# Strategies and Resources to Address Vacant Structures, Vacant Lots, and Community Safety

## Vacant Structures

### Strategies:
- **Disguise vacancy**
  - Plant flowers to improve landscape
  - Mow lawn and clean up leaves
  - Install decorative solar lighting
  - Decorate with holiday decorations
  - Install decorative fencing

- **Protect structure**
  - Board up and secure property entrance points
  - Install solar motion lights near entrance points

- **Improve appearance**
  - Install graphic windows and doors over boards
  - Paint boards to look like windows/doors
  - Hold a mural painting contest with youth on boards
  - Have a youth survey team survey and clean properties

- **Occupy property**
  - Start a neighborhood marketing campaign to attract residents to neighborhood
  - Organize a home tour event to display available vacant structures

### Resources:
- Detroit Vacant Property Campaign: Vacant Property Toolbox, 2nd ed.
- Reimagining Cleveland: Ideas to Action Resource Book
- Reimagining Cleveland: Vacant Land Pattern Book
- Philadelphia Horticultural Society: Basic Land Stabilization Treatments
- Philadelphia Horticultural Society: Reclaiming Vacant Lots

## Vacant Lots

### Strategies:
- **Discourage dumping**
  - Plant trees in a perimeter to show property is being maintained
  - Plant a street edge barrier of plants and flowers (not potted plants)
  - Use attractive barricades to prevent entrance into property
  - Install fencing between adjacent lots
  - Plant large volumes of flowers (i.e. sunflowers, etc)
  - Install security lights on lot
  - Record and report activity on lot by patrol or camera

- **Improve appearance**
  - Mow lawn and clean up leaves
  - Clean up debris and items dumped on property
  - Start adopt-a-lot program
  - Have a youth survey team survey and clean properties
  - Install decorative fencing

- **Reuse lot**
  - Create a rain garden or natural storm water management area (i.e. bioswales)
  - Create an art garden
  - Put up free-standing murals and facilitate a mural contest
  - Install community garden beds
  - Plant a natural area or native planting
  - Create a natural neighborhood pathway
  - Plant a flower garden (i.e. cut flowers)

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## Community Safety

### Strategies:
- **Increase visibility**
  - Illuminate all areas including doorways, sidewalks and streets
  - Ensure visibility of doorways
  - Pick up trash and debris
  - Eliminate blind spots or areas that cannot be viewed
  - Remove debris from alleyways
  - Illuminate alleyways with solar lights
  - Remove/trim overgrowth/dead foliage

- **Increase Security**
  - Start a vacant property patrol
  - Start daily neighborhood walking clubs
  - Start a walking school bus or other method of safely walking kids to school
  - Use signifying elements to flag vacant properties (i.e. reflectors) for easy report and detection

- **Increase awareness**
  - Hold a community safety seminar
  - Start a neighborhood phone tree, email chain, or text chain to inform about potential security issues

### Resources:
- SafeGrowth: Creating Safety & Sustainability through Community Building and Urban Design
- Walking School Bus Guide Book