

Genesee County Land Bank 2017 Annual Review

Aggressive Blight Elimination Campaign Underway

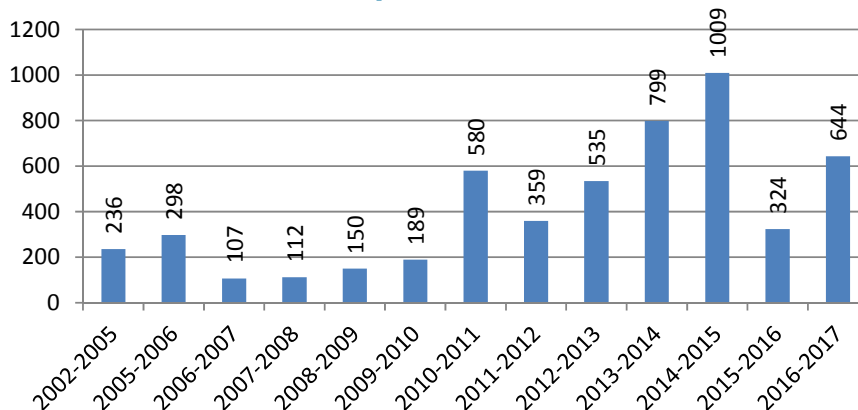
The Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA) continued its aggressive blight elimination campaign in 2017. Since 2013, the GCLBA has received \$67.4 million from the U.S. Department of Treasury's Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) allocated through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to demolish a total of more than 5,000 blighted residential structures and support maintenance on the remaining lots for five years. During the last fiscal year, the GCLBA demolished and maintained 644 properties under HHF. More than 2,700 blighted structures have been demolished under HHF to date and approx. 2,300 will be demolished by the end of the program in 2019.

The GCLBA received several other grants for demolition. \$634,359 was awarded from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Michigan Land Bank, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to demolish the blighted buildings in the former Ross Plaza at Pierson and Clio Roads. The North Flint Reinvestment Corporation has plans to develop the site into the North Flint Food Market. The GCLBA, in partnership with the City of Flint, secured \$500,000 from MSHDA for demolition on 810 Ballenger Hwy, 1518 Averill, and 1425 N. Saginaw St. The City committed \$659,768 in HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and Phoenix Investments, a developer with plans to develop a site near 1518 Averill, committed \$50,000 as match towards the demolition. The GCLBA also received \$200,000 from the C.S. Mott Foundation to clear blight in the neighborhoods around the new Educare Flint facility.

The GCLBA received a total of \$684,213 in CDBG funding from the City of Flint for FY 2016/17 to demolish six blighted commercial structures in the former Glen Acres apartment complex and three blighted houses. The GCLBA received an additional \$1 million from the Genesee County Treasurer to demolish blighted structures in the county but outside the City of Flint. The GCLBA's aggressive blight elimination campaign will continue into the next fiscal year.

- Christina Kelly

Land Bank Demolitions By Fiscal Year



Message from our Board Chair & Executive Director

On behalf of the Genesee County Land Bank Authority, we are pleased to present this annual review to the community. This report highlights many of the Land Bank's activities during 2017. We hope you will find the report to be informative.

The year saw accomplishments such as the return of 842 properties to the tax rolls, the demolition of 644 blighted properties, and the maintenance of thousands of vacant properties. We also focused on making our existing programming more successful by updating policies and procedures, increasing communication, and using new electronic tools, such as the Flint Property Portal.

These successes and the other Land Bank work highlighted in this report would not be possible without the hundreds of partnerships we have with residents, community groups, government agencies and corporations. We're indebted to our partners who have made every step forward possible.

As we move into 2018, we will continue our work with the community on the demolition of more blighted structures, as well as increasing our programming in the area of renovation of vacant property.

We look forward to our continued work together to make Flint and Genesee County a more vibrant place to live and work.

Deborah Cherry, Chairperson
Michele Wildman, Executive Director

Returning Vacant Property to Productive Use Through Land Bank Sales

The sale of Land Bank property is critical to ensure that abandoned properties are put back on the tax rolls and into the hands of new homeowners who need them. Sales are also a crucial part of the operational budget at the Land Bank and provide revenue to sustain blight elimination and maintenance programming. During the last fiscal year, 842 properties were sold, generating \$3.4 million in gross revenue.

The Land Bank has adopted some changes over the last year in order to increase the number of successful sales and ensure that properties are affordable. Some of the changes we have implemented are:

- Adoption of the federal 30% of Income Standard for Housing Affordability;
- Ensuring land contract buyers receive homeownership counseling from a HUD or MSHDA approved counselor;
- Increasing the number of referrals to state and local partners who have access to grant funding for improvements to housing;
- Increasing the down payment requirement on land contracts to 10% of the bid or \$1,000, whichever is greater;
- Increasing the number of housing inspections on existing properties;
- Expansion of the side lot sales program;
- Use of deed restrictions and other legal tools on commercial properties to prevent holding land for speculative purposes that are more likely to become blighted or abandoned;
- Using the Flint Property Portal to improve access and transparency around Land Bank owned properties.

The Land Bank is also working with community partners to find new ways to market properties and meet the needs of the community. The Land Bank has partnered with the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce and other local land owners in participating in a local Developer Conference and is working with the City of Flint and Michigan Municipal League to develop and utilize a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Request for Proposal (RFP) on properties in commercial corridors.

- By Dawn Everett

Check out the Land Bank's Featured Homes and Land for Development for Sale at www.thelandbank.org



Flint Property Portal is Now Live! Look up and Update Property Information in Flint

The GCLBA developed and launched the online Flint Property Portal in partnership with the City of Flint. The web-based Portal provides and accepts information regarding properties in Flint and includes applications for both Android and iOS devices. To create the Portal, the Land Bank and the City assembled and developed systems to easily visualize more than 4 million pieces of data providing a wide range of property-specific information. The site includes an easy to use mapping tool and serves as a repository for property condition information that is updated on an ongoing basis. The Portal also provides essential information regarding Land Bank properties, including new sales listings, demolition status, and community maintenance commitments.

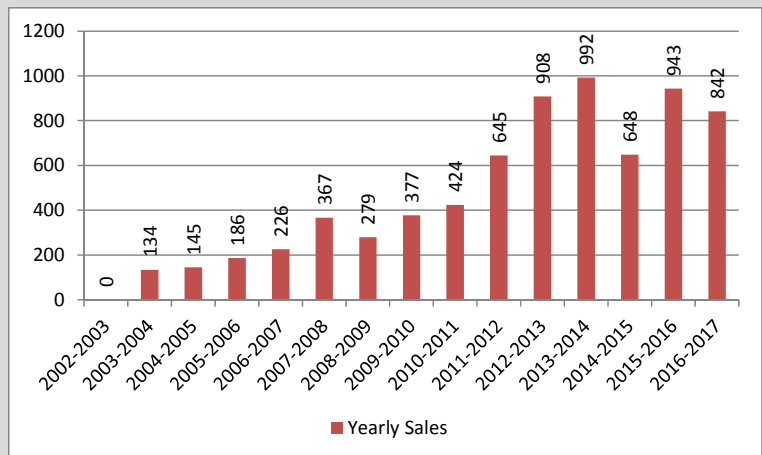


Check out the Portal today at www.flintpropertyportal.com

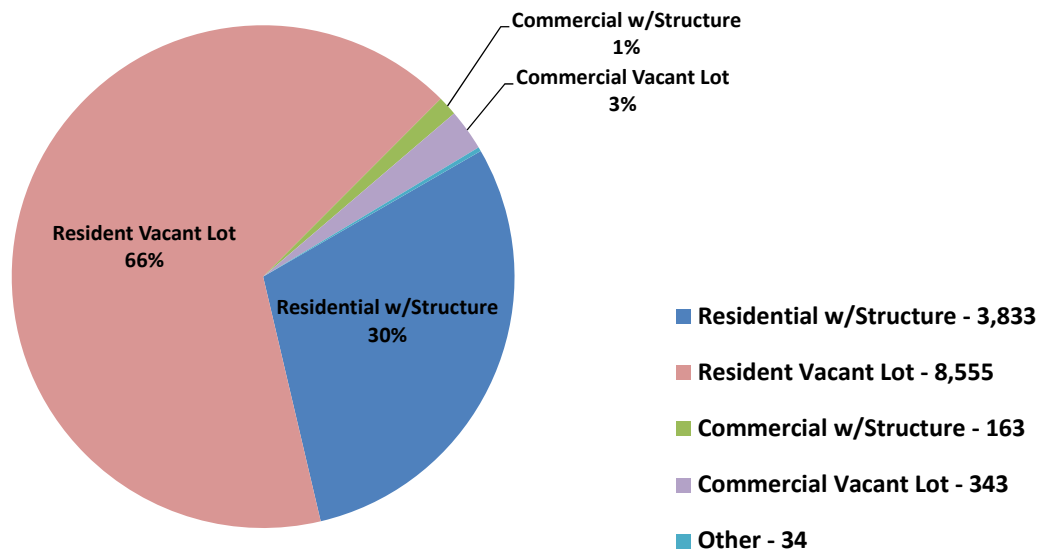
Land Bank Sales in Fiscal Year 2017 by Property Type

GLBA Sales by Property Type	Number
Residential w/Structure	423
Resident Vacant Lot	376
Commercial w/Structure	14
Commercial Vacant Lot	26
Other	3
Total	842

Land Bank Property Sales By Fiscal Year



Land Bank Inventory by Property Type as of September 30, 2017



Supporting Community-Based Property Maintenance Through Clean & Green

From April through September, 58 community-based groups maintained more than 3,500 vacant properties in and around Flint every three weeks. 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.

The program is supported through grant funding from the Ruth Mott Foundation, the Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center, and other sources committed by the Land Bank.

Summary of 2017 Clean & Green Program Results

- Maintained more than 3,500 vacant properties every three weeks
- Completed more than 25,000 vacant property “mowings”
- Engaged nearly 1,500 residents including more than 800 youth in improving their neighborhoods
- Contributed to eliminating blight in and around Flint valued at more than \$1.25 million

- By Melissa Hertlein



Land Bank Crews Clear Blight in Flint and Genesee County

2017 was a very productive year for the Genesee County Land Bank's Blight Elimination Team. Our mowing crews completed 30,000 vacant property mows 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 communities completed more than 5,000 additional vacant property mows.

Our garbage truck and removal crew follow behind those cleaning and mowing lots. These workers removed all of the refuse that our mowing crews cleared and placed on the curb. The Land Bank assisted groups with neighborhood clean-ups on a weekly basis. In all, hundreds of 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, overgrown brush and 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 2017.

- By Duane Bickford



Making Lots Available for Re-Use

The Land Bank makes **Lots Available** to residents and organizations to either adopt or lease vacant land. Adopt-A-Lot Agreements are free and active for one growing season and can be renewed every year. Lease-A-Lot Agreements allow residents to lease vacant land to garden or maintain for up to five years.

878 lots are currently maintained through lease or adoption agreements engaging more than **457** volunteers. **136** new agreements were signed in the last fiscal year.

- By Renee Harvey



Transforming *Chevy in the Hole* into *Chevy Commons*

The Genesee County Land Bank Authority, (GCLBA) in partnership with the City of Flint and the Genesee County Parks Commission, is working to remediate and redevelop the former Chevy in the Hole site into a landscaped park area named Chevy Commons. The GCLBA and its partners helped to secure \$12.5 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for Chevy Commons clean up and redevelopment.



The GCLBA completed construction on the low maintenance landscaped cap, walkways, fencing, and parking lot under Phase I and II and initiated construction on Phase III. For Phase III, partners secured \$468,000 in EPA Revolving Loan Funds, \$700,000 from the C.S. Mott Foundation, and \$150,000 from the Michigan Land Bank. Construction of Phase III will be completed in the Spring/Summer of 2018.

MDEQ Surface Water Quality Initiative Funding (\$3.25 million grant) will support the construction of the low maintenance landscaped cap on Phase IV with work anticipated to begin in the Spring/Summer of 2018. - *By Faith Finholm*



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