
DATE: August 17, 2017

TO: G.T. Bynum, Mayor
Jack Blair, Chief of Staff

FROM: James Wagner

SUBJECT: BlightStat

Strategic Goal Areas: **Well-Being** and **The City Experience**

On Friday, August 11th, the Office of Performance Strategy and Innovation hosted its first BlightStat meeting with city departments and community stakeholders to discuss performance metrics. The purpose of this meeting was to share how data might inform operations and to discuss strategies that would move toward desired outcomes. Data was presented by the Office of Performance Strategy and Innovation and Working in Neighborhoods and discussed with the Mayor's Office and community stakeholder leadership.

**Presenting Parties – City of Tulsa, Offices of Performance, Strategy and Innovation and Working in Neighborhoods:
Robyn Undieme and Dwain Midget**

Attendees Present:

G.T. Bynum, Mayor	Ryan Graham, IT	Andy Teeter, TFD
Jack Blair, Chief of Staff	Erica Moore, Internal	Janet Kohls, TFD
James Wagner, OPSI	Auditing	Teresa Burkett Meinders, Connor
Robyn Undieme, OPSI	Cathy Criswell, City Auditor	& Winters, LLP
Penny Macias, OPSI	Bernard Dindy, Tulsa Health	Michael Birkes, University of
DeVon Douglass, Chief	Department	Oklahoma
Resilience Officer	Reggie Ivey, Tulsa Health	Cameron Walker, Habitat for
Kathy Taylor, Economic	Department	Humanity
Development	Elizabeth Nutt, Tulsa Health	Jennifer Barcus-Schafer,
Brant Pitchford, Housing	Department	Rebuilding Together Tulsa
Dwain Midget, WIN	Chief Chuck Jordan, TPD	Kirk Wester, Growing Together
Kevin Cox, WIN	Charles Wulff, TPD	Tulsa
Chase Mohler, WIN	Daniel Ford, TPD	Delia Kimbrel, Growing Together
Patricia Wolf, WIN	Chief Ray Driskell, TFD	Tulsa
Matt Parsell, Engineering		

Meeting Agenda

1. Define blighted property.
2. Strategize ways to collect a full inventory of blighted properties.
3. Strategize ways to prevent or address blighted properties.

Discussion

The August 11th BlightStat meeting sought input from community partners to establish a working definition for blight. The meeting itself addressed three main questions related to blight: 1. defining what blighted property means, 2. strategize ways to collect a full inventory of blighted properties and 3. strategize ways to prevent or address blighted properties

The discussion began with describing the Mayor's prioritized goals to grow Tulsa's population, reduce crime and reduce the city's life expectancy gap. It was noted that blight was an issue connected in various ways to each of these other problems.

Under question one, there was discussion about how the COT's working definition for blighted properties could be refined or redefined. Some community partners suggested the language could be less technical and more simplified. In response, it was suggested that the city could devise two separate definitions, one for public and one for internal usage. Those definitions could also be separated further into different subcategories, such as vacant and abandoned properties and occupied rental properties with systematically neglectful landlords. Stakeholders agreed to establish a working committee to debate and follow through on these suggestions.

Under question two, there were discussions about how the city could encourage more citizens to help identify and prevent blighted properties. The goal has been to reach out to neighborhoods and incentivize projects that can benefit blight reduction and other beautification efforts. Various strategies were discussed, including crowd sourcing, an online geoform, an online app, and GIS overlays to help the city get a stronger definition of blight and focus on areas most in need. Stakeholders agreed to establish a working committee to debate and recommend these suggestions (same as the one described in question three).

Under question three, there were discussions about how COT could better allocate resources against blight, both internally and externally with community partner organizations. The city expressed an interest to work with these groups on proactive strategies, such as code enforcement. It was suggested COT could broker such efforts by sharing its data with community partners and passing new legislation. Some ideas for the latter included provisions for obtaining clean titles to abandoned properties and restricting sales to problem investors. Stakeholders agreed to establish a working committee to debate and recommend these suggestions (same as the one described in question two).

Follow-Up Items

1. Recommendations of Working Committees on blight definition and strategy.
2. Investigate what policy changes could be made to address code enforcement, titles to abandoned properties and sales to problem investors.
3. Include Crossover Baptist Church in blight working groups. –Teresa Burkett Meinders
4. Does COT have the legal authority to create an absentee landlord license that would require certain maintenance standards? –Dwain Midget
5. What opportunities exist to layer assessor data, water meter data, crowd source data and other data to help COT better allocate resources and get a stronger definition of blight? – Jack Blair
6. How can COT/other public employees become engaged in data collection (postal workers, garbage workers, water meter readers, etc.)? –Teresa Burkett Meinders
7. How can COT establish better communication with neighborhoods about code enforcement and the call-in process? –Teresa Burkett Meinders and Nelda English