



25,000 Vacant and Abandoned Properties in Eight
Ohio Cities Cost the Public more than \$60 Million a
Year

**Forum Hosted by ReBuild Ohio and Community Research Partners
February 19, 2008**

NEWSPAPERS

1. "Report Says Vacancies Hurt Ohio Cities"
Cincinnati Enquirer- February 19, 2008
[Associated Press Story](#)
2. "Empty Buildings Cost Million"
Dayton Daily News- February 19, 2008
[Empty Buildings Cost Millions](#)
3. "Vacant Properties Cost Cleveland \$35 Million, Study Says"
The Plain Dealer- February 19, 2008
[Vacant Properties Cost Cleveland](#)
4. "Zanesville Losing Almost \$200,000 in Vacant Properties"
Zanesville Times Recorder- February 19, 2008
[Zanesville Losing](#)
*This article also appeared on CentralOhio.com
5. "Vacant Properties Costly to City"
Springfield News Sun- February 19, 2008
[Vacant Properties Costly to City](#)
6. "Taxpayers Foot Bill for Vacant Properties; Study Shows Toledo Lost \$3.8 million in '06"
Toledo Blade- February 19, 2008
[Taxpayers Foot Bill](#)
7. "Millions Taken by Abandoned Properties in Ohio"
Business First of Columbus-February 19, 2008
[Millions Taken By Abandoned Properties](#)
*Also appeared in Buffalo Business First
Washington Business Journal
8. "Abandoned Properties Costing Eight Ohio Cities \$63 million"
Canton Rep- February 19, 2008
[Vacant Properties](#)
This is written by the same AP writer listed previously, but goes into more depth.
9. "Empty Housing Costing Millions"
Dispatch Politics/The Columbus Dispatch- February 19, 2008
[Blight On Ohio Cities](#)
10. "Study Reveals Economic Impact of Vacant Properties"
Dayton Business Journal- February 19, 2008
[Study Reveals Economic Impact](#)

11. "Abandoned Properties Costly to City"
The Ironton Tribune
[Abandoned Properties Costly](#)
12. "Springfield Loses \$1.4 million on Vacant, Abandoned Properties"
Springfield News Sun- February 18, 2008
[Springfield Loses](#)
13. EDITORIAL: "Lawyers Should Volunteer to Give Homeowners in Foreclosure Help"
The Plain Dealer- February 20, 2008
[Editorial](#)
14. "64 Million Total Cost for 8 Cities;; Legislators Join Forces to Tackle Vacant Housing"
The Columbus Dispatch- February 20, 2008
[Legislators Join Forces](#)
15. "It's Grim in Ohio as Voters Cite Economy"
The Buffalo News- February 28, 2008
[Grim In Ohio](#)

AP Articles also ran:
Zanesville Times Recorder
Marion Star
Akron News Now
The Middletown Journal
The Review
The Lima News
The Examiner
The Chronicle Telegram

TELEVISION

1. "Report: Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio Cities \$63 Million"
My FOX8 Cleveland- February 19, 2008
[Report Abandoned Properties](#)
2. "Report: Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio"
WFMJ 21 News Now- Youngstown
<http://www.wfmj.com/Global/story.asp?S=7890679>
AP story
3. "Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio Cities \$63 Million"
WKYC 3 News Today- Cleveland
http://www.wkyc.com/news/rss_article.aspx?ref=RSS&storyid=83609
4. "Report: Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio \$63 Million"
WSYX ABC 6- Columbus

http://www.wsyx6.com/template/inews_wire/wires.regional.oh/2e837da2-www.wsyx6.com.shtml

5. "Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio Cities \$63 Million"
NBC 24- Toledo
http://www.nbc24.com/news/news_story.aspx?id=97387
6. "Report: Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio Cities \$63 Million"
WTOL- Toledo
<http://www.wtol.com/Global/story.asp?S=7890679>

RADIO

1. Report: Abandoned Homes Cost Ohio \$64 Million
WCPN 90.3 FM
Click to listen to the broadcast which features Roberta Garber and Mary Helen Petrus
<http://www.myfoxcleveland.com/myfox/pages/News/Detail?contentId=5818002&version=1&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=TSTY&pageId=3.2.1>
2. Government-backed Group Counts Vacant Houses
WOSU Radio
http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wosu/news.newsmain?action=article&ARTICLE_ID=1230432§ionID=1
3. "Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio Cities \$63 Million"
The PATH
<http://www.thepath.fm/news/newsitem.cfm?id=29325>
4. "Slums Cost Springfield Money"
WHIO News Talk Radio 1290AM 95.7 FM
http://1290whio.com/includes/news/indepth/5279860_Slums_Cost_Springfield_Money_051528.html

BLOGS

1. "Foreclosure Study Says Vacant Properties Cost Cleveland \$35+ million"
Cleveland.com
[Foreclosure Study](#)
2. "Foreclosure Study Says Vacant Properties Cost Cleveland \$35 million"
Loan Modification & Home Loan News- February 19, 2008
Same article as above.

<http://loanworkout.org/2008/02/19/foreclosure-study-says-vacant-properties-cost-cleveland-35-million/>

3. **“Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio Cities \$63 million”**
Topix- Toledo
<http://www.topix.com/city/toledo-oh/2008/02/abandoned-properties-costing-ohio-cities-63-million>

4. **Abandoned Properties a Significant Problem in Ohio**
ColumbusAlive
http://www.columbusalive.com/?sec=blogs&story=sites/alive/php/blog.php&blog=City_Limits/2008/02/press_release_abandoned_pprope.html

5. **“Empty Housing Costing the State of Ohio Millions”**
Columbus Underground
[Empty Housing Costing Ohio](#)

6. **“Millions taken by Abandoned Properties in Ohio”**
Columbus RetroMetro- February 20, 2008
http://columbusretrometro.typepad.com/columbus_retrometro/

1. Report says vacancies hurt Ohio's cities

BY STEPHEN MAJORS | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS - More than 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties have cost eight Ohio cities at least \$63 million, as ill-equipped local governments have been unable to wrestle with job loss and the foreclosure crisis, a report has found.

A report released today by Community Research Partners showed that Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville have lost millions in services and tax revenues as vacant residences and abandoned lots have mounted.

The study was commissioned by ReBuild Ohio, a coalition of local government, nonprofit and civic organizations.

Researchers said many of the cities weren't able to provide a comprehensive picture, so the total costs are likely to be much higher.

Job loss, population loss, property tax delinquency and the foreclosure problem all contributed to rising problems with vacant and abandoned properties, the report found. The report used 2006 data.

ReBuild Ohio called on Ohio lawmakers to enact policies to stem the tide.

The group wants the state to create incentives for local governments to develop a property data collection system, and pass a bill that would enable cities to initiate foreclosure action on abandoned property.

The organization wants the state to target long-term planning.

<http://news.enquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080219/NEWS01/802190344/1056/COL02>

2. Empty buildings cost millions

Unused properties siphon off taxes and cost the city for maintenance and police and fire protection.

By Tim Tresslar Staff Writer

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

DAYTON — Vacant, boarded-up homes and commercial buildings cost the city \$12.3 million in lost taxes and municipal services in 2006, according to a report issued today, Feb. 19.

Unused buildings cost Dayton and seven other Ohio communities nearly \$64 million in municipal services and lost taxes, according to the study by Community Research Partners.

The authors blame population declines, job losses, subprime and predatory lending and mortgage foreclosures for the proliferation of unused buildings and homes. In addition to Dayton, ReBuild Ohio also looked at Springfield, Columbus, Cleveland, Ironton, Lima, Toledo and Zanesville.

In Dayton in 2006, unused properties siphoned off about \$8.8 million in taxes, either because the owners didn't pay taxes or the deteriorating conditions cut into the assessed value, the study states.

These properties cost Dayton another \$831,670 for demolition and boarding, \$787,100 for property maintenance and \$332,000 in police and fire services.

Plans call for the city, the Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority and the private sector to demolish 550 homes this year, said John Gower, Dayton's director of planning and community development. Three-hundred of those will be city-led demolitions, versus 131 in 2007, Gower said. Combined, the city and the private sector removed 272 abandoned or vacant buildings in 2007.

City officials have said that demolition of the 800 structures classified as nuisances would cost Dayton \$8 million. Tearing down the 3,800 vacant and boarded-up buildings in the city would cost \$25 million.

ReBuild Ohio, a nonprofit that commissioned the study, said state and local officials should develop comprehensive inventories of vacant and abandoned properties, strengthen code enforcement and launch programs aimed at helping government buy and re-use the properties.

Lavea Brachman, co-chairwoman of ReBuild Ohio, said demolishing unused buildings and putting the land back into use is critical to revitalizing Ohio cities.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/n/content/oh/story/business/2008/02/19/ddn021908vacant.html>

3. Vacant properties cost Cleveland \$35 million, study says

Study: Foreclosures are part of reason for \$35 million tally

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

Laura Johnston

Plain Dealer Reporter

Vacant properties -- abandoned in part by a mountain of foreclosures -- so far have cost Cleveland more than \$35 million, says a study of eight Ohio cities to be released today.

The tally includes property tax dollars lost, as well as wages paid for workers to fight fires, mow weedy lawns and board broken windows, according to the report commissioned by a partnership of local government and civic organizations called ReBuild Ohio.

The study is one of two released this week dealing with issues tied to the region's foreclosure crisis. Cleveland's Housing Research & Advocacy Center reported Monday that a disproportionate number of black Ohioans end up with high-interest subprime mortgages.

For its study on vacant properties, ReBuild Ohio chose the cities, large and small, as snapshots of the state. Other cities in the survey -- Columbus, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville -- together totaled \$28 million in abandoned-properties costs.

The \$35 million the study attributes to Cleveland falls far short of the hundreds of millions of dollars that city officials say foreclosures have cost.

Their estimate includes lost taxes from devalued property and money spent demolishing and boarding up abandoned houses.

The disparity between Cleveland and other cities makes sense, since Cleveland accounts for 12,400 of the 25,400 empty buildings and lots counted in the study.

"It's not really a surprise," said Tom Stone, executive director of Mount Pleasant NOW Development Corp. "We see it every day. Now the question is, how do we stop these, or reduce the number of properties being abandoned?"

ReBuild Ohio has a few suggestions.

The group is urging the Ohio legislature to adopt a host of tools to handle foreclosure cases, make it tougher for absentee landlords to hold land hostage, build a statewide inventory of properties, create ways for local governments to buy property and support redevelopment.

<http://www.cleveland.com/news/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/news/1203413492278390.xml&coll=2>

4. Zanesville losing almost \$200,000 in vacant properties



By **BRIAN GADD**

Staff Writer

COLUMBUS - Vacant and abandoned properties are costing Zanesville more than \$180,000, according to a study released today.

Zanesville was part of the study, which concluded that vacant and abandoned homes and properties in eight cities across the state has resulted in lost revenue and deteriorating neighborhoods totaling more than \$60 million.

The research study was put together by Community Research Partners in conjunction with ReBuild Ohio - a consortium of local government, nonprofit and civic organizations.

Zanesville Community Development Director Meg Deedrick, who helped provide data for the study, said one of the leading causes of vacant homes and properties is the national foreclosure crisis, which has hit Ohio hard.

"The study started before we even saw that wave coming," Deedrick said. "And part of the challenge in putting these properties back in development is if the property is in private ownership, and they live out of town, it's harder to get in touch with them and get them to do something about it."

The study concludes that local governments need additional tools to adequately track vacant and abandoned properties and to take steps to return them to productive use.

The study examined six cities: Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville; the Columbus neighborhoods of Livingston-Driving Park, Franklinton and North Linden; and the Cleveland neighborhoods of Detroit Shoreway, Mount Pleasant and Slavic Village.

In Zanesville, the data suggests that the 117 vacant residential buildings and 123 vacant or abandoned lots has cost the city more than \$180,000 in city services and lost property tax revenue.

"We were surprised to find the extent and impact of vacancies across the study cities, both large and small, as well as the significant challenges facing city staff in addressing the problem," said CRP Executive Director Roberta Garber. "Because most of the cities don't have resources for a comprehensive vacant property inventory, we know that actual numbers are even higher than we were able to identify."

Lavea Brachman, co-chair of ReBuild Ohio, said the study "certainly validated the depth of the problem in each study community."

"And, based on study results from these eight cities, ReBuild Ohio estimates the number of abandoned properties and municipal costs to be close to ten-fold statewide," Brachman said. "Over the long term, the lost revenue and perpetuation of neighborhood blight caused by vacant properties hurts the quality of life for Ohioans throughout the state."

In many cases, the delinquent taxes on a neglected property far exceeds the value of the property, making it harder for the property owner to take steps to redevelop.

"And we're at a disadvantage in relation to other cities, because our housing stock is older and that cycle is expected to continue," Deedrick said.

According to the study, 41.3 percent of Zanesville's housing stock was built before 1940; 48.9 percent between 1940 and 1979; and only 9.8 percent after 1980.

The Zanesville data was compiled from the city's pending demolition list, open condemnation orders, 2006 boardings and other properties identified by code enforcement as vacant or in poor condition. Much of the data was derived from code enforcement's city-wide inspections from 2002 to 2004.

As to why Zanesville was picked for inclusion in the study, Deedrick said planners were looking for a variety of housing demographics, both rural and metropolitan, based on population shifts and other factors.

Where Cleveland tops the study list with an approximate 7,014 vacant buildings and 5,367 vacant lots, Ironton has a total of 131 vacant buildings and lots. Zanesville is next with 240 total vacancies and Springfield with 332.

But Cleveland's numbers were based on neighborhood surveys, and the study suggests that those numbers could be 2 to 6 times higher.

Deedrick said she hopes to use the data and the higher profile the study has created for Zanesville's housing issues to help build a case for future funding of housing demolition and

neighborhood redevelopment efforts, such as what was proposed for the Dryden/Pershing Reinvestment Area.

The city is looking to apply for the maximum \$1 million in Neighborhood Revitalization Funds to help with clearance or demolition work to help bank land for redevelopment.

"Having access to this data, and being able to contribute our best practices, we hope to get ideas to more completely combat our own problems and make a case for funding," she said. "We can look to see how other cities dealt with a particular problem."

<http://zanesvilletimesrecorder.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080219/NEWS01/802190305/1002>

5. Vacant properties costly to city

Lost taxes, police and fire protection and maintenance add up to \$1.14 million tab for Springfield.

By [Elaine Morris Roberts](#)

Staff Writer

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

SPRINGFIELD — Vacant and abandoned properties cost the city an estimated \$1.14 million in lost property tax revenues and code enforcement and maintenance fees in 2006.

Springfield lost \$578,864 in property taxes and spent \$558,450 for code enforcement, demolition, grass-cutting, trash removal and police and fire services, according to a study released today, Feb. 19. It was commissioned by ReBuild Ohio.

The study disclosed that Springfield had 141 vacant and abandoned buildings, most of which were residential properties, and 206 vacant lots.

In the eight cities studied, the total of 25,000 vacant or abandoned properties resulted in \$49 million in lost property tax revenues and \$15 million in city service expenditures.

Statewide, causes of vacancy and abandonment include job and population losses, older housing stock, property tax delinquency and foreclosures and subprime lending.

The causes are directly connected, with job losses starting the cycle. Nearly 40 percent of Clark County's manufacturing jobs have been lost since 1999 and many of the newly created local jobs are in the lower-paying service sector, Springfield Mayor Warren Copeland said.

He said people either leave the area or take a lower-paying job when they cannot find adequate employment. That, he said, results in foreclosures and non-payment of taxes, all of which is corroborated in the study.

"This is a long-term trend, not an immediate reaction to foreclosure," he said.

Springfield has passed legislation requiring property owners in violation of city codes to prepare a rehabilitation plan or demolish the structure, culminating in fewer vacant or abandoned structures and more vacant lots in the city. That, he said, has resulted in fewer long-term problems, including public safety and community image.

"We're bucking the trend that can be seen across the Midwest," Copeland said. "We're swimming upstream as fast as we can."

<http://www.springfieldnewssun.com/hp/content/oh/story/news/local/2008/02/19/sns021908foreclosure.html>

6. Taxpayers foot bill for vacant properties; study shows Toledo lost \$3.8 million in '06

**By KATE GIAMMARISE
BLADE STAFF WRITER**

Vacant and abandoned properties in Toledo and several other Ohio cities are costing taxpayers millions, both in city services and lost tax dollars, according to a new study.

The study, "\$60 Million and Counting: The Cost of Vacant and Abandoned Properties to Eight Ohio Cities," is being released today at a forum at the Statehouse in Columbus.

The researchers examined data from Toledo, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, and Zanesville as well as the Cleveland neighborhoods of Detroit Shoreway, Mount Pleasant, and Slavic Village and the Columbus neighborhoods of Livingston-Driving Park, Franklinton, and North Linden. The properties are often vacant because of job loss, population decline, foreclosures and sub-prime lending, and a number of other factors, the study said.

The research estimated vacant and abandoned properties cost Toledo taxpayers at least \$3.8 million in 2006.

However, the actual costs are probably somewhat higher, said Roberta Garber, executive director of the nonprofit firm that conducted the study, Community Research Partners, Columbus.

"Definitely, [\$3.8 million] for Toledo is a very con-servative number," Ms. Garber said.

The \$3.8 million estimate includes such costs as demolition, boarding, grass mowing, and trash removal, but doesn't take into account any police or fire calls to vacant properties, nor does it include money lost by schools and local governments because of unpaid property taxes, Ms. Garber said.

"We know there are more costs in terms of tax loss," she said.
Lucas County Auditor Anita Lopez could not be reached for comment yesterday.

In Dayton, a city smaller than Toledo, researchers were able to document \$12 million in lost taxes and costs to city services.

However, researchers were not able to obtain as much data for Toledo as they were for other cities, Ms. Garber said. Like many cities, Toledo has no citywide inventory of which properties are vacant and abandoned.

The study found vacant properties cost Lima about \$1.8 million in city services and lost taxes. Additionally, since the study was done using data from 2006, the problem could be even worse by now because of rising foreclosure rates, Ms. Garber said.

"The foreclosure crisis is feeding the pipeline of vacant and abandoned properties," she said. Overall, in all the cities studied, researchers found at least 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties costing \$64 million in city service costs and lost tax revenue.

"That's less money for the school districts and less money for the cities to provide services, and that ultimately affects everyone," Ms Garber said. The study also found cities have a limited capacity to track the properties on their own.

Ms. Garber said the research is unique in that it takes a statewide look at vacant and abandoned properties.

"This is really a widespread problem," she said.

ReBuild Ohio, which commissioned and designed the study, has put forth several policy suggestions to help cities better deal with vacant houses, said Lavea Brachman, its co-chairman. While the study focused on the impact vacant homes have on cities, the group is suggesting reforms on a statewide level.

"Local governments are on the front lines," Ms. Brachman said. "But the purpose of this is to call for state action that supports local efforts. Local governments can't go it alone on this problem." She emphasized the group is not asking for any new state money, but rather changes in state law to make it easier for counties to create land banks and measures that would realign existing funding and prevent more foreclosures.

Among the changes ReBuild Ohio is calling for are:

- Within six months - improving foreclosure prevention and changing legislation making it tougher for absentee owners to keep properties abandoned and in disrepair.
- Within a year - having the state facilitate property inventories, so local governments can more easily track the problem, and the creation of programs allowing local governments to acquire properties more easily.

"We were taken by surprise by the amount of money this is costing cities," Ms. Brachman said. "This [study] should be a call to action."

<http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080219/NEWS17/802190357>

7. Millions taken by abandoned properties in Ohio

Business First of Columbus

Vacant and abandoned properties cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year in municipal services and lost tax revenue in Ohio, a study by the **Community Research Partners** has found.

There are at least 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties in eight cities of varying size in the state.

Community Research Partners, a nonprofit research center, studied six cities in Ohio, including neighborhoods in the Columbus area -- North Linden, Livingston-Driving Park and Franklinton.

"We were surprised to find the extent and impact of vacancies across the study cities, both large and small, as well as the significant challenges facing city staff in addressing the problem," said Roberta Garber, executive director of the Columbus-based organization. "Because most of the cities don't have resources for a comprehensive vacant property inventory, we know that actual numbers are even higher than we are able to identify."

The abandoned properties cost the eight cities a combined \$15 million in added municipal services and \$49 million in lost property tax revenue -- a drain of more than \$64 million annually.

ReBuild Ohio commissioned the study last year and concluded governments need additional tools to track vacant and abandoned properties and take steps to return them to productive use. ReBuild Ohio is a consortium of government, nonprofit and civic organizations working to develop state and local measures to reduce and reclaim vacant and abandoned properties.

The organization identified several steps that governments should take, including:

- Developing comprehensive inventories of vacant and abandoned properties.
- Strengthening code enforcement.
- Creating tools and incentives for redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties.
- Expediting foreclosures and institute foreclosure prevention reforms.

<http://columbus.bizjournals.com/columbus/stories/2008/02/18/daily9.html?t=printable>

8. Abandoned properties costing eight Ohio cities \$63 million

**BY STEPHEN MAJORS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER**

COLUMBUS, Ohio More than 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties cost eight Ohio cities at least \$63 million, as ill-equipped local governments have been unable to wrestle with job loss and the foreclosure crisis, a report found.

A report released today by Community Research Partners showed that Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville have lost millions in services and tax revenues as vacant residences and abandoned lots have mounted.

ReBuild Ohio, a coalition of local government, nonprofit and civic organizations, commissioned the study.

COSTS MAY BE HIGHER

Researchers said that Dayton and Columbus were able to provide complete data, but many of the smaller cities, as well as Cleveland, weren't able to provide a comprehensive picture. So the total costs of \$63 million are likely to be much higher.

The study found that 6.7 percent of residential buildings in Dayton were vacant, and the city had 5,435 vacant buildings and lots. The city had \$12.3 million in costs from lost tax revenue and services for those properties.

CLEVELAND HIT HARD

Cleveland saw costs of roughly \$35.5 million from its vacant and abandoned properties, and Columbus saw \$8.4 million in costs. Columbus was not as heavily affected as some other cities because Franklin County has been able to make up for its loss of manufacturing jobs with an increase in jobs in other sectors, the report said.

Job loss, population loss, property tax delinquency and the foreclosure problem all contributed to rising problems with vacant and abandoned properties, the report found. The report used 2006 data, so present conditions are likely to be worse since much of the foreclosure crisis expanded in 2007.

MORTGAGE FRAUD

Abandoned properties are just a subset of homes in foreclosure. Properties may be abandoned if a seller expected to be able to sell the property had a high price but then saw the market tank. Mortgage fraud also plays a role. Many cities simply don't have the resources to keep a complete inventory of all vacant and abandoned properties, much less to pay to fix them up and then sell them, said Roberta Garber, executive director for Community Research Partners.

"They (cities) are struggling in the trenches everyday and they really want this story to be told," Garber said.

Reacting to the results of the report, ReBuild Ohio called on Ohio lawmakers to enact a number of policies in the next 18 months to stem the tide.

By January 2009, ReBuild Ohio wants the state to create incentives for local governments to develop a property data collection system, and pass a bill that would enable cities to initiate foreclosure action on abandoned property.

By Sept. 2009, the organization wants the state to target long-term planning by helping cities support mixed-income and mixed-use development.

<http://www.cantonrep.com/index.php?ID=400011>

10. A BLIGHT ON OHIO CITIES

Empty housing costing millions

Vacant properties degrade quality of life, study says

Tuesday, February 19, 2008 3:18 AM

By [Alan Johnson](#)

Abandoned houses and vacant lots are sapping the life from Ohio's urban neighborhoods and costing \$64 million a year, according to a report released today that studied the problem in Columbus and seven other cities.

The cost could be 10 times as much, according to the study by Community Research Partners of Columbus on behalf of ReBuild Ohio, a coalition of government, nonprofit and community organizations.

Three Columbus neighborhoods -- Franklinton, Livingston-Driving Park and North Linden -- accounted for 4,868 of the 25,407 vacant and abandoned properties in the report.

"We designed this study as a 'snapshot' approach to quantifying the damaging impacts of vacant and abandoned properties on cities, towns and neighborhoods across Ohio," said Lavea Brachman, co-chairwoman of ReBuild Ohio.

The toll includes \$49 million in forgone property tax revenue -- most of which goes to schools -- and \$15 million for a variety of city services, including code enforcement, demolition, trash pickup, grass cutting and fire and police runs. The impact of abandoned and boarded-up properties is nothing new to Donna J. Hicho, who sees them every day as executive director of the Greater Linden Development Corp.

"At the moment, we have probably close to a fifth of all Columbus vacant houses in the Linden area," she said.

"It's not just a problem for people who live in houses and have closed them. ... When we have boarded-up houses, that creates challenges for the other property owners on that street. They find it harder to sell their homes, to get renters and insurance."

North and South Linden combined have more than 1,000 abandoned properties, Hicho said.

The report looked at Cleveland (Detroit Shoreway, Mount Pleasant and Slavic Village), the three Columbus neighborhoods, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville.

Columbus tallied nearly \$200,000 in demolition and boarding costs, \$185,000 in police and fire runs and \$7.5 million in lost taxes, the study found.

Those figures pale in comparison to Cleveland's \$4.5 million in city services and \$30.7 million in forgone taxes.

When the total loss was spread out over the number of households, Cleveland's cost was \$186 per household, Dayton's \$182 and Columbus' \$19.

The study used code enforcement records, police and fire expenses and county auditors' data.

Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman has focused on the problem for several years, initiating programs to demolish structures not worth saving and repairing those that are.

State Sen. Steve Stivers, R-Columbus, is the sponsor of legislation that would allow three cities, Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo, to consolidate liens on vacant and abandoned properties more easily. The process now usually takes three time-consuming trips to court.

Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer Jr., frustrated at the slow process, has been advocating the legislation for a year.

Stivers said blighted properties often become crime-ridden eyesores that depress the value of adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood.

The study team recommended the need to:

- Inventory all vacant and abandoned properties. This should be a city and state collaborative effort.

- Beef up local code enforcement, including improved nuisance abatement, crackdowns on absentee owners of abandoned homes and creation of home fix-up programs for lower-income residents.
- Develop new programs and tools to redevelop vacant properties.
- Speed up foreclosures, at the same time adding increased foreclosure-prevention protection for homeowners.

Funding for the project came from several banks, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Ohio Realtors Association and community organizations.

http://www.dispatchpolitics.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2008/02/19/ABANDONED.ART_ART_02-19-08_A1_QC9D780.html?type=rss&cat=&sid=101

10. Study reveals economic impact of vacant properties

Dayton Business Journal

Vacant and abandoned properties cost tax payers tens of millions of dollars a year in extra municipal services and lost tax revenue in Ohio, a study by the Community Research Partners has found.

There are at least 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties in all or parts of eight cities of varying size in the state.

Columbus-based Community Research Partners, a nonprofit research center, studied six cities in Ohio, including Dayton and Springfield, and two neighborhoods in the Columbus area.

"We were surprised to find the extent and impact of vacancies across the study cities, both large and small, as well as the significant challenges facing city staff in addressing the problem," said Roberta Garber, CRP executive director. "Because most of the cities don't have resources for a comprehensive vacant property inventory, we know that actual numbers are even higher than we are able to identify."

The unused properties cost the eight cities a total of \$15 million in extra municipal services and \$49 million in lost property tax revenues -- a total drain of more than \$64 million annually.

ReBuild Ohio commissioned the study last year and concluded that local governments need additional tools to track vacant and abandoned properties and to take steps to return them to productive use.

ReBuild Ohio is a consortium of local government, nonprofit and civic organizations working to develop new state and local measure to reduce and reclaim vacant and abandoned properties.

The organization identified several steps that state and local governments should take:

- Develop comprehensive inventories of vacant and abandoned properties;
- Strengthen local code enforcement;

- Create new tools and incentives for redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties; and
- Expedite foreclosures and institute foreclosure prevention reforms.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/dayton/stories/2008/02/18/daily9.html>

11. Abandoned properties costly to city

	IRONTON		LAWRENCE COUNTY		OHIO	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	5,720	5,507	24,788	27,189	4,371,945	4,783,059
Owner occupied	56.1%	56.1%	66.7%	68.0%	63.1%	64.2%
Renter occupied	36.6%	32.9%	25.7%	22.9%	30.4%	28.7%
Vacant	7.3%	10.9%	7.6%	9.0%	6.5%	7.1%
Vacant for rent	114	178	434	711	108,117	125,059
Vacant for sale only	54	57	261	317	37,628	48,400
Vacant rented or sold, not occupied	46	36	185	161	32,961	33,188
Seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	10	22	173	242	37,324	47,259
Migrant worker units	0	3	2	3	4,57	35
Other vacant	192	305	834	1,023	67,912	83,000
Total vacant	416	601	1,889	2,457	284,399	337,270

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000 Summary File 1

Census statistics on housing in Lawrence County.

By Benita Heath/The Ironton Tribune

Tuesday, February 19, 2008 11:40 AM EST

They're ugly, dangerous and no one wants them nearby.

They're abandoned properties and they're not just an eyesore. They're an expensive eyesore.

With the sub prime mortgage crisis that hit Ohio with full force and put the state in the top 10 for foreclosure rates, the number of abandoned and vacant properties is on the social and economic radar screen more than ever.

And Ironton is no exception. According to a report by the Community Research Partners, those abandoned and vacant properties can cost the city more than an estimated quarter of a million dollars a year.

Commissioned by ReBuild Ohio, the non-profit research group looked at the phenomenon of abandoned properties including locations in eight communities: Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville.

"The research supports ReBuild Ohio's mission of promoting reclamation of vacant and

abandoned properties for economic vitality and enhanced quality of life throughout the state," according to the executive summary of the report that the non-profit released this morning during a press conference in Columbus.

Overall, those eyesores in the eight communities turned into \$15 million in city service costs and \$49 million in lost property tax revenues to local governments and school districts.

"This is the first project that has looked across multiple cities on the issue of vacant and abandoned properties," Roberta Garber, CPR executive director, said in a phone interview on Monday. "Rebuild Ohio was interested in getting a broader picture of Ohio, not just the large cities, but medium and small cities."

A significant difference between the metropolitan areas and cities the size of Ironton is staff.

"Dayton and Columbus had been able to have enough staff to drive through all the neighborhoods and do a windshield survey and inventory," she said.

However, cities the size of Ironton have limited staff, she said.

"There is one code enforcement person who wears multiple hats who can only track the most egregious problems that go across his desk," Garber said.

The report states Ironton has 77 vacant residential buildings, along with 83 vacant and abandoned lots.

"This includes 12 buildings on the city's pending demolition list for 2007, 14 buildings designated as unsafe/public nuisance buildings, 20 buildings that are condemned because of unresolved emergency repair orders, and 31 buildings with multiple outstanding repair violations," according to the Ironton Summary of the report.

Translating that into money, the breakdown for 2006 costs is estimated at \$10,333 for code enforcement; \$22,185 for demolition; \$6,560 for grass cutting and trash removal; \$30,000 for police and fire runs; and \$203,994 for lost taxes.

However, Garber calls that the "tip of the iceberg."

There is the possibility of more properties identified if there were staff available to go out and inventory those projects, Garber said.

Thus, the issue of vacant and abandoned property is not simply an aesthetic issue for they pose long-term financial predicaments.

"We know there is a blighting influence on neighborhoods with vacant and abandoned properties nearby," Garber said.

Often those living next to these properties are impacted as they may struggle to sell their house and get their price for it.

"It begins to weaken the housing market," she said.

However, solving the problem requires resources and gaining state input and aid is a goal of the study.

"It is not a cheap thing to do," Garber said.

"Communities are struggling to find the resources. This is to assist Rebuild Ohio in putting a

policy agenda before the state. This is how the state could help these communities. Hopefully, there could be a change in state law or policy or redirection to focus on helping vacant and abandoned policy."

<http://www.irontribune.com/articles/2008/02/19/news/local02.txt>

12. Springfield loses \$1.4 million on vacant, abandoned properties

"This is not a housing problem, it's a jobs problem"

By [Elaine Morris Roberts](#)

Staff Writer

Monday, February 18, 2008

Vacant and abandoned properties and vacant lots have cost the City of Springfield millions in lost property tax revenues and city services.

A study released today, Feb. 19: "\$60 million and counting: The cost of vacant and abandoned properties to eight Ohio cities" looked at the eight Ohio cities that have been hit the hardest.

Springfield made the list with 141 vacant and abandoned buildings and 206 vacant lots, which cost the community \$1.14 million in 2006.

The study identified five causes that can lead to property troubles, all of which are intertwined.

"This is not a housing problem, it's a jobs problem," Springfield Mayor Warren Copeland said.

The study offered the following information about Springfield's situation:

- Job Loss

From 1999-2005, Springfield lost 6.6 percent, or 4,775 full and part-time jobs. Manufacturing jobs, classified separately, fell by 5,633 or 39.8 percent during the same period.

- Population Loss

In 1970, Springfield's population was 81,850, but by 2006, that number had fallen by over 20 percent to 62,844. Clark County had a population of 147,548 in 1990 and fell about 4 percent to 141,872 by 2006.

- Older Housing Stock

Older homes are often less appealing to younger buyers and in need of greater maintenance and repairs. The majority of Springfield's homes are more than 28 years old, with 36.8 percent built before 1940, 54.2 percent built from 1940-1979 and 9.1 percent built since 1980.

- Property Tax Delinquency

City of Springfield's total property tax delinquency as of 2005 was \$6.392 million, with \$150.9 in delinquency for every \$1000 levied.

- Foreclosures and Subprime Lending

In 2006, Clark County had 1,113 new foreclosures, an increase of 673% from 144 filings in 1995. There were 377 subprime loan purchases, which was 17% of all purchases, and 657 subprime refinances in 2006, which was 26% of all refinances.

13. Editorial: Lawyers should volunteer to give homeowners in foreclosure help

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

More than 83,000 foreclosure cases were filed last year in Ohio.

The cost of devastation from abandoned property - an outgrowth of the foreclosure crisis - totals more than \$63 million across the state. The bill includes foregone property taxes as well as the costs of fighting fires, boarding up homes and keeping lots clear of debris.

In the Cleveland area alone, the price tag tops \$35 million, according to ReBuild Ohio, a collection of local government, nonprofit and civic groups concerned with the debilitating effects of vacant and abandoned property.

Ohio needs effective tools to thwart this poison seeping through the community. One such antidote is the plan Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Moyer has backed that would provide free legal representation to some borrowers facing foreclosure. It's the biggest effort of its kind in this state.

Joining in support of the idea are Gov. Ted Strickland, Attorney General Marc Dann, Treasurer Richard Cordray, the state bar association and a variety of housing and legal advocates, who have created FLAG-Ohio, Foreclosure Legal Assistance Group of Ohio.

At its core, the program offers a way to give some homeowners a voice in a process that, far too often, is slanted against them because they can't afford, or aren't entitled to, representation. It will match lawyers (who volunteer their time) with homeowners in every county across the state who need help.

Despite the plan's boldness and breadth, it can't be the only tool this state uses to combat foreclosures and the damage they inflict.

Ohio must keep up pressure on banks to renegotiate loan terms for homeowners who are struggling in good faith to stay current in their payments. Lenders are not doing enough. The latest data show that banks are reworking only about 3 percent of loans.

This region's political leaders must also keep focused on creating a land bank, which could wrest vacant properties from the grasp of speculators who want only to turn a quick buck while the community bears the scars of their selfish strategies.

The program that FLAG- Ohio has outlined won't solve, single-handedly, this crisis. But it could help some folks. And it's backed by an impressive group of political and civic leaders.

Moyer wrote to the state's 37,000 lawyers to prod them to donate their time to the cause. They should answer the call.

<http://www.cleveland.com/editorials/plaindealer/index.ssf?base/opinion/120349990740130.xml&coll=2>

14. \$64 MILLION TOTAL COST FOR 8 CITIES; Legislators join forces to tackle vacant housing

BYLINE: Alan Johnson, THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 03B

LENGTH: 500 words

Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer Jr. asked the audience of city officials, planners, bankers and community leaders gathered at the Statehouse yesterday: "How many of you live on a street with a vacant house?"

Nearly half raised a hand.

Foreclosures, vacant and abandoned properties are approaching crisis level in Ohio's small and large cities, officials say. Now, the state is being asked to help erect a firewall to slow the encroaching blight.

"This issue is nonpartisan, believe me," said state Rep. Louis Blessing. The Cincinnati Republican is working with Rep. Mike Foley, a Cleveland Democrat, on House Bill 138, legislation to help cities deal more efficiently with abandoned properties.

Blessing said he plans to amend the bill to make it a crime to steal from or vandalize vacant property. Police often have trouble charging vandals because they can't locate property owners to get them to press charges.

"This is a problem all over Ohio," Foley said.

The legislators spoke at a news conference outlining a new report showing that the cost of more than 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties totals \$64 million in Columbus and seven other cities statewide.

The costs break down to \$49 million in uncollected property taxes and \$15 million for a variety of city services, including code enforcement, trash pickup, grass cutting and police and fire runs.

Part of the study focused on three Columbus neighborhoods: Franklinton, Livingston-Driving Park and North Linden. However, the statistics included in the study, 4,868 vacant houses and abandoned lots, covered the entire city. That figure represents 2.1 percent of all houses in Columbus.

The 18-month study was done for ReBuild Ohio, a coalition of government, nonprofit and community organizations, by Community Research Partners of Columbus. The full report is available at www.communityresearchpartners.org/uploads/publications//FullReport_Nonembargoed.pdf.

"It's time to stop the blight, turn the tide and recapture our cities throughout the state," said Mary Helen Petrus of the Cleveland Neighborhood Development Coalition.

To be counted in the study as abandoned, a property must have been empty for two years with no action taken by the owner to rehab or sell it.

Other related pending legislation includes Senate Bill 277, sponsored by state Sen. Steve Stivers, R-Columbus, to streamline the foreclosure process, and House Bill 26, sponsored by Rep. Larry Wolpert, a Hilliard Republican, to create a voucher scholarship incentive for those who rehab and occupy properties in blighted neighborhoods.

One interesting conclusion involved lowered property values. In neighborhoods such as Franklinton where there are many abandoned properties, property values overall are depressed. However, the sale prices of properties on streets with three or more vacant houses were actually a bit higher.

Researchers attributed that oddity to property speculators buying inexpensive properties to rehab or resell quickly.

15. It's grim in Ohio as voters cite economy

Clinton, Obama tailormessages to job climate

By Jerry Zremski

Updated: 02/28/08 6:54 AM

ZANESVILLE, Ohio — At 28, Crystal Young is a college graduate, a full-time worker at the local Dollar General, a part-time clerk at the Sheetz convenience store, and just the kind of person Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton is counting on in Tuesday's Ohio primary.

"I work two jobs, and I can't afford health care," said Young, who can't find a better job in this Jamestown-size community in the foothills of Appalachia despite her psychology degree from Ohio University at Zanesville. "I voted for Bill [Clinton], and things were a lot better when he was president, so I think they will be if Hillary gets elected."

You'll find plenty of voters like Young in this beaten-down state, which has lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs — a quarter of what it had — since the turn of the decade.

Not surprisingly, the New York senator and her rival for the Democratic presidential nomination, Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, are in a pitched battle for their votes.

That means the campaign here is as economy-focused as, say, a race for senator or governor in upstate New York.

"I believe we can create at least 5 million good green-collar jobs here in America," Clinton said in an economic summit featuring politicians, business leaders and average voters, which Young attended Wednesday. "That's the kind of vision we need."

Three hours earlier and 60 miles to the west in Columbus, Obama pushed his vision for a new American economy at one of his trademark rallies before several thousand people.

"We should take that \$12 billion we're spending every month in Iraq right now and spend it in places like Ohio, putting people back to work, making the economy more competitive," said Obama, who, like Clinton, expresses passion for green-collar jobs that aim to make America energy independent.

Those are by no means the only parallels on economic issues between Clinton and Obama, who are spending much of this week traveling the state, selling solutions for a state economy that's being ground up in the gears of globalization.

Clinton is spelling out an economic blueprint that features more than \$10 billion in infrastructure investment, an end to tax breaks for companies that shift jobs overseas and a "pro-American trade agenda" that involves renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement to make it more friendly to the American worker.

"I'll be saying to Wall Street: You've had your president — now it's time for a president for Main Street," Clinton said.

Obama likewise pushes infrastructure investment, though his plan is less specific than Clinton's. He also would end tax breaks for companies that shift jobs overseas and for the wealthy while cutting taxes for working families. And, like Clinton, he wants to renegotiate NAFTA with tougher labor and environmental standards.

"When CEOs are making more in 10 minutes that workers make in an entire year, and when CEOs get golden parachutes and bonuses when a company closes and leaves workers with nothing, something is wrong and has to change," he said.

Both candidates bash trade agreements such as NAFTA, which is no surprise, given the number of factory jobs that have abandoned Ohio.

"In Ohio, we like protectionists," said Bill Binning, a political scientist at Youngstown State University.

Yet Binning said both candidates are hemmed in a bit on the trade issue.

Clinton's problem is that her husband, former President Bill Clinton, pushed for and signed NAFTA.

As for Obama, Binning said he's being careful not to sound too protectionist, lest he alienate voters in other parts of the country — such as Texas, which also votes March 4 — or in states crucial to the general election.

NAFTA is the focus of much of the economic debate in Ohio even though most experts say that more of the state's jobs have left for China than for Mexico.

"NAFTA is a symbol of the trade issue and the frustration with globalization," said William Angel, a political scientist at Ohio State University at Lima.

You'll find plenty of that frustration in Zanesville, where manufacturers such as Longaberger Basket Co. have cut hundreds of jobs in recent years.

Gretchen Mitzelfelt, a former Longaberger employee who now has a seasonal job with a warehousing company, said she's counting on Clinton to help revive the local economy.

"She is a very strong woman, and I admire her," Mitzelfelt said. "She has a lot of great plans and solutions."

Several voters interviewed in Zanesville said they thought Clinton would do a better job on the economy because of her experience.

But in Columbus, Obama supporters said their candidate will be better able to bridge the partisan divide that stands in the way of better economic policy.

"I think Hillary represents more division," said Rob Baiocchi, a cancer researcher who used to work at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo before taking a research job in Columbus a decade ago. "It would be more of what we've had for the last 16 years."

Pat Putney, a retiree who was raised in the Town of Tonawanda but now lives in Marysville, Ohio, agreed that Obama would be more likely to deliver the changes he's promising.

"I think he's put in competent people to manage the economy," she said. "It's important to Ohio. The whole state is in a distress mode."

Most notably, longtime industrial behemoths such as Cleveland and Toledo are suffering a double whammy of manufacturing job losses and a housing foreclosure crisis brought on by subprime mortgages.

Cleveland has nearly 7,000 vacant properties, according to a recent study by Community Research Partners of Columbus, which said the crisis would cost Cleveland \$4.5 million in city services and \$30.7 million in lost tax revenue.

As a result, both Clinton and Obama push solutions to the foreclosure crisis — one of the few economic issues where the two candidates differ sharply.

Clinton wants a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures and a five-year freeze on subprime adjustable mortgage rates along with \$30 billion in funding to help combat the housing crisis.

Obama, in contrast, says Clinton's mortgage rate freeze would result in higher rates for traditional mortgages — and is proposing a foreclosure-prevention fund of only \$10 billion.

The candidates also offer health care plans that include one key difference. Clinton's would require all Americans to get health coverage, while Obama's would require only parents to get coverage for their children.

Clinton has made such economic issues the centerpiece of her Ohio campaign, and Obama is trying to catch up.

The University of Cincinnati's Ohio poll this week showed Clinton, who led by double digits weeks ago, only 8 percentage points ahead.

The poll also showed that 4 percent of likely voters were still undecided — while 9 percent said they would vote for former Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, the fiery economic populist who left the race weeks ago.

“For those voters, neither one of the two remaining candidates has connected,” said Eric W. Rademacher, a University of Cincinnati professor of political science, who noted that the Ohio primary is in the hands of those voters.

<http://www.buffalonews.com/180/story/286942.html>

TELEVISION

1.Report: Abandoned Properties Costing Ohio Cities \$63 Million

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) -- A report released today says more than 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties cost eight Ohio cities at least 63 million dollars.

The report by Columbus nonprofit Community Research Partners showed that Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville have lost millions in services and tax revenues as vacant residences and abandoned lots have mounted.

The study was commissioned by ReBuild Ohio, a coalition of local government, nonprofit and civic organizations.

Researchers said that Dayton and Columbus were able to provide complete data.

But many of the smaller cities, as well as Cleveland, could not. So, the total costs of 63 million dollars are likely to be much higher.

<http://www.myfoxcleveland.com/myfox/pages/News/Detail?contentId=5818002&version=1&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=TSTY&pageId=3.2>.

RADIO

2. Government-backed Group Counts Vacant Houses. Associated Press

COLUMBUS, OH (2008-02-19) A report released today says more than 25,000 vacant and abandoned properties cost eight Ohio cities at least \$63,000,000

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Researchers said that Dayton and Columbus were able to provide complete data. But many of the smaller cities, as well as Cleveland, could not. So, the total costs of 63 million dollars are likely to be much higher.

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BLOGS

1. Foreclosure study says vacant properties cost Cleveland \$35+ million

Posted by JKroll February 19, 2008 00:29AM

Vacant properties - abandoned in part by a mountain of foreclosures - so far have cost Cleveland more than \$35 million, says a study of eight Ohio cities to be released Tuesday.

The tally includes property tax dollars lost, as well as wages paid for workers to fight fires, mow weedy lawns and board broken windows, according to the report commissioned by a partnership of local government and civic organizations called [ReBuild Ohio](#).

The study is one of two released this week dealing with issues tied to the region's foreclosure crisis. Cleveland's [Housing Research & Advocacy Center](#) reported Monday that a disproportionate number of black Ohioans end up with high-interest subprime mortgages.

For its study on vacant properties, ReBuild Ohio chose the cities, large and small, as snapshots of the state. Other cities in the survey - Columbus, Dayton, Ironton, Lima, Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville - together totaled \$28 million in abandoned-properties costs.

The \$35 million the study attributes to Cleveland falls far short of the hundreds of millions of dollars that city officials say foreclosures have cost. Their estimate includes lost taxes from devalued property and money spent demolishing and boarding up abandoned houses.

The disparity between Cleveland and other cities makes sense, since Cleveland accounts for 12,400 of the 25,400 empty buildings and lots counted in the study.

"It's not really a surprise," said Tom Stone, executive director of Mount Pleasant NOW Development Corp. "We see it every day. Now the question is, how do we stop these, or reduce the number of properties being abandoned?"

ReBuild Ohio has a few suggestions.

The group is urging the Ohio legislature to adopt a host of tools to handle foreclosure cases, make it tougher for absentee landlords to hold land hostage, build a statewide inventory of properties, create ways for local governments to buy property and support redevelopment.

"We've got to address the foreclosure crisis up front because that's feeding this pipeline," said Lavea Brachman, co-chair of ReBuild Ohio. "At the same time, we've got to be putting structures in place so that we can continue to monitor the problem."

Marie Kittredge, executive director of the Slavic Village Development agency, agreed. In her neighborhood, nearly 11 percent of properties are empty.

"For me, the report really brought home how widespread the problem is," Kittredge said. "Everybody has had to suffer from this."

The ReBuild Ohio study concentrates on abandoned properties without exploring high-interest mortgages or foreclosure cases, which jumped 88 percent statewide, to 153,200 filings, last year.

The study by Cleveland's Housing Research & Advocacy Center focused on the flip side - getting mortgages.

Statewide, black Ohioans with incomes of \$55,110 and higher were denied home-purchase loans more often than white Ohioans earning less than \$22,963, the report says.

In Cleveland, the disparity was greater. Upper-income black loan seekers were rejected 32 percent of the time and low-income whites were turned down 24 percent of the time.

Black borrowers of every income level received more high-interest loans than whites of every income level in Ohio metropolitan areas, the study says.

"Unfortunately, this is a rather persistent problem in mortgage lending," said Jeffrey Dillman, executive director of the Housing Center. "African-Americans have a harder time getting loans, and when they do get loans, they're more likely to get subprime loans ... regardless of incomes."

As for Cleveland's disparity, Dillman points to the high-interest loans piled on Northeast Ohio.

"It was just this huge flood of risky loans, subprime loans, that came into the region," he said.

http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2008/02/foreclosure_study_says_vacant.html

5. Empty Housing Costing the State of Ohio Millions

Empty housing costing millions

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

BY ALAN JOHNSON

Abandoned houses and vacant lots are sapping the life from Ohio's urban neighborhoods and costing \$64 million a year, according to a report released today that studied the problem in Columbus and seven other cities.

Three Columbus neighborhoods -- Franklinton, Livingston-Driving Park and North Linden --

accounted for 4,868 of the 25,407 vacant and abandoned properties in the report.

The toll includes \$49 million in forgone property tax revenue -- most of which goes to schools -- and \$15 million for a variety of city services, including code enforcement, demolition, trash pickup, grass cutting and fire and police runs. The impact of abandoned and boarded-up properties is nothing new to Donna J. Hicho, who sees them every day as executive director of the Greater Linden Development Corp.

"It's not just a problem for people who live in houses and have closed them. ... When we have boarded-up houses, that creates challenges for the other property owners on that street. They find it harder to sell their homes, to get renters and insurance."

<http://www.columbusunderground.com/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?p=116558#116558>