



City of Philadelphia

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Michael A. Nutter, Mayor
Mark McDonald, Press Secretary
Office: 215-686-6210
Cell: 267-303-9248

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAYOR NUTTER TRANSFERS FIRST PROPERTIES TO THE PHILADELPHIA LAND BANK

Philadelphia, December 9, 2015 — Mayor Michael A. Nutter electronically transferred the deeds for 150 properties into the Philadelphia Land Bank's inventory from the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC), the first of approximately 650 PHDC properties that will be transferred to the Philadelphia Land Bank by the end of the year. In total, the Land Bank will receive 225 properties from PHDC this week.

"Over the last five years, we have worked together to transform a dysfunctional system of property disposition into one that better serves the needs of this City through the creation of the Philadelphia Land Bank," said Mayor Nutter. "As of this week, the Land Bank now owns properties, bringing each closer to a new use, whether it is an affordable home, new business or a community garden. I am proud to say that Philadelphia is the largest city in America with a land bank and I thank all of our partners in this process."

This deed transfer aligns with the Philadelphia Land Bank's comprehensive strategic plan.

"Creating a well-regarded Strategic Plan and fixing thousands of deeds set the stage for today's transfer," said Nicholas J. Scafidi, the Land Bank's interim executive director. "Acquiring properties with insurable titles in locations with identified potential uses will give new owners the confidence to move forward."

PHDC owns 780 of the approximately 8,700 publicly-owned vacant properties in Philadelphia. PHDC is already in discussion with potential new owners for several of these properties and, so as not to disrupt these potential transactions, they will not be included in the deed transfer.

"PHDC is dedicated to improving Philadelphia's neighborhoods," said David Thomas, interim Executive Vice President, PHDC. "We're pleased to be moving properties to the Land Bank as a way of advancing our mission."

The transfer process included work to address inaccuracies, remove City liens and prepare the deeds for transfer by staff from the Land Bank, Law Department, Revenue Department, Department of Streets, Records Department and PHDC. Land Bank staff submitted the deeds to the Records Department via Simplifile, a web-based deed transfer system.

"I am grateful for the tremendous cooperation between the agencies involved in these property transfers," said

Records Commissioner Joan Decker. “Recording hundreds of deeds in a few weeks is a significant task, and the quality of the records we are receiving will make that task much easier.”

In addition to the properties from PHDC, City Council has begun the process to convey 833 City-owned properties to the Land Bank via the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, per City Council resolutions introduced on December 3.

“Moving properties into the Land Bank is a significant step but there are many more to take. Creation of the Land Bank was a deliberative, collaborative process, and so must be the process of getting it running on all cylinders. While our strongest neighborhoods are thriving post-recession, too many suffer from disinvestment,” said Council President Darrell Clarke. “The Philadelphia Land Bank is a promise to our struggling neighborhoods that City Hall sees you, and is ready to help you heal and grow. I can’t wait to work with my colleagues, the current and next Administration, and all other stakeholders toward making good on that vow.”

Councilwoman Maria Quiñones Sánchez added, “The Land Bank is a valuable tool that will help us revitalize our neighborhoods. This is an important step in our ability to use it.”