

Vacant Structure Stabilization Strategy for the Hill District



Consultant Team



Erik Kath

Director
Project Manager
rePLACE Urban Studio

Pittsburgh, PA



Peter Syrett

Partner
Historic Preservation / Stabilization
rePLACE Urban Studio

New York, NY



Majora Carter

Founding Partner
Engagement / Training
Majora Carter Group

Bronx, NY



Jenni Easton

Principal
Planning / Housing Policy
Pashek + MTR

Pittsburgh, PA

Rehabilitation and Infill Development | Memphis Medical District Collaborative

Memphis, TN

B.3

Neighborhood Services
Area of Opportunity



Strategy
Provide frontage along Poplar Avenue that is supported by existing organizations, provides opportunity for appropriate uses, and lends support to the Supportive Housing opportunity.

Connections
Neighborhood Services should include, but not be limited to, health services and evaluation, educational attainment, job readiness programs, financial literacy, personal and home care, and child care. Re-purposing underutilized properties and filling the gaps created by vacant lots as space for services and resources will help transform this section of Poplar into a more complete and engaging street. These investments, when paired with streetscape improvements such as new and improved street lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and pedestrian infrastructure will help to calm traffic thereby enhancing both safety and livability.

Opportunities

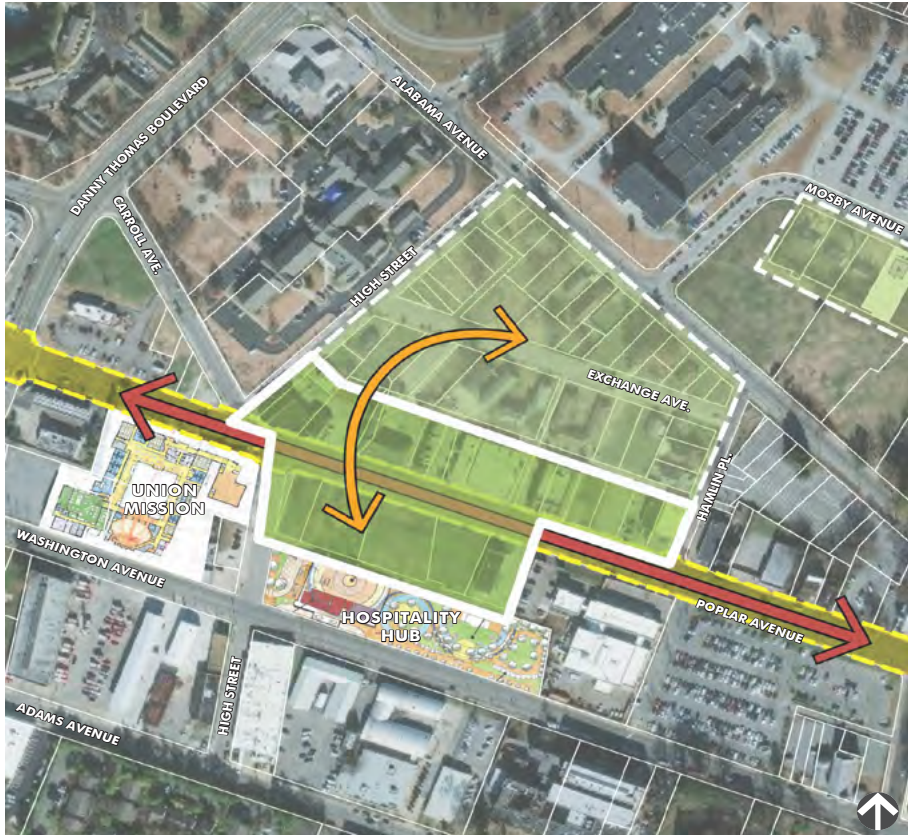
- Provide access to fresh produce.
- Invest in child daycare for working families.
- Implement programs for adult education.
- Supply mental health care.
- Create a Job Training center and programs to connect people to jobs.
- Connect Supportive Services with the Medical District and existing organizations.
- Quality and condition of existing underutilized buildings.

Precedents

- Substance Abuse Education and Recovery (SABER) Program through Charlotte's Urban Ministry Center that provides housing for those within the program.

Agencies

- Lead: CRA
- Support: City, DMC, MMDC, Development Partners



Poplar Corridor Implementation Plan



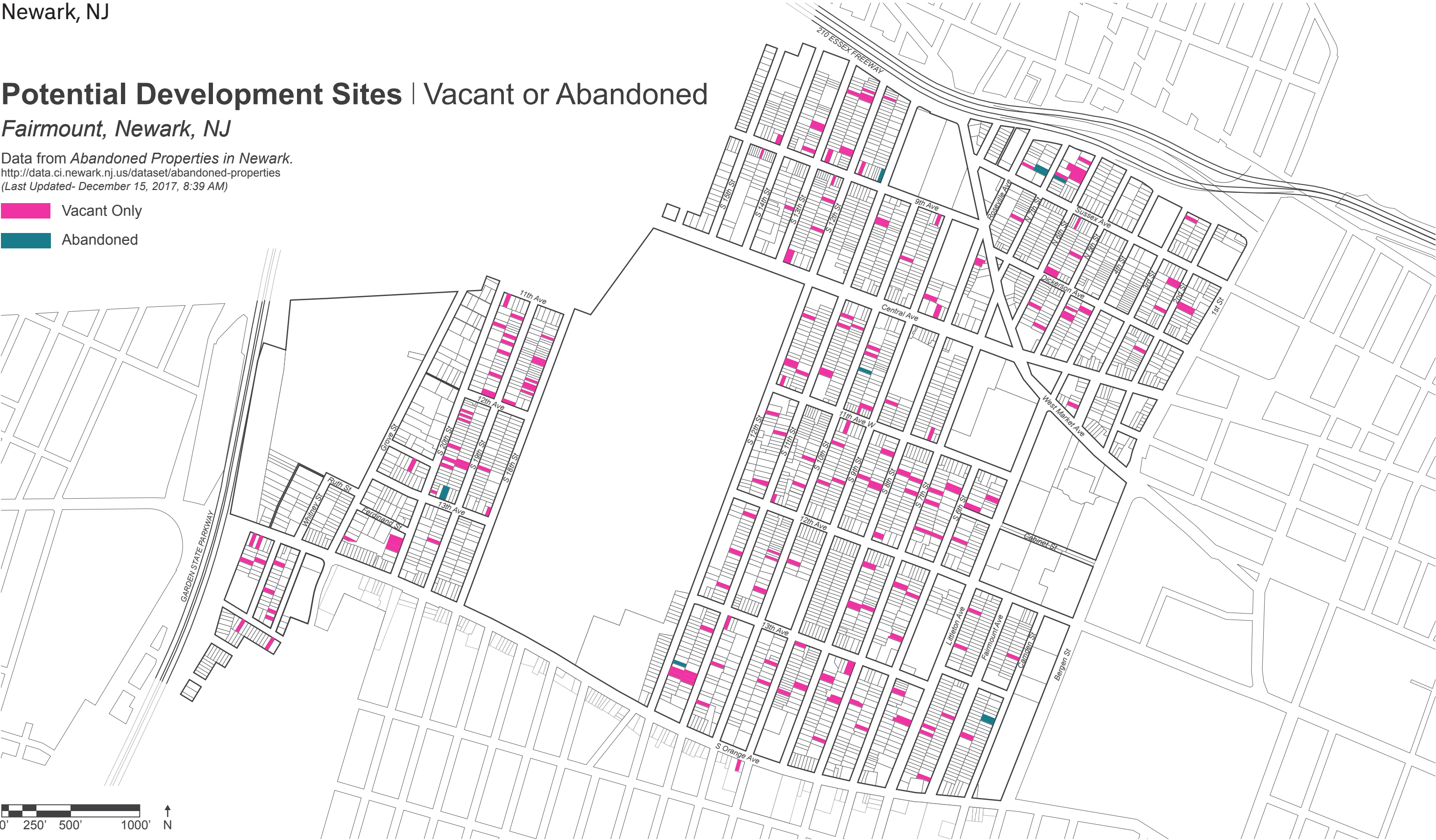
Vacant Property Strategy | Urban League of Essex County

Newark, NJ

Potential Development Sites | Vacant or Abandoned *Fairmount, Newark, NJ*

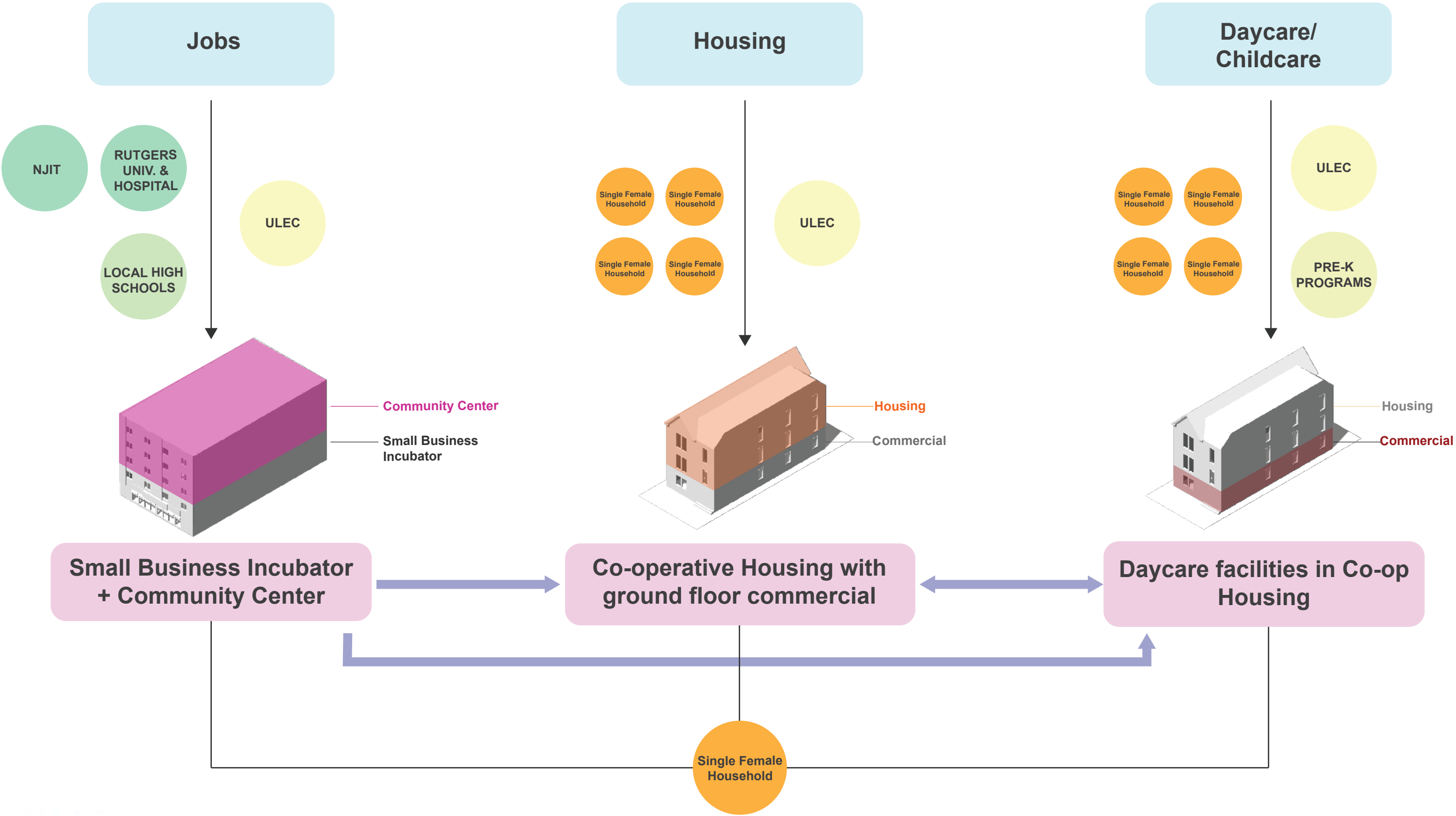
Data from *Abandoned Properties in Newark*.
<http://data.ci.newark.nj.us/dataset/abandoned-properties>
(Last Updated- December 15, 2017, 8:39 AM)

- Vacant Only
- Abandoned



Vacant Property Strategy | Urban League of Essex County

Newark, NJ



Community Engagement

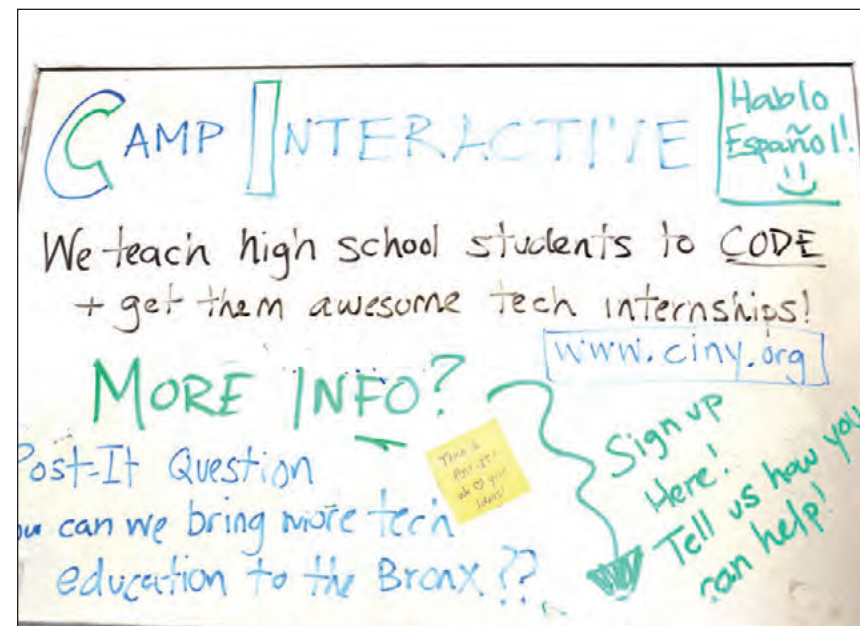
Majora Carter Group

StartUp Box: South Bronx

- In August of 2014, Majora Carter hosted a block party on Seneca Avenue in the Bronx, which focused on teaching high school students to code software and introducing tech-based organizations in the community.
- The 6-hour event drew various nonprofit, community and commercial organizations and featured games, tournaments, face-painting, kids' activities, a "Game Truck," and performances from the Lorenz Latin Dance Studio.
- Assembly-member Marcos Crespo attended the event, as well as Peta Clark, founder of Black Girls Code.
- The primary objective was to raise community awareness of multiple organizations that aim to educate and train people in various tech platforms.

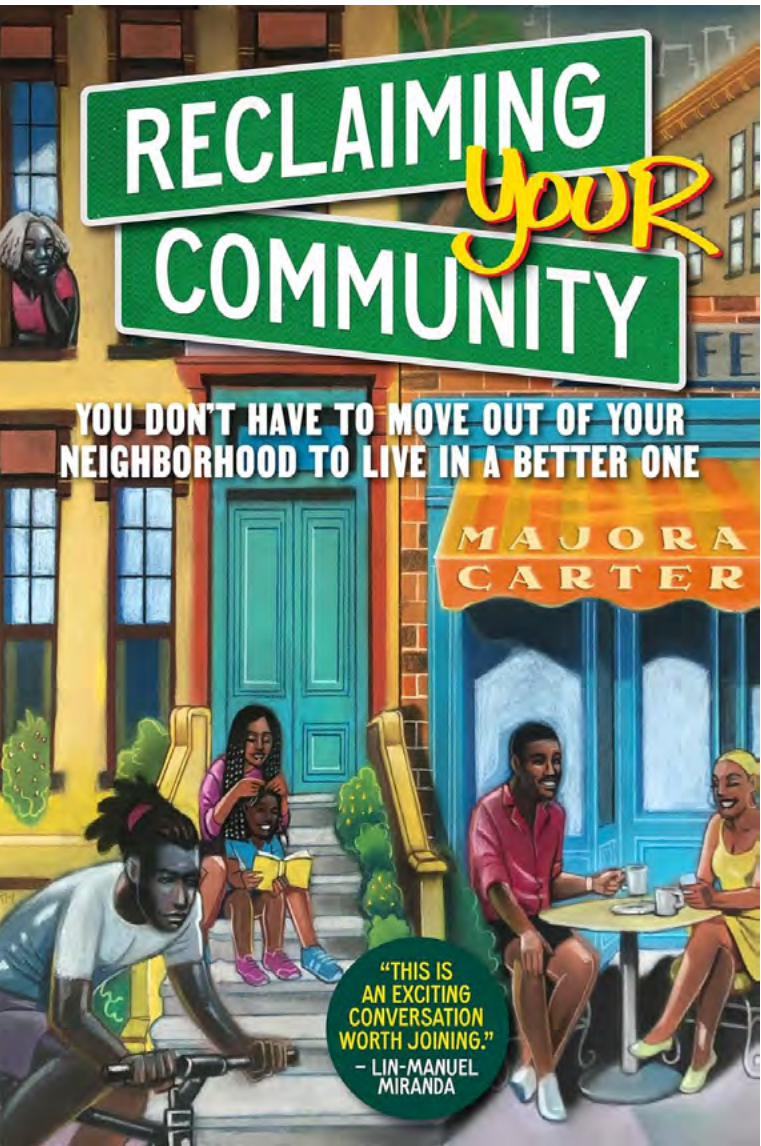


Lancelot Chase (member of StartUp Box), Melissa Lomba, Majora Carter



Developing “Third Spaces”

Majora Carter Group



Bronxlandia Event Venue | The Bronx, NY

Majora Carter Group



Bronxlandia Event Venue | The Bronx, NY

Majora Carter Group



900 Chestnut Street | Pittsburgh, PA

Erik Kath as General Contractor



900 Chestnut Street | Pittsburgh, PA

Erik Kath as General Contractor



Visit the **Engage Page** and share your thoughts.

Vacant Structure Stabilization & Reuse Strategy for the Hill District

Development of a pilot strategy to address the issue of vacant structures in the Hill District that is scalable citywide and promotes stabilization instead of demolition.

+ Follow

[Home](#) / [Historic Preservation Program](#) / Vacant Structure Stabilization & Reuse Strategy



Project Background

The Department of City Planning has received a **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) Keystone Historic Preservation Grant** to assist with the development of a Vacant Structure Stabilization Strategy to apply throughout the City of Pittsburgh.

The strategy will assist City Planning and community groups in establishing a transparent evaluation system while setting the priorities for stabilization that includes focus areas like historic significance, community importance, and potential for use as affordable housing. The strategy will also explore funding sources, solutions to legal issues, and explore possible partnerships in this work.

Once complete, the strategy will consist of multiple parts including the development of a community engagement strategy to ensure the process is equitable and transparent from start to finish, and a pilot implementation stage in the Hill District.

What is Vacant Property Stabilization?

In reference to this project, the term "structural stabilization" applies to a building and is based on a professional assessment of the existing condition of the building in order to mitigate the property's

Who's Listening?

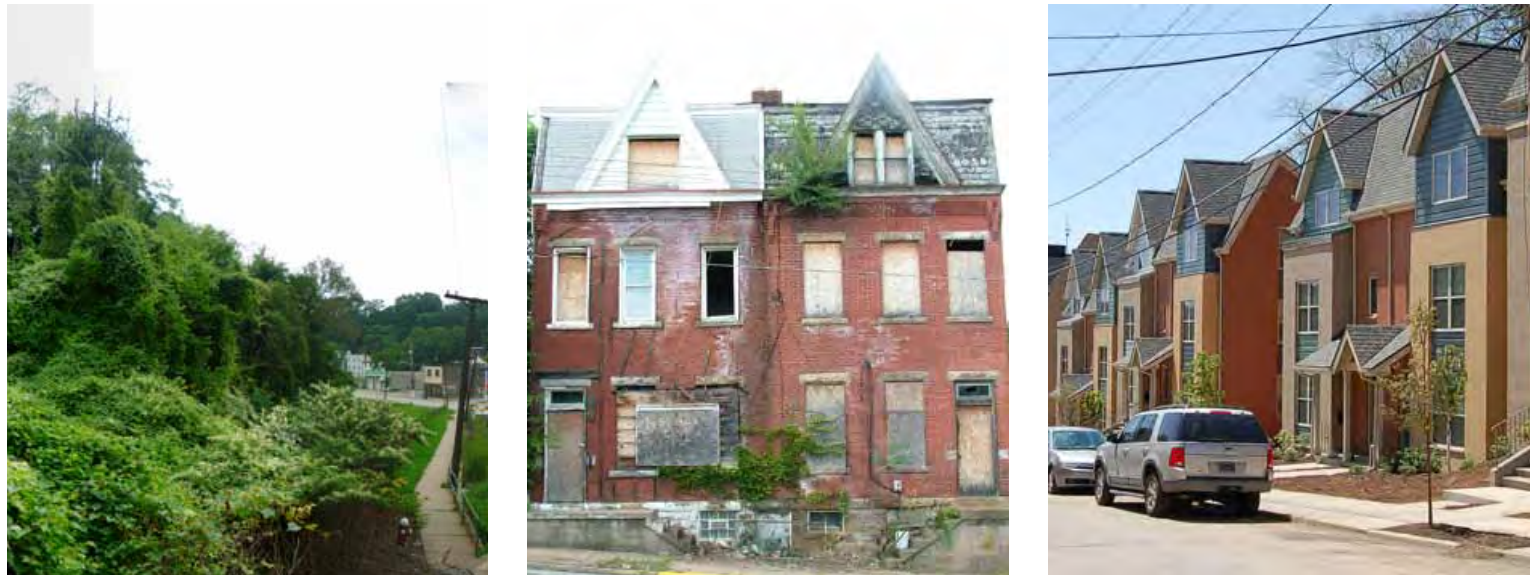


Sharon Spooner
Department of City Planning
Senior Planner, Public Realm Division



Mackenzie Pleskovic
Department of City Planning
Senior Planner, Vacant Property & Open Space

2013 Vacant Property Strategy Report



Hill District Vacant Property Strategy

Hill District Consensus Group



Planning Team:
Studio for Spatial Practice
University of Pittsburgh Center for Social and Urban Research
GTECH Strategies
ELDI Real Estate
Earl Hord, Jr.
Chris Koch, Consultant
Irene McLaughlin, J.D.

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Previous Plans & Reports

**Hill District Vacant
Property Strategy**
2013

**Greater Hill District
Neighborhood Plan**
2025

**Housing Needs
Assessment**
2022

**Architectural Inventory
for Middle Hill**
2019

**Architectural Inventory
for Upper Hill**
2021

Preserve PHG
2012

**Greater Hill District
Master Plan Update**
2022

**Centre Avenue
Design Plan**
2015

Comprehensive Plan
(findings thus far)
2025

Establishing a Methodology | Key Questions

1. Which structures are vacant?

Who owns them? How can ownership be transferred?

2. Which vacant structures are worth keeping?

How do we define “worth” or significance?

What is the feasibility and cost of minimum stabilization?

3. What are potential future uses for the structure?

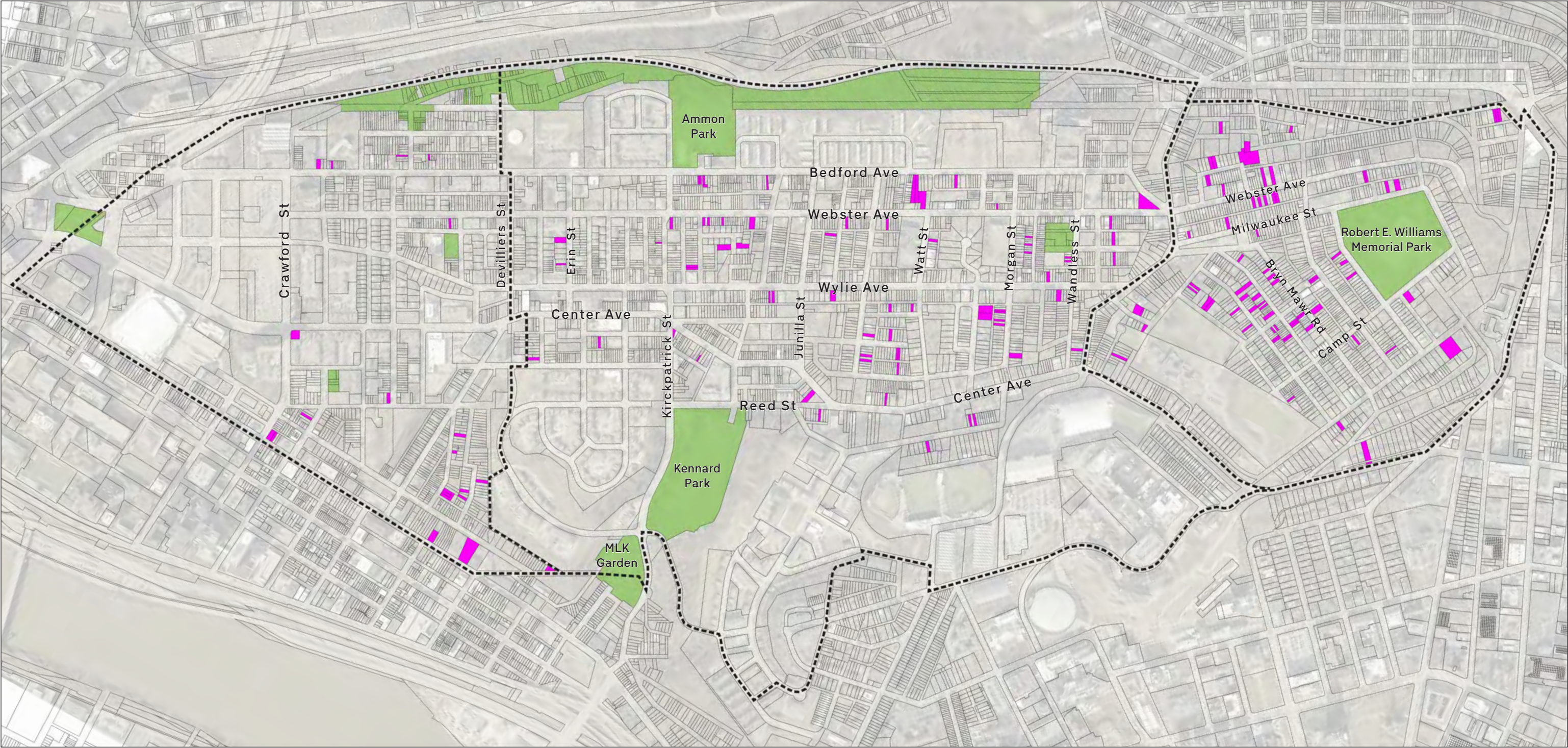
What are the specific needs of the community or for that particular location?

4. What are the challenges or barriers to stabilization and reuse?

Costs, access to capital, availability of qualified contractors, regulatory hurdles?

Vacant Structures

Based on US Postal Service data and neighborhood walk-throughs



Legend

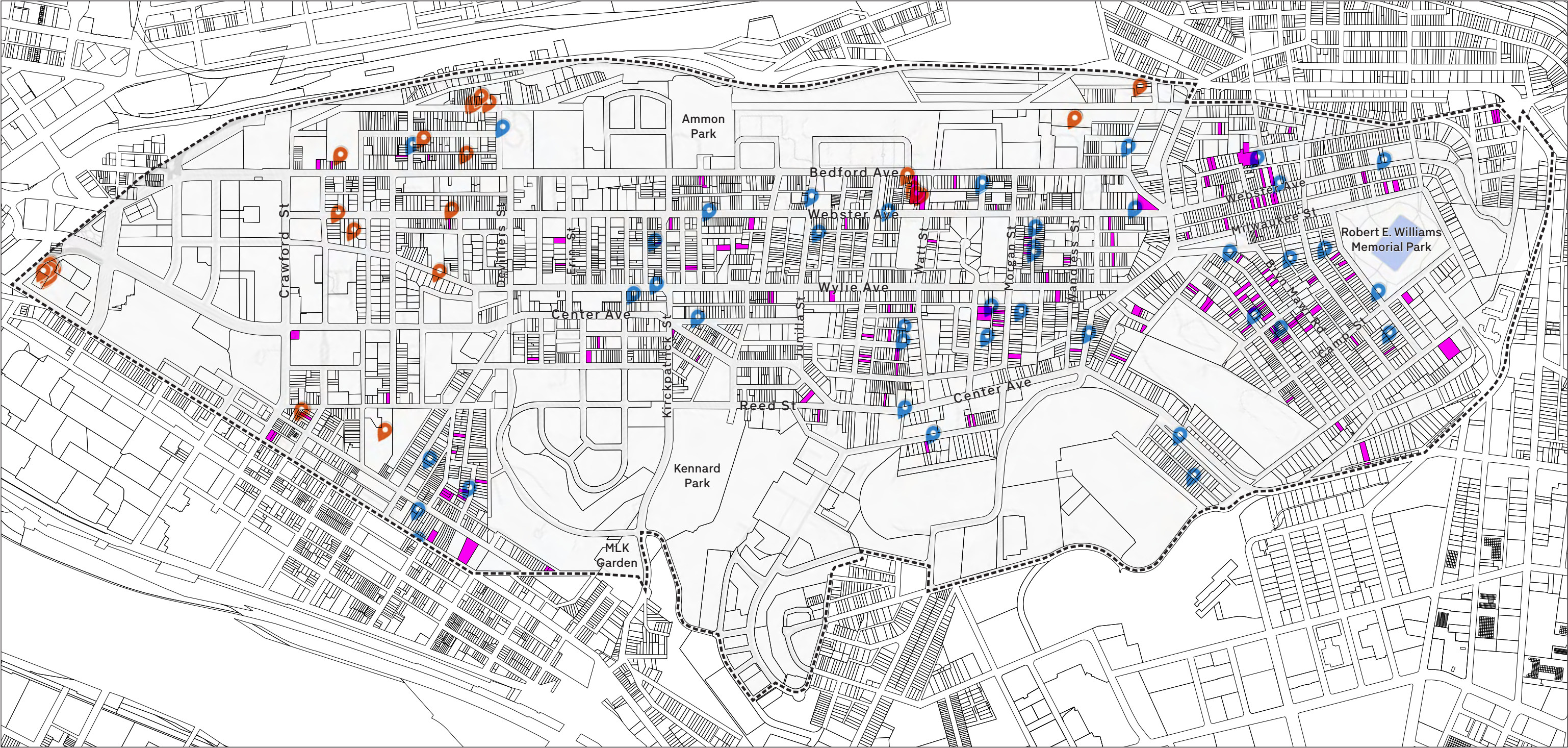
- Parcel with Vacant Structure
- City Parks

--- Greater Hill District Neighborhood Boundary



Condemned and Dead-end Properties

Based on Pittsburgh GIS data



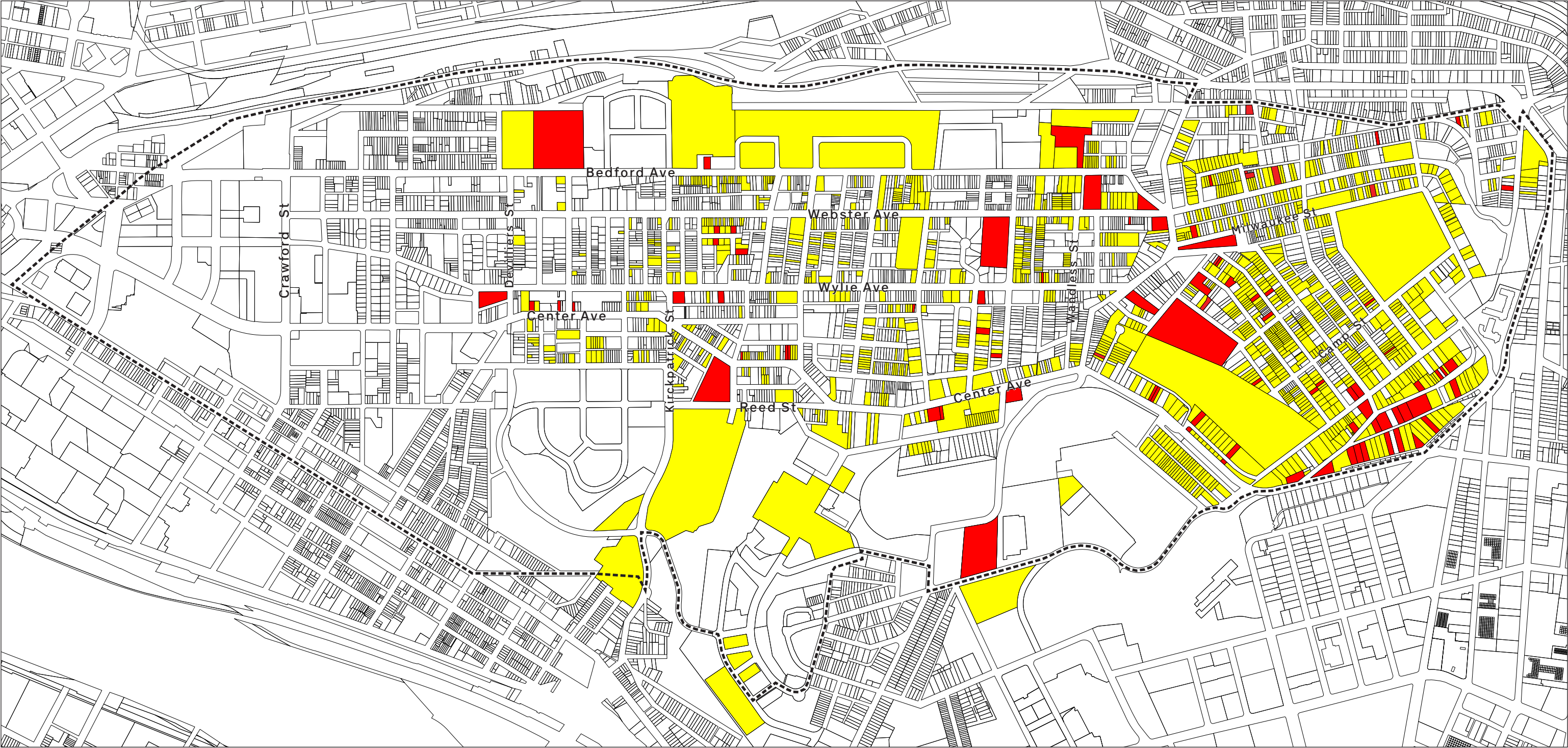
Legend

- Condemned or Dead-end Property
- Tax Delinquent Property



Properties with “high” or “medium” historical integrity

Source: Architectural Inventory for the City of Pittsburgh, 2019 and 2022



Legend

High historical integrity

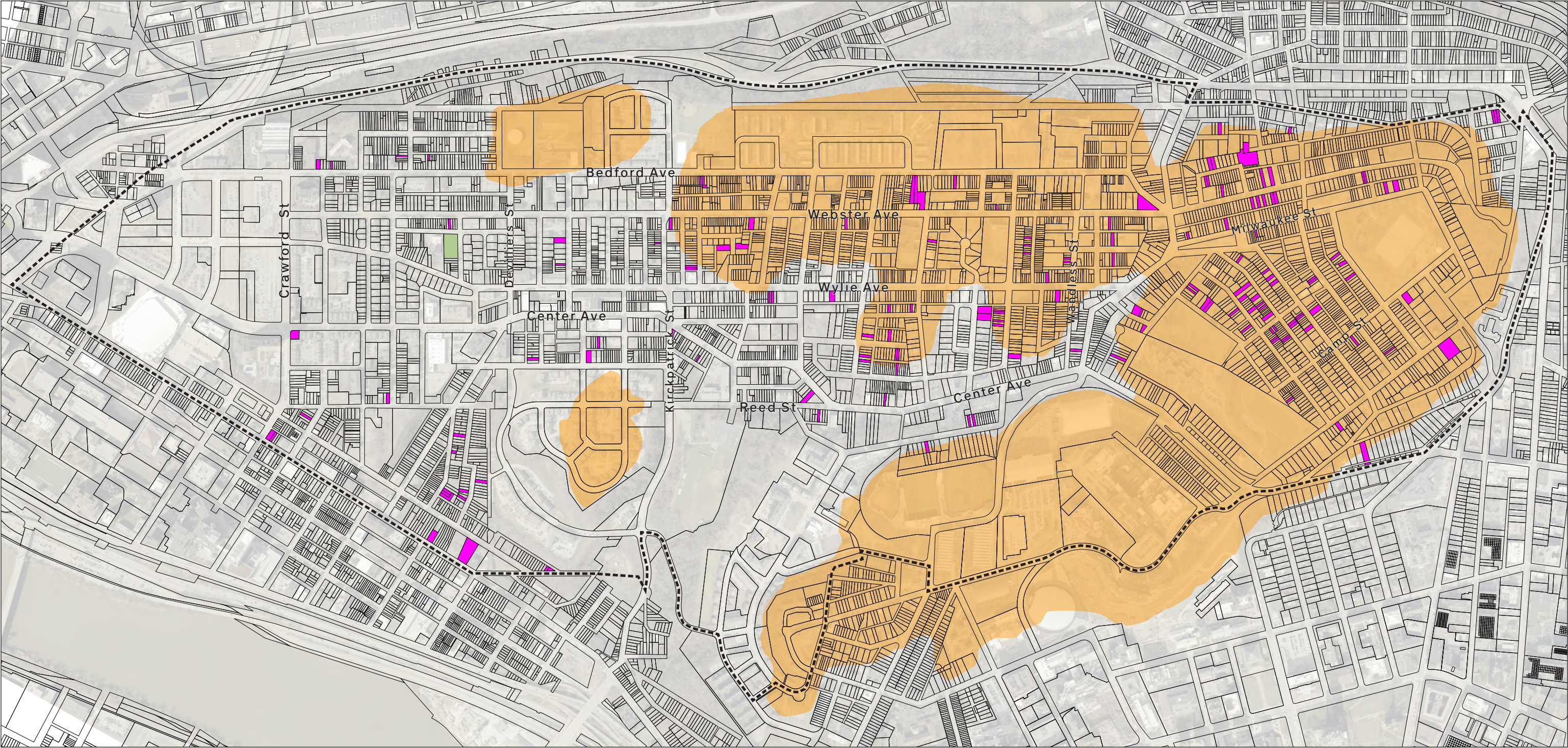
Medium historical integrity

--- Greater Hill District Neighborhood Boundary



Undermined Areas

Based on City of Pittsburgh GIS data



Legend

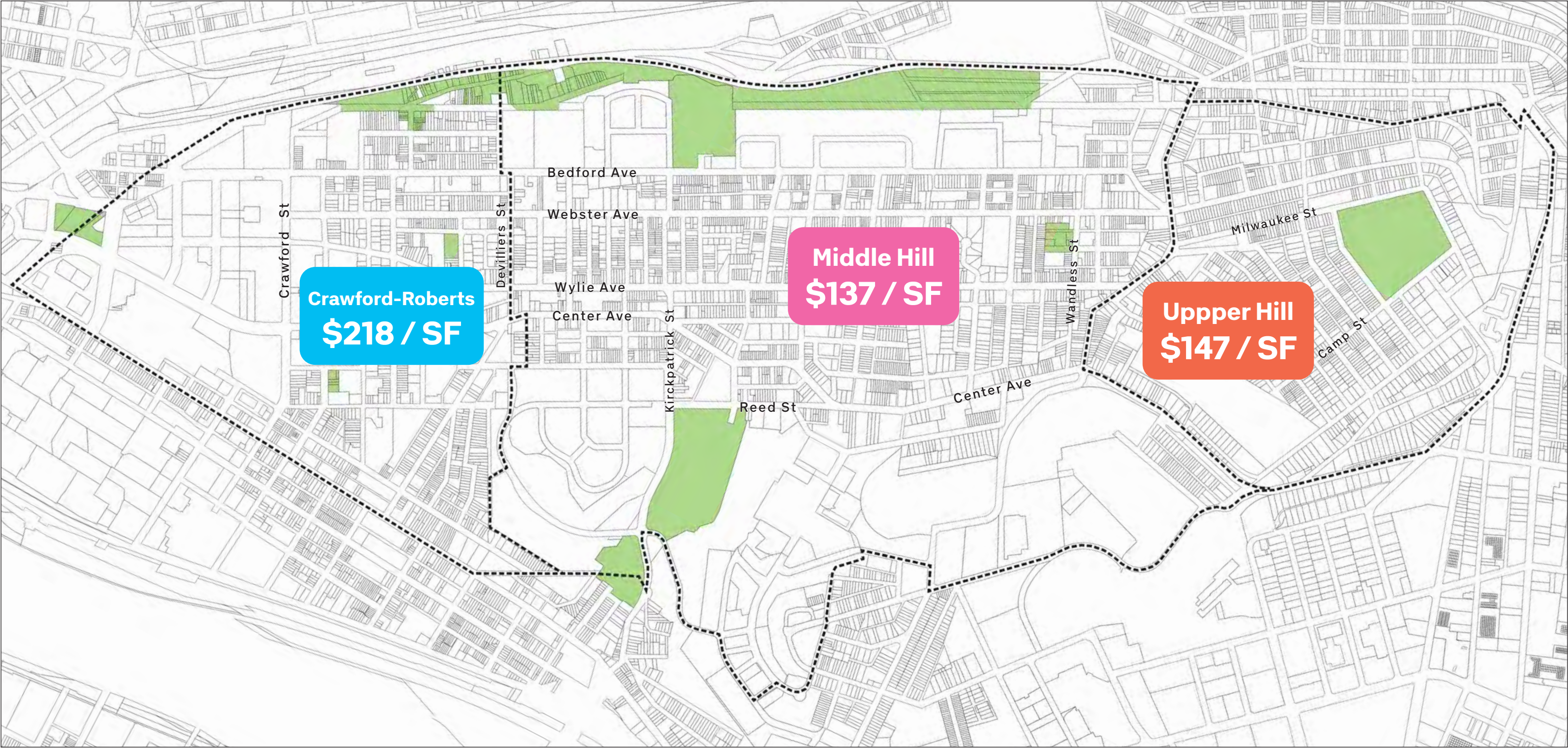
- Parcel with Vacant Structure
- Undermined Areas

--- Greater Hill District Neighborhood Boundary



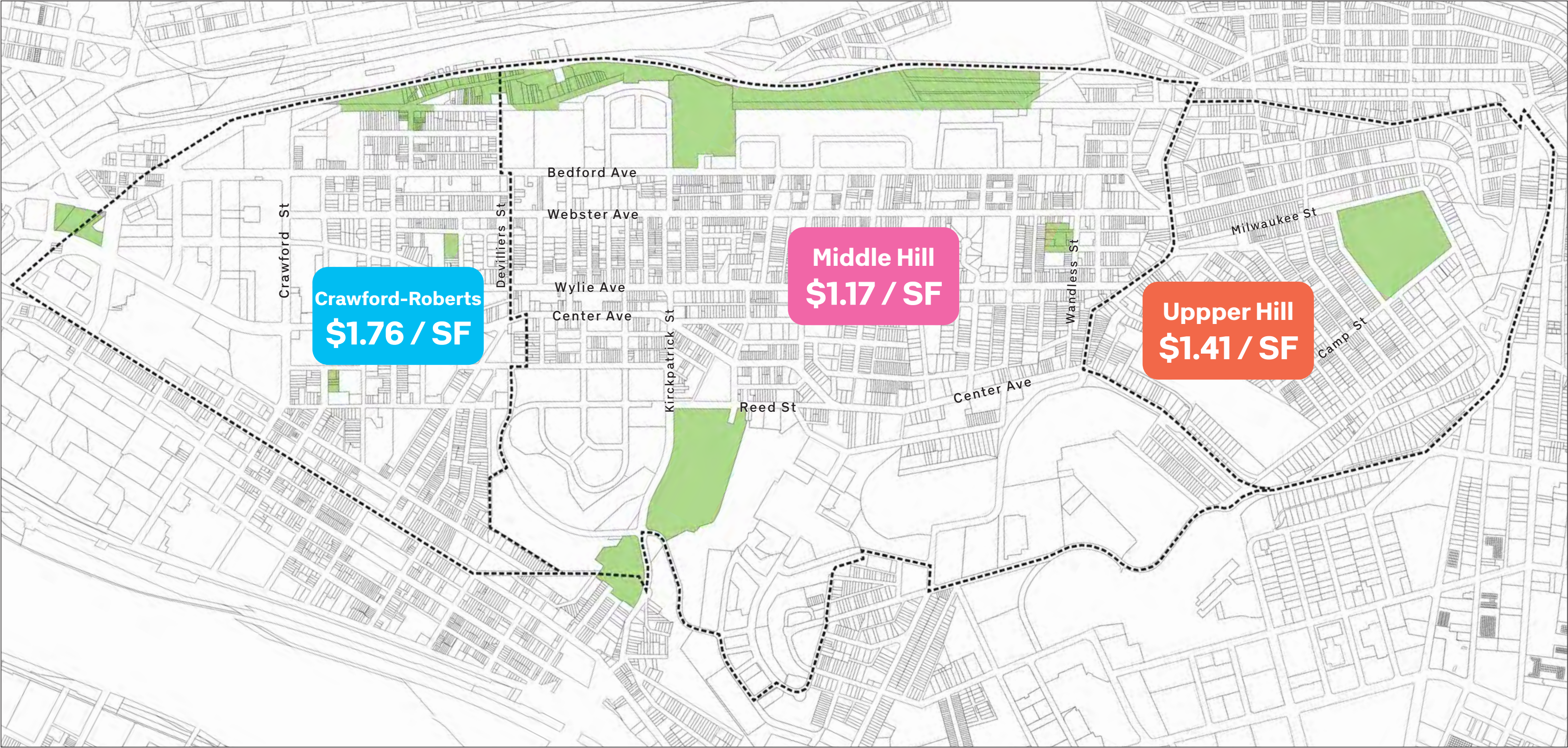
Market Scan - Recent Sales

Based on 15 properties sold within previous 9 months



Market Scan - Rental Listings

Based on 18 current listings



Which Structures should be Prioritized for Stabilization?

- 1. Buildings in good or fair condition (before they deteriorate further)**
- 2. Buildings with historic and/or cultural value**
 - Requires community input
- 3. Properties with historic designation, or with high/medium integrity**
 - Refer to the Pittsburgh Architectural Inventory surveys
- 4. Part of a strong row of houses or occupies a corner**
 - Or shares a party wall with at least one other structure
- 5. Potential for affordable or multi-unit housing**
- 6. Potential for active ground floor use**
 - If located along a commercial corridor
- 7. Potential for financial return**
- 8. Not located in an environmentally challenged area**
 - Landslide-prone and steep slope areas

Youth Ambassador Program | Task 4G

[Example shown from a planning project in the Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan]

Training and proactive inclusion of the Lowline Park's Young Ambassadors throughout the engagement process builds their capacity as leaders and ensures the inclusion of youth voice throughout the process. It proved to be a great way to build trust in the community engagement process overall.

1. Young Ambassador Training Session One:

- Defining Community Engagement
- Public Speaking
- Active Listening
- Outreach Strategies: Hands-on practice

2. Two Young Ambassador Focus Groups:

- To determine what they wanted to see at the future site
- To demonstrate the value of their feedback

3. Young Ambassador Training Session Two:

- Understanding online and digital engagement
- Driving integration of online and in-person sessions

4. Getting the word out:

- Flyering around the Lower East Side
- Using coUrbanize online engagement platform
- Recruiting participants to events

5. Outreach and Capacity Building at Public Workshops:

- Public speaking/presenting at large meetings
- Note taking at breakout tables
- Translating and facilitating at breakout tables



Youth Ambassadors
presenting and co-
facilitating public
meetings for our Lowline
Park Engagement
project in New York City
rePLACE
URBANSTUDIO

Next Steps

1. Continue to meet with City agencies

2. Engagement with the Hill District

- Introduction at December 15th D.A.M.
- Kick off recurring meetings with a Steering Committee
- Understand the capacity of local non-profit and for-profit developers
- Engaging with high school students in a retail gap analysis

3. Continue to refine maps and stabilization criteria