

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

October 9, 2019

**BOARD OF HEALTH RESOLUTION
SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL-RESIDENTIAL BUFFERS FUND**

WHEREAS, while some communities in Jefferson County were originally developed near industrial facilities where workers were employed, these communities are now more likely to experience blight, diminished property values, and decreased access to amenities that promote good health and quality of life (1);

WHEREAS, neighborhood blight contributes to poor health and health disparities (2);

WHEREAS, blight, including large numbers of abandoned houses in local neighborhoods resulting in safety and health hazards, as well as environmental problems, have been identified as significant concerns by residents of Jefferson County (3);

WHEREAS, a guiding principle for local city planning efforts is to avoid locating residential land uses near industrial land uses (4);

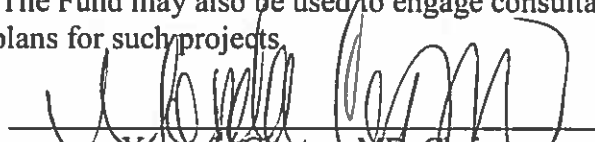
WHEREAS, the City of Birmingham established the Birmingham Land Bank Authority to work collaboratively and transparently with community stakeholders and the City of Birmingham to steward vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties and dispose of them to the best use as defined by the needs of the community to reduce community blight and stabilize neighborhoods (5);

WHEREAS, Birmingham's Neighborhood Revitalization and Public Safety Committee has recommended utilizing the Land Bank to facilitate development of abandoned land and blighted property, including converting some abandoned land into green spaces (6);

WHEREAS, various environmental improvement projects and other innovations can decrease the impact of industrial activity on nearby residential areas; for example, buffer zones and targeted planting of trees and other plants around heavy industrial sites can reduce particulates and some other pollutants in the air, mitigate heat, protect the water and soil, and improve the aesthetics of the surrounding areas (7);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Jefferson County Board of Health:

- 1) Approves transfer of \$2,000,000.00 from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to the General Fund Committed Fund Balance to establish the Sustainable Industrial-Residential Buffers Fund;
- 2) Directs the Jefferson County Health Officer to direct the use of this Fund for the public health benefit of residential areas in close proximity to heavy industrial sites in Jefferson County, including creation of buffer zones, green spaces and other environmental improvement projects;
- 3) Intends for this Fund to provide matching funds for local, state or federal grants, or to co-fund with other entities who make substantial financial or in-kind contributions, projects that provide a public health benefit. The Fund may also be used to engage consultants or designers to make recommendations or plans for such projects.


Yocunda Clayton, MD, Chair
Jefferson County Board of Health

References:

- 1) Birmingham Community Framework Plans. Found at <https://www.imaginebham.com/>
- 2) Erwin de Leon and Joseph Schilling, "Urban Blight and Public Health: Addressing the Impact of Substandard Housing, Abandoned Buildings, and Vacant Lots" The Urban Institute, April 11, 2017.
- 3) The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment, "Community Matters: Assessment, Visioning and Planning for a Healthy Jefferson County, Alabama;" 2019.
- 4) "Future Land Use, Regulations and Urban Design," from the City of Birmingham Comprehensive Plan, Part IV, Chapter 134. Adopted by the Birmingham City Council on October 2, 2013.
- 5) "Planting Healthy Air" Nature Conservancy
https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/20160825_PHA_ExSummary_Final.pdf
- 6) "Our Mission," Birmingham Land Bank; Found at <http://birminghamlandbank.org/about/>
- 7) Neighborhood Revitalization & Public Safety Committee Report, in "The Woodfin Way: A Citizen-led Transition for Progress in Birmingham," March 15, 2018.