

Using ForeclosureRadar to Improve Cost Recovery

ForeclosureRadar users:

- Find ownership contact information faster
- Improve cost recovery for abatements
- Track photos and notes of blight issues for use in hearings
- Quickly produce reports on complaint and abatement activity

Fighting Blight

In the city of Hayward, CA, abandoned apartments are covered with graffiti and surrounded by trash. Scavengers have ripped copper from the walls. Vagrants squat inside.

In cases like these, the Community Preservation Division tries to hold the owner accountable. “Staff would spend four or five hours on one case just to track an owner. We would try every avenue, the tax assessor, water bills, banks, even driving by the property on the chance there was a realtor sign,” said Stacey Sorensen, Neighborhood Partnership Manager. Sometimes they found the former owner, who was more concerned about avoiding liability than helping.

There are two ways to avoid paying for abatements with taxpayer funds—the owner takes care of the problem or the city hires a contractor and bills the owner. If the owner doesn’t pay, the cost can be added to the county taxes on the property in a special assessment, if the information is verified through a source the county assessor’s office accepts. Otherwise, the city is left holding the bill. “We weren’t getting paid on either end.”



“ForeclosureRadar pays for itself in staff time saved in research alone, not to mention the improved cost recovery benefits.”

Stacey Sorensen
Neighborhood Partnership
Manager
City of Hayward

Saving Taxpayer Dollars through Cost Recovery

To improve cost recovery, Stacey evaluated several alternatives and settled on ForeclosureRadar. “My staff are veterans of the process, some for 10 to 15 years. They understand the requirements. ForeclosureRadar has proven itself.”

With ForeclosureRadar, they now connect a property with the owner in minutes rather than hours. Plus, a greater percentage of owners are found, which means better cost recovery. “For every property that is self-abated, it means fewer taxpayer dollars spent.

Saving Taxpayer Dollars through Increased Efficiency

The Community Preservation Division uses ForeclosureRadar to work smarter and faster.

- Status codes track workflow and tags indicate special conditions, such as abated properties, to quickly identify cost recovery needs.
- Inspectors create a drive list of the most efficient route with step-by-step directions and a map.
- Photos are uploaded as evidence for internal and court hearings.
- Reports demonstrate the number of properties inspected, abated, and recovered.
- Information is shared with other departments, such as planning, building inspection and law enforcement.

Winning the Fight

Remember that abandoned apartment? “We used ForeclosureRadar to find the lender, get a trespass order to keep the vagrants out, and establish public safety. It was something we weren’t able to do before ForeclosureRadar.”

Would Stacey recommend ForeclosureRadar? “Definitely. I have a staff of seven and we all use ForeclosureRadar on a daily basis, including the secretary.”