



Wayne County Land Bank Practicum Project

Wayne County Land Bank

- ▶ Our mission is to return tax-foreclosed and abandoned properties to productive use, contribute tax revenue, and promote community rehabilitation.
 - ▶ Preserving or increasing property values by actively developing vacant, under-utilized, and blighted properties.
 - ▶ Engaging in community development projects that promote health, safety, and wellness.
 - ▶ Working with state, local, and non-profit partners to dedicate distressed properties for public use.

Our Practicum Project

- ▶ MSU EDA University Center for REI sponsored our MSU Practicum Project.
- ▶ The WCLB was a Practicum Client for MSU's SPDC planning students from January-May of 2022.
- ▶ We applied for funding through REI under the categories of *Resilience Planning* and *Financial Resiliency*.

Wayne County Qualifications

Economic Distress

Only 52% of residents in the county are above the ALICE threshold. We work directly with individuals in some of the most distressed communities in Michigan; like Highland Park, Ecorse, and River Rouge.

Block Stabilization

The WCLB works to return property to productive use. We have a wide array of programs that are available for residents and potential buyers to find opportunities for housing solutions.

Municipal Participation

Wayne County is home to 43 distinct communities, and by using the practicum project we looked at ways to expand our outreach and find opportunity for where to target our programs moving forward.



School of Planning, Design
and Construction
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



Our Practicum Project

After assessing our existing programs we partnered with MSU to get an assessment on how we have been functioning, and where we can expand in the future.

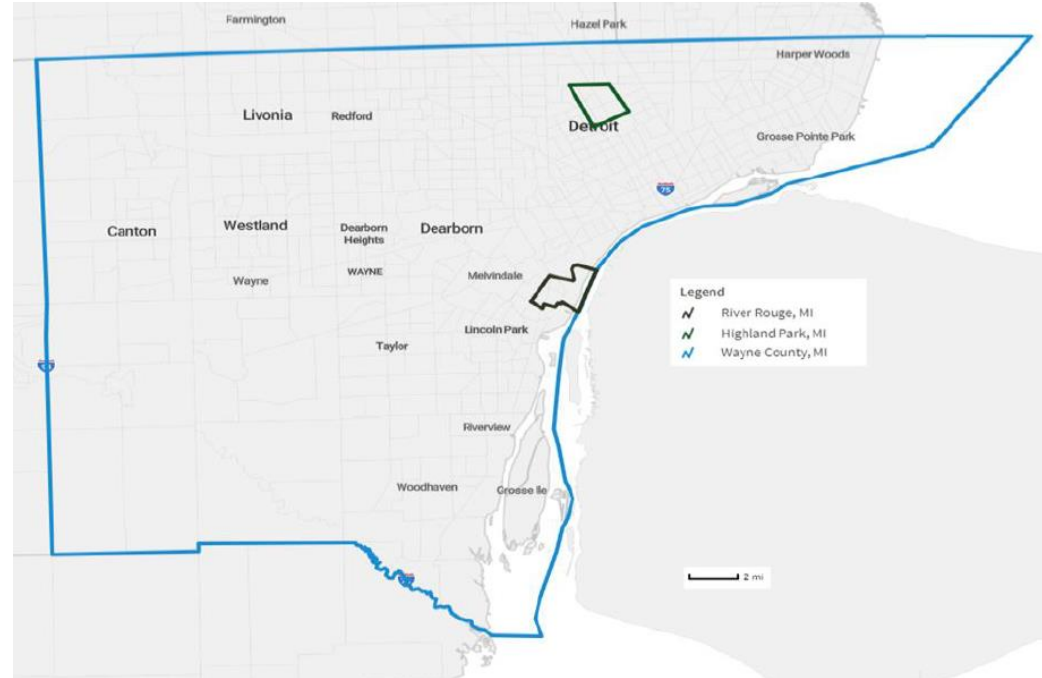
Wayne County Land Bank Assessment Report 2022



Omar Al-Qouran, Kyle Cogan, Tess Heidt, Sam Hetherington, Mitchell Lang, Luca Muench, & Jessa Sherrill
May 2022

Scope of Work

Our team focused on recommendations for our rehabilitation programs and site lot sales programs. Additionally, they completed a review of our website and social media to find opportunities for growth.



Finding Opportunities

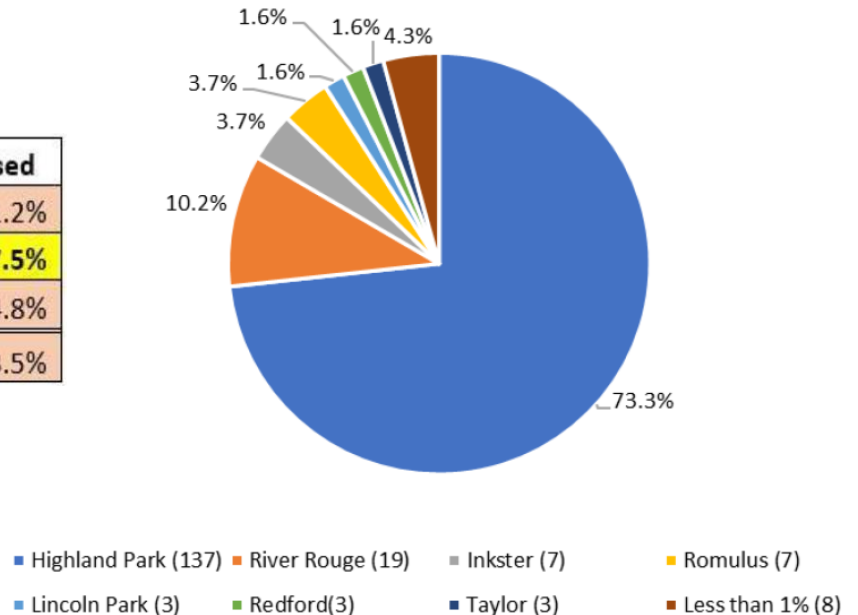
In addition to a comprehensive county profile the team successfully sent out a county-wide survey to all municipalities to receive feedback on how they have worked with the WCLB in the past. They received 25 responses from 18 communities.

Municipality	Number of Responses
City of Riverview Michigan	2
City of Wyandotte	3
Inkster	2
Brownstown Township	1
City of Romulus	2
Livonia	2
City of Plymouth	2
Rockwood	1
City of Grosse Pointe Park	1
City of Belleville	1
City of Allen Park	1
Gibraltar	1
City of Taylor	1
Flat Rock	1
Charter Township of Northville	1
Canton Township	1
Westland	1
City of Trenton	1

Identifying Shortcomings

Disposition	Total Sold 2017-2021*	Relapsed*	% Relapsed
Adj Vacant Side Lot	420	89	21.2%
Compliance	406	71	17.5%
Other Dispositions	558	27	4.8%
Total	1,384	187	13.5%

Wayne County Land Bank Relapsed Properties by Municipality, 2017-2021



Following Best Practices

		Land Bank Program Comparison			
Land Bank:		Wayne County Land Bank	Detroit Land Bank	Genesee County Land Bank	Ingham County Land Bank
Program:	Side Lot	X	X	X	X
	Compliance	X	X	X	
	Rehabilitation	X	X	X	X
	Right of Refusal	X			
	Demolition	X	X	X	X
	Quiet Title	X			
	Auction		X		
	Land Reuse		X		
	Buy Back/ Occupied		X		
	Community Partnership		X	X	X
	Own it Now		X		
	Clean & Green	X		X	X

Recommendations

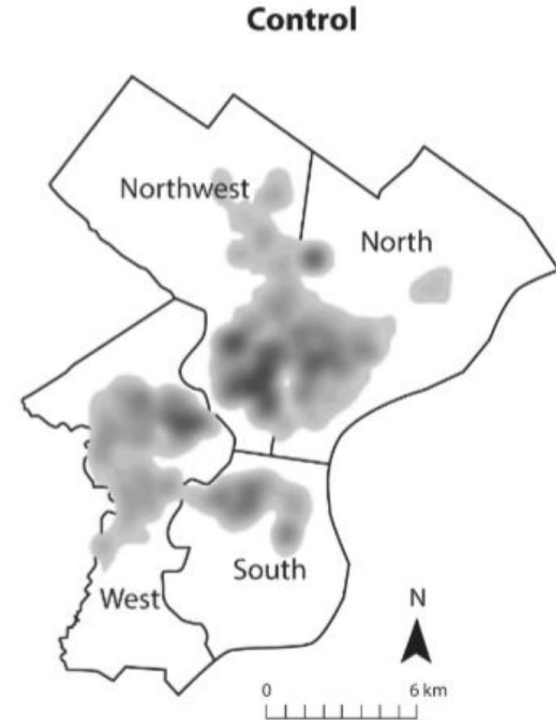
Rehabilitation

What can we do to improve WCLB?	Implement a system to improve compliance monitoring and compliance reporting.	
Cause/Effect	Cause: Lack of compliance reporting	Effect: Better organization of data and timeline for clients
What problem does this address?	Allows the WCLB to establish an average amount of time that each property is under compliance and compare municipalities to evaluate performance.	
Can we implement this?	Assigning specific staff members to work with compliance data tracking full time will improve the WCLB's ability to measure success throughout the Rehabilitation Program.	
Evidence?	DLBA has shown success in creating a uniform compliance period across Detroit. The DLBA has established a compliance department within the bank to monitor, track data, and offer extensions.	

Side Lots

What can we do to improve WCLB?	Implement the LandCare program aimed at turning vacant lots into green spaces around Wayne County.	
Cause/Effect	Cause: Lack of green spaces	Effect: Reduce unsightly properties, reduce crime, and improve community health
What problem does this address?	Many WCLB properties are vacant lots with little to no lawn care. This program would be very effective on vacant Side Lots where no structures are present.	
Can we implement this?	Focusing on one street or one lot in Wayne County would influence the entire community in that area.	
Evidence?	Between 1999 and 2008 a LandCare program was implemented in Philadelphia. A study showed a noticeable drop in crime, and an improvement in mental/physical health. The effect multiplies outward from a single space.	

Lot Greening Examples



Our Next Steps

Lot Greening Strategies

With the help of our intern we are finding best practices nationally for implementing green space creation on our vacant lots to create safer neighborhoods and more sale-ready properties.

Compliance Review

Staff is reviewing the compliance checklist and standards for rehabilitation success so we can ensure more programs successfully make it through our compliance program.

Website Updates

In conjunction with our recent grant project from MSHDA we are working on reviewing our website for accessibility and mobile compatibility. We put grants apps on the site so that we can monitor how it is working.



Wayne County Land Bank Assessment

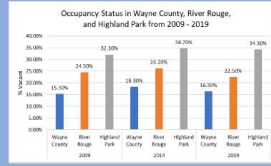


INTRODUCTION

- Identify opportunities to expand programs and strengthen the positive presence of the organization in key neighborhoods.
- The cities of Highland Park and River Rouge are highlighted to address the cities' specific needs.
- Analysis of the performance of the Wayne County Land Bank's current programs, the Rehabilitation and Side-Lot program.
- Create strategies for the WCLB to return the vacant and abandoned property to productive use.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Like Detroit, vacancies are still at epidemic levels in legacy cities, far above the national average (Mallach, 2018). Figure 3.17 shows the Occupancy Status for Wayne County, River Rouge, and Highland Park from 2009 to 2019, including Total Housing Units, Vacant Units, and the Percent Vacant.



Vacancies all over the country skyrocketed during the Great Recession and the number has been declining since then, but it is still higher than it was before 2005.

LAND BANK PROGRAMS

- The WCLB, DLBA, and the GCLB all have similar versions of a Rehabilitation Program, Side Lot Program, and Demolition Program which are commonly implemented in their communities.

		Land Bank Program Comparison				
		Wayne County Land Bank	Detroit Land Bank	Genesee County Land Bank	Highland County Land Bank	
Program	Side Lot	X	X	X	X	
	Compliance	X	X	X		
	Rehabilitation	X	X	X	X	
	Right of Refusal	X				
	Demolition	X	X	X	X	
	Side Lot	X				
	Auction		X			
	Land Reuse			X		
	Buy Back/ Occupied			X		
	Community Partnership			X	X	
	Own it Now		X			
	Clean & Green	X		X	X	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Outreach:

What can we do to improve WCLB?	Advise the Wayne County Tax Exemption programs on the WCLB website.
Cause/Effect	Cause: Advise Wayne County Tax Exemption Programs Effect: Reduce the number of properties in Wayne County being foreclosed
What problem does this address?	This would reduce the amount of blight and vacant/abandoned properties within Wayne County by helping residents avoid foreclosure.
Can we implement this? Is it realistic?	This is a realistic recommendation. The Tax Exemption program already exists. Adding information about it on the WCLB website would help provide awareness of its existence to Wayne County residents.
Evidence?	Wayne County Treasury Office has seen success in reducing foreclosures through Wayne County Tax Exemption programs. Providing the same information on the WCLB website could help WCLB buyers who may foreclosure in the future.

Rehabilitation:

What can we do to improve WCLB?	Implement a system to improve compliance monitoring and compliance reporting.
Cause/Effect	Cause: Compliance reporting Effect: Better organization of data and timeline for clients
What problem does this address?	Allows the WCLB to establish an average amount of time that each property is under compliance and compare municipalities to evaluate performance.
Can we implement this? Is it realistic?	This is a realistic recommendation. Expanding the compliance department will improve the WCLB's ability to measure success throughout the Rehabilitation Program.
Evidence?	DLBA has shown success in creating a uniform compliance period across Detroit. The DLBA has established a compliance department within the bank to monitor, track data, and offer extensions.

Website:

Level of Difficulty to Achieve	Aesthetics and Accessibility	Content	Data and Maps
Easy	Add social media links for the WCLB (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) Have explanations for each on the homepage	Current sales chart sorted by program to help buyers judge program success Add "Inquire Your Neighborhood" land reuse program as a way to attract local residents	
Average	Organize the website's homepage to distinguish between buying land or a house Improve the search engine on the website for accuracy Implement a "Recently Renewed" tab to attract customer attention to specific properties	Disclose liability information on the website to allow purchaser(s) to understand the liability they assume Have completed sales reports for each program available to the public	Provide maps of available properties on the website so prospective homebuyers can narrow their search
Hard	Improve mobile website format/design		Have an individual GIS map of properties for each program to provide visual

Side-Lot:

What can we do to improve WCLB?	Implement the LandCare program aimed at turning vacant lots into green spaces around Wayne County.
Cause/Effect	Cause: Greening spaces Effect: Reduce unsightly properties, reduce crime, and improve community health
What problem does this address?	Many WCLB properties are vacant lots with little to no lawn care. This program would be very effective on vacant Side Lots where no structures are present.
Can we implement this? Is it realistic?	This is a realistic recommendation. Focusing on one city or even one street or one lot in Wayne County would influence the entire community in that area.
Evidence?	Between 1999 and 2008 a LandCare program was implemented in Philadelphia. A study showed a noticeable drop in crime, and an improvement in mental/physical health. The effect multiplies outward from a single space.

PROGRAM ANALYSIS

- The Rehabilitation Program's purpose is to remediate blight and return properties to productive use.
- When a bought through the Rehabilitation program the price of the property is lowered below market value and the owner is required to return the property to a functional state.
- Since 2019, Compliance has made up over 50% of all properties sold. Although the WCLB sold the highest number of Compliance properties during 2019, they gathered the most revenue from these Compliance properties in 2020.
- The Wayne County Land Bank administers multiple programs that aim to increase property values and to return them back to productive use
- WCLB has 1,118 properties in 52 different communities.



Thanks!

Any questions?

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