



Assessment of Code Enforcement Activities and Priorities to Consider

Community Progress Code
Enforcement TA Scholarship for
Jackson, Mississippi

Memorandum

TO: **Von Anderson**, Director, Planning and Development
LaTonya Miller, Deputy Director, Office of Code Services
Samantha Graves, Code Enforcement Manager, Office of Code Services
Jennifer West, Neighborhood Services/Small Business Development Coordinator,
Neighborhood Service Division

FROM: **Matt Kreis**, General Counsel, Center for Community Progress
Liz Kozub, Associate Director, Technical Assistance, Center for Community
Progress
Jeana Dunlap, Principal and Founder, Meta Agency, LLC

DATE: November 7, 2025

RE: Assessment of Code Enforcement Activities and Priorities to Consider, Community
Progress Code Enforcement Technical Assistance Scholarship

Background

About the Scholarship

The Center for Community Progress developed the Code Enforcement Technical Assistance Scholarship program to help cities implement a more strategic approach to stabilize and strengthen neighborhoods with vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated (VAD) properties through code enforcement. In April 2025, Community Progress competitively selected the City of Jackson (“the City,” “Jackson”) to receive a scholarship award. Jackson rose to the top of the national applicant pool because the team demonstrated an urgent need to address vacant property challenges and an eagerness to think differently about their approach. We were especially impressed by the team's leadership and commitment to centering the community and residents in their work.

The initial scope of the engagement was focused on facilitating conversations with the City and critical stakeholders to identify existing barriers to addressing VAD properties and develop focused summaries for three potential projects that could be used to attract additional funds to support long-term collaboration. However, the scope expanded to include four priority areas and recommendations for each due to the depth of engagement from the Community Improvement team (“Code Enforcement”) and number of challenges identified.

The priority areas and recommendations are described in more detail in the *Overview of Memorandum*.

About Community Progress and our Approach

Community Progress helps people transform vacant spaces into vibrant places. Since 2010, our team of experts has provided urban, suburban, and rural communities battling systemic

vacancy with the policies, tools, and resources needed to address the full cycle of property revitalization. As the only national nonprofit dedicated to tackling vacant properties, Community Progress drives change by uncovering and disrupting the unjust, racist systems that perpetuate entrenched vacancy and property deterioration. Community Progress has delivered customized, expert guidance to leaders in over 300 communities and provided hundreds of hours of free educational resources as well as leadership programming to help policymakers, practitioners, and community members across the country return properties to productive use.

Overview of Memorandum

This memorandum contains Community Progress' understanding of the challenges of vacant properties in Jackson and the City's approach to addressing these properties. Our engagement with local stakeholders and our review of data, policies, and practices revealed a key takeaway: **the City of Jackson's ability to address widespread vacancy is constrained by gaps in data, weak markets, insufficient resources, and policies that keep properties stuck, furthering decline and neighborhood instability.**

As VAD properties languish, they fuel a vicious cycle of neighborhood decay. The City is doing what it can with limited data and resources, but additional capacity and resources are needed to reverse underlying market conditions and build confidence in a vibrant future for high vacancy neighborhoods.

We present four priority areas for the City and its partners:

1. Enhance data collection and analysis to better understand the magnitude of the problem.
2. Leverage enhanced data practices and Code Enforcement expertise to create a comprehensive vacant property strategy.
3. Engage a coalition of local stakeholders to support the comprehensive vacant property strategy.
4. Assess efficacy of local legal tools and pursue state policy changes to fix ineffective and broken systems.

Each priority area includes brief observations and preliminary recommendations for the City and its partners to explore.

This expanded memorandum was made possible by the City's engaged and committed Code Enforcement team along with other key stakeholders in this process. These stakeholders are listed in Appendix A. Their passion, collaboration with residents and property owners, and openness to new approaches exemplifies the leadership Jackson needs to address its complex issues.

Though Jackson faces significant challenges, Community Progress left the city with a sense of hope. Local leaders and residents are already working to turn their frustration over past disinvestment and harmful policies into meaningful action for a stronger, more vibrant city.

This memorandum offers a range of short- and long-term options to help stabilize neighborhoods through increased code compliance. All observations are those of Community

Progress and may not reflect the views of those interviewed. Recommendations should be reviewed in consultation with local legal counsel.

The Role of Code Enforcement in Addressing Vacant Properties

National Context

The term “code enforcement” is used across the country to refer to the activities undertaken by local governments or their agents to compel private owners to comply with health and safety provisions of municipal and state codes. The types of activities that fall under code enforcement are broad and understood differently across jurisdictions.

For the purposes of this memo, “code enforcement” refers to the process local governments like Jackson use to enforce property maintenance and housing standards for existing buildings (whether vacant or occupied) and vacant land. The goal of all code enforcement is to bring properties into compliance with local standards, improve the health and safety of residents, and stabilize neighborhoods. Like most local government systems, code enforcement is most effective when coordinated with other agencies working on similar issues, including housing, law, and community development.



Effective code enforcement considers the complex factors that contributed to current property conditions and the unique history and cultural significance of individual properties. In Jackson, stakeholders identified several key external forces that have led to the deterioration of homes and businesses. These include the loss of good jobs and economic opportunities, a poverty rate of nearly 26 percent, and decades of ineffective and often racially discriminatory land use policies that diverted resources and investment away from the neighborhoods that need them most.

An equitable approach to code enforcement understands property condition factors and the history of neighborhoods. An efficient approach is data-driven, allocating resources to maximize positive outcomes and help residents achieve compliance quickly and easily. An effective approach includes sufficient legal capacity to resolve complicated property types, like those whose deeds are continuously sold through the tax sale process, properties owned by LLCs, and properties stuck in a web of tangled title (e.g., property owned by multiple, absent heirs). Without a reimagined approach to code enforcement, VAD properties will continue to languish and harm neighborhoods, leaving all parties frustrated: property owners, tenants, neighbors, elected officials, and code enforcement staff.

Code Enforcement in Jackson

The City’s Community Improvement team (“Code Enforcement team”) is under the Division of Code Services in the Department of Planning and Development. They handle property

maintenance code violations, identify demolition candidates, oversee the abatement work, and address other nuisance related matters.

Over the last year, the City Council recognized the need for more resources to address the significant challenges in Jackson and provided funding to expand the Code Enforcement team to eight code officers. Leadership on the Code Enforcement team is extremely knowledgeable, investing time and effort to create a culture of compliance that could serve as a national model. Sustaining that culture and realizing impact will require, however, a long-term, comprehensive strategy backed up with the necessary capacity and resources to address the scale of the problems.

Many Code Enforcement officers grew up in or live near the neighborhoods where they work. These personal ties drive their passion and help them understand the importance of working closely with community members—an essential best practice—and encourages voluntary compliance from property owners. When properties do not come into compliance through voluntary efforts, whether the owners are unwilling, unable, or nowhere to be found, additional legal tools and enforcement actions are required.



Property that may require nuisance abatement action.

The legal and enforcement tools Jackson uses to address vacant properties are similar to those used in other cities. The City can issue a Notice of Violation to the owner and summon them to a hearing in Environmental Court. If the owner fails to comply, a fine is assessed. If the property conditions warrant some type of abatement action (e.g., board up, remove trash and debris, cut high weeds) because the owner failed to remedy a violation upon notice, the City can seek approval from City Council to abate the nuisance, bill the owner, and if unpaid, file the costs as a lien against the property. The collection of unpaid fines is reportedly difficult (as is true in most cities without a strong policy infrastructure in place) and while the costs of abatement actions can be added as liens, those code liens are rarely paid off.

The City uses OpenGov, a software system that tracks data and supports case management for code enforcement and housing-related activities. OpenGov offers valuable tools that can help the City take a more strategic, data-driven approach to code enforcement. Fortunately, several key departments that deal with problem properties—such as Code Enforcement, Planning and Development, Zoning, Legal, Permitting, and Historic Preservation—are using the platform.

The following is a chart of Code Enforcement's commonly used tools to address noncompliant properties as explained to us by stakeholders and as revealed in a brief scan of the Jackson Code of Ordinances (JCO). This summary is not intended to be a comprehensive look at all code enforcement tools available in Jackson.

Figure 1: Commonly Used Code Enforcement Tools in Jackson¹

Tool	Brief Description	Observations
Education and Outreach	Over the last year, Code Enforcement has invested heavily in building relationships with neighborhood associations, attending community meetings, working one on one with individual owners, and providing general education on compliance and resources.	This effort had great success in establishing Code Enforcement's increased presence and commitment to neighborhood stabilization.
Vacant Building Registration	The JCO requires owners of vacant buildings to register their properties and maintain them or face fines and prosecution. ²	The ordinance and program are outdated, and initial uptake was low when it was first rolled out. It is unclear how many total vacant buildings exist in Jackson. However, the United States Postal Data shows over 6,000 addresses marked as vacant. Code Enforcement can use this as a preliminary figure to determine a compliance rate based on registrations.
Notices of Violation/Environmental (Municipal) Court	For violations of the Property Maintenance Code, Vacant Building Registration, Rental Registration Program, or others, non-compliant owners are served with a notice of violation. A hearing is scheduled in Environmental Court and a fine and fee are charged if the owner fails to comply. ³	Most owners fail to show up to Environmental Court (~20 percent appearance rate) and most owners fail to pay the fines and fees (~10-15 percent collections rate).
City Council/Administrative Court/Nuisance Abatement	If the owner fails to resolve the violation via Environmental Court, Code Enforcement may request a hearing from City Council to get approval to abate the violation. Additional legal research is needed, but it appears there is some authority to add costs as a lien to the property for collection along with unpaid property taxes. ⁴	If funding is available, City Council approves the abatement activities and the immediate safety concerns are temporarily addressed. Costs are added as a lien and collected with property taxes, but since many VAD owners do not pay property taxes and many properties do not sell at tax auction, recovering costs can be difficult.

¹ This chart compiles tools explained stakeholders and listed in Jackson Code of Ordinances (JCO). There are several additional tools and policies discussed in this engagement which the City has not yet piloted or adopted. Most appear to require amendments to state law. See Priority 4 for more discussion on additional tools to explore.

² See Jackson Code of Ordinances (JCO) § 26-531 *et seq.*

³ See, for example, JCO §§ 26-511 and 26-512 (adopting and amending the International Property Maintenance Code); JCO §§ 26-8 and 26-9 (authorizing issuance of NOV and penalties for violations); and JCO § 46-46 (creation of Municipal Court).

⁴ See, for example, MS Code § 21-19-11 (2024).

Demolition/Abandoned Structures

The City can notify the owner that the property has been deemed dangerous and beyond repair, demolish the structure via a third-party contractor, and then secure its costs with a lien against the property.⁵

There is limited demolition funding to address the scale of the problem and demolition liens are largely uncollectible.

The Challenge with Vacant, Tax-delinquent Properties in Jackson

The City of Jackson faces a widespread vacant property crisis. Vacant properties pose significant costs to individual wealth and well-being, strain municipal budgets, create fiscal instability, and destabilize neighborhoods by inviting crime and weakening market demand.⁶ A drive through Jackson's most impacted neighborhoods reveals the nature and extent of homes that are boarded up, deteriorated to the point where it is unsafe for anyone to live in,⁷ or already falling down. The City has experienced population decline of nearly 28 percent between 1980 and 2020. There are more properties than people, and many of them will need to be demolished as part of Jackson's broader revitalization strategy.

The full scale of vacant and deteriorated properties across the city is currently unknown, due to the limited local data being tracked and analyzed. However, preliminary data and visual evidence confirm that high vacancy rates and high tax delinquencies are substantial, especially when compared to other peer cities across the country. Below is an overview of the available data related to vacancy and tax delinquency in Jackson.

Vacant Properties

- The residential vacancy rate is nearly **300 percent higher** than the national average.⁸ About 12 percent of housing units—nearly 8,900 total housing units—are vacant.⁹
- The City has issued demolition orders, or is in the legal process of doing so, for approximately **1,400 properties**.¹⁰ There are likely many more properties in need of demolition that are not on its demolition list.
- **Funding for demolition is limited.** Available demolition funding includes:
 - An annual federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation between \$300,000 to \$400,000, which allows for the demolition of around 20 single-family structures on the “demo list.”

⁵ See MCA Sec. 21-19-11 or MCA 21-19-20.

⁶ “Progress Points: The Costs of Vacant, Abandoned, and Deteriorated Properties,” (Center for Community Progress, 2022), <https://communityprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Progress-Points-Systemic-Vacancy-Cost-of-Vacancy-2022.pdf>.

⁷ Tragically, the City has many individuals living in unsafe housing due to extreme poverty or lack of quality, safe homes.

⁸ Data from U.S. Census Bureau suggests that more the 12 percent of the total housing units in Jackson are vacant, compared to a national rate of around 3.78 percent. “2019-2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed November 4, 2025. <https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/acs-5year.html>.

⁹ “U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020, 5-Year Estimates.” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed November 4, 2025. <https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/acs-5year/2020.html>.

¹⁰ Some properties on the list may recently have been completed and bid out to private contractors for demo, but most are pending court approval or awaiting follow up inspection or funding.

- A one-time allocation of \$250,000 from the state legislature to demolish the abandoned Gipson Grocery Store and the former Coca-Cola bottling plant.
 - A one-time allocation of \$1 million in city and state funds for commercial demolition.
- All demolitions are bid out to private contractors. This process can be long and costly.
 - The number of vacant properties that do not require demolition and could be salvaged with swift intervention is taken is not known.

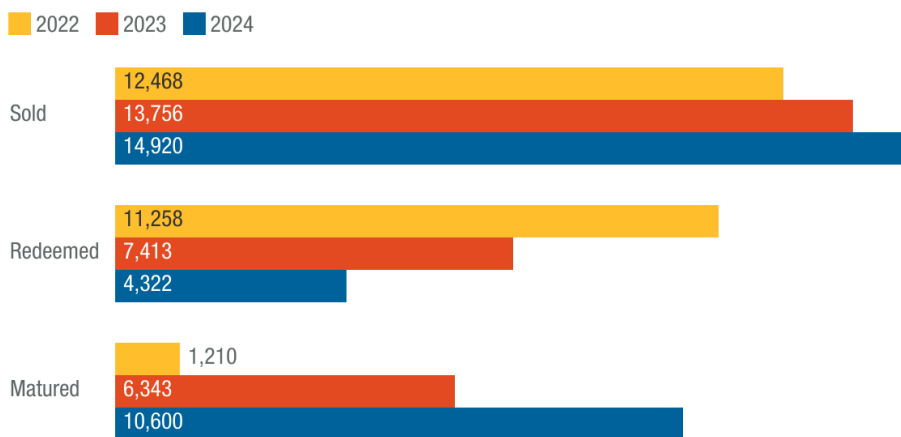
Tax-delinquent Properties

When an owner fails to pay their property taxes on time, the property is considered tax delinquent. Tax delinquency is a reliable indicator that a property is vacant or in jeopardy of its condition deteriorating. If the owner also fails to pay or “redeem” property taxes within the timeframe set by state law, they may lose their property to a forced sale or transfer. The preliminary data below offers insights into the challenges with tax-delinquent properties in Jackson:

- More than **15,000 parcels were tax delinquent** in 2023 and brought to the 2024 tax sale. With approximately 70,000 parcels in Jackson, this means **1 in 5 parcels** are not paying their taxes. Over the past three years, this number has **increased**.¹¹
- Over the past three years, **fewer properties are being redeemed**—meaning the owner is not paying back the unpaid taxes—bucking national trends. Figure 2 provides information on the shifting outcomes of Hinds’ County tax sales.

Figure 2: Trends in Hinds County's Tax Sales, 2022–2024

Over the past three years, Jackson has seen a steady rise in the number of properties sold. Conversely, the number of properties being redeemed has seen a sharp decline, leading to more properties reaching maturation. This is a concerning trend, as properties are rarely changing ownership and likely languishing in a cycle of decline.



Source: Data provided by Hinds County via the Real Property Tax Sale Summary.

¹¹ Data provided by Hind's County via the Real Property Tax Sale Summary.

- The influence of non-local property owners is of concern to nearly all stakeholders engaged. Stakeholders report that buyers who are not from Mississippi often buy in bulk and are unaware of the conditions of the properties. Tax sale results are publicly available through Hinds County,¹² but the results do not include the purchasers' address. Figure 3 provides information the trend of bulk purchases at tax sale by LLCs.

Figure 3: 2024 Tax Sale Results in Hinds County, Purchasers of Over 500 Properties

Eight limited liability corporations (LLCs) purchased over 500 properties at tax sale in 2024, totaling 4,959 properties. This demonstrates the outsized impact corporate entities have in Jackson when they do not address property conditions or take ownership after properties have matured.

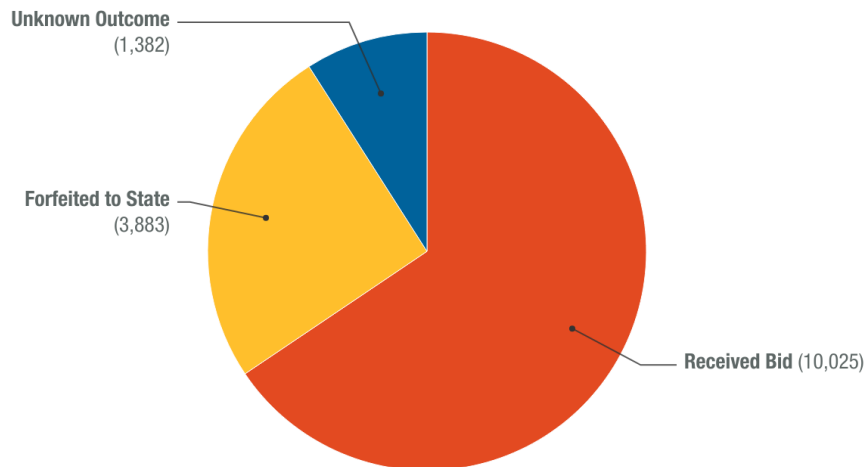
Purchaser	Number of Properties
Woodmark Investments LLC	761
Eclipse17 LLC	671
SDG Investments, LLC	670
Quicksilver Tax Funding LLC	615
Ganesha Tax Investments LLC	597
Odysseus Strategies LLC	579
Nineteen For Me LLC	556
FCR TL Holdings LLC	510

Source: Data provided by Hinds County via the Real Property Tax Sale Summary.

¹² "Hinds County Tax Sale Files," Hinds County, Mississippi, accessed November 4, 2025, <https://www.co.hinds.ms.us/pgs/taxsalefiles.asp>.

Figure 4: Tax Sale Results in Hinds County

A quarter of all properties brought to the 2024 tax sale were forfeited to the State of Mississippi. While not every property will come into the state's ownership due to redemption opportunities, this demonstrates the sizable number of properties private buyers have no interest in.



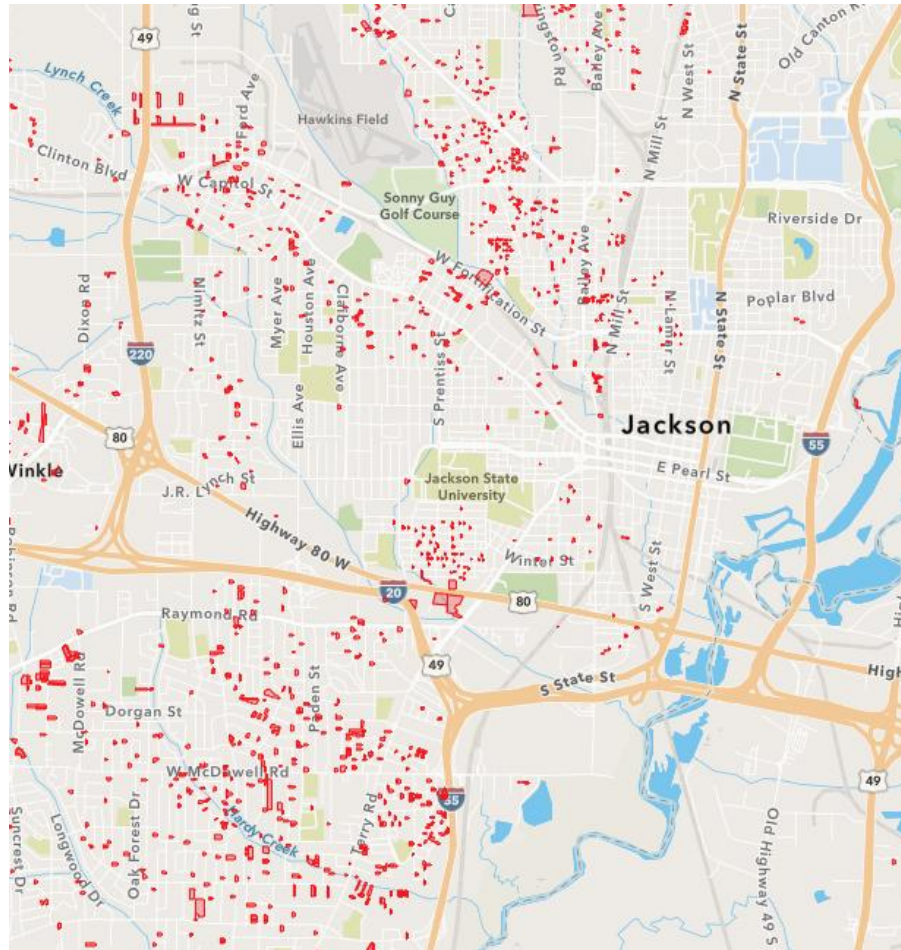
Source: Data provided by Hinds County via the Real Property Tax Sale Summary.

- Stakeholders expressed frustration that the **purchaser at tax sale rarely seeks to acquire possession of the property** after the maturation date (the date by which the owner must redeem or risk losing the property) as allowed by state law. Many investors buy an interest and then walk away or transfer/sell their interest instead of acquiring the property. That interest creates confusion as to who owns or can do what with respect to many properties. Attempts have been made to limit how soon after the maturation date a purchaser must seek possession or lose their interest.¹³ Meanwhile, the properties remain vacant, continue to deteriorate, and cause significant harm to the neighborhood.
- The tax sale system creates a significant barrier for code enforcement officers, who are often **unable to verify the legal owner** of properties that have been put up for tax sale.
- Stakeholders reported that the properties not sold, mostly vacant (lots and properties with structures), default to the state of Mississippi per state property tax laws.¹⁴ While the City, Code Enforcement, and the Secretary of State's Public Land Division have done excellent work to reduce this inventory over the last several years, there are still roughly 1,700 state forfeited properties throughout Jackson.
- While properties are owned by the Secretary of State, the City is responsible for maintaining the properties, a task that often falls on Code Enforcement.

¹³ In 2025, House Bill 1198 was introduced in the Mississippi but died in committee. The bill sought to require investors who gain properties through the tax sale to file the tax deed within 90 days of the maturation period or else cede their interest to the state.

¹⁴ For general provisions related to the collection of property taxes in Mississippi, see Miss. Code Ann. Secs. 27-41-1 *et seq.* See also Miss. Code Ann. Secs. 27-41-59 and 27-41-75 for some more specific information on Mississippi tax sales.

Figure 5: Tax-forfeited properties, as of September 2025



Source: Mississippi Secretary of State, <https://tflgis.sos.ms.gov/>

- **Stakeholders report the tax sale process does not result in clear title**—creating a major barrier to returning vacant properties to productive use. Most of these properties come with significant title issues that require costly and time-consuming legal work, often \$2,500–3,000 or more, to resolve. This creates a major disincentive for potential buyers who might otherwise invest in repairs or redevelopment.
- In most cases, properties purchased from the state—especially as side lots—are acquired without any effort to clear the title. Therefore, while the property has a new owner, the **problem is not solved**. It simply **pushes the burden onto future generations** when they attempt to sell or transfer ownership.

Recommended Priorities

Following the engagement and analysis described in preceding sections, it was clear that the City of Jackson's ability to address widespread vacancy is constrained by gaps in data, weak markets, insufficient resources, and policies that keep properties stuck. These limitations further decline and neighborhood instability.

As vacant properties languish, they fuel a vicious cycle of neighborhood decay: attracting vermin, enabling criminal activity, driving down property values, and eroding the safety and dignity of nearby residents. The most vulnerable communities in west and south Jackson are at risk of being hollowed out block by block. The City urgently needs tens of millions of dollars to carry out demolition at scale. This type of demolition campaign was carried out by many cities in the 2010s and proved to be instrumental in setting the stage for revitalization efforts.¹⁵

Demolition alone is not enough. Without a balanced approach that includes property stabilization and reinvestment, the City risks erasing the social and physical fabric of these historic neighborhoods. To develop a comprehensive approach to address this challenge, the City needs to understand the scale and potential costs of widespread demolition and stabilization and develop strategies to prioritize interventions when additional funding is procured. We recommend the City prioritizes the following activities:

1. Enhance data collection and analysis to better understand the magnitude of the problem
2. Leverage enhanced data practices and Code Enforcement expertise to create a comprehensive vacant property strategy.
3. Engage a coalition of local stakeholders to support a comprehensive vacant property strategy.
4. Assess efficacy of local legal tools and pursue state policy changes to fix ineffective and broken systems.

Below each priority, Community Progress provides relevant recommendations for what the City and its partners might consider to move on these efforts.

Priority 1: Enhance data collection and analysis to better understand the magnitude of the problem.

The most effective approaches to addressing vacancy utilize data to drive decision-making, allocate resources, and evaluate effectiveness. This is especially important when a local government has limited staff and resources. Robust data collection, management, and analysis help define the problem, indicate the most effective solutions, and generate the greatest impact.

¹⁵ Cities like Detroit, Cleveland, South Bend, and Gary have overseen significant demolition campaigns to address large inventories of vacant, obsolete properties. In Cleveland, neighborhoods where demolition take place experience positive economic impacts and experiences a decrease in mortgage foreclosure rates across all income levels. Nigel G. Griswold et al. "Estimating the Effect of Demolishing Distressed Structures in Cleveland, OH, 2009--2013", (Western Reserve Land Conservancy, 2014), https://case.edu/socialwork/povertycenter/sites/default/files/2018-09/FinalReportwithExecSummary_modified.pdf. In South Bend, the City developed a 1,000 Houses in 1,000 Days initiative, after the release of a code enforcement report documenting the scale and scope of VAD properties. The City targeted demolition, and some rehabilitation, across South Bend's west and southeast sides. The initiative was funded by a combination of City funds, CDBG funds, and other sources.

In Jackson, the lack of data analysis and visualization is a key barrier preventing the Code Enforcement team from maximizing impact, despite their strong desire to do so. Currently, the City's demolition list includes 1,400 properties. Local stakeholders believe this is incomplete—since it is built largely on reactive reports and staff observations. Equally important, the City lacks a clear picture of vacant properties that do **not** require demolition. These properties represent an important subset of properties where non-demolition intervention is needed to preserve the existing fabric of Jackson—and prevent tomorrow's demolition candidate.

With enhanced data collection and analysis efforts the City could:

- **Quantify true need:** The cost per demolition ranges from \$7,000- \$20,000. The existing list alone suggests up to a \$28 million cost. But given possible omissions and better understanding of property type (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial), the actual need may reach or exceed \$40 million.
- **Prioritize more effectively:** Data should be the foundation on which the City builds a strategic approach to addressing vacant properties. Parcel level data can help triage properties by priority, not just by complaints. The City already prioritizes code violations at properties located near schools and churches. Enhanced data could track which of these areas are most in need of intervention.
- **Build capacity:** In this past year, Code Enforcement increased its capacity by hiring additional officers. This has allowed the team to file nearly 1,500 cases, and take a thoughtful resident-center approach. Clarifying the true scope and scale of the problem will make it easier to advocate for more capacity, if its needed.
- **Strengthen funding efforts:** A clearer picture of the costs to address adverse conditions enables stronger advocacy for state, federal, and philanthropic support.
- **Improve public trust:** Sharing data-backed progress enables Code Enforcement to be transparent with the public and manage expectations given limited resources.

Recommendations

1. Develop an accurate understanding of outstanding code cases by addressing backlog of data in OpenGov.

There are nearly 5,000 cases in OpenGov where the case is noted as “active” or “open” but where a second inspection was never conducted or the case was left open after the owner complied. This backlog prevents the Code Enforcement team from accurately understanding the scale of the problem. Establishing partnerships with local or state-wide institutions, like Jackson State University, to develop tools to optimize efficiency in reviewing this backlog could be a significant asset. See Appendix B for more information on the benefits of such a partnership.

2. Work with the account administrator at OpenGov to create an improved workflow process to ensure data stays current and sizable backlogs are prevented.

Request that OpenGov create a “second inspection” activity as an automatic trigger after a set period (e.g., 30 days after initial inspection date), which will help ensure cases are put into a second inspection queue rather than held in limbo. The Code

Enforcement team may need to update their Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to conform with the new workflow.

3. Track outcomes of cases to identify tools that work, and those that do not.

Code Enforcement should track which workflow improvements help to better capture and assess outcomes. Some key questions for Code Enforcement to contemplate in partnership with OpenGov to assess the effectiveness of existing tools include:

- a. Can OpenGov be leveraged to capture and report out compliance rates? For example, when a property goes to Environmental Court, is there a way to track whether that action resulted in compliance?
- b. How much of the officers' time (as a percentage) is spent deploying the various code enforcement tools? Which tool or approach leads to higher compliance rates?
- c. How often does the City carry out multiple abatement actions in a year for nuisance violations on the same property?

4. Increase proactive data collection efforts through parcel condition surveys, in partnership with community organizations and local institutions.

Parcel condition surveys are a foundational tool to understand the inventory of vacant and deteriorated properties and inform the strategic allocation and coordination of activities and investments. Revive and Restore, a west Jackson nonprofit, is currently leading a parcel condition survey in a targeted area in west Jackson. They have engaged a group of volunteers to complete a GIS-linked survey in the field for every parcel (~9,500) in the targeted west Jackson neighborhoods. The survey includes questions on property type (e.g., structure, lot), occupancy, (e.g., vacant, occupied), condition (e.g., presence of illegal dumping, arson, demolition condition), and gather photographs.

The City and Code Enforcement should partner with Revive and Restore to analyze the data gathered through the parcel survey. Additional support from local institutions that have expertise in data analytics and mapping is likely needed to overlay and visualize the survey data. See Appendix B for additional information on establishing and sustaining data partnerships.

5. Aggregate, analyze, and map data related to VAD properties.

Code Enforcement should aggregate the data refinement and collection efforts described above with the existing code enforcement data from OpenGov and other City sources to better understand the scale of the problem.

Designating a target area could be helpful to pilot data collection and analysis efforts and inform comprehensive vacant property reduction strategies (see Priority 2). The geographic area in west Jackson where the parcel condition survey is being focused could serve as a critical foundation for data aggregation, analysis, and mapping. If that geography is not deemed the most appropriate pilot, consider piloting these efforts in another area of the City where vacant properties pose the most harm to residents.

As a first step, Code Enforcement should aggregate Code Enforcement data, parcel condition surveys, and County Assessor data. This aggregated data will provide a clearer picture of the scale and nature of the four different residential problem property types we heard were the biggest issue:¹⁶

- a. Vacant residential structures
- b. Vacant residential lots
- c. Substandard owner-occupied properties¹⁷
- d. Substandard tenant-occupied properties

Properties that are owned by the Secretary of State as tax-forfeited lands should include their own designation.

Parcel specific data can be leveraged to prioritize properties that are endangering neighbors in target areas or in tipping point neighborhoods. Sources for this analysis include:¹⁸

- a. Property condition, per the survey¹⁹
- b. Indicators of deterioration or vacancy, such as delinquent taxes, utility shut offs, or tax sales
- c. Direct City involvement within the last year, such as code enforcement cases, unpaid code enforcement fines, abatement work orders, or fire and police calls

The most effective mechanism to assess and prioritize VAD property interventions is to analyze the above data visually. Spatial analysis, or mapping, is imperative to prioritize interventions. This parcel-specific information should be visualized using a geographic information system (GIS) mapping platform. To use this tool, all data collection and analysis efforts need to utilize the uniform parcel identification number designated by the Assessor's Office.

6. Overlay market data with parcel-level data analysis.

Understanding neighborhood markets is critical to assess which enforcement tools have a higher probability of compelling compliance (see Priority 4 for additional commentary on the market's effect on code enforcement activities). The Reinvestment Fund is conducting a new Market Value Analysis (MVA) in partnership with Working Together Jackson and a coalition of other stakeholders. When complete, MVA data should be overlaid with parcel data to help determine the most effective interventions.

7. Assess capacity of Code Enforcement team given current need and scale of the problem.

¹⁶ Vacant commercial property was also raised as a large issue in certain spaces, but by most stakeholders identified on residential as the primary priority.

¹⁷ Identifying whether an occupied property is "substandard" or not will require additional data points from either the parcel condition survey or existing code enforcement data.

¹⁸ Analyzing the data based on the current year should be the starting point. As the City's data analysis capacity improves, it should also use this data to look at trends over time and identify neighborhoods that may be improving or declining and design appropriate interventions.

¹⁹ Ideally, parcel condition surveys are updated on a frequent basis (every 2 to 5 years) to ensure the information is accurate to present conditions.

While the City has taken important steps to expand the Code Enforcement team, the department remains under-resourced relative to the scale of need. Code Enforcement should assess the full extent of vacancy and problem property challenges to determine the staffing and resources truly required to respond effectively. The City should invest in ensuring its Code Enforcement team has the capacity and skills to engage more routinely and effectively with property owners and neighborhood organizations.

More resources are also needed to expand the team's outreach and engagement programs, such as weekend clean-up days (with the provision of food and refreshments), neighborhood tool sheds, and other activities to increase touchpoints between residents and Code Enforcement.

8. Leverage data to strengthen communications and build public trust.

Code Enforcement should leverage data to develop a clear, transparent communications strategy that informs residents of progress and neighborhood investments. A lack of visible updates often leads to confusion and the perception that no action is being taken.

Public-facing tools—such as an online platform showing code enforcement cases and outcomes—can demonstrate progress, celebrate successes (e.g., demolitions of dangerous structures), and highlight the ongoing need for more resources.

Data from tools like the MVA can also help explain the challenges of attracting private development in weaker markets and justify calls for additional public investment. By showing existing challenges and where intervention could stabilize neighborhoods, the City can rally support and build trust.

Priority #2: Leverage enhanced data practices and Code Enforcement expertise to create a comprehensive vacant property strategy.

Cities that make the most progress in addressing vacant properties do so with cross-departmental efforts. This typically involves forming a dedicated team of leaders from multiple departments whose work deals directly with vacancy.

There are many City departments that interact with vacant properties in different ways. To be successful, the approach must be coordinated and supported across the entire City government. The Code Enforcement team brings valuable expertise and can help lead the way.

Recommendations

1. Establish a Vacancy Task Force and appoint members.

Our work nationally indicates the best practice is for a responsible, high-performing person or department to take the lead on convening and overseeing the Task Force with authority from the Mayor's Office. We recommend the Mayor appoint a Vacancy Director to lead the Task Force. The Vacancy Director should have the ability to direct action and hold senior staff accountable to executing their shared goal of reducing vacancy and stabilizing neighborhoods.

Representatives from Code Enforcement, Housing, Law Department, Fire Department, Police Department, Information Technology, and other city agencies that touch vacant property should be appointed to the Task Force. It could also include relevant entities outside of City Hall, like the Secretary of State's Public Lands Division, Jacksonville Redevelopment Authority, or other closely aligned public agencies.

2. Establish recurring meetings and a shared vision and goals.

At initial meetings, stakeholders should define a shared vision that drives the group. The Task Force should first identify the City's desired outcomes, such as more quality, safe, and affordable housing and increased economic opportunities for residents. These desired outcomes should drive vision and strategy development, not the other way around. The City should consider the targeted geographic area, discussed in Priority 1, as the focus of the Task Force.

Then, the Task Force should identify priority activities that will help work towards desired outcomes. For example, if the Task Force identifies developing quality housing is a key need but vacant and abandoned homes on many blocks are preventing developers from investing, the priority could be directing resources to undertake a strategic and expansive demolition initiative in neighborhoods that the MVA has identified as relatively stable.

The Task Force should set a timeline and benchmarks for achieving this goal and report progress.

3. Leverage data to guide Task Force activities and priorities.

The Task Force should review data and relevant analysis on an ongoing basis to inform investments, assess the success of interventions, and evaluate its priorities. This includes assessing the utility of available legal and programmatic tools, reviewing data like the MVA and parcel condition surveys, and engaging community input.

4. Share information about the Task Force with the public.

The City should create a new landing page on its website to inform the public of the Task Force and its efforts. The website should clarify the Task Force's mission, promote its initiatives, celebrate wins, and encourage community feedback. Easily accessible information and regular updates about the Task Force will demonstrate the City's more strategic commitment to addressing vacancy.

Priority #3: Engage a coalition of local stakeholders to support a comprehensive vacant property strategy.

Code enforcement cannot do it all—and neither can the City. However, many non-City partners in Jackson share a strong desire to play a role in the city's revitalization. The City should incorporate the expertise and resources of these partners to complement its own strategy.

The Vacancy Task Force must develop an approach to productively incorporate partners into its comprehensive strategy. This could mean inviting the partners to Task Force meetings on a quarterly basis, convening partners for sector-specific discussions, or inviting certain partners to Task Force meetings where the agenda is aligned with that partners' area of expertise.

Recommendations

1. Engage identified stakeholders who can provide critical quantitative and qualitative data.

This engagement uncovered two immediate partners that could help with data collection and analysis. The first is the Water Authority, which expressed a desire to work with Code Enforcement to share meter reading data that could indicate vacancy. This data could allow for more proactive inspections and timely interventions. A second group of stakeholders are resident-led neighborhood groups, like Revive and Restore. As previously mentioned, Revive and Restore are working on a parcel condition survey and a resident sentiment survey in west Jackson.

2. Convene realtors, local developers, and nonprofit organizations to better understand development opportunities and housing needs across Jackson.

The City must engage and support partners who will build housing. Affordable and market-rate housing developers are key to informing and implementing a more comprehensive strategy. For example, insights shared by housing developers we met with during the engagement point to potential policy and practice reforms:

- a. Accessing land is not a major barrier. There is a good amount of available property, often at a relatively inexpensive price point that. However, many neighborhood markets do not allow for the rehab or development of new housing without public subsidy. The costs exceed what the market can or will pay.
- b. The cost to clear title of many vacant properties in Jackson—especially tax-defaulted properties owned by the state—is significant. This burden can make it difficult for projects to pencil out and can block private investment altogether.

The Jackson Redevelopment Authority is a critical partner, and their capacity has increased significantly in recent years. It is currently “banking” land with the intention of building single-family homes. The Secretary of State’s Public Lands Division, which owns the 1,700 tax forfeited parcels in Jackson, is another key partner. Fortunately, representatives from the Division are already discussing how it can divest its inventory in support of local goals to increase housing or catalyze economic development. The Task Force should include *any* public agency that handles or might take on a greater role in holding and managing vacant, publicly owned land.

3. Foster relationships with financial institutions and philanthropic organizations to bring additional resources to support implementation efforts.

The City should build relationships with financial institutions and philanthropic organizations that can provide funding to advance the City’s priorities. At least two CDFIs in the community demonstrated a desire to support development in disinvested neighborhoods. Others noted the need for better communications expertise to draw attention to the problems and the good work being done to address these issues.

4. Leverage coalition of local stakeholders to support advocacy and knowledge building around policy reform.

As the City and its partners assess existing policies and practices and pursue local and state reform (described in Priority 4), the partnerships and coalitions developed should be leveraged to support state-wide education and advocacy efforts. In Missouri, the St. Louis Land Bank Coalition²⁰—which included state legislators, realtors, legal aid organizations, and other key partners—successfully advocated for new legislation that achieved key policy reforms. These reforms included allowing municipalities to opt out of the harmful default tax-lien foreclosure process and adopt a court-supervised system that better protects homeowners, expediting the resolution of problem properties, and enabling the creation of land banks.

Priority #4: Assess efficacy of local legal tools and pursue state policy changes to fix ineffective and broken systems.

The most effective strategy for addressing **harmful vacant properties** is to get them in the hands of new responsible owners as swiftly as possible. Local governments can compel the transfer of these properties to a new, responsible owner through the effective, equitable use of two key legal systems: housing and building code enforcement and delinquent property tax enforcement.

Whether and to what extent this approach has been tried before or is appropriate in Jackson should be explored through deeper community and stakeholder engagement, review of historical city practices, and a deeper dive into existing law. Nevertheless, we provide additional context on these two legal systems and recommendations for how stakeholders might better assess and pursue appropriate policy changes.

Code Enforcement

The code enforcement tools Jackson uses to address *vacant* properties are similar to those used in other cities. However, these tools often fail to compel vacant property owners in Jackson to take action, making noncompliance the main challenge for the Code Enforcement team.

The effectiveness of legal action is often limited if a property has a low market value. Owners, if they have the resources, are less likely to invest in costly repairs that exceed the property's market value. In Jackson, where the poverty rate is high, many residents simply cannot afford the necessary improvements—even when legally required. The ability to obtain fair financing is a wider challenge for low-income property owners in historically disinvested neighborhoods and many people, regardless of income, cannot afford to pay for costly repairs in cash.

These conditions often fuel a speculative real estate market, where investors buy low-value properties cheaply but refuse to make repairs. Instead, they may extract rent from tenants with limited housing options or simply hold onto a vacant property, hoping for a future rise in market value. In these cases, more traditional tools like fines—with relatively little teeth to enforce when they go unpaid—are unlikely to be effective in compelling compliance.

²⁰ For more information, see “St. Louis County Land Bank Coalition.” STL Vacancy Collaborative, accessed November 4, 2025. <https://www.stlvacancy.com/stlcolandbankcoalition.html>.

Instead, the following tools/approaches are often more effective:

- Identifying owners of occupied properties who want to comply with local codes but lack resources, and connecting them to social services or grant or loan programs to help fund basic repairs.
- Creating strong rehabilitation and development incentives (e.g., code enforcement fine or lien waivers/releases) for owners to fix their vacant properties or facilitate the sale and transfer of vacant properties to new owners who will undertake rehab or development activities.
- Utilizing nuisance abatement or demolition to mitigate or remove the immediate, dangerous conditions (e.g., board ups, clean up debris) and placing a high priority lien on the vacant property either to ensure the City is paid back, or drive the vacant property through a public lien foreclosure (or tax foreclosure) process to a new and hopefully more responsible owner.

Delinquent Property Tax Enforcement

Property tax delinquency is a critical element of the vacant property cycle. Vacant properties, whose owners have walked away from responsibilities like basic upkeep of the property and paying property taxes, must be swiftly transitioned to new, responsible owners. However, Mississippi's delinquent property tax enforcement laws and practices allow vacant properties to languish for years.

Nearly all stakeholders were adamant that state law, especially when it comes to delinquent property tax enforcement, presents great barriers to neighborhood revitalization. In Jackson, tax certificates are sold to investors, who have the authority to collect the debt, plus additional fees, from the owner. If the owner does not redeem the property (pay off all the debt and fees), the tax sale investor can take title to the property, though rarely do. Importantly, **the tax sale process does not result in clear title**, creating a significant barrier for reuse of the property by future owners.

A well-designed delinquent property tax enforcement system is a strong tool for local governments to leverage. States with equitable, effective, and efficient delinquent property tax enforcement systems share these common features:

- The ability to add code enforcement costs and unpaid liens to the property tax bill, and to include those amounts in any minimum bid for the property.
- A judicial *in rem* foreclosure process that takes place at the end of the owner's redemption period, names the property as the defendant (not the owner) and provides notice that meets US Constitutional standards for due process. This process includes judicial oversight and results in a public auction of the property to the highest bidder, with any amount over the minimum bid going to the former owner.²¹
- A process that results in insurable and marketable title.

²¹ See Kim Graziani, *Reimagine Delinquent Property Tax Enforcement* (Center for Community Progress, 2022), <https://communityprogress.org/publications/reimagine-delinquent-property-tax-enforcement/>.

Recommendations

Many of the recommendations provided in this section are in response to the excellent questions and discussion around available tools and the perceived need for more robust state and local policy solutions with Jackson stakeholders. Exploring the utility of these tools and policies, including nuisance abatement, delinquent property tax enforcement reform, receivership, and others, will require deeper analysis to determine if and in what forms they are appropriate to address the challenges with vacant property in Jackson.

We include them in the memorandum to identify the breadth of possibilities and help frame their potential utility. This section provides some preliminary guidance and contains examples of how such a tool or policy has or is working elsewhere. Given limited resources, it will be critical to discuss which of these tools, if any, are appropriate to pursue, in partnership with the community, local stakeholders, and attorneys.

- 1. In coordination with the Legal Department, document the suite of currently available legal and programmatic tools. Leveraging information available via the data analysis, assess the utility or effectiveness of each tool as it relates to the various vacant property types.**

The review could include an assessment of how each tool might motivate the various types of owners (e.g., owner occupant, speculative investor, rental property owner) to comply. *Figure 1: Commonly Used Code Enforcement Tools in Jackson* should serve as the starting point for the analysis. To the extent possible, data should show how effective the use of any of these tools has been in achieving compliance or some other outcome (e.g., transfer to a new owner) preferred by the City.

- 2. Explore authority under state law to foreclose on nuisance abatement or demolition liens.**

Should the City have a responsible end user or caretaker (e.g., Jackson Redevelopment Authority, or a land bank if pursued in the future) for a vacant property that the City has abated many times, it could more aggressively pursue foreclosure of some of these code liens. Such exploration should also review whether title transferred at the conclusion of that process is likely to be insurable (e.g., proper notice was provided).

- 3. Explore whether nuisance abatement or demolition costs can be added to the property tax bill and whether those costs can be included in the minimum bid at the annual property tax sale.**

It appears there is some authority in state law for the City to abate nuisances and collect those costs in the same manner as unpaid taxes if the municipality addresses dangerous conditions by “cutting grass and weeds; filling cisterns; securing abandoned or dilapidated buildings; removing rubbish, abandoned or dilapidated fences, outside toilets, abandoned or dilapidated buildings, slabs...and other debris; and draining cesspools and standing water therefrom.”²² If so, the City could increase its chances of getting paid back its costs either by the owner seeking to prevent the loss of the property or by a speculative owner or investor.

²² See MS Code § 21-19-11 (2024).

4. Explore authority to ask a court to appoint a receiver or conservator to manage vacant or occupied rental property and where the receiver's lien for costs has an elevated priority.

It is unclear whether Mississippi law explicitly authorizes a court to appoint a receiver to manage, demolish, or sell property that is in violation of state or local housing and building codes, which is available in many other states.²³

Such a tool may be useful, but is often limited. Receivership is helpful primarily in situations where (a) there is value in the vacant property sufficient to pay the receiver in the event the owner fails to do so and the property is foreclosed on and sold; or (b) where there is sufficient rental income a receiver could collect to fund their efforts to manage and repair the property. There is a third option, where a receiver's work is funded out of a pool of public dollars to do the work, though this funding may be difficult to secure.

If receivership is feasible under existing law, the following questions could help determine its viability in Jackson:

- a. What properties might be eligible for this tool (e.g., is there a limitation on types of code violations that must be present)?
- b. What is the neighborhood market where eligible properties are located?
- c. What would the repair costs be?
- d. If costs for repair exceed market value, is there funding to subsidize the repairs?
- e. Do any existing entities have capacity to serve as receivers/conservators?
- f. Would the receiver be able to recover its costs through a high priority lien authorized by state law?

More research is needed to assess whether there are other receivership models that would be helpful for the City if Jackson or Mississippi stakeholders choose to pursue or expand receivership authority. One model that may be instructive is the Neighborhood Preservation Act (NPA) in Tennessee.²⁴

5. Coordinate with Hinds County to strengthen bidder accountability at tax sale.

The City could work with Hinds County to explore the County's legal authority to require bidder registration prior to tax sales. Stakeholders have raised concerns about bidders providing false or incomplete information to avoid responsibility for properties. Implementing a registration system with verification measures would improve accountability, help track down property owners, and limit the speculative purchases driving many vacancy challenges.

²³ See, for example, the Tennessee Neighborhood Preservation Act (NPA), T.C.A. §13-6-101 et seq.

²⁴ See TN Code §13-6-101 et seq. The NPA, for example, allows municipalities or certain neighbors, nonprofits, or land banks to file an NPA action and ask the court to appoint a receiver. A receiver has all the powers traditionally given to a receiver by the court, including the power to immediately foreclose on and sell or transfer the property at a public auction to a new owner. If the action is done right, it can also result in clear, insurable title to the new owner. Much more detail is needed to determine if this tool is a useful model for Mississippi or Jackson, but it is one example to help the City's analysis.

6. Explore, in coordination with the County, whether there is authority for the County to impose an additional registration fee on tax bidders to support efforts to address vacant properties.

This funding could be allocated to Code Enforcement efforts to offset maintenance costs on vacant, tax-delinquent properties.

7. Explore, in coordination with the Secretary of State, the ability to restrict sales of tax-forfeited properties to ineligible buyers.

Buyers who meet established eligibility criteria, such as a history of tax delinquency, unpaid abatement liens, outstanding City debt, or rental registration noncompliance should be disqualified from purchasing tax-forfeited properties owned by the Secretary of State. This would help prevent repeat offenders and bad actors from acquiring more properties and contributing to the ongoing vacancy challenges.

8. In coordination with Hinds County, conduct a comprehensive examination of state delinquent property tax enforcement laws to better understand how certain aspects limit critical revitalization work in many Jackson neighborhoods.

Reform should prioritize getting non-tax producing properties back to productive use in line with community goals and should seek to minimize harm by limiting the participation of investors who are participating primarily in speculative practices and have little interest in developing properties in line with the community's priorities. Community Progress' 2023 publication *Reimagining Delinquent Property Tax Enforcement*²⁵ contains an outline for how such a system might look and provides examples from other jurisdictions (e.g., judicial *in rem* property tax foreclosure in Georgia).

Conclusion

The City of Jackson stands at a critical juncture in its work to confront the entrenched challenge of widespread vacancy. Reversing neighborhood decline will require a comprehensive, coordinated approach rooted in data, guided by strategy, and sustained through partnerships. The Code Enforcement team has shown commendable leadership and a commitment to a community-centered approach that can serve as an example for other code enforcement departments nationally.

Jackson must prioritize building a foundation of accurate, up-to-date data that informs action and drives decision-making. Investing in better data systems and workflows will allow the City to understand the scale of the problem, allocate resources more effectively, and communicate transparently with residents and stakeholders. Leveraging this data, the City should empower a dedicated Vacancy Task Force—led by a designated coordinator and composed of cross-departmental leadership—to institutionalize a unified, citywide strategy for vacant properties. But the City cannot do this work alone. Revitalization will depend on the active participation of non-governmental partners—from resident groups and developers to legal experts,

²⁵ Kim Graziani, *Reimagine Delinquent Property Tax Enforcement* (Center for Community Progress, 2022), <https://communityprogress.org/publications/reimagine-delinquent-property-tax-enforcement/>.

universities, and philanthropic institutions. Their involvement must be embedded in the City's long-term strategy.

Finally, Jackson must assess and reform the legal systems that enable long-term vacancy, particularly the ineffective tax enforcement process and code enforcement tools. Local and state policy reforms focused on transferring vacant, harmful properties to responsible ownership with marketable title are necessary for Jackson to move forward.

With strong leadership and a shared commitment to equity and revitalization, the City can transform today's vacancy challenges into tomorrow's opportunity. Jackson is ready to lead boldly, invest wisely, and create a future where every neighborhood has the foundation it needs to flourish.

Appendix A: Stakeholders

Name	Title	Organization
Von Anderson	Director	Interim Director of Planning and Development.
LaTonya Miller	Deputy Director	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Samantha Graves	Code Enforcement Manager	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Jennifer West	Small Business Development Coordinator	Neighborhood Service Division Department of Planning & Development
Robert Brunson	Code Enforcement Manager	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Joseph Wade	Chief of Police	Jackson Police Department
Victoria Williams	Police Officer	Jackson Police Department
Frederick Suttles	Police Officer	Jackson Police Department
DeJon Arterberry	Police Officer	Jackson Police Department
Marco Johnson	Deputy Chief of Police	Jackson Police Department
Allison Cox	Executive Director	Jackson Housing Authority
Harvey Beasley	Code Enforcement Officer	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Jeffrey Sanders	Code Enforcement Officer	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Andrae Griffin	Code Enforcement Officer	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Marcus Grayer	Code Enforcement Officer	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Antwaur Bennett	Code Enforcement Officer	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Estor Ainsworth	Zoning Administrator	Department of Planning & Development
Paris Smith	Innovation Team	Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation
Angela Brown	Innovation Team	Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation
Stephanie King	CDBG Grant Monitor	Office of Housing and Community Development Department of Planning & Development

Dr. Robbie Smith	Senior Planner	Office of Housing and Community Development
Philip Massey	Executive Director	Urban Rehab Inc.
Warren Yoder	Director of Constituent Engagement	Open Door Mennonite Church
Reginold Jefferson	Deputy Director	Office of Housing and Community Development Department of Planning & Development
Vicotria Love	Rental Registration Manager	Office of Code Services Department of Planning & Development
Celestial Gordon	Senior Planner	Office of Housing and Community Development Department of Planning & Development
Kortenie Starling	Senior Planner/ Housing Rehabilitation Project Manager	Office of Housing and Community Development Department of Planning & Development
Christopher Pike	Executive Director	Jackson Redevelopment Authority
Andy Frame	Attorney	Jackson resident
Mary Elizabeth Evans	Project Manager	Gulf Coast Housing Partnership
Jamie Rasberry	Board Member	Jackson Association of Neighborhoods
Tyrone Hickman	Bureau Director	Public Lands Division Mississippi Secretary of State
Jordan Hillman	Chief Operating Officer	JXN Water
Charles Stokes	Tax Assessor	Hinds County
Lakeysha Liddell	Chancery Clerk	Hinds County
Brian Washington	Owner	B.E.W. Construction and B.E.W. Property Management
Debra Dixon	District 3 Supervisor	Hinds County
Ebonie Way	Supervisor Debra Dixon, Executive Assistant	Hinds County
Johnny Jones	Supervisor Debra Dixon, Assistant	Hinds County
Wanda Evers	District 4 Supervisor	Hinds County

Appendix B: Overview of Data Partnerships

Data is critical to understand the full scale and nature of vacant property challenges. It provides local decision makers with valuable information to help target revitalization strategies based on market conditions and identified opportunities. With data from city departments and affiliated organizations, communities are better poised to create equitable, effective, and efficient revitalization strategies.

Systematic data tracking, updates, and analysis allows for decisionmakers to understand underlying-root factors that keep problem properties “stuck” in decline and combat their negative impacts on neighborhoods. Despite the benefits of strong data collection, setting up and maintaining the necessary systems to collect, monitor, and maintain this data takes time, skill, and financial investment. Communities across the country have leveraged various expertise within local government and through local and regional partnerships to build out robust data consortiums and data portals. These partnerships have proved critical in setting the foundation for a comprehensive strategy to addressing vacancy.

We encourage the City and its partners to read a memo produced by Community Progress for the City of Dayton: [Exploring Open Data Portals and Data Consortia for VAD Property Interventions](#), which provides helpful information surrounding the type of data needed, technology and staffing opportunities, sustaining a system, and national best practices.

The City should consider reviewing this information in partnership with local institutions like Jackson State University or the University of Mississippi to explore what opportunities might exist for future collaboration. The partnership could start off small, for example, engaging students in the technology sector to develop analytic tools, through algorithms or AI, to address the backlog of unresolved code enforcement cases (as described in Priority 1). Longer-term engagement opportunities could include faculty and students establishing a data center to allow for multi-departmental data collection and analysis, including spatial mapping for parcel level data.