Wayne County is continuing the Action Before Auction program, begun last year as a pilot program to speed up redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed homes and businesses, strengthen neighborhoods and reduce the number of homeowner and renter evictions.

“This program gives us an important tool as we continue to fight homelessness and preserve neighborhoods,” Commissioner Alisha Bell said.

In the past year, the program included 141 properties throughout the county that otherwise would have headed for a tax sale through the Wayne County Treasurer’s Office.

Some 240 additional properties were added to the program this year. Those properties, by community, are in: Detroit, 181; Harper Woods, 17; Highland Park, 6; and Brownstown Township, 5. The program also includes three properties in each of the following communities: Riverview, Southgate, Sumpter Township, Taylor and Wayne. It includes two properties each in Canton Township, Dearborn, Flat Rock, Inkster and Van Buren Township and single properties in Belleville, Grosse Ile Township, Trenton, Westland, Woodhaven and Wyandotte.

Under the program, Wayne County exercises its right of refusal on the properties, which allows them to transfer to the Wayne County Land Bank – a separate authority – for developers to bid on them. Developers bid on the properties and acquire them by paying the amount of back taxes owned on each property.

Developers also work with eligible residents to keep them in their homes. The program is seen as an alternative to tax sales, where bidders are often speculators who sometimes decline to restore properties in a timely fashion and do not work to keep residents from losing their homes.
Wayne County Commission Vice-Chair Alisha Bell is serving in a leadership position on public safety issues with the National Association of Counties (NACo) during the organization’s 2018-19 legislative year.

Commissioner Bell is chair for NACo’s Justice and Public Safety Committee, which evaluates such criminal justice and public safety issues as crime prevention, juvenile justice and homeland security, among many others. Commissioner Bell served as a committee vice-chair during the 2017-18 legislative year.

“These issues are vital, not only to Wayne County but to counties throughout the nation,” Commissioner Bell said.

“I am pleased to be serving with a leadership team that includes representation from county courts and commissions from a number of other states.”

As the committee’s chairperson, Commissioner Bell will also work closely with NACo President Greg Cox on the organization’s agenda for the coming year.

Commissioner Bell is also a former NACo board member and immediate past president of the National Association of Black County Officials (NABCO).

Commissioner Bell serves on the Wayne County Commission committees on Public Safety, Judiciary & Homeland Security and Health and Human Services and is vice-chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, which just completed work on the county budget for 2018-19.
Wayne County Commissioners have approved a resolution by Commission Vice-Chair Alisha Bell in support of making it easier to vote and resist to vote. Commissioners voted in August to back Commissioner Bell’s resolution in support of Promote the Vote, a proposed amendment to the Michigan Constitution that would safeguard elections while removing barriers many working families face.

“Our nation was built on the right to vote, but Michigan lags behind many other states in adopting measures that would allow more people to vote,” Commissioner Bell said.

The Promote the Vote amendment would allow citizens with proof of residency to register to vote at any time up to Election Day, with rules to be established by the Michigan Legislature.

It would also:
- Ensure that military service members and overseas voters receive ballots in time for their votes to count.
- Protect the right to secret ballots.
- Register voters automatically at Michigan Secretary of State’s offices, unless they decline.
- Provide all voters with absentee ballots for any reason.
- Ensure the accuracy and integrity of elections by auditing election results.
- Provide voters with the option of voting for a straight party ticket.

“These common sense reforms are already in place in a number of other states,” Commissioner Bell said. “It’s time for Michigan to adopt them as well.”

County supports recovery programs

Led by Vice-Chair Alisha Bell, the Wayne County Commission declared September as National Recovery Month 2018 in the county. The designation supports those who choose to overcome alcohol and drug addiction and also supports those programs that help them succeed.

“The cost of addiction is high, not just for individuals but for their families, employers and society in general,” Commissioner Bell said. “We must continue to do whatever we can to help people recover.”

National Recovery Month began nearly 30 years ago to educate Americans about the treatment options for addiction and mental health issues that promote recovery and help individuals lead healthy, productive and rewarding lives. This year’s theme, “Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose and Community” highlighted how integrated care helps recovery from addiction and mental health issues.

Individuals seeking help for substance abuse and mental health issues can call the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Agency at its 24-hour hotline, (800) 241-4949.

DPS is recognized among nation’s best

The Wayne County Department of Public Services recently received accreditation from the American Public Works Association, making it one of only three public service agencies in Michigan, and 142 nationwide, to have received that prestigious designation.

APWA Accreditation is given to agencies that exceed best management practices to deliver superior service to the public.

“Despite the challenges we have faced in recent years, the Wayne County Commission, the Wayne County Executive’s office and DPS leadership have all worked together to continue to see that our residents’ public services and recreational needs have been met,” Commissioner Bell said.

Wayne County DPS maintains county roads, buildings and parks. With nearly 700 employees and an annual budget of roughly $300 million, it is among the largest county departments.

Final hazardous waste collection is Nov. 3

Wayne County will conduct its final household hazardous waste disposal day of the year Saturday, Nov. 3, at the Wayne County Community College District Downriver Campus, 21000 Northline Road in Taylor. Items can be dropped off between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Items will only be accepted from those who can prove they are county residents. Items to be collected include household paints, bathroom cleaners, floor care products, computers, cell phones and car batteries.

For a complete list, visit the event flyer at https://www.waynecounty.com/departments/environmental/land-resource-management.aspx.
Please join Wayne County Commission Vice-Chair Alisha Bell for a Town Hall meeting October 24, 2018 6-7:30 p.m. at N. Rosedale Park Community House 18445 Scarsdale Detroit, MI 48223 Commissioner Bell will be joined by Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy. Please RSVP to 313-224-0936.