JEFFERSON
CIVIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Blight in Erie County, as recorded by ECCL Class of 2016. Photos: Brad Triana.

A Citizen's Action Guide to Blight:
A Report by the Erie County Civic Leadership Academy 2016 Cohort

A Citizen's Action Guide to Blight
A Report by the Erie County Civic Leadership Academy 2016 Cohort

The Erie County Civic Leadership (ECCL) Academy, along with the Jefferson Dinners, and the Jefferson Essays are initiatives of the Jefferson Alliance for Community Progress, the civic-action arm of the Jefferson Educational Society, established in 2015.

Jefferson Educational Society of Erie (JES) is a nonprofit institution founded to promote civic enlightenment and community progress for the Erie region through the study, research, and discussion of ideas and events that have influenced the human condition. JES works to ensure the preservation of the past for study and to examine key lessons of the present to build a better future for our region. JES offers courses, seminars, and lectures; publishes books, essays, journals that explain the central ideas that have formed the past, assists in exploring the present, and offers guidance to enhance the civic future of the Erie region.

Why blight?

Blight is more than an eyesore; it affects the health, safety, and economy of our neighborhoods and communities.

Ending blight is not easy. It is a complex problem that requires many solutions. The Citizen's Guide to Blight will provide practical tips, policy solutions, and activities that the "everyday" citizen can accomplish to eliminate blight.

As part of the ECCL curriculum, we, as participants, engaged in cooperative learning through a team-based, customized project designed to cultivate civic action in conjunction with analytical research and investigation of critical issues facing Erie County. In order to best apply the lessons learned through the ECCL while utilizing the resources of a community-based think tank, we chose to produce this citizen's guide as the most practical, potentially impactful outreach tool to foster continued conversation about this issue. In this case, blight in Erie County.

Source: Erie Blight Beat (Facebook)

ABOUT ERIE COUNTY CIVIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

ECCL Class of 2016

Launched in 2015, the Leadership Academy prepares Erie professionals, ages 25 to 45, for meaningful engagement in their community through a dynamic environment fostering teamwork, growth and learning for those seeking to be agents of change for their community. Through ECCL, students examine the inner workings of governments including Federal and State but with a special emphasis on local governments, including county, cities, school districts, boroughs, and townships. The aim of ECCL is to help emerging young professionals become civic leaders who are capable of affecting positive change for the County's future. With a close look at Erie's economic, entrepreneurial, and innovation ecosystems, ECCL informs future leaders of Erie's post-industrial landscape while exposing them to global ideas that can be applied to Erie County's overall developmental health and well-being.

During our seven-month study, we have found that blight is so visible in some areas of Erie County that it becomes commonplace and may go unnoticed. Signs of blight are the dilapidated buildings residents pass on the way to work every day, the weed-infested vacant lot down the block, or the house around the corner just needing some new paint, a few replacement window screens, and a minor repair or two.

In Erie County, supply versus demand is contributing to blight

(czb, llc., 2016 p. 12)

Supply

4,700 vacant housing units

1,900 abandoned housing units

9,500 residential properties with signs of moderate to severe distress

Demand

37,000 fewer city residents than 1960 population

60% growth in surrounding population since 1960

33% fewer middle and upper income households in city compared to 1969

As of September 2016, a study conducted by the ECCL estimated that there were at least 430 instances of blight in Erie's "Our West Bayfront" neighborhood alone. The West Bayfront community area is made up of 4,459 structures and houses approximately 13,000 residents in an area identified by the following boundaries: Waterfront to the north, Bayfront Connector to the west, West 12th Street to the south, and Sassafras Street to the east. While this is a snapshot of just one neighborhood, blight is found in many neighborhoods throughout all of Erie County's urban, suburban, and rural communities. Low population density in many areas, paired with low property values overall, allow blight to spread almost unabated in some areas ("Our West Bayfront Community Plan", 2016).

This ECCL cohort is taking a stand that keeping neighborhoods safe and clean is a responsibility every citizen must share to maintain a high quality of life for our entire community. Even if your own neighborhood is in good condition, blight tends to spread, eventually reaching the farthest edges of a community and pushing the most livable neighborhoods farther to beyond community centers. When it reaches your neighborhood, it invariably has a negative effect on property values. When given the choice, who wouldn't invest in a home or commercial structure in a pristine neighborhood, rather than a neighborhood with a handful of unsafe, unsightly structures? And even you don't see signs of "blight creep" in your neighborhood, blighted areas adjacent to yours can also negatively impact the value of your property, as in the "broken windows theory" of James Wilson and George

Kelling, using broken windows as a metaphor for disorder within neighborhoods, and going on to link disorder and incivility within a community to subsequent occurrences of serious crime (Kelling and Wilson, 1982).

But it's not all about the bottomline. It is the shared civic duty of each of us to ensure the safety and livability of our entire community. When we see our neighbor suffering, we should be motivated to make a change. What's more, doing this civic duty better positions the community to develop and adapt when faced with other challenges and contributes to the community's ability to prosper as a whole. And as you'll learn in this document, no one is expected to do it alone.

While there are several blight initiatives occurring in Erie County, detailed later in this Citizen's Guide, an overarching, coordinated approach that would maximize current efforts – and possibly even attract new resources – is not yet in place. As a result, pervasive blight has begun to take hold, eroding the aesthetic standards of the communities of Erie County and frustrating other abatement efforts.

Adding to the frustration, some property owners who would like to remediate the condition of their properties may lack access to or awareness of tools and resources that their community already has in place – tools and resources that the "Resources" section of this document identifies. To effectively remove blight from our neighborhoods – long-term – Erie County needs a single, focused strategy, not the least part of which is individual efforts by you – the homeowner, advocate, and educator – the empowered citizen.

Our months of research show that while the causes of blight are many, and the issue is widespread and growing — individual efforts can truly make a difference. In many cases, they deliver the most cost-effective measures. Imagine that your neighbor down the block repaints her home's exterior and adds mulch around her newly planted shrubs, and while she's at it she also fixes the gutters. Soon other neighbors are inspired to make little improvements that can be so easy to put off, and a neighborhood at risk of blight has avoided that fate. As you'll read, other

Photo: Brad Triana

communities across the country have seen that kind of positive energy for themselves.

Of course, a solution entails more than weeding and scrubbing graffiti and calling it a day. This guide is intended for citizens' individual house-by-house and neighborhood-by-neighborhood efforts, but also as a guide to including local policymakers in the efforts to tackle blight in Erie County. In this guide, you'll find practical tools to help you encourage local elected officials to address blight with policy change.

Overview

Within this document, you'll find practical tips for hands-on activities you can do to address blight almost immediately, and you'll also find resources for encouraging your elected officials to create a policy environment to help to mitigate and prevent blight. You'll learn about the underlying causes of blight, its effects, and how to identify and score blight, including whether your own property is at risk of being classified as "blighted," what a few other cities have done to address blight through the efforts of individuals, groups, and policy makers. What tools, resources, and programs are available to property owners and concerned citizens in each of Erie County's 38 municipalities ("Erie County Pennsylvania", n.d.).

What Exactly Qualifies as Blighted Property?	**Historic Efforts to Tackle Blight in Erie**
Spectrum of Blight	**Guidance for Tackling Blight for Everyday Citizens**
What Are the Impacts of Blight?	**Fighting Blight: What Can Government Do?**
What Are Some of the Root Causes of Blight?	**Five Strategies for Fighting Blight**
Three Erie Counties	**A Brighter Future without Blight**

? What Exactly Qualifies as a Blighted Property?

EXAMPLES FROM "THE CITY OF READING BLIGHTED PROPERTY REVIEW PROCESS"

- An attractive nuisance to children (e.g., abandoned wells, shafts, basements, excavations, unsafe fences)

- Properties with an accumulation of trash and debris or otherwise environmentally hazardous conditions or contamination

- Structures unfit for human habitation, including those lacking utilities (water, electricity, gas, etc.)

- Fire hazards

- Properties that are tax delinquent for two years and vacant, or vacant and not rehabilitated within a year of notice of violations

- Abandoned property, with cost of demolition unpaid for 6 months, municipal liens in excess of 150% of property value, or declared abandoned by owner

- Properties with titles in defective or unusual condition

Photos of blight and decay in Erie County.

Source: The City of Reading, 2016 p. 5

ROOT CAUSES
OF BLIGHT

Keep America Beautiful, an organization which aims to "inspire and educate people to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environment," has published numerous studies on the causes of blight throughout the United States. While the root cause of blight varies from location to location, it is typically caused by one or more of the following reasons: poor urban planning, poverty, suburbanization, and racial discrimination. ("What we do") ("Keep America Beautiful", 2016)

URBAN PLANNING

Takes place in cities, suburban and rural areas.
Purpose: structuring how land and resources within a city will be used, make suggestions for zoning regulations, economic development, environmental (green space) planning, and also transportation systems. When all of these systems are not working together properly, it may cause residents and/or businesses to leave the area, resulting in less mobile (lower-income) households bearing the brunt of taxes and contributing to a downward spiral of neighborhood.(Aalbers, 2006)

POVERTY

Homeowners facing poverty are less likely to be able to afford routine maintenance and upkeep on their properties. This lack of upkeep lowers the value of the property, resulting in a cycle of less maintenance being performed and continued deterioration.
Deterioration of one property begins to affect the value of nearby properties, expanding the reach and repeating the cycle. Safety concerns may influence even more residents to leave the area. (Aalbers, 2006)

SUBURBANIZATION

Residents who are more economically stable may leave the area for safety reasons, or simply because they are seeking the lower taxes and housing costs available in many suburban and rural markets. Declines leave the remaining neighborhoods poorer and less able to support area businesses and schools.
This may result in businesses or schools closing, which contributes to even higher unemployment rates and vacant storefronts, both of which contribute to urban blight. (Macey and Denton, 1988)

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Minorities (especially African-Americans) are less likely to be hired for jobs and approved for loans. Both situations contribute to higher poverty rates and the increased likelihood that they will be among the residents of neighborhoods most heavily affected by blight. Racial discrimination can also take the form of redlining. (Aalbers, 2006). Redlining is the practice of either completely denying or raising the price of vital services (banking, healthcare, insurance. etc.) to the residents of specific areas known for their racial or ethnic makeups. This process can further contribute to the degradation of neighborhoods which are often already left behind due to their racial makeups. (Madrigal, 2014)

TPC

Spectrum of Blight

In 2016, Erie Refocused, a comprehensive plan created by Alexandria, Va.-based consulting firm czb, LLC., introduced a 5-point scale to assess Erie's housing stock. A field score of 1 is painted dark green. It represents prime housing stock. A score of 5 or 6 is colored red, which is blighted beyond feasible recovery. Red properties are candidates for demolition. This map illustrates that approximately 5% of the housing stock is "best in class." According to the consultants, a vibrant community has 50% of its housing in this category. If a picture is worth a thousand words, this map clearly illustrates the task ahead for city leaders and residents in turning around the housing market. For practitioners looking at addressing blight, it begs the question: Where to start?
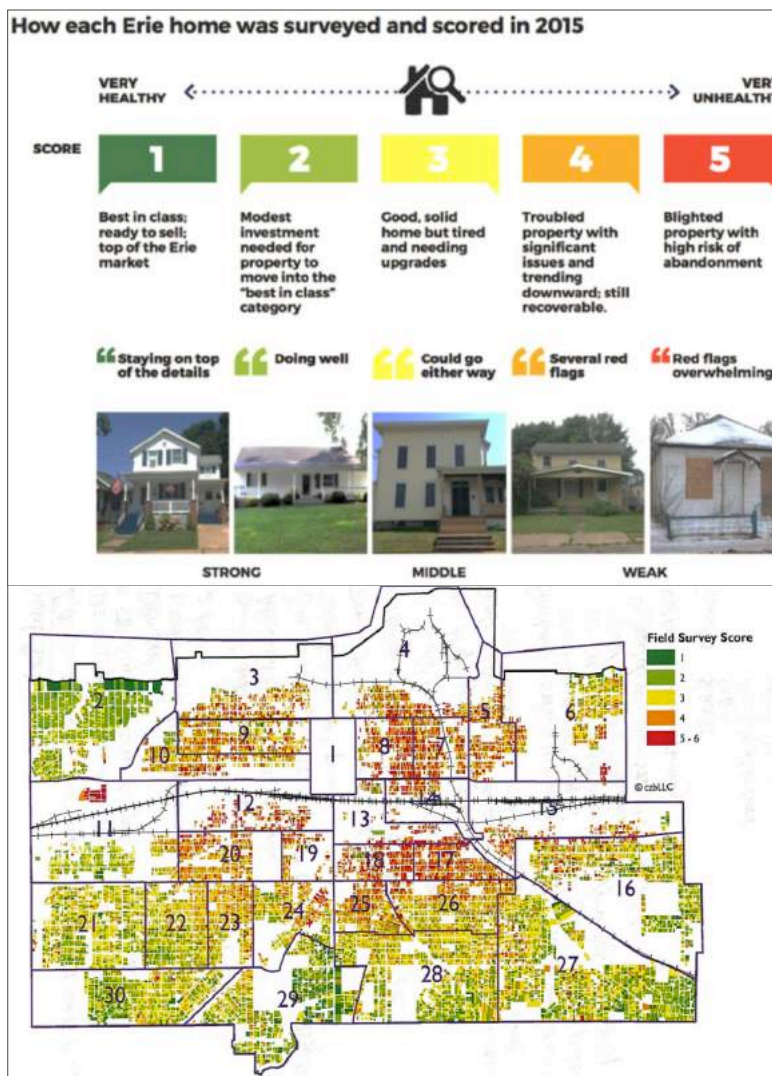
Source: czb, llc, 2016

What are Some of the Impacts of Blight?

While the economic and visual impacts of blight are the most commonly discussed, blight also affects residents socially, psychologically, and environmentally.

Social & Psychological

Studies have shown as the numbers of blighted properties in an area increase, so does crime. In 1982, George Kelling and James Wilson explained this idea using a metaphor called the "Broken Windows Theory." This theory explained, "... social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left un-repaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken" (Kelling and Wilson, 1982).

According to the theory, the symptoms of blight indicate residents of a particular neighborhood simply do not care or pay attention to what goes on around them. Thus, inviting opportunities for advanced crime and social disorder. In addition to reported crimes, the neighborhood experiences a psychological shift in crime perception. People simply just believe their neighborhoods are not safe anymore, regardless of whether that shift has actually happened. For example, a longtime resident of this area, Paul Gambill, described the warning signs of criminal activity, stating, "You had large groups of individuals hanging out in the streets and on the corners at all hours. There was obvious open-air drug dealing." Gambill also cited an increase in random shootings, prostitution, absentee landlords, abandoned homes and "speakeasies" (establishments selling stolen or illegal goods) as components of the crime problem in the neighborhoods. Obviously, Gambill didn't feel safe ("Is Erie a Safe City", n.d.).

Neighbors who can afford to do so may leave these borderline neighborhoods feeling the need to move before things "get worse." When these residents leave, they contribute to the cycle of urban blight by leaving behind unoccupied homes and taking their tax dollars with them. In reality, investing in their neighborhoods and homes could make the same difference as moving.

Studies show residents tend to feel safer and happier in neighborhoods with improved property upkeep rates and are therefore less likely to move away, reducing the likelihood of the blight cycle repeating itself (Hur & Nassar, 2014). The Citizens Police Academy and the Neighborhood Watch Program sprang from the Savocchio administration's belief that residents needed to be involved in

Former GAF Site: from brownfield to greenfield

http://reprints.goerie.com/mycapture/enlarge.asp?image=47929276&event=1676562&CategoryID=74625

http://www.goerie.com/news/20141022/zoning-appeal-filed-over-erie-bayfront-walkway

order to stop the crime in their area. Unfortunately residents who witnessed crimes were afraid to come forward because of fear of retribution.

In addition, residents may not trust police. The result is there are no witnesses to testify and no victims pressing charges; many of those committing crimes go free to continue criminal acts. However, as the program received a good acceptance from the local residents, the Neighborhood Watch groups began seeking cooperation from absentee landlords and working in conjunction with a well-funded Redevelopment Authority to remove abandoned homes and reduce blight, thereby drawing homeowners back to the area ("Is Erie a Safe City", n.d.).

Environmental

Personal safety concerns not only stem from criminal activity and violent crimes, but also from public health issues. Blight has a significant environmental impact in the areas of property, public health, and green infrastructure (Davis, 2002).

"Brownfields" are vacant industrial properties that have residual waste left behind on them. This waste often contributes to respiratory illness in the surrounding community and may be linked to cases of cancer in these lots' urban neighbors (Litt, 2001). Cleaning up these properties and turning them into usable green spaces has been shown to reduce the risks of illness while creating a usable space for neighbors to enjoy. An iconic example of a brownfield in Erie County would be the GAF site, the former shingle factory, located directly on the shores of Presque Isle Bay. Through remediation of the site, there is now a public access walkway along the waterfront, as well as the development of hotels to serve not only the city, but the nearby convention center.

Increased risk of fire, illness, and personal safety concerns are among the risks that blight has on public health. Older homes with dated wiring or cooking appliances pose fire-related risks, as do properties lacking adequate trash removal practices. This risk is further complicated when lower tax bases result in shrinking police forces and lower numbers of firefighters. Blighted properties can also be a threat to public health because vacant lots can become breeding grounds for mosquitoes, mice, and other disease spreading vermin, in addition to the allergy inducing weeds often found growing in unmaintained lots (Kochtitzky, et al., 2006).

Blight can also affect the development of green infrastructure, such as stormwater management systems, community gardens, and soil

suitability. Stormwater management is an important but expensive requirement of updating infrastructure in urban environments to keep up with the demands on our sewer systems. Community gardens and urban farms make important strides toward improving food security in underserved neighborhoods, while telling us a lot about soil suitability. Soil suitability is one of the key factors when developing stormwater management plans and selecting locations for urban gardens. Blighted neighborhoods often see issues arise concerning the usability of their soil for either of these important projects. (Knight et al., 2013).
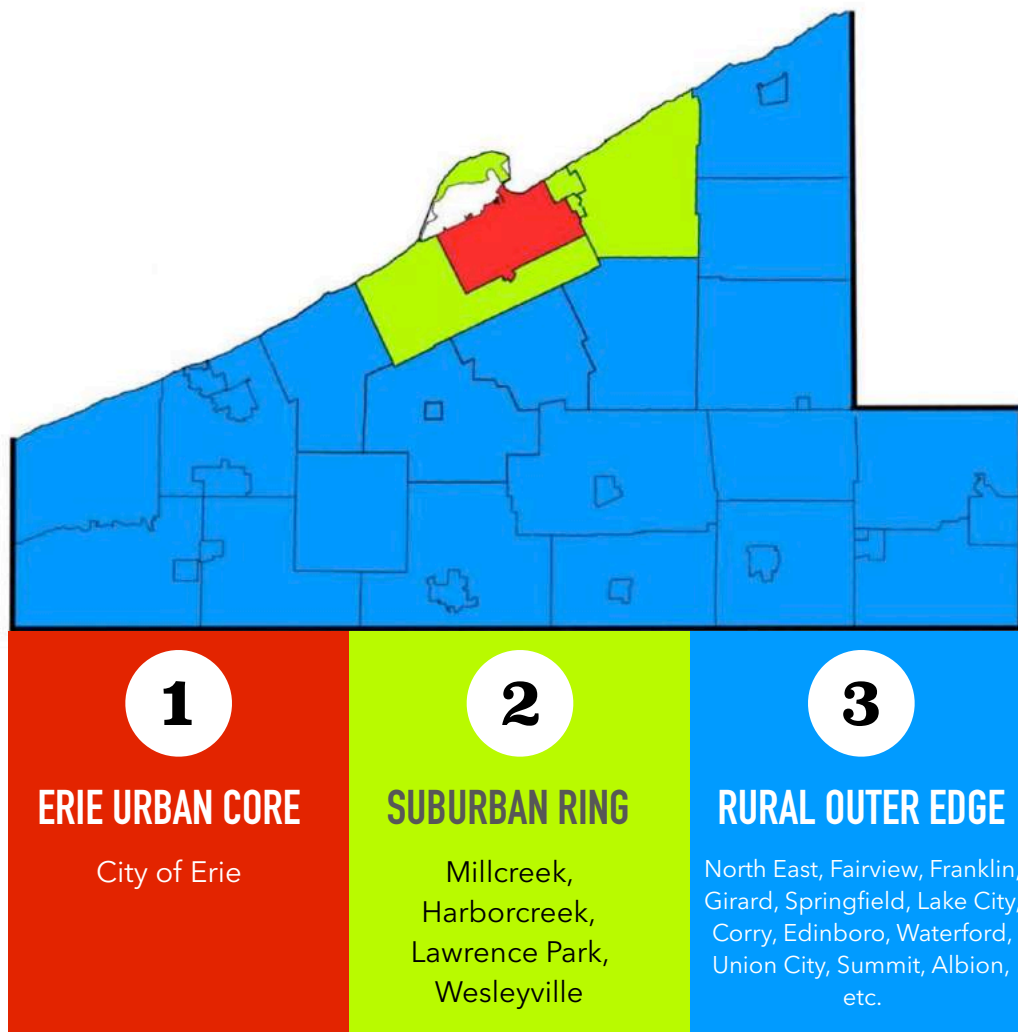
Economic

Many people may be more familiar with the economic impacts of urban decay, and much research has been done on the connection between blight and the economy of the surrounding area. Blight tends to spread like cancer. Blighted properties and abandoned or vacant homes lower the values of surrounding buildings and parcels of land. These lower home values then go on to decrease the surrounding tax base, leaving less money for social programs, safety systems (police and fire), and schools -- plus the smaller population negatively impacts private businesses.

In a vicious cycle, new businesses and residents are less likely to invest in these neighborhoods. Businesses will not move into the area because they struggle to find qualified employees, because schools had to cut programming due to reduced funding from the declining tax base. Residents struggle with unemployment and cannot obtain home loans or earn money to update their properties. Continuing its cancerous spread, this struggle often means more blighted or vacant properties, causing even more residents to move away. When populations dip, it creates more opportunities for crime and disorder to take hold on the community, causing a further downward spiral of once vibrant neighborhoods. (Kelling & Wilson, 1982).

Three Erie Counties

When talking about blight in Erie County, it is interesting to note it can be divided into three distinct, different parts of the county.

1	2	3
ERIE URBAN CORE	**SUBURBAN RING**	**RURAL OUTER EDGE**
City of Erie	Millcreek, Harborcreek, Lawrence Park, Wesleyville	North East, Fairview, Franklin, Girard, Springfield, Lake City, Corry, Edinboro, Waterford, Union City, Summit, Albion, etc.

As recently illustrated in the Erie City Comprehensive Plan, Erie has a growing problem with blight but it would be naïve to think that blight is only contained within the city limits. While the ECCL traveled around the county, we found blight as a major issue in most of the communities we visited.

Suburban Ring

Although to varying degrees, the Suburban Ring has seen its share of blight. In Millcreek Township, it is found in sporadic properties like the Granada Apartments. Millcreek Supervisor John Groh informed us that the concern regarding the spread of blight is real and that the township is actively working to make sure that the spread of it is contained and eliminated (Groh, 2016). Alternatively, some parts the Suburban Ring, such as Wesleyville and Lawrence Park, the levels nearly mirror the blight that is found in the City of Erie.

Success Story: Millcreek's West Erie Plaza

Developer VCG Properties' own Chris Conrad offers some insights on the process of taking a property from blight to bright & the tough decision to raze the Plaza Theater.

Why Erie?

Why not Erie? The metro area is teaming with young entrepreneurs and boasts a vibrant arts & culture scene. That kind of charm cannot be recreated. We see the area not as a blank canvas, but rather a transitional mid market awaiting its renaissance.

Why WEP?

It was there, full of rich history, tarnished mid-century flare and stunning demographics. We spent months just trying to figure out why it had been forgotten.

Our vision has always been a healthy mix of national, global and local tenants complementing one another, offering patrons a "go-to family center". That includes ongoing connections with the community through open dialogue, events and opportunities to help influence the development. Of course it wouldn't be a VCG project without some artistic and architectural flare and our signature "retrovation" approach. Our team looked at the history and took on the challenge of "what would we have done in 1949", while incorporating modern conveniences and industry leading-innovations.

Tough Call: The Theater

Although most of our team had never stepped foot in the building before 2012, through researching its significance and working so hard to find solutions, we became personally attached. Finally accepting harsh realities of bad timing, knowing if we had been a few years earlier in acquisition, was difficult. It still bothers me we couldn't save what was once the crown jewel of WEP and a hub for nightlife in Erie. That sense of personal loss went beyond business and allowed us to sympathize with the community on a deeper level. That is what inspired the final lighting effort, no press interviews, no distractions with positive news. It was simply a moment to reflect and remember.

Current Exciting Features:	New Tenants	2017 Plan
Bike Lanes & Pedestrian Safety Improvements Weekly Farmers Market Arch & Mini Park Courtyard Area/Google Fiber wifi	E.Lane Boutique Achilles Running Shop Claytopia Icing On The Lake (early 2017) LIDL (2017/2018)	Lot improvements, lighting, site amenities, drive lane improvements, signage & campus landscape.

Source: Chris Conrad, personal communication, January 2017.

Rural Outer Edge

The perimeter of the county is quite a mixed picture. Blight in the east and west regions is more rare. The southern part of the county, however, has many sections where blight is a major issue and in some areas, such as Corry, Union City, and Albion, blight is at higher levels than those seen in the city of Erie. The primary cause of blight in these areas is the job losses as a result of companies moving because of globalization (Robinson, 2016).

Dave Robinson, CEO of Union City Family Resource Center, spoke to our ECCL group about the fact that, during the last two decades, dozens of companies have abandoned rural communities in Erie County to pursue more profitable alternatives available around the globe. The uprooting of long-standing companies such as Ethan Allen Chair in Union City, the Corry Jamestown company in Corry, and many others due to corporate consolidation, decimated thousands of families who relied on wages from these firms for generations. The widespread extraction of earned income from these areas has contributed to extreme levels of rural poverty and blight. Prior to globalization, the downsizing of firms was cyclical and eventually the workforce rebounded as the national and regional economies scaled up to meet demand for

Photo: Brad Triana

products and services. However, the shift by multinational corporations towards globalization created a new reality — the jobs that left were never coming back. This new normal left behind thousands of unemployed who once were able to provide for their families and create a stable tax base for the communities where they lived. Workers who once built the products used in homes and offices across America were no longer able to provide for their families, and their communities began to struggle due to limited resources and a shrinking tax base (Robinson, 2016).

✓ Historic Efforts to Tackle Blight in Erie

Edward Wellejus, in his book *Historic Erie County,* explained that, over the years, throughout the City of Erie and Erie County there have been a range of recommendations for combating blight. After World War II, the City of Erie was at its peak as an industrial powerhouse, having been a major supplier to the United States' military during the nation's war effort. In the aftermath of the war, returning soldiers were able to purchase new homes under the G.I. Bill. This fueled a suburban migration, which saw neighboring Millcreek Township double in population to more than 28,000 by 1960. At the same time, the City of Erie's population would hit its peak and eventually lose 38,000 residents by 2016 (Wellejus, 2004).

Photo: Brad Triana

As city leaders took stock of the situation, they realized production facilities built between the 1880s and 1940s were in need of modernization. Erie, like most industrial centers from the Northeast to the Midwest, was unprepared to stem the loss of manufacturing jobs to the southeastern states. Both the city and county were fortunate in that they did not lose their manufacturing-job bases in a dramatic fashion like Youngstown, Ohio; Gary, Indiana; or Flint, Michigan, where sudden plant closures decimated local economies. Erie's strategic location on the St. Lawrence Seaway system did enable the city to compete in global shipping into the 1970s, but even the promise of Erie as a major seaport diminished quickly (Wellejus, 2004).

In 1955, Mayor Arthur J. Gardner spearheaded the creation of the city's Redevelopment Authority with guidance from Mayor David Lawrence of Pittsburgh, which was also dealing with similar issues of loss of industry and disinvestment in city neighborhoods. Gardner appointed a number of prominent business leaders in 1958 to lead a Citizens Action Committee, which hired French city planner Maurice Rotival. Rotival's concepts, which were popular among Modernist architects and planners at the time, were to create a number of expressways and towers after destruction of much of the city's historic neighborhoods and downtown fabric. Rotival also encouraged the creation of the Port of Erie marine terminal, which was completed in 1960 (Wellejus, 2004).

Between 1960 and 1970, the Erie Redevelopment Authority demolished hundreds of downtown buildings, in some cases entire blocks, to implement the Rotival plan and fight what they saw as urban blight. This large-scale urban renewal was made possible by the significant financial contributions of the federal government under President Lyndon Johnson. Between 1960 and 1983, more than $250 million in federal funding found its way to downtown Erie for projects such as residential towers, parking garages, a civic center (now Erie Insurance Arena), a pedestrian and transit mall on State Street, and the central mall.

Wellejus also notes, unfortunately for downtown Erie, much of the retail businesses had begun to move to the neighborhoods and the suburbs in the 1960s due to the growing number of households with automobiles and the creation of automobile accommodating shopping plazas. In 1974, the Millcreek Mall was constructed, which further erod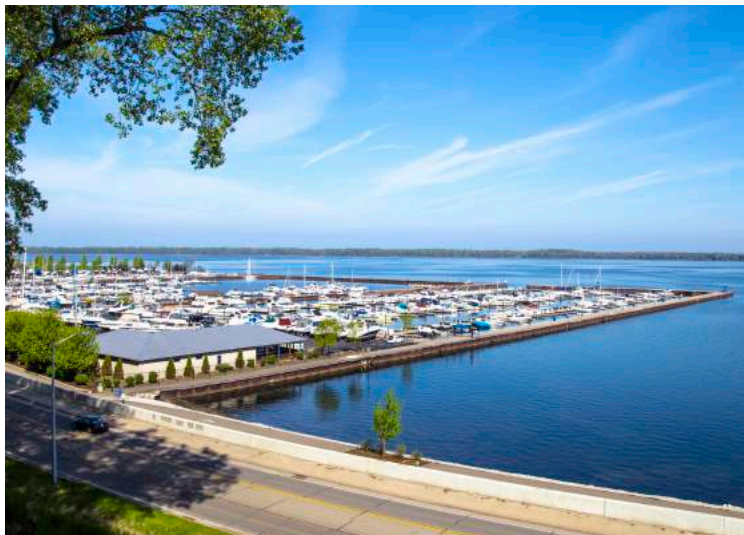ed the downtown retail base. Even in the early 1970s, blight was still an issue for cities, thus, in 1974, U.S. Congress created a new program for urban areas called the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG), which would be administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Erie would use these federal funds to attack blight through home rehabilitation, demolition, and the construction of new residential units. The Redevelopment Authority and the city's Housing Authority would use these resources to assist low-income areas of the city. Despite the new approach by HUD, the city's population would now begin a period of decline and with it disinvestment in city neighborhoods.

Photo: Brad Triana

In the 1980s and 1990s, neighborhood groups such as Bayfront/NATO, (a community and neighborhood development organization on Erie's lower west side) and the Bayfront East Side Task Force (BEST) on Erie's lower east side, leveraged local dollars, low-income housing tax credits, and corporate contributions to be proactive change agents in their neighborhoods. The nonprofits each began campaigns in their neighborhoods to acquire problem properties, assist homeowners with repairs, and even construct new housing. Their work continues to this day, as the blight problem has become a constant battle with long-time resident homeowners moving and absentee landlords taking their place.

In 2001, under the administration of Mayor Rick Filippi, the city became more aggressive in fighting blight by demolishing many dilapidated homes in the city's Little Italy and Center City neighborhoods, which at the time had the highest crime rates in Erie. The demolitions signaled to

residents across the city the new administration and its "Neighborhoods First" program would finally concentrate city resources on projects other than downtown (Wellejus, 2004).

In 2004, under new leadership, the Erie Redevelopment Authority (ERA) took a more targeted approach to arresting the city's blight. The ERA began to assemble properties in neighborhoods such as Center City for the purpose of removing vacant and blighted homes in order to promote a large-scale reconstruction of the neighborhood, including construction of 20 new homes. The ERA also continued work in the historic Little Italy neighborhood by acquiring and rehabilitating existing homes. The ERA also transformed the Mercantile Building in downtown Erie from a boarded-up eyesore into 14 condominiums, office and retail space, and assisted a number of downtown businesses with façade renovations, which dramatically reduced blight on Erie's main thoroughfare, State Street ("Erie Redevelopment Authority," 2016).

The Erie County Housing plan was adopted in October 2008 — with the recommendation to create a Housing Court (or Environmental Court as they're known in some jurisdictions) to facilitate the efficient, effective, and consistent enforcement of housing codes. The Center for Community Progress was created in January 2010 to work with local and state governments "across the country to build systems to prevent, acquire, manage and repurpose those properties that are considered negative influences on a community." Community Progress began work in Erie County in September 2011 by focusing on 3 major areas: 1) market assessment, 2) collecting data from meetings, and 3) how to best address blight in Erie and Erie County (Center for Community Progress, 2012).

The city's Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2015, underscores the urgency in getting the upper hand with Erie's blight problem. Since 1955, cities have obtained new weapons and tactics to use in turning the tide on blight. Repairing a real estate market is a long-term campaign that takes resolve and focus. "Erie needs bold changes to reduce blight, encourage homesteading and preservation, improve our collective finances, and make the city safer block by block" (Austin and Moyer, 2015).

The city of Erie has also been evaluating new legislation from Pennsylvania Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship Law, and the Neighborhood Blight Reclamation and Revitalization Act for implementation in our community. The recommendations also state the need for the City of Erie to go into Land Banking, discussed later in this document, acquiring abandoned property and redeveloping the land.

In 2016, Erie's current leadership added a seventh Code Enforcement officer to combat rental and blighted properties. When a property becomes neglected through the death of the owner, the owner having moved, a neglectful landlord, or another circumstance, a call goes to the Code Enforcement Office where it is investigated. The Code Enforcement Office, after the violation is verified, issues an "Order to Correct Code Violation Notice." The office gives the owner time and then the Code Officer goes back out and reinspects the site, if it is not corrected, a citation is filed with the Magisterial District Judge. The owner has 10 days to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty, and if the owner does not respond a warrant is issued. The issue becomes more involved — a much longer process if the

owner decides to go to court and plead not guilty. The owner and the Code Enforcement Officer both have to go to court and present their case, followed by a ruling from the Magisterial District Judge. If it is not to each side's liking, there are appeals and more time goes by as the property deteriorates. "Obviously, this lengthy process is not effective in addressing blight" (Austin and Moyer, 2015).

An example of work being done by Erie's community groups is that of the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network, which was developed in January 2000 to serve the neighborhoods between 12th to 26th streets from State to Cranberry streets, which includes the Historic Little Italy. The Sisters have made tremendous progress toward this revitalization and empowerment with the creation of neighborhood gardens, the management of a soup kitchen, programs for women and children, a variety of classes, and work with the City, the Redevelopment Authority, and

Photo: Brad Triana

Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS) to address housing and rent concerns. The Sisters have become the go-to source for help and encouragement for the neighborhood ("Sisters of St. Joseph", 2017).
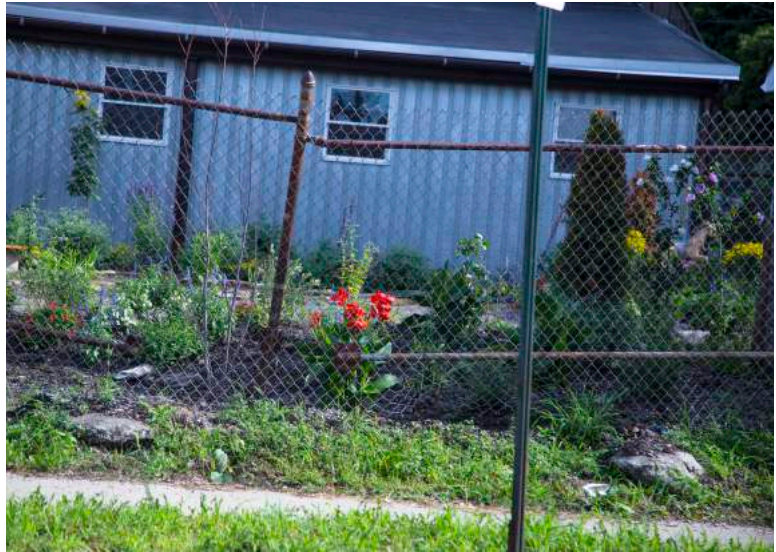
Erie Redevelopment Authority's Adopt-A-Lot program allows people, businesses, or community groups to care for and utilize vacant lots in their neighborhood. Lots might be used for gardening, creating an impromptu pocket park, planting flower beds, or adding picnic tables to the lot. Anyone can adopt a lot, using a form on the ERA website, which also includes a complete list of available lots (Erie Redevelopment Authority, 2016).

Past efforts throughout our city and county show us there is no single solution for tackling the problem of blight. Only through a concentrated effort along multiple fronts, using several tools and programs, will we affect a change and reverse its course. Throughout this document there are a number of new tools discussed, which have proven successful in other cities – adding these tools to Erie's arsenal allows residents and policymakers to choose the best course of action for each property.

Guidance for Tackling Blight for Everyday Citizens

There have been great ideas presented, but how have they been incorporated to make the communities of Erie County more vibrant and safe? Across the country, some communities have implemented a landlord "hall of shame," which advertises the names of (mostly out-of-state) negligent landlords in the local newspaper or televised news. Once a week, pictures and descriptions of abandoned or neglected properties are featured, often prompting other rental property owners to preempt their own notoriety and take action to fix their blighted buildings (Daley, 2016).

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

-MARGARET MEAD

But if a smear campaign isn't your style, consider that many individuals in other communities concerned about blight have started Neighborhood Watch groups to come together and tackle blight on a neighborhood level. A successful example is Houston's Neighborhood Center (Katz and Bradley, 2013), which used a community-generated approach to tackle the problem of assimilation of immigrants into the Houston community. Neighborhood Centers, a nonprofit organization in the Houston metro area, focused on helping crime and poverty-ridden immigrant communities. Each of their centers offers courses in the English language, civics, and the naturalization process. Neighborhood Centers deliver social services that Houston does not and works within

the community to determine what citizens needs to help them comfortably assimilate into the Houston metro area (Katz and Bradley, 2013). This case provides an example of how grassroots community organizing can provide change in struggling communities. Erie can utilize a similar approach where Neighborhood Watch groups can effectively deter crime and ensure safety for the neighborhood by using a community-generated approach. And the simple act of getting to know your neighbors strengthens community bonds and is a safeguard against blight-inducing crime. The local SNOOPS Neighborhood Watch is a very good example of what a strong group of community-minded people can accomplish if everyone works together ("SNOOPS," 2016).

Photo: Brad Triana

You, a private citizen, can monitor, identify, and correct any number of blight risks on your property and in your immediate surroundings. Painting your house and organizing a crew to mow the vacant lot in your neighborhood are some methods. Further, the importance of engaging elected officials cannot be understated. Citizens can always write to the newspaper, make phone calls to their local legislators, and attend city hall meetings to advocate for policy change (*Beyond Blight*, 2013).

Sure, you can slap a coat of paint on your house and organize a crew to mow the vacant lot in your neighborhood. But if you act alone you may forever be chasing peeling paint. Your role in the fight against blight is not just to maintain your property and help your neighbors as you can but to advocate for change within your local government. Think of your local elected officials as partners in the fight against blight. Any tool available to the ordinary citizen goes hand-in-hand with anti-blight policies enacted by your city, county, township, or borough. Local government – not state, and not federal – is where policies and practices are most likely to make real change when it comes to urban, suburban, and rural property blight. Similarly, these policies are only as strong as the willingness of private citizens to take matters into their own hands. You and your elected officials are partners in the fight against blight. Neither of you can solve the problem alone.

"It is better to light one candle, than curse the darkness."

-JAPANESE PROVERB

Policymakers more often than not rely on input by citizens in determining and implementing policy goals. The most effective policy is not made in a vacuum, but shared and percolated until it matures into significant changes brought forth with substantial buy-in. What might begin as a letter, a phone call, speaking at a public meeting, or taking action to raise public awareness can lead to votes, appropriation of public and private funds, creation of new programs and communication patterns, and real transformation. Without policy changes, citizens will find the tools available to them to be limited to the resources and methods already available which, for Erie County citizens, is not enough.

Currently, relatively little money goes to programs, resources, and cohesive information for tackling blight in Erie County. In the City of Erie's 2014 budget, $500 was allotted for plywood/supplies to "repair"

What can you do?

INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTS & NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

-Join a neighborhood or community group and take the lead in eliminating blight in and near you.

-Organize neighborhood cleanups. Create schedules for mowing vacant properties not located next to occupied houses. Initiate efforts to reuse vacant lots in your area.

BUSINESSES INSTITUTIONS, & DEVELOPERS

-Take the lead on blight that is within a half-mile of your location by removing trash, mowing grass, boarding and demolishing vacant properties, and reusing vacant lots.

-Support blight elimination efforts in your area with funding, supplies, and volunteers.

-Remove trash and mow grass on vacant properties

Source: *Beyond Blight*, 2013

damaged buildings and $65,000 allowed for the demolition of blighted properties. This accounts for only 4.1% of the Office of Code Enforcement budget, and 0.05% of the Total City Budget (Winarski, et al., 2013). With a budget of this size, only seven buildings could be demolished, out of 80 declared blighted in 2014 (*Battling Blight*, 2015). In smaller municipalities, there are no code enforcement officers or ordinances for blighted properties; they are relying on the services of the county to help address some of the more significant areas of concern. Wesleyville Borough employs a part-time code enforcement officer, and the entire Code Enforcement budget is only 2.2% of the total borough budget (Borough of Wesleyville, 2015). Across Erie County, it is clear targeting blight is not a high priority budget line item when it comes to municipalities. Most municipalities distribute the vast majority of their funds to police, storm water management, and roads or winter maintenance, leaving little or no funding for other programs.

Therefore citizens have to advocate for the real change necessary for implementing policies, creating programs, raising funds, managing responsibilities, communications, and more. There are a handful of such policies at the state level we might choose to advocate for, but ultimately palpable change will be made at the local level. Our municipalities have the authority to initiate this change. So, what kind of change will help Erie County turn around the problem of blight?

Photo: Brad Triana

Action Steps to Fight Blight: What Local Government Can Do

Policy Recommendations:

End the Tax Cycle: Push to remove blighted properties from the destructive tax sale cycle. Erie County tax sales are for properties with outstanding tax balances that are at least two years delinquent. The sale is held as a public auction, but there are many ways the original, delinquent property owners can retain ownership of the property, destroying any chance the property may be rehabilitated ("The City of Reading," 2016).

Receivership: Municipalities should work with Magisterial District Judges to use receivership (placing property in the custody of an official entity) very selectively, not as a tool broadly applied to force property owners to clean up/fix properties. Receivership works best as a scalpel, not a hammer (Edell & Lee, 2010).

Civic Engagement: Policy makers must put the community and people at the forefront of any anti-blight process. Such a process can't be simply legislated and enacted from an office in City Hall with occasional input from citizens. Rather, the conversation must be ongoing, at public forums, community centers, and at the cozy kitchen table. Encourage conversations about blight among your neighbors, and encourage them to do what you're doing to engage officials (czb, llc, 2016).

Inventory Management: Consider advocating for more aggressive selling of blighted properties that are owned by municipalities or the County. These sales should include restrictions that any new owner MUST upgrade/repair/retrofit the property ("The City of Reading," 2016).

Standardized Points of Contact: Urge your elected officials to develop unified zoning ordinances countywide, and to develop a single online source for citizens to learn about zoning ordinances ("The City of Reading," 2016).

Project Blight Risk Assessment: New projects or developments, whether they are public or private should be given a blight risk score. This can be calculated based on the business type (for example, businesses with historically lower chances of success are given higher risk scores) or the development type (for example, development types which did not previously demonstrate success would be scored higher) (czb, llc, 2016).

Tenant Rights: Encourage your municipality to make information about tenants' rights widely available in print and online ("The City of Reading," 2016).

Funding Recommendations:

Rehabilitation/Remediation: Governments need to develop a dedicated revenue stream for rehabilitation or remediation of blighted properties. This could be a countywide pool of funds managed by municipalities (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

Blight Remediation Trust: Create a trust for blight removal using fees from the property court program (Detroit Blight Plan, n.d.).

Long-Term Capital Bond: Interest rates are at an all-time low, thus, municipalities should consider issuing long-term bonds to combat blight (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

Success Story: Harborcreek Township's Commercial Revitalization

Dean Pepicello is a Harborcreek Township supervisor, who is in his twelfth year of public office. He is currently the Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors.

How did the revitalization of the Harborcreek Mall and Eastway Plaza begin?

The revitalization began approximately in 2010. In 2009, two new supervisors of the Township had development background; Dean Pepicello and Joe Peck. This helped to get the ball rolling on addressing two blighted areas in Harborcreek: Route 5, which is the former Harborcreek Mall along East Lake Road and is mostly residential, and Route 20, which is the Eastway Plaza that is the commercial properties along Buffalo Road. The Harborcreek Township government wanted to redevelop these two areas.

What were some of the obstacles faced with this revitalization?

The two major obstacles to redevelopment were time and money. Property owners of the blighted property were asked (and agreed) to sale the property to Harborcreek Township. This drastically cut the time of acquiring the necessary Harborcreek Mall and Eastway Plaza properties. The Township was able to purchase the properties from Baldwin Brothers for fair market value in 2011.

The redevelopment also required taxpayer investment — a hard sale to any local community. The investment required was approximately $500,000. However, the Township was able to make a return on this investment in only a few years. Before the revitalization, the property was valued at $300,000. Once the Township was able to later resell the property, the property was valued at $2 million.

What was the strategy/vision of the revitalization of Harborcreek Mall and Eastway Plaza?

Harborcreek Township supervisors have the power of zoning. To regenerate an area, they can rezone the property for new uses. For the Harborcreek Plaza, it was rezoned for senior housing. The Eastway Plaza was rezoned to expand commercial property on Buffalo Road. The power of zoning the Township supervisors possessed helped to renew these properties into successful entities.

Source: Dean Pepicello, personal communication, January 2017.

Program Recommendations:

Issue Tracking: Does your township, borough, or city have an online (and mobile friendly) blight reporting tool? If so, continue to develop its use! If not, it should implement one. ("Blight Status, n.d.).

Training: Local governments should have a program for all new municipal employees and elected officials to be trained on blight and the best ways to fight it. Certification – and recertification every 2 or 3 years – may be the best way for policymakers to stay abreast of blight-fighting progress, recommendations, and best practices (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

Homeowner assistance: See the list of resources at the end of this guide to learn if your community has affordable home repair funds available for lower-income homeowners, and whether foreclosure prevention assistance — including counseling and emergency financial assistance – is available for homeowners (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

Countywide Land Bank: A government-controlled land bank can manage an inventory of surplus properties. A county-run land bank would be more feasible than individual land banks, which may not have enough properties to sustain their own land bank. Municipalities, however, must have a strong voice in the administration of a countywide land bank (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

Shared Database: The County should host a geographic information system (GIS) database of blighted properties and actions taken. Such a database would capture, store, and allow manipulation and analysis of geographical data. Centralized, complete information would be available to municipalities, neighborhood organizations, and academic programs, and possibly be accessible to citizens, as well (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

Landlord Incentives: See the list of resources at the end of this guide to learn if your city, borough, or township offers financial or tax incentives to landlords seeking to maintain and upgrade their properties, and whether it also offers training or technical assistance programs for landlords (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

Property Court: A special court must be enacted to standardize the process, with the goal not of incarcerating or penalizing offending property owners, but using a variety of support services and assistance to ensure owners are held accountable and blighted properties are addressed in a timely manner (Katz and Bradley, 2013).

⦿ Five Strategies for Fighting Blight

Fighting blight requires a multifaceted approach to generate successful outcomes. Based on the research completed by the team assembled for this class, the following five strategies have been identified to reduce blight.

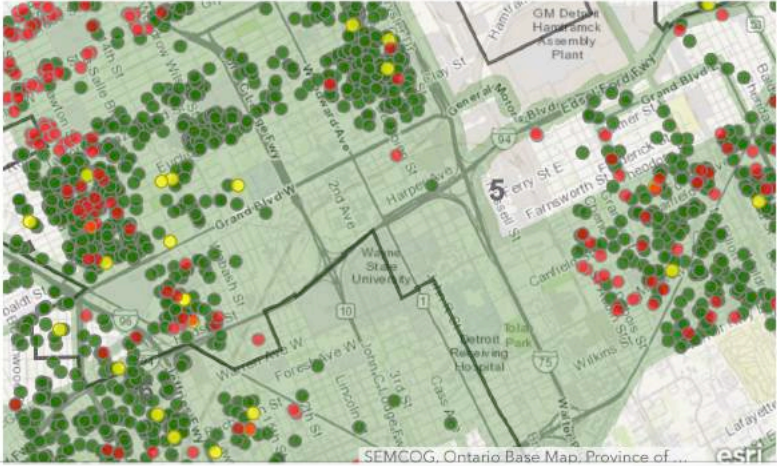### Interactive Map to Identify Blight and Track Outcomes

Several cities across the United States have implemented interactive maps tracking blighted properties and in some cases, providing real-time updates as to what is being done to address the blight. Some examples are:

DETROIT

Although the focus has been on demolishing homes, the tracking program developed in Detroit shows the progress of demolitions and has been implemented with full transparency – showing the cost, frequency, and plan for completion of demolitions.

Detroit runs the largest and most transparent demolition program in the country.

Search the new Detroit Demolition Tracker to find the status of upcoming demolitions around your house.

Number of demolitions
10,706
*Includes all demolitions for which the City has the date that the structure was knocked down, the price of the demo, and the contractor since 2014.

Number of upcoming contracted demolitions
189

Number of Structures in the Demolition Pipeline
2,529

Number of demolitions in 2016
3,136

Average price for residential demolition in 2016
$12,619

Link: http://www.detroitmi.gov/demolition

NEW ORLEANS

The City of New Orleans has launched a web application called BlightStatus in which you can look up a property and see actions taken to remedy blight. BlightStatus provides citizens and local officials with real time updates as to the status of blight cases and connects with other enterprise systems to streamline the enforcement process.

Link: http://blightstatus.nola.gov
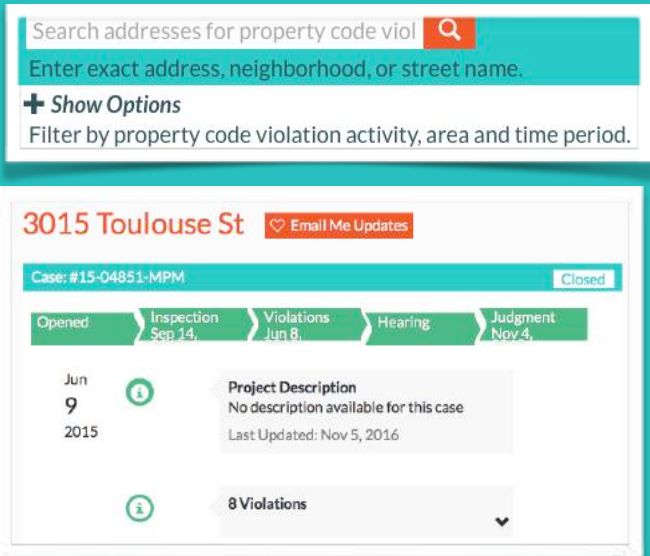
HOUSTON

Blight tracker in the City of Houston provides residents with the ability to search open code enforcement violations within the city. Website visitors can see violations recorded, actions taken to remedy the situation, and the current status of the violation.

Link: http://mycity.houstontx.gov/nuisancetracker/

Educate Population on Blight and Its Causes

There is a clear need to provide information regarding the causes of blight, the solutions identified, and relevant benchmarks for success. For example, the city of Flint launched a comprehensive blight strategy with a 152-page manual, but also used a graphic-laden brochure that discussed the strategy in simple terms. This manual briefly addressed "What YOU can do to eliminate blight in Flint" aimed at five areas: residents, community groups, institutions, businesses and developers, and local government ("City of Flint, Michigan", 2016).

Identify Groups to Manage Blight Effort

* Detroit developed a Detroit Blight Removal Task Force with a specific plan providing information in the form of questions and answers ("Detroit Blight Plan," n.d.).

* City of Memphis created a steering committee to help develop a charter for its blight strategy, but then approved the creation of a Blight Elimination Coordinating Team (Sells, 2016).

* New Orleans hosts monthly BlightStat meetings, in which city departments and redevelopment authority agencies update the public on projects related to blight ("City of New Orleans," n.d.).

Create a Volunteer Program

* Phoenix created the Blight Buster Volunteer Program — a formal program complete with training to help encourage volunteers to help combat graffiti, provide tool lending services, and identify sites for community cleanup projects ("City of Phoenix," n.d.).

* Detroit has an organization called Motor City Blight Busters, which features more than 10,000 volunteers annually to help paint/renovate/repair/built housing for Detroit's population ("Motor City Blight Busters", n.d.).

Lot Maintenance Strategy

Numerous cities and groups are creating ways to keep lots clean in hopes of helping to stop the spread of blight. Creative municipalities and grassroots groups have developed programs to ensure maintenance is a key component in their efforts to fight blight before it occurs.

* The City of New Orleans has a Fight the Blight Strategy which contains a Lot Maintenance Plus program – the city proactively finds sites with overgrown grass, mows them, then bills the owner's tax bill ("NOLA for Life," 2017).

* Genesee County in Michigan has a Land Bank that operates the Clean & Green program – in which community groups seasonally maintain clusters of vacant lots – 25 lots every 3 weeks – and receives a stipend to help support the work ("Genesee County Landbank," n.d.).

A Brighter Future without Blight

Blight is pervasive in our county, as in many cities and regions across the country. Earlier we discussed how blight can be insidious, having a domino effect on a neighborhood until a once well-kept and inviting area is dangerous, unsightly, and detrimental to property values and the quality of life in general.

With a concerted effort on the part of individuals, community groups, anti-blight advocates, and elected officials, we can begin to mitigate blight. Recall what you read earlier in this document regarding the social, psychological and environmental impacts of blight, as well as the economic and aesthetic effects that you may be confronted with on a daily basis.

As the numbers of blighted properties in an area decreases, we can expect criminal activity to decrease as well. As crime diminishes, the neighborhood may experience a positive psychological shift in crime perception. Residents will feel safer and happier in neighborhoods with improved property upkeep rates, and they will likely "stay put," further strengthening the neighborhood's fight against blight. Residents of well-kept, clean and safe (that is, walkable!) neighborhoods are also less likely to suffer from medical conditions caused by a sedentary lifestyle or from vacant, neglected industrial properties. Dealing with blight will decrease the risk of fire, illness, and other public health & safety concerns. And of course, well-maintained properties help to stabilize and even bolster the values of surrounding buildings and lots, also increasing tax revenues, thus making them available for social and safety programs, schools, and a booming neighborhood economy. Businesses will be more likely to move into the area because they can find qualified employees and a robust patron base. We can, in short, expect an improvement in the overall quality of life for those of us who live, work, and play in Erie County.

ECCL 2016 Class Bio

Breanna Adams
Erie County Dept. of Health
Environmental Protection
Specialist
BreannaAdamsErie@gmail.com

Niken Astari
AAUW Erie Branch
Member
np_astari@yahoo.com
814-384-5338

Jay Breneman
Erie County Council
Chairman
email@jaybreneman.org
814-580-8683

Michelle Butler
GE Transportation
EHS Growth & Sustainability
Leader
mbutler73@hotmail.com

Brian Dorio
Erie Insurance
IT Program Manager
brian.dorio@erieinsurance.com

Ferki Ferati
Jefferson Educational Society
Vice President/Executive Director
ferati@jeserie.org
814-459-8000

Varun Gupta
Penn State Behrend
Asst. Prof. of Operations & SCM
vxg15@psu.edu
814-898-6266

James Heubel
Cumulus Media
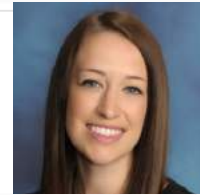General Sales Manager
jamesheubel@gmail.com
814-873-8574

Khadija Horton
Erie County Public Defender's Office
Attorney
khorton@eriecountypa.gov

Amanda Iadeluca
County of Erie
Employee Resource Manager
aiadeluca@eriecountypa.gov

Alison Kaminski
GE Transportation
Black Belt Sourcing Initiatives
ark178@hotmail.com

Andrew Kerr
Erie City Mission - Chaplain
Andy Kerr Coaching
andy@andykerrcoaching.com
814-440-7782

Andrew Kochirka
Erie Times-News/Cyberlink
Graphic Designer/Writer
akochirka@gmail.com

ECCL 2016 Class Bio

Halle Kostansek
WQLN Public Media
Communications Specialist
halle@wqln.org
814-572-3656

Ashley Lawson
Gannon University
Honors Program Coordinator
nike.rising@gmail.com
814-871-5749

Mac Lewis
Cork 1794 Restaurant
General Manager
mac.lewis@cork1794.com
814-397-2209

Tom Maggio
ECGRA
Grants Manager
tom.maggio620@gmail.com
814-566-1300

Tiffany L. McCloud
HER POWER, Inc.
Founder & CEO
herpowerceo@gmail.com
814-873-2846

Tiffanie Page-Collazo
Erie City Mission - Director of
Strategic Dev't & Grants

Ryan Palm
Mercyhurst University
Associate VP for Advancement
ryan.palm@gmail.com

Paul Smola
Graco High Pressure
Equipment, Inc.
Accounting Manager
paul@highpressure.com

Tiffany Thomas, RN
First Unitarian Universalist
Church Girard - Community
Worker
tiffanymariethomas@gmail.com

Bradley Triana
BOTH Studios
Woodworker/Maker
brad@bothstudios.com
814-882-0182

Maureen Walls
Erie School District
Secretary
wall13mark@yahoo.com
814-899-0136

Matthew Wiertel
Velocity Network
Director of Sales & Marketing

Perry Wood
ECGRA
Executive Director
pwood@ecgra.org
814-897-2690

References

Aalbers, M. (2006). 'When the Banks Withdraw, Slum Landlords Take Over': The structuration of neighborhood decline through redlining, drug dealing, speculation and immigrant exploitation. *Urban Studies*, 43(7), 1061-1086.

Austin, L., & Moyer, S. (2015, October 14). Considering the city: fight blight! *The Erie Reader*. Retreived from http://www.eriereader.com/article/considering-the-city-fight-blight

Battling blight: 80 properties declared blighted in Erie. (2015, July 9). *Erie News Now*. Retrieved from http://www.erienewsnow.com/story/29514263/battling-blight-80-properties-declared-blighted-in-erie)

Beyond blight: City of Flint five year blight elimination summary [Pamphlet]. (2013) Flint, MI: Imagine Flint.

Blight Status. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://blightstatus.nola.gov/

Borough of Wesleyville Approved 2017 Budget General Fund. (2016). Retrieved from http://wesleyvilleborough.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/General-Fund.pdf

Center for Community Progress. (2012). *Strategic Assessment of Blight in Erie County, Pa*. Erie, PA. The Erie Community Foundation

City of Flint Michigan. (2016). *City of Flint adopts beyond blight comprehensive blight elimination framework, offering model for other cities*. Retrieved from https://www.cityofflint.com/2015/03/12/city-of-flint-adopts-beyond-blight-comprehensive-blight-elimination-framework-offering-model-for-other-citie/

City of New Orleans. (n.d.). BlightSTAT. Retrieved from http://www.nola.gov/performance-and-accountability/reports/blightstat/

City of Phoenix. (n.d.). *Neighborhood Services Blight Buster Volunteer Program*. Retrieved from https://www.phoenix.gov/nsd/programs/blight

CZB, llc. (2016). *Erie Refocused: Comprehensive plan and community decision making guide* (Rep.). Erie, PA: City of Erie.

Daley, D. (2016, June 5). *Lecture on Policy and Blight in Harrisburg*. Erie County Civic Leadership Academy, Jefferson Educational Society, Harrisburg PA.

Davis, T. S. (2002). Brownfields: A comprehensive guide to redeveloping contaminated property. Chicago, IL: Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources, American Bar Association.

Detroit Blight Plan Removal Task Force. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://report.timetoendblight.org/

Edell, C., Lee. K (2010, July). Receivership: *A coordinated strategy to stabilize troubled properties* (No. 2010-03). Boston MA. Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

Erie County, Pennsylvania. (n.d.). *Demographics*. Retrieved from http://www.eriecountypa.gov/county-services/health-department/statistics/demographics.aspx

Erie Redevelopment Authority (2016). *ERA Initiatives*. Retrieved from http://www.redeveloperie.org/era_initiatives/

Genesee County Landbank. (n.d.). *Clean & Green* Retrieved from http://www.thelandbank.org/clean_green_prog.asp

Groh, J. (2016, August 18). *Analyzing Erie County's Urban Core-History, Challenges, Future*. Erie County Civic Leadership Academy, Jefferson Educational Society. Millcreek PA.

Hur, M., & Nasar, J. L. (2014). Physical upkeep, perceived upkeep, fear of crime and neighborhood satisfaction. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 38, 186-194.

Is Erie a Safe City? Perception, reality, recommendations. (n.d.). *The Jefferson Essays*.

Katz, B., & Bradley, J. (2013). *The Metropolitan Revolution: How cities and metros are fixing our broken politics and fragile economy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Keep America Beautiful (n.d.). *What we do?* Retrieved from https://www.kab.org/about-us/what-we-do

Kelling, G. L., & Wilson, J. Q. (1982, March). Broken windows: The police and neighborhood safety. *Atlantic Monthly*, 249(3), 29-38

Knight, A., Cheng, Z., Grewal, S. S., Islam, K. R., Kleinhenz, M. D., & Grewal, P. S. (2013). Soil health as a predictor of lettuce productivity and quality: A case study of urban vacant lots. *Urban Ecosystems*,16(3), 637-656.

Kochtitzky, C. S., Frumkin, H., Rodriguez, R., Dannenberg, A. L., Rayman, J., Rose, K., Gillig, R., Kanter, T. (2006, December 22). *Urban planning and public health*. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su5502a12.htm

Litt, J. S., Tran, N. L., & Burke, T. A. (2001). Examining urban brownfields through the public health "macroscope" *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 110(S2), 183-193.

Madrigal, A.C.,(2014, May 22). The racist housing policy that made your neighborhood. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/05/the-racist-housing-policy-that-made-your-neighborhood/371439/

Massey, D., & Denton, N. (1988). Suburbanization and segregation in U.S. metropolitan areas. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(3), 592-626. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2780255

Motor City Blight Busters. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/MotorCityBlightBusters

Mow to own Program. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/real-estate/mow-to-own-program.cfm

NOLA for Life. (2017). *Fight the Blight.* Retrieved from http://nolaforlife.org/strategy/initiatives/get-involved-rebuild-neighborhoods/fight-the-blight/

Our West Bayfront. (2016). *Our West Bayfront Community Plan.* Erie, PA. City Architecture Urban Partners.

Robinson, D. (2016, September 29).*Learning about East Erie County*. Erie County Civic Leadership Academy, Jefferson Educational Society, Union City PA.

Sells, T. (2016, March 21) Memphis has a new 17 page blueprint to eliminate blight. *Next City.* Retrieved from https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/memphis-neighborhood-preservation-charter

Sisters of St. Joseph. (2017). *Tutoring.* Retrieved from http://www.ssjnn.org/ministries/activities- for-children/tutoring/

SNOOPS. (2016) *About*. Retrieved from http://www.snoopserie.org/about/

The City of Reading. (2016) *Blighted Property Review Process* [Power Point Slides]. Retrieved from http://www.readingpa.gov/content/blighted-property

Wayne State University. (n.d.). *Detroit Revitalization Fellow*. Retrieved from http://detroitfellows.wayne.edu/

Wellejus, E. T. (2004). *Historic Erie County: an illustrated history*. San Antonio, TX: Historical Pub. Network.

Winarski , J., Brennan, D., Evans, J., Horan-Kunco, J., Jones, C., Jr., Merski, R., & Witherspoon, M. (2013, November). *Final Budget 2014*. Retrieved from http://www.erie.pa.us/Portals/0/Content/Finance/reporting/budget/2014%20General%20Fund%20Final%20Budget.pdf