



## 2014 Performance Objectives

Adopted by the GSPDC Board of Directors February 18, 2014

Review of Accomplishments to Date: January 20, 2015

*Preparation of annual performance objectives is required by Section 7.06 of the Intermunicipal Agreement creating the Land Bank.*

### **Capacity**

✓ Hire (staff) Property Manager

Hired in March 2014, position now vacant. Interviews complete and expecting to fill the Director of Property Management position in February/March 2015.

✓ Obtain additional administrative support

Hired Executive Assistant in July 2014.

✓ Launch website

[www.syracuselandbank.org](http://www.syracuselandbank.org)

✓ Secure a permanent location for the Land Bank's offices

We've continued to enjoy rent-free office space at 333 W. Washington Street, but with the hire of a fourth staff person will require more space. We are currently exploring options for a move in March/April 2015.

✓ Support the creation of a New York Association of Land Banks, communication between land banks, and ensure that the Greater Syracuse Land Bank is represented in both local and statewide dialogue on issues related to vacant and abandoned property or that otherwise relate to land banks' missions.

Katelyn Wright is now serving as the chairperson of the New York Land Bank Association. Under her leadership the association is incorporating and finalizing its first annual legislative advocacy agenda. The organization's monthly conference calls and online communication between members has delivered extensive technical guidance to start-up land banks across New York. The Association has retained Menter, Rudin, & Trivelpiece to conduct research and provide statewide guidance to land banks that might ensure consistent interpretation of the Land Bank act and other statutes that govern land banks' operations.

✓ Continue to seek funding derived from increased City and County tax-collections enabled by the Land Bank's acceptance of foreclosed properties.

In mid-2014 the City of Syracuse awarded an additional \$1.5 million to the Land Bank and in the fall Onondaga County awarded an additional \$500,000 to the Land Bank. This significant local support enabled a strong application for a second round of Office of the Attorney General funding in which the Land Bank was awarded nearly \$2 million for renovation work that wouldn't have otherwise been funded by local dollars.

✓ Plan for the organization's financial sustainability in light of the anticipated decline in delinquent collections once the City's new tax collection policies are fully implemented (2016 [now projected to occur in 2017]).

○ Staff is preparing to request the 50%/5 year split of property taxes generated by properties returned to the tax rolls by the Land Bank's actions,

- The Land Bank has begun to receive cash donations from banks when donating mortgage-foreclosed properties to the Land Bank,
- Revenues from sales are higher than anticipated and staff is researching strategies to maximize this revenue source.
- 2015 Property management contract renewals and a new approach to contracting out snow removal are expected to result in significant savings in the coming year and additional efficiencies will be identified as the Land Bank's operations develop.
- Statewide land banks are researching strategies to collectively advocate for additional sources of State and philanthropic aid.

### **Planning and Programming**

In our first full year of operations the Land Bank proved to lack sufficient capacity for needed planning and program development. Measures are underway to remedy this in 2015 with the hire of a Director of Operations who will alleviate some administrative burdens and allow the Executive Director to devote increased attention to some of the issues described below, but many of our goals for 2014 under this subject area remain unmet.

- Develop a framework for strategic, geographically targeted plans that, where needed, may supplement the Land Bank's countywide and citywide policies. Develop at least three geographically targeted strategic plans for Land Bank operations.

*The Land Bank strives to act in compliance with the adopted Comprehensive Plans of the municipalities in which it operates and has incorporated citywide guidance, developed by the Land Bank Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), regarding how it might best accomplish this within the City of Syracuse into its Disposition Policies. In addition, there may be instances that warrant the development of strategic, geographically targeted plans to guide the Land Bank's operations. These may be needed in areas where the Land Bank has acquired a dense concentration of properties in a distressed real estate market in order for the Land Bank to most effectively advance its mission. These plans will guide the Land Bank in strategic acquisition of additional properties, targeted capital investment, special incentive programs to attract buyers or certain types of development, and enhanced terms of sale. Such plans for Land Bank operations should be developed by the Land Bank, but should include consultation with the CAB, municipal planning staff, neighborhood residents, other relevant stakeholders, and existing neighborhood plans where they exist.*

Held a series of stakeholder meetings on the Butternut Street Corridor and participated in planning a volunteer litter cleanup along this corridor. Staff was unable to dedicate adequate attention to this work in 2014, but we expect increased staff capacity and increased clarity on what planning functions will be performed by the City and what planning functions will be performed by the Land Bank will enable increased attention to these matters in 2015.

- Launch pilot-programs for:

- Targeted Redevelopment Plans in the Towns/Villages

*Plan and begin acquisition & redevelopment for a targeted redevelopment plan in partnership with a Town/Village and the County*

Established relationships with Codes officials in Baldwinsville and Jordan/Elbridge and got them to begin gathering helpful data on vacant properties. Wasn't able to acquire properties here via County foreclosure until January 2015 and so detailed planning & implementation won't occur until 2015. Met with Village of East Syracuse officials in late 2014, laying the groundwork for collaboration with that village in 2015.

- Neighborhood-Based Property Maintenance Program

*Engage at least one neighborhood group to provide maintenance services for Land Bank owned lots*

Preliminary conversations were held with Jubilee Homes, one local church, and the Onondaga Earth Corps, but no maintenance agreements were finalized in 2014. As our inventory grows and properties are acquired in denser concentrations this may prove more feasible.

✓ Neighborhood-Organization Side-Lot Sales Program

*Engage at least one not-for-profit or neighborhood organization in marketing side-lots for sale*

The Land Bank entered into a contract with NEHDA to assist side-lot purchasers with the process of filling out the purchase application and then applying for resubdivision prior to taking title. NEHDA is in the process of assisting 13 purchasers through this process and has completed two. This engagement has added valuable customer-service capacity to the Land Bank's limited staff.

✓ Green Lots (Community Garden) Program

*Establish a standard lease and program guidelines to be published online; enter into at least one (1) lease of a vacant lot for a community garden or other "green" or community-oriented purpose*

Standard lease developed and one garden lease active in 2014. Currently working to incorporate [Syracuse Grows](#) into the process of testing soil and reviewing gardeners' plans to provide lessees with valuable guidance on what grows well in Central New York's climate and gardening safely in an urban environment that contains some soil contamination.

✓ Establish minimum home energy performance standards for investor renovations of residential properties purchased from the Land Bank

Landlord purchasers of Land Bank are now required to comply with minimum standards for energy efficiency upgrades. These measures are inspected prior to discharge of the Land Bank's enforcement mortgage.

✓ Evaluate funding available for energy efficiency upgrades

Have worked with the Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board to identify incentives and grant programs that our buyers may utilize. 2015 brokerage agreements will ensure that this information is provided to all prospective buyers.

✓ Endeavor for the Land Bank to become the default entity to assemble and hold for tax-foreclosed and surplus properties in order to 1) consolidate purchase processes to provide clarity to buyers, 2) to consolidate ownership under one entity to facilitate coordinated long-range planning and 3) to reduce property maintenance costs by utilizing the Land Bank's economy of scale.

✓ Continue to acquire tax-foreclosed properties via the City's tax-foreclosure process

The Land Bank acquired 307 properties subsequent to City tax foreclosure in 2014. If we are to successfully implement the City's new tax-collection procedures in a three year period this rate needs to more than double in 2015 and 2016.

✓ Promote the donation of other vacant properties in proximity to Land Bank properties in order to facilitate their redevelopment

Accepted the Land Bank's first five donations from banks and mortgage lenders and one from a private corporation. The Land Bank made some effort to encourage private donation, but we need to make a more aggressive attempt to attract donations in targeted, strategic geographic areas in 2015 now that the Land Bank has obtained 501c3 status and donors can more easily claim an income tax deduction.

- ✓ Evaluate and acquire ‘surplus’ property owned by other public entities (City, SURA, etc.) within the City of Syracuse

Acquired surplus inventory from SURA. The City has not advanced their surplus inventory yet.

### **Production**

- ✓ Approve property sales totaling \$500,000 (see 2014 budget)

The Land Bank closed on sales exceeding \$1 million in 2014 – a total of 76 properties. Approved sales yet to close at the time of this writing total approximately \$328,500 (removing the Addis building pending sales total \$171,025). The properties sold and returned to the tax rolls should generate approximately \$150,000 in property taxes annually and the buyers of these properties are pledging to invest nearly \$5 million in their renovations.

- Renovate five (5) properties using unrestricted Land Bank funds in order to sell “move-in ready” to owner-occupants

Ultimately the Land Bank decided that this activity did not fit our business model, as we were unable to ensure that these projects would not lose money or require an inordinate amount of staff time to administer.

- Complete twenty (20) residential renovations with Attorney General grant funds

Completed, in partnership with Home HeadQuarters, ten residential renovations. An additional twelve are underway with Home HeadQuarters and eight with Onondaga County. Home HeadQuarters has taken measures to ‘catch up’ with the OAG’s production goals in 2015 by hiring additional project management staff.

- ✓ Demolish or deconstruct twenty-five (25) blighted structures

- ✓ Establish standard work-specs and bid procedures for demolitions and deconstructions managed by the Land Bank

Standard specs for deconstruction utilized in 2014. Demolitions administered by HHQ using their standard spec. In 2015 we will seek to make all demolitions follow a ‘green’ spec including some deconstruction and salvage rather than track deconstructions and demolitions separately.

- ✓ Complete a pilot program of no less than six (6) deconstruction<sup>1</sup> projects

Six complete and five invoiced and paid.

- Ensure that, to the maximum extent feasible, all demolitions include architectural salvage of reusable materials prior to demolition.

The Land Bank sold salvage rights to one property in 2014, but ultimately it appears that the most value will be found in unpainted lumber and structural items that cannot be sold and ‘soft skimmed’ prior to demolition, but that must be salvaged during the demolition. These items are also the most likely to be re-milled and repurposed, creating local jobs, whereas soft-skimmed items don’t often require processing and are simply resold in their current condition. While salvage wasn’t widely implemented in 2014, it will be integrated into nearly all demolition projects in 2015 and will include both ‘soft skim’ and an effort to salvage structural items, milled stone, metal that can be scrapped, and unpainted structural lumber.

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<sup>1</sup> Deconstruction includes recycle or sustainable disposal of all building materials

**Guiding Principles** – continued from 2013 Performance Objectives

1. Acquire and redevelop vacant and abandoned properties in Syracuse and Onondaga County, in a coordinated manner, consistent with local municipalities' Comprehensive Plans.
2. Support the revitalization of neighborhoods and enhance quality of life for neighborhood residents.
3. Encourage investment in business districts through the assembly and marketing of commercial and industrial properties for private development.
4. Hold and maintain landmarks and properties of interest to the community in order to enable a rational planning process for their redevelopment.
5. Acquire real property or an interest in real property in order to preserve land for future public use.
6. Lessen the burdens of government and act in the public interest.
7. Stabilize and grow the value of the real property tax base.
8. Enable the City to increase the property tax collection rate within the City of Syracuse, by acting as a receiver of foreclosed properties.