



Contact:

William Mrdeza

Community Services and Economic Development Director

City of Mt. Pleasant

989-779-5311

wmrdeza@mt-pleasant.org

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Mount Pleasant gets \$250,000 grant to aid in demolition of former hospital facility

MSHDA allocates \$3.8 million to help 19 communities tackle blighted properties around the state

MT. PLEASANT, MICH. – Residents will finally get to say goodbye to the hospital facility formerly known as the Mt. Pleasant Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities thanks in part to a Blight Elimination Program grant awarded by the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority.

“This will help Mt. Pleasant revitalize a distressed area and attract new jobs and development to mid-Michigan,” said Sen. Judy Emmons, R-Sheridan. “This is the result of a cooperative effort with state and local officials to return local property to productive use, improve safety and help bring new economic growth and investment in the community.”

The 100-acre project area contains 17 vacant buildings and is bordered by a public school building, registered historic properties owned by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe and residential neighborhoods.

According to the grant application, "removal of the dilapidated, abandoned buildings remains the biggest impediment to redevelopment of this high-potential site." The project plan is to demolish the remaining on-site buildings and make the property "development ready."

“Mt. Pleasant is a beautiful community and one of mid-Michigan’s leading cities,” said House Speaker Kevin Cotter, R-Mt. Pleasant. “It is important we do everything we can to keep it that way as it continues to grow now and into the future. This program will give us a great new tool to support smart investment and development.”

The application says the site has been a magnet for trespass, theft and unauthorized access and this grant will "assist the City of Mt. Pleasant with its efforts to reduce blight in order to better develop a vibrant community, strengthen infrastructure, and create jobs."

This grant is funded through a portion of Michigan’s Homeownership Protection Fund that was appropriated to MSHDA in 2012 and repurposed last year to continue to address blight elimination needs across the state.

County Land Banks and local units of government statewide were invited to apply for up to \$250,000 in assistance. Forty-nine applications were submitted, requesting more than \$8 million to fight blight. Three different groups scored each application and the combined scores were used to select the 19 grant recipients.

Proposals were evaluated by representatives from MSHDA and the Michigan Land Bank Authority based on their anticipated impact on public safety, stabilizing property values and enhancing economic development. Public and private investment in the project and alignment with a local place plan or other placemaking effort were also factors.

Eligible projects were required to involve demolition of blighted buildings in business districts, downtowns, or commercial corridors; full or partial demolition of commercial buildings that are part of a development project with funding commitments and/or involve demolition of blighted residential structures.

The following cities received grant funds through the Blight Elimination Program:

- Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- City of Mt. Pleasant; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- Marquette County Land Bank; preliminary award amount \$223,250.00
- City of Battle Creek; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- City of Harbor Beach; preliminary award amount \$150,000
- Kent County Land Bank Authority; preliminary award amount \$50,000
- City of Springfield ; preliminary award amount \$135,000
- City of Dowagiac; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- City of Monroe; preliminary award amount \$200,000
- City of Muskegon; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- City of Bay City; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- Berrien County Community Development; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- City of Manistique; preliminary award amount \$201,550
- City of Kalamazoo; preliminary award amount \$217,350
- City of Alpena; preliminary award amount \$245,000
- City of Ypsilanti; preliminary award amount \$250,000
- Clare County Community Development; preliminary award amount \$157,500
- City of Coldwater; preliminary award amount \$65,250
- Village of Marcellus; preliminary award amount \$155,100

The Blight Elimination Program has funded approximately \$25 million in demolition projects dating back to 2012 and has applied the newly repurposed \$3.8 million to continue efforts to demolish vacant and abandoned structures.

“By investing in blight elimination we are investing in the future of Michigan,” said Kevin Elsenheimer, executive director at MSHDA. “Eliminating blighted properties promotes public safety, stabilizes property values and enhances economic development opportunities.”

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) provides financial and technical assistance through public and private partnerships to create and preserve decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents and to engage in community economic development activities to revitalize urban and rural communities.*

*MSHDA's loans and operating expenses are financed through the sale of tax-exempt and taxable bonds as well as notes to private investors, not from state tax revenues. Proceeds are loaned at below-market interest rates to developers of rental housing, and help fund mortgages and home improvement loans. MSHDA also administers several federal housing programs. For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/mshda.