



August 22, 2023

Andrew Sheaf  
Local Government Policy Manager  
PA Department of Community & Economic Development  
Governor's Center for Local Government Services  
Commonwealth Keystone Building  
400 North Street, 4th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225

Via E-mail: [RA-DCLANDBANKORD@pa.gov](mailto:RA-DCLANDBANKORD@pa.gov)

Re: 2021 Audit for Pittsburgh Land Bank, Entity # 4271506

Dear Mr. Sheaf:

The Pittsburgh Land Bank (PLB) was formed via Local Ordinance 2014-0025 in the City of Pittsburgh, with its Certificate of Incorporation dated April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Its fiscal year runs concurrent with the calendar year January 1 - December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Enclosed is the completed audit of the PLB's finances and records for its activities in FY2021 as well as the Activity Report submitted to DCED per the regulations outlined in PA Act 153 of 2012, 68 Pa.C.S.A §2101 et seq.

Please consider this letter and the attached audited financial statements as our formal acknowledgement and record of fulfilling our audit obligation for the 2021 fiscal year for the PLB.

Please direct any questions regarding this matter to Sally Stadelman at [sstadelman@ura.org](mailto:sstadelman@ura.org).

Respectfully,

*Sally Stadelman*

Sally Stadelman  
Manager, Pittsburgh Land Bank

CC: Hon. Ed Gainey, Mayor, City of Pittsburgh  
Damara Carter, Chief Financial Officer, Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh  
Jennifer Gula, Director, Department of Finance, City of Pittsburgh  
Kimberly Clark-Baskin, Clerk, City of Pittsburgh  
Susheela Nemani-Stanger, Executive Director, URA

Attachments



## **2021 Activity Report**

In 2021, the Pittsburgh Land Bank began the year with several major staffing changes. Diamonte Walker resigned her position as Board Secretary to become the Executive Director of the PLB and was replaced on the Board by Doug Anderson, former Director of Finance at the City of Pittsburgh, who was elected Board Secretary. On April 5, 2021, a newly hired manager, Greg Miller, was welcomed to the PLB.

In March, a Cooperation Agreement for Services and Facilities was executed with The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA). The PLB was fully integrated as an affiliate entity of the URA, situated in the URA's Development Services Unit along with the URA's project managers, community development staff, and the URA's other development-focused affiliates. The URA will negotiate in good faith with the PLB Board and provide direction and support to PLB Staff.

A Memorandum of Understanding was executed between the PLB and URA to clarify roles and procedures within the Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement concerning real property transfers from the URA to the PLB in accordance with the PLB's policies and procedures. While the MOU allows for land transfers between the two organizations, it also outlines steps needed to make more transformative legislative changes between the major land recycling entities, the City of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and the Pittsburgh Land Bank.

The PLB executed the Property Reserve Donation Agreement to provide legal services directly to the City as part of a Donation and Professional Services Agreement between the City, PLB, and GRB Law, revitalizing the Pittsburgh Property Reserve as a program of the Pittsburgh Land Bank. By providing extra in-kind support, PLB allowed for efficient and expeditious title clearance for City-owned properties to be conveyed to community groups, limiting further property deterioration, and returning properties to productive reuse.

The PLB Board gave Authorization to engage with Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote, P.C. to complete the Land Bank's first quiet title action. DMC was able to begin clearing title for PLB owned property in Spring 2021.

In August, Emily Kauchak was onboarded as a one-year PULSE Fellow. She was hired to assist the Land Bank Manager and URA Staff to help move the PLB forward and greatly increasing the PLB's capacity to advance projects.

In December, Karen Brean, with forty years of professional experience in urban design and planning, was welcomed to the Board of Directors. Further guiding the PLB's mission to return unproductive Real property back to beneficial reuse in alignment with neighborhood needs and local priorities. In December, Doug Anderson stepped down from the PLB Board of Directors as he was leaving his position of Finance Director at the City. His replacement, who will be a financial specialist, will be appointed by the City of Pittsburgh Mayor and ratified by City Council.

We continue to work on the goals established and reported in our 2020 Activity Report.



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## **2022 Activity Report**

In March, the PLB Board authorized its first property acquisition from the Urban Redevelopment Authority of 6 Boggs Avenue. After entering a Purchase and Sale Agreement, the buyer, unfortunately, withdrew from the sale. The PLB re-listed the property in the fall, and the Board of Directors voted to approve the sale of 6 Boggs to the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation to house the Washington Heights Ecumenical Food Bank (WHEFB) and provide an affordable apartment. The PLB's very first sale of 6 Boggs Ave was completed in May 2023.

In May, the board approved a revision in PLB Policies and Procedures to allow for a non-competitive disposition process for individuals and community groups in the City of Pittsburgh with targeted end uses that qualify for directed sale: side yards, green space, affordable/mixed income or workforce housing, development assemblages where applicant owns a significant portion of the development site, properties in the Pittsburgh Property Reserve, community-based facilities, and a sale approved by 2/3 majority vote of the entire Board of Directors. This allows the PLB to be more effective in reaching its goals of preserving affordable housing, eliminating blight, and returning vacant and abandoned land back to the community.

In January 2022, Greg Miller resigned as PLB Manager, and Diamonte Walker resigned as Executive Director in March, effective in June 2022. The organization overcame these setbacks and moved forward, adding a temporary administrative assistant to organize and handle some of the PLB's everyday operations in May. In August, Emily Kauchak, who had served as PULSE fellow with the PLB since August of 2021, accepted a permanent position as PLB Assistant Manager. In September, Sally Stadelman was welcomed as the new PLB Manager. Sally brought nine years of experience working in five City Departments, including the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections to the PLB team. With the newly formed PLB team incorporated into the URA's transactions team, the PLB's capacity increased significantly.

In May 2022, an amendment to the existing Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement between the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the City of Pittsburgh, and the PLB was introduced before City Council to create a process for the PLB to request and receive property from the City of Pittsburgh's inventory. The City's current inventory is roughly 14,000 parcels.

In September, Senator Wayne Fontana stepped down from the PLB Board of Directors. His replacement, who will be a real estate specialist, will be appointed by the City of Pittsburgh Mayor and ratified by City Council.

A strategic plan, 2023 budget, and 4-year plan to spend the PLB's \$7 Million ARPA Allocation were created with the goal of bringing fifty (50) publicly owned properties into the PLB's inventory. Both budgets were approved by the PLB Board of Directors in December 2022.

Board members expressed the desire to better understand the process of bringing properties back onto the tax base and to become more involved in the work of the PLB. As a part of this effort, some Board members and staff attended the Center for Community Progress' 2022 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference in Chicago. To continue this momentum, executive conferences are held prior to public meetings each month for the staff to instruct and inform the Board of progress, and to receive input for ongoing plans and future goals.

In December, staff attended the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania/Pennsylvania Land Bank Network's final meeting of the year at the Homes Within Reach Conference to learn and to network with staff from other Pennsylvania Land Banks.

As a team, the staff continues to work on the goals established and reported in our 2020 Activity Report:

- Revitalizing the Pittsburgh Property Reserve as a program of the Pittsburgh Land Bank.
- Developing a Property Inquiries "Front Door" for the Pittsburgh Land Bank and publicly-owned property.
- Scaling and growing transactions and operations.
- Creating transformational community development opportunities for greenspace activation, homeownership accessibility, and other equitable uses of publicly owned property.