

**JULY 2010 SURVEY UPDATE:  
VACANCY RECLAMATION AND REDEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHWEST CENTER CITY**

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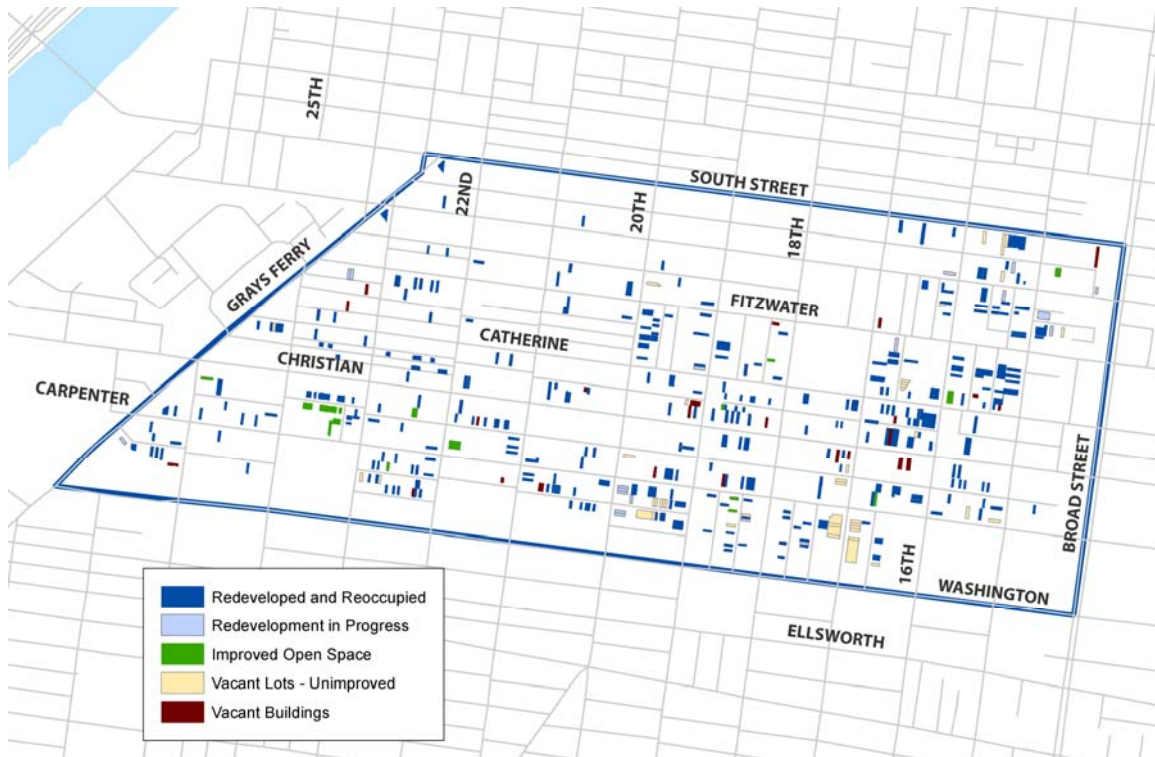
*For background on the 2008 Fels Institute of Government report, Vacant Property Reclamation and Neighborhood Change in Southwest Center City Philadelphia, please see the end of this notice. A companion report, to be published September 2010, will examine the strategic redevelopment of an area of Eastern North Philadelphia led by public agencies and nonprofit organizations over the past decade, and use the lessons from these efforts to answer important questions about how blighted communities can be transformed into neighborhoods of choice.*

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**SUMMARY**

**Between 1998 and 2010, 426 (80.5%) of the 529 vacant properties in Southwest Center City have been reclaimed – either redeveloped or improved as open space.** This is an increase of 98 properties since 2008 (from 328), equal to an increase in reclaimed properties of 29.9% in two years.

**MAP 1 – VACANT PROPERTY RECLAMATION IN SOUTHWEST CENTER CITY, 1998 - 2010**



**RESULTS IN DETAIL**

In July 2010, the Fels Institute of Government revisited its analysis of vacant properties in Southwest Center City in order to determine the status of parcels that had yet to be redeveloped in 2008, categorized as either “Renovation in Progress” (65), “Vacant Lot / Unimproved” (87), or “Still a Vacant Building (49).”

**The results of this survey update suggest that Southwest Center City has continued to enjoy a substantial level of development activity since the bursting of the “housing bubble.”** Much of this activity has taken place south of Catherine Street, with a high level of activity in the blocks just north of Washington Avenue where significant concentrations of vacancy had been recorded in 2008.

In the past two years:

- 30 properties that were either vacant buildings or empty lots in 2008 have been redeveloped and 17 more are in the process of being built and rehabilitated.
- 49 properties that were under construction in 2008 have been finished and occupied.

Detailed results for the properties that had been identified in 2008 as Renovations in Progress (65 properties), Vacant Lot/Unimproved (87 properties), or Still a Vacant House (49 properties) are listed in the table below:

**TABLE 1 – 2010 SURVEY UPDATE, DETAILED RESULTS**

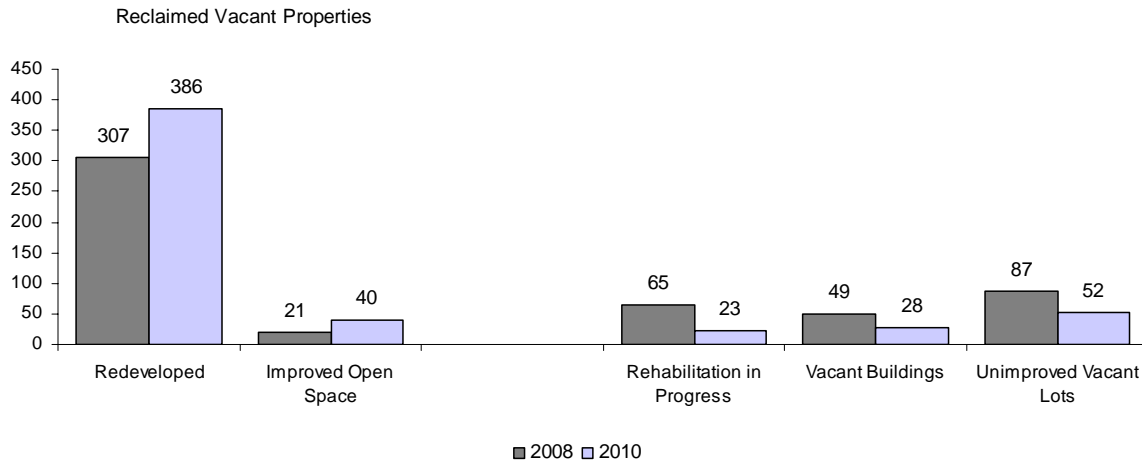
	Status in 2008	Status in 2010				
		Redeveloped	Renovations In Progress	Vacant Lot / Improved	Vacant Lot / Unimproved	Still a Vacant Building
Renovations in Progress	65	49	6		10	
Vacant Lot/Unimproved	87	21	8	19	39	
Still a Vacant Building	49	9	9		3	28
Total	201	79	23	19	52	28

Source: Fels Institute of Government 2010 Survey

**Nearly half of the 201 properties still undeveloped in 2008 have been redeveloped in the past two years,** including 9 properties that had been identified as vacant buildings in 2008. New construction on properties that had been identified as unimproved vacant lots in 2008 (21 properties) accounted for more than one-quarter of the total number of redeveloped properties.

Table 2 summarizes the current status of the 529 properties vacant in 1998 which the Fels Institute was able to identify and classify in 2010. The status of these properties in 2008 is included for comparison.

**TABLE 2 – VACANT PROPERTY RECLAMATION IN SOUTHWEST CENTER CITY, 2008 AND 2010**



Source: Fels Institute of Government Surveys, 2008 and 2010.

**Between 1998 and 2010, 426 (80.5%) of the 529 vacant properties in Southwest Center City have been reclaimed – either redeveloped or improved as open space.** This is an increase of 98 properties since 2008 (from 328), equal to an increase in reclaimed properties of 29.9% in two years.

**EARLIER RESEARCH**

**Vacant Property Reclamation and Neighborhood Change in Southwest Center City Philadelphia**

In 2008, the Fels Institute conducted a vacancy analysis for Southwest Center City, an area with 550 identified vacancies in 1998 that gentrified throughout the early and mid-2000s. The contrast to the APM-area under investigation in the Fels Institute’s upcoming report, *Vacant Property Reclamation through Strategic Investment*

*in Eastern North Philadelphia, 1998-2010*, suggest some important questions about the sufficiency of existing development incentives, the relationship between investment strategies and the type of redevelopment envisioned for each community, and the role of community development corporations as catalysts and managers of that change. While both the APM-area and Southwest Center City are being rapidly transformed, the mechanics and outcomes of that transformation are importantly different.

Vacant Property Reclamation and Neighborhood Change in Southwest Center City Philadelphia



*READ THE REPORT: Vacant Property Reclamation and Neighborhood Change in Southwest Center City Philadelphia*, by Hallie Mittleman and Catherine Lamb. Published 2008 by the Fels Institute Of Government. [www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization](http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization)