



Transforming Vacancy into Opportunity

Across St. Louis, residents and local organizations are using innovative tools and resources to tackle the challenges of vacant property and strengthen their communities. From strategic partnerships and creative reuse to targeted home rehabilitation and legal advocacy, community-driven efforts are turning vacancy into tangible progress. These vignettes reflect the power of local action, collaborative problem-solving, and the practical application of resources highlighted in the [From Policy to Progress](#) report.

West End: Grassroots Partnership Gets Results

In the West End, residents teamed up with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri and City partners to track vacant properties, engage absentee owners, and move problem properties toward productive use. The West End experience demonstrated a replicable model for neighborhood-driven vacancy reduction and resident engagement.



St. Joseph Housing Initiative: Revitalizing the 8700 Block of Annetta

On the 8700 block of Annetta, St. Joseph Housing Initiative rallied residents, nonprofits, and for-profit partners to transform three long-vacant properties into quality, affordable homes. The Annetta project built on momentum from community organizations active in Baden and drew strength from relationships with mission-minded businesses.



St. Louis Art Place Initiative: Tackling Vacancy Through Art

In Gravois Park, the St. Louis Art Place Initiative (API) is turning long-vacant homes into affordable, for-sale housing for local artists, anchoring creativity and community investment in the neighborhood. API is creating lasting affordability and transforming underused spaces into cultural assets that support neighborhood stability and vibrancy.

Green City Coalition: Greenspace Conversion Reduces Vacancy and Supports Community

In College Hill, the Green City Coalition and residents reimagined vacant land around Peace Park as a vibrant community resource rooted in long-term partnerships and resident leadership. By aligning neighborhood priorities with technical support and funding, this collaboration has converted underused lots into welcoming green space, created paid stewardship opportunities, and strengthened local organizational capacity.



Transforming Vacancy into Opportunity

CleanUp/BuildUp: Mobilizing the Private Sector for Large-Scale Property Improvements in Disinvested Neighborhoods



Launched in 2017, CleanUp/BuildUp (CUBU) brings together a broad coalition of volunteer construction and demolition firms, churches, City agencies, and community members to tackle visible signs of disinvestment. Together, they've demolished more than 100 vacant buildings, cleared hundreds of vacant and abandoned lots, and addressed chronic illegal dumping across more than 20 large-scale events. CUBU demonstrates how coordinated, highly visible action can stabilize neighborhoods, spark reinvestment, and build momentum for longer-term recovery.

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri Neighborhood Advocacy: Putting Power Back in Community Hands



Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) enables residents and neighborhoods to hold absentee owners accountable and move vacant homes back into use. On the 3600 block of Hydraulic Avenue, LSEM partnered with Tower Grove Community Development Corporation (CDC) to acquire and rehabilitate a long-vacant home into a modern, two-family residence. Over the past decade, Tower Grove CDC has revitalized more than 20 buildings on the 36–3700 blocks of Hydraulic and nearby streets—a feat made possible by LSEM's guidance through legal and title challenges too complex to navigate alone.

Jeff-Vander-Lou and St. Louis Place: A New Model for Neighborhood-Scale Redevelopment

In 2024, the City approved a landmark 821-acre plan for Jeff-Vander-Lou and St. Louis Place, establishing neighborhood-scale revitalization driven by residents. Developed through years of collaboration among community associations, elected officials, and City staff, the plan allows targeted acquisition of long-vacant properties through limited, defined use of eminent domain, protects occupied homes and businesses, and ensures development aligns with community priorities.



Prop NS: Expanded Funding to Stabilize City-Owned Abandoned Properties

The Prop NS (“Neighborhood Stabilization”) Program is a valuable tool for stabilizing vacant homes. North Grand Neighborhood Services shows how that initial investment can go further when paired with volunteers and strong partnerships.