Blight to Bright: Act 2
Lilah Zautner and Debora Flora
Western approach of the Detroit - Superior High Level Bridge, 1930
Retrieved from: Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.
Decentralization

The pattern in Cuyahoga county and many metro areas nationally has been one of sprawling developments that fail to create appropriate densities in the right locations and begin to compromise rural environments and create decay in urban areas.

The Cleveland Akron Metropolitan area contains 26% of the states population, while encompassing less than 9% of the land area in the state.
Land Bank Missions

The Mission of the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation is to strategically acquire properties, return them to productive use, reduce blight, increase property values, support community goals and improve the quality of life for county residents.

Est. 2009

The Mahoning County Land Reutilization Corp. will strategically acquire distressed properties and return them to productive, tax-paying use. The Mahoning County Land Reutilization Corp. (the “Land Bank”) will: reduce blight; stabilize neighborhoods and property values; promote neighborhood reinvestment and economic development opportunities; and improve the quality of life in Mahoning County.

Est. 2013
# Land Bank Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cuyahoga</th>
<th>Mahoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Properties Acquired</td>
<td>4,392</td>
<td>1,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Properties in inventory</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Properties Demolished</td>
<td>2,833</td>
<td>30 Commissioned 300 Overseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Properties Renovated</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image of renovated properties](image1.png)

![Image of renovated properties](image2.png)

![Image of renovated properties](image3.png)

![Image of renovated properties](image4.png)
Opportunity
- Over 3,500 acres of vacant land

Goal
Reuse vacant land to create neighborhoods of choice, improve quality of life, provide ecosystem services and foster economic growth through stabilization, food production and energy generation

Accomplished
- Identified a wide range of land reuse strategies that link natural and built systems to improve the quality of life and the long-term health of residents and the environment
- Identified criteria for implementing reuse strategies and
- Developed policy to support land reuse
- Created **124 Projects on 195 land bank lots and STILL GROWING**
Brier Hill Neighborhood Greening, Lien Forward
Leveraging investment for neighborhood stabilization

Opportunity
- Over 20,000 vacant properties in the surrounding county with a concentration in Youngstown
- Opportunity to leverage $1 Billion factory expansion in the Brier Hill neighborhood of Youngstown

Goal
Forge a public-private partnership to return vacant, abandon, tax-delinquent land to productive use around Vallourec Star factory, thus stabilizing the long disinvested section of Route 422 between Interstate 80 and the Madison Avenue Expressway

Accomplished
- Used tax lien foreclosures to transfer more than 900 vacant parcels to new, responsible owners
- Demolished dozens of blighted homes surrounding Vallourec Star.
- Energized and organized historically disenfranchised community to plan, create and maintain greenspaces
- Laid the foundation for a multi-jurisdictional partnership that is now implementing a comprehensive revitalization plan for Route 422.
Vacant Land Reuse Strategies

Neighborhood stabilization / holding strategies
- Temporary beautification and street edge improvements

Greening
- Pocket parks and neighborhood pathways
- Green Infrastructure for storm water management
- Side Yard expansions

Productive Landscapes
- Vineyards and Orchards
- Community Gardens
- Market gardens
Vacant Land Reuse
Stabilization

- Temporarily beautifying a vacant lot spurs development interest, discourages dumping and ensures continuity along the street edge
- Low cost improvements can be made and maintained by the City or residents and improvements can be reused when the site is developed
Vacant Land Reuse Stabilization

Pennsylvania Horticulture Society
Land Care Program: Clean and Green vacant lot reuse stabilization

By the numbers:

- For every dollar spent to clean and green vacant land, housing wealth increased by a $224.
- The values of nearby homes jumps by nearly 20 percent. Before the treatment they are worth 16 percent less than comparable homes, after the treatment they command a premium of 2-5 percent.
- The benefits increase over time. When cleaned and greened lots are maintained, nearby homes continue to appreciate at an additional 0.5 percent every year.
- The benefits increase with more greened lots. After the initial benefits of a cleaned-up lot, each additional cleaned and greened lot adds another 1 percent of value to homes within a quarter mile.

For more information and statistics on health, economic and quality of life impacts visit: http://phsonline.org/greening/landcare-program
Community gardens, market gardens, orchards and vineyards provide gathering spaces, places for skills exchange, supplemental income and community pride. If managed appropriately these spaces add value for homeowners.

Improvements can be made by residents via property purchase or lease (parks). Improvements should be considered permanent or semi-permanent. Water access, soil testing procedures, operational and wintering expectations and zoning restrictions should be clearly defined.
Vacant Land Reuse

Greening

- Pocket parks, rain gardens, neighborhood pathways and side yard expansions provide gathering places, ecosystem services and pedestrian access adding value for individual homeowners and increasing community pride and beauty.
- Improvements can be made by residents via property purchase (side yards) or lease (parks). Improvements should be considered permanent or semi-permanent.
Reimagining Cleveland
Vacant Land Projects

Before

During

After
Reimagining Cleveland
Vacant Land Projects
Land Bank Vacant Land Projects
Lessons Learned
Land Bank Vacant Land Projects
Lessons Learned

Before

During

After
The Neighborhood Initiative Program
Continuing the land reuse movement

Opportunity
- NIP allows for up to $5,000 per property for greening
- Side Yards, Parks and Recreation areas qualify for early lien release

Challenges
- Extremely tight timeline
- Compliance requirements
- Scale
  (Cuyahoga Goal 100 side yards)

Programmatic Solutions
- Prioritize and offer a template-based side yard expansion program
The Neighborhood Initiative Program
Side yard incentive program

Program Requirements
 OHFA Eligibility Requirements (owner occupancy, zoning, real estate history, etc.)
 Approval by the Municipality to ensure de-densification does not hinder long-term land use planning

Program Process
 Prequalification process to identify and recruit qualified applicants
 Seamless project management beginning with prequalification to demolition, landscape installation and final conveyance
 Lot improvements are cost effective, easy to maintain and focus on restoring the urban edge
The Neighborhood Initiative Program
Side yard incentive program

Side Yard Improvement Templates

**Template A - Corner**
- No Fence
- 1 Large perennial bed with shrubs
- 2 Shade trees

**Template B - Mid-block**
- 4’ fence along front and wrapping back to the house line (approx. 60 linear ft.)
- 1 Large perennial bed with shrubs
- 2 Shade trees
The Neighborhood Initiative Program
Side yard incentive program

Side Yard Improvement Templates

Template C - Mid-block
- No Fence
- 1 Large Perennial bed with shrubs
- 1 Shade trees
- 2 Flowering trees
The Neighborhood Initiative Program

Side yard incentive program

**Plant Material**

Plant material will be selected by a professional landscaper from the options shown below. Species have been selected based on their tolerance to Northeast Ohio soil and climate conditions. Plant selection will be determined by site conditions (sun, shade, grade, etc.) and plant availability. All perennial beds will be raised, edged and mulched upon completion.
Land Reuse Resources
Building capacity within Land Banks and the change-making community

Relimagining Pattern Book
- Identifies and illustrates a suite of reuse strategies

Relimagining Cleveland Ideas to Action Resource Book
- Provides information on things to consider, site plans, detailed budgets, and local resources
- Highlights Reimagining projects and real Local Heroes

YNDC Lots of Green
- Illustrates several strategies, explains links to greater community planning and offers local resources.
Thank You!

Lilah Zautner, Manager of Special Projects and Land Reuse
Cuyahoga County Land Bank
lzautner@cuyahogalandbank.org
216-698-4696

Debora Flora, Executive Director
Mahoning County Land Bank
dflora@mahoninglandbank.com
330-259-1040