

# NEXT FIVE

**2025–2030 Strategic Plan**

**DETROIT LAND  
BANK AUTHORITY**

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## ABOUT THE DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY

The Detroit Land Bank Authority envisions a Detroit where all neighborhoods provide residents with access to a high quality of life. We work towards our vision of safe, healthy, thriving neighborhoods by transforming vacant properties into inclusive community assets, and by aligning our policies and practices together with our partners in city and county government. Our robust programming offers residents, community members, local organizations, entrepreneurs, and others opportunities and resources to rehabilitate and repurpose vacant properties. To learn more, visit [buildingdetroit.org](http://buildingdetroit.org).

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As the Detroit Land Bank Authority passes 15 years of service to Detroiters, I am excited to take this opportunity to tell our story, highlight the opportunities before us, and share our plan for the land bank’s next chapter.

From our origins as a product of community activism to our present position as the largest land bank in the nation, the DLBA has constantly evolved to meet the needs of the city it serves. Having sold nearly 50,000 properties, demolished more than 15,000 unsafe structures, and rehabilitated more than 100 homes, we have left a positive mark on neighborhoods across the city from Parkland to Regent Park.

We are incredibly proud of our work thus far and firmly believe our best days lie ahead. We recognize the responsibility inherent to being the largest property owner in the city as we tackle the more than 66,000 parcels still in our inventory. We believe the DLBA, with our expert team of committed staff and unique statutory powers, is uniquely situated to support a Detroit where all neighborhoods are safe, healthy, and thriving places that provide access to a high quality of life for Detroiters. **Next Five** is our plan to do just that.

Centered on our mission to strengthen Detroit neighborhoods by transforming vacant and abandoned property into inclusive community assets, **Next Five reimagines our programs, our relationships, and our internal operations.** Created through a robust year-long process—with input from thousands of residents, City partners, and national land bank leaders—**Next Five** focuses our efforts on strategic outcomes to improve **not just individual properties, but whole neighborhoods.**

We thank you for your support in developing this plan and we invite you to continue taking this journey with us. **Next Five** is full of ambitious ideas that require partnership, ongoing input, feedback, and collective support. We are committed to working diligently to realize this bold, transformative agenda to create the land bank Detroiters deserve. We cannot do it without you.

**Tammy Daniels**  
*Chief Executive Officer, Detroit Land Bank Authority*



# INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 2008, the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) has evolved to meet the challenges posed by vacant and abandoned properties in Detroit. The DLBA's role expanded significantly in 2014 when most of Detroit's publicly owned residential property was consolidated into the DLBA's inventory. **Ten years later, we are at another pivotal point.**

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**Context** **pg 7**

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**Ten Years of Impact** **pg 15**

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**Planning Process** **pg 21**

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Photo credit: Community Progress



# CONTEXT

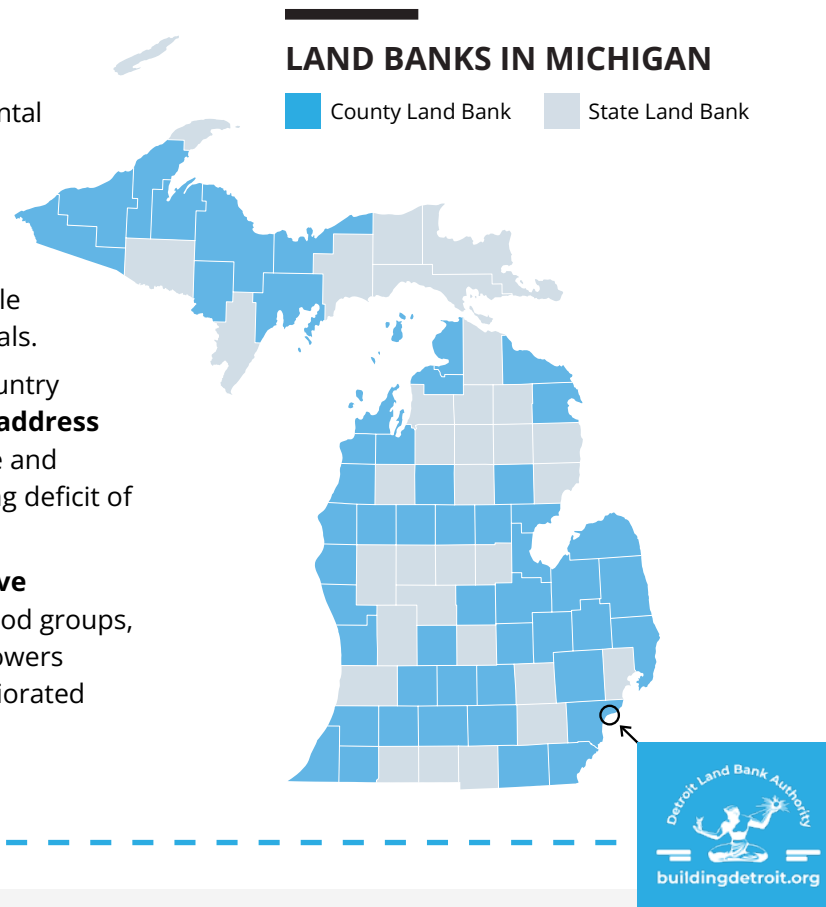
To best understand the activities in the **Next Five** plan and the DLBA's value to Detroit, it is useful to consider how the DLBA compares to other land banks in Michigan, its origin, past work, and current role.

## What is a Land Bank?

In Michigan, land banks are quasi-governmental entities that leverage unique legal powers provided by state law to acquire vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties; extinguish debt and liens; clear title; and transfer those properties to new, responsible ownership in alignment with community goals.

For over 40 years, land banks across the country have been **evolving to help communities address fluctuating challenges**, from the mortgage and property tax foreclosure crisis to the growing deficit of quality affordable housing.

Land banks serve as **reliable and responsive partners** to local governments, neighborhood groups, and residents, and use their unique legal powers to transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties into community assets.

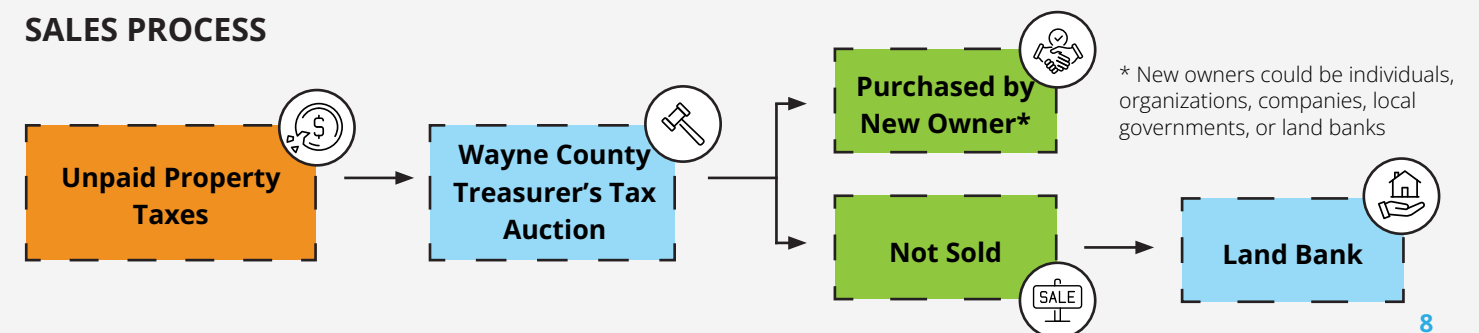


Land banks, like the DLBA, improve residents' lives by taking on properties neglected by the private market and helping transform them into homes, intentional open spaces, and community assets.

Too often we speak about land banks as purely transactional entities focused solely on property disposition.

	ELEMENTS OF LAND BANKS IN MI	FEATURES UNIQUE TO DLBA
How are they <b>established</b> ?	Almost all land banks in Michigan are at the county level, created by an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the State Land Bank Authority.	The DLBA is currently the only city land bank in Michigan. Only a few cities are permitted to create land banks under state law. The Wayne County Land Bank serves the rest of the county.
How are they <b>governed</b> ?	All land banks are governed by a board of directors. The composition of the board of directors is detailed in each land bank's IGA.	Per its IGA, the DLBA is governed by a five-member board: four appointed by the Detroit mayor and one by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.
How do they <b>get</b> properties?	Most land banks receive properties that have gone through property tax foreclosure and did not sell at public auction ("involuntary" transfer). Land banks can also get properties through intergovernmental transfers, donation, swaps, and purchase. See Property Tax Foreclosure Sales Process graphic below for more detail.	Like county land banks, the DLBA receives most of its property through the tax foreclosure process. The DLBA also receives property through other transfers from the City of Detroit and its Nuisance Abatement Program.
How do they <b>sell</b> properties?	Land banks are designed to sell properties with flexibility, including pricing. This allows them to more quickly return properties to productive use and ensure the sales are in line with community goals.	The DLBA sells its residential structures and lots through over a dozen programs ranging from side lots for \$100 to Rehabbed & Ready homes for market rate. See Appendix A for a full description of programs.
How are they <b>funded</b> ?	Land banks have access to the following funding mechanisms: 50 percent share of property taxes for the first five years after a property is sold (5/50); property sales; foundation and government grants; and in-kind support.	The DLBA's annual revenue largely comes from property sales (particularly structures) and an annual negotiated allocation from the City. 5/50 is a small, but growing, portion of annual revenue. Additional funding includes public and private grants.

## PROPERTY TAX FORECLOSURE SALES PROCESS





## The DLBA's History & Role

The DLBA was created pursuant to Michigan's Land Bank Fast Track Act and an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority (State Land Bank) and the City of Detroit. The DLBA leverages the powers and tools of a land bank to **nimblely meet the evolving needs of the City and its residents** by creating programs to address challenging market failures, address vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated (VAD) properties, encourage attainable and quality housing, help stabilize Detroit neighborhoods, and promote economic growth and entrepreneurship.

The powers and authorities of a land bank are **especially important** in Detroit, where

residents have experienced some of the **hardest outcomes of systemic racism**, disinvestment, and macro-economic changes. Following decades of population and wealth outmigration facilitated by local, state, and federal policies, the Great Recession of 2008 caused Detroit homeowners to experience another wave of trauma and loss. Many lost their properties to mortgage foreclosure, followed by a wave of tax foreclosures; all of which exacerbated Detroit's substantial vacancy challenge. Black Detroiters experienced the most significant wealth and property loss during this time.

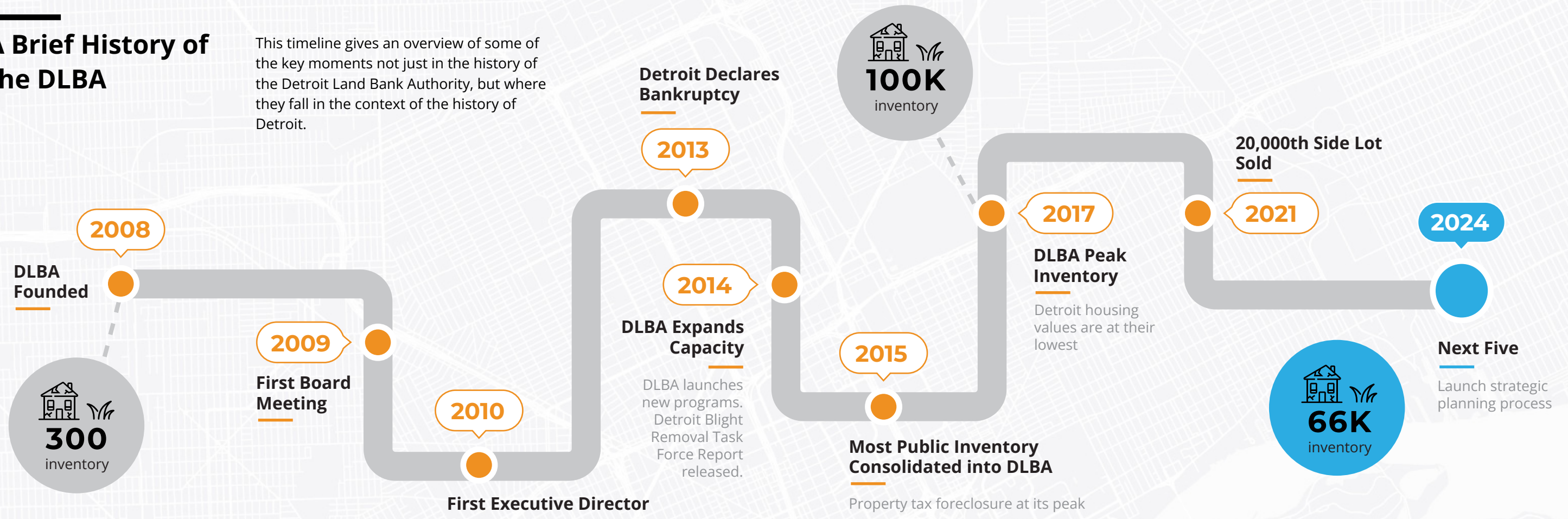
These events set the critical context for the DLBA's work.



Photo: Community Progress

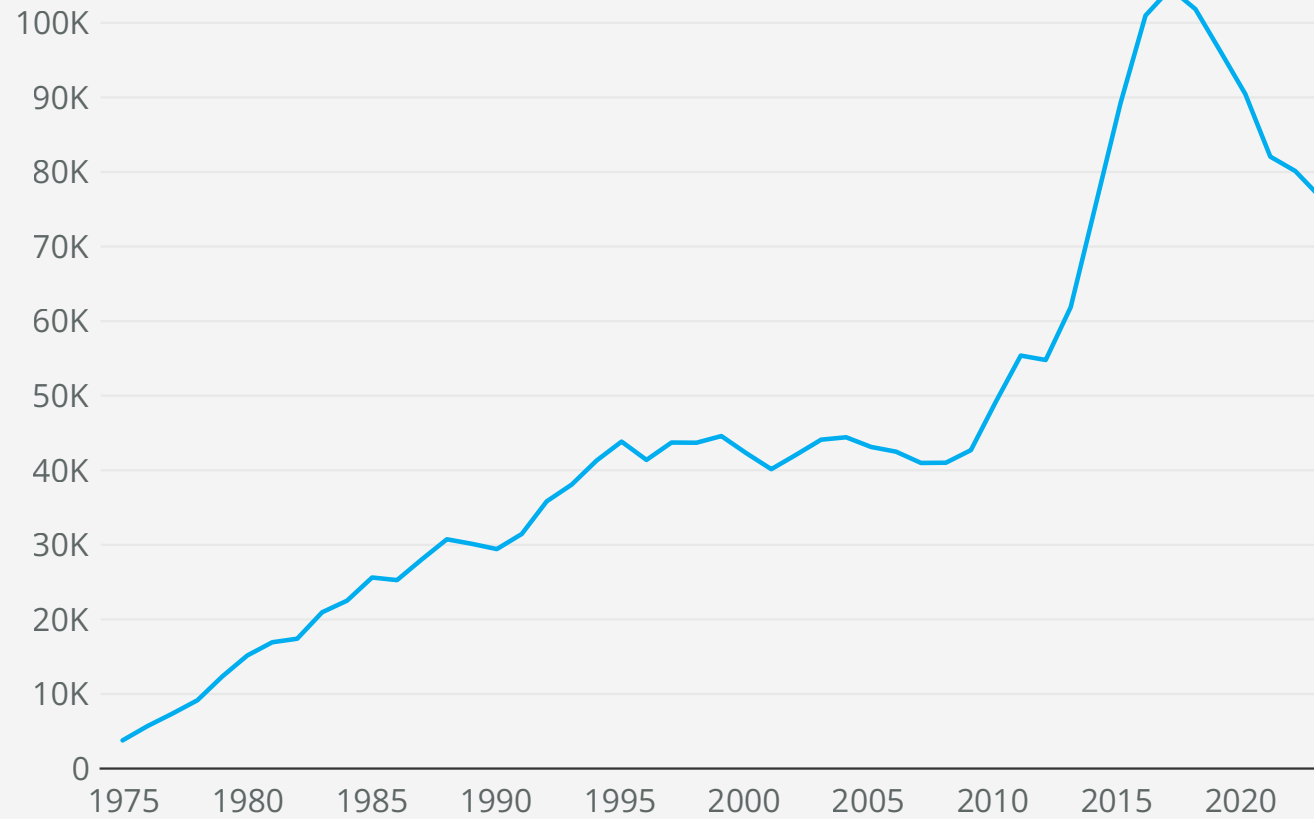
## A Brief History of the DLBA

This timeline gives an overview of some of the key moments not just in the history of the Detroit Land Bank Authority, but where they fall in the context of the history of Detroit.





**ALL PROPERTIES IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP 1975–2023**



Between 2014–16, vacant residential property from the City of Detroit, the State Land Bank, the Wayne County Land Bank and the Wayne County Treasurer’s office was consolidated into DLBA’s inventory.

**ORIGIN**

The DLBA was founded in 2008 following advocacy efforts from several community organizations including Community Development Advocates of Detroit, Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength, and Community Legal Resources.

DLBA’s early work was limited to executing Neighborhood Stabilization Program activities because at the time it controlled an insignificant portion of vacant properties in the city. As of 2013, most of Detroit’s vacant properties remained held by the City of Detroit. The State Land Bank, the Wayne County Land Bank, and the Wayne County Treasurer also maintained significant holdings.

This meant that any effort to revitalize multiple

properties on a neighborhood block **would require coordination of several public entities** that had different disposition processes and goals—a seemingly impossible feat.

To address this barrier to revitalization, between 2014 and 2016, vacant residential property from these public entities was consolidated into the DLBA’s inventory with the support of community development advocates. This greatly increased both the City’s and the DLBA’s ability to **support community-driven reuse** of vacant residential structures and lots and comprehensively meet the challenges of a significant, increasing inventory of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

Over time, the DLBA’s inventory continued to grow as property tax foreclosure peaked and market values plummeted. The DLBA responded by adjusting programs, trying new things, and ramping up partnerships and operations to handle being the largest land bank in the United States. The DLBA is an integral part of ensuring Detroiters have a place they can proudly call home.

**DLBA IN 2024**

*Current Inventory & Programming*

The DLBA is selling property every day to Detroit residents, neighborhood organizations, small businesses, and others through nearly a dozen sales programs. An overview of current programs can be found in Appendix A. As of August 1, 2024, the DLBA owns 60,886 vacant lots and 5,988 vacant structures spread across the city. An additional 8,143 structures have been sold and are working towards compliance. A map of that inventory can be found on page 13.

*Board of Directors*

The DLBA is governed by a board of directors (board). The composition of the board is set by the IGA. The current board consists of five members. One is appointed by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the remaining four are appointed by the mayor subject to approval by City Council. In practice, City Council offers a recommendation for one of the mayor’s appointments.

*Staff*

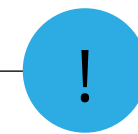
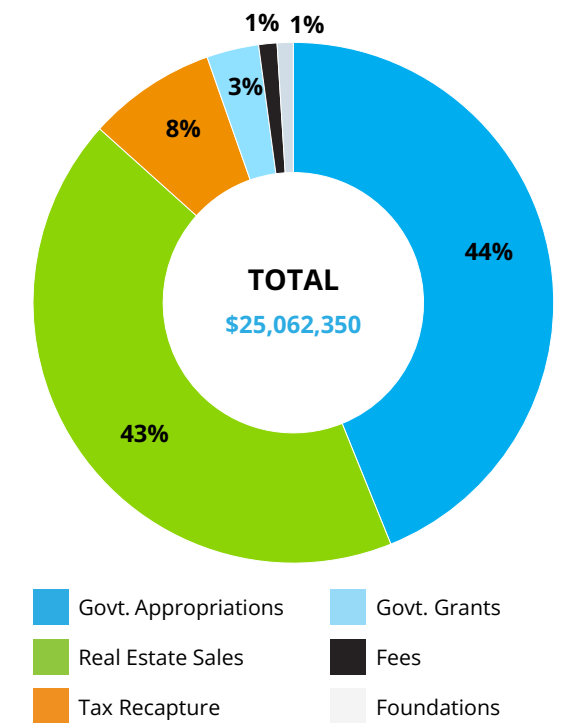
The DLBA has a skilled, dynamic staff dedicated to improving their city and neighborhoods. There are currently approximately 150 full-time employees. See Appendix B for an organizational chart.

*Funding*

Managing and addressing an inventory of over 66,000 vacant structures and lots, many in difficult neighborhood markets, is a costly, ongoing challenge. It is clear the DLBA’s current annual operating budget of nearly \$25 million is **still insufficient for the task** of ongoing maintenance, outreach, programming, and other important property revitalization work, when the cost of stabilizing the land banks structures alone would be \$30 million. Structure property sales have helped sustain operations to date, but those are decreasing as the inventory of properties with high and moderate values dwindles. As structure inventory declines, the DLBA is left with an inventory of predominantly low-value vacant land.

Addressing vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties **requires sustained public and philanthropic investments**. As the DLBA continues to manage properties forgotten by the private market and **focuses on disposition decisions driven by community goals and equitable outcomes**, rather than selling to the highest bidder, financial commitments from all levels of government, along with philanthropic and corporate support, are critical.

**SOURCES OF DLBA FUNDING**



The DLBA owns residential property. The City of Detroit, via the Detroit Building Authority, maintains ownership of publicly-owned vacant commercial and industrial property. This was a local policy decision at the time of public property ownership consolidation.

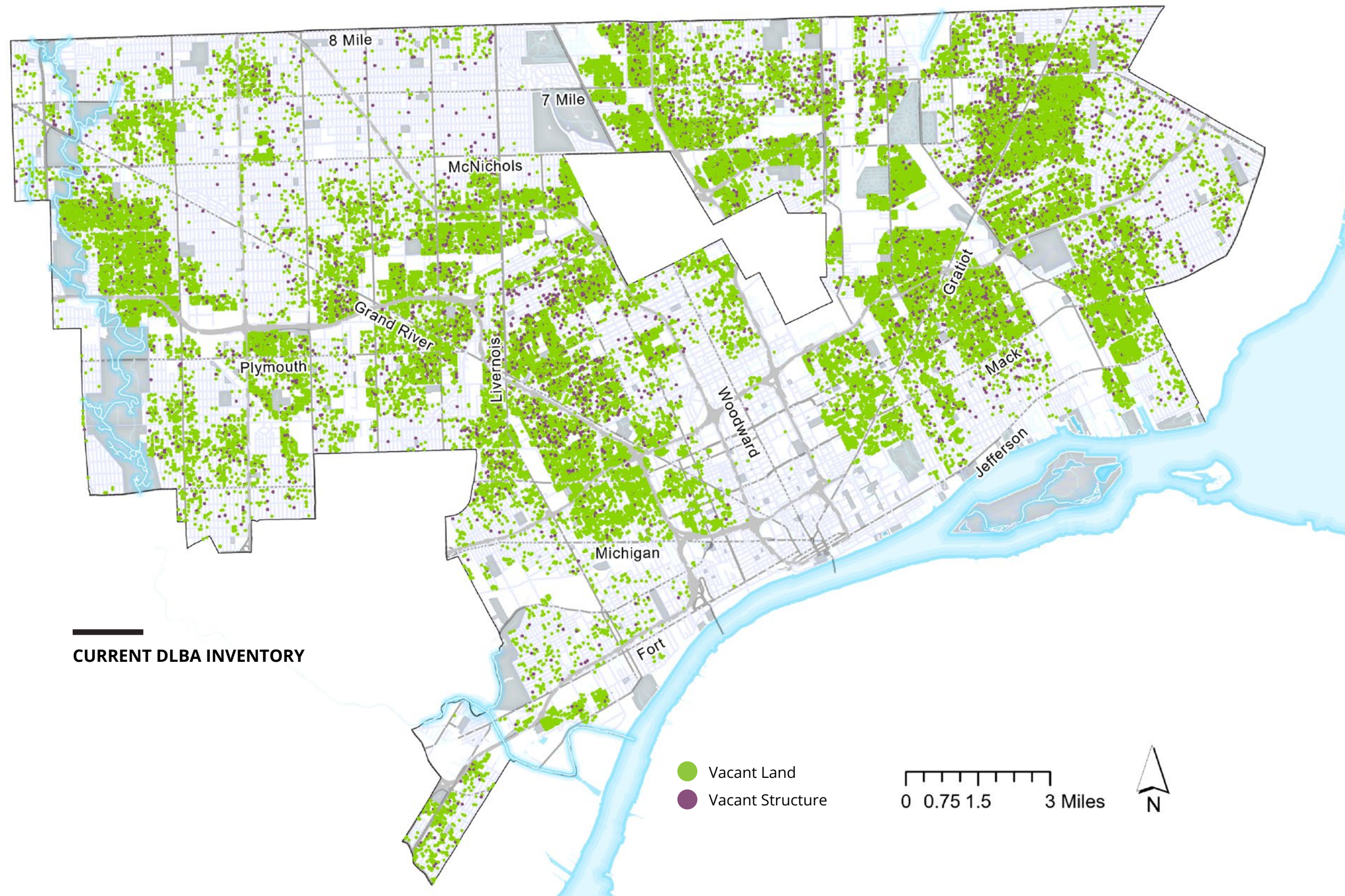


**ROLE**

With over 66,000 houses and lots in its possession, the DLBA is the largest property owner in the city of Detroit. **Nearly every neighborhood has DLBA-owned vacant lots or houses.** There are very few Detroiters not impacted by the DLBA's inventory or programming. These properties present a significant opportunity for Detroit to proactively address existing and future issues, like **minority homeownership, housing affordability, economic prosperity, public health, climate change, and equity.** They also represent lost ownership and wealth for thousands of Detroiters, making the care and disposition of these properties an inherently sensitive endeavor.

As the central entity acquiring, managing, and disposing of residential property, the DLBA has a responsibility to **work collaboratively with the City and the community to achieve their shared goals.** To be an equitable, efficient, and effective tool in that process, the DLBA needs both flexibility and direction. The City sets an overall vision for land use, housing, open space, and economic development that the DLBA will align its programs to, with a focus on **leveraging the DLBA's legal tools, substantial staff expertise, and information systems capacity to the benefit of Detroit** as a whole.

The goals and activities in **Next Five** incorporate existing City plans and priorities, alongside community input and feedback and address ways to clarify and expand the DLBA's role. While **Next Five** was written and adopted prior to the completion of **Plan Detroit**, the DLBA will align implementation with the updated master plan.





# TEN YEARS OF IMPACT

The DLBA has made considerable progress in stabilizing Detroit's neighborhoods over the last decade by removing thousands of unsafe structures and providing thousands of homeownership and wealth-building opportunities for Detroiters. For the last 10 years, we have met the city's challenges head-on.



Community Partners launched **600 projects** on properties purchased from the DLBA, including:



**50 urban agriculture** projects



**291 lot beautification** projects

Photo: DLBA

## SINCE 2014, THE DLBA HAS SOLD MORE PROPERTY THAN ANY LAND BANK IN THE COUNTRY



**27,800+ vacant lots**

to Detroit homeowners, totaling 2,530 acres

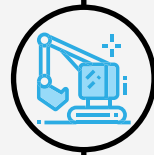


**19,400+ residential structures**

approximately 75% of which were purchased by residents



**11,864 rehabbed** houses through our programs



**27,468 demolished** structures



Creating a market impact of **\$800+ million**

When thousands of occupied homes were property tax foreclosed by the Wayne County Treasurer, the DLBA also created occupied property programs to help **prevent housing displacement and support renters in becoming homeowners**. Few land banks have taken such action to preserve housing stability.



**1,523 homes**

sold through our Occupied Properties programs



Photo: DLBA

DEFINITIONS

**Acres:** Estimated acreage of vacant lots sold to Detroit homeowners through DLBA's vacant land programs, like Side Lot and Neighborhood Lot.

**Demolition:** Includes properties demolished by the DLBA with Hardest Hit Fund support, and structures removed by partners including the City of Detroit Construction & Demolition Department.

**Houses Rehabbed:** Residential structures that have been rehabbed through DLBA sales programs such as Auction, Own-it-Now, and Rehabbed and Ready.

**Market Impact:** According to the research firm Munetrix Analytics, this reflects an increase of \$410,631,492 from ongoing and completed rehabs by the DLBA and its purchasers and a gain of \$390,918,325 in equity from demolitions.



**As of 2024, the DLBA manages the largest land bank inventory in the United States—over 66,000 properties—five times larger than the nation’s second-largest land bank.**

The DLBA only handles residential properties, unlike other land banks, yet still owns more structures than any other land bank. Over 75 percent of current DLBA inventory comprises vacant residential lots, which is on par with most land banks. Being so different from even the closest peers presents challenges and opportunities.

As the DLBA looks toward the next decade, there are immense **opportunities to learn, innovate, improve, and partner with Detroiters** to ensure Detroit neighborhoods are safe, healthy, and thriving places.



Photo: DLBA

**DLBA HAS COMPLETED:**



**49,614 closings**



**5,475 open houses**



**26,247 titles cleared**



**462,310 structure surveys**

**THE DLBA IS CONSTANTLY CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS**

We've mailed

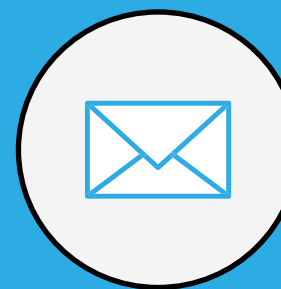
**513,260 postcards**

advertising Vacant Lot Sales

And in the last two years alone, we've fielded

**140,845 phone calls**

**4,353 lobby visits**





## Why Next Five?

**Changing Inventory:** The DLBA must evolve our goals, programming, and capacity to focus more on vacant lot outcomes while still supporting the rehabilitation of vacant structures.

A large portion of our programming and operations are currently dedicated to managing and selling the inventory of vacant structures. However, following years of robust property sales, efforts from partners to reduce the number of properties headed towards property tax foreclosure, growing home values across the city, and increasing for-profit and nonprofit development capacity, **our existing and future vacant structure inventory has decreased considerably**. Current structure inventory is less than 6,000.

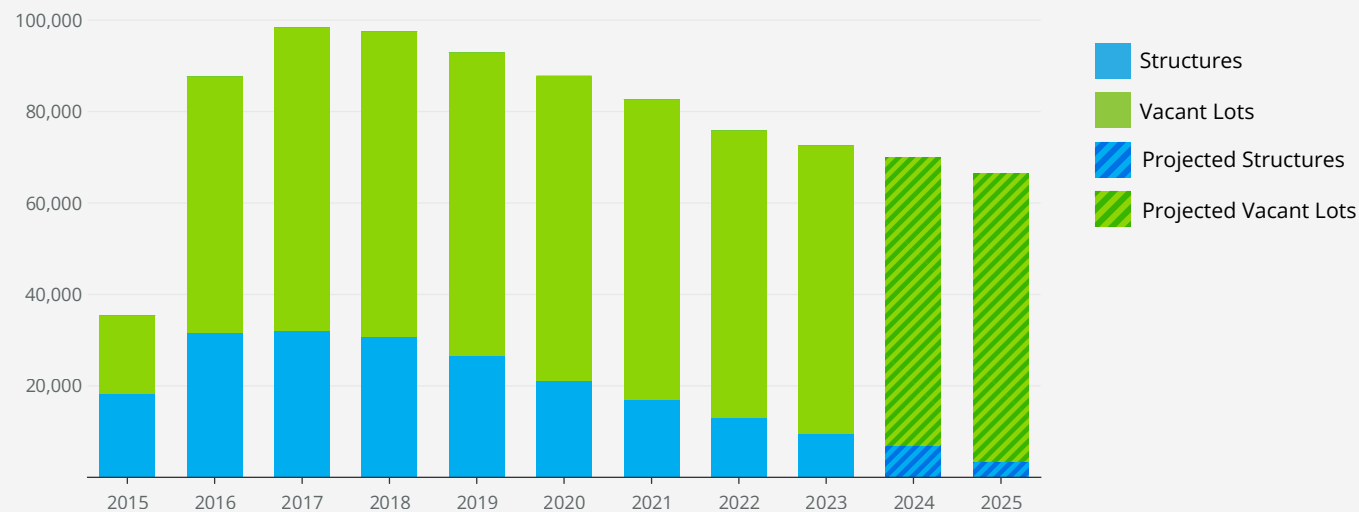
**At the same time, our inventory of vacant lots has remained mostly stable.** Significant demolition activity by the City has kept pace with vacant lot sales, and privately owned vacant lots continue to fall into property tax foreclosure and ultimately DLBA ownership. Currently, vacant lot inventory is more than 60,000.

**Deepen Community Confidence:** The DLBA has a responsibility to be an engaged member of the community and must be in partnership with local government, community organizations, and residents to be effective.

The DLBA still has an inventory of over 66,000 properties, which continue to have **a tremendous impact on the day-to-day lives of Detroiters**. Every day, residents are navigating how to deal with the vacant houses and lots on their blocks and in their neighborhoods, often needing to work with the DLBA to do so. Providing excellent customer service, opportunities for true partnership, and improving coordination with the City of Detroit are vital to the DLBA's, and Detroit's, future success.

It is imperative that the DLBA set a strategic course, **leveraging our land bank tools to effectively respond to community needs** and support neighborhood stabilization and revitalization, and communicate that direction clearly and openly. The DLBA has the opportunity and ability to drive equitable, sustainable neighborhood revitalization in the city.

CHANGES IN DLBA INVENTORY, 2015-25



## What is a Strategic Plan?

**With this need and opportunity in mind, the DLBA sought to develop a strategic plan.**

Strategic planning is the process of creating a vision of a desired future for an organization and then translating it into goals and a series of steps which, if taken, will result in the achievement of the vision (adapted from Leading Governance).

Strategic plans are a critical tool to set organizational direction and priorities, drive alignment, simplify decision making, and communicate to partners and stakeholders (adapted from Leadership Strategies). Plans should be structured yet agile, allowing organizations to stay on course but adjust to changing conditions.

**Next Five is the DLBA's course, designed from a nearly year-long collaborative planning process.**

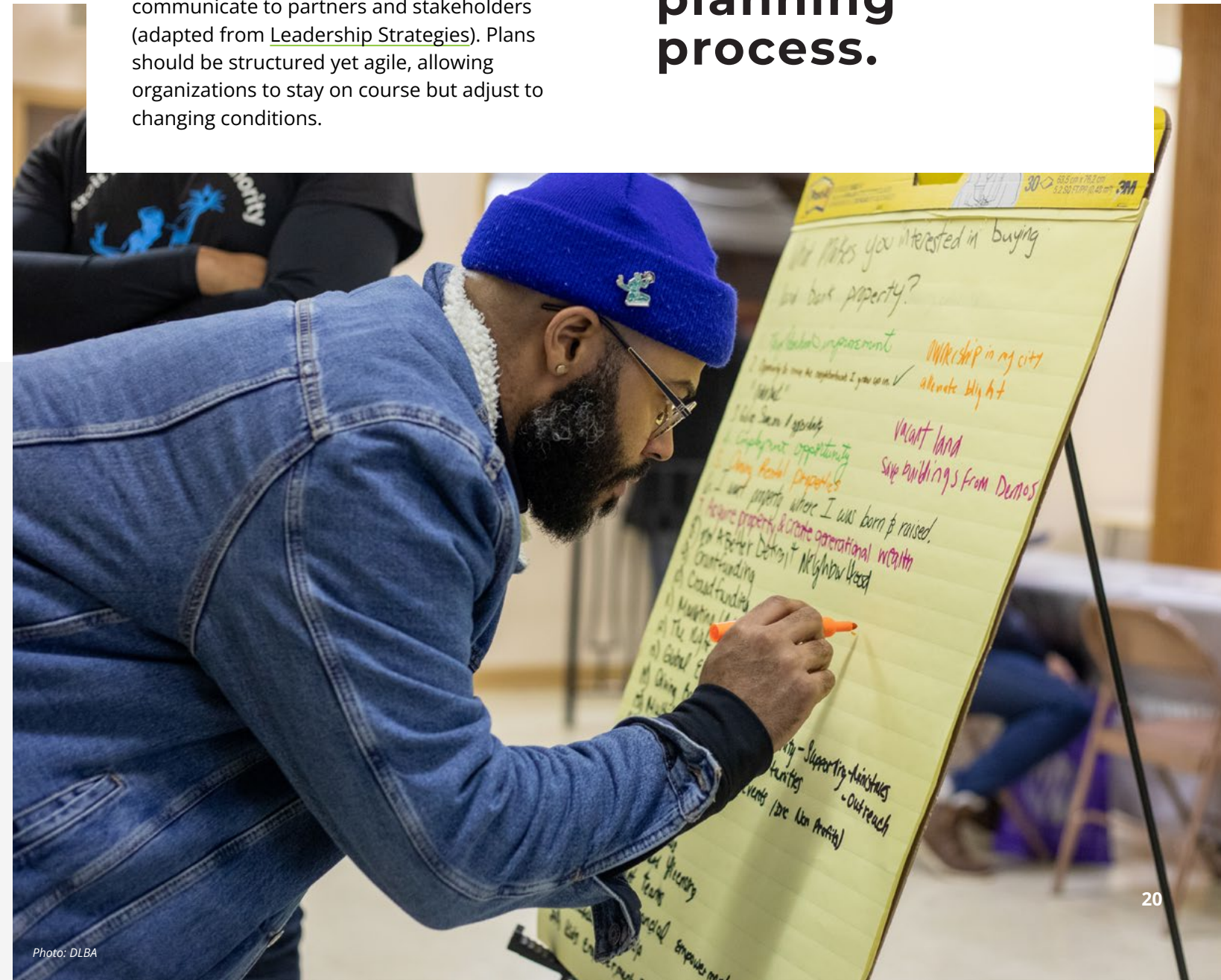


Photo: DLBA



# PLANNING PROCESS

Starting with the development of our [Strategic Framework](#) in 2022, the DLBA has been focused on improving communication and operations and designing a robust strategic planning process.

In August 2023, we launched that planning process with the kickoff of [Next Five](#). Through a **five-phase process, we engaged Detroiters, subject-matter experts, partners, and staff** in setting goals, defining initiatives, and detailing specific action steps.

- 1 RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
- 2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PART 1
- 3 DRAFT THEMES & GOALS
- 4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PART 2
- 5 FINAL PLAN



Photo: DLBA

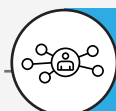
## Gathering Community Input

We knew intentional community engagement was key to a successful strategic planning process. Therefore the DLBA focused on gathering **broad, meaningful input and collaborating with residents** and resident-serving institutions. The project team gathered thousands of ideas and opinions through various in-person and virtual opportunities. See a summary of community engagement findings in Appendix C.



### Advisory Panel

We formed a **14-member Advisory Panel** of local leaders, neighborhood revitalization experts, City staff, and other land bank leaders. The panel met 6 times during the planning process to review survey questions, support outreach for engagement opportunities, and review multiple drafts of Next Five.



### Focus Groups

With such a large body of past and current program participants, along with continuously improving processes, focus groups were an important tool to get specific and nuanced feedback. Through **five focus groups with 42 participants**, Detroiters provided feedback on their experiences.



### Public Surveys

In the winter and spring of 2024, Community Progress and JFM conducted two public surveys on the DLBA. **780 respondents** shared their thoughts on topics ranging from experience with the DLBA to perceived impact of DLBA programs to desired outcomes in 2030.



### Interviews

The project team conducted **25 interviews** with city staff, local foundations, lending institutions, small and large developers, and other land banks in Michigan and across the country, to ensure the full range of perspectives, expertise, and experiences were infused into Next Five.



### Community Engagement Events

DLBA staff met over **551 Detroit residents** in their neighborhoods, at **60 events** such as resource fairs, Department of Neighborhood meetings, and DLBA events like Building Blocks. Event participants shared their dreams for the future of their neighborhoods, the challenges of homeownership in Detroit, and their ideas for vacant land reuse, among others.



### Working Sessions

The DLBA has been working with topic experts, such as urban agriculture practitioners, to improve processes for several years. During the strategic planning process, the DLBA convened **three working sessions** with **36 individuals** to work through specific changes in processes and programs to include in the plan.

This community feedback led the DLBA to develop the **three strategic themes** outlined in [Next Five](#):

**STRONG & CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC**

**ACTIVE & CONSISTENT COLLABORATION**

**SUSTAINABLE & DYNAMIC OPERATIONS**



# NEXT FIVE STRATEGIC PLAN

2025–2030

**Next Five** is a roadmap to ensure DLBA continues to evolve, reflect, and act on the lessons learned in our next five years.

In these pages you will find immediate actions, long-term ideas to explore, achievable and ambitious goals, and a commitment to partnering with Detroiters to support Detroit neighborhoods.

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**Mission and Vision** **pg 25**

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**Plan Overview** **pg 27**

# NEXT FIVE



As part of the **Next Five** planning process, we developed a new mission statement to reflect our current and future work, and crafted a vision statement to guide our overall direction.



## OUR MISSION

We strengthen Detroit's neighborhoods by transforming vacant and abandoned properties into inclusive community assets.



## OUR VISION

All Detroit neighborhoods are safe, healthy, and thriving places that provide access to a high quality of life.

## User Guide

**This plan contains a robust and ambitious level of detail. It is organized into three themes, within which you'll find goals and their associated initiatives and specific activities.**

Each goal includes a measurable outcome to be tracked over the next five years. Every level is labeled with numbers (e.g., Initiative 1.2 and Activity 1.2.3) for ease of reference. Each activity has a priority level and a completion timeframe. The Appendices contain an overview chart of community engagement activities and a goals dashboard.

We encourage you to set aside some time to read the full plan. If you are only interested in a few sections, you can simply navigate to them by clicking on the header in the overview table. As we implement **Next Five**, you can follow our progress at [www.buildingdetroit.org/nextfive](http://www.buildingdetroit.org/nextfive).

### PRIORITY LEVEL



**Important:** Valuable, but not directly connected to other activities; an activity where DLBA plays a small, supporting role; does not require much effort



**Necessary:** Preceding or follow-up step upon which other activities may be dependent; requires some effort



**Significant:** Meaningful piece of the process; requires dedicated effort



**Essential:** Absolutely critical to outcomes; likely requires the most effort

### TIME TO COMPLETE

Each activity is given an approximate timeframe it will take to complete. Ongoing activities are designated as the full five years for completion.

### YEARS TO COMPLETE

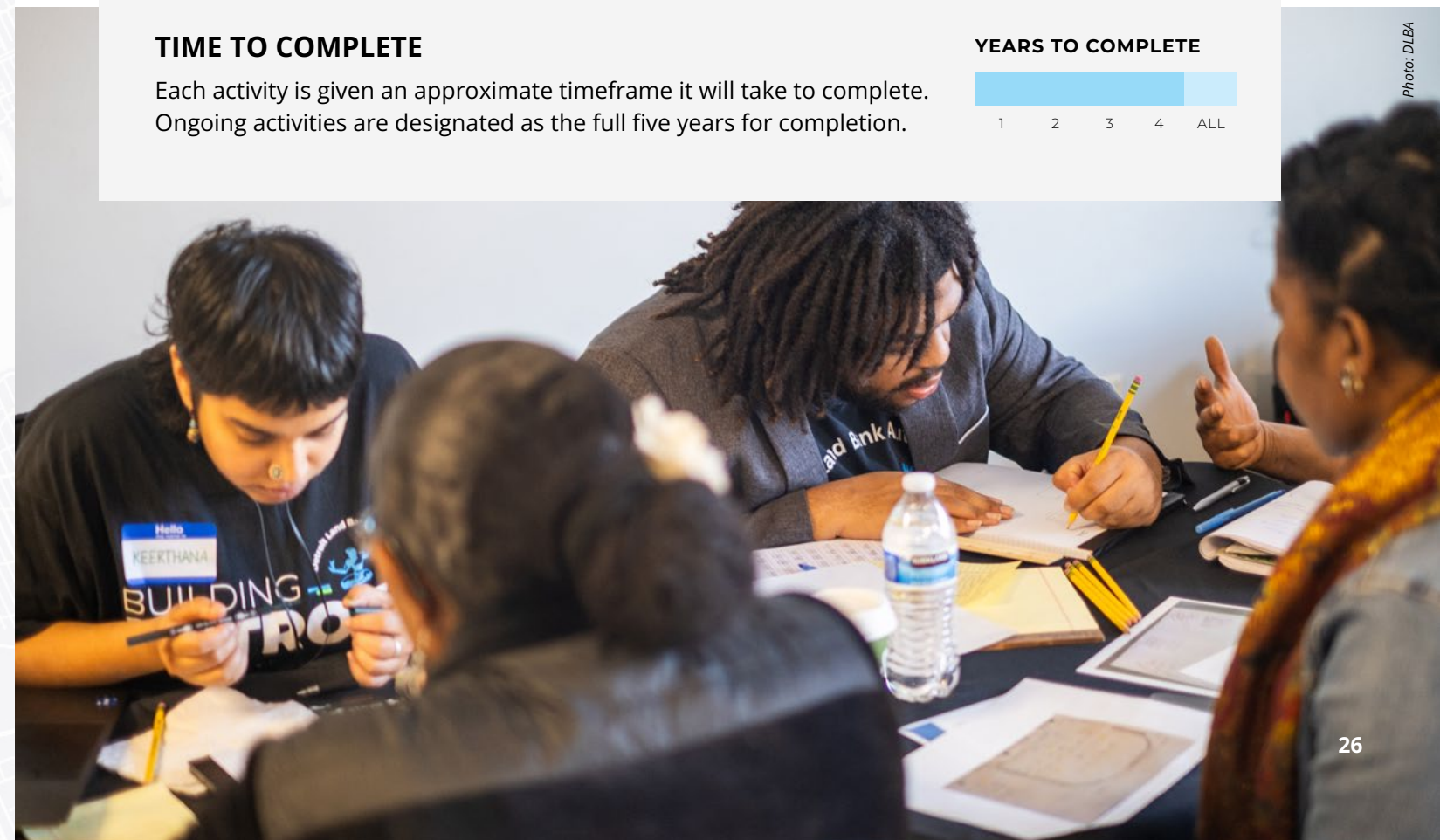
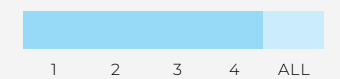


Photo: DLBA



## Plan Overview

Under each of our **three strategic themes**, we identified **goals and activities** that will guide the DLBA's actions over the next five years.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Through the planning process, it was clear there were five key concepts that touched multiple ideas and were too important to limit to just one goal or initiative: accessible, accountable, equitable, effective, and efficient. These Guiding Principles are intended to be fundamental considerations when implementing the activities detailed in **Next Five**.

**Accessible:** Easy to understand and connect with.

**Accountable:** Use metrics and data to continually improve programming.

**Equitable:** Treat residents fairly and work to eliminate barriers to opportunity and disparities between residents.

**Effective:** Neighborhood outcomes drive programming design.

**Efficient:** Responsible use of time, effort, and resources, both internally and externally.

### STRONG & CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC



#### Goal 1: Create a stronger network of activated open space.

- 1.1: Improve and streamline access to vacant land.
- 1.2: Collaborate on city-wide comprehensive open space planning and on implementation of large-scale projects.
- 1.3: Increase coordinated neighborhood-scale open space projects.
- 1.4: Initiate and pilot innovative open space uses, including those supporting climate resiliency and mitigation, sustainability, and urban conservation.



#### Goal 2: Bolster quality, attainable housing options.

- 2.1: Align vacant structure sales programs to ensure successful outcomes.
- 2.2: Ensure informed and prepared buyers.
- 2.3: Advance strategic new housing development.
- 2.4: Support safe and stable housing opportunities for people who live in DLBA properties.
- 2.5: Grow technical and financial resources to support successful rehabilitation.



#### Goal 3: Collaborate on improved property maintenance.

- 3.1: Establish a comprehensive property maintenance strategy.
- 3.2: Mobilize neighborhood resources and private partners to support property maintenance.



#### Goal 4: Expand the use of land bank tools to advance economic opportunities.

- 4.1: Offer a suite of development services, especially to support larger-scale projects.
- 4.2: Conduct strategic acquisition to support City priorities.
- 4.3: Design and implement programming to support improvement of neighborhood commercial districts.
- 4.4: Leverage DLBA's resources and spending to support the local economy.

### ACTIVE & CONSISTENT COLLABORATION



#### Goal 5: Provide excellent service and clear information to constituents.

- 5.1: Continue to strengthen customer service.
- 5.2: Provide clear, consistent, and accessible information on programs and processes.
- 5.3: Implement multi-faceted, purposeful community outreach.
- 5.4: Proactively tell the DLBA's story.



#### Goal 6: Define and build meaningful, formal partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations.

- 6.1: Improve purchase processes for Detroit nonprofit organizations and entrepreneurs.
- 6.2: Expand dedicated communication to all types of neighborhood and community organizations.
- 6.3: Formalize roles for supporters and strategic advisors.



#### Goal 7: Strengthen mutually beneficial relationships across City and County government.

- 7.1: Build systems for greater collaboration on City priorities.
- 7.2: Participate in City's project planning, attraction, design, and approval processes.
- 7.3: Build and deepen relationships across County government departments.

### SUSTAINABLE & DYNAMIC OPERATIONS



#### Goal 8: Advance organizational effectiveness through preservation of institutional knowledge and ongoing evaluation.

- 8.1: Capture, document, centralize, and share institutional knowledge.
- 8.2: Evaluate and modify initiatives and activities for continuous improvement.



#### Goal 9: Develop diverse and robust funding to grow strategic programming and sustain long-term operations.

- 9.1: Sustain and grow City and County government funding sources.
- 9.2: Increase ability to provide fee-for-service programming and expand earned revenue streams.
- 9.3: Seek expanded philanthropic and charitable support, including corporate and foundation grants, in-kind services, and donations.
- 9.4: Aggressively pursue and advocate for state and federal funding.
- 9.5: Explore ways to reduce costs through partnerships and other opportunities.



#### Goal 10: Ensure staff are supported by and integrated into a strong organizational culture and equipped to implement strategic goals.

- 10.1: Memorialize and operationalize organizational values.
- 10.2: Foster an environment where staff are celebrated, rewarded, and provided ample opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- 10.3: Evaluate needs and implement long-term staffing plan.



# STRONG & CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC

The DLBA has the responsibility and opportunity to support all Detroit neighborhoods in being strong, healthy, and thriving places. Fostering a strong, connected neighborhood fabric across Detroit is an important component of achieving that vision.

Through the activities in Strong & Connected Neighborhood Fabric, DLBA will consider individual parcels in the context of their neighborhoods, rather than in isolation, and align programming to offer properties in support of the City's Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and neighborhood revitalization, housing, open space, and

other land use strategies. DLBA will steward the properties in its inventory from vacant and deteriorated to new owners who will reoccupy, repurpose, and beautify them. Through updated disposition policies and programs, improved coordination of maintenance, and expanded leveraging of land bank tools, DLBA will help stabilize Detroit neighborhoods, increase homeownership and quality rental properties, address challenging market conditions, and promote economic growth and entrepreneurship.

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**Activated Open Space**      **pg 31**

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**Attainable Housing**      **pg 43**

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**Property Maintenance**      **pg 61**

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**Economic Opportunity**      **pg 65**

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Photo: City of Detroit



GOAL 1

# Create a stronger network of activated open space.

Detroit's vacant land inventory presents an incredible opportunity to improve individual, social, and environmental health. As the largest single owner of vacant land, the DLBA has a responsibility to support the City in seizing that opportunity. The DLBA has facilitated returning tens of thousands of lots to resident ownership, many of which are used as side yards or repurposed to improve neighborhoods. In addition to continuing and expanding these

programs, the DLBA hopes to support more strategic efforts to network existing and new projects and help Detroit lead the way in vacant land stewardship. These projects could include urban agriculture, green stormwater infrastructure, solar energy, pocket parks, community gathering spaces, forest and prairie patches, art parks, and uses we may not have even thought of yet. For infill and other built development on vacant land, see Initiative 2.3.



Photo: Community Progress

## WHAT IS ACTIVATED OPEN SPACE?

Activated open space is properties with limited or no buildings that are intentionally used for community and/or environmental benefit, such as pocket parks, rain gardens, urban farms, art parks, and community gathering spaces.



### OUR GOAL

Create a stronger network of activated open space

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**90%**

of DLBA-owned vacant lots available for sale through DLBA programs by 2030

- 1.1 Improve and streamline access to vacant land.**
- 1.2 Collaborate on city-wide comprehensive open space planning and on implementation of large-scale projects.**
- 1.3 Increase coordinated neighborhood-scale open space projects.**
- 1.4 Initiate and pilot innovative open space uses, including those supporting climate resiliency and mitigation, sustainability, and urban conservation.**



INITIATIVE 1.1

# Improve and streamline access to vacant land.

Before and throughout the **Next Five** planning process, community partners and DLBA staff identified several process improvements to vacant land programming to improve efficiency and support applicants in achieving their goals.

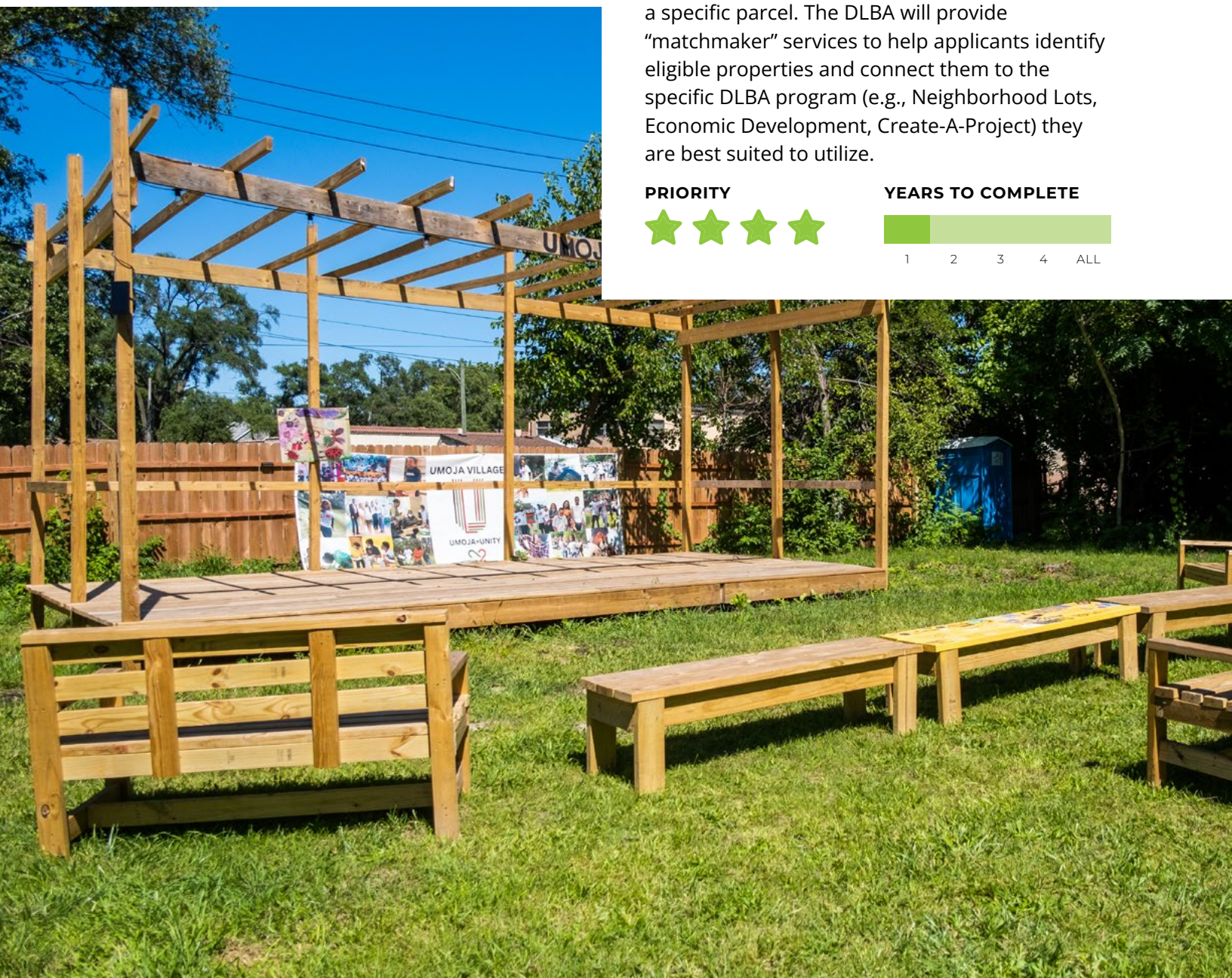


Photo: DLBA

## 1.1.1 Redesign application process.

Changes to the application form(s) and process will focus on matching project to property and allow applicants to apply without identifying a specific parcel. The DLBA will provide “matchmaker” services to help applicants identify eligible properties and connect them to the specific DLBA program (e.g., Neighborhood Lots, Economic Development, Create-A-Project) they are best suited to utilize.



## 1.1.2 Streamline purchase process.

Lack of clarity and the need to file paperwork with multiple entities were repeatedly cited as process barriers. Some past purchasers even reported acquisition timelines jeopardized project funding. The DLBA will make improvements to the vacant land purchase process including, speeding up the time from application to closing and changes to the closing package. The DLBA will also explore offering to quiet title (for an extra fee) for side lots and neighborhood lots.



## 1.1.4 Convene Vacant Land Working Group.

During the **Next Five** process, the DLBA convened several working conversations with vacant land focused organizations (e.g., Detroit Future City, Keep Growing Detroit, Black Farmer Land Fund) to get input and feedback on process improvements. Participants requested those meetings continue, as they were useful opportunities to bring collective feedback and understand problem points. The DLBA will continue to convene these conversations on a regular basis to ensure continuous improvement to processes and programs. This group should help inform the specific changes detailed in the above initiatives. This group could also help conduct surveys, focus groups, and interviews with past purchasers to inform improvements.



## 1.1.3 Expand types of access.

With the scale of vacant land inventory in Detroit and the need for creative reuse projects on those lots, a range of options for site control should be available. The DLBA will explore opportunities to offer leases in situations that are more suited to interim access. This would include working with the City to detail appropriate uses and criteria to consider when deciding which projects might be eligible for leases. The DLBA may also explore working with local project-expert organizations to monitor implementation and maintenance of projects on leased property.



## 1.1.5 Conduct evaluation of past vacant land sales outcomes.

As the DLBA shifts to being more outcome-focused in its disposition programs, it is necessary to understand outcomes of past sales, especially side lots. The DLBA will conduct an evaluation (e.g., buyer survey, windshield survey) of past vacant land sales to explore the impact of those sales on desired community goals like large-scale open space and infill housing. The evaluation should include observing property conditions, project implementation status, tax status, value, block conditions, and ownership changes. Results from the evaluation will inform additional changes and improvements to vacant land disposition policy.





INITIATIVE 1.2

# Collaborate on city-wide comprehensive open space planning and on implementation of large-scale projects.

Community advocates have been calling for a comprehensive open space plan for over a decade. As the owner of the most properties in the city, the DLBA echoes that need in order to align its programming, disposition, and acquisition strategies to help achieve residents' and the City's goals. The DLBA should play an important role in open space visioning and strategy development but is not suited to lead it. DLBA inventory offers the City an important opportunity to collaborate with residents, the land bank, and other partners on large-scale open space projects.



Photo: Community Progress

## 1.2.1 Lead advocacy for open space plan creation.

The DLBA will elevate the need for a comprehensive open space plan with partners and stakeholders throughout Detroit, including the City and funders. The DLBA hopes (and will ask) to be substantially included in Plan Detroit, to ensure an open space plan is included in, or completed as a follow up to, that process.



## 1.2.2 Assist in plan creation.

The DLBA has significant capacity (e.g., data, analysis, expert knowledge, and relationships) that could be leveraged during plan creation. The DLBA is also experienced at hosting neighborhood events and could partner with the Planning and Development Department (PDD) on planning activities like a neighborhood open space charette.



## 1.2.3 Align programming to match plan.

Once an open space plan is created, the DLBA will work with partners to align their vacant land programming to support desired end uses. With a collective direction, the DLBA should work with partners to strategically acquire property for open space projects and to efficiently move large amounts of inventory to entities and projects with funding streams.



## 1.2.4 Proactively acquire and prepare property for future dedicated greenspace.

In the interim, the DLBA will explore areas where it owns a high concentration of properties, identify parcels not in DLBA inventory, and develop a strategy with the City to acquire and "bank" parcels that might be assembled for dedicated open space. Additionally, the DLBA will explore ways to prepare lots, like rezoning and lot combinations, for reuse.



Any proactive acquisition (here or in other activities) should focus on properties clearly neglected, abandoned, or owned by speculators (e.g., multi-year tax delinquent, egregious accumulation of code violations, out-of-state/country ownership). Similarly, strategic holding or banking of land should be clearly communicated by the DLBA and the City and offer an avenue for entities to inquire and still potentially acquire lots for projects related to the hold rationale (e.g., tree planting).



For more details on interviewees and focus group participants, see Appendix C.



**It's a dream come true for a climate project to have one public entity holding this much inventory.**

Philanthropic Interviewee



Photo: DLBA



Photo: Community Progress

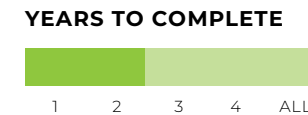
INITIATIVE 1.3

**Increase coordinated neighborhood-scale open space projects.**

Community groups and residents across the city are transforming vacant lots every day. Some of these are well-coordinated and connected, and some are more dispersed and disconnected. As the entity seeing the most project ideas, the DLBA has an opportunity to connect more dispersed projects and ideas to each other and to better align which properties are available for which disposition programs. The DLBA can leverage existing and expanded partnerships with other open space-related organizations to improve this coordination. This Initiative focuses on coordinating projects. See Activity 3.2.1 for more details on coordinating community-based maintenance.

**1.3.1 Include existing and needed vacant land reuse as criteria in lot assessments.**

Neighborhood market conditions are an important factor in determining the best outcome for a property, especially as Detroit tries to return purpose to tens of thousands of properties and increase infill housing development. The DLBA will explore additional criteria to inform which lots are available for which disposition programs, especially exploring expanded initial criteria beyond proximity to purchasers. Criteria should at least include adjacency to other vacant land reuse projects, current property condition, environmental and infrastructure needs (e.g., flooding mitigation), and property features (e.g., soil condition). Properties with proximity to existing vacant land reuse projects and/or well-suited to be repurposed to address specific issues should be prioritized for sale to parties that can implement reuse. Results from Activity 1.1.5 can help inform the criteria, along with City's Master Plan and other priorities.

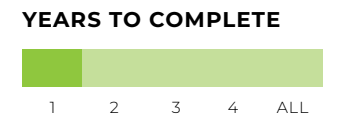


**1.3.2 Improve existing neighborhood-based project processes.**

Over the last four years, the DLBA has expanded opportunities for neighbors and community groups to purchase vacant lots. Some Neighborhood Lot endorsers and Create-a-Project (CAP) applicants shared ideas for improvement. The DLBA will explore:

- adding the option for Community Partner Endorsers to say “no, not endorsed” to projects or to applicants they know will negatively impact their neighborhood;
- providing a way for endorser to leave comments; and
- reducing barriers for CAP.

Process improvements here can help capture important information about coordination (or lack thereof) between proposed projects and existing projects and facilitate a greater range of uses.







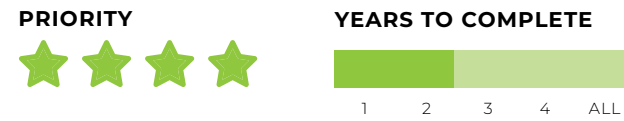
**1.3.3 Consider offering a “trusted buyer fast track” for successful past purchasers.**

Many past purchasers (e.g., Black Farmer Land Fund) shared the desire for their past success to enable more streamlined purchase processes in the future, especially when the purchase was an expansion of an existing and successful site. The DLBA will explore ways to factor in past success in speeding up application submission, review, and approval, and potentially holding proximal properties exclusively for successful past purchasers.



**1.3.4 Offer “Project Ready” sites.**

Preparing vacant lots for sale can be a lengthy process, especially when quiet title is involved, and this can make for drawn-out purchase processes. The DLBA will select vacant lots throughout the City to offer as “Project Ready” sites (for programs like Create-A-Project). Project Ready sites will have completed the quiet title process, and will be specifically offered to purchasers who have tight timelines due to project funding or site conditions.



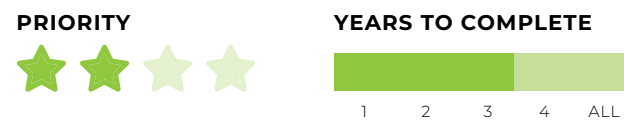
**1.3.5 Improve marketing of vacant lot programs.**

Current methods of marketing some vacant lot programs, such as [Homestead Lots](#), are not consistently reaching vacant land reuse audiences (e.g., members of the urban agriculture community). The DLBA will explore ways to better share purchase opportunities for these programs by partnering with relevant organizations. The DLBA will also explore ways to leverage the expertise of those same organizations to inform which properties are selected for some programs. This could include identifying blocks and neighborhoods where gardeners and farmers have expressed interest in homesteading and creating opportunities in those places.



**1.3.6 Explore need for reconveyance option on vacant lot sales.**

Outcomes of individual projects matter, and both good and bad outcomes have significant impact on neighborhoods. Currently, the DLBA does not have a way to reconvey properties where the owners abandon or fail to maintain the site, or the reuse idea fails to come to fruition. These lots might return to the DLBA via the property tax foreclosure process, but there is no guarantee a speculator won't purchase them first. The DLBA will explore if this issue is large enough to require adding some type of reconveyance tool to vacant land sales.



INITIATIVE 1.4

**Initiate and pilot innovative open space uses, including those supporting climate resiliency and mitigation, sustainability, and urban conservation.**



Detroit has several climate- and sustainability-related goals that strategic use of DLBA's inventory could help advance. Specifically, DLBA would like to play a key role in supporting conservation and environmental projects that benefit both Detroiters and Detroit's natural ecosystem. While an open space plan will help detail some of these activities, there are some activities DLBA can begin doing to further city-wide climate resiliency and sustainability.

**1.4.1: Pilot low-mow plantings.**

With a significant number of planned demolitions over the next several years, there's an opportunity to improve the appearance of vacant lots, improve pollinator habitat, lower emissions, and reduce maintenance costs by changing the plant mix used on freshly demolished sites. In collaboration with the City and others, the DLBA will explore funding opportunities to pilot planting native ground cover or other low-grow plant mixes on lots in strategic locations. In addition to more beneficial plants, a reduction in the need for gas-powered maintenance equipment also supports a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.



**1.4.2: Pilot other native planting strategies.**

Existing vacant lot inventory, including road buffers and other oddly located parcels, presents the same opportunity as newly demolished sites to pilot native plantings instead of turf grass. This is especially true in neighborhoods like [Gratiot-7 Mile](#), where residents already want to see this work. In collaboration with the City and others partners, the DLBA will pursue opportunities to implement new planting strategies on DLBA-owned vacant lots, such as native plant seed mixes on bare lots, removing turf grass and replacing with native plant stock, or incorporating native plantings into existing project expansions.





**1.4.3: Partner on demonstration projects.**

Detroit has been a pioneer in vacant land reuse and stewardship, but there is still much to learn and innovate. The DLBA will explore opportunities for new partnerships to use inventory for activities that benefit people and the environment. This could range from MOUs allowing others to implement their programming on DLBA property, for activities such as environmental job training (e.g., invasive species removal), environmentally friendly landscape maintenance, native plant and tree nurseries, and research projects. The DLBA will also work with local partners to identify sites for partners to implement vacant lot reuse demonstration projects. This should include activities like strategic coordination on parcels available for [Kresge Innovation Projects funding](#) and projects selected through Activity 1.3.4.



**1.4.5: Pursue funding for climate and other greening projects.**

There is an abundance of climate and greening related funding at the federal level currently, and a growing private market for [carbon credits](#). Vacant urban land is underutilized for climate initiatives and remains largely unexplored in the emerging private carbon markets field. The DLBA will dedicate staff time to exploring, identifying, collaborating on, and applying for funding opportunities for greening, climate, and carbon credits.



**1.4.4: Support the City's climate strategy.**

Using vacant lots for things like green stormwater infrastructure is mentioned in the City of Detroit's [Detroit Climate Strategy](#). To achieve those goals, the DLBA will continue to work with the City to identify strategic hold and assemblage areas. The DLBA will also work with the City to explore properties to advance new large-scale climate-related projects (e.g., [solar energy](#)) by identifying ideal sites and working with the City to market them.



Photo: DLBA



**CASE STUDY**

**Genesee Conservation District Habitat Enhancement on Vacant Lots**

*Leveraging vacant lots to combat climate change*

The [Genesee Conservation District](#) is a local unit of government and a subdivision of state government that coordinates technical, financial, and educational resources to meet the needs of residents, land managers, and farmers in Genesee County, Michigan. They are partnering with the Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA) to restore dozens of vacant lots in the city to native forest and grassland.

The project aims to reduce carbon in the air, improve water quality, and increase Flint's ability to address climate change. The Conservation District and GCLBA have built a significant partnership to leverage land bank property for conservation projects, learn more [here](#).



Photos: Genesee Conservation District

**What a \$250,000 grant from Consumer's Energy made possible**



Removing dead and dying trees, invasive plants, trash, and any existing fencing on 50 vacant lots (approximately 5 acres)



Converting those lots to a small, native forest and native grassland pollinator habitats, including 1,600 trees



Educating Flint residents on the importance of and familiarizing them with natural landscapes in our community



GOAL 2

# Bolster quality, attainable housing options.

Detroit has historically been a city of single-family housing, with some duplexes and multi-family buildings mixed in, much of which is in need of significant investment to return to livable condition. Detroit needs a substantial investment in vacant property rehabilitation to address vacant houses and meet existing demand for single family homes.

In addition to quality and stability, homebuyers and renters today are also looking for variety. A healthy, stable housing market needs a variety of unit types—single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, condos, mixed-income multi-bedroom apartments, and other small multifamily options like cottage courts. Detroiters, existing and future, are also interested in new and different models of property ownership, such

as community land trusts and cooperatives. Small multi-family buildings also present opportunities for income generation for low-income families, as the Osborn Neighborhood Alliance’s Mapleridge project is demonstrating. Detroit has the unique and unparalleled opportunity to curtail a severe housing affordability crisis, which the DLBA can play a significant role in through its structure inventory and vacant land inventory. Doing so requires intentionally focusing on designing programs to support and facilitate quality, attainable housing. The DLBA can only do that if public and philanthropic investments allow the DLBA the space and time to be intentional, and to value slow, equitable outcomes over immediate revenue generation needs.



Photo: Community Progress

### WHAT IS ATTAINABLE HOUSING?

Attainable housing meets the needs of households in terms of size, design, location, and other features and is affordable at their income level (30% or less of income).



### OUR GOAL

**Bolster quality, attainable housing options**

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**35%**

of newly occupied or constructed housing units in the next five years are supported by DLBA

2.1

**Align vacant structure sales programs to ensure successful outcomes.**

2.2

**Ensure informed and prepared buyers.**

2.3

**Advance strategic new housing development.**

2.4

**Support safe and stable housing opportunities for people who live in DLBA properties.**

2.5

**Grow technical and financial resources to support successful rehabilitation.**



INITIATIVE 2.1

# Align vacant structure sales programs to ensure successful outcomes.

The DLBA once faced the largest structure inventory of any land bank in the country. Getting those houses back into the hands of capable owners, while still in salvable condition, required swift action. With a more manageable, and declining, portfolio of structures, the DLBA now has the opportunity to refine its sales strategies.

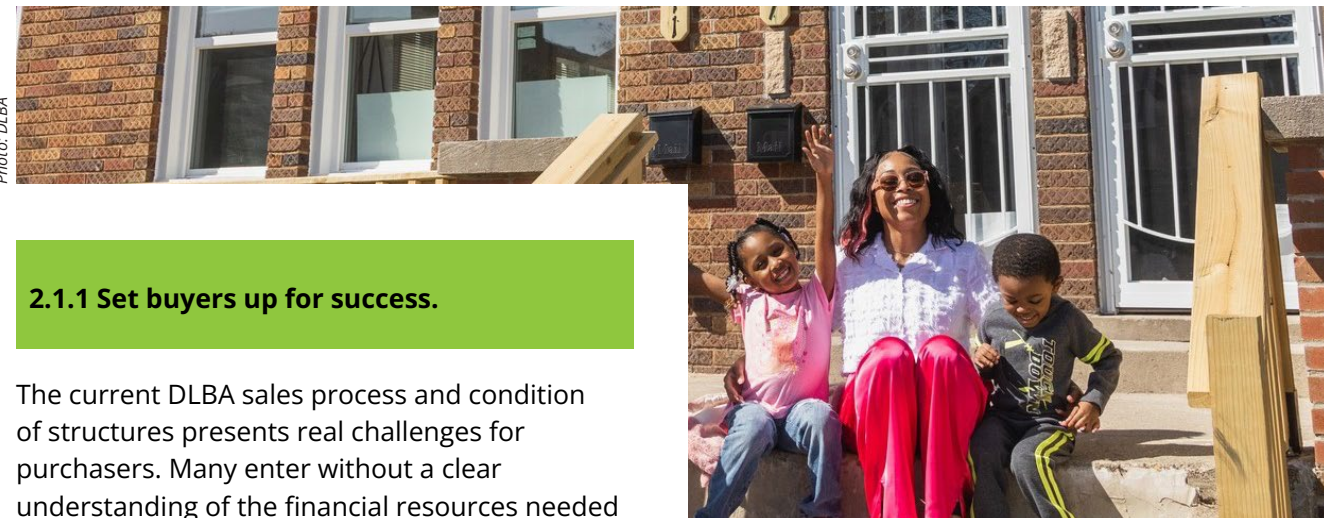


Photo: DLBA

## 2.1.1 Set buyers up for success.

The current DLBA sales process and condition of structures presents real challenges for purchasers. Many enter without a clear understanding of the financial resources needed to achieve a livable structure and end up in over their heads. By establishing a range of minimum buyer qualifications for sales programs, the DLBA can better match interested purchasers to properties (see 2.1.3 for more detail) and ensure successful outcomes for individuals and properties. Qualifications could include characteristics such as:

- Prior experience doing housing rehabilitation
- Past DLBA experience (could include adding a “trusted buyer fast track” for structures sales as discussed in 1.3.3 for vacant land sales)
- Code and property tax compliance on existing properties (already a requirement)
- Completion of homebuyer or rehabilitation education or training (see Initiatives 2.2 and 2.5 for more detail)
- Proposed end use (e.g., owner-occupant, affordable rental)



## 2.1.2 Strategically prioritize projects and buyers in application review.

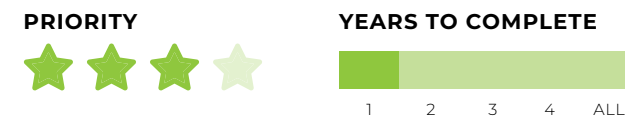
While the DLBA requires entities to be licensed to do business in Michigan, individual buyers are only required to be at least 18 years of age. Many participants expressed a strong preference for prioritizing Detroit-based individuals, organizations, and businesses, followed by those committed to moving to Detroit (see Appendix C). The DLBA will incorporate property outcome goals (e.g., points for affordable rental) and buyer type (e.g., Detroit resident, community development organization) in application review criteria. The DLBA will also work to expand advanced or prioritized access to property sales for partners with specialized expertise and resources to tackle the unique challenges of DLBA property (see Activity 2.2.2 for more detail).



Photo: DLBA

## 2.1.3 Increase application-based sales programs.

Successful outcomes require ensuring capable, qualified buyers. Community engagement participants expressed a desire for the sales process to include consideration for qualifications and experience, greater clarity on discounts and sales prices, and greater overall transparency. Some small-scale developers even expressed that the current sales programs disincentivize them from purchasing DLBA property (see Appendix C). Based upon changes implemented through Initiative 2.1, the DLBA will modify sales programming to ensure the sales channel (e.g., application, closed bid, auction) for each property attracts and qualifies buyers for the best outcomes.



## 2.1.4 Increase and expand the range of DLBA’s pre-sale investment.

The DLBA’s inventory largely comprises property the traditional market rejected, meaning it requires significant investment to bring back to habitable condition. This condition severely limits who can successfully take on rehabilitation projects. To expand the buyer pool and achieve better outcomes, the DLBA will increase and expand the range of investment and improvements it does to property prior to selling. Supported by the activities in Initiative 2.5, the DLBA will invest in each structure in one of the following ways: secured, minimal work, major systems and structural, whiteboxed, fully rehabbed, or new construction. Specifically, the DLBA will increase the number of properties that receive major systems and structural work and that are whiteboxed. The DLBA will establish and share final criteria as programs are updated and created.



## 2.1.5 Improve structure security.

Historically, the DLBA received many more unsold property tax foreclosure properties than it had capacity to immediately inspect and secure. With a reduction in that volume, thanks to efforts of countless Detroit and Wayne County organizations, the DLBA can shorten time between transfer and inspection and expand the resources for boarding and securing. This should also enable more consistent, ongoing property inspections and resecuring when necessary. Property securing is more than basic property maintenance; it is an important tool in crime prevention and reducing unauthorized occupants.







← **BEFORE**  
749 Atkinson

For a buyer to successfully restore a DLBA property, they must have as much information as possible pre-offer.



← **AFTER**  
749 Atkinson

Photos: DLBA

INITIATIVE 2.2

**Ensure informed and prepared buyers.**

For a buyer to successfully restore a DLBA property, they must have as much information as possible pre-offer. Many buyers, especially without financing, struggle to achieve compliance or complete rehabilitation. Focus group participants shared how unprepared most of them were for the reality of rehabilitating a DLBA property. The DLBA has already made substantial improvements to listing information, like including the [Property Walkthrough Guide](#) and water line information (when available). Continued information improvements, paired with the changes in Initiative 2.1, will create a more predictable and supportive process for all buyers, but especially low-income buyers.



**CASE STUDY**

**GCLBA Listing Photos**

The Genesee County Land Bank Authority saw a significant increase in the range and type of buyers along with a 25% increase in sales price for “Featured Homes” and a 35% increase for “Ready for Rehab” properties when investing \$25-150 on professional photography for listings.

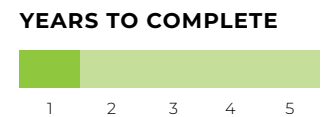


Photos: GCLBA

**2.2.1 Improve information in all listings.**

Community engagement participants and staff shared numerous ideas for improving listing information. The DLBA will explore those ideas:

- More detailed scopes of work
- Additional utility hookup information
- Improved photos, including professional ones or drone photos
- Changing the listing layout to a more traditional display (e.g., Realtor.com style)
- Provide renderings, of rehabilitation features or new construction
- Neighborhood Profiles, providing additional materials on neighborhood features (such as video, testimonials), including links to active neighborhood organizations
- Require pre-purchase property visit
- Buyer Profiles, providing details on ideal levels of experience, capacity, and resources needed





**2.2.2 Expand potential buyer preview opportunities.**

Many past purchasers expressed the desire for more opportunities to view and inspect properties before making an offer. Leveraging the changes in Initiative 2.1, new and retooled listings should be advertised and shared through expanded partners (e.g., infill development opportunities shared through small-developer support organizations) and provide select and targeted opportunities for potential buyers to:

- Walk through purchase options with a DLBA staff member,
- Visit property before public listing or open house,
- Attend a pre-bid meeting with DLBA staff, and/or
- Allow property inspections.



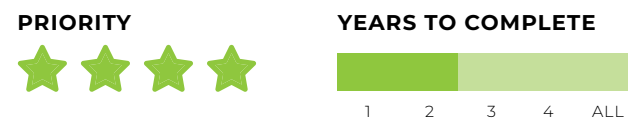
**2.2.4 Conduct regular past purchaser surveys and focus groups.**

Focus groups expressed their appreciation in being included in this planning process and provided a wealth of information for improving DLBA structures programming. The DLBA will survey buyers at closing, minimally to capture demographic information (e.g., residency, age, income) and will survey past purchasers at least once every other year to gauge the impact of policy changes, generate ideas for improvements, and collect outcome and impact stories. The DLBA will also host focus groups at strategic points in program design, development, and implementation.



**2.2.3 Improve process and support offered before DLBA's release of interest.**

The primary challenge DLBA purchasers face is finding the money to fully rehabilitate properties. See Initiative 2.5 for ways the DLBA will work to address this substantial barrier. Additionally, focus group and survey participants shared that the six-month timeline for achieving compliance is often unachievable. While the DLBA is generous with extensions if progress is being made, buyers still expressed apprehension around contractually committing to six months. The DLBA will develop and share a formal extension policy, which clearly defines specific milestones to achieve and associated automatic compliance timeline extensions. Participants also expressed wanting to connect with other past and current purchasers to share lessons learned, support each other, and potentially go in on bulk orders. The DLBA will explore ways to facilitate connecting these cohorts of buyers. The DLBA will also explore strategic and targeted changes to compliance requirements and the reconveyance process. These will particularly focus on providing more opportunities to return value to original buyer when they cannot complete the project. The DLBA will offer at least one way for the original buyer to recoup some of their investment, such as facilitating the sale of property to a more capable buyer and sharing proceeds of sale with the original buyer.

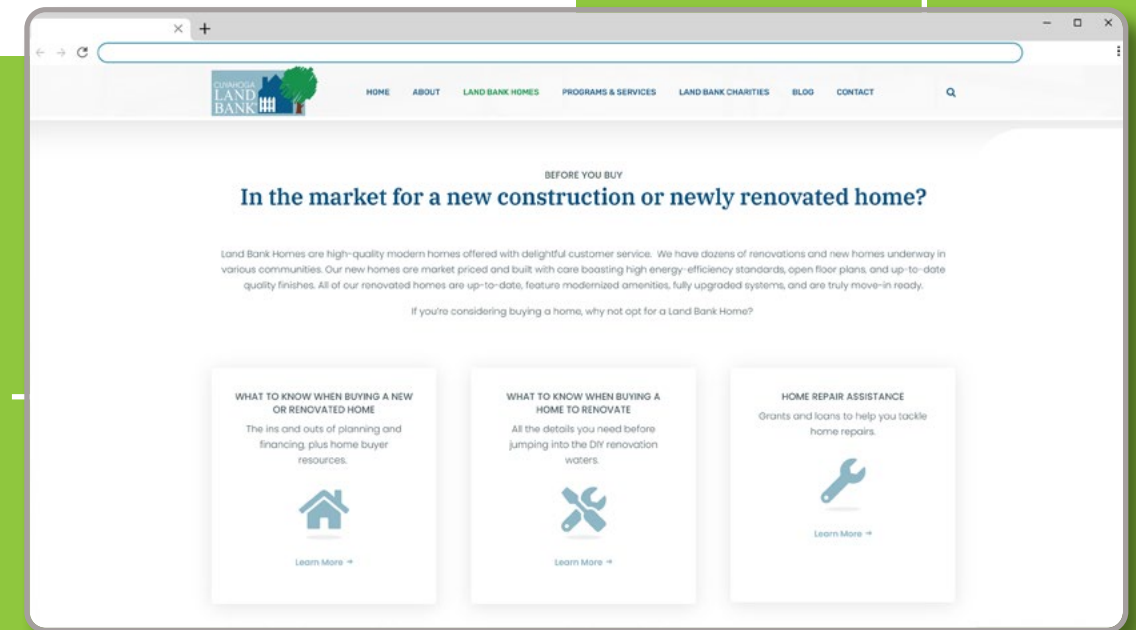


**CASE STUDY**

**Cuyahoga Land Bank  
"Before You Buy" Guides**

*Ensuring potential buyers are well-informed*

Ohio's Cuyahoga Land Bank has a dedicated section on its website to help inform potential purchasers. "Before You Buy" Guides include a **detailed, step-by-step process** for planning and financing a purchase, homebuyer resources, home repair resources, and detailed explanations of rehabilitation and renovation criteria. The page also features soon-to-be-available properties, such as those currently being renovated by the land bank, to help showcase the condition of what is and will be available.





INITIATIVE 2.3

# Advance strategic new housing development.

For Detroit to achieve high-quality, attainable housing stock, new housing construction must happen. In most neighborhoods, though, the market simply does not support new construction without some type of financial support. Through coordination with the Housing & Revitalization Department (HRD) and PDD, the DLBA will support strategic new housing development on select vacant lots. The DLBA is interested in leveraging its inventory to support expanded variety and types of housing.



Photo: Community Progress

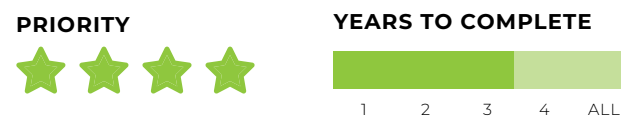
### 2.3.1 Support affordable housing development.

Regulated affordable housing faces significant financial barriers, as its ability to generate income is often restricted. The DLBA sees great opportunities to leverage its inventory to foster naturally occurring affordable housing and reduce some of the costs of regulated (e.g., Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects, community land trusts) affordable housing. The DLBA will explore expanding its role in partnership with City efforts, including through strategic acquisition and strategic holding (see Initiatives 4.1 and 4.2). The DLBA will also expand strategic partnerships with the local organizations with established affordable housing goals by providing first-access and bulk purchasing opportunities.



### 2.3.2 Improve site readiness.

Some cost- and time-related barriers to infill are pre-development activities like lot combinations and splits, replatting, and zoning changes and modifications (e.g., setbacks). The DLBA is capable of many of these activities and will explore doing them before offering properties for sale, thus reducing cost and time for developers. The DLBA will use neighborhood market needs and feasibility to inform which vacant parcels are prepared and sold for infill housing development.



### 2.3.3 Foster more housing variety.

The DLBA's current infill housing policy is rather narrow in considerations for number of housing units. The DLBA will revisit and revise its policy to prioritize infill housing beyond traditional single-family, including in missing middle styles (e.g., townhouses, cottage courts, and courtyard buildings). The DLBA will explore partnering with community development organizations (CDO), local small-scale developers, and other organizations that produce attainable homeownership opportunities by improving access and support.



Photo: Community Progress

### 2.3.4 Support the development of pre-approved construction plans.

In Detroit, City approval processes can greatly impact the timeline and cost of infill housing development. The DLBA will explore, with partners in HRD and Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED), developing preapproved construction plans developers could leverage to expedite housing development.



### 2.3.5 Support development of gap financing solutions.

As an entity well-versed in the costs of rehabilitation and construction and the largest owner of vacant lots in Detroit, the DLBA is an important voice in advocating for and developing gap financing solutions for infill. The DLBA will use its voice and expertise to inform solutions such as the Neighborhood Homes Investment Act, MSHDA's Missing Middle Housing Program, and the Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund.







CASE STUDY

# Land Banks and Attainable Housing Development

*Providing opportunities for residents and developers*

## Albany County Land Bank's Inclusive Neighborhoods Program & Albany Community Land Trust

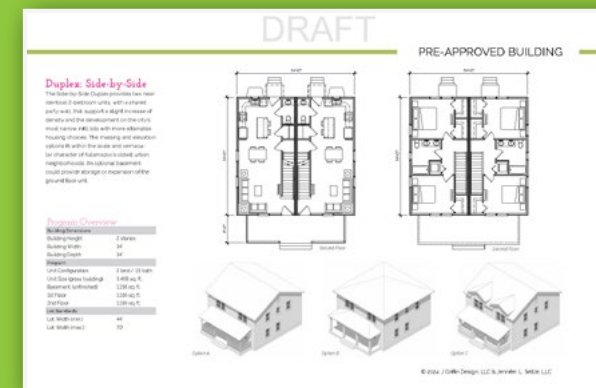
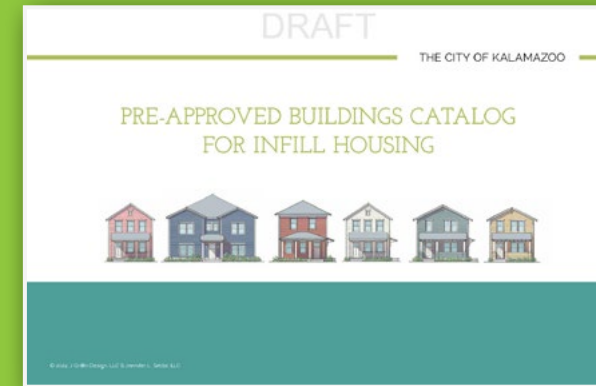
Since 2017, the **Albany County Land Bank (ACLB)** and the **Albany Community Land Trust (ACLT)** have collaborated to address vacancy and abandonment and preserve affordability, both through focusing on how to address the racial wealth gap and provide permanently affordable homeownership to financially underserved individuals in Albany's more stable neighborhoods and provide quality, affordable housing in weaker markets. Through the partnership, ACLB is tapping into its special powers to efficiently unlock a targeted pipeline of properties, while ACLT is tapping into its expertise in developing permanently affordable housing along with leveraging the decades-long relationships with some of the most vulnerable residents in Albany.

ACLB's **Inclusive Neighborhoods Program** allows the ACLB to make certain properties available for sale to the ACLT at a discount (determined on a per-parcel basis by the Board). Residential properties in eligible neighborhoods will be available for purchase by the ACLT for 45 days. The ACLT renovates the property, if needed, and sells to a low-income buyer who will occupy the land trust home as their Principal Residence and abide by the affordability restrictions outlined in their 99-year ground lease. Without the Inclusive Neighborhoods Program, ACLT would be unable to afford these properties.

For more information on land bank and community land trust partnerships, read **Land Banks and Community Land Trusts: Partnering to Provide Equitable Housing Opportunities Now and for Future Generations.**



In 2021, ACLB sold a house for discounted price of \$60,000 to ACLT. ACLT invested about \$115,000 into the renovation and sold it two years later to a CLT buyer for \$175,000. The current fair market value of the home is about \$295,000.



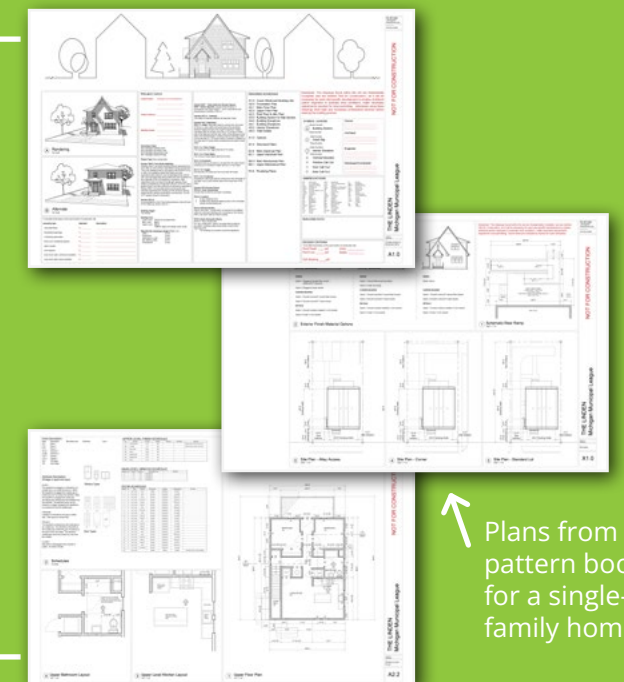
Pages from the pre-approved building catalog

## City of Kalamazoo Pre-Permitted Housing Plans

In an effort to spur infill housing development by reducing some of the time and costs, the **City of Kalamazoo** commissioned a portfolio of housing plans and added all the required permits and inspections into one upfront streamlined permit fee. The City then partnered with a local nonprofit housing developer to test proof of concept. As of February 2024, 48 houses have been built using the pre-permitted plans.

## Michigan Municipal League Pattern Books

The **Michigan Municipal League** created two volumes of pattern book homes, which contain 95 percent complete construction plan sets for six different style infill homes. Pattern book plan sets can help cut down on the cost of design for new construction and can help support zoning reform tools to streamline review.



Plans from the pattern book for a single-family home



INITIATIVE 2.4

# Support safe and stable housing opportunities for people who live in DLBA properties.

People currently occupy approximately 1,000 DLBA properties; some because of bad landlords who let the property go through tax foreclosure and still collected rent, others who have been victims of deed fraud, and others who found an empty structure when they had nowhere else to go. Often these people are occupants through no fault of their own, but rather from systemic failures and the intentional bad actions of others. Detroit at large has a responsibility to provide services and housing to these individuals, but this problem requires a comprehensive solution and should not rely on the DLBA alone.

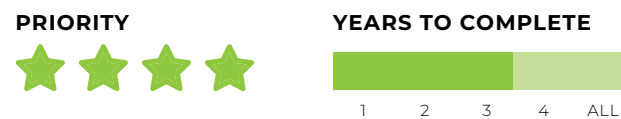
The City, local housing and social services agencies, and the DLBA must work together to create a comprehensive program to help current occupants purchase and improve their homes or secure other safe and stable housing.

The number of occupied properties entering the DLBA's inventory has declined significantly over the last five years because the City of Detroit and local nonprofit organizations' foreclosure prevention efforts, including expanded property tax exemptions and support, and improved outreach. Assuming these programs and trends continue, very few new occupied properties will enter the DLBA's inventory over the next five years. Moreover, the DLBA's increased efforts to maintain and secure its vacant structures (see Activity 2.1.5) should reduce the number of individuals unlawfully moving into DLBA-owned properties.

These activities are primarily designed to help ensure individuals currently living in DLBA properties have safe and stable housing but can be modified for timely response should future occupied properties enter the DLBA's inventory.

## 2.4.1 Conduct new and ongoing outreach.

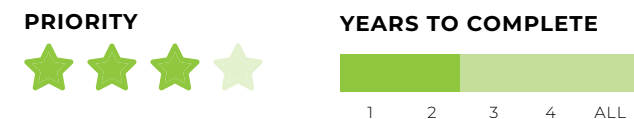
The DLBA will expand their current outreach partnership with HRD to include local nonprofit organizations and agencies with experience working with tenants, low-income homeowners, and unhoused individuals to develop and implement this program. These partner organizations and agencies will conduct a new round of outreach to occupied properties in an effort to reach more occupants than previous efforts. This and ongoing outreach efforts would include informing and educating occupants about the new options outlined below and documenting the location, condition, and occupancy status of each property. Specific option conversations should be led by trusted individuals, such as case managers or outreach partners.



## 2.4.2. Expand options available to occupants.

The DLBA will expand the number of current occupants eligible to purchase their homes by increasing the types of documentation accepted while retaining the ability to disqualify applications based on seriously unsafe housing conditions or occupant behavior that threatens the safety and well-being of neighbors. DLBA will also seek philanthropic funding to help eligible occupants repair and rehabilitate their properties and maintain their homeownership after purchase, decreasing the number of occupants who will not qualify because of the condition of their property.

If an occupant is not interested in or unable to purchase their property, the DLBA's outreach partner and other supportive service organizations will help the occupant transition to new housing by providing (1) assistance locating new housing, (2) time to find new housing and move, (3) money to cover relocation expenses, and (4) additional supportive services as needed.



CASE STUDY

## Greater Syracuse Land Bank and Catholic Charities Partnership

The **Greater Syracuse Land Bank contracts with Catholic Charities of Onondaga County** to provide relocation assistance to occupants living in substandard housing at the time of foreclosure. Catholic Charities case workers help occupants get signed up for public benefits that they might not already be accessing and refers them to available apartments. The contract also provides a set amount of cash assistance for Catholic Charities to draw upon throughout the year to assist occupants with security deposits and first month's rent.

## 2.4.3. Support efforts to prevent deed fraud.

The DLBA will encourage and support educational efforts by others, such as the Wayne County Register of Deeds, to inform potential renters and purchasers about the potential for deed fraud.





INITIATIVE 2.5

## Grow technical and financial resources to support successful rehabilitation.

With tens of millions spent on demolition activities in the last decade, the most dangerous and hardest to salvage properties have been removed. What remains are a lot of properties that still need a lot of work, often in neighborhood markets that do not support the full cost of rehabilitation. The solution is not just more demolition, but investing in existing housing stock. Restoring value to existing structures supports preservation of neighborhood fabric, provides more opportunities for affordable and attainable housing, and reduces waste streams. Yet, lack of rehabilitation resources is the largest barrier to success for purchasers regardless of their skill level and prior experience. Housing financiers (federal and state government, philanthropy, lending institutions) need to make a substantial investment in supporting rehabilitation.

### 2.5.2 Offer, with partners, a wide variety of learning opportunities.

Some cost savings in rehabilitation can be achieved through “sweat equity” or doing the work yourself, such as flooring, tiling, cabinet installation, painting, and other non-licensed and non-permitted work. The DLBA will build and expand partnerships with technical organizations to offer and connect purchasers to courses, training, and information sharing. These could include hosting workshops on all steps in the rehabilitation process, such as how-to classes; partnering on homebuyer, credit, or financial empowerment counseling; and developing project manager resources, such as a permitting how-to guide.



### 2.5.1 Advertise willingness to take second position.

During public engagement, past purchasers and small-scale developers cited the DLBA's current reconveyance policy as a detriment to pursuing purchases, securing financing, and confidence in DLBA flexibility in compliance timelines. The DLBA will clarify policies to include taking second position with their reconveyance deed in certain circumstances—such as if the buyer is seeking to borrow against the property—and update listings, marketing materials, and other references to reconveyance to advertise this position.



### 2.5.3 Facilitate opportunities for past purchasers and buyers to share referrals.

Finding quality vendors is a continual challenge in Detroit; several past purchasers shared their negative experiences and dollars lost from hiring the wrong people. The DLBA will explore the development of a platform where past purchasers and current buyers can share recommendations and referrals. This could include contractors, skilled tradespeople, and even lending institutions.



**DLBA taking second position was the only way we could get financing for our projects.**

Focus Group Participant

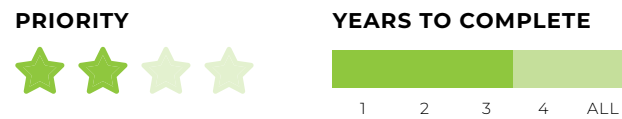


Photos: DLBA



**2.5.4 Support the creation of funding options for poor-condition properties.**

The DLBA and Detroit cannot achieve successful property rehabilitation without more available funding. There is a gap in the lending market for a product focused on rehabilitation of structures with low acquisition costs. There is also a lack of grant dollars for this work. Addressing the full costs of poor-condition requires both. The DLBA will support the creation of new tools for funding and financing rehabilitation, which could include additional funding streams for common repairs; land contracts from trusted partners; re-granting programs; a third-party housing fund; or innovative financing. The solution likely lies beyond more money into existing programs and in something like a traditional mortgage with a forgivable loan or grant component.



**2.5.5 Further local, state, and national conversations on home repair funds.**

The DLBA will leverage its position to increase rehabilitation dollars available to Detroiters. While the tool in 2.5.4 might be enough to address DLBA inventory, the city, state, and national challenge of deteriorated property demands substantial public and private investment. The conversation must go beyond basic repair and deferred maintenance needs. The DLBA is well positioned to speak to the true depth of work needed on vacant houses. Local and state advocacy should be the primary focus, but the DLBA will ensure it lends its valuable perspective and influence to national conversations.



**CASE STUDY**

**Home HeadQuarters: New York**

**Home HeadQuarters** is a nonprofit housing organization and Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) tackling equitable homeownership and lending challenges in upstate New York for more than 25 years.

Home HeadQuarters provides a full suite of home rehabilitation, homeownership, and rental resources—including home repair loans, homebuyer education, contractor training, and home sales—and supports purchasers of land bank properties.

The partnership between Home HeadQuarters and New York land banks began in Syracuse, where Home HeadQuarters redeveloped over 100 land bank properties and provided

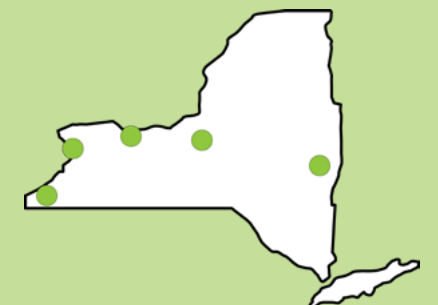
purchase and construction financing to other purchasers. That work has since expanded to underwriting loan products for rehab and repairs of owner-occupied housing and for small-scale developers, particularly responsible landlords who cannot access capital. Home HeadQuarters has provided millions of dollars of financing in upstate New York for purchasing land bank properties for rehab and first-time homeownership. In the vast majority of cases, the loan recipients are people of color who have been declined by multiple financial institutions. This partnership exemplifies what can happen when the unique strengths of organizations that share a common goal of finding creative solutions are combined.

**2.5.6 Explore offering DLBA construction services.**

As challenges with achieving compliance decline based upon changes implemented from Initiatives 2.1 and 2.2, the DLBA will explore leveraging its compliance staff to offer more project-based support to purchasers. The DLBA will also explore what additional services could support purchasers and the expanded rehabilitation in Activity 2.1.4 and purchasers doing full rehabilitation.



Home HeadQuarters currently partners with multiple land banks in New York, including: Albany County Land Bank, Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation, Chautauqua County Land Bank, Greater Syracuse Land Bank, and the Rochester Land Bank Corporation.





GOAL 3

# Collaborate on improved property maintenance.

Detroit's vacant property inventory presents a substantial property maintenance challenge. Even with significant annual investments in mowing, clean-outs, and board-ups, Detroit still struggles to provide comparable levels of maintenance to residents. Yet, substantial evidence shows that improved property conditions stabilize neighborhoods. Advocating for a shift in the conversation about maintenance from "just cutting grass" to using it as a tool for improving health and safety and reducing crime is vital to both dedicated resources to the issue and achieving better outcomes. See Goal 1 for ideas to reduce the maintenance burden across the board, such as increased sales, large-scale open space projects, and alternatives to planting turf grass.

Currently, the DLBA maintains its structure inventory while the City supports maintenance in other ways. General Services Department (GSD) is responsible for vacant lot maintenance (e.g., cleanup, mowing) on DLBA-owned and City-owned properties, along with abatement of privately owned lots. The Construction & Demolition Department (C&DD) provides clean-out and board-up through Proposal N activities. This informal division of duties is primarily dictated by how the City funds vacant property maintenance, except for the remaining Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) dollars the DLBA pays to GSD for maintenance on HHF demolition sites.

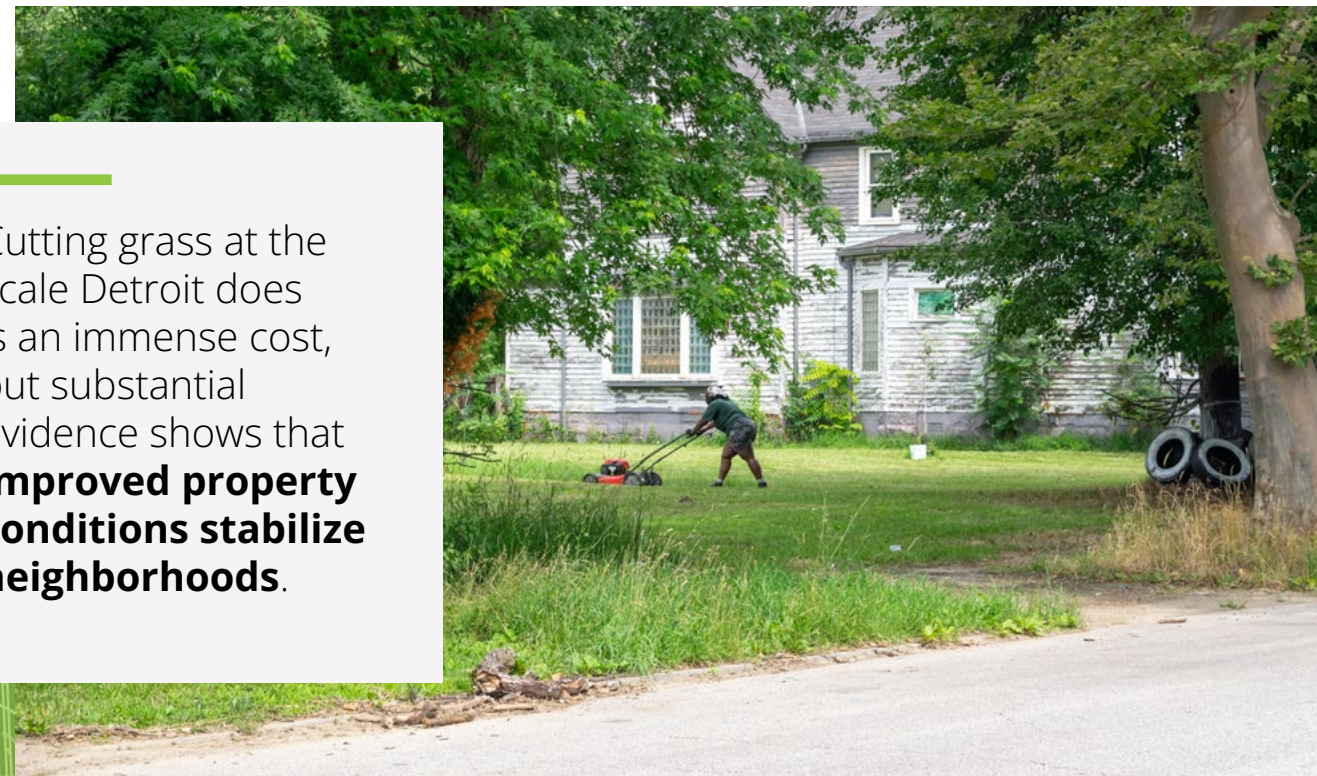


Photo: Community Progress

Cutting grass at the scale Detroit does is an immense cost, but substantial evidence shows that **improved property conditions stabilize neighborhoods.**



OUR GOAL

**Collaborate on improved property maintenance**

MEASURING SUCCESS

**50%**

of DLBA-owned properties have a collaborative maintenance strategy by 2030

**3.1**

**Establish a comprehensive property maintenance strategy.**

**3.2**

**Mobilize neighborhood resources and private partners to support property maintenance.**



INITIATIVE 3.1

## Establish a comprehensive property maintenance strategy.

A more formalized, funded arrangement between the DLBA and City departments is needed to better serve residents. Everything from not mowing on trash pick-up day to total allocated dollars requires coordination and needs improvement. While maintenance is not beautification, bringing new partners into the mix could provide beautification opportunities.

### 3.1.1 Establish clear roles for vacant property maintenance.

The DLBA will develop operating plans with GSD and C&DD to detail roles and collaboration around vacant lot and vacant structure maintenance. Due to the amount of maintenance City departments perform on DLBA property, there must be clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for internal coordination and public understanding. Property conditions cannot improve without more funding. The DLBA will coordinate with GSD to request appropriate levels of City funding for vacant property maintenance. The DLBA will also explore ways to increase public awareness and use of [See Click Fix-Improve Detroit](#) to report property maintenance concerns.



### 3.1.2 Explore passive vacant lot maintenance initiatives.

The scale of the DLBA's inventory presents opportunities to explore new and innovative post-demo plantings and creative maintenance strategies that could reduce maintenance costs, time, and provide some beautification (see 1.4). In coordination with C&DD, GSD, and PDD, the DLBA will study opportunities to reduce the maintenance burden and improve lot conditions.



### CASE STUDY

## Clean & Green

Since 2004, the Genesee County Land Bank Authority's (GCLBA) **Clean & Green Program** has supported community groups and organizations in the cleaning, maintaining, and beautifying vacant properties in Flint, Michigan. GCLBA provides a stipend to over 60 community groups each year to maintain vacant properties in their neighborhoods. The program is application-based, with many groups returning year over year and a few who have participated for all 20 years. The program is rooted in co-design and creation, with Clean & Green groups regularly providing input and feedback into how the program is run. Through a **research partnership with the University of Michigan**, Clean & Green has been found to reduce all crime near land bank owned properties and reduce youth-involved firearm violence and violent crime.



Photos: GCLBA

INITIATIVE 3.2

## Mobilize neighborhood resources and private partners to support property maintenance.

Several [evidence-backed practices](#) for maintenance can improve neighborhood conditions, especially when the community is involved.

### 3.2.1 Pilot, evaluate, and implement a community-based maintenance program.

Detroiters provide an incredible amount of service to the city through their maintenance of public, and privately, owned vacant properties. Those efforts should be recognized and rewarded. Some individuals and organizations expressed interest in formalizing their efforts through new programming. The DLBA will explore opportunities to offer a community-based maintenance program that offers stipends to local groups for vacant property maintenance in specific geographic areas.



### 3.2.2 Develop volunteer opportunities for neighborhood-based maintenance.

Detroit has a strong culture of volunteerism, especially among local businesses and corporations. The DLBA will explore and develop ways to leverage volunteers to expand maintenance capacity. Those opportunities could include regular clean-up events with large city-wide employers and "adopt-a-road" style maintenance agreements with smaller, neighborhood-based employers.





GOAL 4

# Expand the use of land bank tools to advance economic opportunities.

Land banks in Michigan have unique legal powers under state law to acquire and receive properties, extinguish debt and liens, clear title, and transfer for monetary and non-monetary consideration. The DLBA primarily uses its power on residential property but has the legal authority and staff capacity to leverage its tools for commercial and industrial property. Bad title

problems are pervasive in Detroit on all types of property, and resolving them is critical to long-term neighborhood and market stability. Several interview participants expressed the desire for the DLBA to explore using its tools to support neighborhood-scale commercial projects and large-scale housing and economic development projects.

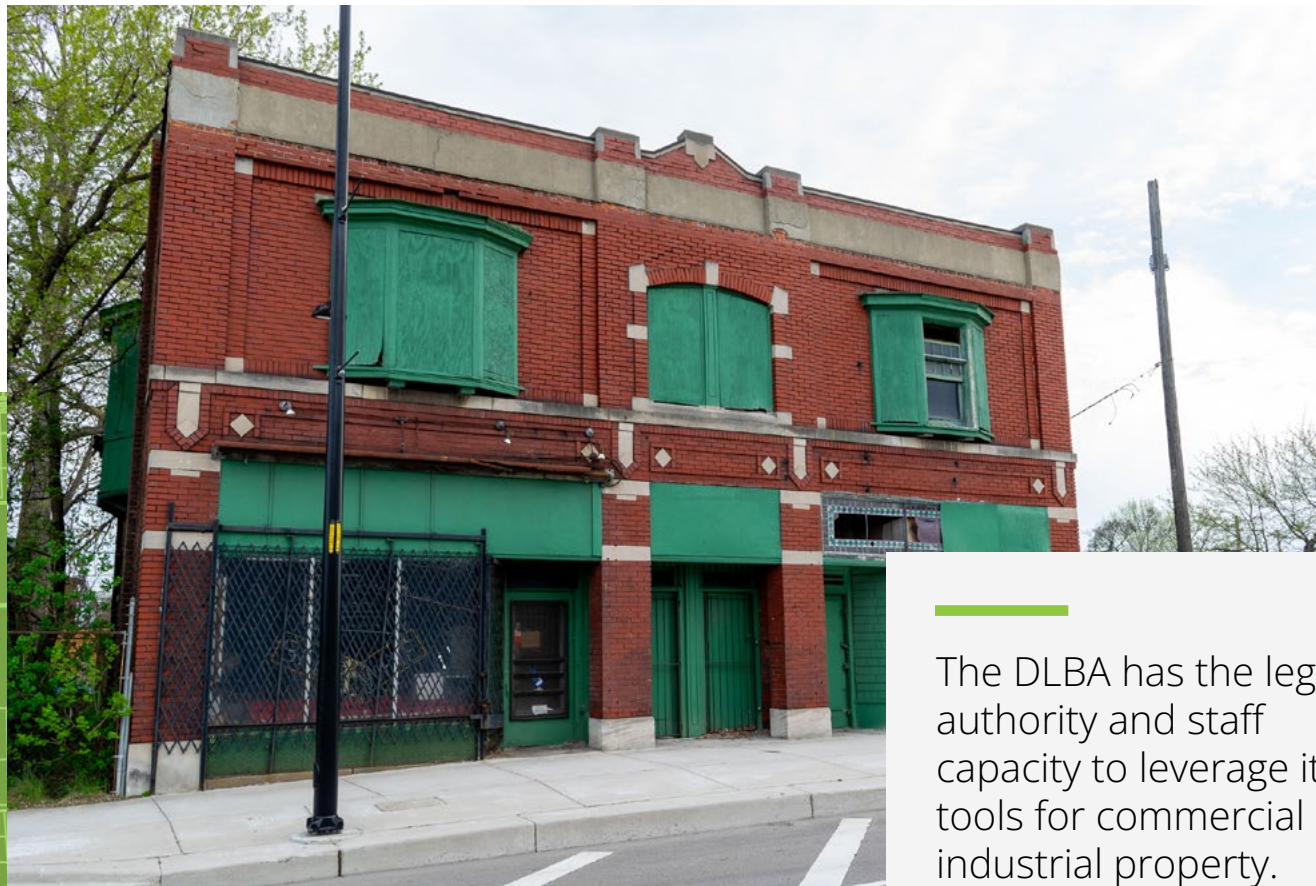


Photo: Community Progress

The DLBA has the legal authority and staff capacity to leverage its tools for commercial and industrial property.



OUR GOAL

Expand the use of land bank tools to advance economic opportunities

MEASURING SUCCESS

15%

annual increase in the number of commercial and economic development projects the DLBA supports

4.1

Offer a suite of development services, especially to support larger-scale projects.

4.2

Conduct strategic acquisition to support City priorities.

4.3

Design and implement programming to support improvement of neighborhood commercial districts.

4.4

Leverage the DLBA's resources and spending to support the local economy.



INITIATIVE 4.1

## Offer a suite of development services, especially to support larger-scale projects.

The DLBA has historically focused on small-scale residential property, but Detroit’s development landscape offers ample opportunity to leverage land bank tools to support development and infrastructure projects.

### 4.1.1 Offer expanded site assembly services.

The DLBA can do strategic land acquisition for the purpose of assembly (see Activities 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). The DLBA will offer a program across public and privately held property for strategic acquisition and assembly for City-led development projects of various scales. Site assembly services may include quiet title services. Proactive acquisition would focus on properties clearly neglected, abandoned, or owned by speculators (see Activity 1.2.4).



### 4.1.3 Continue to attend developer fairs.

As DLBA grows its development services offerings, it will be important to continue and expand attendance at developer-focused events put on by partners (e.g., MSHDA and Detroit community development financial institutions (CDFI)) and on specific topics (e.g., LIHTC funding, brownfield development).



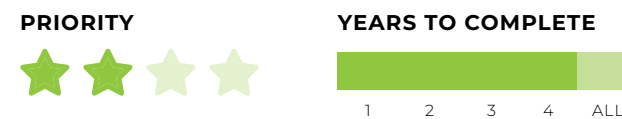
### 4.1.2 Explore offering environmental assessments.

There are ample resources for environmental assessments and remediation through BSEED, the State of Michigan, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). DLBA will explore opportunities to offer Phase 1 and 2 assessments, which could include limiting that service to property purchased for a specific use or goal.



### 4.1.4 Design and offer a depository program.

Moving from idea to construction for development projects is often a lengthy process, which impacts project feasibility and cost. The DLBA’s acquisition and holding abilities could support improving feasibility and reducing costs, especially for projects that align with City priorities. The DLBA will leverage its acquisition and holding abilities to explore creating a depository program—i.e., intentionally holding title to property to preserve it for future uses—for private property. This program could be limited to specific entities (e.g., nonprofits, utilities) or uses (e.g., affordable housing, environmental remediation). The program should include a meaningful and reasonable payment for services and include clear roles for maintenance and property management.



INITIATIVE 4.2

## Conduct strategic acquisition to support City priorities.

Michigan land banks, including the DLBA, receive most of their property via “involuntary transfer,” meaning another governmental entity transfers property to the land bank after it fails to sell at the property tax foreclosure auction. However, land banks can purchase property, receive transfers from other government units, receive donations, and swap properties with public and private entities. The DLBA can strategically leverage and expand these acquisition tools to help the City and partners achieve important outcomes.

### 4.2.1 Explore, continue, and expand proactive purchasing of vacant properties.

To better support City strategies, the DLBA will explore expanding strategic market-rate purchases to include properties like long-term vacant and deteriorated multi-family structures and vacant residential properties that are the only ones on a block not owned by the DLBA.



### 4.2.2 Develop process for receiving property donations and facilitating property swaps.

The DLBA will formalize its property donation program for vacant structures and lots, enabling property owners to direct properties to the land bank rather than abandoning them. This benefits neighbors and neighborhood stability.



This plan was written before significant questions raised by *Tyler v. Hennepin County*, *Schafer v. Kent County* (Docket No. 164975) and *Hathon v. Michigan* (Docket No. 165219) were settled, so it does not address property tax foreclosure “right of first refusal” acquisitions. Once case law is clearer on this topic and the impact on land banks, the DLBA may explore opportunities to partner with the County and City to expand right of first refusal acquisitions.



**If DLBA was engaged in larger development projects and offered more development services, a lot more Detroit-based developers would consider purchasing DLBA property.**

Event Participant

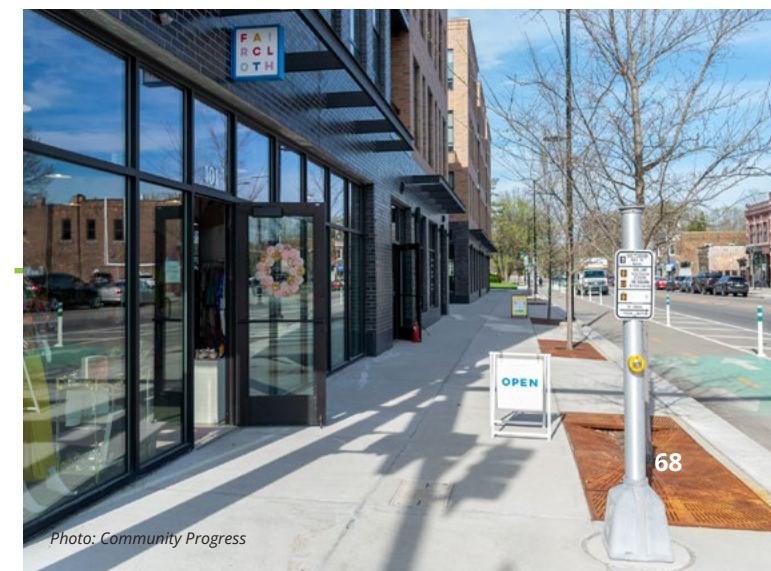


Photo: Community Progress





CASE STUDY

## Land Bank Development Services

*Leveraging land bank powers to support other entities*

### Calhoun County Land Bank Quiet Title Program

The **Calhoun County Land Bank’s (CCLB)** Quiet Title program uses the land bank’s statutory expedited quiet title authority to clear title to properties for eligible third parties. The program is **application-based** and interested parties are encouraged to discuss their property with the land bank before applying. Accepted property owners temporarily transfer properties to CCLB but remain responsible for property maintenance during the holding period. CCLB charges a \$250 non-refundable application fee, \$1,500–\$1,750 for the quiet title action, and a holding fee of 1 percent of the property value. CCLB reports that they typically hold property for 60–120 days.

### Wayne County Land Bank Quiet Title Program

The **Wayne County Land Bank’s (WCLB)** Quiet Title Program uses the land bank’s statutory expedited quiet title authority to clear title for third parties. Interested parties complete an **intake form** for review.

Accepted property owners temporarily transfer properties to WCLB, and WCLB charges \$1,500 per parcel for the service. WCLB reports that the quiet title process takes an average of 60–90 days.

### WHAT IS A “QUIET TITLE” ACTION?

“Title” refers to the legal right to property ownership. When there are multiple parties who may have claim to a potential stake in a property’s ownership (due to a lien being placed on a property or a question as to how the title has transferred from one party to another) that can be referred to as a “cloud” or “defect” on the title. Essentially it means there is a question as to who the owner is.

These questions of ownership can be eliminated through a “quiet title action” which is a court process whereby a judge hears from all parties who may have a claim to ownership and determines the ownership interests in the property. As noted in these examples, many land banks have the statutory authority to quiet title.

### Omaha Municipal Land Bank Depository Program

As part of its **Depository Program**, the **Omaha Municipal Land Bank (OMLB)** uses its statutory authority to clear property title of publicly held liens, including delinquent property taxes and special assessments. OMLB only offers this service to governmental entities and nonprofit organizations.

To be eligible for the program, properties must be part of a redevelopment plan that furthers one of the land bank’s strategic purposes, such as the creation of affordable housing or public open space.

### Albany County Land Bank Development Projects

The **Albany County Land Bank (ACLB)** has assembled three large clusters of properties for development. These **development projects** have unique characteristics, demographics, resident needs, and long-term visions.

To ensure success and that the projects align with community wants and needs, ACLB has taken an active role in shaping and creating these sites and working alongside the developers throughout the development process.



INITIATIVE 4.3

## Design and implement programming to support improvement of neighborhood commercial districts.

Neighborhood-serving commercial districts are vital components of a strong and connected neighborhood fabric. They provide access to services like laundry and salons; enjoyment like dance studios; and goods like convenience and hardware stores. Most of the attention in Detroit's commercial development ecosystem goes to large projects like job centers or foot traffic-based projects like coffee shops and restaurants, and therefore lacks the robust ecosystem to support neighborhood-serving uses. DLBA can help elevate that ecosystem by intentionally looking for opportunities to support neighborhood commercial districts.

### 4.3.1 Explore and create ways to leverage existing and future inventory of non-residential properties.

The DLBA currently owns a small number of non-residential lots and will occasionally receive or acquire more. However, there are limited disposition strategies for those properties. The DLBA will work with City partners to develop a strategy for those lots to support neighborhood-serving commercial districts and businesses. The DLBA will also analyze its property inventory to identify residential parcels near commercial properties and corridors that could support commercial development, such as parking lots or business expansions.



### 4.3.2 Pursue opportunities to support mixed-use development.

Detroit's neighborhoods are full of one-off or small clusters of mixed-use properties (residential units above commercial units), that are important pieces of the neighborhood fabric. These types of buildings are also an important piece of bolstering quality, attainable housing options (Goal 2). The DLBA will support the City's revitalization efforts in neighborhood commercial districts, through the acquisition, maintenance, and disposition of smaller mixed-use and commercial properties that are not located in main commercial corridors.



Photo: Community Progress

Neighborhood-serving commercial districts are vital components of a strong and connected neighborhood fabric

INITIATIVE 4.4

## Leverage DLBA's resources and spending to support the local economy.

The DLBA spends hundreds of thousands on small- and medium-size purchases every year, which presents a significant opportunity to keep dollars circulating within Detroit and to support local business. Maximizing this opportunity requires the DLBA to be intentional about local spending at all levels of

### 4.4.1 Update language in Third Amended Contracting and Procurement Policy.

The DLBA sets specific policies that stipulate how it selects vendors and the processes that must be followed when doing so. Updating this policy will allow the DLBA to support more small businesses. This will include adding specific language to Section I.B. to include local operation as a justification for selection, and updating language in Section I.H to be stronger than "reasonable effort."



### 4.4.2 Consider mechanism for tracking local spending.

The DLBA will explore ways (e.g., via expense reports) to track and report out on dollars spent with small businesses, women-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, and Detroit-based businesses.





# ACTIVE & CONSISTENT COLLABORATION

As the largest property owner in a city of over 630,000 people, the DLBA has a responsibility to be an engaged member of the community and must be in partnership with local government, community organizations, and residents to be effective..

Prioritizing active and consistent collaboration with all types of partners is vital to fostering a Detroit where all neighborhoods are strong, healthy, and thriving places.

Neighborhoods comprise property and people and much of Detroit's strength lies in its people. The activities in Active & Consistent Collaboration ensure

the DLBA leverages the expertise and resources of Detroit's people in its acquisition, disposition, and other programming decisions. The DLBA will steward robust partnerships to be able to nimbly respond to community needs. Through excellent service to constituents, meaningful partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations, and stronger local government relationships, the DLBA can have a more positive impact on neighbors and neighborhoods.

For a full overview of recommended community engagement activities throughout [Next Five](#), see Appendix D.

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**Excellent Service** **pg 75**

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**Build Partnerships** **pg 81**

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**Strengthen Relationships** **pg 87**

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Photo: DLBA



GOAL 5

# Provide excellent service and clear information to constituents.

The DLBA fields an extremely high volume of resident calls and office visits. In the first six months of 2024, the DLBA answered over 41,000 calls with wait times averaging just 3.5 minutes and served more than 2,600 people through lobby and office hours visits.

This sheer volume necessitates a strong communication strategy using technology, resource materials, and multiple channels to enhance understanding of the DLBA and address inquiries promptly.



Photo: DLBA

In the first six months of 2024, the DLBA answered over 41,000 calls with wait times averaging just 3.5 minutes and served more than 2,600 people through visits.



### OUR GOAL

**Provide excellent service and clear information to constituents**

### MEASURING SUCCESS

# 100%

of inquiries resolved within seven business days by 2030

**5.1**

**Continue to strengthen customer service.**

**5.2**

**Provide clear, consistent, and accessible information on programs and processes.**

**5.3**

**Implement multi-faceted, purposeful community outreach.**

**5.4**

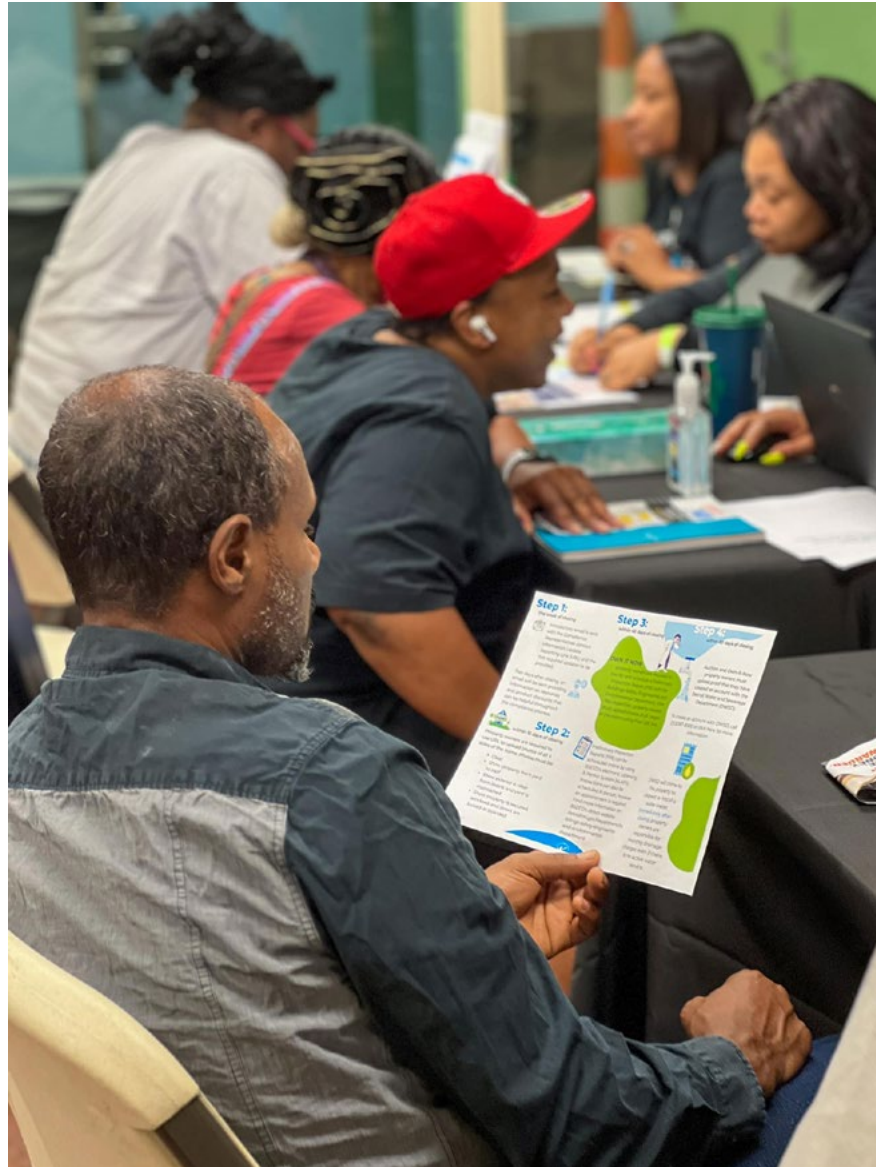
**Proactively tell DLBA's story.**



INITIATIVE 5.1

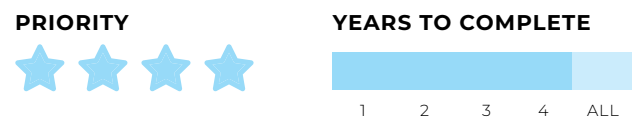
## Continue to strengthen customer service.

Beginning in 2022, the DLBA committed to substantially improving caller and visitor experience. The DLBA has made substantial strides on this commitment, including reducing the average call wait time from 49.2 minutes to 2.2 minutes. Survey respondents recognized it was easier to get to a person, but still said it often took multiple phone calls and emails to actually get an answer. It is critical for the DLBA to provide callers, visitors, and constituents with excellent service and quick resolutions. Improving the website to provide useful, timely information should reduce call volume and allow customer service representatives to better serve callers. The DLBA will continue existing customer service activities and expand the number and approachability of other resource materials.



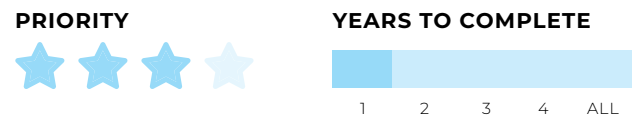
### 5.1.1 Continue customer service training.

The DLBA instituted new customer service training procedures in 2023 to great success. The DLBA will continue to provide those trainings and a commitment to an ethos of service excellence.



### 5.1.2 Add organization chart or staff list to website.

Understanding how the DLBA is structured, how many people work there, and which teams are responsible for which programs was a frequent request during community engagement. The DLBA will add an organization chart or staff list to the website, with program leads, job titles, short bios, and staff photos.



Photos: DLBA

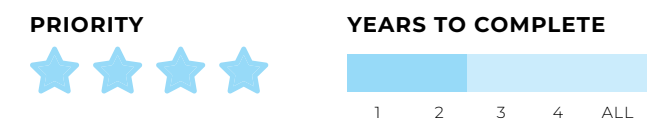
INITIATIVE 5.2

## Provide clear, consistent, and accessible information on programs and processes.

The DLBA must commit to making information clearer, consistent, and more accessible to effectively serve constituents and build community trust.

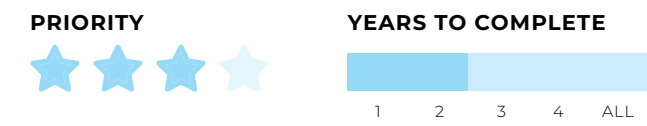
### 5.2.1 Create and improve outreach materials.

The DLBA will audit and revise existing outreach materials like door hangers and emails. The audit will involve staff, experts in human-centered design, and community members (with and without direct experience with DLBA programs) in order to ensure the new materials are accessible and easy to understand. The DLBA should consider working with experts to improve content, design, and response rates to outreach materials.



### 5.2.3 Create how-to guides.

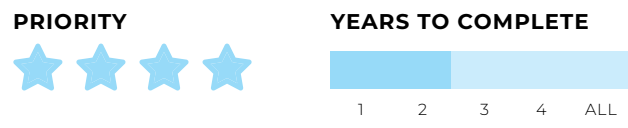
The DLBA will create simple, visual how-to guides for common website functions like finding land bank property and applying to purchase. These guides will be shared with staff, distributed at events, and posted on social media and neighborhood organizations.



### 5.2.2 Redesign website.

The DLBA's website hosts an abundance of information, but it can be challenging to navigate. The DLBA will redesign its website to simplify navigation and make information clearer and more accessible for its primary audiences. Specific changes could include:

- Improvements to the All Listings Map, adding more information on each property and details on property "holds" (including which department requested the hold, the reason for the hold, and contact info for the requesting department) and reasons for a property being unlisted and details on when it may become available (e.g., going through quiet title, available no sooner than date);
- Providing policies in more digestible format, including more clarity on discounts;
- Improvements to the FAQ page, including ensuring the most frequently asked questions are represented; reducing the number of clicks; recategorizing questions; improved infographics; and incorporating how-to guides;
- An easy-to-understand annual budget overview or breakdown;
- Better listings, see Activity 2.2.1; and
- Improved application process, see Activities 1.1.1, 2.1.3, and 2.2.3.





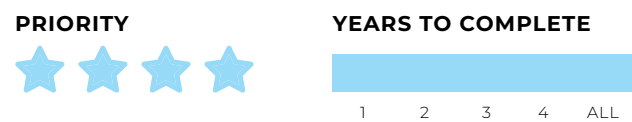
INITIATIVE 5.3

## Implement multi-faceted, purposeful community outreach.

It is imperative to get the improved informational materials from Initiative 5.2 into the hands of residents and partners. DLBA must build a broad yet targeted outreach network to ensure the right information gets to the right audiences with minimal effort required from them. This requires the DLBA to expand the types of information it shares and to continue to be visible in the community.

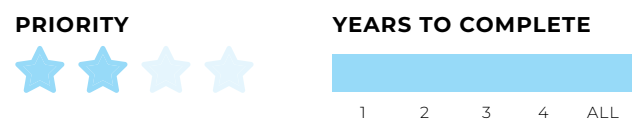
### 5.3.1 Proactively share more information with the general public.

Throughout community engagement, participants requested better awareness of the DLBA's organizational activities, including policy changes, programming changes, and engagement opportunities. The DLBA will audit and then update its current communication practices to determine the best channels for reaching more people and sharing more detailed information. This could include things like topic-specific social media series, targeted emails (e.g., unsuccessful bidders, neighborhood groups) for event reminders, or sharing pre-made social media content for other organizations to share.



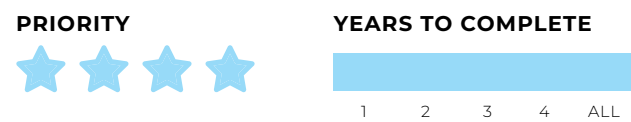
### 5.3.3 Continue to host informational events.

Community engagement participants repeatedly requested the continuation, and return, of DLBA informational events like lunch-and-learns. These events provide important education and grow the number of people who understand and access DLBA programming. The DLBA will continue to host informational events and explore new styles and types, such as virtual Q&A sessions. Through Activity 5.3.1, awareness of and attendance at these events should also increase.



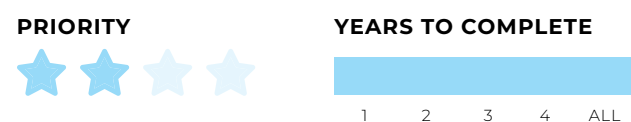
### 5.3.2 Continue to regularly attend meetings and events throughout the city.

DLBA staff attend hundreds of events a year, including Department of Neighborhoods meetings, charter-mandated events, city council district meetings, and other city-lead community meetings, along with numerous neighborhood and partner events. These valuable touchpoints help build relationships between residents and DLBA staff, expedite resolution of resident questions and concerns, and increase the general public's understanding of the DLBA. The DLBA will continue this practice and ensure consistency of staff who attend events and that those staff are equipped to answer a wide range of questions.



### 5.3.4 Provide opportunities for staff to work from neighborhood locations.

Better connections and relationships can be built when DLBA staff are out in the community, meeting people in their own places and spaces. In addition to Activities 5.3.2 and 5.3.3, the DLBA will improve resident access to staff by having staff work from satellite locations and hold regular office hours in community spaces like recreation centers and neighborhood offices. Staff also expressed interest in having opportunities to work from their own neighborhoods.



INITIATIVE 5.4

## Proactively tell the DLBA's story.

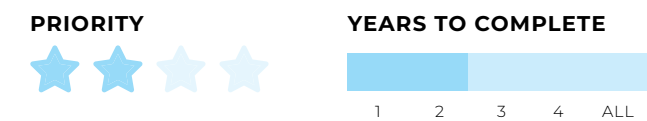
The DLBA has significantly contributed to neighborhood stability and revitalization in Detroit. These stories are worth sharing. Nevertheless, the DLBA is often only mentioned in city-wide media when challenges or complaints arise. The DLBA needs to actively share success stories, explain its role and context, and highlight its staff. Intentional storytelling paired with the other improvements in this plan will build trust and improve accuracy.



Photo: DLBA

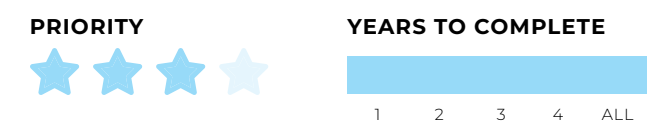
### 5.4.1 Identify trusted community voices to share DLBA's work and impact.

DLBA will strengthen and expand relationships with local and community journalists, identify neighborhood newsletters, and work with DLBA buyers to share stories about the positive effects of DLBA's programs bring to buyers' lives and neighborhoods.



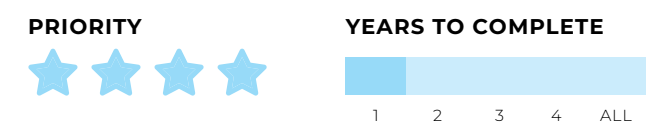
### 5.4.3 Create an annual "State of the Land Bank" report.

Similar to a state of the city address, DLBA will produce an annual "State of the Land Bank" report to share the accomplishments and challenges of the year, along with progress towards [Next Five](#) metrics.



### 5.4.2 Improve social media content.

Social media is a powerful tool for communicating positive outcomes, sharing staff stories, and explaining its role and functions. DLBA will incorporate buyer testimonials and other success stories, share important facts about staff (e.g., percent of Detroit residents) and the organization, feature neighborhood profiles and testimonials, and other awareness and trust building information into its social media strategy. For an example, see GCLBA's ["What is the Land Bank?" video](#).





GOAL 6

# Define and build meaningful, formal partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations.

Detroit's neighborhood and community organizations have valuable expertise, strong relationships with residents, and expressed interest in partnering with the DLBA. Current relationships with these organizations must

extend beyond discounts on purchasing property and move towards intentional, two-way communication. Leveraging the local expertise and relationships of these organizations will add value to DLBA programs and operations.

Leveraging the local expertise and relationships of these organizations will add value to DLBA programs and operations.



Photo: DLBA



### OUR GOAL

Define and build meaningful, formal partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations

### MEASURING SUCCESS

25%

increase in formalized partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations by 2030

6.1

Improve purchase processes for Detroit nonprofit organizations and entrepreneurs.

6.2

Expand dedicated communication to all types of neighborhood and community organizations.

6.3

Formalize roles for supporters and strategic advisors.



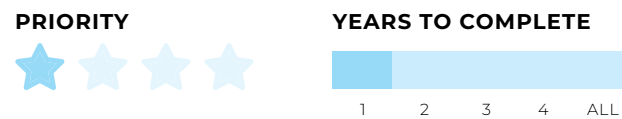
INITIATIVE 6.1

## Improve purchase processes for Detroit nonprofit organizations and entrepreneurs.

Before expanding relationships, the DLBA should improve basic components of the existing Community Partner program and other discounts. See Appendix A for details on existing programs.

### 6.1.1 Recognize value of local expertise in purchase process.

Neighborhood organizations and local businesses often have a detailed and nuanced understanding of what a successful project requires, both from past projects and their proximity to neighborhood conditions. The DLBA will explore opportunities for priority or preferred access (see Activity 2.1.2).



### 6.1.2 Change multi-property purchase process.

The DLBA currently only allows successful past purchasers to have multiple properties in the compliance pipeline. The DLBA will change the current policy, to reflect the “buyer fast track” (see Activities 1.3.3 and 2.1.2), to prioritize strategic partnerships with experienced community development organizations, small-scale developers, and large developers as well as capable past purchasers. See Goal 2 for related process improvements.

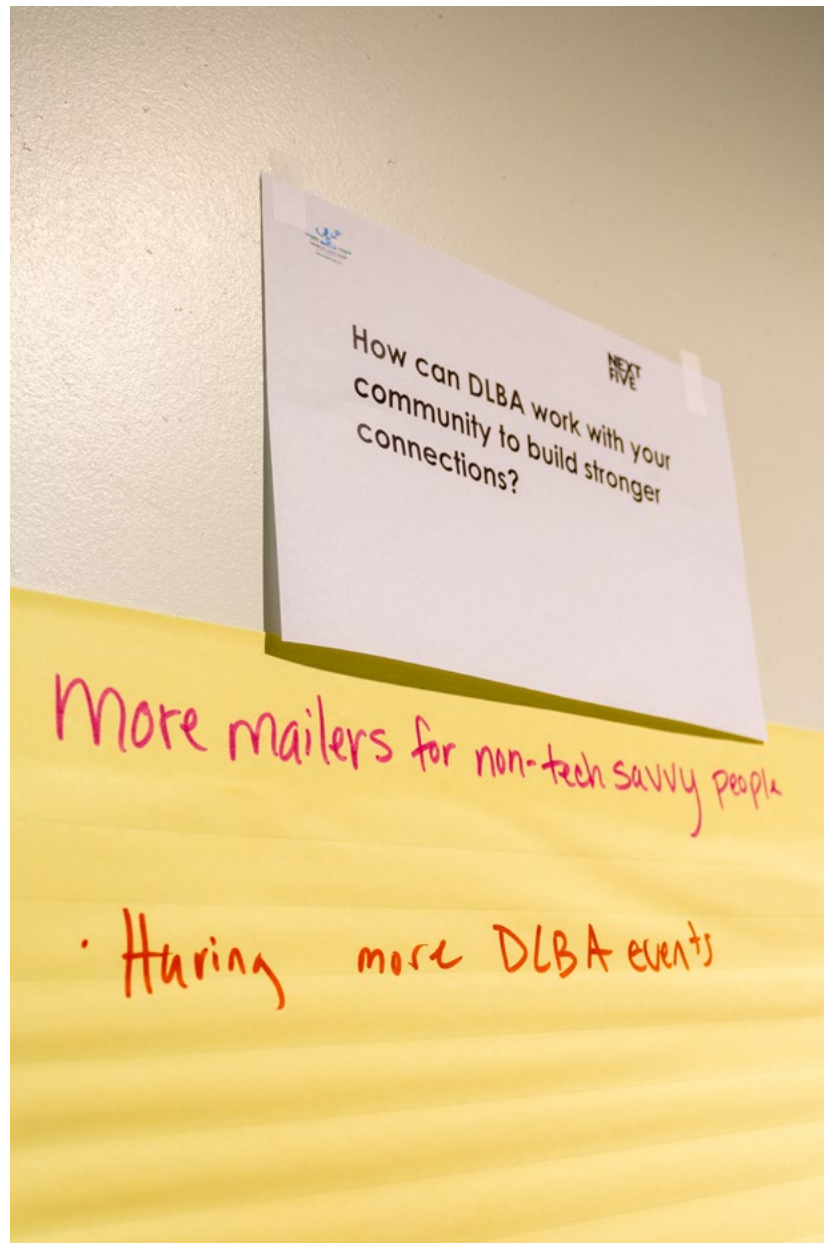
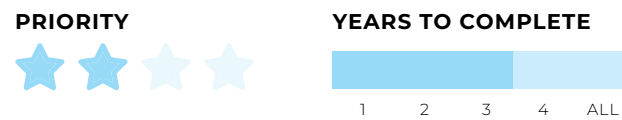


Photo: DLBA

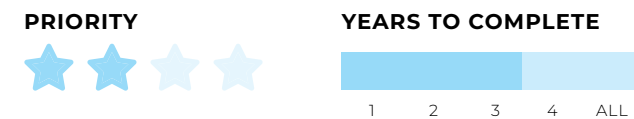
INITIATIVE 6.2

## Expand dedicated communication to all types of neighborhood and community organizations.

Throughout the community engagement process, organizations—block clubs, community garden groups, CDOs—requested communications that were tailored to them with information and opportunities to connect with each other. The DLBA recognizes that request and its role in improving program outreach. This Initiative includes ideas from focus groups, survey responses, and community engagement events.

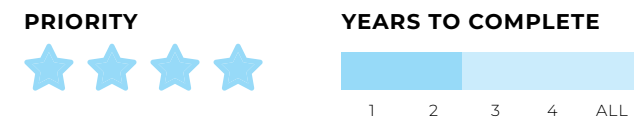
### 6.2.1 Offer special communication channels.

By improving communication to neighborhood and community organizations, the DLBA can reach more residents. The DLBA will explore creating at least one dedicated communication tool for these organizations, such as a dedicated email newsletter with important updates (e.g., upcoming events, policy changes, how-to guides); a special webpage; and/or automatic notifications for listings in their neighborhood.



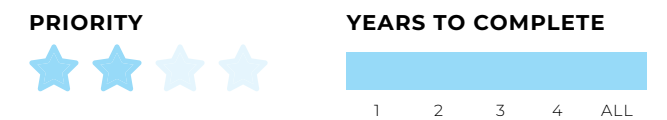
### 6.2.3 Provide a consistent point of contact for neighborhood organizations.

Many organizations shared the importance of consistent, sustained contact in feeling connected to the DLBA. The DLBA will find ways to provide a consistent point of contact for neighborhood and community organizations, such as designating specific staff roles or email addresses (e.g., blockclubs@detroitlandbank.org) to different types of organizations or by City Council district. At minimum, the DLBA will list an email and phone number on its website for partnership and outreach inquiries.



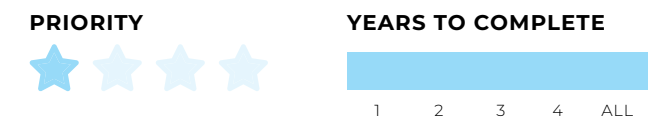
### 6.2.2 Host annual events to gather input and feedback.

The DLBA will host at least one in-person event to connect with community organizations. The goal of these events would be to deepen connections, have constructive conversations, and gather input on program improvement. These may include an annual kickoff for the community-based maintenance program (see Activity 3.2.1) or State of the Land Bank report sharing event (see Activity 5.4.3), or provide opportunity for organizations to give the DLBA input and feedback, such as an annual planning meeting.



### 6.2.4 Cohost neighborhood-based office hours.

The DLBA will find opportunities to cohost office hours in neighborhood locations with neighborhood-based organizations (see Activity 5.3.4) to give residents more access to the DLBA and equip neighborhood-based organizations with better knowledge and understanding of DLBA programs.







CASE STUDY

# Omaha Municipal Land Bank Community Ambassadors Program

*Building a network of support for the land bank*

In 2021, the Omaha Municipal Land Bank (OMLB) created its **Community Ambassador Program** to expand the number of stakeholders and community members whom OMLB works with and serves. Through the Ambassador Program, OMLB shares information on its programs and potential impacts, and collects input on how they can be a better neighbor.

Each year, interested residents can apply to become ambassadors. Applications are reviewed based on representation from city council districts, the overall qualifications of the candidate, and the ability of the candidate to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the program.

Each cohort of ambassadors has at least one participant from each city council district. Accepted applicants attend training sessions once per month from September to May. The new community ambassadors are then equipped to share information about OMLB with their neighbors and networks and provide an informed network for OMLB to tap when making programming and policy decisions.

To date, 65 people have become ambassadors, and some have even become board members, funders, and property buyers.

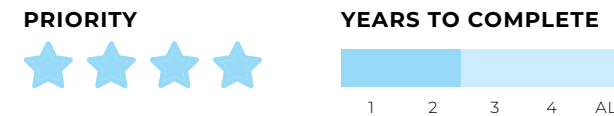
INITIATIVE 6.3

## Formalize roles for supporters and strategic advisors.

The Community Partner program needs a redesign to better foster collaboration and serve the mutual needs of community organizations and the DLBA, including expanded opportunities for involvement in programming. The DLBA will build on the advisory relationships built during this planning process and work with partners to create more formal roles for programmatic outreach and strategic direction after pursuing the activities in Initiatives 6.1 and 6.2.

### 6.3.1 Leverage the expertise of Detroit's community organizations.

Community organizations are vital connection points to residents. The DLBA will explore ways to better engage community organizations through opportunities for more formal relationships. These opportunities may include dedicated informational sessions, program kickoffs or annual celebrations, or a formal process for feedback on DLBA policies and programs. These may also include expanding opportunities for current Community Partners to support direct resident engagement and promote DLBA events.



### 6.3.2 Formalize Next Five Advisory Panel.

The DLBA convened an Advisory Panel comprising key Detroit partners, land bank peers, subject matter experts, and community serving organizations, to get insights for the strategic plan. To ensure continuity during implementation of **Next Five**, the DLBA will continue to convene an Advisory Panel for at least the first year of the plan. As the Advisory Panel transitions from planning to supporting implementation, DLBA will update its roles, description, commitment language, and a set meeting schedule.

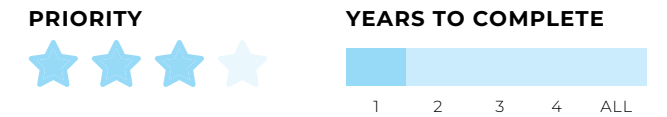


Photo: DLBA



GOAL 7

# Strengthen mutually beneficial relationships across City and County government.

As the central entity receiving, acquiring, managing, and disposing of residential property, the DLBA is a tool for the City and residents to achieve their goals. To be an equitable, efficient, and effective tool, the DLBA needs flexibility and direction. **Next Five** nimbly charts much of this direction, but a significant amount of the overarching direction should come from the City. As [Plan Detroit](#) works to establish an updated master plan and [Zone Detroit](#) works to

modernize the zoning code, the DLBA will play an integral role in informing and supporting those and other City efforts. As the largest single owner of vacant property, the DLBA has a responsibility to support the City in implementing the master plan's priorities. The DLBA has a substantial amount of capacity, across staff expertise, information systems, and community relationships that are and can be great assets to the City.

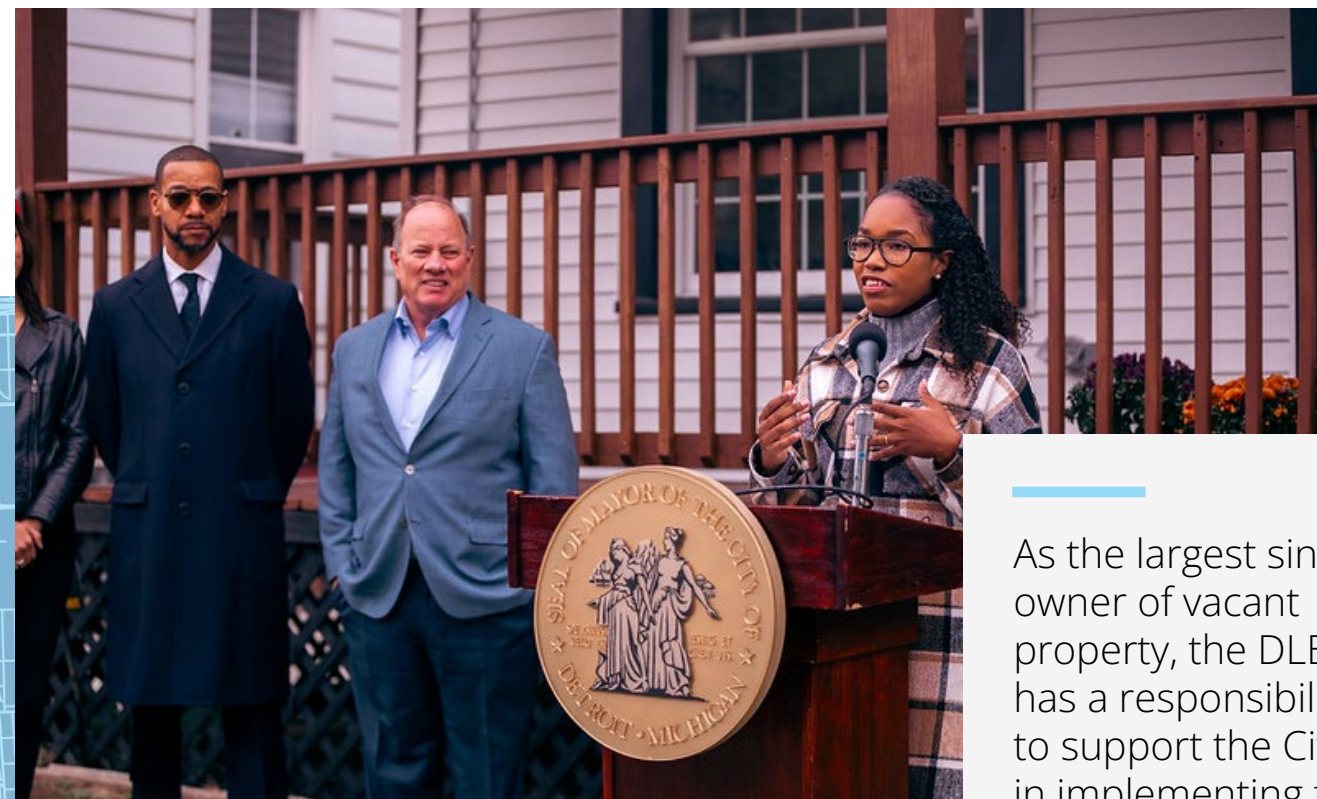
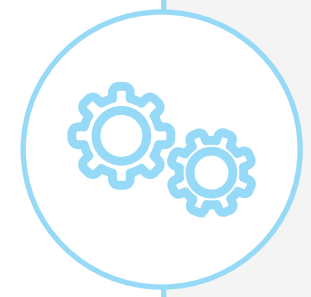


Photo: DLBA

As the largest single owner of vacant property, the DLBA has a responsibility to support the City in implementing the master plan's priorities.



**OUR GOAL**

**Strengthen mutually beneficial relationships across City and County government**

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**100%**

of key public departments receive regular, effective communication from DLBA by 2030

**7.1 Build systems for greater collaboration on City priorities.**

**7.2 Participate in City's project planning, attraction, design, and approval processes.**

**7.3 Build and deepen relationships across County government departments.**



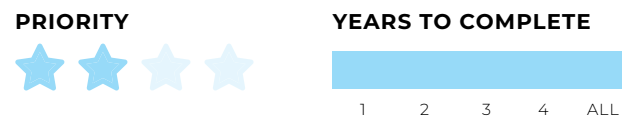
INITIATIVE 7.1

# Build systems for greater collaboration on City priorities.

Much of the DLBA's involvement with the City is site- or project-specific, which is important but limiting. Greater collaboration with city departments and council members would better utilize the DLBA's expertise while developing City plans and strategies. Initiatives 7.2 and 7.3 will also support this effort.

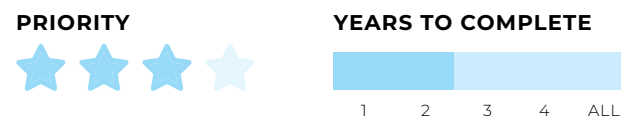
## 7.1.1 Take proactive steps in land bank education.

Recognizing that some City staff may not know the land bank's full capabilities, the DLBA will provide learning opportunities to bridge this gap. This could include quarterly or annual lunch-and-learns, info sheets, and dedicated DLBA staff to support City staff with onboarding.



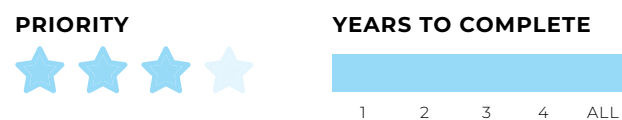
## 7.1.2 Improve data sharing.

While much of the City's and DLBA's data is accessible through the [Open Data Portal](#), it is not always organized usefully for departments, City Council, or the public. The DLBA and the City will explore opportunities to increase data sharing between the DLBA and City departments and automating some sharing functions.



## 7.1.3 Host regular, informal conversations for multiple levels of staff.

Time to just connect with one another is crucial to building and sustaining meaningful relationships. Committing to show up to a regular meeting and just talk is a great way to build rapport, ponder future opportunities for collaboration, and discuss topics beyond specific task-at-hand projects. This could take several forms, a quarterly in-person lunch among directors; a bimonthly virtual meeting among program leads; or even an annual ice cream social with DLBA staff, City departments, and City Council staff. The DLBA will invite City colleagues to plan and schedule these conversations with them.

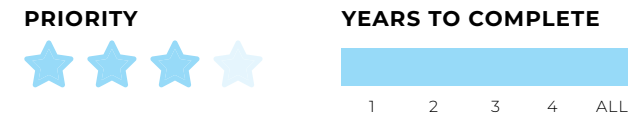


**There's a lot of opportunity to be more proactive and collaborative on strategies, not just projects.**

City Staff Interviewee

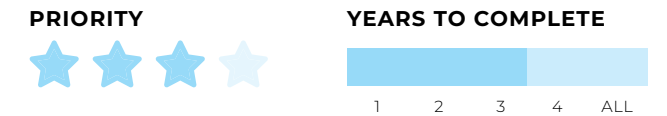
## 7.1.4 Improve connection between the DLBA and City Council and Mayoral priorities.

The DLBA will continue to align its programming with City priorities and improve its communication of those connections through activities detailed in other sections of this plan and by reformulating its annual budget request.



## 7.1.5 Build relationships with legislative affairs and lobbying staff.

The DLBA will build a relationship with the City's staff dedicated to tracking and responding to state legislative changes, to ensure the DLBA is apprised of looming legislative changes and understands opportunities to help shape state policy.



Photos: DLBA





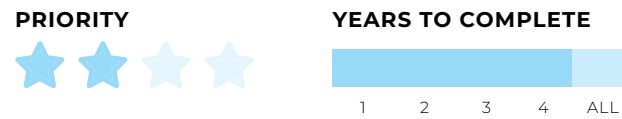
INITIATIVE 7.2

## Participate in City’s project planning, attraction, design, and approval processes.

Immediate improvements are needed at the project level while the systems in Initiative 7.1 are put into place. The DLBA interacts with the City day-to-day during the project or sales approval process, which works reasonably well, but earlier participation from the DLBA in project planning, attraction, and design could reduce project timelines and benefit the City and applicants.

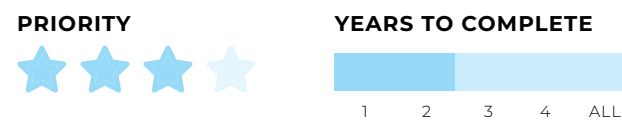
### 7.2.1 Streamline processes for moving properties through approval processes.

The DLBA will support pre-plan review and plan approval meetings with PDD, BSEED, and others to exchange immediate feedback on DLBA-originated project applications. The DLBA will also work with City partners to establish approval process guidelines to better communicate across departments and with applicants on the process. This may include exploring batch submissions of permits and applications, to streamline paperwork that poses a substantial hinderance to buyers and development.



### 7.2.3 Expand coordination on site readiness.

The DLBA will work with City partners to better utilize its available land assemblage tools (see Activity 2.3.2). For example, the DLBA could improve coordination with HRD site selection for new affordable housing development or with PDD and GSD on large-scale open space projects.



### 7.2.2 Establish cross-agency strategy sessions.

The DLBA will work with City partners on strategy development and formalize its role in major initiatives (e.g., the master plan). Topics could be as broad as land use, housing, and open space, or more specific such as missing middle funding. These sessions will advance Goals 1 and 2.

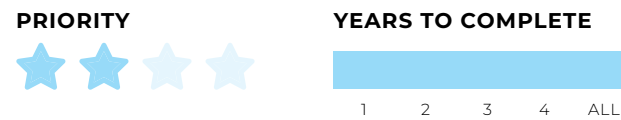


Photo: DLBA

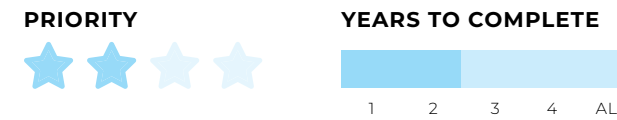
INITIATIVE 7.3

## Build and deepen relationships across County government departments.

As the main source of DLBA inventory, the Wayne County Treasurer’s Office is critical to DLBA operations. However, the DLBA has few relationships with county government outside of the County Treasurer’s office. As the largest municipality in Wayne County and home to over a third of the county’s residents, Detroit, and the DLBA, should benefit from the County’s skills and capacity.

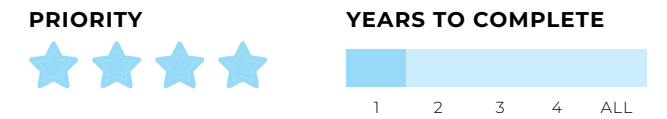
### 7.3.1 Pursue new relationships with Wayne County departments.

There are mutually beneficial opportunities to pair County resources (both funding and skills) with DLBA inventory and skills. The DLBA will pursue opportunities to connect and partner with Wayne County departments and programs, including the Wayne County Land Bank Corporation, Parks & Recreation, and Sustainability Program.



### 7.3.2 Expand and deepen relationship with the Wayne County Treasurer’s Office.

The DLBA’s primary relationships with the Wayne County Treasurer’s Office are informal and largely at the staff level, which can limit ease of communication when there is staff turnover. The DLBA will pursue opportunities to expand and deepen its relationship with County Treasurer’s office staff to ensure relationships continue through staff transitions.





# SUSTAINABLE & DYNAMIC OPERATIONS

Next Five's success depends on a well-resourced, highly skilled, productive, and agile organization. A strong Detroit Land Bank Authority lends to a strong Detroit. Through the activities in Sustainable & Dynamic Operations, the DLBA will steward its resources to benefit Detroiters. By preserving institutional knowledge and ongoing evaluation; diversifying

funding; and supporting its dedicated staff, the DLBA will foster a strong and connected neighborhood fabric throughout Detroit, engage in active and consistent collaborations, and make progress towards stronger neighborhoods that are safe, healthy, and thriving places that provide access to a high quality of life.

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**Institutional Knowledge**      **pg 95**

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**Diverse Funding**      **pg 99**

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**Support Staff**      **pg 107**

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Photo: DLBA



GOAL 8

## Advance organizational effectiveness through preservation of institutional knowledge and ongoing evaluation.

The DLBA's advanced and streamlined information technology infrastructure can be leveraged to capture and share institutional knowledge, relationships, and to conduct ongoing evaluation of programs.

This focus on preserving knowledge and continuous improvement will support the sustainability and quality of programming for years to come.

### WHAT IS INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE?

The critical details and people needed to implement programming and sustain the DLBA over time. This includes specific details of activities, processes, outcomes, data, onboarding and human resources, and trends. It also includes external relationships with residents, programming partners, government staff and officials, funders, and more.

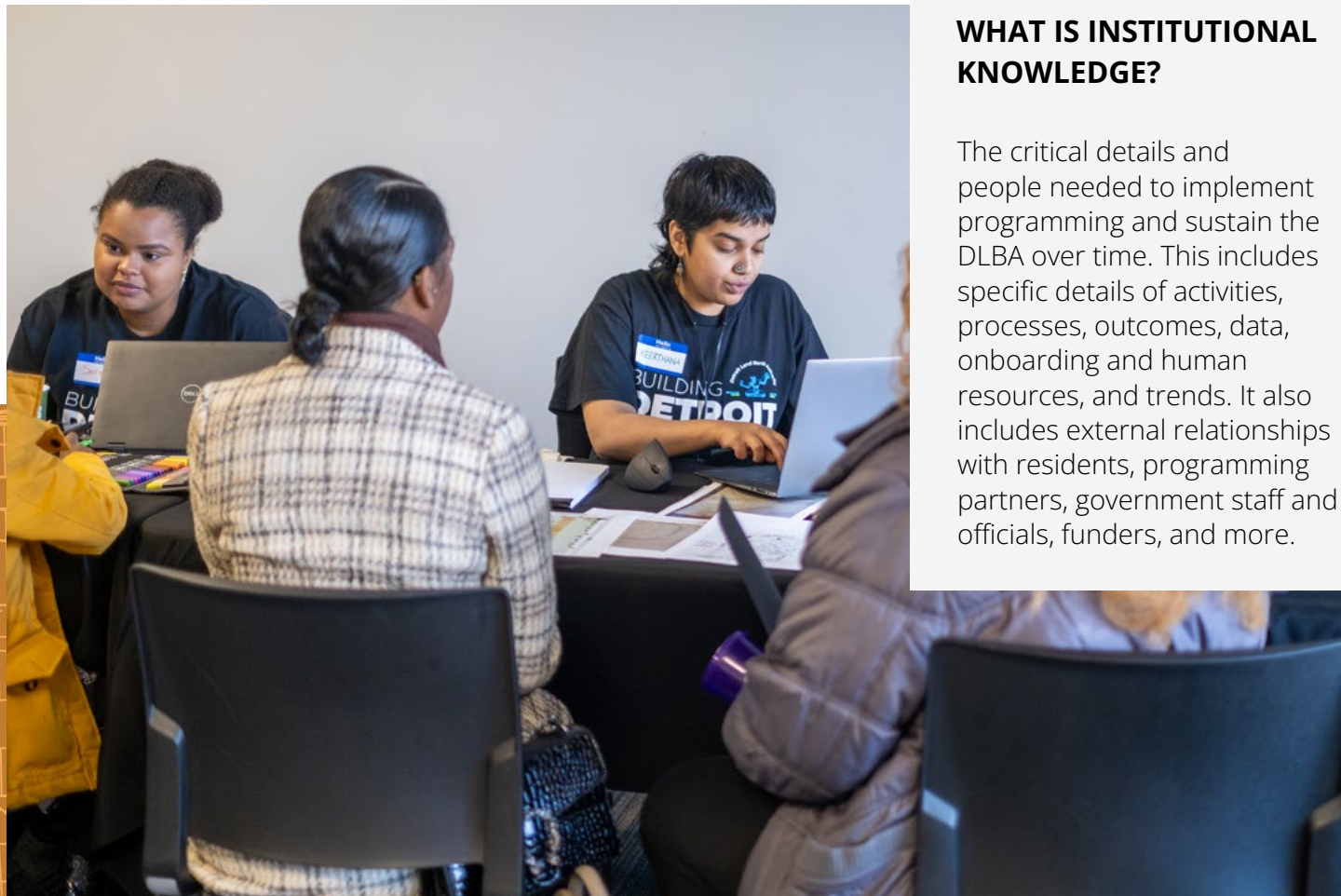


Photo: DLBA



#### OUR GOAL

Improve organizational effectiveness through preservation of institutional knowledge and ongoing evaluation

#### MEASURING SUCCESS

**80%**

of **Next Five** activities completed within the implementation timeline by 2030

**8.1**

Capture, document, centralize, and share institutional knowledge.

**8.2**

Evaluate and modify initiatives and activities for continuous improvement.



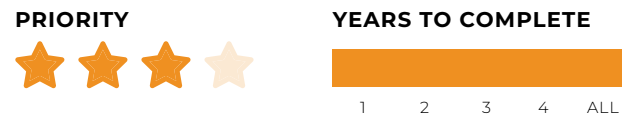
INITIATIVE 8.1

## Capture, document, centralize, and share institutional knowledge.

Impactful programs depend on well-equipped staff to implement them. Too often, that expertise leaves when an individual leaves. As the DLBA commits to being a great service provider and a great place to work, it must support staff in onboarding and offboarding, creating routine and meaningful ways to capture, document, and centralize institutional knowledge. Finally, it is a priority to share institutional knowledge with all staff for their professional development and enable them to better serve constituents.

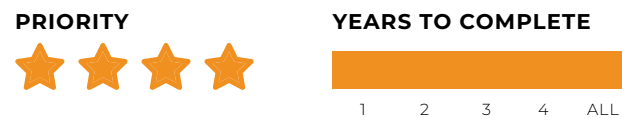
### 8.1.1 Capture, document, and centralize storage of institutional knowledge.

The DLBA will expand its system and methodology to capture nuances of program implementation from staff members, at minimum upon their departure from the DLBA but ideally on a more frequent basis. This will include a strong explanation for the importance of capturing this information and support from leadership for the time required to do it well. The DLBA will identify the best location(s) for this information to live, recognizing it may be in different locations depending on the content. For example, regular trend reports may live in Salesforce while process documentation for implementing windshield surveys may live in a project folder on SharePoint.



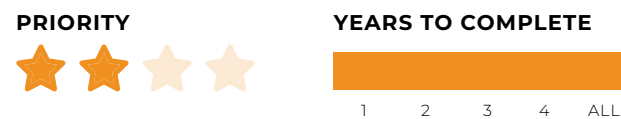
### 8.1.3 Provide a robust onboarding process.

The DLBA will produce individualized onboarding and ongoing training plans for each position. Training plans and institutional knowledge related to each position will be used to inform individual performance goals and performance reviews.



### 8.1.2 Provide multiple cross-training and peer learning opportunities.

The DLBA will offer a variety of learning opportunities like one-on-one job shadowing, lunch-and-learns, and small group workshops for staff to share knowledge about program implementation and daily functions. Staff can provide feedback on the utility of these events through check-ins with supervisors and the annual staff survey. All-staff events will also include discussions on institutional knowledge, lessons learned, organizational history, program design and development, and how-to trainings on specific operations. Staff will have an opportunity to help develop the format for these learning opportunities.



INITIATIVE 8.2

## Evaluate and modify initiatives and activities for continuous improvement.

Building in moments to reflect, revise, and adjust is a critical part of implementing a multi-year strategic plan. Not every idea or activity in this **Next Five** plan will be successful, as many depend on the work of partners or may be sensitive to external factors like the economy and housing market. Evaluation of outcomes must document successes and failures equally.

### 8.2.1 Develop evaluation plans for Next Five initiatives and all other programming.

The DLBA has substantial data tracking infrastructure and capacity to capture outputs (e.g., number of properties sold) that could be expanded to include more outcomes-based data tracking and analysis. The DLBA will form an internal team to develop an evaluation plan. This team would be dedicated to improving customer service and programming and could conduct interviews and other evaluation activities.



### 8.2.2 Launch and maintain an online Next Five dashboard.

While the evaluation plan is being developed, the DLBA will convert the dashboard in Appendix E to a web-based version that reports on the ten metrics identified in this plan, along with metrics it regularly reports like call volume and wait times, property sales, compliance achievements, and community events attended. This dashboard will also be included in the DLBA's quarterly reports to City Council.



### 8.2.3 Establish annual checkpoints for Next Five modifications.

The DLBA will set a time each year of the plan—such as the end of its fiscal year—to review evaluation data and revise initiatives and activities. This review should consider external conditions like major economic shifts, changes to land banking and related laws, and administration changes, and incorporate new knowledge and best practices from the national field. At a minimum, the DLBA will conduct a resident survey and host focus groups at the midpoint of implementation to share and assess progress and modify activities as needed.



Photo: DLBA



GOAL 9

# Develop diverse and robust funding to grow strategic programming and sustain long-term operations.

DLBA is essential for Detroit's future and needs diverse, robust funding to support programming and operations and successfully serve the community. **Next Five** and activities contained within should serve as an excellent fundraising

tool. The Detroit community should commit to supporting the land bank for the years to come as a key component of neighborhood stability and revitalization.



### OUR GOAL

Develop diverse and robust funding to grow strategic programming and sustain long-term operations

### MEASURING SUCCESS

# 20%

annual growth of secondary revenue sources (e.g., grants, fee-for-service, and new government funding)



## The DLBA is essential for Detroit's future.

- 9.1** Sustain and grow City and County government funding sources.
- 9.2** Increase ability to provide fee-for-service programming and expand earned revenue streams.
- 9.3** Seek expanded philanthropic and charitable support, including corporate and foundation grants, in-kind services, and donations.
- 9.4** Aggressively pursue and advocate for state and federal funding.
- 9.5** Explore ways to reduce costs through partnerships and other opportunities.

Photo: Community Progress



INITIATIVE 9.1

## Sustain and grow City and County government funding sources.

The DLBA received a transfer of over 100,000 properties from the City of Detroit in 2016 and receives an annual involuntary transfer of properties from the Wayne County Treasurer's Office. Without the DLBA, the over 66,000 properties it owns would be the responsibility of those two entities. Land banking tools make the DLBA a much more equitable, efficient, and effective steward of those properties than local government. This is rarely recognized when the land bank is making its annual appeal for operating support.

### 9.1.1 Position the land bank to maximize City support.

The DLBA receives an important annual allocation of general operating funds from the City of Detroit, but it is insufficient to support the amount and level of services the DLBA provides the city, including services above and beyond basic land bank functions (like fielding code enforcement complaints unrelated to DLBA property). The DLBA will better articulate its value, including the financial impacts of rehabilitated properties that have been reoccupied and put back on the tax rolls. The DLBA will work with City Council and City departments to better explain and match the City's financial support to the land bank's services.



### 9.1.2 Consider making a direct appeal to County Treasurer for general operating support.

As the only city land bank in Michigan, the DLBA has a unique relationship to the county treasurer. This does not mean it should be unsupported by the county. Without the DLBA, these properties would likely fall to the Wayne County Land Bank Corporation. The Wayne County Treasurer financially supports the Wayne County Land Bank Corporation through a formula based upon existing and new inventory. The DLBA will consider requesting financial support from the County Treasurer, following the formula used for the Wayne County Land Bank Corporation and other Michigan counties.



INITIATIVE 9.2

## Increase ability to provide fee-for-service programming and expand earned revenue streams.

Many activities described in this plan provide opportunities for new revenue streams, particularly Initiative 4.1. To capitalize on those opportunities the DLBA needs to create the infrastructure necessary to market and manage those services.

### 9.2.1 Improve consistency and accuracy of 5/50 payment.

As described in the [Context](#) section of this plan, land banks in Michigan receive a property tax recapture on properties they sell. This is an important source of funding for the DLBA and one it currently receives inconsistently. Working with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the DLBA will develop a 5/50 agreement that outlines clear timelines, processes, metrics, methods to handle errors as well as the roles of the Office of the Assessor, the Office of the Treasury, Law Department, and the DLBA.



### 9.2.2 Consider offering quiet title services to private parties.

DLBA will explore leveraging its statutory quiet title authority and capacity as a paid service to others. Due to both its statutory authority and efficient process, DLBA's quiet title unit cost is substantially below market rate and it could harness this capacity to support projects with affordable quiet title while also developing new revenue. DLBA will explore how to craft owner and property eligibility requirements to ensure these services advance the land bank's strategic goals and avoid creating conflicts of interest.



Photo: DLBA



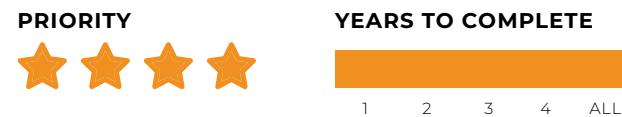
INITIATIVE 9.3

## Seek expanded philanthropic and charitable support, including corporate and foundation grants, in-kind services, and donations.

Detroit has a robust philanthropic and charitable giving community. Given the DLBA's substantial impact on neighborhoods, residents, and the long-term success of the city, that community should provide more support to the land bank.

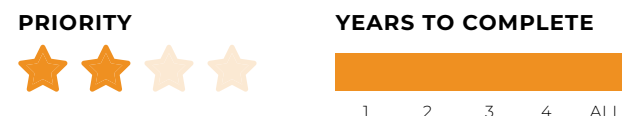
### 9.3.1 Actively develop relationships and pursue funding opportunities from philanthropic and corporate sources.

The DLBA will develop a formalized structure for identifying, writing, tracking, and reporting philanthropic and corporate giving opportunities, such as grants, equipment donations (e.g., vehicles), and program-related investments.



### 9.3.2 Generate opportunities for individuals and organizations to make donations and in-kind contributions.

Many entities do not make direct financial contributions but provide no-cost services like education and training, food for events, office and printing supplies, and consulting. In-kind services should also include volunteer opportunities discussed in other parts of this plan (see Activity 3.2.2). Additionally, there are likely many individuals who support the mission of the land bank and would consider making financial donations if they knew it was possible.



**Detroit's philanthropic and charitable giving community should provide more support to the land bank.**

Photo: Community Progress

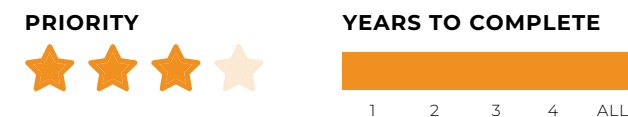
INITIATIVE 9.4

## Aggressively pursue and advocate for state and federal funding.

Land banks are underfunded in Michigan and have no dedicated federal funding. As the largest land bank in the country, the DLBA has the opportunity and responsibility to lead the charge for more consistent revenue streams for land banks of all sizes.

### 9.4.1 Partner with MALB to pursue state-level funding for land banks.

The DLBA will partner with the Michigan Association of Land Banks (MALB) and other statewide entities to garner support for statutory changes that create more robust, sustainable long-term funding for land banks across the state. DLBA will also support MALB in advocating for other State funding opportunities, including annual appropriations and one-time allocations. The DLBA will support staff in dedicating time to this work.



### 9.4.2 Intentionally build relationships with state-level funders.

Land banks are being included in more and more State funding opportunities. The DLBA will continue to build relationships with state agencies like MSHDA and Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to best position itself for funding opportunities and ensure the inclusion of land banks as eligible entities.



### 9.4.3 Pursue application-based federal funding.

The DLBA has received federal funding in the past, usually through programs that dictate or necessitate the land bank being the recipient (e.g., HHF). The DLBA should take advantage of the numerous application-based funding opportunities that exist, including from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The DLBA will equip specific staff to pursue those opportunities.



### 9.4.4 Support NLBN in advocating for federal funding for land banks.

The National Land Bank Network (NLBN) has been actively supporting the creation of a dedicated federal funding source for land banks nationally. As the largest and most productive land bank in the country, the DLBA is an essential voice in that work. The DLBA will continue to participate in NLBN events and supporting federal funding efforts.





INITIATIVE 9.5

## Explore ways to reduce costs through partnerships and other opportunities.

Detroit and Michigan are home to many well respected high-capacity organizations—like colleges, universities, research institutions, and more—that could help support DLBA operations and expand its services.

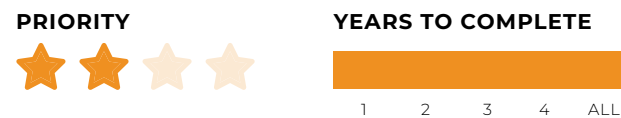
### 9.5.1 Explore partnerships to provide services.

Academic institutions, and their staff and students, can help expand the DLBA's capacity and bring in specialized support. Student projects can be great opportunities for developing case studies to inform programming, designing and implementing evaluation activities, analyzing data for trends and outcomes, designing programming, creating educational materials, and more. Academic research can support long-term evaluation and program implementation, including developing solutions to longstanding challenges.



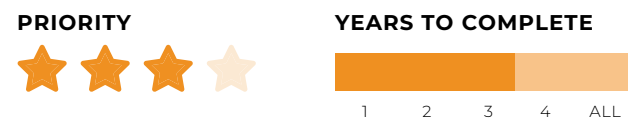
### 9.5.2 Continue leveraging external support for specialized services.

The DLBA uses contractor support for some specialized services or to temporarily increase capacity for a finite need. The DLBA will continue this practice and identify additional places where external support could reduce staff burden. The DLBA will also consider keeping an on-call community engagement and/or evaluation consultant to help implement surveys; focus groups with program participants; and other community engagement activities. This outside expertise allows the DLBA to focus staff time and functions on core programming, while still conducting high-quality, specialized activities when needed.



### 9.4.3 Actively pursue purchasing a field office outside of downtown.

As mentioned in Goal 6, the DLBA's current office can be difficult for constituents to access. Constituents, and the organization, would be better served by a DLBA-owned field office located in an easily accessible neighborhood outside of downtown Detroit. The DLBA will pursue purchasing a building and relocating select operations.



Photos: DLBA





GOAL 10

# Ensure staff are supported by and integrated into a strong organizational culture and equipped to implement strategic goals.

As the DLBA enters its next era, staff satisfaction and retention are crucial. High staff turnover harms community perception of the DLBA and does not serve the mission. Additionally, COVID-19 significantly transformed workplaces

and elevated the need to reevaluate workplace practices and priorities. The DLBA will improve internal culture, offer opportunities for staff growth, and align current and future staff to long-term needs.

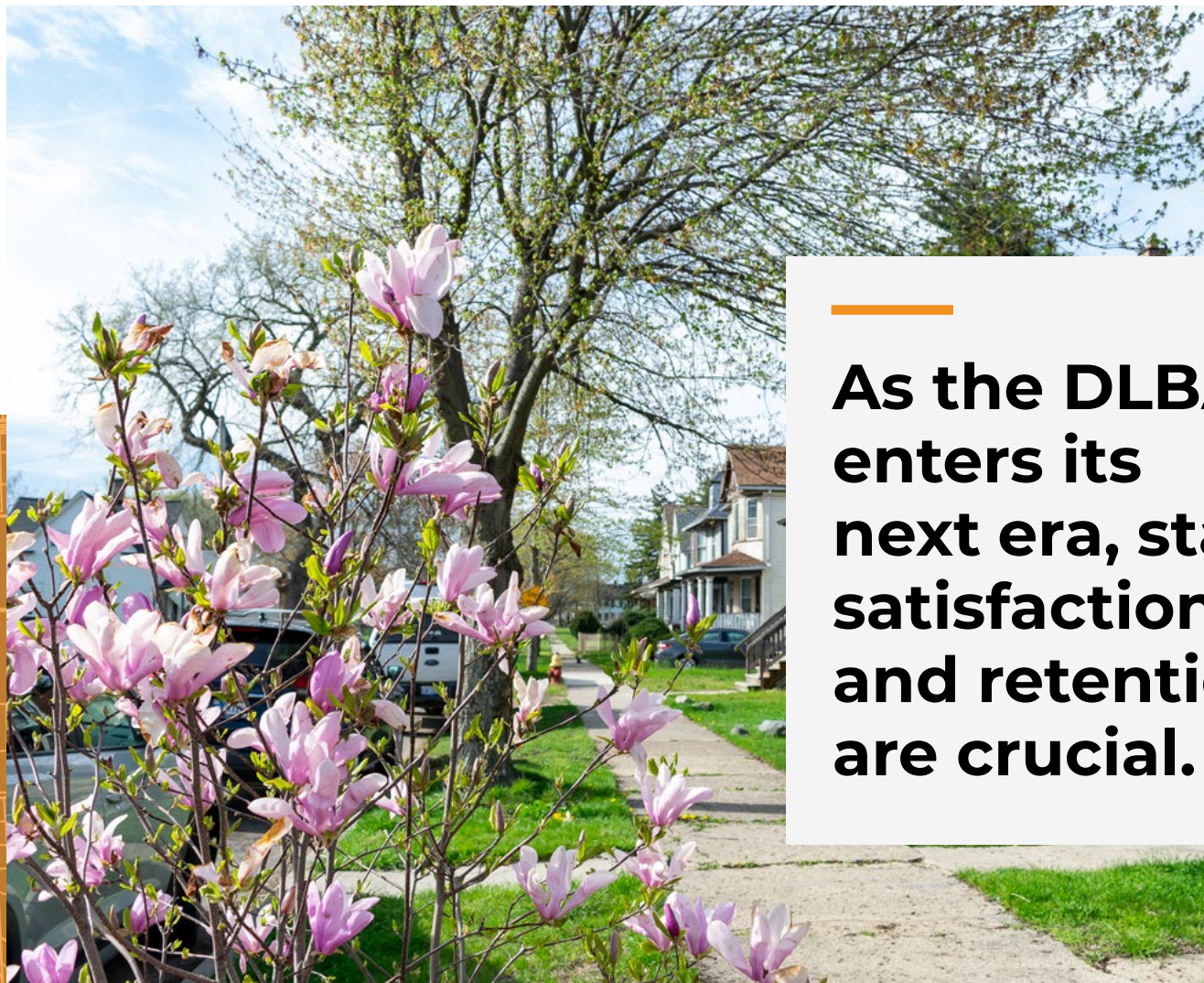


Photo: Community Progress

**As the DLBA enters its next era, staff satisfaction and retention are crucial.**



### OUR GOAL

Ensure staff are supported by and integrated into a strong organizational culture and equipped to implement strategic goals

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**80%**

of employees report they feel equipped to efficiently and effectively do their jobs by 2030

**10.1**

Memorialize and operationalize organizational values.

**10.2**

Foster an environment where staff are celebrated, rewarded, and provided ample opportunities for personal and professional growth.

**10.3**

Evaluate needs and implement long-term staffing plan.



INITIATIVE 10.1

## Memorialize and operationalize organizational values.

The DLBA identified Guiding Principles for this plan, standards that are infused in each priority and inform how the DLBA will conduct activities. The DLBA will seek to institutionalize this plan's Guiding Principles as core organizational values in implementing **Next Five**. Those values will define how the DLBA conducts itself and treats members of the community and fosters a positive organizational culture, while ensuring accountability and clearly communicating its standards to partners and constituents.

### 10.1.1 Define organizational values.

Working from the Guiding Principles and other ideas for values identified through the strategic planning process, the DLBA will define at least three achievable and aspirational organizational values. Values should be easily distinguished from one another, provide a clear blueprint for staff and organizational actions, and be enforceable by leadership. Values must be included in employee handbooks and explained during onboarding.



### 10.1.2 Audit internal and external operations for values alignment.

The DLBA will review all components of the organization for alignment to the selected values and make plans for changes and improvements. Perfection is not expected, but a commitment to continuously pursuing alignment is. The DLBA will conduct initial and regular audits of operations and programming for values alignment.



Photo: DLBA

INITIATIVE 10.2

## Foster an environment where staff are celebrated, rewarded, and provided ample opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Internal and external groups repeatedly raised concerns about staff retention during the planning process. Celebrating, rewarding, and providing opportunities for growth are important staff retention tools, as is providing opportunities for constructive criticism, and responding to it.

### 10.2.1 Celebrate staff successes.

Working with the most challenging properties in a changing city is important, challenging work. It is crucial to celebrate minor and major successes of individuals, teams, and departments. The DLBA will develop ways to celebrate staff successes internally and, when appropriate, externally. The DLBA will develop ways to celebrate staff and provide guidelines and templates for how to do so. This may include awards to staff (and partners and residents).



### 10.2.3 Reward high-quality work.

The best retention strategies are good pay, good benefits, and an enjoyable work environment. The DLBA will continue to improve pay equity and transparency, maintain competitive salaries, and offer comprehensive benefits. The DLBA will also solicit ideas for "rewards" from staff.



### 10.2.2 Provide opportunities for personal and professional growth.

During the **Next Five** process, staff shared a desire for more clarity on internal advancement. The DLBA will improve clarity about roles and how these fit into the organizational staffing, and the process for raises and promotions. Working at the DLBA can require niche technical skills, some of which are transferable across fields and some of which may not be. The DLBA will provide cross-training and professional development opportunities for staff to expand their skills of their careers at, or outside of, the DLBA.



### 10.2.4 Regularly survey staff.

The DLBA will continue to regularly survey staff on job satisfaction and organizational culture. Findings from those surveys will be used to inform and improve other activities in Goals 8 and 10.





INITIATIVE 10.3

## Evaluate needs and implement long-term staffing plan.

As the DLBA undergoes this substantial shift in inventory and programming, it is important to provide security and clarity to staff and maximize staff retention. Using **Next Five**, the DLBA can evaluate long-term staffing needs and craft ways to redeploy existing staff into new programming and roles. This will ensure the DLBA is effectively structured to meet its goals and mission.

**10.3.1 Assess, define, and train core skills needed to implement Next Five.**

Plan implementation requires balancing staffing with program needs. The DLBA will analyze existing skillsets and the expertise needed for the next five years and offering staff opportunities to develop necessary skills for new roles.



**10.3.2 Develop and implement multi-year staffing plan.**

To prepare for future programming, accurate budgeting and fundraising, and to provide clarity and security to current staff, the DLBA will develop a five- to seven-year staffing plan. This may include workforce forecasting, diversifying staff models, succession planning, incorporating shared responsibility into existing roles (e.g., no one answering phones 40 hours a week with no other tasks), and clearly defining which skillsets are needed internally and which can be contracted work.



Photo: DLBA



# APPENDICES

<b>Appendix A: Overview of the DLBA's Existing Programs</b>	<b>pg 114</b>
<b>Appendix B: The DLBA's Current Leadership, Department Directors, and Programs Organizational Chart</b>	<b>pg 115</b>
<b>Appendix C: Planning Process Community Engagement Summaries</b>	<b>pg 117</b>
<b>Appendix D: Summary of Community Engagement Activities Recommended in Next Five</b>	<b>pg 119</b>
<b>Appendix E: Next Five Dashboard</b>	<b>pg 121</b>

## Appendix A: Overview of the DLBA's Existing Programs

As of August 1, 2024, the DLBA has several programs for disposition of structures and lots, a brief overview of the main programs is provided below. More information and detail can be found at [www.buildingdetroit.org/programs](http://www.buildingdetroit.org/programs). *Drafted by the DLBA.*

**Auction:** Online, live bidding to purchase houses "as-is."

**Own it Now:** Online, closed bid process to purchase houses "as-is." Once an offer is made, other interested parties have 72 hours to place their closed bid.

**Rehabbed & Ready:** Public-private partnership that fully rehabilitates vacant houses and sells them for market value to owner-occupants.

**Marketed Properties:** Partnership with local real estate brokers to list and market properties through the traditional real estate market.

**Side Lots:** Vacant lots available for adjacent homeowners to purchase for \$100.

**Neighborhood Lots:** Vacant lots, within 500 feet, for nearby owner-occupants to purchase for \$250.

**Create-a-Project (CAP):** Vacant lots available for community groups and block clubs to purchase at an affordable price for neighborhood beautification projects.

**Infill:** Vacant lots available for purchase specifically for new construction projects.

**Economic Development:** Application-based program to purchase DLBA properties at market rate for economic development projects.

**Buy Back/Occupied:** Pathway to homeownership for individuals living in DLBA-owned houses.

**Compliance:** Ensures property owners are supported throughout the rehabilitation process and ultimately meet the renovation and occupancy requirements.

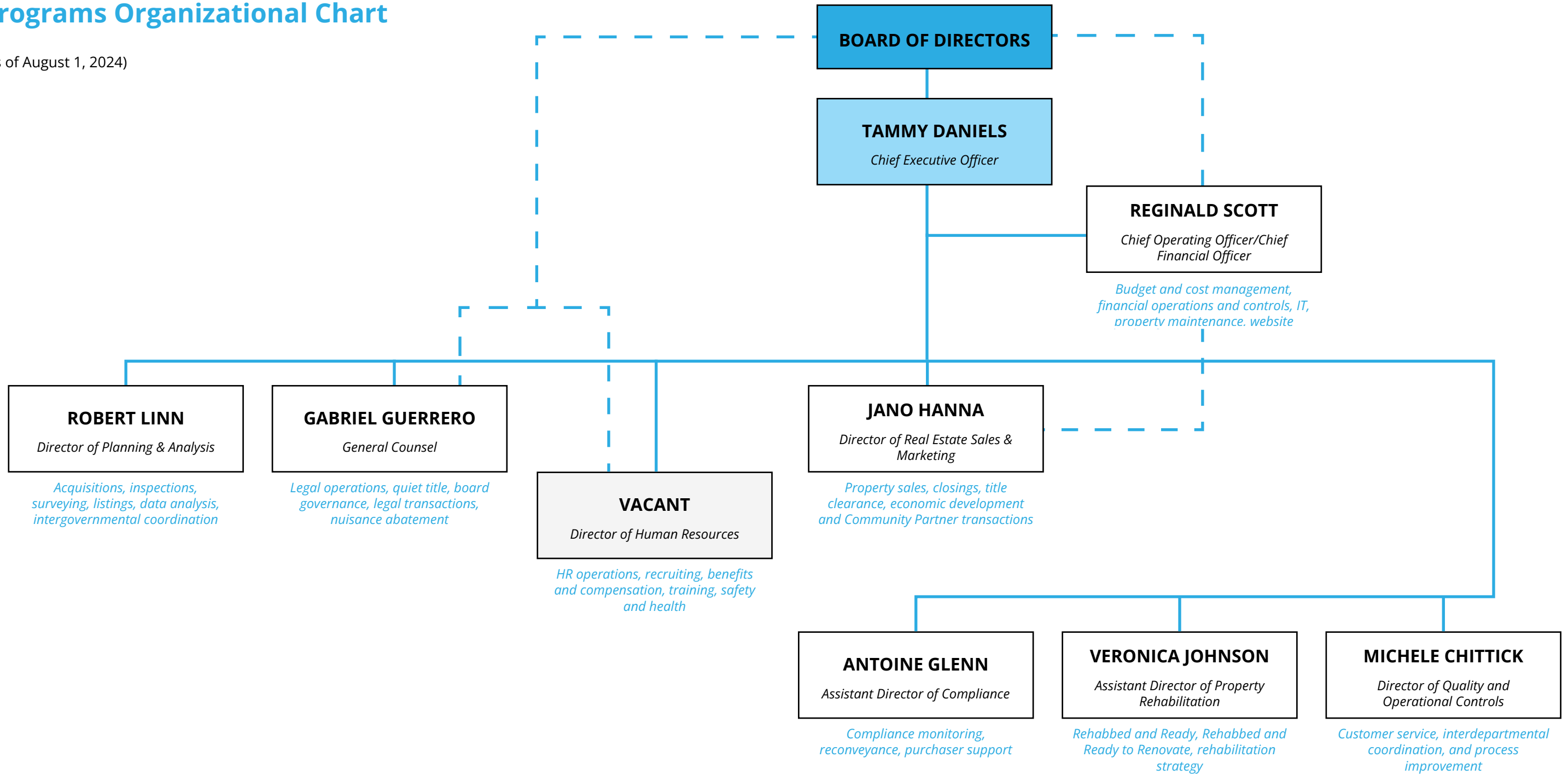
**Nuisance Abatement Program (NAP):** Identifies vacant, privately-owned properties that are open to trespass, neglected, or dangerous and takes action to compel property owner to rehabilitate the property or transfer ownership to someone who will.

**Community Partners:** Nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, and community development organizations can acquire DLBA-owned properties for projects that benefit the community, such as structure rehabilitation, urban gardening, green space creation, lot beautification, and more.



## Appendix B: The DLBA's Current Leadership, Department Directors, and Programs Organizational Chart

(As of August 1, 2024)





## Appendix C: Planning Process Community Engagement Summaries

As described in the Planning Process section and referenced throughout, the DLBA conducted substantial community engagement for this strategic plan. Many activities in the plan come directly from the input and ideas of the 780 survey respondents, 42 focus group participants, 25 interviewees, and 551 event attendees. For a more detailed exploration of these findings, read the summaries below.

### SURVEY 1 FINDINGS

*Memo from JFM to Community Progress and the DLBA*

A comprehensive analysis of responses to the February 2024 survey.

[Read Here](#)

### SURVEY 2 FINDINGS

*Memo from JFM to Community Progress and the DLBA*

A comprehensive analysis of responses to the May 2024 survey.

[Read Here](#)

### FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

*Memo from JFM to Community Progress and the DLBA*

A summary of focus group results.

[Read Here](#)

### INTERVIEW FINDINGS

*Memo from Community Progress to the DLBA*

Key takeaways from internal and external interviews.

[Read Here](#)

### DLBA'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT FINDINGS

*Written Summary by the DLBA*

Across 60 events, the DLBA engaged residents, neighborhood leaders, and other stakeholders in a variety of activities to gather their experiences, hopes, and input on the DLBA's direction, goals, and priorities. Events included resource fairs, council and mayoral charter-mandated meetings, block and neighborhood association meetings, and DLBA district events. Read a summary of some top responses on the following page.

#### Detroit Experience

*What three words do you hope describe your neighborhood five years from now?*

Safe | Clean | Beautiful | Thriving

*What challenges do you and your neighbors face in pursuing or maintaining homeownership?*

Property taxes | Household finances | Property maintenance

#### Experience with DLBA

*How do you interact with DLBA-owned property?*

There are DLBA-owned properties on my block | I take care of DLBA-owned property near me | Someone bought a DLBA property on my block and improved it

*What are your biggest challenges in terms of the DLBA's transparency?*

Understanding why a property isn't available for sale | Understanding DLBA processes

*What are your biggest challenges in terms of the DLBA's accessibility?*

Connecting to the right person | Connecting during times convenient for me | Finding information on the DLBA's website

#### DLBA Priorities

*Beyond Detroiters, who should get to purchase DLBA property first?*

People who want to live in the neighborhood | Good neighbors | Folks with shared values | Nonprofit developers

*How should the DLBA to work with communities to build stronger connections?*

- Better maintenance on DLBA-owned properties, front and back yards
- Be honest and open with the community
- Don't give preference to people from outside of the city
- Resolve issues in a timely manner
- Improve slow processes
- Learning opportunities/workshops
- Collab with community partners
- Help find money for rehabs

#### Community Engagement

*How often do you want to see DLBA staff in your neighborhood?*

At least monthly | More frequently when the DLBA owns property there | When there is new information (e.g., new programs)

*How do you want the DLBA to engage with your community?*






- Be more accessible, visible, answer questions, send flyers
- Attend/host community meetings
- Be in the neighborhoods
- Have community centers/offices in neighborhood/district locations
- Offer homebuyer and homeowner classes
- Provide list of reputable contractors








## Appendix D: Summary of Community Engagement Activities Recommended in Next Five

This strategic planning process strengthened DLBA's community engagement relationships and skills. The activities throughout **Next Five** build upon this new foundation, with intentional outreach, consultation, involvement, and collaboration, working towards opportunities for shared leadership in later years. Nearly every initiative continues intentional community engagement opportunities.

As shown throughout the plan and aggregated below, through **Next Five** activities DLBA will offer multiple avenues for consistent, authentic community engagement in the development and execution of activities and programming.











	 <b>OUTREACH</b>	 <b>CONSULT</b>	 <b>INVOLVE</b>	 <b>COLLABORATE</b>	 <b>SHARED LEADERSHIP</b>
<b>Engagement Level</b>	minimal engagement	more community engagement	better community engagement	strong community engagement	strong bidirectional engagement & leadership
<b>Communication</b>	communication flows from one to the other, informs community	gets information or feedback from community, answer-seeking	communication flows both ways, participatory form of communication	community partnerships on each aspect of project, from development to solution	bidirectional communication, some or all final decision-making is at community level
<b>Relationship</b>	entities coexist	entities share information	entities cooperate with each other	entities form bidirectional communication channels	entities form strong partnership structures

	<b>GOAL 1</b> <i>Create a stronger network of activated open space</i>	<b>GOAL 2</b> <i>Bolster quality, attainable housing options</i>	<b>GOAL 3</b> <i>Collaborate on improved property maintenance</i>	<b>GOAL 4</b> <i>Expand the use of land bank tools to advance economic opportunities</i>	<b>GOAL 5</b> <i>Provide excellent customer service and clear information to constituents</i>	<b>GOAL 6</b> <i>Define and build meaningful, formal partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations</i>	<b>GOAL 7</b> <i>Strengthen mutually beneficial relationships across City and County government</i>
 <b>OUTREACH</b>	1.1.1	2.1.2 2.2.1 2.4.1 2.5.1		4.1.1	5.1.1 5.2.1 5.2.3 5.3.1 5.4.3	6.2.1	7.1.1
 <b>CONSULT</b>	1.3.5 1.1.5	2.2.4		4.2.2	5.3.2	6.3.1	
 <b>INVOLVE</b>	1.3.2 1.4.3		3.1.2 3.2.2		5.3.3 5.3.4	6.2.2	
 <b>COLLABORATE</b>	1.1.4 1.2.2	2.3.4 2.4.3			5.4.1	6.2.4	7.1.5
 <b>SHARED LEADERSHIP</b>			3.2.1			6.3.2	



## Appendix E: Next Five Dashboard

Outcomes we are striving for over the next five years:

	BASELINE	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	TARGET
 <b>Goal 1: Create a stronger network of activated open space.</b>							90% of DLBA-owned vacant lots available for sale through DLBA programs by 2030
 <b>Goal 2: Bolster quality, attainable housing options.</b>							35% of housing units newly occupied in the next five years happen on DLBA property
 <b>Goal 3: Collaborate on improved property maintenance.</b>							50% of DLBA-owned properties have a collaborative maintenance strategy by 2030
 <b>Goal 4: Expand the use of land bank tools to advance economic opportunities.</b>							15% annual increase in the number of commercial and economic development projects the DLBA supports
 <b>Goal 5: Provide excellent service and clear information to our constituents.</b>							100% of inquiries resolved within seven business days
 <b>Goal 6: Define and build meaningful, formal partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations.</b>							25% increase in formalized partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations by 2030
 <b>Goal 7: Strengthen mutually beneficial relationships across City and County government.</b>							100% of key departments have effective, and maintained, communication mechanisms with DLBA within two years
 <b>Goal 8: Advance organizational effectiveness through preservation of institutional knowledge and ongoing evaluation.</b>							80% of Next Five activities completed within the implementation timeline
 <b>Goal 9: Develop diverse and robust funding to grow strategic programming and sustain long-term operations.</b>							20% annual growth of secondary revenue sources (e.g., grants, fee-for-service, new government funding)
 <b>Goal 10: Ensure staff are supported by and integrated into a strong organizational culture and are equipped to implement strategic priorities.</b>							80% of employees report they feel equipped to efficiently and effectively do their jobs



## ABOUT THE PROJECT AND TEAM

This plan was commissioned by the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) and primarily authored by Janell O’Keefe, Associate Director, Technical Assistance at the Center for Community Progress, on behalf of the DLBA. Additional contributing authors include:

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### Detroit Land Bank Authority

The Detroit Land Bank Authority envisions a Detroit where all neighborhoods provide residents with access to a high quality of life. We work towards our vision of safe, healthy, thriving neighborhoods by transforming vacant properties into inclusive community assets, and by aligning our policies and practices together with our partners in city and county government. Our robust programming offers residents, community members, local organizations, entrepreneurs, and others opportunities and resources to rehabilitate and repurpose vacant properties. To learn more, visit [buildingdetroit.org](http://buildingdetroit.org).

### Center for Community Progress

The Center for Community Progress helps people foster strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. As the only national nonprofit dedicated to tackling vacant properties, our team of experts provides communities battling systemic vacancy with the policies, tools, and resources needed to address the full cycle of property revitalization. To learn more, visit [communityprogress.org](http://communityprogress.org).

### JFM Consulting Group

JFM Consulting Group is a Detroit-based research and evaluation consulting firm committed to promoting positive social change in the communities in which we work through strategies, planning, research, and evaluation. To learn more visit [jfmconsulting.net](http://jfmconsulting.net).

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**NEXT  
FIVE**

**Questions?**

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