

Vacant Properties Inventory

East McKeesport, PA

Summer 2011

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Agenda

- Why vacant properties?
- Data Collection & Database
- Vacant Properties Survey
- Collaboration
- Future Steps



Why Vacant Properties?

East
McKeesport Small community with nice homes
Borough population is 2,126

First vacant
properties
project

Started program with council members

Printed information from County

Took pictures and notes

Difficult to keep track of growing number of blighted properties

LGA
internship

Had a program written to identify lot & block

Application for LGA intern for Vacant Properties Inventory to expand program

Introduction

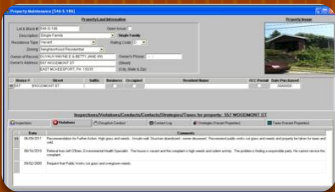
Data Collection &
Database

Vacant Property Survey

Collaboration

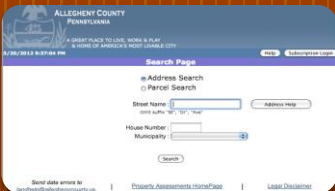
Future Steps

Data can be found from a variety of [free] sources



Database

- Access Database
- Based on Lot & Block



Institutional Sources

- County data
- PNCIS: foreclosure-related, owner mailing



Existing Expertise

- Returned Mailings
- Police, code official, long-time residents

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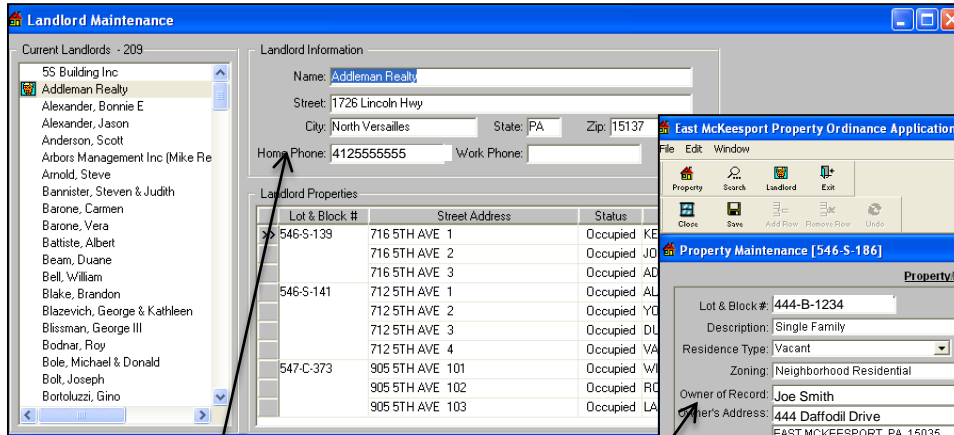
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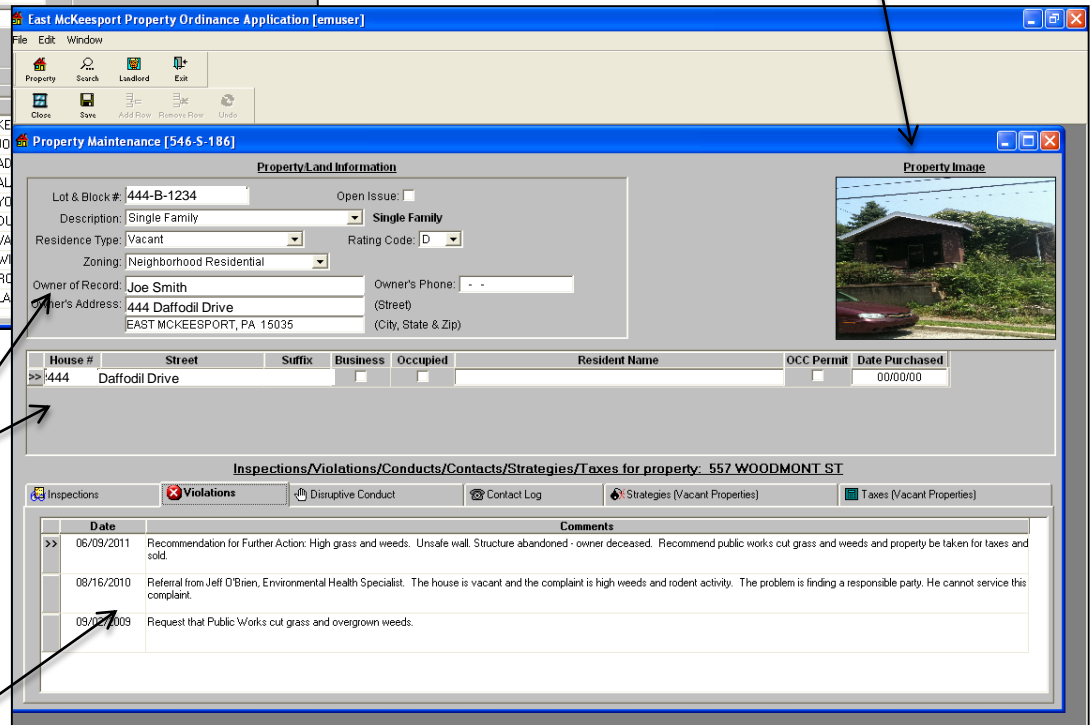
Collaboration

Future Steps

The simple Access database wasn't a perfect system, but it worked



Picture of house



Landlord addresses

Residents vs. Owners

Comment fields

Introduction

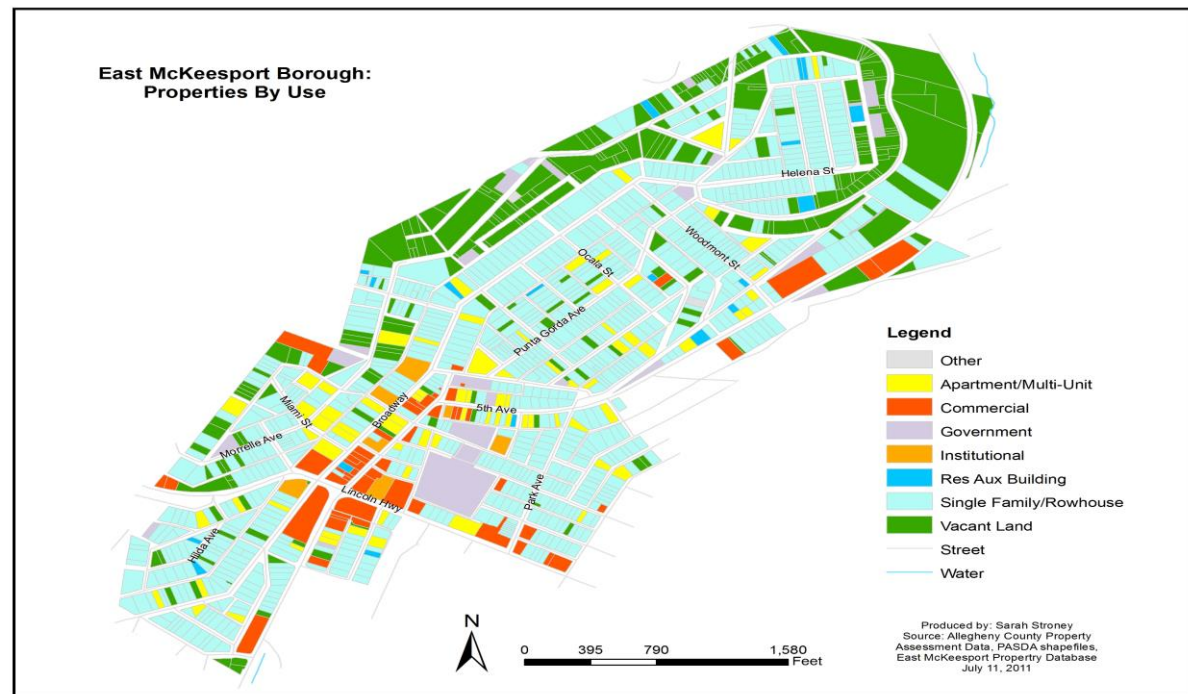
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GIS Maps helped decision-makers visualize conditions in the community



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Results confirmed council's concerns

8%

- 91 of total structure were vacant

Foreclosures

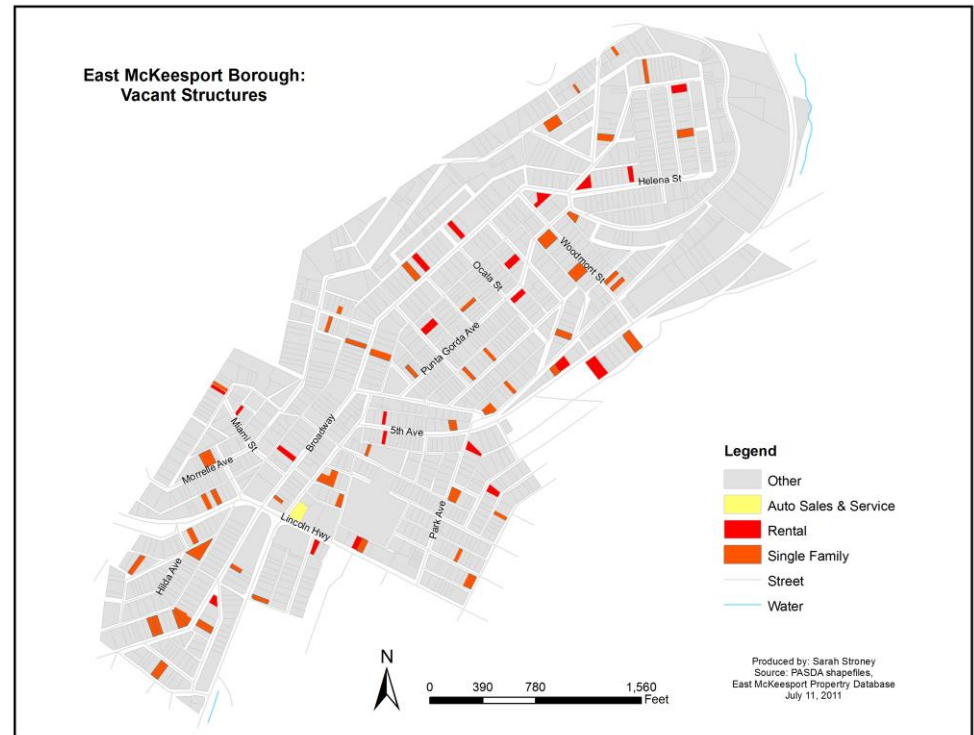
- 10 were in some stage of foreclosure process

No Real Pattern

- Vacancies occurred on nearly every street

Not only multi-family

- Vacancies occurred among single and multi-family houses



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Visiting each building provided a clear picture of the problem

East McKeesport Vacant Properties Survey: Rating System & Instructions



A. Excellent

- No visible signs of deterioration
- Well maintained and cared for
- New construction/renovation
- Historic detailing/unique



B. Good

- Needs basic improvements
- Minor painting needed
- Removal of weeds needed
- Cleaning needed



C. Fair

- Some cracking of brick or wood
- Major painting required
- Deteriorated cornice
- Crumbling concrete
- Cracked windows or stairs



D. Deteriorated

- Major cracking of brick, wood rotting
- Broken or missing windows
- Missing brick and siding
- Open holes



F. Unsafe/Hazard

- House is open and a shell
- Can see through completely
- House ransacked and filled with trash
- In danger of collapse
- Immediate safety hazard to neighborhood

Instructions for Vacant Property Survey

1. **Map:** Use the parcel map to identify vacant structures. Addresses are given.
2. **Rating:** Use the criteria to the left to rate each vacant structure and write the letter directly on the map. You should choose the rating that *best reflects* the structure's qualities. The group should come to consensus before rating the property. Although the landscape is often the first thing you notice, be sure to look at the following before making a rating:
 - Foundation
 - Siding
 - Roof/Gutter/Downspout
 - Windows & Doors
3. **Written Comments:** If you feel the need to write comments about the house (i.e. house has a for sale sign, neighbor tells you there are rats), use the Comment Column next to the property in the table.

What to do when:

Structure appears not to be vacant: If you determine the house is not vacant, mark it with the letters "NV."

Structure appears vacant: If you see a structure that appears vacant but is not marked on the map, rate the structure and write the letter on the proper place on the map. Also write an address number, if marked on the structure.

Sarah Stroney; July, 2011; Adapted from: MVOC 2010 Vacant Properties Survey

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Visiting each building provided a clear picture of the problem

A: 7

B: 45

C: 23

D: 8

F: 3



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Engaging all stakeholders helped determine priorities

- Council
- Residents
- Building Code Inspector
- Tax Collector
- Public Works
- Emergency Services



Building Department Com
 if you would like to make a complain about a property, ...

Property Address: _____ Owner N
 Date of Complaint: _____
 Person Making Complaint: _____

Issue: check all that apply

<input type="checkbox"/> Building Open	<input type="checkbox"/> Unusable/K
<input type="checkbox"/> Utility Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Windows/Gra
<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Danger Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Overgrown
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Code Violation	<input type="checkbox"/> Noisy/Con
<input type="checkbox"/> Permit Issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Broken Win
<input type="checkbox"/> Tenant/Landlord Issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Prop
<input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility Issue	

Describe issue: _____

.....OFFICE USE ONLY.....

Priority Rating
 No Response Needed 1 Low Priority 2 High Priority 4

Date Entered: _____ Closed: Da

Corrective Action Taken: _____

EastMcKeesport
Community Property Questionnaire June 2011

How long have you lived in the community? _____
 Do you own your property or rent? Own Rent

Please read the following statements. Circle the response that best reflects your opinion about each statement. Please use the space at the bottom for any comments especially any ideas.

VACANT / ABANDONED PROPERTIES:
 Vacant Buildings are a problem in East McKeesport

Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

Our community has an effective plan for dealing with vacant properties.
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

I would be interested in purchasing vacant land (no structures)
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

FORECLOSURE:
 Foreclosures are a problem in East McKeesport

Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

Our community could benefit from educational programs on how to prevent foreclosures
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

BEAUTIFICATION:
 East McKeesport could benefit from beautification programs

Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

Our businesses could benefit from loan programs such as a façade improvement program
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

GREENSPACE:
 Our community has enough access to parks and greenspace
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

Our community could benefit from access to community gardens
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
 Our community has an effective plan for marketing itself
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

Our community offers ample activities for residents and opportunities to get involved
 Strongly Agree Agree Don't know Disagree Strongly disagree

Please detach and mail to the Borough at 507 Florence Ave. East McKeesport, PA 15035 2) return it to the drop-box at the Borough building or 3) go to our website to fill it out online.



Now for the difficult part: Finding solutions to put properties back on the tax roll

- Real Estate Attorney
 - 13 “priority” properties
 - No response
- Demolition
 - All three houses rated “F”
 - One house rated “D”
- Rehabilitation
 - Two houses
- New Tri-COG initiative on blight
 - 42 municipalities
 - 5-year plan

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