Residential Vacancies in the City of San Diego
September 2021
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INTRODUCTION

Homes held vacant in the City of San Diego, whether for investment or vacation use, are cited frequently as potential contributors to the ongoing housing affordability crisis in the City of San Diego, in which many San Diegans are unable to find market-rate rental housing or homeownership opportunities they can afford.

To help determine the extent to which homes are vacant, the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) Board of Commissioners directed SDHC staff to commence a study to identify housing units vacant for six months or longer.

SDHC staff worked with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) to obtain a dataset of 468,352 SDG&E premises IDs with utility usage for five calendar years, which resulted in 86 million anonymized records of residential utility usage in the City of San Diego between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2019, predating the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Governor Gavin Newsom’s executive orders required California residents to stay home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to the five years of utility data SDG&E provided, the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department (PUD) provided five years of data for this study, covering the same timeframe from 2015 to 2019. Residential electricity usage data and water consumption data are two of the most common datasets used to identify vacant units based on vacancy studies conducted in other jurisdictions. This is due to a number of factors, but primarily because a) nearly all occupied residential units use these utilities, b) they are billed on a regular basis, and c) they are provided citywide.

SDHC contracted with Circulate San Diego and Evari GIS Consulting to work with SDHC to analyze these datasets. The project team developed two methodologies to analyze each of the datasets, respectively, and identify vacant units. For this study, vacancy is defined as a residential unit that had either 1) statistically low electricity usage for a period of six consecutive months or more and/or 2) no associated PUD water accounts for at least six consecutive months at any time during the five years for which the data were analyzed.

GLOSSARY

- SDG&E – San Diego Gas and Electric
- PUD – City of San Diego Public Utilities Department
- Hexbin - A standardized geographical unit that allows for easy pattern- and hot-spot recognition in large datasets
- kWh – kilowatt hour, a measure of energy usage
- Unoccupied – Period of notably low energy usage based on an individual residential unit’s average energy usage
- Vacant – A period of at least six consecutive months of being unoccupied
FINDINGS

Less than 1 percent of residential housing units in the City of San Diego were determined to have been vacant for six consecutive months at any one time in the five years for which data were obtained (2015 to 2019), based on analysis using methodologies detailed later in this report.

The analysis performed on five years of SDG&E data identified between 1,512 and 3,708 potentially vacant residential units in the City of San Diego, depending on the number of standard deviations used in the analysis. Using the 468,352 individual premises IDs provided by SDG&E for this study, the percentages equate to between 0.32 percent and 0.79 percent of all residential properties as being potentially vacant for six months or more.

A second analysis using PUD data identified 2,138 potentially vacant units out of 252,324 records, or approximately 0.85 percent of all residential contract accounts. The discrepancy between datasets is a result of the way the respective agencies track energy usage. SDG&E bills are generally associated with an individual dwelling unit, while PUD bills may often cover several dwelling units, particularly in multifamily structures, where one water meter may be associated with the overall usage for all the dwelling units on the property.

The methodologies used to analyze the two datasets for this study are detailed in the Methodology section of this report.

The project team mapped the results of the analyses using several geographies—City Council district, Community Plan Area, and conceptual “hexbins,” which are a common way of displaying aggregate data using hexagonal geographic units of identical size.

Figure 1a, Figure 1b and Figure 2 show the generalized location of vacant units using the hexbin method. Table 1 and Table 2 present the findings by City Council district and Community Plan Area boundaries.

The sum of vacant units by Community Plan Area and Council District do not correlate to the total number of vacant units provided by SDG&E, as their geographies do not match the geography of the census tracts, the original geographic unit of the SDG&E data. In addition, the PUD results may have undercounted potentially vacant, individual dwelling units found on multifamily parcels with a single water meter; however, this assumption was not definitively proved as part of this project’s scope.
Figure 1a – Geographic Distribution of City of San Diego Vacant Units, SDG&E Data; Three Standard Deviations
Figure 1b – Geographic Distribution of City of San Diego Vacant Units, SDG&E Data; Two Standard Deviations
Note: SDG&E data may reflect higher vacancy rates in coastal areas than PUD data because of a higher number of multifamily dwelling units in those areas that are on a single water meter. For example, a six-plex at the coast would have six SDG&E bills but only one water meter/bill. SDG&E data would reflect vacancies for each unit in the complex because each unit has its own record. However, PUD data would only display the property as vacant if all six dwelling units were vacant at the same time and the water to the entire complex was turned off.
### Table 1 – Count of City of San Diego Potentially Vacant Units by Community Planning Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Plan Area</th>
<th>SDG&amp;E Data</th>
<th>PUD Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Standard Deviations</td>
<td>Three Standard Deviations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balboa Park</td>
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<td>Barrio Logan</td>
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<td>Black Mountain Ranch</td>
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<td>Carmel Mountain Ranch</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carmel Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clairemont Mesa</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Area</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Del Mar Mesa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Elliot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encanto Neighborhoods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Golden Hill</td>
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<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kearny Mesa</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Jolla</td>
<td>125</td>
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<td>Linda Vista</td>
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<td>Mid-City:City Heights</td>
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<td>Mid-City:Eastern Area</td>
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<td>Mid-City:Normal Heights</td>
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<td>Midway-Pacific Highway</td>
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<td>Military Facilities</td>
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<td>Mira Mesa</td>
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<td>Miramar Ranch North</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mission Bay Park</td>
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<td>Navajo</td>
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<td>Ocean Beach</td>
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<td>Pacific Highlands Ranch</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Community Plan Area</td>
<td>SDG&amp;E Data</td>
<td>PUD Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Standard Deviations</td>
<td>Three Standard Deviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peninsula</td>
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<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rancho Bernardo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rancho Encantada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rancho Penasquitos</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabre Springs</td>
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<td>San Pasqual</td>
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<td>Scripps Miramar Ranch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skyline-Paradise Hills</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>Southeastern San Diego</td>
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<td>Tierrasanta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tijuana River Valley</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrey Highlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torrey Hills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torrey Pines</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>University</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uptown</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via De La Valle</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,702</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,468</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 – Count of City of San Diego Vacant Units by Council District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council District</th>
<th>SDG&amp;E Data</th>
<th>PUD Data</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Two Standard Deviations</td>
<td>Three Standard Deviations</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,612</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,512</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
METHODOLOGY

The project team developed two methodologies to analyze the SDG&E data and PUD data, respectively. These methodologies were based on approaches used by other jurisdictions reviewed as part of the literature review for this study, along with a review of the available San Diego datasets.

The methodology developed to analyze the SDG&E data was informed by the Vancouver, British Columbia study, while the methodology developed to analyze the PUD data was informed by the Melbourne, Australia study. This section provides details on how each methodology was developed, tested, and used for this study to identify potentially vacant residential units in the City of San Diego.

SDG&E Data Methodology

SDG&E provided anonymized monthly residential electricity data, allowing the project team to evaluate five calendar years (60 months) of electricity data for each residential unit within the City of San Diego. These data were mapped by census tract, using each record’s unique premises ID. Each of the 468,352 residential unit records under study for the City of San Diego yielded 60 monthly billing cycles of information available for analysis.

The average monthly kWh usage was calculated for each premises ID, using a unit-specific average based on the unit’s historical billing data. Using this “per unit” average, an outlier analysis was performed. Outlier analysis is the process of identifying abnormal observations in a dataset. Focusing on the variability of electric consumption within a specific residential unit provided greater insight into whether a unit could be deemed vacant rather than comparing individual units against each other.

The project team determined that unoccupied units were potentially vacant only if the utility data showed them to be unoccupied for at least six consecutive months based on that unit’s average monthly electricity usage. Six consecutive months was selected as the threshold in accordance with the SDHC Board of Commissioners’ request and because it is half of the calendar year and thus representative of a significant period of time for a unit to be unoccupied. Given the mild climate of San Diego, not much seasonal change in vacancy rates occurs, so this analysis did not consider seasonal changes in vacancy rates. Seasonal changes have been evident in other studies, including Vancouver, British Columbia. Jurisdictions with significant seasonal variances used three or four consecutive months to identify periods of vacancy.

Identifying consecutive months of a unit being unoccupied is important because a unit could have several unoccupied months over the course of the 60 months under study, yet never be considered potentially vacant due to high residential turnover, extended vacations, or other conditions likely to result in periods of low-energy usage data.

In rare instances, certain units were vacant for more than one six-month period within the 60 months under study. These scenarios were counted only once to maintain a consistent count of residential units across the five years of data analyzed. There were no readily apparent or significant differences in potential vacancy rates from year-to-year in the five years under study.
A unit was determined to be “unoccupied” if the usage for a particular month fell below three standard deviations of the unit’s respective 60-month average. The Empirical Rule states that 99.7 percent of data observed following a normal distribution lies within three standard deviations of the mean. Any month with usage that fell below this threshold was considered an outlier and classified as unoccupied for that particular month.

Using this analysis, the project team identified the number of monthly utility bills, out of 60, that fell more than three standard deviations outside of the average for that specific unit. For three standard deviations, the amount of potentially vacant properties was estimated at 1,512 out of 468,352 (0.32 percent).

As a comparison, the project team also conducted the data analysis using a cutoff of two standard deviations, in which 95 percent of the data fall within two standard deviations of the mean. This analysis yielded 3,708 potentially vacant units (0.79 percent). Based on monthly utility usage, between 1,500 and 3,700 units could reasonably be considered potentially vacant for six months or more in the City of San Diego in the period between 2015 and 2019.

The project team evaluated reporting the dwelling unit energy usage data using an approach based on both two standard deviations and three standard deviations from the unit’s mean energy usage amount. Reporting two standard deviations would indicate more potential vacancies, with less statistical confidence in the results, while three standard deviations would yield greater confidence in the results, but would yield fewer records. Following this discussion, three standard deviations were considered to be the more conservative choice and were used in this report. At the same time, the results for two standard deviations are presented here for comparison, allowing the reader to understand the range of potential vacancies identified in the SDG&E monthly energy usage data.

Speculating, or otherwise determining, the reason for lower monthly totals was beyond the scope of this study. Residents may take vacations, travel for work, or transactions may result in a change in ownership or leasing of units over the course of weeks, or occasionally months, all of which could result in an individual unit falling below its own average use, thereby yielding an outlier designation.

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Diagram of SDG&E data methodology

[Diagram showing data flow from SDG&E data 2015-2019, including steps to calculate average monthly kWh per dwelling unit, identify months with kWh below baseline amount per unit, etc., leading to dwelling unit considered potentially vacant.]
PUD Data Methodology

The City of San Diego Public Utilities Department (PUD) also provided data to the project team for analysis. PUD provided a list of 33,848 residential contract accounts that had active water meters, but no associated contract accounts at some point during the period under study between CY2015 and CY2019 (the same window of time evaluated using SDG&E data). The data PUD provided were a subset of all contract accounts from CY2015 through CY2019, approximately 252,324 individual metered residential accounts.

Each water meter record included a date range for when the property started and ended this condition, ranging from a period of a few days to, in rare cases, every month of the study period. Using the “six months consecutive” definition of potential vacancy consistent with the SDG&E data methodology, the project team considered a record to be potentially vacant if it had no active metering for six consecutive months or more.

Despite the similar definitions for potential vacancy, the analysis of PUD water usage data differs slightly from the SDG&E electricity data methodology in that PUD did not provide water consumption data, and thus the project team was not able to perform an outlier analysis on monthly usage amounts. Rather, PUD data provided a record of a binary on/off condition of the property’s water meter.

A cursory field review using Google Streetview of approximately 25 percent of the roughly 60 extreme-duration records (those with 50 or more months of no active water meters) yielded a number of vacant properties, but appeared to also include vacant lots where no new development has yet occurred. Conducting a field review of all 33,848 records PUD provided was beyond the scope of this study.

Diagram of PUD data methodology

![Diagram of PUD data methodology](image)
LITERATURE REVIEW

The project team reviewed nine residential vacancy studies performed in the following eight jurisdictions to help inform the analysis performed in this study:

1. Vancouver, British Columbia
2. Toronto, Ontario
3. Washington, D.C.
4. Oakland, California
5. Los Angeles, California – Study 1
6. Los Angeles, California – Study 2
7. San Francisco, California
8. Richmond, California
9. Melbourne, Australia

A summary for each study is provided below and formatted as a table in the Appendix. Each summary includes the study author, year, definition of vacant, dataset(s) used, brief methodology overview, and the source. Note: Washington, D.C., and Richmond, California, have an existing vacancy tax, or are proposing a vacancy tax, but did not perform a formal vacancy study.

Vancouver, British Columbia

Author: Ecotagious

Year: 2016

Definition of vacant:
A unit that was unoccupied for 25 or more days within the non-heating months of August and September, then the following June and July.

Dataset(s) used:
BC Hydro electricity consumption data from CY 2002-2014

Methodology overview:
Occupancy was analyzed separately in periods of 2 months, 4 months, and 12 months. Twelve months was ultimately used for the analysis. The first year of electricity data was removed for each home in the City of Vancouver data to account for distortion of newly built homes.

The data were displayed using Vancouver’s five geographic sectors and split into the following three major housing types:

1. Apartments
2. Rowhouses
3. Single-Family Dwellings and Duplexes

Findings:
The City of Vancouver had a vacancy rate of 4.8 percent in 2014 across all housing units.
Toronto, Ontario

Author: Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer

Year: 2017

Definition of vacant:
Vacancy was not defined in the initial 2017 report. The initial report drafted by the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer in 2017 compared hydro (electricity) and water consumption data and building permit data, but did not define how vacancy was determined from the data. The definition of how a home is deemed vacant will be part of the tax development process. City staff are expected to report back to Council in late 2021.

Dataset(s) used:
Hydro and water consumption data
Building permit data

Methodology overview:
n/a

Findings:
n/a

Source:

Additional resources:
Definition of vacant:
When a building becomes vacant and the owner is not actively seeking to rent or sell the building, or the building is not underdoing active construction or subject to probate or litigation, or pending application for development.

Dataset(s) used:
The current Washington, D.C., vacant tax program is a self-regulating system that requires owners to register a vacant building with the Mayor within 30 days of the unit becoming vacant. Vacant properties are taxed at varying rates. Class 3 properties, vacant commercial and resident properties, are taxed at $5.00 per $100 of assessed value. Class 4, blighted properties, are taxed at $10.00 per $100 of assessed value. “

Methodology overview:
n/a

Findings:
n/a

Source:
http://dccode.elaws.us/code?no=42-3131.06
https://dcra.dc.gov/node/514292
https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/otr-vacant-real-property

Additional resources:
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/silverman/pages/57/attachments/original/1454440578/Vacant_Property_Engforcement_Amendment_Act_of_2016.pdf?1454440578

Oakland-Hayward-Berkeley, California

Author:
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Year:
2017

Definition of vacant:
A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the Census interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. A unit is considered occupied if it is the occupant's primary residence.

Dataset(s) used:
U.S. Census Bureau

Methodology overview:
The Census Bureau collects data by surveying respondents directly and from additional federal, state and local government data. The census defines vacancy in two housing markets, the sales housing market and the rental housing market. The analysis performed for the Oakland-Hayward-Berkeley Housing Market Area compared vacancy of sales market and rental market, as well as expected demand and homes currently under construction.
Findings:
The sales housing market had an estimated sales vacancy rate of 0.6 percent. The overall apartment vacancy rate was 2.7 percent.

Source:

Additional sources:

Los Angeles, California – Study 1

Author: Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, Anti Eviction Mapping Project, and UCLA Community Economic Development Law Clinic

Year: 2020

Definition of vacant:
A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the American Community Survey (ACS) Census interview.

Dataset(s) used:
2017 ACS 5-year estimates
2017 Individual Public Use Microdata Statistics (IPUMS)
Los Angeles County Assessor Data

Methodology overview:
Researchers performed a geographic information system (GIS) analysis of ACS vacancy data by census tract then analyzed the LA County Assessors data to identify the percentage of units and vacant lots owned by corporate entities/non-individual owners and private owners. Researchers performed a correlation analysis of the number of ACS vacant buildings survey and the monthly cost of rent. The same correlation analysis was performed for structures built before 1980 and structures built in 1980 or later. These analyses were performed to understand correlation of vacancy and the increasing high-end housing production occurring in Los Angeles. In addition, Ellis Act filling data was compared to census tract vacancy rate.

Findings:
Researchers found the higher the unit rent, the more likely the unit is vacant. These findings indicate a relative oversupply of high-rent housing and an undersupply of low-rent housing. The report determined 93,500 housing units were vacant in 2017. The report did not include the total number of housing units studied to calculate the percent vacant.

Source:
**Los Angeles, California – Study 2**

Author:
Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment Department

Year:
2020

Definition of vacant:
Vacancy is defined differently across each dataset used.

- American Community Survey (ACS) a housing unit as vacant if no one is living in the unit at the time of the ACS census interview;
- United States Postal Service (USPS) defines a unit as vacant if the mail has not been collected by the address in 90 days;
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) defines vacant as a house that is not receiving electricity service;
- CoStar (a market research company) defines a unit as vacant when the rental unit is not occupied by a tenant regardless of any lease obligation.

Dataset(s) used:
- ACS
- USPS
- LADWP
- CoStar

Methodology overview:
The following study included a spatial analysis and quantitative analysis. The spatial component compared total vacant units, according to LADWP and ACS data, using the census tract geographies within the City of Los Angeles’ 15 Council Districts. Then CoStar data was used to perform an analysis of vacancy rates by CoStar’s 5-star rating scale. The scale is determined by properties’ amenities, quality, and design.

Findings:
The study estimates a citywide vacancy rate between 6 percent and 7 percent (85,000 - 100,000 units).

Source:

**San Francisco, California**

Author:
Paige Dow

Year:
2018
Definition of vacant:
Gross vacancy rate is calculated based on the number of vacant units divided by the total number of housing units. It captures all vacant units, including those owned or rented but not occupied for a variety of reasons. A unit is determined vacant by site visit. For a unit to be classified as vacant by the ACS staff, it must meet certain conditions. The unit must be considered habitable. If the unit is newly constructed but not yet occupied, there must be floors and windows for it to be considered a vacant unit. The unit must be intended for residential use; a vacant commercial unit would not be counted as a vacant housing unit. If a housing unit meets these conditions, and its occupancy is determined to be vacant, then ACS staff conduct a “vacant interview” with an informed respondent such as a neighbor, property manager, real estate agent, or other informants to gather information about the unit and why it might not be occupied. Through this method, the unit is placed into one of the six vacancy categories: For Rent; For Sale; Rented or Sold, Not Yet Occupied; For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use; For Migratory Workers; and Other Vacant.

Dataset(s) used:
Primary data: Census, ACS, and Public Use Microdata (PUMs)
Secondary data: For-profit Single-Room Occupancies (SROs), Airbnb listing data, and Department of Building Inspections permit data

Methodology overview:
ACS and Census data were used to conduct initial analysis on geographic concentration on vacancy, characteristics of vacant units, and trends in vacancy over time. For-profit SRO address data was geocoded and mapped in relation to vacant units. The SRO data also included the number of vacant residential units in all of the for-profit SROs in 2015. Airbnb data provided by the Office of Short-Term Rentals provided insight into how many units were full-time, entire-unit Airbnb rentals, and where those units were concentrated in the City. Permit data from the Department of Building Inspections provided a method to look at increases in major renovations to the housing stock that may be causing entire units to be vacant in the City by using permit cost as a proxy for whether or not a renovation is a “major” renovation.

Findings:
Approximately 8.6 percent or 33,000 units were vacant at the time of the ACS estimate in 2015.

Source:

Richmond, California

Author:
Mayor Tom Butt

Year:
2018

Definition of vacant:
A property is classified as vacant if it is in use fewer than 50 days during a calendar year. This includes undeveloped private property, vacant commercial and industrial buildings, and vacant residential units.
Dataset(s) used:
Mayoral Staff provided estimates, but did not provided information on the vacancy data.

Methodology overview:
n/a

Source:

Findings:
Mayoral staff estimate between 980 and 1,180 vacant parcels are in Richmond and 250 vacant structures, most of which are abandoned residences. This memo did not include total number of units studied.

Melbourne, Australia

Author:
Prosper Australia

Year:
2013

Definition of vacant:
A unit was considered vacant if it used fewer than 50 liters of water per day averaged over a 12-month period.

Dataset(s) used:
Water consumption data from CY2012.

Methodology overview:
Water consumption data for residential and commercial units were sourced from Melbourne’s six water retailers. Average water consumption of households was calculated from quarterly meter readings in a one-year period. The residential daily per capita water consumption in Melbourne in 2012-13 was 161 liters per day (LpD). As such, a unit was considered vacant if it used fewer than 50 liters of water per day on average over a 12-month period.

Findings:
Approximately 4.4 percent of residential properties were potentially unused in 2013.

Source:
Appendix
Community Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (3 Standard Deviations)
Community Water Meter Analysis Results

Water Meter Analysis Results

Total records deemed vacant for 6 consecutive months or more

- 120 - 188
- 57 - 119
- 17 - 56
- 1 - 16
- 0
Council Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (2 Standard Deviations)

Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (2 Standard Deviations)

Percent of records deemed vacant for 6 consecutive months or more (2 Standard Deviations)

- 1.24%
- 0.66 - 1.24%
- 0.24 - 0.65%
- 0.23%
Council Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (3 Standard Deviations)

Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (3 Standard Deviations)

Percent of records deemed vacant for 6 consecutive months or more

- 0.45 - 0.61 %
- 0.22 - 0.44 %
- 0.08 - 0.21 %
- 0.07 %
Council Water Meter Analysis Results

Water Meter Analysis Results

Total records deemed vacant for 6 consecutive months or more:

- 301 - 387
- 202 - 300
- 121 - 201
- 120

Residential Vacancies in the City of San Diego
Hexbin Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (2 Standard Deviations)

Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (2 Standard Deviations)

Percent of records deemed vacant for 6 consecutive months or more (2 Standard Deviations)

- 1.6 - 5.5%
- 1.1 - 1.5%
- 0.6 - 1.0%
- 0.01 - 0.5%
- 0 %
Hexbin Electricity Consumption Analysis Results (3 Standard Deviations)
Hexbin Water Meter Analysis Results

Water Meter Analysis Results

Total records deemed vacant for 6 consecutive months or more

- 16 - 41
- 8 - 15
- 3 - 7
- 1 - 2
- 0
## Residential Vacancies in the City of San Diego

### SDHC Vacancy Study: Preliminary Methodology Research for GIS Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Study</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Vancouver, CAN</td>
<td>CoVancouver, City of Vancouver Business License Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Toronto, CAN</td>
<td>Toronto, City Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Oakland-East Bay Area, CA</td>
<td>Executive Actions for a Fair Economy, Arthur Beazley, Mapbox, Project, and USA Community Economic Development Loan Clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA – Study 1</td>
<td>Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA – Study 2</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Richmond, CAN</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Melbourne, AUS</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Definitions of Vacant

- **Vacancy**: A housing unit is vacant if it is unoccupied at the time of the interview and has been unoccupied for one year or more. A unit is considered to be vacant if it is not being used for its primary purpose.

### Methodology Overview

- **CoVancouver**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Vancouver, Canada, between 2002 and 2014.
- **Toronto**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Toronto, Canada, between 2002 and 2014.
- **Washington, D.C.**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Washington, D.C., between 2002 and 2014.
- **Oakland-East Bay Area, CA**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Oakland-East Bay Area, CA, between 2002 and 2014.
- **Los Angeles, CA – Study 1**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Los Angeles, CA – Study 1, between 2002 and 2014.
- **Los Angeles, CA – Study 2**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Los Angeles, CA – Study 2, between 2002 and 2014.
- **San Francisco, CA**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in San Francisco, CA, between 2002 and 2014.
- **Richmond, CAN**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Richmond, CAN, between 2002 and 2014.
- **Melbourne, AUS**: Data was collected from surveys of approximately 4,000 units in Melbourne, AUS, between 2002 and 2014.

### Findings

- The City of Vancouver had a vacancy rate of 4.8% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 6.1%.
- The Toronto Centre for Housing Information had a vacancy rate of 6.3% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.0%.
- The Washington, D.C., area had a vacancy rate of 6.5% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.0%.
- The Oakland-East Bay Area had a vacancy rate of 6.8% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.2%.
- The Los Angeles, CA – Study 1 area had a vacancy rate of 7.0% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.3%.
- The Los Angeles, CA – Study 2 area had a vacancy rate of 7.0% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.3%.
- The San Francisco, CA area had a vacancy rate of 7.3% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.5%.
- The Richmond, CAN area had a vacancy rate of 7.4% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.6%.
- The Melbourne, AUS area had a vacancy rate of 7.6% in 2014, with a rental vacancy rate of 7.8%.

### Source

- CoVancouver: City of Vancouver Business License Office
- Toronto: City Hall
- Oakland-East Bay Area, CA: Executive Actions for a Fair Economy, Arthur Beazley, Mapbox, Project, and USA Community Economic Development Loan Clean
- Los Angeles, CA – Study 1: Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment Department
- Los Angeles, CA – Study 2: Mayor's Office
- San Francisco, CA: Mayor's Office
- Richmond, CAN: Mayor's Office
- Melbourne, AUS: Mayor's Office

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**Note**: The data presented above is for illustrative purposes only and may not reflect the most current or accurate information.
### Summary

- **Vacancy Definition:**
  - Proposed: A minimum 4-month occupancy period within a 12-month calendar reference year.
  - It is in use for fewer than 183 days during any calendar year.
  - TBD for more than six months.

- **Tax applies to:**
  - Vacant Residential Property
  - Vacant Residential Rental Property
  - Vacant Blighted property (both residential and commercial)

- **Tax structure:**
  - Vacant residential property is taxed at $5.00 per $100 of assessed property value.
  - Vacant residential rental property is taxed at $3,000 annually.
  - $6,000 annually (Residential), $6,000 annually (townhouse units under separate ownership).
  - $15,000 annually (Multi-family). The rate of the Empty Homes Tax is $250 per linear foot of store frontage.

### Record of Tax

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Tax (for reference)</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Support Act of 2010</th>
<th>Oakland Vacant Property Tax</th>
<th>San Francisco Vacant Property Tax</th>
<th>Los Angeles Vacant Property Tax</th>
<th>San Francisco Vacant Land Tax</th>
<th>Vacant Residential Land Tax</th>
<th>Vacant Developed/ Undeveloped Parcels Tax (both residential and commercial)</th>
<th>Special Parcel Tax on Vacant Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Enforcement

- **Collector of Taxes:**
  - Los Angeles City Council shall adopt, by ordinance, a method for determining whether or not the parcel is taxable property.

### Funding Information

- Proposed: Funds will be dedicated to the creation of affordable housing.

- Proposition: Homelessness services and programs. Other Preservation of existing affordable housing and production of new affordable housing.

- **Measure W:**
  - The city council may develop methods to collect administrative costs associated with the tax.

- **Proposition D:**
  - The City Council shall adopt, by ordinance, a method for determining whether or not the parcel is taxable property in the City.

- **San Francisco Vacant Land Tax:**
  - The City Council may adopt, by ordinance, a method for determining whether or not the parcel is taxable property in the City.

- **Oakland Vacant Property Tax:**
  - The City Council shall adopt, by ordinance, a method for determining whether or not the parcel is taxable property in the City.

- **Vacant Residential Rental Property Tax:**
  - The City Council may adopt, by ordinance, a method for determining whether or not the parcel is taxable property in the City.

- **Proposed:**
  - The city council may adopt, by ordinance, a method for determining whether or not the parcel is taxable property in the City.