Kevin Meindl, Landscape Architecture ’15

City of Amsterdam, NY
Community and Economic Development

CALS NYS Internship Program 2013

Vacant Lot Inventory

A data base of all properties was created using Microsoft Access software. The database utilized information from the Montgomery Planning Department, the Tax Assessors Office, and site visits. This database will allow better decision making by city officials in the future regarding economic development strategy and planning.

Analysis

Residential vacant land (shown in red) is abundant throughout the City of Amsterdam NY. Unlike commercial and industrial vacant sites, residential vacant lots pose significant challenges to redevelopment due to their small size.

Methodology

A method for determining projected best civic uses for sites was offered based on both technical analysis and public participation.

Community Capitals

The Community Capitals framework provided a model for understanding assets that contribute to healthy vibrant communities and was used to examine youth attraction and retention opportunities and challenges in the Amsterdam area.

Host Community Profile

A socio-economic demographic profile of Amsterdam highlights some of the challenges the city is facing.

Income
The median household income is $38,699, well below the $52,762 national and $43,254 Montgomery County median. 19.9% of individuals and 15.1% of families are estimated to live below poverty (for comparison the U.S. is 14.3% and 10.5% respectively).

Employment
Jobs are scarce in Amsterdam and Montgomery County with 42% of workers commuting outside the county to work.

Education
Only 17.8% of the City’s population over the age of 25 has obtained a bachelors degree of higher, compared to 28.2% for the U.S.

Youth Attraction/Retention

Many opportunities exist to strengthen capital area assets and better attract and retain young people. Some of these are highlighted below:

Other students in the internship program had indicated valuing aesthetic and natural resources in describing an ideal place to live and work. Improving the streetscapes with more street trees is one way to both increase the visual appeal and ecological performance of the city.

Creating a job training center or satellite campus of the community college within the city limits may help strengthen human capital and provide more opportunities for the workforce to acquire specialized skills. Human capital related to educational opportunities is another area that several interns identified as being important for a place to live and work.