Executive Summary

The mission of the Trumbull County Land Reutilization Corporation is to return land and vacant abandoned properties to productive use, reduce blight, increase property values, support community land use goals, and improve the quality of life for all county residents.

In late 2010, the Trumbull County Land Reutilization Corporation (TCLRC) was established by the Trumbull County Treasurer’s office, with support from the Trumbull County Commissioners and the Trumbull County Prosecutor. The TCLRC and Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership (TNP) have partnered since the inception of the Land Bank, and went into a contractual agreement in March of 2013 because of a shared commitment to increase quality of life throughout Trumbull County by returning derelict vacant property back to productive use. TNP manages the sale, transfer, disposition, demolition, rehabilitation, and reutilization of all Land Bank owned property.
News and Updates

TNP, in partnership with the Land Bank, formed a housing partnership with Trumbull County Career and Technical Center (TCTC) adult program. This program will provide Land Bank properties to the TCTC Adult Building Maintenance/Construction Trades Program at a reduced cost. TCTC students will have the opportunity to experience hands-on training through the rehabilitation of the house. Graduates from the program earn an OSHA certificate as well as a NCCER certificate. Once the students graduate and the house is complete, TCTC will offer the home for public sale to owner occupants. The buyers must reside in the house for at least three years.

This year’s Ohio Land Bank Conference, held by Thriving Communities Institute, will be September 21-23 in Cleveland. TNP and the TCLRC has been recognized as a high performing land bank state wide and through this TNP has been invited to present at this conference the past two years. This year TNP staff and the Treasurer will be presenting on four panels. These panels include: a housing rehab panel that will discuss the TCLRC’s approach to rehabilitating houses, a social media session that will cover how social media has helped programming and visibility for our organization, a panel reviewing community involvement and the important role this plays in building a community focused organization, and the last session will be covering the highly successful partnership between TNP and the Land Bank.

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Ongoing Inventory Management

**TNP manages** the disposition of all land bank owned properties. This includes the sale of houses, side lots, and acreage parcels in the Land Bank.

**The Land Bank acquires** 15-30 new parcels a month through tax foreclosure. A number of properties are acquired through bank and private donations monthly.

Current Inventory

- **Side Lots** - 436
- **Houses For Sale** - 17
- **Acreage lots** - 15
- **Demolition Candidates** - 35
- **Pending Demolitions** - 29
- **Demolitions Completed** - 88
Improved Property Sales

In the third quarter of 2015, TNP facilitated the sale of eleven (11) improved properties—two (2) as private demolitions and nine (9) as deed in escrow sales. Five (5) deed in escrow sales were to owner occupants, four (4) were to investors. Deed in escrow sales are the result of a purchase agreement between the TCLRC and the buyer in which the deed is held until an agreed upon rehabilitation plan is complete. These sales have helped to stabilize neighborhoods and increase market values throughout the county. They have also allowed residents to have affordable housing options.

TNP is actively seeking the sale of seventeen (17) improved properties, ten (10) of which are temporarily reserved for owner occupants and three properties are fully renovated, move in ready properties. TNP continues to maintain improved properties per the service contract with the TCLRC. As new improved property enters into the land bank, TNP assesses and secures each property before identifying the home as either salvageable or a demolition candidate, and identifies the appropriate maintenance plan, pricing and restrictions for each property.
Side Lot Transfers

In the third quarter of 2015, TNP facilitated the sale of 44 side lots. Since March 2013, over 370 side lots have been transferred under the management of TNP.

TNP conducts direct outreach for side lot sales. TNP staff visits each immediately adjacent neighbor for input regarding the future use of the land bank property and, in many cases, offers the property for sale through the Side Lot Program for yard expansion.

In instances where both adjacent property owners wish to purchase a side lot and both are qualified buyers, TNP assists neighbors in a lot split through hiring certified surveyors in Trumbull County.

The TCLRC in partnership with the Trumbull County Commissioners, City of Warren, TNP and several other local and county departments completed the Moving Ohio Forward demolition grant. The final report released by the Ohio Attorney General, Mike DeWine, showed that Trumbull County used a total of $2,211,862.32 which allowed for the demolition of 374 structures. Trumbull County also had the lowest average demolition cost in the state at $5,914.07.
Demolition

Demolition is an ongoing activity within the Land Bank. TNP has sought to secure demolition resources where available. Private demolition is one avenue through which the need to demolish a severely dilapidated property can be attained. TNP has secured two (2) private demolitions in the third quarter of 2015, saving the Land Bank a potential $10,000 - $20,000 per house ($20,000 to $40,000 total) for public demolition.

TNP is assisting the TCLRC with the demolition of Land Bank owned property via Ohio Housing Finance Agency’s (OHFA) Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP). This program has allotted 3.2 million dollars to the TCLRC, for the demolition of residential structures. TNP has developed eleven (11) target areas, ten (10) within Warren City and one (1) in Girard. There will be additional target areas developed throughout the County to assist other municipalities, townships, and villages as Land Bank inventory allows.

In April 2015, the TCLRC was awarded an additional $986,616.00 for being one of the high performing Land Bank’s in Ohio. The award accounted in number of properties in the pipeline for acquisition as well as the number of properties currently in the Land Bank that are demolition candidates. With the services of the Trumbull County Treasurer’s, Prosecutor’s, Recorder’s and a number of other county departments, TNP was able to submit a competitive application that brought this additional funding into the county.

TNP and the TCLRC continue to identify houses for demolition. Through the NIP program, TNP has been able to raze eighty-eight (88) structures, with an additional fifteen (15) under contract, twenty-nine (29) awaiting bids and twenty-five (25) out for asbestos surveys. Once these demolitions are completed TNP will seek to transfer the properties to qualified end users through the Side Lot Program, or allow community members to pursue green public space projects.
TNP in partnership with the TCLRC has released the Lots to Love Program this quarter. This program is geared towards vacant lot reuse post demolition. The NIP program has allocated $6,000 per lot that can be used for ‘greening’ of the lot. TNP has turned to the community to propose greening projects on qualified vacant lots.

There are currently eight (8) Lots to Love projects underway which include a labyrinth, a hopscotch park, and several other projects. TNP has also partnered with the Trumbull County Health Department on turning two vacant lots into a bicycle park. The properties located on Woodland near the bike trail entrance have ~$12,000 from Lots to Love and an additional ~$7,000 from the Trumbull County Health Department which will allow $19,000 to revitalize once blighted properties. This bike park will include work out equipment, play areas for children, and bike repair equipment.

Lots to Love Program
2017 Willard Ave. Demolition

In August of 2015, TCLRC has demolished a property located at 2017 Willard Ave. This house has been an eyesore in the neighborhood for years and it is located across the street from Willard Elementary School. The school and many parents had made several complaints about the property due to the severe disrepair it was in. The Land Bank was able to acquire the property through tax foreclosure and raze the property through the Neighborhood Initiative Program.

The now vacant lot is currently available for TNP’s Lots to Love Program. This allows residents from the community to take the vacant lot and install a project to beautify the once derelict vacant property. There have been a number of interested parties for this property.
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Third Quarter Highlights

Court Ordered Community Service Program

TNP operates the Court Ordered Community Service (COCS) Program in partnership with the Warren Municipal Court and the TCLRC. COCS acts as a sentencing alternative as well as a tool to fight blight throughout Warren City. In the third quarter of 2015, the COCS Program has mowed over 250 Land Bank lots and houses. In addition to mowing properties the COCS Program also ensures that all Land Bank properties are secured by boarding the structures and regularly inspecting them.

This program has maintained all the post Neighborhood Initiative Program demolitions sites per Ohio Housing Finance Agencies guidelines. The COCS Program also works with the Warren City Health Department and other city agencies to secure and/or mow nuisance complaint properties.
TNP began the Lots to Love Program in early 2015. The program empowers residents to beautify their neighborhoods through community organizing and post demolition vacant lot reuse. This program was erected from money allocated through Ohio Housing Finance Agency’s (OHFA), Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP). NIP allows for up to $6,000 per lot, post demolition, to be used for greening projects.

This summer has been a very successful start to the program with six lots completed or nearing completion. One of these lots is the Good-looking View Children’s Garden, the former site of 1236 Buena Vista, which was torn down early this summer. This project is an interactive area for everyone in the community. The garden features children’s play equipment, raised beds, life size tic-tac-toe board, and many other features for everyone to enjoy!

The second round of Lots to Love has recently been released and TNP will be accepting applications through October.