



New Castle County Government

Matthew S. Meyer, County Executive

Executive Summary

Vacant Spaces to Livable Places Initiative

Vacant Spaces to Livable Places is the Meyer Administration's vacant housing strategy. It is a multi-agency effort that is addressing vacant housing in the County and repurposing these properties for occupied homes and improved communities. This is an executive summary of a more detailed progress report. Please see the link below to view the full report.

Vacant properties cause blight, public safety concerns, decreased property tax collections, and increased property and community maintenance costs. The graphic below shows these effects at a community scale.

Community Effects of Vacant Spaces to Livable Places



Initiative Highlights

- When the program started in 2017 there were 1,350 known vacant properties, requiring the County to spend significant resources to inspect and maintain.
- Our count of known vacant properties has decreased by 53% from 2017 to 2022.
- The County has collected \$3.5 million in delinquent taxes and fees through this program, much of which goes to schools.
- Perhaps more importantly, with projects such as a recent Habitat for Humanity groundbreaking, the **Vacant Spaces to Livable Places** initiative is repurposing vacant land and derelict properties while increasing the supply of affordable housing in the County and uplifting neighborhoods— a critical need.
- Repurposing a property from vacant lots to new homes is a great example of making much better use of our land and community resources.

The Administration created a robust partnership of several agencies to build the program. They assembled data, reviewed current and potential policies, laws, and processes and identified needs and a strategy to address the large number of vacant properties. We made major changes to State and County laws to enable this program's success by working collaboratively across several County departments, the New Castle County Council, and the Delaware General Assembly, as well as external stakeholders including communities, nonprofits, and real estate professionals. This, and consistent teamwork, led to a significant decrease in vacant properties and repurposing those properties. There are great success stories across several communities in the County. Details about this and other aspects of the initiative are in the full progress report.

320 Bassett Avenue, New Castle (Manor Park)



VACANT
Sheriff Sale – August 2018



RENOVATIONS
February 2019



SOLD
August 2019

Moving forward, the County intends to continue the **Vacant Spaces to Livable Places Initiative**—minimizing the number of vacant properties and repurposing those properties for new homes and other beneficial use. The Initiative compliments other related neighborhood improvement and safety, community revitalization, and housing efforts in the County. These collective efforts benefit the residents of those properties, the communities, and the County overall.

To learn more about Vacant Spaces to Livable Places, please visit:
www.newcastlede.gov/1762/Vacant-Spaces-to-Livable-Places.