Vacancy Collaborative Launch

July 11, 2018

Event Coordinated By

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Welcome
Vacancy Collaborative Overview

Dana Malkus, *SLU LAW Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic*
dana.malkus@slu.edu
July 11, 2018
Our City has a serious **vacant property challenge**.

- As of June 2018, there are 20,187 vacant parcels (about the equivalent of 2,000 football fields)
- Highest concentration in north city

Vacancy leads to **neighborhood decline** by decreasing property values, discouraging investment, reducing available tax revenues, and decreasing the quality of life for residents. Vacancy is a burden on the City’s annual budget.
Property **can become vacant** due to:
- Incomplete foreclosure
- Bankruptcy
- Prolonged probate or lack of proper probate
- Outside investor who has little incentive to care
- Judgement proof owner
- Bank ownership
- Lack of resources to repair/redevelop
- Lack of value
- Sprawl and weak markets

Other contributing factors include **population loss**, an **aging housing stock**, detrimental **public policies** such as redlining, **predatory investors**, the **foreclosure crisis**, and other forms of disinvestment.
2015-2018: Growing recognition among individuals and groups of our City’s serious vacant property challenge

City of St. Louis Selected to Leadership Institute's Best Practices on Tackling Vacant and Problem Properties

A team focusing on urban land use and redevelopment will represent the City of St. Louis.

March 16, 2015 | 3 min reading time

Vacant Property Summit: Legal Tools to Spur Renewal of Privately Owned Vacant Property

Thursday, October 20, 2016 - 8:00am to 1:45pm

Sponsored by Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Saint Louis University School of Law Legal Clinics, Saint Louis Association of Community Organizations, and Thompson Coburn LLP.

Vacant and abandoned properties bring with them a multitude of challenges and opportunities for our neighborhoods. Vacancy has many causes and contributing factors, and it calls for focused and innovative solutions. Through the work of local government officials and the nonprofit sector, our city has already begun to focus on the need for solutions. This event will further the conversation around solutions, with a particular focus on a case study that illustrates how lawyers, neighborhoods, and others can utilize legal tools to work together in strategic ways.

2.0 MO CLE Credits Available

Vacancy: Challenges and Solutions and...
2015-2018: Learning from other cities and our own consultants what we need to do to proactively address the problem.
Key Recommendations from Both Reports: public/private coordination and a shared vision

Key Implication of the Guide: To effectively address vacancy, public and private tools must be used together in strategic ways

Working together allows us to build the capacity of the ecosystem to respond to crisis and opportunity.
One outcome of the February 2017 Vacancy Summit was the establishment of a **Vacancy Steering Committee** to shepherd the process of forming and launching the **Vacancy Collaborative**:

- Austin Albert (SLDC)
- Tracy Boaz (Missouri Dept of Conservation)
- Patrick Brown (City of St. Louis)
- Peter Hoffman (Legal Services of Eastern Missouri)
- Dana Malkus (Saint Louis University)
- Sal Martinez (North Newstead Association)
- Dottie McDowell (City of St. Louis)
- Kevin McKinney (SLACO)
- Matt Schindler (Gateway Greening)
- Rhonda Smythe (Missouri Foundation for Health)
- Sean Spencer (Tower Grove Neighborhoods CDC)
- Rebecca Weaver (Nature Conservancy)
- Sundy Whiteside (SLACO)
2017-18: Vacancy Steering Committee meets.

Results include:

Establishes *Vacancy Collaborative structure* (using recommendations from CCP and Asakura Robinson reports)

Establishes *foundation of collaborative partnerships* among stakeholders (including public and private)

Establishes *CBN* as a partner; receives funding to establish a *vacancy coordinator* to help move forward the work of the Vacancy Collaborative

Currently completing *final task*:

Setting up the *Vacancy Advisory Committee*
2017-18: City Continues Vacancy Efforts

Mayor Krewson has established monthly VacancyStat meetings as a way for City departments and agencies to manage vacancy related programs, review collective performance, and coordinate internal operations across departments. Led by the Vacancy Strategy Project Manager, Austin Albert, VacancyStat is designed as an opportunity for the Mayor’s department directors to identify new partnerships, coordinate existing programs, and continuously improve the overall quality of vacancy-related services delivered to City neighborhoods.

January 2018: SLDC Hires Vacancy Strategy Project Manager (per consultant recommendation)
# VACANCY COLLABORATIVE

Commit to reduction of vacancy and abandonment as a top City priority by building upon existing vacancy efforts and incorporating input from vacancy-related community representatives, private and non-profit stakeholders, and city agencies.

## Vacancy Advisory Committee
- Provides input to VacancyStat and works on private-side responses to vacancy
  - Neighborhood Leaders
  - Strategic Preservation Perspective
  - Greening Perspective
  - Real Estate Perspective
  - Community Development Corporation (CDC) Perspective
  - Nonprofit Perspective
  - Philanthropy/Funder Perspective
  - Racial Equity Perspective
  - Public Health Perspective

## Vacancy Coordinator

## VacancyStat
Sets priorities for City’s efforts to combat vacancy
- Office of the Mayor
- St. Louis Development Corporation
- Land Reutilization Authority
- Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry
- Problem Properties Unit – City Counselor’s Office
- Information Technology
- Planning & Urban Design Agency
- Building Division
- St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department
- St. Louis Fire Department
- Community Development Agency
- Department of Health
- Citizens’ Service Bureau / Neighborhood Improvement

## Cross-Sector Working Groups
Coordinates existing vacancy efforts under one umbrella and encourages the public and private sectors to work together toward solutions in a comprehensive and coordinated way.
Vacancy Collaborative

Vacancy Advisory Committee

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Vacancy Coordinator

VacancyStat

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Cross-Sector Working Groups: Example

Vacancy Data

- OpenSTL
- Rise
- WashU
- Lutheran Development Group
- Daugherty Business Solutions

Office of the Mayor
St. Louis Development Corporation
Land Reutilization Authority
Information Technology
Planning & Urban Design Agency
Building Division
What is Next?

The work is **beyond any single institution’s ability to address**. We need to work together in a transparent and coordinated way that values a variety of perspectives. The Vacancy Collaborative is a way of doing that. It can help us **bring existing vacancy efforts under one umbrella** and encourage the **public and private sectors to work toward solutions** in a more comprehensive and coordinated way.

A key strategy for addressing vacancy has been to bring stakeholders to a common table to work together to address this challenge. This strategy has resulted in increasingly collaborative working relationships between City officials, nonprofit organizations, and residents. Today’s launch provides an **opportunity to build on the work we’ve all been doing and to move forward together**.
Vacancy Collaborative - Issue Areas

Austin M. Albert
Vacancy Strategy Senior Project Manager, St Louis Development Corporation (SLDC)

Tara Aubuchon
Vacancy Coordinator, Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis
Context

Vacancy is a wide-reaching, multifaceted problem which impacts a variety of areas, therefore the solutions to the problem cast a wide net.

Issue areas are foundational and have been identified by other cities working on the issue.

The depth and breadth of each issue area can be significant, but these aren’t the only topics of importance.

-Tell us what is important to you!

*The following groups are only a sampling of those doing great work in our community*
Identified Issue Areas

- Data Analysis
- Vacancy Prevention
- Marketing & Engagement
- Reinvestment & Reuse
- Anti-Displacement & Neighborhood Planning
- Stabilization, Maintenance, Demolition

What Else?
Data Analysis

- Identify the scope of vacancy
- Establish metrics and track progress towards goals
- Help drive decision making
- Improve programs and policies

Examples:
- Vacancy Data Working Group
  - Vacancy Properties Portal
  - Find your Lot Tool
- Rise via the Neighborhood Data Gateway
Marketing and Engagement

- Market programs, initiatives, and opportunities to expand use and access
- Engage, educate, and empower the community
- Reduce real and perceived “red tape”
- Recognize economic opportunities in vacancy

Examples:
- SLACO Vacancy Committee
- Green City Coalition (neighborhood workshops)
- Neighborhood associations and CDCs
Anti-displacement and Neighborhood Planning

- Understand community impact of vacancy and possible solutions
- Create community led and driven redevelopment opportunities
- Ensure equitable and successful outcomes
- Establish across all issue areas

Examples:
- Equitable STL
- College Hill Neighborhood Solutions: Peace Park edition
- Dutchtown South Community Corporation
Vacancy Prevention

- Educate on legal remedies and provide access to those resources
- Provide financial resources for existing homeowners and new home buyers (e.g. MO Property Tax Credit, home repair programs, home buyer programs)
- Empower communities and individuals to address vacancy

Examples:
- Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative (LSEM, BAMSL, City of St. Louis, SLDC)
- Urban League, Community Development Agency, and Mission: STL Home Repair Programs
- Justine PETERSEN
Reinvestment and Reuse

- Renovate and rehab properties
- Find and establish alternative land uses (e.g. greening, stormwater, etc.)
- Finance renovation and construction projects
- Advocate for legislative, title, and tax sale reforms

Examples:
- SLACO & LRA- “The Finest 15”
- Food/Farm organizations (Gateway Greening, HOSCO Farms, Good Life Growing, International Institute Global Farms)
- CDCs and other local development organizations
Demolition, Stabilization, and Maintenance

- Secure and stabilize vacant properties
- Codify strategic code enforcement policies
- Establish and expand interim land uses
- Develop effective landbanking policies and programs
- Examine and implement demolition best practices and plans

Examples:
- Brightside St. Louis
- Operation Clean Sweep (Better Family Life, RBC, Kwame, City of St. Louis, LRA, etc.)
- Green City Coalition via Urban Greening Program Demos and Deconstruction
Issue Stations Breakout

Credit: SLACO Neighborhoods United for Change

Credit: Gravois-Jefferson Historic Neighborhood Plan
Issue Area Station Breakouts
Break

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Frank Oswald
Building Commissioner, City of St. Louis

Building Division Data Collection & Enforcement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacant Building Summary</th>
<th></th>
<th>Vacant Building LRA Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>This Fiscal Year</strong></td>
<td>7/1/2017</td>
<td>7/1/2018</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>New</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Demolished</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Abated LRA</strong></td>
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<th>Vacant Building Ward Summary</th>
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<td>7/1/2018</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ward</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Privately Owned LRA Owned New Demolished Fee Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Privately Owned LRA Owned New Demolished Fee Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Invoice Adjustments
STL Vacant Properties Portal
translating data to information

Daugherty
BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

OpenSTL
HOW did we get here?

• OpenSTL Visualizing Vacant Properties Hackathon: September 2017

• Volunteers from Daugherty Business Solutions and OpenSTL branched off to tackle data challenges: clean-up, integration

• Conversations with City tech teams: CTO, CIO, ITSA, Building Division, etc.
WHY do we need it?

• A single source of truth

• Data access and transparency: translation from data to information

• Data-driven decision making

• Track progress as we develop and implement vacancy strategies
WHAT is it?

- ONE comprehensive dataset for all vacant (or possibly vacant) properties in the City of St. Louis
- Pulling from 12 different existing datasets from four departments: Building Division [7], Land Reutilization Authority [2], Assessor’s Office [2], Forestry Department [1]
- Runs a series of calculations (e.g. count of property maintenance services provided by Forestry) and queries (e.g. this says it’s vacant but this doesn’t) to determine vacancy status
- Populates metrics and an interactive map
- Provides data to be used for other applications (e.g. OpenSTL’s Find Your Lot)
WHAT is wrong with it?

- Snapshot of current vacancy (through June 2018)
- Methods will continue to develop
- Human error – not yet automated
- No mechanism for tracking changes over time yet
- No mechanism for reporting errors (other than emailing us)
- Lag time in property owner changes
- Running on a ‘cheap’ server - slow
WHAT IS VACANT?
Vacant & Abandoned

Definitions for vacant buildings and lots were developed to reflect unoccupied properties that have been abandoned and represent a burden to the City and its residents. The following definitions were created through conversations with several City departments and vacancy stakeholders and are determined by data availability.

**Vacant Buildings** are defined as **buildings with consistent signs of abandonment** (structural condemnation, tax delinquency, identified as vacant by building inspectors, owned by the LRA) across available datasets. Possible vacant buildings have some signs of abandonment, but the data are contradictory or are missing needed information.

**Vacant Lots** are defined (conservatively) as parcels that do not contain a building, and that do not seem to be used for an explicit purpose (e.g. parking lot, cemetery, public green space, extended yard), and where there is evidence to suggest that the property is not being maintained. Possible vacant lots may be vacant and abandoned but more information is needed.
1017 Geyer Ave – Privately-Owned – Soulard

NOT tax delinquent

Structural
Condemnation

4 vacant building registration fees in the last 2 years

10 outstanding building code violations

Board-Up Services Provided

Vacant Building

NOT reported vacant since 2013
1407 Penrose
LRA-Owned Vacant Building

Demolition Permit Issued June 2018
Vacant Lot
2512 N 21st Street – Vacant Lot

Owned by Church Next Door

Coded as Vacant Lot by Assessor’s Office

Forestry has provided FIVE yard maintenance services over the last two years

Vacant Lot
2512 N 21st Street – Vacant Lot

Owned by Zion Lutheran Church (next door)

Coded as Vacant Lot by Assessor’s Office

ZERO records of Forestry having to provide property maintenance over the last 10 years

Possible Vacant Lot
7,663 Vacant Buildings
1,055 acres

20,187 Vacant Parcels
2,620 acres

12,524 Vacant Lots
1,565 acres

60% LRA / 40% Private

These totals reflect a conservative estimate for vacant properties. When including parcels coded as 'possibly vacant' the total is 20,212. [See Methods for more information.]

MAINTENANCE COSTS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS
$17,042,323

Costs provided for services provided by City Forestry Department (lawn services, weeding, boarding-up, dumping removal, tree services, etc.) to all of the above parcels combined.

TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE
$79,813,010

for all properties combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Buildings</th>
<th>Lots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wells Goodfellow</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>1,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Vanderliou</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>1,297</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Ville</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>1,066</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyde Park</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>611</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walnut Park East</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Villa</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Heights</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTERACTIVE VACANCY MAP

[Hover over or click on property for details]
INTERACTIVE VACANCY MAP

[Hover over or click on property for details]

Daugherty
BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

1415 GOODFELLOW BLVD
Vacant Building

Owned by:
LRA
1520 MARKET ST, STE 2000
ST LOUIS, MO 63103

Years Owned: 8
LRA: Downtown

1415 GOODFELLOW BLVD is a single family, 2 story, brick building built in 1890. It is not structurally condemned, and has been reported vacant for a total of 3 years.

LRA New Construction Price: N/A
LRA Sales List Price: N/A
LRA Vacant Building Price: $1,000.00
LRA Vacant Lot Price: N/A

Visit this property on Geo St. Louis
Visit this property on the LRA Website
Vacant Properties Dataset (June 30, 2018)

Vacant Properties Data Dictionary

Vacant Properties Portal: Full Methods
NEXT STEPS

- Methods refinement
- Content refinement
- Automation
- Track Changes Over Time
- Ability to Report Errors OR Explain How to Rectify
- Data Analysis Projects
- Adding Vacancy Reuse Projects
WHAT IS USEFUL?

WHAT IS UNCLEAR?

WHAT IS MISSING?
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Thank you!