



Repurpose. Renew. Reconnect.



Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

A Message from the Board Chair

2022 was a year of exciting changes and challenges at the Kalamazoo County Land Bank. New projects, new staff, and new opportunities set the Land Bank on path toward great things in 2022, all the while maintaining the agency's focus on redevelopment, accessibility and support for community members, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

In the beginning of the year, we welcomed Executive Director Sid Ellis to the Land Bank. Sid brought long experience and incredible vision to the Land Bank. Sid previously served as the Executive Director at the Douglass Community Association, and before that, as the Director of Mission Advancement with the YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo. With his leadership, we began to tackle a number of larger projects.

First, we broke ground on the second phase of the Eastside Square project. When complete, this Phase will contain 6 condominiums along with nearly 2000 square feet of commercial space, located along the East Main Corridor in the Eastside Neighborhood. The Condominiums will be sold as Affordable Housing, and we are excited to lease the commercial space for either one or two local businesses. This investment in the East Main Commercial Corridor will serve as an anchor for the local community, and we are happy to lead this effort.

Next, the Land Bank had the opportunity to work with Industrial Partners USA, Pavilion Township, and Southwest Michigan First to develop a novel project structure, bringing a potential of 1 million desperately needed industrial development to Kalamazoo County.

Lastly, at the end of 2022, the Land Bank began the Homeward Promise Project, beginning the process of acquiring and administering nearly 60 rental homes in Kalamazoo. With the input and assistance of many local partners, the Homeward Promise Project aims to convert many of these rental properties into home-ownership opportunities, prioritizing the residents that are currently occupying the homes.

2022 was a year of change. It was a year of new opportunities, and new faces, as the Land Bank takes on new challenges, and serves the county in new ways. We thank you for the opportunity, and are proud to share these successes with you in the following pages.

Sincerely,



Thomas Whitener
KCLBA Board Chair

Kalamazoo County Liaisons



Veronica
McKissack



Tami Rey

Board of Directors



Thomas Whitener
Board Chair
Kalamazoo County Treasurer



Carl Roberts
Vice Chair
Retired V.P. Engineering,
BorgWarner Thermal Systems



Rebekah Kik
Assistant City Manager
City of Kalamazoo



Holly Crump
Senior Wealth Manag. Assoc.
Greenleaf Trust



Brian Hudson
Executive Director,
Chase Commercial Banking



Qianna Decker
City of Kalamazoo
Commissioner



Elizabeth Schlott
Supports Coordinator,
Integ. Serv. of Kalamazoo



Shawntel Lindsey
The Arbor Community
Connection Center



Pat Clark
Housing Director,
CARES

A Message from the Executive Director

Staff



Sidney Ellis
Executive Director



Theresa Coty O'Neil
Communication & Grant Manager



Reality Rojas
Senior Operations Manager



Anna Roeder
Administrative Support



I'yanna Wilson
Communication Intern

As I began my time as Executive Director April 2022, three words continued to reverberate throughout conversations at the Kalamazoo County Land Bank: Repurpose, Renew, and Reconnect. These three words cycled through in meetings with staff, the Board of Directors, city and county officials, other partners and supporters. The focus on these three strategies allowed for the continuation of parcel management, the development of projects, and thriving partnerships.

With the due diligence of our contractors, we were able to manage and maintain over 300 properties to keep vacant parcels within the community vibrant. Vacant parcels were reconnected to the neighborhood through partners such as Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (KNHS), who purchased from the Land Bank and built five homes in 2022.

Vibrant Kalamazoo along with our Affirmative Marketing Committee, the Eastside Neighborhood Association and other community partners hosted the second Show Me the Money event at the Eastside Sunrise Plaza. This event provided residents one-on-one conversations with community partners, informational booths, and presentations in English and Spanish surrounding financial literacy, mortgage preparation, and credit repair.

Our proudest moment was the groundbreaking of the long-anticipated redevelopment project, Eastside Square, on December 14th. Eastside Square was originally conceived in 2019 and faced delays due to the pandemic, construction slowdown, and construction cost increases. On December 14th, a number of community members, community partners, and supporters of Eastside Square gathered to mark the momentous occasion. Despite the initial delays, the progress of the project has been tremendous and generated excitement at the Land Bank and within the community. Eastside Square went from a community envisioned idea to a reality, thanks to generous local philanthropic individuals, organizations, local grantors, and Kalamazoo County Government. This project continues our quest to Repurpose, Renew and Reconnect, helping to transform neighborhoods.

Our vision for 2023 is to move forward in helping to provide affordable housing in the Kalamazoo County area. We want to work with other community agencies to help make purchasing a home a more equitable process.

Best,

Sidney Ellis
Executive Director

Property Opportunities



In 2022, the Kalamazoo County Land Bank had the opportunity to sell a number of parcels to residents, small businesses, small developers, and nonprofits.

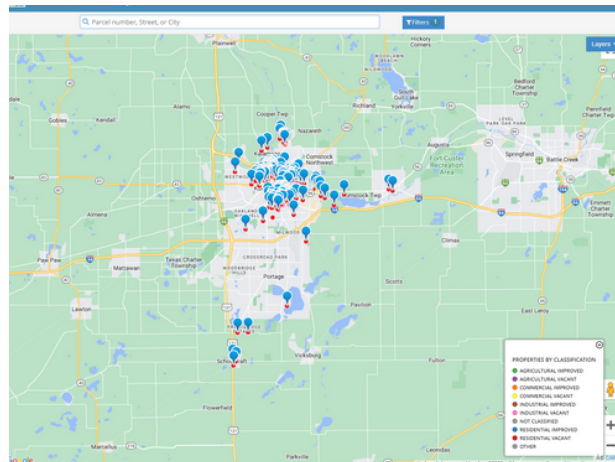
With the sale of these parcels, we were able to support new ventures and continue our support of community and municipal plans.

Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (KNHS) purchased land from the Kalamazoo County Land Bank inventory such as 3531 Lowden, 3524 Lowden and 1333 Summit. These once vacant parcels are in the process in becoming renewed and reconnected homes in the community.

Partner with Us!

We have over 300 parcels in our inventory, the Land Bank is eager to continue work with residents, small business partners, developers, and non profits. To access our inventory visit: <https://kalamazoolandbank.org>.

If you have any questions, we're happy to answer them! We look forward to working with you in the future.



This map showcases our Property Search located on our website. Within the Property Search, you are able to see parcels the Land Bank has within its inventory as well as parcel details such as asking price, square footage, neighborhood and more.

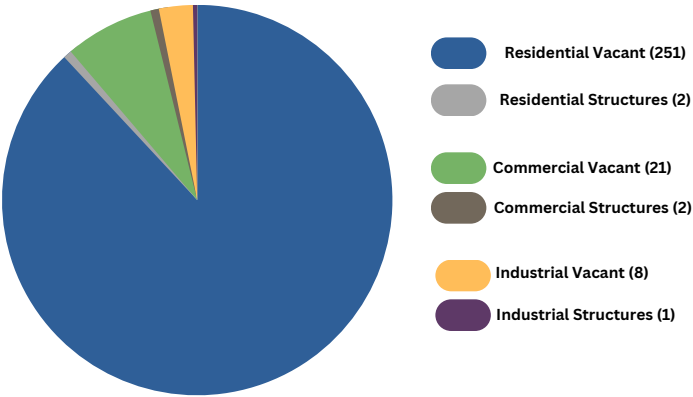
1523 Riverview Drive, Suite A
Kalamazoo, MI 49004
269.762.6191
landbank@kalamazoolandbank.org



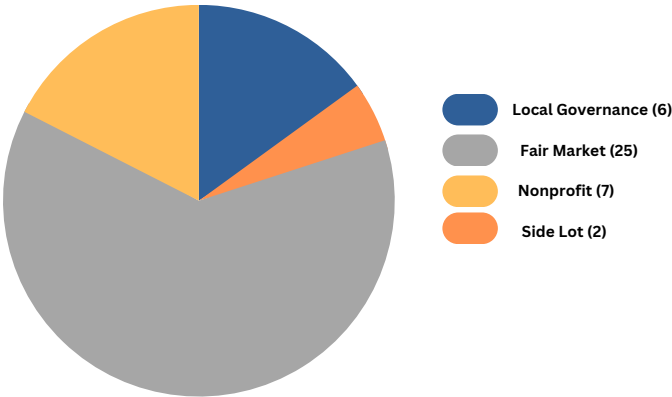
Progress by the Numbers

In 2022, over 300 properties were managed in our inventory. Within those properties, there were 251 Residential Vacant, 2 Residential Structures, 21 Commercial Vacant, 2 Commercial Structures, 8 Industrial Vacant, and 1 Industrial Structures. The Land Bank acquired zero parcels through tax foreclosure process in 2022, and completed 25 Fair Market sales, 2 Side Lot sales, 7 Nonprofit sales, and 6 Local Governance sales. For 2022, there were 52 tax foreclosures.

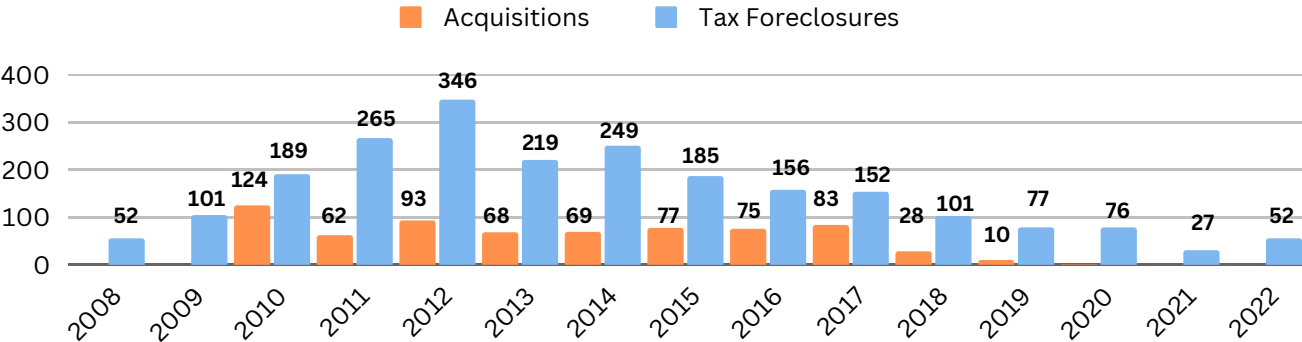
Year- End Inventory



Disposition



Kalamazoo County Tax Foreclosures & Acquisitions



1601 East Main Groundbreaking

The long anticipated redevelopment project, Eastside Square began on December 14, 2022. Once completed, 1601 East Main will house six two-bedroom, mixed-income, affordable and energy-efficient housing units along with 1,800 square feet of commercial space.

Originally conceived of in 2019 after three community envision events that drew over 200 residents, Eastside Square experienced subsequent start delays due to the pandemic, construction slowdown, and construction cost increases. Thanks to generous local philanthropic organizations and an American Rescue Plan Act grant administered through Kalamazoo County Government, as well as ongoing infrastructure support with reimagining East Main from the City of Kalamazoo.

“It’s incredibly exciting to see the Eastside Square project break ground,” said Thomas Whitener, Land Bank Board Chair and Kalamazoo County Treasurer. “This project, designed with the community for the community, will provide affordable housing and community commercial space in the Eastside Neighborhood. I’m very proud of the team at the Land Bank, and thankful to our partners in the Kalamazoo Eastside Neighborhood Association, the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, the City of Kalamazoo, and others, for coming together and making this possible.”

The Land Bank is grateful to the following for their generous support of Eastside Square: Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Stryker Johnston Foundation, Dorothy U. Dalton Foundation, Marvin and Rosalie Okun Foundation, Suzanne Upjohn Delano Parish Foundation Jim Gilmore Jr. Foundation, Tyler Little Foundation, Harold and Grace Upjohn Foundation Fifth Third Foundation, Old National Foundation, Huntington Foundation and Kalamazoo County Government for ARPA funding.



Pictured is a sample of the completed building of Eastside Square. November 2023 the construction of the long-awaited project, Eastside Square, will be completed.



Riverview Launch

The Land Bank offices are in Riverview Launch. Located on the River Valley Trail, the launch is shared with our tenants: Open Roads, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council, and Farmers Bloom. The ground include drought-tolerant gardens, native plantings, butterfly gardens, a view of the river.



We welcome all to use the trail behind the offices with free after-hours and weekend parking in front of the building.

Photos by Fran Dwight.



Rent the Riverview Launch Space

Our indoor facilities includes a large conference room and hub with a kitchen that opens to create an indoor/outdoor gathering space. Rentals are available on a limited basis during business hours, Monday through Friday. If you are interested in renting or visiting the facility, please give the Kalamazoo County Land Bank a call at 269.762.6191 or inquire at landbank@kalamazoolandbank.org.

Riverview Launch offers opportunities to bring neighbors together, and drives momentum toward the creation of greener, safer, and smarter use of public spaces. As staff migrated back to the office so has the community. Riverview Launch attracts the community to get outside to bike, walk on the trail, and enjoy the butterflies.

Riverview Launch Tenants

Farmers Bloom Flower Company

Owner, Kristiana Coutu

Farmers Bloom enjoyed another year of providing local, fresh cut flowers to florists, event designers and flower lovers in southwest Michigan. Since the majority of cut flowers are produced in other countries, we at Farmers Bloom take a lot of pride in being a local source for quality flowers. "Every stem we grow and sell to our local customers is a stem that did not need to be flown in from thousands of mile away" said Kristiana Coutu. The lovely, historic greenhouse at Riverview Launch allows us to have flowers blooming several months earlier than our field-grown crops. As the local flower movement continues to grow, we continue to grow right along with it.



Open Roads Bicycle Program

Open Roads Bike Program has been busier than ever in 2022! Open Roads partnered with several refugee serving organizations to provide bicycles for newly settled refugees. 96 bikes were donated to this cause – and hope to do even more in 2023. Open Roads expanded its programs to include our first ever Adult Earn-a-Bike, and has been building a strong team to deliver more programs around the Kalamazoo Area. "In 2022, over 550 students joined for Open Shop sessions and learned to fix their own bikes, and we hosted our first ever Earth Day event, which had an incredible turn-out," said Isaac Green, Executive Director. "Open Roads is a proud supporter of after-school learning and is grateful for the community support we have received."



Kalamazoo River Watershed Council

The Kalamazoo River Watershed Council has a 30-year history as an important voice in southwest Michigan for restoring and protecting the health of the Kalamazoo River, its tributaries, and its watershed. Kalamazoo River Watershed Council is a science-based organization that works to promote wise stewardship of this priceless regional asset by collaborating with communities, government agencies, local officials, and businesses. In the past year, we have been active in a number of areas. Kalamazoo River Watershed Council supported a number of Kalamazoo paddle events and the Krazy for the Kazoo cleanup and stewardship events, helping to get people on the river to enjoy and care for it. They participated in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services "Eat Safe Fish" program to help educate the watershed community about the "Do Not Eat" fish consumption advice that applies to fish caught from the Kalamazoo River between the Morrow Dam and the Calkins Dam at Lake Allegan. Kalamazoo River Watershed Council stayed up-to-date with, and communicated with the public about the many cleanup and river restoration activities in the Kalamazoo River Area of Concern (AOC), including the Allied Paper/Kalamazoo River Superfund cleanup of PCB-contaminated river sediments and floodplain soils. Lastly, they were able to increase engagement with underserved and underrepresented communities in the watershed to learn, educate, and connect more of our watershed community with this important "quality of life" natural resource asset in southwest Michigan.



Show Me The Money

On June 23rd, 2022 the Kalamazoo County Land Bank and Vibrant Kalamazoo in partnership with the Kalamazoo Eastside Neighborhood Association sponsored Show Me The Money. “KENA is proud to continue our partnership with the Land Bank joining our efforts to stabilize household finances and assist families to purchase homes or save more efficiently,” said Pat Taylor, KENA Director. The event was a financial literacy, mortgage preparation and credit repair event that took place at the Eastside Sunrise Plaza. The event featured the Lunchbox Food Truck, the Eastwood Kalamazoo Public Library's mobile lending library, Twala Lockett-Jones with her children's book, *Princess Mackie Buys a House*, games, and financial panels in English and Spanish.



Residents brought financial-related questions to have them answered on the two half-hour long panels that were hosted by Buddy Hannah, a former radio talk show host. This successful event created an opportunity for residents to find out more about the Eastside Square Project and jumpstart conversations about homeownership.



Special thanks to those who supported and participated in this event, including Lunchbox Food Truck, Kalamazoo Public Library, Amerifirst Mortgage, Consumers Energy, El Concilio, Lockett-Jones Realty Group, Buddy Hannah, Fifth Third Bank, 1st Source Bank, the Land Bank's awesome Affirmative Marketing Committee, and so many others!

Vibrant Kalamazoo

Engaging and Connecting Community

Vibrant Kalamazoo, a 501 (c)3 supporting organization, is the community engagement and fundraising arm of the Kalamazoo County Land Bank. In 2022, Vibrant continued to engage with Land Bank board members, staff, nonprofit leaders, neighborhood leadership, and bankers to provide financial literacy and connect with resources for homeownership with the goal to increase homeownership of low-income residents, people of color, and non-English speakers. With the support of Vibrant, the Affirmative Marketing Committee partnering with Kalamazoo Eastside Neighborhood Association helped to organize KENA's Show Me The Money event.

Affirmative Marketing Campaign



Photo features a few committee members from left to right: Sidney Ellis, Qianna Decker, I'yanna Wilson, Pat Taylor, Theresa Coty O'Neil, Twala Lockett-Jones, Nick Boyd, Adrian Vazquez, and Juliet Altman

Vibrant Kalamazoo's Affirmative Marketing Homeownership Campaign seeks to address disparities in homeownership, particularly for People of Color, low-income residents and Non-English Speakers.

Vibrant Board



Thomas Whitener
Board Chair
Kalamazoo County Treasurer



Holly Crump
Vice President
TCF National Bank



Adrian Vazquez
Director, El Concillio



Ian Kennedy
Vice President, & General Counsel
Kalsec Inc.



Juliet Altman
Realtor and Interpreter



Paul Valentin
Realtor, Jaqua Realtors



Sidney Ellis
Executive Director, Kalamazoo
County Land Bank Authority

Looking Ahead



In 2023, we are excited to continue to implement our strategies of repurpose, renew, and reconnect. We will continue to work with the community and our partners with the focus to create affordable housing within Kalamazoo County.

With the completion of the Eastside Sunrise Plaza, we have seen the plaza utilized by residents of the Eastside. Residents have gathered for events like Show Me The Money as well as community lead events. Eastside Sunrise Plaza was a starting point for the project plans on the Eastside. December 2022 marked the start of the Eastside Square. The construction of the project will be complete November 2023.

Thank you to our community partners, community members, Land Bank and Vibrant board for their work with us in 2022. The Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority looks forward to continue repurpose, renew, and reconnect.



Core Values

The following values were adopted by the Kalamazoo County Land Bank in 2020 to inform the basis for our work.

INTEGRITY

We embody fairness, professionalism, transparency and respect in every interaction.

COMMUNITY

We are committed to elevating community voice and leadership in all stages of community development.

EQUITY

The Land Bank acknowledges systemic racism and commits to forwarding an inclusive and equitable future.

STRATEGY

We make decisions based on the careful analysis of data.

IMPACT

We emphasize action, achievement and results.

Mission

The mission of the Kalamazoo County Land Bank is to create vibrant communities through the elimination of blighted properties, creation of affordable housing opportunities, and the stabilization of property values.

Vision

For all of Kalamazoo's neighborhoods and County municipalities to be defined by economic stability, quality of life for residents and an absence of blight.

Thank You, Partners!



Tyler Little Family
FOUNDATION

STRYKER
JOHNSTON
FOUNDATION



Thank you to our 2022 partners. We appreciate your contribution and dedication to our mission and vision for Kalamazoo County. We look forward to continued partnership.



Eastside Square Coming 2023

