

Lancaster County Vacant Property Reinvestment Board (VPRB)

What is the VPRB?

The VPRB is established under a County ordinance and follows the state-mandated procedures to declare a property to be “blighted.”

Purpose

- Encourage property owners to fix up their properties and eliminate blight.

Process

- The process of declaring a property to be blighted takes several months with several opportunities for the owner to remove the blighting conditions.
- Once the property is declared blighted, it is referred to the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority for acquisition through either negotiated sale or eminent domain. The property may also be referred to the Lancaster County Land Bank.
- The property is then sold to the referring municipality to rehabilitate the property and resell it to a responsible owner.

To Refer a Property to the VPRB

- Municipality Completes a Property Referral Form along with a Submission Fee of \$750 and submits it to the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority who provides staff support for the VPRB.
- A municipal representative must attend Board meetings when property is discussed.

To Learn More Please Contact:

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LANCASTER COUNTY VACANT PROPERTY REINVESTMENT BOARD

Actions taken by the Vacant Property Reinvestment Board are based on the determination that blighted conditions exist on the subject property. The following includes a list of conditions that support a legal determination of blight as outlined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

1. Any premises which because of physical condition or use is regarded as a public nuisance at common law or has been declared a public nuisance in accordance with the local housing, building, plumbing, fire and related codes.
2. Any premises which because of physical condition, use or occupancy is considered an attractive nuisance to children, including but not limited to, abandoned wells, shafts, basements, excavations, and unsafe fences or structures.
3. Any dwelling which because it is dilapidated, unsanitary, unsafe, vermin infested or lacking in the facilities and equipment required by the Housing Code of the municipality, has been designated by the department responsible for enforcement of the Code as unfit for human habitation.
4. Any structure which is a fire hazard, or is otherwise dangerous to the safety of persons or property.
5. Any structure from which the utilities, plumbing, heating, sewage or other facilities have been disconnected destroyed, removed or rendered ineffective so that the property is unfit for its intended use.
6. Any vacant or unimproved lot or parcel of ground in a predominantly built up neighborhood, which by reason of neglect or lack of maintenance, has become a place for accumulation of trash and debris, or a haven for rodents or other vermin.
7. Any property which is vacant but not tax delinquent, which has not been rehabilitated within one year of the receipt of notice to rehabilitate from a municipal code enforcement agency.

LANCASTER COUNTY VACANT PROPERTY REINVESTMENT BOARD

PROCEDURES		
	Meeting	Action
1.		Municipality submits a Property Referral Form to Board
2.		Staff sends notice to property owner (certified) informing the Property Owner that the property has been referred to the VPRB on the specified date time and place for consideration of blight.
3.	1st Meeting Acceptance into the Program	Board reviews Property Referral and decides whether to accept it into the Program or not.
4.		If accepted, staff inspects exterior to confirm the existence of blight.
5.		Staff creates Property Fact Sheet listing the rehabilitation actions necessary to eliminate blight.
6.		Staff sends letter to Property Owner with Property Fact Sheet through regular and certified mail.
7.		Property Owner responds within 21 calendar days from date of receipt with a rehabilitation plan.
8.		Staff determines if rehabilitation plan is adequate to address elements of blight. If declined, specific reasons will be given. If accepted, the property goes before the Board for provisional approval.
9.		If the Property Owner does not respond, or the rehabilitation plan is deemed inadequate by staff, the property will go before the Board for consideration of 1 st Resolution of Blight.
10.	2 nd Meeting Acceptance of Rehabilitation Agreement or 1 st Resolution of Blight	<p>If the Property Owner has submitted a rehabilitation plan that is acceptable to staff, the Board will provisionally approve the plan pending negotiation of Rehabilitation Agreement with staff. Property Owner has 21 calendar days from the VPRB meeting date to negotiate with staff to create a Rehabilitation Agreement.</p> <p>If the Property Owner has not responded and the legal requirements for notification are met, and the property meets all other elements of blight,</p>

		then the property will go to the Board for consideration for 1st Resolution of Blight .
11.	After passage of 1 st Resolution	After the Board passes a 1 st Resolution, the Property Owner is formally notified, AND the property is posted AND a notice is published in the paper within three (3) business days.
12.		Property Owner must submit a rehabilitation plan within 21 calendar days of receipt of notice.
13.		Staff reviews the Property Owner's rehabilitation plan and determines if it is adequate to eliminate blight. If the staff deems the rehabilitation plan to be acceptable, it will go to the Board for approval.
14.		Property Owner may request a hearing on the determination of blight.
15.	3rd Meeting	Board meets to do one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board holds a hearing, if requested by Property Owner. 2. Determines approval of the rehabilitation plan. If Board gives provisional approval of rehabilitation plan, it is referred to staff for negotiation of Rehabilitation Agreement which must be completed within 21 calendar days. 3. If the Property Owner does not comply with the executed Rehabilitation Agreement, the Board will consider a 2nd Resolution of Blight 4. If there is no response by the Property Owner, the Board will consider a 2nd Resolution of Blight.
16.		Staff notifies Property Owner of 2nd Resolution.
17.		The staff refers the property to the municipal planning commission and the County Planning Commission for certification of the blight determination process and requests a recommendation for the re-use of the property (commercial, residential, mixed use, etc.).
18.	4 th Meeting	After both planning commissions certify the process of the determination of blight, the property returns to the Board for final certification and referral to either the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority or the Lancaster County Land Bank Authority.