Vacant to Vibrant:

A guide for revitalizing vacant lots in your neighborhood

Greening Vacant Lots for Pittsburgh's Sustainable Neighborhood Revitalization

A Systems Synthesis Project
Fall 2006

Carnegie Mellon
Policy • Management • Information Technology
Heinz School

Vacant to Vibrant ~

A GUIDE FOR REVITALIZING VACANT LOTS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Greening Vacant Lots for Pittsburgh's Sustainable Neighborhood Revitalization
Fall 2006 Systems Synthesis Project

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Preface

Vacant lots are an underutilized resource in the City of Pittsburgh. Despite tireless efforts from the Mayor's office, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, community development corporations, environmental groups and dedicated community members around the city; more than 14,000 lots were vacant in 2005. With the consent of the Mayor's office, a team of graduate students from the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University gathered information from city officials, community groups and non-profit organizations around Pittsburgh to better understand the full consequences of vacant lots. The hope was to develop suggestions for other methods to stop the neighborhood deterioration caused by vacant lots.

After several months of unbiased and objective research, *Vacant to Vibrant: A Guide for Revitalizing Vacant Lots in Your Neighborhood* was produced. *Vacant to Vibrant* can be used by individuals, groups and neighborhood associations who wish to eliminate vacant lots in their community by using green strategies

Community organizations all over Pittsburgh can describe to you the intangible values of green projects – they increase pride, add beauty to the area, encourage cooperation among neighbors – in essence they bring joy into the lives of people around them. One community garden has the potential to encourage other beautification projects and deter criminal activity.

We recognize that it is not ideal to turn all vacant lots in Pittsburgh into green spaces. Some areas would benefit more by developing the vacant lot into a permanent structure such as a home or business. However, imagine the prospects of recycling at least a small percentage of the vacant lots in Pittsburgh. With your help and the help of others like you around the city, we are closer than ever to achieving a greener Pittsburgh. We thank you for taking the initiative to look into the possibility of reclaiming a vacant lot for the betterment of our community.

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Vacant Lots are parcels of land completely void of any structures. These parcels result from absentee landlords and tax lien accumulation. These lots are either unkempt or maintained by municipal authorities.

Green Strategies are environmentally-friendly land management methods that improve quality of life, enhance neighborhood interactions, increase recreational opportunities, and stimulate local economies. Examples of projects that use green strategies are community gardens, parks, urban farms, and greenways.

How can *Vacant to Vibrant* be used?

The suggested steps outlined in this guide are intended to assist you through the process of acquiring ownership of vacant lots, or temporarily leasing them from the City of Pittsburgh. Individuals interested in greening vacant lots must first consider five areas of land management before actually beginning a green project. Chapter 1 addresses the five areas of land management which are:

1) Due Diligence
2) Evaluate your lot
3) Resource assessment
4) Assess ownership options and
5) City leasing options and the Side Yard Sale Program

Once the five areas have been addressed, you are ready to begin one of the green strategies described in Chapter 2. Various projects suitable for urban vacant lots as well as different types of vacant lots are described in detail. For the purposes of this handbook, a vacant lot is defined as a piece of land without any sort of structure or building. Vacant lots in the City of Pittsburgh range in size from 26 square feet to 634 acres .

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CHAPTER 1

First Things First: Finding out the Facts

FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER

There are five important steps you must go through before you can reclaim and revitalize your lot. Making sure you have thought through the steps and information outlined over the next few pages will help ensure the successful green rebirth of your parcel. Take a few minutes to read through the next pages and formulate a plan of attack.

Due Diligence

Due diligence is a term used for a number of concepts involving an investigation of a business or person. It can be a legal obligation, but the term will more commonly apply to voluntary investigations. In particular, due diligence is a process through which a potential buyer evaluates a target company or item for acquisition or purchase.

As it directly applies to vacant land management, due diligence essentially means doing your homework. It involves amassing a comprehensive body of knowledge that includes everything you need to know about the lot itself from physical properties to history and back taxes (or liens), to what the potential strategies are for your lot. Due diligence also includes taking stock of the resources you have, knowing how many other resources it will take, and where you could potentially look for help.

Due diligence is a process, or a guide that walks you through all of the necessary steps to efficiently get comprehensive information down on paper right up front, before you spend money and other resources in the land acquisition and reclamation process.

Step One: Know your lot

The first step in the due diligence process is understanding the current 'status' of your lot. This includes current ownership, number and amount of liens against the property, identifying the lien holders, and learning the history of the piece of lot.

A. Ownership

Who owns the lot that you want to green? There are many possibilities and each one will lend itself towards a different greening strategy. Potential ownership possibilities are:

- Individual, tax delinquent
- Individual, not tax delinquent
- Individual, multiple lien holders
- Individual, deceased
- Individual, cannot be located
- City
- Held in Land Bank for a Community Group

There are many questions associated with ownership that must be answered. The first place to start is the county website at **www2.county.allegheny.pa.us/RealEstate/**. You will need: the street name, 'lot block' number, and zip code (i.e., 123 North Ave, 15219) to look up the parcel in the city database.

This database will tell you, most importantly, the current owner, and the tax liens for the last five years. If the city system cannot locate your particular parcel, then local real estate offices, or the Allegheny County Recorder of Deeds office are the next places to look.

When finding out information about the ownership of the parcel you are interested in, it is important to be as thorough as possible and uncover as much information as possible. This will save time and resources down the road. Once you enter into the acquisition process (if you choose to do so); if your due diligence has not been complete, it can send the process back several steps and extend the timeline up to six months. Several questions to ask about the owner and are:

- Do they have a free and clear title?
- Is there one owner or two or more?
- Is it tax delinquent or up to date?
- Is the current owner local, an out-of-towner, or deceased?
- Does the current owner have multiple properties?
- Are they willing to sell?
- Are you interested in owning or just seeing the lot rehabilitated?
- Are you able to buy?

B. Liens

Outstanding back taxes or liens against the parcel will also surface during the ownership/title search. These can be anywhere from one hundred to tens of thousands of dollars. It is critical to get the entire picture up front, as every lien holder must be contacted in the acquisition process. The questions to ask are:

- Are there liens against it?
- How many liens are there and what is the total dollar amount?
- What kind of liens are they: mortgage default or property tax?
- How many people own interest (lien holders) in the property?

C. History

The last piece of 'knowing your lot' is uncovering its history as far back as you can. This includes talking to the surrounding neighbors, the Department of City Planning's Zoning Office, and the Bureau of Building Inspection to determine what has happened on your parcel both recently and historically. The questions to ask are:

- What has happened there recently?
- What structures were on the lot before?
- When and how were they demolished?
- What structures could still be under the ground (i.e., foundation or basement)
- How many owners have there been in the past?

Resources:

The County Database in the County Treasurer's Office records information regarding county liens, but not municipal or city liens. For information on city property tax liens, visit the City of Pittsburgh Department of Finance website. Click on the link for the tax delinquency report.

Yet another source to uncover information on liens is the County Prothonotary website. There you will find data on existing municipal liens, such as mortgage foreclosures on a property, or property tax liens.

County Treasurer's Office: www.county.allegheny.pa.us/treasure

City of Pittsburgh Department of Finance: www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/finance

County Prothonotary: www.county.allegheny.pa.us/protho

Title Search:

A full title search may result in discovering the following types of liens:

- Water and Sewer Liens
- Demolition liens
- Utility liens
- State liens
- Federal liens
- IRS liens

Step Two: Evaluate Strategies

The answers to sections A, B, and C will help determine which strategies you can implement on your lot. Other things to consider are:

a. Do you want to buy the lot?
b. How much time do you have to give to the process and how long do you plan on owning your current house?
c. If there is significant debris below the soil, what does that mean for your plan?

Step Three: Cost Overview

There are several levels of costs associated with land acquisition. They are:

- Performing a title search
- Requesting that the parcel be put through the city land sale process, referred to as a Treasurer's Sale
- Purchasing the property from the City or another source
- Converting the parcel to what you've determined as its future use
- Maintenance costs to keep up the parcel

There is no standard for costs associated with each lot. It all depends on size, location, condition, and the strategy you are interested in implementing on your lot. Go through the above list and find these costs ahead of time, so you have a comprehensive picture of how much money you will need before you start the process and to see it through to the finish. You will save both the City and yourself time and money in the long run by knowing what's ahead from the start.

Evaluate Your Lot

Once you have completed due diligence on the lot, you are ready to begin the evaluation process. In other words, what are the physical characteristics unique to your lot? Plan to spend about an hour evaluating the lot. For the evaluation, it will be helpful to bring something to take notes on, gardening or work gloves, and a digging tool. Focus on the following major areas when conducting the evaluation:

Size

The size of the lot will determine what type of green strategy you can implement. Estimate the size of the lot and take notes on the general shape.

Is the lot rectangular, square, or irregular?

Litter/Illegal Dump Sites

How much litter, if any, is present? Inventory as many of the discarded items as possible.

Does illegal dumping occur on the lot?

- Check the Resource Directory at the end of this guide for contact information for organizations that can assist with litter and illegal dump removal, including abandoned cars and appliances.

Sunlight

If you plan to grow plants on the vacant lot, you will need to know how much sunlight reaches the soil.

How much sunlight does the lot receive throughout the day?

What is the location of the lot? Is it on a corner or is it between buildings?

What is the orientation of the lot; North, South, East, or West?

The location and orientation of the lot will determine the types of plants that can be successfully grown. If the lot is between two buildings and faces North, the lot receives direct sunlight for only a few hours per day.

Are trees growing on the land? If yes, how much shade do they provide?

- Presence of shade trees will determine the types of plants that can be successfully grown. Too many shade trees will prevent the plants below from receiving adequate sunlight.

Water

Is water accessible?

- If it isn't, you can request that the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority install a water meter on your lot.

Is rain collection possible?

Soil condition

The condition of the soil is very important if you plan to grow fruits and vegetables or large quantities of plants. Some soil types, such as those full of rocks, will demand more work on your part to get plants to grow.

Is there a foundation from a demolished home on the lot?

- You can check this by digging a hole. If a foundation is present, you will hit it after digging a foot or two of soil.

What is the condition of the soil? Is it full of rubble?

Are plants thriving on the lot?

- If nothing is growing on the lot, it could be an indication of poor soil quality.

If trees or other plants are growing on the lot, how healthy do they appear?

Are invasive species present?

- Invasive plants are difficult to completely wipe out. Removal of invasive plants is necessary before beginning other projects such as gardens or farms.

What types of contaminants are present in the soil? What are the levels of contamination?

- **Many vacant lots in Pittsburgh may have harmful contaminants**. Before starting any green project on the lot, it is important to consider this issue particularly if you intend to plant edible crops. You may need

Invasive Species:

Definition: Any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of spreading that does not naturally occur in a specific area and whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Types of Invasive Species found in Southwestern Pennsylvania:

Herbs:
Burdock
Canada Thistle
Crown Vetch
Garlic Mustard
Japanese Knotweed
Purple Loosestrife

Shrubs:
Bush Honeysuckle
Japanese Barberry
Jetbead
Multiflora Rose
Privet

Vines:
English Ivy
Japanese Honeysuckle
Mile-A-Minute
Oriental Bittersweet
Porcelainberry

Trees:
Norway Maple
Tree of Heaven

Common Soil Contaminants

Heavy Metals and Trace Elements:
Acetone
Aldrin/Dieldrin
Arsenic
Barium
Benzene
2-Butanone
Cadmium
Carbon Tetrachloride
Chlordane
Chloroform
Chromium
Cyanide
DDT, DDE, DDD
1,1-Dichloroethene
1,2-Dichloroethane
Lead
Mercury
Methylene Chloride
Naphthalene
Nickel
Pentachlorophenol
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)
Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)
Tetrachloroethylene
Toluene
Trichloroethylene
Vinyl Chloride
Xylene: Pending
Zinc

to remediate, or rid the soil of the contaminants, especially if young people will be involved and in contact with the soil.

- Please check the Resource Directory for contact information on organizations that conduct soil testing. Soil tests range in price from $25 to more than $100.

Slope
What is the slope of the lot?

- Flat parcels of land may seem ideal; however, lots with variances in slope collect more water. This is useful if you plan to grow plants that require more water.

If you are considering composting, is there an area to reserve for that purpose?

Resource Assessment

Once you have evaluated the lot, you will be better able to take stock of several types of resources. Know what you have and what you need. Resources that are important are money, physical tools, time and people. Be realistic when taking stock of your personal resources, both financial and physical. Start-up funds are important, but future costs are also important to consider. Do you have the resources, or will you have them by the time necessary?

There are many organizations in the Pittsburgh area that can help with reclaiming property and the resources associated with it. Find out what resources exist within your community, and work to pool all of them together. Is there an existing community development corporation (CDC) in your neighborhood? If so, they have likely gone through this process before and can offer support in the form of both resources and advice. What other organizations are in the area that could offer volunteer time or start-up funds? Look around and think strategically and creatively about all of the options and groups who could help with different kinds of resources.

Check the Resource Directory at the end of this guide for a list of community organizations, CDCs, and non-profit organizations in Pittsburgh.

Ownership/Acquisition Options

Once you have determined that you have the resources, knowledge and desire to move forward with reclaiming your lot, there are two different options ahead of you:

1.) Acquire the lot and become the owner, or free and clear title holder;
2.) Reclaime the lot without ownership or title-holder status.

Acquiring your lot
There are a number of options (illustrated on pages 12-15) in regards to acquiring your parcel. When you are working towards acquisition, you may encounter an obstacle that blocks your ability to purchase the lot, so leasing may be an option for you.

Leasing Options and the Side Yard Sale Program

Garden Waiver Program
The City currently has a Garden Waiver program where you can lease the lot you are trying to acquire for $1/month while you wait for free and clear ownership of the parcel. It is true that this can take up to two years, or that ownership may never be possible; but in the meantime you may use that lot and maintain it in many different ways. These include planting a garden or grass, placing a bench or picnic table on the lot, or using it as a play area for your family. You may not place permanent structures on the lot, in other words, cement pavement for a basketball court, a garage or building.

The Side Yard Sale Program
The City of Pittsburgh's Side Yard Sale program is an asset in the vacant land management process coordinated by the Real Estate Division in the Department of Finance. The Side Yard Sale program provides homeowners the opportunity to purchase vacant parcels that are directly adjacent to the front, rear or side of their property as long as they are current on all financial obligations to the City and have liability insurance. Since 1995, 416 vacant lots have been sold through the program and returned to productive use. The process takes up to 18 months if the City of Pittsburgh owns the property. However, if it is owned by another party, the homeowner must request that the City put the parcel into the City Treasurer's Sale. This can increase the timeframe by up to 9 months. For more information on the Treasurer's Sale, go to page 12.

The City has tried to promote both the Side Yard Sale program and the Garden Waiver program to community groups with limited success, encountering varying levels of interest. Community groups can be proactive by identifying lots in their neighborhood that qualify for the program and approaching the Real Estate Division about acquiring these lots. Please visit their website at:

www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/finance/html/faq-real_estate.html

The Process to Purchase a Vacant Lot

In the City of Pittsburgh, three different types of entities purchase vacant lots: private individuals or groups, community development corporations (CDCs) and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). The following pages illustrate some of the options private individuals or groups might take to acquire land. Ownership is the most important component of redeveloping vacant land. There are important differences in the processes that purchasing entities go through to purchase a vacant lot with free and clear ownership or title (no liens still owed on the property – back taxes for example). However, the first step to purchasing a vacant lot is always doing Property Fact Finding (Due Diligence). Contact he City Real Estate Division in the Department of Finance for further detail on these processes. The following flowcharts represent the possibilities that private individuals and groups might encounter when purchasing vacant land.

Treasurer's Sale

A Treasurer's Sale, or T-Sale, is the primary mechanism used to enforce tax collection, but is also used by the City to recycle property by selling it. Anyone interested in acquiring property that is more than two years tax delinquent can file a request to take properties to a T-Sale. The complete T-Sale process is on pages 14–15

What To Beware of in a Treasurer's Sale

NO ONE SHOULD BID ON ANY PROPERTY WHO HAS NOT HAD THE TITLE EXAMINED BY A TITLE COMPANY OR AN ATTORNEY

This is because the Treasurer's Sale process is only for delinquent city and school real estate taxes and does not clear a property of the following types of liens because owners of these liens are not notified in the Treasurer's Sale:

-Mortgages
-Judgments
-County Taxes and/or liens
-State taxes or liens including: Inheritance, Corporate or Welfare
-Water claims or liens
-ALL other secured claims

Quiet Title Action

Quiet Title Action, also known as the Validation Process, involves the legal processing needed to ensure that properties are sold with a free and clear title. The process, which is performed by the Department of Law, often reveals liens that are higher than the property's market value. The Quiet Title Action process is necessary to make acquiring tax delinquent property cost-effective. A free and clear title is necessary to make permanent alterations to a property.

Capital Assets Research Corporation (CARC)

CARC, a private for-profit corporation, purchased the City's delinquent tax, water and sewer liens in 1996. Consequently, it owns all of these liens from 1998 and before. Additionally, when property owners fail to pay these liens, CARC can foreclose on the property to collect any debt that they own. A disproportionately high number of vacant properties with CARC-owned liens are in neighborhoods with low median incomes. In many cases the value of the liens on a property is greater than the value of the property itself. As a result, it is very difficult to purchase property that has CARC liens attached to it. The City is currently working to resolve this situation.

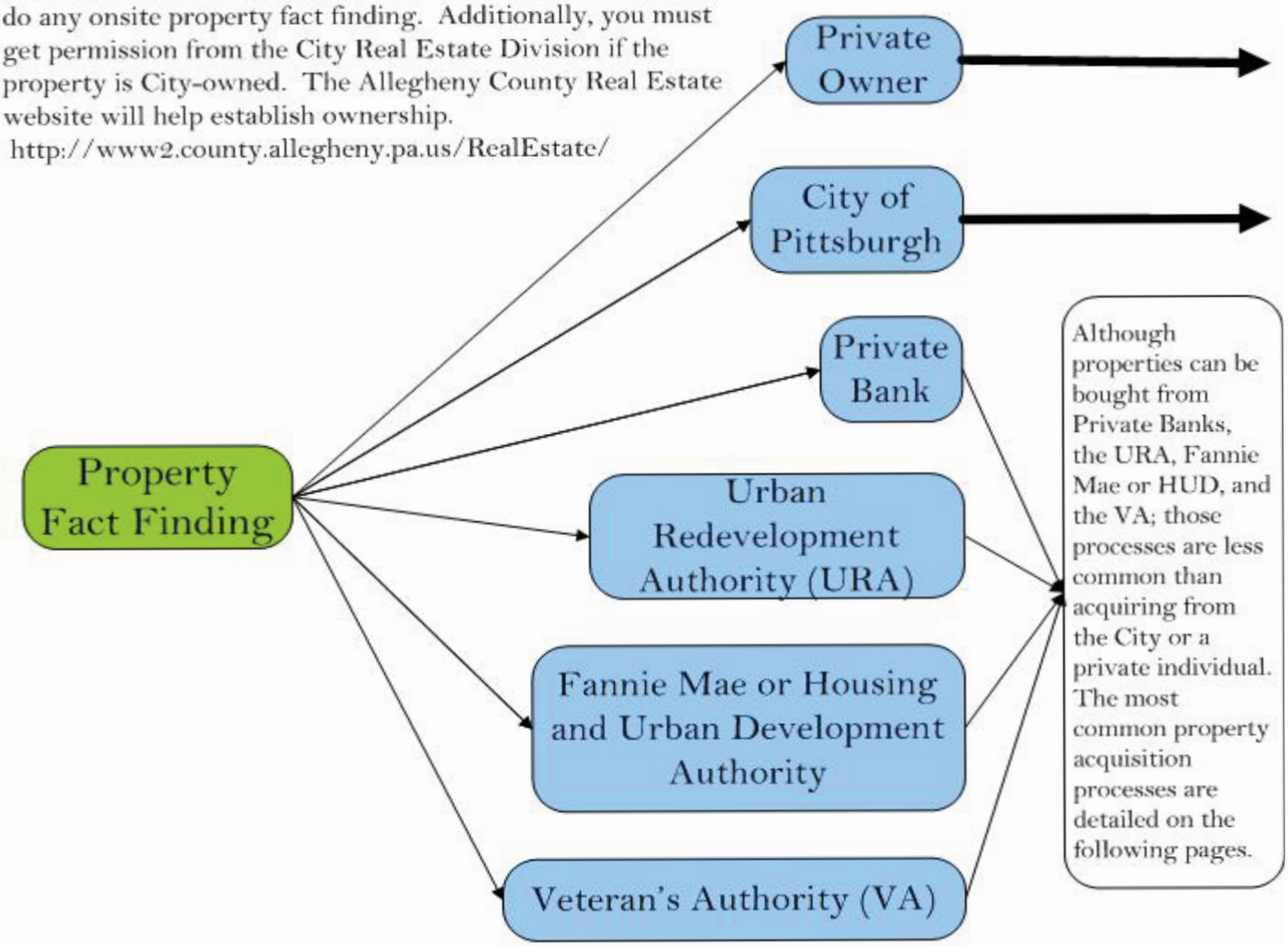
Step 1: Perform Property Fact Finding on the vacant lot you want to convert using a green strategy. Go to the Allegheny County Real Estate website to establish who owns the property.

Step 2: Find the flowchart that matches your situation.

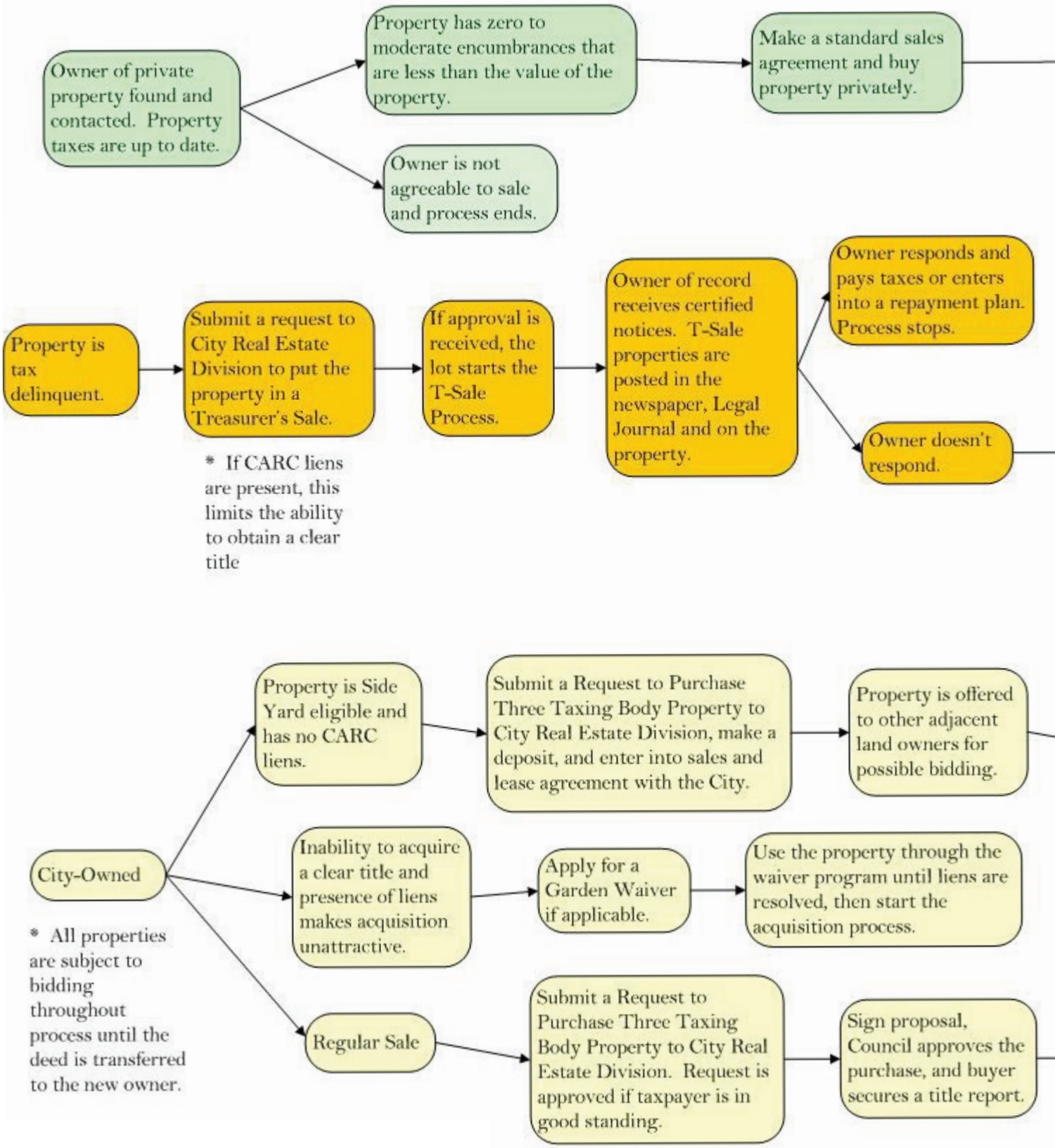
Flow Charts for private individuals and groups on next page.

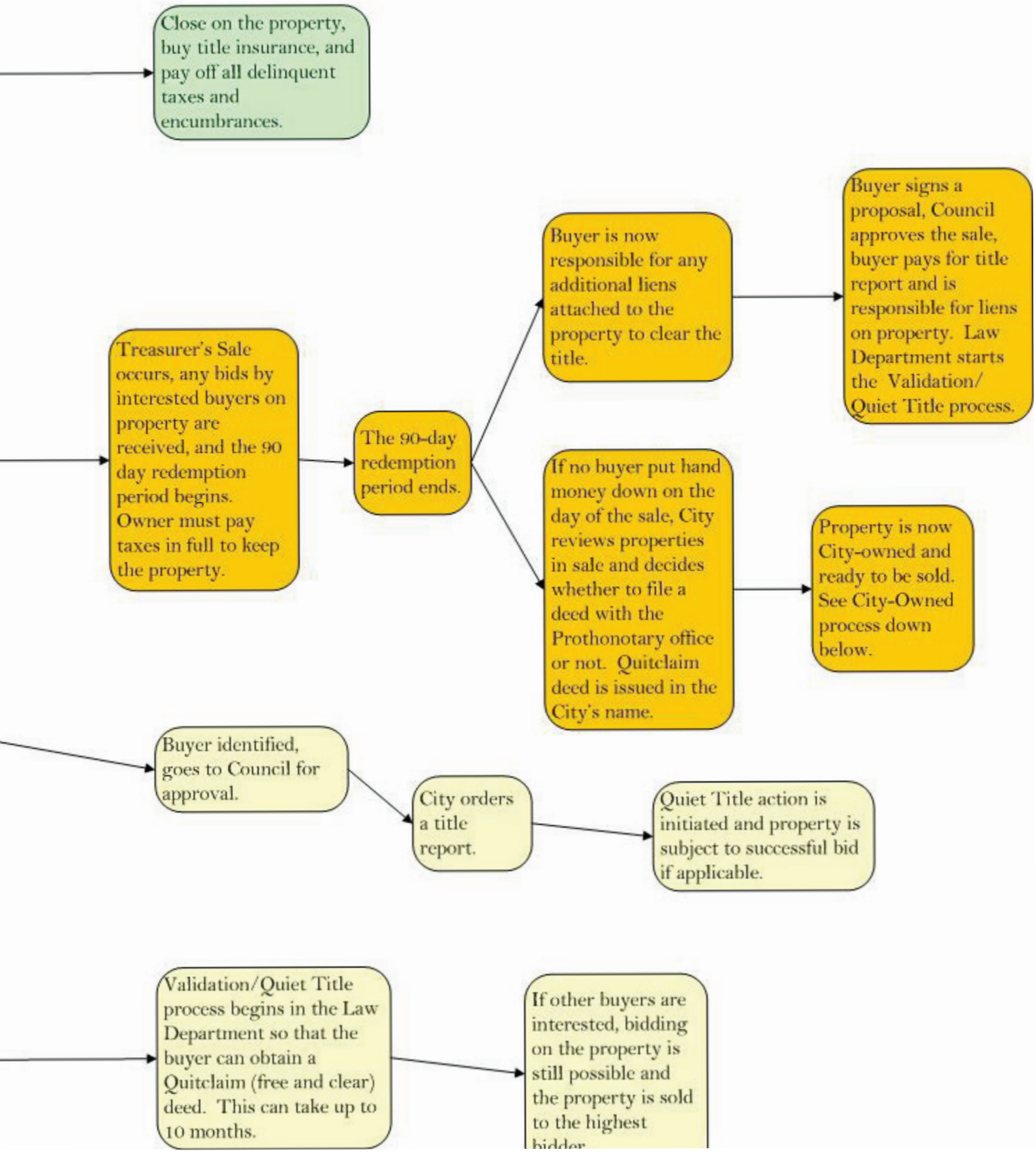
Property Fact Finding (Due Diligence)

Property Fact Finding involves investigating all facets of the lot. This includes ownership, zoning, history, and other characteristics listed in this guide. It is very important to obtain permission from the owner of the property before you do any onsite property fact finding. Additionally, you must get permission from the City Real Estate Division if the property is City-owned. The Allegheny County Real Estate website will help establish ownership.
http://www2.county.allegheny.pa.us/RealEstate/



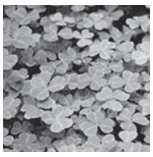
The three most common options for a private individual or group to acquire property




Close on the property, buy title insurance, and pay off all delinquent taxes and encumbrances.
Buyer signs a proposal, Council approves the sale, buyer pays for title report and is responsible for liens on property. Law Department starts the Validation/ Quiet Title process.
Buyer is now responsible for any additional liens attached to the property to clear the title.
Treasurer's Sale occurs, any bids by interested buyers on property are received, and the 90 day redemption period begins. Owner must pay taxes in full to keep the property.
The 90-day redemption period ends.
If no buyer put hand money down on the day of the sale, City reviews properties in sale and decides whether to file a deed with the Prothonotary office or not. Quitclaim deed is issued in the City's name.
Property is now City-owned and ready to be sold. See City-Owned process down below.
Buyer identified, goes to Council for approval.
City orders a title report.
Quiet Title action is initiated and property is subject to successful bid if applicable.
Validation/Quiet Title process begins in the Law Department so that the buyer can obtain a Quitclaim (free and clear) deed. This can take up to 10 months.
If other buyers are interested, bidding on the property is still possible and the property is sold to the highest

CHAPTER 3

Green Strategies



WHAT ARE GREEN STRATEGIES AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Green Strategies are methods of land enrichment that improve quality of life, enhance neighborhood interactions, increase recreational opportunities, and stimulate economic revitalization through smart growth strategies that emphasize environmentally-friendly land management.

Green strategies are important to vacant lot revitalization because:

- They add beauty to the community with green space, and fight urban blight
- They are an environmentally conscious option
- They bring health to the community and its residents

There are two important components to consider when thinking about how utilizing a vacant lot or parcel of land.

1.) After working through the initial steps outlined in Chapter 1, consider how much time you are willing to invest in the green strategy on both start up and maintenance costs.

2.) Additionally, think about how long you envision your green strategy lasting. Both of these factors will affect the type of green strategy you are able to implement. Table 1 illustrates the difference between short-term and long-term green strategies.

Time consideration:

The amount of time necessary to implement a green strategy on a vacant lot is dependant on what your objectives, resources, and skills are. Short-term projects can be expected to demand several hours for initial work such as clearing a site and preparing for disposal of waste and debris; and a minimal amount of time to maintain and clean the lot over time, (roughly 1-2 hours/month depending on the specifics of the site and the desired outcomes).

Table 1. Differences between Short-term and Long-term Green Strategies

	Short-Term	**Long-Term**
Time Commitment:	Less than three years (Temporary)	Three years or more (Permanent)
Characteristics:	• Ownership issues, such as multiple encumbrances (restraints) and excessive liens especially if leasing a lot, or have a waiver for temporary use. • Resource assessment indicates poor soil quality, unhealthy conditions, lack of water access, or unmovable objects. • Community interest is low and few organizations or individuals show interest in forming partnership • Funding and resources are minimal. • Future plans on the lot for permanent use exist, but may be currently delayed.	• Ownership issues and disputes are resolved and/or are close to being resolved. • Community partnerships are established and motivated. • Funding resources are extensive and budgeted for long-term projects. • Knowledge and skills in regard to a specific green strategy exists. • Neighborhood property values are improved with additional green space as either an extension to a greenway, park or other long-term preservation.
Examples:	- Stabilization - Community Gardens - Community Expression	- Green Enterprise - Recreational Sites - Green Infrastructures

Long-term projects ultimately require at least the same amount of time for initial preparation and clean up, but will likely demand more time for sustained maintenance and care, depending upon what specific projects are implemented. Thus long-term projects and strategies should be considered as needing more time and energy over a longer time period.

Permanence of Green Strategy

Every piece of land has unique characteristics that will determine to some extent what types of green strategies can be implemented. It is important to make decisions for use based upon existing conditions. As a result, some strategies and vacant lots are best suited for short-term time periods and low investment of resources. These strategies emphasize clearing debris, disposing of organic (logs, dead leaves, etc.) and inorganic (old tires, plastic bottles, discarded appliances, etc.) waste and maintaining existing resources. Other strategies for vacant lots have an ideal combination of factors which allow community groups to establish long-term, substantial projects maximizing community resources and creativity. In general, the same initial steps taken that are necessary to achieve short-term projects are also the same first steps necessary to achieve long-term projects. This means that starting either type of project is simple, however if you have the time, ability, and resources, it may be worthwhile to plan a long-term strategy.

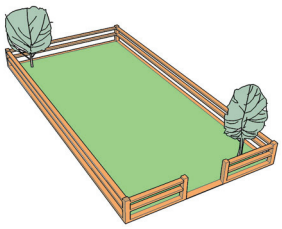
SHORT-TERM GREEN STRATEGIES

Short-term strategies are projects that you expect to last three years or less. These strategies include:

- Stabilization of Vacant Land
- Community Gardens and Parklets
- Community Expression

Stabilization of Vacant Lots

Stabilization is the first step for any green strategy. It is the basic treatment of a vacant lot through cleaning, seeding for grass, and planting trees to correct the blighted condition of that lot.



Examples:

1. Side yards
2. Passive sitting areas

How to Achieve:

1.) Clear and dispose of debris on lot including trash, overgrown vegetation, and any large objects such as abandoned cars or air conditioning units.

2.) Amend and grade the soil for proper slope and drainage. Proper drainage ensures healthier vegetation and prevents excess erosion.

3.) Test soil for toxins and contaminants and prepare the soil for grass cover by applying fertilizer and mulch to the ground.

4.) Plant grass, trees, and flowers to make the lot green and beautiful. Picking the right types of plants that are easy to maintain will make your work over time easier.

5.) Fence the lot using a basic wood fence or low bushes to show that the lot is cared for and to prevent any further dumping.

6.) Maintain the lot's appearance throughout the year – mowing, watering, trimming trees, raking leaves, etc. A maintained lot is a happy lot.

Lot stabilization can be an individual initiative or community effort. Stabilization is often undertaken as an informal volunteer task by community members. However, it is best to work through a community organization since that organization can provide institutional support, visibility, and funding.

Lot stabilization requires little resources other than a desire to improve neighborhood appearance and a commitment of time. Stabilization of a lot can be achieved without ownership. Often neighborhood groups undertake these projects at will, with or without approval from the lots' owners. However, please be aware of the risks associated with this option. For example, owners have the right to stop the project at any time without notice resulting in a total loss of your resources. If a lot is privately owned, an agreement (verbally or in writing) with the owner is the safest option.

If a lot is City-owned, then interested parties can either lease the lot (at a cost of $1 annually) or purchase the lot through the City's Side Yard Sale program. However, the Side Yard Sale program requires ownership of the vacant lot, which requires extensive time commitment and possibly financial resources. The Side Yard Sale program is described in greater detail in Chapter 1. For more information you may also visit their website listed at the bottom of this section on Stabilization.

It is recommended that parties interested in lot stabilization should not attempt to own the lots unless the parties have a specific long-term strategy in mind for that stabilized lot. Lastly, involved parties should check with City regulations about planting lawns.

Positive Impacts:
Improved neighborhood appearance
Deterrence of criminal activities
Increased property values
Healthier ecosystem

General Costs:
Basic stabilization treatment of a lot varies depending on the condition and size of that lot. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society estimates that a treatment that includes basic cleaning, soil preparation, grassing, tree planting, and fencing can cost about $1,500. Local estimates based on research and various lot stabilization programs puts the range between $1,500 and $2,000.

Cleaning lot = $0-$200
Soil testing = $5-$15 per test, per element
Soil grading = $300-700/lot (.25 acre)
Tree/flower planting = $100-$500
Fencing = $20-$30 per 10 feet

There is also an annual maintenance cost of $200, which is roughly what Pittsburgh community groups spend on maintaining a lot. These costs can be avoided through recruiting volunteer activities, soliciting donations, or forming partnerships with organizations like the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

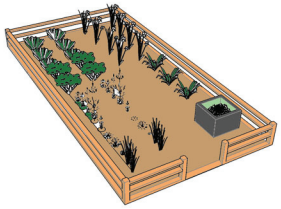
Resources:

Organization	Services	Website
City of Pittsburgh, Department of Public Works	Refuse and recycling pickup	www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/pw/html/recycling.html
City of Pittsburgh Department of Finance, Real Estate Division	Vacant lot acquisition for Side Yards	www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/finance/assets/sideyard_sale_program.pdf
PA CleanWays of Allegheny County, Inc	Cleaning vacant lots	www.pacleanways.org/allegheny
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia Green	Lot stabilization costs	www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org
Operation Brightside (Project Blitz), St. Louis, Missouri	Cleaning of vacant lots	http://stlouis.missouri.org/501c/brightside/

Community Gardens/Parklets

Community gardens are a great way to improve a vacant lot as well as provide a place for your community or neighborhood to grow together. Gardens require a lot of manpower and hours of effort to make them successful. It is important to make sure you have community involvement before taking on such a large project. If you are not able to get your neighbors involved start small and make your garden bigger as time goes on.

Examples of Community Gardens:



1.) Vegetable garden - A garden intended for growing edible fruits and vegetables.
2.) Herb garden - A garden for small greens and herbs. These gardens are ideal for small lots.
3.) Flower garden - Best option for a lot with contaminated soil where edible plants should not be grown. Flowers also attract birds, butterflies and bees, thus they create a miniature urban habitat in your neighborhood for smaller native wildlife.
4.) Parklet - A small urban park, typically the size of one vacant lot, and meant to be a location for community members to stop and enjoy the beauty of the space. Parklets may have ornamental plants, flowers, bushes, trees and a paved path or bench to promote foot traffic.

There are several important things to consider about your lot before you start digging.

Soil Quality- If your lot contains heavy metals such as lead, toxins or other contaminants, it will not be safe to plant anything intended for consumption. A lot with contaminated soil may be used as a flower garden or parklet where there would be no danger of people getting sick from eating what was grown in the soil. Another option is to invest in raised garden beds filled with clean soil. This will give you a safe place to plant a garden without having to grow in contaminated soil.

Water Sources- Larger gardens or those intended to produce a large amount of edible crops should have a water source readily available. If no water source is readily available, crop yields will be significantly lowered.

Sunlight- If your lot does not receive a lot of direct sunlight due to trees or surrounding buildings, you might want to consider a green strategy other than a community garden, or choose plants that can survive with low exposure to sunlight.

For more information on how to start a community garden, you can do your own research or find more information from your local garden center. Check the resources at the end of this section on Community Gardens for organizations that provide information on plants native to Pennsylvania as well as their water and sunlight requirements.

Benefits of Community Gardens:
Active gardens create a stable force in the community and serve as anchors for area redevelopment initiatives. They make the neighborhood where they are located safer, healthier, and cleaner.

Potential uses of community gardens include: educational workshops, children's programs, food pantries, or community-building events like block parties.

Positive Impacts:
Community health
Increased community participation
Community beautification
Improved community appearance
Education opportunities
Decreased opportunities for criminal activities

General Costs:
Costs vary on garden projects due to the size of the lot and how much labor you are willing to put into the project. Materials that you will need to invest in include garden tools such as shovels, rakes, and hoes, as well as materials used to improve the soil such as compost and fertilizer. Of course the most important things to buy for your project are the seeds and plants that will grow in your garden.

Community garden in Hazelwood. Created by Gertrude Street Block Club. Photo courtesy of Hazelwood Initiative, Inc.

Resources:

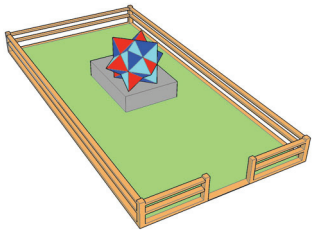
Organization	Services	Website
Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy	Provides lists of plants for gardens	http://www.pittsburghparks.org
Grow Pittsburgh	Urban agriculture and education	http://www.growpittsburgh.org
Mexican War Streets Society	Example of local neighborhood community gardens	http://www.mexicanwarstreets.org
Penn State Cooperative Extension, Allegheny County	Soil testing, master gardener classes, horticulture resources	http://allegheny.extension.psu.edu
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy	Land conservation programs and education	http://www.paconserve.org
Pennsylvania Elm Street Program	Neighborhood revitalization	http://www.padowntown.org/programs/elmstreet
Department of Environmental Protection	Soil testing, environmental resources	http://www.dep.state.pa.us/
City of New York Parks & Recreation's GreenThumb Program	NYC community gardening program	http://www.greenthumbnyc.org

Community Expression

Community expression or public art is another strategy to consider when revitalizing a vacant lot. It is a way that you can beautify your community with artwork installed permanently or temporarily in a lot or similar space where nothing previously existed. Public art shows that your community cares about supporting art and expression, and similar issues. Art comes in many forms and therefore, there are numerous options to consider when planning a public art project for a vacant lot.

Examples:

1. Sculpture Gardens
2. Murals
3. Installations
4. Topiary Gardens



When taking on a public art project, there are several steps you should consider in order to make your community expression project a success.

Conceptualization- Before you start any community expression project, a vision or concept is needed to guide the project and its participants in the right direction. A community dialog is important to choose the art, to collaborate with the artist, and to make final design decisions with the artist.

Planning- Planning lays out the process of creating a community expression project into manageable steps. With proper planning you will be able to determine how long the project should take to complete, what resources you will need, and how much funding will be necessary.

Timelines- Consider when is the best time to of year to start the process and how long each step will take to complete.

Resources- Make a materials list. Use lasting and durable materials to build and construct the piece so the public art lasts as an investment in the community. Be ready to recruit volunteers from the community to ensure you will have enough manpower to complete the project.

Funding- Try to predict how much your project is going to cost and create a budget. Brainstorm community resources such as local businesses and other organizations that would be willing to donate money or materials to your community expression project.

Installation- After the art work has been created or envisioned, it is now time to give it a home. This step includes the preparation of the space in your lot to accept the art work. Engage the community to help out with the installation so they will have a sense of ownership for the finished piece.

Maintenance and Conservation- Now that you have a public art work in your community you

should consider what steps you should take to maintain and preserve the artwork for the enjoyment of future generations. You may want to ask a local community group or organization to become stewards of the artwork to ensure it is protected.

Benefits:
Community expression and shows that your community appreciates art, and the positive impacts both visually and socially it has on the community.

Positive Impacts:
Community involvement
Community beautification

General Costs:
The costs of a community art project depend on how involved the project is and what materials are used to create the art. Public art created from found materials and volunteers would be an inexpensive project, but other larger and more complicated endeavors may cost thousands of dollars to complete.

Resources:
The Sprout Fund, a local non-profit, has been funding public art projects in the form of murals since 2003. The Sprout Fund works closely with communities and artists to achieve well crafted murals that can be seen throughout Pittsburgh. For more information about the Sprout Fund and their Public Art Program, please visit: http://www.sproutfund.org/publicart.

Other Resources:

Organization	**Services**	**Website**
Public Art on the Net	Public art resources	http://www.zpub.com/public/
Cleveland Public Art	Cleveland Non-Profit that supports public art	http://www.clevelandpublicart.org/
Public Art Fund	New York City Non-Profit that supports public art	http://www.publicartfund.org/

Sprout Fund Public Art Mural

Title: **Children's Alphabet Garden**

Artist: **Mary Mazziotti**

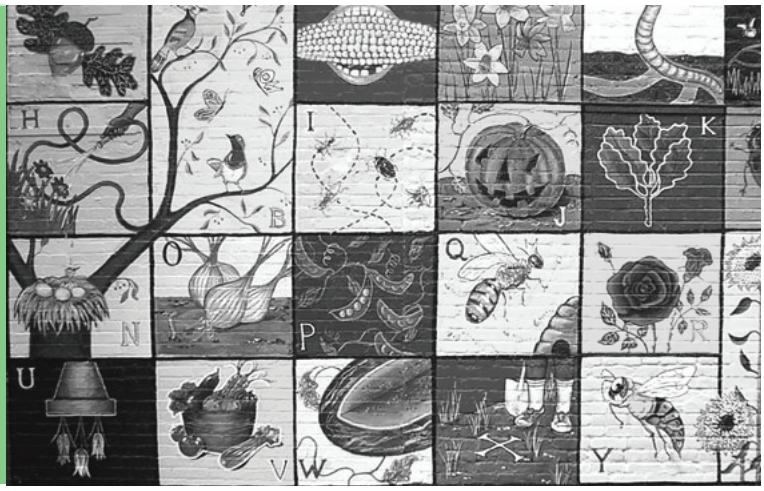


Photo courtesy of the Sprout Fund.

LONG-TERM INITIATIVES

Green Enterprise

Start your own! If you are passionate and motivated about making a lasting impact on your community, and think an idea might sustain itself in the form of a full-time venture, this is for you!

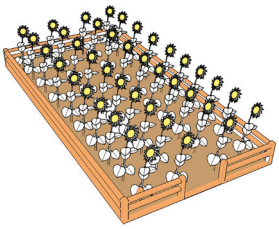
Local programs, organizations, groups or enterprises (for-profit or non-profit) committed to a healthy environment through a vibrant, flourishing, locally-based economy utilizing vacant lots by maximizing resources and partnerships.

Examples:

1. Composting: Composting decomposes and transforms organic material into a soil-like product. Food scraps, leaves and yard trimmings, paper, wood, manure, and the remains of agricultural crops are excellent organic composting materials. Example: AgRecycle Compost Center, 412- 242-7645
2. Market gardens/Urban Farms: These upgraded community gardens are either individually owned, or owned and operated by an organization that yield enough produce or goods to sell and/or distribute in a market place. Example: Garden Dreams, www.growpittsburgh.org,
3. Bio-remediation: the use of green plants to clean contaminated soils, sediments, or water. Example: Steel City Bio-Fuels, www.steelcitybiofuels.org
4. Job Training: hands-on training, outreach and technical assistance through the development of educational programs. Examples: Rosedale Block Cluster, www.rosedaleblock.org

How to Achieve:

There is no recipe for success for this particular strategy, as it will ultimately be your creativity, perseverance, and commitment that determine the outcomes. However, it should be noted by individuals or groups with motivation and passion for community revitalization that these are core elements that impact the ability to achieve success. If you are interested in examples, please look at the resources provided at the end of this section of Green Enterprise.



Some questions to help refine your ideas:

Vision:

What do you want to achieve?
What are the fundamental values you hope to exercise?
What opportunities exist?
What will success look like and how will you achieve it?
How will your idea shape the future of the community/neighborhood/city?

Partnerships:

Who are groups or individuals that may share your vision?
Who would benefit from your ideas?
Who has an interest in helping you?
Who is an expert in the field of interest?
Where are resources that will allow you to implement your vision?

Process:

What are the strengths of your assets? (land, ideas, relationships, resources)
What are potential areas of weakness?
What are opportunities you can utilize?
What potential threats exist that can become a barrier to your vision?

Positive Impacts:

Food source	Health improvements	Education
Energy source	Community revitalization	Diminishing urban blight
Innovation	Improved environmental quality	Job creation and training

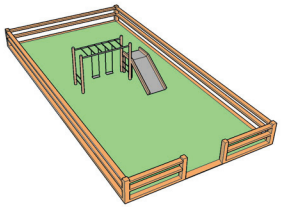
Organization	**Services**	**Website**
Penn State Cooperative Extension, Allegheny County	Site Assessment	http://allegheny.extension.psu.edu/Default.asp
MapHub Pittsburgh	Zoning and Site Assessment	www.maphub.com/map.php
Heinz Endowments	Funding and General Organizational Resources	www.heinz.org
Pittsburgh Small Business Administration	Funding and General Organizational Resources	www.sba.gov/pa/pitt/
Southwest Pennsylvania Commission	Funding and General Organizational Resources	www.spcregion.org
Pennsylvania Resources Council	Environmental Resources	www.prc.org
Center for Ecoliteracy	Environmental Resources	www.ecoliteracy.org/
PA CleanWays of Allegheny County, Inc.	Environmental Resources	www.pacleanways.org/allegheny
Sustainable Pittsburgh	Environmental Resources	www.sustainablepittsburgh.org

RECREATIONAL SITES

Recreational sites are any open space designated for recreational activities. Depending on the intended use, recreational sites range in size and investment resources. Recreational sites are often public works projects spanning many years and are for semi-permanent use. These sites require stewardship from government agencies or an established community organization. Recreational sites on formerly vacant lots require re-zoning of relatively large lots.

Examples:

1.) Playgrounds
2.) Ballparks
3.) Walking and hiking trails



How to Achieve:

Recreational sites require substantial investment. As large scale, multi-year projects, they require ownership of the lot and institutional involement from community groups and government

agencies. For example, the City of Pittsburgh maintains over a dozen ballparks throughout the city. Any attempts to build new recreational sites should go through the Department of Public Works first. Contact information for the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works is included below.

It is important to evaluate the site thoroughly when deciding to create a recreational space. Factors to consider include cost, design, usage, land ownership, size, topography, existing natural or man-made elements, history of the space, neighborhood environment, shade, amenities, and proximity to potentially hazardous areas such as busy streets or parking lots. Keep in mind that the larger and more complex the plan, the more expensive the costs of construction and maintenance. Ultimately, success of this strategy requires participation and commitment from an institution that can maintain the site over the years. This organization can be a non-profit organization, private entity, or government agency with access to sizable funds.

Some suggestions to help refine your ideas:

- Durable materials should be used for longevity
- Sturdy native plants, shrubs, and trees should be used
- Lawns should be minimal and require low maintenance
- Wood chips and chemically-treated wood should be avoided
- Hedges and shrubs should be used as barriers, not walls or fences
- A good irrigation and electrical system should be in place
- Playgrounds should be age appropriate
- Recreational areas should have picnic areas with permanent tables, benches, and barbeque grills

Benefits:
Recreational sites help preserve open green space in the community and provide residents with areas for exercise and recreation. Many recreational sites host public facilities such as swimming pools and ballparks. These facilities build neighborhood interaction and community safety. These sites also provide clean and safe areas for children to play.

General Costs:
Costs depend on the scale of the project. Costs include land acquisition fees, construction costs, and maintenance costs. Parties should contact a professional organization or the Department of Public Works for a consultation session.

Resources:

Organization	**Services**	**Website**
KaBOOM	Playgrounds for children	www.kaboom.org
National Trails Training Partnership	Trails	www.americantrails.org
City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works	Information on Pittsburgh's parks	www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/pw/html/ballfield_permits.html
Friends of the Riverfront	Information on Pittsburgh's waterways and riverfront trails	www.friendsoftheriverfront.org

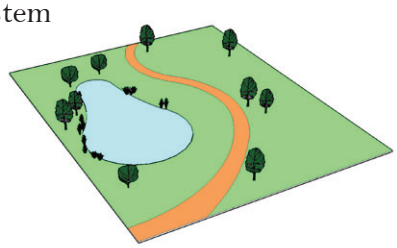
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem functions and provides associated benefits to human populations. Green infrastructure can also be an approach to identifying conservation priorities and developing a framework for proactive, holistic and strategic conservation. Two primary types of green infrastructure are greenways and large scale regional parks. Green infrastructure often requires extensive due diligence, planning, and participation from many stakeholders as covered in the first chapter of this guide.

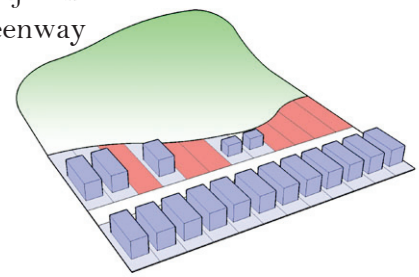
Examples:

1.) Greenways- A greenway is a corridor of open space. Greenways vary greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban, and rural areas to wider corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural and scenic features. They can incorporate both public and private property, and can be land-based or water-based. Greenways may follow old railways, canals, or ridge tops. They may also follow stream corridors, shorelines or wetlands, and include water trails for non-motorized craft. Some greenways are recreational corridors or scenic byways that may accommodate motorized and non-motorized vehicles. Others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage. Greenways differ in their location and function. Overall though, a greenway will protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, enhance natural beauty and quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, and stimulate economic development opportunities.

Conserved natural ecosystem



Lots adjacent to Greenway



2.) Parks- A publicly owned area of land, usually with grass, trees, paths, sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, and other features for recreation and relaxation. An area of land reserved and managed so that it remains unspoiled, undeveloped, and as natural as possible.

How to Achieve:

- Perform thorough due diligence of site.
- Check for existing plans for the site.
- Understand the surrounding neighborhoods. Different types of neighborhoods demand different strategies.
- Understand market conditions impacting the site.
- Develop working relationship with City departments as soon as possible.
- Understand the legislative process for different programs, such as the Pittsburgh Greenways program.
- Consult with surrounding neighbors through a neighborhood planning process.
- Start with lots that are already adjacent to other parks or greenways.

Benefits:
Green infrastructure provides values that address both natural and human needs, a variety of public and private functions, and positive impacts for communities and the environment. Green infrastructures protect and restore naturally functioning ecosystems and provide a framework for future development. They also provide a diversity of ecological, social, and economic functions.

Advantages:
Enriched habitat and biodiversity
Cleaner air and water
Maintenance of natural landscape processes
Improved health
Better connection to nature and sense of place

General Costs:
Costs associated with greenways are minimal. These include initial stabilization and annual maintenance costs. Greenways that belong to Pittsburgh's Greenway Program are typically maintained by volunteer groups. Parks have much higher costs than greenways and they require more investment in maintenance if there are recreational sites on them.

Resources:

Organization	Services	Website
National Trails Training Partnership	Trails	www.americantrails.org
City of Pittsburgh Department of Finance, Real Estate Division	Information on Pittsburgh's Greenways	www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/finance/
Friends of the Riverfront	Information on Pittsburgh's waterways and riverfront trails	www.friendsoftheriverfront.org
Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy	General environmental stewardship and training	www.pittsburghparks.org
Conservation Fund & USDA	General information	www.greeninfrastructure.net

Green Strategies Template

Community Based Green Strategies for Vacant Land Management:

Pairing green solutions with site limitations

Stabilization / "Redd-Up"

Profile: A usable, clean, accessible, and maintained site

Features: Disposing of litter, grading, and seeding

Limiting Factors: Resources for maintenance

Value Added: Transforming vacant lots into usable space is the most important step to improving neighborhood appeal and most basic strategy necessary for any further projects or plans

Community Expression / Public Art

Profile: Artistic creativity in a variety of mediums designed to enhance community appearance appeal, and desirability

Features: Colorful murals, "Found Art" Sculpture, landscaped gardens, community gathering spots

Limiting Factors: Creativity, funding, long-term care

Value Added: Improved appearance of neighborhoods, promotion of local artistry

Agriculture

Profile: Community Gardens, Urban Farms, or any other crop based program

Features: Remediation of soil, secured lands, maintained and cared for crops, and productive land

Limiting Factors: Access to water, land ownership, education, partnerships, and supportive funding

Value Added: Locally grown food, education, community health, community participation/investment, self-sustainability

Parks / Ball fields

Profile: An open space designated for recreational activities

Features: Playgrounds, Ballparks, Walking and hiking trails

Limiting Factors: Cost, design, usage, land ownership, size, topography, existing natural or man-made elements, history of the space, neighborhood environment, shade, amenities, and proximity to potentially hazardous areas such as busy streets or parking lots

Value Added: Recreation sites help preserve open green space in the community and provide residents with areas for exercise/recreation

Green Enterprise

Profile: Local programs, organizations, groups or enterprises maximizing resources and partnerships.

Features: Vision for long-term positive community impact through a combination of multiple green strategies and entrepreneurial endeavors

Limiting Factors: Barriers to entry range from a lack of a market, to a lack of resources, to a lack of community support or participation

Value Added: Home grown ideas, potential job creation, leverage community resources, spur community revitalization

Green Infrastructure

Profile: An interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem functions and provides associated benefits to human populations

Features: Greenways, parks, preserved riparian zones

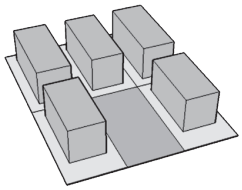
Limiting Factors: Substantial planning, coordination, approval from city, public support, and sustained resource

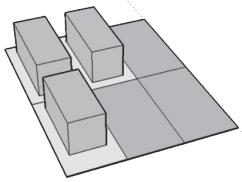
Value-Added: Protect and restore naturally functioning ecosystems and provide a framework for future development

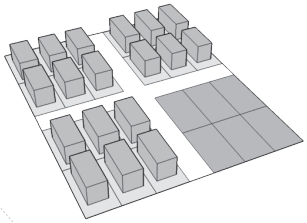
Lot Characteristics and Green Strategies

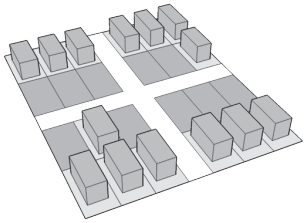
Determining appropriate strategies depends not only on the conditions within a lot, but on the greater urban context

"GAP"	"CONSECUTIVE"	"BLOCK"	"CORRIDOR"
Single "GAP" vacant lots are commonly found in residential neighborhoods, where temporary reuse adds social and economic value	Two or more "CONSECUTIVE" vacant lots are flexible for a variety of greening strategies	Vacant "BLOCKS" offer unique opportunities for large scale community greening strategies	Vacant Lots along urban "CORRIDORS" share common uses and potential future programing









Green Strategies Template

Check the following criteria to determine appropriate strategies and understand available options.

Lot Criteria

Use the gray boxes as a key to determine what strategies are viable. The boxes you check will specify what strategies are most viable given criteria specific to your site location, resources and interests.

Green Strategies

	Stabilization	Community Expression	Agriculture	Parks & Ballfields	Green Enterprise	Green Infrastructure
Ownership						
Free and Clear Title	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Ownership with outstanding liens	☑	☑			☑	
City owned with Garden lease	☑	☑	☑		☑	
City owned without Garden lease in proximity to park or greenway						☑
Informal agreement of use	☑					
Site Conditions						
Poor soil quality	☑	☑			☑	
Invasive plants	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Litter and debris	☑					
Easy water access	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Steep Slope						☑
Community Participation and Funding						
Strong community involvement	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
Access to outside funding	☑	☑				
Lot Type						
"Gap"	☑	☑	☑		☑	
"Consecutive"	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
"Block"	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑
"Corridor"	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑

Worksheet: Your Vacant Lot Profile

Use this worksheet to create a profile for the vacant lot you are interested in greening. It can be a handy checklist when you visit the lot to conduct a site evaluation. Once you complete the worksheet, you can use it as a reference to decide which green strategy is best for your lot. Green strategies are described in Chapter 2.

1. What is the size of the lot in square feet? _____

2. Describe the general shape of the lot. _____
(examples: rectangular, square, irregular, etc)

Use this space or a separate sheet of paper to sketch the shape of the lot and map major landmarks such as trees or large abandoned items. Also indicate the direction with regard to north and south.

3. What type of ownership does the lot have? Circle all that apply.

Individual, tax delinquent

Individual, not tax delinquent

Individual, multiple lien holder

Individual, deceased

Individual, cannot be located

City

Being held in Land Bank for a Community Group

4. What is the total number of lots? _____
(One lot, two connected lots, more than two lots, etc)

5. Where is the lot situated? Note the address if possible. _____
(examples: on the corner, between buildings, etc)

6. Who or what neighbors the lot? List addresses and descriptions below:

7. Is there litter on the vacant lot that you can't get rid of without the help of others?
Yes No Don't Know

8. Is there an illegal dump site on the lot with items such as trash bags, mattresses or appliances?
Yes No Don't Know

9. Are trees growing on the lot?
Yes No Don't Know

10. If yes, does the lot still receive sufficient sunlight in spite of the shade from the trees?
Yes No Don't Know

11. Do the trees appear healthy?
Yes No Don't Know

12. Are there invasive plants on the lot?
Yes No Don't Know

13. Is water accessible?
Yes No Don't Know

14. Is there a foundation from a demolished home on the lot?
Yes No Don't Know

15. Is the soil full of rubble or rocks?
Yes No Don't Know

16. Are there high levels of contaminants in the soil? (A good indication of high levels is the absence of plants) Yes No Don't Know

17. Does the lot have steep slopes?
Yes No Don't Know

18. Are you interested in creating a compost area?
Yes No Don't Know

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy has a variety of site assessment forms they use for the Urban EcoSteward program. To download the forms and learn about the program, visit their web site at: www.pittsburghparks.org/_66.php

CHAPTER 4 RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Community Organizations		
Organization	**Website**	**Telephone**
Adopt-a-Block		412-323-7837
Allegheny West Civic Council		412-323-8884
Brighton Heights Citizens Federation		412-734-0233
Brightwood Civic Group		412-732-8152
Central North Side Neighborhood Council	http://www.centralnorthside.com/	412-231-7742
Dinwiddie Community Alliance		412-417-7709
Garden Dreams		412-638-3333
Hill House Association	http://www.hillhouse.org/	412-392-4463
Lawrenceville Corporation	http://www.lawrencevillecorp.com/	412-782-5100
Lawrenceville United	http://www.lunited.org/	412-802-7220
Manchester Citizens Corporation		412-323-1743
Mexican War Streets Society	http://www.mexicanwarstreets.org/	412-323-9030
Morningside Area Community Council	http://www.macconline.org/	412-362-0132
Perry Hilltop Citizens Council		412-321-4632
Pittsburgh Project	http://www.pittsburghproject.org/	412-321-1678
Southside Slopes Neighborhood Association	http://www.steptrek.org/	412-488-0486
Spring Garden Neighborhood Council		412-323-9778
Tacoma Block Association		412-901-3052
Troy Hill Citizens Council		412-321-2852

Community Development Corporations

Organization	Website	Telephone
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation	http://www.bloomfield-garfield.org/	412-441-6950
East Liberty Development Inc	http://www.eastliberty.org/	412-361-8061
Friendship Development Associates	http://www.friendship-pgh.org/fda/about	412-441-6147
Hazelwood Initiative	http://www.hazelwoodhomepage.com/	412-421-7234
Highland Park Community Development Corporation	http://www.hpcdc.org/	
Hill Community Development Corporation	http://www.trcil.50megs.com/	412.765.1320
Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation	http://www.mwcdc.org/index.htm	412-481-3220
Northside Leadership Conference	http://www.pittsburghnorthside.com/main/	412-330-2553
Oakland Planning and Development Corporation	http://www.oaklandplanning.org	412-621-7863
Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group	http://www.pcrg.org/vpwg/	412-391-6732
Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development	http://www.ppnd.org/partners_cdc.asp	412-471-3727
South Side Local Development Company	http://www.southsidepgh.com	412-481-0651

Green Nonprofits

Organization	Website	Telephone
Conservation Consultants, Inc.	http://www.ccicenter.org/	412-431-4449, ext 214
Construction Junction	http://www.constructionjunction.org/	412-243-5025
GREENLOTS	http://www.greenlots.org	412-244-3435
Grow Pittsburgh	http://www.growpittsburgh.org/	412-473-2542
Healcrest Urban Community Farm		412-362-1982
Mildred's Daughters Farm		412-956-9873
Sustainable Pittsburgh	http://www.sustainablepittsburgh.org/	412-258-6642
Urban Farming Initiative		412-362-5501

Other Nonprofits

Organization	Website	Telephone
Community Empowerment Association	http://www.ceapittsburgh.org	412-371-3689
One Vision/One Life	http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/dhs/1V1L/index.htm	412-434-1287
Rosedale Block Cluster	http://www.rosedaleblock.org/	412-243-6474
Sprout Fund	http://www.sproutfund.org/	412-325-0646
Youth Works	http://www.youthworksinc.org	412-281-6629 ext217
YouthPlaces		412-434-0851 ext102

Environmental Groups

Organization	Website	Telephone
Friends of the Riverfront	http://www.friendsoftheriverfront.org	412-488-0212
Nine Mile Run Watershed Association	http://www.ninemilerun.org/	412-371-8779
PA CleanWays of Allegheny County	http://www.pacleanways.org/allegheny/index.html	412-381-1301
Pennsylvania Resources Council	http://www.prc.org/	412-448-7490
Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy	http://www.pittsburghparks.org/	412-682-7275
Student Conservation Association	http://www.thesca.org/	412-325-1851
Urban Ecology Collaborative	http://www.urbanecologycollaborative.org	
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy	http://www.paconserve.org/	412-288-2777

City Departments

Organization	Website	Telephone
Department of Finance, Real Estate Division	http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/finance/	412-255-8958
Department of Public Works	http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/pw/	412-255-2790
Department of City Planning	http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/cp/	412-255-2102
Office of the Mayor	http://www.redduppittsburgh.com	412-255-CITY

Academic Groups (Penn State Extension, CMU)

Organization	Website	Telephone
Center for Healthy Environments and Communities, University of Pittsburgh	http://www.chec.pitt.edu	412-624-2942
Carnegie Mellon Center for Economic Development	http://www.smartpolicy.org/index.php	412-268-9880
Penn State Cooperative Extension	http://allegheny.extension.psu.edu/	412-473-2540

Funding Sources (Foundations, Corporations, State Grants, City Programs)

Organization	Website	Telephone
Sprout Fund	http://www.sproutfund.org/	412-325-0646
Heinz Endowments	http://www.heinz.org	412-281-5777
R.K. Mellon Foundation	http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/rkmellon	412-392-2800
Home Depot Foundation	http://www.homedepotfoundation.org	770-384-3889
Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation	http://www.lowes.com	