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PAA Extended Abstract
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Using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS)/Housing Vacancy Survey (HVS), this poster is going to examine the three percent of the total housing inventory and the twenty percent of the vacant housing inventory made up of "other" vacant housing units. A housing unit is classified as other vacant when it does not fit into any other year-round vacant category (for rent, for sale, rented or sold but not yet occupied, occasional use, or temporarily occupied by persons with a usual residence elsewhere). Common reasons a housing unit is labeled other vacant is that no one lives in the unit and the owner is making repairs/renovations, does not want to rent or sell, is using the unit for storage, or is elderly and living in a nursing home or with family members.

When a sample unit in the CPS is vacant, the field representative completes the HVS. A primary focus of the HVS is to collect the vacancy status, which represents the vacant housing inventory. In the HVS, field representatives collect the survey information from the most knowledgeable respondent. Often times this is the owner, property manager, leasing agency, or homeowners association. Other knowledgeable respondents are realtors or neighbors. A limitation from HVS data is that not all respondents are able to answer every question pertaining to the unit in sample. While questions such as "When was this unit built?" or "How many bedrooms are in this unit?" are more challenging for some respondents, the vacancy status of the unit is generally easier to answer.

Prior to 2012, field representatives had the option to provide a write-in explanation as to why the unit in sample was an other vacant. Starting in January 2012, the field representatives were instructed to choose between 10 pre-defined explanatory other vacant categories, with an additional option to write in an explanation if it does not fit into any pre-defined category. Not only do the 10 categories provide greater detail about other vacant units, but the categories motivate the field representatives to provide more information about other vacants. In the fourth quarter 2011, write-in explanations were not provided for 12.4% of other vacant units. With the onset of the pre-defined categories in the first quarter 2012, this number decreased to only 2.2%. Additionally, after coding the fourth quarter 2011 write-in explanations into the pre-defined categories using SAS, 31.6% of cases still remained in the "other" category. This percentage

dropped to 8.0% in the first quarter 2012, suggesting the category definitions and examples provide greater clarification on how to further classify other vacant units.

The main limitation of coding the fourth quarter 2011 write-in explanations into the pre-defined categories is that I was coding based on the short response provided by the field representative. While write-in explanations such as "foreclosure" and "used for storage" easily fit into the pre-defined categories, reasons such as "builder backed out" and "not for rent or sale" require more information to properly code and therefore remain in the other vacant category. This is a contributing reason why the other vacant category was four times larger in the fourth quarter 2011 than the first quarter 2012.

The purpose of the other vacant categories is to provide data users with more detailed information about the nearly four million housing units that are classified as other vacant. This is the first time any Census Bureau survey has expanded the other vacant category and quantified the reasons a unit is other vacant. Housing analysts and economists express great interest in the other vacant category so they can properly gauge the housing inventory that is vacant and not on the market. The other vacant categories will allow data users to refine their analyses of housing market trends and to greater understand the shadow inventory.

This poster will present the quarterly frequencies of each other vacant category from first quarter 2012 through fourth quarter 2012. The first quarter 2012 data will be compared to the fourth quarter 2011 data that we coded into the other vacant categories based on the write-in explanations. The category definitions and examples, along with graphs and charts, will also be present.

Other Vacants as a Percentage of Total Housing Units

Distribution of Year-Round Vacant Categories: 2000-2012
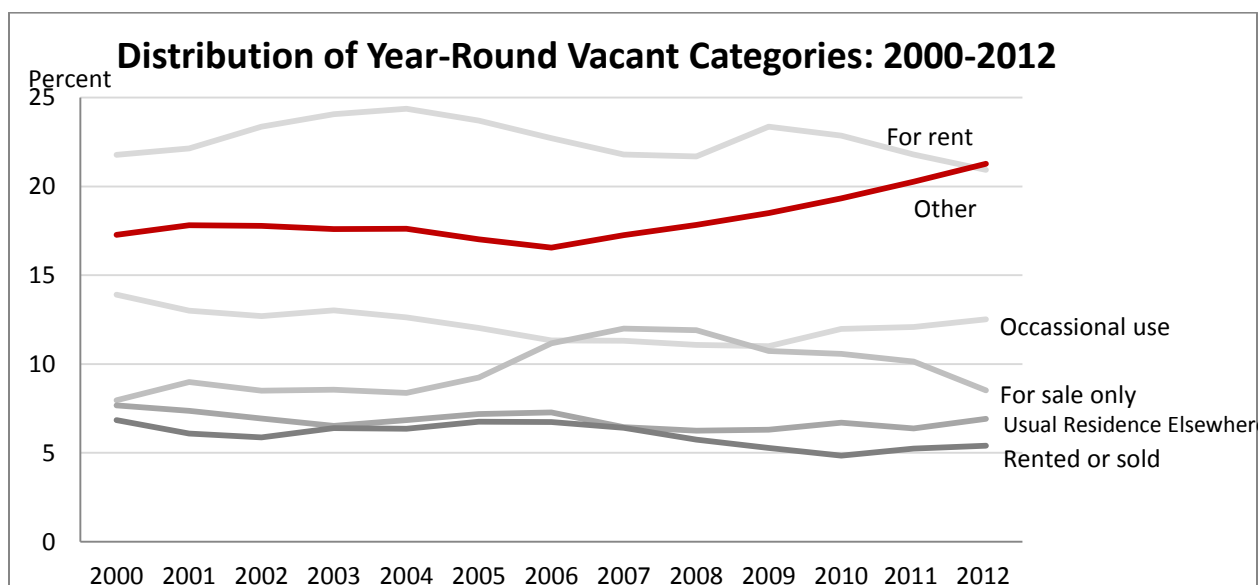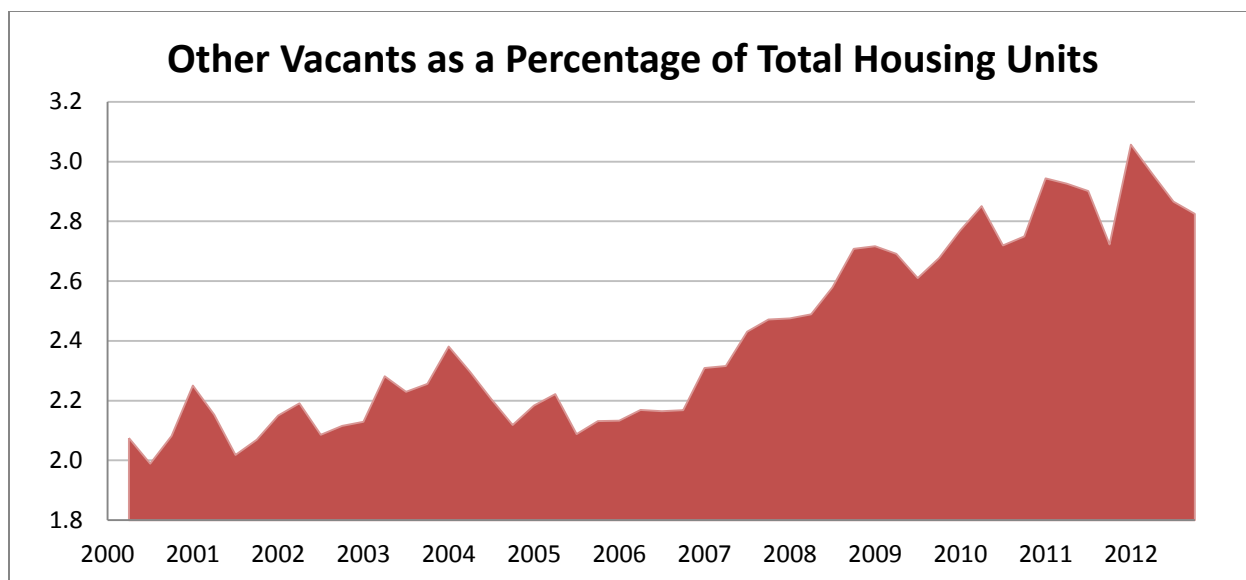
Other Vacant Explanations (in percent)	12Q1	12Q2	12Q3	12Q4
Personal/Family Reasons	19.1	19.2	19.8	20.8
Needs Repairs	12.6	13.7	14.2	14.9
Foreclosure	11.7	12.0	10.7	12.2
Being Repaired	9.6	9.9	9.0	8.6
Storage	8.1	7.5	7.4	6.7
Extended Absence	7.5	6.1	5.2	4.3
Legal Proceedings	6.8	5.6	6.1	5.0
Preparing to Rent/Sell	6.7	6.7	6.3	6.7
Possibly Abandoned/to be Demo./Condemned	6.0	7.2	6.6	6.8
Specific Use Housing	1.6	2.3	1.9	1.7
Other Write-in/Don't Know	10.2	9.8	12.8	12.3

Percentage Point Change of Fourth Quarter 2011 Other Vacant Write-in Explanations to First Quarter 2012 Other Vacant Category Selections