

# Spatial Analysis of Urban Decay in McKeesport, PA

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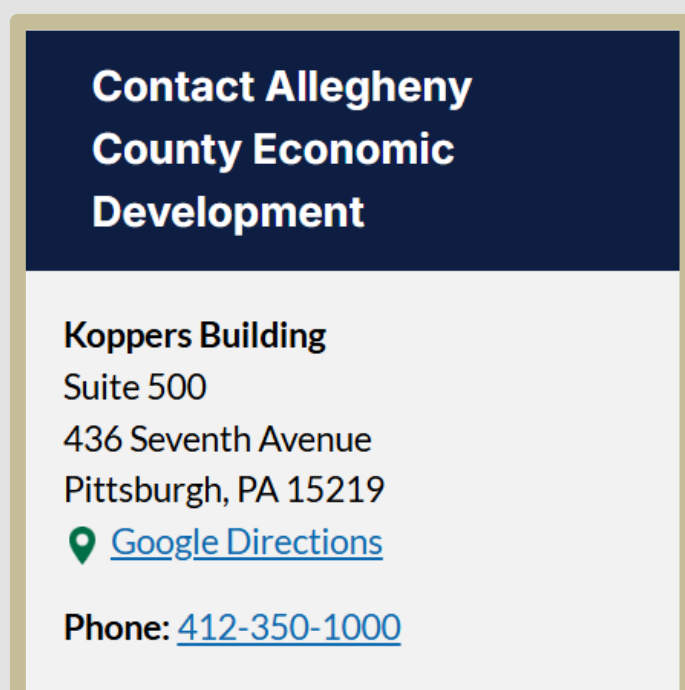
## Background

- Urban decay – process by which a once thriving urban area deteriorates physically, economically, and socially over time
- McKeesport, PA – historic city in Allegheny County, near Pittsburgh
  - Once a major steelmaking hub, hit hard by decline of domestic steelmaking industry in last 50+ years
- Revitalization is a long, complex, and delicate effort



## Objectives

- Analyze changes over time in physical, economic, and social urban decay indicators based on city data
- Assess current state of urban decay based on data analysis
- Explore current county/city initiatives to combat urban decay
- Recommend impactful changes to fight urban decay



## Methodology & Materials

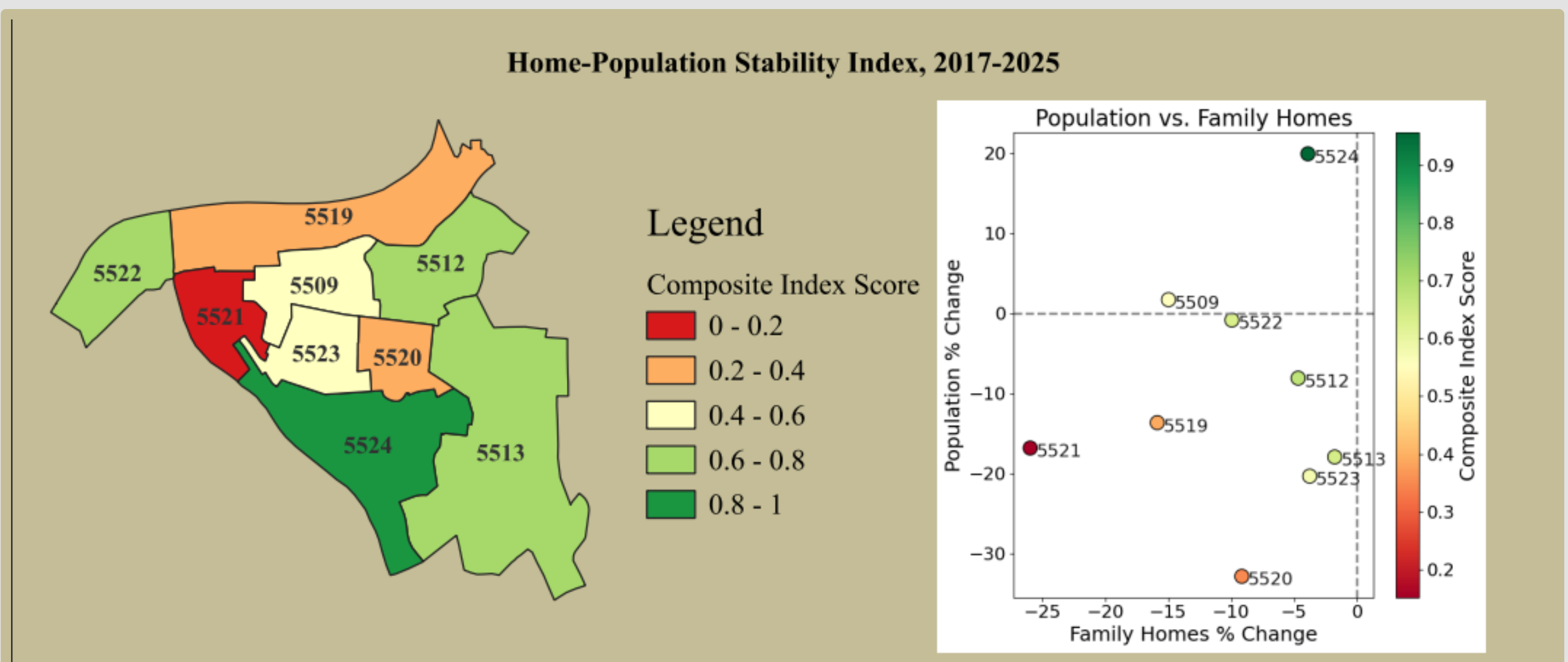
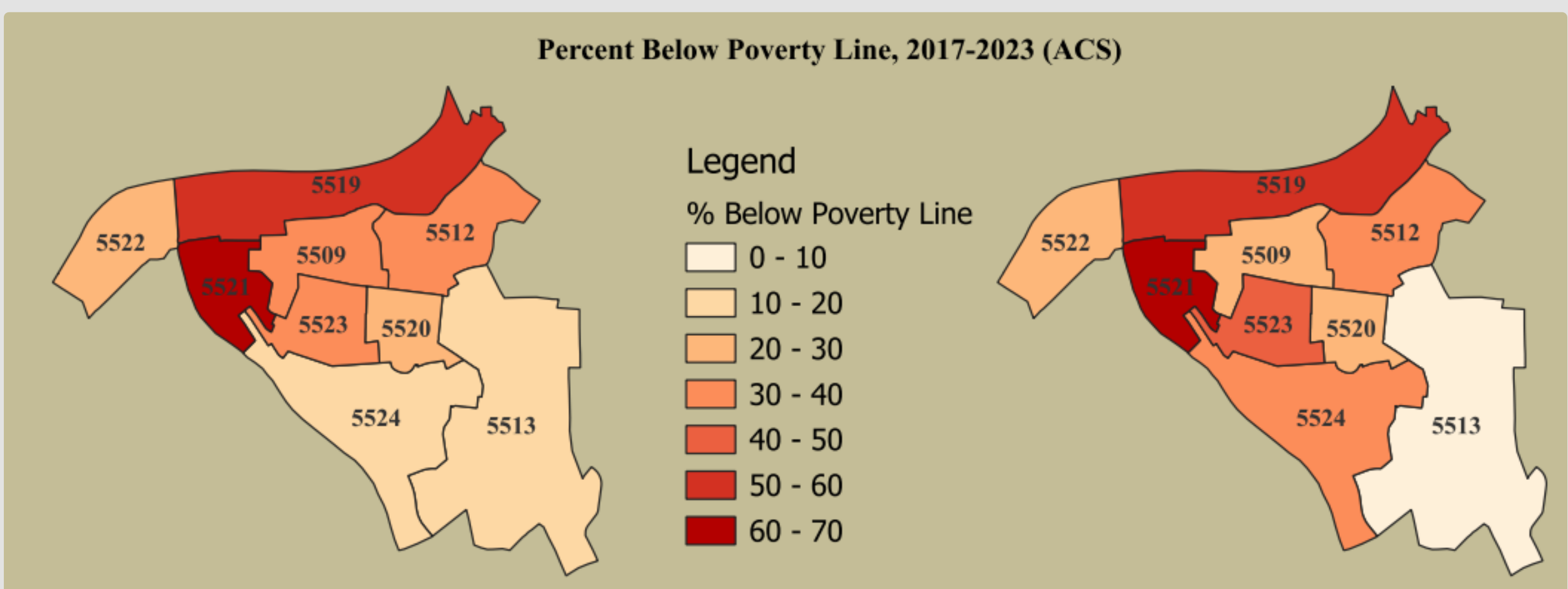
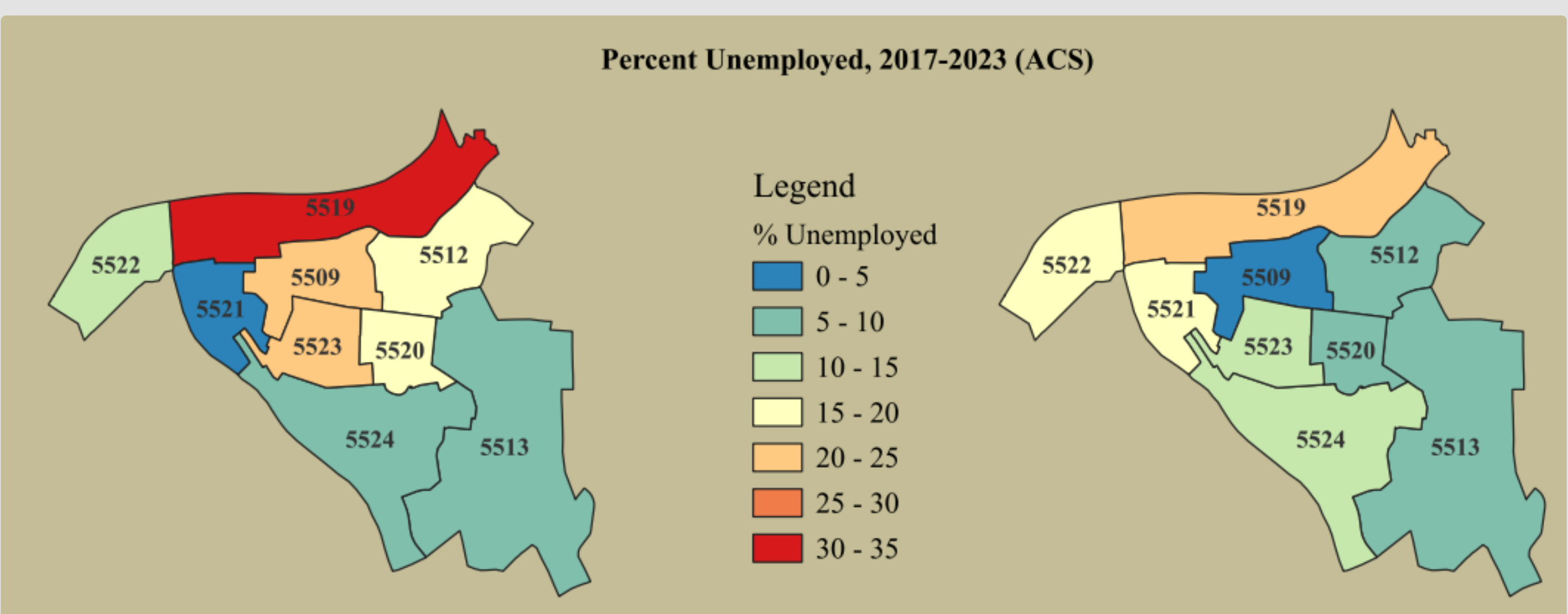
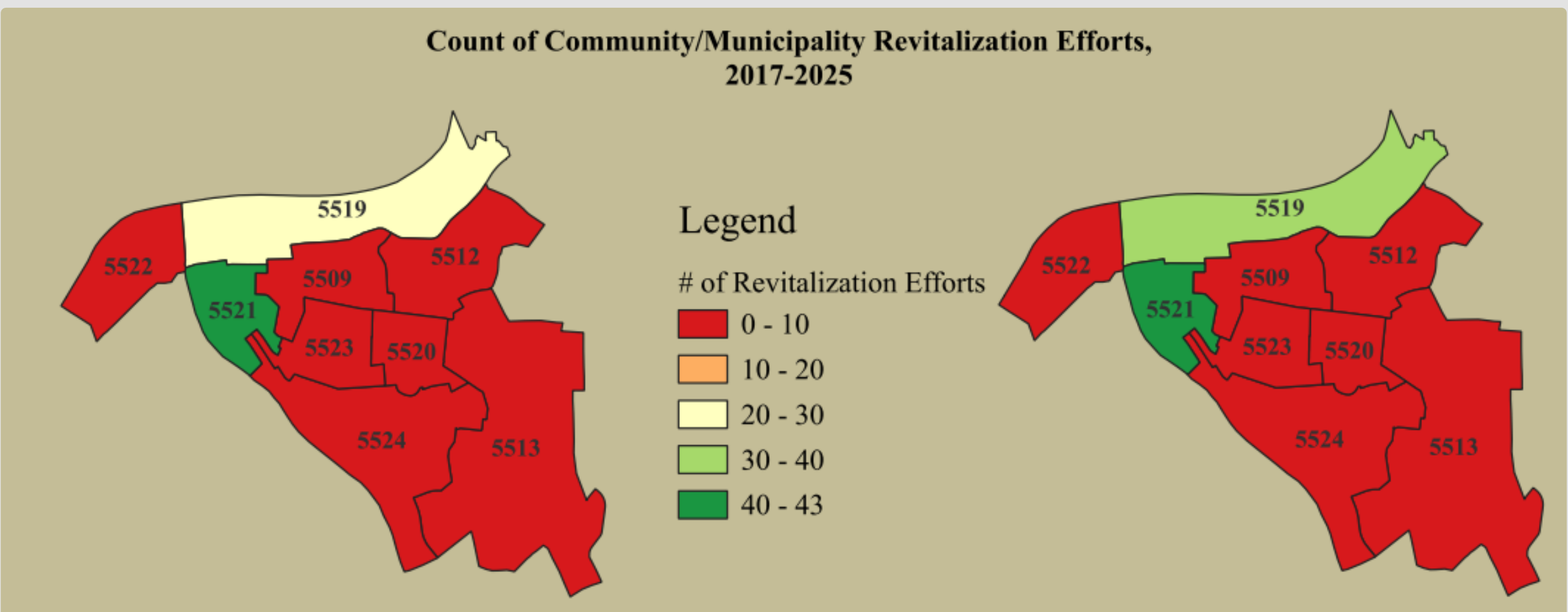
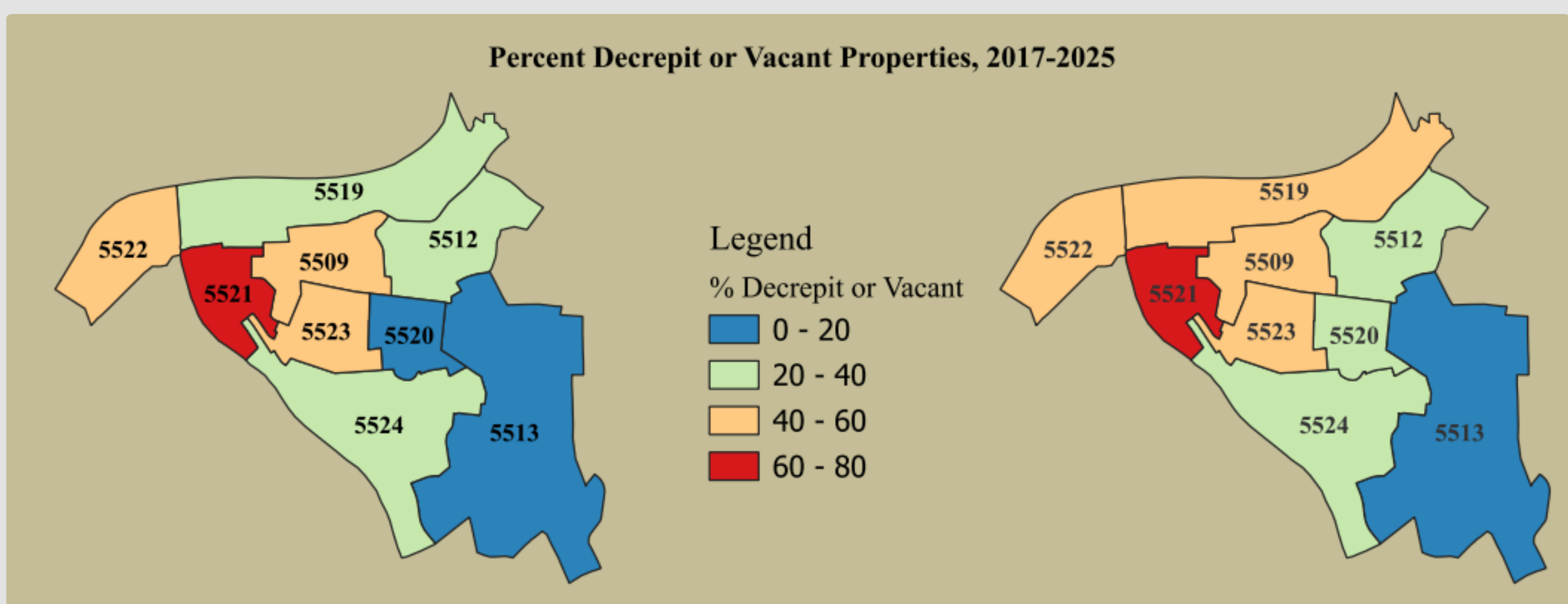


- Used Python, QGIS, and Excel for data preparation, analysis, and visualization
- Extracted physical and social indicators from WPRDC's 2017, 2025 Allegheny County Property Assessments datasets
- Extracted economic and social indicators from select 2017, 2023 ACS 5-year Estimate tables
  - No overlap, data from 2018 not in range for either survey
- Analyzed indicators like property type and condition, vacancy, population change, unemployment rate, poverty rate, and more
- Discovered relevant county/city initiatives from official websites

## Findings – Relevant Initiatives

- McKeesport Rising Initiative – spurs community and economic development via investments in numerous sectors like blight remediation, infrastructure, and more
- Vacant Property Recovery Program – handles acquisition and transfer of blighted properties to developers in Allegheny County
- PA DCED Act 152-2016 – enables counties to establish a demolition fund to finance revitalization of blighted properties
- Community Development Block Grants – provides federal funds for projects designed to benefit struggling, lower-income communities

## Findings – Changes in Urban Decay Indicators



## Conclusions

- General overabundance of decrepit/vacant property
- Revitalization efforts are numerous but highly concentrated
- Unemployment rates have generally cooled
- Poverty rates have generally stagnated but remain high
- Population and number of family homes per tract have generally dwindled
- Tract 5521 generally measures significantly worse than others

## Going Forward

- Kickstart revitalization efforts in other tracts for broader community benefit
- Demolish blighted structures and turn vacant land into businesses for local jobs to combat unemployment and poverty
- Spread success stories of relevant initiatives to attract investors and developers
- Develop affordable housing and recreational areas through vacant land recovery to attract new residents and boost local population

## Sources

- <https://data.wprdc.org/dataset/>
- <https://www.pasda.psu.edu/>
- <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.html>
- <https://www.mckeesport-pa.gov/220/Economic-Development>
- <https://dced.pa.gov/county-demolition-fund-reporting/>