

REVITALIZE through Community Engagement and Action

Neighborhood Best Practices Conference

Saturday, October 11, 2014
Columbus Downtown High School

Ian J. Beniston
YNDC

Youngstown, Ohio

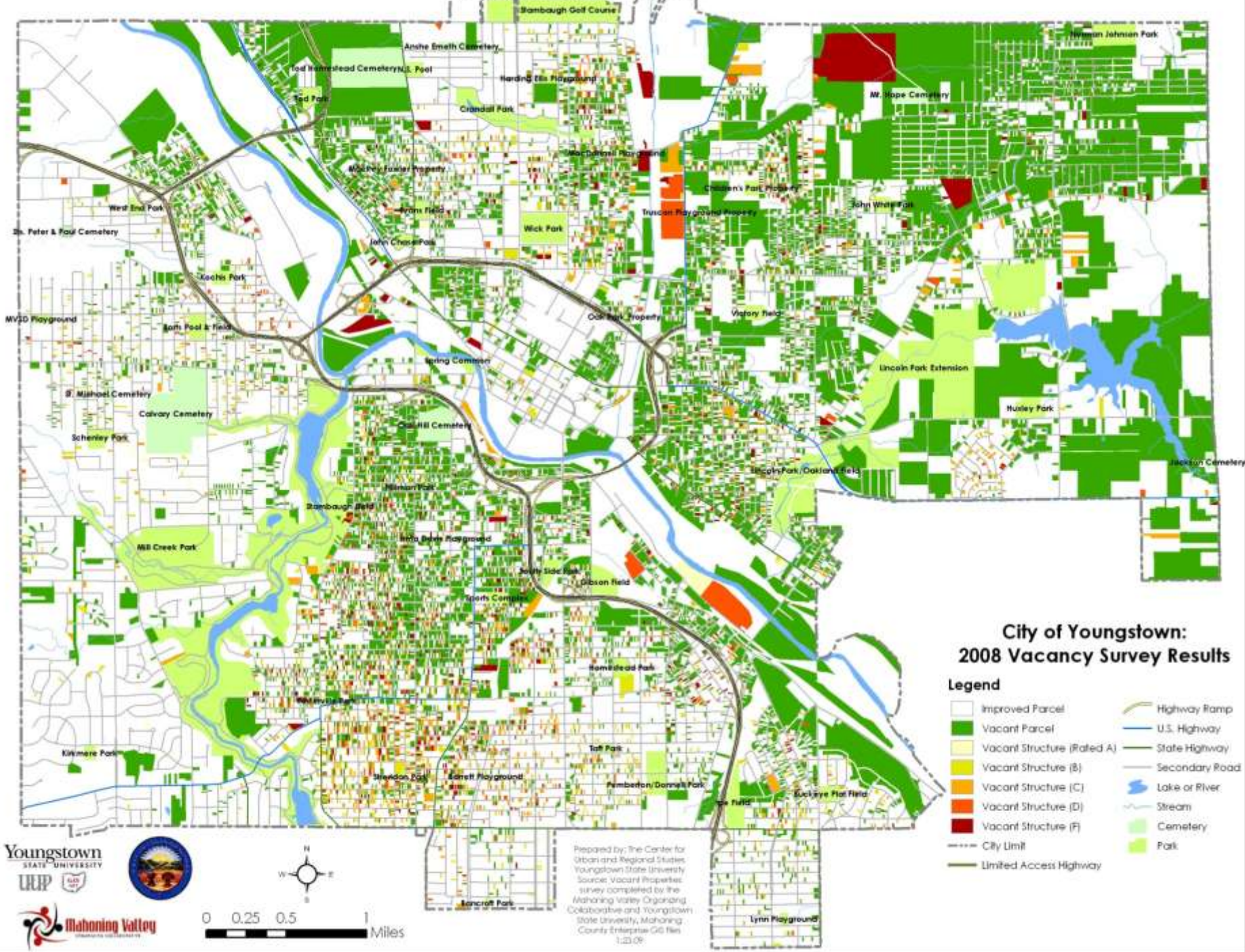
- **Ian Beniston, Executive Director**
- **Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC) – Citywide community planning and development organization**
- **Created through public private partnership after completion of 2010 plan**
- **Began operations in 2009**



Current Reality

2013 Snapshot

- **Population:** 66,982 -61 percent
- **Vacant Structures:** 4,500 structures
- **Vacant Land:** 24,000+ parcels
- **Poverty Rate:** 36 percent
- **Median HH Income:** \$24,880
- **Avg Home Sale Price:** \$21,327



City of Youngstown: 2008 Vacancy Survey Results

- Legend**
- Improved Parcel
 - Vacant Parcel
 - Vacant Structure (Rated A)
 - Vacant Structure (B)
 - Vacant Structure (C)
 - Vacant Structure (D)
 - Vacant Structure (F)
 - City Limit
 - Limited Access Highway
 - Highway Ramp
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Highway
 - Secondary Road
 - Lake or River
 - Stream
 - Cemetery
 - Park

Youngstown
STATE UNIVERSITY



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Prepared by: The Center for Urban and Regional Studies
Youngstown State University
Source: Vacant Property Survey completed by the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative and Youngstown State University, Mahoning County Enterprise GIS files 1/23/09



**How to engage
communities resistant
to change or no longer
believing its possible?**

Community Engagement

- **Not more talk!**



Restore Hope

- **Engagement begins by making people believe again.**
- **Progress without resources? Can be difficult, but can be done.**
- **Create momentum. Demonstrate hope – the feeling of that what is wanted can be had.**
- **Requires strong commitment.**
- **Show tangible/visible improvement.**

Action: Corner Store Campaign



United Way Neighborhood Best Practices

Immediate Victories

- **Community must set the expectations through a clear message and action.**
- **80 percent vote in favor.**
- **First sign of progress in 20+ years.**

Action: Land Lord Campaign

Block w

About 100 city residents at the meeting.

By KATIE SEMHARA
STAFF WRITER

YOUNGSTOWN -- Landlords are responsible for their properties, and need to answer for their role in poor conditions as well, said city Councilwoman Annie Gillam, D-1st.

Gillam, along with Councilwoman Tarypley, D-6th, and Councilman Jim D-7th, attended a meeting Thursday

CITIZEN

Continued

properties was 8 according to 11 focus is to clean up blight in Youngstown. If the landlord meeting, the JW would have also agreement, staff immediately deal these properties. The agreement landlord would training course systematic requests being accounted properties.

James London Idora Neighborhood spoke out about by the same landlord held up a poster faces of the blight. "We're here we're sick of it, blight in city and

"We have to hold accountable to live by that we do while point of houses in don in order to clean up city and state landlords, the neighborhood group as an one step, he is "Doing things and doing things

RIGHTING CITY BLIGHT



STANDING UP TO BLIGHT: James London, president of the Idora Neighborhood Association, stands in front of a vacant and haphazard property owned by Mack Properties. The complex on Parkview Avenue on the city's South Side is stamped with a warning sign from the Ohio Department of Health deeming it unsafe for occupation. This property is included on a list created by the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative and other community organizations as a potential for demolition.

The Photographer: Robert K. Yeager

Cleanup collaborative enlists cooperation from landlord

MACK PROPERTIES

Vacant and abandoned properties on the demo list

The following are locations owned by Mack Properties that have been processed for demolition by the city. These are 13 of 29 properties proposed by the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative.



Youngstown Properties

King Property

Limit

Ed Access Highway

way Ramp

Highway

: Highway

ndary Road

or River

in

etery

Park

reek Park

Action: Resident Driven Workdays



Action: Resident Driven Workdays





Action: Resident Driven Workdays



Action: United Way, Stand Up Fight Blight



Action: Have Fun and Celebrate Victories!



Lessons

- **Listen.**
- **Demonstrate change is possible even with the reality of limited resources.**
- **Sometimes agitation and community action are necessary.**

Lessons

- **Provide many opportunities to engage: talking, discussion, meals, fellowship, workdays, community actions.**
- **Build a broad coalition of allies.**
- **Have fun and REVITALIZE.**

QUESTIONS?

STAND UP



Contact

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Photo courtesy of <http://www.yndc.org>
<http://www.yndc.org/neighborhood-redevelopment-issues> & <http://www.yndc.org/neighborhood-redevelopment-issues>

Core Activities for CIT Neighborhood Groups

When asked if there was a core group of activities that neighborhood groups should work on, Beniston offers the following:

1. Conduct a property condition survey, emphasizing problem sites.
2. Identify distressed properties (boarding, ten-downs).
3. Organize to deal with basic neighborhood daily activities (such as cutting high grass / boarding up properties as citizens instead of waiting for the city).
4. Work to install welcome signs to identify neighborhoods and convey pride.
5. Organize to repair and paint neglected houses with volunteers or other community groups.
6. Organize street, park, and neighborhood clean ups to tackle signs of neighborhood neglect.
7. Employ reuse and greening strategies for vacant properties (neighborhood/community uses as interim uses, such as community gardens, etc.)
8. Build relationships with neighborhood commercial uses (neighborhood/corner markets, etc).
9. Build from strength (don't start on the worst blocks in the neighborhood).
10. Foster a sense of urgency (every day nothing is done is another family leaving or another home going vacant).
11. Have fun (create multiple opportunities to have fun such as the "Idon't" a neighborhood festival).
12. Create a range of opportunities for people of all ages to get involved (such as CIT group for young kids, workdays for teenagers/adults, letter writing to be completed by seniors, etc. If someone wants to get involved we encourage groups to find a way).
13. Seek small grassroots grant opportunities (Example: Neighborhood SUCCESS).
14. Develop a collective voice.

Community groups that engage and participate in such processes not only begin to control their own future but also stretch limited resources, enabling other nonprofits and community organizations to tackle larger neighborhood redevelopment and community issues.