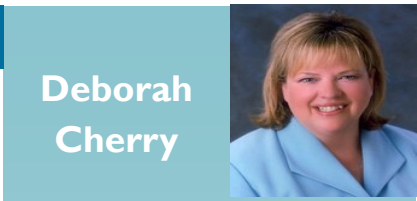




Genesee County Land Bank 2012 Annual Review



Deborah Cherry

Genesee County Land Bank: 2012 Annual Review

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Genesee County Land Bank Authority, I am pleased to present this annual review to the community. This report covers major Land Bank activities for the period 2002 through 2012. We hope you find this report interesting and informative.

As your Genesee County Treasurer, I serve as Chair of the Land Bank Authority Board of Directors. Since 2002, Genesee County has had the responsibility of managing tax foreclosed properties, keeping them under local rather than State control. Since then, the Land Bank has managed tax foreclosed properties for our community. Over that time the Land Bank has developed a number of programs to deal with the growing problem of tax foreclosed properties and blight in our community. This report reviews those programs and their impact.

Deborah Cherry
 Genesee County Treasurer
 Chair
 Genesee County Land Bank Authority

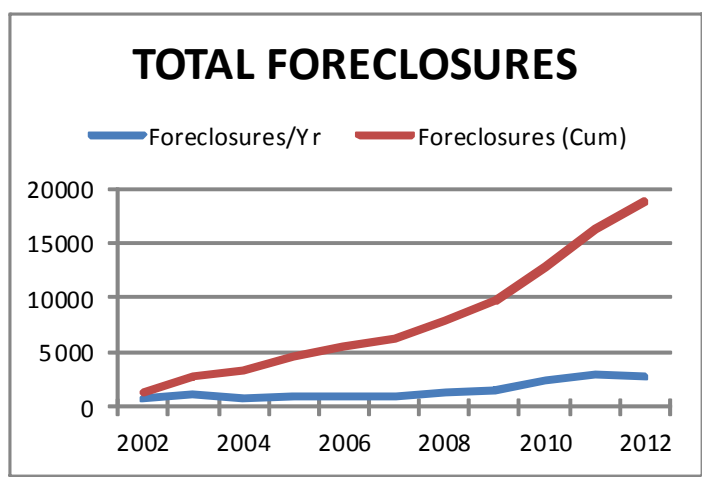
Giving Homeowners a Second Chance through Foreclosure Prevention

With more homeowners than ever in danger of losing their homes for unpaid property taxes, the Genesee County Treasurer has encouraged delinquent taxpayers with homestead properties and qualifying commercial properties to seek assistance. The Treasurer's goal is to assist these taxpayers in postponing the foreclosure of their properties and help achieve their real property tax obligations. For several years, the Treasurer has offered a program to help prevent foreclosure on homes or businesses due to hardship. The reasons for taxpayer's becoming delinquent on their property taxes can range from extreme poverty to unavoidable hardship. Because of these unavoidable circumstances the Treasurer has developed this program to help taxpayers get back on track and resolve their delinquencies with affordable payments. The Foreclosure Prevention Program offers a postponement, for those who qualify, on the foreclosure of property for one additional year. The taxes and fees are paid on a payment plan. Genesee County requires that any person applying for the postponement of a tax foreclosure must own and reside in the property. Commercial properties must be utilized as an operating business, which provides employment for Genesee County residents. In 2012, the Treasurer helped prevent over 1,000 foreclosures using this program.

Foreclosures Still Too High -- But Down 7% in 2012

It is still too early to tell if this will become a trend, but the good news in 2012 was that total tax foreclosures (2,700) were down 7% from 2011 (2,877). While the number of foreclosures is still too high, it may be beginning to trend downward after four straight years of significant increases. The number of foreclosures in Flint was down 18% from 2,185 in 2011 to 1,783 in 2012. Surprisingly, however, the number of foreclosures outside the City of Flint has increased significantly. In 2011, the total number of foreclosures in the suburbs of Flint was 776. In 2012 that number increased 19% to 920. For the past several years, suburban foreclosures have included a significant number of failed subdivisions and condominium developments. That trend appears to be continuing.

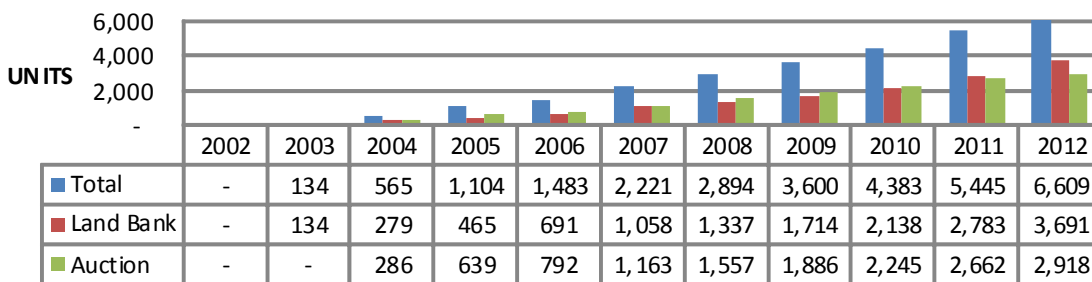
NUMBER OF FORECLOSURES BY YEAR	
Year	Foreclosures
2002	683
2003	1,048
2004	810
2005	1,015
2006	995
2007	872
2008	1,211
2009	1,555
2010	2,317
2011	2,877
2012	2,700
Total	16,083



Putting Property Back on the Tax Roll

Since 2002, when the County became the foreclosing governmental unit, there have been 16,083 properties foreclosed. Of these, 6,609 properties have been sold 2,918 by auction and 3,691 by the Land Bank. The Land Bank has steadily increased its sale of properties over the years with 2012 sales reaching 908 properties for a total of \$3.6 million. While our sales have increased, our inventory of properties has grown and is heavily populated by blighted and abandoned properties for which there is no market. Of the Land Bank's current inventory of about 9,600 properties, nearly 5,300 are vacant residential lots in heavily abandoned areas of Flint and Beecher. Nearly 400 are abandoned commercial and industrial properties, many of which are environmentally contaminated or so blighted that they need to be demolished. Of the remaining 3,950 residential structures, most have been stripped of any value and should be demolished. Since the Land Bank was formed, over \$16.4 million worth of property has been put back on the tax rolls through our sales operations.

PROPERTY SALES (CUMULATIVE)



YEARLY SALES	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
TOTAL	-	134	431	539	379	738	673	706	783	1,062	1,164
LAND BANK	-	134	145	186	226	367	279	377	424	645	908
AUCTION	-	-	286	353	153	371	394	329	359	417	256

GCLBA Current Inventory By Property Type	Number
Residential Structure	3,950
Residential Lot	5,260
Commercial Structure	125
Commercial Lot	263
Other	26
Total	9,624

Creating Affordable Housing Through Rentals and Sales

One of the goals of the Land Bank is to create affordable housing opportunities for residents. At any given time the Land Bank has about 85 rental properties. Once a tenant establishes a reliable payment history we work with them to convert the tenant to a home owner by offering them an opportunity to purchase the property at an affordable monthly payment via a land contract. The Land Bank has sold nearly 1,300 homes, mostly to first time home owners on land contracts. The average monthly payment on these homes is under \$200 per month and the term is generally five years, making these homes affordable to even the lowest wage earners in the area.

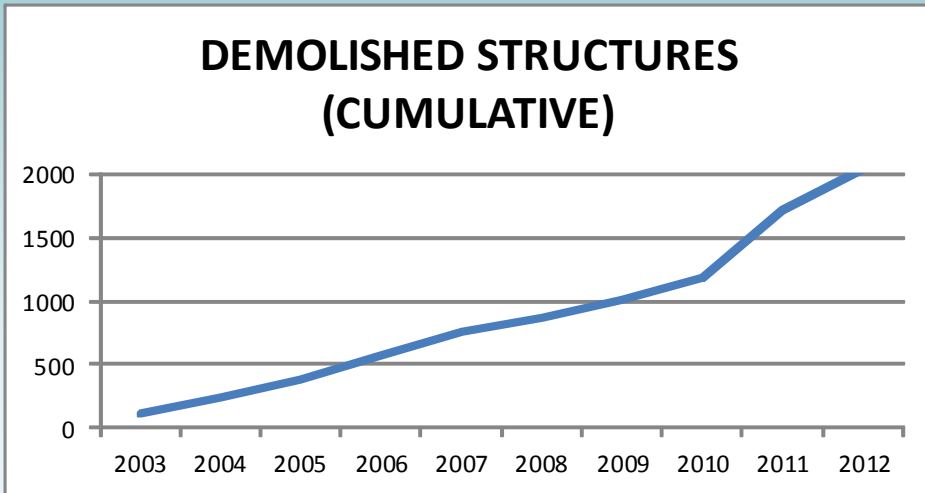
Engaging Community Groups in Cleaning and Greening Lots

For the ninth year in a row, community groups received stipends for seasonally maintaining concentrated clusters of vacant lots held by the Land Bank through the Clean & Green program. Participating groups include churches, schools, non-profits, neighborhood associations, and block clubs. In 2012, each participating group maintained at least 25 vacant lots every three weeks between mid-May and early-September. The 43 participating groups of the 2012 program collectively maintained more than 1,300 vacant lots or roughly 48 city blocks. The 2012 program was supported with funding from the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, and the Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center.



Demolishing Blighted Structures

Through 2012, the Land Bank has demolished 2,040 blighted properties by using every financial tool available including: proceeds from the sale of Brownfield bonds; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds; and federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP 1, 2, and 3) funds. Just last year 332 blighted properties owned by the Land Bank were demolished in various communities throughout Genesee County using NSP funds. Many of these demolitions have been completed through partnerships with the City of Flint and the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission.



Year	Structures Demolished
2003	115
2004	121
2005	139
2006	197
2007	187
2008	110
2009	141
2010	171
2011	527
2012	332
Total	2,040

Improving Blighted Properties through Partnerships

There are about 20,000 blighted properties in Flint and about 2,000 more in neighboring communities. While many people assume that the Land Bank owns every blighted property, the Land Bank actually owns about one out of every three. Through a partnership with the City of Flint, Career Alliance and Mott Community College, for the past four years we have performed weed and trash abatement on virtually every blighted property in Flint and on every Land Bank property in other communities including Burton, Linden, Swartz Creek, and the Townships of Genesee, Mt. Morris, Flint, Mundy, Argentine, and more. Services have included boarding and securing hundreds of houses in a partnership with the Downtown Weed and Seed Program, Garfield-Bunche Community Service Corporation, the West Flint Church of the Nazarene and the New Paths jail alternative program. Since 2009 we removed nearly 2,500 tons of trash, much of it having accumulated for years.

Making Lots Available for Re-use

Area residents continued to maintain, garden, and purchase vacant lots held by the Land Bank in 2012. Supporting homeownership has been a top priority of the Land Bank since it formed. Thus, homeowners with vacant Land Bank property on either side of their home are generally eligible to purchase that side lot for a nominal fee. The Land Bank has sold over 650 side lots to date. In addition to increasing property value for homeowners, side lot sales help improve the neighborhood and put property back on the tax roll. To give those who are not eligible for side lot purchases access to vacant lots the Land Bank offers formal maintenance agreements, including Adopt-A-Lot, Lease-A-Lot, and Lease-A-Lot with Option. Through these agreements, the Land Bank transfers access rights and maintenance responsibilities to those who want to re-use available land. Creative mowing, flower gardens, pocket parks, food gardens and low-maintenance plantings are examples of work completed through agreements with the Land Bank. There are currently more than 350 maintenance agreements for Land Bank lots. The Land Bank also sells vacant lots, beyond the side lot option. More than 800 other vacant land purchases have taken place since the Land Bank formed. Vacant land purchases, other than side lots, include condominium and subdivision developments that were abandoned by the original developers. These have become an increasing problem in Genesee County over the past three years.



Connecting and Collaborating with Our Community

By connecting with area residents and organizations the Land Bank seeks to increase local awareness of its policies and programs and gain feedback on their reception and perception. In the past year our Community Outreach Coordinator, Raynetta Speed, attended more than 391 neighborhood-based meetings. The Land Bank staff annually gives presentations to an array of area audiences, including community-based organizations, students, and neighborhood groups. The Land Bank also has a Citizens' Advisory Council whose purpose is to connect the Land Bank's staff and Board of Directors to the thoughts and sentiments of residents. By collaborating with area institutions the Land Bank seeks to leverage resources, operate more strategically, and ultimately amplify its impact in Genesee County. Collaboration on the Land Bank's 2012 Michigan Blight Elimination Grant is an example of successful collaboration, which included a demolition strategy that was created using data from the City of Flint Master Plan Housing Conditions Assessment. Land Bank collaborations over the last year also include supporting the City of Flint Master Plan, Flint River Corridor Alliance, Neighborhoods Without Borders, participating in *edible flint*, and participating in Building Neighborhood Power.

Investing In Our Community—The Neighborhood Stabilization Program

The Genesee County Land Bank, in a partnership with the City of Flint, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), and the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission (GCMPC), is investing in our community through federal grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

So far, the NSP Program (a part of President Obama's stimulus program) has allowed this partnership to spend over \$36.5 million benefitting over 150 local businesses who have been engaged to build or remodel homes and to eliminate blighted properties through demolition. Of this total, \$12.6 million has been invested in blight removal and the demolition of 1,417 homes in seven Genesee County communities (Burton, Fenton, Mt. Morris, Flint, and the Townships of Flint, Genesee and Mt. Morris). Another \$23.9 million has been invested in housing renovation or building a total of 177 homes in ten communities (Burton, Clio, Fenton, Mt. Morris, Swartz Creek, Flint and the Townships of Flint, Genesee, Grand Blanc, and Mt. Morris). The total expenditure of \$36.5 million is the equivalent of creating 912 jobs earning the average annual wage in Michigan.

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Hon. Omar Sims – *Treasurer*
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