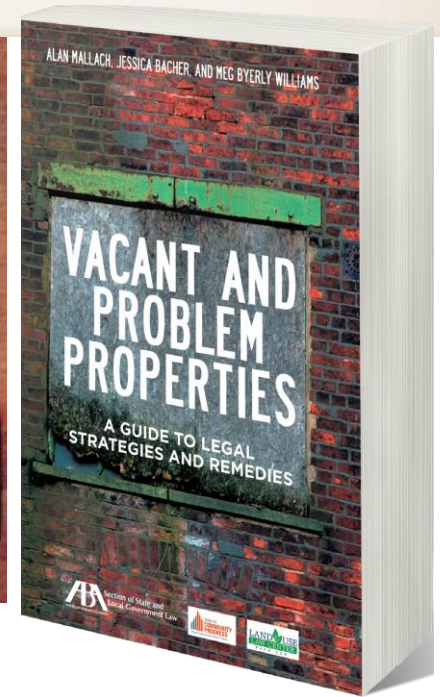
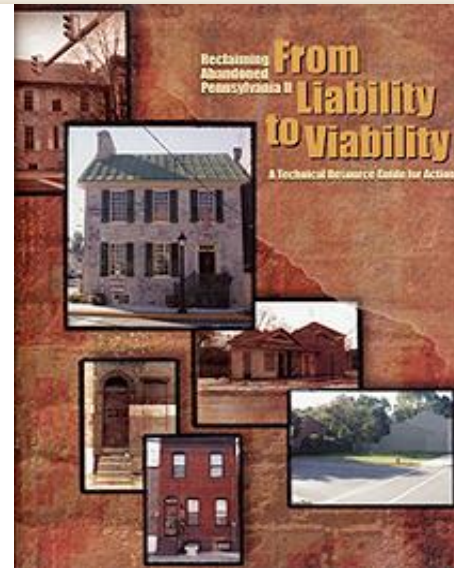
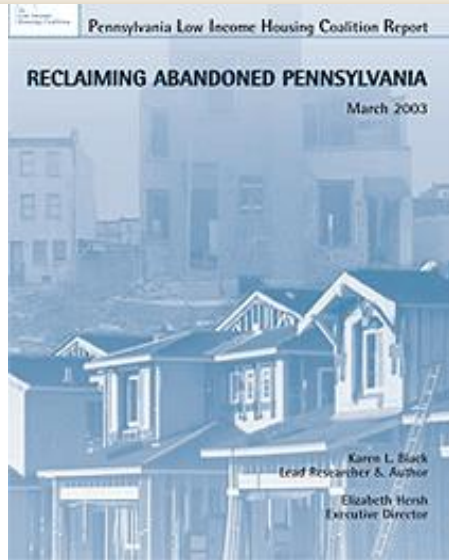
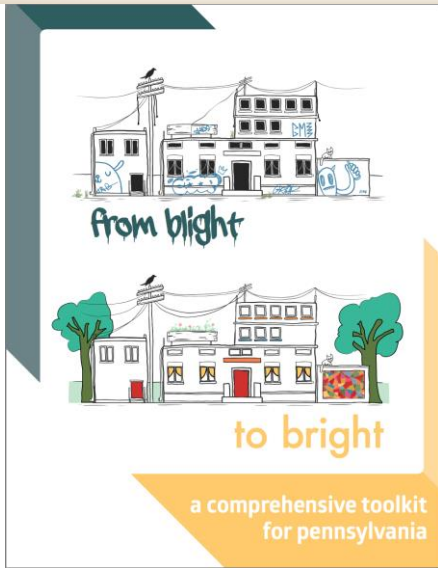


# Taking a Bite Out of Blight: Effective Tools and Innovative Strategies in the Battle to Reuse Problem Properties

Karen Black

MAY 8 CONSULTING

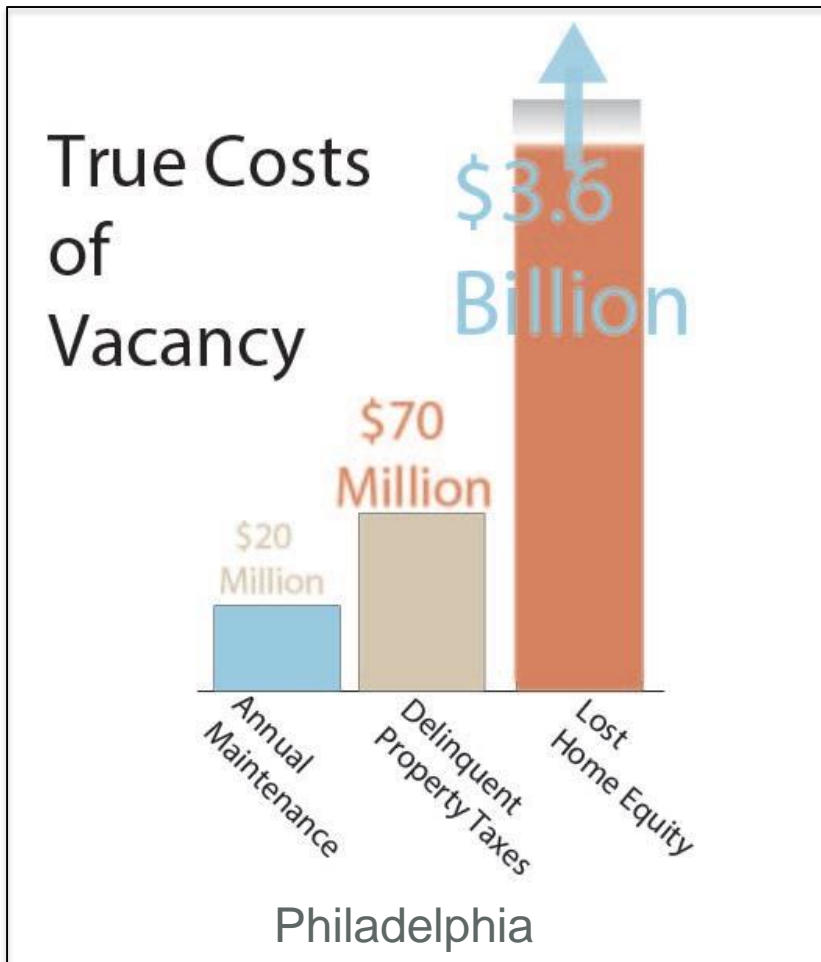


**Karen L. Black, Esq.**  
**May 8 Consulting Principal**  
**University of Pennsylvania Lecturer**  
**Healthy Rowhouse Project Co-Founder**  
**Drexel University Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation Senior**  
**Research Fellow**





# Status Quo Not An Option



## Vacant Land Management in Philadelphia

The Costs of the Current System and the Benefits of Reform

Econsult Corporation  
Penn Institute for Urban Research  
May 8 Consulting

Prepared for  
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia  
Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations

November 2010

# Huge Benefits when Eliminate Blight



- Reduces crime, in particular gun-related violence



- Improves health of residents



- Raises surrounding property values by up to 30% just by greening a vacant lot



- Increases tax revenue for city and school district

# Municipalities Authorized to Address Property Condition

**Federal and state law** - Local governments may enforce acceptable property conditions because deteriorated properties have “a profound adverse effect on the well-being of the community”



# Power to Inspect Rental, Owner-Occupied and Vacant Properties Differs Greatly

## **Owner Occupied:** “reasonable expectation of privacy”

- Must obtain a search warrant or have owner permission to enter
- May not need warrant for violations visible on exterior from a public thoroughfare

## **Rental:** Form of commerce so can regulate

- Tenants (not landlords) have privacy interest so may consent to search
- Moving from tenant complaint-based to strategic and systematic inspections

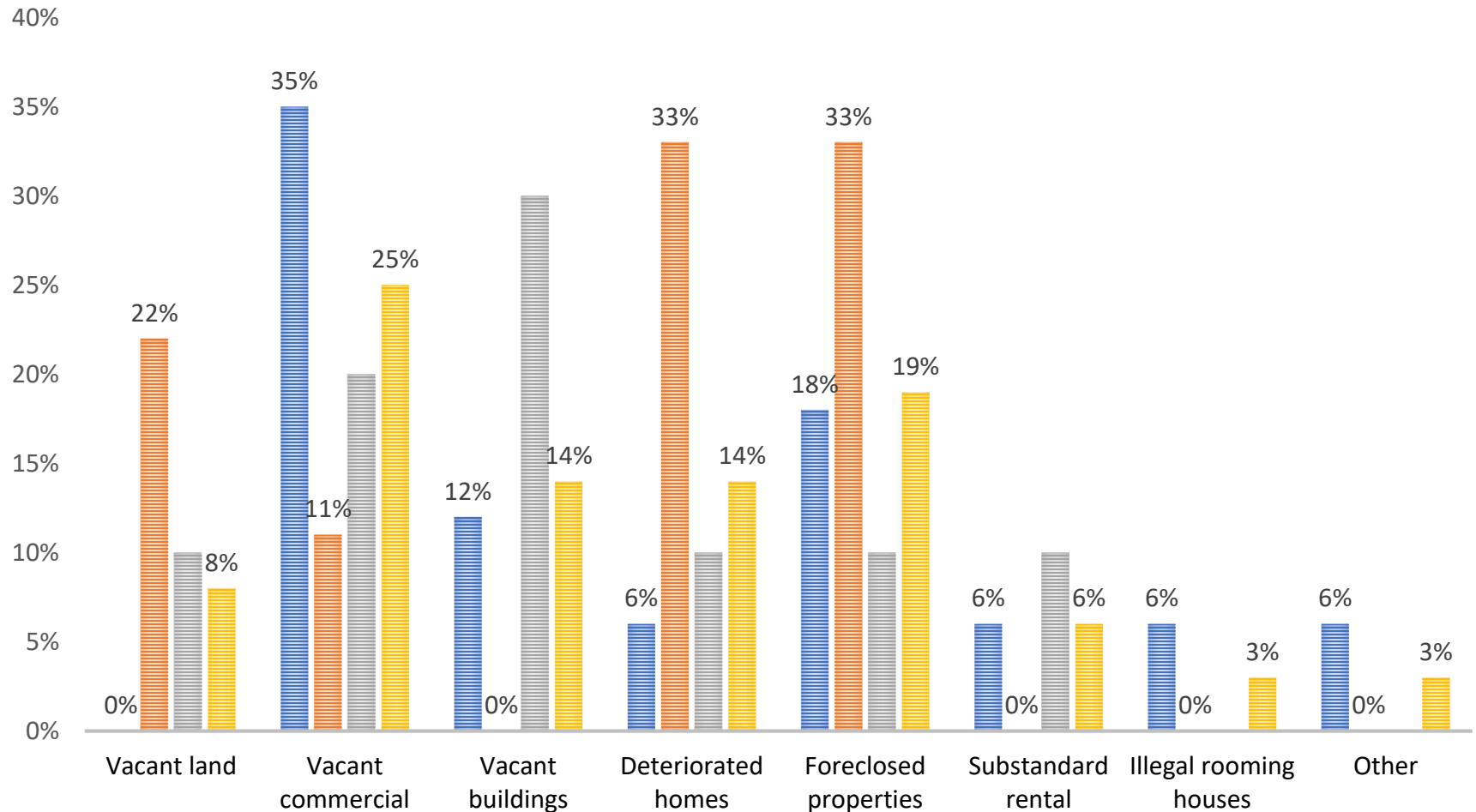
## **Vacant and Abandoned:** Most expansive

- Require owner to maintain and secure property
- Nuisance ordinances typically allow entry to maintain exterior
- Right to demolish property where poses health and safety risk
- Reimbursement through lien

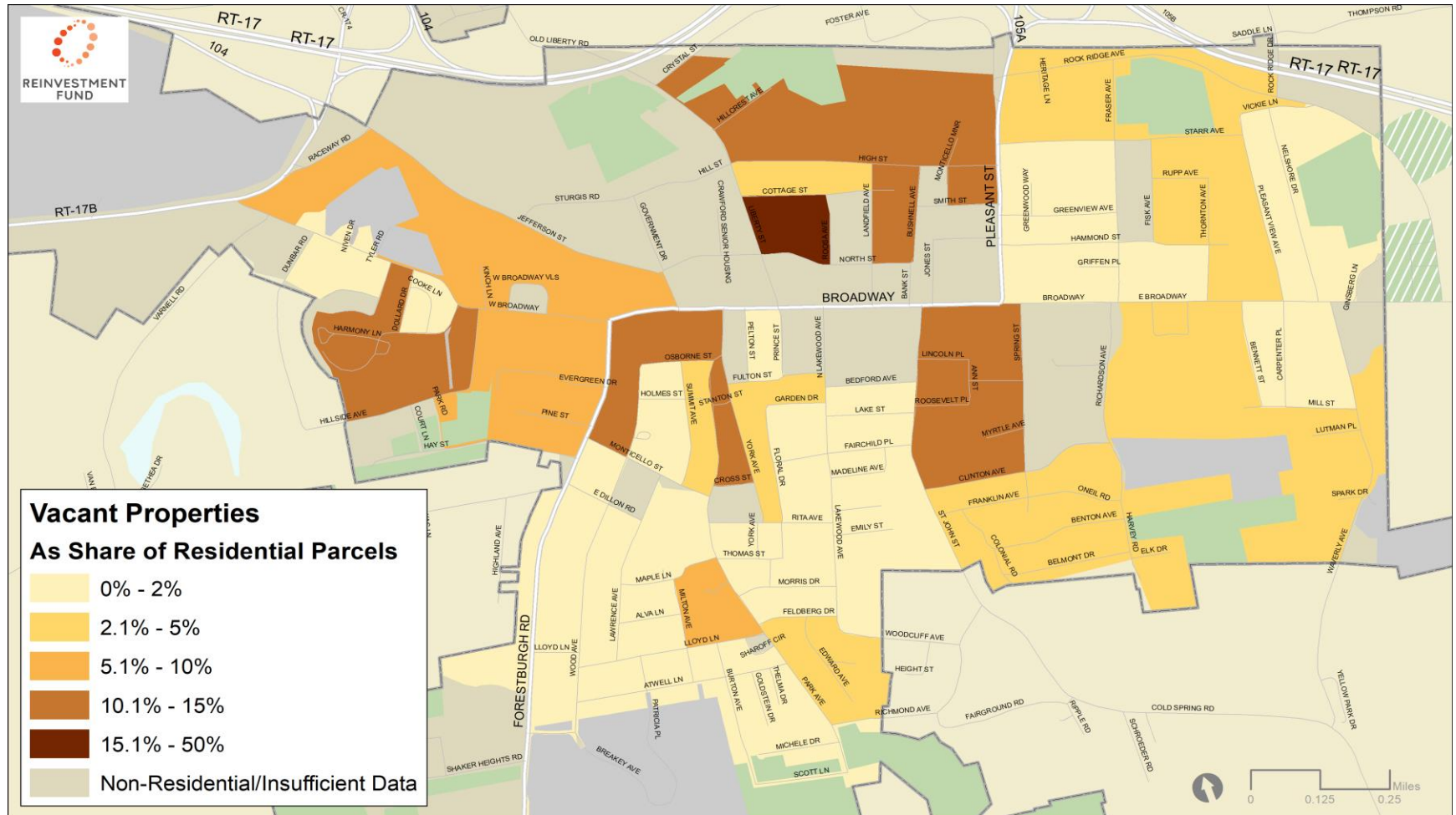
# Municipalities are Fighting Different Forms of Blight

What is the most significant type of blight in your community?

■ URBAN ■ SUBURBAN ■ RURAL ■ ALL



# Many New York Municipalities Have Challenges



Monticello Properties with Code Violations or Inactive Water Account





# Monticello, NY Market Analysis

	Median Sales Price, 2013-19	Share of Single-Family Homes	Residential Parcels with Homestead Exemptions	Property Sales Per 10 Homes, 2013-19	Homes with Permits, 2018-19	Foreclosures Per 100 Homes, 2016-18	Homes with Code Violation or Inactive Water Account	Share of Home Sales to Investors, 2013-19
A	\$72,839	71%	42%	2.50	4%	3	3%	29%
B	\$64,737	78%	40%	4.70	7%	8	1%	40%
C	\$47,824	63%	29%	4.18	7%	9	5%	46%
D	\$33,756	59%	22%	6.16	8%	13	8%	63%
E	\$32,348	51%	18%	4.43	5%	4	14%	48%

# States Are Modernizing Three Historic Tools

- 1. Code Enforcement** – Data-driven enforcement of a clear framework of standards
- 2. Tax Foreclosure** – Improved ability to ensure new owner has capacity and willingness to improve property
- 3. Eminent Domain** – Tool of last resort to transfer ownership



# States Are Authorizing A Series of New Tools to Address Problem Properties

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**What does it do?**



**How does it work?  
What is needed to use  
the law effectively?**



**How do we pay for it?**



**What policies and practices  
will increase our chances of  
successfully using this tool?**



**What types of property  
are covered?**



**What legal documents  
will we need?**



**What challenges  
will it solve?**



**Who is using the tool now?**



**Where does it apply?**



**How can we combine this  
with other strategies?**



# Many of the Tools Are Designed to Gain the Owner's Attention

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## Change the owner's stance

*from:*

**I'm going to  
ignore You**

*to:*

**How much time  
do I have to get  
my property into  
compliance?**

# Compliance is the Goal for All Tools

**COMPLIANCE**

ces  
s of  
ool?

 What

 How does it work?  
What is needed to use

 How

 What are c

 What challenges will it solve?

 Who is using the tool now?

 Where does it apply?

 How can we combine this with other strategies?

# New State Authorized Tools Seek To:

- Increase local government's ability to transfer to responsible owners (**land banks**)
- Require identification and registration of owners and properties (**vacant, foreclosed and rental property registration**)
- Make tax and code compliance a prerequisite for obtaining some government services (**permit denial**)
- Allow enforcement with limited court involvement (**quality of life ticketing**)







# No One Agency Responsible for New Tools

## City Agencies

### Include:

Mayor's Office  
Departments

- Planning and Community Development
- Public Works
- Public Safety
  - Police
  - Fire
  - Code Enforcement
- Judicial System
  - Municipal Court
  - DA's Office
- City Council



## Public & Quasi-Public Agencies

### Include:

- Land Bank Authority
- Housing Authority
- Public Schools
- Regional Commission

# Equity – Assistance for Lower-Income Owners

Improve health

Preserve the city's  
iconic housing  
stock

Create  
neighborhood  
jobs

Allow seniors to  
age in place

Become a more  
resilient city

Revitalize  
neighborhoods

Slow the decline of  
home ownership

Stop  
abandonment

Improve school  
performance

Lower healthcare  
costs

Prevent  
displacement

