PROGRESS
REPORT

2018

Building Support
Growing Impact

Montgomery County
Land Reutilization
Corporation

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
LAND BANK

A Message from the Montgomery County Land Bank Board

2018 LAND BANK BOARD

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In the day-to-day work of the Land Bank, we don't often take time to consider each discrete improvement that we – working with our partners – are gaining for our community. We're so often caught up in the issue-of-the-moment, we tend to lose sight of the incremental positive changes that, when taken together, add up to meaningful impact for people who call Montgomery County home.

And so, the creation of this Progress Report provides an opportunity to look back at the effect of the strategies we've employed, the goals we've accomplished and the collaborative efforts we've set in motion.

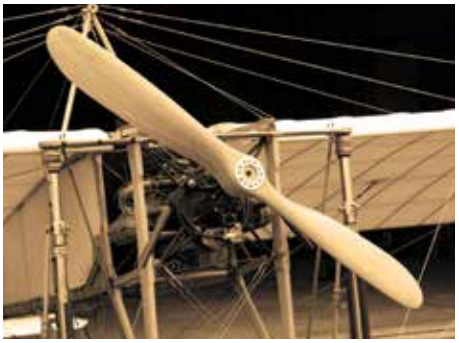
But this document is more than a summary of that review. It is a statement of our commitment to align with like-minded organizations working toward a future of blight-free, healthy neighborhoods and thriving businesses.

In Dayton, we stand on the shoulders of giants in our quest for positive impact through collaboration. We need only to consider our ultimate hometown collaborators, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who made a success of every venture, working side-by-side as printers, businessmen and inventors. If there's one lesson the brothers' legacy teaches us today, it's that we're better when we work together.

Montgomery County Land Bank

2018 Progress Report

MISSION: ***To facilitate the transition of blighted, foreclosed and abandoned properties into viable, marketable properties by working collaboratively with public and private entities in a financially responsible, transparent manner with a long-term goal of returning these properties to the tax roll.***



Fourteen-year-old Orville Wright was bubbling with excitement that day in 1885 when he showed his father the first copy of The Weekly Midget, a newspaper he and his friend, Edwin Sines, had printed for their classmates at Dayton's Intermediate School. They had set the printers' type by hand and printed the four pages on Orville's hand-me-down press.

But there was one problem. The boys, exhausted after setting three pages of type letter by letter printed only their company name – twice – on one of the pages. When Orville's father saw this, he said it made the boys look lazy and forbade distribution.

But Orville was undaunted

He continued publishing newspapers for his neighbors on Dayton's west side. Once, when the young printer was struggling to build a larger press, Wilbur, four years his senior, offered to help.

"Some of the suggestions Wilbur made for moving parts of the press were peculiar in that they seemed to violate all mechanical rules and could not possibly be expected to work. Yet they did…" wrote Fred C. Kelley in his biography of the Wright Brothers.

Working together, the brothers made a success of the printing business

Orville and Wilbur Wright eventually launched a job printing company, and then added their bicycle business before finally giving up both to focus on aeronautics.

To learn the Wrights' history is to see how their "crazy" notion of creating a flying machine became a reality because of their supportive relationship as brothers and partners in problem solving. This, combined with their experience, skills, curiosity and tenacity – with an added a dash of daring – propelled them to invent a machine that would impact the world forever.

We've learned from the Wrights that relationships and impact go hand-in-hand

During 2018, the Land Bank's strategies for resolving distressed property problems evolved as we built on our experience and continued to innovate within the scope of our authorities. With our mission as a guide, we creatively mixed and matched our legacy programs to tailor solutions for a variety of commercial and residential projects.

While working with communities, however, we discovered another need – and an opportunity. Although improvements were being made in struggling neighborhoods, other issues emerged from deeper analysis of data that challenged long-lasting transformations. A different approach was needed – one that viewed the problems holistically, coordinated tactics by relevant agencies and then layered investments to maximize impact.

Recognizing these issues required broader capabilities, so we began to consider how to address the challenge

Working with local government partners, we shaped a concept to engage the broader community. We reached out to real estate experts, financial institutions, nonprofits, businesses and neighbors – and asked them to join us in developing and delivering remedies within their respective scopes of service. The resulting program, the Thriving Neighborhoods Initiative, was piloted in Dayton's Pineview neighborhood throughout 2018 and delivered positive impacts that are described in this report.

Over the course of the Pineview pilot, we – like Wilbur and Orville – discovered the power of relationships. We have learned that, as a group of collaborators, we have at our disposal the support and energy needed to generate transformational impact. We have learned that we are greater than the sum of our parts when we work together to improve the health, prosperity and quality of life in Montgomery County.

This report highlights those relationships and activities that made 2018 a year of growing impact.

Growing Impact

In 2018, Land Bank activities generated significant impacts across the commercial and residential properties — to provide creative solutions to distressed property issues and pave the way for redevelopment and reuse.

GROWING IMPACT: **Pineview Project**

Aimed at improving property values, encouraging improvements by homeowners, increasing market confidence and enhancing residents' quality of life, the Thriving Neighborhoods Initiative exceeded expectations in 2018. The pilot program in Dayton's Pineview neighborhood resulted in the sale of a Land Bank-renovated home to an owner occupant at 50 percent more than the neighborhood's median sales value. It also provided a focal point for commitments of support from public and private organizations with resources to invest in the neighborhood.

We saw this positive result as an early indication of the strategy's soundness and foresee implementing it in up to two neighborhoods yearly, or as far as the budget permits.

GROWING IMPACT: **Honeywell Building Recovery**

The Land Bank acquired a relatively modern, tax-delinquent commercial building in North Dayton by way of a new pilot program that allowed us to purchase the tax lien from the Treasurer's Office and employ private counsel to close on the property. After extensive work and investment to repair the leaking roof and empty the building of its waterlogged contents, we used a private broker to advertise and sell the facility. It was ultimately purchased by an electronics company from northern Ohio and returned successfully to the tax roll.

Building Support

To analyze the issues surrounding Montgomery County's distressed properties and neighborhoods is to develop an understanding of their profound, multi-faceted nature. Yet by reaching out, the Land Bank has begun to build a network of support with organizations that provide complementary services.

BUILDING SUPPORT: **Financial Institutions**

The Land Bank's relationship with financial institutions continues to develop gradually. Bringing the institutions' Dayton-based executives into the discussion about the Thriving Neighborhoods approach has been highly valuable in terms of the thought leadership and important real estate financing advice they have provided, especially as related to the Pineview pilot project. Several have indicated their desire to do their part to improve neighborhoods, stabilize property values and create home-ownership opportunities, and to support home-improvement financing on Land Bank properties.

GROWING IMPACT: Arcade Renovation

When a redevelopment firm expressed interest in Dayton's iconic Arcade buildings, local government officials saw the potential for it to become a catalyst for a future downtown renaissance. However, they also realized the delinquent taxes on the 114-year-old structures were uncollectible given the condition of the property.

The Land Bank was able to accept the property under a deed in lieu of taxes provision that removes the tax liability. The property was then turned over to the city of Dayton, and ultimately made available to the developer. The $90 million redevelopment — foreseen an "Innovation Hub" — will include commercial and residential spaces.

"The project could not have moved forward without the Land Bank playing its role," said Frances Mennone, development director for Cross Street Partners, one of the development partners. "The back taxes would have been a deal breaker."

GROWING IMPACT: West Carrollton Sand Volleyball Facility

The Land Bank's investments in planning grants to help communities create strategic, market-based plans for areas of potential redevelopment have begun to pay off. An early participant in the program, the city of West Carrollton, had completed a master plan for the Dixie Drive Corridor. One of the first projects was the demolition and clearing of an industrial area. This left a 16-acre parcel near the middle of town, where the plan had suggested a sports complex.

To the surprise and delight of city officials, they were approached last August by two Cincinnati investors whose vision is to create a sand volleyball facility on the site. With an anticipated investment of $4 million, the pair plans an indoor-outdoor facility for year-round use, along with food and beverage service.

"I see it as a catalyst for good things to come," said West Carrollton Development Director Mike Lucking.

BUILDING SUPPORT: Rebuilding Together Dayton

Rebuilding Together Dayton is a largely volunteer organization committed to providing home rehabilitation for low-income, Dayton-area homeowners, particularly the elderly, so they may live in warmth, safety and independence. An affiliate of a nationwide organization, Rebuilding Together Dayton provides volunteers – mostly skilled tradespeople – to targeted neighborhoods to make critical needed home repairs, at no cost to homeowners. They also check homes for fire safety, falls prevention, energy efficiency, exterior maintenance, furnace and water-heater maintenance.

With closely aligned goals, the Land Bank and Rebuilding Together Dayton solidified their partnership and anticipate working side-by-side in targeted neighborhoods.

"I see a partnership in which we'll do what we do best, and the Land Bank will do what it does best," said Amy Radachi, president and CEO of Rebuilding Together Dayton. "We'll leverage the resources each of us brings to create the greatest impact for residents."

GROWING IMPACT: **Riverfront Plan**

In 2017, the Land Bank provided a grant to support a year-long planning effort to tap the potential of the area's waterways and their corridors while stabilizing Dayton neighborhoods within the planning area. The resulting plan was a 20-year vision to develop a more accessible riverfront that invites outdoor recreation, brings people together, improves housing opportunities, attracts companies and talented workers and generates environmental benefits.

The plan is now complete, and Land Bank staff continues to help with implementation.

"The Land Bank has been incredibly helpful to this effort as a forward-thinking consultant and reliable supporter," said Carrie Scarff, chief of Planning and Projects for Five Rivers MetroParks.

GROWING IMPACT: **Verily Health Care Campus**

When Google's sister company, Verily, began looking in the Dayton area for just the right property for a non-profit opioid addiction treatment and recovery program, it wasn't long before the Land Bank was asked to participate. The development will include spaces for inpatient, outpatient and recovery services, as well as job training.

Dayton's Carillon neighborhood was selected because of the existing facilities at Kindred Hospital and availability of adjacent additional property. But the purchase of a 4-acre parcel and an underused industrial building were critical.

Because of a longstanding professional relationship with the owner, we were able to arrange for the purchase of the property, which will house inpatient facilities as early as spring of 2019.

GROWING IMPACT: **Neighborhood Initiative Program**

Working with nine partner communities and funds provided through the Neighborhood Initiative Program, the Land Bank reached a major milestone in 2018. We completed 75 percent of the 1,100 demolitions of abandoned and distressed houses targeted by the communities. During 2018 alone, we removed 408 Units. The program is due to be completed in 2019.

The Land Bank's total award since NIP's inception is approximately $18.5 million.

BUILDING SUPPORT: **MVRPC**

The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission has been an invaluable support to the Land Bank, providing much of the fundamental demographic-data collection and mapping needed for our research on various neighborhoods throughout Montgomery County. The organization has been a consistent and reliable source of geographic information system (GIS) expertise. MVRPC's professionals have patiently worked with us in the evaluation, acquisition and fine-tuning of the new, redevelopment-targeting software.

BUILDING SUPPORT: **Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE)**

ABLE is committed to protecting the rights of people with much at stake and nowhere else to turn. Through litigation and other advocacy, ABLE prevents homelessness, domestic abuse, and discrimination and improves opportunities for education, housing, employment and access to health care and public benefits for people living in poverty in 32 counties in western Ohio. In all cases, ABLE works to address the root causes of poverty by seeking systemic solutions.

During 2018, ABLE advocates expressed interest in our efforts to revitalize declining neighborhoods. We took the opportunity to initiate a discussion about the role ABLE might play in helping residents who face various legal challenges but who cannot afford legal representation. As we move forward with the Thriving Neighborhoods Initiative, we believe providing pro-active assistance to homeowners will be invaluable for the residents and support long-term neighborhood stability.

GROWING IMPACT: **Do-It-Yourself Renovation**

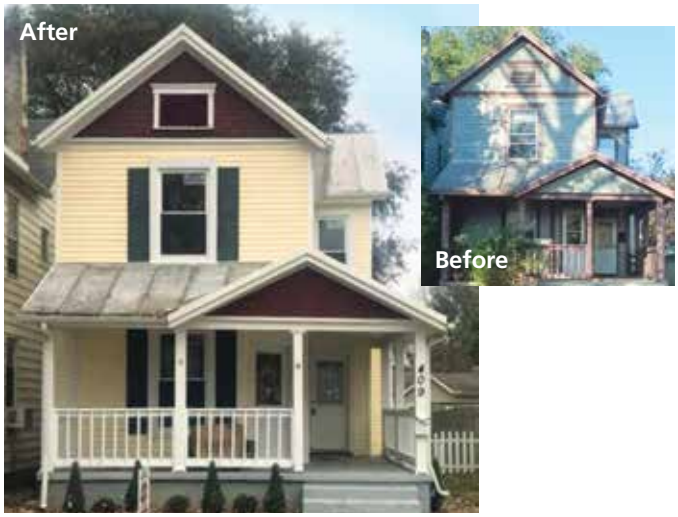
The Land Bank's DIY Renovation Program helps to stabilize property values in neighborhoods by allowing citizens and investors to buy and rehab distressed homes that have been acquired by the Land Bank. Once the home is renovated, and the structure meets our standards, the buyer receives the deed and then may sell, lease or occupy the property.

In 2018, we transferred 24 properties to new owners and returned them to the tax roll.

GROWING IMPACT:
Tax Foreclosure Acquisition Program

For a modest investment, citizens and investors may acquire a tax-delinquent residential property to rehab and reuse for a residence, side lot, home expansion or new construction.

In 2018, we transferred 27 properties to new owners.



From Support to Impact

Whether called to build a printing press, fix bicycles or invent a flying machine that would change the world, Orville and Wilbur Wright had figured out at an early age that they could best achieve their dreams when they worked together. We, at the Land Bank, have learned that lesson about relationships, as well. Our impact grows best when community partners engage with us to support our mission – and our loftiest goals.

BUILDING SUPPORT:
Data Mapping System

To better prioritize our use of available resources, we have moved to a data-based approach. However, the data helpful in examining neighborhood health is dispersed among numerous sources and found in various forms, making analysis of any sort time-consuming.

That changed in 2018. After a lengthy effort to develop a planning tool with the support of Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, we purchased GIS mapping software designed to inform redevelopment strategies. This software streamlines analysis by combining multiple government data sources in one application. It allows us to monitor neighborhood health metrics, assess housing strength and determine the areas that would most benefit from targeted programming.

The program has already improved staff efficiency, and we believe it will greatly enhance our decision making as we work to determine priorities and opportunities.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

LAND BANK

Montgomery County Land Bank
130 W. 2nd St. #1425
Dayton, OH 45402
www.MCLandBank.com

(937) 531-6921

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