

St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative



2019-2021 Work Plan

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to our committee and working group members, other city staff, and community members for your countless hours of input and research to make this work plan a reality.

We also want to thank our generous funders who support coordination of the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative and without whom this work plan would have not been possible.

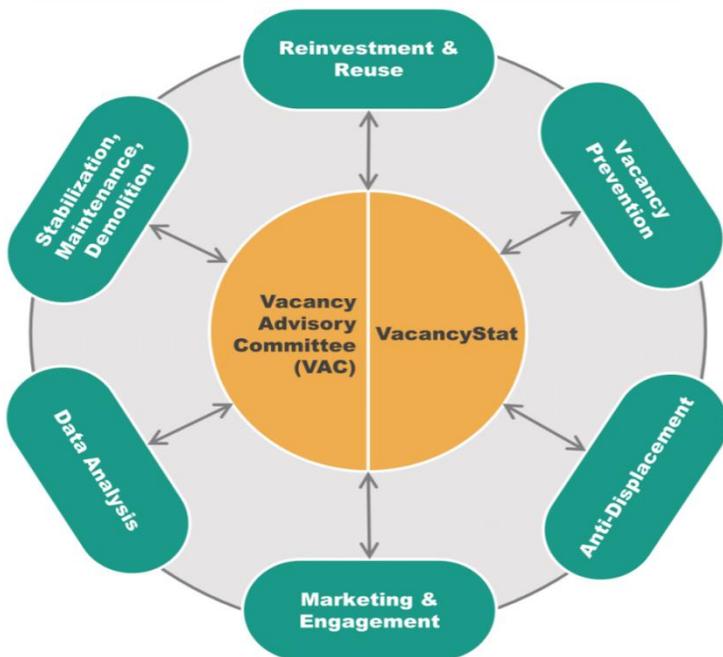
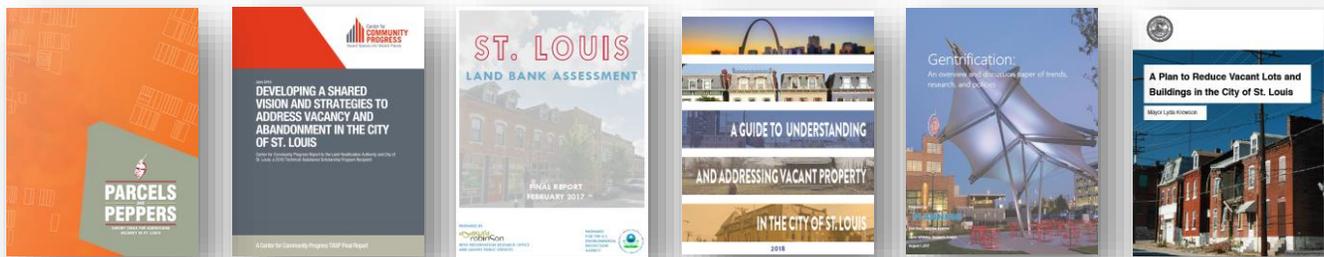


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Introduction

Our City has a serious vacant property challenge. To effectively address vacancy, we must understand and respond to the factors that cause and perpetuate it. Much of the story of vacancy in our city, like other cities, includes a legacy of racism, disinvestment, and disengagement that has led to a breakdown in trust. We know that vacancy can result from incomplete foreclosure, bankruptcy, prolonged probate or lack of proper probate, investors with little incentive to care, judgment proof owners, bank ownership, lack of resources to repair or redevelop, lack of value, the foreclosure crisis, sprawl and weak markets.¹ In St. Louis, other contributing factors include population loss, an aging housing stock, detrimental prior public policies (e.g., redlining, deed restrictions), predatory investors, and other forms of disinvestment.²

The challenge is beyond any single institution's ability to address. Over the past four years, City and neighborhood leaders have made concerted efforts to understand our vacancy challenge and the specific steps needed to address the challenge. As detailed on our [website](#), this effort has produced key foundational reports and numerous recommendations (including, among others, [Parcels and Peppers](#), [recommendations](#) from the Center for Community Progress, the Asakura Robinson [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment](#), [A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Vacant Property in the City of St. Louis](#), the St. Louis Planning and Design Agency's [gentrification discussion paper](#), and [Mayor Krewson's Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#)).



This multi-year effort has grown into what has come to be known as the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative (VC), a coalition of partners committed to reducing vacant property in St. Louis. Reducing the negative impact of vacancy is a complex strategy that requires coordination to achieve a shared vision. The VC is not a stand-alone entity, but a coalition of community representatives, private and non-profit stakeholders, and local government agencies. The VC helps to coordinate existing vacancy efforts under one umbrella and encourages the public and private sectors to work together toward solutions in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

Work Plan Purpose and Guiding Principles

Because the vacancy challenge requires a coordinated response from multiple stakeholders, the VC has engaged in an action-oriented planning process to identify the most immediate necessary next steps. In this process, the VC considered the [key milestones that led to the creation of the VC](#), issue area findings from the [2018 VC Summit](#), priorities identified in VC meetings and workshops, and recommendations and ideas from the foundational reports described on the previous page.

Purpose

This work plan is intended to:

- align and coordinate actions and resources of VC partners;
- respond to priorities identified in VC meetings, workshops, and key events leading up to the creation of the VC;
- build on and connect to existing efforts, future activities, and best practices;
- help demonstrate the needs and support neighborhoods and new partners in becoming part of the solution; and
- track our progress and remain accountable to build trust.

Guiding Principles

The following principles are the foundation of the VC's approach to addressing vacancy. These principles should guide implementation of this work plan.

Collaborative

Create a culture of collaboration and advocate for alignment and a shared vision whenever possible. Recognize that close coordination and committed leadership across the public and private sectors are essential to address the challenge.

Transparent

Communicate efforts and provide information in transparent and accessible ways. Evaluate whether new policies and programs might have unintended consequences due to existing structures and systems already in place.

Data-Driven

Use verifiable data and community stories to inform and evaluate responses to vacancy. Recognize that effective decision-making and a vacancy system that continually adapts and refines policies and programs can only exist with accurate, complete, and current information.

Community Informed

Support community engagement and community centered solutions. Empower community residents to take action.

Policy and Systems Oriented

Work for policy and systems level change in addition to individual building and lot interventions. Recognize that the vacancy challenge harms the whole City and the region and that vacancy is often the product of larger forces (e.g., irresponsible investors, detrimental public policies, population decline, sprawl, and a lack of economic and educational opportunities).

Racial Equity Framework

Apply a racial equity lens to the work, recognizing that the disproportionate impacts of vacancy fall on communities of color in St. Louis.

Work Plan Overview

Based on community input and evidence-based best practice recommendations, the VC is prioritizing five action categories to guide its work for the next 18 months. In this work plan, each action category contains long-term goals with one or more next steps associated with those goals. Accomplishing any given goal may not be achievable in the next 18 months given known resources and the complexity of the issue. However, each specific next step is designed to move us closer to achieving the goal. Each next step has a lead VC working group or committee responsible for working on that step. Because vacancy is a complex issue that requires a multi-year commitment, the VC anticipates that its members will work together to create an updated work plan with additional next steps that will guide its work after the conclusion of this initial work plan.

Importantly, this work plan includes a summary of research and best practices as they relate to the next steps associated with each goal. The research and best practices cited in this work plan are representative and are not intended to function as an exhaustive index or to encompass everything related to a given goal. They are intended to provide support and context for what is relevant to our work for the next 18 months. In crafting this plan, working groups identified key actors and resources needed to accomplish each step, but these conversations are ongoing, and as such are not included in the work plan. Working groups will continue to add to these areas as they begin implementation.

Action Categories and Associated Long-Term Goals

Category #1: Transparent and Equitable Development and Reinvestment
Understand and prevent displacement
Develop a shared understanding of present-day consequences of historical inequities and population decline
Increase opportunities and capacity for small-scale redevelopment, reuse, and reinvestment (SSR)
Enhance tax foreclosure processes to increase quality of title and quality of reinvestment
Understand tools to prevent vacancy; facilitate development of additional tools
Promote effective strategies for vacant lots
Category #2: Vacant Property Owner Accountability
Use strategic code enforcement and related court processes to increase private owner accountability
Develop next iteration of the Vacancy Portal
Category #3: Engagement & Capacity Building of Neighborhood Residents
Empower neighborhoods with information, tools, and resources; listen to residents' hopes and concerns to rebuild trust
Regularly communicate about the work of the VC with the St. Louis community
Increase capacity of neighborhood residents to work collectively; strengthen neighborhood association ecosystem
Increase opportunities for neighborhood-based vacancy planning and decision-making
Category #4: Government Process
Increase capacity within City agencies to address the vacancy challenge
Manage vacant properties comprehensively (i.e., strategic stabilization, maintenance, deconstruction, demolition, and sale) and increase transparency
Category #5: Collaborative Leadership Backbone
Build political will to address vacancy on a sustained and longer-term time horizon
Identify and pursue financial resources to support ongoing work of the VC
Track VC progress towards goals

Glossary of Terms

ADWG: Anti-displacement Working Group, one of six [cross-sector working groups](#) of the VC

Backbone: [leading organization or group](#) that supports and facilitates collective impact by guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing funding

DWG: Data Analysis Working Group, one of six [cross-sector working groups](#) of the VC

EPA: [Environmental Protection Agency](#)

LRA: [Land Reutilization Authority](#), the agency that functions as the City's land bank (i.e., receives title to certain tax delinquent properties and other donated property); the LRA is staffed by SLDC

MEWG: Marketing and Engagement Working Group, one of six [cross-sector working groups](#) of the VC

RRWG: Reinvestment and Reuse Working Group, one of six [cross-sector working groups](#) of the VC

PDA: [Planning and Urban Design Agency](#) for the City

SLDC: [Saint Louis Development Corporation](#), the economic development arm for the City

SMDWG: Stabilization, Maintenance, and Demolition Working Group, one of six [cross-sector working groups](#) of the VC

SSR: abbreviation for small-scale redevelopment, reuse, and reinvestment

VAC: [Vacancy Advisory Committee](#) of the VC, which is a community-oriented committee made of up private, non-profit, and community members who represent a variety of viewpoints and expertise

VC: [St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative](#)

VPWG: Vacancy Prevention Working Group, one of six [cross-sector working groups](#) of the VC

Vacancy Portal: [the online tool](#) that pulls publicly available data from 12 City databases into one place

Vacancy Resources: information, tools, and resources designed to help stakeholders (i) address existing vacancy, (ii) prevent future vacancy, and (iii) market neighborhood redevelopment opportunities in a way that builds on and preserves neighborhood assets

Category #1	Transparent and Equitable Development and Reinvestment
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Build capacity for transparent and equitable development decision-making and reinvestment that is tailored to local conditions.

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> Understand and prevent displacement </div>	Building on the City's Gentrification Report (PDA, 2017), identify and increase awareness of existing tools, policies, and programs to prevent displacement and promote equitable development and recommend additional tools, policies, or programs that are needed	ADWG
	Collect, analyze, and give voice to St. Louis City residents' concerns regarding displacement in their neighborhoods	ADWG
	Document narratives of displaced persons to demonstrate the many factors forcing people from their homes and neighborhoods	ADWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Addressing displacement concerns requires careful policy responses that consider historical context, market conditions, and qualitative and quantitative neighborhood data.³
- Data collection and analysis that is specific to our St. Louis context will help us develop and implement effective anti-displacement strategies.⁴

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> Develop a shared understanding of present-day consequences of historical inequities and population decline </div>	Building on Gentrification Report (PDA, 2017), identify and promote shared definitions of gentrification, displacement, and equitable revitalization that recognize the need to benefit existing residents while also welcoming new residents and new investment	ADWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- St. Louis has a long history of land clearance, housing discrimination, segregation, and population decline, the effects of which still linger today.⁵
- Effective vacancy strategies are informed by an understanding of this history and strive to ensure impacts and outcomes of programs, policies, and interventions do not disproportionately impact vulnerable people.⁶

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<p>Increase opportunities and capacity for SSR</p> 	<p>Collect and promote user-friendly guidance for purchasing and rehabilitating LRA and tax foreclosure properties</p>	<p>RRWG</p>
	<p>Identify and promote existing financial and technical assistance resources for reinvestment and reuse by small developers</p>	<p>RRWG</p>
	<p>Understand and promote existing efforts to develop a “small developer bootcamp” program to increase capacity of small developers to pursue SSR opportunities in ways that empower them to avoid falling prey to predatory schemes; identify gaps and evaluate whether additional efforts in this area are needed</p>	<p>RRWG</p>
	<p>Evaluate relative importance of historic district designations as a tool for encouraging reinvestment and reuse in two pilot St. Louis neighborhoods; if evaluation demonstrates such designations are a useful tool, identify neighborhood leaders and work with them to facilitate creation of additional historic districts to increase SSR opportunities in their neighborhoods</p>	<p>RRWG</p>

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- While economics drives redevelopment and reuse of vacant property, law and policy can significantly affect whether and how the market responds to redevelopment opportunities and can be used to reverse a downward trajectory of abandonment, diminished quality of life, and decreased property values.⁷ However, significant investment is needed to see change.⁸ Strategies must be tailored to local neighborhood conditions, including market strength.⁹
- Educating potential homebuyers and real estate agents about opportunities to purchase vacant property is an effective strategy to increase the number of responsible owners who acquire and care for distressed properties.¹⁰
- Clear title and access to mortgage financing, along with technical and other support for small developers, are key drivers of market-driven reuse.¹¹ In St. Louis, there are untapped SSR opportunities, including for LRA inventory.¹²
- Historic tax credits are an important redevelopment tool for vacant structures in St. Louis.¹³

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<p>Enhance tax foreclosure processes to increase quality of title and quality of reinvestment</p> 	<p>Identify existing tax foreclosure steps; identify policy, practice, and legislative changes in these steps that could increase amount and quality of reinvestment in vacant tax-delinquent properties</p>	<p>VPWG (Clear Titles Subgroup)</p>

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- The ways that local governments handle vacant tax-delinquent properties significantly impact whether those properties are likely to be reused productively.¹⁴

- In St. Louis, the Collector of Revenue and Sherriff (both of which are elected officials and part of the City of St. Louis “county” government structure) are key actors in the tax foreclosure process.¹⁵
- While the delinquent tax foreclosure system in the City is a beneficial tool in many respects, aspects of the system need to be modernized.¹⁶

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
Understand tools to prevent vacancy; facilitate development of additional tools	Identify and promote existing home repair programs, financing programs, and other resources for owner-occupants to reduce the flow of properties into vacancy	VPWG
	Identify gaps and opportunities for increasing scale of and funding for home repair programs, financing programs, and other resources for owner-occupants	VPWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- The entry of additional vacant properties into our vacancy inventory can be slowed through vacancy prevention strategies, including home repair programs.¹⁷
- In St. Louis, existing home repair programs are underfunded and oversubscribed, resulting in long waiting lists.¹⁸

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
Promote effective strategies for vacant lots	Create or adapt an existing toolkit to increase awareness of alternative land uses that can stabilize neighborhoods, attract investment, reduce the cost of maintenance, and reduce illegal dumping	RRWG
	Develop rubric to categorize condition of vacant lots (e.g., problem lot, neutral lot, or neighborhood asset lot; temporary or permanent land use)	RRWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Greening infrastructure and alternative land uses (both short-term and long-term) are valuable vacancy strategies that can stabilize neighborhoods, attract investment and increase property values, reduce the cost of maintenance, reduce illegal dumping, and bring other environmental, social, and economic benefits.¹⁹
- In St. Louis, more than enough publicly-owned land is available for long-term greening uses and can have quantifiable economic benefits for surrounding property values.²⁰
- Tracking the location, number, status, and condition of vacant lots is key to appropriate planning.²¹

Hold private owners of vacant properties accountable through strategic code enforcement and neighborhood-based tools.

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
Use strategic code enforcement and related court processes to increase private owner accountability	Create high-level process map of existing code enforcement system followed by more detailed process map of mechanisms and processes related to vacant property; begin to identify preliminary pain points and opportunities	SMDWG
	Create process map of existing municipal court mechanisms and processes related to vacant property; begin to identify preliminary pain points and opportunities (e.g., more formalized/funded diversion program to support lower-income owner-occupiers)	VPWG
	Explore City-initiated receivership tool to permit City to take control of privately-owned vacant property; and explore accompanying necessary capacity (i.e., qualified small developer/rehabbers, staffing, etc.)	SMDWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Traditionally, "code enforcement" means the legal and administrative processes that local governments use to gain compliance with ordinances designed to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare.²² Modern problems—such as widespread vacancy—call for "strategic" code enforcement (operating within a dynamic system, used proactively to address problem properties to further community wellbeing, and often requiring new tools).²³
- Property owners who are local and live in or near their properties are more likely to maintain them.²⁴ Neighborhoods with high levels of absentee ownership are more likely to experience crime and property deterioration.²⁵ Non-local "investors" in areas of high concentrations of vacancy tend to invest little or nothing in the properties, hold them, and then abandon the properties after getting the anticipated return on their investment.²⁶
- To move toward strategic code enforcement, code enforcement agencies need to engage in process mapping,²⁷ coordinate across city agencies and departments,²⁸ and develop and disseminate code enforcement information.²⁹ Agencies should continually evaluate whether code updates or other changes could increase their effectiveness in fighting vacancy.³⁰
- One key legal tool to address vacancy is receivership (i.e., legal tool that allows court to designate local government or qualified nongovernmental entity as the receiver of vacant property that an owner has failed to maintain that allows receiver to rehabilitate it and return it to productive use).³¹

Long -Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
Develop next iteration of the Vacancy Portal	Clean up, organize, and automate the Vacancy Portal	DWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Access to accurate data and understanding how to interpret this data are key to addressing vacancy.³²
- Easily accessible data empowers residents to take action and increases transparency.³³
- Accurate vacancy data provides baseline from which to measure progress.³⁴

Consistently engage with St. Louis neighborhoods and support efforts to build the capacity of residents to work collectively. Support neighborhood planning and link vacancy efforts other planning efforts, making sure that residents are at the center.

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<p>Empower neighborhoods with information, tools, and resources; listen to residents' hopes and concerns to rebuild trust</p>	<p>Collect and organize the Vacancy Resources created by each working group</p>	<p>MEWG</p>
	<p>Use the Vacancy Resources to build out stlvacancy.com for user-friendly public consumption; create new tools/dashboards to better track and understand this data</p>	<p>DWG</p>
	<p>Facilitate neighborhood workshops and presentations to existing neighborhood networks (i.e., meet people where they are already gathering) designed to (i) provide the Vacancy Resources in multiple formats, and (ii) collect stories and lived experiences</p>	<p>MEWG</p>
	<p>Understand existing youth networks (i.e., organizations and coalitions focused on youth) and host at least one roundtable discussion with leaders in those networks to (i) empower youth to use the Vacancy Resources and lead efforts to address vacancy in their neighborhoods and (ii) connect youth with opportunities vacancy brings (e.g., deconstruction job training programs, lot maintenance, rehabilitation projects construction)</p>	<p>MEWG</p>

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- While the City has a variety of tools to address vacancy, neighborhoods and other private stakeholders also have powerful tools (e.g., nuisance, receivership, and Abandoned Housing Act lawsuits; collective pressure on problem property owners) and are essential parts of the solution.³⁵
- To reduce vacancy, relevant City departments, neighborhood associations, CDCs, and other nonprofits must routinely collaborate.³⁶
- User-friendly information designed to help stakeholders take action and proactive community engagement are key elements of effective collaboration.³⁷

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<p>Regularly communicate about the work of the VC with the St. Louis community</p>	<p>Distribute a quarterly VC newsletter and host public workshops to highlight progress, increase awareness of the Vacancy Resources, present needs, and build a shared vision</p>	<p>VAC</p>
	<p>Develop a communications plan to guide both internal and external VC communication</p>	<p>MEWG</p>

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Stakeholders must develop a common understanding of the problem, coordinate initiatives, communicate effectively, and work toward a shared vision.³⁸
- Neither local government nor the private sector alone can solve the challenge, and public and private tools must be used together in strategic ways.³⁹
- Communication, respect, transparency of processes, sharing of information, and meaningful engagement are key elements of building trust with a community.⁴⁰

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<p>Increase capacity of neighborhood residents to work collectively; strengthen neighborhood association ecosystem</p>	<p>Develop publicly available map of existing neighborhood associations (or groups with similar function); identify gaps and overlaps; refer groups to legal and technical assistance as needed</p>	<p>MEWG</p>
	<p>Identify possible City-wide marketing mechanism to increase the overall demand for living in city neighborhoods (i.e., marketing to individuals/developers/relators not currently living/working in the City)</p>	<p>MEWG</p>
	<p>Identify possible ways City can facilitate a neighborhood association ecosystem that incentivizes (i) a single neighborhood association for each neighborhood and (ii) diverse and sustained resident participation</p>	<p>MEWG</p>

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Local government's ability to develop and maintain strong neighborhood relationships is a critical element of an effective vacancy strategy.⁴¹
- Moving a neighborhood toward a more positive trajectory requires (i) financial, social, and psychological investment in the neighborhood, and (ii) increasing demand for what the neighborhood offers (both from the people who live there and from people trying to decide where to live).⁴² Without efforts to increase demand for what the neighborhood offers, values will remain too low to make rehabilitation economically feasible.⁴³
- Residents can work collectively to create positive neighborhood brands (which can help their market strength)⁴⁴ and to shape redevelopment in their neighborhoods.⁴⁵
- An effective vacancy response includes supporting existing homeowners to enable them to remain in their homes, encouraging new homeowners to move into targeted areas, and strengthening neighborhood associations.⁴⁶

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<p>Increase opportunities for neighborhood-based vacancy planning and decision-making</p>	<p>Seek a more direct relationship to City's current economic development planning effort to align VC efforts with City's economic development planning; identify any other City-wide/regional planning efforts and establish ongoing connections to those efforts</p>	<p>VAC</p>

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Local residents are key actors in the design and implementation of vacant land strategies.⁴⁷
- In St. Louis, neighborhood-based planning has been a critical component of successful redevelopment in some areas with concentrations of vacant land, but these efforts are limited by the capacity of CDCs to partner and by the overall resources for community-based planning in the City.⁴⁸ More neighborhood plans and planning resources could help support redevelopment.⁴⁹

Category #4	Government Process
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Continue working toward transparent and consistent vacancy-related processes at the City level. Support continued modernization efforts.

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 150px;"> <p>Increase capacity within City agencies to address the vacancy challenge</p> </div> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0 10px;">➔</div> </div>	Engage with staff of key City departments on use of the Vacancy Portal for training and feedback	DWG
	Use vacancy data to determine how to most effectively deploy building inspectors	SMDWG
	Connect Forestry Division to database to join Building Division; expand contractor classifications to increase opportunities for contracting out vacant property related work	DWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- When developing vacancy resources, policies, and procedures related to vacancy, it is critical to engage “front line” inspectors and staff, both because they have practical knowledge and valuable feedback to improve systems and because their buy-in is essential for an effective system.⁵⁰
- Reducing vacancy requires modernizing current programs and looking to national best practices.⁵¹

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 150px;"> <p>Manage vacant properties comprehensively (i.e., strategic stabilization, maintenance, deconstruction, demolition, and sale) and increase transparency</p> </div> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0 10px;">➔</div> </div>	Develop a baseline vacant property inventory analysis and framework by which to evaluate future inventory for publicly owned property (i.e., a rating system that evaluates and categorizes existing structures and recommended treatment that can also be applied to future inventory)	SMDWG
	Create process map of existing LRA processes and procedures related to vacant property; begin to identify preliminary pain points and opportunities	SMDWG
	Develop and launch Proposition NS program	SMDWG
	Develop and launch deconstruction pilot program and complete cost-benefit analysis of deconstruction vs. demolition	SMDWG

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- A critical step to increasing LRA’s operational effectiveness is a baseline LRA inventory analysis (i.e., a framework that develops a priority list of uses for each property in the LRA inventory and that helps inform the LRA’s strategies for property acquisition, maintenance, and disposition).⁵² This inventory analysis is also a key step toward tracking and reducing LRA’s inventory.⁵³
- Demolition activities have to be part of a larger strategy to stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods.⁵⁴ Demolition must be partnered with rehabilitation and mothballing strategies,⁵⁵ and limited demolition

resources must be carefully targeted.⁵⁶ Demolition priority should be based on demolition criteria, including a formal ranking or point-based system.⁵⁷

- Strategic demolition can increase nearby home values,⁵⁸ but such benefits have been shown to accrue primarily in high and moderately functioning markets.⁵⁹ Moreover, targeted demolition can reduce crime, but vacancy prevention strategies may be even more effective at minimizing crime.⁶⁰
- Written policies and procedures are a cornerstone for effective strategic code enforcement.⁶¹

Category #5	Collaborative Leadership Backbone
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Sustain the work of the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative.

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
 Build political will to address vacancy on a sustained and longer-term time horizon	Understand relationship between vacancy and crime, focusing on impact of lot maintenance programs on crime	DWG
	Research and update vacancy estimates using additional sources of data	DWG
	Research net social benefits of current and potential vacancy initiatives	DWG
	Engage and inform legislators of the work of the VC	VAC

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Vacancy results in substantial costs to cities.⁶² In St. Louis, the fiscal toll of vacancy on the city's operating budget in 2017 was nearly \$66 million.⁶³
- Vacancy is associated with crime,⁶⁴ and addressing vacancy helps reduce crime.⁶⁵
- Vacancy is also associated with reduced quality of life,⁶⁶ elevated lead levels,⁶⁷ and lower property values.⁶⁸ Vacancy spreads like a disease, and homes close to vacancy are more likely to become vacant themselves.⁶⁹

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
 Identify and pursue financial resources to support ongoing work of the VC	Engage foundations and pursue grant opportunities	VAC
	Secure an AmeriCorps VISTA to focus on research and capacity building (i.e., research on VC governance structure, long-term sustainability, and implementation of this work plan)	VAC

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Given the scope of the vacancy challenge in St. Louis, the VC's collective efforts to address the problem will be needed for many years to come.⁷⁰
- Managing and sustaining a collaborative and community-informed coalition to address the vacancy challenge requires considerable staff resources.⁷¹

Long-Term Goal:	Next Steps:	Lead Group:
 Track VC progress towards goals	Review work plan progress at least every 6 months and publicly report out progress	VAC

Why is this long-term goal important? What is the evidence?

- Effective leaders facilitate a visionary agenda in a consensus-building way, and are results-oriented.⁷²
- Monitoring progress toward a goal increases the likelihood that the goal will be achieved, especially if that progress is publicly reported or physically recorded.⁷³

Endnotes

¹ [A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Vacant Property in the City of St. Louis](#), p6-7

² [A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Vacant Property in the City of St. Louis](#), p5

³ City of St. Louis Planning & Urban Design Agency, [Gentrification: An Overview and discussion paper on trends, research, and policies](#), p4 (noting a primary issue is how gentrification is defined and noting displacement has been the most prominent theme and is of primary concern to those grappling with neighborhood change); Kennedy and Leonard, [Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices](#) (2001) (outlining “10 steps to a stronger community”: knowing the context, anticipating the pressure, getting organized, developing a unified vision and implementation plan, implementing regulatory and policy fixes, maximizing public assets for the public good, educating residents about their legal rights and other options, improving the public education system, preparing groups to negotiate, and creating forums to unify the gentrifying community)

⁴ City of St. Louis Planning & Urban Design Agency, [Gentrification: An Overview and discussion paper on trends, research, and policies](#), p22 (“In the context of St. Louis, more analysis and data collection will likely be necessary to develop and employ an effective gentrification strategy in the coming years.”)

⁵ City of St. Louis Planning & Urban Design Agency, [Gentrification: An Overview and discussion paper on trends, research, and policies](#), p9 (“issues of land clearance, housing discrimination, and segregation have a long history in St. Louis and their effects continue to inform the attitudes of the community to policy remediation”)

⁶ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p15 (“Strategic [code enforcement] should always strive to ensure that the impacts and outcomes of its programs, policies, and interventions do not disproportionately impact vulnerable communities, families, and individuals. . . . More so today than ever before, it becomes essential for [code enforcement] agencies, from the leadership to the frontline staff, to understand how this legacy of inequality plays out in the communities in which they serve.”)

⁷ Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p37 (“Fundamentally, economics drives the redevelopment or reuse of vacant properties, but public laws, policies, and actions significantly affect whether and how the market responds to redevelopment opportunities. Public policies and actions can hinder the market or, alternatively, help overcome economic obstacles and jump-start markets.”) and p41 (“[R]evival is very different from what some people may think of as gentrification; it is, rather, the reversal of what is currently a downward trajectory of abandonment, diminished quality of life, and decreased property value to ensure that neighborhoods remain healthy places for families at all income levels.”)

⁸ Mallach, [Neighborhood Change: Leveraging Research to Advance Community Revitalization](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Three, p17 (summarizing two studies demonstrating significant positive neighborhood impacts as a result of concentrating high levels of public investment and noting that both studies found that “investing in improvements in a neighborhood has little impact until a critical level of concentration is reached, at which point the investments then begin to affect the neighborhood’s trajectory”)

⁹ [Laying the Foundation for Strong Neighborhoods in Trenton, NJ](#), p65-66 (describing relationship between 14 vacancy strategies and neighborhood conditions)

¹⁰ Treuhaff, Rose, and Black, [When Investors Buy up the Neighborhood: Preventing Investor Ownership from Causing Neighborhood Decline](#), p15 (highlighting Minneapolis program where nonprofit partners visit foreclosed properties and evaluate their condition, immediately notifying real estate agents of promising leads and a Boston program that offers potential homebuyers tours of foreclosed properties and home-buying workshops focused on buying homes that need work); Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p57 (Recommendation 4.4, recommending seminars or learning sessions about process to purchase and rehabilitate LRA property and noting that “[r]esidents of neighborhoods who wish to help improve their neighborhood and have local connections and social capital can be a major asset in making small-scale neighborhood improvements over time”) and p53 (Recommendation 4.1, recommending specific improvements to website to help public easily navigate available properties and programs and understand program requirements); Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p10 (describing steps toward LRA website redesign); [Strategies to Rebuild Detroit’s Homebuyer Ecosystem](#), p7, 18-19, 25-26 (recommending neighborhood marketing, potential homebuyer engagement, and realtor education strategies to rebuild Detroit homebuyer ecosystem).

¹¹ See Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p51-52 (to foster more market-driven reuse, (i) ensure contractors and developers have quick access to vacant properties at realistic prices with clear title, (ii) create supply of moderately priced homes for sale in move-in condition, and (iii) provide access to mortgage financing for reasonably qualified

buyers); [BEST Action Plan 2017-18](#), slides 28-30 (create path for marketable, insurable title; identify resources available for developers interested in acquiring vacant property; small developer bootcamp and regular follow-up gatherings to share success, identify roadblocks, and brainstorm about redevelopment efforts); Treuhaft, Rose, and Black, [When Investors Buy up the Neighborhood: Preventing Investor Ownership from Causing Neighborhood Decline](#), p15 (highlighting programs offering free or reduced fee property management training); [Strategies to Rebuild Detroit's Homebuyer Ecosystem](#), p20-21 (recommending financing strategies to incentivize and support developers of move-in ready homes)

¹² Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p 21 ("One of the LRA's cornerstone strategies for disposing of property is to assemble large tracts of land and dispose of it to large purchasers who commit to generating redevelopment and jobs. However, there seem to be fewer programs that target complementary small-scale redevelopment opportunities that local residents and small developers can access.")

¹³ Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p39 (Recommendation 3.3a, develop partnerships to stabilize properties, especially historic tax credit eligible) and p49 ("Recommendation 3.7c: Coordinate with existing historic districts, and consider advocating for additional historic district designations to make tax credits available where appropriate. . . . While local historic districts come with demolition and design review requirements that can discourage redevelopment, National Register districts make state and federal rehabilitation credits available without these requirements. Therefore, defining new National Register districts may create opportunities for historic rehabilitation of vacant structures in targeted areas that will coordinate with redevelopment priority areas.")

¹⁴ Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p37 ("Although every city wants to see vacant properties productively reused and blight removed, many state and local laws and practices get in the way of that outcome. Most significant, perhaps, is how many jurisdictions in the United States handle local property tax collection. While not all vacant properties are also tax delinquent, a disproportionate share are. As a result, the ways that local governments handle vacant tax-delinquent properties become a critical element in whether they are likely to be reused productively."); Center for Community Progress, [Developing a Shared Vision and Strategies to Address Vacancy and Abandonment in the City of St. Louis](#), p10-11 (recommending reduced time frame for delinquent property tax enforcement and housing and building code enforcement); Barlow, Schaffzin, and Williams, [Ten Years of Fighting Blighted Property in Memphis: How Innovative Litigation Inspired Systems Change and a Local Culture of Collaboration to Resolve Vacant and Abandoned Properties](#), p351 (explaining that a high performing code enforcement operation and a tax foreclosure system that gets properties back into productive use in a reasonable time period are prerequisites to a well-functioning land bank)

¹⁵ [A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Vacant Property in the City of St. Louis](#), p16 (explaining role of Collector of Revenue and Sheriff); Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p35 ("Recommendation 3.2: Work with the Collector of Revenue to understand the full tax-delinquent property inventory and develop strategic enforcement mechanisms to shape the properties acquired by the LRA each year. . . . The study team recommends that the LRA and collector of Revenue actively work together to target delinquent property tax enforcement strategically in particular areas of the city where the LRA is working at assemble land and work with other agencies like the LCRA and Building Division to stimulate redevelopment. While the LRA is unlikely to receive every property auctioned through a tax sale (as some will sell to private buyers), this collaboration will introduce additional predictability into the process and will help reduce the timeframe for delinquent tax enforcement in areas that are receiving substantial investments of public resources."); Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p10 (describing need for clear and insurable tax title and highlighting Collector of Revenue's role)

¹⁶ Center for Community Progress, [Developing a Shared Vision and Strategies to Address Vacancy and Abandonment in the City of St. Louis](#), p10-12 (recommendations related to improving the tax foreclosure system)

¹⁷ Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p39 (recommending foreclosure prevention programs, property tax circuit breakers, and home repair programs as effective strategies to reduce future abandonment); [BEST Action Plan 2017-18](#), slide 22 (recognizing need to increase awareness of home repair resources)

¹⁸ City of St. Louis, [Healthy Home Repair Program](#) (noting that, because so many homeowners are already on the waiting list, there may be significant delay before a user is able to participate)

¹⁹ Schilling and Logan, [Greening the Rust Belt: A Green Infrastructure Model for Right Sizing America's Shrinking Cities](#), p455 (highlighting research documenting the environmental, social, and economic benefits of urban greening); Wachter et al, [Green Investment Strategies](#) (summarizing research analyzing the impact of a multi-year vacant-land cleanup and management program in Philadelphia focused on lot clearance, seeding and landscaping, and rustic wood fencing; finding greening investment reversed negative vacancy impacts and led to gains in nearby property values of 9-30%); Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p46-48 (recommending inexpensive, low-maintenance approach to vacant lots installed and maintained by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society with support from the city of Philadelphia but also noting two distinct obstacles to building sustainable greening efforts in legacy cities: (i) lack of enough financial resources to treat even a majority of the vacant lots; and (ii) long-term sustainability of greening projects due to ongoing maintenance

needs, a lack of a citywide greening infrastructure, and failure to see greening as a long-term use of urban land); Center for Community Progress, [Boosting Productivity: Lessons from the Green Reuse and Vacant Land Maintenance Learning Exchange](#) (describing (i) “small scale” disposition, maintenance, and green land-use treatment options such as branded rain gardens, a lease-to-own lot purchase program, a lot maintenance program designed to target the city’s six high-crime neighborhoods as part of a homicide reduction strategy, and a user-friendly side lot purchase program; (ii) “large-scale” alternative land uses such as green infrastructure to reduce combined sewer overflow events, urban agriculture, dendroremediation, and low-maintenance landscape designs; and (iii) outreach and engagement initiatives such as design competitions, educational workshops, combined city and resident clean-up days, and community-driven planning); Tyler Swehla et al., Kan. State Univ., Dep’t of Landscape Architecture and Reg’l & Cmty. Planning, [Parcels and Peppers: Savory Ideas for Addressing Vacancy in St. Louis](#) (providing multiple ideas for reuse of vacant lots in St. Louis); [BEST Action Plan 2017-18](#), slide 27 (recognizing need to research best practices for vacant lots, create a community toolkit, and empower community groups to create alternative uses for vacant lots); Engh et al., [Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities](#) (describing creative placemaking efforts and demonstrating increased community engagement as a result); Detroit Future City, [Working with Lots: A Field Guide](#) (step-by-step instruction for 38 landscape designs addressing variety of concerns including stormwater, dumping, and soil quality); United States Department of Agriculture, [Green Pattern Book: Using Vacant Land to Create Greener Neighborhoods in Baltimore](#) (designed to assist organizations in greening vacant land)

²⁰ Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p27 (recommending St. Louis undertake an analysis of the economic and social benefits of greening projects to provide a clear picture of the economic benefits of green uses and to demonstrate clear tie to LRA’s mission) and p39 (“Recommendation 3.4: Promote and facilitate alternative land uses and greening.”); Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p13 (describing work of Green City Coalition to create ecologically rich green spaces by converting vacant land into community green spaces, bikeways, greenways, and traditional public parks)

²¹ Kermit Lind, Vacant Property Research Network, [Data-Driven Systems: Model Practices & Policies for Strategic Code Enforcement](#) (recommending best practices for gathering broad assortment of specialized property data to support evidence-based policymaking); Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p50-51 (noting that systems should include parcel surveys, vacant property registration ordinances, and vacant building notices)

²² Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p13 (“data serves as the foundation for transforming [code enforcement] agencies and operations from an array of fragmented silos into a coordinated system of interconnected policies, programs, procedures, and practices”)

²³ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p9 (describing core elements of strategic code enforcement)

²⁴ Treuhaft, Rose, and Black, [When Investors Buy up the Neighborhood: Preventing Investor Ownership from Causing Neighborhood Decline](#), p10 (property owners who are local and live in or near property tend to maintain better)

²⁵ Treuhaft, Rose, and Black, [When Investors Buy up the Neighborhood: Preventing Investor Ownership from Causing Neighborhood Decline](#), p10 (studies show neighborhoods with high absentee ownership are less stable and more prone to crime and property deterioration)

²⁶ Malach, [The Two Vacancy Crises in America’s Cities](#) (“In hypervacant areas, as houses become empty, they often don’t sell at all. The few that do—the ones in relatively good condition—are both not by owner-occupants, but by investors. Rarely, though, by responsible landlords, but typically by the investors I’ve called ‘milkers’—people who invest little or nothing in the properties, hold them for only a few years, and then walk away. After all, if you can buy a property for \$10,000, and rent it out for \$600 a month, no questions asked, provide little or no maintenance, and not pay property taxes, at the end of three years you’ve doubled your investment. At that point, you don’t even care if the county takes it through tax foreclosure.”)

²⁷ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p18 (recommending creation of process maps for every code enforcement action and then identifying ways of streamlining, saving valuable resources and improving effectiveness); Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p63 (Recommendation 6.1, recommending information and databases be integrated into a centralized technology platform in a way that increases coordination among LRA, Forestry, Problem Properties, Housing Court, Citizens’ Service Bureau, Building Division, and Collector of Revenue); [BEST Action Plan 2019-20](#), Code Enforcement Action Item #4, p3 (streamline and strengthen vacant property registry); [The Power & Proximity of Code Enforcement: a Tool for Equitable Neighborhoods](#), p4, 13-17 (recommending code enforcement approach that is restorative, evidence-based, collaborative, community-centric, and proactive; describing process mapping and providing practical advice on how to approach)

²⁸ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p19 (“Strategic [code enforcement] happens when the multiple departments and agencies coordinate their actions.”)

²⁹ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p19 (“Strategic [code enforcement] requires having a robust website that outlines the programs’ big picture mission and policy goals along with details about the specific [code enforcement] processes, procedures, and remedies.”); [BEST Action Plan 2019-20](#), Code Enforcement Action Item #6, p3 (develop and share a playbook for citizens and violators about how code enforcement works and the steps in the process)

³⁰ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p12 (assessing departmental performance can be an incredibly valuable and powerful tool in allocating limited staff resources and moving to strategic code enforcement); Center for Community Progress, [Raising the Bar: Linking Landlord Incentives and Regulation through Rental Licensing](#) (suggesting more modern licensing system is more effective than a registration system and highlighting strategies for getting the most out of a licensing system); Pianka, [Community Control Supervision of Building Code Offenders in Cleveland’s Housing Court: Making the Most of Ohio’s Direct Sentencing for Misdemeanors](#), p903 (describing development of community control sentencing in housing court); Treuhaft, Rose, and Black, [When Investors Buy up the Neighborhood: Preventing Investor Ownership from Causing Neighborhood Decline](#), p21-23 (highlighting San Diego program requiring buyers of vacant structures to submit a statement of intent to bring the property into productive use and associated fines; Minneapolis program requiring owners to register vacant properties and pay a fee of \$6,360 per year on each property for as long as it remains vacant; Chicago program requiring local authorized agent, liability insurance, and conspicuous sign identifying name and contact information of current owner of vacant properties)

³¹ Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p38-39 (noting that the tool “can help unlock...demand by eliminating impediments that stand between potential users and properties”)

³² Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p7 (“Data-driven decision making is key to successfully targeting and reducing the number of vacant and abandoned properties.”); Center for Community Progress, [Neighborhood Stabilization in Waterbury, Connecticut: Recommendations to Build a More Proactive and Comprehensive Approach to Vacancy and Abandonment](#), p12-22 (recommendations for improved approach to data collection and management)

³³ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p19 (core element of strategic code enforcement includes developing and clearly communicating code enforcement information in a way that helps users take action)

³⁴ Center for Community Progress, [Developing a Shared Vision and Strategies to Address Vacancy and Abandonment in the City of St. Louis](#), p13 (recommending data collection needed to create baseline number of privately owned vacant properties and implying such baseline data is needed to create priority action list and measure progress)

³⁵ [A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Vacant Property in the City of St. Louis](#), p21 (describing neighborhood-based tools); Tyler Swehla et al., Kan. State Univ., Dept’ of Landscape Architecture and Reg’l & Cmty. Planning, [Parcels and Peppers: Savory Ideas for Addressing Vacancy in St. Louis](#) (recognizing role of City residents in addressing vacancy and providing multiple grassroots and neighborhood tools); [BEST Action Plan 2019-20](#), Community Engagement Action Item #3, p4 (recognizing neighborhoods as essential actor and committing to developing content designed to educate community on strategies and programs)

³⁶ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p9 (emphasizing that an effective approach coordinates programs, policies, and cases among city departments and agencies and that those departments and agencies routinely collaborate with neighborhood associations, CDCs, and other nonprofits and community-based organizations throughout the entire code enforcement process)

³⁷ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p19 (core element of strategic code enforcement includes developing and clearly communicating code enforcement information in a way that helps users take action)

³⁸ Center for Community Progress, [Developing a Shared Vision and Strategies to Address Vacancy and Abandonment in the City of St. Louis](#), p9-10

³⁹ Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p2 (noting that local government alone cannot adequately solve all the challenges with vacant and abandoned properties); Barlow, Schaffzin, and Williams, [Ten](#)

[Years of Fighting Blighted Property in Memphis: How Innovative Litigation Inspired Systems Change and a Local Culture of Collaboration to Resolve Vacant and Abandoned Properties](#), p383 (emphasizing that multisector partnerships are critical and explaining that vacancy progress in Memphis came “only as a result of a core cross-sector team that sincerely agreed on a path forward to address the longstanding problem of blighted property in [the] city, that trusted each other to be working toward the same commonly beneficial goals, and that stayed in regular communication with each other in formal and informal ways”); [A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Vacant Property in the City of St. Louis](#), p6 (emphasizing that public and private tools must be used in a coordinated way)

⁴⁰ Center for Economic and Community Development, Engagement Toolbox, [The Role and Importance of Building Trust](#) (summarizing trust literature)

⁴¹ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p19 (core element of strategic code enforcement includes developing and maintaining community relationships by regularly engaging with community groups)

⁴² Mallach, [Neighborhood Change: Leveraging Research to Advance Community Revitalization](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Three, p10 and 22 (mechanism underlying almost all neighborhood change factors is the way they affect people's desire to invest in their neighborhood and the strength of its housing market demand; investment and demand are both required elements of creating a positive neighborhood trajectory); [Strategies to Rebuild Detroit's Homebuyer Ecosystem](#), p18-19 (recommending neighborhood marketing strategies)

⁴³ Mallach, [Laying the Groundwork for Change: Demolition, urban strategy, and policy reform](#), p9 (lack of demand keeps values too low to make rehabilitation economically feasible; once house sits vacant, cost of rehabbing it can exceed the post-rehabilitation value)

⁴⁴ NeighborWorks, [Neighborhood Marketing Guide](#) (resources and publications that share key concepts, strategies, and tools to assist community-based organizations in creating positive neighborhood brands that can help to attract and retain residents and businesses)

⁴⁵ [The Community Association's Guide to the Development Process in Baltimore City](#), p2-3, 11-12, 23-28 (recommendations and practical advice for neighborhood associations to monitor and shape development)

⁴⁶ Center for Community Progress, [Laying the Foundation for Strong Neighborhoods in Trenton, NJ](#), p60 (emphasizing homeownership strategies and strengthening neighborhood associations); [Neighborworks Community Building and Engagement Program](#) (explaining that resident leadership is the key that enables communities to become vibrant and that resident-led associations brings together resources and skills in a way that increases collective capacity); [Strategies to Rebuild Detroit's Homebuyer Ecosystem](#), p12-13 (recommending user-friendly information source for potential homebuyers as a strategy to increase homeownership in Detroit)

⁴⁷ Garvin et al, [More than Just an Eyesore: Local Insights and Solutions on Vacant Land and Urban Health \(public health researchers and practitioners, and urban planners, should engage local residents in the design and implementation of vacant land strategies\)](#)

⁴⁸ Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p63 (“Neighborhood-based planning has been a critical component of successful redevelopment in some areas with concentrations of vacant land. However, these planning efforts are limited by the capacity of local community-based organizations to engage and partner in planning efforts, and by the overall resources and capacity available for community-based planning in the City. Neighborhood plans would provide the LRA with an objective and community-oriented basis for prioritizing its programs and resources to best meet local needs. Ideally, these plans should be conducted by the Planning Department on a rolling basis in an effort to complete plans for all neighborhoods [by 2021] and have them complete in time for the future Alderman transition which will occur after the 2020 Census results are released.”)

⁴⁹ Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p63 (“The City and SLDC should work together to consider redefining the role of the Neighborhood Stabilization Officers (NSOs) by rewriting the Civil Service job description for future hires to encompass planning-related tasks such as community engagement, community mapping, and data collection. The NSOs currently serve as ward-based troubleshooters who report issues back to the Citizen's Service Bureau, but do not have a formal role in planning to deal with and prioritize these issues.”)

⁵⁰ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p12 (critical to engage front line inspectors and staff in creating policies and procedures because they have practical insights into what works and what needs improving; engagement also increases commitment for following policies and procedures)

⁵¹ Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p13 (“Addressing vacancy is complex work. Reducing the 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties will require modernizing our current programs and looking toward national best practices. St. Louis is not the only city dealing with these issues. Seeking best practices allows us to move more quickly.”); Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p17 (“One of the key goals that pervades this study is therefore adopting best practices from nationwide land banks that have had the benefit of building their legal foundation and operational structure using the hard-won lessons and results that have come from the LRA and other long-standing land banks.”); Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p1 (noting that “many [code enforcement] agencies operate with limited resources within fragmented governmental organizations that make it difficult to proactively coordinate, respond, and comprehensively reclaim vacant, abandoned, and other problem properties” and that “[code enforcement] agencies must deploy their inspection resources, administrative and judicial remedies, and policy tools in new, proactive ways—targeting the right responses to the right places at the right time.”)

⁵² Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p31 (recommendation 2.2)

⁵³ Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p30 (inventory analysis is critical first step to accomplish disposition, maintenance, and strategic acquisition goals); Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p9-10 (describing administration’s goal of reducing the number of properties in LRA’s inventory)

⁵⁴ Mallach, [Laying the Groundwork for Change: Demolition, urban strategy, and policy reform](#), p5 (policymakers need to be strategic about which buildings to demolish and such activities must be part of larger strategy focused on stabilization and revitalization; recommending ten action steps for strategic demolition including transparent procedures, demolition criteria, process for demolition decisions that engages wide range of interests and viewpoints, demolition of privately owned buildings and taking title to vacant buildings and lots, strategic vacant lot maintenance, comprehensive neighborhood stabilization programs, streamlined demolition regulations, demolition cost recovery, legislative tools, and leveraging federal and local funds with state resources); Yin and Silverman, [Housing Abandonment and Demolition: Exploring the Use of Micro-Level and Multi-Year Models](#), p1185 (study demonstrating increased focus on demolition in Buffalo did not result in net reduction of total number of vacancies and that demolitions were executed more randomly and often not based on community priorities because of the lack of a clear strategy)

⁵⁵ Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p53 (explaining that “[t]he long-term vitality of our cities and their neighborhoods also depends on their ability to retain their historic urban fabric if they are to draw market demand in the future” and that demolition needs to be balanced with rehabilitation and mothballing; recommending cities use a systematic process that (i) engages many stakeholders, including community residents; (ii) considers market conditions, financial resources and constraints, neighborhood character, features of the building (including architectural and historic value), its contribution to neighborhood fabric, and its potential blighting effect on its surroundings; and (iii) includes greening as an integral element); Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p13 (“The historic buildings and homes that line the City’s streets are underappreciated assets for the future growth of St. Louis. Our unique architecture provides St. Louis a competitive edge when attracting new residents because of our authentic urban design and affordability. However, every time the City is forced to demolish a vacant building, we lose a little piece of our history and part of our competitive edge.”)

⁵⁶ Mallach, [Laying the Foundation for Strong Neighborhoods in Trenton, NJ](#), p64 (recommending limited demolition resources be targeted to (i) blocks containing no more than 1 or 2 properties in need of demolition, to stabilize the block; (ii) in areas with larger numbers of vacant structures, those problem properties with the greatest impact on quality of life; and (iii) vacant properties where demolition can materially further assembly of larger property with significant redevelopment potential); Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p21 (“There is a strong need to define a set of internal LRA policies/procedures detailing how the agency might strategically utilize available stabilization/demolition resources for the purposes of maintaining public safety while encouraging and directing redevelopment.”) and p45 (Recommendation 3.5, recommending that LRA adopt a set of demolition standards for prioritization of demolition funds based on existing internal standards and best practices)

⁵⁷ Asakura Robinson Co., [St. Louis Land Bank Assessment: Final Report](#), p45-46 (Recommendations 3.5-3.6, providing tailored advice for formalizing existing LRA demolition policies, incorporating national best practices, and piloting enhanced demolition to facilitate redevelopment); Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p12 (describing increased demolition funding and strategy of prioritizing dangerous structures near schools, parks, and other community gathering spaces)

⁵⁸ Dynamo Metrics, LLC, [Estimating Home Equity Impacts from Rapid, Targeted Residential Demolition in Detroit, MI: Application of a Spatially-Dynamic Data System for Decision Support](#) (home values in Detroit increased after nearby targeted demolition activity, at least in part as a result of targeted demolition activity supported by data system)

⁵⁹ Western Reserve Land Conservancy Thriving Communities Institute, [Estimating the Effect of Demolishing Distressed Structures in Cleveland, OH, 2009-2013: Impacts on Real Estate Equity and Mortgage-Foreclosure](#), p i-iv (finding benefits from demolition activity were shown to accrue primarily in high and moderately functioning markets and that little real estate equity return is available from demolition activity in weak real estate markets)

⁶⁰ Stacy, [The effect of vacant building demolitions on crime under depopulation](#), p101 (study demonstrating that demolitions do work to reduce crime, but that it is unclear whether demolitions fully revert crime to its prevacancy level and suggesting vacancy prevention strategies may be more effective at minimizing crime)

⁶¹ Schilling and Lind, [Strategic Code Enforcement: A New Model for Reclaiming Vacant Properties and Stabilizing Neighborhoods](#), VPR Network Research & Policy Brief No. Six, p18 (recommending written manual to provide management and staff with baseline and consistent standards and to provide opportunity for practical insights from frontline staff)

⁶² Dan Immergluck, [The Cost of Vacant and Blighted Properties in Atlanta: A Conservative Analysis of Service and Spillover Costs](#) (range of quantifiable, known annual costs associated with vacant properties in Atlanta is conservatively estimated at between \$2.6 and \$5.7 million and does not include many unmeasured costs or one-time loss in single-family property values); Center for Community Progress, [A Conservative Analysis of Costs Imposed by Vacant and Blighted Properties in Toledo](#) (Toledo incurs a conservative estimate of approximately \$3.8 million annually in direct vacancy costs, \$2.71 million in annual lost tax revenue from delinquency, and millions in annual lost tax revenues for properties within 500 feet of vacant properties); National Vacant Properties Campaign, [Vacant Properties: The True Costs to Communities](#) (detailing costs of vacancy, including municipal services, decreased property values, and costs to homeowners)

⁶³ Mayor Lyda Krewson, [A Plan to Reduce Vacant Lots and Buildings in the City of St. Louis](#), p5

⁶⁴ Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p19-20 (vacant properties strongly associated with crime and violence); William Spelman, [Abandoned Buildings: Magnets for Crime? Journal of Criminal Justice](#) (blocks with unsecured [vacant] buildings had 3.2 times as many drug calls to police, 1.8 times as many theft calls, and twice the number of violent calls as blocks without vacant buildings); Max Weinstein et al., [Final Report of the Foreclosure Impacts Task Force of the State of Massachusetts](#) (violent crime increases by more than 15% within 250 feet of a vacant property)

⁶⁵ Walker and Winston, [Place, People, Police: The Effects of Place-Centric Crime Reduction Efforts in Three Neighborhoods](#) (finding as much as a 41% decline in crime incidents in Providence after police and community developers worked together to renovate and program a park, construct affordable housing, renovate blighted structures, and introduce more active policing); Charles C. Branas et al., [Urban Blight Remediation as a Cost-Beneficial Solution to Firearm Violence](#) (finding abandoned building remediation significantly reduced firearm violence by 39%); Branas et al., [Citywide Cluster Randomized Trial to Restore Blighted Vacant Land and its Effects on Violence, Crime, and Fear](#) (541 randomly sampled vacant lots were randomly assigned into treatment and control study arms; outcomes from police and 445 randomly sampled participants analyzed over a 38-month study period showed participants living near treated vacant lots reported significantly reduced perceptions of crime, vandalism, and safety concerns as well as increased use of outside spaces for relaxing and socializing; significant reductions in crime overall, gun violence, burglary, and nuisances were also found after the treatment of vacant lots in neighborhoods below the poverty line)

⁶⁶ Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p19-20 (vacant lots negatively affect quality of life and sense of well-being and lead to social fragmentation)

⁶⁷ Coulton et al, [Housing Deterioration Contributes to Elevated Lead Levels and Lower Kindergarten Readiness Scores in Cleveland](#) (children who spent more time living in or near properties that had signs of deterioration and disinvestment were more likely to have elevated lead levels and to have low scores on a kindergarten readiness assessment)

⁶⁸ Hye-Sung Han, [The Impact of Abandoned Properties on Nearby Property Values](#) (research examining impact of abandoned properties on nearby property values in Baltimore, Maryland, from 1991 to 2010 using longitudinal data sets while simultaneously controlling for both nearby foreclosures and local housing market trends; as properties are abandoned for longer periods of time, the impact on nearby property values increases in magnitude and is seen increasingly farther away); Temple University Center for Public Policy and Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project, [Blight Free Philadelphia: A Public-Private Strategy to Create and Enhance Neighborhood Value](#) (houses within 150 feet of a vacant or abandoned property experienced a net loss of \$7,627 in value); Whitaker and Fitzpatrick, [Deconstructing Distressed-Property Spillovers: The Effects of Vacant, Tax-Delinquent, and Foreclosed Properties in Housing Submarkets](#) (in Cleveland, Ohio, vacant property within 500 feet reduces sales price of a home by 1.7% in low-poverty neighborhoods and 2.1% in medium-poverty neighborhoods); Alm et al, [Property Tax Delinquency and its Spillover Effects on Nearby Properties](#) (in Chicago, tax delinquent properties not successfully sold had a negative spillover of 5.1% "delinquency discount" on value of nearby properties); Center for Community Progress, [The Empty House Next Door](#), p19-20 (vacant buildings and lots reduce property values and associated household wealth of nearby property owners; vacancy has devastating effects on a city's fiscal condition due to direct

maintenance and demolition costs and lost tax revenues from the vacant properties themselves and from the devaluing of neighboring properties)

⁶⁹ Pough and Wan, [Data Analytics and the Fight against Housing Blight: A Guide for Local Leaders](#), p2 (housing blight spreads through a city like cancer bringing a host of negative externalities impacting a city's financial and physical well-being)

⁷⁰ Barlow, Schaffzin, and Williams, [Ten Years of Fighting Blighted Property in Memphis: How Innovative Litigation Inspired Systems Change and a Local Culture of Collaboration to Resolve Vacant and Abandoned Properties](#), p389 (efforts must be "sustained indefinitely in any urban community that wants to get serious about eliminating blighted properties at a large scale")

⁷¹ Prevention Institute, [Developing Effective Coalitions: An Eight Step Guide](#), p14 (coalitions require substantial time commitments from people and ability to allocate considerable staffing is one of the most important considerations in coalition leadership; noting clerical, meeting, membership, research and fact gathering, public relations, coordination, and fundraising as areas of need); HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs, [Building Effective Coalitions](#), p7 (building and managing a coalition is labor-intensive, and coalitions without dedicated staff often fail); Neighborhood Preservation, Inc., [Strategic Plan 2019](#) (one of the three strategic goals being to "[e]ncourage, educate and support the ever-changing 'coalition of the willing' as community members work together to achieve the goals of [vacancy reduction]")

⁷² Stanford Social Innovation Review, [Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 4 \(summarizing value of effective leadership among backbone organizations and characteristics of effective backbone leadership\)](#)

⁷³ Webb et al, [Does Monitoring Goal Progress Promote Goal Attainment? A Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence \(progress monitoring increases goal attainment; effects are larger when outcomes are reported or made public and when information is physically recorded\)](#)