

**CITY OF COLUMBUS  
LAND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICE  
MOW TO OWN PROGRAM**

The Mow to Own program strengthens the City of Columbus Land Bank’s purpose by improving Columbus neighborhoods and returning vacant, abandoned and underutilized properties into productive community assets. Additionally, the Mow to Own program strengthens existing community investments by transferring ownership of vacant and abandoned parcels acquired by the City of Columbus Land Bank to adjacent property owners and nonprofit neighborhood stakeholders.

As required by Ohio Revised Code §5722.07, the vacant lots owned by the City of Columbus Land Bank will be sold at not less than fair market value. Adjacent homeowners may purchase an adjacent vacant lot to expand the homeowner’s existing property by earning all or part of the purchase price by maintaining and/or making improvements on the vacant lot. Ownership of vacant lots may also be earned by a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status that is an existing stakeholder within the same neighborhood or Area Commission boundaries as the City owned property to be acquired. However, priority will be given to the adjacent property owners.

An application is required to participate in the program. Once the application is approved, the City and buyer will enter into an agreement that specifies the purchase price, proposed improvements, and maintenance plan. The property is transferred to the buyer once enough credits are earned toward the purchase price, either by completing and paying for the agreed upon improvements or cash payment. Additionally, the deed for the vacant lot acquired through the Mow to Own program will contain deed restrictions, including, but not limited to a restriction that the acquired vacant lot may not be resold without written approval from the City of Columbus Land Redevelopment Office for a period of five years from the closing date.

Potential purchasers must meet the following qualifications:

- *Responsibilities of all purchasers of vacant lots through the Mow to Own Program*
  - Submit the required application with a proposal attached detailing the maintenance and/or improvements to be completed on the vacant lot
  - Pay a nonrefundable administrative fee of \$175. This fee will be waived if the purchaser contributes at least 50% of the fair market value in cash and/or improvements to the lot.
  - Complete all proposed maintenance and/or improvements on the vacant lot to be acquired, including required maintenance sufficient to satisfy the fair market value purchase price
  
- *Adjacent Homeowners and Adjacent Nonprofit Neighborhood Organizations*
  - Own and occupy the property adjacent to the land bank vacant lot to be acquired
  - No delinquent real estate or personal property taxes in Franklin County

- No history of property maintenance, nuisance, building, and/or zoning code violations
- No delinquent utility accounts
- Adjacent Nonprofit Neighborhood Organizations must have 501(c)(3) status at the time of application and maintain it throughout the agreement
- *Non-adjacent Nonprofit Neighborhood Organizations*
  - Have 501(c)(3) status at the time of application and maintain it throughout the agreement
  - Successfully license and maintain a land bank vacant lot for a minimum of one year
  - Be an existing stakeholder within the same neighborhood or area commission boundaries as the land bank vacant lot to be acquired
  - No delinquent real estate or personal property taxes in Franklin County
  - No history of property maintenance, nuisance, building, and/or zoning code violations
  - No delinquent utility accounts
  - Provide evidence that the nonprofit organization has the ability to complete the proposed project, including maintenance and improvements, in a timely manner in compliance with all city, state and other applicable regulatory requirements

## Process

- *Price*
  - O.R.C. 5722.07 requires that the City of Columbus Land Bank Program sell the vacant lots for not less than fair market value. The sales price will be based on an internal fair market value determination by the Land Bank Program. However, the potential purchasers have the option to hire an independent appraiser to value the vacant lot or use the land value listed by the Franklin County Auditor.
- *Administrative Approval Process*
  - Purchaser must submit a completed application. Along with the application, purchasers will have the option to submit a proposal to earn all or any portion of the final purchase price by maintenance and/or improvements on the vacant lot.
    - Maintenance shall include, but not be limited to, mowing and removal of trash and debris on the vacant lot. Purchasers will receive a \$25.00 credit for each mowing and related maintenance occurrence, up to a maximum of 15 times per year.
    - Improvements shall include, but not be limited to, gardening, landscaping, fencing, etc. Credit given for improvements will not exceed 50% of the fair market value. Purchasers will be required to submit receipts and photographs of any improvements.

- Purchasers will have the option to pay all or part of the purchase price for the vacant lot at any time during the agreement.
- The application and submitted proposal will be reviewed by the Land Bank staff. As required, the Land Bank staff may request additional information from the applicant and negotiate the terms of the purchase, including the maintenance and improvements proposal cost and timeline.
- Applicant will receive a notification letter with their approval or disapproval status.
- If approved, the applicant must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) to purchase the vacant lot. The MOU will become null and void if the purchaser fails to adequately perform the proposed maintenance and/or improvements to the vacant lot.
- *Legislative Approval*
  - After the application has been approved, the Land Bank staff prepares the required communication and legislation for City Council approval.
- *Closing*
  - After the purchase price of the vacant lot has been earned or paid in accordance with an executed MOU between the purchaser and the City of Columbus Land Bank Program, the Land Bank staff will prepare the necessary documents and schedule the closing to effect the transfer of the vacant lot
  - A deed will be prepared for transfer of the property
  - The City will not provide title insurance to the purchaser. The purchaser may independently purchase title insurance through a title company

**Mow to Own Addendum**

**Include this sheet with your completed Application for Yard Expansion or Vacant Lot Purchase.**

**About the property you wish to purchase:**

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| Parcel ID Number:               |
| Address:                        |
| Purchase Price of the Property: |

**Please list the proposed improvements and a timeline for the work:**

| <u>Proposed Improvement</u> | <u>Completion Date</u> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|                             |                        |
|                             |                        |
|                             |                        |

**Please attach a site plan, estimates, pictures or any other relevant information that will assist us in evaluating your application.**

**Signature (Required)**

I hereby authorize the Land Redevelopment Office of the City of Columbus to obtain any credit, criminal, or other information necessary to

- 1) Determine my ability, or the ability of the party that I represent, to complete the proposed project.
- 2) Verify the information supplied in this application. All the information that I have provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

X\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_