

# **CITY OF JERSEY CITY'S ABANDONED PROPERTIES INITIATIVE**

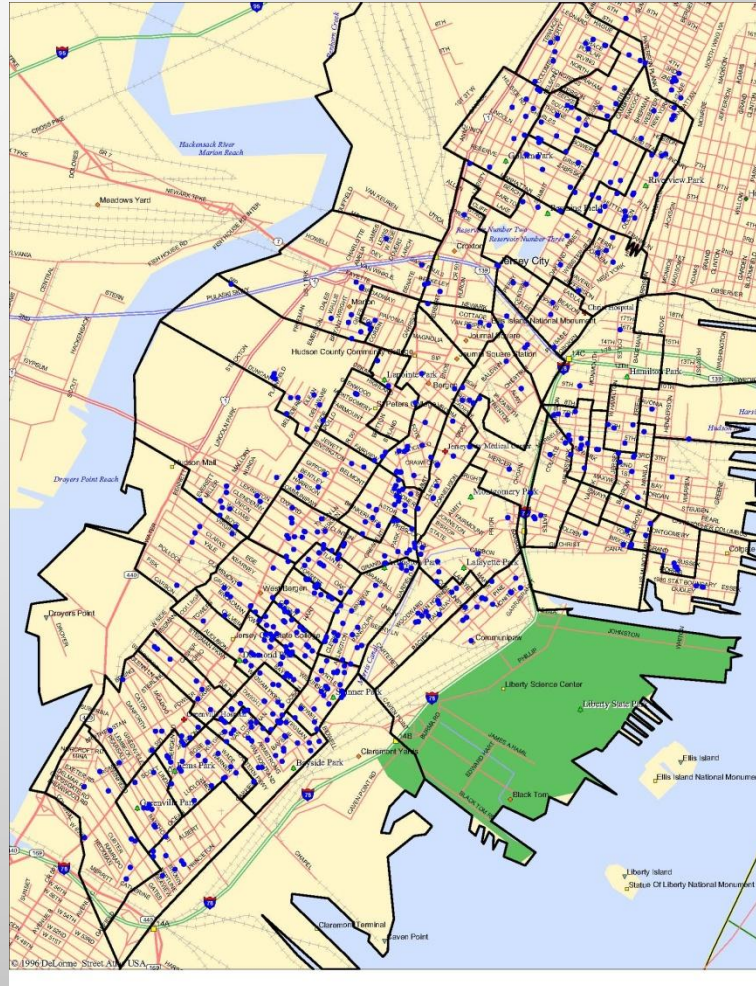


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# Background

- ▣ About 800 vacant properties in Jersey City
  - Properties are monitored on an on-going basis by Code Enforcement.
  - Comprehensive files are maintained on all vacant properties.
- ▣ Properties are scattered throughout the City
- ▣ Highest concentrations are in lower income sections of the City.
- ▣ Low income sections are most impacted by foreclosures and high risk loans.

# Abandoned Properties Map



# Developed a Vacant Building Registration Fee Ordinance

- ▣ Ordinance took effect on October 15, 2011.
- ▣ Property owners must pay a \$250.00 fee initially and \$500.00 subsequently.
- ▣ Enables the City to obtain relevant information about property owners.
- ▣ Allows the City to issue summonses to owners who fail to register their property.
- ▣ Compels owners to take action to get their property back into use.
- ▣ Helps to generate revenue to cover some costs associated with monitoring vacant properties.

# Results Obtained

- ▣ At least 676 properties have been registered.
- ▣ To date, the City has collected \$169,000 in Vacant Building Registration fees.
- ▣ 311 properties have been removed from the City's Vacant Buildings Inventory.
- ▣ Significant private dollars have been reinvested into the City's housing stock.

# Results Obtained (Cont'd)

- ▣ Some buildings have been demolished.
- ▣ Community involvement has increased.
- ▣ Vacant building complaints have increased by more than 70%.
- ▣ More coordinated approach to dealing with vacant properties.

# 236 Van Horne Avenue (Before)





# 236 Van Horne Avenue (During)





# 236 Van Horne Avenue (After)



# 347-349-351 Summit Avenue





# 347-349-351 Summit Avenue (Alt. View)



# 222 Van Horne Avenue (Before)





# 222 Van Horne Avenue (After)





# 52 Van Reipen Avenue (Before)



# 52 Van Reipen Avenue (After)



# Actions Taken by the City

- ▣ Mayor's Quality of Life Task Force consists of:
  - Municipal agencies and divisions
    - ▣ Ex: Police, Fire, Code Enforcement, Community Development, Public Works, Mayor's Action Bureau, Incinerator Authority, Health & Human Services
  - Private organizations
    - ▣ Ex: PSE&G and United Water



# Focus of Task Force

- ▣ Close illegal rooming houses and apartments
- ▣ Address vacant property issues by ensuring the following:
  - Securing of property
  - Removal of weeds and debris
  - Removal of squatters and animals
  - Maintenance of quality of life for residents



# Next Steps

- ▣ November 11, 2011 the City published a list of the forty (40) most egregious abandoned properties.
- ▣ Published second list of sixteen (16) problem properties on April 3, 2012.
- ▣ Initial criteria for selecting properties:
  - 1) Received significant complaints due to illegal activity. (Public Nuisance)
  - 2) Owners failed to take action in spite of previous City intervention.
- ▣ City is in the process of gearing up to utilize APRA tools to address problem properties.
- ▣ Will involve engaging other professions, such as, an appraisal and title company and possibly legal assistance.



# 671 Palisade Avenue



# What is Working in Jersey City

- ▣ Aggressive and consistent code enforcement.
- ▣ Issuing of summonses and violation notices for inspections.
- ▣ Consistent re-issuance of notices if violations are unabated.
- ▣ Using a bright orange placard to post on properties to encourage owners to contact the City.
- ▣ Educating the Municipal Court about the City's Vacant Buildings Ordinance and obtaining cooperation from the legal system.

# What is Working in Jersey City

- ▣ Maintaining a good database with current owner contact information.
- ▣ Making use of the Creditor Responsibility Act to issue notices of violations to banks.
- ▣ Using a coordinated approach for tracking vacant / abandoned properties. (Quality of Life Task Force)
- ▣ Systematically assessing the City's Vacant Buildings Inventory.

# Conclusion

In order to get results it is important that you:

- ▣ Collaborate with other key stakeholders.  
(Courts, Police Dept., Code Enforcement, etc.)
- ▣ Be consistent and diligent when dealing with property owners.
- ▣ Persistently monitor the inventory of properties.
- ▣ Make use of tools available through APRA, etc.