

Economic Revitalization Post-Disaster

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Outline

- Challenges and opportunities
- Mobilizing for change
- Developing a vision for revitalization
- Assessing revitalization needs
- Revitalization tools & resources





From 2000 to 2010, the total number of vacant housing units in the U.S. grew by over 4.5 million, an increase of 44%



Vacant, abandoned properties are linked to increased crime (particularly arson) and declining property values.



Maintenance or demolition of vacant properties is a huge expense for many communities.





Vacancy & Blight

Complex causes:

- Owner leaves and can't find a buyer
 - Population decline due to local business or industry losses
 - Foreclosure
 - Obsolescence of building
 - Manmade or natural disaster – rapid or widespread loss
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- Left alone, a problem can grow rapidly – like a cancer – as it affects businesses around it
 - Properties located within 500 feet of vacant buildings lose as much as 8.7% in value, according to HUD



Do any of these images look familiar?



Group discussion

How are you dealing with these issues?

1. Chronic vacancy in certain locations?
2. Lacking infrastructure affecting business areas?
3. Lack of resources for revitalization?
4. Out-migration of young people due to lack of activities?
5. What have you strategies to deal with these issues?



Challenges

- Worsening of poor pre-disaster conditions
- Lack of capacity
- Neighborhood-oriented commercial activity overlooked



Challenges

- Difficulty in seeing revitalization potential
- Small neighborhood businesses hit hard
- Divisive social lines or underlying issues



Opportunities

- Chance to re-group, re-connect, re-focus
- Ability to leverage prior distressed status for resources and services
- Opportunity to build back better



Opportunities

- Rehabilitate or repurpose existing assets for new purposes
- Improve quality of life for existing residents and adjacent neighborhoods
- Establishing commercial uses for vacant property helps to reclaim such locales and plant seeds for future, local economic growth





A holistic approach
is required





Assessing Revitalization Needs





Assessing Neighborhood Revitalization Needs

Business and Community Surveys

- Great way to gather needs and current issues
- Provide qualitative and quantitative information
- Information collected from surveys can be used to:
 - Formulate issues
 - Gather ideas for redevelopment
 - Gauge what is valued in the neighborhood



Assessing Revitalization Needs

Information to gather

- Estimates of property and equipment damage
- Economic activity loss
- Workforce disruption and loss
- Utility disruption
- Loss of suppliers
- Loss of customers
- Financial and technical assistance needs



What is the format for these meetings?

Business and community surveys

- Large group meeting with businesses
- One-on-one meeting with business owners or managers
- Neighborhood gatherings or meetings
- Neighborhood asset mapping



Assessing Neighborhood Revitalization Needs



Asset Mapping

- Shows assets of the neighborhood and highlights interconnections among them
- Doesn't have to be very detailed
- Assets are not only physical
 - e.g. relationships, cultural mapping, and human capital





Organizations to Assist With Revitalization

Redevelopment/Revitalization Taskforce

- Group of key neighborhood and community stakeholders
- Pool financial and human resources
 - Take advantage of existing resources
 - Can be community clubs, organizations, personnel from a nearby military base
- Scope of the task force varies - can oversee redevelopment or bring neighborhood needs to city level



Organizations to Assist With Revitalization

Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

- Do not have standard service – flexible to address needs
- Advocates for neighborhoods
- Resource: <http://www.useful-community-development.org/start-a-community-development-corporation.html>



Organizations to Assist With Revitalization

Roles of a CDC

- Providing leadership to stimulate the development process within the community
- Packaging public and private financing
- Investing in development projects
- Developing and managing development projects
- Providing technical assistance
- Assisting in directing city investments





Roles and Responsibilities





Leadership Roles & Responsibilities

- Successful neighborhood revitalization takes your leadership
 - Driver of redevelopment
 - Inspire and motivate stakeholders
 - Organize resources
 - Support strategies for revitalization
 - Appoint local volunteers to expand your capability to get things done





Roles & Responsibilities of the Community

Residents and business owners

- Participate in organizations
- Provide input for planning efforts
- Provide volunteer resources



Mobilizing for Change

Identify
Relevant
Stakeholders

Identify a
Revitalization
Champion(s)

Gather
Residents to
Spur Interest
and Educate





Mobilizing for Change

Identifying Relevant Stakeholders

- Inclusion ensures the proper representation recovery efforts can be easily organized.
- Local groups and charities should be involved
 - religious organizations, prominent business owners, and contacts at all govt levels
- Gather contact information through formal networks





Mobilizing for Change

Revitalization Champion

- Provides a point of contact
- Resource providing one stream of clear communication
- Can empower individuals who have a vested interest in their neighborhood



Mobilizing for Change

Gathering Residents

- Doesn't require long prep and man-hours
- Provides opportunity to educate residents on resources available and revitalization goals
- Can help ease abandonment of properties
- Can persuade residents to stay





Local economic depression due to loss of manufacturing

(revenues in millions)

Case Study: A U.S. Territory with 65K population



Local government lost \$146M per year in annual tax revenues





Result: blight & business closures in downtown



- Trash
- Untended landscaping
- Empty storefronts
- Stray dogs



Case Study: Mobilizing self-help with volunteer resources

- With no resources for improvements, the Mayor appointed volunteers who stepped up as champions.
- Small businesses formed a business improvement district, organized cleanups and weekly night markets, special events.
- Local beautification efforts were done by volunteers of all ages, nationalities and religions -- organized on weekends through social media. Companies donated supplies. The program won a national EPA award.





Developing a Vision for Revitalization





Developing a Vision for Revitalization

- Sustainability and success depends on engagement
- Engagement can awaken authentic desire for change from the community
- Jump-start the process with an inclusive gathering
 - e.g. charettes or activities that get attendees identifying issues, recognize progress





Case Study: Tuscaloosa, AL

- Struck by an EF₄ tornado in April 2011. Ripped through downtown Tuscaloosa.
- “We wanted to build it back to where they’re proud of living there, and give businesses incentives to build in that area.”



Case Study: Tuscaloosa, AL

- Led to the “Tuscaloosa Forward Generational Master Plan”
- Included rezoning from purely residential to mixed-use to drive commerce opportunities
- Tuscaloosa used the lag time -- it was waiting on (HUD) rebuilding funds -- to build support for its new vision





Case Study: Tuscaloosa, AL

Key to the success, Mayor Walter Maddox says, was identifying early on that the city will be rebuilt differently -- better -- than before, and it would address the concerns of citizens who want their city back as fast as possible



Tools & Strategies for Revitalization

- Business improvement districts (BID)
- Revolving loan funds (RLF)
- Strategic use of incentives
- National Main Street Programs
- Grassroots / volunteer campaigns
- Art centers as a catalyst for revitalization



Organizations to Assist With Revitalization

Main Street Program and Business Improvement Districts

- Focus resources on a specific area
- Comprehensive strategy that addresses challenges for traditional commercial districts
- Does not only apply to downtown's main streets
- Leverages local assets to revitalize districts
- BIDs often incorporate maintenance, safety and marketing



Organizations to Assist With Revitalization

Main Street Programs

- Budgets vary according to:
 - size of the commercial district
 - local priorities and resources
 - regional variations in salaries
- Program budgets can range from \$45,000 to \$100,000 annually
- Financial support comes from local entities that have a stake in commercial area

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/>



Louisiana Main Street Organizations

Louisiana Main Street Organizations



LOUISIANA
Pick your Passion.

OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NATIONAL REGISTER
SECTION FOR REVIEW
TAX INCENTIVES
TAX ABATEMENTS
GRANTS
CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LOUISIANA MAIN STREET
LOUISIANA CULTURAL RESOURCES MAP
UNIQUELY LOUISIANA: HISTORY PRESERVATION EDUCATION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANTS
LOUISIANA HISTORIC STANDING STRUCTURES SURVEY
LOUISIANA STATE PLAN (SHIP)
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
STAFF
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
LOUISIANA MAIN STREET



A Proven Strategy | National Network | Louisiana Network | Resources | Contact Us

MAIN STREET IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR LOUISIANA!

2,709 New Businesses	11,490 New Jobs	\$342,000,000 Private Investment	\$227,000,000 Public Investment	863,063 Volunteer Hours
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<http://www.crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/historic-preservation/main-street/>



Revitalization Opportunity Areas

Improving Infrastructure

- Distressed neighborhoods *pre-disaster* often face issues with infrastructure
- Improved infrastructure should be aligned with redevelopment vision
- Post-disaster, local leaders and economic development professionals should identify revitalization funds or grants





Examples of Building Back Better

Examples:

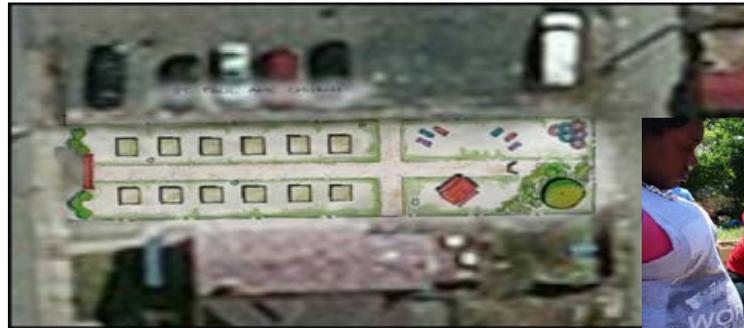


- Rebuilding damaged bridges so that they include wider access to make a business district more marketable
- Implementing long-desired street redesign when water and sewer lines are replaced downtown
- Planning a new parking garage in a damaged area to accommodate denser future development



Case Study: ReClaim Pittsburgh

- **Non-profit organizes collaboration to turn vacant spaces to green space**
 - Worked with over 55 partners in 33 neighborhoods to clean up 56 acres of vacant land and install 23 permanent projects on vacant land



Case Study: ReClaim Pittsburgh

- Twofold approach: individual empowerment along with place-based impact on vacant land
- Recruited and train ambassadors who serve a year and propose projects from their area to implement
- This also helps build the next generation of local leaders





Revitalization Opportunity Areas

Revolving Loan Fund for Streetscape and Business Façade Improvements

- Streetscapes and facades speak loudly to an image of the neighborhood
- Can be a critical impetus for reinvestment from developers
- Landscaping can help increase retail sales by as much as 30%



Case Study – REVOLVE Detroit

- REVOLVE is a collaborative program of the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) that partners with local leaders, building owners, entrepreneurs, and artists
- Activate vacant storefronts with transformational businesses and art installations.





Case Study – REVOLVE Detroit

REVOLVE uses “pop-ups” as a catalyst to accomplish objectives:

- recruit and grow permanent tenants
- spark public and private investment
- change the image and experience of neighborhood business districts.





Revitalization Opportunity Areas

Incentive Zoning and Permitting

- Work with local businesses and the city to ease the permitting process
- Address current zoning that may be detrimental to redevelopment
- New designations can improve commercial streets with little business activity
 - Example – Feret St, New Orleans – overlay as “arts and culture district” eased permitting – 20 new biz’s opened 2008-2012



Art Centers as a Catalyst for Revitalization



*Glasstown Arts Center,
Milleville
Cumberland County, NJ
One of the poorest towns is
experiencing revitalization in
its arts district*



Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria, VA

A surplus federal building became a landmark attraction and special event space – attracts \$16M annual economic benefit



How the arts are helping save Detroit



- Developers, along with government and foundation investors, envisioned the historic district becoming a major cultural attraction.
- Central to the vision is a \$6 million art center. Its low-cost live/work spaces and retail gallery are meant to attract and support artists.
- Many other buildings are being converted from eyesores to live-work artists' lofts.





Case Study: New Orleans

- New Orleans holds the record as America's most blighted city, with over 68,000 vacant buildings – 12.6%
- Mayor Mitch Landrieu created a task force that created 5 pillars for tackling blight:



- 1) Data-driven decision making
- 3) Blight tool alignment and improvement
- 3) Organizational architecture and processes
- 4) Strategic deployment of resources
- 5) Place-based revitalization



“Tough Love” solution

- New Orleans created tough standards for repair and renovation of buildings by City Code 26
 - Establishes minimum standards
 - Fines of up to \$500/day
 - Foreclosure
 - City remediation – may demolish the building



*City Councilman Jon Johnson
tours a lot that the city will clear*

For more information:

https://www.nola.gov/getattachment/Performance-and-Accountability/Initiatives-and-Reports/BlightSTAT/Blight-Report_web.pdf/



Results in New Orleans

- 13,000 properties remedied in 4 years
- BlightSTAT – monthly meetings where properties are prioritized that have potential to stabilize neighborhoods
- BlightStatus – Partnered with Code for America to create website that allows public to track properties



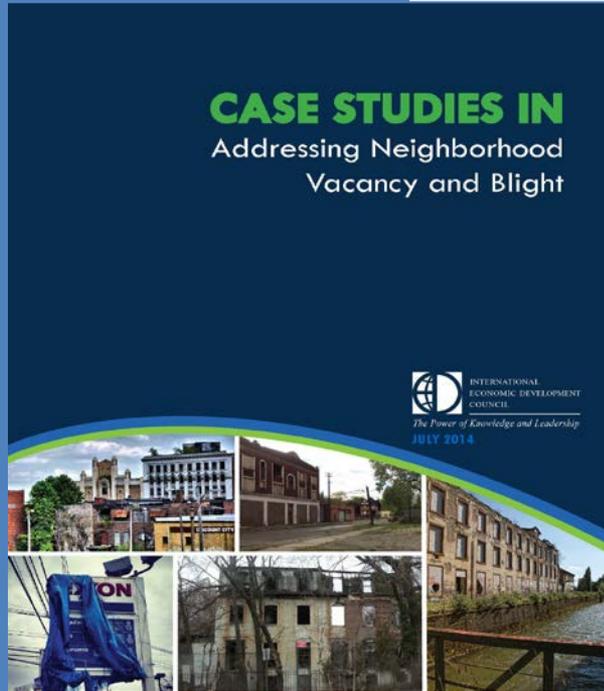
Guide for Louisiana

- Louisiana Main Street Resources guide for dealing with vacant properties
- See: http://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/hp/mainstreet/Dealing%20with%20ADBuildings_AnIntroductoryGuide-print.pdf

How Can Municipalities Confront the Vacant Property Challenge?



More Resources



6 Case Studies in Vacancy and Blight

- In July 2014 IEDC launched a publication highlighting case studies from across the country

<http://restoreyoureconomy.org/case-studies-addressing-neighborhood-vacancy-and-blight>



Additional Resources

Louisiana Main Street Program –

<http://www.crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/historic-preservation/main-street/>

Rural Community Downtown Revitalization -

<https://ric.nal.usda.gov/downtown-revitalization>

Thoughts on the Economic Revitalization of Small Town Downtowns -Econ Dev Journal -

<http://goo.gl/JfRcKl>



Key takeaways in how to lead revitalization

- Listen to your community – 2-way dialogue
- Create a better vision
- Policy environment – sometimes “Tough Love” is the right course
- Leverage resources - grants, public-private support
- Secure, safe environment
- Use a variety of tools
- Product development: maximize existing assets
- Enlist community support – appoint future leaders
- Persevere: this is a long-term process



Questions?