



Lessons from the Field

Policy Insights For Reclaiming Vacant Properties



National **Vacant Properties** Campaign
CREATING OPPORTUNITY FROM ABANDONMENT

www.vacantproperties.org

Virginia Housing Commission
June 24th, 2008

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Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech

Today's Presentation

- The National Vacant Properties Campaign
 - Who are we? What do we do? What have we done?
- Vacant Properties
 - What are they? How many? What are the costs?
- The State of Vacant Properties in America
 - What have we learned after five years?
 - What are the trends and opportunities?
 - What can policymakers do?
 - What will the NVPC be doing?

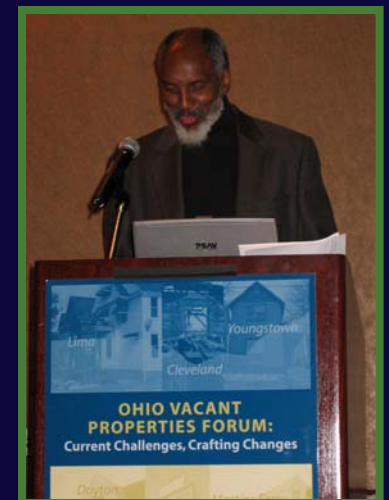
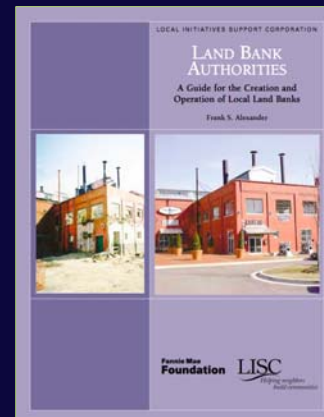


Who Are We?

- Launched in 2003 with assistance from Fannie Mae Foundation, EPA, Ford and Surdna Foundations
- NVPC Executive Committee: Smart Growth America, Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), Virginia Tech's Metropolitan Institute, and the Genesee Institute (Flint, Michigan)
- Advisory Committee: APA, NAR, NTHP, ICMA, NHI, Fels Institute of Government, CEOs for Cities, etc.

Annual Policy & Practice Forums

- Washington, DC Forums (2003 and 2004)
- Land Bank Forum (2005)
- Columbus, Ohio Statewide Forum (2005)
- First National Conference on Reclaiming Vacant Properties, Pittsburgh, September 24th-25th, 2007
- **Louisville, June 1-3rd, 2009**



Technical Assistance

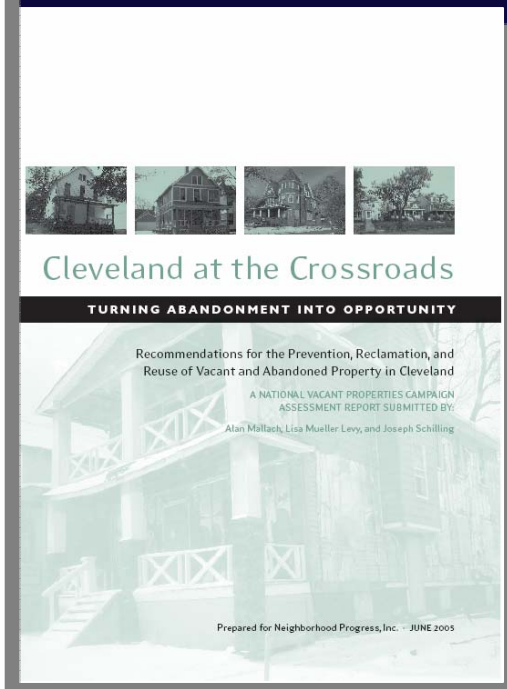
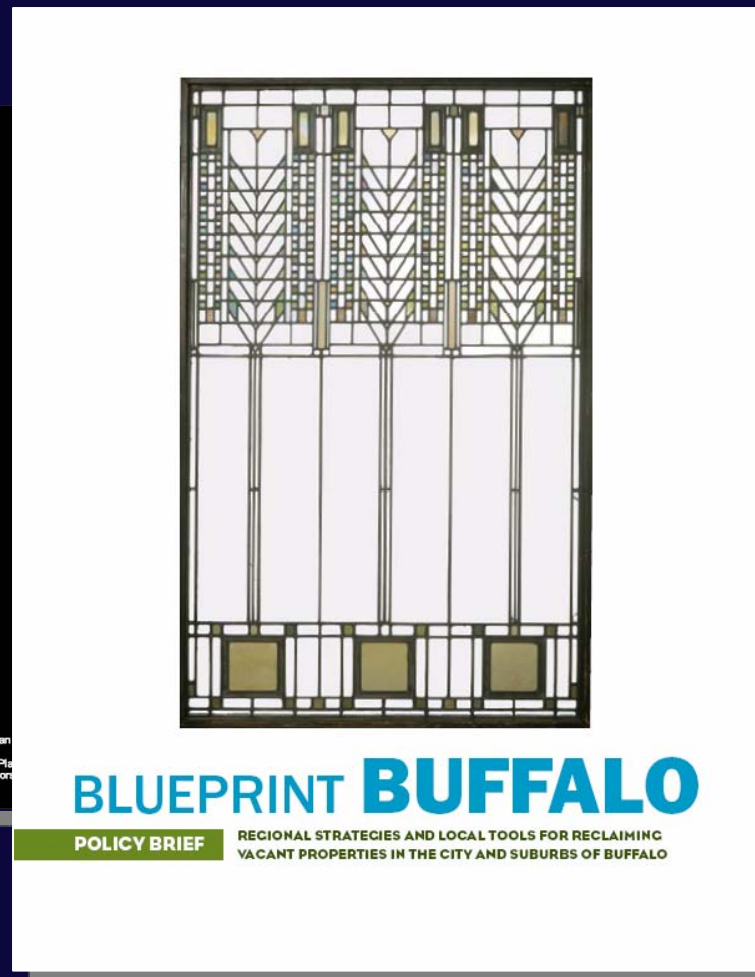
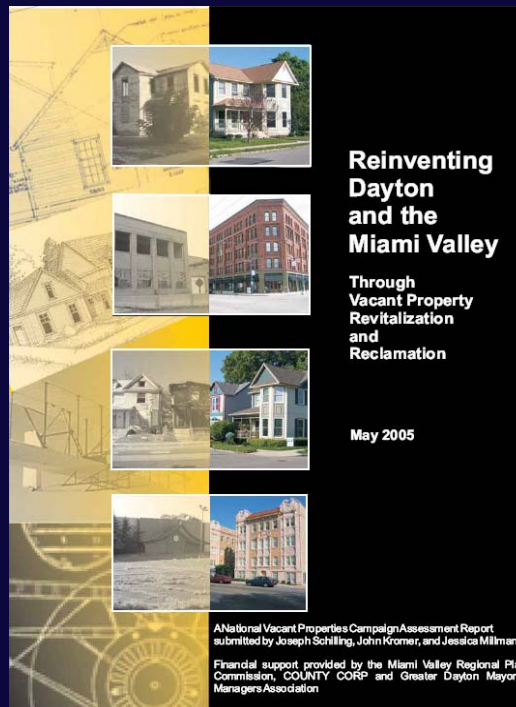


NVPC's TA Teams

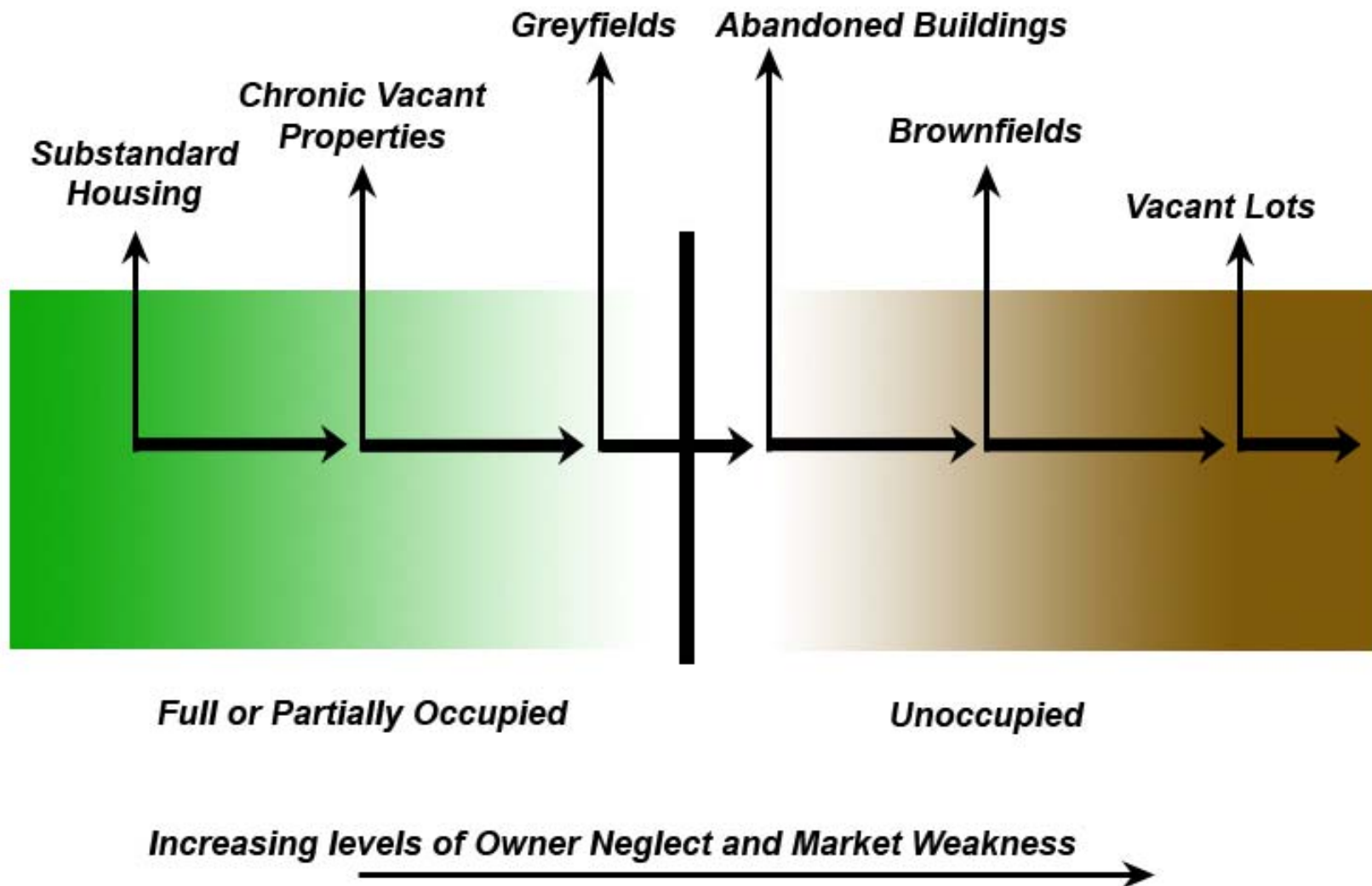
www.vacantproperties.org

- Team of practitioners and experts
- Learn from best practices and peers
- Build support through local advisory committee
- Diagnostic and prescription for revitalization:
 - Comprehensive policy blueprint
 - Systematic action plan
 - Specific reforms and technical assistance

NVPC Assessment Processes—*Translating Policy into Practice*



Continuum of Vacant Properties























How Many?

- Brookings 2004—15% vacant land
- Lack sufficient and reliable data
 - US Census Vacant Housing Units
 - US Post Offices Non-deliverable Addresses
- Few real property information systems
 - Philadelphia NIS and Minneapolis
- Early warning systems

Roots of Abandonment

- Dispersed Growth—Regional Sprawl
- Job Loss & Weak Markets
- Financial and Household Instability—foreclosures and predatory lending
- Quality of Schools
- Oversupply of Housing—more units than people
- Racial and Economic Divide—increasing social impacts of poverty



Macro and Micro Roots of Abandonment

“Understand the Story Behind Each Vacant Property”

- Dispersed Growth—Regional Sprawl
- Job Loss & Weak Markets
- Financial and Household Instability—foreclosures and predatory lending
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Costs of Vacant Properties



Calls for service - police and fire

Havens for crime and drugs



Drain on municipal budgets -
demolition and nuisance abatement
clean-ups

Decreased property values



Loss of tax revenue

Poor environmental /personal health

Policy Observations—the Problems

- No one knows how many VPs there are
- Complex, seemingly intractable problem that no single entity owns
- *VPs are not victimless crimes*—cumulative costs to community and individuals
- Current foreclosure crisis will expand and exacerbate decay and blight nationwide

Benefits of VP Reclamation

Healthier environment

Rebuild neighborhoods and
reconnect communities

Housing choices

Reduce crime

Increase tax base and
redevelop new
markets



The Current Practice in the Field

- Primarily state and local policy
- Fragmentation—lack of systematic and comprehensive strategies
- Lack of local resources and capacity
- Pioneers and innovators—Flint LBA, Philly NTI, Baltimore 5000
- Critical partnerships—CBOs and CDCs

Essential VP Strategies & Tools

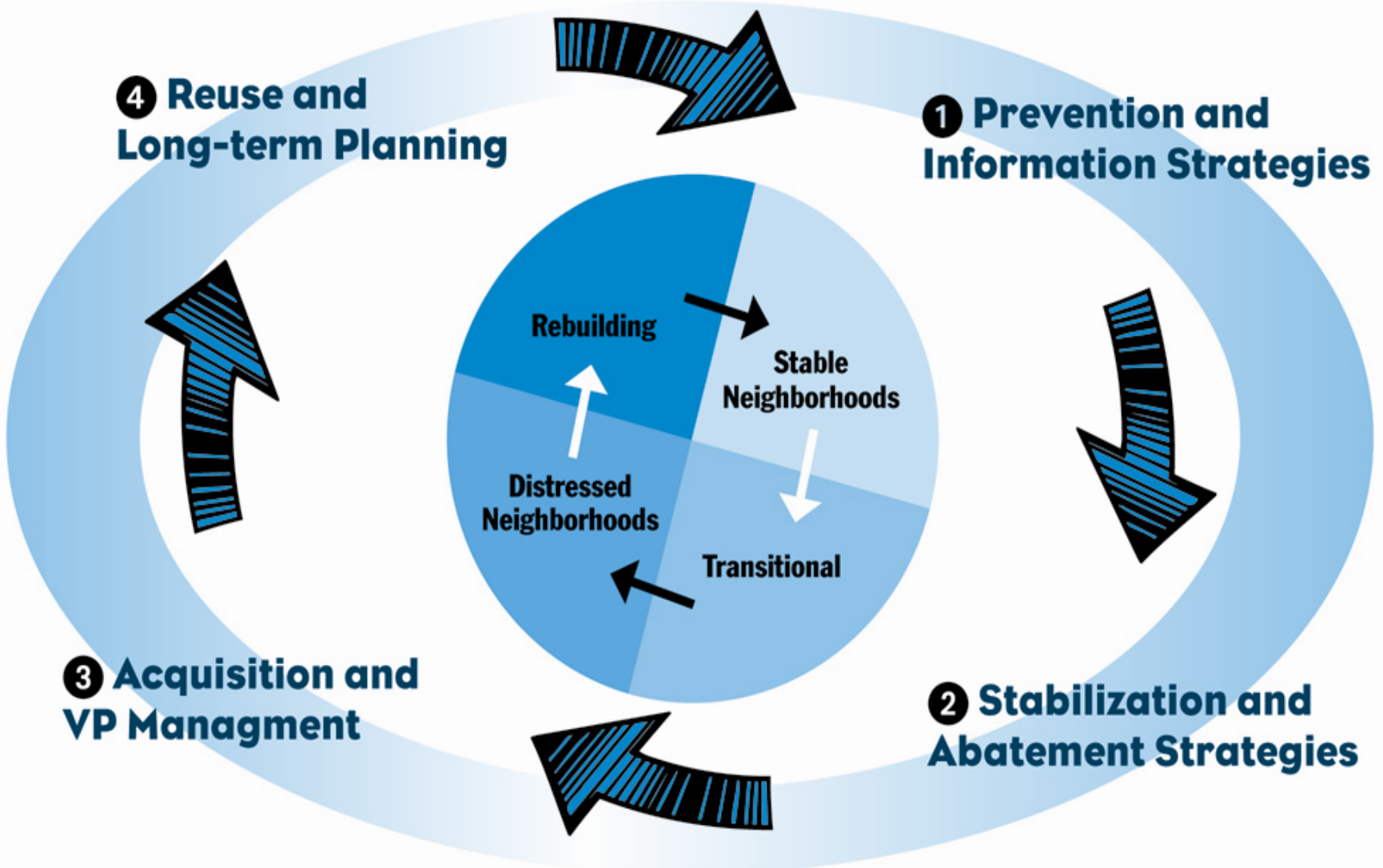
Prevention/Stabilization

- Develop a comprehensive real property information system
- Institute comprehensive code enforcement strategies
 - Registration ordinances
 - Targeted demolition
 - Slumlord Task Forces & Housing Courts
 - Civil Receivership
- Enhance and expand rehabilitation and housing assistance resources

Acquisition/Management

- Create multi-purpose land banks & urban land trusts
- Streamline tax foreclosures
- Launch city-wide right sizing through green infrastructure
- Design a network of neighborhood and city wide VP reclamation plans to guide revitalization and target resources

Vacant Properties Revitalization Cycle



Emerging Federal VP Agenda

Pending Legislation

- Neighborhood Stabilization Acts
- Combine income housing & historic rehab tax credits
- Hope VI Improvement and Reauthorization Act
- Brownfields reauthorization

NVPC Ideas

- Revise US Census Vacant Housing Units
- Reinvigorate the Technology Opportunity Grants
- Green infrastructure and energy

NVPC 2008-09 Action Agenda

Reports

- Fall 2008 Case studies on TA cities
- State of Vacant Properties in America 2009
- Building Blocks Series
- Survey of State VP Policies
- Community impacts of Foreclosure

Activities

- Technical Assistance and Training—
Youngstown, St. Louis, Columbus, GA, Syracuse,
- Second National Conference in Louisville
June 2009
- Policy charrettes on right sizing
- REO Foreclosure Workshops

Additional Resources

www.vacantproperties.org

- Rebuild Ohio: www.rebuildohio.org
- Genesee Institute: www.geneseeinstitute.org
- ICMA's Research & Case Studies
www.icma.org/vacantproperties
- LISC: www.lisc.org/resources
- Fannie Mae Foundation: www.knowledgeplex.org
- Brookings Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy:
www.brook.edu
- National Housing Institute: www.nhi.org



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