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Tri-COG Land Bank Sells First Home to Owner Occupant

On April 12, 2021, Tri-COG Land Bank (TCLB) closed on its first sale of a home. Located in Monroeville, the buyer of this house has committed to live in the property as their primary residence for at least three years. This is the first time a house has been sold by a land bank in Allegheny County.

“This milestone is the culmination of many years of planning, engagement with our municipal and school district partners, and pursuing legal action to clear title and get this property ready to market,” said An Lewis, Executive Director of TCLB. “We are so excited to see this house now in ownership of someone committed to renovating it and making it their new home.”

For several years, the Borough of Monroeville received numerous complaints from neighbors about the property and was burdened with cutting its grass. Tri-COG Land Bank acquired the house in 2018 at the recommendation of the Borough of Monroeville. After TCLB acquired the property, it cleaned out leftover trash and debris from inside the structure and managed all property maintenance needs, including grass cutting and snow shoveling. Additionally, TCLB pursued a legal process called Quiet Title Action to clear the house’s title of any outstanding liens or debts. This enables the new owner to purchase title insurance, a critical protection to make sure that they will not be held accountable for any debts accrued by the house’s previous owners.

So far in 2021, Tri-COG Land Bank’s Board of Directors has approved buyer applications to sell 10 additional properties. TCLB is currently in the process of preparing closing documents for those transactions. TCLB also sold a vacant lot in Millvale earlier this year. Previously, a dilapidated structure sat on this lot. TCLB demolished that structure in June 2020 using lead safe demolition methods, piloting a technical specification it developed in partnership with Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh. Now that the lot is clear of debris and safe from health hazards such as lead dust in the air and soil, a new house will be constructed on top of it.

Tri-COG Land Bank currently has 8 houses listed for sale along with one vacant lot. It owns 47 properties total. Earlier this month, it was announced that Tri-COG Land Bank will be recognized for promoting community and economic revitalization and given a 2021 Governor’s Award for Local Government Excellence.

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About the Tri-COG Land Bank

Founded in 2017, the Tri-COG Land Bank (TCLB) revitalizes neighborhoods by transitioning vacant, blighted properties to beneficial reuse. TCLB partners with local municipalities, community development corporations, nonprofits, and individuals to strategically align purchases with each community's priorities and plans.

TCLB currently operates in Blawnox, Braddock Hills, Chalfant, Churchill, Clairton, Dravosburg, East Pittsburgh, Edgewood, Etna, Forest Hills, McKeesport, Millvale, Monroeville, North Braddock, Pitcairn, Rankin, Sharpsburg, South Versailles, Swissvale, Turtle Creek, White Oak, and Wilkins.

For more information, please visit <https://tricoglandbank.org/>.