

Transforming Vacancy in Walnut Hills

Relocal Analysis

Prepared for the Cincinnati Preservation Association
and the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation
by *PlaceEconomics*

January 2015

About the authors

This report was prepared and written by Cara Bertron and Donovan Rypkema. Bertron is Director of the Rightsizing Cities Initiative at PlaceEconomics, a Washington D.C.-based real estate and economic development consulting firm. She studied urban planning at Stanford University and holds a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania, where she wrote her thesis on incorporating preservation in older industrial cities' rightsizing strategies. Rypkema is principal of PlaceEconomics. He is the author of *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide* and an adjunct professor in the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Pennsylvania. The authors can be contacted at cara.bertron@gmail.com and drypkema@placeeconomics.com.

TRANSFORMING VACANCY IN WALNUT HILLS

Relocal Analysis

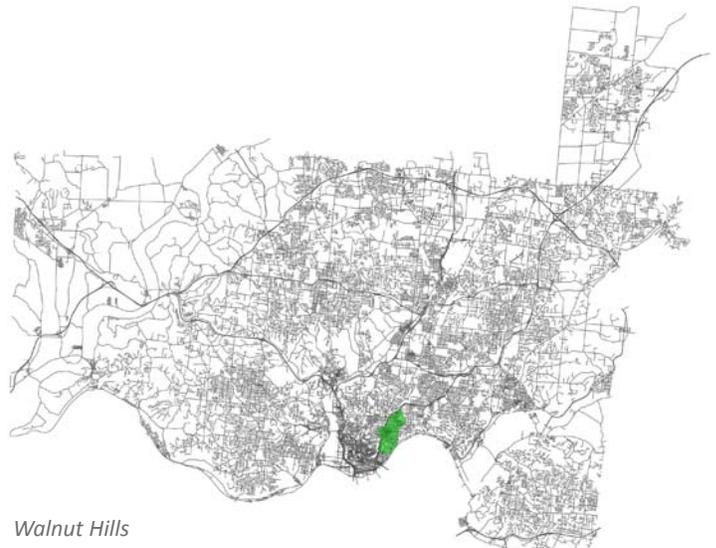
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1. Executive Summary

Cincinnati’s Walnut Hills neighborhood is on an upswing. In addition to resident efforts, a number of organizations and public agencies are focusing attention and resources on the neighborhood. Because no one has unlimited resources, it is critical to leverage existing assets and coordinate work to make efforts effective and sustainable.



The Relocal tool was applied to Walnut Hills to provide a data-based framework for coordinating these efforts. Parcel characteristics were analyzed within six subareas using nearly 70 quantitative metrics and a community-wide priority survey. The results yield an array of practical recommendations for treating and reusing apparent liabilities—vacant buildings and empty lots—in a way that strategically contributes to the vitality of the surrounding area and improves quality of life for residents. Local stakeholders can select specific strategies based on other plans, available funding, and collaborative coordination.

This report has a twofold purpose:

1. To offer an array of data-based recommendations for each vacant building and vacant lot in Walnut Hills in the intermediate term (5-7 years); and

2. To establish a flexible framework for local decisionmaking for multiple entities with different roles and priorities.

Each subarea of Walnut Hills has distinctive strengths and challenges. Most of the subareas scored between just 50 and 60 percent of the total possible score; the Southeast scored highest with 75 percent. This underscores the need for continuing strategic investment of time and resources to strengthen each subarea and the neighborhood as a whole. Five of the six subareas are recommended for stabilization at the current residential density.

Vacancy is a major issue in every subarea. In Walnut Hills as a whole, 10 percent of buildings and

<i>Relocal category</i>	<i>What it measures</i>	North	Northeast	Northwest	Central	Southeast	Southwest
<i>Real estate</i>	Past disinvestment and prospective reinvestment	↓	→	→	→	↑	→
<i>Stability</i>	Population trends and related quality-of-life issues	→	↓	↓	↓	↑	→
<i>Neighborhood character</i>	Sense of place through the built environment	↓	↓	↑	→	↑	↓
<i>Walkability</i>	Proximity to community assets and condition of bike-ped infrastructure	→	→	→	→	→	↓
<i>Fiscal</i>	Economic costs and contributions of neighborhood elements to City	↓	→	→	↓	↑	↑
<i>Economic opportunity</i>	Wealth-generating opportunities for residents	↓	→	↓	↓	↑	↓
<i>Engagement</i>	Resident participation in neighborhood	↓	↑	→	↓	→	→
<i>Environment</i>	Past land uses, natural resources, and current quality-of-life factors	↓	→	→	→	↑	↑

Neighborhood score: ↑ Above average → Average ↓ Below average

38 percent of parcels are vacant. However, this can be an opportunity to meet local needs.

Relocal recommendations at the parcel level contribute to the overall subarea strategy: in most subareas, to stabilize residential density. In some cases, the recommendation is to defer the decision. This acknowledges that Walnut Hills is changing rapidly, with many interlocking conditions that influence the neighborhood's evolution.

For vacant buildings:

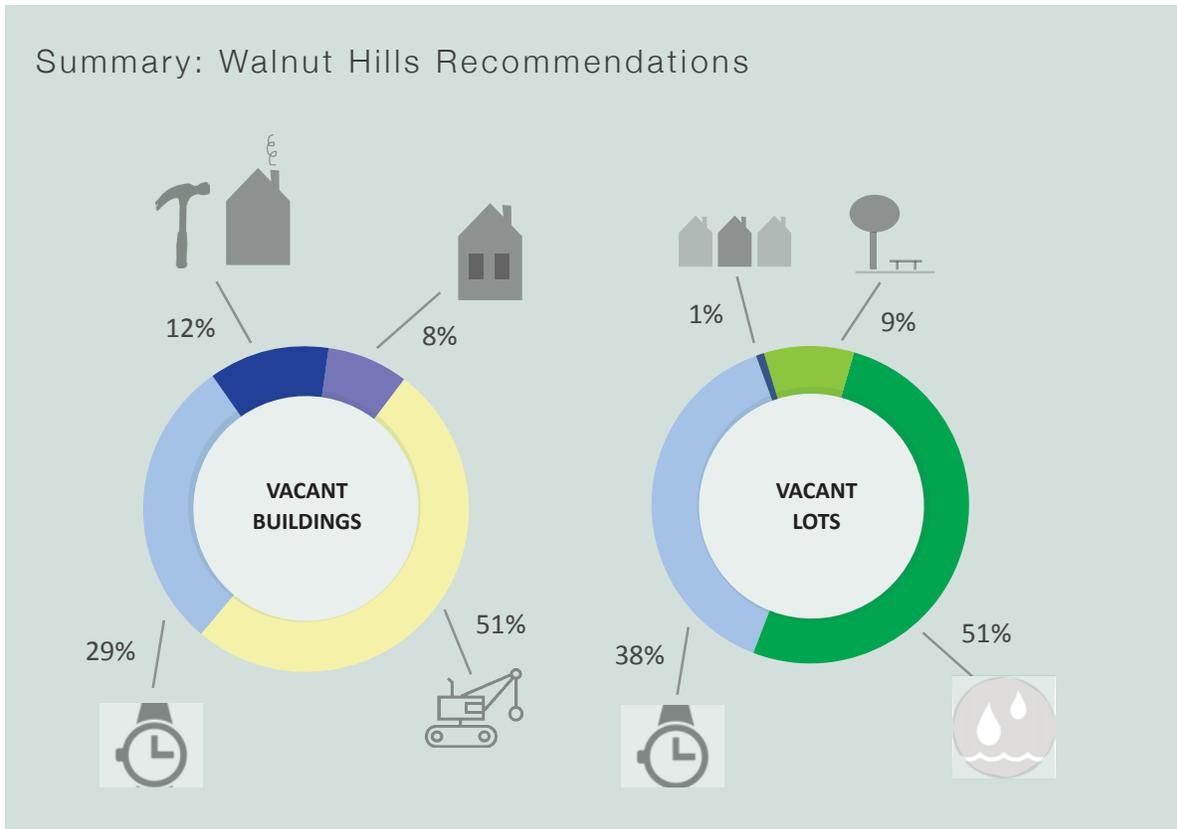
- 12 percent are recommended for rehabilitation and reuse, with prioritization of high-quality buildings in good condition that are located in intact blocks.
- 8 percent are recommended for stabilization and mothballing.
- 51 percent are recommended for razing and recycling, in keeping with the goal of stabilized density.

- 29 percent are recommended for deferred decisions.

For vacant lots:

- 1 percent are recommended for infill.
- 9 percent are recommended for contributing reuses that directly benefit community members. Contributing reuses include side lot splits and deed transfers to adjacent property owners, community gardens, or pocket parks.
- 51 percent are recommended for environmental reuses that effectively remove them from the residential and commercial real estate markets and transform them into natural ecosystems from the parcel to the block scale, blue-green infrastructure (e.g., storm-water management and treatment systems), or renewable energy production.
- 38 percent are recommended for deferred decisions.

Summary: Walnut Hills Recommendations



2. Introduction

Walnut Hills is gaining momentum. Located two miles northeast of downtown and Over-the-Rhine and just east of the university of Cincinnati, the neighborhood is home to Eden Park, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House, a re-energizing business district, and blocks of solidly built residences.

The neighborhood has seen significant investments of time and resources in recent years, with more on the way. Most recently, in fall 2014 the City of Cincinnati completed a 3-month Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) in Walnut Hills that focused the efforts of nine City departments and more community partners on a target area around Peeble's Corner.

The Walnut Hills NEP is typical of ongoing efforts to coordinate partners and resources in the neighborhood. The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation is working with other local partners to engage residents and improve quality of life throughout the neighborhood, with a \$9 million development project on the horizon. Keep Cincinnati Beautiful works to make vacant buildings and lots more attractive, decreasing blight and boosting community pride. The Hamilton County Land Bank is considering Walnut Hills for a targeted campaign of buying, rehabilitating, and reselling houses.

Relocal

The Cincinnati Preservation Association and the Redevelopment Foundation asked PlaceEconomics to apply the Relocal tool in Walnut Hills to provide a foundation for strategic decisionmaking and even more effective partnerships.

Relocal establishes a framework for long-range thinking about the direction of a neighborhood, as well as intermediate-term recommendations to help the neighborhood advance in the next five to seven years. It recommends data-driven, context-based strategies for vacant properties—strategies that turn potential liabilities into actual assets and set the course for greater neighborhood stability



and sustainability. These recommendations give municipal agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders the information they need to effectively target limited resources.

This is accomplished by identifying distinctive neighborhood strengths and challenges using nearly 70 metrics across 8 categories. Every category measures a different quality of place using information from municipal and county governments, federal and state databases, and field surveys. The resulting framework highlights existing assets such as walkability, quality building stock, and resident engagement, along with issues such as falling property values, unemployment, and crime. A community survey is used to gather residents' priorities for their neighborhood and influence categories' importance.

In Walnut Hills, a partnership with the Center on Aging and Community at Indiana University added another layer to the Relocal analysis. Communities for a Lifetime (CfAL) is a concept based in the idea that healthy communities engage, assist, and accommodate people of all ages, from the very young to the very old. CfAL questions were incorporated into the community survey and relevant metrics are highlighted in this report.

Methodology

PlaceEconomics staff conducted two visits to Cincinnati in summer 2014. We met with key stakeholders in July and returned in August to complete a field survey of every parcel in Walnut Hills. Volunteer surveyors spread out for a week to look at every parcel in the neighborhood, cataloguing vacant lots, graffiti, and sidewalk condition and evaluating buildings for occupancy, construction quality, architectural character, and condition.

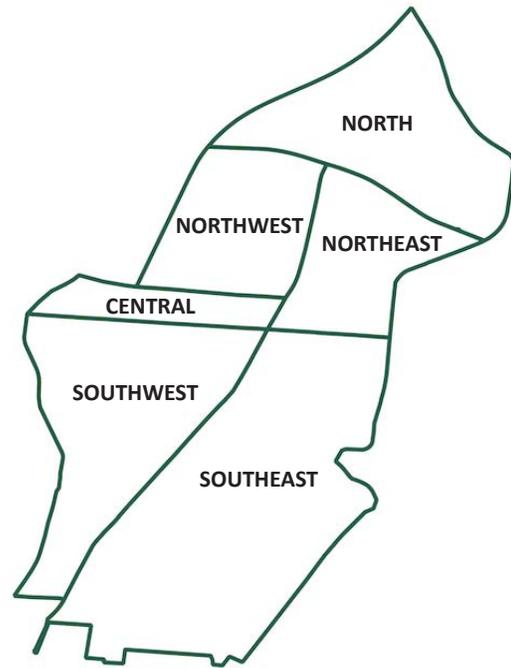
Walnut Hills was divided into six subareas for Relocal analysis. Each subarea was evaluated according to nearly 70 quality-of-place metrics across a broad spread. See the Relocal Framework section for more detailed information.

How to use this report

This report is structured in six sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Relocal Framework
4. Results
5. Recommendations
6. Appendix

The Relocal framework in section 3 provides a brief explanation of the tool's structure; more detail is available in the appendix. Readers interested in a specific subarea of Walnut Hills should reference the results in section 4. This section will be of particular use to municipal staff, the land bank, and neighborhood and citywide organizations seeking to make the most effective decisions about how vacant properties can contribute to long-term revitalization.



Walnut Hills subareas

3. Relocal Framework

The Relocal tool measures neighborhood vitality through eight quality-of-place categories. The categories span market forces and opportunities, the built and natural environments, and social capital. Each category is comprised of 7 to 14 metrics from a variety of sources and scales that identify strengths and challenges at the neighborhood level. The tool includes 77 metrics, 65 of which were applied in Walnut Hills. The remaining metrics were not used because the metric was not applicable, information was not available, or available data was not up-to-date.

Each metric identifies subarea performance for a specific element: foreclosures, architectural character, and voter participation, to name a few. However, not every metric is of equal importance. For example, public art is of value, but less significant in evaluating long-term neighborhood health than the condition of the local building stock. Consequently, each metric was assigned a weight relative to other metrics in the same category. These weights reflect the importance of each metric in contributing to a healthy neighborhood, and are applied when aggregating metrics into categories. Similarly, each category was assigned a weight to

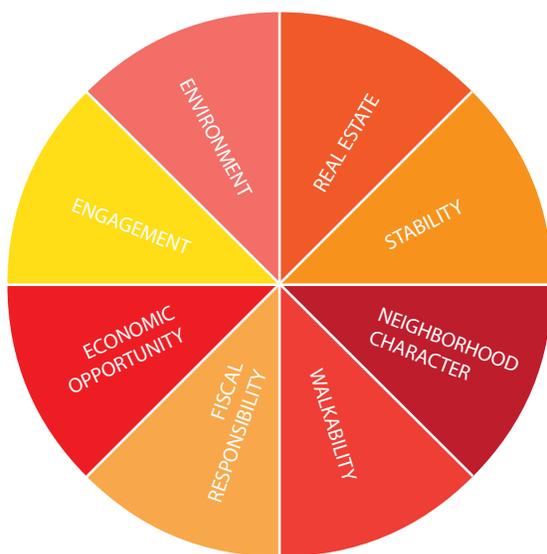
reflect its relative importance to long-term neighborhood health.

Then, a community survey was used to gauge local priorities. Relocal is composed of dozens of objective metrics. But it is important that local citizens have an opportunity to weigh in on which of those metrics are more important in their neighborhoods. To measure that importance, Relocal includes a community priority survey that asks citizens to rate some 50 neighborhood attributes from “Very important” to “Not important” on a 1 to 5 scale. With outreach assistance from the Cincinnati Preservation Association and the Walnut Hills Development Foundation, surveys were obtained from every part of the Walnut Hills through both online and hard copy surveys. The results were used to adjust each category’s weight according to its relative importance to the community—though notably consistent priorities across Walnut Hills meant that categorical weights remained the same.

Outcomes

Relocal offers strategies and tools to help local decisionmakers and advocates evaluate how to best utilize vacant buildings and lots as part of a broader neighborhood strategy. An array of recommendations is offered for each vacant building or lot, depending on a number of factors. Taken cumulatively, they will help effectively direct available resources and enable neighborhoods to become more stable, vibrant, and sustainable. These recommendations are for the intermediate term, five to seven years. This timeframe acknowledges that external factors will affect properties in the long run, but allows entities to lay out future plans for multiple years.

Relocal recommendations build on local strengths and emphasize long-range stability and sustainability. An area with committed residents, strong built character, and community amenities will likely be recommended for long-term residential use at current or increased densities. An area that is located in close proximity to natural features



Relocal categories

Relocal Metrics

REAL ESTATE

Property value changes
Property sales
New construction
Renovation
Vacant land
Vacant buildings
Foreclosures
Tax delinquency
Affordability
Diversity of unit size
Community development corporations

STABILITY

Population change
Economic integration
Diversity
Owner occupancy
Long-term residents
Signal population trends
Demolition permits
Crime
Fire calls

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Building quality
Architectural character
Building condition
National Register historic districts
Local historic districts

Design guidelines
Public art
Maintenance of public spaces
Graffiti

WALKABILITY

Street connectivity
Sidewalkability index*
Sidewalk condition
Public transportation
Bike routes
Walking trails
Traffic*
Schools
Neighborhood business district
Proximity to downtown*
Community centers
Other public facilities
Medical services
Walk Score

FISCAL

Property value per acre
Property tax generation
Sales tax generation*
Density
Density potential
Value of public infrastructure
Infrastructure depreciation*
Demolition to rehab ratio
Availability of intervention tools*
Use of intervention tools*

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Aggregate household income
Aggregate purchasing power
Spending power per acre
Employment centers
Neighborhood business district
Business/merchants association
At-home businesses*
Households with high-speed internet*
Immigrant in-migration
Unemployment rate

ENGAGEMENT

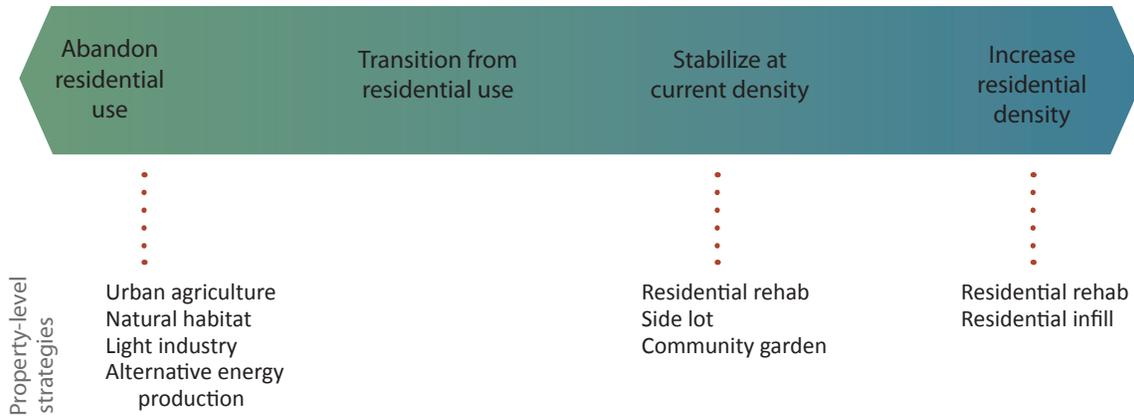
Civic associations*
Senior organizations
Youth organizations
Third places
Voter registration
Voter participation

ENVIRONMENT

Embodied energy
Tree cover
Water access
Slide areas
Brownfields
Air/odor pollution
Noise*

* Not used in Walnut Hills

Neighborhood-level recommendations



but has widespread vacancy and foreclosure may be recommended to return to natural habitat over the course of years or decades. Still other areas may be appropriate for lower-density residential uses.

Property-level strategies support each area’s long-range plan, balancing lot and building characteristics with the area’s context and direction. What happens to a vacant lot or vacant building—demolition, stabilization and mothballing, rehabilitation, or moving—should be aligned with the sustainable long-range plan for the area. In some places, the array of strategies presented here will help preserve residential areas that people will want to live in and return to: stabilization and rehabilitation of existing buildings, infill development, small-scale green spaces. In other places with decreasing populations, lower-quality building stock, and additional significant challenges, the strategies will support a gradual transition away from residential use and toward less dense land uses. In some cases, the recommendation will be to defer a decision and to focus limited resources on other properties. All Relocal strategies are designed to effectively use scarce public resources, raise the quality of life for current residents, and allow highly local decisions to be made within a strategic framework.

Recommended strategies vary: some are very simple, while some are complex. Some are low-budget but require political willpower or strong community support; others take more financial

resources. Similarly, some tools aim to catalyze small changes, while others have more ambitious goals. Strategies for two vacant buildings on a block may differ, but both contribute to the same long-range neighborhood vision.

BUILDING STRATEGIES

Strategies for vacant buildings are classified into four opportunity categories, each with associated tools.

Rehab and reuse: Vacant buildings that were solidly constructed, have high architectural character, are in good condition—and are located in neighborhood contexts where dense residential use is an appropriate long-term strategy—are recommended for near-term reuse. These buildings should be prioritized for rehabilitation dollars and incentives.

Strategies in this category include a rehabilitation by a private property owner, with or without public assistance or incentives; acquisition and rehabilitation by a public entity such as the land bank, with reconveyance to a private owner or reuse for a public use; and acquisition and rehabilitation by a nonprofit organization. Buildings in this category may also be moved, if the building score is exceptionally high but the most appropriate long-range use for the surrounding area is much lower density (e.g., return to natural habitat).

KEY TO SELECTED TOOLS

* Best practices from other cities/states

(F) Federal Program available to Cincinnati/Walnut Hills

(S) State Program

(LB) Land Bank Program

© City Program

(L) Local, Walnut Hills Program

Selected tools:

- Receivership ©
- Façade improvement program (L)
- Conservation guidelines ©
- Vacant Foreclosed Residential Property Registration Ordinance ©
- CRA Commercial Tax Abatement Program ©
- General Reutilization Program (LB)
- Tax credits such as Federal and State Historic Tax Credits and New Markets Tax Credits (S, F)
- Targeted use of Community Development Block Grant funding (F)
- Building Relocation Application*

Stabilize and mothball: Some vacant buildings have high quality, character, and condition, but are in areas struggling with high vacancy levels. Others have less exceptional building-specific qualities but are in areas recommended for stabilization. These buildings should be given priority when targeting stabilization and mothballing, an approach that will improve local safety and give the area time to recover.

Strategies in this category include the same players as in the Rehab and Reuse category: public entities, nonprofit organizations, and private property owners. Each can acquire, stabilize, and potentially reconvey a property, with or without public assistance.

Selected tools:

- Vacated Building Maintenance License (VBML) ©
- Façade Improvement Program (L)
- Future Blooms ©
- Receivership ©

Defer decision: Other vacant buildings have mixed strengths and weaknesses, and/or are in areas where trends around vacancy and revitalization are unclear. These are recommended for a deferred decision. The eventual treatment of these buildings largely depends on contextual patterns and trends in the subarea and neighborhood. If extra funding is available for mothballing, these buildings may be boarded up.

Raze and recycle: Some vacant buildings were built quickly and cheaply, or have been neglected for decades to the point where they are “too far gone.” Some are located on blocks with very high levels of vacancy. Buildings in these situations may be recommended for demolition or deconstruction, with materials recycling.

Strategies in this category focus on removal and reconveyance or reuse of the vacant lot, potentially with acquisition included. These steps can be completed by a public entity, nonprofit organization, or private property owner. Parcel strategies are provided for each building recommended for raze and recycle.

Selected tools:

- Strategic demolition and deconstruction*
- Future Blooms ©
- Code enforcement: Hazard Abatement Program ©
- Infill development

PARCEL STRATEGIES

Strategies for vacant lots are classified into four opportunity categories.

Infill: Vacant lots in areas recommended for increased density are good candidates for infill development. This may be small-scale or large-scale, depending on the context and the potential to aggregate multiple vacant lots. Strategies in this category focus on acquisition and reconveyance or construction.

Selected tools:

- Forfeited Land Program (LB)
- General Reutilization Program (LB)
- NYC Brownfield Partnership*
- Low income housing tax credits (LIHTC) for

- infill housing (F)
- New Markets Tax Credits for infill development (F)

Contributing reuse: Vacant lots in areas recommended for stabilized density should be activated in a way that creates a sense of ownership and adds to local quality of life. For example, a single vacant lot might be acquired by the City and designated as a pocket park, or acquired by the land bank and resold as a side lot to an adjacent property owner. Clustered vacant lots might be reused as the site of a pop-up neighborhood bazaar or a community garden stewarded by a nonprofit.

Strategies for this category include straightforward public acquisition and public use or reconveyance for private use, creative partnerships with community or arts groups, and private acquisition and use.

Selected tools:

- Lot split
- Neighborhood Support Program ©
- Forfeited Land Program (LB)
- Lot-to-Yard Program (LB)
- Gardens and Green Program*
- Future Blooms ©
- Pop Up City*
- Re-zone as an Urban Garden District

To return parcels to the tax rolls, ensure continuing stewardship, and reduce public responsibilities, lot split and reconveyance should be the top choice, given the following conditions:

- *At least one occupied building or one building recommended for rehabilitation adjacent to parcel,*
 - *A willing and financially responsible adjacent property owner, and*
 - *Lot size consistent with the typical lot size on the block.*
-

Environmental reuse: Vacant lots in areas recommended for decreased density over the long run should be carefully and consciously converted to passive uses. Potential passive uses include blue-green infrastructure, alternative energy production, or a return to native ecosystems. These uses

may be executed by public or private entities. A long-range stewardship plan is essential.

Selected tools:

- Geothermal Wells*
- Forfeited Land Program (LB)
- Code enforcement: Hazard Abatement Program ©
- Forfeited Land Program (LB)
- Dendro-Remediation Pilot Program*
- Green Overlay District Zoning
- The Greening of Detroit’s Vacant Land Treatment Program*
- EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant

Relocal recommendations should be applied with attention to city and neighborhood priorities, as well as the various funding sources that help make policies, programs, and incentives possible. Private, state, and federal funds have a range of focuses: improving housing quality, encouraging homeownership, preserving historic resources, shaping transit-oriented development, providing jobs, cleaning up brownfields, supporting local food production, increasing community engagement, and improving the health of ecological systems—to name a few.

Defer decision: Vacant lots in areas with mixed trends or patterns are recommended for deferred decisions. As with buildings recommended for deferred decisions, the eventual use of these parcels should be decided with reference to subarea trends and block evolution.

Communities for a Lifetime

Young creative professionals moving into urban neighborhoods have captured headlines in cities across the country, but there is a quieter movement happening among older adults. Empty nesters and others in the Baby Boomer generation are heading back to cities to grow older in a lively urban community.

A livable community accommodates, engages, and serves people of all backgrounds, incomes, and ages: from young adults to empty nesters, families with children to the elderly, and everyone

in between. But what does that community—that place—look like? What type of neighborhood is a sustainable home for people from the very young to the very old?

The American Planning Association and AARP agree on six basic qualities of livable communities, focused on safe and affordable housing and quality transportation options. The Relocal framework captures data on all of those, and Walnut Hills scores at or above average on each.

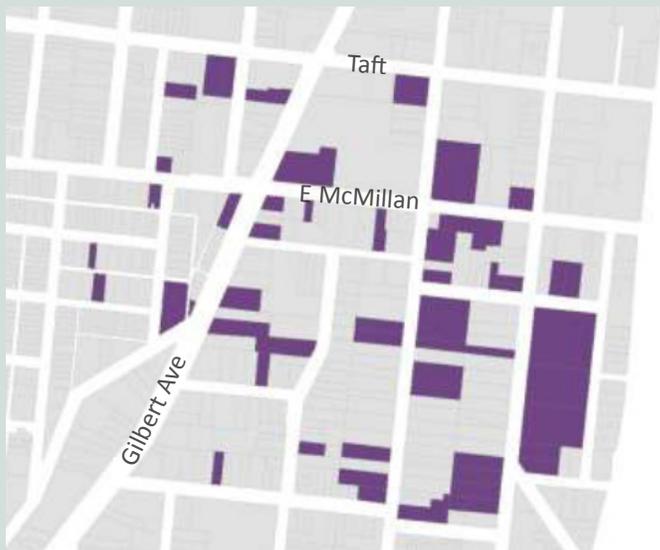
	Walnut Hills	Metric
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	More affordable than Cincinnati	H+T Affordability Index
SAFE COMMUNITIES	Roughly as safe as Cincinnati	Police calls per capita
ACCESS TO TRANSIT	Good access to transit	% buildings within 1/4-mile of transit
WALKABILITY, ESP. ACCESS TO GOODS, SERVICES, AND PARKS	More walkable than Cincinnati	Walk Score
PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY STREETS	Good sidewalks and condition, average intersection density	% parcels with sidewalks, sidewalk condition, intersection density
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	Good civic infrastructure	Third places, senior and youth organizations, active neighborhood association

These metrics are supported by qualitative data from Millennials (under age 35) and Baby Boomers (over age 65) who live in Walnut Hills. The Relocal community priority survey asked respondents to identify the most important neighborhood characteristics. Seven of the top nine most important characteristics were exactly the same for Millennials and Baby Boomers. This consistency did not appear in any other combinations of age categories.

- Neighborhood stability
- Low crime rate/safety*
- Ability to walk places*
- High quality of life
- Close to shops and restaurants
- Close to parks
- Not many vacant buildings

*Also qualities identified by the American Planning Association and AARP.

Potential Properties for Senior Housing



These potential properties for senior housing:

- Are located within 1/4 mile of a grocery shopping
- Are located within 1/4 mile of a pharmacy
- Are within 1/2 mile of a park
- Are in areas with sidewalks in good condition
- Have high or landmark built character

This map depicts parcels, not building footprints.

4. Results

Though Walnut Hills is gaining momentum, the neighborhood still has many opportunities for revitalization. Most subarea scores are just half the possible total score in the Relocal framework, indicating ample room for improvement. However, it is important to make targeted improvements based on local opportunities and challenges. This section discusses outstanding strengths and weaknesses in each subarea.

At the subarea level, five of the six subareas are recommended for stabilization at current residential densities, using various strategies. The Southeast subarea is recommended for slightly increased density.

As a whole, Walnut Hills is already a very dense neighborhood. Buildings, people, and households are located at higher densities than in the city as a whole in every subarea—often at much higher densities.

This high density supports business districts in close proximity to residential areas, a strong point for walkable communities. More than three-quarters of buildings are located within a quarter-mile radius of a neighborhood business district—an easy stroll—and nearly every building is located within a half-mile radius. The neighborhood is also job-rich, with more than one job per resident in four of the six subareas, though the unemployment rate tops 30 percent in all but one subarea—a missed opportunity.¹

Most subareas have a very good diversity of unit sizes. Typical of many older neighborhoods, this diversity creates options that are affordable to a wide range of household sizes and incomes. The entire neighborhood is affordable for housing and

transportation; half of the subareas are more affordable than Cincinnati, while the other half are in line with citywide costs.

Engagement scores are generally low throughout the neighborhood, with the exception of organizations for youth and seniors. All subareas contain or are located very close to youth organizations; some contain organizational resources for seniors as well. Environmental scores are also generally low.

An interesting result emerged from the community priority surveys, which were administered to Walnut Hills residents with the goal of influencing the importance—the weight—of metrics that emerge as very important to citizens by subarea. There was no significant statistical difference among any of the subareas within Walnut Hills as to what was important. Though the neighborhood is made up of subareas with very different economic, racial, and educational characteristics, there is extraordinary consistency in what residents count as important across the entire neighborhood.

NOTE: Various metrics are discussed in this section. Definitions can be found in the Appendix.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCORES

-  Above average
-  Average
-  Below average

¹ The jobs to residents ratio compares the number of jobs to the number of residents in a subarea. Where many people live elsewhere but are coming into the subarea to work, the ratio is greater than 1.

North

The North subarea is located at the northernmost tip of Walnut Hills. It includes 94 acres bounded by I-71 on the west, Victory Parkway on the east, and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive on the south. The subarea had a population of 1,071 people in 2012. It is recommended for stabilization at its current density.

Development patterns here are varied, with variously sized single-family houses interspersed with occasional vacant lots and multi-family housing concentrated northwest of Gilbert Avenue. A small commercial node stands at the intersection of Gilbert Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and a cluster of industrial warehouse buildings in the southwest corner of the subarea. German Cemetery occupies the northeast portion.

REAL ESTATE

The subarea contains diverse unit sizes that can accommodate a range of household sizes and incomes. However, long-range disinvestment has resulted in many vacant lots and little new construction. Nearly 4 out of every 10 properties are tax delinquent, and the foreclosure rate hovers around 12 percent. Between 2008 and 2013, property values fell by an annual average of -4.2 percent, compared to a citywide average of -1.7 percent.

STABILITY

The North has an average stability score. Its population is slowly growing, with an uptick of 1.4 percent from 2000 to 2010. Like most of Walnut Hills,

the subarea's owner occupancy rate is below average: 17 percent compared to Cincinnati's citywide homeownership rate of 40 percent. Economic integration is low, and the area is not very diverse among racial groups.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

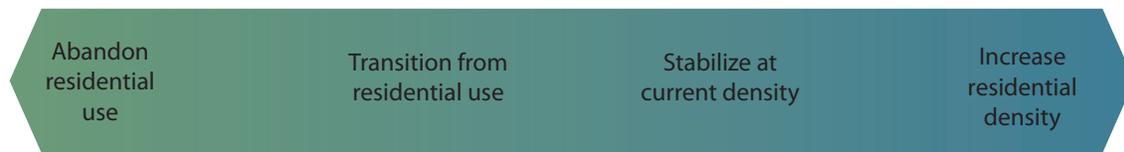
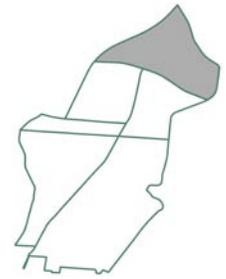
Most buildings are of a relatively low construction quality and do not have high architectural character. However, 68 percent of buildings are in good condition.

WALKABILITY

The area has good access to the small node of businesses at Gilbert and MLK Drive, but otherwise has below average walkability. Pedestrian traffic is limited by large roads on the west, east, and south, and smaller dead-end streets within the subarea. Only half the buildings are within walking distance (1/2 mile) to a community center. One-third of roads are designated as bike routes, the highest proportion in Walnut Hills, but only half of the area's buildings are within a half-mile of a public transportation route.

FISCAL

Reinvestment in the North's existing buildings is not happening at a high rate; indeed, 70 percent of building permits are for demolitions. Property value per acre in the North is over \$500,000 less than the city average and the lowest in Walnut Hills; consequently, the area generates relatively low property tax revenue. These factors pull the fiscal score below average.



North

↓ ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The North subarea has an economic opportunity score that is slightly below average. Median household income is half that of the city as a whole—\$16,000 in the North compared to \$33,000 in Cincinnati—and aggregate income across the neighborhood is low. Hyperlocal job opportunities are limited because of a very small neighborhood business district. However, half of those local businesses are part of the Walnut Hills Business Association. Nearly twenty percent of jobs in the subarea are in small businesses with 20 or fewer employees, and 4 percent of jobs are in startups in their first year of business—well above the city’s startup rate of .04 to 1.95 percent. This speaks to an impressive economic vitality that should be supported.

↓ ENGAGEMENT

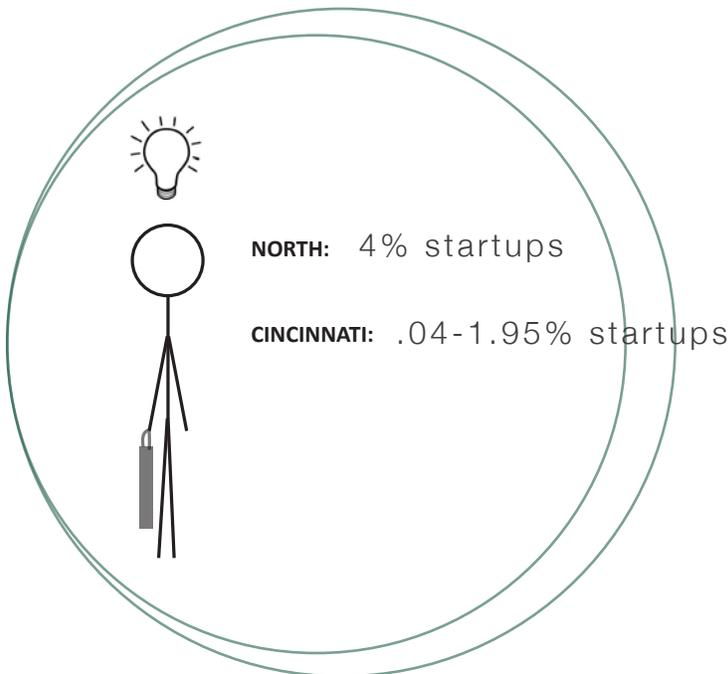
The North lacks formal and informal social institutions in close proximity. No senior organizations, youth organizations, or “third places” exist within

Third places are informal community gathering places such as coffee shops, bookstores, and bars. They provide safe places for people to casually meet and interact with friends, neighbors, and strangers.

a quarter-mile. Additionally, voter registration and participation rates are low.

↓ ENVIRONMENT

The subarea has an average environmental score. Nearly 16 percent of the area is classified at high risk for landslides, one of the highest proportions in Walnut Hills. On a brighter note, tree canopy covers 44 percent of the subarea, a higher percentage than the citywide tree cover.

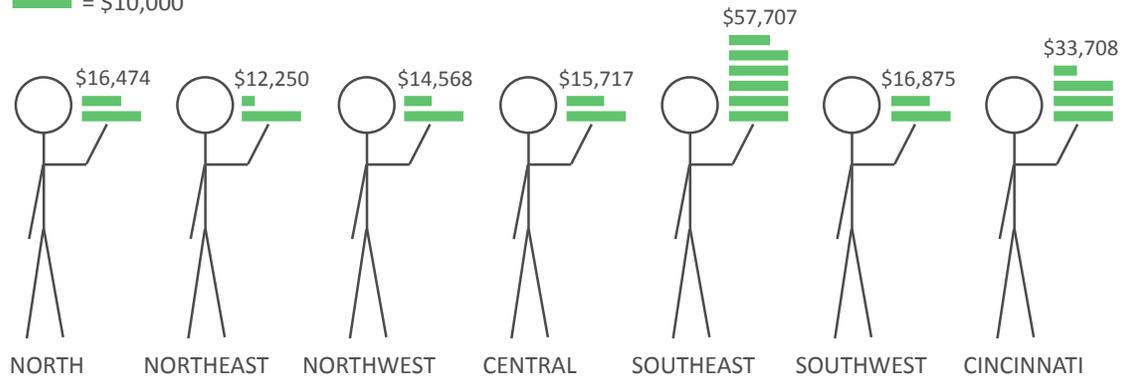


Percentage of startup businesses in the North subarea

Economic Opportunity – Selected Metrics by Subarea

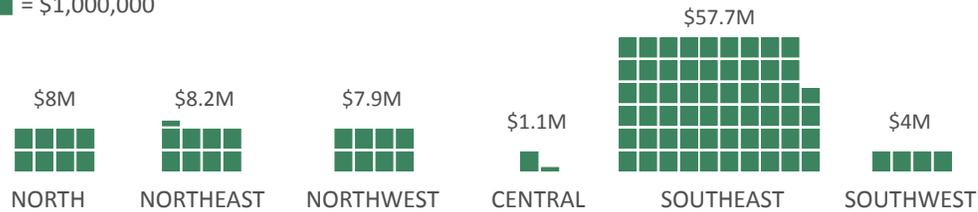
Median household income

■ = \$10,000



Aggregated neighborhood income

■ = \$1,000,000



Neighborhood purchasing power*



*Neighborhood purchasing power is calculated according to the number of households in the subarea and the proportion of income they spend.

Northeast

The Northeast subarea is centrally located in Walnut Hills. It includes 52 acres between MLK Drive and E McMillan, Victory Parkway and Gilbert Avenue. The subarea had a population of 862 people in 2012. It is recommended for stabilization at its current density.

Like much of Walnut Hills, the Northeast contains many types of development. Historic and big-box commercial buildings and large parking lots line Gilbert and E McMillan. Most residential buildings are single-family houses concentrated just west of Victory Parkway and on Park Avenue, though the subarea also holds a few larger multi-family buildings. There are a notable number of large vacant areas along Park Avenue.

➔ REAL ESTATE

In the past four to five years, property sales and average value change in the Northeast have been in line with the citywide average. The subarea is highly affordable; only 22 percent of households pay an unsustainable amount for housing and transportation (more than 45 percent of their income). Its diverse range of unit sizes likely contributes to its affordability, as households of different sizes and income levels can find a unit that meets their needs.

The subarea does face significant continuing challenges, which are reflected in lower metrics. One-third of all properties are vacant and one-third of all properties are tax-delinquent.

⬇️ STABILITY

Though the Northeast saw a 13 percent jump in population between 2000 and 2010—the highest growth rate in Walnut Hills—its other stability

indicators are well below average. The subarea has very low economic integration, with a concentration of low-income households and few moderate- to high-income households. Less than 6 percent of households own their home, and only 15 percent of residents have lived in the same place for more than 10 years. This could be related to low local homeownership rates, but other subareas with low homeownership rates have much higher numbers of long-term residents. The Northeast also has a high number of police calls per capita.



⬇️ NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

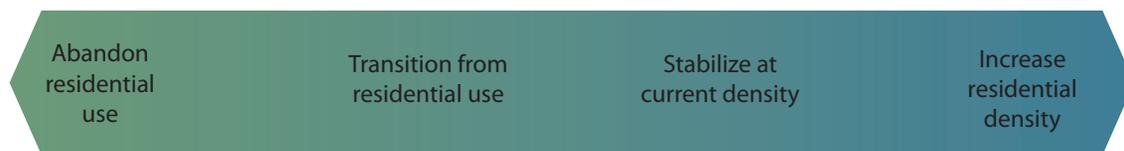
The Northeast’s neighborhood character score is well below average, and just half of the total potential score for the category. Though 66 percent of the buildings are in good condition, only 19 percent have high or landmark character. Seven percent of properties have graffiti tags on them.

➔ WALKABILITY

The Northeast has excellent access to neighborhood businesses along Gilbert Avenue and in Peeble’s Corner. The Walnut Hills Library, the Bush Community Center, and Frederick Douglass School are located near the center of the subarea. The vast majority of properties have sidewalks in good or fair condition fronting them, making it easier for pedestrians to move around the subarea. Overall, the category score is above average.

➔ FISCAL

The Northeast contains substantial public investment. It has the highest density of households and nearly the highest density of residents; public infrastructure and other resources are well used.



Northeast

There is potential for additional density, too, as nearly one in every three parcels is underutilized.

The subarea’s property value per acre is \$277,000 higher than that of the city as a whole. However, the subarea generates relatively low property tax revenue, as half of the highest-value properties are owned by non-tax-paying entities. The subarea has a high demolition to rehabilitation ratio—34 demolitions for every 54 rehabilitations.

 **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

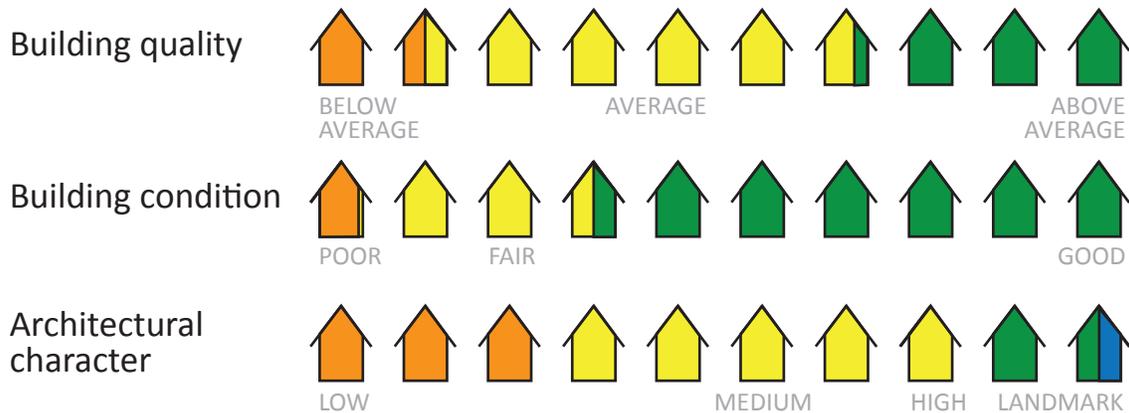
The economic indicators in the Northeast are mixed. One in every three residents is unemployed, and the median income is just over one-third of Cincinnati’s. Still, the subarea’s density generates a very high purchasing power per acre—the highest of all the subareas in Walnut Hills. Businesses in the Northeast generate roughly 1 job per capita, though the high unemployment rate testifies that those jobs are not reaching residents. No startup businesses were recorded in the subarea.

 **ENGAGEMENT**

The Northeast has the highest engagement score in Walnut Hills. Six “third places” were identified by survey respondents. Youth and seniors have specific places to gather in or near the subarea, with two senior organizations and three youth organizations within a quarter-mile. As across most of Walnut Hills, voter registration and participation rates are both low.

 **ENVIRONMENT**

The Northeast has an average environmental score. Because it has relatively few buildings compared to most other Walnut Hills subareas, the embodied energy in existing single-family and multi-family residential buildings is low. Scarcely more than a quarter of the land area has tree cover. However, there are no high-risk slide areas.



Building-level factors in the Northeast subarea

Northwest

The Northwest subarea is located at the northernmost tip of Walnut Hills. It includes 60 acres in 7 large blocks bounded by MLK Drive on the north, Gilbert Ave on the east, Oak St on the south, and I-71 on the west. The subarea had a population of 1,114 people in 2012. It is recommended for stabilization at its current density.

The Northwest’s built landscape includes many types of development, with commercial and industrial buildings as well as single- and multi-family housing. Garden apartments and a large apartment tower occupy the northeast portion, near the intersection of MLK Drive and Gilbert. The area between Stanton Avenue and I-71 holds industrial uses clustered along an old railroad line, including a few substantial brick buildings. Most commercial buildings are located on Gilbert. Interior streets in the subarea hold predominantly single-family houses, along with scattered multi-family buildings and parking lots.

➔ REAL ESTATE

The Northwest’s real estate score is a mix of positive and negative trends. The subarea saw one in every five properties rehabilitated between 2003 and 2013, and an amount of new construction in line with the citywide rate. Housing and transportation costs are affordable. Yet the subarea has high vacancy rates to contend with. Nearly 18 percent of buildings are vacant—the highest rate in Walnut Hills—as well as 37 percent of parcels. One quarter of all properties are tax delinquent.

⬇️ STABILITY

The Northwest lost nearly one-third of its population between 2000 and 2010, nearly twice Cincinnati’s

rate of population loss, and one-third of all building permits issued were for demolitions. Economic integration and racial diversity are both low. Likely because of the cluster of apartment buildings in the northeast corner, owner occupancy is not quite 10 percent: half of the Walnut Hills average and one-quarter of Cincinnati’s average. However, 26 percent of residents have lived in the same location for more than ten years—an indication of stability that is especially impressive given the low homeownership rate.



⬆️ NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

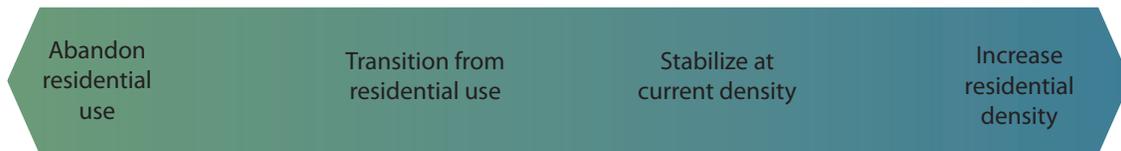
The building stock in the Northwest is a strong asset. One-third of buildings have high or landmark architectural character, and nearly 75 percent are in good condition. The subarea contains one local historic district with 23 buildings, which are subject to local design review to safeguard the district’s character.

➔ WALKABILITY

The Northwest is located relatively close to the neighborhood center, with commercial development and transit options along Gilbert. The majority of buildings in the subarea (60 to 65 percent) are within an easy walk (1/4 mile) of transit and schools, and nearly 90 percent of buildings are within a quarter-mile of businesses and public facilities and businesses. The subarea’s is rated “very walkable” by Walk Score, with a score of 72—much higher than the citywide score of 50.

➔ FISCAL

The Northwest has an average fiscal score compared to other Walnut Hills subareas. The high



Northwest

density of the neighborhood makes for efficient use of infrastructure, but the total investment in infrastructure is among the lowest in the neighborhood. Per-acre property value is \$75,000 less than the city average, and property tax generation is consequently low.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Like most of Walnut Hills, the Northwest has unemployment rates of more than 30 percent. The subarea’s median household income is very low, less than half that of the city as a whole, and aggregate household income is low. However, because of the density of households, spending power per acre is one of the highest in Walnut Hills: nearly \$260,000 per acre.

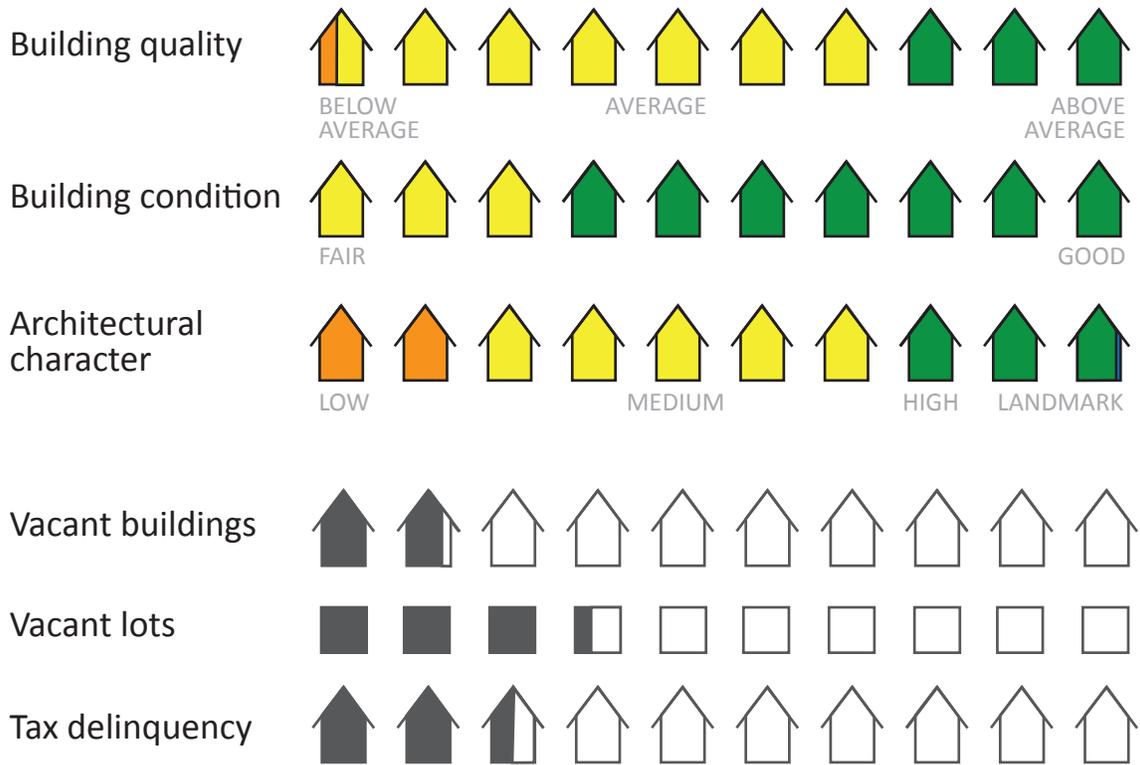
The Northwest has a relatively high number of jobs compared to residents, with 0.4 jobs per resident. Nearly 1 in every 4 of these jobs is in a small business with fewer than 20 employees, and 1 in every 8 jobs is in a startup business.

ENGAGEMENT

Voter registration in the Northwest is average for Hamilton County, with nearly 70 percent of residents over age 18 registered. However, the voter participation rate is much lower than the county-wide average: only 46 percent of voters voted at least once in a general election since 2008. This is typical of Walnut Hills as a whole. Subarea residents can utilize three youth organizations and one senior organization within a quarter-mile of the subarea.

ENVIRONMENT

Due to the relatively flat topography, less than 1 percent of the land is classified as a high-risk slide area. In hilly Cincinnati, this is a notable strength. Yet only 28 percent of the area has tree cover, below average for Cincinnati and the rest of the neighborhood.



Building-level factors in the Northwest subarea

Central

The Central subarea is the smallest subarea in Walnut Hills both in terms of geography and population. It includes a scant 15.5 acres between Taft Street on the north, Gilbert Avenue on the east, E McMillan on the south, and Reading Road on the west. In 2012, the subarea was home to 153 people. It is recommended for stabilization at its current density.

The predominant development pattern is single-family houses along north-south streets east of I-71. Clusters of older and historic commercial buildings along E McMillan and at the intersection of Gilbert and McMillan are interspersed with parking lots, vacant parcels, and a few newer developments. West of I-71, larger parcels along E McMillan hold institutional buildings, with a few residential buildings to the north.

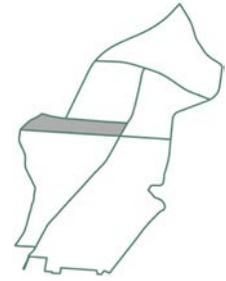
➤ REAL ESTATE

The Central subarea faces large challenges. Nearly 4 in 10 properties are tax-delinquent. Property sales are well below the city average, with only 5 percent of properties changing hands between 2009 and 2013. And 43 percent of lots are vacant.

But there are positive indicators, too. Close to 20 percent of building permits are for rehabilitation, indicating reinvestment in existing buildings. The subarea contains a range of unit sizes to meet the needs of diverse households, and only one-third of households pay more than 45 percent of their incomes for housing and transportation.

⬇️ STABILITY

Between 2000 and 2010, the Central subarea's population dropped by half. This is reflected in demolitions: between 2011 and 2013, close to 40 percent of building permits were for demolitions. The subarea struggles with other stability indicators as well: a very low homeownership rate and low economic integration that signals concentrated poverty. Crime is also an issue, with a high number of police calls recorded per resident.



➤ NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

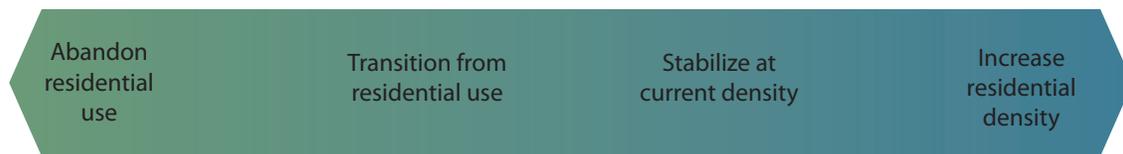
Buildings in the Central subarea are generally in good condition. The Peeble's Corner Historic District (National Register) includes 24 properties—16 percent of all the properties in the subarea—and covers 1.75 acres.

➤ WALKABILITY

The Central subarea is highly walkable. Its close proximity to Peeble's Corner provides excellent access to public facilities, schools, and neighborhood businesses, as well as good access to public transit. A high intersection density and a large proportion of properties with sidewalks in good or fair condition enhance the pedestrian environment. Its Walk Score is 72, classified as "very walkable." No roads have bike route designations.

⬇️ FISCAL

The Central subarea has the highest density of buildings per acre in Walnut Hills, with high popu-



Central

lation and household densities as well. Though the property value per acre is slightly higher than that of the citywide average, the subarea's small size means that aggregate property taxes are low and public investment in infrastructure is below average.

↓ ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Unemployment hovers around one-third, similar to most of the rest of Walnut Hills. Median income is just over \$15,000, half that of Cincinnati. Because the subarea contains few households (approximately 70 in 2012), aggregate household income, purchasing power, and spending power per acre are very low. These factors make Central subarea's economic opportunity score is very low: half the neighborhood average and just one quarter of the total possible score.

The subarea does contain a relatively large business district with 15 percent of properties con-

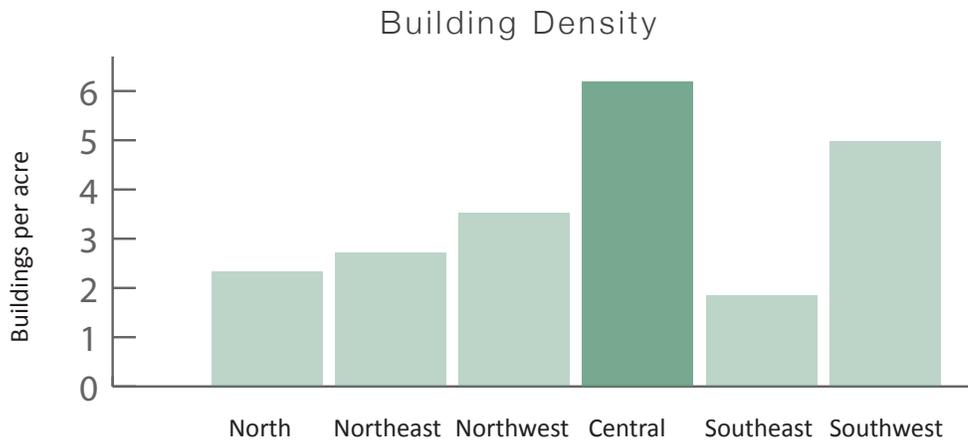
tributing, as well as a job-to-resident ratio of 0.93. Just 4 percent of the subarea's jobs are in small businesses with fewer than 20 employees, and only 2 percent of jobs are in startups.

↓ ENGAGEMENT

The subarea has a slightly below average engagement score. Survey respondents from Walnut Hills at large identified one "third place." Two youth organizations and one senior organization are within easy walking distance (1/4 mile) from the subarea, providing those age groups with access to recreation and social opportunities.

→ ENVIRONMENT

The subarea has very low embodied energy due to its small size and relatively low number of buildings. It does not contain any high-risk slide areas.



Southeast

The Southeast subarea includes 255 acres, 168 of which are occupied by Eden Park on the southern tip. It is bounded by Gilbert Avenue, E McMillan Street, Victory Parkway, and Columbia Parkway. In 2012, 1,757 people lived in the Southeast. It is recommended for slightly increased density.

The Southeast contains the southern part of Peeble’s Corner along E McMillan, with a number of historic mixed-use buildings including the Trevarren Flats redevelopment area. Industrial buildings on the north end of Gilbert give way to single-family homes around Sinton Avenue. The interior of the neighborhood is predominantly single-family houses, with some modern high-rise buildings and mid-century apartment buildings close to Eden Park and along Park Avenue. This subarea is notable for its low number of vacant lots.

REAL ESTATE

The Southeast has a healthy real estate market with high demand; more than one third of all properties—35 percent—were sold between 2009 and 2013. Relatively few vacant lots and buildings further indicate well-valued land and improvements. Still, the Southeast remains affordable at a level similar to Cincinnati as a whole, perhaps because of a broad spread of unit sizes to accommodate various income levels. Building permits signal a significant amount of reinvestment in existing buildings over the past decade, with 40 percent of permits pulled for rehabilitation work.

STABILITY

This subarea has above average economic integration, holding diverse household incomes. It is also the only subarea where racial diversity and

homeownership rates are in line with citywide figures. Though the Southeast lost nearly 17 percent of its population between 2000 and 2010, it still has a very high stability score.



NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

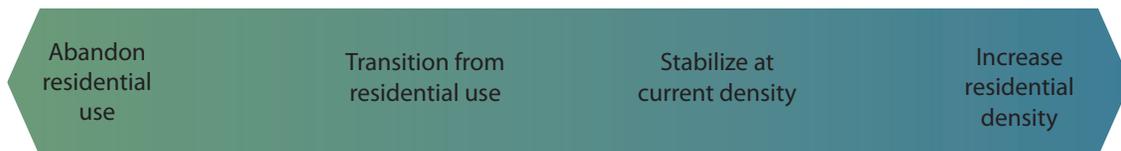
The Southeast has the highest neighborhood character score of all Walnut Hills subareas. The vast majority of buildings are in good condition, and an impressive 42 percent were rated as having high or landmark architectural character. Many of these are located in the Gilbert-Sinton Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

WALKABILITY

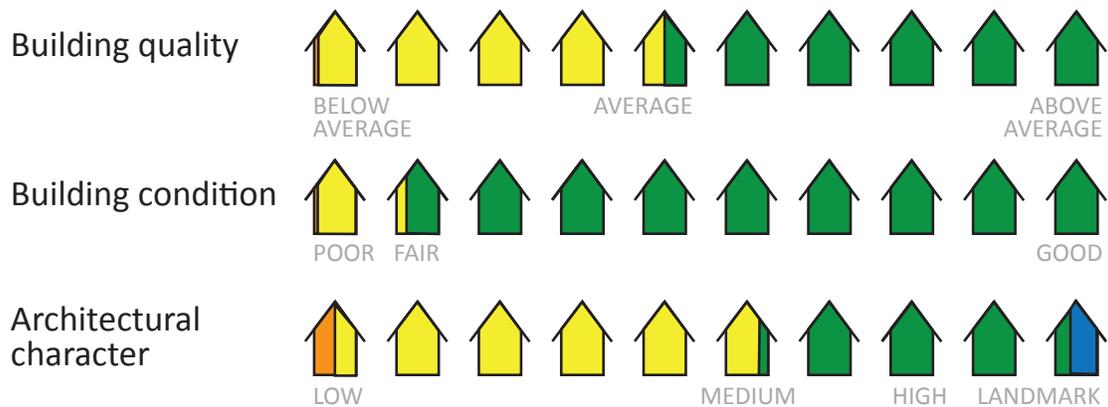
The Southeast has average walkability. Residents on foot have relatively poor access to schools, community centers, and other public facilities, though 80 percent of buildings are located within a quarter-mile of a public transit line and 99 percent are within a quarter-mile of a business district. Most properties have sidewalks in good or fair condition; only 10 percent of roads have bike route designations. The subarea’s average Walk Score is 62, or “somewhat walkable.”

FISCAL

The Southeast has seen a great deal of public investment in infrastructure. That infrastructure is heavily used: Though Eden Park’s large area means that the subarea as a whole has a relatively low building density compared to the rest of Walnut Hills, it is still denser than Cincinnati as a whole in terms of population and households per acre. Property value per acre is slightly higher



Southeast



Building-level factors in the Southeast subarea

than that of the entire city, and aggregate property taxes are high in this subarea.

↑ ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The Southeast has outstanding economic opportunity. It contains a relatively large business district that generates 2.6 jobs per capita, and has an unemployment rate in line with the city as a whole—just 10 percent. Nearly half of the subarea’s jobs are in small businesses with fewer than 20 employees.

Median household income is high, nearly twice that of Cincinnati. Combined with a high number of households in dense development, this means that aggregate household income, purchasing power, and purchasing power per acre are all high.

→ ENGAGEMENT

The Southeast’s residents are well served by places to gather, with four “third places,” two youth organizations, and two senior organizations. Like the rest of Walnut Hills, voter registration and participation rates are low.

↑ ENVIRONMENT

The subarea has an above average environment score. Its residential buildings have very high embodied energy. High-risk landslide area for the subarea is 128 acres; however, all but 2.5 acres of high-risk areas are located in Eden Park.

Southwest

The Southwest subarea contains 65 acres. It is bounded by E McMillan Street, Gilbert Avenue, and Reading Road. In 2012, 600 people lived in the subarea. It is recommended for stabilization at its current density.

The subarea is bisected by I-71, with distinctive development patterns on each side. The eastern half has small residential lots with mostly single-family houses. In the northern part, alleyways run north-south and east-west, and vacant lots space out houses. Historic commercial buildings line E McMillan—side by side with vacant lots—and Gilbert, along with historic industrial buildings. Newer commercial buildings and auxiliary parking lots occupy the south end of Gilbert.

The western half of the subarea is a mishmash of older and contemporary industrial buildings and parking lots, with a couple of impressive institutional buildings like the United Way headquarters on Reading Road. Single-family houses stand in pockets of residential development around McGregor Avenue and Symmes Street and E McMillan and Dover Street.

➔ REAL ESTATE

The Southwest subarea has an excellent diversity of unit size and is similar to Cincinnati as a whole in terms of housing and transportation affordability. However, real estate metrics are lagging. Nearly a quarter of all properties are tax-delinquent, and property sales are well below the city average. Only 4.3% of properties changed hands between 2009 and 2013. The subarea saw an average annual increase in property values of 6.6 percent, but that was largely due to a significant value jump in 2008-09; values have been flat or

slightly decreased in years since. More than one in every two properties is a vacant lot.

➔ STABILITY

The Southwest experienced a population decline of 21 percent between 2000 and 2010. A high rate of demolitions is likely related: nearly 40 percent of building permits in the subarea were issued for demolition. The homeownership rate here is 26.3 percent, higher than the neighborhood average but still well below the city average of 40.5 percent.

⬇️ NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

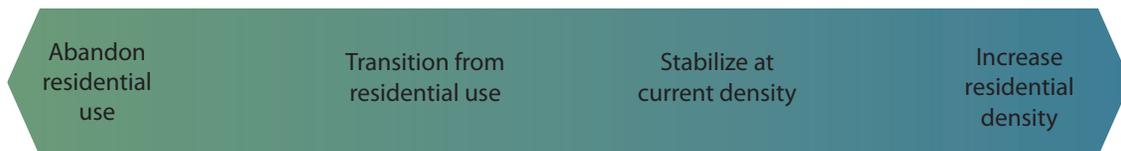
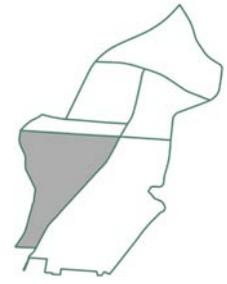
This subarea has the lowest neighborhood character score in Walnut Hills. Half of the buildings were rated in good condition, but overall architectural character and construction quality are both below average.

⬇️ WALKABILITY

The subarea has limited walkability. Only 52 percent of properties have sidewalks, half of which are in good or fair condition. Roughly 41 percent of buildings are located within a half-mile of a community center; 44 percent are within a quarter-mile of other public facilities. The Walk Score is relatively high—67, or “somewhat walkable”—which may reflect excellent access to the neighborhood business district.

⬆️ FISCAL

The Southwest boasts a very high density of buildings, population, and households. This density likely contributes to a per-acre property value that is much higher than the citywide average—\$1.45 million compared to \$766,000 in Cincinnati. Ag-



Southwest

gregate property taxes are consequently very high compared to the rest of the Walnut Hills sub-areas. Public investment in infrastructure is high due to the large size of the subarea.

There are opportunities. The Southwest has a high number of demolitions compared to rehabilitations—roughly one demolition for every two rehabs. More than one third of parcels are underutilized, which presents an opportunity for even more contributing development.

 **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

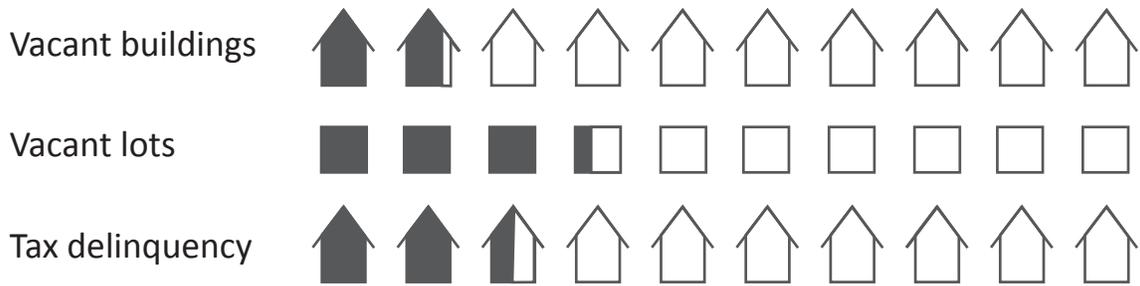
The Southwest’s economic opportunity score is well below average. It is a job-rich area, with close to 3,000 jobs—nearly 5 jobs per capita—but residents do not occupy those jobs. Like most subareas in Walnut Hills, its unemployment rate is high and median household income very low—just over half of Cincinnati’s. Purchasing power is low.

 **ENGAGEMENT**

The Southwest is home to two “third places,” as well as two youth organizations and one senior organization. Thus, residents have places to gather. However, like the rest of Walnut Hills, the subarea has low voter registration and participation rates: just over half of residents over age 18 are registered to vote, and only half of those voters participated in at least one general election since 2008.

 **ENVIRONMENT**

The Southwest has an above average environmental score, with a large amount of embodied energy in its buildings and very little area at high risk for landslides.



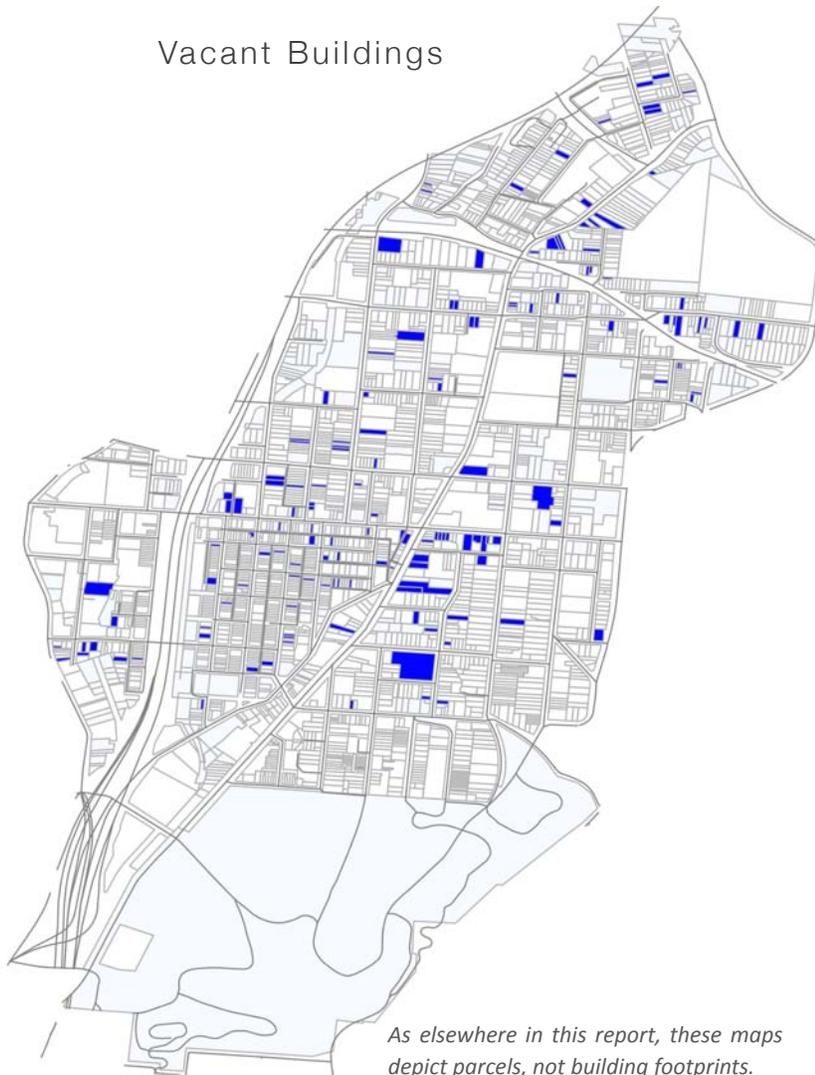
Building-level factors in the Southwest subarea

5. Recommendations

Walnut Hills has a strong building stock, though most blocks have a relatively high proportion of vacant parcels. Five of the six subareas are recommended for stabilization at current residential densities. The exception, the Southeast, is recommended for slightly increased density. These subarea-scale recommendations fundamentally guide parcel-level strategies for vacant buildings and lots, which aim to leverage and transform these parcels to make each subarea a better, more sustainable place to live.

Rehabilitation or stabilization is recommended for vacant buildings in generally intact blocks with high-quality construction, high character, and good condition, while demolition removes low-quality buildings or buildings in largely vacant areas. Infill is a sound strategy for vacant parcels in particularly strong blocks, but many parcels are recommended for measures that will return the parcel to a contributing use—either by a public or private community use—or as an environmental asset, thereby improving quality of life.

Vacant Buildings



Strategies for vacant buildings and land must be targeted according to the specific parcel and its context. The appropriate strategy depends on a particular balance of subarea vibrancy, the vacancy in the rest of the block, and parcel-specific qualities. For vacant buildings, construction quality, architectural character, building condition, and whether the building fits into the block context should be considered. Qualities of vacant lots include whether adjacent parcels are vacant or developed, the scores of nearby buildings, and the amount of vacancy on the surrounding block.

- Rehab and reuse
- Stabilize and mothball
- Raze and recycle
- Defer decision

Vacant parcels are classified into four opportunity categories:

- Infill
- Contributing reuse
- Environmental reuse
- Defer decision

As discussed in the Relocal Framework chapter, vacant buildings are classified into four opportunity categories:

Recommendations are made at the subarea level according to specific parcel conditions and local context, but one opportunity is worth considering at the neighborhood scale. Corridors of vacant

Vacant Lots Suitable for Redevelopment



parcels along I-71 and MLK Drive east of Gilbert offer opportunities for connected environmental reuse. This might take the form of blue-green infrastructure, alternative energy production, or a return to native landscape.

Most subareas include recommendations to defer decisions about a vacant building or vacant lot. This will not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with Walnut Hills. As discussed earlier, the neighborhood is at a turning point, and many factors can influence the direction of buildings or parcels. Seventy-five buildings are recommended for razing and recycling. All these are included in the “defer decision” category as vacant lots.

For now, partners should focus on properties with definitive recommendations. Diverse strategies under each category can take advantage of various funding sources, help partners with different priorities to align efforts, and help to meet other community needs while effectively tackling vacant properties. (See Building Strategies and Parcel Strategies under 3. *Relocal Framework*.)

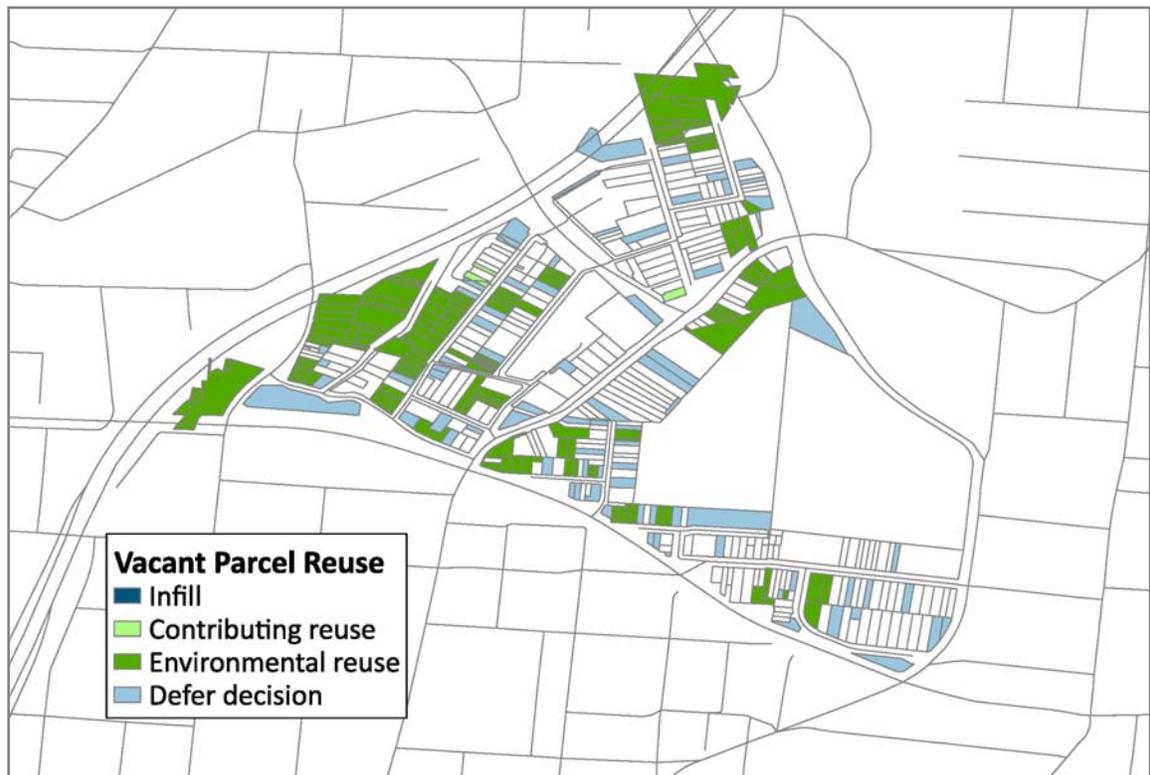
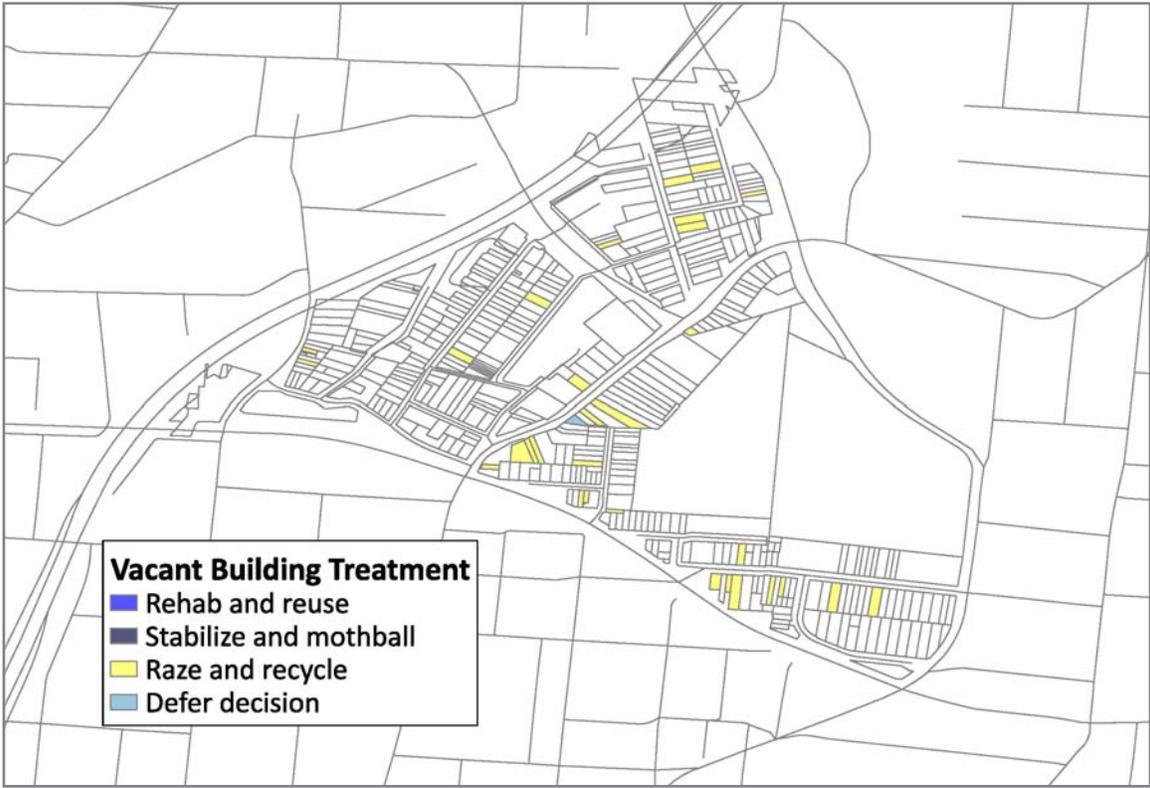
North

The North is recommended for continuing developed uses, with residential density stabilized at its current levels. It faces substantial challenges in the real estate, neighborhood character, walkability, fiscal, civic engagement, and environment categories: six out of the eight Relocal categories. Vacancy abounds, with 15 percent of buildings and half of parcels—close to 40 percent of all land area—empty.

Nearly every vacant building in the North is recommended for demolition and materials recycling. This treatment will remove physical blight and shape the subarea for its current population.

Most vacant lots in the North are recommended for environmental reuse, with clusters of parcels at the intersection of Victory Parkway and I-71 and at the north end of Syracuse Street. (The latter cluster may be impacted by the new I-71 interchange at MLK.) A few parcels are recommended for contributing reuse. No infill is recommended, in keeping with the overall recommendation to stabilize the subarea as a whole at its current residential density.

Many vacant lots are recommended for deferred decisionmaking. Particularly along and around Gilbert, there may be an opportunity to work with community groups and youth organizations to develop long-range visions for these properties and work to build local support for eventual reuse.

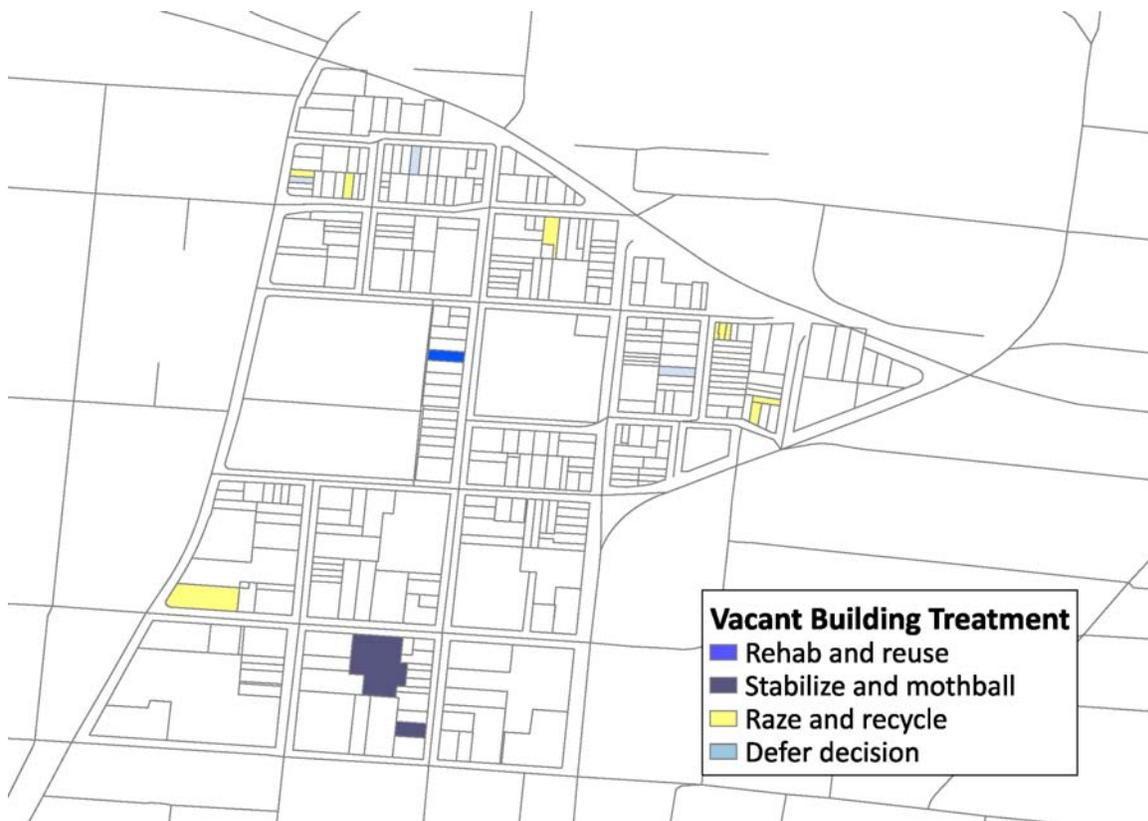


Northeast

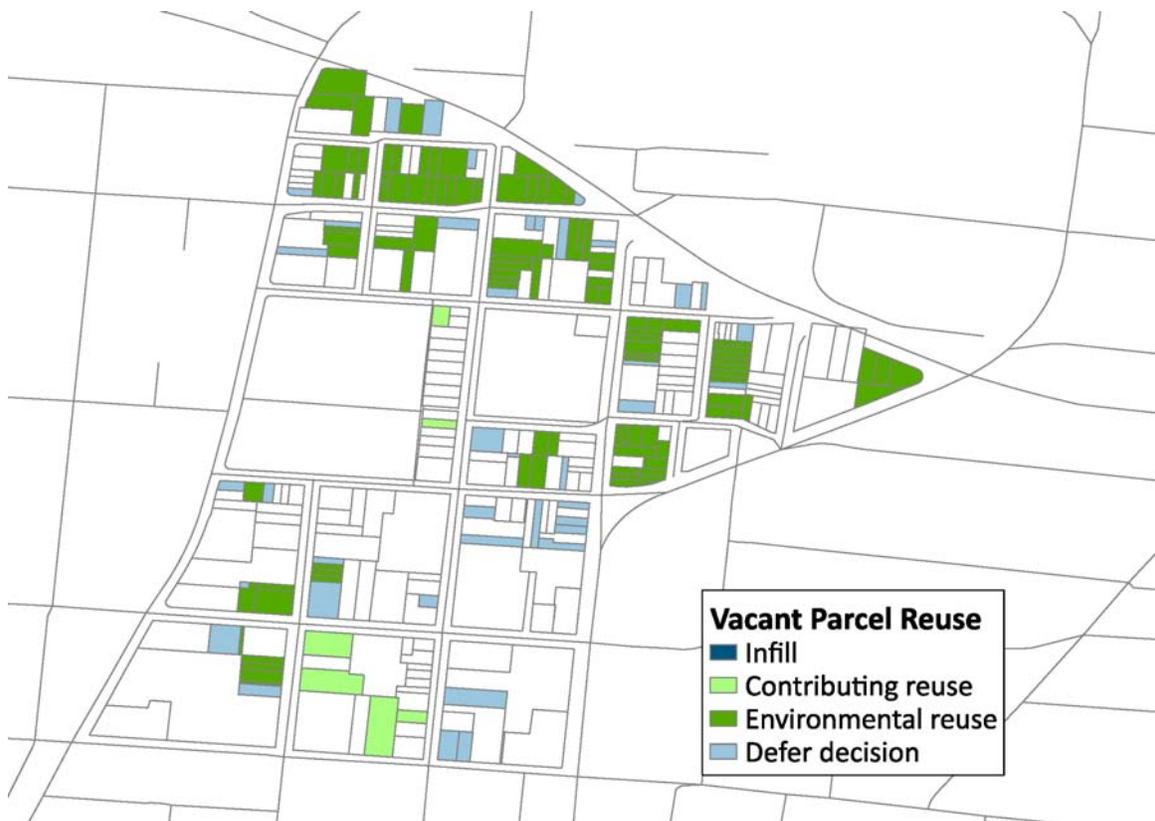
The Northeast is also recommended for continuing developed uses and stabilized residential density. Its strengths fall in the walkability, fiscal, and civic engagement categories; challenges are in the stability and neighborhood character categories. Like the North, the Northeast faces high vacancy levels, with 12 percent of buildings

and 49 percent of parcels—one-third of all land area—empty.

One building in the Northeast is recommended for rehabilitation and reuse, and two for stabilization and mothballing. Nine vacant buildings—more than half of the Northeast’s vacant buildings—are recommended for razing and materials recycling. A few are recommended for deferred decisions.



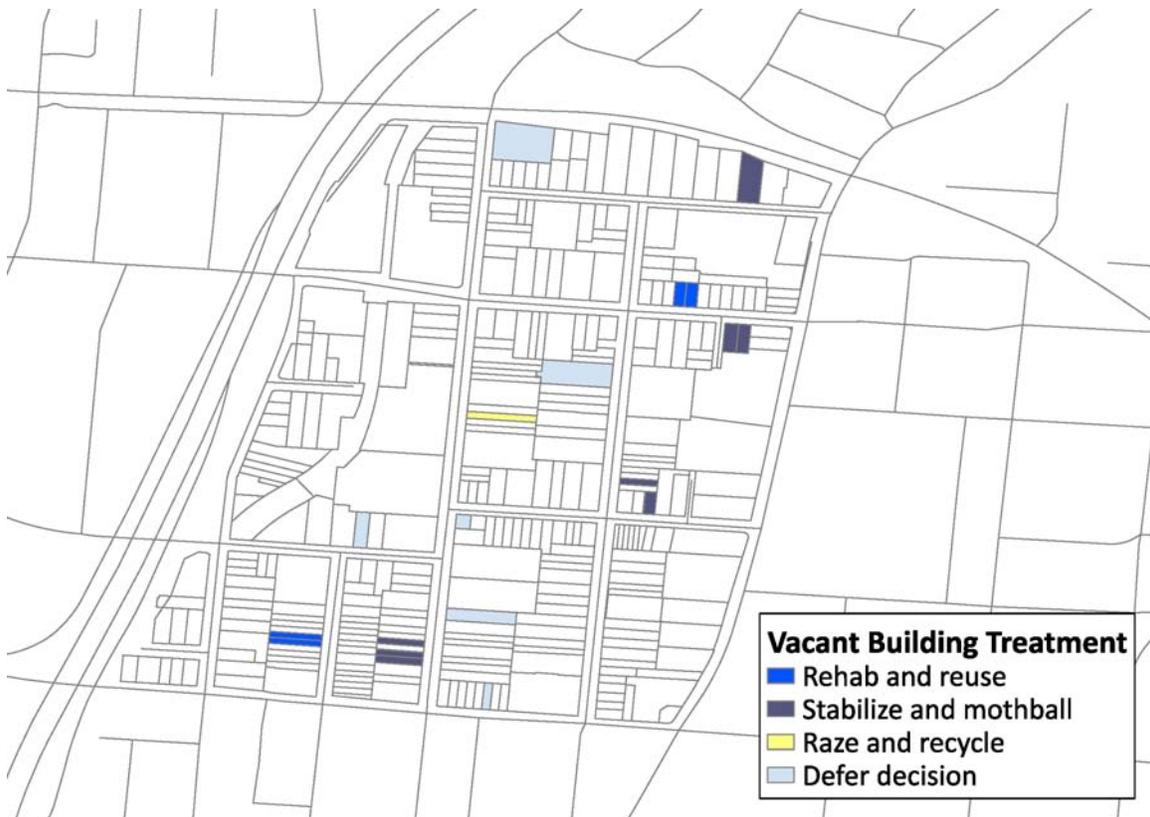
Vacant lots in the Northeast are concentrated along MLK Drive and the blocks just to the south. The majority of these are recommended for environmental reuse; the remaining lots are recommended for deferred decisionmaking. Five vacant lots along Park Avenue and the block bounded by Taft, Park, McMillan, and Kemper are recommended for contributing reuse: lot splits, community gardens, pocket parks, or other public or private uses.



Northwest

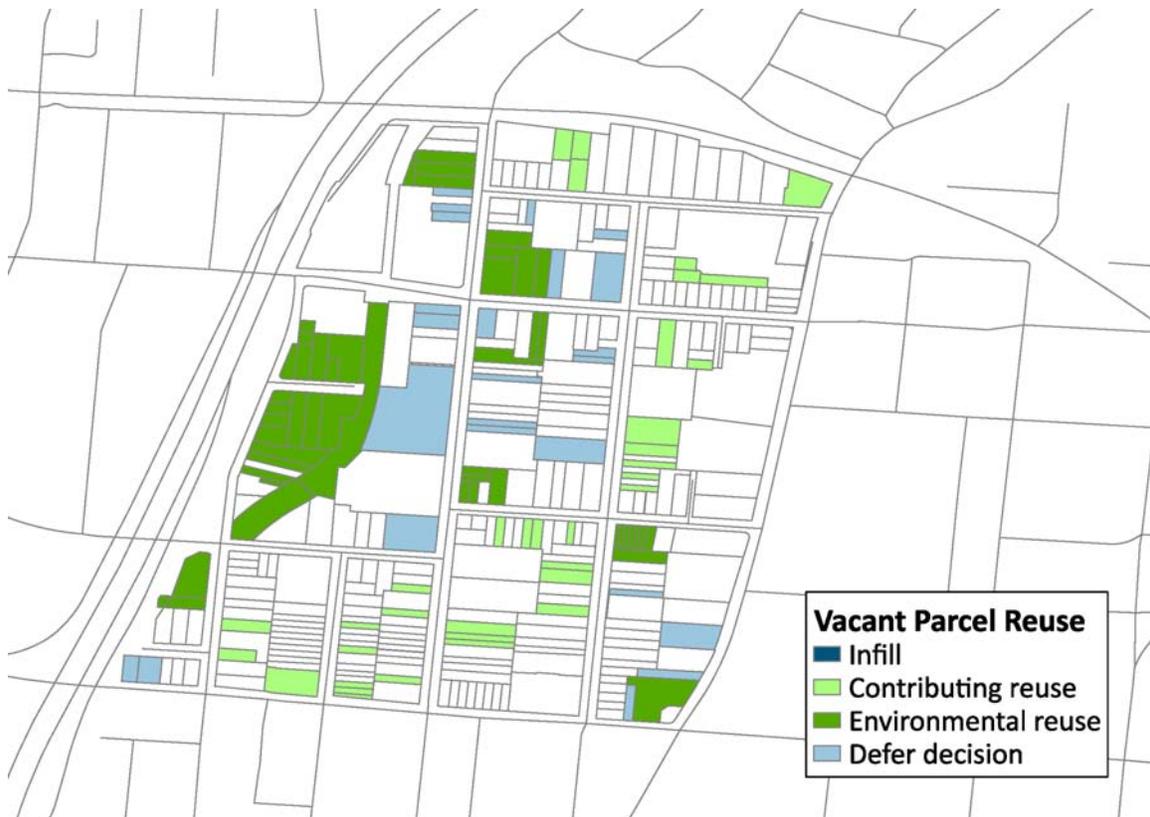
Similar to most other subareas in Walnut Hills, the Northwest is recommended for stabilized residential density. However, the subarea has unique strengths in neighborhood character and walkability; and faces distinct challenges in real estate, stability, and economic opportunity. Twelve percent of buildings and 37 percent of land area in the subarea are vacant.

Four vacant buildings are recommended for near-term rehabilitation and reuse, and eight are recommended for stabilization and mothballing. These buildings tend to be located in clusters of two to four properties on the same block or adjacent blocks, to maximize the reinvestments' ability to strengthen the blocks and the subarea, and to catalyze additional investment. One building is recommended for razing and materials recycling, and six vacant buildings are recommended for deferred decisions.



Many of the vacant lots in the Northwest are clustered in groups of three or more parcels. This offers strong opportunities for environmental reuse, which can take advantage of aggregated land for larger-scale uses like blue-green infrastructure or restoration of native ecosystems. The Northwest also contains many parcels recommended for contributing reuses. Where vacant lots are located next to one or more occupied houses, a side lot split could provide neighbors with additional property and return the parcel to the tax

rolls. Where vacant lots are clustered, there may be an opportunity for a community garden or pocket park. Roughly one quarter of vacant parcels are recommended for a deferred decision; these are concentrated in six blocks throughout the subarea.

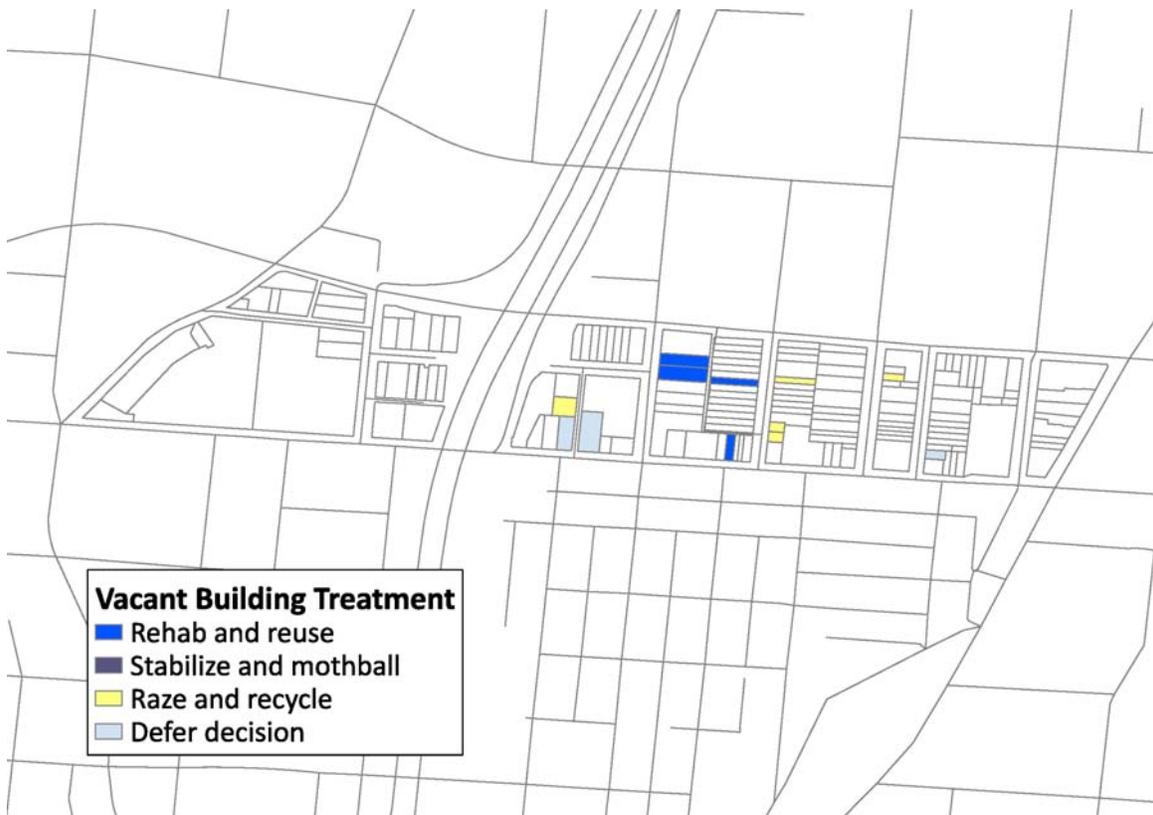


Central

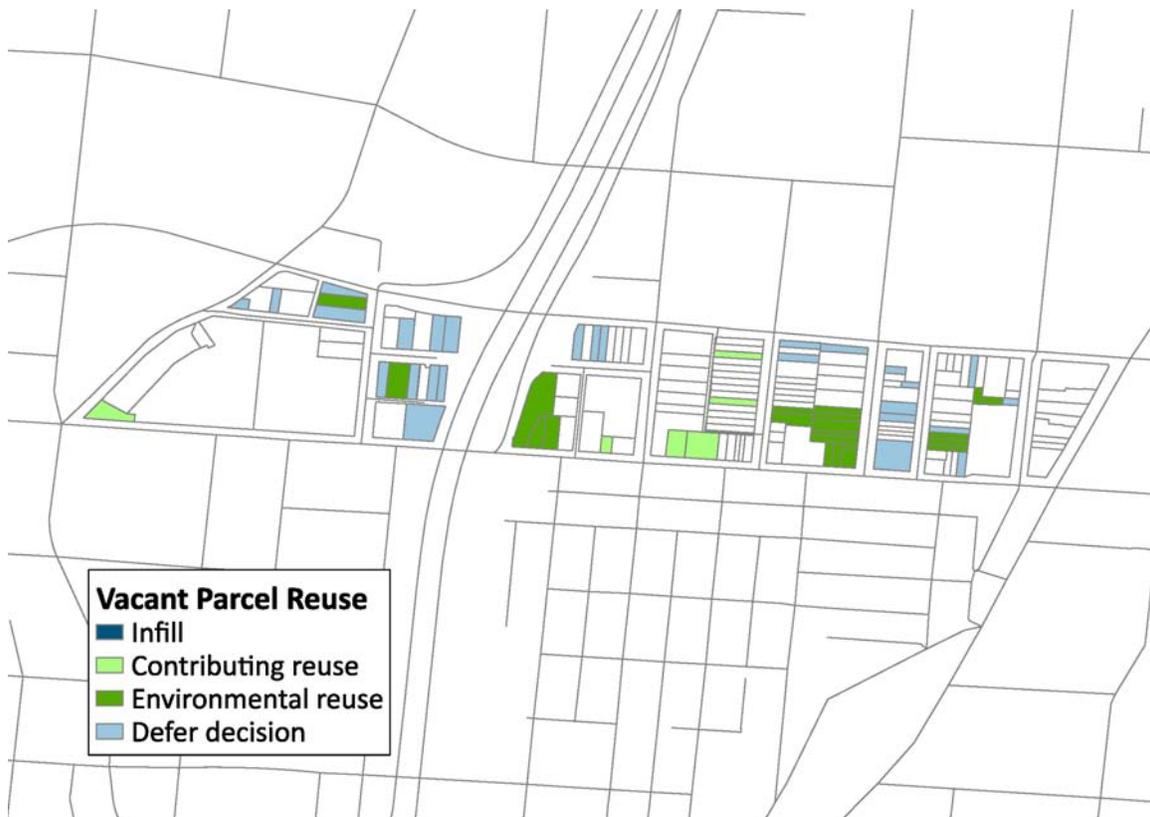
The Central subarea is also recommended for stabilized residential density. Fifteen percent of the buildings and 37 percent of the lots—43 percent of the geographic area—are vacant. Because of the small scale of the subarea, which contains just over 150 parcels, these figures represent relatively few vacant properties. However, the need

to address them strategically is just as important as in larger subareas.

Four vacant buildings are recommended for rehabilitation and reuse. Five vacant buildings east of I-71 are recommended for razing and materials recycling, and three are recommended for deferred decisions.



Vacant lots are located throughout the subarea. Six lots, five of which are on E McMillan or Hemlock Street, are recommended for contributing reuse as privately held side lots or more public community uses. Three groups of vacant lots and a few scattered lots are recommended for environmental reuse. The remaining 27 vacant lots are recommended for deferred decisions.

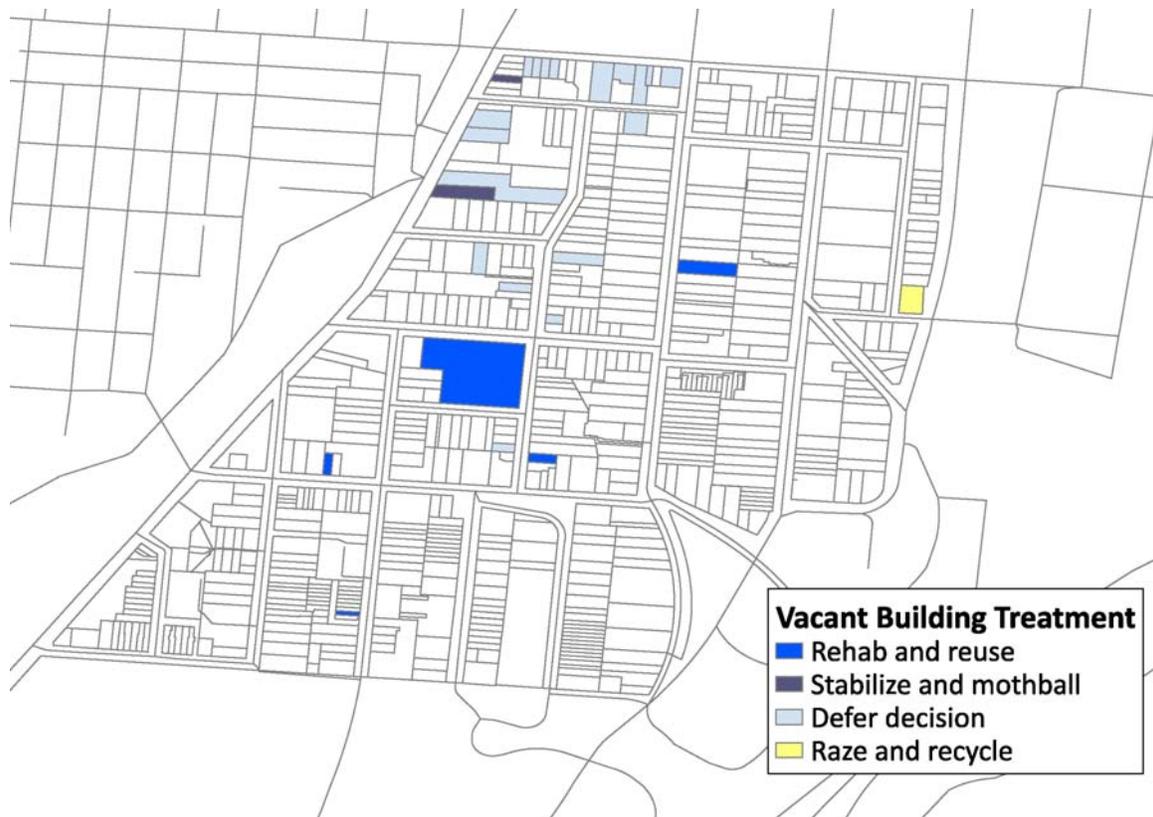


Southeast

The Southeast is recommended for a slight increase in residential density. This recommendation strongly guides the parcel-level recommendations. Just 6 percent of buildings—27 buildings—are vacant in the subarea. Five of those buildings are recommended for rehabilitation and reuse, and two are recommended for stabilization and mothballing; strategies that will not only preserve the existing residential density, but also create the opportunity for additional residents in the

subarea. Only one vacant building is recommended for demolition. Eighteen are recommended for deferred decisions. These buildings—mostly clustered along Gilbert and McMillan—should be given top priority for reinvestment if and when the definitive recommendations for other vacant lots catalyze additional investment.

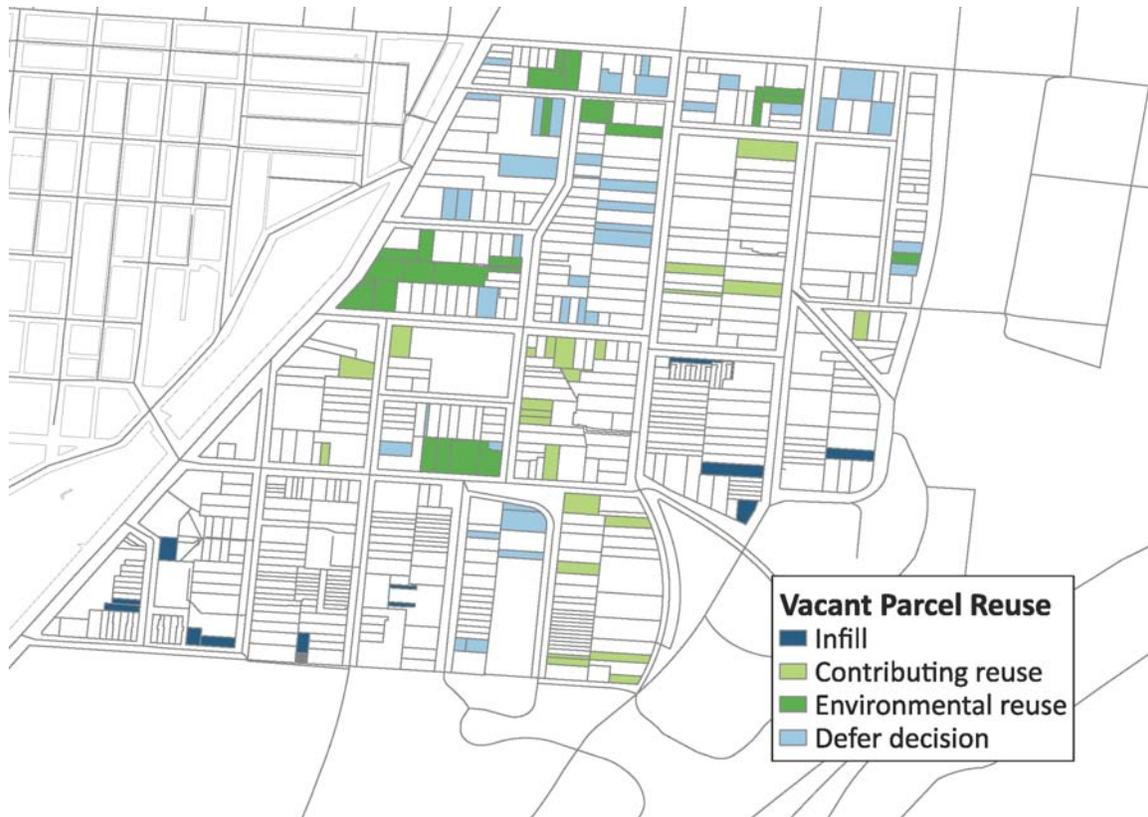
N.B. The Southeast technically includes Eden Park, but only the developed portion of the subarea is shown here.



The Southeast has a much lower proportion of vacant lots than other subareas in Walnut Hills, but 17 percent of parcels located throughout most of the neighborhood are still vacant. This makes up only 6 percent of the land area. Thirteen vacant lots on otherwise intact blocks are recommended for infill development. Twenty-three lots are recommended for contributing uses; side lot splits may be a particularly appropriate strategy here where at least one adjacent parcel is occupied or recommended for near-term rehabilitation and reuse. One-quarter of vacant lots (25 lots) are recommended for environmental reuse. These

are mostly concentrated on Gilbert Avenue and Nassau Street, with a few in the blocks south of McMillan. The remainder is recommended for deferred decisions.

See note under Vacant Building Treatment map.

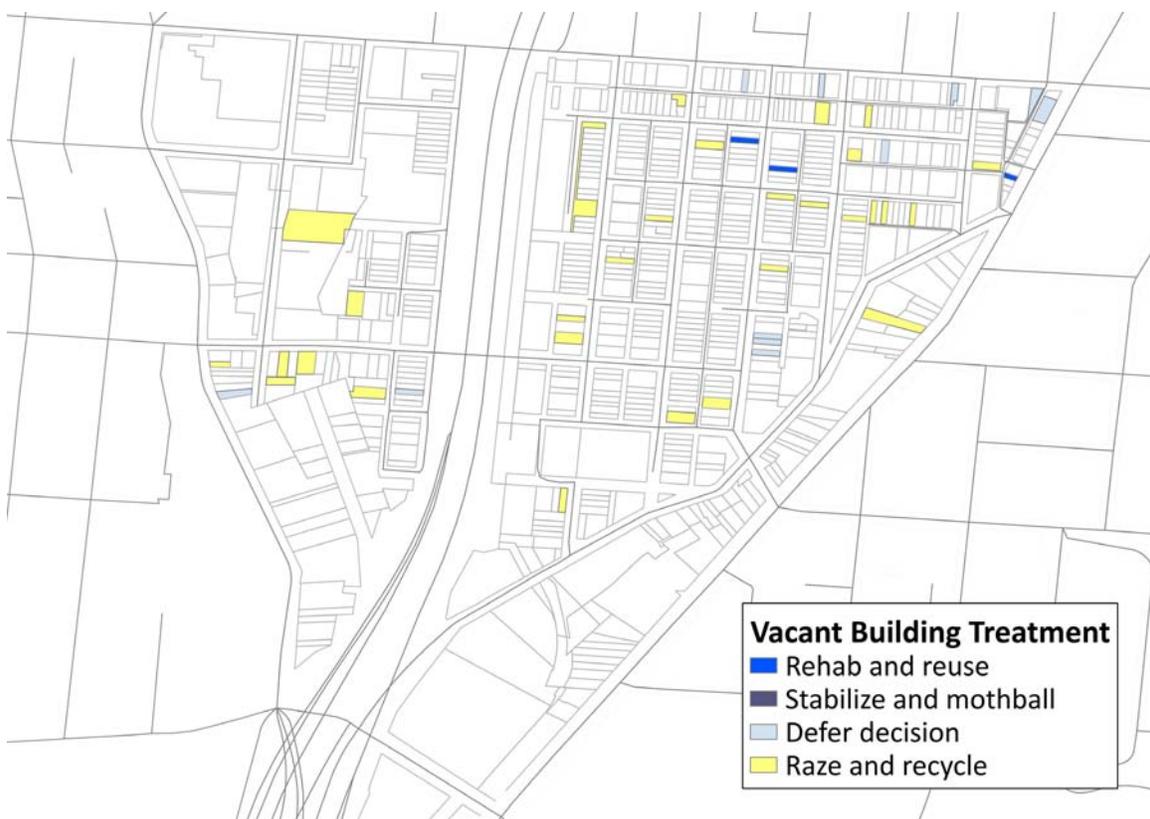


Southwest

Like most of Walnut Hills, the Southwest is recommended for stabilization at its current residential density. Fifteen percent of the subarea's buildings are vacant, as well as 48 percent of parcels that comprise 52 percent of the geographic area.

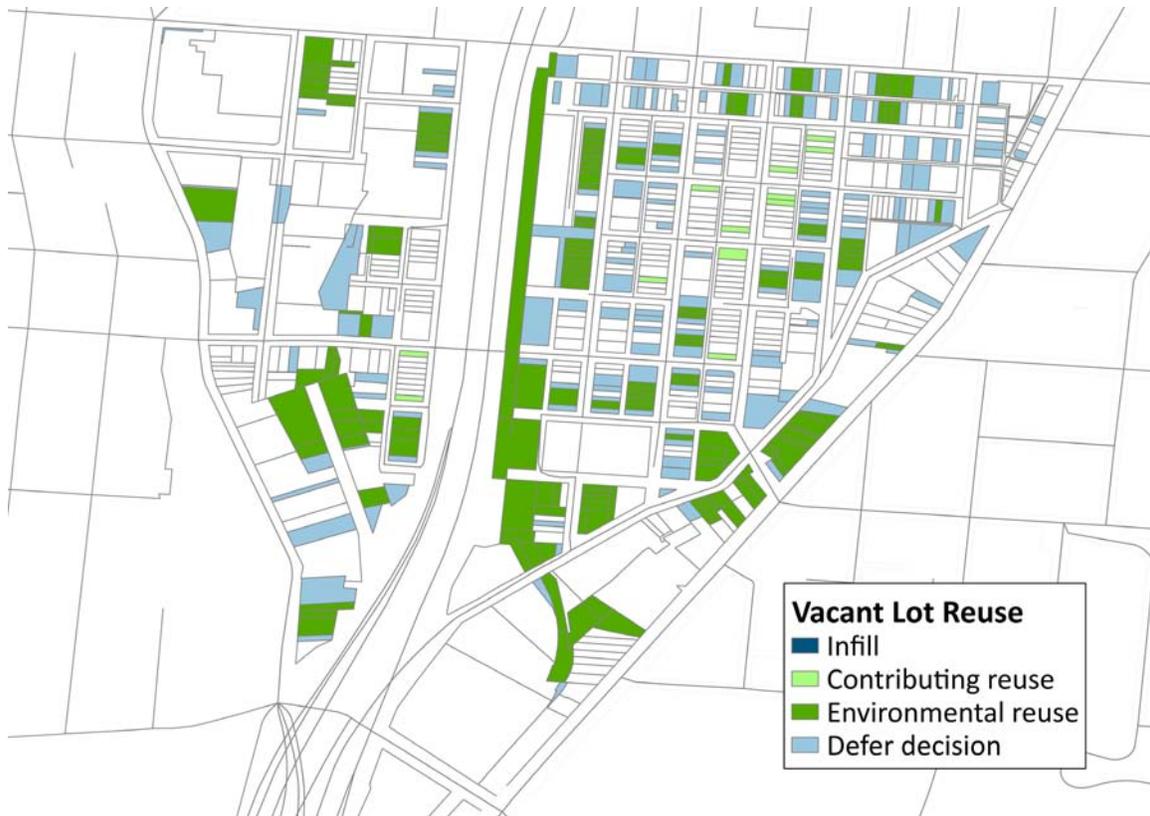
Three vacant buildings are recommended for rehabilitation and reuse. Two of these are on the

same low-vacancy block of Kenton Street to better catalyze investment in other properties. The majority of vacant buildings in the Southwest (29 buildings, or 67 percent of vacant buildings) are recommended for razing and materials recycling; another 11 are recommended for deferred decisions. The deferred-decision properties are concentrated on a few streets, and, in two cases, a single block.



Just twelve vacant parcels are recommended for contributing uses in the Southwest subarea. Most of these are located on low-vacancy blocks in the center of the subarea east of I-71. Nearly half of vacant parcels are recommended for environmental uses; these are clustered along the I-71 corridor, the eastern border of the subarea between Florence Avenue and Gilbert Avenue, and other scattered locations. In many cases, multiple vacant lots are grouped together, creating an opportunity for landscape restoration or other uses

at a multi-parcel scale. The remaining half of vacant parcels are recommended for deferred decisions.



APPENDIX

Acknowledgments

Relocal Elements

Property-level Strategies and Tools

Tool Definitions

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Acknowledgments

We are grateful to many Cincinnatians for making this project interesting and pleasant. Our clients at the Cincinnati Preservation Association and the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation were eager, responsive, and effective throughout—thanks to Paul Muller, Margo Warminski, Dick Duval, and Rebecca Stone at CPA and Kevin Wright and staff at WHRF. Phil Stafford and Ed Sullivan added invaluable expertise around Communities for a Lifetime.

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Relocal Elements

This section provides a detailed overview of the Relocal tool. Relocal is comprised of eight categories that cover a broad range of community measures: the built and natural environments, the real estate market, fiscal responsibility, and diverse quality-of-life metrics.

Real Estate

A strong real estate market is rightly linked to healthy neighborhoods. It supports consistently valued property, sales (but not at a rate that is destabilizing to the community), low vacancy rates, few foreclosures and vacancies, and markers of continued investment like building permits for new construction and rehabilitation. Though the real estate market includes hundreds of nuanced factors that vary daily, the metrics included here incorporate major factors for evaluating past disinvestment and prospective reinvestment in transitional neighborhoods.

PROPERTY VALUE CHANGES

Property value reflects many variables in the health of a neighborhood. Steady or rising property values over time indicate that homebuyers and investors feel that the neighborhood is worth investing in. This score is based on property value trends over recent years.

PROPERTY SALES

Sales reflect the stability and desirability of a neighborhood. A low sales volume where properties spend relatively few days on the market indicates a stable neighborhood where people are eager to buy in; conversely, a high sales volume or long time on the market point to investor flipping or a hesitancy by prospective homeowners to invest. This score is based on sales volume and time on the market.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

New construction indicates optimism and investment in an area, as well as job creation. This score is based on construction activity (building permits

over a given period. Large redevelopment projects may be linked to a high number of demolition permits.

RENOVATION

Renovation projects signal investment and long-term owner occupancy. They also create jobs, increasing local economic activity. This score is based on rehabilitation activity (building permits) over a given period.

VACANT LAND

A high number of vacant lots signals long-term disinvestment and depopulation, and potentially a greater investment needed to make a difference. This score is based on the proportion of vacant land to developed land in the neighborhood, excluding parks and other intentional open space.

VACANT BUILDINGS

Vacant buildings are another indicator of disinvestment, depopulation, and devalued real estate. This score is based on the proportion of vacant buildings to occupied buildings.

FORECLOSURES

Foreclosures indicate a real estate market with a high number of underwater properties, where the value of the home exceeds the mortgage value, or more general economic distress. This score is based on the number of foreclosures in proportion to the total number of owner-occupied properties.

TAX DELINQUENCY

Tax delinquency is a signal of economic distress and overall disinvestment. This score is based on the number of tax-delinquent properties and amount owed.

AFFORDABILITY

This category includes housing and transit, the two largest expenses incurred by the vast majority of households. Neighborhoods that have a range

of housing choices (size and cost) and are located close to neighborhood business districts or downtowns are more likely to accommodate a broader range of incomes and more diverse residents. This score is based on the Center for Neighborhood Technology's H+T Affordability Index, which is calculated from block-level Census data. By combining a 15 percent allocation for transportation with the 30 percent housing affordability standard, CNT recommends a new view of affordability that combines housing and transportation costs and consumes no more than 45 percent of household income.

DIVERSITY OF UNIT SIZE

A range of unit sizes allows a neighborhood to accommodate diverse household sizes and incomes and creates a more inclusive neighborhood. This score is based on parcel-level data on the size and type of residential buildings.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Community development corporations (CDCs) are formed to help strengthen a weak market by developing properties, revitalizing commercial corridors, and taking risks where private-sector developers are unwilling to act. This score is based on the presence of a community-based organization, as well as its level of activity and investment.

Stability

Neighborhood stability plays a central role in determining whether investments will hold their value over time. An area that has experienced population decline or is rapidly changing from owner occupancy to rental housing may require interventions that are not possible given capacity. Allocating limited resources could fail to address the underlying issues or 'turn the tide.'

POPULATION CHANGE

Population change is the number of people who have left or moved to the neighborhood over the last decade. A healthy, stable neighborhood will gain more residents than it loses. Population change is scored based on the population change from 2000 to 2010.

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Economic integration reflects the diversity of housing choices within a neighborhood through the range of incomes. A greater variety of housing choices will accommodate a greater range of incomes. This diversity creates a more livable environment for all residents. Economic integration is scored for each neighborhood based on whether the neighborhood reflects the income ranges of the city as a whole.

DIVERSITY

Racial and ethnic diversity points to a neighborhood that welcomes and sustains a variety of people. This type of neighborhood is likely to be more resilient in the face of external changes. Diversity is measured using the Gini coefficient and scored based on whether it reflects the demographics of the city as a whole.

OWNER OCCUPANCY

Owner occupancy indicates a sustained financial, physical, and social investment in the neighborhood. Homeowners are more likely to make physical improvements to their homes, participate in local civic activities, and reside in the neighborhood longer. This score is based on proportion of homeowners in the neighborhood.

LONG-TERM RESIDENTS

Resident mobility is an indicator of stability, connection, and commitment to place. A lower rate of resident mobility means that residents stay in the neighborhood longer, contributing to lower turnover rates and higher feelings of neighborhood ownership. This score is based on the proportion of residents who have lived in the neighborhood longer than nine years as of 2013.

SIGNAL POPULATION TRENDS

A sharp increase in certain demographics, or "signal populations," may signal the beginning of a larger neighborhood trend. This may be true even if the overall neighborhood population is decreasing. This score is based on neighborhood-level data compared with city-level data.

DEMOLITION PERMITS

Demolition permits measures the number of buildings that have been demolished in the neighborhood over a given period of time. Many demolition permits point to a high degree of change in the neighborhood as more familiar built fabric is removed. Demolition is scored based on number of demolition permits as a percentage of all building permits in the neighborhood. When the number of demolition permits is close to the number of building permits over the same period—that is, demolition is associated with redevelopment—demolition scores are not treated as a negative.

CRIME

Crime rates affect the actual and perceived quality of a neighborhood. High crime rates discourage investment and improvements, make the neighborhood less attractive to prospective residents, and may even cause current residents to leave. This score is based on reported crime rates in recent years.

FIRE CALLS

Building fires may be the result of outdated or poorly built facilities (such as poor wiring), arson, or simply accident. A high number of building fires indicates a high level of disinvestment and/or criminal activity. This score is based on fire calls linked to building fires in recent years.

Neighborhood Character

Neighborhood character contributes to a sense of place. It helps distinguish one neighborhood from another through obvious and subtle differences in mostly physical elements: street width and layout, street furniture, street trees, building size and scale, building style, building age. Many of these factors are measured in other categories. This category captures the indicators relating to a neighborhood's buildings and history, as told through the built environment.

BUILDING QUALITY

The construction quality of building stock helps determine how soon additional private or public investments will be needed. Higher-quality build-

ing stock holds its value longer—an important factor in areas prone to disinvestment. This score is based on field surveys or city records.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Architectural character adds personality and charm to a neighborhood, whether through gingerbread houses swagged with Victorian trim, modest workers' cottages, glassy mid-century houses, or a combination of different architectural styles in the same neighborhood. This score is based on field surveys.

BUILDING CONDITION

Building condition indicates the regularity and quality of maintenance. This score is based on field surveys.

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The National Register of Historic Places is a record of places in the U.S. with local, state, or national importance, or significance. A historic district listed in the National Register is a collection of buildings or landscape features that are significant for the same reason, and which convey their significance (integrity) to residents and visitors. Historic districts indicate a well-preserved sense of history and place. This score is based on the existence of one or more National Register-listed historic districts and the proportion of neighborhood buildings included in their boundaries.

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Local historic districts also denote collections of buildings or landscape features that are locally significant and have sufficient integrity to convey their significance. Local districts also carry the distinction of being regulated by a review board of local citizens, which ensures that publicly visible changes to private or public property are in keeping with the character of the district. This score is based on the existence of one or more local historic districts and the proportion of neighborhood buildings included in their boundaries; it is weighted more heavily than National Register historic districts because of the local review board's regulatory oversight powers.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines in a neighborhood assist property owners in making improvements in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. They ensure consistency, and reflect local and/or municipal investment in retaining a local sense of place. This score is based on the existence and consistent application of design guidelines.

PUBLIC ART

Though public art is not essential for daily life, it adds a cultural dimension to daily life, as it is open to everyone free of charge. This score is based on City lists of formally recognized public art, if available, as well as field surveys.

MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES

Public spaces are evidence of historical planning priorities. Their presence and maintenance demonstrates the value that the municipal government and citizens place on these public spaces for socializing and recreation. This score is based on field surveys.

GRAFFITI

Graffiti creates and encourages the impression that a place is not actively watched or cared for. This score reflects the amount of graffiti noted in field surveys.

Walkability

Homebuyers and renters in urban areas increasingly value proximity to jobs, schools, shopping, and public assets as a contributor to quality of life. A walkable neighborhood allows people to access goods and services without driving and is also supported by public health advocates who seek to incorporate more exercise in daily activities. Reinvesting in walkable neighborhoods with nearby amenities is a long-term approach to building stronger, more sustainable, more livable communities. Walkability scores are calculated according to the proportion of buildings and occupied buildings within a given distance of a community amenity (generally one half-mile).

STREET CONNECTIVITY

A street network with short blocks provides more options and shorter routes between points. A higher number of visually interesting routes means that walking or cycling is more pleasant, and raises the likelihood of people choosing an alternative (non-driving) modes of transportation.

SIDEWALKABILITY INDEX

Sidewalks play an essential role in measuring walkability. They create a separate space for pedestrians and increase perceived and actual safety. Sidewalks are especially critical for those with limited mobility or higher vulnerability such as people with disabilities, seniors, and children; but they are important for everyone. This score is based on the proportion of sidewalks to roads in a neighborhood. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

SIDEWALK CONDITION

Sidewalk condition also affects the walkability of an area, as well as its accessibility for community members with limited mobility.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Proximity to public transportation allows residents to access other areas of the city and may bring in business customers from other neighborhoods. Good access to a variety of transit options also contributes to a more equitable community, where residents without cars are not at a disadvantage in moving around the city. This score is based on number and proximity of public transportation routes.

BIKE ROUTES

Safe bike routes allow cyclists to ride to work, school, and errands, or for pleasure without concerns about safety. Bike routes could include streets with on-street bike lanes, sharrows, or separated bike lanes; as well as off-street pathways. This score measures the length of bike-friendly street segments as determined by a municipality, advocacy group, or citizen poll.

WALKING TRAILS

Walking trails provide pedestrians and sometimes cyclists with navigation options. By separating

people from fast-moving cars that emit pollution and noise, these networks increase safety and enhance the experience of walking or cycling. This factor measures the length of bike path and walking trail segments.

TRAFFIC

Roads that carry higher volumes of traffic are likely less pleasant to walk or bike on, and thus discourage alternative modes of transportation. This score is based on the average and peak traffic counts on selected roads in the neighborhood. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

SCHOOLS

An operating school is a significant neighborhood asset. It allows children and parents to walk or bike to school and creates a potential hub for community volunteer investment. A school building that is no longer in educational use remains a significant asset that can be reused for a variety of community-oriented uses, from housing to commercial/office space to culture.

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

A healthy business district in the neighborhood provides basic goods and services to residents. This is a major asset in a walkable neighborhood. Even a struggling business district holds the potential to meet basic neighborhood needs with targeted, committed investment.

PROXIMITY TO DOWNTOWN

Downtown is typically a hub of jobs, transportation, culture, and entertainment. Proximity to these amenities—or the potential for these amenities, in some places—is a strength for residential neighborhoods. Additionally, efforts to make downtowns more vibrant can “spill over” with benefits to other nearby neighborhoods. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

COMMUNITY CENTERS/OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public facilities include libraries, schools, community centers, recreation centers, and parks - spaces designed and designated for public use. Proximity to these opens access to people who do not drive because of income, disability, or age (youth

and seniors). This score sums up the number and proximity of public facilities in and around the neighborhood.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Proximity to medical services allows car-less residents, particularly seniors, to access important health services and generates local jobs. This score is based on the presence and proximity of medical services in and around the neighborhood.

WALK SCORE

Walk Score is a scoring system developed by the Walk Score company that assigns scores to given places based on their proximity to businesses, schools, parks, transit, entertainment, and other common destinations. A higher Walk Score indicates that the place is more walkable.

Fiscal

Fiscal responsibility is important for the long-term sustainability of any municipality, and especially for cities and towns that are already struggling because of long-term population loss and disinvestment. These indicators measure the costs and contributions of neighborhood elements, with the goal of enabling local governments to capitalize on existing assets and spend new funds conservatively and effectively.

PROPERTY VALUE PER ACRE

Property value evaluates the worth of land and buildings in a neighborhood according to estimated or actual market value. This score is based on property value per acre, according to the county assessor’s office.

PROPERTY TAX GENERATION

Property taxes provide a significant amount of revenue to local government coffers. Looking at what areas generate property taxes recognizes that importance by aggregating and averaging property taxes in the neighborhood by area. This score is based on property taxes collected per acre.

SALES TAX GENERATION

Sales taxes contribute to local government revenue. This score is based on sales taxes collected per acre. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

DENSITY

Areas where more people live and work concentrates activity and requires less public investment in infrastructure, transportation, public spaces, and other public goods. This score is based on the concentration of residents per acre.

DENSITY POTENTIAL

Density potential measures how many additional residents could fit in a neighborhood if current development patterns were to replace vacant residential properties. Though less important than current density, density potential looks to the future in considering what a neighborhood might look like with less vacancy and more infill development.

VALUE OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Public infrastructure represents past investments in the built environment for the public good, sometimes through generations. True fiscal responsibility requires that municipalities seriously examine the benefits of capitalizing on these long-term investments via incremental maintenance expenditures. The score is based on the replacement costs of various types of infrastructure.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEPRECIATION

This indicator acknowledges that public infrastructure no longer holds its full value due to wear and tear over time and occasional obsolescence. The score is based on the approximate depreciation rates and current values of existing infrastructure. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

DEMOLITION TO REHABILITATION RATIO

Demolition lowers property value by removing—or subtracting—the value of improvements from the overall value of the property. When demolition outpaces rehabilitation in a neighborhood, it signals a high level of disinvestment unmatched by reinvestment.

INTERVENTION TOOLS AVAILABLE

Diverse tools exist for improving a community: sparking revitalization, encouraging rehabilitation and reuse, improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities, creating affordable housing, and many more. This score is based on the availability of intervention tools at all levels, from local to national. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills because nearly the same tools were available across the neighborhood.

USE OF INTERVENTION TOOLS

Intervention tools are of little value if they are not employed. This score is based on how frequently and effectively available intervention tools are used in a given neighborhood, with a focus on the municipal government's use of the tools. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

Economic Opportunity

Economic activity contributes to neighborhood strength and sustainability by generating jobs and services to serve residents and perhaps attract visitors. A thriving business district, employment centers, and at-home businesses generate financial revenue for business owners and workers, as well as tax revenue for local and state governments. Economic opportunities for entrepreneurs also help determine residents' ability to build wealth.

AGGREGATE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household income indicates current prosperity and trends over time. This score is based on household income compared to that of the city as a whole.

AGGREGATE PURCHASING POWER

Aggregate purchasing power measures the cumulative income of all households in the neighborhood. Higher purchasing power means more opportunities for businesses, and thus more local jobs. This is scored relative to other neighborhoods in the city.

SPENDING POWER PER ACRE

Purchasing power per acre is a geographically based measure of aggregated household income, which reflects the density of households in a neighborhood. This score is based on purchasing power per acre in the neighborhood compared to the city as a whole.

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

An employment center is a cluster of employers who provide job opportunities for locals and others. This score is based on the number of jobs in subareas.

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

Small businesses in a neighborhood business district offer easily accessible goods and services, provide local jobs, and generate income and sales taxes. This score reflects the number of buildings that contribute to neighborhood business districts.

Business/merchants association

A business or merchants association promotes and sometimes recruits local businesses, helping to strengthen a neighborhood business district. This score is based on the presence and level of activity of a business or merchants association.

AT-HOME BUSINESSES

Entrepreneurs working from home provide a level of economic and intellectual capital that helps energize a neighborhood and increase a city's tax base. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

High-speed internet provides access to communication, education, and commerce. A high number of households with high-speed internet points to increased opportunities for neighborhood residents. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

IMMIGRANT IN-MIGRATION

In-migration reflects perceptions of economic and other opportunities as people move into and invest in a neighborhood. In particular, immigrants serve as a bellwether of economic development, as they are more likely to start new businesses.

This score is based on the rates of in-migrants from other countries in the past 5 years.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The unemployment rate is an indicator of the level of economic activity and opportunity in and around a neighborhood. This score is based on the neighborhood unemployment rate compared to that of the city as a whole.

Engagement

Though public engagement is intangible, it has strong implications for the social and physical health of a neighborhood. A healthy neighborhood holds people who believe that they can make a difference, who gather to discuss problems and opportunities, and who take ownership of public spaces. Some indicators for engagement are non-physical, such as voter registration; others are represented by a building or space.

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Neighborhood associations and block groups are a fundamental part of shaping city policy at the grassroots level. This score is based on the existence of an active neighborhood association or block groups, as judged through online activity, conversations with City staff, and an interview with the group leader, if possible. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

SENIOR ORGANIZATIONS

Senior organizations provide a way for seniors to socialize with each other and give back to the broader community. This type of organization improves the quality of life for senior residents and can serve as a hub for community service activities. This score is based on the existence of one or more active senior organizations and weighted according to the number of seniors (65 years and older) living in the neighborhood.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Youth organizations focus on engaging young people in community activities. This score is based on the existence of one or more active youth organizations and weighted according to the proportion of young people living in the neighborhood.

THIRD PLACES

Third places are informal community gathering places such as coffee shops, bookstores, or bars. They provide safe places for people to casually meet and interact with friends, neighbors, and strangers.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Voter registration signals that citizens are engaged and committed at a very basic level. This score is based on the proportion of eligible registered voters in the neighborhood.

VOTER PARTICIPATION

Voter participation also reflects community members' civic engagement. It is based on the voter participation rate over the past five years.

Environment

Environmental factors constitute a broad category, reflecting past land uses, as with brownfields; natural resources such as trees and water; and current quality-of-life and health concerns such as noise, air, and odor pollution. Judicious long-term investments prioritize healthy places where people want to live, work, play, and invest.

EMBODIED ENERGY

Embodied energy reflects past investments in time, physical labor, and materials. Reinvesting in places with a high amount of embodied energy saves time and money now, and also capitalizes on past expenditures. This score provides an estimated aggregate of the embodied energy in a neighborhood's buildings.

TREE COVER

Trees along public rights-of-way, in parks, and on private property add a sense of place, as well as more tangible benefits such as shade, aesthetic pleasure, and reduction of the urban heat-is-

land effect. A higher proportion of tree cover in a neighborhood results in a higher score.

WATER ACCESS

Water can provide wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and significant ecological benefits. This score is based on the presence and accessibility of a body of water.

SLIDE AREAS

Steep topography can be an asset in view properties, but it is a serious environmental concern. Buildings constructed on steep hillsides may cause erosion, eventually reduce water quality, and fall victim to sliding. This score is based on the proportion of land classified at high risk for landslides.

BROWNFIELDS

Brownfields are sites that have, in the past, held industrial uses that affect the ability of the property to be used for other uses. Brownfields may require cleanup to federal standards as part of redevelopment, though some federal funds are designated for planning and remediation. They may be weighted as an opportunity for new development or a liability inhibiting other new development and lowering property values, depending on community concerns, public and private impetus, and available funding. This score is based on the number and area of EPA-classified brownfields and may be negative.

AIR/ODOR POLLUTION

Air pollution from traffic or industry affects resident health, particularly that of vulnerable populations such as children and seniors. This score is based on air quality levels and may be negative.

NOISE

Noise pollution affects quality of life, particularly for residential properties. If loud enough, it can disrupt sleep and daytime activities. This metric was not used in Walnut Hills.

Property-level Strategies and Tools

Vacant Building Treatments

Opportunity Category	Strategies	Tools
REHAB AND REUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market transaction • Public acquisition and reconveyance • Public acquisition, rehabilitation and reconveyance • Public or nonprofit rehabilitation and use • Public or nonprofit assistance to private owner • Private rehabilitation and use • Move building to parcel recommended for infill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code Enforcement {C} • Receivership {S} • Facade Improvement Program {L} • Local Conservation Guidelines {C} • Vacant Foreclosed Residential Property Registration Ordinance {C} • CRA Commercial Tax Abatement Program {C} • General Reutilization Program {LB} • Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) {F} • Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NBDIP) {C} • Neighborhood Business District Support Fund (NBDSF) Program {C} • Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) {F} • GC-PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) {C} • Ohio New Markets Tax Credit Program {S} • Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program {S} • Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act (tax credit)* • Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits {F} • Expert House Movers* • Building Relocation Application* • Moving the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse*

Key

* Best practices used in other cities/states
 {F} Federal program available to Cincinnati/
 Walnut Hills
 {S} State program
 {LB} Land Bank program
 {C} City program
 {L} Local Walnut Hills program

Public acquisition includes: Tax foreclosure / Sheriff's Sale, Land bank acquisition, bank foreclosure donation/bargain sale

Land bank acquires through: Tax Foreclosure, Nuisance Abatement, Tax Lien Certificates, and Forfeited Properties

<p>STABILIZE AND MOTHBALL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public or nonprofit acquisition, stabilization, and potential reconveyance • Public or nonprofit assistance to private owner • Public or nonprofit stabilization • Private acquisition, stabilization, and potential reconveyance • Private stabilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacated Building Maintenance License (VBML) - similar to Mothballing {C} • Facade Improvement Program {L} • Arts Program {C} • Vacant Lot Stabilization Program {C} • Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) {F} • Receivership {S} • Mothballing*
<p>DEFER DECISION</p>		
<p>RAZE AND RECYCLE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public or nonprofit acquisition, removal, and potential reconveyance or use • Public or nonprofit removal and potential reconveyance or use • Private acquisition, removal, and potential reconveyance or use • Private removal and potential reconveyance or use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Demolition* • Deconstruction* • Future Blooms {C} • Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) {F} • Hazard Abatement Program {C}

Vacant Parcel Reuse

Opportunity Category	Strategies	Tools
INFILL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public acquisition and reconveyance • Private acquisition and construction • Nonprofit acquisition and construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code Enforcement {C} • NYC Brownfield Partnership* • Forfeited Land Program {LB} • General Reutilization Program {LB} • Low income housing tax credits (LIHTC) {F} • New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) Program {F} • Serve as site for moved building
CONTRIBUTING REUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public acquisition and reconveyance • Partnerships with community/nonprofits/arts groups • Private acquisition and construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood Support Program {C} • Forfeited Land Program {LB} • Lot-to-Yard Program {LB} • Garden Pittsburgh Program * • Gardens and Green Program {LB} • Adopt-A-Spot {C} • Future Blooms {C} • Pop Up City* • Urban Garden District* • NatureWorks Grant Program {S}
ENVIRONMENTAL REUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public acquisition and reconveyance • Private acquisition and construction • Public acquisition • Green/blue infrastructure, alternative energy production • Natural landscape/return to native ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geothermal Wells* • Forfeited Land Program {LB} • Kinsman Solar Farm* • The Greening of Detroit's Vacant Land Treatment Program* • Hazard Abatement Program {C} • Forfeited Land Program {LB} • Adopt-A-Spot {C} • Future Blooms {C} • Dendro-Remediation Pilot Program* • The Greening of Detroit's Vacant Land Treatment Program* • EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant
DEFER DECISION		

Tool Definitions

ABANDONED BUILDINGS REVITALIZATION ACT*

The Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act established a state-level tax credit in South Carolina for the rehabilitation of commercial properties that have been largely vacant for the past five years.

www.masc.sc/legislative/Pages/SC-Abandoned-Buildings-Revitalization-Act.aspx

ADOPT-A-SPOT {C}

This is a program through Keep Cincinnati Beautiful in partnership with the City's Department of Public Services, where any individual, organized group, or business can adopt a portion of their neighborhood to regularly clean littered curbs, sidewalks, and vacant lots, cut grass and high weeds, plant flowers, remove illegally posted signs, report graffiti, etc.

www.keepcincinnatibeautiful.org/volunteer/adopt-a-spot

ARTS PROGRAM {C}

Through Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and based on the Future Blooms Program, this program focuses on enhancing the doors and windows of vacant buildings with decoratively painted plywood.

www.keepcincinnatibeautiful.org/programs/arts

BROWNFIELD CLEANUP GRANT {F}

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers grants to selected owners of brownfield sites to help fund cleanup activities.

www.epa.gov/brownfields/cleanup_grants.htm

BUILDING RELOCATION APPLICATION*

The City of Austin, Texas implemented their "Building Relocation Application" in 2012 that requires the Historic Preservation Office's approval to move a building and provides the applicant with a permit.

www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/Applications_Forms/relocation_permit_app.pdf

CODE ENFORCEMENT {C}

Cincinnati administers laws regarding property maintenance and construction, with public safety

as the main goal. This (code enforcement) may require more resources than are made available, yet done properly, can help deter neighborhood issues like abandoned buildings, litter, vandalism, etc.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/property-maintenance

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) {F}

Offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), this program gives resources to selected communities to help them tackle various community development needs.

portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs

CRA COMMERCIAL TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAM {C}

Developers and companies that build or renovate residential, commercial, industrial, or mixed-use properties can obtain a tax abatement of up to 75% tax exempt on building improvements if the new or renovated facilities will result in job creation.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/neighborhood-development/cra-commercial-tax-abatement-program

DECONSTRUCTION*

This is the careful and systematic dismantlement of a building's structural components, one large section at a time. These sections are further disassembled at an off-site location to ultimately be reused.

www.thereusepeople.org/deconstruction

DENDRO-REMEDICATION PILOT PROGRAM*

This initiative led by Detroit Future City aims to reduce and eliminate over time the toxic substances from industrial sites by planting trees, also known as dendro-remediation.

www.detroitfuturecity.com/initiatives/dendro-remediation-pilot-program-2

EXPERT HOUSE MOVERS*

Well known for moving many types of buildings, this company can relocate buildings to more suitable areas. Their website provides helpful FAQs about moving buildings.

www.experthousemovers.com/moving-resources/faqs

FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM {L}

The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation offers grant funds to renovate or restore commercial storefronts and to replace deficient signs and awnings.

www.walnuthillssf.org/facade-improvement-program

FEDERAL HISTORIC REHABILITATION TAX CREDITS {F}

The 20% income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings, and the 10% tax credit is for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936 and not for future residential use.

www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm

FORFEITED LAND PROGRAM {LB}

The Hamilton County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank) provides the opportunity for responsible end-users to purchase and develop land that has not received any bids at auction. Re-developing the land occurs under the Lot-to-Yard Program, the Gardens and Green Program, or the General Reutilization Program.

www.hamiltoncountylandbank.org/property-acquisition/forfeited-land-program

GARDEN PITTSBURGH PROGRAM*

In Pittsburgh, citizens can maintain a city-owned property, while the City remains responsible for any liability, by obtaining a license for only \$5. This was formerly known as the Garden Waiver Program.

www.growpittsburgh.org/what-we-do/we-build-and-support-gardens/our-community-gardening-programs

GARDENS AND GREEN PROGRAM {LB}

As part of the Forfeited Land Program, this program involves the Hamilton County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank) working with individuals or organizations to convert vacant lots

in their neighborhood into gardens or green community spaces.

www.hamiltoncountylandbank.org/property-acquisition/forfeited-land-program

GC-PACE (PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY) {C}

A partnership between the Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance and the Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority offers industrial and commercial building owners the opportunity to access financing for clean energy improvements to their buildings.

www.gcpace.org/#gcpace

GENERAL REUTILIZATION PROGRAM {LB}

As part of the Forfeited Land Program, this program involves the Hamilton County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank) working with eligible individuals or organizations to assist them in purchasing and redeveloping forfeited properties.

www.hamiltoncountylandbank.org/property-acquisition/forfeited-land-program

GEOTHERMAL WELLS*

To heat and cool a home, as well as heat water, this technology uses the earth's renewable energy just below the surface. "Re-Imagining Cleveland: Vacant Land Re-Use Pattern Book" suggests placing Geothermal Wells on a vacant lot to provide adjacent houses with environmentally friendly and cost effective energy.

www.earthdaycoalition.org/documents/patternbookFINAL_lo-res_file_1241529170.pdf

THE GREENING OF DETROIT'S VACANT LAND TREATMENT PROGRAM*

In Detroit, several organizations partnered to show how green infrastructure can be used to improve vacant lots.

www.detroitfuturecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/dfc-vacant-land-treatment-20140228.pdf

HAZARD ABATEMENT PROGRAM {C}

A part of Cincinnati's Code Enforcement, this program is in charge of demolishing vacant and condemned buildings, and barricading open, abandoned structures.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/property-maintenance/vacant-hazardous-buildings

KINSMAN SOLAR FARM*

The Kinsman Neighborhood of Cleveland is the home to one of the state's largest solar farms. The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority developed it from a vacant brownfield site.

www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2013/01/sun-catching_solar_farm_to_pow.html

LOCAL CONSERVATION GUIDELINES {C}

These are recommended guides developed for the historic conservation (preservation) of the locally designated historic districts and areas within Cincinnati. Though the guidelines are not mandated, they provide property owners, architects, and contractors with a framework for changing existing buildings, demolishing buildings, or constructing new buildings in the districts and areas.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/historic-conservation/local-conservation-guidelines

LOT-TO-YARD PROGRAM {LB}

As part of the Forfeited Land Program by the Hamilton County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank), this program helps a property owner obtain ownership of a vacant lot if it is adjacent to his or her residence.

www.hamiltoncountylanbank.org/property-acquisition/forfeited-land-program

LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS (LIHTC) {F}

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers this program to help encourage and fund the development of affordable rental housing for low-income households by providing an indirect federal subsidy.

portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/training/web/lihtc/basics

MOTHBALLING

This involves stabilizing, securing, and protecting a vacant structure from weather damage and vandals while preserving the structure for future use.

www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/31-mothballing.htm

MOVING THE CAPE HATTERAS LIGHTHOUSE*

The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in North Carolina was successfully moved in 1999, approximately 2,900 feet from its original 1870 location, to avoid the threat posed by shoreline erosion.

www.nps.gov/caha/historyculture/movingthelighthouse.htm

NATUREWORKS GRANT PROGRAM {S}

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources will reimburse local government subdivisions up to 75% for acquiring, developing, and rehabilitating public parks and recreational areas.

www.ohiodnr.gov/realestate

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (NBDIP) {C}

Through the City of Cincinnati's Department of Trade and Development, neighborhood business districts can receive funds for community-supported projects that will enhance their local economy.

www.choosecincy.com/services/Neighborhood_Business_District_Improvement_Program

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT SUPPORT FUND (NBDSF) PROGRAM {C}

Recognized neighborhood business districts get funds to help finance projects that will benefit their district and neighborhood. Projects can include promotional activities, physical improvements, and organizational development.

www.choosecincy.com/services/NBDSF

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM (NSP) {F}

This program run by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides states and selected local governments with funding to purchase and redevelop foreclosed and abandoned houses. For example, NSP funds have aided in the formation and continuation of land banks.

www.hudexchange.info/nsp

NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT PROGRAM {C}

Community councils can receive funds for neighborhood activities and projects through this program offered by the City of Cincinnati's De-

partment of Trade and Development. Use of the funding includes beautification and cleanup activities, newsletters, membership drives, summer employment or cultural activities for neighborhood youth, and networking and training workshops for community leaders.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/neighborhood-development/neighborhood-support-program

NEW MARKETS TAX CREDITS (NMTC) PROGRAM {F}

This federal program focuses on generating economic growth in low-income communities by providing tax credits to investors who make equity investments in Community Development Entities (specialized financial institutions that help low-income communities or persons).

www.irs.gov/pub/irs-utl/atgnmtc.pdf

NYC BROWNFIELD PARTNERSHIP*

Based in New York City, this non-profit organization serves as a resource for NYC community members and developers to learn more about brownfields, their issues, their remediation, and their redevelopment.

www.nycbrownfieldpartnership.org

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM {S}

This is Ohio's version of the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Through the Ohio Development Services Agency, eligible owners and long-term lessees who rehabilitate their historically designated building can receive a state tax credit of up to 25% of their expenses from rehabilitation.

development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_ohptc.htm

OHIO NEW MARKETS TAX CREDIT PROGRAM {S}

This is the State's version of the New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) Program. Similar to the federal program, investors receive a tax credit in exchange for investing in a Community Development Entity, who then uses the funds to finance projects in low-income communities.

development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_onmtcredit.htm

POP UP CITY*

The Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative developed this research program to demonstrate how vacant spaces can be turned into experiential, temporary spaces that encourage imagination and reuse.

www.cudc.kent.edu/pop_up_city/index.html

RECEIVERSHIP {S}

Characterized under the Ohio Revised Code as "Buildings found to be public nuisance," use of this law involves the appointment of a receiver to restore an abandoned and/or foreclosed building back to building code and remove it as a public nuisance.

codes.ohio.gov/orc/3767.41

STRATEGIC DEMOLITION*

This involves a targeted, cost-effective approach to removing buildings, and most importantly, is integrated into a larger revitalization plan. It also includes the proper disposal of waste produced by the demolition.

www.greaterohio.org/publications/strategic-demolition-report

URBAN GARDEN DISTRICT*

Cleveland's zoning code specifically allows the City to reserve land for urban gardens and to prohibit all other uses for a property.

planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/zoning/pdf/agricultureopenspacesummary.pdf

VACANT FORECLOSED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY REGISTRATION ORDINANCE {C}

This law requires vacant, foreclosed property owners to pay a fee and register their property with the city, and then comply with the maintenance regulations detailed in the ordinance.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/property-maintenance/vacant-foreclosed-properties

VACANT LOT STABILIZATION PROGRAM {C}

Through Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and based on the Future Blooms Program, this program focuses on cleaning and greening vacant lots throughout the City.

keepcincinnatibeautiful.org/programs/vacant-lots

**VACATED BUILDING MAINTENANCE LICENSE
(VBML) {C}**

If a building is ordered vacated due to code violations, the owner must obtain a Vacated Building Maintenance License (VBML) through Cincinnati's Department of Community Development. This requires a fee, as well as full compliance of the maintenance standards listed in the ordinance.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/linkservid/2B9F59F3-CC02-4520-ACF7D7A0042FF04E/showMeta/0