

John Kromer

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Urban Policy Development and Strategic Planning

As a sole practitioner and as Senior Consultant at the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government, recent and current accomplishments include the following. See "**Policy Papers and Research Reports**" for links to related publications.

- As part of a team under contract with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, currently preparing the housing and economic development elements of a recovery plan for the City of Altoona, PA, as part of a state-authorized economic recovery strategy for this central Pennsylvania city (current activity).
- For the Prince George's County, MD Office of Audits and Investigations, currently completing an assessment of opportunities for the county's Department of Housing and Community Development to play a more dynamic role in advancing economic development initiatives launched by the county government administration (current activity).
- For the Wyomissing Foundation, assisting the Foundation's Long Range Planning Committee in designing a strategic investment plan to support revitalization activities in Reading PA and the adjacent municipalities of West Reading and Wyomissing (2010-present).
- For the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, provided narrative content and editorial oversight for a new publication, to be released in 2012, describing strategies for reinvigorating Pennsylvania's local and regional housing markets by promoting mixed-income preservation and development (2011-12).
- In a loaned executive capacity, served as Development Coordinator for the City of Reading, PA in order to supervise the completion and initial implementation of a five-year housing and economic development strategy, as part of a state-authorized economic recovery plan (2010-11).
- As part of a team organized by the Virginia Tech Center for Housing Research, completed a management audit of the Prince George's County, MD Department of Housing and Community Development, to include recommendations for improving departmental capacity and using resources more strategically to address countywide housing and economic development challenges (2010 to 2011).

- With funding support from the William Penn Foundation, organized a research project to examine the impacts and outcomes associated with the implementation of a strategic investment plan for a highly disinvested section of Eastern North Philadelphia over a ten-year period (2009-10).
- For the City of Reading, PA, organized and supervised initial implementation of a code enforcement strategy involving a special focus on strengthening the city's role in ensuring improved maintenance of small rental properties (2009-10).
- In Camden, NJ, assisted the state-appointed Chief Operating Officer and the Camden Redevelopment Agency with policy development and strategic planning tasks, with support provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation. Subsequently, at the invitation of Governor Jon Corzine's administration, managed the City's development agencies for thirteen months during a leadership transition period (2002 to 2008).
- In Allentown, PA, completed a plan for addressing blight, housing code violations, and negligent rental property management in residential communities adjacent to the central business district through a more aggressive use of municipal powers, combined with better public agency collaboration and the promotion of housing preservation opportunities. (2007-08).
- Co-authored *Philadelphia's Residential Tax Abatement: Accomplishments and Impacts*, the first comprehensive study of the City of Philadelphia's ten-year real estate tax abatement incentive for residential development, including recommendations for improving the effectiveness and equitability of this policy (2005).
- For the National Vacant Properties Campaign, participated in site assessments and drafted proposed strategies for addressing housing vacancy and abandonment in Buffalo, Dayton, and Richmond (2004-2006).
- For the Mayor's Office of the City of Reading (PA) and for the City of York (PA) Redevelopment Authority, supervised the completion of a citywide vacant property inventory and designed a series of strategies for the prevention of future abandonment and the reclamation and development of vacant houses and land (2003 and 2004).
- Served as the Penn's primary contact person for a \$28.5 million Citizens Bank commitment in support of West Philadelphia neighborhood reinvestment (2002 to 2007).
- Organized annual statewide conferences on "Vacant Property in Pennsylvania Cities and Towns" with 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania and the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania (2002 to 2005).

Housing and Community Development Administration

As Director of the City of Philadelphia's Office of Housing and Community Development (1992 through 2001), major accomplishments included the following.

- Organizing and directing the City of Philadelphia's neighborhood reinvestment programs, gaining national recognition for high performance and innovation.
- Managing \$120 million annual budget and leveraging unprecedented levels of outside funding from state and federal government, private-sector lending institutions, and charitable foundations.
- Designing and implementing new approaches to low-cost housing rehabilitation, job training for neighborhood residents, and public housing reform.

Development Financing and Management

As consultant, working independently and as Senior Associate with the firm of Urban Partners (1982-1991), provided development-consulting services to local governments, private developers, and nonprofit organizations. Coordinated a \$2.7 million affordable housing venture to restore National Register houses in Parkside Avenue historic district. Financed and developed the West Philadelphia Firehouse Farmers Market, the conversion of a vacant fire station into a fresh food center with eight retail stores.

Program Management.

- Administrator of neighborhood revitalization programs at City of Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development (1978-82).
- Performed administrative/management responsibilities at two community-based nonprofit organizations (Chinatown Building and Education Foundation and Washington Square West Project Area Committee) engaged in neighborhood planning and advocacy (1972-78).

Education

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, 1998.
Completed Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government, supported by Fannie Mae Foundation Fellowship.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, 1983-86. Completed advanced course work in Finance, Accounting, and Real Estate.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, 1971. Completed postgraduate work in Political Science.

HAVERFORD COLLEGE, 1966-71. Received B.A.

Publications

Books

Money, Mojo, and Votes: Election Reform and Political Reality in Philadelphia, with Julie M. Proulx and Andy Denison. (e-book listed on www.amazon.com, 2012).

Fixing Broken Cities: The Implementation of Urban Development Strategies (Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2009).

Neighborhood Recovery: Reinvestment Policy for the New Hometown (Rutgers University Press, 1999).

Policy Papers and Research Reports

All published by Fels Institute of Government unless otherwise noted.

Vacant Property Reclamation through Strategic Investment in Eastern North Philadelphia, 1998-2010 (2010).

Neighborhood Stabilization and Safety in Eastern North Philadelphia, 1998-2010 (2010)
http://www.fels.upenn.edu/apm_stabilization.

Beyond the Foreclosure Crisis: Reconstituting the Rental Housing Market in Pennsylvania (2009) <http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/making-case-healthy-and-affordable-rental-market>.

Allentown Progress Report: Housing Asset Management Strategy in Allentown, PA (2009)
<http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization-getting-better-results-allentown-pa>.

Vacant Property Reclamation and Neighborhood Change in Southwest Center City Philadelphia (2008) <http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization>.

A Housing Strategy for Allentown's Central City Neighborhoods (2007)
<http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization-housing-strategy-allentown's-downtown-neighborhoods>.

Philadelphia's Residential Tax Abatement: Accomplishments and Impacts (2005)
<http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization-2>.

West Philadelphia Initiatives: A Case Study in Urban Revitalization (2005)
<http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization-1>.

Vacant Property Reclamation and Development in York, PA (2004)
<http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization-4>.

Vacancy Inventory and Reinvestment Strategies for Reading, PA (2004)
<http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization-0>.

Vacant Property Policy and Practice: Baltimore and Philadelphia, (The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2002) <http://www.fels.upenn.edu/news/new-report-urban-revitalization-3>.

Teaching

As adjunct faculty member, teaching fall-semester course in “The Politics of Housing and Urban Development” at the University of Pennsylvania’s Fels Institute of Government (2001-present).

Through Penn’s Department of City and Regional Planning, managed spring-semester studio projects for second-year Masters of City Planning students on the development of Choice Neighborhoods proposals for the Baltimore and District of Columbia housing authorities (2010) and the organization of a citywide blight-reduction policy for Philadelphia’s Office of the Managing Director, emphasizing the organization of a citywide land bank and affiliated land trust organizations to support affordable housing and green space ventures (2011).