



## Strong Neighborhoods Committee Update

<https://wilkinsburgcdc.org/strong-neighborhoods-committee/>

January 2021

*Purpose:* The goal of this committee is to build strong neighborhoods through an investigation of the causes and impacts of blight and vacancy in Wilkinsburg and work with the WCDC to develop a Vacant Property Re-Use Plan to address vacancy and blight, mitigate threats of displacement and gentrification, and create catalysts for reinvestment driven by community vision.

### Committee Meetings

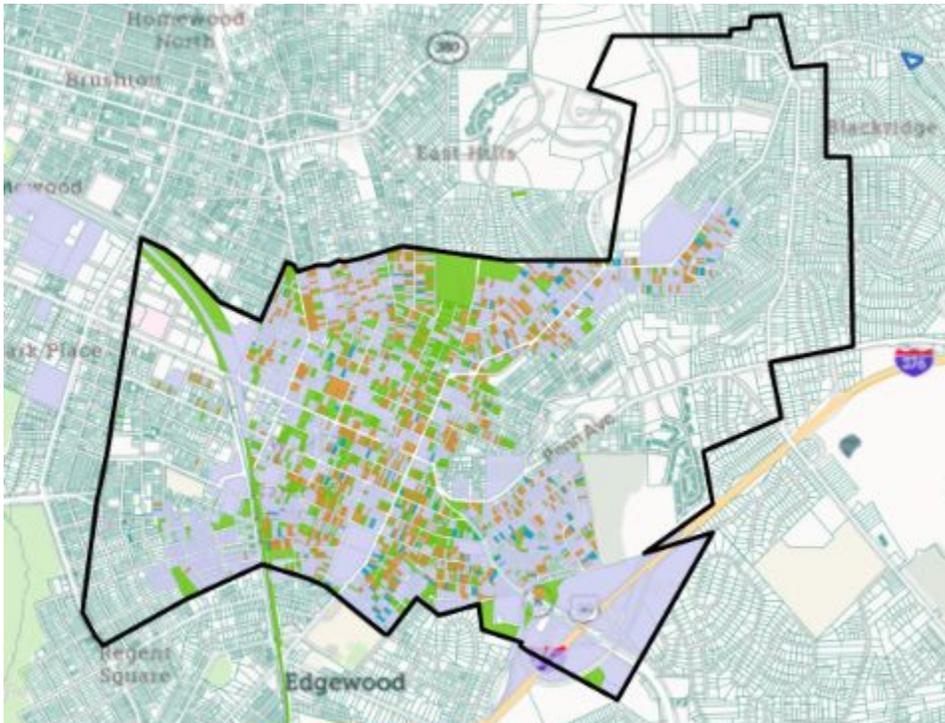
- The resident-led committee has met monthly since October and adds new attendees with each meeting. The next meeting is February 10, 2021, at 4 pm on Zoom. **Email [jpallitto@hillgroupinc.com](mailto:jpallitto@hillgroupinc.com) to be added to the call invite.**
- The committee is being led by 2 residents, Pam Panchak and Deb Rose from the Hamnett Place neighborhood, with support from Jordan Palitto (scheduling and logistics), Ellen Ruddock (facilitation), and Evaine K. Sing (planning strategy and data), as consultants with the WCDC. This group meets monthly and stays in contact throughout the month in addition to managing the large group conversations.
- Issues that are arising among the committee: cost to rehab or demolition do not justify the investment by many residents, confusion on what properties may be available, lack of clarity over which programs are applicable, access to or awareness of various financing options and knowledgeable contractors to consult. **Additional resources will be provided through the WCDC to provide education opportunities and direct users to resources for navigating these various challenges and public programs.**
- There is an effort to have more direct contact with Borough Council and staff to stay informed and ideally avoid any future confusion about roles and outcomes and we will continue to reach out to relevant parties along the way

### Data Collection

- Use of the Landgrid platform by Loveland Technologies for easy mobile data collection, which residents have been supporting by walking the community and assessing each parcel through the Borough
- A conversation about data accessibility, once it has been collected, has not yet happened, but will likely err on the side of caution so as to deter unvetted speculation

# WCDC

- Data collection efforts to update a vacant property inventory began in November. So far, we have completed about **65%** of the community or around **4710 parcels of the 7272** have been surveyed with the assistance of 14 residents and new ones volunteering each week. ***Residents are encouraged to sign up to support the data collection process***
- We are currently hoping to have all data collected by the end of the month and aiming for February analysis so that communication conversations can begin in March and extend through the summer as needed



## Outreach

- An outreach effort has begun with an interest form that allows people to share how they would like to become involved, whether just to stay informed or participate in the various phases, which we will follow up on as we move forward and reach milestones
- We have established a master list for easy contact, and anticipate further sorting as neighborhood geographies become clearer to ensure consistent and relevant communication efforts are being made throughout the process.
- We will soon line up community conversations in different areas of the Borough to share the current status of vacant/blighted properties and gut check the data findings as well as add context