



OMAHA MUNICIPAL
LANDBANK

A Catalyst for Transforming Distressed Properties
into Community Assets

STRATEGIC PLAN
MAY 2016

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Vision into action – that is the promise – and the power – of a strong, collaborative **Omaha Municipal Land Bank (OMLB)**. A merger of expertise, passion and partnership dedicated to **reinvigorating** Omaha’s distressed neighborhoods, **encouraging** new community investment and **improving** the quality of lives. **Now and for future generations.**

The Challenge

Omaha is a proud, progressive and vibrant city – but we are not without our challenges.

Vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent lots and structures litter our city, resulting in compounded feelings of despair in our hardest hit neighborhoods, higher crime rates, depressed property values and loss of property taxes.

- More than 7,000 parcels in Omaha have some level of code violation,
- More than 3,000 have a demolition violation (700 structures have demolition orders),
- Nearly 4,000 parcels have an “unfit/unsafe” designation,
- More than half of all violations are concentrated in neighborhoods east of 42nd Street in North, South and Midtown Omaha,
- Today, delinquent property taxes and special assessments total \$1,181,285.30.

OMLB: A Strategic, Collaborative Solution

An overriding public need to confront this dilemma prompted the Nebraska Legislature to pass the Nebraska Municipal Land Bank Act which enabled the City of Omaha to create the **Omaha Municipal Land Bank (OMLB)**.

Working in concert with our community partners – public, private and nonprofit – we are eager to act, fiercely committed to returning vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent property to productive use.

Our Mission

To serve as a catalyst for transforming distressed properties into community assets.

Our Vision

Make Omaha an even better place to live by perpetually turning problem properties into opportunities.

Vision-to-Reality

To achieve our mission and vision, OMLB’s primary functions include **assessing, acquiring and disposing of** three property categories:

- Those that impose the greatest harm to a community and, if acquired, could prevent greater abandonment,



- Those that impose the greatest likelihood of future harms to adjoining properties,
- Those that have an immediate end-user.

Operating Principles | We...

- Exist as a strong partner and resource to help revitalize and transform blighted neighborhoods,
- Use business-minded values and market-driven considerations to drive decision making,
- Operate as a community-minded and accountable organization,
- Maintain top-notch leadership consisting of high-quality staff, board members and community volunteers.

Values | We respect and embrace...

- Transparency in the sharing of information about OMLB activities, financials and accomplishments,
- Working as a team with our community,
- The formation of partnerships to grow, support and sustain our mission,
- The rich history and heritage of our city.

Strategic Overview

The **OMLB Strategic Plan** utilizes innovative goals, objectives and strategies – along with the power of community partnerships – to return vacant and abandoned property to productive use and revitalize our Omaha community.

Five pillars connect to specific goals in the launching the OMLB Strategic Plan forward.

These Pillars are:

- **Acquisition Planning**
- **End-Use Partnerships, Priorities, and Policies**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Fund Development**
- **Organizational Excellence**

Acquisition Planning

Acquiring properties is one of the OMLB’s core functions. We will ensure this role is carried out strategically and with maximum impact with guidance from an **acquisition plan**.

Objective: The OMLB will create a data-driven acquisition plan to maximize it’s revitalization efforts and provide direction for carrying out it’s real estate activities.

Strategic Goals:

- Utilize available acquisition methods to acquire and assemble properties for reuse, redevelopment and development,
- Determine focus areas/acquisition criteria to guide the property selection process,
- Ascertain annual acquisitions in an effort to minimize standing inventory costs and maximize our revitalization efforts,
- Implement systems to provide support for the acquisition and ongoing management of the land bank property inventory.

End-Use Partnerships, Priorities and Policies

The OMLB seeks **partners** to offer input, support our mission and help ensure our strategies reflect community priorities and ambitions.

Objectives: The OMLB will foster and maintain quality end-use partnerships critical to achieving the Land Bank’s productive land-use goals and establish comprehensive end-use priorities and policies to guide the disposition process and provide transparency in disposition decisions.

Strategic Goals:

- Foster quality relationships with potential end-use partners in an effort to maximize the transfer of properties for redevelopment, development and other productive uses,
- Foster relationships with community players to maximize our revitalization efforts,
- Adopt end-use priorities to provide transparency for disposition decisions,
- Adopt policies to streamline the property disposition process.

Community Engagement

The OMLB aspires to build strong partnerships and work side-by-side with community members and organizations. Hearing about community needs first-hand will allow us to better understand priorities and barriers.

Objective: The OMLB will promote community engagement activities, including meetings and events planned to initiate key conversations and obtain insights from community members and organizations.

Strategic Goals:

- Explore and implement community engagement practices affirming a strong commitment to inclusiveness, transparency and empowerment,
- Engage the community consistently, through various methods, to promote community involvement and develop strong community partnerships,
- Form collaborations with organizations sharing similar community development



Fund Development

OMLB will utilize **public funding, philanthropic contributions, property tax recapture, property sales, tax certificate redemptions** and **bonding authority** to finance our efforts.

We recognize, in order for long-term sustainable change to occur in Omaha’s distressed neighborhoods, we need to build **effective, on-going fund development partnerships**. Collaboration with and input from these stakeholders is critical to supporting the OMLB vision and achieving our mission.

Objective: Create a comprehensive fund development plan to enable the OMLB to secure sustainable long-term funding for all operational and programmatic activities.

Strategic Goals:

- Maintain quality relationships with existing investors/donors to secure future operational funding and potential programmatic funding
- Utilize the relationships with existing investors/donors to recruit additional investors
- Establish a fund development committee to foster relationships with potential investors/donors and identify potential public revenue sources
- Utilize volunteers and/or identify staff needed to support our fund development activities

Organizational Excellence

The OMLB is committed to organizational excellence - strengthening **community awareness** and **understanding** of our OMLB, and **developing** and **inspiring highly skilled staff** and **volunteers**.

Objective: The OMLB will inform our community of the benefits of working together, give insight into distressed properties and act as a resource for transforming these properties into community assets.

Strategic Goals:

- Identify brand and marketing strategies to strengthen the image and awareness of the OMLB
- Integrate community outreach messaging and marketing activities with all strategic efforts to build synergies, gain community support, sustain donor/ stakeholder support and increase momentum to further accomplish strategic goals
- Foster and encourage an environment where staff members and volunteers can make a positive impact on our community

OMLB Volunteers and Staff

The **OMLB Board of Directors** ensures the OMLB is working toward achieving its mission.

- The Board consists of seven voting members appointed by the Omaha Mayor and confirmed by the Omaha City Council.
- The Omaha City Planning Director or designee, serves as a nonvoting, ex-officio member.
- Five non-voting members are also appointed.

An **Executive Director** manages the day-to-day operation of the OMLB with the OMLB staff. Together, their knowledge and acumen shape the direction of the OMLB.

Transforming Our City

The OMLB exists to transform distressed properties into community assets. We strive to be a trusted community partner, accountable to our stakeholders, and a voice to help revitalize our Omaha community.

The long-term community impact of the OMLB can be measured by:

- Increases in property values, capital investment, real estate development and community engagement,
- Decreases in vacant lots, code violations and crime.

The OMLB’s Strategic Plan is the first of many steps aimed at turning vision to action – and then community-altering impact. **Now and for future generations.**

For More Information...

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A STRATEGIC, COLLABORATIVE SOLUTION
TIMELINE

January - May
Legislation reintroduced and received unanimous support

June
Legislation enabling the creation of a Land Bank signed by Governor

2014

January
OMLB began executive director search process and OMLB board members received training from the Center for Community Progress

First Quarter
Developed and approved bylaws, policies, and procedures

February - July
Secured public and private funding pledges for 2015 - 2018 totaling \$2.3M

March
OMLB board members received training from the Cuyahoga County Land Bank and Thriving Communities

March - July
Applied for and received 501c3 tax exempt status

August - September
Secure office space

Summer
Conducted executive director interviews

September
Executive Director started

December
Began strategic planning process

2016

2013

July
City Council unanimously passed ordinance that created the Land Bank

July - October
Mayor vetted Land Bank board candidates

November
Land Bank board members unanimously voted in by City Council

December
First Land Bank board meeting

2015

February
Executive Director resigned, Began search process for new Executive Director, Engaged nonprofit housing organizations and conducted due diligence to participate in Tax Certificate Sale

March
Secured interim Director, Participated in tax certificate sale, aquired 78 certificates, Revised procurement policy, Community

May
Implemented a depository agreement and policy, Completed strategic plan

April
Issued database/GIS system RFP and received first property donation

March - Current
Conducted due diligence on potential donations and continued community engagement





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