Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy
December 2019
Acknowledgements

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Advisory Committee Members
- Mustafa Abdall, Rockford Public Schools
- Bev Broyles, KNIB / Tinker / SWIFT
- Owen Carter, Rockford Housing Authority
- Derrick Davis, Rockford Park District
- Deon Freeman, Community Activist
- John Mecklenburg, NW Rockford Redevelopment
- Mokhtar Mohamed, Local Business Owner
- Patrick O’Keefe, Great Neighborhoods
- Danielle Potter, Rockford Park District
- Dennis Rich, Keith Creek Neighborhood Association
- Jeff Sturtecky, Rockford Apartment Association
- Odessa Walker, Rockford Housing Authority
- Carl Wasco, Rockford Realtors Association

Multicultural Focus Group
- Janet Biljeskovic, Catholic Charities
- Simone Cameron, Maurice West’s office
- Laura Furman, Midway Village
- Dina Getty, Rockford Italian Sister Cities Alliance
- Sue Moberg, St. Stanislaus (Polish Community)
- Ricardo Montoya Picazo, Hispanic Community leader
- Goldie Pekarsky, Jewish Federation of Greater Rockford
- Danielle Potter, Rockford Park District
- Aisha Shaheen, Muslim Association of Greater Rockford
- Baba Ji Singh, Sikh Temple
- Sengla Vanmanivong, Lao-American Association of Northern Illinois

Youth Focus Group
- Mary Ellen Commare, Youth Services Network
- Becky Cook Kendall, Rockford Regional Health Council
- James DeVoe, Project 1013 / former Pres of West Gateway
- Morgan Gallagher, Principal of Roosevelt Community Education Center
- Anisha Grimmett, Alignment Rockford / Ready to Learn
- Josie McCasne, Human Services - Youth Advocate
- Danielle Potter, Rockford Park District
- Oliver Reed, Boys and Girls Club
- Sandra Rodriguez, Head Start
- Barb Seaworth, Rock House Kids

Real Estate Focus Group
- Lisa Warren, Head Start

Grass Roots/Social Services Focus Group
- Danielle Angileri, ED of NAMI
- Keri Asevedo, ED of Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity
- Sarah Brinkmann, ED of HomeStart
- Eric Brown, RAMP
- David Gomel, President of Rosecrance
- Anisha Grimmett, ED of Alignment Rockford
- Jennifer Jaeger, Rockford Human Services Department
- Shelton Kay, Crusader Clinic
- Shannon Kopp, Rockford Fire Department
- Cat Lewis, Swedish American
- Todd Marshall, Winnebago County Health Department
- Jessie Schaefer, City of Rockford Neighborhood Standards
- David Sidney, ED of Transform Rockford

Phone Interviews
- Bob Campbell, Zion Development
- Deb Dorsey, City of Rockford
- Sue Kanchik, Jeremiah Development
- Jamie Piotrowski and Karl Haglund, Urban Design Ventures
- Eric Setter, Northern Illinois Land Bank Authority
- Danielle Poter, Rockford Park District

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Introduction
In July 2019, the City of Rockford partnered with the National Resource Network (Network) to develop a neighborhood revitalization strategy that addresses the deteriorated conditions in many Rockford neighborhoods. The impetus for this effort came from a prior Network engagement in which the City undertook multi-year financial planning that illuminated the need to increase property values in the city. This neighborhood revitalization strategy is the culmination of community development recommendations included in Rockford’s multi-year financial plan. It includes two components: 1) a neighborhood typology that integrates with City data to provide a data-driven framework for policy and programmatic decision-making now and into the future; and 2) this document – an accompanying strategy that builds on the neighborhood typology to provide direction to the City and its community partners as they implement neighborhood improvements across the city.

Represented by Enterprise Community Partners, the Network partnered with the City to engage staff, community organizations, service providers and civic leaders to develop a revitalization strategy that is actionable and builds on Rockford’s robust community collaboration and visioning. The Network team interviewed community members, held focus groups with community representatives from across a spectrum of sectors and stakeholder groups, facilitated two community workshops and held two public input sessions to gain insights from community residents, and received regular input from staff.

Recognizing that Rockford’s real estate market is still recovering ten years after the Recession, this neighborhood revitalization strategy balances the use of real estate market analysis with a qualitative approach that incorporates community assets, stakeholder input, and shared values. It draws on national best practices in community revitalization to suggest solutions for Rockford’s neighborhoods.

Rockford faces real challenges, but there is a clear way forward. Revitalization will take many years, but the City is poised to harness recent momentum and take advantage of opportunities to drive towards a future in which residents can live, play, and thrive in their city and in their neighborhoods.

A Comprehensive Approach
This neighborhood revitalization strategy uses both quantitative and qualitative data to provide comprehensive recommendations to address neighborhood conditions and residents’ quality of life. The neighborhood typology provides the ability to do fine-grained data-driven analysis at the block level in neighborhoods across the entire city. However, there are four overarching recommendations that frame the more detailed strategies that follow:

- **Empowered Collaboration** – To foster real improvement in its neighborhoods, the City will need to draw on the collective energy and resources of community organizations and agency partners for many years ahead. Community partners will need to rethinks historic ways of working in order to maximize momentum for change. Collaboration will need to be coordinated and sustained with laser focus on shared visions, desired outcomes, and mutual responsibilities. To provide the best chance for a multi-year collective effort to be successful, the City should convene a steering committee comprised of high-level community leaders from participating organizations who are able to speak on behalf of their organizations, direct implementation efforts and provide accountability. In cities that have successfully launched coordinated cross-sector engagement strategies, this work has launched from high level offices in the City government to demonstrate commitment and provide the steering committee with the mandate needed to reinforce implementation. Rockford should look to established collective impact models for ongoing inspiration to support long-term, coordinated actions that drive impact and positive results.

- **Asset-centered Revitalization** – Rockford’s assets lay the foundation for strategic revitalization that can be distinctly Rockford’s – connected people, architectural character, parks and natural beauty. Revitalization should be grounded in fostering stronger community connections, amplifying neighborhood character and cultural personality, and expanding the value of green spaces, parks, and recreational amenities. A people-centered revitalization approach can offset some challenging market realities with actionable improvements and empowered communities. While a real estate market approach provides insight into current neighborhood conditions and investment activity, it can limit the City’s ability to build positive momentum in weaker market areas. Rockford should continue to actively pursue redevelopment Downtown, in Midtown and along the riverfront, as well as pursue infill redevelopment opportunities as opportunities arise in neighborhoods. However, with limited capacity and resources to dedicate to neighborhood redevelopment in the current investment climate, a balanced, people-centered revitalization approach provides opportunities for visible action and “quick wins”.

- **Tactical and Incremental** – Residents and community leaders express the desire to see Rockford in the future look more like its vibrant past, with fewer vacancies, more housing construction and infill development to fill areas where demolitions have left “holes” in the fabric of the community. In many parts of Rockford, this is a long-term vision that will take years, even decades, to come to fruition. The City has an opportunity to take action and create visible “quick wins” in the near term that can support positive momentum and outcomes through adopting tactical approaches to revitalization. Tactical measures are temporary and provide opportunities for reuse and community-building without encumbering properties in perpetuity, which allows for flexibility in the future as the market strengthens.

- **Amplify the Positive** – Rockford has charm, architectural heritage, strong community connections and a wealth of spirit. However, Rockford’s image is haunted by past headlines that highlighted its hardships and struggles. Rockford could benefit from the creation of a digital platform that provides positive stories and accounts of living in Rockford, actively promotes housing loan and investment products, and highlights neighborhood assets. This site should be a marketing platform that targets varied audiences, including prospective new residents and current residents who may consider leaving for locations with higher morale and investment potential. Beyond providing information about available housing and lending programs for homebuyers and investors, the site should be an active platform to market housing opportunities and connect residents to neighborhoods. Given the City’s staffing constraints, it is important to consider that technical and regular content development for a digital platform can be challenging to maintain over time. The City should consider streamlining site management through strategic partnerships with community-minded organizations that share the City’s revitalization vision. External partnerships can help mitigate the City’s capacity limitations and result in an updated website that effectively promotes interest and investment in Rockford.
The 2020 Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology was created using machine learning technology based on data collected from a variety of city-provided and public data sources that capture ten dimensions of neighborhoods (defined herein as a census block group) as follows:

- Home sale prices in 2019
- The change in home sale prices since 2008
- Code violations
- Foreclosures
- Building vacancy
- Land vacancy (other than parks and other intentionally vacant spaces)
- The share of parcels that have received more-than-typical investments in property improvements
- The homeownership rate
- The presence of commercial or institutional land uses
- The presence of project-based housing subsidies (used largely to identify Special Case areas)

**Strong Neighborhood** types tend to have higher homeownership rates and home values, lower levels of distress (building and lot vacancies, foreclosures and code violations) and be home to owners and landlords that are willing to invest to maintain and improve their properties. These markets are places where the city and its partners can build on existing strengths and assets, expand existing positive momentum, and support quality of life for residents in these places.

**Emerging Neighborhood** types tend to have lower homeownership rates and home values, along with substantially higher levels of distress than other parts of the city – more vacancies, more foreclosures, more properties with code violations. These are neighborhoods where there are multiple interrelated issues that will need to be addressed using concerted and likely long-term efforts. Despite existing signs of distress, emerging neighborhoods have a number of committed neighborhood groups, areas showing active investment and redevelopment opportunity sites that can form the basis for broader improvement efforts.

**Middle Neighborhood** types fall somewhere in between Strong and Emerging neighborhoods with characteristics more closely resembling the city as a whole – moderate values and moderate levels of distress. These are places where significant progress can be made on a shorter time scale if appropriate strategies are pursued and resources targeted accordingly. On the other hand, these are the neighborhoods that may be most susceptible to decline in the absence of an effective neighborhood revitalization effort.

As mentioned above, **Special Neighborhood** types are those areas that were identified as being different enough from other neighborhoods that they likely need a different kind of strategy framework than the one provided here. These include the downtown area, areas with intensive commercial or institutional developments where additional research and engagement would be needed to identify appropriate strategies. In addition, this includes areas with very high levels of project-based housing subsidies, since these areas will have irregular housing market characteristics and may require a more in-depth partnership strategy with affordable housing owners. For this reason, these areas are not discussed in the strategy sections that follow.
Revitalization Strategies by Neighborhood Type

The following sections build on the neighborhood typology to provide implementation recommendations designed to address specific characteristics of each group of neighborhoods – Emerging, Middle and Strong. Using the typology’s neighborhood categories as a starting point, the neighborhood-specific recommendations incorporate stakeholder input to present a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization that spans a diverse set of programmatic areas and initiatives. Strategic initiative categories include:

- Housing;
- Vacant properties and lots;
- Neighborhood placemaking;
- Community connection; and
- Crime and safety.

Recommendations for each category of neighborhoods have been designed to 1) ensure a high quality of life in Rockford neighborhoods; and 2) strengthen the residential real estate market. Community members and advocates directly contributed input into resident priorities and provided a foundation to formally understand the existing character and social climate within neighborhoods. Overarching strategic goals that underly this neighborhood revitalization strategy include:

Ensure a high quality of life in neighborhoods
- Heighten neighborliness, community connection and civic participation
- Increase neighborhood safety – both real and perceived
- Ensure access to neighborhood amenities and connections to broader city programs and events
- Foster neighborhood pride

Strengthen the residential real estate market
- Spur investment in rehabilitation to preserve Rockford’s architectural character and provide safe, high-quality housing
- Support asset building for property owners – both owner occupants and investors
- Attract new infill development to provide additional housing options and density
- Attract new residents to Rockford
- Increase the City’s revenue base

The recommendations for the City of Rockford’s neighborhood stabilization strategy are outcome-driven and data-supported to reflect present neighborhood conditions and drive toward desired results. Outcomes include targeting blight and its negative impact on neighborhoods; reinforcing positive perceptions about Rockford; and developing robust outreach to foster community connection, engagement, and improved quality of life. Recognizing that Rockford’s neighborhoods include both real estate and people, the strategy includes recommendations for both place-based and people-centered initiatives.

Appendix III includes an implementation matrix with recommendations for actions, timelines, funding and partnerships to support implementation and engagement over the coming years. Leading the neighborhood revitalization effort, the City of Rockford is charged with identifying action-oriented community partners and sustaining collaboration and momentum over time.
### Emerging Neighborhood Strategy

Market data indicate that Emerging Neighborhoods have lower homeownership rates and home values, along with substantially higher levels of distress compared to other parts of the city – more vacancies, more foreclosures, more properties with reported code violations. The physical decline visible in Emerging Neighborhoods reflects the impacts of population loss, regional economic decline, decreasing household incomes, and legacies of racial segregation. However, they also possess community assets that can sustain positive change and improvement over time. Residents voiced a need for new development to counter disinvestment and attract new services and amenities, such as grocery stores and laundromats. Residents also expressed concerns about isolation, stigma and a need to connect to the prosperity evident in other areas of the city. To realize revitalization Emerging Neighborhoods will need to address multiple interrelated issues using concerted, and likely, long-term efforts.

### Average Indicator Values for Each Neighborhood Subtype

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Emerging Type A</th>
<th>Emerging Type B</th>
<th>Emerging Type C</th>
<th>Emerging Type D</th>
<th>City Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure Rate</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Violation Rate</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Improvement Activity</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Subsidized Units</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Land within Commercial Use</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership Rate</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Median Home Sales Value, 2008-2019</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Home Sales Value, 2019 (S)</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Community Connection:

Strong community connections built on participation and meaningful relationships between neighbors.

**Approach:** Strengthening neighborhood associations and providing early supports to ensure that group participation is sustainable are key priorities. Recommended strategies include initiatives to connect neighbors, such as long-term residents, recent immigrants and new residents. Recommended initiatives include improving outreach to residents with information about neighborhood engagement, welcome packages, special events, education programs and services.

**Potential Partners:** City of Rockford; Catholic Charities; Rockford Housing Authority; neighborhood groups; local nonprofit organizations.

### Neighborhood Placemaking:

Neighborhoods that have a strong sense of place and that project community well-being, character and history.

**Approach:** Recommended neighborhood initiatives include landscaping and neighborhood beautification through landscaping, gardening and community art installations – particularly in areas where vacant lots provide opportunities for creative reuse. Recommendations also build on community organizing efforts to focus civic engagement on the physical improvement of the neighborhood through mini-grants and collective implementation.

**Potential Partners:** Great Neighborhoods; City of Rockford; community nonprofits; churches.

### Housing:

High-quality housing that contributes to safe and attractive neighborhoods.

**Approach:** Neighborhood initiatives recommend increasing property improvements through grants, loans and targeted outreach to property owners. For elderly or disabled residents, recommendations include improving outreach to services, programs and volunteer groups that can assist with age-in-place and accessibility upgrades that can provide safer housing conditions. In addition, a key priority for the neighborhood should be to address housing insecurity by providing additional supports to residents facing foreclosure or those in need of tenant protections. The City should continue to implement strategic code enforcement policies with a focus toward establishing a culture of compliance.

**Potential Partners:** City of Rockford; the Rockford Housing Authority; HomeStart.

### Vacant Structures & Lots:

Improved neighborhood conditions as a result of blight removal and proactive reuse of vacant lots.

**Approach:** Recommended implementation initiatives adopt a tactical approach to vacant land reuse in the short-term while waiting for market to strengthen in time. Tactical uses are temporary in nature and do not encumber a property in perpetuity, which allows for redevelopment in time as market conditions improve. Tactical reuse opportunities range in size from small side lots to larger clusters of adjacent parcels, and can include gardens, gathering spaces, public art venues and well-maintained green spaces. The City should continue to implement strategic code enforcement policies with a focus toward establishing a culture of compliance and continue demolition of unsafe structures.

**Potential Partners:** City of Rockford; Land Bank.

### Crime & Safety:

Residents report higher levels of security in neighborhoods and improved experiences of both real and perceived crime.

**Approach:** Neighborhood recommendations focus on building collaborative relationships between law enforcement, individuals, and organizations to strengthen accountability and proactive problem solving, and evaluate effective responses. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) recommendations include landscape, visibility and lighting.

**Potential Partners:** City of Rockford; Rockford Police Department; Neighborhood groups.
### Emerging Neighborhood Strategies by Type

| Emerging Type A | Emerging Type A neighborhoods are located across the west and northwest areas of Rockford and in many cases are adjacent to Middle-type neighborhoods and Winnebago County lands. These neighborhoods are located in ZIP codes that have lower than average home sale values but where values have recovered and, in some cases, surpassed 2008 values (before accounting for inflation). In other respects, however, Emerging Type A neighborhoods are similar to Middle type neighborhoods. Distress levels in this area tend to be roughly on par with or even slightly lower than the city as a whole, with the exception of lot vacancy rates, which are slightly higher than average. Homeownership rates are roughly average compared to the city as a whole, but higher than other Emerging types. Homeowners and landlords in this type, as with all Emerging market types, have lower rates of investment in substantial property improvements. This type also has a substantial commercial/institutional land use presence. | Implementation Priorities: |
| | | • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach |
| | | • Continue demolition of blighted properties that pose significant negative impacts to neighborhood and promote rehabilitation of abandoned properties where feasible |
| | | • Actively attract new tenants to vacant commercial spaces with a focus on grocery markets and neighborhood services |
| Emerging Type B | Emerging Type B neighborhoods are located in a small cluster in the far northwest area of Rockford and are almost entirely adjacent to Winnebago County lands. The most distinguishing features of this type are the high rates of vacant lots and the substantial presence of project-based housing subsidies in this type. Aside from vacant lots, however, this neighborhood type shows roughly average levels of distress relative to the city as a whole and substantially lower levels than Emerging Types C, D and E neighborhoods. That said, substantial residential improvement activity is the lowest of any neighborhood type in the city. Home values in the ZIP code where these neighborhoods are located is lower than average and on par with values of other Emerging Type neighborhoods, although values in Type B neighborhoods have nearly recovered to 2008 levels. | Implementation Priorities: |
| | | • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach |
| | | • Pursue tactical opportunities to reuse vacant lots in the near term while preparing for redevelopment and infill when market strengthens |
| Emerging Type C | Emerging Type C neighborhoods are scattered throughout Rockford’s west side. These neighborhoods have higher than average levels of lot vacancy, structural vacancy and code violations, but roughly average foreclosure rates. Relative to other Emerging type neighborhoods, Type C neighborhoods are more predominantly residential with less land devoted to commercial/institutional uses. Homeownership rates in this type are lower than Rockford as a whole, but moderate relative to other Emerging type neighborhoods. Levels of homeowner/landlord investment in substantial improvements is lower than the city average, but moderate relative to other Emerging Types. Home values in the ZIP codes where these neighborhoods are located are similar to other Emerging Types and lower than the city as a whole. Values are roughly on par with 2008 levels. | Implementation Priorities: |
| | | • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach |
| | | • Pursue tactical opportunities to reuse vacant lots in the near term while preparing for redevelopment and infill when market strengthens |
| | | • Target outreach and access to foreclosure assistance and tenant advocacy programs |
| Emerging Type D | Emerging Type D neighborhoods are a cluster of neighborhoods south of Rockford’s downtown and are adjacent on all sides to Middle Type neighborhoods, aside from the section that borders the river on the west side. These neighborhoods have moderately higher than average levels of distress relative to the city as a whole with the exception of lot vacancy rates, which are roughly average. Homeownership rates are low, but this type does show a more substantial investment by owners and landlords in residential property improvements relative to other Emerging types. Home values in the ZIP codes where these neighborhoods are located are on par with other Emerging types today, but this type has experienced the lowest levels of recovery toward 2008 values of any neighborhood type with values today substantially lower than those in 2008. Commercial/institutional presence in this type is similar to that of the city as a whole. | Implementation Priorities: |
| | | • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach |
| | | • Pursue tactical opportunities to reuse vacant lots in the near term while preparing for redevelopment and infill when market strengthens |
| | | • Target outreach to tenant advocacy programs and eviction prevention |
| Emerging Type E | Emerging Type E neighborhoods are located in a cluster on Rockford’s west side between West State St. and Auburn St. This type borders a combination of Emerging and Middle Type neighborhoods. Type E neighborhoods show very high levels of structural vacancy, foreclosure rates and code violations along with moderately high lot vacancy, making this type the most distressed in Rockford. Homeownership rates are very low with low levels of investment in property improvements by homeowners and landlords. Home prices in the ZIP codes where these neighborhoods are located are on par with other Emerging neighborhoods, and while on a percentage basis the typical current values in the ZIP code are higher than those in 2008, the low home values make this gain modest in dollar terms. Commercial/institutional presence in this type is slightly below average. | Implementation Priorities: |
| | | • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach |
| | | • Pursue tactical opportunities to reuse vacant lots in the near term while preparing for redevelopment and infill when market strengthens |
| | | • Target outreach to tenant advocacy programs and eviction prevention |
| | | • Implement strategic code enforcement measures that foster a culture of compliance by property owners and to ensure safe housing conditions |
Middle Neighborhood Strategy

Middle Neighborhoods – sometimes referred to as “tipping” neighborhoods – fall somewhere in between Strong and Emerging Neighborhoods with characteristics more closely resembling the city as a whole – moderate values and moderate levels of distress. These are places where significant progress can be made on a shorter time scale if appropriate strategies are pursued and resources targeted accordingly. On the other hand, these are the neighborhoods that may be most susceptible to decline in the absence of an effective neighborhood revitalization effort. Middle Neighborhoods vary in terms of community engagement, with some showing strong leadership and others requiring additional support to advocate effectively for neighborhood change. To maximize impact, sustainability and reach, neighborhood associations should prioritize inclusivity and diversification of membership and leadership.

### Map 3: Middle Neighborhoods

#### Desired Outcome

**Community Connection:**
- Strong community connections that provide the foundation for sustained participation, engagement and civic leadership in neighborhood improvement.

**Neighborhood Placemaking:**
- Attractive neighborhoods that have a strong sense of place that inspires connection and investment.

**Housing:**
- Attractive neighborhoods that reflect Rockford’s architectural heritage and provide safe, high-quality housing opportunities for residents.

**Vacant Structures & Lots:**
- Improved neighborhood conditions as a result of blight removal and proactive reuse of vacant lots.

**Crime & Safety:**
- Residents report higher levels of security in neighborhoods and improved experiences of both real and perceived crime.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Connection:</td>
<td>Strengthening neighborhood associations and providing early supports to ensure that group participation is sustainable are key priorities. Associations should prioritize outreach and inclusion to ensure maximum participation by neighbors representing Rockford’s diversity – homeowners, renters, longtime residents, new residents and immigrants. Recommended strategies include initiatives to improve outreach to residents with information about neighborhood history, participation, special events, local programs and services.</td>
<td>Great Neighborhoods; City of Rockford; neighborhood groups; local nonprofit organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Placemaking:</td>
<td>Neighbors work together to articulate a shared vision for their neighborhood that respects the past while looking ahead to a vibrant future. Recommended initiatives include providing opportunities for neighbors to work together – and in partnership with local organizations – to activate vacant lots for reuse as gardens, green spaces, public art venues, and gathering or event spaces. In addition, neighborhood associations should highlight assets and the neighborhood’s identity to actively brand and market the area to prospective residents, while also creating an identity that fosters a sense of ownership in current residents.</td>
<td>Great Neighborhoods; Transform Rockford; neighborhood groups; local nonprofit organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing:</td>
<td>Middle Neighborhood recommendations include increasing property improvements through grants, loans and targeted outreach to property owners. For elderly or disabled residents, recommendations include improving outreach to services, programs and volunteer groups that can assist with age-in-place and accessibility upgrades that can provide safer housing conditions. Homebuyer assistance programming should include down payment assistance and property investors who have remained in good standing should have access to home enhancement loans. In addition, a key priority for the neighborhood should be to address housing insecurity by providing additional supports to residents facing foreclosure or those in need of tenant protections.</td>
<td>HomeStart; City of Rockford; Habitat for Humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots:</td>
<td>The City should continue to implement strategic code enforcement policies with a focus toward establishing a culture of compliance and continue demolition of unsafe structures. In areas where there are real concerns of blight encroachment, the City should prioritize demolition and rapid tactical reuse of the resulting vacant lots as gardens, gathering areas, mini-parks, and arts venues. Due to the fact that tactical uses are temporary in nature, and do not encumber a property in perpetuity, they provide an opportunity to create positive energy while waiting for the market to strengthen and support future infill. Where clusters of vacant lots provide opportunities to create larger development sites, the City should prioritize parcel assembly and marketing to infill developers.</td>
<td>City of Rockford; Land Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime &amp; Safety:</td>
<td>Neighborhood recommendations focus on building collaborative relationships between law enforcement, individuals, and organizations to strengthen accountability and proactive problem solving, and evaluate effective responses. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) recommendations include landscape, visibility and lighting.</td>
<td>City of Rockford; Rockford Police Department; Neighborhood groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Average Indicator Values for Each Neighborhood Subtype

*Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology & Strategy*

*National Resource Network, 2019*
| Middle Type A | Middle Type A neighborhoods are located primarily on Rockford’s southeast side and are mostly adjacent to other Middle Type neighborhoods or to Winnebago County or Cherry Valley lands. Type A neighborhoods are almost entirely residential, have very high homeownership rates and have the highest rates of homeowners/landlords who invest in substantial property improvements of any neighborhood type in Rockford. Distress levels in these neighborhoods is lower than average with the exception of the residential foreclosure rate, which is higher than the city average. Home values in the ZIP codes where Type A neighborhoods are located are slightly higher than average, but substantially lower than both Strong type neighborhoods, and values there have recovered similarly to the city as a whole since 2008. |
| Implementation Priorities: | • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach • Provide outreach and access to foreclosure assistance and tenant advocacy programs • Engage neighbors in identifying and articulating the neighborhood’s assets and marketing them to current and future residents • Provide support for the creation and strengthening of neighborhood associations capable of leading implementation of improvement efforts, such as: community events, beautification, banners and placemaking. |
| Middle Type B | Middle Type B neighborhoods can be found in both southeast and northwest Rockford and are primarily adjacent to other middle neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have slightly lower than average levels of distress across all four indicators. Homeownership rates are average, and levels of homeowner/landlord investments in property improvements are higher than average, but not as high as Middle Type A neighborhoods on average. Commercial/institutional presence is on par with the city as a whole, as are home values in the ZIP codes where these neighborhoods are located. However, home values in these neighborhoods have been slightly lower than average in recovering to 2008 levels. |
| Implementation Priorities: | • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach • Target outreach to landlords in the area who are responsive to positive community engagement and provide access to support for property enhancement efforts • Engage neighbors in identifying and articulating the neighborhood’s assets and marketing them to current and future residents • Provide support for the creation and strengthening of neighborhood associations capable of leading implementation of improvement efforts, such as: community events, beautification, banners and placemaking. |
| Middle Type C | Middle Type C neighborhoods are located exclusively in southern Rockford, primarily along 11th Street. Among Middle type neighborhoods Type C stands out as having very high lot vacancy rates. Other distress indicators are slightly lower than the city average. Homeownership rates are slightly lower than average, as are rates of investments in property improvements by homeowners and landlords. However, home values in the ZIP codes where these neighborhoods are located are higher than any other middle type, and values have been quicker to recover to 2008 levels than the city as a whole. Commercial/institutional presence is on par with the city as a whole. |
| Implementation Priorities: | • Target homebuyer assistance and down payment programs to properties located in the neighborhood. • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach • Target outreach to landlords in the area who are responsive to positive community engagement and provide access to support for property enhancement efforts • Provide outreach and access to foreclosure assistance, rental assistance and tenant advocacy programs • Engage neighbors in identifying and articulating the neighborhood’s assets and marketing them to current and future residents • Provide support for the creation and strengthening of neighborhood associations capable of leading implementation of improvement efforts, such as: community events, beautification, banners and placemaking. |
| Middle Type D | Middle Type D neighborhoods can be found primarily in northwest and southeast Rockford and are adjacent to both Middle and Emerging neighborhoods. These neighborhoods tend to have lower levels of distress than the city as a whole, with the exception of the foreclosure rate, which is higher than average, but lower than Middle Type E neighborhoods. Homeownership rates are moderately high, but investment in substantial property improvements is lower than Middle Types A, B and C. Home values in the ZIP codes where these neighborhoods are located vary, but on average are on par with the city as a whole, although values have been slower than average to recover relative to 2008 levels. Commercial/institutional presence is on par with the city as a whole. |
| Implementation Priorities: | • Target homebuyer assistance and down payment programs to properties located in the neighborhood. • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach • Target outreach to landlords in the area who are responsive to positive community engagement and provide access to support for property enhancement efforts • Engage neighbors in identifying and articulating the neighborhood’s assets and marketing them to current and future residents • Provide support for the creation and strengthening of neighborhood associations capable of leading implementation of improvement efforts, such as: community events, beautification, banners and placemaking. |
| Middle Type E | Middle Type E neighborhoods represent the bulk of the neighborhoods in northwest Rockford, with a few east of downtown and in southeast Rockford. Type E neighborhoods tend to be adjacent to other Middle neighborhoods and in many cases Emerging neighborhoods as well, including a few bordering Emerging Type E neighborhoods that have very high levels of distress. Middle Type E neighborhoods have moderately high levels of structural vacancies and code violations and very high rates of foreclosure relative to the city as a whole and to other Middle types. In this respect, Middle Type E actually more closely resembles Emerging type neighborhoods. However, lot vacancy rates are substantially lower than the city as a whole, and Type E neighborhoods tend to be located in ZIP codes with higher home values that have nearly recovered to 2008 levels. Homeownership rates tend to be on par to slightly lower than the city average, but rates of owners/landlords making substantial investments in property improvements are lower than any other Middle type. Commercial/institutional presence is on par with other Middle Type neighborhoods and lower than the city as a whole. |
| Implementation Priorities: | • Provide outreach and access to foreclosure assistance and tenant advocacy programs • Prioritize demolition of blighted properties that pose significant negative impacts to neighborhood • Target homebuyer assistance and down payment programs to properties located in the neighborhood. • Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach • Implement strategic code enforcement measures that foster a culture of compliance by property owners and to ensure safe housing conditions • Target outreach to landlords in the area who are responsive to positive community engagement and provide access to support for property enhancement efforts • Engage neighbors in identifying and articulating the neighborhood’s assets and marketing them to current and future residents • Provide support for the creation and strengthening of neighborhood associations capable of leading implementation of improvement efforts, such as: community events, beautification, banners and placemaking. |
**Strong Neighborhood Strategy**

Market data indicate that Strong Neighborhoods have higher homeownership rates and home values, lower levels of distress (building and lot vacancies, foreclosures and code violations) and be home to owners and landlords that are willing to invest to maintain and improve their properties. Strategies for strong neighborhoods involve building on existing assets and momentum to ensure continued prosperity and quality of life for residents. Strong Neighborhoods vary in terms of community engagement. To maximize impact, sustainability and reach, neighborhood associations should prioritize inclusivity and diversification of membership and leadership, as well as provide mentorship to start-up neighborhood associations across the city.

### Desired Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Neighborhood Strategy</th>
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- **Market data indicate that Strong Neighborhoods have higher homeownership rates and home values, lower levels of distress (building and lot vacancies, foreclosures and code violations) and be home to owners and landlords that are willing to invest to maintain and improve their properties. Strategies for strong neighborhoods involve building on existing assets and momentum to ensure continued prosperity and quality of life for residents. Strong Neighborhoods vary in terms of community engagement. To maximize impact, sustainability and reach, neighborhood associations should prioritize inclusivity and diversification of membership and leadership, as well as provide mentorship to start-up neighborhood associations across the city.**

### Average Indicator Values for Each Neighborhood Subtype

- **Lot Vacancy Rate**
- **Structural Vacancy Rate**
- **Foreclosure Rate**
- **Code Violation Rate**
- **Residential Improvement Activity**
- **% Subsidized Units**
- **% of Land that is a Commercial Area**
- **Homeownership Rate**
- **Change in Population, 2000-2019**
- **Median Home Value, 2019**

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**Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology & Strategy**

National Resource Network, 2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Neighborhood Strategies by Type</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong Type A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strong Type A</strong> neighborhoods have very high homeownership rates and are located in ZIP codes with very high home values that have nearly recovered to 2008 levels. Located primarily in the northeast part of the city, these neighborhoods are adjacent to Strong Type B neighborhoods and commercial corridors classified as a “special” type. Strong Type A neighborhoods have lower than average levels of distress and average rates of homes that have received substantial investments in improvements over the last 5 years. That said, compared to Strong Type B neighborhoods, Strong Type A neighborhoods have higher rates of structural vacancy, foreclosures, and code violations as well as lower rates of investment in residential improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Implementation Priorities:** | **Structure loan and grant programs that provide funding to property owners to improve and/or enhance older properties, with efforts to include both owner-occupants and investors in program reach**  
**Target outreach to landlords in the area who are responsive to positive community engagement and provide access to support for property enhancement efforts**  
**Implement strategic code enforcement measures that foster a culture of compliance by property owners and to ensure safe housing conditions**  
**Engage neighbors in identifying and articulating the neighborhood’s assets and marketing them to current and future residents**  
**Provide support for the creation and strengthening of neighborhood associations capable of leading implementation of improvement efforts, such as: community events, beautification, banners and placemaking.** |
| **Strong Type B** | **Strong Type B** neighborhoods are Rockford’s most stable neighborhoods. Located primarily in the northeast part of the city, they are primarily adjacent to Strong Type A neighborhoods. These primarily residential neighborhoods have very high homeownership rates and are located in ZIP codes with the highest home values in the city. Although home values have not fully recovered from 2008 levels, they have still recovered more than the city as a whole. This neighborhood type has very low levels of distress and high rates of homes that have received substantial investments in improvements over the last 5 years. |
| **Implementation Priorities:** | **Engage neighbors in identifying and articulating the neighborhood’s assets and marketing them to current and future residents**  
**Provide support for the creation and strengthening of neighborhood associations capable of leading implementation of improvement efforts, such as: community events, beautification, banners and placemaking.** |
Appendix I: Methods for 2020 Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology

The 2020 Rockford Housing Market Typology was created by the National Resource Network team in order to group neighborhoods according to similarity along strategy-relevant dimensions. The typology was developed over several iterations with direct input and feedback from both city staff as well as the Advisory Committee for this engagement. It was also informed more generally by first-hand observations of neighborhood conditions by the NRN project team and insights collected through stakeholder engagement and informant interviews.

The final typology was creating using two primary processing steps – generating the base typology and then modifying it to best meet strategy needs.

To create the base, city-wide typology the project team employed cluster analysis, a family of methods that group individuals (in this case neighborhoods) according to their similarity across a specified set of dimensions. For this cluster analysis, we chose an affinity propagation clustering method, a set of machine learning algorithms, using the apcluster package in R. This method is desirable for this project over more common clustering methods such as k-means or k-medoids for two reasons – first, it identifies clusters based on the best fit rather than a prespecified number of clusters. In other words, instead of specifying that we want to end up with 8 clusters as we would with k-means, we are instead able to allow the machine learning algorithm to determine what the most appropriate number of clusters would be given the input data. Second, unlike some other popular machine learning models, affinity propagation is not based on probabilistic learning methods and therefore generates perfectly replicable clusters. The final cluster model was based on a negative distance squared similarity matrix and used the apcluster() method with default arguments.

The most important decision-point for producing the clusters is what input data will be used, so the project team spent considerable time collecting, cleaning and testing variables to determine viability for use in the typology. Variables without close to comprehensive city coverage, for example, are not suitable because they result in some neighborhoods being excluded from the analysis. Variables with substantial outliers or many zero values are often unsuitable because they result in exaggerated similarity or dissimilarity across that dimension. Variables that are too highly correlated with one another may also be unsuitable, as this may result in “double counting” of the same underlying factor in the analysis. After testing and in consultation with the city and Advisory Group, the team elected to use a set of 10 variables in the final model, described in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Source and Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median home value for homes sold in the ZIP code in 2019, Year to date (as of Sept 30, 2019).</td>
<td>Source: Illinois Realtors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in the median home value in the ZIP code between 2008 and 2019 Year to Date sales (as of Sept 30, 2019).</td>
<td>Source: Illinois Realtors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of parcels with code violations.</td>
<td>This is calculated as the number of City of Rockford parcels in the block group with at least one code violation on record since 2006 divided by the total number of City of Rockford parcels in the block group. Source: Tolemi as of 9/12/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of residential parcels that have had at least one foreclosure since 2010.</td>
<td>This is calculated as the number of City of Rockford residential parcels in the block group with at least one foreclosure on record since 2010 divided by the total number of residential City of Rockford parcels in the block group. Source: Tolemi as of 9/12/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of parcels that have no structure.</td>
<td>This is calculated as the number of City of Rockford parcels with a vacant current use (excluding intentional uses such as conservation areas and wooded transitions) divided by the total number of City of Rockford parcels in the block group. Source: Tolemi as of 9/12/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of buildings that are vacant.</td>
<td>This is calculated as the number of City of Rockford parcels with a structure that have a status other than “Occupied” divided by the total number of City of Rockford parcels with a structure. Source: Tolemi as of 9/12/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of households that owned their home as of the 2013-2017 ACS (regardless of city limits)</td>
<td>Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5 Year Sample at block group scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of residential parcels that have undergone substantial rehabilitation/improvement efforts between 2014 and 2019.</td>
<td>This is calculated as the number of City of Rockford parcels with a residential current use and permit valuations totaling at least $7,500 since 2014 divided by the total number of City of Rockford parcels with a residential current use and a structure present. Note that the $7,500 value is based on the median total permit valuation for parcels in the city, meaning that these parcels received more than typical levels of maintenance/investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estimated share of all housing units that receive project-based subsidies (regardless of city limits)</td>
<td>Source: National Housing Preservation Database, 2019; 2013-2017 American Survey, 5 Year Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of the land area devoted to commercial or institutional uses</td>
<td>This is calculated as the total acreage of City of Rockford parcels with a current commercial or institutional use divided by the total of the acreage of City of Rockford parcels in the neighborhood. Source: Tolemi as of 9/12/19.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Technical documentation here: https://cran.r-project.org/package=apcluster
Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology & Strategy
National Resource Network, 2019*
For the purposes of land use coding, the project team used the following designations:

**Commercial/Institutional Current Uses are:**
- Educational Property
- Religious Property
- Government Building
- Exempt Prop Com Office
- Social/Charitable/Fratern
- Exempt Prop Com Bus
- Commercial Office-Impr
- Exempt Prop Govt Bldg
- Commercial Business-Impr

**Residential Current Uses are:**
- Five Family Residence
- Exempt Prop 2 Fam Res
- Six Family Residence
- Three Family Residence
- Exempt Prop 1 Fam Res
- Comm Res (6+units)-Imp
- Four Family Residence
- Two Family Residence
- Condominium (Residential)
- Single Family Residence

**Vacant Current Uses Are:**
- Vacant Rural Prop
- Vacant Industrial Land
- Vac Commercial Land
- Vacant Farmland - assd
- Vacant Residential Land

Four of these variables capture various forms of neighborhood distress, two capture home valuation characteristics and four capture other characteristics deemed relevant from a strategy perspective. Each variable was collected or aggregated up to the census block group scale with two exceptions - in the case of home value and percent change in home value, data was available only at the ZIP code scale, so these variables actually represent the market values/change in value of all homes in the ZIP code where the block group is located, rather than values in the specific block group. This was necessary due to small sample sizes of home sales across many block groups. After block group-level values were obtained for these variables, each variable was scaled and centered to the variable’s mean (i.e. z-scored) in order to normalize for the purposes of computing the similarity matrix. Note that due to lack of data availability or small sample sizes, a small number of block groups such as the area around the airport were excluded from the dataset prior to clustering.

The clustering method described above applied to this dataset resulted in a set of 19 clusters (neighborhood types) that were then studied by the project team and city staff to determine relevance for strategy development. In evaluating the strategic relevance of differences between types, it was deemed appropriate to make two modifications to the analytic clustering result to simplify it and make it more appropriate for strategy development:

- First, the types were grouped into 3 primary neighborhood categories (Strong, Middle and Emerging) based on a combination of the average ZIP code home value for the block groups in the type and the overall level of distress across the four indicators. These groups were intended to simplify the typology conceptually and provide an easier entry point, but not to replace type-level strategy development.
  - A fourth group (Special) was also created to capture 4 of the 19 neighborhood types that were viewed as falling outside of the neighborhood revitalization strategy. These were:
    - neighborhoods that have a very high share of land area devoted to commercial/institutional uses (such as the downtown and major commercial corridors); or
    - neighborhoods that have a very high share (>60%) of housing units that receive project-based subsidies and would therefore not participate in the standard housing market; or
    - neighborhoods that had some combination of both of these characteristics

- Second, a few sets of types were identified where the differences between them were not relevant from a strategy perspective (e.g. a primary differentiator might have been that one type had a high foreclosure rate while the other had an extremely high foreclosure rate, but the two types were similar across the other dimensions). In these cases, the types were combined to create further conceptual simplicity and facilitate strategy development. In all, 3 sets of types were combined this way, resulting in effectively 16 types in the final typology or 12 excluding the four Special types not covered in the strategy.

"Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology & Strategy
National Resource Network, 2019"
Appendix II: Targeting Guidance

About Targeting

In order for neighborhood revitalization strategies to be effective and result in the efficient use of public resources, consideration must be given to where they are targeted. Given a limited set of resources and capacity for demolition activities and a large number of potential sites, where should effort be focused? Is it more effective to focus on a lone single site or on an area of the city where vacancy and blight are rampant? Should the city align investments across strategies in a single place or spread the resources across the city? Because resource allocation in municipal governments is typically driven by politics as much as strategy, the most common approach to neighborhood revitalization targeting is to divide intervention resources up roughly equally among city council districts or planning areas or another similar unit so that investment in revitalization is spread thinly and evenly. While this approach is fair and politically expedient, this is generally not the most effective way to revitalize neighborhoods, as smaller investments across many places will often fail to have significant market impacts in any of those places.

A second common approach is to direct neighborhood revitalization resources at the most distressed areas. In stronger markets, where only small pockets of distress exist and where the broader market may be expected to help create positive momentum, this may indeed be the best approach. In markets such as Rockford’s, however, where there are multiple large areas with substantial levels of distress and soft markets, revitalization efforts undertaken in the most distressed areas may realistically have little demonstrable impact on market conditions, even if they still carry other benefits for local residents.

Given that city and neighborhood improvement and market stability are key revitalization goals for Rockford, we recommend that in cases where targeting decisions must be made that the city prioritize its efforts on the neighborhoods where each dollar can have the most substantial impact on these outcomes. Often referred to as “tipping point” neighborhoods, these will be places where efforts are most likely to generate positive momentum by tipping the neighborhood into more positive perceptions and market conditions or by preventing areas of distress in stronger markets from spilling over into adjacent areas and tipping those neighborhoods into decline.

Although site-level targeting recommendations for each potential program are beyond the scope of this strategy and depend to a large degree on local knowledge, we offer some guidance below to assist the City and other stakeholders in undertaking this decision-making process.

Assessing Concentration

A key consideration in neighborhood revitalization intervention targeting is identifying concentrations of positive or negative conditions or activities. Concentrated distress can spill over into adjacent neighborhoods and lead to increasing distress there. On the other hand, concentrations of positive activities such as owners investing in properties can help to create positive momentum that neighboring areas will benefit from.

For the purposes of discussing targeting in this report, we use an analysis technique called Hot Spot analysis which identifies statistically significant concentrations, known as “Hot Spots” along with areas of absence known as “Cold Spots.” These analyses use parcel-level data to identify individual blocks or streets where positive/negative conditions are concentrated and provides a complement to the more general typology characterization described above. In this discussion, we assume a radius of influence in these examples of 528 feet (1/10th of a mile) meaning that a vacant building or homeowner investment could be expected to have substantial impacts on surrounding properties located about that distance away. In reality, impacts will be very high for properties that are directly adjacent and lower the farther away a given property is from the parcel. So here, a 1/10th of a mile radius means that the majority of impacts will be felt within that area and that impacts beyond that are less significant.

Note that in practice, identified hot spots are affected not only by what is directly highlighted as a hot spot but also by areas around the hot spot that impact it. For example, it’s possible to have a vacancy hot spot that doesn’t actually contain many vacancies but is surrounded by vacancies whose areas of influence overlap in the hot spot. For this reason, hot spots should be interpreted not as “areas of concentration” but rather as “areas of concentrated impacts.” It is thus critical to not look only at what is happening inside hot/cold spots, but also in the areas directly around them.

In addition to Hot Spot analysis, a second useful technique called Cluster and Outlier Analysis can be used to identify individual parcels that break the hot spot/cold spot patterns. For example, this analysis will identify vacant buildings located in areas that are otherwise vacancy cold spots. It could also be used to identify owners who have not made substantial property investments located in areas where their neighbors have to consider for outreach for home repair assistance programs.

Although we have provided the City with an initial set of inputs using these techniques, both of these analysis techniques are built into ESRI’s ArcGIS Spatial Statistics toolbox or can be accessed through other geospatial analysis packages so this analysis can be updated or expanded in the future to accommodate new data.

Targeting Priorities for Select Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies

In general, revitalization activities seeking to have the greatest impact on market conditions should focus on the following priorities. Maps below illustrate the landscape of conditions at a city level, but this information is best explored digitally and in concert with other data, such as that which is available through the city’s Tolemi system.

General Criteria for Successful Neighborhood Revitalization Targeting

• The presence of commercial or institutional anchor projects and partners that can support revitalization efforts.
• The extent to which the neighborhood has an engaged and organized community that can reinforce and sustain progress toward revitalization in the area.
• Whether there are place-based or other designations in an area that enable the use of particular kinds of funding that could enable new activities or a larger scale of existing activities.
• Whether the City of Rockford, the new land bank or other public entities own real estate in the area that could be employed in the strategy.
• The alignment of potential revitalization activities with existing revitalization activities in the area – for example, when considering funding homeowner improvement assistance programs, possibly targeting resources in areas where foreclosure and vacant structure mitigation programs are also focused so that these programs can work in concert to improve the neighborhood.

2 This rate is based on research on the impacts of neighborhood revitalization efforts in Cleveland. Studies of other cities such as New York have in some cases shown measurable impacts occurring at up to 2000 feet from a given site, but we feel that the Cleveland case is probably a better baseline for Rockford. It might also realistically vary by the condition being studied.

Note that this guidance focuses on geographic targeting and is intended to be complementary to Rockford’s existing site-level evaluation criteria, such as the demolition prioritization tool, which captures much more specific information about the property and building conditions.

3 See this paper for additional background on this issue: https://www.princeton.edu/~erossi/EHE.pdf

Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology & Strategy
National Resource Network, 2019
Demolition Targeting Criteria
a) Places where vacant structures are scarce and those that exist have a substantial negative impact on surrounding properties. These would typically be Strong (Type A and B) or Middle (especially types A and B) neighborhoods where vacancies are least common.
   a. More specifically, focusing on outlier vacancies or isolated hotspots in areas that are otherwise in or near structural vacancy cold spots (see maps below).
   b. Structural vacancies located in hot spots of property improvement activities would also be a useful focus.
   
b) Within Emerging type neighborhoods that are targeted (for example, through CDBG-funded activities), areas with the lowest levels of structural vacancy and distress generally should be focused on first (especially Type A), along with those that are directly adjacent to neighborhoods with low levels of distress, as these will result in the greatest benefit. These would either be structural vacancy cold spots or at least areas that are not hot spots, particularly in Emerging Types A and B.
   
c) In areas with higher levels of structural vacancy that do get targeted, resources should be concentrated to demolish all of the derelict buildings in the area and where possible to reprogram the newly vacant land, as only addressing some will generally result in continued decline.
   
d) Areas where market conditions mean that the vacant structure is unlikely to be simply taken care of by the market through investment/redevelopment. Currently Rockford’s real estate market means that most if not all neighborhoods probably meet this criteria, but this may be something to revisit as the market continues to improve and make these activities more viable. When this happens, targeting prioritization should shift away from neighborhoods with strong demand, which are more likely to have markets supporting investment.
   
e) Areas where there are specific goals and resources identified for the reuse or redevelopment of the newly vacant land (including land assembly for redevelopment) and/or where there is an expectation that nearby owners would be willing to utilize the mow-to-own or other similar programs to absorb the land.

Foreclosure Assistance and Mitigation Targeting Criteria
Since the city may have limited ability to select sites here in the absence of place designations, this guidance could be used to inform the outreach/marketing approach.

a) Places where foreclosures and structural vacancy are currently scarce and where a foreclosure resulting in a long-term vacancy is expected to have a substantial negative impact on surrounding properties. These would typically be Middle (Type A, B, C and possibly D) neighborhoods where foreclosures tend to be scarcer. Strong type neighborhoods may also be a possibility (particularly Strong Type A), but there may already be enough demand in these markets for foreclosures without serious structural deficiencies to remain in productive use without intervention.
   a. More specifically, focusing on outlier foreclosures in areas that are in or near foreclosure and structural vacancy cold spots or foreclosures in hot spots of property improvement activities in Middle (Type A, B, C and possibly D) neighborhoods.
   
b) Within Emerging type neighborhoods that are targeted, areas with the lowest levels of structural vacancy, foreclosure, and other distress generally should be focused on first (especially Type A), along with those that are directly adjacent to neighborhoods with low levels of distress, as these will result in the greatest benefit. These would either be foreclosure and structural vacancy cold spots or at least areas that are not hot spots.
   
c) To proactively address potential foreclosures that could result in long-term vacancy, the City should target outreach to areas at risk of foreclosure to increase awareness and availability of intervention programs provided through community partners, such as Prairie State Legal Services Legal Help for Homeowners Project and the 17th Circuit’s Mediation Program.

Vacant Land Reuse Targeting Criteria
a) Areas where there are specific goals and resources identified for the reuse or redevelopment of vacant land (including land assembly for redevelopment) and/or where there is an expectation that nearby owners/institutions would be unwilling to utilize the mow-to-own or other similar programs to absorb the land.
   
b) Areas where market conditions mean that the vacant lot is unlikely to be simply taken care of by the market through redevelopment. Currently Rockford’s real estate market means that all neighborhoods probably meet this criteria, but this may be something to revisit as the market continues to improve and make these activities more viable. When this happens, targeting prioritization could shift away from Strong type neighborhoods, which are more likely to have markets supporting investment.
   
c) Places where other signs of distress are low and those that exist have a substantial negative impact on surrounding properties. These would typically be Strong (Type A and B) or Middle (Types A, B, D and possibly C) neighborhoods where distress levels tend to be lower.
   a. More specifically, focusing on outlier lot vacancies in areas that are in or near lot vacancy cold spots
   b. Lot vacancies in hot spots of property improvement activities could also be a consideration.
   
d) Within Emerging type neighborhoods that are targeted, areas with the lowest levels of lot vacancy and distress generally should be focused on first (especially Type A), along with those that are directly adjacent to neighborhoods with low levels of distress, as these will result in the greatest benefit. These would either be lot vacancy and distress cold spots or at least areas that are not hot spots.

Home Repair Assistance and Home Enhancement Loan Targeting Criteria
Since the city may have limited ability to select sites here in the absence of place designations, this guidance could be used to inform the outreach/marketing approach.

a) Places where distress levels are low and home improvement activities are expected to significantly improve neighborhood perception and spur additional improvements. These would typically be Strong (Types A and B) and Middle (especially Types A, B and C) neighborhoods.
   a. More specifically focusing on distress cold spots and areas located near existing home repair hot spots.
   
b) Within Emerging type neighborhoods that are targeted, areas with the lowest levels of distress generally should be focused on first (especially Type A), along with those that are directly adjacent to neighborhoods with low levels of distress, as these will result in the greatest benefit. These would either be cold spots or at least areas that are not hot spots. Any areas that are property improvement hot spots could also be considered.
The highlighted parcels here could be a useful starting list to evaluate further for demolition priorities – because they are outliers, they are likely to have substantial impacts on surrounding properties if left unattended.
This neighborhood could be a useful "tipping point" area to focus on for demolition or other structural deficiency remediation strategies. It is a Middle Type A neighborhood, which is a lower-distress type generally. It has some distinct vacancy cold spots but there are a fair number of vacancies nearby that could start to have negative impacts here if left unattended (assuming they are true problem vacancies and not properties that would naturally return to the market).

Map 3: Neighborhood-level view of Vacant Structure Hot and Cold Spots with Vacant Structures Indicated

Map 4: Neighborhood-level view of Vacant Structure Hot and Cold Spots with Vacant Structures Indicated

This is another neighborhood that could be a good candidate for targeted demolition activities – this neighborhood is Middle Type B, meaning there is a relatively low level of distress. There are large areas with no vacancies (in blue), but also some areas with more concentrated vacancies (in red) that could risk destabilizing surrounding properties if left unattended. As mentioned above, the strategy here should focus on demolishing or in other ways remedying all of the problem properties simultaneously, and vacant land reuse/mow-to-own/etc. strategies employed so that the neighborhood could be effectively "tipped" in a positive direction.
Map 6: Neighborhood-level view of Vacant Structure Hot and Cold Spots with Vacant Structures Indicated: Far Northwest

Map 7: Neighborhood-level view of Vacant Structure Hot and Cold Spots with Vacant Structures Indicated: Southwest
Map 8: Neighborhood-level view of Vacant Structure Hot and Cold Spots with Vacant Structures Indicated: Washington Park

Map 9: Residential Foreclosure Hot and Cold Spots
Map 12: Parcels with Code Violations Located in areas that are Otherwise Code Violation Cold Spots

Map 13: Property Improvement Hot and Cold Spots (Note that unlike the other maps, in this case red areas represent areas that are being positively impacted by activities.)
## Appendix III: Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies Matrix

### City-wide Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies

*Bold type indicates potential implementation lead*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Intended Outcome(s)</th>
<th>Initiative/Strategy</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Est. Costs</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Partners*</th>
<th>Links &amp; Resources (e.g. best practices, examples, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| City-Wide        | Housing  | Build a body of responsible landlords and motivate owners to reuse properties. Increase demand for rental units with a reputation for active management | “Good Landlord” recognition program AND/OR regulatory relief for responsible behavior | Short    | Variable   | City of Rockford | City of Rockford; Winnebago County; Great Neighborhoods; Neighborhood Associations; regional agencies | •  [Good Landlord Incentives](#)  
•  [A Short Guide to Landlord Incentives and Rental Property Regulation](#) |
<p>| City-Wide        | Housing  | More effectively implement inspection and enforcement of property standards | “Top 10” negligent landlord list | Short    | Variable   | City of Rockford | City of Rockford; Winnebago County; Great Neighborhoods; Rockford Police Dept; Neighborhood Associations | •  <a href="#">Finding and Targeting “Bad Apples”</a> |
| City-Wide        | Housing  | Youth connections to social services, including homelessness, trauma care, nutrition and health care | Explore opportunities to provide school-based connections to community and social services | Long     | variable   | variable        | RPS; City of Rockford; CAA; Alignment Rockford | •  <a href="#">Communities in Schools</a> (Illinois affiliates in Aurora and Chicago) |
| City-Wide        | Housing  | High-capacity nonprofit partner able to leverage funding through grants and partnerships to support housing-related community development efforts (e.g., rehabilitation, emergency repairs, LIHTC, redevelopment, etc.) | Consider expanding local capacity to support housing rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization through the establishment of a neighborhood development corporation, or through extension of RLDC mission. | Medium   | variable   | City of Rockford; regional foundations; private sector partners | Rockford Local Development Corporation; City of Rockford; regional foundations | •  <a href="#">Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation</a> |
| City-Wide | Neighborhood Placemaking | Youth leadership and participation in planning improvements in neighborhoods, city-wide | Launch partnerships with RPS teachers and youth programs to foster authentic youth leadership in neighborhood improvements | Medium | Variable; potentially minimal | Regional grants; City of Rockford; RPS; Alignment Rockford | City of Rockford; RPS; Alignment Rockford; Rockford University; after school program providers | - Y-PLAN (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act, Now), UC Berkeley Center for Cities &amp; Schools - DIY Mini plan resources - Community Foundation of Northern Illinois - In Youth We Trust |
| City-Wide | Neighborhood Placemaking | Bolster local housing market, improve perception of Rockford neighborhoods, and invite resident participation in community-building activities | Neighborhood Marketing and Branding | Long | Variable | City of Rockford, community grants | Great Neighborhoods; Transform Rockford; City of Rockford; community organizations | - Using Place Branding Strategy to Create Homebuyer Demand for Legacy City Neighborhoods, Community Development Investment Review - Middle Neighborhoods - Volume 1, Issue 1 |
| City-Wide | Community Connection | Positive youth engagement in neighborhood improvement efforts | Ensure youth are active participants in neighborhood associations and improvement efforts through structured youth and civic leadership programming | Medium | variable | Regional grants; City of Rockford | City of Rockford; neighborhood associations; Rockford Public Schools; Alignment Rockford | - Neighborhood Leadership Institute, Cleveland, OH - Community Foundation of Northern Illinois – Neighborhood Grants |
| City-Wide | Community Connection | Connecting immigrant and refugee community members to each other, services and the larger neighborhood/community | Immigrant Community Hub | Long | $150k | grants, local foundation CAA; Catholic Charities; Habitat for Humanity; Catholic Charities; Community Action Agency; Winnebago County Health Department Refugee Program | Exchange House project, Akron OH – multicultural gathering space and temporary rental Buildings and Sustaining Community Collaborations for Refugee Welcome: A Community Engagement Toolkit |
| City-Wide | Community Connection | Improved recognition of neighborhoods. Improved neighborhood pride and connection | Neighborhood Special Events | Medium | Variable, depending on scale of event | Local contributions, grants | Great Neighborhoods; Transform Rockford; City of Rockford; Community organizations | Cost Management – Developing a Planned Special Events Line Item Neighborhood Event Planning Guide |
| City-Wide | Community Connection | Improved recognition of neighborhoods. Improved neighborhood pride and connection. Sustained engagement over time | Neighborhood Associations | In Progress | Variable | City of Rockford, Local contributions, grants | Great Neighborhoods; Transform Rockford; City of Rockford; Community organizations | |
| City-Wide | Community Connection | Special events that reinforce sense of place and connection Promotion of neighborhood quality of life | Neighborhood Gatherings, website, or newsletter | Medium | Variable | Local contributions, grants | Great Neighborhoods; Transform Rockford; City of Rockford; Community organizations | |
| City-Wide | Community Connection | Develop the skills of community organizations to effectively respond to community concerns, share knowledge and skills, and collaborate for impact. | Mobile Toolbox | Short | Variable | grants, philanthropy Neighborhood Associations; Transform Rockford | PGH Mobile Toolbox – Lots of Love Pittsburgh, shared community resource by Grounded and Neighborhood Allies |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City-Wide</th>
<th>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</th>
<th>To expedite the sale of vacant properties to owners and investors for rehabilitation</th>
<th>Launch an abandoned property acquisition program to facilitate the resale of abandoned privately-owned properties to buyers for rehabilitation.</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>-Variable</th>
<th>Staff time, program participants fund legal fees associated with title transfer and deed clearance</th>
<th>City of Rockford; Land Bank; Community Development Corporations</th>
<th>• City of Chicago Heights Abandoned Property Acquisition Program (APAP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| City-Wide         | Crime & Safety           | Improved sense of neighborhood safety within Rockford communities               | Community Peacekeepers and Neighborhood Watch Organizations; Social media marketing and information sharing | Medium | Variable, could be no cost | City of Rockford | Great Neighborhoods; Neighborhood Associations; Rockford Police Department | • Starting Neighborhood Watch Groups  
• Social Media can help police departments |
| City-Wide         | Crime & Safety           | Build collaborative relationships between law enforcement, individuals, and organizations to strengthen accountability, proactive problem solving, and trust in police | Model community policing strategies and programming - unarmed mediation, conflict resolution, trauma-informed care, and intervention trainings | Ongoing | Variable | City of Rockford | City of Rockford; Rockford Police Department; ROCK/Strong Houses | • Understanding Community Policing  
• Making Children, Families, and Communities Safer from Violence  
• Community-Based Proactive Strategies |
| City-Wide         | Crime & Safety           | To support expansion of neighborhood associations to strengthen relations with the Rockford Police Department | Aligning with community connection initiatives, launch a neighborhood group support initiative to strengthen neighborhood associations and foster positive relations with the RPD | Medium | Staff time | City of Rockford | City of Rockford; Rockford Police Department; ROCK/Strong Houses; neighborhood associations | • Aurora, IL Neighborhood Support Group Initiative |
| City-Wide         | Crime & Safety           | Positive youth leadership that provides opportunities for youth participation in community safety improvements | Explore feasibility of launching program to develop youth leadership to parallel community policing and youth outreach efforts in neighborhoods | Medium | Variable | City of Rockford; RPD; local business community | City of Rockford; Rockford Police Department; local business community; community organizations; neighborhood associations | • Positive youth leadership that provides opportunities for youth participation in community safety improvements  
• Engaging Youth in Crime Prevention  
• Teens, Crime, and the Community |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Intended Outcome(s)</th>
<th>Initiative/Strategy</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Est. Costs</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Partners*</th>
<th>Links &amp; Resources (e.g. best practices, examples, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Expanded access to homeownership, shared equity, and wealth building</td>
<td>Down payment assistance/First-time homebuyer assistance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>CDBG and other federal programs, bank partners, state/federal grants</td>
<td>HomeStart, Habitat for Humanity, City of Rockford</td>
<td>• Rockford’s homebuyer assistance program&lt;br&gt;• The Potential of Down payment Assistance for Increasing Homeownership Among Minority and Low-Income Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Increased investment by existing owners in their properties</td>
<td>Home repair assistance</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>variable (Seattle Low-Income Housing Fund City-wide allocation for weatherization from local grants: $1,707,000)</td>
<td>CDBG, Other federal programs, bank partners, state/local/federal grants</td>
<td>HomeStart, Habitat for Humanity, City of Rockford</td>
<td>• How to Use CDBG for Housing Activities&lt;br&gt;• Greater Cleveland Home Repair Loan Program&lt;br&gt;• Housing Enhancement Loan Program, Cuyahoga County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Upgraded and modified housing stock and public infrastructure for increased use</td>
<td>Accessibility/&quot;age-in-place&quot; improvements</td>
<td>Short - Medium</td>
<td>Street Accessibility Improvement Projects ~$600,000</td>
<td>Government grants, foundations, and private philanthropy</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Rockford Social Security/Disability Resource Clinics, Transform Rockford</td>
<td>• Good Practices for Accessible Urban Development&lt;br&gt;• Oregon Street Accessibility Improvement Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Improved housing stability for lower-income renters; Improved household financial stability; Families can access higher-opportunity neighborhoods</td>
<td>Rental assistance/ Emergency Assistance</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>variable ($1.3 million annually)</td>
<td>Federal, City of Rockford, CDBG, CSBG</td>
<td>Rockford Housing Authority, Prairie State Legal Services, social service organizations</td>
<td>• State and City funded Rental Housing Programs&lt;br&gt;• Protect Tenants, Prevent Homelessness&lt;br&gt;• PSLS Legal Help for Homeowners Facing Foreclosure&lt;br&gt;• The 17th Judicial Circuit of Illinois’ Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Reducing crowding, housing instability, evictions, and homelessness.</td>
<td>Tenant advocacy/education programs, Homeowner counseling services</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>variable (Philadelphia, PA $500,000 eviction defense fund)</td>
<td>City of Rockford, state and federal resources</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Rockford Housing Authority, Prairie State Legal Services</td>
<td>State and City Funded Rental Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Neighborhood Placemaking</td>
<td>Activated vacant commercial spaces that 1) contribute to neighborhood revitalization; 2) provide incubation space for arts and local entrepreneurs; 3) market available spaces to potential tenants or buyers</td>
<td>Support for local arts and maker community through short-term leases for temporary art installations, studios and galleries in vacant commercial spaces</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>variable depending on grant support for artists and associated legal costs to prepare lease agreements</td>
<td>Local arts grants, Arts Council, RLDC</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Arts Council; RLDC; Rockford Area Economic Development Corporation</td>
<td>Cambridge Arts Vacant Storefront Initiative – connects property owners to local artists who are interested in temporary installations or pop-up projects in vacant spaces; Activation resources for storefront owners between tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Neighborhood Placemaking</td>
<td>Activated vacant commercial spaces that 1) contribute to neighborhood revitalization; 2) provide incubation space for arts and local entrepreneurs; 3) market available spaces to potential tenants or buyers</td>
<td>Support for local entrepreneurs through short-term leases for temporary retail pop-ups in vacant commercial spaces</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>variable depending on grant support for artists and associated legal costs to prepare lease agreements</td>
<td>RLDC</td>
<td>City of Rockford, RLDC, Rockford Area Economic Development Corporation</td>
<td>Michigan Municipal League: PlacePOP - A service for local municipalities to implement “lighter quicker, cheaper” approaches to placemaking and civic engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Neighborhood Placemaking</td>
<td>Demonstrated neighborhood pride and ownership through sustained maintenance of physical features.</td>
<td>Landscaping and beautification; sidewalk &amp; pedestrian improvements</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>variable, depending on funding source</td>
<td>City of Rockford, community organizations</td>
<td>Great Neighborhoods, Transform Rockford, Neighborhood Associations</td>
<td>Placemaking in the Pedestrian Realm – tactical urbanism to advance street safety and placemaking projects, Austin, TX</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Emerging Community Connection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Implementor</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved recognition of neighborhoods</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Local contributions, grants</td>
<td>Neighborhood Associations – A Key to Successful Community Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood pride and connection</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Involving the Community in Neighborhood Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustained engagement over time</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged community members that prevent their neighborhoods from falling into disrepair</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Avg $25,000 total - for city-wide wide grants ranging in $500 to $2000</td>
<td>City of Rockford, state service departments</td>
<td>Love Your Block Blueprint – city-led, neighborhood revitalization small grant program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Love your Block” Mini-Grant Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen mentorship program, naturalization workshops, and adult English classes</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>federal, local foundations</td>
<td>Catholic Charities, RPS, Multi-cultural organizations, Unions, Credit Unions, Law Firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower residents to gain citizenship/legal status, contribute to, and feel ownership in their local community</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>state, federal</td>
<td>Rockford Housing Authority, Community Organizations, A Provider’s Guide to Promoting Economic Self-Sufficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect residents with financial resources and support towards self-sufficiency and economic empowerment</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Rockford Housing Authority, Community Organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary maintenance or reuse of vacant lots; Foster neighborhood interaction; Contribute to neighborhood stabilization/support Stronger market valuation; Encourage environmental awareness</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>staff time</td>
<td>City of Rockford</td>
<td>Pittsburg, PA: Adopt-a-lot with a Vacant Lots Toolkit and Resource Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuse inspiration and design assistance: Lot Reuse Pattern Book</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>variable, depending on partners; market value estimate: $20-$35k; high quality examples online and available for free; partner funding? volunteer?</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Community Action Agency; residents, community organizations</td>
<td>Erie Redevelopment Authority Adopt-A-Lot Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA: Adopt-a-lot with a Vacant Lots Toolkit and Resource Guide</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adopt a lot program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore one-year use permit requires insurance and additional water access, also has a “community managed open space” and “urban farm” designations</td>
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<td>Cleveland Vacant Land Pattern Book - plan and recommendations for vacant land reuse adopted by the Cleveland City Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local design community/Transform Rockford?</td>
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<td>Cleveland Vacant Land Pattern Book - plan and recommendations for vacant land reuse adopted by the Cleveland City Planning Commission</td>
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<td>Baltimore Green Pattern Book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Maintenance and transfer of vacant lots to property owners</td>
<td>Mow-to-Own Program</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Demolition of unsafe and deteriorated properties</td>
<td>Demolition Program</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Crime &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Improved neighborhood safety</td>
<td>Improved perception of neighborhood safety Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)</td>
<td>Street and pedestrian lighting improvements, shrubbery maintenance and tree trimming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Crime &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Increased information exchanges between city services, residents, and businesses on improved problem-solving efforts.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Task force - crime-fighting and quality of life improvement strategies</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Crime &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Build collaborative relationships between law enforcement, individuals, and organizations to strengthen accountability, proactive problem solving, and trust in police</td>
<td>Model community policing strategies and programming - unarmed mediation, conflict resolution, trauma-informed care, and intervention trainings</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **City of Rockford Mow-to-Own**
- **Greening Vacant Lots – Policy Recommendations, Pittsburgh, PA**
- **Baltimore Green Pattern Book**
- **Setting Demolition Priorities**
- **Green Cities: Good Health – Crime & Safety** - This briefing summarizes the research findings on the relationship between urban vegetation and crimes, aggressive behavior, and safety.
- **Housing Counts Policy Toolbox: Strengthen and Promote Existing Neighborhoods**
- **Understanding Community Policing**
- **Making Children, Families, and Communities Safer from Violence**
- **Community-Based Proactive Strategies**
## Middle Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies

*Bold type indicates potential implementation lead*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Intended Outcome(s)</th>
<th>Initiative/Strategy</th>
<th>Timeline Short (0-24 months) medium (2-5 years) long (5+ years)</th>
<th>Est. Costs</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Partners*</th>
<th>Links &amp; Resources (e.g. best practices, examples, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Expanded access to homeownership, shared equity, and wealth building</td>
<td>Down payment assistance/ First-time homebuyer assistance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>CDBG and other federal programs, bank partners, state/federal grants</td>
<td>HomeStart, Habitat for Humanity, City of Rockford</td>
<td>Rockford’s current homebuyer assistance program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Increased investment by existing owners in their properties</td>
<td>Home repair assistance</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>CDBG, Other federal programs, bank partners, state/local/federal grants</td>
<td>HomeStart, Habitat for Humanity, City of Rockford</td>
<td>How to Use CDBG for Housing Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Neighborhood Placemaking</td>
<td>Foster community pride in neighborhoods, and support connection between neighborhood history/architecture/character and residents</td>
<td>Vacant Property Tours</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Variable, could be no cost</td>
<td>local grants/philanthropy</td>
<td>Great Neighborhoods, Rockford Historical Society; community organizations; churches</td>
<td>Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties - New Perspectives on Old Buildings: The Vacant Home Tour, Wilkinsburg, PA p. 23-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Neighborhood Placemaking</td>
<td>Strengthen community participation in neighborhood improvements and foster sustainable connections for future participation</td>
<td>Community Mini-grants</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable depending on funding source</td>
<td>local foundation?</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Rockford Historical Society; community organizations; churches</td>
<td>Mini-Grant Program: Community Impact and Program Evaluation, State of Alaska</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Community Connection</td>
<td>Empower residents to gain citizenship/legal status, contribute to, and feel ownership in their local community</td>
<td>Citizen mentorship program, naturalization workshops, and adult English classes</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>federal, local foundations</td>
<td>Catholic Charities, Rockford Historical Society; community organizations; churches</td>
<td>Immigrant Civic Integration and Service Access Initiatives: Cities for Citizenship Toolkit - 10 Strategies to Launch &amp; Strengthen Citizenship Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Temporary maintenance or reuse of vacant lots, Foster neighborhood interaction; Contribute to neighborhood stabilization/support Stronger</td>
<td>Adopt-a-lot program</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Staff Time</td>
<td>City of Rockford</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Community Action Agency; residents, community organizations</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA: Adopt-a-lot with a Vacant Lots Toolkit and Resource Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Temporary maintenance or reuse of vacant lots; Foster neighborhood interaction; Contribute to neighborhood stabilization/support Stronger market valuation</td>
<td>Reuse inspiration and design assistance: Lot Reuse Pattern Book</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable, depending on partners; market value estimate: $20-$35k; high quality examples online and available for free</td>
<td>Arts Council; Land Bank; Community Land Bank; Arts Council</td>
<td>City of Rockford; Land Bank, Arts Council</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Temporary reuse of vacant lots; Arts and culture promotion in neighborhoods</td>
<td>Artist-in-Vacancy program</td>
<td>Short/Medium</td>
<td>Staff time to administer arts funding for artists and materials</td>
<td>Arts Council; Land Bank; City of Rockford; Land Bank, Arts Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Demolition of unsafe and deteriorated properties</td>
<td>Demolition Program</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td>Staff Time</td>
<td>City of Rockford; state funding</td>
<td>City of Rockford</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Quick Response to new abandonment in “tipping” areas</td>
<td>Windows and Doors Ordinance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Staff Time</td>
<td>City of Rockford; City of Rockford, Great Neighborhoods</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Great Neighborhoods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Vacant Structures &amp; Lots</td>
<td>Identify, halt and reverse the negative impact of vacant, abandoned and problem properties</td>
<td>Strategic Code enforcement; citizen code enforcement support team</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td>City of Rockford</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Emergency Services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Crime &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Increased information exchanges between city services, residents, and businesses on improved problem-solving efforts.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Task force - crime-fighting and quality of life improvement strategies</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Variable, could be no cost or staff time</td>
<td>City of Rockford</td>
<td>City of Rockford, Great Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Associations, Rockford Police Department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Crime &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Build collaborative relationships between law enforcement, individuals, and organizations to strengthen accountability, proactive problem solving, and trust in police</td>
<td>Model community policing strategies and programming - unarmed mediation, conflict resolution, trauma-informed care, and intervention trainings</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>City of Rockford</td>
<td>City of Rockford; Rockford Police Department; ROCK/Strong Houses</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Baltimore one-year use permit** requires insurance and additional water access, also has a “community managed open space” and “urban farm” designations
- **Cleveland Vacant Land Pattern Book** - plan and recommendations for vacant land reuse adopted by the Cleveland City Planning Commission
- **Baltimore Green Pattern Book**
- **Cleveland Vacant Land Pattern Book** - plan and recommendations for vacant land reuse adopted by the Cleveland City Planning Commission
- **Newburgh, NY Community Land Bank: Artist-in-Vacancy program** – descriptive program website with sponsor info, etc.
- **Setting Demolition Priorities**
- **Consider focusing a portion of demolition efforts to neighborhoods in Middle types as part of a larger effort to halt blight (ex. if 100 houses to demo, prioritize % in Middle neighborhoods and remainder on the current demolition list)**
- **Anti-Blight Legislation – Philadelphia, PA**
- **Using Market Driven Decision-Making for Strategic Code Enforcement Success**
- **Strategic Code Enforcement**
- **Housing Counts Policy Toolbox: Strengthen and Promote Existing Neighborhoods**
- **Understanding Community Policing**
- **Making Children, Families, and Communities Safer from Violence**
- **Community-Based Proactive Strategies**
## Strong Neighborhood Stabilization Strategies

*Bold type indicates potential implementation lead*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Intended Outcome(s)</th>
<th>Initiative/Strategy</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Est. Costs</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Partners*</th>
<th>Links &amp; Resources (e.g. best practices, examples, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Community Connection</td>
<td>School-centered community revitalization</td>
<td>Plan and prioritize community/school partnerships</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>grants, philanthropy</td>
<td>Rockford Public Schools, Neighborhood Associations, Community-based development organizations</td>
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</table>
| Strong            | Community Connection              | Expanded community networks through community-driven learning experiences         | Neighborhood mentorship program                                                    | Short    | -Variable   | -staff time                                                                     | Great Neighborhoods, Transform Rockford; City of Rockford; Community organizations          | • "I'm In" Campaign - Detroit Public Schools  
• Connecting Public Schools to Community Development  
• Sister Neighborhoods and Sister Strong |
| Strong            | Community Connection              | Activated public-facing spaces that encourage neighbor interactions               | Activate front yard                                                                | Short    | -Variable   | -staff time                                                                     | Great Neighborhoods; Community organizations                                               | • Be a Better Neighborhood, Build a Better Neighborhood  
• Curbed – 101 Small Ways You Can Improve Your Community  
• Healthy Neighborhoods Model |
| Strong            | Vacant Structures & Lots          | Identify, halt and reverse the negative impact of vacant, abandoned and problem properties | Strategic Code enforcement; citizen code enforcement support team                  | Short    | In Progress | City of Rockford                                                                | City of Rockford, Emergency Services                                                          | • Using Market Driven Decision-Making for Strategic Code Enforcement Success  
• Strategic Code Enforcement |
| Strong            | Advocacy                          | Mixed income communities Diversified housing stock Desegregated neighborhoods       | Advocate for mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood centers, particularly in conjunction with transit nodes | Long     | Variable   | -                                                                               | City of Rockford, State: legislature: state funding, legislative assistance. Local: neighborhood advocacy, tenant advocacy | • The Cost of Segregation  
• The Cost of Segregation – Roadmap for the Region  
• The Cost of Segregation – Roadmap for the Region |

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Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Typology & Strategy  
National Resource Network, 2019