members Bill Bishop, Warren Jones, Jim Love

**Also:** Karen Bowling – Mayor's Office; Cherry Shaw and Paige Johnston – General Counsel Office; Dan Macdonald – ECA Dist. 8; Robert Campbell – Office of Council Auditor's; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Lee called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m.

CM Lee began the meeting with introductions from the committee and attendees.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes were received as information due to the lack of a quorum.

#### **Old Business**

##### **1. Media Campaign update – Paul Martinez and Aleizha Batson**

Ms. Batson and Mr. Martinez provided a thorough review of the public awareness campaign "Fight Blight". The committee reviewed the incorporated changes for the logo and website from the previous meeting. The choice of font and graphics was narrowed down to #2 and #7. CM Lee requested that the campaign sub-committee continue to refine overall campaign. Item will be placed on next week's agenda.

Mr. Martinez announced the partnership with JTA in the "Fight Blight" campaign. JTA will wrap a bus with the campaign theme for one year which is equivalent to \$22,500. The campaign kickoff is tentatively scheduled for mid-January with a press conference, mascot and presentation of the bus.

2. Fight Blight Mobile Application – Usha Mohan

Ms. Mohan presented background options for mobile application. The committee preferred the option with the sun in distance. There was extensive dialogue about inserting an additional button to provide specifics or questions regarding blight prior to submitting report. This would minimize inspectors responding to areas that do not meet the Code requirements. It was suggested the mobile application mimic the reporting of blight through the CARE system. Ms. Mohan will take the ideas back to the vendor to refine the application.

3. CARE reports for illegal dumping in Districts 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 - Jeff Foster

Mr. Foster distributed three reports: Top 20 Dumping Sites; Report on the Blight Process; and Current Status of Top 20 Dumping Sites. The Top 20 Dumping Sites in the City was compiled from the CARE system. The statistics covered tire dumping, litter and illegal dumping. The report was divided into geographic areas to illustrate the specific trends and trajectories in all of the Council Districts for the last three fiscal years. It should be noted that overall Districts 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11 have the highest issue counts.

4. Report from OGC on the process to pursue out-of-town violators – Cherry Shaw

Ms. Shaw explained the process for filing a lawsuit against out of state violators. She identified positive and negative components associated with filing out of state. There have been approximately 100-200 motions filed for final judgments. In these cases, many of the corporations in Florida have paid the face value of the citations issued on snipe signs prior to the final judgment. In response to Ms. Bowling's question, Ms. Shaw will provide an estimate of cost versus the expected return on a case. It was suggested that filing a lawsuit should happen automatically once fines reach and go beyond a certain accumulated dollar amount specifically of those out of state entities.

**New Business**

None

**Public Comments & Announcements**

Mr. Paul Soares suggested a possible opportunity to engage students in a cleanup activity which could be arranged through DCPS Community Family and Engagement Division. CM Lee requested Ms. Batson follow up with Mr. Soares.

Mr. Jay Higbee provided a brief overview of the Andrew Robinson Foundation. It is a public-private partnership to provide additional resources to the school, students and community.

Mr. Paul Tutwiler expressed his concern for the recent tragedies near Moncrief area. He stated being committed to working within 19 neighborhoods to get them energized, organized, and ready to take back their communities.

Ms. Allison Albert inquired about the status of the property list of fines and foreclosure of Moncrief & 13<sup>th</sup>. CM Lee stated both topics will be on next week's agenda.

Mr. Carnell Oliver expressed his appreciation to committee for their handwork.

In response to a question by Ms. Gracie McCastler, Mr. Soares will provide an update on the status of school truancy.

Ms. Roberta Thomas inquired about the status of rental ordinances. This topic is being handled in CM Gulliford's sub-committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research Division (904) 630-1679

Posted 10.24.14 10:00 a.m.

# Blight Public Awareness Campaign

## Fight Blight App

Aleizha Batson, Deputy Director of Communications

Paul Martinez, Director of Intra-Governmental Services

Usha Mohan, Chief of Information Technologies

Monica Cichowlas, Customer Service Manager

November 5, 2014

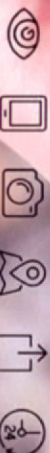
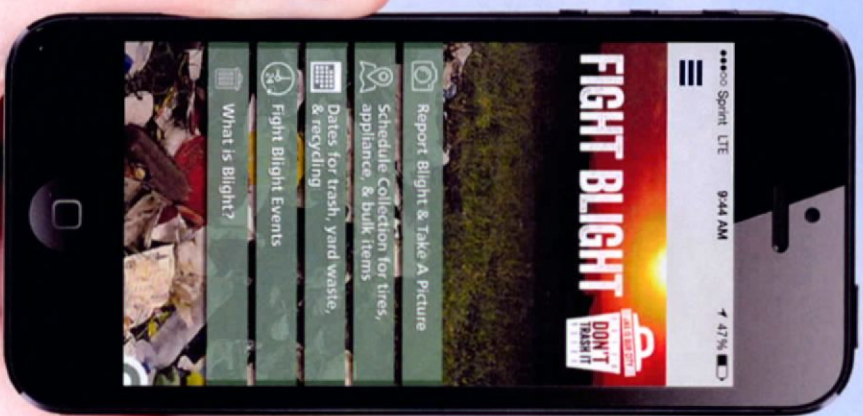




## MOBILE APP TECHNOLOGY

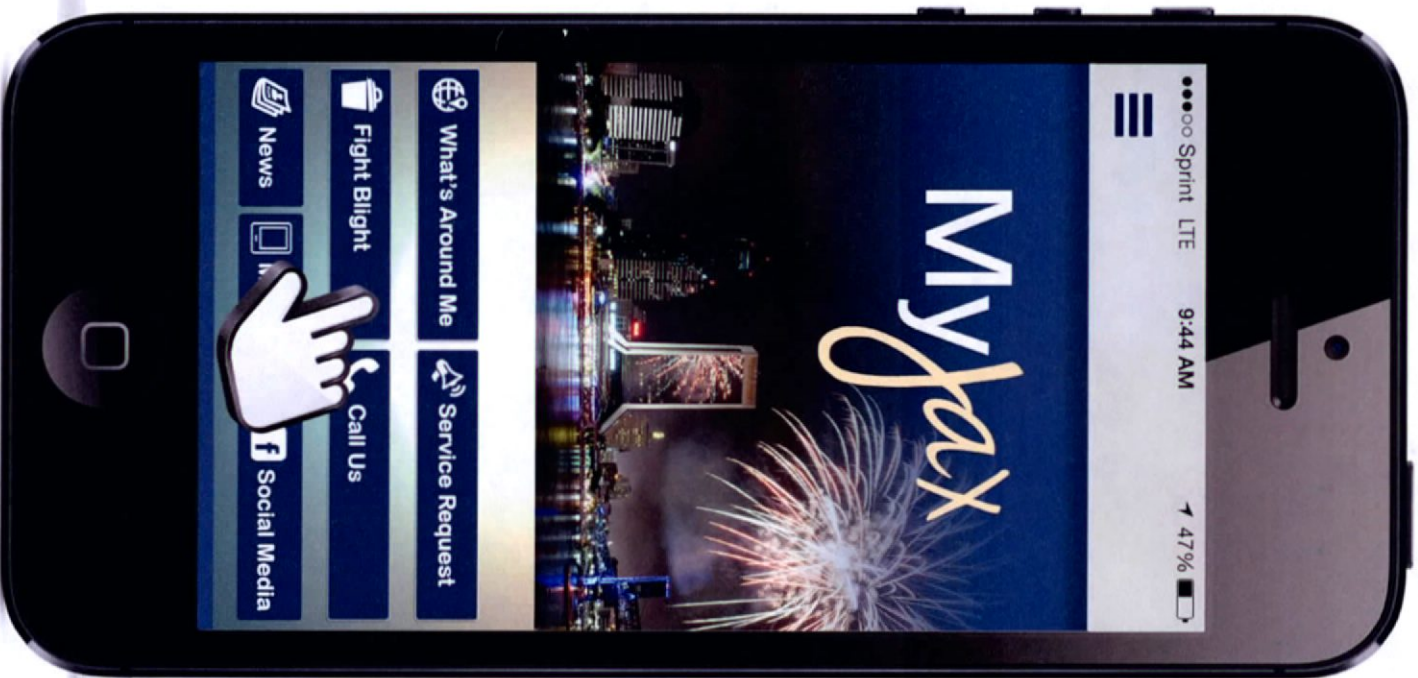
# FIGHT BLIGHT

Your city needs your help. Let's work together to fight against blight in Jacksonville. Using your mobile device, capture locations that need help. With our newly developed [Insert app name] app, you can notify the City of Jacksonville instantly—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If not us, then who? If not now, then when? Be a part of the solution. Because you're worth it, Jacksonville!



*Jacksonville*  
Where Florida Begins.

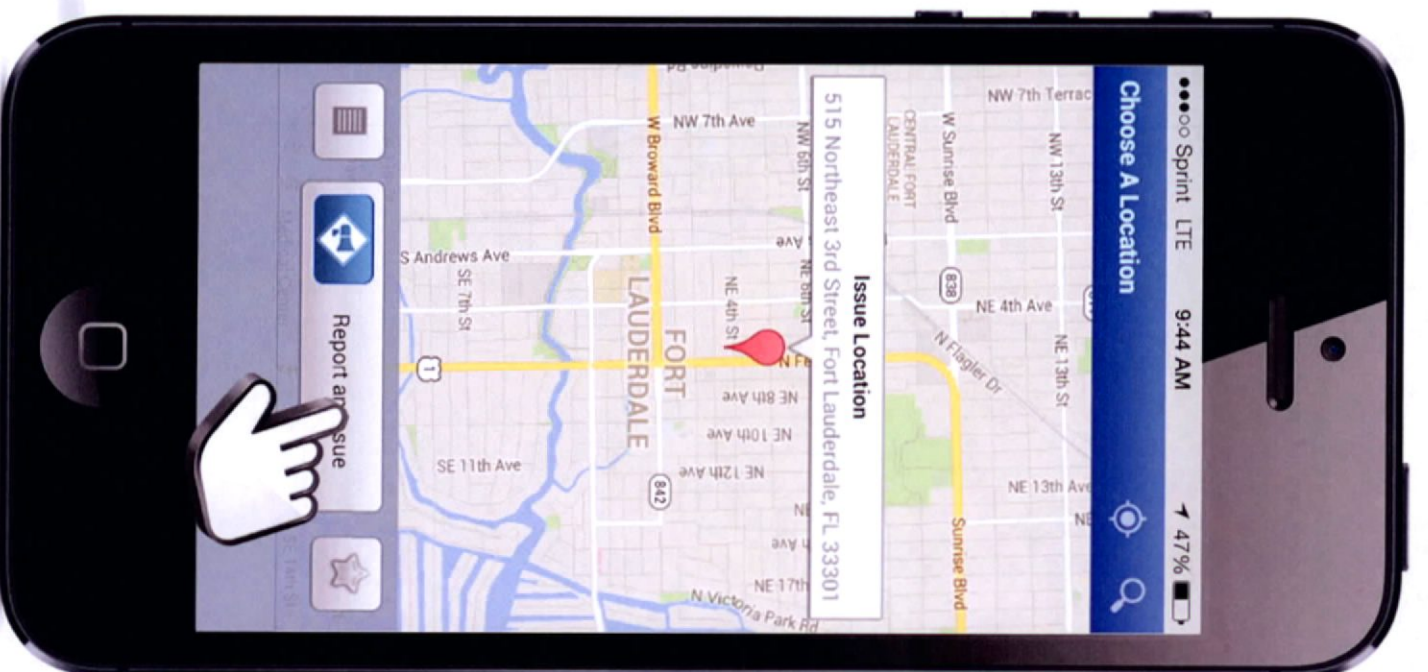
[www.coj.net/blight](http://www.coj.net/blight)

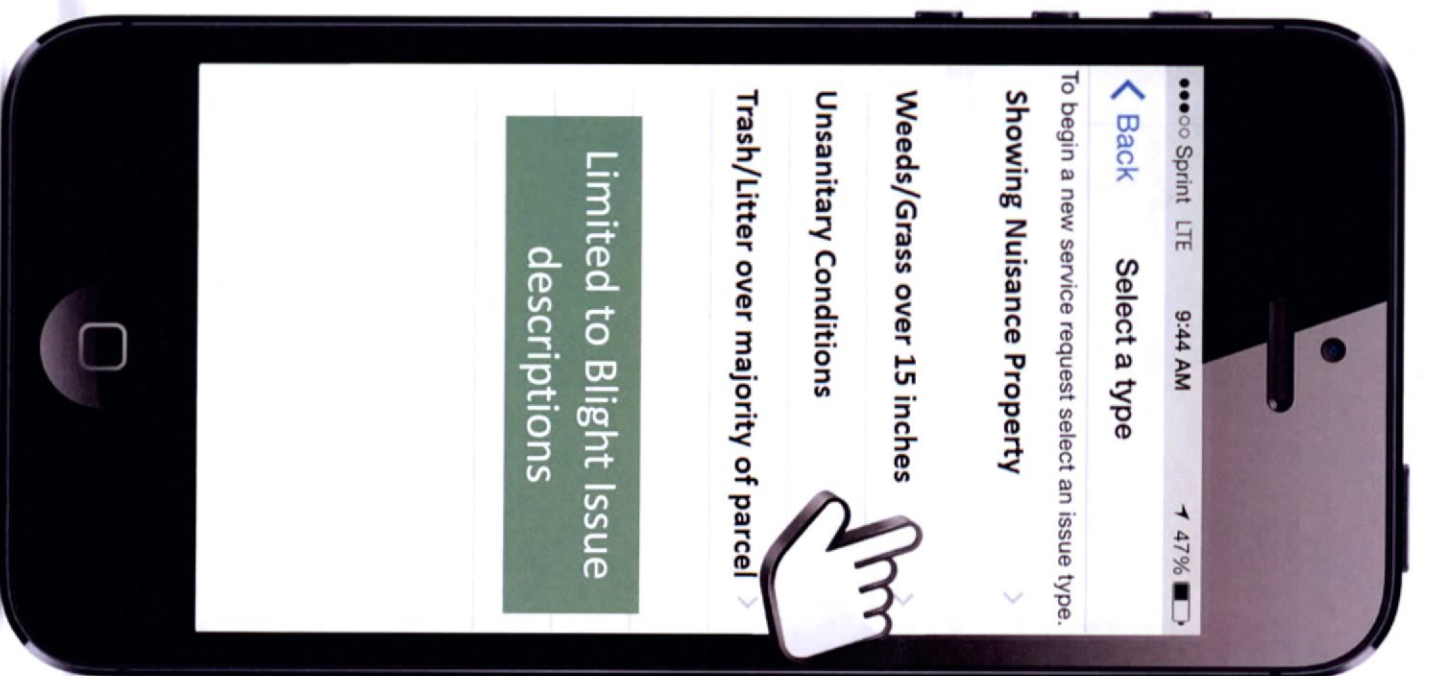
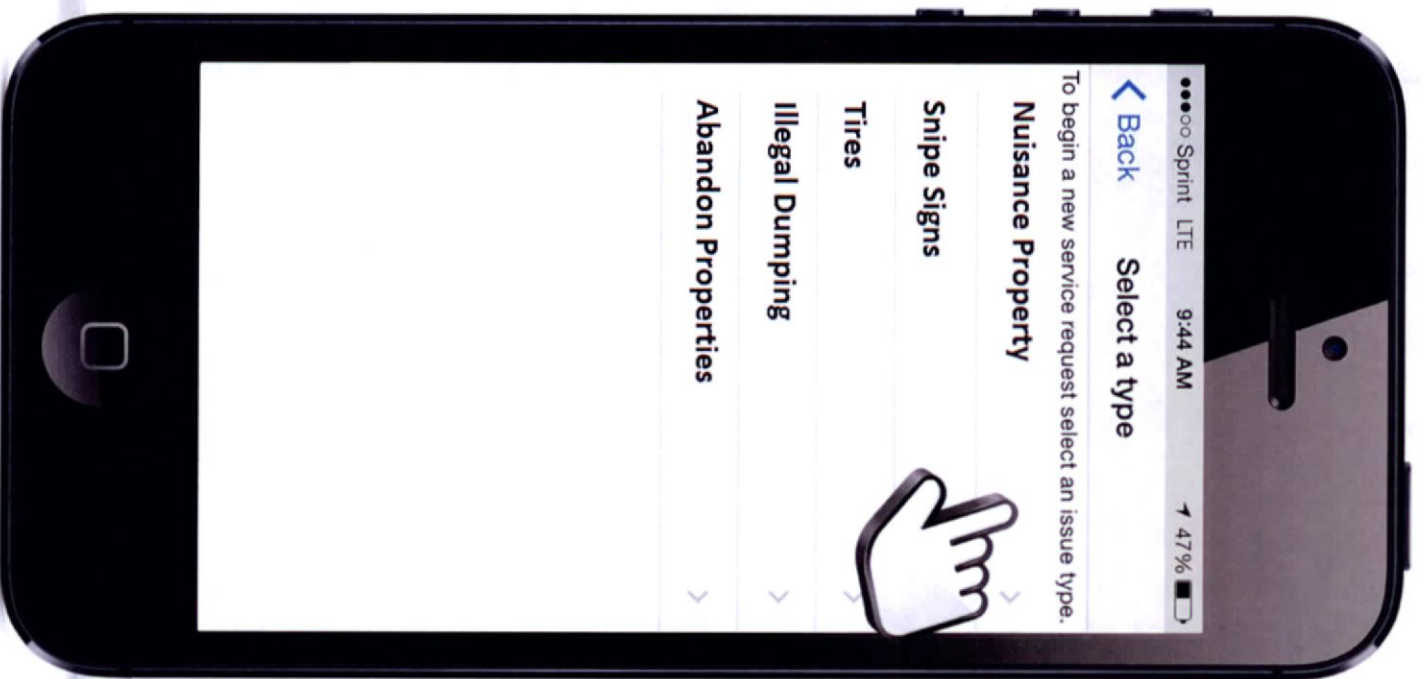


Launch  
Fight  
Blight  
app

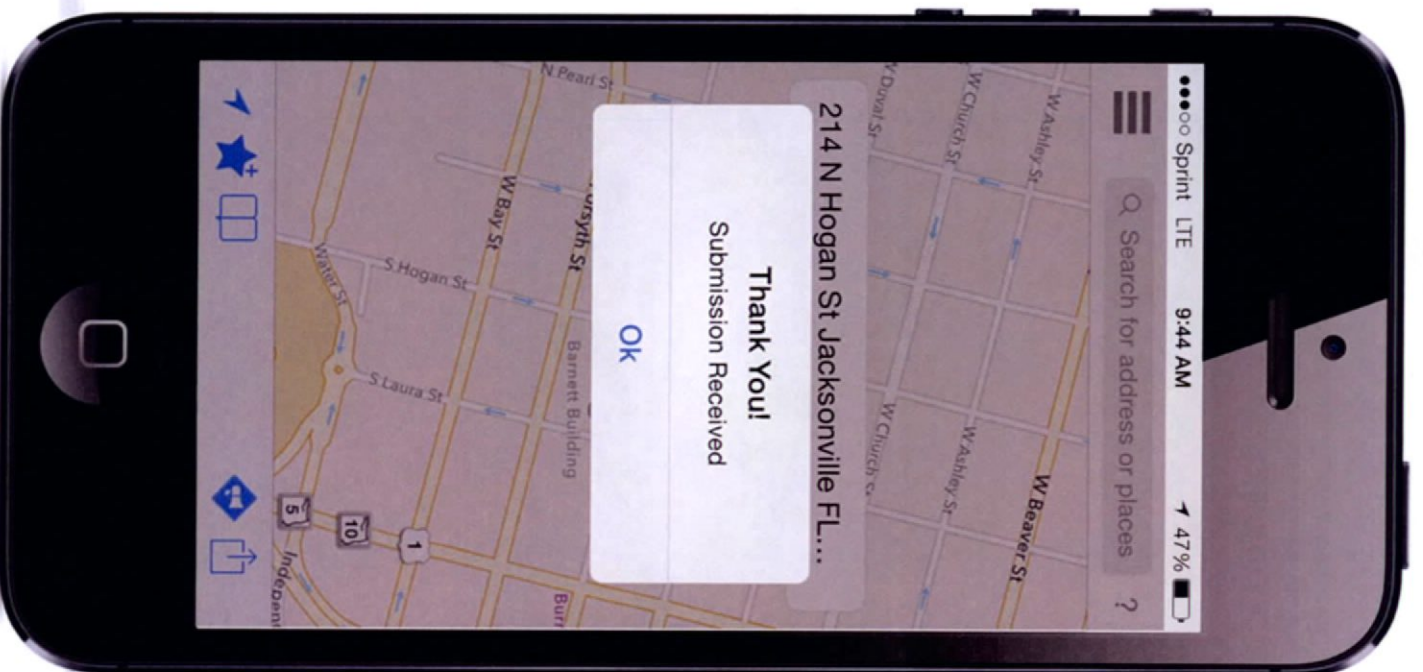
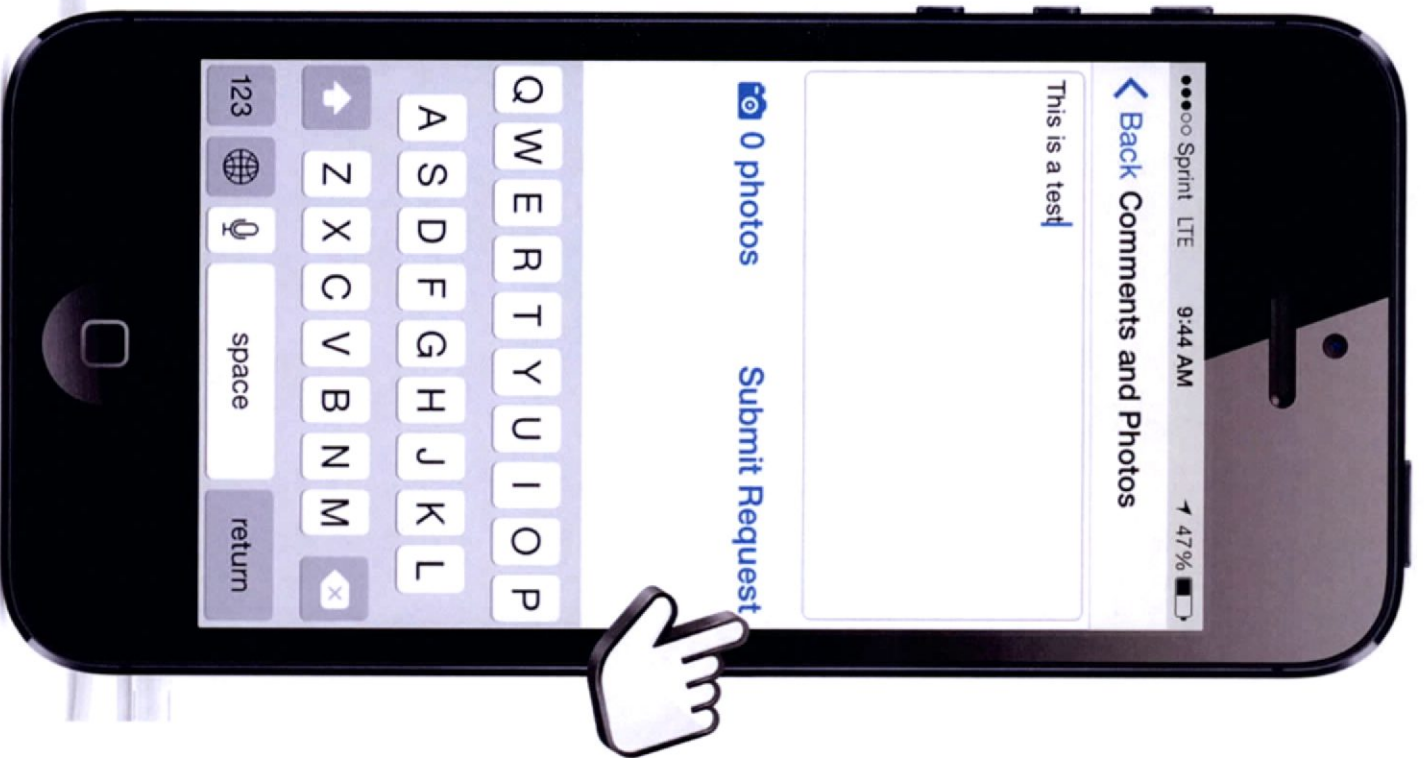


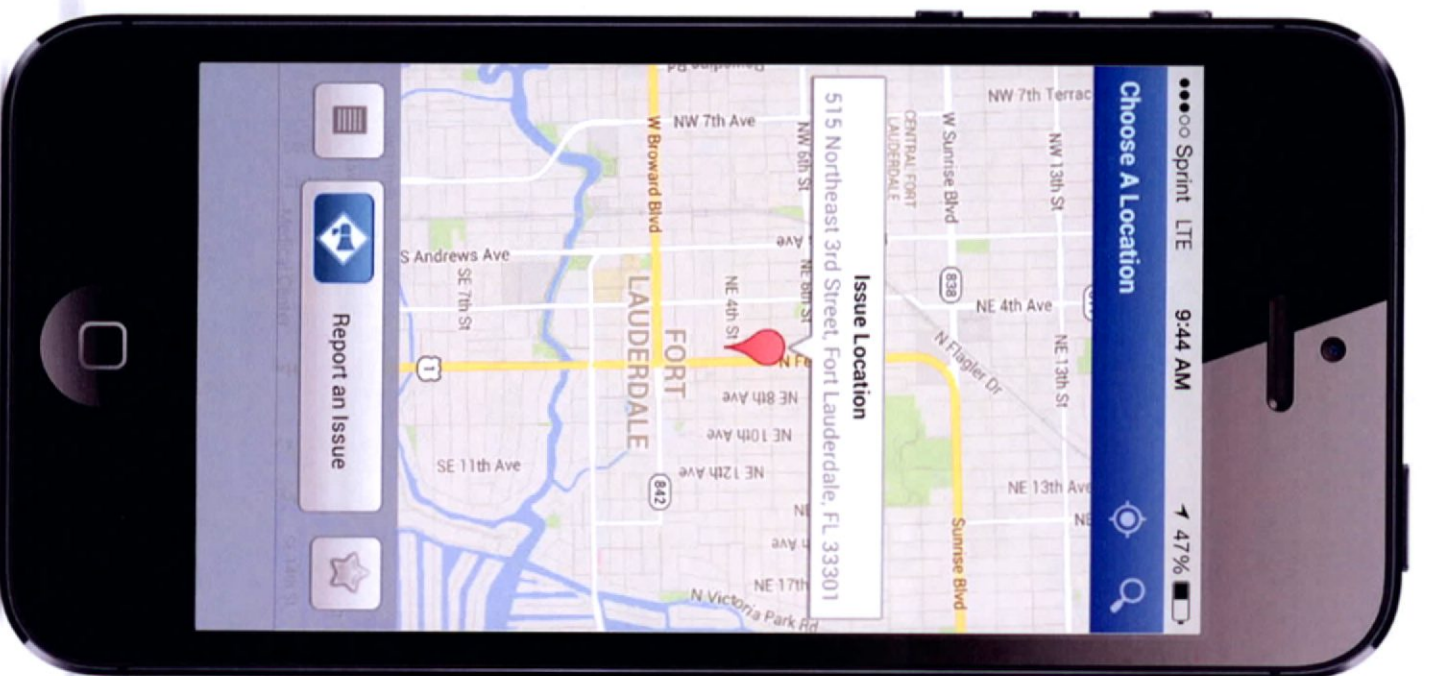
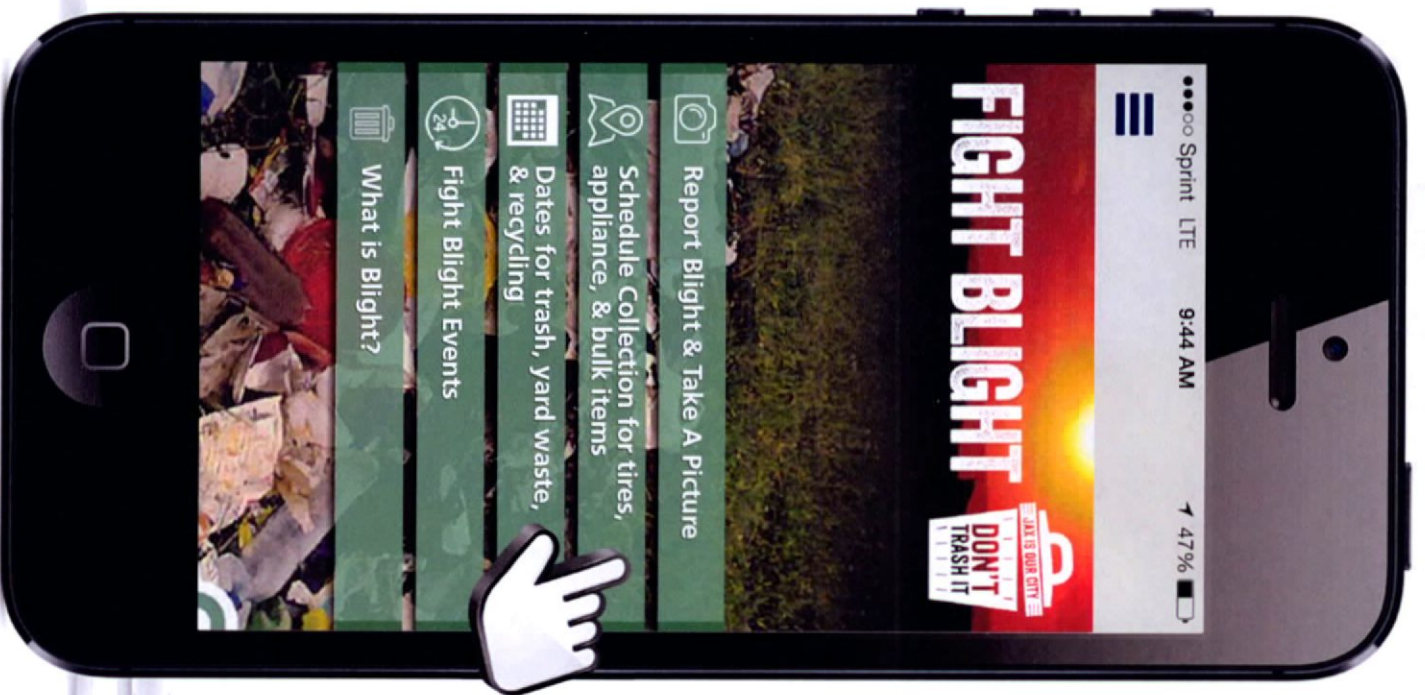


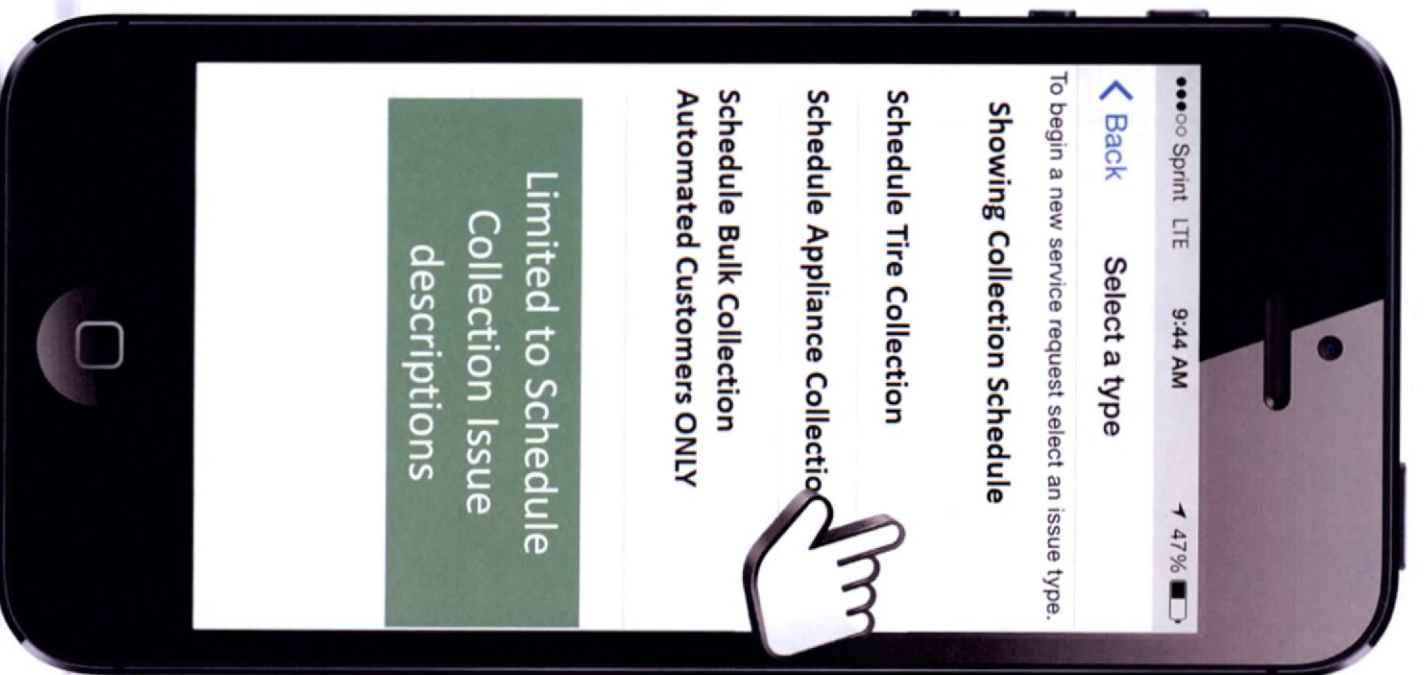
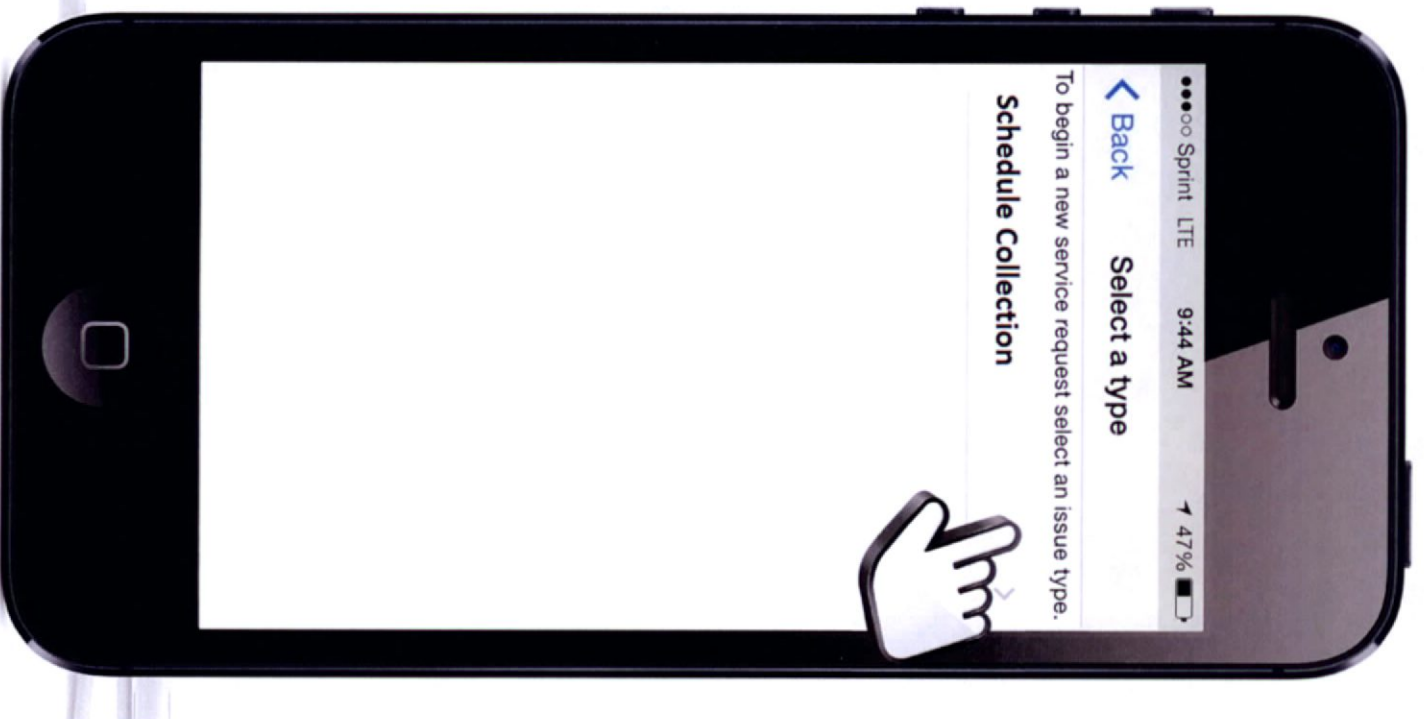




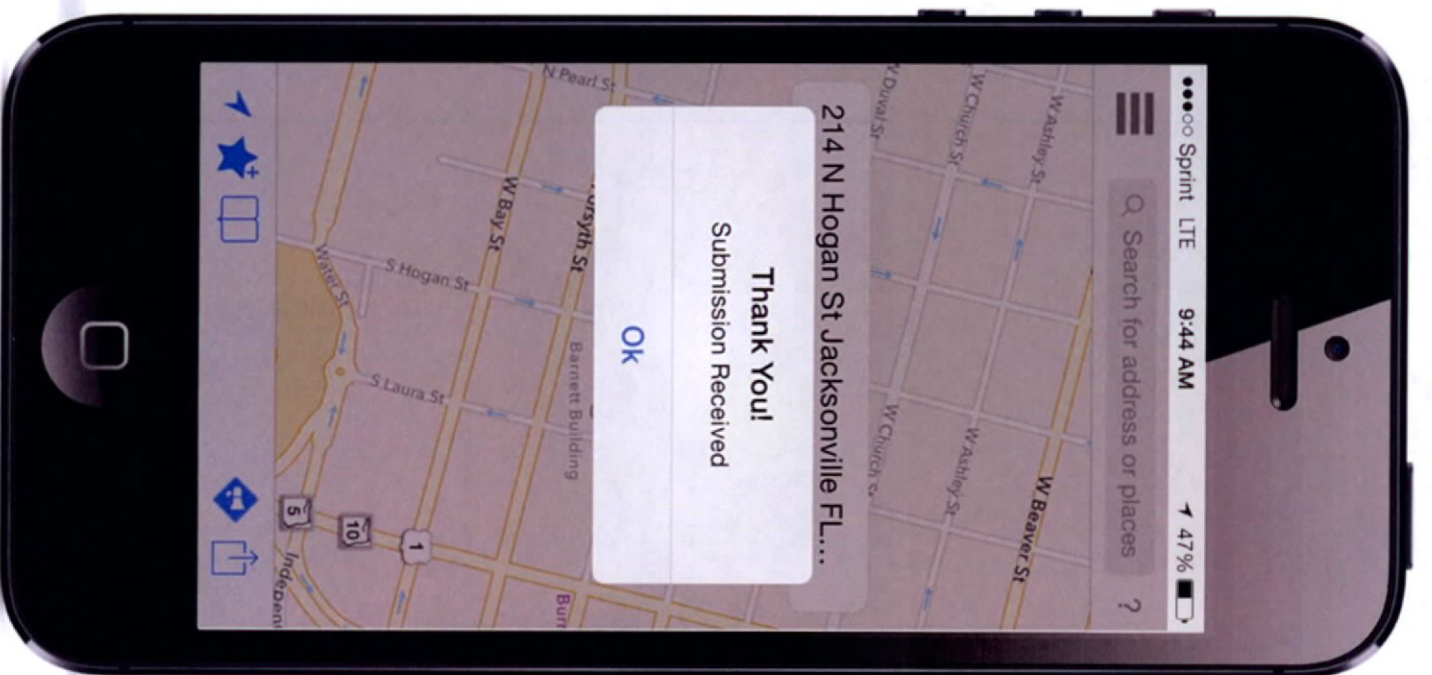
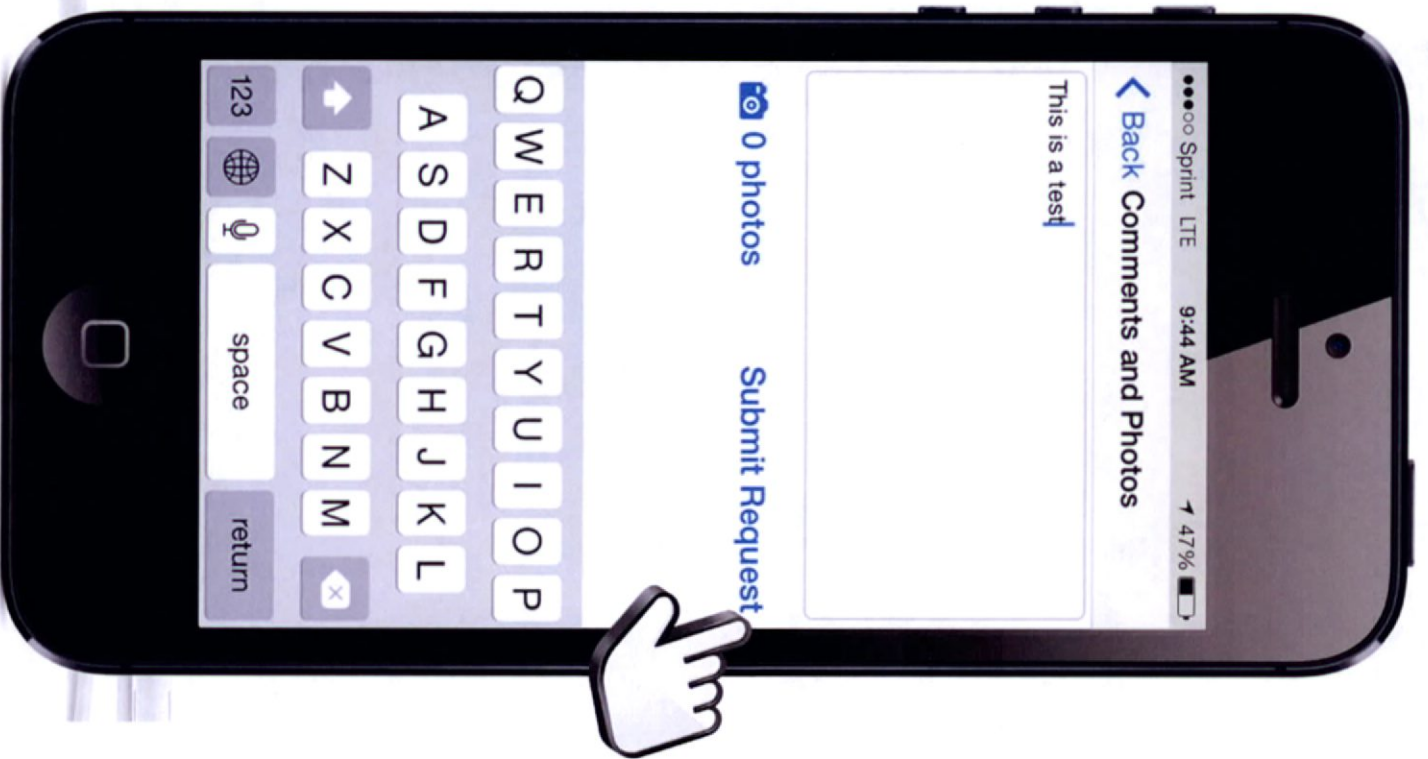


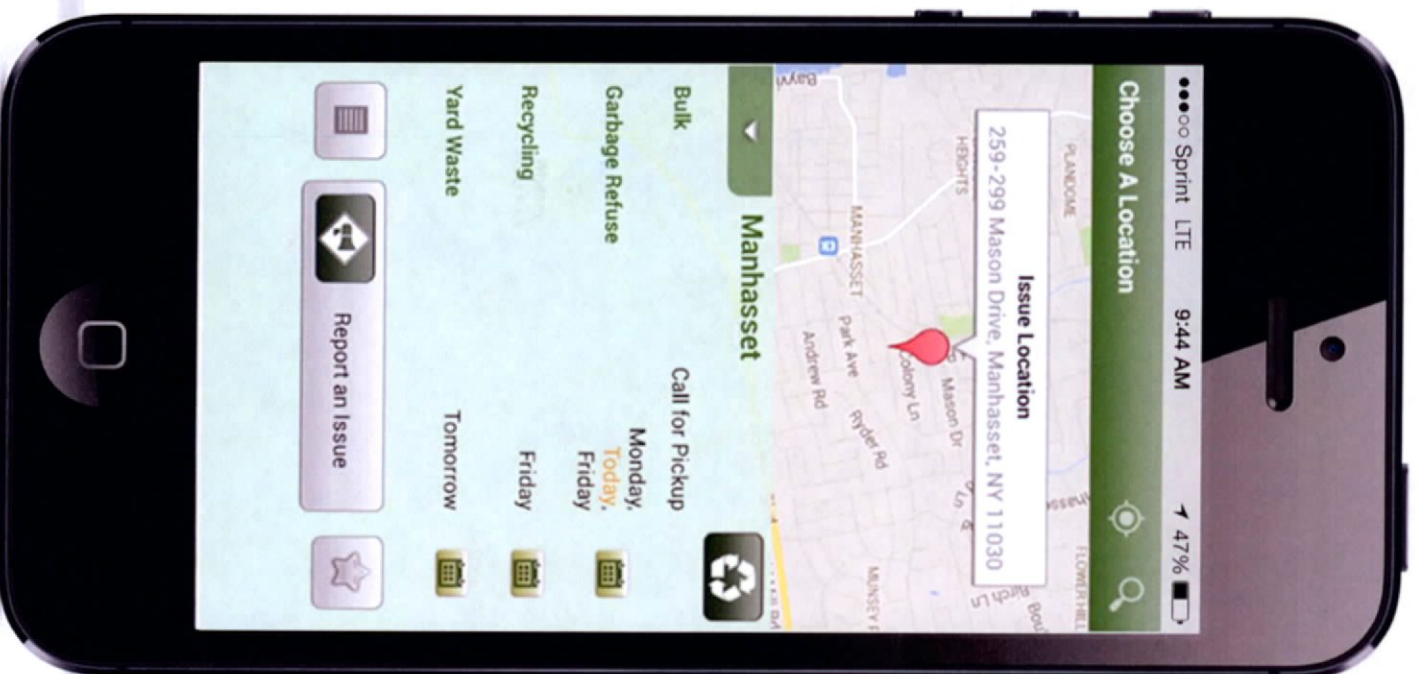




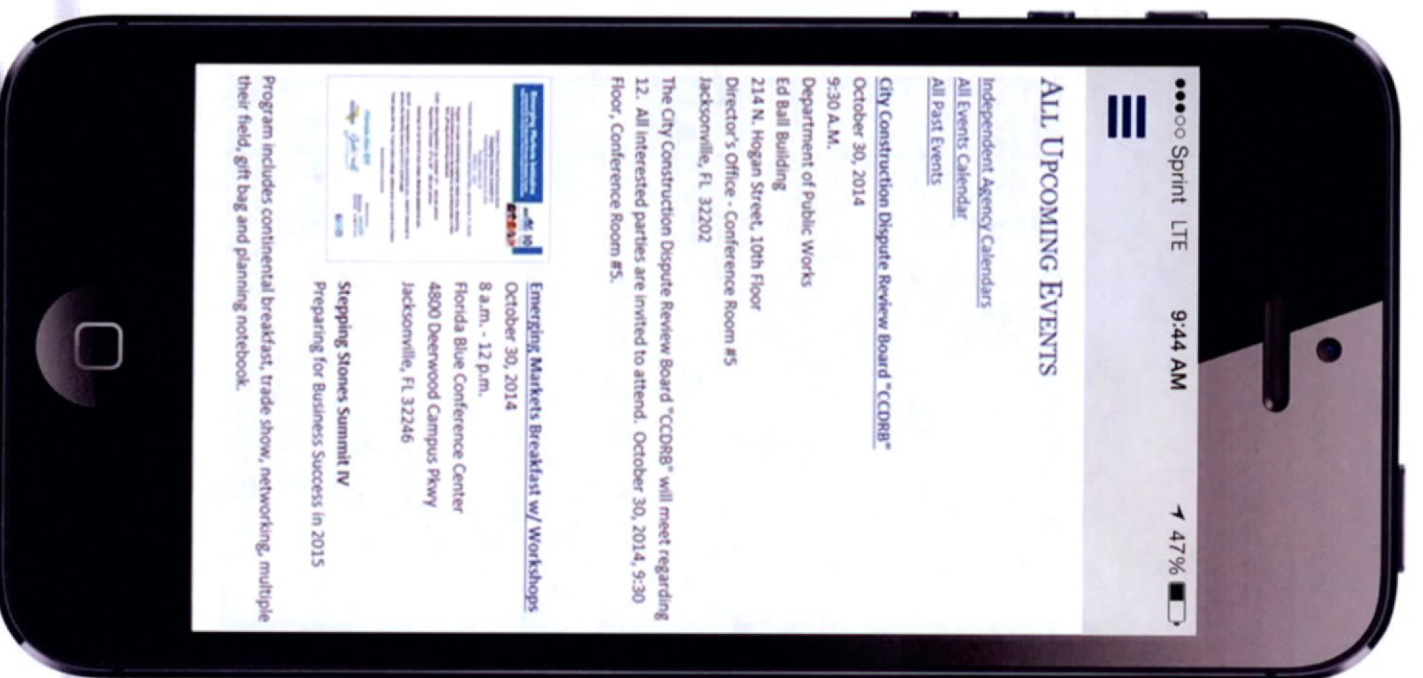










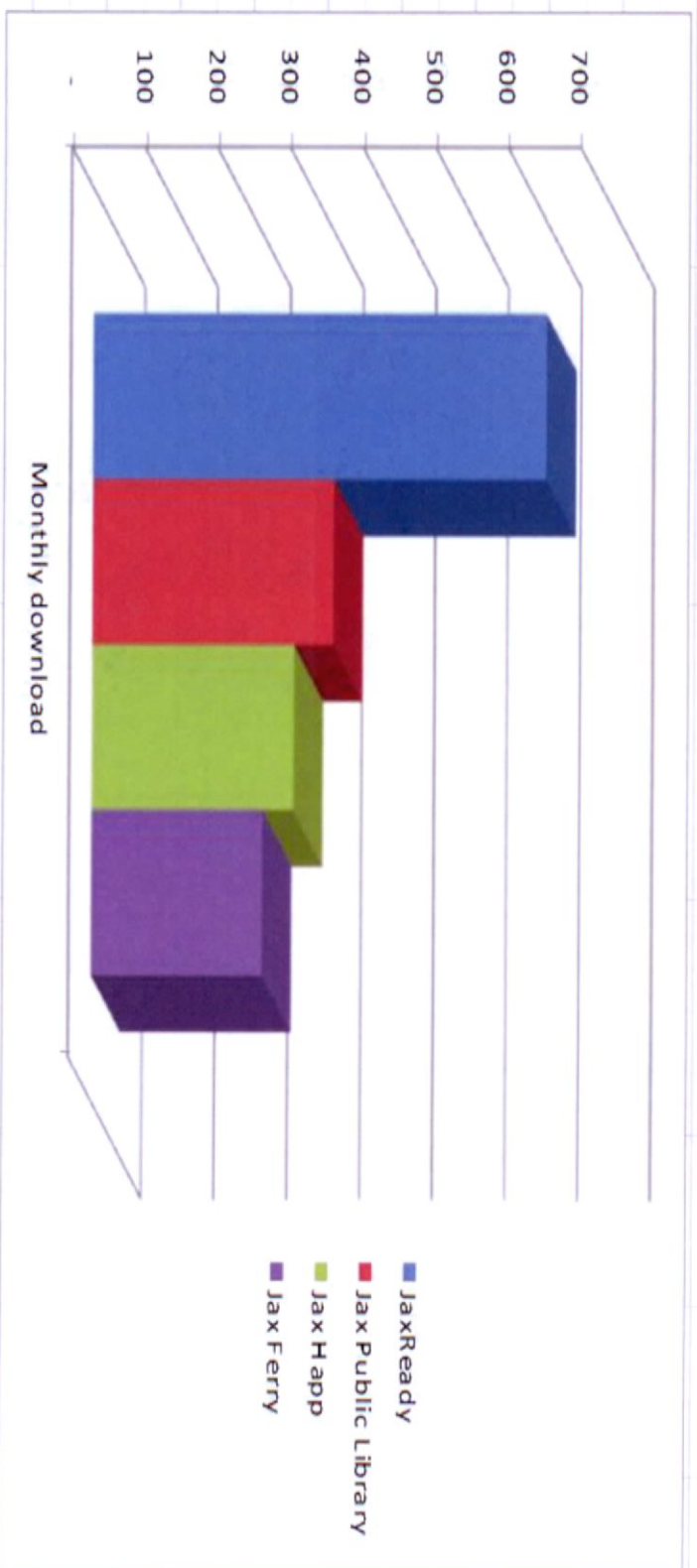






Fight Blight Website for more  
information and details.

## COJ Average Monthly App Downloads



	Monthly download	Total Downloads	Release Date	# Mths
JaxReady	624	16,852	5/30/2012	27
Jax Public Library	332	4,980	6/2/2013	15
Jax H app	278	5,280	3/3/2013	19
Jax Ferry	236	2,826	10/2/2013	12

Fight Blight App First Year Goal 5,000

\* data provided by ITD



## OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**BILL GULLIFORD**  
COUNCIL MEMBER DISTRICT 13  
OFFICE (904) 630-1397  
FAX (904) 630-2906

SUITE 425, CITY HALL  
117 WEST DUVAL STREET  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202  
E-MAIL: GULLIFORD@COJ.NET

October 30, 2014  
(11:00 A.M.)

### **Minutes of Ad Hoc Neighborhood Blight Subcommittee meeting of October 28, 2014**

**Topic:** Criteria, Goals and Structure of Neighborhood Organizations

**Location:** Committee Room B 1st Floor, 117 West Duval St., City Hall, Jacksonville, FL

**City Attendees:** Council Member Bill Gulliford, Council Member John Crescimbeni, Peggy Sidman (Office of General Counsel), Yvonne Mitchell (Council Research), and Stan Johnson

**See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.**

**Meeting convened:** 2:12 p.m.

Council Member Gulliford opened the meeting and introductions were made. Council Member Gulliford began by discussing the establishment of an ordinance that regulates rental property within the City. He acknowledged the research conducted by Council Research titled: Rental Property Inspection Ordinances in Florida.

Roberta Thomas suggested that if there was an ordinance created to regulate rental property. It should apply to owners with four or more properties, include a home inspection paid for by the property owner and have a rewards system whereby owners that maintain their properties, without violations for a specific number of years, would be rewarded. She went on to discuss some of the issues (i.e. drugs, sex offenders) that downgrades her neighborhood and lead to homeowner flight.

The group discussed whether associations could restrict renters within a neighborhood association. Also, whether zoning, use of an overlay and/or establishment of a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) could be tools used to help address the rental issue.

Council Member Gulliford asked the group for suggestions on structure and standards for establishing a neighborhood association. Also, how would we show success and replicate it throughout the City? Deborah Green with the Northwest Jacksonville CDC explained that they work with or have helped to establish about 19 neighborhood associations in the northwest area. They meet once a month. They bring in different industries to educate the participants and as a result they have seen their attendance almost tripled. They organize neighborhood events and



community participation is rewarded. They have established Standard Operating Procedures and provide training to each neighborhood association on those procedures.

Council Member Crescimbeni asked how are the neighborhood organizations initially created? Deborah Green responded that they hold massive community events and at those meetings they promote the neighborhood association concept. If the community is interested in creating an association, they are guided through the establishment process and mentored for about six months. By that time they are usually able to continue on their own. Council Member Crescimbeni stated that the City should be more proactive in identifying areas that could benefit from a neighborhood association, and then educate the residents of the area on the advantages of creating an association.

Council Member Gulliford stated he will meet with Elaine Spencer, Chief, Housing and Community Development to discuss proactive measures as it relates to creating neighborhood associations.

Council Member Crescimbeni requested that Council Research amend their research document titled: Rental Property Inspection Ordinances in Florida to include the following questions: 1) What happens in those locations when someone does not register...what enforcement action do they take? 2) When the cities implemented those programs what kind of response did they get with regard to landlords registering?

Council Member Gulliford adjourned the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned:** 2:55 p.m.

**Minutes:** Stan Johnson

## RENTAL PROPERTY INSPECTION ORDINANCES IN FLORIDA

The research covers eight ordinances for:

- Broward County, FL
- Clearwater, FL
- Daytona Beach, FL
- Deltona, Volusia County, FL
- Gainesville, FL
- St. Petersburg, FL
- Tampa, FL

**Broward County, FL** (unincorporated population 14,637 and land area 12 square miles) – The ordinance covers landlords of residential rental properties within the *unincorporated areas* of Broward County.

Main points of ordinance:

- Effective October 1, 2013
- Landlord registration database maintains current and accurate contact information of owner, or designated entity
- Requires an annual registration and inspection of the residential rental properties to address substandard maintenance standards, protect property values, preserve the quality of the unincorporated area neighborhoods and prevent blight.
- Prior to leasing a unit, a Certificate must be obtained through the Division
- Annual Fee \$75
- Division must be notified within thirty (30) days, in writing, after any change of information provided in application, including ownership
- Contact information of a person with a local residence of business must be on file, if neither the owner nor landlord maintains a residence or business in Broward, Miami-Dade or Palm Beach County
- No certificate shall be issued until cursory exterior inspection is completed (within 15 business days from receipt of completed application)
- Inspection report provided indicating any outstanding code violations or lot-clearing liens or bills
- Database assist with informing landlord regarding health or safety violations, minimum housing code complaints, or emergency situation at residential rental units.

**Clearwater, FL** (population 109,703 and land area 25.56 square miles) – The purpose of the ordinance is to establish a system which all rental properties are licensed by the City and certified as meeting certain minimum housing and development standards. The ordinance also provides for inspection, enforcement proceedings and revocation of the business tax receipt if provisions of Ordinance 6932-02 are not met.

Main points of ordinance:

- Effective April 4, 2002
- All rental property, including single-family units, must obtain a Business Tax Receipt

Information compiled from current research and 2006 white paper entitled Rental Housing Programs



- All business tax receipt application shall include a local contact or representative with a current number and local address (Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Manatee or Sarasota)
- Business Tax Fees – rental units (1-5) \$31.50; Plus, each unit of five (5) \$1.70. \*\*Five or more units require a license from the State, issued by the Department of Business and Profession Regulation, Division of Hotels & Restaurants.
- If any contact information should change, the City must be notified in writing within thirty (30) days of the change.
- Courtesy visits to rental properties may be complaint-driven or inspector-initiated; however, three (3) or more code violations may trigger an inspection of the exterior and interior of the property.
- Random sampling of inspections can be done when one or more properties are owned or managed by one person or firm. Percentage of units inspected is determined total number of units owned.
- Failure to obtain or renew business tax receipt or failure to maintain the property may result in penalties to be administered either through the City's Municipal Code Enforcement Board or Pinellas county Court.
- If provisions of the ordinance are not met, a business tax receipt may be denied or revoked.

**Daytona Beach, FL** (population 62,316 and land area 58.41 square miles) – This regulation is intended to ensure that residential rental units that are not subject to state regulation meet minimum standards for the health, safety, and welfare of all city residents, and that responsible persons are readily available to respond and take appropriate action when necessary to prevent or remedy the occurrence of nuisances.

Note: The City of Daytona Beach charged \$203,893 for services of rental inspections in Fiscal Year 2013-214.

Main points of ordinance:

- Effective October 1, 2012
- Property owners are required to register rental property to obtain a Rental Property License and pass an inspection on a biennial basis
- Established minimum standards for exterior and interior of property
- City issued rental property license for owners with one to four units
- Any change of information on application must be submitted to the City, in writing, within 15 calendar days of the change
- Rental License shall be renewed annually in the same manner as, and concurrent with, the business tax receipt renewal
- Property owner and agent shall permit the City to inspect all premises governed by this ordinance to determine compliance, and shall fully cooperate with such inspections.
- Fees – initial application \$40 and inspection fee \$50 (per unit); annual license renewal fee \$15 and inspection fee \$68
- Provides process for enforcement, suspension or revocation of license



**Deltona, Volusia County, FL** (population 86,290 and land area 37.53 square miles) – Deltona Rental Regulatory License Ordinance

Main points of ordinance:

- Effective July 21, 2014
- Fees – range from \$20 - \$75
- Obtain Rental Regulatory License prior to rental of residential dwelling
- Rental Regulatory License Fee will be set annually by the City Commission during budget process. Fee shall be determined to generate revenue commensurate with cost of the regulatory activity.
- Application of license should be filed on or before September 30 of each year, or at the same time thereafter as a residential unit is first offered for rent
- Separate license is needed for each and every tax parcel on which a rental residential dwelling unit is located
- Contact person or owner must certify receipt of ordinance and applicable sections of the International Property Maintenance Code and acknowledges that failure to abide by this ordinance or applicable codes and ordinances may result in a lien upon the property of the owner
- Any contact information change must be submitted in writing to the City within thirty (30) days of the change
- Interior rental inspections are permissible if rental inspector has probable cause, supported by a sworn affidavit or by invitation of tenant or property owner, to believe a health or safety violation exist inside the dwelling
- Establishes guidelines for emergency inspections and remediation

**Gainesville, FL** (population 127,488 and land area 61.31 square miles) – Landlord Permits

Main points of ordinance:

- Effective June 25, 2007
- Every owner of a single-family dwelling, two-family dwelling, three-family dwelling, four-family dwelling, multiple-family dwelling, rooming house, dormitory or other dwelling unit within a district designated is required to get a annual landlord permit from the city manager or designee prior to allowing the occupancy of such unit by another natural person or other natural persons, unrelated to the owner.
- Annual permit shall be valid from August 1 through July 31 of each year
- An agent must be appointed if the owner does not reside within the county for purposes of receiving notices.
- Violations of unit are regulated by the accumulation of a point system. After each point assessed written warning is sent to owner or agent. Accumulation of six or more points is subject to revocation of permit.
- By applying for a permit, the owner agrees to allow inspection of the unit for violations of this article, as well as violations of the housing code at any reasonable time; however,

this provision shall not be interpreted as authorizing the city to conduct an inspection of an occupied rental unit without obtaining either the consent of an occupant or a warrant.

**St. Petersburg, FL** (population 249,688 and land area 61.74) – Two programs authorized by under the code: Certificate of Inspection Program and Rental Housing Inspection Program

Main points of ordinance:

- Effective 1989 - Certificate of Inspection
- Applies to all rental housing units within approved target areas (adoption process through neighborhood associations with City Council approval)
- Housing unit within an approved target area has a change in occupancy, by rental, there must exist a valid certificate of inspection for that unit before it can be lawfully reoccupied by a tenant.
- Structures less than five years old are exempt.
- No charge
  
- Effective 2004 – Rental Housing Inspection Program
- Regulates any property with three (3) or more residential rental housing units

**Tampa, FL** (population 352,957 and land area 113.41)

- The entire rental inspection program is on cease and desists since earlier this year. The Code and process is being revised by the City Attorney for approval by City Council.

**Other cities/counties researched:**

Collier County – no specific ordinance regarding a rental property inspection program; however, has a mandatory code inspection of foreclosed or abandoned homes.

Lakeland - no specific ordinance regarding a rental property inspection program; however, they have a foreclosure ordinance that requires Mortgagee's registration of Property.

Orange County – no specific ordinance regarding a rental property inspection program

Orlando - no specific ordinance regarding a rental property inspection program

Tallahassee – no specific ordinance regarding a rental property inspection program; however, has a rooming house ordinance.



## **BENEFITS**

1. Conceptually, establishing a local rental inspection program is a positive step towards addressing rental unit health and safety issues and contributes to cleaner, safer, blight free neighborhoods.
2. Many rental programs have more success in small cities and towns.
3. Charging fees to property owners/landlords provides an incentive to correct violations and improve properties.

## **CONCERNS**

1. Charging fees to property owners/landlords may result in offset of incurred costs to the tenant through increased rent, thus creating a financial burden for the tenant.
2. Time constraints and manpower - Estimated scheduled inspection range from 10-14 days. This activity would greatly affect inspection response from complaint to first inspection for other issue types within any agency.
3. Jacksonville land mass and inspection area is over 747 square miles; other cities reviewed range from 12 to 113.41 square miles.
4. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Jacksonville's renter-occupied housing units was 112,175; this statistic will definitely increase, due to adding more units to the 'older housing stock' category as units age and an active local construction industry.
5. The amount of local renter-occupied housing units (and the addition of more in coming years) and Jacksonville's land size and population would likely require establishing a new department or division to conduct rental inspections.
6. Many citizens perceive required government fees as taxes.
7. Collection of program fees will likely not offset expenditures to administer the program.

In light of the preceding information, establishing a local rental inspection program, while conceptually is a positive step to address an age-old problem, would likely result in increased budgetary burden upon local government, and low-income citizens, who need affordable housing.

\*There was no reference of a required background check in any of the ordinances researched.