



# Vacant Housing Working Group Update

January 23, 2018

# Why we're here



# Vacant Housing Working Group



**Mission:** Create a single unified strategy to address vacant and abandoned parcels

## Goals:

- Improve communities by taking vacant and abandoned properties that are destabilizing communities and putting those vacant properties into productive use
- Improve efficiency and reduce County resources by shifting the cost of vacancy to responsible parties and to efficiently collect monies owed to the County that are assessed against vacant premises

# Vacant Housing Working Group



## Members:

- Attorney General's Office
- County Council
- Executive Office
- Community Services
- Finance
- Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Information Systems
- Public Safety
- Law
- Land Use
- Sheriff's Office
- Recorder of Deeds

# Vacant Housing Working Group



## Initial Focus:

- Interdepartmental collaboration
- Focus on data: GIS layers created (Land Use) to define the problem
- Created ReVaMP Program
- Worked with Attorney General's Office and other jurisdictions to pass state code revisions
- Grant Awards – Strong Neighborhood Housing Fund, Neighborhood Building Blocks, Vacant Property Fund
- **Internal policies to accelerate and guide monition process of delinquent and problematic vacant parcels**



# More than receivables

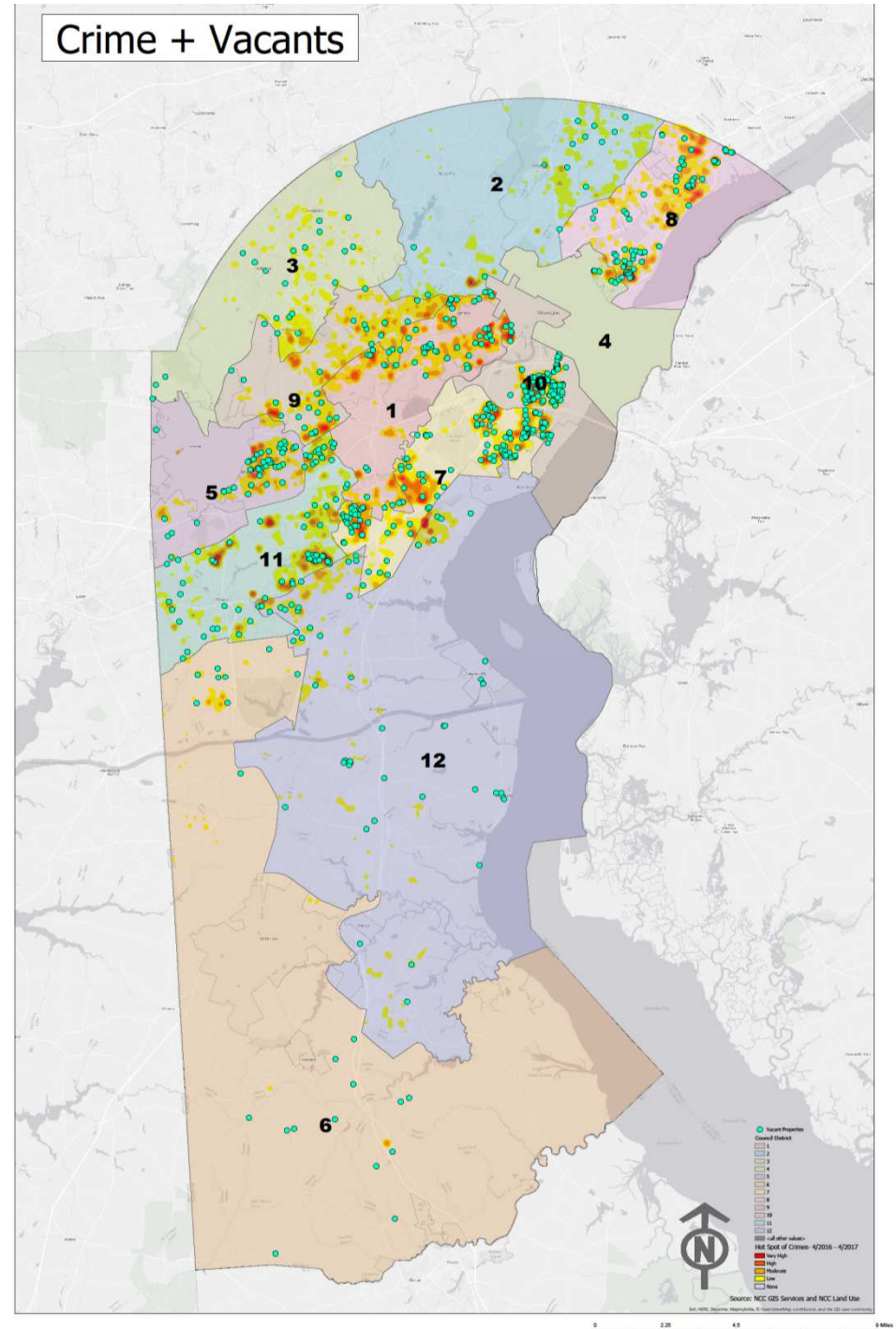


- Integrated, multi-pronged approach
- Turning liabilities into community assets
- Benefits of reducing vacancies
  - ✓ Revitalize neighborhoods
  - ✓ Make more efficient and effective use of Code Enforcement and Public Safety resources
  - ✓ Increase taxpayer rolls

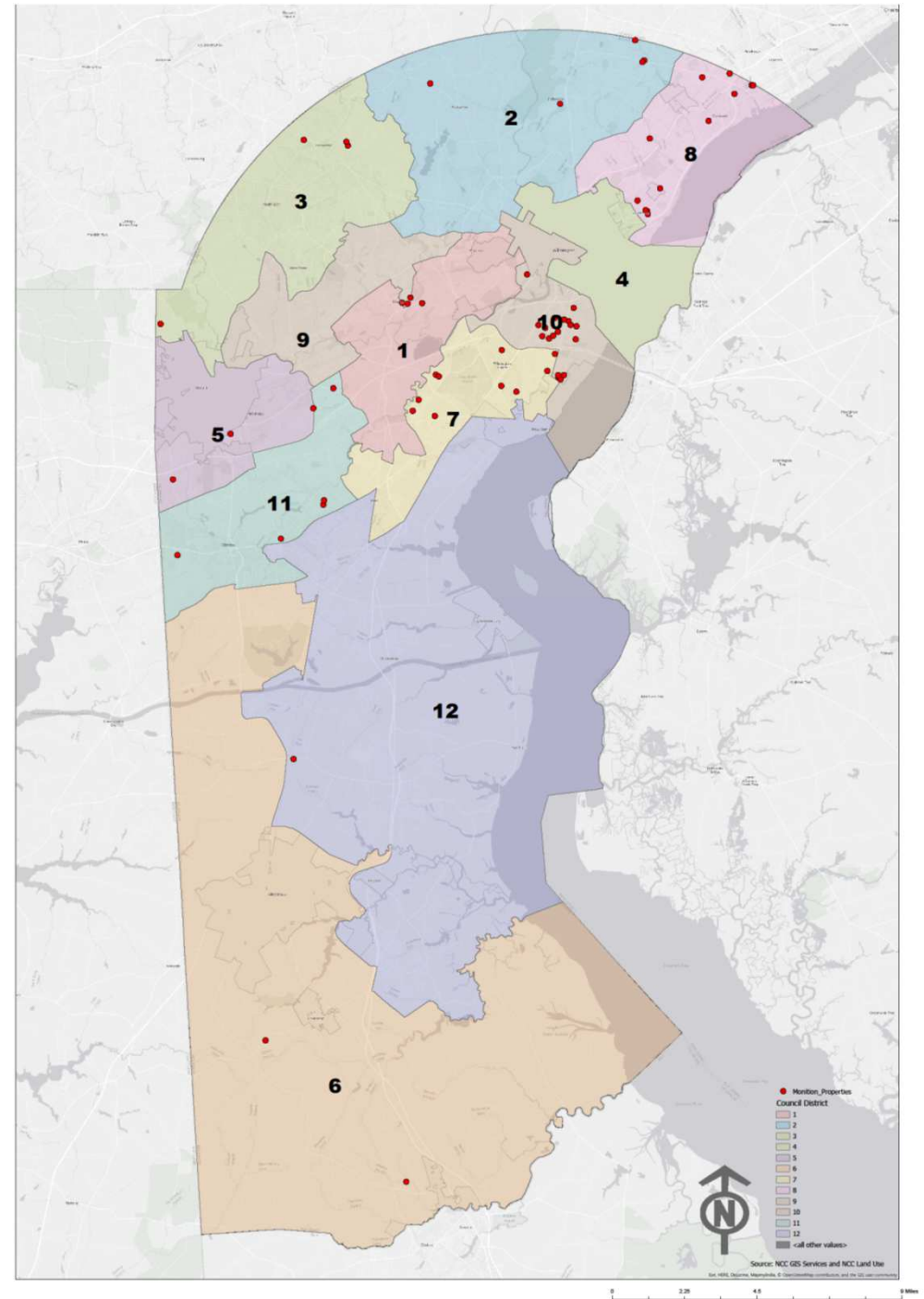
# Public Safety Impact

**Heat Map:** Overlay of vacant properties and crime hot spots

- **Green:** Vacant properties
- **Yellow to Red:** Medium to high crime hot spots

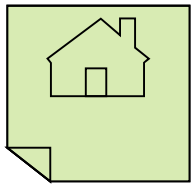


**Initial group of 50  
vacant premises  
recommended for  
Monition action**



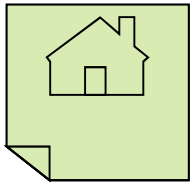


# Vacant to Valued Property

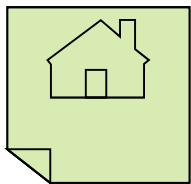


## Vacant Property

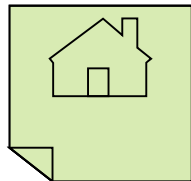
- Neighbors complain
- Public Safety addressing crime
- Code cutting grass & boarding windows
- Concern about health of neighborhood
- County owed \$ for taxes, Code abatements



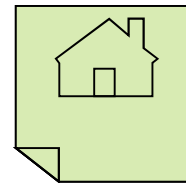
**Vacant Property contacted, hearing held, placed on Registry**



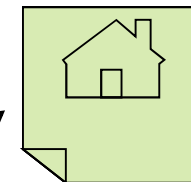
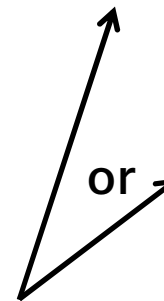
**Vacant Property Placed on Monitions List & Prioritized**



**Monition Filed and Sheriff's Sale Occurs**



**Property Sold**



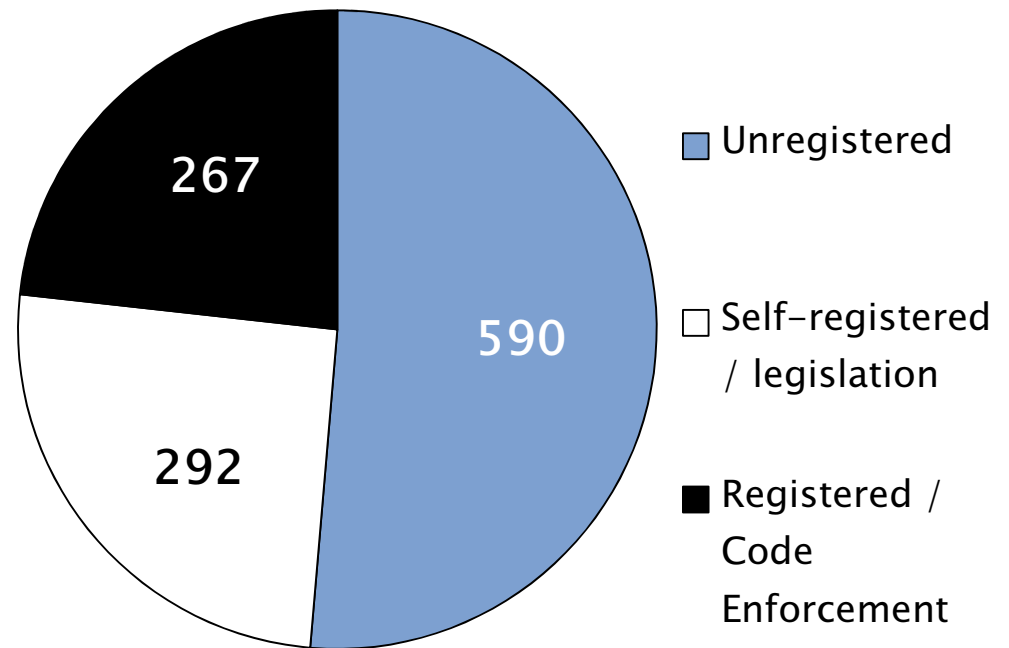
**Acquire & Dispose of Property**

# Register Vacant Premises



- Must be registered with NCC if vacant for 90 days
- Monitoring roughly **1,149** suspected or known vacant premises
- Continuing to contact owners as 90-day threshold is reached
- Administrative hearings to register vacant premises will be held on Wednesdays, beginning January 24, 2018

## Status of Vacant Premises



# Prioritize Monitions

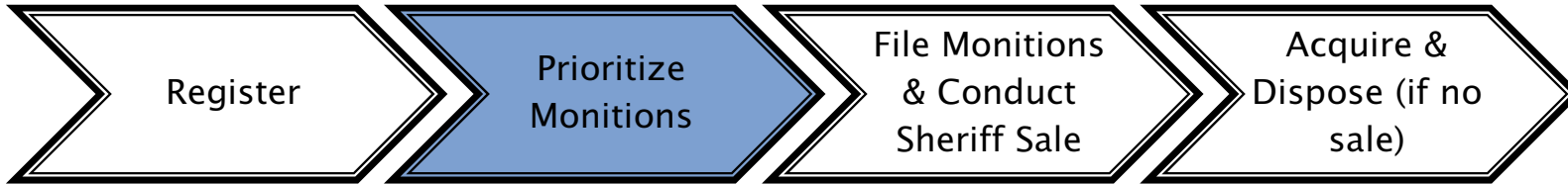


- **Step 1:** Implemented EO #2017-06 and EO #2017-7

## **Vacant Property Eligibility Criteria:**

- A. Registered vacant and encumbered by a minimum of **\$5,000** of County liens OR
  - B. Encumbered by a minimum of **\$7,500** of County liens and not occupied by a legal tenant or owner OR
  - C. Where **all habitable structures have been demolished** by the County with public expenditures
- **Step 2:** Developed list of properties eligible for monition
  - **Step 3:** Code Enforcement created individual property profiles
  - **Step 4:** Monition Team met to review & prioritize (Police, Land Use, Community Services, Finance)

# Prioritize Monitions



## Property Profile



Address	220 Single Avenue, New Castle 19720
Owner Information	[REDACTED]
Owner Address	Unknown
Owner's Disposition	
Property Status	Vacant
Subdivision	Collins Park
Parcel	1002020206
Lot Size	0.12
Code Liens	\$2,658.80
Other Liens	\$0.00
County Taxes	\$5,233.70
School Taxes	\$6,798.43
Sewer Taxes	\$771.22
Total Due	\$15,462.15
Mortgage Holder	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Mortgage Holder	
Case Open Since	1999

# File Monitions & Conduct Sheriff Sale



- Monition Authority: State code authorizes the County to pursue the sale of real property to collect monies owed to the County
- Conducted comprehensive review and created new internal process to support monition sales
- Timeline: 6 months – minimum time to take a property through entire monition process (file monition through deed issuance)

# Acquire & Dispose (if no sale)



## Developing Acquisition & Disposition Policy

### Goals:

- Ensure vacant properties owned by the County are efficiently put back into productive reuse
- Track performance benchmarks at 6, 12 and 18 months

### Highlights:

- Review third party purchaser sales
- Recommend disposition of properties “bought back” by the County (no bidders)

# Acquire & Dispose (if no sale)



## Acquisition/Disposition team will:

- **Step 1:** Review list of properties sold within 20 days after a Sheriff's Sale
- **Step 2:** Review third party purchases
- **Step 3:** Review parcels "bought back" by the County. Recommends bid assignment, bid rescission or acquisition
- **Step 4:** Recommend to the County Executive properties acquired by the County for transfer to an eligible non-profit developer, county ownership, or open auction sale



# Vacant Housing Strategy Status Summary



Administrative  
hearings begin  
1/24/18

50 vacant premises  
identified &  
forwarded to  
Office of Law

Office of Law  
processing first  
round of  
monitions

Acquisition/  
disposition  
policy finalized  
by Feb 2018



# Council Partnership & Next Steps



**ReVAMP funding- Thank you!**

## **Implement state legislation**

- Super Lien Legislation (HB 188)
  - Allow additional costs to become liens and moved to the tax bill
- Prequalification of Bidders at Sheriff's Sale (HB187)
  - A Sheriff's Sale bidder can not be prequalified if they owe more than \$1,000 in taxes & code fees

## **Support future state legislation**

- Sewer fees
- Strong Neighborhood Housing fund
- Other initiatives as we move forward

**Report back on progress after first round of Sheriff's Sales**



**Thank You!**



# Appendix

