

Berrien County Land Bank Authority

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Calli Berg

Stephen Mitchell

Marletta Seats

Stephen Smith

Andrew Vavra

*Bret Witkowski,
Chair*

*Mamie Yarbrought,
Secretary*

A message from the Chair

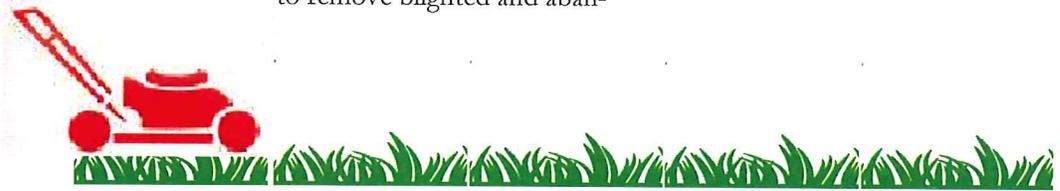


The Berrien County Land Bank Authority is a tool for community and economic development activities in Berrien County with the end goal of returning properties back to productive use. As foreclosure rates continue to rise each year, the tools and resources provided by the Land Bank can assist in addressing the challenges our county and communities encounter.

Over the past year, the Land Bank made long term renters into homeowners and continue to remove blighted and aban-

doned structures from neighborhoods. We are continuing to maintain our inventory and look for opportunities to partner with neighboring residents, local agencies and organizations through the Side Lot and Adopt -A-Lot Programs.

As we move into the next year, we look forward to working with the local governmental units, residents and partners to continue to create opportunities for change that supports the mission and vision of the Land Bank.



Special points of interest:

- Total NSP demolitions: 314
- Total Sales: 154
- 2015 Grant Awards: 434,000
- 2015 Donations received: \$8,500
- 2015 Taxable value captured: \$445,800

Before & After of fire damaged house near Community Center in Benton Harbor



Year in Review of Inventory and Sales



In 2015, the Land Bank partnered with local organizations, for profit and non-profit agencies to continue to eliminate blight and re-purpose vacant property. The total sales consist of 2 donated residential structures; one was transferred to Kinexus, work-force training agency, to train youth in construction trades and renovation. The second sale was a responsible disposition of new owner investment to create homeownership for a family member and the remaining 4 parcels

were sold as side lots.

The Land Bank provides maintenance for properties in its inventory which includes mowing, limited snow removal, securing and clean up. In 2015, the total inventory consisted of 156 vacant residential properties. Of that 156 properties, 102 are for sale through the Side lot program. The Land Bank offers the following programs:

- Side Lot Program—allows qualifying residents to purchase eligi-

ble vacant residential lot adjacent to or near their properties for \$250.00 or Fair Market Value.

- Adopt-A-Lot Program—allows qualifying residents and groups to adopt lots on an annual basis for a minimal fee.
- Long-Term Tenant to Homeowner program—allows qualified renters to purchase foreclosed property and become a homeowner.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP2) Program Income

Through the partnership with US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), and the City of Benton Harbor, the Land Bank Authority has been able to remove 314 blighted structures since 2010. Over the last year, the Land Bank was awarded program income funding (income that was generated from the sale of NSP

property that was returned back to MSHDA.). Two rounds of funding were awarded for a total of \$434,000. Round 1 consisted of demolition of 11 properties targeted as the worst on the block of abandonment and severe fire damage. Round 2 consisted of 21 residential demolitions for a total of 32 demolitions. The neighborhood impact of the NSP program includes arresting

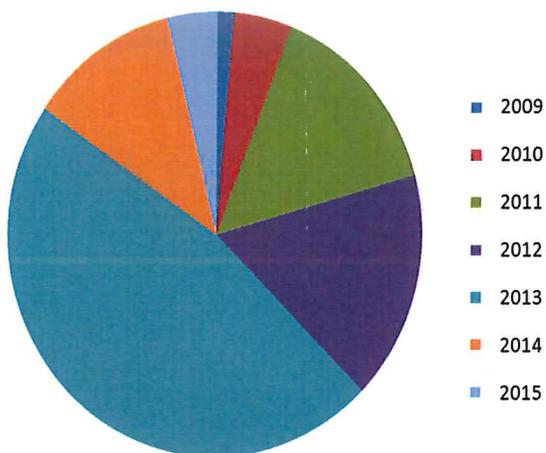
decline and abandonment and changing the landscape of the neighborhoods in Benton Harbor.



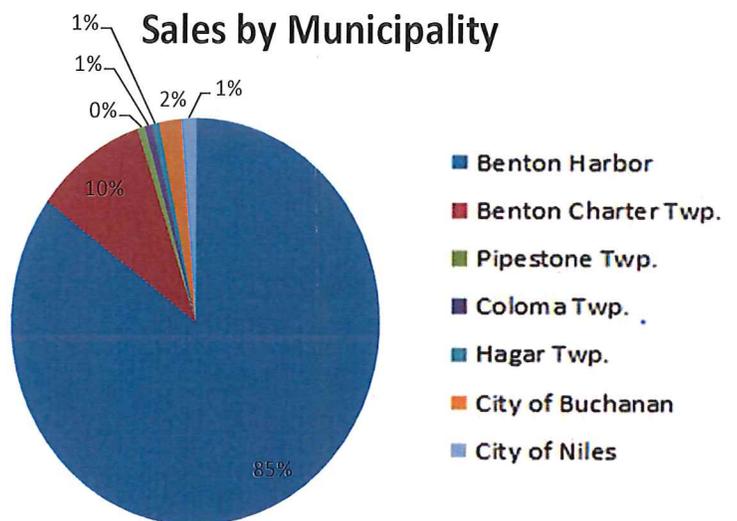
Progress by the Numbers

Year	# of Parcels Acquired	Demolished	# of parcels combined	Properties sold	Available for Sale
2009	2	-	-	2	-
2010	75	40		7	68
2011	149	75		23	194
2012	79	120	4	26	193
2013	1	47	21	73	121
2014	2	-	3	18	105
2015	2	32	2	6	101
TOTAL	310	314	30	154	

Sales by Year



Sales by Municipality



Berrien County Land Bank Authority

Berrien County Administration Center
701 Main St.
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Phone: 269-983-7111 x8257
Fax: 269-982-8611

www.berriencounty.org/communitydevelopment/landbankauthority

Berrien County Land Bank Authority Mission:

The mission of the Berrien county Land Bank authority is to alleviate blight and increase the tax base through thoughtful acquisition and disposition of tax reverted and abandoned properties, ensuring that land is developed with high standards in the most productive manner.

The Berrien County Land Bank Authority's vision is for Berrien County to be a premier destination for families to live and prosper. This successful community is filled with diverse neighborhoods, abundant rental and homeownership opportunities, viable downtowns incorporating mixed-use development, ample employment opportunities and reliable tax base to support public systems. Every resident and visitor takes pride in the communi-

Side Lot Program

The Land Bank Side Lot Program offers opportunities to adjacent or nearby property owners to purchase vacant lots for \$250.00 or the fair market value. Buyers have created larger yards for playset, gardens, expanding parking lots to prevent traffic congestion or creating more outdoor living space. The buyers are the pioneers in revitalizing and creating a sense of place within the neighborhoods.

The properties available for the side lot program are a result of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2.



Side lot owner expanding their yard and outdoor space

Side lot owner preparing land for youth garden



As a requirement of the program, the disposition of all the properties must meet a national objective. The Land Bank analyzes each lot available and establishes disposition strategies for each lot. The most common disposition is through Side Lots, which gives control and ownership to the residents of the neighborhood. Over the past several years we are encouraged by the level of interest in acquiring vacant lots. Working with the City through the NSP Redevelopment Plan and the City's Master Plan, the Land Bank uses these plans as our guide. There are some lots that have long term plans for redevelopment.

For more information on the Side Lot Program, please go to our website: www.berriencounty.org/communitydevelopment/landbankauthority