DATA FOR CHANGE: PROPERTY INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND EQUITABLE REVITALIZATION

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What We Do

• The Department of Housing and Community Development’s Land Resources division, on behalf of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, strategically acquires and manages vacant or abandoned properties, aiming to return them to productive use and improve Baltimore’s neighborhoods.

• Baltimore’s vacant property inventory is estimated to be 15,000 buildings and 10,000 lots. With a City-owned property inventory of nearly 10,000, in any given year the Land Resources division is responsible for acquiring and managing over 1,000 of these vacant properties.
Data Challenges

- Volume of properties
- Complex business processes
- Kind and amount of data to be stored about each property; compliance with many legal and regulatory requirements
- Number of staff both internal and external involved in processes and relying on data
- No Shared Data System: Properties progress through the division from one unit to the other (i.e. acquisition to legal; legal to asset management), without an accompanying shared data system.
- Results in cumbersome inconsistencies and redundancies in City-owned property data, data management, and reporting (CitiStat).
Data Solution

• Integrated, custom data management application. We call it CoBLAM - City of Baltimore Land Asset Management.

• CoBLAM is one system where all the division data are stored, but has unique functionality for each unit and user within the division.

• Each unit's applications are designed and built separately but ultimately are integrated into on data warehouse. Staff members have one login to access all data related to a project/property.
System Goals

- **Organize and track information on the project and property level** such as milestone dates, project costs, property interest(s), contact information, and project objectives.

- **Identify “to do” items for staff**, organizes their work, and establishes priorities.

- **Produce standard documents** such as affidavits, letters, and memos.

- **Generate reports** to chart progress and analyze data.

- Assist supervisors with **coordinating and managing** workflow.

- **Track costs**, related funding sources, and monitors spending.

- Organize and standardize data and data systems to be more easily shared inter/a-agency and publicly.
Challenges in Building the System

- Internal IT department
- City’s procurement process for contractor
- Takes time to build a system from scratch
- Identifying and making business process changes while building a system
- Adding system design, testing, implementation, training, and troubleshooting tasks into staff already overloaded work schedule
- Compliance with many legal and regulatory requirements
- Staff training: addressing a variety of levels of computer aptitude
- Getting all users actually using the system – primary and external
CoBLAM Overview

- Web-based ASP.NET application based on a Microsoft SQL Server database.

- System design, implementation, and staff training by division staff (managers and primary users) with a contractor for programming and system maintenance.

- Designed for a variety of users, both internal and external. Unique views and functions to each user. The **dashboard** functions as user’s personal portal into the system.

- Organized on the **project and property** levels. Projects can include one or more properties. Properties can have one or more interests.

- 60-70% complete to date. Additional unit-specific systems to build before full integration and GIS components added. Anticipated completion May 2008.
CoBLAM Features

Users log-in on the website.
Dashboard organizes and prioritizes user's work based on the staff role assigned and permissions.
System organizes first on redevelopment project details.
CoBLAM Features

Then, the system organizes on the property level with property details, milestone dates, and more.
Finally, the system organizes on the interest level.
CoBLAM Features

System generates standard documents, automatically populating project/property details.
System generates many custom reports on staff and project progress. Results can be downloaded to Excel for additional analysis or synthesis with additional data.
Future Enhancements

• Finish designing and building **data systems for each division unit.**

• Full integration of five separate data systems into one **data warehouse.**

• Integrating with our City agency data systems (where possible).

• Interface developed for **public use** providing information on City-owned properties, or those in the acquisition pipeline, and redevelopment projects.

• Integration with existing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) application called **HousingView.**