

The Strong Neighborhoods Plan is the Mayor’s comprehensive approach to the issue of City-owned and vacant property, focused on four strategic goals:

- Prevent** tax foreclosure and reduce the City’s property inventory and costs
- Mitigate** blight caused by vacant property, City-owned and otherwise
- Revitalize** City-owned property and neighborhoods affected by foreclosure
- Renew** vacant spaces and neighborhoods

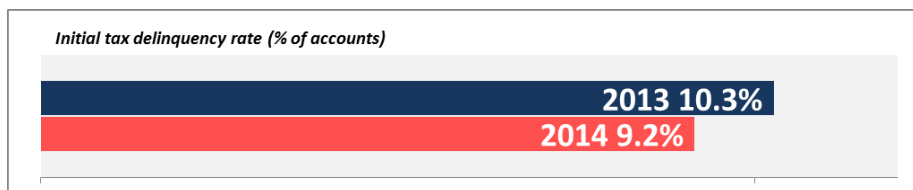
Through first quarter 2014, the Administration has begun to implement some of the efforts outlined in the Plan and funded via the 2014 Adopted Budget and other sources. Below is a barometer showing key indicators of the City’s current situation as of March 31.

YTD Totals (March)	2012	2013	2014
Bank Foreclosure Filings	1,221	831	557
Initial Tax Delinquency (% Accts.)	15,734 9.7%	16,665 10.3%	14,903 9.2%
Pending Tax Foreclosures	1,152	1,101	1,046
City Property Sales	52	48	80
City Inventory	397	815	1,226

GOAL: Prevention

The Dept. of Neighborhood Services (DNS) has begun referring homeowners for the Code Compliance Loan Program as outlined in the Budget and authorized by Council File 130940. The program seeks to assist owners who have a strong desire to remain in their home, but whose code violations have gone unaddressed due to severe income constraints and lack of any access to credit.

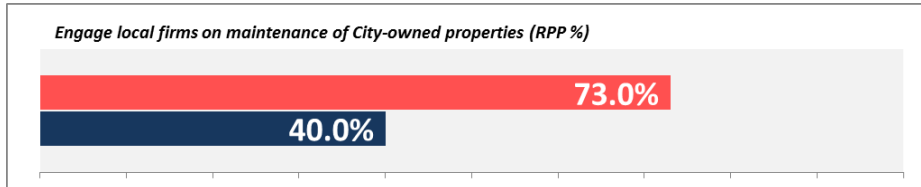
City Treasurer Spencer Coggs reports that initial tax delinquencies for 2014 are down by 10%, which translates to 1,700 properties out of the tax foreclosure pipeline compared to last year. The reduction is due in large part to ordinance changes (CF 121802 and 121803) allowing taxpayers to pay special charges on installments beginning in 2014. The Administration, Treasurer, and City Attorney will continue to work on tax foreclosure prevention as a means of reducing the City’s inventory and costs.



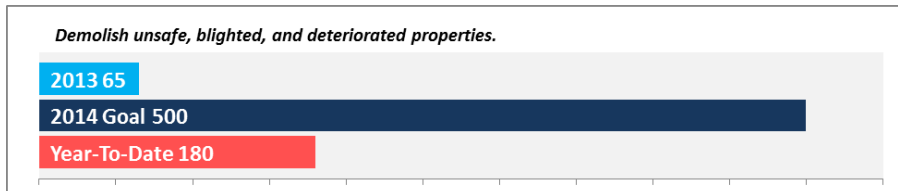
During the first quarter the Mayor and Housing Outreach Director attended 40 stakeholder meetings throughout the City. Meetings have been the primary method utilized to share information on the Strong Neighborhood Plan. Identifying financial assistance to help owners that are tax delinquent was a recurring concern for neighborhood stakeholders and residents alike. The Administration will be working to develop more robust prevention initiatives in the next six months.

GOAL: Mitigation

The Dept. of Public Works (DPW) has re-bid maintenance contracts for the approximately 1,200 improved properties and 3,000 vacant lots owned by the City. DPW will do its first full year of property maintenance, and bids for April-March snow and grass contracts are in, with unit costs down 15% from the last set of contracts. For the 2013-14 contracts, DPW set a 40% RPP goal, with achievement of 73% on that work.



Demolition activity funded in the Plan is underway, both by DNS contractors as well as DPW staff. DNS has a June 10, 2014 deadline to utilize \$2 million in grant funding from the State Dept. of Financial Institutions, supporting 200 demolitions. Those demolitions are in addition to the 200 funded in the budget, and 100 to be performed by DPW staff. As of March 31, 200 properties have been bid or contracted by DNS, and DPW has demolished 13 properties. Progress on the goal is shown below.



In outreach efforts, a nearly universal request was for information on demolitions, including timing and status, and more information on ownership and responsibility for vacant property. The Administration is developing tools to make this information sharing easier both for City staff as well as residents.

GOAL: Revitalization

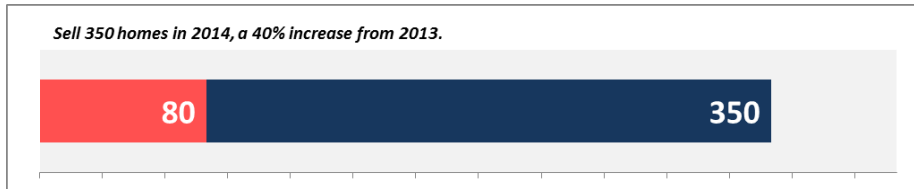
DCD has implemented three programs aimed at increasing sales of City property and finding “niche” methods and opportunities to reach as many buyers as possible. This includes three main efforts:

City-funded matching loans: The City will provide a forgivable loan to qualified owner-occupant buyers of City-owned homes via the Homebuyer Assistance Program.

Rent-to-own pilot: The City will work with qualified tenants we “inherit” via tax foreclosure to allow them to buy the home they live in.

ACTS partnership: ACTS has a unique and proven model to broker, finance, and rehab homes for highly motivated low-income buyers. The City will assist in expanding their efforts on City-owned properties.

Progress on the City’s 2014 sales goal is shown below.



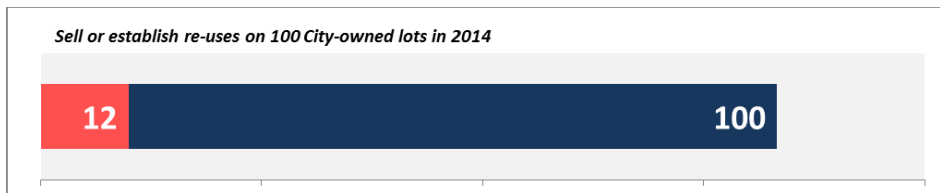
DCD is also using some of the Plan’s allocated funds as well as re-programmed CDBG funding (Council File130035) to support rental rehab work. Applications are in process for 18 rental units currently. WHEDA will be announcing soon recipients of Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and several candidate developments have utilized City-owned property for their proposed tax-credit financed developments.

The City and Take Root Milwaukee sponsored a homebuyer fair March 29 which drew over 300 attendees, and featured homebuyer seminars and the opportunity to tour City-owned homes featured at the event.

GOAL: Renewal

Activities supporting the Renewal goal are aimed at adding value to neighborhoods beyond housing and blight elimination. This includes re-use of vacant space and efforts to connect the City’s work on City-owned property to training and employment opportunities for City residents.

City staff is currently engaged in planning for vacant lot renewal efforts, including setting design and use parameters, and planning outreach. The Mayor’s HOME GR/OWN initiative will also be supported by the vacant lot work undertaken with the Plan. To date, the City has sold 12 lots, and has 57 garden leases in effect and up for renewal. Between HOME GR/OWN and vacant lot re-uses, the City’s total goal is 100 new sales and re-uses in 2014.



The DPW Dombrowski Urban Forestry Fellowship is currently field training **27 workers** in landscape management and urban forestry skills, including training and limited work on City-owned property. The Fellowship is funded in part by the Dombrowski estate, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, and City operating funds. At least 15 of these employees, and potentially more, will be placed with private firms upon completion. The balance will remain as City laborers through November.

DNS will be implementing the hybrid deconstruction program this summer, which will generate skill-building work for a local vendor and develop the local market for re-use of building and architectural materials. Mayor Barrett and the Administration are committed to combining workforce opportunities with Plan activities whenever possible.