

Community & Economic Development
Department Mission Statement:
To provide leadership, foster partnerships, and promote balanced growth to enhance the quality of life in all neighborhoods.

City of Rockford
Community & Economic Development
Neighborhood Development Division
425 E. State Street - 2nd Floor
Rockford, IL 61104
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Mow or Improve to Own:
City Owned Vacant Lot Program

**City of Rockford
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**425 East State Street
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Why institute a Mow or Improve to Own Vacant Lots Program?

The City of Rockford owns vacant residential lots and is looking for quality owners to acquire and maintain this vacant land. The Mow to Own and Improve Program is designed to help adjacent property owners acquire City vacant lots and improve neighborhoods while decreasing the City's maintenance burden. Please see pages 5-6 of this brochure for the properties eligible for purchase.

The Mow or Improve to Own program has been designed to help adjacent property owners and eligible non-profits acquire certain City vacant lots and improve neighborhoods. Buyers commit to maintaining the lot and improving such as with landscaping, fencing, tree removal, grass restoration. The cost of maintenance and improvement is subtracted from the purchase price.

The program is deemed necessary in order to provide for the preservation and improvement of property, health, and safety of the City of Rockford, Illinois, and its residence and to contribute to the economic and environmental improvement of the City.



Eligible Mow to Own Properties Continued

House Number	Prefix	Street Name	Suffix	Parcel #
117	S	Independence	Ave	11-21-281-018
122-124		Irving	Ave	11-22-152-008
7xx		Kishwaukee	Ct	11-26-408-018
430		Knowlton	St	11-27-405-001
130		Lexington	Ave	11-20-278-011
134		Lexington	Ave	11-20-278-012
316		Lexington	Ave	11-20-282-004
713		Locust	St	11-22-234-012
1417		Mulberry	St	11-22-109-032
1435		Mulberry	St	11-22-109-026
1510		Mulberry	St	11-22-152-006
616		Newport	Ave	11-20-454-006
729	N	Rockton	Ave	11-23-103-002
733	N	Rockton	Ave	11-23-103-001
210		Tay	St	11-22-183-002
450		Underwood	St	11-22-202-005
8xx	S	Winnebago	St	11-27-207-012
1027		Woodlawn	Ave	11-14-352-007



Eligible Mow to Own Properties

House Number	Prefix	Street Name	Suffix	Parcel #
724		7th	Ave	11-26-401-003
31xx		8th	St	15-02-430-019
		9th	St	15-02-435-011
2614		10th	St	15-01-103-017
418		Albert	Ave	11-21-226-011
1130		Andrews	St	11-22-131-010
17xx		Chestnut	St	11-21-285-009
13xx	N	Church	St	11-14-407-017
13xx	N	Church	St	11-14-408-035
1101	S	Church	St	11-27-258-010
430		Concord	Ave	11-20-426-007
3xx		Concord	Ave	11-20-281-005
718		Cunningham	St	11-27-133-002
13xx		Cunningham	St	11-22-352-002
1918		Elm	St	11-21-284-001
1302		Fairview	Ave	11-15-379-010
3417		Green	St	11-20-281-007
520		Hartford	Ave	11-20-429-012
636		Hartford	Ave	11-20-477-013
409	S	Horace	Ave	11-21-306-026
411	S	Horace	Ave	11-21-306-027
1012	N	Horsman	St	11-15-426-030
10XX	N	Horsman	St	11-15-426-044
	N	Horsman	St	11-15-426-029

Eligible Applicants

1. Adjacent owner-occupants that own property next door (share a property line)
2. 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Eligibility Requirements

1. Within the last 5 years, there can be no buyer delinquent taxes in Winnebago County; no history of property maintenance, nuisance, building and zoning code violations; and no delinquent City utility accounts.
2. Property owners must own and occupy the property adjacent to the land bank vacant lot to be acquired.
3. Non-profit organizations must have 501(c)(3) status at the time of application and maintain such throughout the term of the agreement.

General Information & Requirements

- Adjacent land owners must own and occupy their residence to be given preference as a buyer.
- If vacant land is wanted by both adjacent land owners, the property can be split.
- Buyers must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City which will include a Hold Harmless Clause.
- At a minimum, the buyer will be responsible for basic maintenance. This includes mowing and trimming the lot once every two weeks, raking leaves, shoveling snow, and picking up trash.
- The lot must be maintained for two years without City code violation of the property will revert back to the City. The City reserves the right to condition the sale on the buyer's acceptance of this deed restriction.



Vacant Lot Cost Reduction

- General Maintenance

Maintenance Care	Dollar amount	Maximum per Year
Lawn Mowing	\$50 per cut	\$500
Leaf Removal	\$50 per removal	\$100
Snow Removal	\$50 per removal on front sidewalk	

- Value of the lot will be identified along with the approved improvements
- The cost of a lot will be reduced by 1/2 if the proposed buyer can demonstrate that they have been maintaining the lot the year prior to their application

Improvement Cost Reduction: Improvements to the properties such as a new fence, landscaping, tree removal, and grass restoration can be used as a ‘payment’ in addition to mowing and snow removal. Participants must submit an Improvement Plan. The cost of improvements must be agreed upon prior to improvements being started.

Payment for Work/Improvements: The City will not pay or reimburse for anyone’s work or improvements. Purchaser’s contributions will be considered ‘sweat equity’ and will be subtracted from the selling price/current market value of the property. The amount subtracted will be based on receipts and photographs of any improvements and logs kept by the buyer for mowing/snow removal.

Time to complete work: No longer than 24 months.

What is the value of each vacant lot? The value of each parcel will vary based on size and comparable sales in the area. The value will be the market value of each property as determined by City Staff, the Winnebago County Supervisor of Assessments or a professional appraiser, and approved by the City Council.

- After the purchase price of the vacant lot has been earned or paid in accordance with the MOU and in an amount sufficient to satisfy the fair market value purchase price, City staff will prepare the necessary document(s) and transfer the vacant lot.
- The City will send a letter annually to those property owners who live adjacent to available City vacant lots.
- The City reserves the right to accept or reject any and all applications. All applicant personal information is confidential.
- Only lots listed for sale are eligible (see pages 5-6). Applications for lots not listed will be returned. The City has the right to exclude properties from the program.

Where do I get an application for the Mow or Improve to Own program?

- Pick up an application at City Hall:
425 East State Street, 2nd Floor,
Rockford, IL 61104
- Call 779-348-7162 and request an application.
We will mail it to you!
- Visit our website at www.rockfordil.gov:
 - Search “Mow to Own”
 - Select the link titled “Mow to Own & Improve Program”

