



2020

# Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP) Report

Paulding County, Ohio

Maumee Valley Planning Organization  
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# CONTENT

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## Background

Introduction  
Census Tract Information  
Target Area Information

## Properties

Properties Demolished  
Properties Considered

## Challenges

Target Areas  
Future of the Properties  
Additional Remarks

## Education & Growth

Land Bank Conference  
Network  
Demolition Administration

## Partners

Key Actors

## Active Citizens & Leaders

Contact person(s) & Information

## Overview & Success

Success by the Numbers  
Additional Remarks

## Personal Impacts

Habitat for Humanity Build  
A Better Home, Life, & Community



# Background

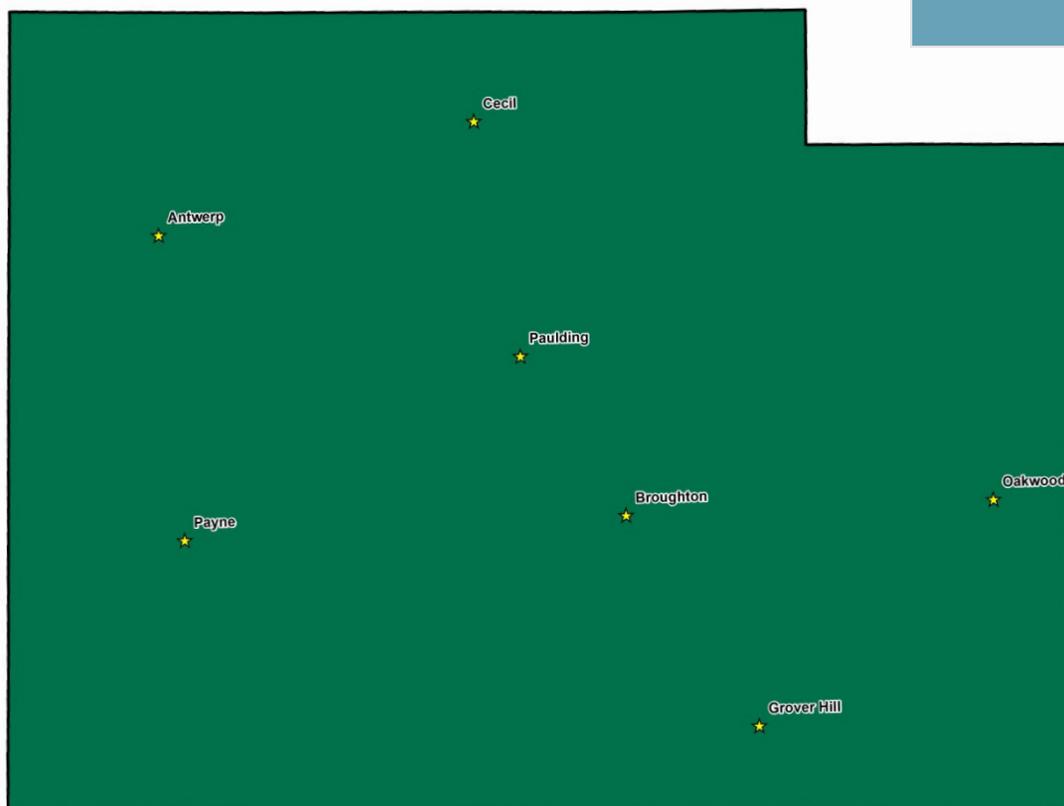
The Paulding County Land Reutilization Corporation (PCLRC), also called the Paulding County Land Bank, was formed in July 2017. The Land Bank’s mission is to reclaim, rehabilitate, and re-utilize vacant, abandoned, tax-foreclosed, or other property in the County. The Land Bank Board consists of two County Commissioners, the County Treasurer, a municipal representative from the largest municipality, and a township representative, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code §1724.03.

After their formation, the Land Bank applied for funds from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency through the Neighborhood Initiative Program. The Land Bank received \$350,000 in reimbursable funds to acquire, demolish, green, and dispose of vacant, abandoned, and/or tax delinquent properties.

This table shows the Target Areas within each Census Tract in Paulding County. See map attachment depicting the Target Areas and Census Tracts in Paulding County. >

Census Tract Numbers	Target Area
Census Tract 9601	None
Census Tract 9602	1. Cecil 2. Antwerp
Census Tract 9603	4. Payne
Census Tract 9604	3. Paulding
Census Tract 9605	5. Broughton 6. Oakwood 7. Grover Hill

## Paulding County, OH Target Areas



< Seven target areas received approval in the application, which outlines the municipal boundaries for Antwerp, Paulding, Oakwood, Grover Hill, Cecil, Broughton, and Payne.

# Properties



Using funds from the Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) through the Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP), the Paulding County Land Reutilization Corporation was able to remove blighted, vacant homes within several villages across the county. The greatest impact was seen in the Village of Grover Hill, where eight dilapidated homes were demolished in the small village.

At the start of the land bank program, thirty-six (36) properties were considered for demolition with NIP funds. Several of these properties were not acquired and demolished for a variety of reasons related to the property owner, location, or OHFA's review process. Then in 2019, another twelve (12) properties were considered for the second round of NIP funding.

**21**

## residential homes demolished

Twenty-one blighted residential homes were demolished through the Neighborhood Initiative Program in five (5) of the seven (7) Paulding County Land Reutilization Corporation's Target Areas.

### Properties Demolished in Target Areas

Target Area 1: Cecil	Target Area 2: Antwerp	Target Area 3: Paulding	Target Area 4: Payne	Target Area 7: Grover Hill	Target Area 7 properties continued
102 Fourth Avenue	109 E. Daggett Street	115 S. Coupland Street	126 Ash Street	100 W. First Street	205 S. Cleveland Street
207 E. Plum Street	114 E. Woodcox Street	221 N. Coupland Street	221 E. Oak Street	102 E. Jackson Street	304 Monroe Street
400 N. Main Street	204 E. Daggett Street	848 Perry Street	403 S. Laura Street	200 E. First Street	306 E. Jackson Street
407 Main Street				200 N. Maple Street	402 W. Jackson Street

There were no acquisitions with NIP funds in Target Area 5: Broughton and Target Area 6: Oakwood.

## Additional Remarks

### Staff Turn-over

During the NIP acquisition process, two (2) highly involved MVPO staff members left for new employment opportunities. Picking up their responsibilities proved to be challenging. As a result, it took the land bank much longer to complete tasks and provide reports due to the employee turn over.

### Allita System

Over time, the Allita system became unreliable. Documents were not regularly reviewed by staff or it did not reflect this in the system. However, OFHA staff was always very organized and able to answer questions via phone or e-mail which was very helpful.

### Future Funding

The PCLRC would benefit tremendously from future rounds of NIP funding. The staff has just become accustomed to the process and is ready to take on more projects. The lack of State funding has hindered the efforts to reduce blight in Paulding County.

# Challenges

## Target Area

The current target areas located in Paulding County encompass the county's small cities and villages. This is unique compared to the large cities where other land banks operate. The target areas proved to be the biggest challenge for the PCLRC. Target areas as they were implemented in the previous rounds made it extremely difficult to serve areas of the County with significant need. These area boundaries limited our ability to address blight throughout the entire County. Paulding County is a large, rural community with high levels of blight spread out. Future rounds of funding would allow for serving the entire county, not just the current target areas.

## Future of the Properties

The Paulding County Land Bank continuously struggled to identify plans for the development of a parcel after demolition took place. A plan early in the process should have been developed to make the space active and vibrant immediately after demolition. This would have reduced costs and the County's concerns in regards to maintenance. In the end, everything worked out and many of the parcels have been developed into functioning lots. However, a development plan for these properties from the start would have made our program more efficient in the long run. Staff will address this when demolishing future properties.



This parcel is 204 Jefferson Street, a blighted structure sat here for years until it was taken into control by the PCLRC. Now, it will sit as a beautiful empty lot until the day investors realize its true potential.

# Education & Growth

## Land Bank Conference

The Western Reserve Land Bank Conference is useful because it presents best practices by other land banks in the State of Ohio. It is also beneficial because it presents state programs for additional funding opportunities such as brownfield redevelopment. Lastly, it is a fantastic opportunity to learn from other land banks that have faced similar issues. The conference provides workshops that focus on topics like historic preservation, brownfield, and the acquisition process.

"The land bank conference is invaluable to the growth and collaboration of land banks. From legal issues to everyday problems, I can always expect the land bank to address the most pressing issues that I face at work". - MVPO Staff



## Network

The Paulding County Land Bank created and strengthened countless relationships with the public and private sectors through NIP. There is regular collaboration between the Paulding, Henry, Williams, and Lucas County Land Banks. This network provides the PCLRC with new and creative solutions to tackling blight problems that the county has faced for years.



## Demolition Program Administration & Steps

The most valuable lessons that the PCLRC has learned relate to the administration of demolition programs. There are many steps required to successfully complete a demolition project. In the beginning, these steps were challenging to follow but became second nature to the staff. Today, demolition projects are PCLRC's main avenue of reducing blight in the community which would have been impossible without the NIP and HHF funds.

**Step 1:** Visit the property in question

**Step 2:** Asbestos inspection

**Step 3:** Contact utilities

**Step 4:** Abatement (if necessary)

**Step 5:** Demolition

**Step 6:** Bidding

**Step 7:** Bid Award & EPA Notification

**Step 8:** Contract Preparation

**Step 9:** Notice to Proceed

**Step 10:** Finished Site Inspection & Payment

# Partners

The accomplishments of the Paulding County, Ohio Land Bank were a combined effort of many public and private partners. Acquiring, demolishing, and re-utilizing these spaces is not the doing of a single person or entity, it is the active participation of countless organizations and entities dedicated to the betterment of Paulding County, Ohio.



## Maumee Valley Planning Organization (MVPO)

MVPO is a non-profit organization that focuses on land use. With their support the Land Bank was able to secure the NIP funding and managed all of the demolitions, greening, and reporting of land bank activity.



## Western Reserve Land Conservancy

land • people • community

## Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC)

The WRLC provided all of the tools necessary to create, organize, and manage a land bank in Paulding County, Ohio. Their partnership was vital in the establishment and success of the PCLRC.



## Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA)

Paulding County was hit hard by the 2008 recession and blight became a common sight. Fortunately, OHFA approved the County's NIP application which prompted a new partnership between public entities and started the beautification process for this community.



## Paulding County Government Officials

The operations of this land bank would not be possible without the full support from the County Commissioners, Treasurer, and municipality officials.



## Paulding County Habitat for Humanity

The PCLRC was happy to donate property that had been demolished using HHF funds for a habitat build. In one case, the land was donated just in time to have a home built by the Holidays for an elderly individual.

# Active Citizens & Leaders

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The images below depict the stages of demolition to beautification at 115 South Coupland Street in Paulding, Ohio.



## Roy Klopfenstein

"The positive visual effect the NIP has had on Paulding County has inspired people to improve their own property and encourage more people to move back to Paulding County communities".

Paulding County, OH Commissioner  
PCLRC Director  
419-784-3882

## Dennis Miller

"The land bank has transformed dilapidated structures into safe, valuable green space that will have positive impact on the revitalization of neighborhoods".

Maumee Valley Planning Organization  
Executive Director  
419-784-3882



## Miguel Becerra Hernandez

Village of Cecil  
Citizen Contact  
419-670-3656  
Miguelabucerra74@yahoo.com

## Reggie & Melanie Hinchcliff

Village of Grover Hill  
Citizen Contact  
419-587-3288  
rmhinchcliff@tds.net



## Laurie Lucas

Habitat for Humanity of Paulding County  
Citizen Contact  
419-399-4791  
corkydion@yahoo.com

THIS PROPERTY IS OWNED BY THE

# Overview & Success

## BY THE NUMBERS

21

### DEMOLITIONS BETWEEN 17'-20'

The Land Bank has demolished 21 total structures. These demolitions have improved safety, created opportunities for home builds in town, and saved the taxpayers thousands of dollars.

4

### POCKET PARKS DEVELOPED

These parks are small, outdoor spaces about the size of a residential lot or smaller. Pocket parks are beneficial because they are easy to maintain and transform underutilized corridors.

1

### HABITAT HOME BUILT

Habitat homes provide a unique opportunity for low-income persons to finally invest in healthy, stable housing. Donating a parcel from the land bank to this Habitat Build gave an elderly citizen greater self-esteem, sense of security, and personal control.

2

### NEW FUNDING SOURCE BEING PURSUED

Through the land bank network, PCLRC learned about the US EPA Brownfields Redevelopment Program and the State of Ohio abandoned Gas Station Cleanup Program. Since no more NIP funding has been allocated PCLRC is pursuing new avenues of funding to continue reducing blight across the County.

## Additional Remarks

### Environmental Impacts

Qualitative data collected through observation supports evidence of improvement to the local environment. Wildlife such as native butterflies, bees, and birds have returned as a result of the advanced greening practices that occurred after demolition.

The human environment improved as well. These abandoned structures were home to many unwanted pests and mold. Several of the structures had asbestos and lead problems too. These structures will no longer be a threat to humans or the environment. Now, they are a sign of community resilience.

### Impacts on Crime

At this time there is no direct correlation between crime reduction and work completed by the land banks. Indirectly, the demolitions of these structures make the community less inviting to criminal activity making it safer for the people who live in the communities served by the PCLRC. In the future, staff will be more data-driven so that the impact these demolitions have on crime can be quantified and reported on.

# Personal Impacts

**"Home is a shelter from storms—  
all sorts of storms"**

**—William J. Bennett**

## Home for the Holidays

The collaborative efforts of many individuals and organizations allowed Paulding County Habitat for Humanity to build a home for an elderly gentleman in Northwest Ohio just in time for the Holidays. Maumee Valley Planning Organization (MVPO) was searching for ways to provide this gentleman with safe, affordable, stable housing when they approached Paulding County Habitat for Humanity.

With no intention to build in 2019, Paulding County Habitat for Humanity director Laurie Lucas quickly went to work securing donations for the build. Where exactly to build this home weighed heavily on everyone involved. Where can you find affordable land to build a 946-square-foot home last minute? Laurie gave it her best shot and reached out to the Paulding County Land Bank. The PCLRC was more than happy to donate land for this cause in Grover Hill that was once the site of a crumbling home that suffered from years of neglect.

In addition to the efforts MVPO and HFH, the homeowner was approved for a low interest loan with USDA Rural Development to finance the mortgage. Plans to demolish the delapidated structure are in process, which will also improve the neighborhood. This project created a decent, safe and affordable home through collaboration efforts of many agencies.

Roy Klopfenstein, PCLRC Director and County Commissioner, said the land bank was more than happy to donate the land for the build. "It helps accomplish some goals (of the land bank) such as cleaning up communities and making a buildable lot," he said. "In this case, it benefits an area resident, and Habitat has graciously stepped forward to help. ... This project has provided a new home and add to the tax base. There are a lot of good things with this."

This project could not have been done so quickly had it not been for the fast actions of MVPO, HFH, USDA and the PCLRC. While this project weathered some storms throughout its life these dedicated organizations made a lasting change in this persons life and is a profound example of organizations working as one.



# Personal Impacts

The Village of Antwerp, Ohio experienced a dramatic makeover in August of 2018 and August of 2019 when three (3) ramshackle homes were demolished by the PCLRC and NIP. One of those structures can be seen to the right in the "before" photo.

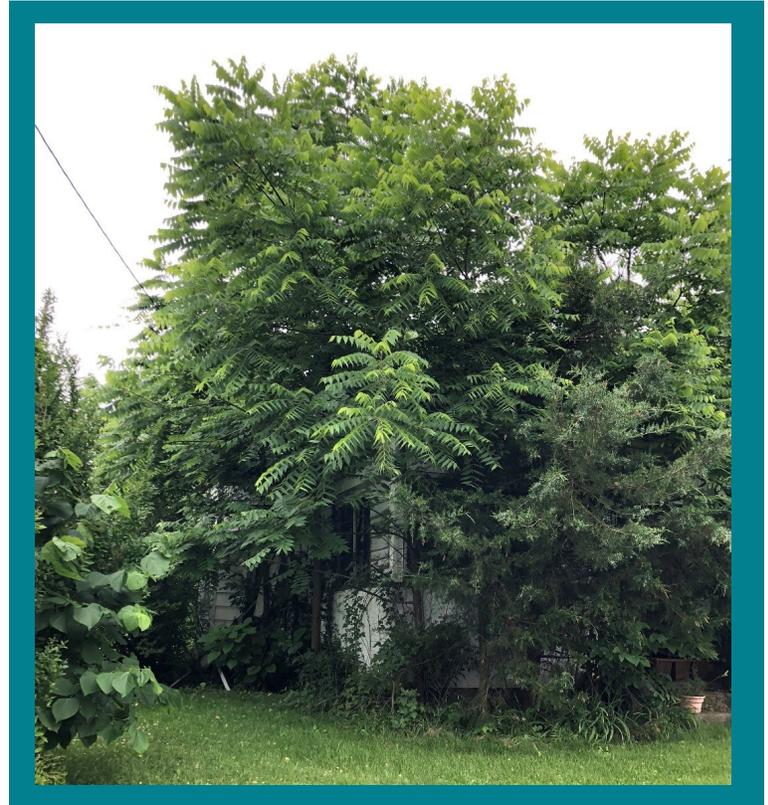


Sometimes we catch deer walking into our yard enjoying the space just as much as we do. This is an improvement compared to the bats, raccoons, and feral cats that lived in the house before it was demolished. *-Current Property Owner*

Before

After demolition and greening took place, an abutting property owner bought the parcel from the land bank, and stated they are very happy with the results. In the coming years, the owners hope to construct home additions that will extend onto the new property. This will create more space for them to enjoy time with family and friends-- something that has become so precious as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to keep families and communities apart.

The value of the property could increase dramatically because a dilapidated home no longer exists, beautiful landscaping was established, and a large expansion may be added to the home. Paulding County and the property owner will reap the benefits from this project for years to come which was only made possible through the support of the NIP and HHF.



After



The experience with the Paulding County Land Bank was very positive for my family & the community. In the summer the landscaping is so beautiful. I enjoy going outside and spending time with my daughter on warm sunny days. I even had professional photos of my family taken there this summer.

*-Current Property Owner*

