

Genesee County Land Bank FY 2019 Annual Report

**From Blight to Bright**

The former Shady Acres Mobile Home Park is now an attractive wooded lot cleared of abandoned and blighted trailers and buildings, pads and roads. The Genesee County Land Bank would like to thank its project funders, including the Genesee County Treasurer, City of Flint, and Environmental Protection Agency for making the demolition and clean-up of this site possible. Contractors removed more than 2,000 tons of debris from the site. Special thanks to the Rollingwood Neighborhood Association and dedicated neighbors for working with us to improve our community.

- By Faith Finholm



Message from  
our Board Chair  
& Executive  
Director

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed our lives and created challenges for all of us. On behalf of the Genesee County Land Bank Authority, we are sending this Annual Report as a reminder that there is evidence of community resilience all around us. Successes from 2019 highlighted in this report include demolishing 919 blighted and abandoned structures, completing nearly 60,000 vacant property mows - half of those in partnership with community groups, removing 400 tons of debris and trash from lots, renovating 9 houses, and selling 251 structures and 293 vacant lots to responsible owners. These efforts go a long way towards expanding assets for residents and improving neighborhoods.

We look forward to our continued work together to overcome the additional challenges ahead to make Flint and Genesee County a more vibrant place to live and work. Thank you to our many partners and funders for making our work to address the problems with abandoned and tax-foreclosed properties feasible.

We hope that you stay healthy and safe.

Deborah Cherry, Chairperson  
Paul McShane, Interim Executive  
Director

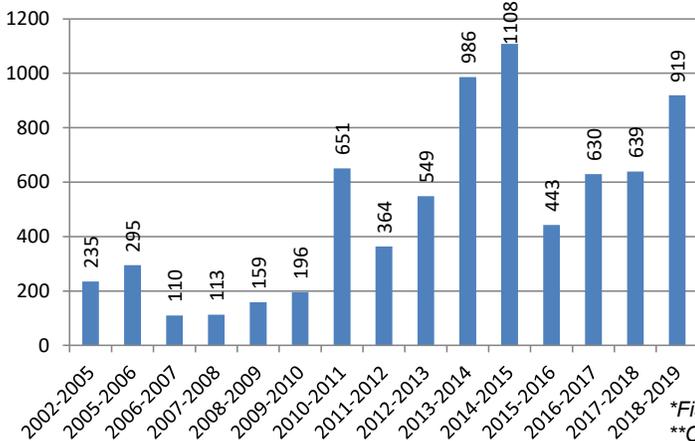
**The Fight Against Blight Continues**

More than 11,200 blighted Land Bank owned structures have been demolished since 2004 with 76% of those completed since FY 2014. In FY 2019, the Land Bank completed 919\*\* demolitions - mostly with funding from the Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) program. Clearing blight from neighborhoods has created new opportunities for investments, recreation, and neighborhood improvements. Lots are transformed into side yards and gardens. With the Land Bank's HHF program wrapping up in early 2020, far fewer demolitions are planned for the coming year yet blight remains a significant challenge

and the number of blighted structures will likely increase. We will continue to work with partners to secure funding for demolition in 2020 and beyond.

- Christina Kelly

Land Bank Demolitions By Fiscal Year (FY)\*



\*Fiscal year is unknown for 259 demolitions.  
\*\*Completed demos updated 6/17/202

## CLEAN & GREEN CELEBRATES ITS 15<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

In 2019, from May to September, Clean & Green volunteers cleaned and maintained vacant properties every 3 weeks. Some of the program results include:

- Over 4,100 vacant lots maintained in and around Flint.
- 12 food gardens, flower gardens, trees and pocket parks planted.
- 90 vacant structures secured with boards painted to mimic doors and windows.
- Supported over 1,250 program volunteers, including 500 youth.
- Reduced crime in neighborhoods according to research by the University of Michigan, Youth Violence Prevention Center.

Groups that went above and beyond the call of duty of Clean & Green received awards and recognition:

- **The “Clean & Green Thumb” award** went to CHEA – the Center for Higher Educational Achievement for the best greening site.
- The **“Superior Service Squad” award** went to Grace Community Christian Fellowship – Fight Against Blight – Power of One for receiving the highest property evaluation scores for their high quality maintenance.
- The final and top award **“The Barbara Griffith Wilson Award – The Overachiever”** an annual award created to honor one of the original Clean & Green group leaders, went to R.O.L.E – Reaching Out Love Everyday for going far above and beyond the expectations of the program.

The Land Bank is grateful to Clean & Green volunteers who clear, maintain and garden vacant and abandoned properties and to funders, including the Ruth Mott Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the University of Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center and the Hardest Hit Fund program. *- By Melissa Hertlein*



### Clean & Green Program Spans Generations

The Clean & Green Program started in 2004, the same year the Genesee County Land Bank formed. Initially, only a few groups participated in the program. Last year 62 devoted groups maintained more than 4,000 properties every three weeks. At the end of the growing season these groups completed 31,000 mows in the Greater Flint Community. Although, this is a remarkable accomplishment by a group of caring and hardworking residents, something else was significant about last year's program. For the very first time, five generations of volunteers participated in the program.

A particular highlight for me from last year was a group from the Gen Z generations including people born in 1996 and after. Two young men ages 23 and 24 were bothered by the neglected vacant properties in their neighborhood and decided to do something about it. These thoughtful young men also realized that their younger neighbors needed something to do during the summer months to earn money. These Gen Z residents also had the desire to become mentors to their young neighbors. After learning about the program, they thought this may be the answer to their prayers. They could beautify the vacant lots, employ their young neighbors and become mentors all at the same time. Every three weeks this Gen Z group managed 25 properties in their area. By joining the Program these young men were able to accomplish their three goals: beautify their neighborhood, include their young neighbors in their work, which we do encourage, and become mentors. Thank you Dre'shon Burt and Marquise Edwards for a job well done!

*- By Raynetta Speed*

## Land Bank Crews Clear Blight in Flint and Genesee County

- More than **25,000** vacant properties mowed within the City of Flint.
- More than **5,000** additional vacant properties mowed in out-county communities.
- More than **500** tons of garbage removed from vacant properties in Flint and surrounding areas.
- Removed tree limbs and brush from properties producing more than **1,700** cubic yards of woodchips.
- **550** vacant structures boarded and secured within Genesee County.
- Made improvements and renovations to **9** houses sold through the Land Bank. - *By Duane Bickford*



## Placemaking Around Durant Tuuri Mott

The Land Bank continues to support revitalization efforts in the areas surrounding Durant Tuuri Mott (DTM) and the new EduCare facility in collaboration with partners. Several improvement projects were completed during FY 2019, including: demolishing nine blighted structures, including a formerly vacant gas station, renovating a Land Bank owned property, and sponsoring repairs on ten porches. The Land Bank's efforts were leveraged in collaborating DTM and Carriage Town service days with Kettering University, Genesee County Habitat for Humanity, the Porch Project, Mid-Michigan Pride Painting, and Republic Services. 200 volunteers planted flowers at thirteen homes, mowed lots, removed brush and overgrowth, and painted six porches.

The Land Bank worked with partners on several other placemaking projects in the area. Key collaborations included working with the Flint Public Arts Project to paint seven murals on commercial buildings, as well as installing a surface mural and making lighting improvements to the Carriage Town Neighborhood Association's Water Street Plaza. In addition, ten unique hand-shaped chairs painted by professional artists will be installed on lots owned by key institutions along University Avenue in the spring and seven utility boxes were wrapped with artistic images to create additional small-scale art installations. A rain garden was installed in partnership with the Genesee County Conservation District at Durant Tuuri Mott Elementary to reduce storm-water runoff into the thoroughfare and enhance the neighborhood aesthetic along University Avenue.

The Land Bank contracted Michigan State University's (MSU) Sustainable Built Environment Initiative to support a vacant land use plan for the area during FY 2020. MSU will work with the Land Bank and other partners to engage residents and stakeholders through a twelve month process. The Land Bank will support catalytic improvement projects and blight elimination activities in the area in FY 2019/2020. With demonstrated success, this model may expand to other neighborhoods Flint in the future. - *By Moses Timlin*



## Promoting Homeownership, Affordable Housing and Redevelopment Through Sales

The Land Bank relies upon sales revenue to support the operations of the Land Bank, the maintenance of the vacant properties, and assisting with blight elimination. During fiscal year 2018/2019 the Land Bank sold 544 parcels generating nearly \$3.1 million of gross revenue. Of those 544 parcels, 293 were vacant lots and 251 were structures.

The Land Bank is continuing to focus on Featured Home sales for all residential structures in good or fair condition; 116 Featured Homes were sold last year. We piloted this program in 2018 and exclusively sell residential structures with this process now. This program was dreamed up by the sales staff and other staff members that have a role in the sales process through a moderator lead Lean Process Improvement workshop. As a result we are selling houses over 70% faster than the old application driven process and have a much simpler internal process to speed things up.

We are also focused on getting vacant lots back into the hands of the homeowners in our community. With the Help for the Hardest Hit (HHF) program winding down, the Land Bank has many vacant lots from the completed demolitions. We are sending out post cards to neighboring parcels letting people know we own a vacant lot next to them and to apply, they simply need to send back the post card with their information on it.

- By Dawn Everett



Check out the Land Bank's Featured Homes and Land for Development for Sale at [www.thelandbank.org](http://www.thelandbank.org)

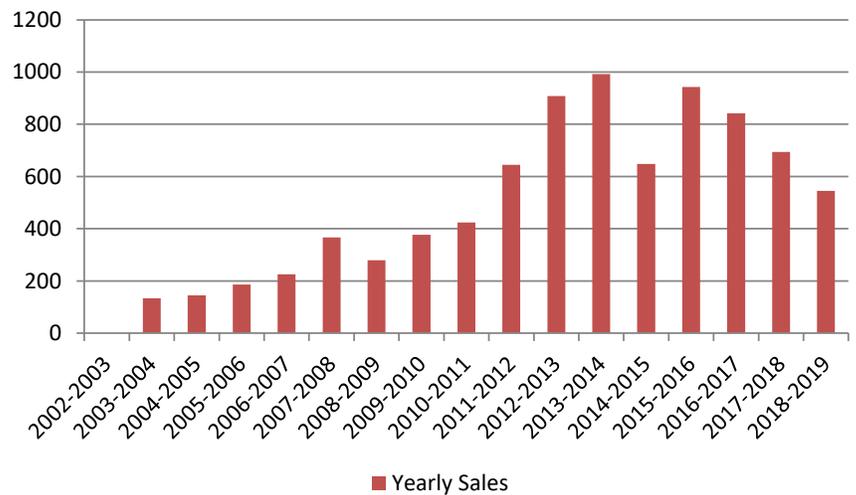


# Genesee County Land Bank Inventory In Review

## Land Bank Sales FY 2019 by Property Type

| GLBA Sales by Property Type | Number     |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Residential w/Structure     | 240        |
| Resident Vacant Lot         | 280        |
| Commercial w/Structure      | 11         |
| Commercial Vacant Lot       | 11         |
| Other                       | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>544</b> |

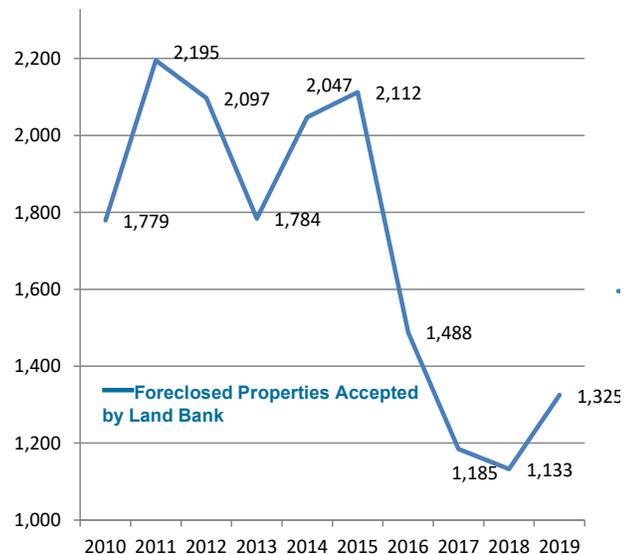
## Land Bank Property Sales By Fiscal Year



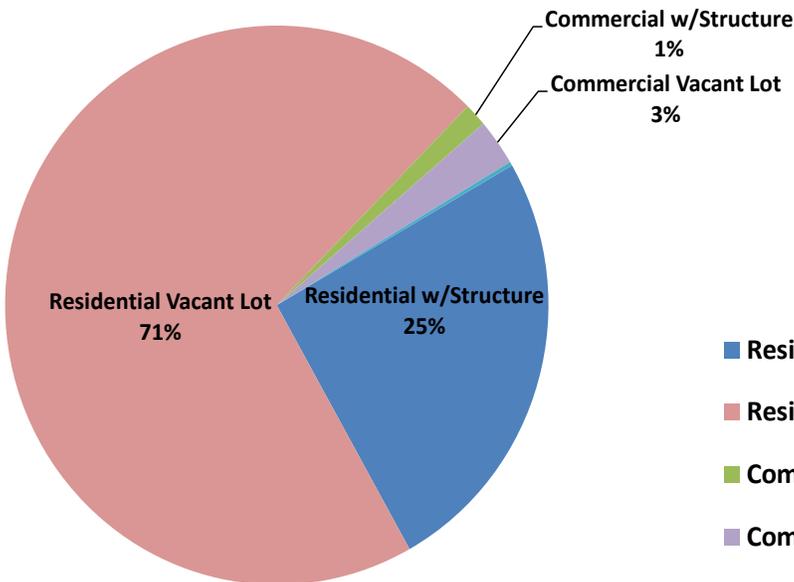
### LAND BANK INVENTORY SUMMARY:

The Land Bank sold 544 Properties in FY 2019. While the number of properties sold declined this year, the value of properties with structures increased. The number of foreclosed properties accepted by the Land Bank began to increase again after three years of decline. 74% of properties in the inventory at the end of FY 2019 were vacant lots while the remaining 26% had a structure.

## Foreclosed Properties Accepted by Land Bank by FY



## Land Bank Inventory by Property Type (end of FY 2019)



- Residential w/Structure - 3,540
- Residential Vacant Lot - 9,908
- Commercial w/Structure - 189
- Commercial Vacant Lot - 377
- Other - 32

### Chevy Commons: Brownfield Redevelopment Success!

The Genesee County Land Bank, City of Flint, and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) received awards at the U.S Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Brownfields Conference for working together with the Genesee County Parks to transform Chevy in the Hole, a former downtown GM manufacturing plant, into a public greenspace now known as Chevy Commons. 51 acres are now planted with a landscaped cap and an additional 9 acres will be constructed in 2020. This, combined with the County Park's rail trail running through the site, creates 69 acres of public greenspace. A total of 2.65 miles of paved trails have been constructed on site so far. That will increase to 2.9 miles once the final phase of the project is completed in 2020. 1222 trees have been planted with an additional 70 to be planted in 2020 thanks to support from the United States Forest Service. The site is now a valuable asset to the community providing greenspace for residents while also absorbing

storm water and carbon emissions.

- Christina Kelly



### State and Federal Support for Brownfield Investigation and Cleanup

Through the Land Bank's partnership with Michigan Department of Environmental, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), over \$340,000 has been leveraged over the last two years to investigate and clean up taxed foreclosed properties now held by the Land Bank. Eleven sites were investigated for underground storage tanks. Cleanup and remediation activities are ongoing at five sites.

The Land Bank was awarded a \$300,000 Brownfield Assessment grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2017 to investigate brownfield projects in Genesee County. Over the past two years the Land Bank started or completed site assessment work on 21 projects including 14 Asbestos & Hazardous Materials Surveys and Phase I Environmental Site Assessments and 5 Phase II Environmental Site Assessments. This work helps to support cleanup and reuse of these abandoned and challenged properties. - By Lucille James

### GENESEE COUNTY LAND BANK BOARD MEMBERS:

- Hon. Deborah Cherry – Chair
- Hon. Brenda Clack – Vice Chair
- Hon. Patricia Lockwood - Secretary
- Hon. Bryant Nolden – Treasurer
- Hon. Ellen Ellenbug
- Hon. Santino Guerra
- Hon. Mark Young

### GENESEE COUNTY LAND BANK CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Chris Del Morone – Chair
- Larry Petrella – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Christoff
- Tim Coleman
- Gerri Hall
- Rev. Jacob Hawkins
- Deborah Holmes
- Joe King
- Eric Loper
- Quincy Murphy
- Harry Ryan
- Edna Sabucco
- Anoopa Todd
- Larry Wright
- 4 - Vacant Positions

Paul McShane  
Interim Executive Director

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