

Marion Housing Coalition: Issues and Recommendations

Background

Discussions were held in an ad hoc fashion in 2019 that became the basis for the organization of the Marion Housing Coalition (MHC), which is a funded activity of the United Way of North Central Ohio for 2021. The Coalition was actively holding public input meetings and engaging other communities and community-based organizations (CBO's) in the latter part of 2019 and early in 2020, until in-person meetings were slowed considering the pandemic.

In May of 2021 an application from the Marion County Land Bank (MCLB) to the United Way was approved to continue to initiative. Additional funding support was provided by the Marion Regional Chamber of Commerce and the MCLB. Since August, four (4) additional meetings of the Marion Housing Coalition have been held. The "work product" of these meetings identified a range issues that need to be addressed. Forward thinking recommendations regarding avenues by which communities can proactively address a specific property, in the case of former school sites in several of the towns, or multiple properties in neighborhoods that need comprehensive redevelopment within the city of Marion were developed by the working groups and have been further developed into recommendations that will be put before the city administration and council, county commissioners, and the MCLB Board of Directors.

The proposed recommendations (see below) have been framed to represent the interactions that must take place in order to advance an community and housing development initiative focused on addressing vacant and abandoned, tax delinquent properties, that need intervention in order to stem further decline of neighborhood property values, as well as neighborhood condition and overall perception within the marketplace.

The MHC's mission is to promote:

"The establishment and growth of a non-profit housing organization that develops safe, decent, and affordable housing for a spectrum of household incomes in a self-sustaining manner. This will be accomplished by focusing resources to decrease the incidence of blight and negative health effects of poor housing conditions by focusing on deficiencies "inside the house, outside of the house, and in neighborhoods," and offering collaborative services, training, and technical assistance to promote homeownership throughout Marion County."

Call for Action

Support for proactive steps to identify issues and forge a strategic plan to implement the tenants of the mission statement has come from a broad spectrum of organizations, including local churches, non-profit funders, the business community and Chamber of Commerce membership, and much of the administrative and organizational work has been performed by the Marion City County Regional Planning Commission's staff. ARPA and ARPA-HOME funding, as well as the ability to demonstrate to

outside funders, the existence of a well thought out plan of action that addressed the specific areas of need, including demolition, neighborhood stabilization, and acquisition-rehabilitation programming that will facilitate the rehabilitation and resale of properties to owner/occupants.

"Sign On" Letter of Support

The MHC is respectfully requesting that individuals, organizations, and businesses "sign-on" in support of the recommendations and consider sending a "letter of support" to the city, county, and MCLB independently. A sample "Sign On" letter template has been provided for your convenience. Please free to modify the sample to include specific considerations that you or your organization would like to have considered.

Issues and Recommended Actions

MCLRC (Land Bank)

- 1: Encourage county departments, elected officials (Treasurer, Auditor, Prosecutor, BOR, and Sheriff's Department) and the MCLRC enter into an agreement (Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA), or other appropriate agreement to delineate and define the responsibilities and actions that need to be carried out in relationship to advancing the response to blighted, vacant and abandoned properties.
 - **Review process and procedure for Sheriff Sales and expedited foreclosure action, as provided to 1724 Corporations (Land Banks) through the Board of Revision (BOR) and make further recommendations relative to the prioritization of vacant, tax delinquent properties.**
2. Adopt rehabilitation standards and property inspections requirements. Implement a protocol that requires a state of Ohio accredited inspector to perform periodic inspections during the project and a final inspection upon completion to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy. The state of Ohio's Residential Rehabilitation Standards (RRS) and OBC (2011) Sections 1-35 will serve as guidance for all rehabilitation activities.
 - **Develop "Residential Property Rehabilitation Manual" to be utilized as the minimum standard for all properties that are sold to developers by the MCLRC and/or re-developed directly by the MCLRC.**
3. Establish threshold requirements for the resale of properties for rehabilitation Consider experience, financial resources, condition of and tax status of other properties owned in Marion by the potential purchaser.
 - **Develop a policy for "Socially Responsible Developer" (SRD) eligibility, including a standardized application to cover owner occupants and investor/developer applications with a scoring system upon which to develop recommendations to sales. Establish documentation to be required to implement Internal privacy standards for the organization.**

4. Utilize the MHC to review property sales applications and provide recommendations to the MCLRC regarding SRD program participation, prioritization of targeted neighborhoods, and making recommendations about the level of subsidy or grant funding that may be available to owner/occupants and investors/developers.

- Develop a transparent process for evaluating and prioritizing neighborhoods/block groups and "scoring" applications for funding from prospective owner/occupants and SRDs.
- Explore alternative sources of funding to facilitate rehabilitation projects where subsidy will be required and develop a "proforma" approach for the evaluation of properties and the allocation of any local grant or subsidy allocations that may be or become available.

6. Expand the local capacity for property development focusing on distressed single family (1-4 units) properties.

- Develop a "technical assistance and training" program for local contractors, developers, and investors to learn about the process of rehabilitating properties acquired through the MCLRC's program.

7. Implement a process and underwriting criteria for considering loans or grants of MCLRC funds or other funding that may be available to the MCLRC for this purpose.

- Develop program guidelines for the establishment of a revolving loan fund (RLF) to provide loans and/or grants to SRDs and non-profits for eligible costs associated with property redevelopment.

City of Marion

1. The city of Marion will work cooperatively with the MCLB to identify and advance properties through the foreclosure process, provide the necessary information and actions, in support of the evaluation of the expeditious processing of distressed properties and evaluation of disposition alternatives for tax delinquent, vacant properties in Marion.

- Review process and procedure for Sheriff Sales and expedited foreclosure action, as provided to 1724 Corporations (Land Banks) through the Board of Revision (BOR) and make further recommendations relative to the prioritization of vacant, tax delinquent properties.

2. Enact minimum building codes and regulations for rehabilitation and new construction activities in conformance with OBC Chapters 1-35.

- Develop local provisions, as they may be applicable, in the form of a "Residential Rehabilitation Standard" should be developed and adopted by ordinance.

3. Provide Certificates of Occupancy (C of O) for new residential construction (sited built and modular) and residential rehabilitation projects. Implement requirements for applications, inspections, and record collection for all residential rehabilitation or construction activities.

- **Develop an application and review process for the issuance of residential building permits and certificates of occupancy.**
- **Review the potential of utilizing ARPA or funding from HB 110 to support adding building inspection officials to address blighted property conditions.**

4. Support an application from the MCLRC to ODOD under the \$50M program for Land Banks at the maximum feasible grant amount. Support potential applications to the State's new Brownsfield Remediation Program (BRP) in the amount of \$1.0M and under the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program (BDSRP) in the amount of \$500,000, for projects to be identified and prioritized locally to the State for funding under HB110.

- **Develop a process for identifying projects, evaluating feasibility, eligibility, match availability, and potential avenues for site redevelopment. Have projects prioritized and due diligence and research performed to be ready to make application to the state for funding as funding becomes available in the first quarter of 2022.**

County of Marion

1. County Departments, Elected Officials (Treasurer, Auditor, Prosecutor, BOR, and Sheriff's Department) and the MCLRC enter into an agreement (Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA), or other appropriate agreement to delineate and define the responsibilities and actions that need to be carried out in relationship to advancing the response to blighted, vacant and abandoned properties.

- **Review process and procedure for Sheriff Sales and expedited foreclosure action, as provided to 1724 Corporations (Land Banks) through the Board of Revision (BOR) and make further recommendations relative to the prioritization of vacant, tax delinquent properties.**

2. Consider the provision of ARPA funding to the MCLRC for projects that support the development of housing for "qualified populations" (developmentally disabled, ELI (Extremely Low Income)).

- **Work with ADAMHS board to identify specific areas of need and populations, evaluate housing inventory relative to properties that may be feasible for rehabilitation to house eligible populations.**
- **Perform due diligence on potential single family (1-4 units) as well as existing multi-family units for rehabilitation and reuse, and/or vacant land that can be acquired and aggregated to support the construction of new facilities to accommodate the identified needs of qualified populations.**

3. Support the application for ARPA-HOME funding to the state of Ohio in an amount to be determined for use by the MCLB in connection with the acquisition and rehabilitation of blighted, tax delinquent, or property available for transfer and subsequent rehabilitation or resale to qualified buyers (SRDs).

- **Review, evaluate, and support a plan for the acquisition and rehabilitation of vacant, tax delinquent, abandoned and otherwise distressed properties (mortgage foreclosure, intestate, etc) that are strategic to the stabilization and improvement of Marion's neighborhoods.**

3. Support the application from the MCLRC to the State for funding under HB110 to eliminated blighted structures within the county and city of Marion.

- **Develop a process for identifying projects, evaluating feasibility, eligibility, match availability, and potential avenues for site redevelopment. Have projects prioritized and due diligence and research performed to be ready to make application to the state for funding as funding becomes available in the first quarter of 2022.**

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