

Equitable Revitalization

Transforming vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties to better serve people and communities

Equitable revitalization is the process of improving disinvested neighborhoods through intentional reinvestment. It unites policy, practice, and process to ensure all people live in strong, healthy, vibrant communities.

Land control comes with the power to shape the physical fabric of communities and dramatically impact the people and businesses who call them home. Historically, unjust land use, real-estate finance laws, and practices have actively and intentionally discriminated against people of color, businesses, and entire communities.

These practices contribute to ongoing disparities in property values, household wealth, quality of life, health, and community safety. For communities already working to overcome historic inequities, further devastation, like natural disasters or industry loss, can widen the equity gaps exponentially – stripping residents of the power to impact the places they call home.

To return power to residents, communities must transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated property in ways that support equitable outcomes.



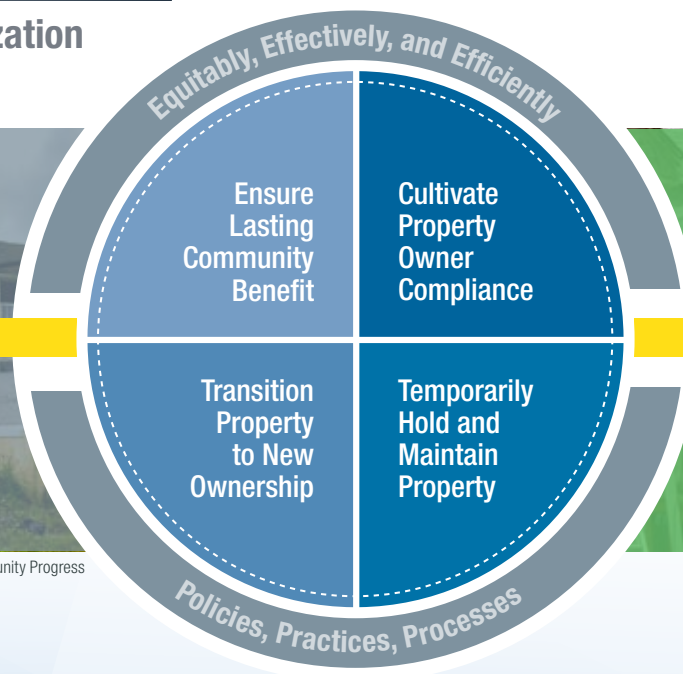
Equitable Revitalization requires addressing vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties

VAD Property Revitalization Framework



Systemic Vacant, Abandoned, and Deteriorated Properties

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Vacant, Abandoned, and Deteriorated Property Remediation and Prevention

Equitable Revitalization requires addressing vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties

Systemic vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated (VAD) properties are plaguing cities, towns, and villages across America. They perpetuate inequitable outcomes for individuals and communities, specifically communities of color and low-income communities. Widespread vacancy, abandonment, and deterioration serve as a major obstacle for communities working to realize the vision of an equitable neighborhood.

Equitable revitalization is **one part** of remediating and preventing vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. This work encompasses course correcting the historic injustices in both housing and economic policy. This approach aims to improve the stability, safety, health, and wellness of neighborhoods and the social, physical, and mental well-being of its residents.

Equitable Revitalization in Practice

Equitable revitalization requires the use of government laws, policies, and practices to help a community more equitably, effectively, and efficiently meet their vacant property revitalization goals. Code enforcement, community engagement, data collection, land banking, property tax enforcement, and vacant land management are the most widely used tools and strategies to address VAD properties. To shift a community from systemic vacancy to equitable revitalization, the policies, practices, and processes must allow for:

CULTIVATING PROPERTY OWNER COMPLIANCE

Stiff fines and penalties can compel some property owners to make needed repairs, but in some instances, property owners do not have the financial means to complete the repairs or pay property taxes and fines. Equitable revitalization focuses on providing vulnerable property owners a more effective way to facilitate property compliance (e.g. financial assistance).

Government tools may include: code enforcement procedures; rental regulation; property tax assessment, abatement, and exemption; property tax enforcement procedures

TEMPORARILY HOLDING AND MAINTAINING PROPERTY

When problem properties are discarded by the private market, voluntarily or involuntarily, government may acquire the properties to prepare them for purposeful use. Equitable revitalization focuses on converting the neighborhood liabilities into assets that advance community-based goals. Governmental systems and tools help ensure properties can be remediated, maintained, held, and assembled for future use.

Government tools may include: land banks; code compliance



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TRANSITIONING PROPERTY TO NEW OWNERSHIP

When compliance does not halt the deterioration of properties, local governments can utilize tools to prompt a transfer of property to a responsible entity or individual to ensure safety concerns are addressed.

In some instances, legal and financial barriers, clouded titles, or accumulated years of back taxes that exceed the market value can deter private investment. Equitable revitalization focuses on reducing uncertainty and liability for responsible investors, and encouraging resident-friendly growth.

Government tools may include: property tax foreclosure; code lien foreclosure; nuisance abatement; receivership; mortgage foreclosure

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ENSURING LASTING COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Communities must compel and equip property owners to keep their properties safe, prevent harm to surrounding neighbors and properties, and use properties in ways that supports the long-term sustainability and vitality for communities. To maximize community benefit, community members must be the focus of revitalization efforts. Equitable revitalization asks residents and business owners to envision their neighborhoods' futures and empowers them to engage in and lead the decision-making process that brings those visions to life.

Government tools may include: community visioning; community planning; creative placemaking; code compliance; property tax assessment, abatement, exemptions; planning & zoning; vacant land management; funding and financing for structure repair, rehabilitation, redevelopment, management, and reuse