



Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Repurpose. Renew. Reconnect.



Core Values

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 as a context for its work. We are intentionally identifying disparate impact and disproportionality in all areas of our work, while maintaining anti-racist practices and delivering equity.

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.

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



Qianna Decker
City of Kalamazoo
Commissioner



Shawntel Lindsey
The Arbor Community
Connection Center



Pat Clark
Housing Director,
CARES



Tami Rey
County Commissioner

Special thanks to former board members Brian Hudson, Elizabeth Schlott, and Holly Crump for their dedication to the Land Bank

Kalamazoo County Liaison



Monteze Morales
County Commissioner

Staff



Sidney Ellis
Executive Director



I'yanna Wilson
Administrative Assistant



Derek Mann
Property & Project Coordinator

Special thanks to Theresa Coty O'Neil,
Anna Roeder, and Reality Rojas for
their years of dedicated service to the
Land Bank.

In 2023, KCLBA experienced notable internal growth and continued its commitment to revitalizing communities. The team welcomed Derek Mann as a new staff member and celebrated the promotion of I'yanna Wilson to Administrative Assistant. Despite being a small team, they remained steadfast in their mission to eliminate blighted properties, create affordable housing, and stabilize property values through initiatives like Homeward Promise.

Two KCLBA staff members attended the Center for Community Progress National Land Bank Network Summit in Cleveland, Ohio, where they gained valuable insights into the initiatives of the Cuyahoga Land Bank. They also explored innovative strategies for land banks to further their impact in community revitalization. Additionally, Executive Director Sidney Ellis attended the Michigan Association of Land Banks Leadership Summit in Genesee County, reinforcing the importance of networking and sharing best practices within the land bank community. These opportunities ensure that KCLBA stays informed and connected to the broader movement of land banks, enhancing its ability to drive positive change.



Photo taken by Michigan Association of Land Banks during the Michigan Association of Land Banks Leadership Summit.

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



Property Opportunities

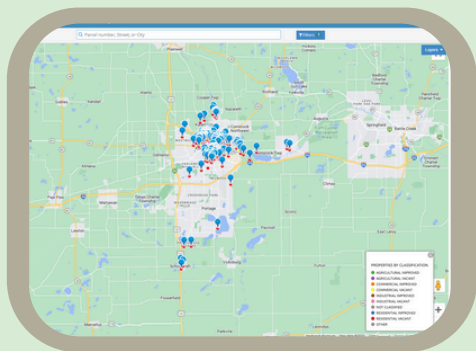
Interested in a Parcel?

With over 200 parcels in our inventory, the Kalamazoo County Land Bank is eager to collaborate with residents, small businesses, developers, and nonprofits. To explore our available properties, please visit:

<https://kalamazoolandbank.org>.

In 2023, our dedicated staff and contractors worked tirelessly to maintain these parcels and address any concerns raised by the community.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out! We look forward to partnering 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.

Scattered Sites Contractors

The Kalamazoo County Land Bank is fortunate to partner with exceptional contractors dedicated to maintaining our properties across the county. This season, Valley Vision Construction & Development and 2nd Chance Lawn Care played crucial roles in keeping our vacant parcels in good condition.

Valley Vision Construction & Development managed parcels throughout Kalamazoo County, while 2nd Chance Lawn Care focused on maintaining parcels in the Northside of Kalamazoo. Their diligent efforts have helped prevent these properties from contributing to blight in our community. We are incredibly grateful for the hard work and dedication of our contractors!

Blight Elimination

In 2023, the City of Kalamazoo was awarded the State Land Bank Authority Round 1 Blight Elimination funds. With these funds, the City of Kalamazoo elected to demolish 328 E Stockbridge, formerly known as the Bingo Hall.



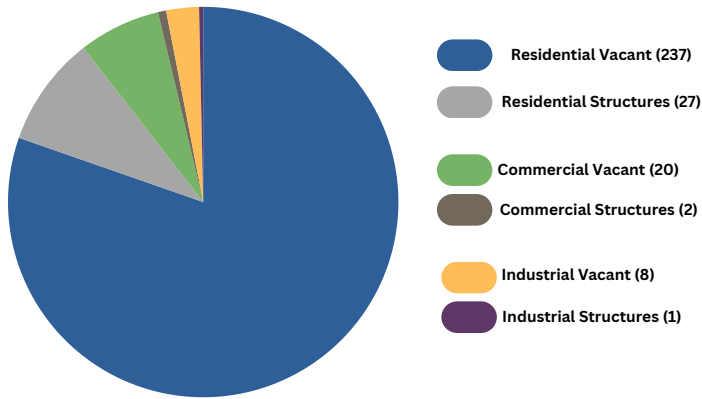
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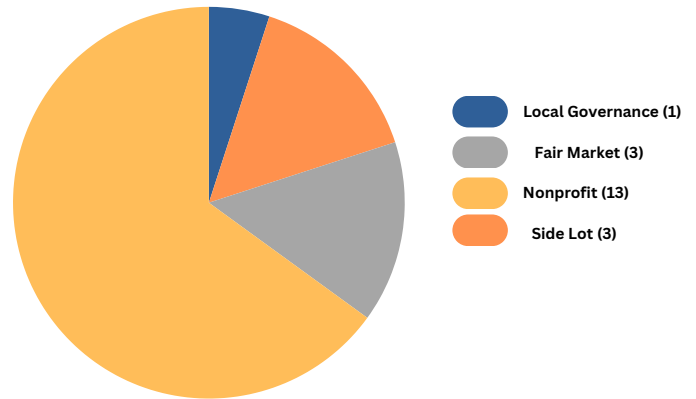
Progress by the Numbers

In 2023, over 250 properties were managed in our inventory. Within those properties, there were 237 Residential Vacant, 27 Residential Structures, 20 Commercial Vacant, 2 Commercial Structures, 8 Industrial Vacant, and 1 Industrial Structures. The Land Bank acquired two parcels through tax foreclosure process in 2023, and completed 3 Fair Market sales, 3 Side Lot sales, 13 Nonprofit sales, and 1 Local Governance sales. For 2022, there were 39 tax foreclosures.

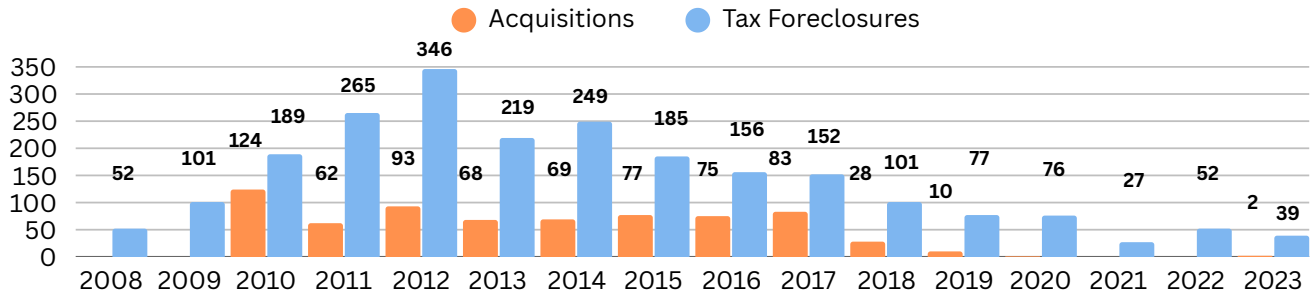
Year- End Inventory



Disposition



Kalamazoo County Tax Foreclosures & Acquisitions



Eastside Square

The Eastside Square redevelopment project has reached significant milestones this year, transforming from community vision to a completed development on East Main. This achievement is a testament to the collective efforts of our generous donors, dedicated staff, the Eastside Neighborhood Association, and the invaluable input from the community.

Eastside Square now includes six two-bedroom, mixed-income, affordable, and energy-efficient housing units, as well as 1,800 square feet of commercial space. Our partners, Lockett-Jones Realty and Dover Birch, collaborated with Land Bank staff and the real estate committee to prepare both the condominiums and commercial space for market launch. A key feature of this project is its affordability; the condominiums are available to individuals earning between 60% and 120% of the area median income. The real estate committee is committed to providing opportunities for homeownership within these affordability guidelines.

Looking forward to 2024, we anticipate welcoming new homeowners and businesses to Eastside Square. The completion of Building C represents a significant step in our ongoing commitment to revitalizing the East Main area.

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, Huntington Foundation, Kalamazoo County Government for ARPA funding, City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Community Foundation and LISC.



Eastside Square Construction



Riverview Launch

The Kalamazoo County Land Bank is proud to call Riverview Launch on the River Valley Trail our home. Our office shares this vibrant space with Open Roads, the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council, and Farmers Bloom. With our staff back in the office full-time, we've seen an increase in foot traffic at Riverview Launch.

The grounds feature beautiful drought-tolerant gardens, native plantings, and butterfly gardens, all offering stunning views of the river. As more visitors come to Riverview Launch, the Land Bank is committed to enhancing the beauty of this area. Our staff truly enjoy the access to the River Valley Trail and the scenic surroundings. We invite everyone to explore the trail behind our offices, with free after-hours and weekend parking available in front of the building. Come visit us!

Barn Redesign

In 2023, Riverview Launch faced some challenges, including several break-ins at the barn over the summer, which impacted our tenant, Open Roads. We worked swiftly to repair the extensive damage to the windows and doors to ensure that Open Roads would not be affected any further. While the barn looks bit different, the redesign of the barn at the rear of Riverview Launch ensures that our tenants are protected and Riverview Launch remain a safe space for our staff, tenants, and visitors.



Kalamazoo River Remediation

Riverview Launch is strategically located alongside the Kalamazoo River Trail and the Kalamazoo River, offering a unique perspective on the ongoing efforts to restore the river's health. Over the past year, we have closely observed the significant progress made in river remediation, particularly the relentless efforts of dedicated crews engaged in mechanical dredging to remove contaminated sediment. This essential work is not only crucial for addressing contamination but also serves as a cornerstone of our commitment to environmental sustainability.

The Kalamazoo River is integral to the appeal of our facilities, enriching the experience of staff, tenants, and visitors alike. Each day, our team enjoys the scenic views and the opportunity to witness the positive transformation of the river. This firsthand experience reinforces our dedication to fostering a vibrant, healthy environment for the community.

Rent the Riverview Launch Space

In 2023, we were excited to resume rentals of Riverview Launch's indoor facilities, hosting several nonprofit organizations throughout the year.

Our indoor space features a large conference room and a hub with a kitchen that opens up to create a seamless indoor/outdoor gathering area. Thanks to our dedicated contractors and staff, guests can fully enjoy the beauty of the facility

Rentals are available on a limited basis during business hours, Monday through Friday. If you're interested in renting the space or would like to visit, please contact the Kalamazoo County Land Bank at 269.762.6191 or email us at landbank@kalamazoolandbank.org.



Riverview Launch Tenants

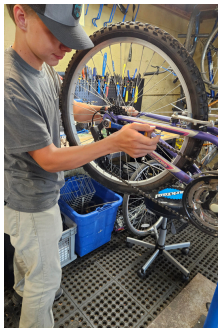


Farmers Bloom Flower Company Owner, Kristiana Coutu

Farmers Bloom enjoyed another year of providing local cut flowers to our community. The smiles our flowers bring to our customers never get old. We love sharing our flowers, but also our passion for agriculture. As the summer draws to a close, we are grateful for another growing season and planning for the next one as always!



Open Roads Bike Program



Open Roads Bike Program is working harder than ever in 2023! Open Roads partnered with several refugee serving organizations to provide bicycles for newly settled refugees. They donated 123 bikes to this cause – and plan to donate even more in 2024. Open Roads is also supporting the work of Dignity in Motion, a non-profit dedicated to serving unhoused community members. The Open Roads team is excited to see four youth apprentices graduate High School and move onto the next stage in their lives -- we thank these seniors for working with us during their high school career. Open Roads is a proud supporter of after-school learning and is excited to be a partner among many in the Kalamazoo non-profit landscape.

Kalamazoo River Watershed Council

The Kalamazoo River Watershed Council has been busy in the past year, providing a public voice and information source for the ongoing cleanup of the Kalamazoo River, and for connecting people with this outstanding natural resource and our part of Southwest Michigan. The KRWC provides the leadership our region needs to help bring the Kalamazoo River back into the lives of residents and visitors to southwest Michigan as a place for clean, nature-based outdoor experiences that we all need for our personal and community well-being and quality of life. In the past year, the KRWC has worked with federal and state agencies to provide input to the planning and progress being made to clean up the Kalamazoo River's past PCB contamination, and communicate that progress to the public. Implemented the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' River Walker program to communicate information about the "Eat Safe Fish" guidelines to Kalamazoo River anglers and their families. Worked with several partners to organize half-day paddle trips on many parts of the river, from Albion to Kalamazoo to New Richmond so more people can enjoy the Kalamazoo River. Helped underserved youth in Kalamazoo and other communities learn about and experience the Kalamazoo River, reducing inequities to safely accessing the life-long benefits of the Kalamazoo River as a natural resource.

This past year, our office location at Riverview Launch gave us a firsthand view of some of the cleanup projects that are being implemented in the Kalamazoo River today. The sights and sounds serve as a reminder of the importance of our mission and our focus on collaborating with communities, government agencies, local officials, and businesses in the Kalamazoo River Watershed to restore and protect the Kalamazoo River for all.

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 2023, Vibrant continued to engage with Land Bank board members, staff, nonprofit leaders through the Affirmative Marketing Campaign. The Affirmative Marketing Campaign's goal is 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 local realtors, lenders, and non-profits for the Homeownership Pop Up Shop.

Homeownership Pop Up Shop



Photo appearance from left to right: Thomas Whitener, Land Bank Board Chair and Executive Director, Sidney Ellis.

The Affirmative Marketing Committee was able to assist with the promotion of the Homeownership Pop-Up Shop. In June 2023, the Homeownership Pop Up Shop was able to connect community members with local mortgage lenders, realtors, and nonprofit agencies focused on homeownership. Community members were able to have one-on-one consultations to get closer to becoming homeowners.

Vibrant Board



Thomas Whitener
Board Chair
Kalamazoo County Treasurer



Paul Valentin
Realtor, Jaqua Realtors



Adrian Vazquez
Director, El Concillio



Juliet Altman
Realtor and Interpreter



Sidney Ellis
Executive Director, Kalamazoo
County Land Bank Authority

Special thanks to Ian Kennedy and Holly Crump
for their dedication to the Vibrant Board

Looking Ahead to 2024

As we step into 2024, we remain energized and focused on our mission to Repurpose, Renew, and Reconnect the communities of Kalamazoo County. Our continued work is centered on creating affordable housing, revitalizing neighborhoods, and fostering stronger connections between residents and the spaces they call home.

With the successful completion of the Eastside Square project, we're excited to see new homeowners and vibrant community engagement take root in the Eastside. Watching this project come to life has been a rewarding experience, and we're eager to see how it continues to contribute to the development of the neighborhood.

We want to take a moment to express our deepest thanks to our community partners, residents, the Kalamazoo County Land Bank, and the Vibrant Board for their collaboration and unwavering support. Your dedication in 2023 helped bring our shared vision to fruition, and we are grateful for your continued partnership.

As we look toward the future, we are excited to continue our work in 2024—repurposing underutilized spaces, renewing neighborhoods, and reconnecting communities. Together, we will keep building a stronger, more vibrant Kalamazoo County.



Thank You, Partners!

As we reflect on the past year, we acknowledge that the success of the Kalamazoo County Land Bank is deeply rooted in the support of our dedicated community partners and the vibrant Kalamazoo community.

Together, we have faced challenges head-on and seized opportunities that have advanced our mission and vision. Your expertise and collaborative spirit have been invaluable in our efforts to repurpose, renew, and reconnect our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment. We look forward to continuing this important work together and making an even greater impact in the year ahead.

Community Partners

Big Vic's Year Round Lawn and
Yard Care/Snow Removal
Byce & Associates
Celery City
Dover Birch
Edison Neighborhood Assoc.
Farmers Bloom
Fifth Third Bank
Glas Associates
Home Builders Association
Huntington Bank
InForm Architects
Intrepid Professional Group
Jaqua Realtors
J & J Lawn Care
Kalamazoo Eastside
Neighborhood Association
Lockett-Jones Realty
Michigan LISC AmeriCorps
Naylor Landscape Management
Northside Assoc. For
Community Development
Rotary Club of Kalamazoo
OCBA Landscape Architects
Old National Bank
Seber Tans
Second Chance Lawn Care
Southwest MI Second Wave
PNC Bank
Valley Vision Construction &
Development

Vine Neighborhood Association
Warner Norcross & Judd

Municipal Partners

City of Kalamazoo
City of Parchment
City of Portage
City of Galesburg
Comstock Township
Cooper Township
Kalamazoo County
Kalamazoo Township
Schoolcraft Township
Pavilion Township
Village of Climax
Village of Schoolcraft
Village of Vicksburg

Nonprofits & Foundation Partners

Black Wall Street of Kalamazoo
Building Blocks of Kalamazoo
Comm. Economic Dev. Assoc.
of Michigan
Center for Comm. Progress
Community Homeworks
Consumers Energy Foundation
Dorothy Dalton Foundation
El Concilio
Harold and Grace Upjohn
Irving S. Gilmore Fdn.
Jim Gilmore Jr. Fdn.
Kalamazoo Community
Foundation
Kalamazoo Neighborhood
Housing Services
Kalamazoo Department of
Public Safety
Kalamazoo River Watershed
Council
Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for
Humanity
Local Initiatives Support
Corporation
Michigan Land Bank
Association
Michigan Homeowners
Assistance Nonprofit Housing
Corp.
Michigan State Housing
Development Association

Michigan Land Bank Fast
Track Authority
Michigan Municipal League
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Open Road Bike Program
Parker Foundation
Stryker Johnston
Foundation
Suzanne Upjohn DeLano
Parish Foundation
Rootead
Tyler Little Foundation
Marvin and Rosalie Okun
Foundation
Vibrant Kalamazoo
Urban Alliance