Tapping into Partnerships & Technology:
Creating Powerful Tools to Address Blight

December 2, 2021
Goals for Today

● Provide overview of the City of Greensburg Blight Inventory project
  ○ Highlighting the *partnerships* and *technology* involved and the *powerful tools* to address blight that resulted

● Complete interactive exercise: Defining a Blight Reduction Strategy
Defining Blight

What is blight? What words come to mind?

nuisance  aging  debris  disrepair

dangerous  dilapidated

neglected  unsanitary  overgrown

abandoned  vacant

trash  unsafe  hazard  decay

unimproved
Defining Blight

Example Poor parcels
Greensburg Blight Inventory Project, April 2021
Source: Westmoreland County Planning
Impacts of Blight

- Threatens health, safety, and welfare
- Decreases property values
- Diminishes community aesthetics
- Impedes growth & development
- Plagues many communities

Blight is a billboard for a community.
How do we address blight?

Comprehensive strategy must be based on data, not anecdotes.

- Step 1: Gain Consensus for Developing a Blight Plan
- **Step 2: Assess the Nature and Extent of the Blight**
- Step 3: Convene a Blight Task Force
- Step 4: Engage Municipal Officials
- Step 5: Identify Priority Action Steps and Implement Them

Source: https://housingalliancepa.org
Map-Based Blight Inventory

- Provides a complete picture of blight
- Creates a baseline for measuring success
- Allows for informed decision making
- Effectively utilize limited resources
- Used to build strategies around
- Supports a data driven, progressive discipline approach
- Lead to funding opportunities
Pilot Project - City of Monessen

- Comprehensive planning process (Spring 2019)
  - Major blight problem
- TRAMS program
- Inventory of all 5,032 parcels
- Result: interactive ArcGIS StoryMap
- Example process and product
- Show value of data layering and visualization
- City already using inventory
Project - City of Greensburg

- Precursor to comprehensive plan update
  - City’s interest - build strategies to address blight
  - County’s interest - help communities plan/improve
- $10,000 Grant
  - National Association of Realtors®’ Housing Opportunity Program
- Shared interest - realtors help build strong communities

GOOD DATA = GOOD PLANNING
Getting Started

Project proposal/cooperation agreement (Fall 2020)

- Project Team representatives:
  - City Police Department
  - City Fire Department
  - City Public Works Department
  - City Planning/Code Enforcement
  - City Council
  - Realtors® Association of Westmoreland, Indiana and Mon Valley

- Define framework, determine end product goals, and ensure data quality & accuracy
Getting Started

Met with Project Team:

- Identify goal
  - Create user friendly and comprehensive blight inventory tool (6,070 parcels)

- Identify available data sets
  - City: code violation, crime, structural fire, Red-X, RoadBotics
  - County: parcel, tax delinquent, tax generation

- Gain consensus on property evaluation process/methods

- Complete end user assessment
Data Collection

Field work (Jan. - March):

- **ArcGIS Collector App**
  - Internet hot-spots
  - Live updates to inventory
- **Parcel-by-parcel property conditions**
  - Used adapted [Grading System](#)
- **Photos taken of:**
  - “Poor” parcels
  - “Developable” parcels
Data Collection

Desk work (Jan. - May):

● Data acquisition/preparation
  ○ Correcting addresses
  ○ Tabulating data
  ○ Eliminating certain entries
  ○ Calculating
  ○ Analyzing

● Data from 2016 - 2020 & 2021
  ○ City: code violation, crime, structural fire, Red-X, RoadBotics
  ○ County: parcel, tax delinquent, tax generation
Creation of Blight Inventory Tools

Data displayed online - final product:

- ArcGIS web app
  - Not public facing
  - Internal use by:
    - City staff
    - City Council
    - Planning Commission, etc.
  - Includes all layers of data
  - Help research, make decisions
  - Updated over time
Creation of Blight Inventory Tools

Data displayed online - final product:

- **ArcGIS hub site**
  - Public facing
  - Communication tool:
    - Project information
    - Status of blight
    - Progress
    - Resources
  - Includes data selected by Project Team
  - Updated over time
In November 2020, the City of Greensburg initiated a citywide inventory of blighted properties. The inventory was completed by the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development through their Technical Resources and Municipal Services (TRAMS) program. Funding for the inventory was secured through a partnership between the City of Greensburg and the Realtors® Association of Westmoreland, Indiana and Mon Valley (RAWIM).
City of Greensburg Blight Inventory

The inventory, completed in April 2021, provides a detailed look at property conditions throughout the city, parcel-by-parcel. Properties considered to be blighted are dilapidated, abandoned, and sometimes vacant, and ultimately pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The completed inventory will inform blight policy decisions and assist planners in targeting future rehabilitation, demolition, and investment efforts.

The inventory was guided by a project team, selected by the city's Planning Commission. The group met monthly with county planners to define the framework of the project, determine end product goals, hear updates from the field, address issues, and ensure data quality and accuracy.

Exploring the Inventory

During the course of the project, planners physically inventoried all 6,070 parcels in the City of Greensburg. Each property was evaluated based off the exterior appearance of the property utilizing a three-grade parcel grading system shown below. Parcel grades are visually shown on maps using a three-color system (green = Good, yellow = Fair, and red = Poor). Parcel grades and any additional descriptive notes can be found by clicking on a parcel and viewing the pop-up window.

This Hub site is intended to be a tool for the City of Greensburg to use to benchmark, track, and communicate to the public the state of blight within the city and how it's being addressed.

Note: For any lot with more than one visible structure, grades were determined based off of the presumed primary structure. For example, if a garage or accessory structure is Poor, but the primary structure is Good, the parcel grade is Good — but it is indicated in the notes section that the garage is Poor.
Total Parcels in Greensburg

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Parcels</td>
<td>5,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Parcels</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Parcels</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developable Vacant Parcels

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Parcels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Boarded up windows, broken windows, deteriorating wood, chipped paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel Number</td>
<td>0010000200150003550000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>127 E PITTSBURGH ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Tax</td>
<td>$434.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Tax</td>
<td>$364.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Tax</td>
<td>$1514.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Photo 1.jpg
Tax delinquency data from 2020 is shown on the map below. The type of delinquency for a given parcel and claim balance is shown in the respective parcel's pop-up window.

Types of Tax Delinquency Shown:
- **Unsold** parcels are those that have gone through tax sale without a buyer purchasing them.
- **Judicial Sale** parcels are those that are being prepared for judicial tax sale which clears the title of some, but not all, defects.
- **Repository** parcels are those that are essentially orphaned, meaning no one has purchased them at any previous step in the process. They represent the most serious type of tax delinquency.

Data provided by the Westmoreland County Tax Office.

Tax Delinquency (2020)
Tax Delinquency (2020)
Citizens can report instances of blight via an online form or by calling the Greensburg Department of Planning & Development. The Department of Planning & Development is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Call (724) 838-4335 to talk with a planner.

Contact a Realtor

If you are interested in buying property in Greensburg, you can get in contact with a local Realtor by going to the Realtors® Association of Westmoreland, Indiana, and Mon Valley Member Offices webpage at http://realtorswim.com/membership/member-offices/.
Thank you!

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