County Land Banks: A Tool to Revitalize Our Communities

Jim Rokakis
Robin Darden Thomas
June 25, 2015
Thriving Communities Institute

• Formed in 2011 to extend the Conservancy’s mission into urban areas
• Establish county land banks throughout the WRLC footprint, then through the state of Ohio
• Seek funding for demolition or rehabilitation of blighted properties
• Impact state and federal policies regarding demolition and rehabilitation of vacant and abandoned properties and revitalization of our communities
Ohio’s Challenges

- Foreclosures
- Vacancy crisis
- Population loss
- Crime
- Demolition Funding
- Loss of home equity
Land Banking in Ohio: History

- First authorized in 2008 for Cuyahoga County only
- Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation opened its doors in 2009
- Law amended in 2010 for smaller counties
- Twenty-four county land banks currently incorporated in Ohio
- Interest in 13 additional counties (5 not currently eligible)
- Legislation pending to remove population requirement
43 Eligible Counties

- 24 Ohio Land Banks (red)
- 9 additional eligible counties have expressed interest (blue)

45 Counties currently ineligible (gray)

- Will become eligible upon passage of Budget Bill
- 4 counties have already expressed interest (cross hatch)
What is a County Land Bank?

- Private, non-profit corporation – not a county agency
- Special, community improvement corporation (R.C. 1724)
- Quasi-governmental (R.C. 5722)
- Created by government, but not government.
- Committed to public purpose
10 Reasons You Need a Land Bank:

1. Take control of vacant and abandoned, tax delinquent properties
2. Demolish blighted buildings
3. Rehabilitate structures for public or private use
4. Transfer properties to qualified end-users
5. Put abandoned properties back on tax roll
10 Reasons You Need a Land Bank:

6. Access demolition funds from Treasury
7. Reduce flipping of properties
8. Assemble property for local development
9. Accept property donations from FNMA, HUD & banks
10. Increase local property values
Reasons **Not** to Create a Land Bank

1. Land banks require funding
2. Viewed as “more government” by some
3. Involves commitment of Board members
4. City and/or township land banks already exist
5. Demolition funds already spent
County Land Bank Operations

- BANK REO’s
- DEED IN LIEU
- HUD
- GSE’s
- TAX FORECLOSED

PROPERTY TRIAGE

RESPONSIBLE FOR
MOTHBALL
REHABILITATION

RESALE TO RESPONSIBLE
QUALIFIED
BUYER/REHABBER

PROGRAMS:
- SIDE YARD
- INFILL HOUSING
- GREEN SPACE
- URBAN GARDENS

HOLD FOR
STRATEGIC
ASSEMBLY &
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

DEMOLISH

Thriving Communities Institute
From Vacancy to Vitality
A Program of Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Questions?