

Genesee County Land Bank 2015 Annual Review

Clean & Green Doubles in 2015



On April 16, 2015 more than 120 community members gathered at Genesee County Community Action Resource Department (GCCARD) to kick-off the 2015 Clean & Green program. Participants represented the 57 community-based organizations that comprised the program this year. From April through September, these 57 groups maintained more than 3,400 vacant properties in and around Flint every three weeks, the equivalent of approximately 142 city blocks. These numbers represent a doubling of the program's scale between 2014

and 2015. This increase in Clean & Green's size came from new funding for the program, maintenance funding included in the Land Bank's Hardest Hit Fund demolition grants.

The increase in Clean & Green doubled not only its maintenance results, but its investment in community-based organizations and youth as well. Block clubs, schools, churches, neighborhood associations, and local non-profits are some of the 57 groups that participate in Clean & Green. Each group receives a stipend for maintaining at least 25 properties every three weeks, though most groups maintain many more than 25 properties. More than two-thirds of Clean & Green groups include participation from neighborhood youth, who then create positive change in their neighborhoods. More than 250 youth participated in Clean & Green in 2015.

In 2015 Clean & Green:

- Maintained more than 3,400 vacant properties every three weeks
- Completed more than 26,000 vacant property "mowings"
- Engaged more than 250 youth in improving their neighborhoods, including more than 125 who were paid
- Decoratively secured and boarded 100 vacant houses
- Invested nearly \$500,000 in 57 community groups that engaged more than 500 residents and community members in improving neighborhoods in and around Flint
- Ultimately, contributed to eliminating blight in and around Flint valued at more than \$1.7 million

Clean & Green has been a program of the Genesee County Land Bank since 2004. The program started as a way to acknowledge and support the vacant property maintenance work that was already occurring in many neighborhoods where vacant properties exist. Thus, the purpose of Clean & Green is to support innovative community organizations in the cleaning, maintaining, and beautifying of otherwise vacant properties in Genesee County. The 2015 program was supported through grant funding from the Ruth Mott foundation, the Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center, and the U.S. Treasury Hardest Hit Fund, all of which are supporting the program again in 2016.



- By Natalie Pruett

Deborah Cherry

**Genesee County
Land Bank**

**2015 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 during 2015. 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. The Land Bank's major activities are property sales, property maintenance and demolition.

Through programs like Clean & Green, the Land Bank works in partnership with many community organizations to maintain blighted properties. As you will read in this Annual Review, the Clean & Green program doubled its activities this year due to the number of demolitions completed through the Hardest Hit Fund where funds were made available to maintain properties after demolition for a five year period.

Other major accomplishments this year have included: demolishing over 1,000 blighted properties, completion of Phase 1 and most of Phase 2 of the Chevy Commons redevelopment plan turning this former Chevrolet factory into a first class nature area and walking trail; and demolishing the blighted former Ramada Inn in Mt. Morris Township.

We're proud of our achievements in 2015 and hope you will be, too!

Deborah Cherry
Genesee County Treasurer
Chair, Genesee County Land Bank Authority

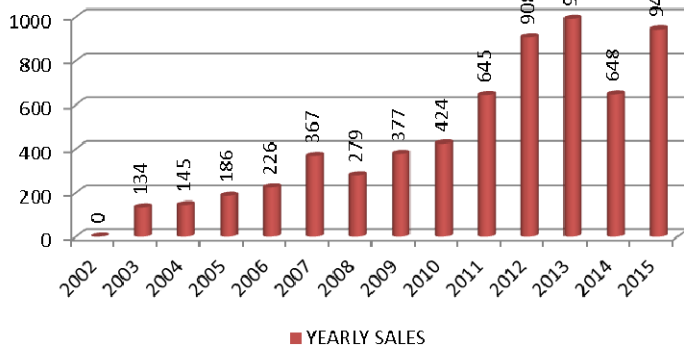
Putting Property Back on the Tax Rolls

Revenue from the sale of tax-foreclosed properties is the primary source of funding for the operation of the Genesee County Land Bank (GCLB) and the maintenance of vacant properties. Fiscal year 2014/2015 has turned out to be the second best year for sales at the GCLB with 943 properties sold generating a total of \$4.2 million in gross revenue. Approximately half (425) of these sales were houses sold on land contracts, primarily to first time home owners. 269 of these properties were vacant lots sold to adjacent homeowners or businesses. The remainder were commercial and cash sales of structures.

The GCLB currently has 1,495 active land contracts with a balance of \$7,826,230.00. In addition to generating funds for Land Bank operations and property maintenance, these properties generate tax revenue for local, regional and state government. During the 2014/2015 fiscal year, 186 land contracts were paid off and deeded to the purchasers.

- By Phil Stair

PROPERTY SALES



GCLBA's Inventory of Tax-Foreclosed Properties

The GCLBA accepts properties from the Genesee County Treasurer after tax-foreclosure to position them for re-use and eliminate blight as funds are available. 63% of the Land Bank's current inventory of 13,120 properties are vacant lots while 36% contain structures. 95% of these properties are residential. The table below provides a breakdown of property by type.

GCLBA Current Inventory By Property Type	Residential Structure	Residential Lot	Commercial Structure	Commercial Lot	Other	Total
Number	4,594	7,954	186	371	15	13,120

Making Lots Available for Re-use

Did you know that there are over 7,000 Land Bank vacant lots available to Adopt or Lease? The Land Bank's **Lots Available Program** allows residents and organizations to either adopt or lease vacant land. These agreements are for vacant lots only. No building is allowed on these lots with the exceptions of raised garden beds and a small movable tool shed. Adopt-A-Lot Agreements (AAL) are free and they are good for one growing season and can be renewed every year. AAL is a good option if you want to mow a vacant lot. Lease-A-Lot Agreements (LAL) allows a person to lease vacant land to garden or maintain. They cost \$1 per lot per year typically last 2-5 years. LAL is recommended for gardening or developing neighborhood pocket parks. Currently there are 743 adoptions and leases registered with the Genesee County Land Bank. With 900 new demolitions expected in 2016, there will be more lots available to adopt or lease. If you are interested in one of these agreements or would like more information, please contact Renee Harvey, the GCLBA's Land Access Coordinator, at 810-257-3088 ext. 541 or rharvey@thelandbank.org. Renee is a LISC-AmeriCorps member serving at the Land Bank to support community re-use of vacant land.

- By Renee Harvey



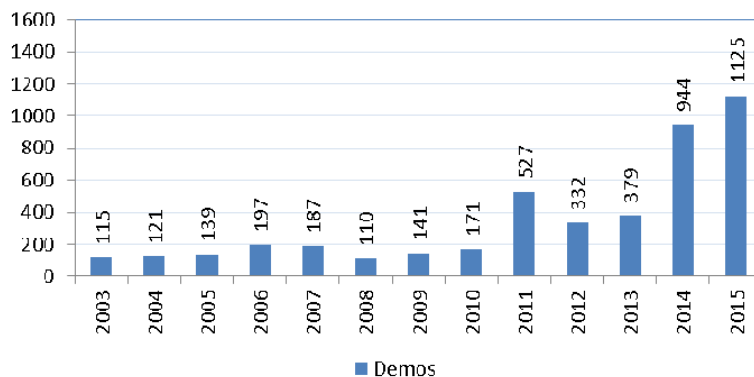
Aggressive Blight Elimination Campaign Underway

The Genesee County Land Bank (GCLB) is in the midst of the largest blight elimination campaign to date. Since 2013, the GCLBA has received \$34.699,519 million in funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury's Hardest Hit Fund allocated through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). This funding will enable the GCLBA to demolish a total of more than 2,700 blighted properties and support maintenance on the remaining vacant lots for five years. During the fiscal year 2015, the GCLBA demolished and maintained 1,028 properties.



In addition to the Hardest Hit Funds, the GCLBA received several other state and federal grants to demolish blighted structures. The City of Flint awarded the GCLBA \$956,230 in HUD Community Development Block Grant dollars for demolition. In 2015, 15 blighted commercial and 7 blighted residential properties were demolished under CDBG. The GCLB received an additional \$871,440 in HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program Income (NSP) funds from MSHDA.

Demolished Structures



In 2015, 33 blighted residential structures were demolished with this funding. In addition to these successes, the GCLBA led the effort to secure \$957,000 in funds to demolish the former Ramada Inn on Pierson Road.

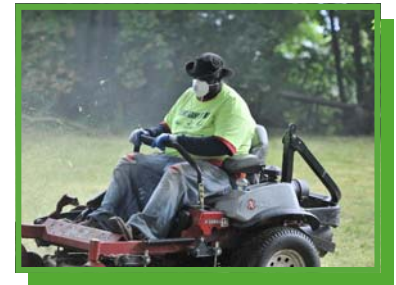
The GCLB's aggressive blight elimination campaign will continue into 2016 and 2017 with more than \$12 million in HHF and \$1 million in Community Development Block grant funds for demolition. The GCLB also received \$1 million from the County Treasurer to demolish blighted properties in the out county. The GCLB will continue to seek additional funding to demolish remaining vacant and blighted properties in Genesee County.

- By Christina Kelly

2015 Property Maintenance Report

2015 was a very productive year for the Genesee County Land Bank's Blight Elimination Team. **Our mowing crews cut over 31,000 vacant properties within the City of Flint.** This was achieved, in part, by the implementation of the City's mowing plan which calls for the use of mow strips on vacant properties not adjacent to occupied structures. **Our crews in the out-county areas cut an additional 4,000 plus vacant properties.**

Our garbage removal crew follow behind those cleaning and mowing lots. Using our garbage truck, these workers removed all of the refuse that our mowing crews placed on the curb. The Land Bank also provided dumpsters and labor for several organized neighborhood clean-ups. In all, **over 624 tons of garbage were removed from the City of Flint and surrounding areas.**



Our blight elimination team also includes tree cutting and wood chipping crews. These crews clear vacant property of fallen trees and overgrown brush and they cut down dangerous trees and limbs from Land Bank and Genesee County Treasurer owned properties. Several violent storms this spring and summer made the crew's work particularly demanding. **By years' end, the removal of tree limbs and brush produced more than 1,700 cubic yards of woodchips.**

The Land Bank also has a construction and building maintenance crew. **This crew renovated twelve residential properties and boarded and secured more than 300 vacant structures within Genesee County in 2015.**

- By Duane Bickford

What's all the "Buzz" at Chevy Commons?

The Chevy Commons project has been moving forward and creating a "buzz" in the community. Residents are eager and excited to use the space. People are already walking, jogging, and biking daily at the site.

At Chevy Commons, the first two phases of a three phase plan have been completed. The landscaping for phase II will be completed this spring. The improvements will make it a recreation area that is safe and useable for the community. Chevy Commons has made a huge transformation since last year (spring of 2015) when construction began at the site. The completed 26+ of the 62 acre site will include newly planted trees, shrubs and grass, along with trails at the once vacant industrial site.

Where do we go from here? The Genesee County Land Bank, the City of Flint and other groups are working together to find additional funding to make sure this project is completed. Because Chevy Commons is a key link to complete an overall riverfront restoration plan for the area, the effort will continue so we can keep the "buzz" going at Chevy Commons.

By Cheryl McHallam



GENESEE COUNTY LAND BANK BOARD MEMBERS:

Hon. Deborah Cherry
– Chair
Hon. Brenda Clack
– Vice Chair
Hon. Patricia Lockwood
– Secretary
Hon. Jackie Poplar
– Treasurer
Hon. Mark Young
Hon. Pegge Adams
Hon. Bryant Nolden

GENESEE COUNTY LAND BANK CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

Chris Del Morone – Chair
Larry Petrella – Vice Chair
William Alexander
Clarence Campbell
Harold Doll
Christopher Gehringer
Gerri Hall
Rev. Jacob Hawkins
Deborah Holmes
Joe Karlicheck
Joe King
Eric Loper
Vince Lorriane
Jeff Neville
Harry Ryan
Bobbie Walton
Two (2) Vacancies

Douglas Weiland,
Executive Director

To receive our e-newsletter please sign up on our website at:
<http://www.thelandbank.org/newsroom.asp>