BEYOND BLADES OF GRASS
Land Leasing Program
What We Do

Mahoning County (OH) Land Bank is unlocking the potential for community revitalization by acquiring land strategically, restoring marketable title to vacant, abandoned parcels, engaging citizens in the use and care of abandoned properties, and enhancing neighborhood stability through renovation, demolition and greening activities.
What We Do

Mahoning County Land Bank primarily sells parcels to adjoining owners for yard expansions, business development and institutional use.

A pilot program from 2014 to 2016 made it possible for interested parties to lease lots when they did not qualify as Side Lot applicants. Leasing is now being used strategically to enable projects and special opportunities that fall beyond our existing programs.
Lease Agreements

- Owner still has control, but also ultimate responsibility
  - Relationships matter!
- Lessee must comply with local zoning codes
  - Cut grass
  - Remove debris
  - Clear walkways
- Low cost way to engage residents in neighborhood beautification
- Not limited in Mahoning County to undevelopable lots
Adopt A Lot/Lease Programs

Kansas City, Mo:
http://www.kcmololandbank.org/adopt-lease-program.html

Cleveland:
http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/sites/default/files/forms_publications/LandBankArgricultureGardenApplication_0.pdf
Mow to Own Programs

Sandusky, OH:  
http://www.ci.sandusky.oh.us/documents/MowToOwnprogramapplicationandpolicy.pdf

Columbus, OH:  
https://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Departments/Development/Land_Redevelopment/Mow%20to%20Own%20Addendum.pdf

Springfield, OH:  

Memphis, TN:  
http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com/index.php/component/cpx/?task=resource.view&id=1712573

Rockford, IL:  

St. Louis, MO:  
Benefits of Leases

- Neighborhood beautification
  - YNDC Youth Greening Grants
- Gardening/farming projects
- Residents in tax-credit housing or land contracts that are nearing completion
Lady Buggs Farm

Sophia Buggs of Youngstown grows flowers, herbs and food on nine adjacent parcels of land behind the house she inherited from her grandmother.
Lady Buggs Farm
Sophia sells flowers and food at farmers’ markets, schedules farm tours and gives cooking demonstrations. Look for Lady Buggs Farm on Facebook.
A Great Idea Takes Flight

Know Your Neighbor Block Watch installed a butterfly habitat on a pair of vacant lots on the North Side in 2016. Neighbors pitched in to clear the site of tires, tree limbs and garbage on a Saturday morning.
A Great Idea Takes Flight

Know Your Neighbor Block Watch had the vision and a grant to create a butterfly habitat. Mahoning County Land Bank added its resources to bring the project to fruition. Neighborhood children earned gift cards by assisting with landscaping and maintenance.
Know Your Neighbor Block Watch is a leader in summertime youth enrichment programming in Youngstown. Summer program participants learned why pollinators are important to the ecosystem.
Growing Future Farmers

TSA Block Watch supports the Taft Grows Green 4-H Garden, which became an afterschool and summertime program at Taft Elementary School on Youngstown’s South Side. Their harvests are shared with the neighborhood.
Growing Future Farmers

The 4-H garden began in 2012 on a privately-owned lot, down the street from Taft Elementary School. It was relocated in 2016 to Land Bank-owned property directly across from the school’s main entrance.
Growing Future Farmers

Hope for Newport, another gardening initiative for young people, is based near Martin Luther Lutheran Church, also on Youngstown’s South Side.
Growing Future Farmers

Many Youngstown neighborhoods are situated in food deserts. Free produce is available seasonally on Saturday mornings at Hope for Newport Garden.
Reimagining Vacant Land Reuse

The Partnership Advantage

Lilah Zautner
Mission

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
Vacant Land Reuse is HARD!

So why do it?

Current compliance rules require that CCLRC hold a lot post demolition for three years UNLESS it can be sold for a beneficial reuse (side yard, new construction, economic development, community greenspace, etc.)

More high quality vacant land reuse projects now…..

…mean lower holding costs for years to come…

…and healthier ecosystems, happier people and more stable communities!

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<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>Private</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>122</td>
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</table>
Why partner?
In the face of abandonment you either laugh or cry. I prefer to laugh…
…with friends

Partnerships

- Result in better planed, higher quality, easier to transact, and better maintained greenspaces.
- Leverage hardscapes with heartscapes to create meaningful places instead of generic spaces.
- Allow non placed-based organizations to take land reuse to scale with only 1.5 staff!
But partnerships are also HARD!
How can I manage tens or hundreds of partners at one time?

Keys to our success

- Create greening programs that are FLEXIBLE for the Partner and PREDICTABLE for you
- Find a formula and stick to it
- Know your strengths and stay in your lane
- Assess risk and allow space for failure
- Encourage partners to grow where they’re planted
The People as Partners – Side Yards

The least glamorous and most impactful land reuse strategy

- Returns otherwise unproductive land to the tax rolls
- Transfer maintenance obligation to responsible private owners
- Helps responsible property owners build equity and invest in the future of their neighborhoods
- Works best when paired with an incentivized improvement program
Organizational Partners
Everyone loves a power couple

Thriving Communities Institute

- Problem property referral
- Side yard applicant recruitment
- Side yard approval process liaison
- Supplemental funding
- Sensitive project vetting
- Ongoing engagement and organizing
- On staff Arborist

Cuyahoga Land Bank

- Property acquisition
- Demolition
- Project management and construction
- Political Influence
- Project Funding
- Property transaction

Greened side yards
Memorials
Block scale stabilization
Tree Planting

Organizational Partners
Everyone loves a power couple
Micro-anchor Partners
Putting the grass back into grassroots

- Patient partnership and strategic acquisition around micro-anchors clears dangerous structures and places free, clean land and title into hyper-local control
- Used by social clubs, churches, street clubs, and schools to beautify, stabilize and create space for engagement
Micro-anchor Partners
Greening as a gateway for community building and stabilization

- When possible, pair with small grants or basic infrastructure improvements (fences, soil, trees) for an initial boost!

- Transfer the land then grow the relationship to include stabilization efforts that build trust, protect small but mighty investments and empower partners
700 Properties
More than 51,000 acres
## Demolition Funds to Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Level</th>
<th>Source of funds</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Hardest Hit Fund</td>
<td>$80 million</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hardest Hit Fund II</td>
<td>$158 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Robo-signing settlement</td>
<td>$75 million PLUS $47 million local match</td>
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<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Bond issue</td>
<td>$50 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local (Municipality or Land Bank match funds)</td>
<td>General Fund or DTAC (land bank funding source)</td>
<td>$47 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>$410 million</td>
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Western Reserve Land Conservancy

land • people • community

CLEVELAND NEIGHBORHOODS

BY THE NUMBERS

2015 CLEVELAND PROPERTY INVENTORY
Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation

and

Western Reserve Land Conservancy

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (CCLRC) and Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC) for the greening of vacant properties in the service area of the Saint Luke’s Foundation.

Background

Western Reserve Land Conservancy is funded by Saint Luke’s Foundation for work in their service area. As part of this funding, WRLC will reimburse CCLRC for greening of post-demolition vacant lots by clearing debris, landscaping and securing (when necessary) up to 15 vacant lots.

Purpose

This MOU will establish the responsibilities of each party in the installation of greening treatments.

WRLC agrees to:
1. Identify single point person for the project
2. Perform initial outreach to identify properties and end-users
3. Serve as liaison with City Council representatives or CDC for letters of determination
4. Determine amount of funding provided for each selected property, not to exceed $3,500 per installation
5. Attend initial spec writing consultation with CCLRC staff and end-user; existing side yard templates will be utilized.
6. Secure projects by December 31, 2017. A secured project requires:
   • Site yard application fully approved by CCLRC
   • Greening application approved
   • Installation completed – weather conditions may delay completion until 2018
7. Reimburse CCLRC for up to $3,500 for each lot installation completed

CCLRC agrees to:
1. Provide greening services, utilizing existing side yard templates, for up to 15 vacant lots identified by WRLC
2. Enter into contracts with preapproved greening contractors
3. Inspect installation upon completion
4. Transfer property to end user
5. Submit itemized invoice, referencing the line item invoice CCLRC receives from contractor, to WRLC for payment
6. Provide backup documentation for invoice, including post-greening photos.
The Cleveland Tree Plan

Together, We’re Making Cleveland the Forest City Once Again

October 2015

Prepared for:
- The Cleveland Forest Coalition:
  - City of Cleveland
  - Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
  - Holden Arboretum
  - LAND Studio
  - Western Reserve Land Conservancy/Thriving Communities Institute

Prepared by:
- Davey Resource Group
Demolition Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submarket</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher functioning ownership areas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$9,387,253</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderately functioning ownership areas</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>$14,187,852</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special rental areas</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$15,183,651</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stressed rental areas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-$13,656</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>75</td>
<td><strong>$38,745,103</strong></td>
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**FIGURE 7.04** Demolition impact in Euclid

Rehabilitation Impact

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<tr>
<th>Submarket</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher functioning ownership areas</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>$32,029,754</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderately functioning ownership areas</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>$30,119,209</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special rental areas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$10,155,795</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stressed rental areas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$114,965</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td><strong>$72,419,721</strong></td>
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**FIGURE 7.05** Rehabilitation impact in Euclid
TRUMBULL COUNTY LAND BANK
- **Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Community Development Corporation serving the neighborhoods of Warren, Ohio.

- The mission of **Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership** is to empower residents and promote sustainable community development through projects and programs that increase the quality of life in Warren's neighborhoods.
Reclaim properties, revitalize neighborhoods, and restore real estate markets

Work cooperatively with cities, townships, villages, other units of governments, leaders, and individual property owners, to acquire derelict vacant property and return it to productive use
Data Collection: 1500 Vacant Houses
Community Outreach

- Engaged more than 250

Warren citizens are most concerned about:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Vacant property</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>High grass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Public art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blight</td>
<td>Passive green spaces</td>
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SOUTHWEST WARREN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

2015

Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership
Warren, Ohio
Demolition
Open space
Green Space
$12.7 Million Awarded Through OHFA’s NIP Program
Building a Better Warren
Logic Model

Resources

- Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership
- Trumbull County Land Reutilization Corporation

Activities

Place
- Renovations
- Perform general construction work on rehab homes
- Complete board ups of nuisance properties
- Post-Demolition Land Use
- Plant trees on vacant lots
- Install pocket parks, orchards, community gardens and other food production sites
- Maintenance
- Mow and maintain lots left empty by demolition
- Deconstruction
- Identify and remove valuable materials with resale value before demolition

People
- Supportive Services
- Recruit residents to program through partner organizations
- Provide employees with necessary social services to succeed

Outcomes

Place
- Create new year round full-time jobs fighting blight
- Decrease housing vacancy levels in strategic neighborhoods
- Rehabilitate and return vacant homes to occupancy
- Increased tax base
- Improved quality of life
- Increased sustainability
- Increased access to healthy food
- Increased community assets

People
- Reduced unemployment
- 9 employees hired
- Reduced poverty
- Provide training to employees in high-demand industries
- Assist employees in overcoming employment and family-sustaining barriers

Impacts

- Sustainable economic development through employment
- Self-sufficiency for individuals and families
- Public and private investment
- Community capital and social inclusion
Renovation

Perform general construction work on rehab homes

Work with private contractors to complete renovations
Deconstruction

- Identify and remove valuable materials with resale value before demolition
- Keep an inventory of salvaged material to work with Land Bank buyers for recycled materials
- Reduce amount of materials going to landfills
Post-Demolition Land Use

Post demolition land use
- Plant trees on vacant lots
- Install pocket parks, orchards, community gardens and other food production sites
- Work with side lot buyers to install templated landscaping installations
- Partner with neighborhood associations and other nonprofit organizations to assist in community projects
Maintenance

Mow and maintain lots left empty by demolition

Remove trees and other small nuisances on properties to ensure public safety

Board up and secure Land Bank houses at the time of acquisition

Perform small maintenance on Land Bank houses listed for sale
Supportive Services

Provide employees with necessary social services to succeed

Provide on the job training to help build employees skills
Thank You

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