

KALAMAZOO COUNTY
LANDBANK
2013 Annual Report



A Message from the Board

Since 2010, the Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority with its partners has invested approximately \$18,000,000 in several transformational projects. The Marketplace development was the first new housing development in Edison in over 20 years where we built 23 market rate homes and sold them all to create a new \$5 million dollar development. Another project, Prairie Gardens, transformed a dilapidated tuberculosis sanitarium into a beautiful, affordable senior housing complex.

In addition, we removed 93 blighted structures, sold 33 new and rehabbed homes to homeowners, and transferred 94 properties to adjacent property owners to expand their yards. In total, 204 properties have been returned to the tax rolls by the Land Bank in three years. This is a significant amount of taxable value added back to the roll.

These properties are concentrated in areas of our county which have struggled from disinvestment, decline and an eroding tax base. This impacts not only individual property owners and residents on the block but also our wider community's economic health and well-being.

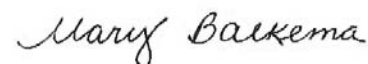
In 2013, the Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University completed a study demonstrating that investments made by the Ingham County Land Bank resulted in a \$56 million impact on the region and created over 400 jobs.

Homes sold next to properties that had been repurposed by the local land bank sold for 5.2 percent more than other homes in similar areas.

In 2013, our tax foreclosure rate was four times as high when compared to pre-recession numbers illustrating that while we have made progress we still have work to do to stabilize our tax base and ensure a strong and resilient economic future for the County.

We are encouraged by the Land Policy Institute study which looked at a peer organization in the State with a longer history than us and look forward to working with the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, local municipal entities, taxpayers and other partners in 2014 to continue this important work.

Sincerely,



Mary Balkema
Land Bank Board Chair



Mary Balkema
Board Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary Balkema, Board Chair
Kalamazoo County Treasurer

Terry Dorgan
President
Huntington Bank

Christopher Haenicke
Trust Officer
Greenleaf Community Trust

Jerome Kisscorni
Executive Director
City of Kalamazoo
Economic Development Corporation

Dr. Addis Moore
Pastor
Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Michael Seelye
President & Owner
Don Seelye Ford, Seelye-Write KIA
(served through Dec. 2013)

Chick Vliek
Vice President
Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)

Michael Collins
Executive Vice President
Kalamazoo Valley Community College
(service begins Feb. 2014)



Kelly Clarke
Executive Director

STAFF

Kenn Hartmann
Assets & Construction
Manager

Amanda Woodin
Finance & Administration
Manager

Catie Boring
Property Coordinator

Michael DeDitius
Property Coordinator

Karma Hassell
LISC Americorps

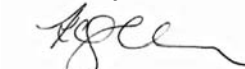
A Message from the Director

Last year in our Annual Report we talked about the power of place. Like others across the county, we are working to re-imagine our abandoned spaces so they not only make us more economically viable, but refresh us, provide spaces to build relationships with our neighbors, and help to define our community as unique and distinctive.

Over this past year, we have continued to learn from our partners about the powerful role people play in these spaces. We have learned that the best efforts in creating place are those that engage people in a meaningful way. Facilitating dialogue on re-purposing public space can be daunting at first. What if we can't implement the ideas? What if we can't achieve consensus? Last year provided great opportunities to engage our community and harness creative energies on several projects big and small. We learned that when asked, community members will offer positive and unique ideas, resources, networks, and even lend their hands on site.

We still have a lot to learn, but will continue to build strategies in partnership with residents, community leaders, stakeholders, and others to transform our community's most challenging spaces. This year, we have asked some of our partners and friends to help tell these stories through our Annual Report.

Sincerely,



Kelly Clarke
Executive Director



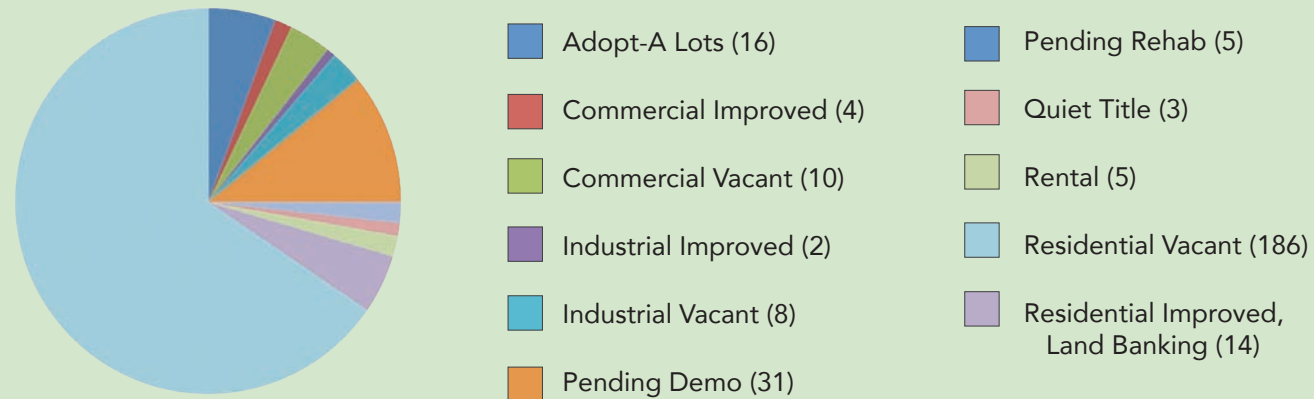
Kalamazoo County Land Bank
229 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 340
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269.762.6191

Progress by the Numbers

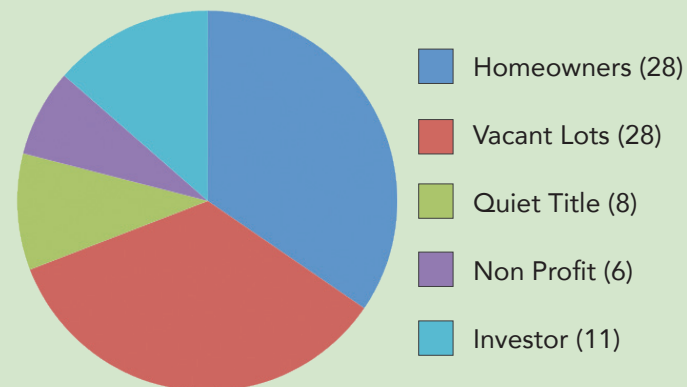
During 2013, the Land Bank worked with a range of funding sources to repurpose vacant, abandoned, foreclosed, and blighted properties and return them to productive use. In total, 81 properties were returned to productive use in 2013.

The Land Bank acquired 63 parcels through the tax foreclosure process in 2013, received 17 properties through donation, purchased four, handled seven quiet title transactions, and maintained 204 properties from existing inventory.

YEAR-END INVENTORY



DISPOSITION



NSP2 Outcomes Over 3 Year Grant Term Completed in 2013

	Units
New Homes Constructed & Sold to Homeowners	35
Homes Rehabilitated & Sold to Homeowners	12
Residential Blighted Properties Demolished	22
Commercial Blight Removed	2
Vacant Side Lots Sold to Adjacent Homeowners	25
Community Gardens Supported	2
Affordable Senior Rental Units Created & Leased	14

NSP2 in Review

Since 2010, the Land Bank has worked in partnership with the City of Kalamazoo on a \$15 million Neighborhood Stabilization Program grant, which funded many projects within the Eastside, Edison, Fairmont, Northside, Stuart, and Vine neighborhoods. Homes sold with great success, bringing an additional \$2.2 million to Kalamazoo resulting in a \$17.2 million investment! Projects included 23 new homes at Marketplace and eight new homes on North Rose and Burdick Streets,

14 scattered home rehabs, Prairie Gardens—a 14 unit senior rental development—and scattered blight removal.

Key to the program's success was the home ownership opportunity offered to a diverse range of buyers. The Kalamazoo NSP2 consortium worked with local partners to ensure broad awareness, including Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Galilee Baptist Church, The Touch Radio, Hispanic American Council, Disability Network, Community

Voices Magazine, and others who helped spread the word to ensure traditionally underrepresented groups had wide knowledge of these unprecedented opportunities to invest in home ownership.

KNHS acted as a valuable partner providing education and counseling services to help clients become mortgage ready. Because the program lasted three years this provided time for many buyers to work with KNHS on credit repair and mortgage readiness.

"I really liked the homes at Marketplace, but when I applied in 2012 KNHS directed me to get my credit score in order before I could be approved. I worked to pay off my old debt and was approved in 2013 to purchase my home at 1002 N. Rose."

— Heather S., North Rose home buyer

"I looked through a number of homes searching for the right one, and from the moment I walked through the door I knew this was my house. People visit and say 'Oh my, this is beautiful' and that's what I say everyday too. It's a blessing for me and my family and I really enjoy being a homeowner, it gives me a sense of responsibility and pride."

— Sheneeka S., North Burdick home buyer



NSP2 in Review . . . some of our projects

MARKETPLACE

The last of the 23 newly constructed homes at Marketplace was sold in August 2013. Through NSP, the Land Bank was able to acquire the six acre parcel that had long stood vacant and worked alongside the City of Kalamazoo and the Home Builders Association

of Greater Kalamazoo to construct 23 high quality, energy efficient homes next to the historic Kalamazoo Farmers Market. Many new residents have become engaged in the community.



"I'm excited to be living in Edison Neighborhood and to be a part of the changes happening in the neighborhood as a member of the Edison Neighborhood Association Board and the Farmers Market Advisory Board. I'm confident the neighborhood will thrive and be vibrant. And I'm very fortunate to have good neighbors all around me; some that have lived in the neighborhood all their lives, and others that are new to the community."

— Pam B., Marketplace homebuyer

SUPPORTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A goal of the NSP2 program included facilitating workforce development opportunities for local residents. Darnell Clay, of Cutting Edge, was procured as a minority owned and disadvantaged business in 2010 to maintain the Land Bank's properties, cutting the grass, securing properties, and removing trash. Since that time, Darnell and Cutting Edge has experienced business expansion. Cutting Edge has located in a new building in the Northside Neighborhood and expanded its services to include landscaping and ongoing additional clients.

SOUTH ROSE

Neighborhood Stabilization Funds were a catalyst for targeted reinvestment areas, such as the 800 block of South Rose. With NSP funds the Land Bank acquired and rehabilitated 805 S. Rose, a house that had stood blighted for many years. In 2013, the Land Bank received an Award of Merit from the Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission for the outstanding rehabilitation of the historic home. Subsequently, the home was sold to home-owners in May. Meanwhile, two houses across the street went through tax foreclosure in March 2013. Both were badly blighted, one condemned for meth contamination. The Land Bank worked with the County Treasurer to gain control of the properties and they were subsequently demolished and sold to the adjacent neighbors through the Side Lot Program.



"Since I found out I'd have the opportunity to purchase 818 S. Rose through the Side Lot program I've been planning with several non-profits to revitalize the vacant lot. In the spring we'll be planting 1/3 of the property to Prairie Mix, heavy on wild flowers, 1/3 to traditional garden, and the last 1/3 will be an outdoor play area."

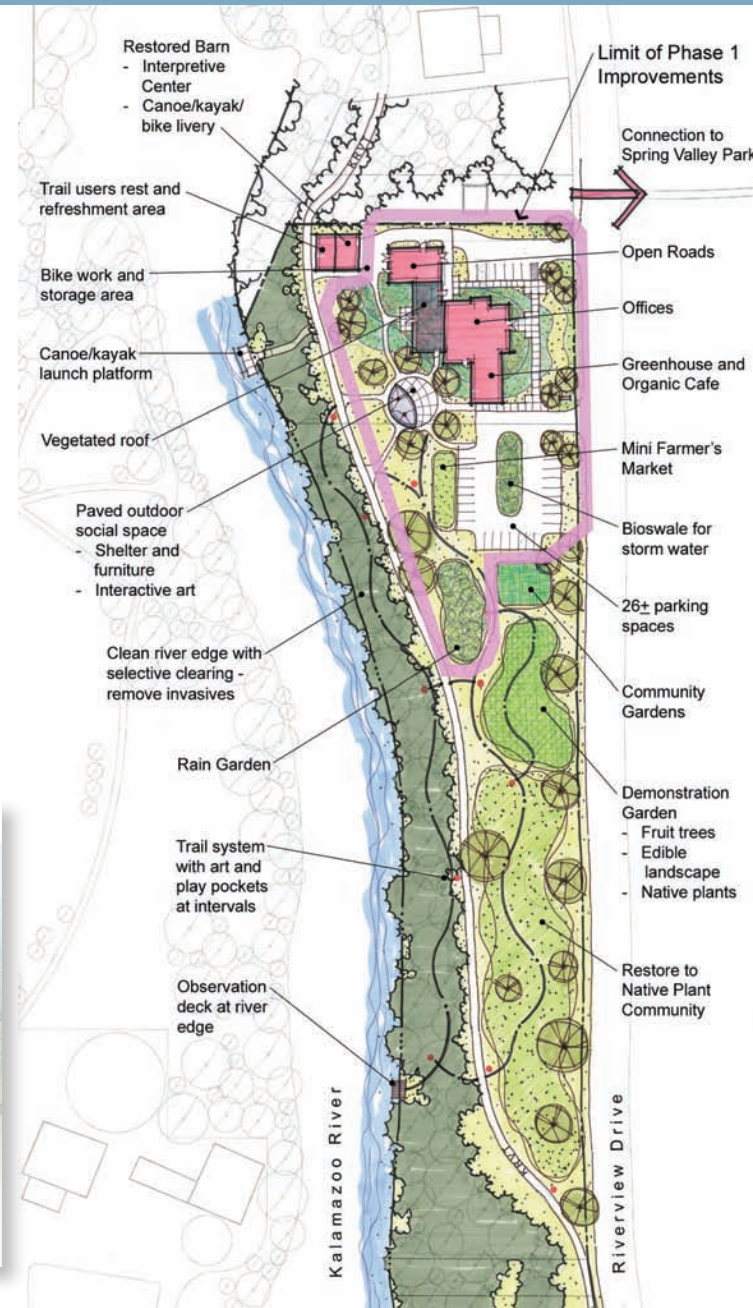
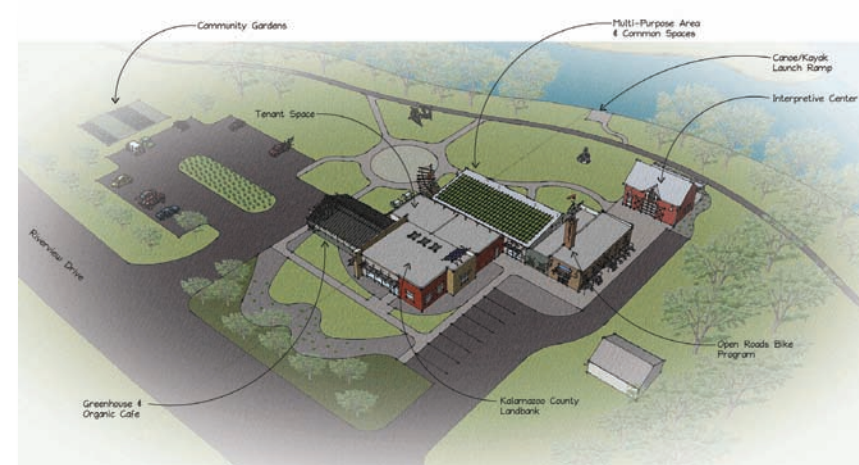
— Stephanie E., South Rose resident and Side Lot participant

NSP2 in Review . . . some of our projects

RIVERVIEW LAUNCH . . . A Project of Synergy

Riverview Launch is a unique site, located along the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and on the bank of the Kalamazoo River. The Land Bank acquired the five acres in 2012. The space connects to downtown, Spring Valley Park, Markin Glen Park, the Kalamazoo Nature Center, and points beyond. Formerly blighted and foreclosed, the site is undergoing a transformation as a community programming space and a center of interest and activity promoting access to the Kalamazoo River and Trailways. Throughout 2013, the Land Bank facilitated resident and stakeholder input sessions to develop concepts for the revitalization of this key property. Partners such as the Kalamazoo County Parks Department, Kalamazoo Nature Center, Open Roads, and MSU Extension, and others have contributed to a collaborative vision for this site.

During the summer months, the Land Bank coordinated volunteer efforts to revitalize the historic barn along the KRV. Over 50 volunteers transformed the barn with a new coat of paint, a poured concrete patio, and a sustainable and attractive rain garden. The Land Bank looks forward to working with Open Roads and MSU Extension to activate the space with programs in 2014!



"My career was spent nurturing the outdoors as Director of Landscape Services at Western Michigan University. Lessons learned through that career and my life have brought me to develop a very positive land ethic. I've been retired since 2009 and have spent my free time looking for and participating in any projects that would progress sustainability and conservation."

The Land Bank works with dedicated volunteers and staff that have made the tasks enjoyable and fulfilling. These activities have benefited me more than anything. I wish for my children to be able to say 'he did good things to help make the environment better for everyone.' I thank the Land Bank for the opportunity to meet good folks, share in great projects and give me a personal feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction in my senior years."

— Paul McNellis, Riverview Launch Volunteer

Riverview Launch

Gardens & Beautification

The Land Bank continues to repurpose vacant properties through Side Lot sales to adjacent neighbors and through beautification work where neighborhood residents are engaged.

SIDE LOT & BEAUTIFICATION

In 2013, the Land Bank sold 28 Side Lots to neighbors with plans to expand their yards. Many of the neighbors purchased vacant properties resulting from recent demolitions. The Land Bank actively promotes the Side Lot opportunity to neighbors throughout the year through the website, mailers, phone calls, and visits.

In honor of Earth Day in April 2013, Naylor Landscape Management coordinated PLANET Day of Service to make improvements to revitalize a basketball court yard that was installed in Kalamazoo's Northside Neighborhood on Union Street in 2012. The team dedicated a whole day to plant and mulch trees, install a cement bench, clean sidewalks, pick up debris, clean the fence row, and fix the grade and plant grass around the court. Naylor Landscape Management employees worked alongside Land Bank staff and Union Street residents to successfully transform the property, plus cooked a picnic lunch for all to share!

COMMON GROUND PARTNERSHIP

The Land Bank continues to participate as a lead agency in the Common Ground network in an effort to promote gardening in Kalamazoo County. In April, the Land Bank opened the Community Garden Resource Shed to all residents working on gardens and beautification. During spring, summer, and fall, more than 20 community gardens borrowed tools ranging from wheelbarrows to shovels. On May 14, 19 gardens received free plants and seeds during the Common Ground Plant Give and on July 11, Common Ground

hosted more than 60 people for an evening Community Garden Tour. The tour was offered by bus and bike. Bikers toured through six gardens and the bus stopped at five gardens to learn about different models, set-ups, and growing methods. Both tours started at the Land Bank's upcoming Riverview Launch site and ended at the Community Garden Resource Shed and Trybal Revival Community Eco Garden.

ADOPT-A-LOT

In 2013, the Land Bank leased 16 properties through the Adopt A Lot program. Through the program, residents adopt a property for purposes of gardening and beautification for one year terms. Lessees take responsibility for any maintenance and improvements to the land and get to enjoy the bounty that the land brings to them.

TRYBAL REVIVAL EASTSIDE ECO-GARDEN

The Trybal Revival Eastside Eco-garden continues to be a hub of activity. One of the first Adopt-A-Lot agreements for the organization, Trybal Revival has transformed the 1500 block of East Michigan Avenue from a blighted space into a vibrant permaculture garden full of fruiting and flowering plants. In 2013, Dale Abbott and Tomme Maile purchased the garage, which was salvaged from a house demolition at 1521 E. Michigan Avenue, to expand their permaculture and community garden strategies. Dale and Tomme plan to use the garage for a woodshop space. Additionally, they poured a concrete pad on their new lot and are using it as a base as they pilot a year-round vermicomposting system, partnering with restaurants to handle their pre-consumer, plant based kitchen waste to produce "black gold" for their gardens.



"Naylor Landscape Management has always felt that it is important to give back to the community that supports us. Being in the landscape business and a member of PLANET (Professional Land Care Network) the Union Street Park project was a perfect opportunity to combine PLANET's Day of Service initiative with the KCLB vision for the community. As we worked that day I could see a great sense of pride and accomplishment among my employees, volunteers and the residents of the neighborhood. I think we all left feeling great in being able to make a difference for a day. Everyone worked hard, had fun and were quite impressed how beautiful the park was when we finished."

— Barney Naylor, Naylor Landscape Management

Quality Rentals

PRAIRIE GARDENS

At the site where the severely blighted and long vacant TB sanitarium stood, in 2013, the Land Bank successfully leased all 14 Prairie Gardens units to occupants 55 and older within 2 months of opening. The units and central pavilion were built with NSP2 funding and are all 5 star-energy efficient and feature large windows that open to the surrounding 6 wooded acres. The Land Bank thanks its partners Byce & Associates, Glas Associates, and OCBA for their work assisting in the redevelopment of this property as a low density cottage style independent senior rental community. The Land Bank also leases 5 scattered site rentals, all which were significantly invested in before renting.



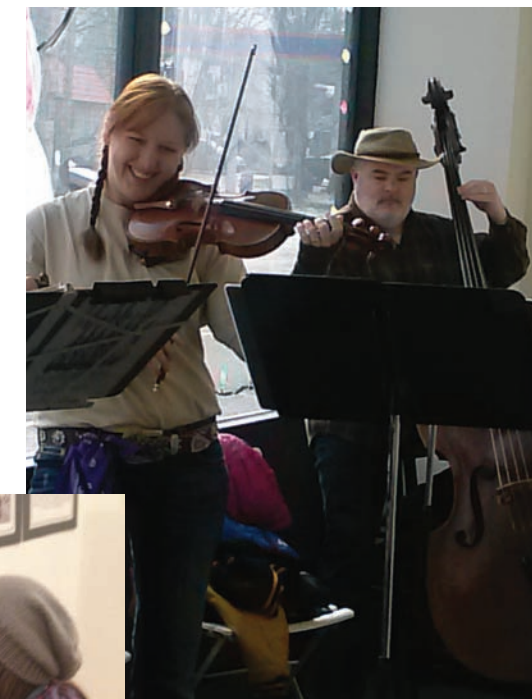
"Living at Prairie Gardens this year is a dream come true for me. As one of the original tenants, I got to be a pioneer, so to speak, up on Kalamazoo's West Douglas Neighborhood 'mountaintop.' It is quiet and peaceful, a little c-c-c-c-cold this winter, (but everyone is experiencing that). The landscaping is lovely, and the moonlit, starry night skies are spectacular. The other thirteen residents and I have shared breakfasts and dinners, walks around the complex, evenings on the porches together and even our annual yard/garage sale. We are enormously proud to live in these spacious senior cottages, where we feel at home, welcomed and you bet, we look out for one another."

— Edie Trent, Prairie Gardens Resident

WASHINGTON SQUARE

In partnership with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Land Bank acquired three prominent, historic buildings between Washington and Stockbridge Avenues on Portage Street in 2013. The Land Bank is working with partners including the Edison Neighborhood Association to re-activate the mostly vacant storefronts. On December 6, the Land Bank opened the doors to 1311 and 1350 Portage Street for Holidays In the Square, an event featuring an ArtHop exhibit and Pop-Up Retail including local artisans selling crafts, local food, and art. The event brought more than 100 residents and shoppers to Washington Square and was publicized via Facebook and local radio.

During Holidays in the Square, idea boards were scattered for residents to post ideas and visions for bringing vitality to the block.



"Washington Square used to be a vibrant hub. Neighbors came out to do their shopping and meet up. We are delighted the Land Bank is working in partnership with the neighborhood to bring life back to these vacant storefronts."

— Tammy Taylor, Edison Neighborhood Association Executive Director and neighborhood resident

Blight Elimination

Many of the properties that go through tax foreclosure present health and safety risks, including compromised and damaged structures, black mold, meth and fire contaminants and debris. Statewide and nationally, Land Banks have been advocating for funding to handle the blight in local communities. Kalamazoo received \$936,915 from the State of Michigan for blight elimination, as a result of a

successful funding application. With that funding, the City of Kalamazoo and the Land Bank demolished 50 blighted structures in 2013. The Land Bank also worked in partnership with the Kalamazoo County Treasurer to demolish eight structures that were tax foreclosed in 2013. In total, five commercial structures and 43 residential structures were demolished by the Land Bank in 2013. In addition, the Land Bank and County



924 Fairbanks | Before & After



The Land Bank was able to support Habitat for Humanity's efforts in the Eastside Neighborhood with the demolition of the severely blighted 924 Fairbanks. After demolition, the Land Bank transferred the vacant lot to Habitat, where they transformed the vacant lot into a brand new, energy efficient home in less than 24 hours. It was the 21st Fast Built home in Kalamazoo.

Treasurer partnered with the Edison Neighborhood Association's deconstruction program to provide four blighted homes for deconstruction.

In 2013, the Land Bank continued to develop a partnership with municipalities throughout the county. The Land Bank has been working with Kalamazoo Township, Cooper Township, Comstock Township,

Village of Schoolcraft, and the Village of Vicksburg. To date, eight blighted properties have been removed as a result of this partnership. Finally, the Land Bank began a partnership effort with Southwest Michigan First, the Kalamazoo County Brownfield Authority, and the Village of Vicksburg to tackle an abandoned mill.



906 Portage | Before & After



The Land Bank worked with volunteers to install landscaping at 906 Portage to replace the dilapidated former Zoo Bar after demo. Light landscaping and corridor beautification can be an effective way of mitigating the "missing tooth" appearance that can be caused by demolition in an urban setting.

Thank You Partners!

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS

Martha Aills
Fritz & Marisa Brown
Dale Abbott & Tomme Maile
BenJammin Children's
Education Duo
Colleagues International
Lydia Cook
Crescendo Fiddlers
William Derouin
Fetzer Institute Staff
Hidden Savannah
Karma Hassell
Ron Hassell
Heather Isch
Kalamazoo College Student
Commission
Kalamazoo Fiddlers
Michigan Statewide LISC
AmeriCorps
MSU Extension Master
Gardeners
Paul McNellis
Ian Nielson
Peace House
Riverstreet Flowerland
Dana Scott
Charlie Stoker
Angelica Tellier
Linda Whitlock
Andy Wilkerson
Tammy Wilson
WMU Student Volunteers

RIVERVIEW LAUNCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CABINET

Mathew Burian (co-chair)
Josie Cekola Boucher
Kelly Clarke
Terry Dorgan
Becky Fulgoni
Phillip Heasley
Ian Kennedy
John Kittredge (co-chair)
Dave Rachowicz
Lynn Spurr
Tim Surprise
Martha Todd

Perry Wolfe (chair)
Honorary Members
Mayor Bobby Hopewell
County Treasurer
Mary Balkema
County Drain Commissioner
Pat Crowley
Chris Tracy, Kalamazoo
River Valley Trail
Bill Rose,
Kalamazoo Nature Center

MUNICIPAL PARTNERS

Charter Township of
Kalamazoo
Charter Township of
Comstock
City of Kalamazoo
City of Portage
Cooper Charter Township
Kalamazoo County
Texas Township
Village of Schoolcraft
Village of Vicksburg

BOARD MEMBERS

Mary Balkema, Chair
Terry Dorgan
Christopher Haenicke
Jerome Kisscorni
Dr. Addis Moore
Michael Seelye
Chuck Vliet

NON-PROFIT & FOUNDATION PARTNERS

CEDAM
Center for Community
Progress
Consumers Energy
Dalton Foundation
Eastside Neighborhood
Association
Edison Neighborhood
Association
Fair Food Matters
Friends of the Kalamazoo
River Valley Trail
Harold & Grace Upjohn
Foundation
Irving S. Gilmore Foundation

Kalamazoo Community
Foundation
Kalamazoo Nature Center
Kalamazoo Neighborhood
Housing Services
Kalamazoo Valley Habitat
for Humanity
KPEP
Local Initiatives Support
Corporation (LISC)
Michigan Association of
Land Banks Michigan
Land Bank Fast Track
Authority
Michigan Municipal League
Kalamazoo County MSU
Extension
Kalamazoo County Parks
Foundation
Kalamazoo River Watershed
Council
Kalamazoo Valley
Community College
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
National Community
Stabilization Trust
Northside Ministerial Alliance
Open Roads
Peoples Food Co-op
Public Arts Commission
Volunteer Kalamazoo
WMU Office of Sustainability

OTHER PARTNERS

Adams Outdoor Advertising
American Village Builders
Bank of America
Byce & Associates
Capital Access
Chemical Bank
Consumers Concrete
Cutting Edge
Envirologic
Farm N Garden
First Source Bank
Flagstar Bank
Fleis & VandenBrink
Freddie Mac
Handley's Tree Service
Home Builders of Greater

Kalamazoo
Home Depot
Huntington Bank
Ignertia
Intrepid Professional Group
Jaqua Realtors
Jeffrey Michael, LLC
Kalamazoo College
Kalamazoo Family Health Center
Kalamazoo Fence
Jaqua Realtors
Lam & Associates
Lamont Title Corporation
Landscape Forms
Lowes
Main Street East
Michigan State Housing
Development Authority
Millennium Restaurant Group
Naylor Landscape Management
OCBA Landscape Architects
STR
Title Check
Warner, Norcross, & Judd, LLP
Water Street Coffee Joint
Wells Fargo
Wenke Flooring & Design
Wenke Greenhouses
Western Michigan University

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE*

5/3 Bank
Glas Associates
Pitsch Companies
PNC Bank
Roberts Development

**Leadership Circle is a
dedicated and growing group
of civic-minded businesses that
support the Land Bank's mission
to revitalize communities.*