Blight Reduction in New Orleans

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

After Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans has had to make uncountable critical decisions to rebuild this city to its former greatness. One issue that has yet to be successfully addressed has been how to repurpose the 35,000-43,000 vacant homes left standing in weak market neighborhoods in the city. The city installed critical rehabilitation programs since Katrina, in attempt to rebuild the neighborhoods that suffered destruction from the storm, many of which contain the blighted properties. Some of these programs include the “Lot Next Door” and ”NORA and LA land trust.” These installments have been successful in restoring strong market neighborhoods and bringing people back into the city. However, the weak market neighborhoods have not taken to this tactic and need a stronger push to become economically beneficial once again. Blight is not a problem unique to New Orleans; many cities across the country have dealt with or are continuing to deal with the effects of blight. Some of the cities analyzed in this policy brief are Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Detroit, Michigan, New York City, New York and Flint, Michigan. In order to restore economic growth, build close-knit community and increase general public health, urban farms must be put in place. Through localization of these farms the economy would be stimulated because the money spent within the community is generated through that same community. Countless jobs would be available as well as a lowered cost of fresh food. In addition, a sense of community would develop amongst the area which would further the efforts to rebuild New Orleans to be even greater than it was before Katrina.
I. BLIGHT IN NEW ORLEANS

1.1 Blight and New Orleans

The city of New Orleans maintains a staggering amount of blighted and vacant properties (approximately 35,000 to 43,000 properties) which cause weak market neighborhoods. These properties fall under blight and vacancy once they have met the following criteria: unsafe/unsanitary, lots of debris and trash, poses a threat to the public, and have owners who have failed to pay taxes, utility bills and liens. For New Orleans, a city administrative official determines if properties are blighted. A weak market neighborhood can be defined as an area of properties and homes where the cost of construction and restoration is greater than the final appraised value of the new property. In the city, officials use a typology, which is one technique that helps examine the strength of neighborhood housing markets. This also guides which actions to take for which market groups. So far, the city has used 2009 home sale volumes and prices by neighborhood, as well as USPS data, to develop a rough typology of the current market strengths across the city’s neighborhoods.
1.2 Causes of Blight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Orleans</th>
<th>In General</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. Hurricane Katrina and Rita</td>
<td>A. High Mortgage Foreclosure Rates</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Kelo Court Case</td>
<td>B. Population Decrease</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Collapsing Real Estate Market</td>
<td>C. Tax Liens</td>
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1.2.1 Hurricane Katrina and Population Decrease

Blight has been a key issue for New Orleans before and after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city in 2005. Through high winds and high flood water the storm destroyed about 70% of all housing units in the city, leaving more than 65,000 blighted structures or empty lots across the city. With such immense destruction, residents of the city were displaced and unable to return home for several months after the storm. Often times the people settled down wherever they evacuated and did not return to New Orleans. Because of the immense flooding and destruction, the population decrease was that of 285,000 which was less people than the city’s peak population.

1.2.2 Kelo Court Case

The 2005 *Kelo vs. City of New London* case involved the question of whether or not authorities had the constitutional right to evict homeowners from their properties in order to use the properties for economic development. The Supreme Court ruled that the taking of properties, in essentially poor neighborhoods, was constitutional; therefore, the city of New London won the court case. Although it involved New London City, this critical court case made way for the Louisiana Expropriating authorities to exercise this power and assisted the Louisiana government in taking properties to not only promote economic development in a city that was in its rebuilding period, but also to improve the city’s economics after Hurricane Katrina and Rita. However, due to backlash, the legislature for Louisiana implemented anti-Kelo restrictions, which restricted NORA’s ability to use expropriation in combating blight. Because of this, the number of blighted properties increased.
### 1.2.3 Collapsing Real Estate Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Home Sales: Single Family Home Sales from January-August of the New Orleans Metro</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GNOCDC

A collapsing real estate market is characterized by neighborhoods that are low-market, in a sense that they have low-median process and sluggish sale activities. After the year of Hurricane Katrina, the number of monthly home sales increased due to many people, such as recovery workers, who were scrambling to find homes. However, after 2006, monthly home sales have fallen every year since this year. In regard to single-family homes, the average monthly sales for the first eight months of 2012 were 16 percent lower than in 2008 and 14 percent lower than in 2005. These decreased percentages are partially due to the fact that in neighborhoods with weak demand, the most likely buyers will be “speculators” who will sit on the property and do nothing to remediate the blight, which in turn will not attract buyers and new homeowners who are willing to bring back the neighborhood to community standards. The Bureau of Government Research conducted an examination of 219 properties that were seized and sold by NORA in 2002, and they found that less than half had been rehabilitated five years later and that 53 percent remained blighted.
1.3 Consequences of Blight

Blight has the capability to debilitate an entire neighborhood, and if the problem evolves, an entire city. Blight deprives the government needed tax revenue to improve the city such as renovating infrastructure and school systems. Even if a home is not blighted itself, just having a house near it can lower the untouched houses market value by $7,000. Blight also leads to endangerment of the public health because these properties often become dumping grounds and infested with rodents. Furthermore, blighted properties increase the rate of crime, because these vacant properties become areas for rapes and murders.

1.4 New Orleans’s Current Situation in Response to Blight

New Orleans has implemented a number of programs and laws to reduce the number of blighted and vacant houses in the city since after Katrina and Rita. These programs and laws such as the Lot Next Door Program, the Growing Home Program, and the NORA and LA Land Trust programs have reduced the number of blight in high market areas, yet have done little to address the problem of blight in weak market areas. For example, the area of Broadmoor saw 2,000 of its 2,400 homes blighted from the hurricane. However, because of the Lot Next Door Program and NORA Program, Broadmoor has decreased that number of blight to 477. On the other hand, there are neighborhoods such as Zion City (a weak market area) that still has extensive blight. Zion City, even before Hurricane Katrina, was a weak market. Around 1960 and 1970, the city experienced its last big zoning code, which allowed for “light industrial” development. Because the neighborhood had been previously residential, the industrial development (e.g. warehouses and trucks) tended to decreased the property values of surrounding homes. The zoning code in turn contributed to the factors making Zion City a weak
market. According to a community survey, Zion City has about 55% vacant and blighted properties.\textsuperscript{xix}

1.4.1 2005 LA Restrictive Law and Expropriate Process

Expropriation is the process in which a public sector can take ownership of the property for public use. Furthermore, the public sector must pay the taxes and liens. The 2005 restrictive law goes hand in hand with this process, in that it states that one cannot give the property to another private owner, but must have the public using the property. These strategies are not the most efficient nor favored strategy by the public sector.

1.4.2 Lot Next Door Program and Growing Home Program

Implemented in 2007, the Lot Next Door Program provided an opportunity for homeowners to buy adjacent vacant properties.\textsuperscript{xx} The program is the process in which the federal government obtained lots and properties through the Road Home Act after Katrina. The Lot Next Door Program gave properties to NORA (New Orleans Redevelopment Authority) to be handled on a local level. Essentially, this program aims to give properties to the next-door neighbors only to be used as “side yard” where the neighbors must maintain the lots. The Growing Home Program allows for these lots to be made over, in that it offers up to 10,000 dollars for homeowners to makeover these lots. However, the Lot Next Door Program only applies to homes that are NORA owned and to homeowners who live directly next door to the blighted home, who does not owe back any liens or outstanding taxes, and who complies with the rules and regulations of owning a house. Because of these limitations, the city is trying to find a way to extend the program to those properties that are not NORA owned. Since the start of the Lot Next Door Program, 560 contracts out of 1,008 have been closed as of 2009. Also, the Lot Next
Door Program has sold a combined 4 million square feet of abandoned properties, thus making this program a small alternative to fixing blight.\textsuperscript{xxi}

1.4.3 NORA and LA Land Trust

The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority works within the city to promote the redevelopment of residential and commercial properties and the neighborhoods in general. LA Land Trust is a non-profit organization formed to manage the properties that were purchased by Louisiana under the Road Home Program. The Office of Community Development provided funding for this program. Although NORA has done a lot to decrease blight through the Lot Next Door Program, still a numerous number of blight exists because the Lot Next Door Program only applies to NORA owned homes. With respect to LA Land Trust, NORA has only disposed of a few blighted homes. For example, LA Land Trust received about 5,000 homes from the Road Home Program that are being held until NORA finds a buyer or some other use for these homes.\textsuperscript{xxii} NORA has only disposed of about 1,000 of these homes primarily through the Lot Next Door Program.\textsuperscript{xxiii}

1.4.4 Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is a market-based strategy that combines several different elements to bring revenue back into the city. The first is a buy-sell system where city governments make an upfront investment and take control of vacant properties. The city government then fixes the property so that it can be resold using money from code liens. Code liens are fees placed on owners maintaining vacant and blighted properties. These fees, while not always a reliable system, generate funding for the rest of the program. Restored properties are put up for auction at two-thirds of the appraised value. If not sold, properties are put up for auction and second time at
a lower price. This strategy is popular with new homeowners because they are able to purchase a house that has a clear title and no back taxes.\textsuperscript{xxiv}

1.4.5 Tax Adjudication

Tax adjudication occurs when a property has property taxes that were not paid and in which an individual at the subsequent tax sale did not buy the property.\textsuperscript{xxv} If no one buys the property at this tax sale, state law requires that it be adjudicated to the Parish. This process has several advantages and disadvantages. For advantages, this process provides procedures to sell abandoned adjudicated property where often the owners cannot be located and or the amount of taxes, liens, and mortgages exceed the value of the property. Also, this process allows for clear title insurance. \textsuperscript{xxvi} On the other hand, this process recommends that the sale be completed not until 3 years after the adjudication record, and the process can take up to 6 months to a year, in which the property could by then deteriorate and become the object of vandalism and crime.\textsuperscript{xxvii}

\textbf{II. BLIGHT REDUCTION: NEW ORLEANS}

2.1 Conditions that would relieve blight in New Orleans

One option, perhaps the most obvious possible solution would be to rehabilitate the abandoned homes and resell them at a low market price. These homes would be appealing to first time homebuyers, as they would get a pretty good deal for their low budget. However, this is a temporary solution to a persistent problem. Unless you can rehabilitate 43,000 homes seemingly all at once, the area isn’t going to flourish. New homeowners, no matter how cheap the property is, are not going to want to move into the only nice house in the neighborhood. Surroundings mean everything to property value; they either all have to be nice and renovated or the problem will still persist.\textsuperscript{xxviii}
Another option would be to simply tear down all of the blighted properties and use the uninhabited area to benefit the city as a whole by creating an effective storm water run-off area. Through the use of drains, underground pipes, catch basins, open channels, culverts and creeks the city of New Orleans would be better equipped to handle a hurricane. Because New Orleans is essentially located in a fishbowl, drainage has always been a huge issue. Storm water run off would be a very costly project that would require the minds of extremely innovative engineers who could create a way to get water to flow out of a city, which is essentially underwater. The possible outcomes for this option would be the security the city could give to its citizens of peace of mind if a storm was ever to hit again and the levees would break. It would also force a shift in poverty migration, as all of the poor who lived in these dilapidated areas would have to move closer into the city.

Projects that cost the least to actually undergo are the most likely to occur in a swift manner. This project is extremely cost effective, productive, and smart in many ways. This task would require start up funds by the government to tear down the vacant houses. However, after that critical step is accomplished the rest of the mission is relatively affordable. All that is necessary after that point is employees, seeds, and gardening tools. The benefits to be had are phenomenal. The economy in these once under developed regions would be transformed by the localization of food. The sense of community would be heavily affected by the unions that would form between everyone involved in such a drastic change for the city. It would unite people under a common goal, seeing the vision play out would be a positive experience for many people in these areas that would perhaps even lower crime rates. It would allow the people to focus their time and energy into something healthy and productive. Urban Farming would also increase the
health standards the people of New Orleans live by. This would especially impact the poor, as they have a correlation with being unhealthy due to the affordability of fast food.

### III. Comparative Analysis

We conducted our comparative analysis research on the topic of blight in the cities of Flint, Philadelphia and New York City. These cities, except for New York City, are similar to New Orleans because they have high percentages of blight causing weak market neighborhoods. In the case of New York City, the government has been successful in maintaining little to no blight through a profitable urban farm system. Other cities used different methods such as code enforcement and land banks in decreasing the percentage of blight in their city.

3.1 Flint

The city of Flint implemented several different strategies to reduce blight in weak markets, all of which fall under the categories of land banks and code enforcement. Vacancy in Flint stayed at a steady 5-6% for three decades prior to the year 2000. However, the 2000 US Census found that vacancy in the city jumped to 12% with a total of 6,720 properties. Between the years of 1999-2003, an estimated 311 “persistently delinquent properties.” Persistently delinquent properties can be defined as owing more than 25% of the home’s value in taxes for three or more consecutive years. These delinquent properties also indirectly contributed to weaker market neighborhoods because tax neglect shows economic distress, which is a forerunner of abandonment.

The land bank strategies that Flint used was tax reverted property and mortgage-foreclosed property. In the tax reverted property strategy the city takes control of properties that
owe significant taxes, fixes them up, and then re-sells them to the public with clear titles. The advantages are that the government can break the cycle of unpaid taxes and bring in a new homeowner who will pay taxes and create more revenue for the city, and homeowners can purchase a house at a good price that has no back taxes. The disadvantage of this strategy is that the process to get a clear title on the house is usually long, ranging from 18 months to 3 years. The mortgage foreclosed property is similar to the tax reverted property because the owner cannot afford to continue paying mortgage payments on their home. In that case, the government also takes control of the property and resells the property at a lower value.

Flint’s Blight Elimination Program was established on February 27th 2008 to target blight in a low-cost way. The city partnered with multiple non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Metro Housing, Job Corps, Destructive Crew, and Michigan Fast Track Land Bank to employ homeless citizens to work on the blighted properties. This gave the homeless job experience and the opportunity to get back on their feet. Funding for the program came from the city of Flint matching up to $423,000 and Genesee County matching up to $500,000. The state of Michigan also has a Blight Elimination Program, which is similar to Flint’s. In addition to Flint’s strategies, Michigan implemented a competitive application process to find companies to work on demolition and rehabilitation on blighted properties. The application includes anticipated benefits for public safety, property value stabilization, economic development, local support, and public and private investments. Funding for this program is seen a long-term community benefit. To avoid corruption, no more than 5% of the funds can go towards administration payment.

A statewide program called the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) has also funded up to $25 million over a four-year period toward blight elimination in
eight Michigan cities including Flint. Its main goals are to improve neighborhood safety for children, increase income and skills of homeless, salvage and recycle destruction materials, and to create a holistic, market-based neighborhood.\textsuperscript{xxvii}

The governor of Michigan, Jennifer M. Grandholm, created the Land Use Leadership Council in February 2003. The council studied urban sprawl for six months before creating a comprehensive plan to address the environmental and economic consequences of blight. The council decided to use land bank strategies such as a tax-foreclosure law and side-lot programs to tackle the problem. \textsuperscript{xxxviii}

Lastly, the city of Flint used the Michigan Property Tax Foreclosure Law to take control of blighted and vacant properties. The law was established in 1999 to give city governments greater authority to gain control of these properties. This land bank strategy sped up the process of bringing the properties back into productive use. It was also beneficial because it gave new homeowners clear titles faster and easier than before the law was implemented. Furthermore, the law also gave money to maintain the foreclosed properties. The funding for this program came from the Ruth Mott Foundation, which is an organization, designed to stimulate and improve the community. \textsuperscript{xxxix}

The results from all of these strategies and programs put together proved to be extremely effective in reducing the amount of blight in Flint. In January 2006, the US Census conducted another survey on the properties in the city. It reported that there were 2392 vacant properties, a 64.4\% decrease from 2000. \textsuperscript{xl}This data proves that Flint was successful in reducing blight in their city.
Table 2: Logic Model for Flint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
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</table>
| Flint has too many blighted properties, around 6,700, that are resulting in unsafe and weak market neighborhoods. | • Time: approximately 4-15 years to see noticeable change  
• Money: $25 million allotted by MSHDA, ~$100,000 from city and county grants  
• 37,000 – 43,000 blighted properties | • Teach valuable skills to homeless/unemployed through work on the blighted properties  
• Participation and help from non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Job Corps, and Metro Housing  
• Organized long-term plan of action formulated by community leaders from the Land Use Leadership Council |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Outcomes</th>
<th>Medium Outcomes</th>
<th>Long Outcomes</th>
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</table>
| • Give jobs to homeless and unemployed  
• Improve the attitude and outlook on the community | • Homeless gain valuable skills such as working in a group, organization, and construction experience that they could also use outside of this project  
• General aesthetic improvement in neighborhoods  
• Invested time into Land Use Leadership Council to create a market analysis report for Flint | • Improved safety in communities  
• Residential and commercial economic growth  
• More tax payer revenue generated  
• An estimated 64% decrease in blight |

3.2 Philadelphia

Over the past ten years, Philadelphia has recollected information on blight within the city. According to the results, Philadelphia has over 8,500 acres of vacant or underutilized land. The city of Philadelphia has come up with plans to re-use the vacant property in the long run. In 2011, the city government turned the vacant properties into more productive areas through three projects. The projects are called Greenworks Philadelphia, Green 2015, and Philadelphia 2035. Each project describes a phase in which Philadelphia has to pass in order to make progress with vacant properties. Before these three projects, no record of the city trying to use vacant
properties for more productive areas. In the date collected for Philadelphia 2035, most vacant properties are already owned by the government, which makes the governments projects more easily to progress.\textsuperscript{xliii}

3.2.1 Greenworks Philadelphia

Mayor Michael Nutter introduced \textit{Greenworks Philadelphia} in January 2008; he promised to make Philadelphia the greenest city in the United States. A year later, the city presented their research and put it into action in 2009. The main goal of the project is to make the city of Philadelphia, by 2015, the greenest city in the United States. Until now the project has advanced quite successfully. In the 2012 progress report, it was presented that about 4.9\% of energy consumption has reduced, the storm water runoff has been successfully demonstrating progress in new management of water runoff, and even the reduction of vehicle usage within the city has reduced. The main goal is still at hand and with the results the report demonstrates, this project has been successfully moving forward.\textsuperscript{xliv}

3.2.2 Green 2015

In 2010 the city introduced \textit{Green 2015} that is part of the \textit{Greenworks Philadelphia} project. The main goal is to unite the city with green areas and turn over 500 acres of land into parks. This project requires the participation of Philadelphians in order to unite the different areas of the city and to make it a more united community. It also requires the involvement of public schools to make their unused vacant land greener environment areas.\textsuperscript{xlv} There has been no document present demonstrating the progress for this program, but since it is a branch of the \textit{Greenworks Philadelphia}, some results are already presented in the progression documents of \textit{Greenworks Philadelphia}.\textsuperscript{xlvi} In only three years, in the 2012 progress report, about thirty-eight
of one hundred and sixty-seven initiatives are complete, one hundred and ten initiatives are in progress, and there are nineteen future initiatives planned.

3.2.3 Philadelphia 2035

Philadelphia 2035 was presented in 2011 and is an overall 25-year project. The main goal of the project is to turn the city into a more green-productive and industrial city. To make it clearer, the projects presented before are inside this 25-year plan. The other two projects, the Greenworks Philadelphia and Green 2015, are the baby steps of this 25-year plan. In the document presented by the government, the idea is to turn the non-productive parts of the city into more industrialized areas in the city. In other words, the idea is to renew its valued resources for future generations.

3.3 New York

New York demonstrated the practicality of urban farms by exploring options for funding other than the typical way of establishing urban agriculture simply by means of a non-profit. New York pioneered incorporating government funding by creating a reciprocal based project. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection and New York State Energy, Research & Development Authority has both awarded grants to urban farms for establishment and expansion. In exchange, urban farming centers such as provide a portion of the fresh crops they produce to government run services such as homeless shelters, this allows for both sectors to benefit. New York has also demonstrated the market value urban farming has the potential to possess. Gotham Green, a company established as non-profit receiving grants from the government then evolved into a corporate company. The main source of income for the company comes from its partnership with high quality food stores such as whole foods.
Gotham Greens provides seasonal vegetables to while foods, marks it with a “locally grown” sticker and sells it for more than the externally grown produce. It has been found that New Yorkers will always buy more of the locally grown produce do to the desire to support their local urban farms and also for the longer shelf-value of the produce. By examining the success New York has seen through the use of Urban Farms both commercially and by non-profit means gives a promising hope to the success New Orleans would have if they followed in the path of New York. In New York, the government invested 4 million dollars into creating a 100,000 sq. foot greenhouse in Manhattan. This expenditure is clearly inflated, as Manhattan property values are not comparable to the weak market neighborhoods in New Orleans we are trying to reinvent.

IV. Possible Solutions

4.1 Increased Code Enforcement

The city of New Orleans should improve its code enforcement policies, so that the city can seize and sells properties primarily through this process. This would allow for people to go through this process instead of the adjudicated process that lasts 6 months to a year. Also, by having increased code enforcement, one has increased staff, and this allows for the process to move along so that many people can get through the blighted process with ease and begin renovations.
4.2 Urban Farming

This chart is an overview of the wide array of benefits urban farms presents to an area it is located in. It connects evidence-based links, shown as the dark dots, across the array of activities that are more likely to be prevalent with the establishment of urban farms than not. These activities include, environmental education, policy work and advocacy, health and wellness education as well as environmental education. The chart really just validates the positive effect urban farms has on a community. It creates an environment were people are very concerned about issues that contribute to health in general, whether it be social justice health, environmental health or physical and mental well being.
V. Recommendation

5.1 Urban Farming

After examining numerous strategies implemented by six different comparison cities across the United States, we have decided the most cost efficient policy to begin in New Orleans to tackle blight in weak market neighborhoods would be urban farms. New York has seen such success with urban farms because they essentially pioneered the transformation of these installations from largely non-profit organizations into government funded projects. By this shift the city has been able to localize some of their agricultural economy and even assist social services such as homeless shelters by providing them with fresh food. New Orleans should follow in the footsteps of New York and enlist funding from the New Orleans Coastal and Environmental Protection Agency to help start-up this project.\(^1\) Also, funding can be provided through the Food Policy Advisory Committee of New Orleans. The money received through governmental sectors such as these would be first used to deconstruct the blighted properties in these weak market neighborhoods. Then facilities would be put in place through government funding and crafting that would use greenhouse technology to maximize the range of produce that could be harvested throughout the year. Employees would then be recruited also through government facilities for part time jobs, no skill sets would be necessary as a prerequisite as farming is a fairly simple job that can be taught and internalized quickly.\(^2\) This expansion would open the market up to the same families that were negatively affected by the Hurricane and the sub sequential blight and would be given the opportunity not only to give back to the community they have known all of their life, but also as a way to make a salary. It would rebuild the community from the ground up, giving the impoverished the
necessary money it takes to establish home ownership, thus contributing tax revenue, that was lost through blight, back into the city.

New Orleans brings in thousands of tourists each year looking to get a taste of the array of food that is unique to the city. Because of this, the food sector plays a dominant role in the city’s economy. Many small businesses have to seek out produce from thousands of miles away, which only adds to the increasingly expensive operations of a small restaurant. Seeing as New Orleans has a largely food based economy urban farms would be embraced by not only the operators of the farm, but by restaurant owners alike looking to decrease their expenditures and increase their fresh produce quality. The localization of the food and subsequently the money produced by that food would stimulate the economy of the city. By keeping the whole project localized it internalizes the project seeing as no one would benefit from the urban farms other than the highly deserving people and city of New Orleans. It would provide steady jobs, cheaper produce and a cleaner way of harvesting food as opposed to trucking in produce from miles away. In addition to the financial improvements Urban Farming would have on the city, community building is another benefit to be reaped through Urban Farms. Uniting people of all different backgrounds from all walks of life behind a common goal and vision is a powerful thing. Urban Farms possess just that amount of power. It enables unskilled unemployed people to provide for themselves and their family through availability of steady jobs. It also creates a closely-knit community within the employees of the farm, as harvesting produce is a collaborative activity. It would grant the citizens of the weak market neighborhoods to take a greater amount of ownership for their neighborhood and it is likely that this pride would spill out into the upkeep of the rest of the neighborhood. Another additional benefit Urban
Farming would contribute to the city of New Orleans is an overall increase in health. Unfortunately there is a strong correlation between poverty-stricken individuals and poor health. This is largely due to the fact that fast food, which is loaded with innutritious simple carbs and saturated fat, is dramatically cheaper and more convenient to purchase than fresh produce. Increasing and localizing an urban farm project eliminate the middlemen in the agricultural business eliminated thus allowing for the produce to be sold at a much cheaper price. By lowering the cost and raising the availability and also the awareness of fresh produce poverty stricken individuals may reconsider fast food and opt for fresh.
Currently in New Orleans there are estimated to be some 35,000 to 43,000 abandoned properties. These vacant properties are not contributing to the economic prosperity of the city; in fact they are inhibiting it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What We Invest</td>
<td>What we do</td>
<td>Who We Reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Transform vacant properties into productive Urban Farms.</td>
<td>Undereducated people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>Employ undereducated people.</td>
<td>Unemployed people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Enlist publications to advocate for donations to start this process.</td>
<td>The general consumers in the city of New Orleans through both economical prosperity and also health benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak market neighborhoods</td>
<td>Teach people a useful trade of urban farming.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-</th>
<th>Medium-</th>
<th>Long-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in attitude residents have towards the social status of where they live.</td>
<td>Change in crime levels, as less unemployed are left on the streets.</td>
<td>Transformation of area from dilapidated into a progressive hip area that attracts new homeowners and small business owners alike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in attitude about community service.</td>
<td>Change in overall behavioral climate of the area.</td>
<td>Economic prosperity due to localization of commerce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in motivation to accomplish a common goal</td>
<td>Positive change in mental health, self-esteem, and social skills amongst all involved in the program.</td>
<td>Lower crime rates due to youth involvement in productive activities.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Higher standards of living, which will pass on from generation to generation and eventually completely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transform the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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