

# Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority

## 2011 Annual Report



### Mary Balkema

Chair  
Kalamazoo County  
Treasurer



### Kelly Clarke

Executive Director



### Board members:

#### Jill Bland

Vice President  
Southwest Michigan First



#### Jerome Kisscorni

Executive Director  
CoK Economic Development Corporation



#### James Marquardt

Attorney  
Lewis, Reed & Allen P.C.



#### Chuck Vliek

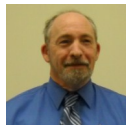
Program Vice President  
Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)



### Staff:

#### Kenn Hartmann

Assets and  
Acquisitions Manager



#### Amanda Woodin

Finance and Administration Manager



#### Catie Boring

Beautification  
Coordinator,  
LISC AmeriCorps



#### Tom Doherty

Special Projects  
Coordinator,  
LISC AmeriCorps



## 1. Year In Review

In its second year, the Kalamazoo County Land Bank has worked to successfully apply its mission in the neighborhoods of Kalamazoo.

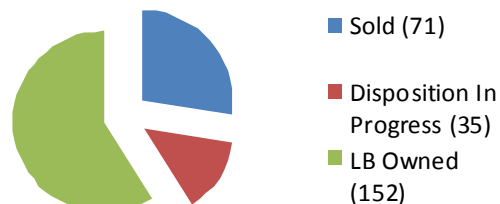
In late 2010, the Land Bank acquired more than 100 properties in the city of Kalamazoo through tax foreclosure and a transfer of properties from the City of Kalamazoo. In 2011, the Land Bank has worked to repurpose those properties to stabilize and improve Kalamazoo's neighborhood's housing stock and property values, in large part through Neighborhood Stabilization Funds awarded in 2010. With its Consortium partner, the City of Kalamazoo, these funds have allowed the Land Bank to demolish, rehabilitate, and construct new housing, as well as demolish a blighted commercial building, and initiate planning and funding for quality senior living developments.

The Land Bank expanded their garden and beautification programs in 2011, expanding residential yards and implementing community gardens and greenspace. Vacant parcels have been sold to adjacent neighbors in order to adjust to the declining inner ring neighborhood population and to provide for more spacious yards and garden opportunities.

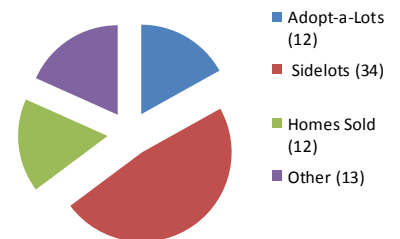
**Performance Measures:** In 2011, the Land Bank began the year with a total of 215 blighted, foreclosed and vacant properties. Through the year, 71 properties were sold or leased, and 35 parcels have projects in progress. The Land Bank acquired an additional 43 properties throughout the 2011 year, 11 of which were sold before year end. This means the Land Bank ended 2011, its first year of being staffed for the entire year, having repurposed or begun the process of repurposing 41% of its inventory.

Sales interest has been strong in 2011. The two completed rehabs were sold or had an offer pending at year end, five of the sixteen 2011 completed new homes were sold, and there is a pipeline of buyers completing required income qualification processes and seeking pre-approvals in order to make offers as well as several sales that have subsequently closed in 2012.

### Properties (258)



### Repurposed Property Breakdown



### Construction Progress

Type	In Progress	Complete	Total
New Homes	7	16	23
Rehabs	10	2	12

### Properties being returned to tax rolls 2011 Transactions

Type	Sold	Pending	Total
New Homes	5	2	7
Rehabs	1	1	2
Side-Lots	34	6	40
Other	13	1	14

## 2. Organization

### Board

The 2011 board's diverse experience including real-estate, law, economic and community development has been an asset as the organization implemented a variety of programs and managed a diverse inventory of property in 2011.

Mary Balkema has continued to spearhead the organization as chairperson and has provided invaluable expertise, time and talent creating a strong partnership between the Treasurer's Office and the Land Bank and continues to provide strategic direction to the Land Bank in its efforts.

Open Meetings have been held monthly throughout the year at the Kalamazoo County Administration building.

In 2011, the Land Bank welcomed Chuck Vlieg, Program Vice President at Local Initiatives Support Corporation, who has provided valuable community development expertise and knowledge to the organization.

The Land Bank thanks Justin VanderArk and Al Rowe for their invaluable service and contributions in 2011.

### Staff

The Land Bank's dedicated staff underwent a few transitions in 2011 to accommodate as programs evolved and expanded.

Former staff member, Kristen Ramer, took a job with one of the Land Bank's partners, Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC). The Land Bank thanks Kristen for her service and wishes her success at LISC.

In order to meet the growing needs of the Land Bank, three additional positions were filled in 2011.

Kenn Hartmann was hired as the Assets and Acquisitions Manager. Kenn has managed the residential demolitions for the Land Bank, as well as larger scale projects, such as the Creamery demolition and the Senior Development contract with NACD.

In September, a second LISC AmeriCorps joined the Land Bank as a Special Projects Assistant, helping Kenn with contracts and coordinating maintenance of properties.

In December the Land Bank hired Amanda Woodin, Finance and Administration Manager, to oversee organizational accountability in the areas of finance, compliance, and administrative matters.

Kelly Clarke has continued to provide executive oversight and leadership to the organization as Executive Director and Catie Boring is continuing a second year of AmeriCorps service with the Land Bank, managing the Land Bank's vacant lot disposition plans and strategies.

### The Bright Side

The Kalamazoo County Land Bank was highlighted on the public television program, The Bright Side, a video production sponsored by the Community and Economic Development Corporation of Michigan. The Land Bank applied for a spot on the program and was chosen in November, 2011. The crew interviewed several residents involved in Land Bank projects and the program featured some of the Land Banks most transformed properties. The video can be viewed at [www.brightsidetv.com](http://www.brightsidetv.com).

### Resources

In 2011, the Land Bank was successful in leveraging additional resources complimenting the 2011 \$100,000 allocation from the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners and the 2010 NSP2 grant for \$6,100,00 to be expended by December 2012.

The Land Bank thanks the following funders for their generous support.

Chase Bank  
Freddie Mac  
Kendeda Fund for Sustainability  
Lake Michigan Credit Union  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
Metro Title  
PNC  
Waterstreet Coffee Joint



Land Bank staff take a break for a picture.

*Mission: to create vibrant communities through eliminating blighted properties, creating affordable housing opportunities, stabilizing properties and returning properties to the tax rolls*

### 3. Projects-Neighborhood Stabilization Program II

#### Single Family New Construction

At years end, through NSP and the partnership with the City of Kalamazoo, the Land Bank has supported the construction of 20 new homes-14 at Marketplace, two near completion in Stuart Neighborhood, and four completed or nearly completed in the Northside Neighborhood.

**Marketplace:** The Land Bank is working in a unique partnership with the City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo Homebuilders Association to develop the 7 acre parcel called Marketplace. In 2011, 14 were built, 5 were sold, and several new homes were planned for next year.



**Willard Street:** The Land Bank acquired 3 blighted homes on the 700 block of Willard Street in Kalamazoo's Stuart Neighborhood. These 3 homes had sat vacant for years, attracting illegal activity and problems for the otherwise stable residential block. The Land Bank demolished the 3 homes, and contracted with American Village Builders to build two new homes architecturally sensitive to the historic neighborhood. The Land Bank worked with block residents, the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner, Pat Crowley, OCBA's Ken Peregón, Waterstreet Coffee Joint, and Metro Title to raise funds for a spring curb lawn beautification project.

**North Rose Street:** The Land Bank has worked closely with the Northside Association for Community Development to strategically build homes to improve the quality and values of the Northside Neighborhoods housing stock. The Land Bank acquired four adjacent properties in the 1000 block of North Rose and built two new homes to complement the rehabilitation of 216 Norway, an NSP rehab owned by the Land Bank.



Just three blocks south, the Land Bank was able to demolish a blighted house in the 700 block of North Rose and has replaced it with a beautiful ranch-style home at 725

North Rose built by Glas and Associates. These homes received such positive feedback; the Land Bank was able to acquire two more properties to build the fourth

North Rose Street house under construction by Roberts Development Group, at 1002 North Rose Street.

#### Rehabs

The Land Bank is working with the City of Kalamazoo to rehabilitate 15 strategically scattered homes in Kalamazoo. These homes are undergoing full gut rehabs, completely redone to meet energy standards and offer modern floor plans. In 2011, two homes were completed in early fall, one sold and the other ended the year with a pending offer. Ten are under construction and will be complete in the spring of 2012.

#### Demolitions

**Residential:** In 2011, twenty nine abandoned, vacant, dangerous and blighted residential structures were demolished. The Land Bank has replaced four of these houses with new construction. The rest of the properties have been replaced with grass and in some cases fences to tie the block together allowing the neighborhood a new sense of space and wider yards. Eight of these now demolished properties have been purchased by adjacent neighbors to expand their yard. Several of these side-lot purchasers have beautified their expanded lots with flowers and fencing.

**Commercial:** In 2010, the Land Bank acquired the Creamery Building on Portage Road. The Creamery was identified by the Neighborhood Association and residents as a dangerous building in need of demolition. The Land Bank demolished the building during the fall of 2011. The site will be replaced with interim green-space and is hoped to be eventually repurposed as a mixed use development potentially including destination retail or restaurant tenant.

#### Multi-Family Developments

**Prairie Gardens:** In 2011, the City of Kalamazoo and Western Michigan University demolished the blighted and abandoned Blakeslee Hospital, known as the old tuberculosis sanitarium, with NSPII funds. This dangerous property has been a longstanding problem for the community. The Land Bank will be replacing this with a senior housing development, Prairie Gardens. Pictured to the right, the development will offer 12 to 14 units and serve independent seniors. The development group, made up of Byce Engineering, OCBA Landscape Architects, and Glas Associates, will start construction in the Spring of 2012. The site will be equipped with walking trails, a community garden space and garden shed. The Land Bank held a community charrette, inviting seniors to express needs and wishes for the design firm's plan.



923 Russell Rehab



Demolition and Side-lot on North Burdick Street.



Prairie Gardens Site Map



### 3. Projects-Neighborhood Stabilization Program II (continued)

#### Multi-Family Developments (cont.):

**North Street Commons:** The Land Bank has been fortunate to work with the Northside Association for Community Development (NACD) to implement needed independent senior living in Kalamazoo's Northside Neighborhood. The City and the Land Bank are providing funding for NACD to construct a six unit independent senior living complex on its campus, adjacent to Park Street Market, the successful local grocery store, and integrated with NACD's wider plans for its campus.



Ground Breaking at NACD's Senior Development

### 5. In the Community



Concept sketch for future "Creamery" development drawn by Byce Engineering.

**Creamery Charrette:** The Land Bank teamed with the Edison Neighborhood Association to host a community charrette to direct the future development of the Creamery site. Thanks to Byce and Associates and OCBA, we were able to host three meetings to engage residents on their wants, needs, and wishes and to come up with a vision for the one acre parcel at the corner of Portage Street and Lake Street.

During a morning session, the Land Bank invited students from the Edison Environmental Academy to share their desires for the interim greenspace.



Students wanted to attract butterflies and birds.

Subsequent sessions were made up of stakeholders, such as nearby business holders and organizations, and residents from Edison Neighborhood. The resounding vision was for a multi-use, multi-story building, offering residents family dining and retail, and that would serve as a "destination place" attracting residents from the neighborhood, as well the wider area.

**Parkway Planting:** In an effort to improve neighborhoods, block by block, the Land Bank operates the Parkway Planting Program. Through this program, blocks can apply for resources from the Land Bank to improve their block's curbside appeal through garden and greenspace enhancement. This year the Land Bank helped several blocks improve their curb appeal, including the 1700 and 1800 block of Egleston. This block is the home of the Edible Edison Garden, as well as three NSPII rehabs underway.



Kalamazoo College volunteers helped plant flowers on Egleston Blvd.



Volunteer Kalamazoo & Biggs Gilmore volunteer group.

**560 Phelps:** During the spring, the Land Bank teamed up with the Eastside Neighborhood Association, Volunteer Kalamazoo, and Biggs Gilmore to clean-up the Eastside Neighborhood, and specifically the corner of East Main and Phelps Avenue. The Land Bank has owned 560 Phelps Avenue since 2010 and has struggled to keep the property clean of litter and loitering. The Land Bank worked with two teams from Biggs Gilmore on projects around the property. One team worked to clear shrubs and brush, pick-up trash, rake and remove low-hanging branches at 560 Phelps to help deter loiterers and illegal activities. Other teams were assigned similar jobs, but the most transforming work was the repainting of the East Main Food and Beverage, the store next door to 560 Phelps. The second Land Bank team made a flower box and planted flowers at the store next to help transform the look and help with the street appeal.

**Habitat for Humanity:** The Land Bank was able to donate two properties to Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity in 2011. In turn, Habitat transformed one of the properties in two days into a new home! The Virginia Avenue property was chosen for the annual Fast Built, a project between Habitat for Humanity and the Homebuilders Association where volunteers build a home in 36 hours.



## 4. Projects: Gardens and Greenspace

The Land Bank owns more than 100 vacant properties acquired through various ways- tax foreclosure, City of Kalamazoo property transfer, and NSP demolitions. In an effort to repurpose these vacant lots, the Land Bank administers several garden and greenspace programs.

**Side-Lot:** Adjacent home-owners, if eligible, may purchase Land Bank property for \$20 with an approved re-use plan. In 2011, thirty three side-lots were sold to expand neighbor's yards. A few properties were split between neighbors from each side, and one resident, Michelle Morin, purchased her backyard through the side-lot program (*pictured at right*).

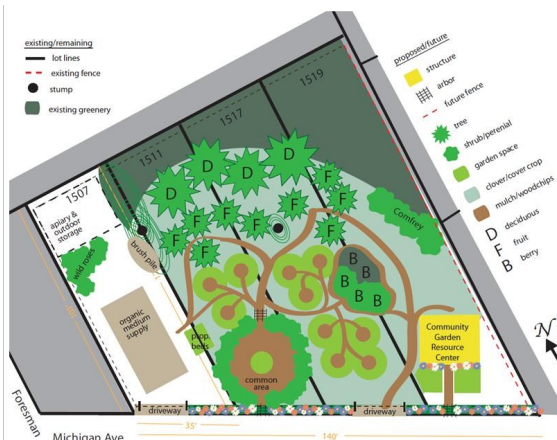
**Adopt-A-Lot:** Residents not adjacent, but interested in Land Bank property for gardening and greenspace can adopt property. Residents or groups interested in starting a community garden or pocket park can apply, and once their plan is approved can enter into a year-long lease for that property. The Campus Beet, a WMU student association adopted 1205 Summit in the spring of 2011 and started a community garden where students can learn to grow their own food, as well as connect to the surrounding WMU community through food sharing and children's events held at the garden.

**Community Garden Resource Shed:** Although many people have the desire to take on Land Bank property for gardens and greenspace, we've found that not all have the knowledge or resources to do so. To respond to this need, the Land Bank built a resource shed to use as a garden resource lending library to provide residents interested in gardens and greenspaces the resources necessary to implement their projects. The Land Bank, along with more than 50 volunteers built a handsome garden shed at 1519 East Michigan Avenue in October and November, which will receive its final touches in the spring of 2012.

The shed sits adjacent to three Land Bank properties that have been adopted by neighbors, Dale Abbott and Tomme Maile, to establish the Trybal Revival Eastside Eco-Garden, a public permaculture garden. The shed and permaculture garden will be a hub for gardeners, novice and experienced, to borrow tools and resources to garden, as well as learn and teach others about the benefits and intricacies of gardening.

Dale and Tomme made great strides in 2011 to help repurpose the Land Bank property on East Michigan. They were awarded funds from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to plant trees and perennials, they hosted several volunteer workdays to clean up the property-cutting down brush and picking up trash, built a fence and compost area, and made beds for spring planting in 2012. The Land Bank is excited to help support such a great community greening project!

The Land Bank was awarded a grant from the Kendeda Fund to design a sustainable Community Greenhouse, where residents can grow food year round, as well as learn hands-on about gardening. The Land Bank plans to fundraise in 2012 in order to construct a greenhouse adjacent to the Community Garden Resource Shed at 1521 East Michigan Ave.



*What Is, And What Is To Come— (Right) Aerial view of the 4 adjacent lots on East Michigan Avenue. (Left) The landscape plan for the Trybal Revival Eastside Eco-Garden and Community Garden Resource Shed.*



*Michelle Morin's children playing in their new backyard.*



*Campus Beet Vegetable Garden*



*Volunteers committed to build the shed, despite the cold.*

## 5. Thank You!

The Kalamazoo County Land Bank thanks its Board and all the dedicated partners, and volunteers that have assisted its efforts over the last year.

### Community Volunteers

Dale Abbott & Tomme Maile  
Cara & Nate Danis  
Esteven Juarez  
Larry & Sue Hill  
Kalamazoo College Student Volunteers  
Ka'Desh Community Garden  
Pamela Jenkins  
Ellen Maxwell  
Hannah McKinney  
Michigan Statewide LISC AmeriCorps  
MSU Master Gardeners  
Paul McNellis  
Olivia Rappel  
Gail Shannon  
Sherry Tomlinson  
Andy Wilkerson  
WMU Campus Beet Students

### Non-Profit Partners

Capital Access  
Center for Community Progress  
Edson Business Academy  
Edison Environmental Academy  
Fair Food Matters  
Fire  
Galilee Baptist Church  
Kalamazoo Community Foundation  
Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services  
Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)  
Michigan State Land Bank  
MSU Extension-Linda Whitlock  
Volunteer Kalamazoo

### Kalamazoo Neighborhood Associations

Eastside-Pat Taylor  
Edison-Tammy Taylor  
Fairmont-Melissa Linkfield  
Northside-Mattie Jordan-Woods  
Stuart-Matthew Baldwin-Wilson

### City of Kalamazoo

City Commissioners & Mayor  
Martha Aills  
Dorla Bonner  
Jeff Chamberlain  
Anna Crofoot  
Sharron Ferraro  
Laura Lam  
Lee Larson  
Gracia Mason  
Robert McNutt  
Rick Suwarsky

### Kalamazoo County

County Board of Commissioners  
Dave Artley  
Peter Battani  
Thom Canny  
Pat Crowley  
Jason Enos  
John Faul  
Lotta Jarnefelt  
Cheri McCaffery  
Register of Deeds Department

### Kalamazoo County Treasurer's Staff

Starr Adams  
Peggy Bresnahan  
Diane Burlew  
Sherry Coffey-Ezell  
Julie Harrison  
Billie Longnecker  
Greg Vlietstra  
Mary Wyatt

### Past and Present Board Members

Mary Balkema  
Jill Bland  
Jerome Kisscorni  
James Marquardt  
Al Rowe  
Justin VanderArk  
Chuck Vliet

### Other Partners

American Village Builders  
Bronson Hospital  
Byce & Associates  
Cutting Edge  
DLZ  
Durwood Custom Homes  
Envirologic  
Fleis & VandenBrink  
Glas Associates  
Hidden Savanna Nursery  
Home Builders Association of  
Greater Kalamazoo  
The Home Depot  
Homrich  
Jacqua Realtors  
Jim Roberts Construction  
Kalamazoo College  
Kalamazoo Family Health Center  
Lam & Associates  
Lowe's  
Martz Home Builders, LLC  
Mary Ann's Michigan Trees  
Metro Title  
Milan Salon  
Millennium Restaurant Group  
Miller Davis  
OCBA Landscape Architects  
Park Place Remodeling  
Prudential Preferred Realtors  
Roberts Development Group, Inc  
RE/MAX Advantage  
Southwest Michigan Appraisal  
The Growing Place, LLC  
Water Street Coffee Joint  
Wenke Greenhouses  
Western Michigan University

**Land Bank Volunteers of the Year:** The Land Bank would like to recognize spectacular community volunteers for their selfless dedication of talent and service to their communities. This year, the Land Bank recognizes Dale Abbott and Tomme Maile of the Eastside Neighborhood and Andy Wilkerson of the Northside Neighborhood. These three individuals have gone above and beyond to create a clean, safe, and pleasing natural and built environment for their neighborhoods and their work is greatly appreciated!