

## Agenda: Battle Creek City Commission

**Meeting Type:** Workshop

**Meeting Date:** January 17, 2017

**Chair:** Mayor David A. Walters

**Prepared By:** Battle Creek City Hall Room 302A - 5:30 pm

City Commission

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### ATTENDANCE

#### Roll Call

Mayor Dave Walters	Rebecca Fleury, City Manager
Vice Mayor Susan Baldwin	Jill Steele, City Attorney
Commissioner Mark Behnke	Ted Dearing, Assistant City Manager
Commissioner Kaytee Faris	Victoria Houser, City Clerk
Commissioner Kate Flores	Chris Lussier, Community Development Supervisor
Commissioner Lynn Ward Gray	Marcie Gillette, Community Services Director
Commissioner Andy Helmboldt	Helen Guzzo, Community Development Specialist
Commissioner Mike Sherzer	Jacob Schacht, Assistant to the City Manager
Absent:	
Commissioner Deb Owens	

### DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Chris Lussier, Community Development Supervisor, presented the 2017-2018 Annual Action Plan, providing a timeline of the plan cycle. Mr. Lussier discussed the eight indicators the Community Development department uses to track neighborhood health, including Junk/Trash Violations, Housing Code Violations, Home Sales, Home Sale Values, Bank and Tax Foreclosures, Long Term Vacant Properties and New Vacant Building Enforcements. Mr. Lussier discussed the metrics used to assess the risk of decline in the Community Development Target area for years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Mr. Lussier noted improvements in 2016 were due to fewer tax foreclosures, fewer vacant building enforcements and a more robust housing market, providing maps of tax foreclosures the last 3 years. Mr. Lussier also discussed the increase in home sales for the fifth year, noting median home values also increased.

Mr. Lussier informed the Commission that his department would be conducting resident engagement for the 2017-2018 Annual Action Plan, including presentation with the local NPCs, the Share Center, along with other consultations. Mr. Lussier discussed last year's new programs, including Rental Assistance, Rental Rehab, a paint program and HOME rehab, along with minor home repair, code compliance, the demolition program and HOME Acquisition/Rehab/Resell. Mr. Lussier also presented the program budget for the 5 Year Consolidated Plan,

providing estimated amounts for 2017-2018.

Helen Guzzo, Community Development Specialist, discussed the rental assistance programs, including 3-6 months rental assistance, modeled after the HUD Rapid Rehousing Model to address homelessness. Ms. Guzzo stated the program was initially facilitated by CAA, but will be done by the Salvation Army this year. Ms. Guzzo noted the rental assistance program was inspired by the Edge program.

Comm. Baldwin suggested staff look into the Nurse Family Partnership through the Battle Creek Community Foundation.

Ms. Guzzo also noted they have held 6 Rental Housing Round Tables, where homeless and supportive service providers have participated with landlords. Ms. Guzzo stated they will be working on a program to give a second chance to residents with troubled past histories.

Comm. Sherzer asked if there were any discussions to have the private sector take on more responsibility for home repair and reselling the properties.

Mr. Lussier stated the private sector was involved, stating he has not recently looked at the number of permits being pulled. Mr. Lussier stated private investment far exceeds the department's investment. Mr. Lussier spoke of a rehab program in Baltimore that has been successful, noting it can be very contentious, often sparking controversy of where to invest funds.

Mayor Walters asked if the City has considered a moratorium on permit fees, stating this may spur building and rehab investment.

Mr. Lussier stated he would be in favor of it, but that was not his decision to make. Mr. Lussier said he was uncertain as to future funding, stating they expected a 10% reduction of funds, stating they would like to use \$20,000 reallocated CDBG funds for Lead Hazard Assessment Program. Mr. Lussier also noted there would be a reduction in CDBG demolition funding, along with a decrease in funding for Code Compliance.

Mr. Lussier discussed a collaboration with many organizations to conduct and analyze lead testing throughout Calhoun County, noting the largest occurrences were within the city. Mr. Lussier stated they have a plan to address the issues, including public awareness and education. Mr. Lussier recommended inquiries be referred to the MSHDA Healthy Homes program.

Comm. Sherzer asked if rental property could be condemned until lead issues were corrected.

Mr. Lussier stated they have some enforcement and regulatory tools, and state laws and resources that can assist.

Comm. Gray asked if there were any discussions around bed bugs, stating she has seen a lot of mattresses at curbs for pickup, but they are not wrapped in plastic as required.

Comm. Faris stated many residents cannot afford to wrap mattresses, stating Waste Management will not pick them up if they are not wrapped.

Mr. Lussier stated there have been some discussions, but they do not initiate from his department.

Comm. Flores noted many lenders were not willing to loan funds for properties in certain neighborhoods, asking if staff has seen any change.

Mr. Lussier stated that at the end of last spring, some lenders were not doing any loans in CDBG neighborhoods.

Ms. Guzzo noted housing values do not support additional funding for rehab.

Comm. Behnke inquired as to the current relationship with Southwest Michigan Community Development (SWMCD).

Mr. Lussier noted they have reduced interactions with SWMCD, stating they continue to work with them on other grant opportunities and to monitor them as they use HOME funds for rehab programs.

**Public Comment - Limited to three minutes per individual**

3 minutes 3 minutes

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Walters adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Citizens who wish to address a specific issue on the floor may do so after being recognized by the Mayor or presiding Commissioner. At the time for general public comments, after being properly recognized, citizens may address the commission on any subject within the control and jurisdiction of the City of Battle Creek. Citizens will be subject to the following summarized limitations, which are set out fully in ordinance 212.02, Art XVII:

1. Citizen comments on any Resolution before the Commission may be made either before or after the Commissioners have had an opportunity to discuss the Resolution, at the discretion of the Chair;
2. Citizens wishing to speak to a particular Resolution should raise their hands and wait to be recognized before speaking;
3. Before speaking, an individual who has not filled out a comment card disclosing this information, shall identify themselves by name and address and, if appropriate, group affiliation for the record.
4. Citizens will confine their remarks to matters currently pending on the floor, and be brief and concise in making their remarks;
5. If a citizen becomes repetitive or, in the opinion of the Chair, takes an inordinate amount of time in making comments, that citizen will be ruled out of order and the Commission will continue with its business;
6. Citizens should address all remarks to the Commission as a whole, and not to individual Commissioners.

These Rules will apply to comments by citizens during the Public Comment section of the Agenda.

The City of Battle Creek will provide necessary, reasonable, auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired, and audiotapes of printed materials being considered in the meeting, upon seven days' notice to the City of Battle Creek. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services, should contact the City of Battle Creek by writing or calling the following:

Victoria Houser  
Office of the City Clerk  
Post Office Box 1717  
Battle Creek, Michigan 49016  
269/966-3348 (Voice)  
269/966-3348 (TDD)

## **Community Needs Workshops & Public Hearing (2017-18)**

The City of Battle Creek's Community Development Division administers Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership funding, and applies for other state and federal funding to improve Battle Creek's neighborhoods. Each year, Community Development reports to the community how it has spent federal funding and then conducts a community needs assessment to determine high priority needs for the next program year.

In 2016, six workshops were held in the community to discuss priority needs. Five of these workshops were held at Neighborhood Planning Councils and focused on priorities within the respective neighborhoods. One workshop was conducted at the Share Center with staff and consumers and focused on priority needs of extremely low income and homeless individuals and families.

A public hearing was conducted on December 6, 2016 during the normal City Commission meeting. The hearing was publicized in the Battle Creek Shopper and the New Opinion newspapers and was announced at each of the workshops.

### **Share Center - November 8, 2016**

**Participants:** 35 Share Center consumers, 3 Share Center Staff

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Content:** CD staff did a 10 minute presentation on community development work in the city that included a map of where CD projects occurred and a list of outcomes from the previous year in each of the eight priority areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan. Particular interest was paid to how the input gathered two years ago in a similar session has impacted community development programming since as well as the outcomes from the previous year related to housing and homelessness.

#### **Priority Needs:**

- Vacant buildings continue to be a concern that is broadly felt; particularly the reuse of such properties to help house the homeless
- Use vacant schools for permanent, supportive housing
- Develop a program like Rickman House in Kalamazoo
- Use homeless people to volunteer to rehab vacant houses, use Habitat model for a day labor program
- Need job training
- Develop a program that helps people by providing motivation/hope (People need motivation/hope)
- Highly selective policies on how to get rental help from local housing programs. (Summit Pointe was mentioned and there was a lot of nodding, suggesting many in the room had difficulty accessing their programs)
- Many homeless or struggling people are rejected by landlords and rental assistance programs
- Many homeless could use training or support on how to deal with disappointment/rejections

- There was some discussion about how to present yourself or sell yourself to landlords. There was push back that not everyone knows how to or feels confident doing that. Also, that it takes a lot of effort to be successful and many tries
- Some have been held back by violence in previous housing situations
- People take money for housing that are not up to code
- Having a felony prevents me from renting in private housing market or public housing (including Housing Choice Vouchers)
- Felonies are a road block
- Felony happened over 10 years ago and I am still being penalized
- Five people in the room were turned away from housing because of felonies
- Qu: How long is a felony held against a potential renter?

### **Post/Franklin Neighborhood Planning Council (NPC #1) – October 6, 2016**

**Participants:** 8 Council Members, 6 guests

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Content:** CD staff did a 10 minute presentation on community development work in the city that included a map of where the CD projects occurred and a list of outcomes from the previous year in each of the eight priority areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

#### **Priority Needs:**

- Paint blitz and handy man resources
- We need to have more people care about the neighborhood they live in
- We have a wild animal problem in Post
- Waste Management is careless and leaves trash scraps
- You want walkability but you don't address overgrown lots
- What about the businesses on the ends of the Main Street corridor? Can those areas be maintained better? Other areas have planters and are nice looking
- Owners and renters lack initiative to maintain their neighborhood (no pride)
- Why does the city allow grass to grow in the street cracks?
- Keeping Fire Station #3 is still a big priority to us
- We have a lot of garbage in the street and sidewalks. Kids think it's the norm
- We need to work to end the property loss (demolition) and improve property values
- Instead of letting these houses waste away lets rehab them
- We have so much blight, so many on the vacant and abandoned list (14 were referenced). People sell these blighted housing and the next person ends up with a problem property that they didn't know was on the list
- Drug houses and crime are a problem
- We need more caring people about neighborhoods
- I like the idea of cleaning up the trash
- I like the idea of a paint blitz or a blitz to do handy man projects in the neighborhood
- The city needs to initiate rehab on properties earlier, not after they have deteriorated
- Give tax breaks for low income property

- The community (including the city) needs to fix up the main corridors
- Keep Fire Station #3 open is important especially for Post
- Yardwork pride – cleaning up own property
- Home prices up
- Keeping Fire Station #3 open and functional
- Vacant buildings are drawing the neighborhood down
- We need to identify the key corridors in our neighborhood
- How do we stop the devaluation of properties?
- Use federal funds more proactively and not reactively
- Stop the demolition trend and rescue homes before it gets to this point
- Helping homeowners more proactively to keep and manage their property
- Look at how to get this neighborhood into a first home buyer program
- Proactive engagement of code with neighbors
- Keep Fire Station #3 at present location and fix it so it stays there for a long time
- Do proactive maintenance on downtown corridors (Main, E. Michigan, BL94 ramp)
- Community policing program
- Proactive property management to keep it out of demolition

### **North Central Neighborhood Planning Council (NPC #2) – November 14, 2016**

**Participants:** 11 Council Members, 3 guests

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Content:** CD staff did a 10 minute presentation on community development work in the city that included a map of where the CD projects occurred and a list of outcomes from the previous year in each of the eight priority areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

Discussion time was used by members to talk about the targeting of HOME Rehab Program resources within the NPC.

### **Central Neighborhood Planning Council (NPC #3) – October 13, 2016**

**Participants:** 7 Council Members, 5 guests

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Content:** CD staff did a 10 minute presentation on community development work in the city that included a map of where CD projects occurred and a list of outcomes from the previous year in each of the eight priority areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

**Priority Needs:**

- Police presence in most neighborhoods
- There are more vacant houses and businesses on Capital Ave.
- Poor rentals (corner of Territorial and La Vista)
- Address speeding in our neighborhoods; not the main roads like Columbia and Capital
- I notice the upkeep is not as nice

- Businesses in our NPC need to keep their outsides neater
- I like the bicycle station on Capital
- I love having the demolitions of blighted properties
- We need to make neighborhoods stay nice
- I like to see code and police working together with problems
- Work so no overlapping of doing things
- Gardens are a good idea on vacant lots
- I agree that the International Property Maintenance Code should govern businesses
- We have more rentals in hard economic times
- More demolitions please
- More coordination between agencies without duplications is needed
- Enforce the International Property Maintenance Code without endless appeals
- Younger families are moving in which is good
- On the other end, our elderly are older and seem possibly more isolated
- A plan to have sidewalks, bike paths leading to schools
- I would like to see the Land Bank explore the possibility of “homesteading” property rather than tax sales
- Wilson project – the green wall is an eyesore
- Reduction of incidents requiring police help
- Bringing new businesses to “OLD” Lakeview and Columbia Plaza
- Decline of business from Dickman to Territorial is a concern
- Need more police eyes on things
- I would like to see the creation of more affordable housing
- Community Development and its partners need to do more listening to landlords needs/concerns
- The City should partner with Habitat for Humanity to help the homeless
- In 21 years I’ve seen more of an increase (cycle) of drug activity
- More vacant housing and businesses
- I am concerned about the decline of the business district from Territorial to Dickman Rd.
- I would like to see more collaboration between businesses and property owners
- Increase police presence inside neighborhoods, not just main streets
- I would like to see Community Development and its partners support more activities that promote community neighborhood interaction and involvement
- Collaboration of some kind within neighborhoods needs to be more of a priority; there needs to be more involvement
- Collaboration within business districts as well

### **North East Neighborhood Planning Council (NPC #4) – October 19, 2016**

**Participants:** 8 Council Members, 6 guests

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Content:** CD staff did a 10 minute presentation on community development work in the city that included a map of where CD projects occurred and a list of outcomes from the previous year in each of the eight priority areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

**Priority Needs:**

- Property listings need to be maintained as if someone is living there... poor condition affects property values and perceptions of the neighborhood
- Vacant commercial properties need to be addressed
- Corridor and node development is a priority particularly along Capital Ave NE
- Can we have input in the State road process?
- We are concerned about the repurposing of Fremont School
- River could be a real asset on the Northside
- Corridor development is important including the development of the river
- There was some discussion about doing some planning around the Capital Ave NE corridor, the linear trail/riverfront, and the neighborhoods in between
- CD staff extended an invitation to facilitate a special planning session for this purpose

**Westlake/Prairieview Neighborhood Planning Council (NPC #10) – October 24, 2016**

**Participants:** 9 Council Members, 9 guests

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Content:** CD staff did a 10 minute presentation on community development work in the city that included a map of where CD projects occurred and a list of outcomes from the previous year in each of the eight priority areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

**Priority Needs:**

- Don't spend \$171 thousand dollars on one project (instead spend \$17k on 10 houses)
- Do a better job of partnering with private sector, this would hopefully leverage \$
- Ramps for disabled persons
- Housing for disabled
- Still see vacant foreclosed homes
- More funding for seniors
- Need better walkability in our NPC, more pedestrian friendly
- Affordability for older folks or fixed income persons (housing?)

**Rural South West Neighborhood Planning Council (NPC #9) – October 11, 2016**

**Participants:** 8 Council Members, 7 guests

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Content:** CD staff did a 15 minute presentation on community development work in the city that included a map of where CD projects occurred and a list of outcomes from the previous year in each of the eight priority areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan. There was no discussion.

**Note: NPC's #5 & #11 did not request a presentation.**

## **Public Hearing on Community Needs, City Commission Meeting – December 6, 2016**

### **Participants: 1**

Jim Moreno testified that the City needs to be more proactive. He said that code compliance is reactive not proactive and that it does not prevent houses from becoming in such bad shape that they are abandoned and then left to be vacant. He suggested the economies of housing rehab don't work. Need to invest \$100,000 and then sell the house for \$60,000 if lucky. He said he wants the City to be a good steward of the Federal money.

He said he wants to replicate the paint blitz programs of the past. He noted that the City cut to neighborhoods prevents this work from happening in neighborhoods. He would like the funds cut to SWMCDC restored. He would like SWMCDC to teach home maintenance skills to homeowners who are not taking care of their properties.

Prepared By: Chris Lussier, Community Development Manager and Helen Guzzo, Community Development Specialist.



# Community Development

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*2017-18 Annual Action Plan Presentation*

# The Annual Action Plan (AAP) Cycle

**Aug – Sept**

**Federal Reporting (CAPER Report)**

**Sept – Dec**

**Community Needs Workshops & Consultations**

**Jan – May**

**Creation of Annual Action Plan**

Data Analysis (Jan 20)

Publish Budget (Feb 2)

Environmental Review (March 10)

Public Hearing on AAP (April 4)

Adoption of AAP by City Commission (May 2)

**July**

**Begin Program Year**



Community Development Division

2017-18 Annual Action Plan Presentation

Based on the eight indicators  
Community Development uses to  
track neighborhood health, Battle  
Creek neighborhoods improved for  
the third year in a row.

**Indicators:**

Junk/Trash Violations

Housing Code Violations

Home Sales

Home Sale Values

Bank Foreclosures

Tax Foreclosures

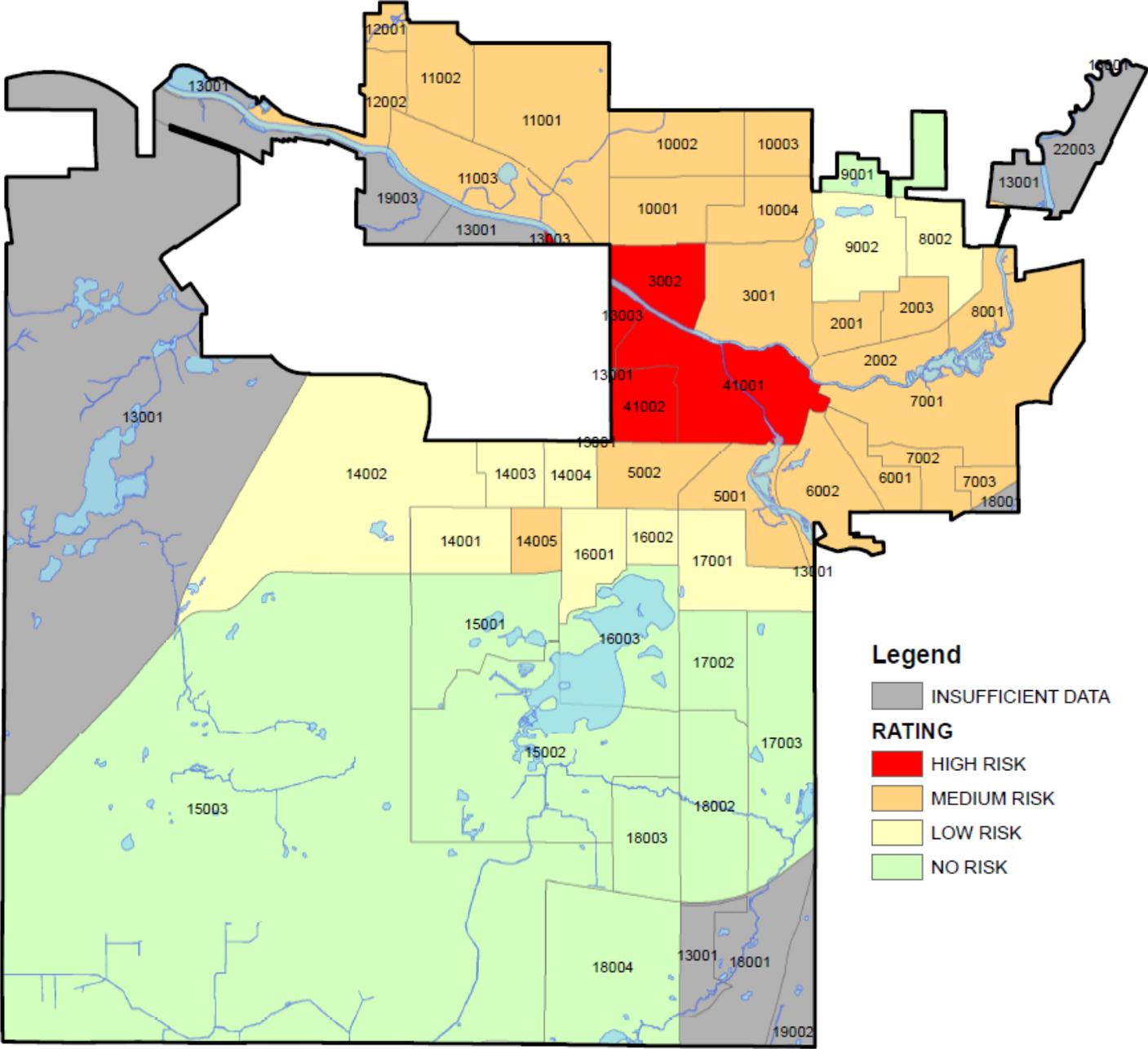
Long-term Vacant  
Properties

New Vacant Building  
Enforcements





# 2014 Community Development Target Area Metrics: Risk of Decline Rating



**Legend**

- INSUFFICIENT DATA
- RATING**
- HIGH RISK
- MEDIUM RISK
- LOW RISK
- NO RISK



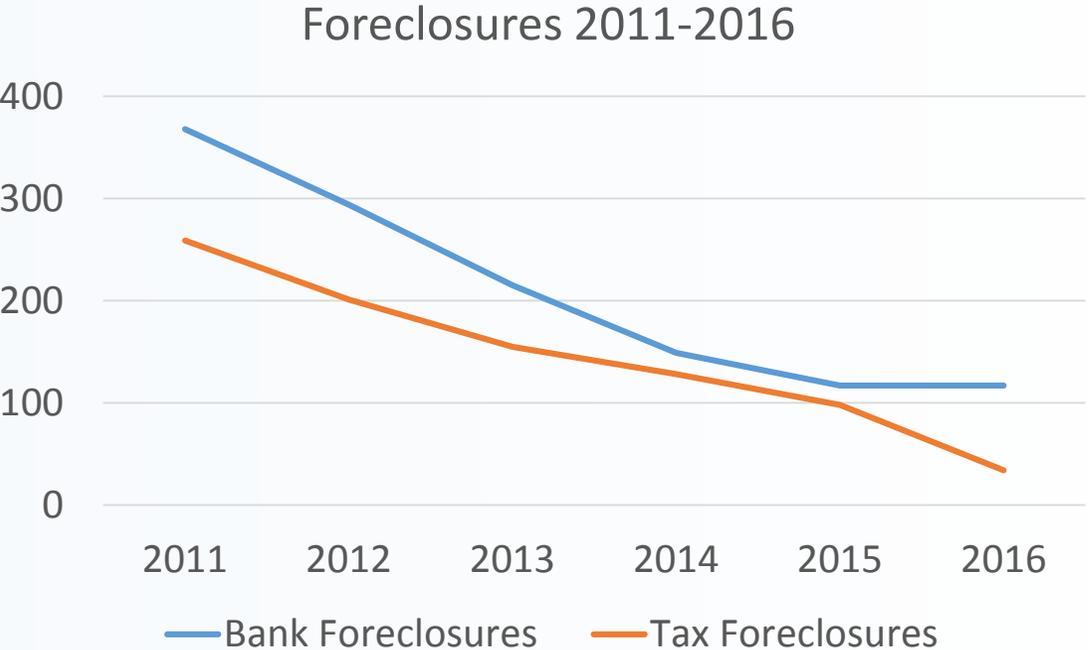




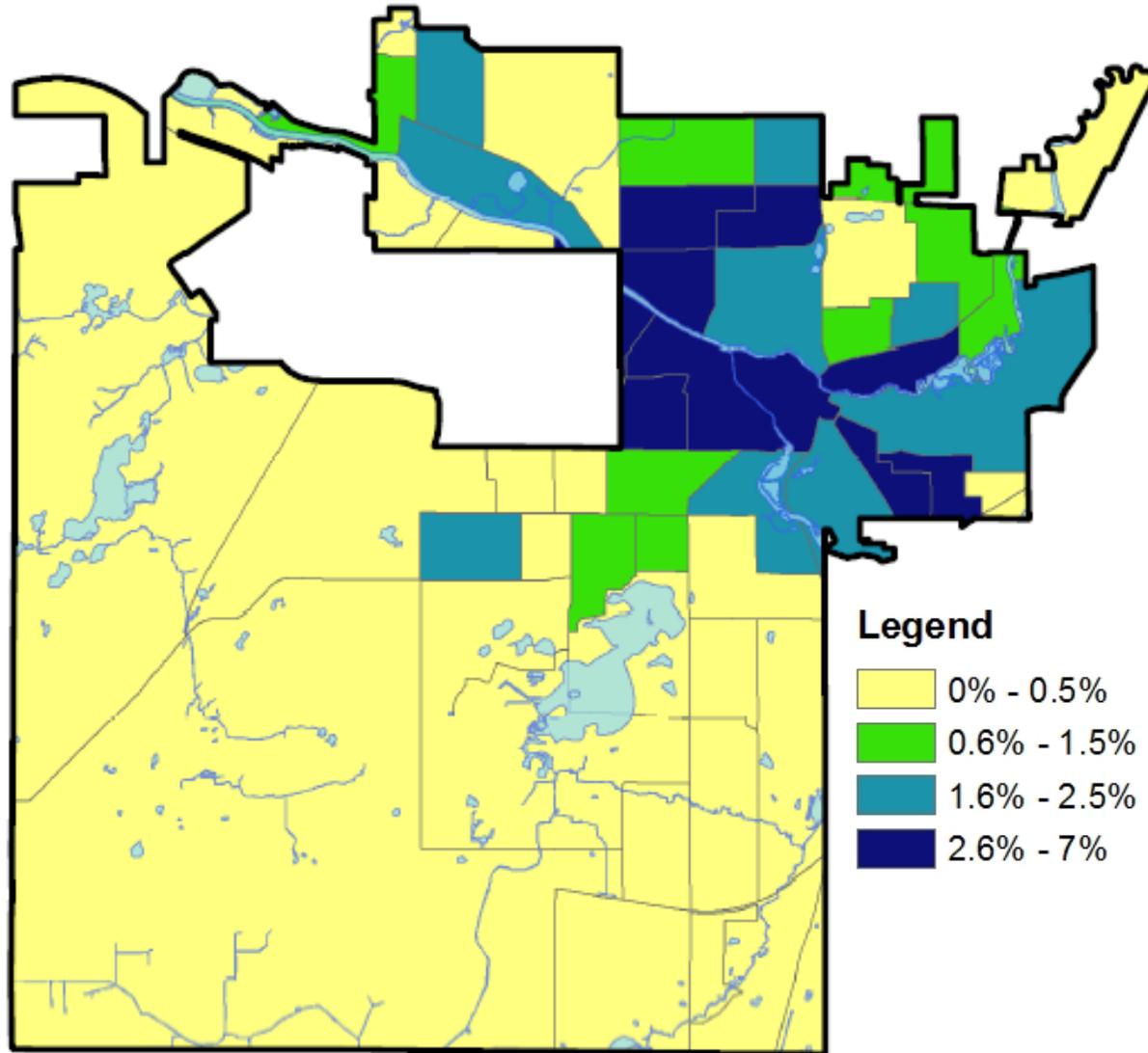
**In 2016, improvement was the result of fewer tax foreclosures, fewer new vacant building enforcements, and a more robust housing market**



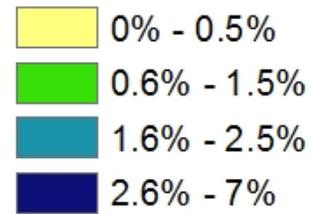
# Tax foreclosures dropped from 98 in 2015 to 34 in 2016



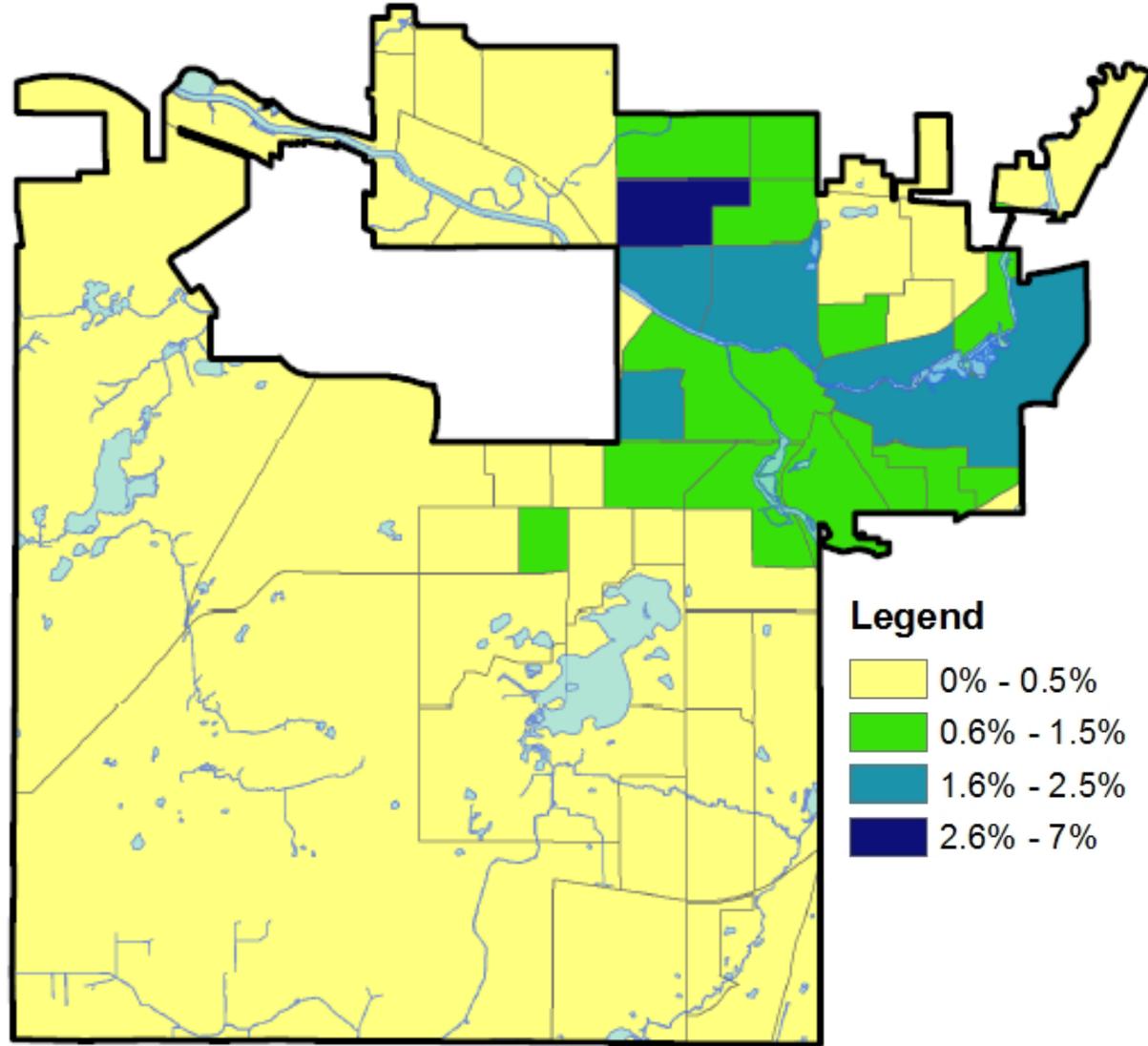
# 2014 Target Area Metrics: Tax Foreclosures



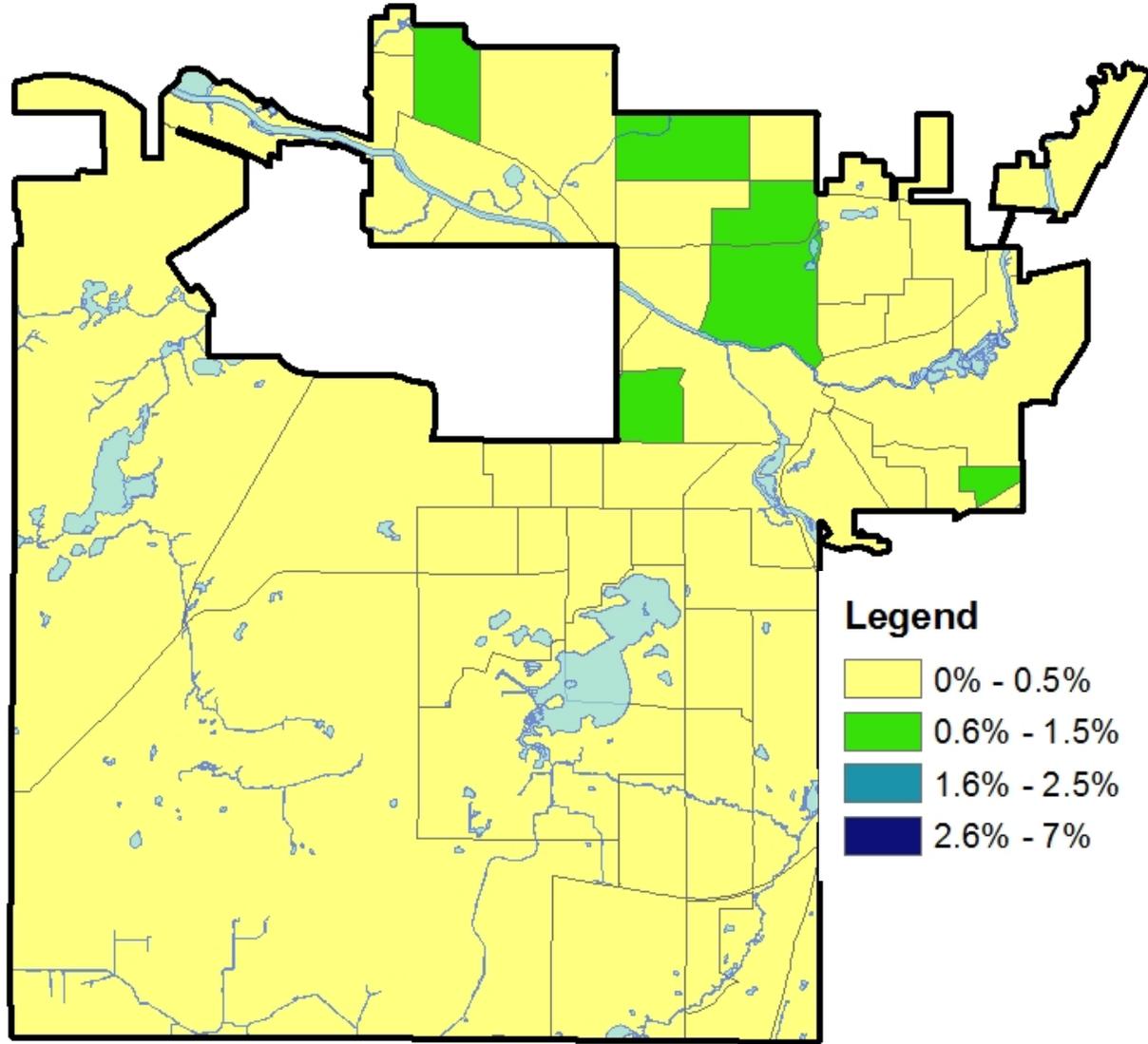
## Legend



# 2015 Target Area Metrics: Tax Foreclosures

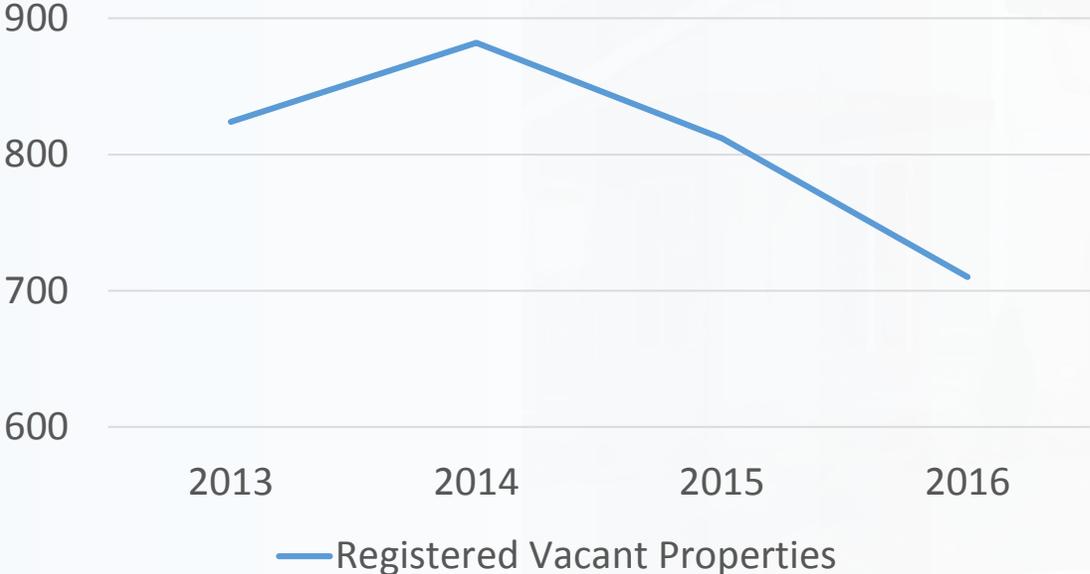


# 2016 Target Area Metrics: Tax Foreclosures

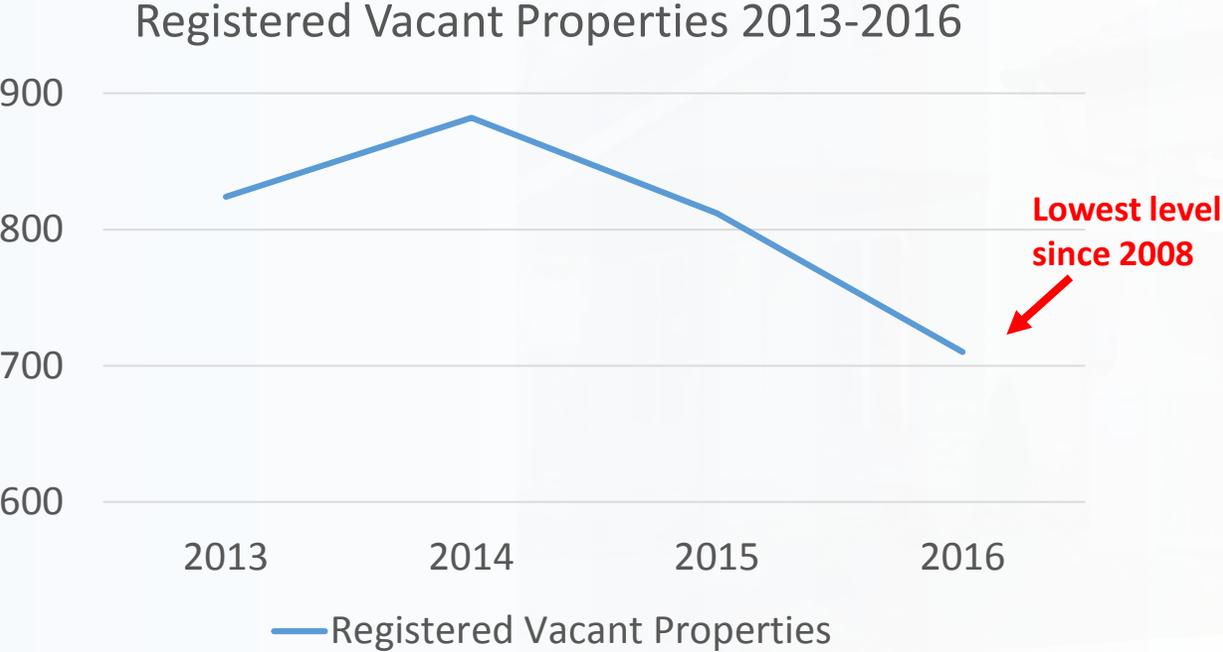


# The number of vacant buildings on the City's registry dropped to 710 in 2016.

Registered Vacant Properties 2013-2016

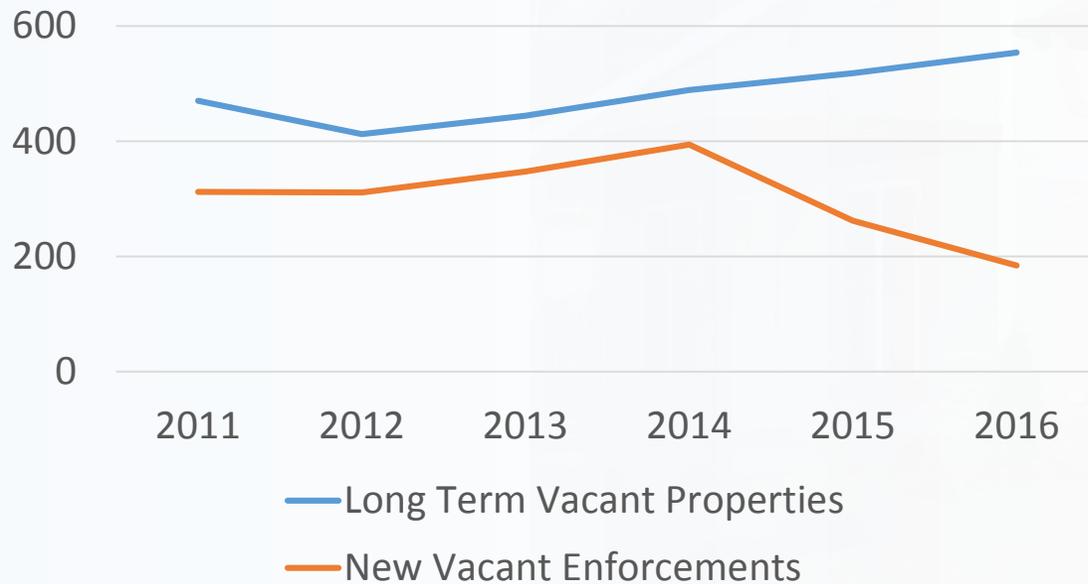


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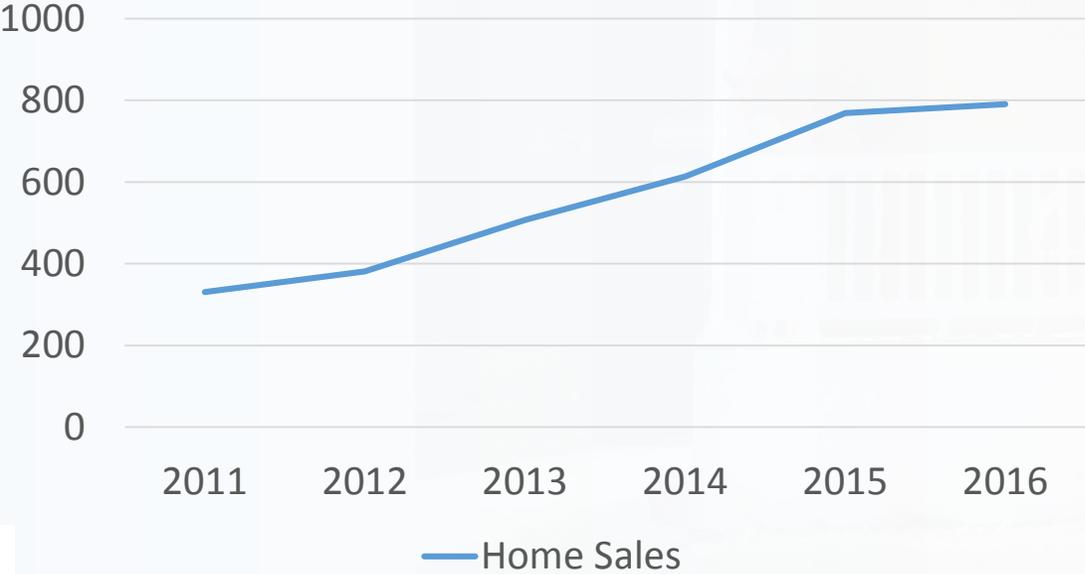
# New vacant building enforcements dropped from 262 in 2015 to 184 in 2016.

Vacant Properties 2011-2016



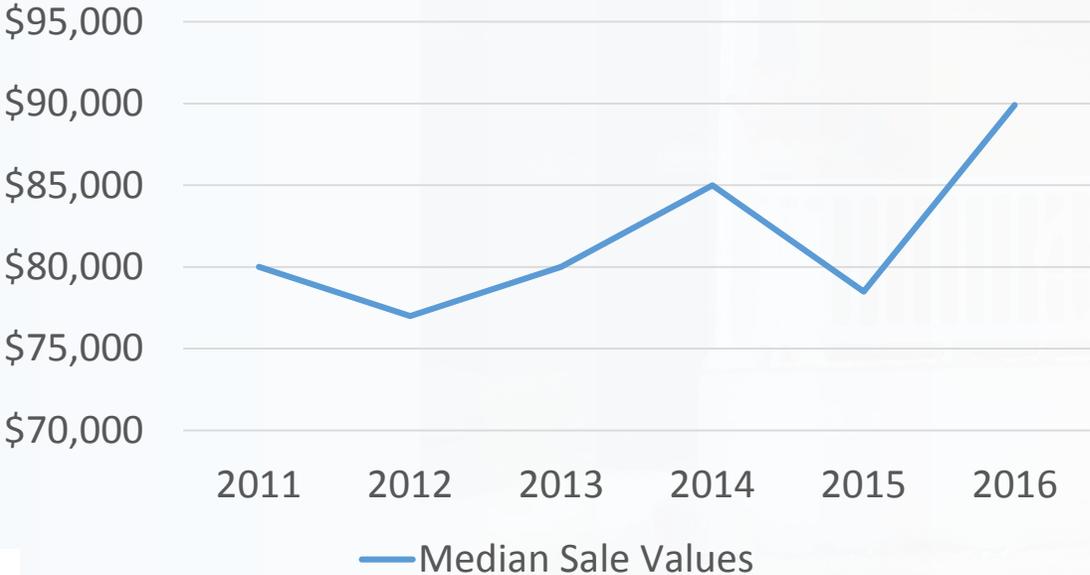
The number of home sales increased for the fifth consecutive year and median home sale values increased from \$78,500 to \$89,900 in 2016.

Number of Home Sales 2011-2016



The number of home sales increased for the fifth consecutive year and median home sale values increased from \$78,500 to \$89,900 in 2016.

Median Home Sale Values 2011-2016



# Resident engagement for 2017-18 Annual Action Plan

- Presentations with discussion about neighborhood conditions at NPC's 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, & 10
- Presentation and discussion at the Share Center with 30-40 consumers
- More than 20 consultations with area organizations



# Key Issues:

- Vacant buildings - emphasis on addressing concerns earlier and on fixing them up rather than demolishing
- Improving the vitality of corridors - “What about the businesses on the ends of the Main St corridor? Can those areas be maintained better? Other areas have planters and are nice looking.”
- Better maintenance in neighborhoods – proactive, preventative code, paint blitzes, more resources for repair, more responsible owners



# Key Issues:

- Neighborhood Planning
  - Discussed with NPC's 1, 2, 3, & 4
- Felonies and evictions are an enormous barrier to finding housing and employment
  - Many homeless don't have the skills or the confidence to "sell" themselves to landlords in order to help them see past their past mistakes.
  - Even when they do it takes a lot of effort to be successful and many tries.



# Initiatives from the Past Year:

- New Programs:
  - Tenant Based Rental Assistance
  - Rental Rehab
  - Paint Program
  - HOME Rehab



# Initiatives from the Past Year:

- Continued Programs:
  - Minor Home Repair
  - Code Compliance
  - Demolition Programs (includes HHF)
  - HOME Acquisition/Rehab/Resell



# Initiatives from the Past Year:

- Key Collaborations:
  - Lead Task Force
  - SWMCDC & Habitat MSHDA grants
  - Calhoun County Land Bank Hardest Hit grant
  - Fair Housing Center & Human Relations Board
  - Rental Housing Round Table



# Program Budget from 5 Year Consolidated Plan

Activity	5 Year Amount
Program Delivery (Admin)	\$500,000
Housing Code Enforcement	\$1,400,000
Rehabilitation of Existing Rental Units	\$171,273
Production of New Rental Units	\$650,000
Rehab and Repair of Homeowner Housing	\$1,850,000
Rental Assistance	\$146,892
Demolition	\$230,000
Public Infrastructure/Street Improvements	\$100,000
Public Services (Fair Housing, Anti-Poverty)	\$221,271
Strategic Planning	\$600,000
	<b>\$5,869,436</b>



# Budget considerations for 2017-18

- Anticipating a 10% reduction of funds
- Use \$20,000 of reallocated CDBG funds to create a Lead Hazard Assessment Program
- Demolition budget reduced from \$77,999 to \$10,000
- Continue with planned decrease in CDBG funding for Code Compliance (from \$290,000 to \$270,000)



# Program Budget from 5 Year Consolidated Plan

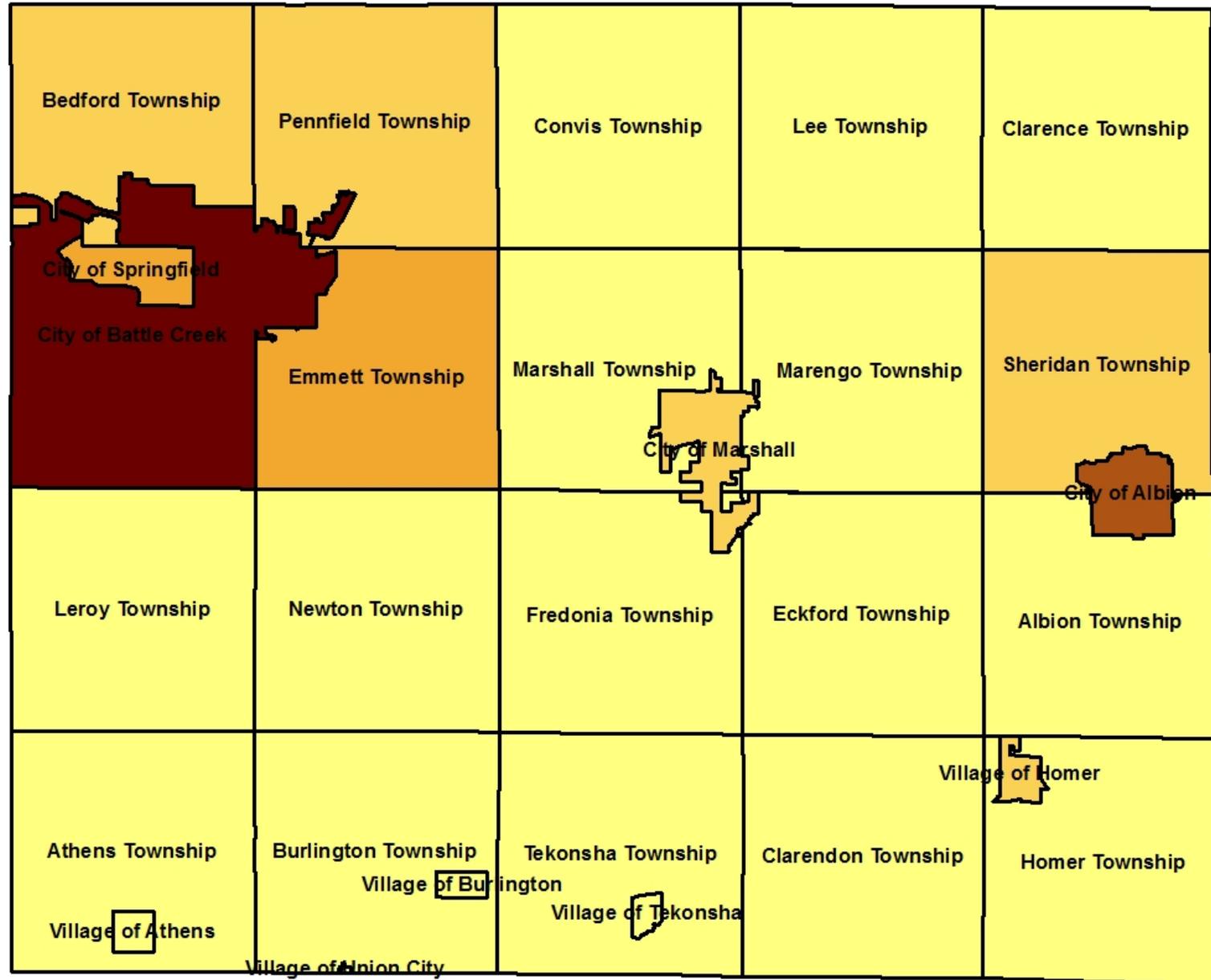
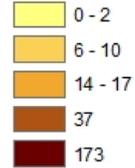
Activity	5 Year Amount	2016-17 Amount	2017-18 Estimated Amount
Program Delivery (Admin)	\$500,000	\$120,706	\$109,898
Housing Code Enforcement	\$1,400,000	\$290,000	\$270,000
Rehabilitation of Existing Rental Units	\$171,273	\$0	\$0
Production of New Rental Units	\$650,000	\$175,000	\$175,000
Rehab and Repair of Homeowner Housing	\$1,850,000	\$636,485	\$471,646
Rental Assistance	\$146,892	\$26,500	\$26,000
Demolition	\$230,000	\$77,999	\$10,000
Public Infrastructure/Street Improvements	\$100,000	\$0	\$0
Public Services (Fair Housing, Anti-Poverty)	\$221,271	\$0	\$0
Lead Hazard Assessment Program	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
Strategic Planning	\$600,000	\$121,577	\$108,391
	<b>\$5,889,436</b>	<b>\$1,448,267</b>	<b>\$1,190,935</b>



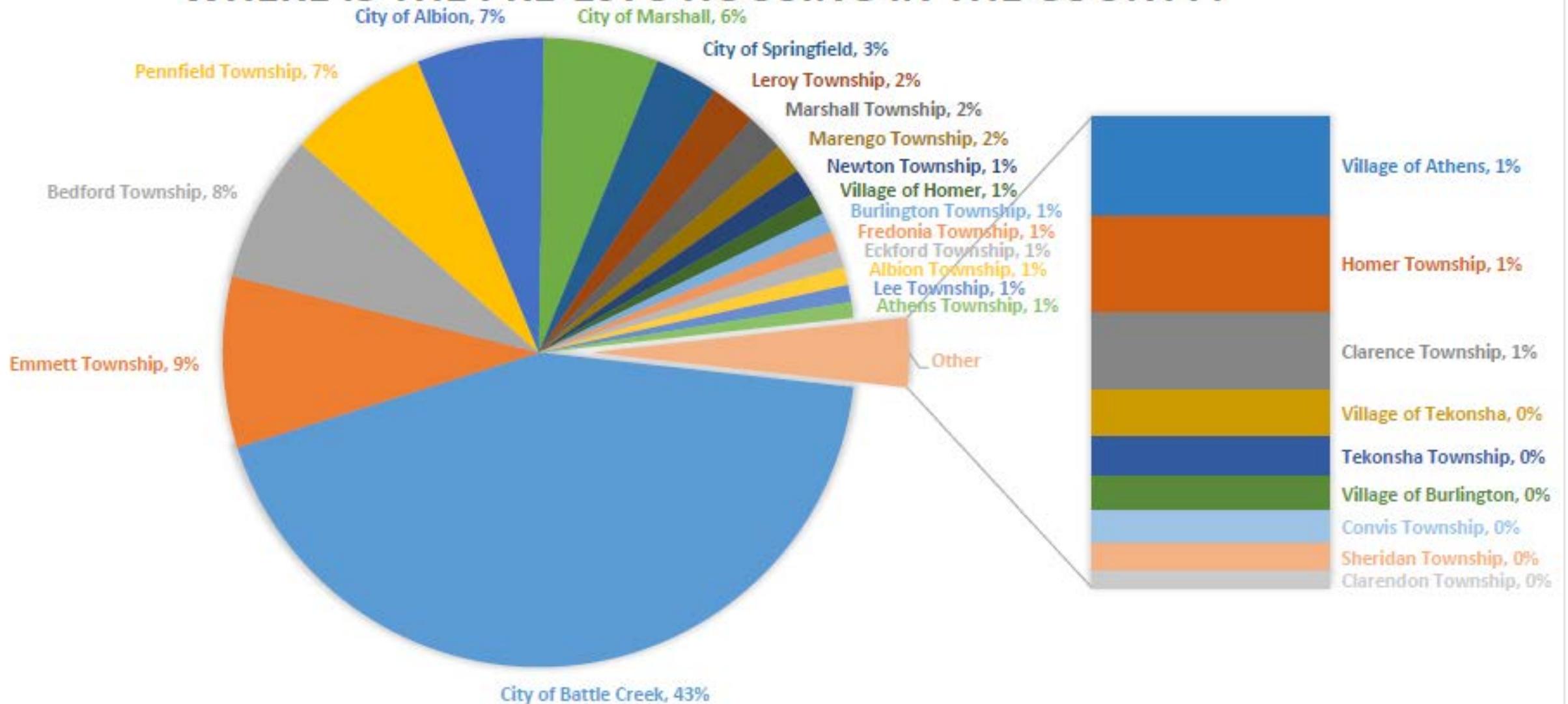
# Calhoun County: Number of Positive Lead Tests by Municipality(2011-15)

## Legend

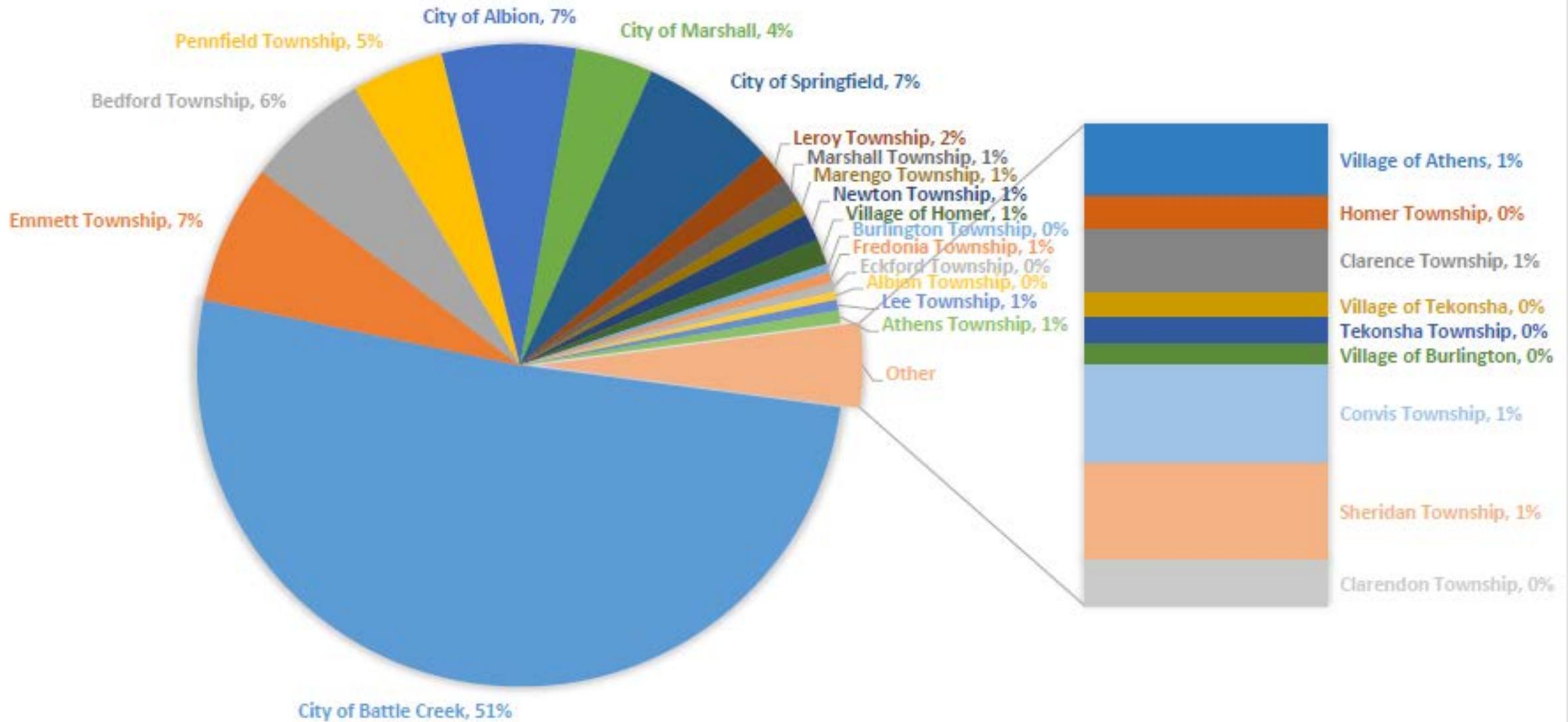
# of Positive Lead Tests  
by Municipality



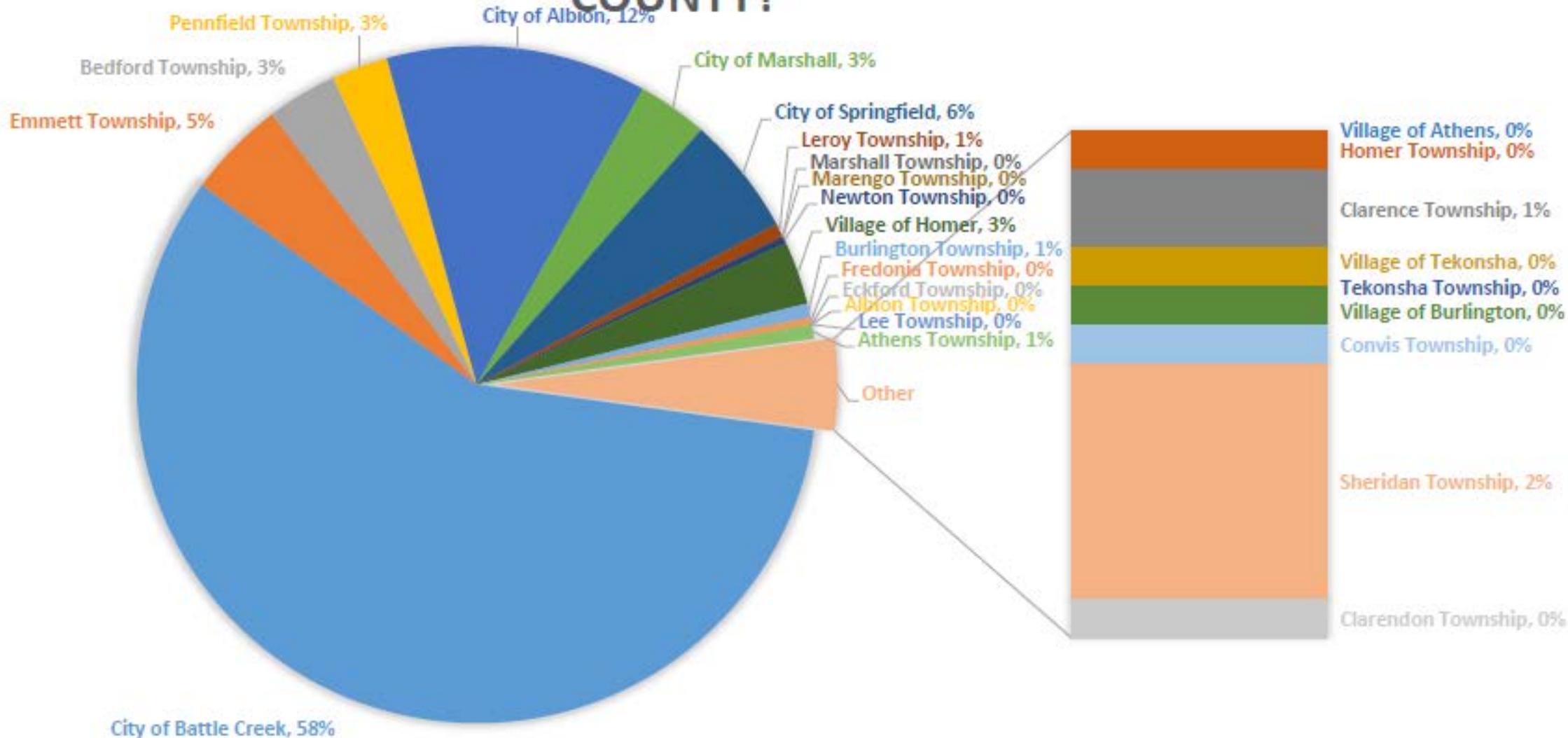
# WHERE IS THE PRE-1978 HOUSING IN THE COUNTY?



# WHERE IS THE CHILD TESTING OCCURRING IN THE COUNTY?



# WHERE ARE THE POSITIVE LEAD TESTS OCCURRING IN THE COUNTY?



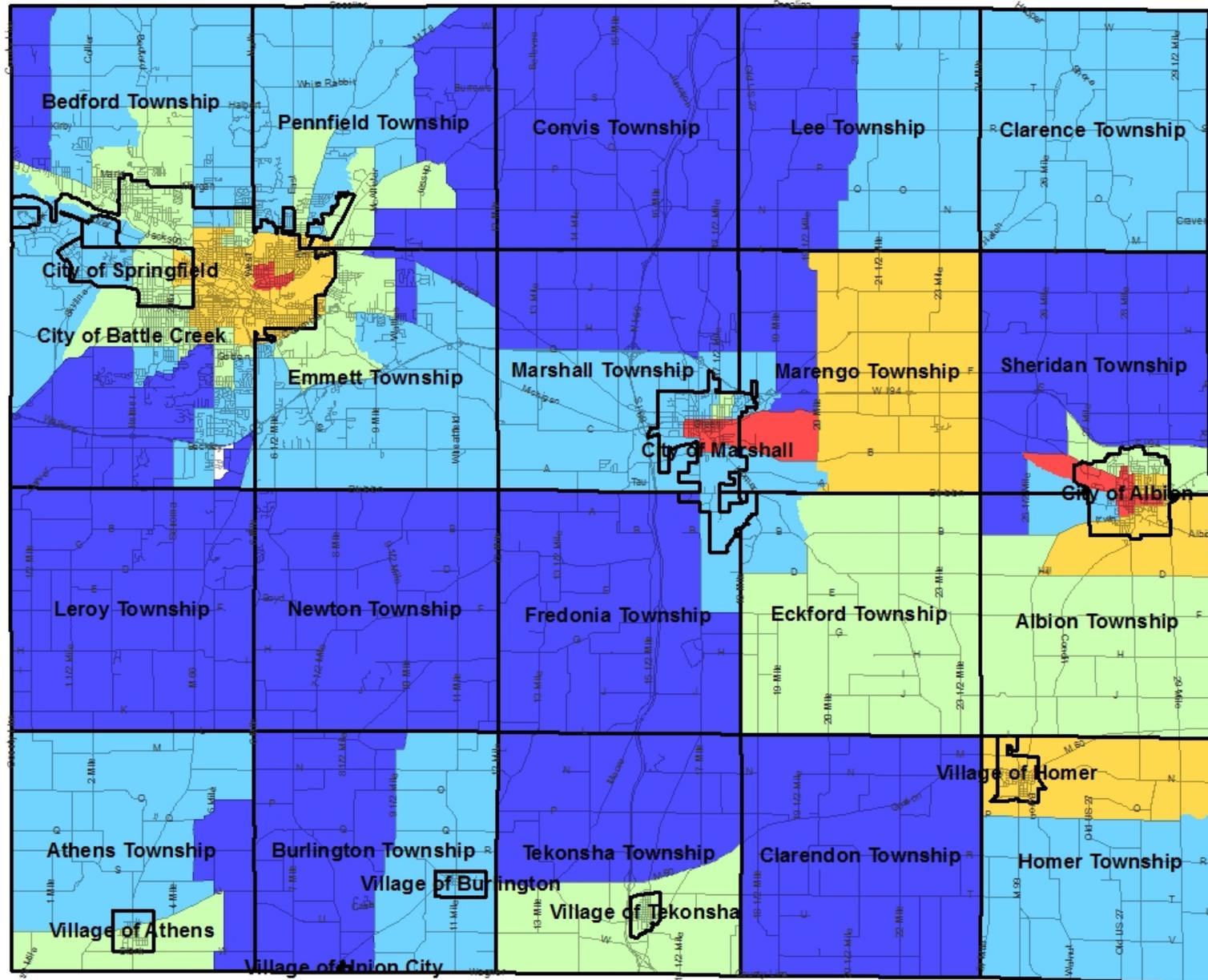
# Calhoun County: Median Age of Housing by Census Block Group

## Legend

### Census Block Group

### Median Year Built

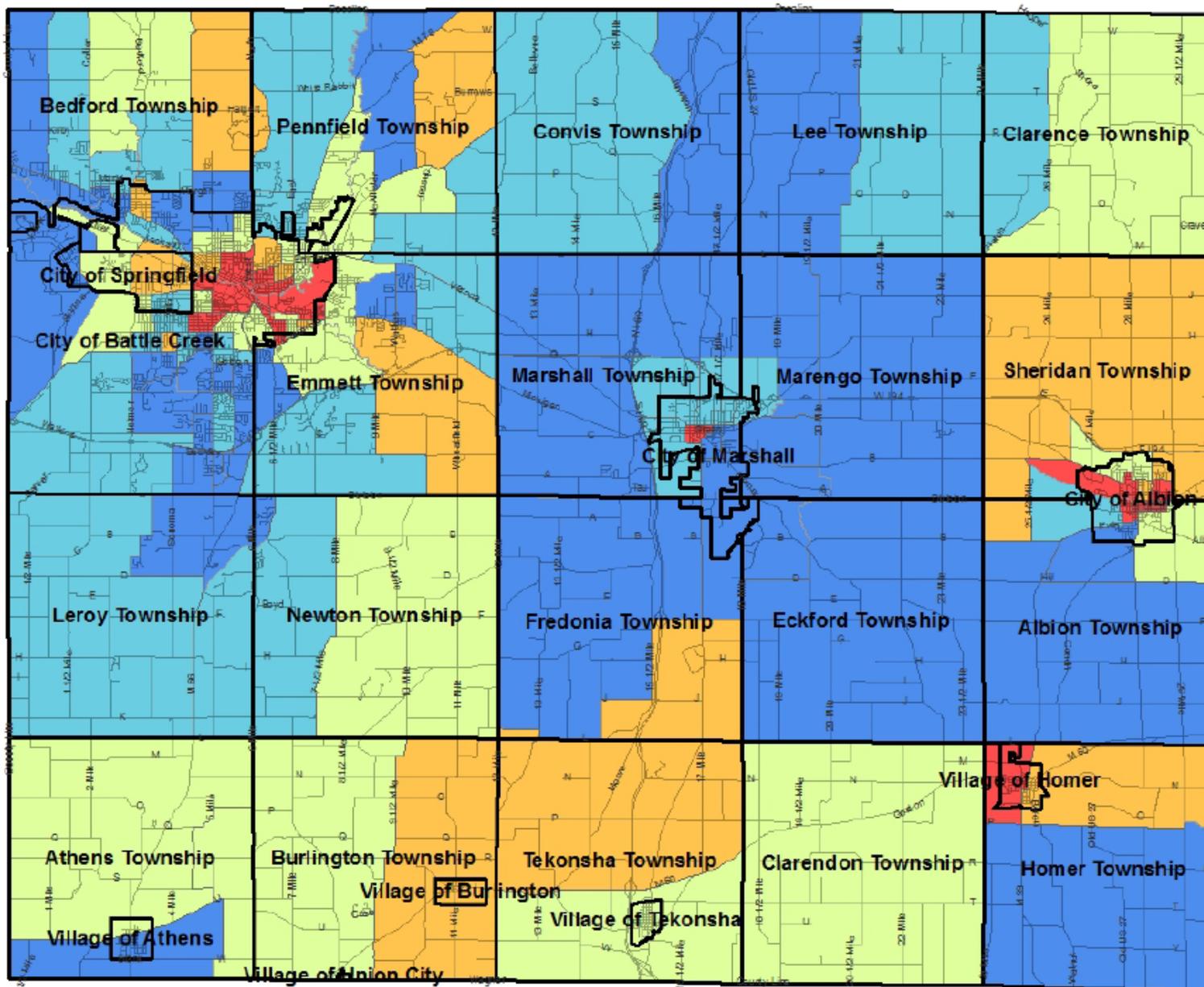
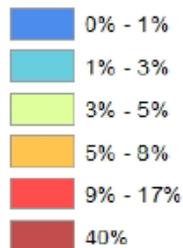
- 1890 - 1910
- 1915 - 1935
- 1940 - 1955
- 1957 - 1968
- 1970 - 1993



# Calhoun County: Percentage of Tests Resulting in an Elevated Blood Level by Census Block Group (2011-15)

## Legend

### % of Positive Tests





# Questions?



Community Development Division

2017-18 Annual Action Plan Presentation

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Community Development Division

2017-18 Annual Action Plan Presentation