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# Strategic Code Compliance 101

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## QUESTION

**What is the goal of your city's code enforcement program?**



# What is the goal of your city's code enforcement program?

- Improve property conditions
- Improve neighborhood conditions
- Safe housing
- Improve resident health
- Return properties to productive use
- Stabilize neighborhoods
- Prevent vacancy
- Preserve housing





# Overview

- The Limits of Traditional Code Enforcement
- Strategic Code Compliance
- Strategic Code Compliance applied:
  - Vacant properties
  - Rental properties
  - Owner-occupied properties
- Question & Answer





# Common Code Violations

- High weeds and grass
- Trash and debris
- Broken or missing windows and doors
- Roof damage
- Peeling paint
- Overgrown and dangerous trees
- Junk vehicles





# Common Code Violations

- Lack of heat or hot water
- Rodent or pest infestations
- Lead paint hazards
- Sewage backups
- Water damage and mold
- Electrical hazards
- Missing smoke and carbon dioxide detectors



# Traditional Code Enforcement



# Traditional Code Enforcement

- Complaint
- Inspection
- Citation
- Enforcement
- Non-priority lien





# Why is this a problem?

- Not Effective
- Not Efficient
- Not Equitable



What's a better approach?

Strategic

Code

Compliance





# How do we shift to strategic code compliance?

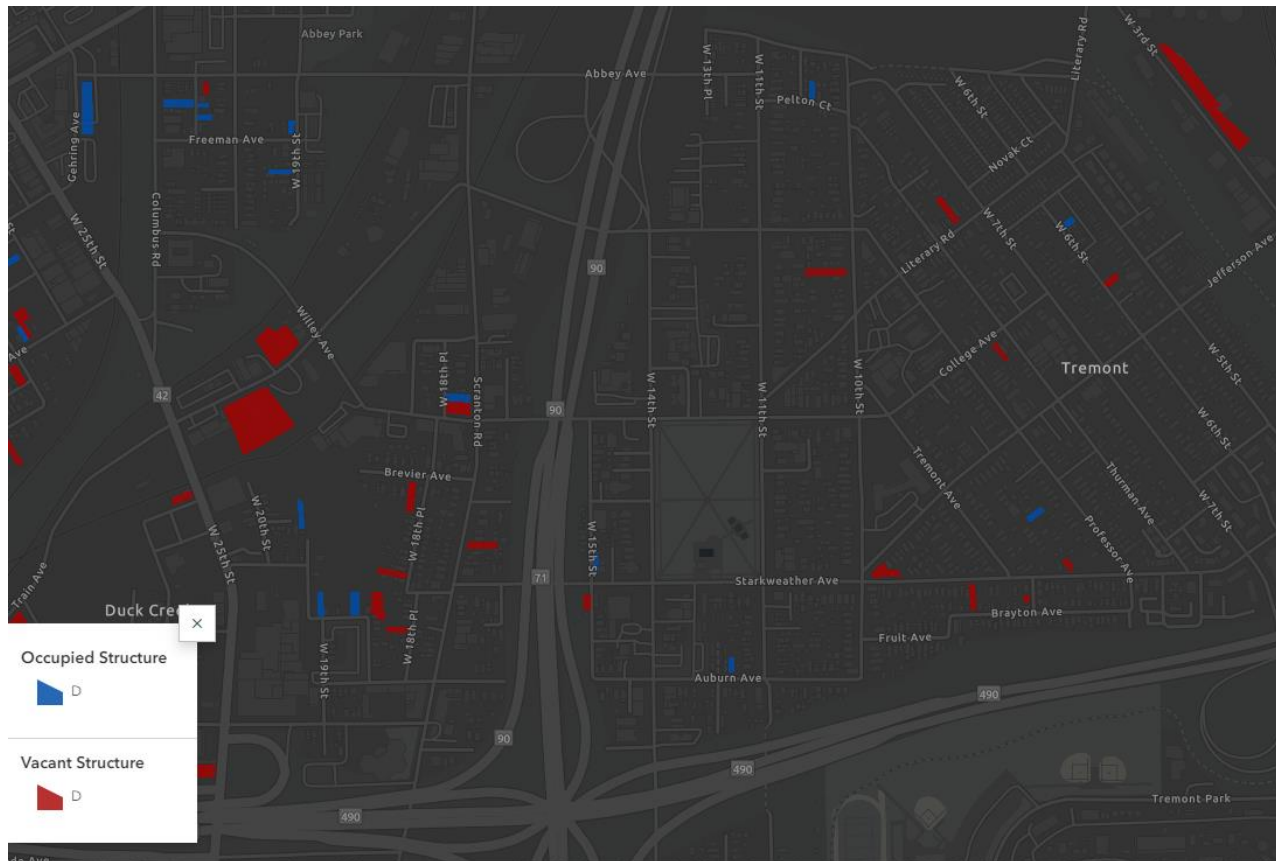


**Use data to inform strategies  
and allocation of resources**



# Example: Cleveland, Ohio

## 2023 City of Cleveland Property Inventory



### "D - Deteriorated"

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



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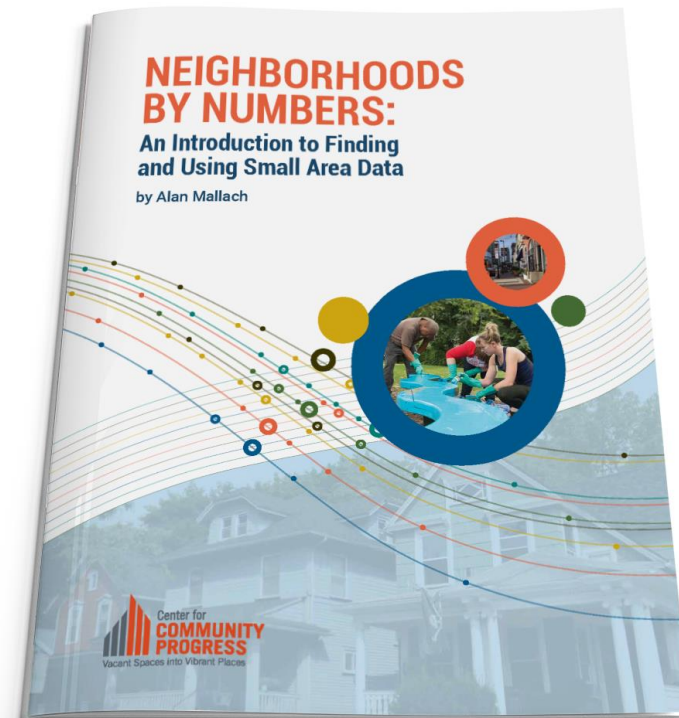
# Example: Syracuse, New York

## Kitchen Table Talks & Community Ambassador Program



# Key Resources

- Academic partners
- In-house expertise
- Specialized software programs
- Lower-tech solutions
- Neighborhoods by Numbers





# How do we shift to strategic code compliance?



Use data to inform strategies and allocation of resources



**Create different strategies for different property and owner types**

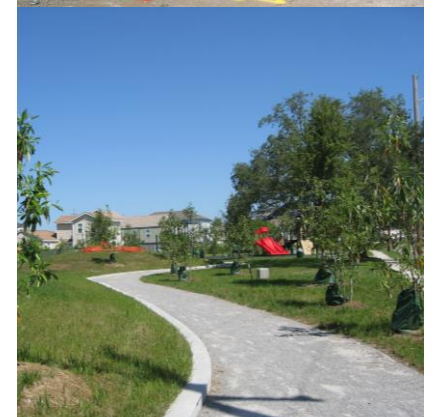
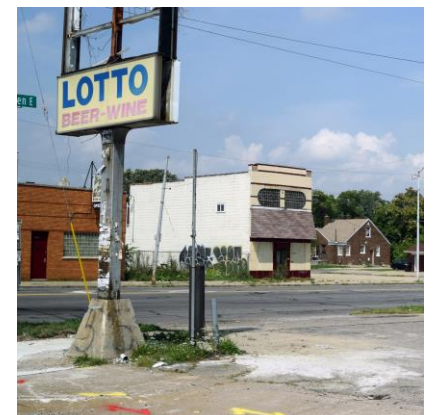
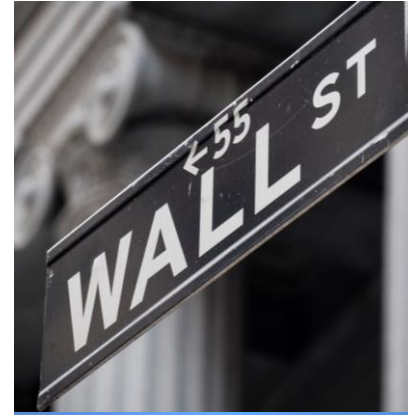


# Different strategies for different property and owner types

What type of property?

Who owns it?

Where is it located?





# How do we shift to strategic code compliance?



Use data to inform strategies and allocation of resources



Create different strategies for different property and owner types



**Track and evaluate outcomes and adjust as needed**



# How do we shift to strategic code compliance?



Use data to inform strategies and allocation of resources



**Collaborate across departments and sectors**



Create different strategies for different property and owner types



Track and evaluate outcomes and adjust as needed





# Example: Buffalo, New York

## Operation Clean Sweep

- Local, state, and federal government partners
- Health and human services providers
- Community groups
- Volunteers



# How do we shift to strategic code compliance?



Use data to inform strategies and allocation of resources



Collaborate across departments and sectors



Create different strategies for different property and owner types



**Make broader changes to support a culture of code compliance**




Track and evaluate outcomes and adjust as needed





# Example: Peoria, Illinois







**COFFEE  
WITH  
CODE**

Meet your code enforcement inspector  
and learn about our grant programs

**THURSDAY, MARCH 21**  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

PEORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY  
107 NE Monroe St, Peoria, IL 61602  
Lower Level Auditorium



# How do we shift to strategic code compliance?



Use data to inform strategies and allocation of resources



Collaborate across departments and sectors



Create different strategies for different property and owner types



Make broader changes to support a culture of code compliance



Track and evaluate outcomes and adjust as needed



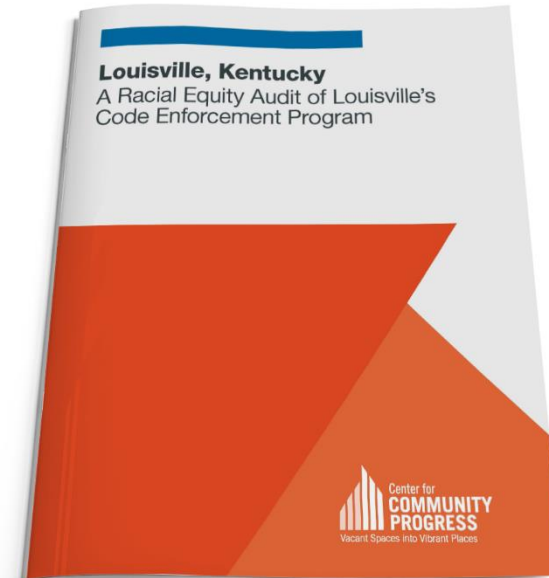
**Make equity a core principle and a desired outcome**





# Example: Louisville, Kentucky

## Code Enforcement Racial Equity Review



# **Strategic Code Compliance: Common Problem Properties**

# Vacant Properties

## Core Policy



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# Key Legal Tools

- Authority to abate nuisances
- Mechanism to “Give it Up”:
  - Delinquent property tax enforcement
  - Priority code lien foreclosure
  - Receivership
- Entity, like land bank, that can act as temporary public steward



# Vacant Properties

- Fix It Up
- Pay It Up
- Give It Up





# Vacant Properties

- Fix It Up
- Pay It Up
- Give It Up





# Example: Tri-COG Land Bank (TCLB)

## Vacant Property to Affordable Homeownership Opportunity

- Acquired tax-foreclosed properties and cleared title
- Sold to local nonprofit housing developer
- Developer renovated and sold to income-qualified home buyers



# Rental Housing

## Core Policy: Proactive Rental Inspections and Licensing

- Know your inventory
- Create a proactive rental inspection and licensing program
- Include effective incentives and penalties
- Protect tenants



# Rental Housing: Examples

## Rochester, New York

- Proactive inspections for lead paint hazards
- Focus on pre-1978 properties and areas with elevated blood lead levels
- Between 2000 and 2016 elevated blood lead levels decreased by 85%

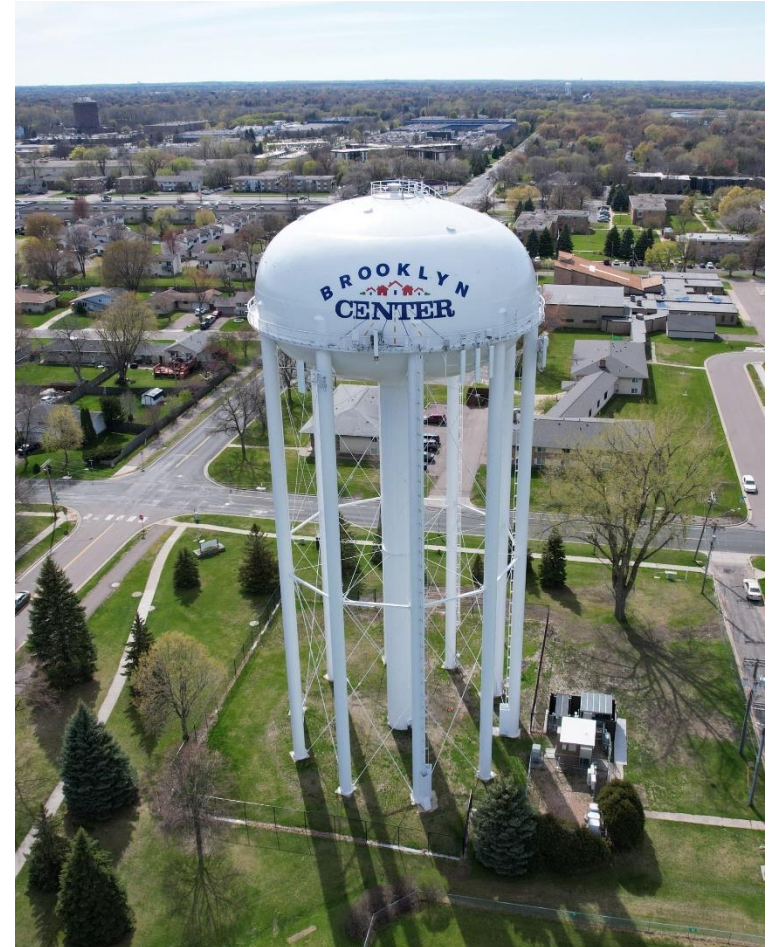




# Rental Housing: Examples

## Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

- Performance-based licensing
- Inspection frequency based on code and nuisance violations
- Helped create Association for Responsible Management



# Owner-Occupied Housing

## Core Policy: Equitable Offramps

- Repair funding, resources, and assistance
- Reminders and warnings
- Resource handouts
- Code inspector soft skills
- Housing navigators or social workers
- Adjournments and resources at hearings
- Fine and lien waiver options





# Owner-Occupied Housing: Examples

## Cincinnati, Ohio

- Notices with resource information
- Social worker on code enforcement staff
- Prohibition on criminal enforcement
- In-person meetings in the home





# Owner-Occupied Housing: Examples

## Free Repair Resource Programs

- Battle Creek, MI: Paint Program
- Greensboro, NC: Neighborhood Toolbox Tool Lending Center
- Philadelphia, PA: Basic Systems Repair Program

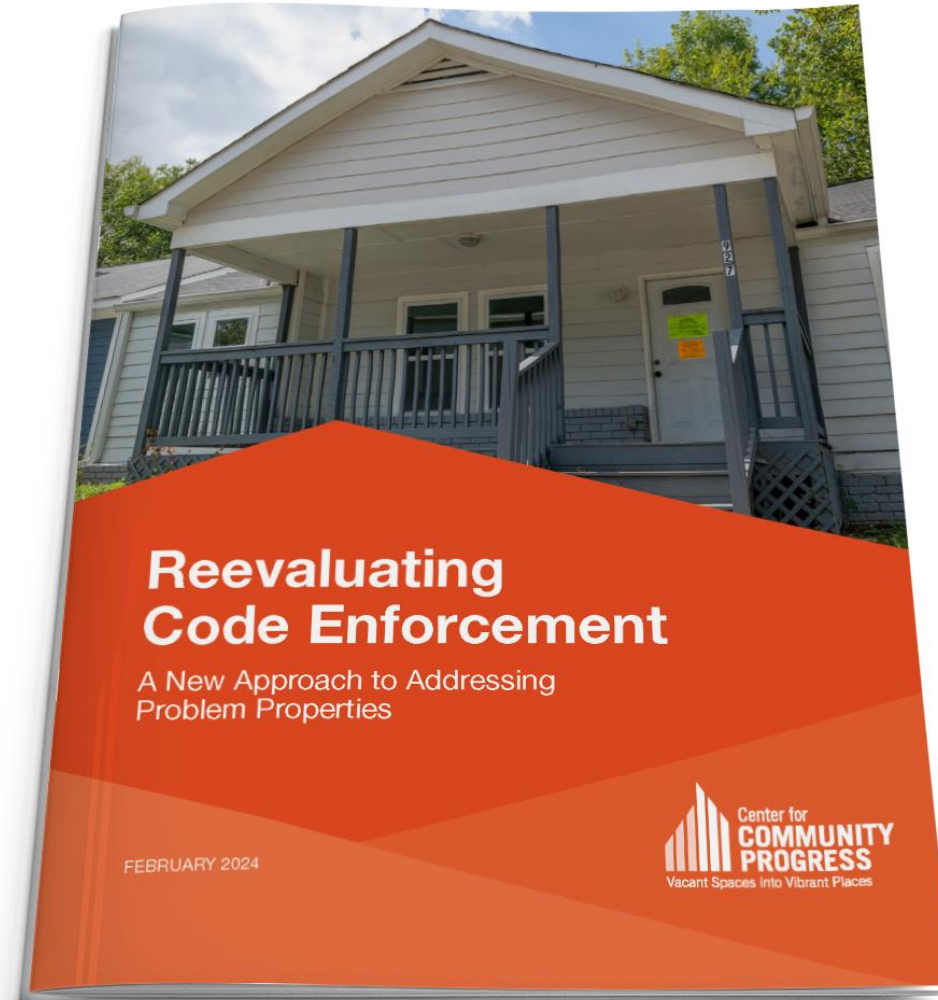


# Owner-Occupied Housing: Examples

## Home Repair Funding Programs

- Pennsylvania: Whole Home Repair Program
- Detroit, MI: 0% Interest Home Loan Program
- Milwaukee, WI: Strong Home Loans Program





[communityprogress.org/code-enforcement-report](https://communityprogress.org/code-enforcement-report)



# Thank You!



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# Q&A

