
Clairton Southside Neighborhood Revitalization

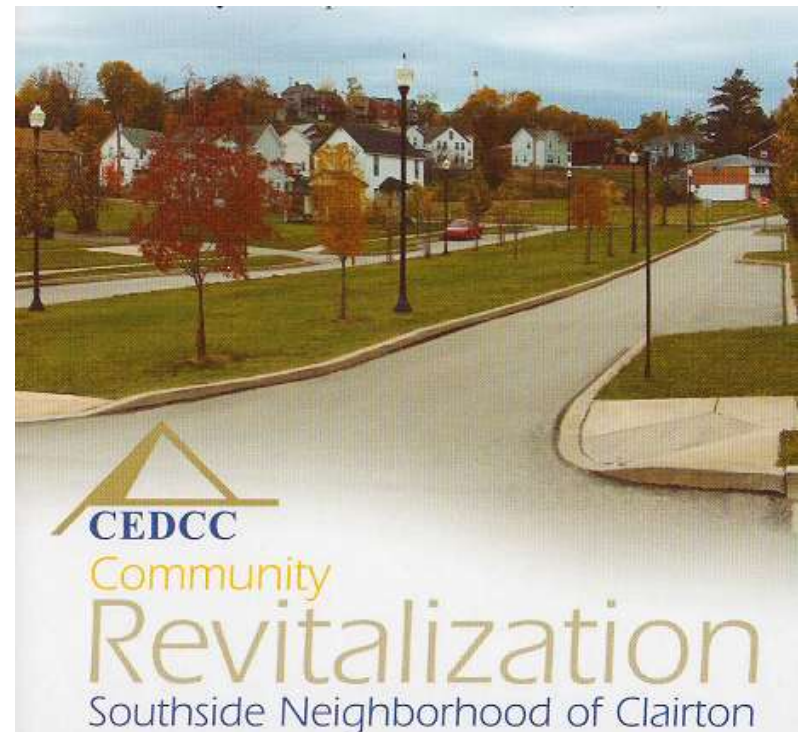
Neighborhood Transformation that Sustains
Long-Time Residents



Cheryl Maxwell Brooks Hurt, President
Community Economic Development Corporation of
Clairton
PCRG Community Development Summit
Putting the Community in Community Development
Pittsburgh, PA – May 25, 2011

CEDCC

When Pennsylvania's steel industry collapsed, Clairton lost over half of its population. But not everyone gave up on the city. A dedicated group of volunteers joined forces in 1987 to form the CEDCC, whose mission is to bring together the community of Clairton; strengthen and enhance the community for economic and social growth; and create a healthy environment for all. The CEDCC remains a mostly volunteer organization, with only one paid staff person who provides service coordination to residents of Clairton's Southside neighborhood.



Clairton Southside – “211”

In the 1990s, the Southside Neighborhood was known as “211” – police lingo for drug-related crimes



- Over 130 vacant properties in a 20 block neighborhood
- 45 condemned structures
- Some parts of the neighborhood had no sidewalks or street lights

Phase 1 – New Infrastructure

Allegheny County Department of Economic Development acquired vacant property and invested \$2.5 million in new infrastructure:

- Acquired over 120 vacant properties and cleared title
- Demolished 45 buildings
- Installed new street paving, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, sewers and street lighting throughout the neighborhood
- Created new green space



Phase 2 – LIHTC Lease Purchase

The community insisted that all new rental housing be affordable lease-to-own.



- Partnership with Falbo-Pennrose
- 44 new LIHTC duplexes and triplexes on scattered sites throughout the neighborhood
- Residents have right to purchase at end of the LIHTC compliance period for an affordable price not to exceed \$21,600
- 19 lease-purchasers are Section 8 voucher holders
- CEDCC has a Resident/Community Services Coordinator who helps residents transition to homeownership

Phase 3 – Single-Family For-Sale Homes

The CEDCC insisted that all new for-sale houses accommodate large families and be affordable to voucher holders.



- Partnership with Falbo-Pennrose
- 23 new scattered-site, single-family for-sale homes
- 1500 square feet, 3 BR, 1.5 baths, central air, full basement and all appliances; basement can be converted to 4th bedroom
- Sales prices ranged from \$52,500 to \$55,900
- 5 homebuyers are Section 8 voucher holders
- Financed with PHFA's Home Choice Program, CDBG, and Federal Home Loan Bank

Strategy: Local Hiring

The CEDCC insists that all contractors hire residents from the community.



- Partnership with Mistick Construction
- 17 residents hired on Lease-Purchase phase
- 10 enrolled in 6-month pre-construction training program (1 day/week)
- 2 admitted into painting and drywall union apprenticeship program
- 8 still employed in the building trades two years after the job was finished

Phase 4 - Owner-Occupied Rehab

The CEDCC joined with housing advocates state-wide to convince PHFA to create a home repair grant demonstration program.

- Partnership with ACTION-Housing
- 36 homes rehabilitated
- Average rehab cost is \$22,500
- Repairs included health and safety, energy efficiency, accessibility, facade, and owner-requested repairs
- Financed through PHFA, FHLB and Allegheny County HOME funding.



Southside Homeowner Demographics



Applicants

- **31%** mortgage or tax delinquent
- **14%** w/out clear legal title
- **14%** at-risk of foreclosure (tax sale or foreclosure action filed)

Assisted Homeowners

- **50%** extremely low-income (30% of area median income or below)
- **75%** elderly (age 65 or older)
- **16%** disabled

Strategy: Equity Protection Services

NeighborWorks WPa

- Helped 17 homeowners negotiate affordable repayment plans to resolve property tax or mortgage delinquencies
- 85% of all applicants who had delinquencies were able to resolve the delinquencies and save their homes
- Out of 9 applicants who were at-risk (tax sale or foreclosure action filed), only 1 house was lost to foreclosure

Equity Protection Legal Clinic

- Provided free “tangled title” legal services (title investigation and deed transfer) and “legacy protection” services (wills, estates and trusts)
 - Helped 5 homeowners obtain clear legal title to their family homes
 - Over half of all applicants who lacked clear legal title to their homes were able to resolve their title problems
-

Step 5 - Community Center/Playground

The CEDCC is building a community center and playground in order to bring needed services to the neighborhood and improve the quality of life.



- Partnering with U.S. Steel, R.K. Mellon Foundation and ACTION-Housing to build a community human resource center
- Will include space for social services, after school programming, meetings and community events
- Partnered with Kaboom! and Junior League of Pittsburgh to build the playground
- 300 volunteers came together for the playground build

Private Investment

The Revitalization has already led to private investment in the neighborhood.



- One former Clairtonian has bought vacant land in the neighborhood, built a home, and moved back to Clairton
- The CEDCC has recently learned that another private individual is interested in building a new home on a prominent corner in the middle of the neighborhood
- This is the first significant private investment in the Southside Neighborhood in over 30 years

Community Driven Master Planning: Hill District Case

Bonnie Young Laing, MSW Ph.D

Associate Professor

Youngstown State University

and Organizer Hill District Consensus Group

Core Approaches to Community Driven Planning

- Engagement
- Education
- Codification
- Assessment/Enforcement

Engagement



Engagement

Hill CBA

- 70+ organizations Mobilized
- Results Related to Master Plan
 - Funding Secured
 - City and Pittsburgh Penguins Use Mandated
 - Community Engagement/Approval Mandated

Engagement-Mechanism

The Hill District Planning Forum

The focus of the Planning Forum is to:

- Act as an advisory panel for development activities in the Hill District.
- Provide a unified voice for community support or opposition to development proposals.
- Serve as the first point of contact for developers in seeking community input and support for projects in the Hill District.
- Play a critical role in informing, shaping, evaluating, and updating the Hill District Master Plan.

Hill District Planning Forum

- The planning forum meets monthly. Meetings are open to all Consensus Group members and to the community. Entities wishing to undertake development in the Hill District are invited to present their projects to the Planning Forum. Only member organizations vote on proposals. The Planning Forum operates by consensus and only those proposals gaining 100% approval will be supported by the Planning Forum. This does not preclude members from supporting projects as individual organizations.

Education

- To ensure valid community participation in planning and development community residents and other stakeholders must gain a working knowledge of planning and development terms, processes, policies bodies and leverage points.

Education-Mechanism

Planning Schools

These are tools being in used in a set of communities, which have experienced what has been colorfully called “urban removal.”

These schools typically partnerships with universities and or planning experts.

Planning Schools

Through these partnerships community organizations have brought about the transfer of knowledge from experts to grassroots community leaders and neighborhoods residents.

These residents have in turn used their organizing skills and knowledge of public processes to build the influence necessary to ensure that new developments will benefit their communities.

Hill District Planning School

A 4 part series which introduced to community the basic knowledge to facilitate informed participation in Master Planning

Hill District Planning School

- Session 1. What is planning?

This session provided the attendees with an understanding of the core components of neighborhood and comprehensive planning

- Session 2 . Basics of Planning and Design in Pittsburgh?

This session familiarized community stakeholders with the language, stages and art of planning.

- Session 3. Nuts and Bolts of Pittsburgh Planning-Guidelines and Law

This session explored zoning and city planning approval processes.

- Session 4. Public Role in Planning Processes

This session will be designed to help stakeholders understand the points of influence they can use to effect planning and development.

Codify

The next step was to garner then document community wants and dreams for the Hill District. The Hill District Planning Forum carried this out by forming a sub-committee to generate principles for community development. There are 19 principles in total (see handout). The principles grouped into following five goals.

- Build Upon the African American Cultural Legacy
- Economic Empowerment and Commercial Development
- Family Friendly Housing Development without Displacement
- Make the Hill District a Green and Well Designed Community
- Mobility and Transportation

Codification-Development Principles

- **Build Upon the African American Cultural Legacy**-The Hill District is an African American neighborhood with a history stretching from the 18th century to the present. The Hill District will position itself as Pittsburgh's oldest African American neighborhood and retain its cultural and historical personality which should not be lost due to market pressures and gentrification. The Lower Hill must be reclaimed a part of the neighborhood and 'right of return' preferences for individuals, families, organizations and businesses displaced in the original Civic Arena development (Renaissance 1) should be included in plans for this area.
- **Economic Empowerment and Commercial Development**- Community residents, organizations and businesses will reap social and economic benefit from neighborhood revitalization efforts. Residents want financially viable institutions that provide jobs for community members, the retention of current businesses, new opportunities for entrepreneurship and equity stakes for its organizations.
- **Family Friendly Housing Development without Displacement.** Developments must include housing with both rental and for sale units that are affordable to various income levels. Proposed projects and initiatives must note how they will impact children and local schools. Housing developments will include play spaces in close proximity to housing developments. The Hill District will be place where children feel safe and nurtured. All housing developments within the Hill District must minimize the displacement of residents and businesses (See Anti-displacement Strategies).
- **Make the Hill District a Green and Well Designed Community.** The Hill District should benefit from the best in thinking around sustainability and quality design as demonstrated in the work of Find the Rivers. The Hill District will have a comprehensive strategy for vacant land and using housing development as a catalyst for economic and community development. Green strategies should promote urban gardening and connect Hill District trails with Allegheny and other trails.
- **Mobility and Transportation**- Entails ensuring viable and affordable transportation access to all members of the community. Also includes provisions to foster sustainable development and should promote walk-ability, street accessibility for the disabled and access to recreation.

Codify -- Anti-displacement Strategies

A key focus for many members of the community was to prevent the displacement of current Hill residents and businesses.

Codify -- Anti-displacement Strategies

For Residents

- **Build First**. Developers rebuilding where there are occupied properties can build replacement housing before asking residents to move, or by relocating residents on-site.
- **Inclusionary Affordable Housing**. Land can be zoned to make sure that at least 30% of housing units are affordable to low-income households.
- **Right to Return**. Developers can provide an admission preference or exclusive marketing period for current & former residents of the Hill District.
- **Equity Protection Services**. The City and URA can fund services to help existing homeowners resolve tax, title & mortgage issues.
- **Right to Remain**. Developers can make sure that residents in rentals who want to live in re-built housing can unless they have been evicted for 'drugs' or not paying rent.

Codify -- Anti-displacement Strategies

For Businesses

• ***National Chain Retail Restrictions*** .

• Developers can limit national chains that would sell similar goods or services already available within the neighborhood business district, so local small business owners are not driven out of businesses.

• ***Inclusionary Business Development***. Developers can set aside commercial space for businesses owned by Hill District residents or that are located in the Hill.

Assess/Enforce

The next key step was to ensure that community members have a formal and consistent 'yard stick' for measuring whether proposed community development projects meet their expectations.

Assess/Enforce-Mechanism

The Hill District Planning Forum has developed a 2 stage process and rubrics for rating community projects (see handouts).

- Stage 1. Project and Community Overview-a general overview of the project
- Stage 2. Development/Principles and Community Benefits Review- a more detailed review of potential benefits to community residents and organizations.

Assess/Enforce-Mechanism

The Hill District Planning Forum has developed a rubric for rating community projects (see handout for detail).

The Greater Hill District Development Principles Rubric

- 1** **Unacceptable**
Plan Reflects No Adherence to the Development Principles
- 2** **Insufficient Compliance**
Demonstrates Limited Adherence to the Development Principles
- 3** **Emerging Compliance**
Demonstrates an Some Adherence to the Development Principles
- 4** **Compliance**
Demonstrates a consistent Adherence to the Development Principles
- 5** **Advanced Compliance**
Demonstrates an outstanding Adherence to the Development Principles

Assess/Enforce-Mechanism Sample

Right Historical Wrongs-LOWER HILL FOCUSED	Score 1 2 3 4 5	Comments
1. Refers to The Mellon Arena and the Melody tent sites sit on the Lower Hill District as the Lower Hill District instead of as the '28 Acres'.		
1. Fully restores the pre-Arena street grids/roadways, so that Wylie Avenue runs completely into the downtown Pittsburgh street grid without barriers of any type.		
1. Preserves no physical remnant of Civic Arena/Mellon arena and the resulting displacement of 8,000+ Hill Residents and businesses.		
1. Includes 'right of return' preferences for individuals families, organizations and businesses displaced in the original Civic Arena development. (LOWER HILL ONLY)		

Summary

- Ensuring real and meaningful community involvement in community development goes far beyond having residents 'at the table'. Ongoing effort, institution building and formal processes are necessary to keep residents actively involved development and planning work that often takes decades to come to fruition.



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*Empower People
Lead Organizations
Grow Communities*

Data Driven Organizing:

Partnerships for Community Change in the Homewood Children's Village

Samantha Teixeira, MSW and John Wallace, Jr., PhD

5.25.11





Overview

- About Homewood and the Homewood Children's Village.
- How do vacant and abandoned properties threaten children's health?
- Measured neighborhood conditions as part of larger community initiative.
- How can we use data to mobilize residents for change?
- Partnership approach to research that leads to empowerment and capacity building.



About Homewood

- 1 square mile
- 9,160 residents
- 96% African American
- 61% of residents below 200% of poverty line



About Homewood's Properties

- 28% residential properties vacant
- 52% absentee ownership
- 57% tax delinquent
- \$9,152: average property sale price, 2009
 - \$90,491: average property sale price in Pittsburgh, 2009



The Village

- Child centered comprehensive community initiative.
- Property issues are a key aspect of Homewood's challenges.





Conceptual Framework

- Neighborhoods matter for children
 - Cognitive & emotional development
 - Academic achievement
 - Childhood injuries and maltreatment
- Vacant buildings, social and physical disorder
 - Associated with crime
 - Developmental delays
 - Fear
 - Limited active play



Project Background

Goals:

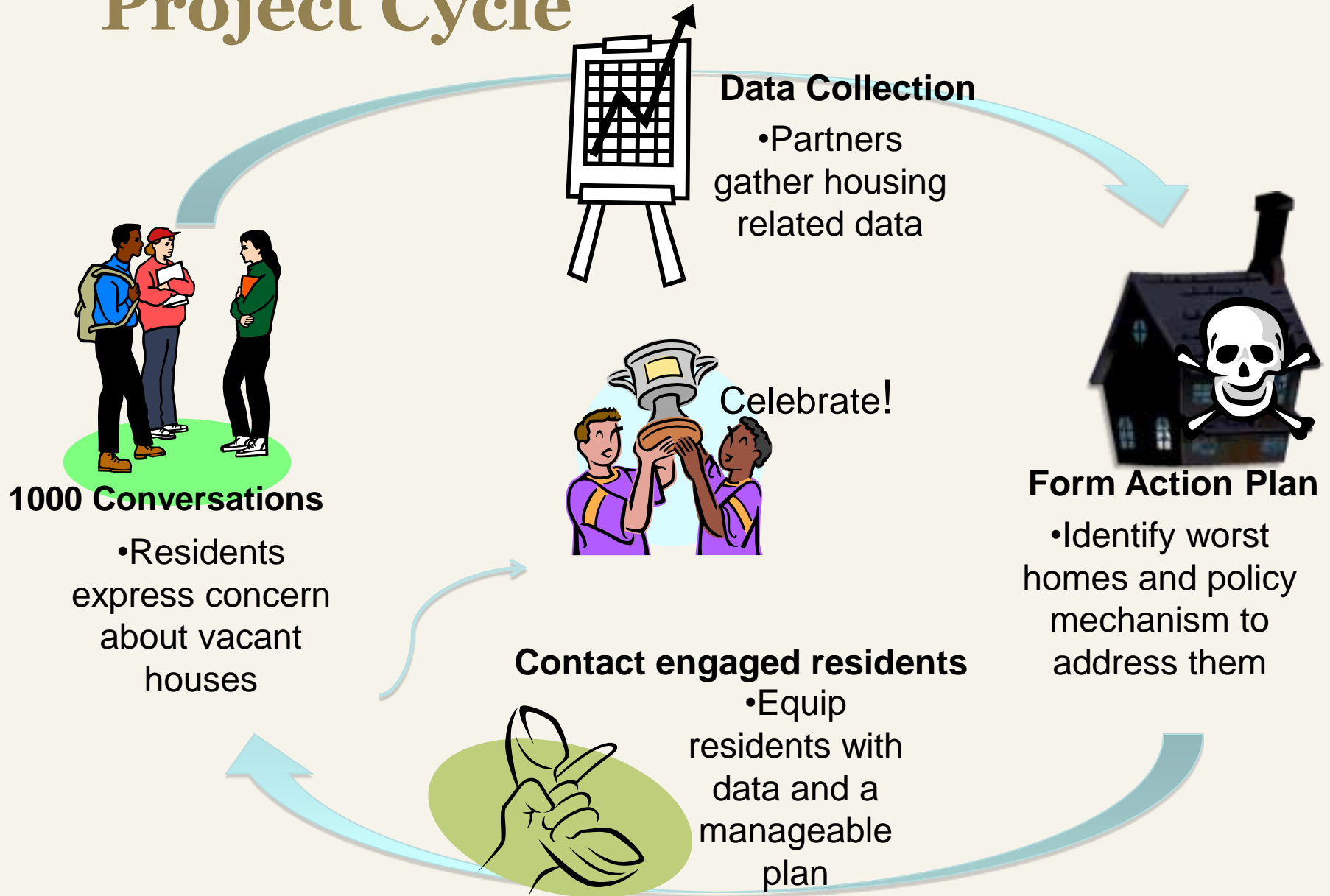
1. Assess condition of properties surrounding schools.
2. Organize and mobilize residents
3. Create lasting neighborhood change.

Partners:

1. Homewood Children's Village
2. University of Pittsburgh SOSW
3. Operation Better Block, Inc.
4. High school after school program



Project Cycle





Balancing Planning and Community Interests

□ **Researcher Interest:**

- Housing quality
- Neighborhood infrastructure
- Vacant and abandoned properties

□ **Community Interest:**

- Vacant and abandoned properties
- Crime





Methods and Community Engagement



- Systematic observation & property level measures.
- Assessed condition of properties surrounding schools.
- Developed list of properties that posed risk for children.



Data Driven Organizing



Data Driven Organizing: The use of data to mobilize communities for change.



Data Driven Organizing in Action

Homewood's Dirty Thirty:

- Identified properties in worst condition.
- Mobilized residents to take action.
- Tracked results using pre and post intervention photos.



Homewood Building Condition



Legend

- Exterior and Paint
 - No
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
- City Steps
- Railroad
- Streets
 - Street
 - Major Road
- Rivers
- Parcels
- City Neighborhoods
- Municipalities
- County
- Woodland
- Cemeteries
- Parks

1: 9,770

Notes



Results

- Properties Assessed: 1509
- Blocks Assessed: 65
- Number of residential homes: 876
- Number homes vacant & not boarded:
79
- Number in deplorable condition: 30
- Number improved after intervention:
23 (77%)



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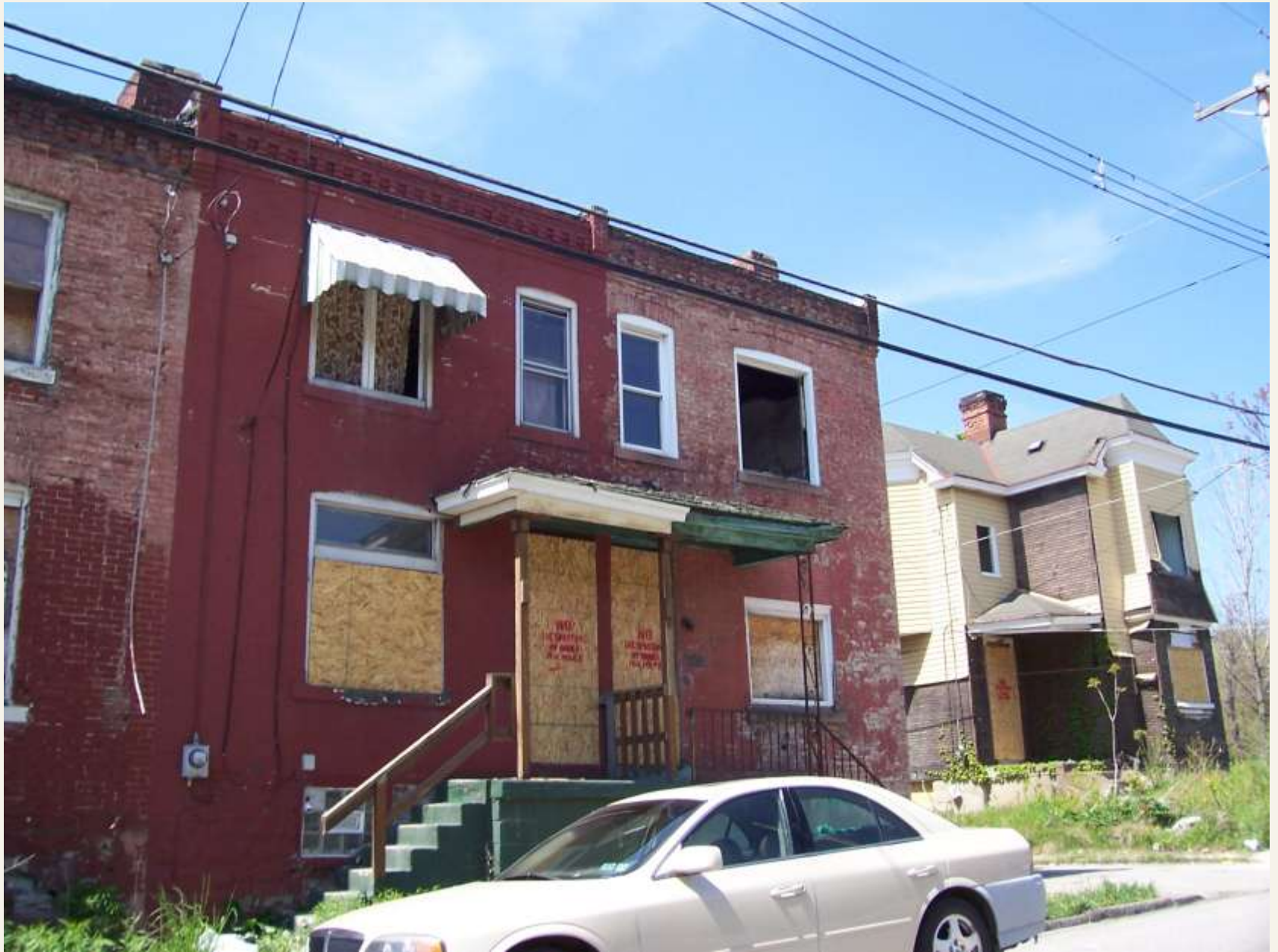




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Implications

- Grew from researcher interest but tailored to meet community need.
- Data validated resident concerns and promoted empowerment.
- Improved neighborhood conditions for children.
- Obtained results that were of use to researchers and community.
- Began neighborhood stabilization process.



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