



**CITY OF DANBURY**  
**OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE**

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Livable Neighborhoods 2011  
*“Building a Better Danbury”*

**December 2011**

December 26, 2011

Honorable Mayor Boughton and City Council Members:

Below is a table highlighting UNIT activity from the time of last month’s City Council report. This does not include any UNIT activity regarding follow up and re-inspection work from previously noted issues. The UNIT works to ensure that each and every issue is resolved as quickly as possible.

<b>Time Period</b>	Nov 28 – Dec 26, 2011
<b>Number of Quality of Life Issues</b>	91
<b>One Year Ago</b>	67

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it (37)
- Miscellaneous (18)
- Unregistered/abandoned cars (15)
- Front Lawn Parking (8)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction (7)

Another year has come and gone. As of December 26, the UNIT has handled over 1120 complaints or issues within the community! Nearly 40% of UNIT activity has been the result of ACTION (Active Commitment Toward Improving Our Neighborhood). Despite the daily challenges, the UNIT will continue to maintain its commitment of addressing the quality of life concerns throughout Danbury. Properties with trash/garbage account for the highest percentage of the UNIT’s day to day activity (approx. 1/3). The list continues as the UNIT addresses several other issues ranging from Zoning violations, unregistered/abandoned vehicles, illegal dumping, unsafe and overcrowding living issues, neighborhood nuisances, and many other miscellaneous issues. We take pride in being the eyes and ears of the community and addressing issue after issue, many times in creative fashion.

**December Updates:****Illegal Dumping – Belmont Place:**

Early in the month, while on a nearby inspection, the UNIT noted a lot of trash tossed over the embankment off of Belmont Place, near the Still River. The trash was a variety of empty oil containers, some car parts, kitchen garbage and some old furniture. After spending a long period of time examining all of the trash, the UNIT came across one piece of mail belonging to a nearby resident. Upon questioning this individual and his friends, it became clear that he was responsible for much, if not all, of the trash. As a result, he issued an infraction of \$219 by UNIT Police Officer Ken Utter. Additionally, he was ordered to remove all of the garbage from the hillside within 5 days. Upon re-inspection, the UNIT was pleased to see that all of the trash had been picked up and disposed of accordingly. It is not often that our department gets lucky enough to identify the person(s) responsible for illegal dumping, but in this case, through our hard work, we were able to identify the individual AND have this person clean it up. Unfortunately, in many cases, a person is not identified and the UNIT then coordinates the cleanup.

**Attic Occupancy – White St:**

With the assistance of the Danbury Police Department, the UNIT was made aware of unsafe and illegal occupancy of an upstairs area on White Street. The UNIT coordinated an immediate inspection with the property owner and confirmed an area where approximately four people were sleeping. The space was deemed unsafe for occupancy by Fire Marshal Jim Johnson. Additionally, upon involving the Zoning Department, there were additional violations cited as well. The owner of the property immediately expressed his willingness to comply with each of the departments' requirements of compliance. Re-inspection two days later validated his commitment as the attic area had been entirely vacated.

Most people aren't even aware of the serious dangers of sleeping in a basement or attic bedroom without the necessary means of escape in case of fire. In the winter, lack of heat in these locations almost always means use of dangerous space heaters. Too often, the UNIT has seen that the illegal construction of these spaces create an immediate danger to residents, as walls are built inches away from furnaces, and wires and extension cords are run carelessly about the house. It is impossible for the UNIT to identify all of the unsafe locations, so we heavily rely on the feedback of Danbury's residents, as well as other City departments. Thank you to Police Officer Mike Georgoulis for bringing this unsafe condition to our immediate attention!

**Construction without Permit – Westville Ave:**

While proactively inspecting the neighborhood of Hakim St, UNIT noticed a pile of construction debris on the side of a house on Westville Ave. Further inspection revealed that unpermitted construction was being completed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> apartment of a multi-family home. Additionally, a tenant was living in this apartment without any heat, running water, a toilet and electricity. Space heaters were dangerously being powered via extension cords from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartment. UNIT immediately had a building inspector and Fire Marshal on scene to help determine what next steps to take. UNIT also contacted

property owner. The result of the inspection concluded with the property owner being required to apply for a permit for electrical and plumbing work. The tenant needed to vacate the apartment until the renovations and follow up inspections were complete and the construction debris needed to be cleaned up within 24 hours. Fortunately, the tenant's family member lived downstairs, so he was able to move there temporarily. I met with the property owner less than 24 hours later and he has already taken the steps to apply for a permit and all of the debris on the property has been cleaned up. UNIT will follow up and close out the issue once everything is complete. This is a common example where a UNIT inspection for one thing (garbage) leads to many other issues (unsafe living, construction without permit). This is a GREAT example of the benefits of UNIT ACTION!

### Major Cleanup – Exit 4 exit ramp:



On Tuesday, Dec 20<sup>th</sup>, the UNIT utilized the assistance of two of FCI's residents to complete a major cleanup off of the Exit 4 West exit ramp. For years, I have noticed an abundance of tires that had been dumped in this wet and wooded location for who knows how long. I'm very pleased to announce that after 94 TIRES, this area is now clean! 94 tires! Thankfully, this eyesore will no longer haunt me (and others) as I drive down the exit ramp. Additionally, Danbury residents and taxpayers need not worry, as I have coordinated for the tires to be picked up and disposed of AT NO COST.

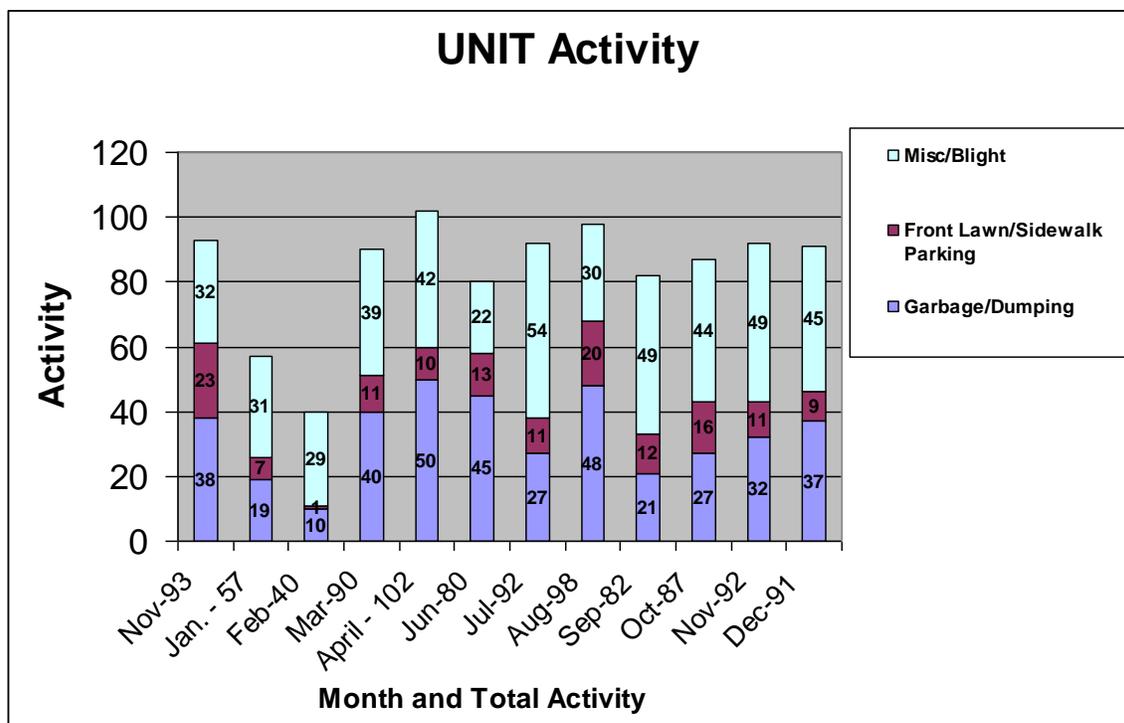
The partnership that the UNIT has created with FCI has been terrific. So many locations around town have been cleaned, as well as weekly, general litter cleanup in the common, well traveled areas. Thank you to all of their hard work, it is very much appreciated.

### **SMALL DEPARTMENT, BIG RESULTS:**

Our department has expanded well beyond its original purpose of simply responding to resident quality of life complaints. Over the last three years, approximately 40% of UNIT activity has been the result of ACTION, a proactive effort of identifying and resolving issues around town. In addition to the positive results of ACTION, the UNIT now coordinates the weekly involvement of FCI residents to complete community work around town. Finally, beginning in 2012, the UNIT is prepared to assist the DPD with the enforcement of parking violations in our neighborhoods. Commercial vehicles parked at night in residential neighborhoods, as well as vehicles parked in non-parking areas will be ticketed by the UNIT. These violations create unsafe and undesirable conditions in our neighborhoods and our added enforcement will help curtail these occurrences.

The goal of the UNIT is to improve the quality of life in Danbury and maintain the city as a desirable place to live. The UNIT is committed to addressing and resolving these issues as quickly as possible and continues to be the department where residents can come to register their complaint and get the quality service that they expect. We will continue to proudly serve and follow up on complaints as best as we can. Our office seeks quick resolution to the quality of life complaints we receive.

Below is a bar graph illustrating the monthly totals of UNIT service requests for various concerns. Front lawn parking and garbage/debris result in the majority of the daily issues faced by the UNIT. Miscellaneous may include homes in disrepair, illegal dumping, blight, etc.



### **311 Call Center Report: December 2011**

The ensuing cleanup following the Halloween snow storm maintained high call volume throughout the month of December as the 311 Call Center received 890 calls. Requests for information pertaining to the branch pickup totaled more than 200 calls while the postponed fall leaf pickup program brought another 170 inquiries. Requests for free and reliable information held steady through the month as 221 calls were placed for phone numbers, 34 calls were placed for information regarding the recycling truck, and another 42 were placed for information on where residents can dispose of household garbage. It is expected that call volume will remain high throughout the coming winter months but that expectation is dependent upon the weather. The experience of last winter prepared the 311 Call Center well for any future emergencies and has solidified a productive means of communication with other critical departments to ensure that consistent responses are provided for the residents of Danbury.

The UNIT continues to encourage the participation of Danbury's residents to report any concerns in their neighborhood by utilizing the City Line 311 system. Residents of Danbury can simply dial 311 from their home phones, or 203-744-4311 from out of town or cell phones. Additionally, residents can log on to the City's webpage, [www.ci.danbury.ct.us](http://www.ci.danbury.ct.us), and click on the City Line 311 link and register their complaint at their convenience, and now, residents can utilize the Danbury Direct app from their iPhone to submit a concern or question. Residents can choose to provide their contact information, so the UNIT can follow up and provide an update on the situation. By

visiting the Neighborhood Assistance Department on the City's website, residents will also be able to view the UNIT's monthly activity.

If we can be of any assistance to you or residents in your ward please contact us at 796-8026 or 311.

Sincerely,  
Shawn Stillman  
Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Assistance