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City Solutions for Solving Blight Issues

Background:

- Blight is a unfortunate problem that effects all neighborhoods. We all experience the eyesores, attraction of crime, and devaluing of property values that blighted properties encourage.

- The term blight is generic and has varied definitions – unsafe structures, vacant properties, a haven for vagrants, an attractive nuisance for children, a house that "just plain looks bad."

- It takes a combined effort between municipalities, community leaders, and neighborhoods using innovative solutions to properly combat blight.

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Basic Codes Enforcement

Violations:

- Abandoned or inoperable vehicles
- Grass over 12" high
- Dirty lots/solid waste violations
- Illegal dumping

Process:

- Report via 311
- Inspection
- Notification
- Re-inspection
- City crew to correct

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Codes process for structures

Information:

- First step in process

- File a complaint through 311

- An inspector will evaluate and write up any violations

- Notice is sent to owner

- Generally 120 day recheck

- Individually evaluated at each re-inspection

Best for:

- Any structure that has any level of City Codes violations

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Codes (cont'd)

Advantages:

- Problems may be resolved with simple notice
- Requires minimal City or neighborhood action

Disadvantages:

- Few penalties if owners don't comply
- May take time if owners aren't cooperative

Public Officer Hearing

Information:

- Houses have already been inspected by an inspector
- Owner takes no action
- Public hearing with notice to all interested parties
- Repair orders allow us to placard structures
- Demolition orders allow us to tear down structures

Best for:

- Occupied structures that need to be vacated
- Structures where owner needs more incentive to do repairs
- Structures so badly damaged, repair isn't feasible

Public Officer Hearing (cont'd)

Advantages:

- Placard structures to get occupants out of an unsafe living environment
- Tear down structures that are a danger to the community
- Works as incentive to owners to do work on their own

Disadvantages:

- Long wait list
- Has to have severe enough violations

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Acquisition

Information:

- Lengthy process involving various Boards and Hearings
- Negotiated sales with owner make process easier
- Can be used for properties that don't have major Codes violations
- Properties are sold to approved applicant with the highest score
- Clawback provision

Best for:

- Marketable properties
- Vacant houses/lots that otherwise probably wouldn't get on the market

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Acquisition (cont'd)

Advantages:

- In the hands of someone who will develop the property
- Clawback provision insures work will be done

Disadvantages:

- Limited resources
- Lengthy process takes time

Tax Sale

Information:

- 2 years delinquent
- Due process
- 1 year redemption period
- City purchases all properties that don't sell
- Acquired properties may be sold in surplus sale later

Best for:

- Houses not in immediate danger
- Properties that will sell

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Tax Sale (cont'd)

Advantages:

- Get property into hands of new owner
- City gets back tax revenue

Disadvantages:

- Lengthy process takes time
- Redemption period
- City owning more properties
- Clouded title

Demolition by Neglect

Information:

- H-1 or NC-1 overlay, National Register District
- Qualifying violations
- City will stabilize

Best for:

- Historic buildings owners can't/won't save
- Balance between needing action, but not too bad to save

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Demolition by Neglect (cont'd)

Advantages:

- Saves historic homes from potential loss
- Save the integrity of neighborhood as a whole
- Buys time to come up with redevelopment plan

Disadvantages:

- Only for certain districts
- Limited budget
- Stabilization only

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Open Data

- Bloomberg Philanthropies' What Works Cities initiative
- Establish open data policy
- Evaluate and publish relevant datasets
- Use data to develop quantifiable goals
  - First goal set aimed at blight reduction
- Develop dashboard to publicly track progress of goals

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