

Johnston Square: Implementation Strategy

Fall 2022

Opening

A New Era of Neighborhood Development

As established in the [Framework for Community Development](#), the City of Baltimore is at a unique inflection point with a substantial physical transformation and growing employment opportunities. However, a history of segregation and racial discrimination has left a disparity amongst neighborhoods, some thriving under new investment and others facing continued effects of poverty and disinvestment. Middle income neighborhood health is threatened by aging residential housing stock and limited access to capital. Low-income neighborhoods face stagnant values and lack adequate, safe affordable housing options. This combination of challenges proves the urgency and necessity for continued development and information of a coherent, increasingly comprehensive community development strategy as initially detailed in the Framework.

Our Continued Commitment to the Framework

The City will continue to promote thriving, economically sustainable communities through an equity lens. Baltimore has a once in a generation opportunity to “get community development right” through development without displacement. The City understands the need to support community-based development efforts and strengthen social capital to empower stakeholders to participate as full partners in the process.

This begins with authentic, collaborative community planning. The City is dedicated to working directly with communities which include the following consensus-based planning work:

- Identifying target blocks in Impact Investment Areas
- Implementing community development strategies and priorities based on a specific neighborhood’s characteristics
- Building support with existing residents
- Envisioning outcomes for key sites

Finally, we remain committed to supporting existing homeowners and renters to ensure these long-term residents benefit from rising values and improved neighborhood conditions. At the same time, the preservation and creation of quality, affordable housing - both rental and homeownership - must be planned for at the outset to achieve successful mixed-income communities. Supporting long-term residents will not be an after-thought.

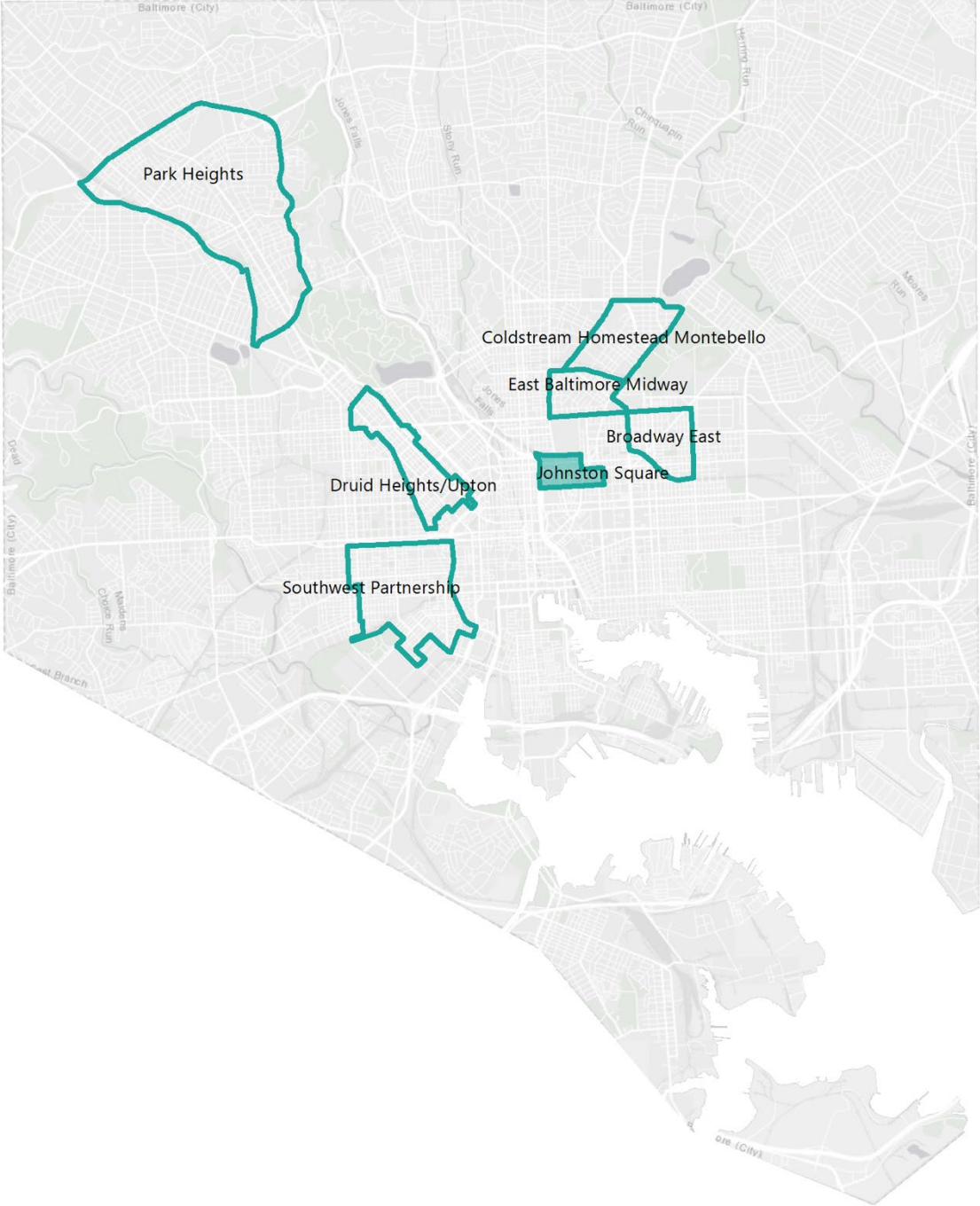
Johnston Square's Implementation Strategies

This Implementation Strategy document provides a recommended set of actions and investments which the City and partners will implement. These recommendations are based on our iterative, detailed planning process and engagement over the last 18 months. In addition to the monthly Work Groups, City staff engaged in data-driven, planning workshops across multiple divisions at DHCD and at DoP to provide detailed, analytical understanding of opportunities and challenges in each neighborhood. The purpose of the Implementation Strategy is to draw on these workshops to codify existing commitments, strengthen the platform for ongoing collaboration with community partner and stakeholders, and focus on hyper-local factors such as legacy homeowners, proximity to assets, and housing stock to make smart and targeted community-based development decisions.

Short Term (0-3 years) Development Priorities

This [Project Tracker](#) is a proposed list of priority sites for the next 36 months. The rationale behind these priority sites and blocks is detailed in this document.

Figure 1, Map of all Impact Investment Areas



Area Overview

The Johnston Square community is located in east Baltimore and generally is bounded by E. Hoffman Street (N), E. Eagar Street (S), Ensor Street connected by Biddle Street to N. Eden Street (E) and the Jones Falls Expressway (W). This compact, vibrant community encompasses approximately 37 whole and partial blocks. A largely residential community, Johnston Square, boasts strong community cohesion with a number of active residents and community partners. The western sector of the community includes several former industrial sites that have redevelopment potential.

Johnston Square is bordered by the Greenmount West community, Greenmount Cemetery and the Oliver community to the north, the Penn-Fallsway and Oldtown communities including Latrobe Homes and the Maryland Correctional Facility complex to the south, the Oliver and Gay Street and communities to the east and the Mid-Town Belvedere and Mt. Vernon communities to the west.

Johnston Square's location adjacent to the Jones Falls Expressway, Greenmount Avenue and the E. Biddle Street/E. Preston Street one-way pair provides convenient access to the community and future opportunities for improved amenities, a strategy for traffic calming initiatives and increased pedestrian access, as well as new and renovated housing for current and future residents.

Johnston Square is a piece of a larger redevelopment strategy developed in 2004. These community driven efforts outlined intentional planning for the neighborhoods of Greenmount West, Johnston Square, Oliver, and Broadway East. The strategy started redevelopment closest to two major economic assets - Penn Station and Johns Hopkins Hospital - and is working in from these assets towards Johnston Square, which is roughly equidistant between these two assets. To date, Greenmount West and Oliver greatly benefited from the whole block redevelopment strategy that is envisioned and being executed in Johnston Square.

- A new central community park and greenspace, Greenmount Park is planned on several City-owned sites that will be consolidated and redeveloped into a community park and football practice field. The park will be bounded by the 1100 block Forrest Street, Biddle Street, Chase Street and Barclay Street.

Zoning

The predominant zoning in Johnston Square is R-8, a residential zoning designation. Johnston Square includes several zoning districts that were adopted through the 2017 comprehensive rezoning process for Baltimore: C-1 – Pedestrian oriented commercial, OS, Open Space, and I-MU, Industrial Mixed-Use.

Community Schools

The Johnston Square Elementary School is located centrally in the community at 1133 Valley Street. Johnston Square Park is located east of and adjacent to Johnston Square Elementary. The Principal and school team for Johnston Square are committed to a strong partnership with the Johnston Square community and have partnered with ReBUILD Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization and Mt. Sinai Baptist Church on several school spruce-up, learning and fund-raising projects.

Mother Mary Lange and the Oblate Sisters of Providence opened St. Frances Academy as the St. Frances School for Colored Girls in 1828. St. Frances Academy, located at 501 E. Chase Street, is the oldest continuously operating, predominantly African-American Catholic High School in the United States. St. Frances has developed an enduring and key partnership with the Johnston Square community and is one of the partners in the Johnston Square partnership.

Current Planning Initiatives Underway in Johnston Square

Several planning and community development initiatives are underway in Johnston Square. Below is a summary of the initiatives:

Johnston Square Vision Plan 2020

The [Johnston Plan Vision Plan 2020](#) supports the Johnston Square community's vision for revitalization by addressing development and redevelopment opportunities, connectivity and design guidelines for public streets and open spaces, and programs to support community development goals and priorities. The Baltimore City Planning Commission accepted this plan on March 26, 2020.

East Impact Investment Area

Johnston Square is one of the four initial Impact Investment Areas included within the Department of Housing and Community Development's new Framework for Community

Development. As a component of the East Impact Investment Area, Johnston Square has partnered with the Mayor’s Office, Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Planning and several City agency partners to develop strategies that will support the community’s vision for inclusive, economically sustainable growth. The Johnston Square Master Plan is one major component of the partnership to foster the community’s vision for its community.

Greenmount Avenue LINCS (Leveraging Investments in Neighborhood Corridors Strategy)

A comprehensive corridor revitalization strategy for Greenmount Avenue to Milton Avenue. Focus areas include transportation, commercial revitalization, parks, land use/greening and public safety and sanitation. Specific requests for Johnston Square have been a traffic study for the Preston – Biddle corridors.

Johnston Square Urban Renewal Plan

The Johnston Square Urban Renewal Plan was enacted on June 27, 1977 and its most recent amendment, Amendment #12, was enacted on November 9, 2018. Amendment #12 extends the duration of the Urban Renewal Plan through December 31, 2022. The Department of Housing and Community Development’s acquisition authority for selected properties is also extended through December 31, 2022. The Urban Renewal Plan also provides support for the Land Disposition Agreement, LDA, that the City executed with Johnston Square Partners in October 2019. In 2019, the Partners worked with Baltimore City to secure site control over all abandoned and City owned properties in Johnston Square. During the ten year term of a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA), Baltimore City will acquire and convey vacant properties to the Partners to redevelop vacant parcels and to renovate or newly construct scores of houses in order to rebuild a healthy, viable and equitable residential market.

Table 1, Johnston Square Property Characteristics

Neighborhood	Commercial	Residential	Vacant Lots	Vacant Buildings	Private Rental	Homeowner Occupied
Charles North	3	-	12	-	-	-
Johnston Square	300	862	347	162	302	281

*Data Sources: City Real Property File, DHCD Administrative Data.
Date Analyzed: November 2022 by Baltimore City DHCD Research & Analytics Team.*

Figure 3, Asset and Opportunity Map



Figure 4, Selected Projects, Assets and Opportunities in JS

1. Baltimore Pennsylvania Station
2. 508 E. Preston St.
3. Lilian Jones Multi-Family Housing
4. E. Preston St. Rehab Blocks
5. Hoffman Street Corridor
6. Charm City Meadeworks
7. Yellow Bowl and future "Care House"
8. Mura St. Rehab Blocks
9. Johnston Square Park
10. Greenmount-Chase Multi-Family Housing
11. Johnston Square
12. Johnston Square Elem.
13. St. Frances Academy
14. Henrietta Lacks Educational Park



Comprehensive Neighborhood Planning

Planning Efforts

Building and sustaining economically and culturally diverse communities requires comprehensive neighborhood planning. While the City's goal is for all people to live in decent, healthy, and affordable housing, strong neighborhoods are more than housing. They should include retail and private amenities, parks and recreation opportunities, schools, public safety, transportation, and access to jobs. The City is committed to working in a coordinated fashion across departments, with residents, and community-based stakeholders to promote great neighborhoods.

Comprehensive Neighborhood Planning in Practice

In practice, comprehensive neighborhood planning is a complex process that requires coordination among city agencies (DHCD, Department of Planning, DOT, DPW, Rec and Parks, and BDC) and a wide and growing set of community stakeholders (neighborhood leaders, community associations, small and large businesses, local institutions, as well as trusted development partners). The strategies and projects outlined in this document reflect hundreds of hours of coordination among DHCD homeownership staff, attorneys, and Neighborhood Development Officers; Community Planners, City senior leadership, and Community partners.

This process included data-driven, block-level analysis and deliberation of existing structural assets, community support and capacity, available capital, and selection of the right type of intervention for each block or property.

And yet, the City acknowledges that this is a living document, subject to multiple iterations and refinements over time. The City commits to working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure the plan adapts to changing conditions to best serve the positive, equitable growth of the neighborhood.

2. Build Impactful Developments to Create a Mixed Income and Diverse Community
3. Develop Sustaining Programs and Operations to Support Social Networks, Reinvestment and Economic Growth

Within the framework goals, the Plan identifies a set of public realm projects and key development sites that combine to create potential synergies. These proposals require collaboration among the community and a variety of City partners, public and private partners and stakeholders to ensure equitable outcomes with the community's perspective at the forefront. Examples of potential areas of synergy and collaboration are:

1. **The Greenmount Avenue Corridor** - BDC, Planning, DPW and the Police Department may work together to create a clean, safe and welcoming environment to support the growth of a thriving retail corridor. The *Vision Plan* requests zoning changes that may serve to increase the potential for mixed-use development. Collaborative City support for small business operations and façade improvements, storefront design guidelines as well as greening and streetscaping interventions at selected intersections and spaces will combine to spur the new businesses and customers the community anticipates attracting.
2. **The newly completed Greenmount + Chase apartment complex** and the proposed mixed-use residential building with ground floor retail in the 1100 block of Greenmount Avenue will complement the corridor and establish a micro-node along Greenmount.
3. **Three community assets, Henrietta Lacks Educational Park, Johnston Square Elementary School and Johnston Square Park** offer a tremendous opportunity for comprehensive community planning. With Valley Street as a physical, organizing spine, the *Vision Plan* recommends traffic calming, streetscaping, lighting and parking design to increase pedestrian safety and access to those assets, as well as to create a pleasing visual connection among the three assets. The *Plan* also recommends increasing programmed activities at Johnston Square Park to encourage use, including after school and summertime programs for school aged children, and senior programs during the day, such as yoga classes or painting in the park.
4. **The Johnston Square Garden & Art Walk** vision is the transformation led by the community of neglected vacant dumping ground lots into beautiful creations by bringing vibrant colors in flowers, trees, fountains, inspirational mural art, and calming greenspaces throughout Johnston Square with the goal of bringing suburban peace and tranquility to urban spaces. ReBUILD Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization has already transformed ten vacant lots into pocket parks and community gardens that are maintained by community stewards, and maintain 32 vacant lots as clean and green.

Henrietta Lacks Park is an example of interagency cooperation for an equitable outcome. The City, through Recreation and Parks, teamed with the precursor to the Johnston Square Partnership for Phase 1 renovations to the existing park, while the Department of Housing

and Community Development assembled blighted and vacant land around the outer edge of the park for the Phase 2 expansion.

Placemaking Opportunities in the JS Impact Investment Area

Holistic community development requires consideration of more than creation of housing units or the individual components of a plan but also a commitment to “placemaking”. Placemaking captures physical upgrades to both public and private spaces – including parks, plazas, landmarks, unique lighting or signage, public art, adopt-a-lot initiatives, local music & festivals, coordinated holiday decorations, and streetscapes. These placemaking initiatives provide for positive social interaction, offer cohesion to urban setting, and strengthen residential communities. These efforts can bring neighbors together when complete, but also as they are planned and implemented. To bring this concept to reality, the Department of Planning is working with community partners throughout the City to facilitate creative visioning sessions that can serve as the springboard for actionable neighborhood-based plans.

The ReBUILD Johnston Square Community Association and the Johnston Square Partners led a community planning and visioning process in the fall of 2019. The process included a number of outreach efforts that centered around three community workshops. Architectural consultant Hord Coplan Macht led the visioning and planning process in partnership with the Johnston Square community, the Baltimore City Department of Planning and the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development.

The vision statement in the *Johnston Square Vision Plan 2020* is:

Johnston Square will revitalize to become a safe, walkable neighborhood complete with diverse housing choices for all people and anchored by thriving businesses, supportive services and institutions. Public streets and open spaces will connect people and create welcoming community places. The plan is crafted to improve access to transportation options and amplify economic opportunities. Sustaining programs and operations will support social networks, reinvestment and economic growth.

The *Vision Plan* identifies several opportunities for placemaking and development:

- Greenmount Avenue
- Greenmount Park (Biddle, Greenmount, Chase and Fallsway)
- Hoffman Street Corridor – Strategic housing infill, greening and traffic calming improvements. Lillian Jones Apartments – community composting site and gardening.
- Identification and beautification of corners – particularly at intersections of Greenmount and Preston, Biddle and Chase.
- Claymore Sieck Site
- Biddle – Barclay
- Greenmount- Biddle –Chase

- 508 E. Preston Street



An idea for a vacant lot at the corner of Greenmount Avenue and E. Preston Street by students in the Landscape Architecture program at The Pennsylvania State University.



A proposed view of Greenmount Avenue and Chase Street (looking north) from the Johnston Square Vision Plan accepted by the Planning Commission in March 2020. Image by Hord | Coplan | Macht.



Proposed view of 1000 Block of Greemount Avenue looking north (looking north) from the Johnston Square Vision Plan accepted by the Planning Commission in March 2020. Image by Hord | Coplan | Macht.



Proposed aerial view of Hoffman Street and Greenmount Avenue Gateway from the Johnston Square Vision Plan accepted by the Planning Commission in March 2020. Image by Hord | Coplan | Macht.

In addition, ReBUILD Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization led a community engagement process to develop a brand for the Johnston Square neighborhood. The newly created brand includes flower and bee motifs to support the Johnston Square Garden & Art Walk. Street pole banners, signage at gardens, traffic calming crosswalk art, and murals including the Biddle Street bridge mural have been installed.



Example of Johnston Square branding. Image by Glenn Dellon.

Homeowner Support

Why Homeownership is Important

Supporting future and existing homeowners is a key component of equitable community development. DHCD is dedicated to helping homeowners and landlords make repairs to their homes to address emergencies, code violations, as well as health and safety issues. Our programs help eligible low- and moderate-income applicants finance home improvements including the repair and replacement of roofing, heating, plumbing and electrical systems, energy efficiency measures, lead hazard reduction, and disability accessibility modifications. In addition, Expanding and reducing barriers to maintaining homeownership is an effective method to foster wealth accumulation in low-income households and stabilize neighborhoods. While these programs existing Citywide, efforts are being made to provide targeted assistance to homeowners in Impact Investment Areas.

DHCD's Homeowner Toolkit

There are several direct ways in which the City supports existing, legacy, and new homeowners. DHCD conducts a “no wrong door”, single point-of-entry for programs through the LIGHT Program to best coordinate the delivery of a variety of no- and low-cost services to help homeowners become more self-sufficient, safer, more stable and healthier in their homes.

- **Housing Rehabilitation and Repairs:** The Office of Homeownership initiates the repair process that addresses emergencies, code violations, and health and safety issues for owner-occupied properties. Available only for eligible owner-occupied properties.
- **Weatherization:** The Office of Homeownership initiates the process for energy efficiency improvements that lower utility bills and make homes safer and more comfortable. Available for eligible owner- and tenant-occupied properties.
- **Lead Hazard Reduction:** The Office of Homeownership manages lead remediation projects for eligible owner- and tenant-occupied properties. Household must include a pregnant woman or a child under 6. Available for eligible owner- and tenant-occupied properties.
- **Tax Sale Prevention:** DHCD's Tax Sale Services Coordination and Prevention division assists homeowners in avoiding tax sale and in understanding and navigating the tax sale process

The City offers a range of programs to support home buyers:

The City offers a range of programs to support home buyers and businesses in the West:

- **Baltimore City Employee Homeownership Program:** \$5,000 for employees of City and [quasi-City agencies](#) who have been employed for at least six months.
- **Buying Into Baltimore:** \$5,000 awarded by lottery to people who attend a Live Baltimore [Trolley Tour](#) and meet other conditions.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Homeownership Assistance Program:** \$5,000 for first-time homebuyers with a household income at or below 80% of area median income. Currently, this is \$54,950 for a household of one, \$62,800 for two, or \$78,500 for four.
- **Direct Homeownership Assistance Program:** An additional \$5,000 for CDBG Homeownership Assistance Program recipients who (a) purchase the house they have rented and occupied for at least six months, or (b) have a household member with a disability.
- **Live Near Your Work:** This partnership with [participating employers](#) encourages homeownership near places of employment. The City matches employers' contributions between \$1,000 and \$2,500, for total incentives of \$2,000-\$5,000+, depending on the employer.
- **Vacants to Value Booster:** \$10,000 incentive for properties that were subject to a Vacant Building Notice for at least one year prior to (a) rehabilitation of the property by an

investor/developer, or (b) sale of the property to a homebuyer who intends to renovate the property using an acquisition/rehabilitation loan.

- **Facade Improvement Grants (FIG):** This grant provides funds to make exterior improvements to commercial buildings. The grants are to be used to enhance the appearance of individual buildings facades, signs, awnings and other exterior improvements. Both businesses and property owners are eligible.

The above listed homebuyer funds are city-wide. No money from these specific programs has been explicitly set aside in the Johnston Square Impact Investment Area, yet residents in this geography are highly encouraged to utilize these resources. For more information, please visit the Housing and Homeownership [website](#), with more information and access to the initial online application.

Homeownership Support Opportunities in Johnston Square

The Johnston Square community embraces welcoming a diversity of tenure and incomes for its residential population, but also strongly supports long-term or “legacy” residents who have matured with the community and want to remain in Johnston Square. The Johnston Square Vision Plan states that:

Johnston Square residents overwhelmingly express a sense of urgency for the revitalization and income diversification of their neighborhood. They also recognize that Johnston Square’s proximity to Baltimore’s Midtown area and Penn Station make it vulnerable to housing cost increases and further cost burdens on current residents. Because most residents of Johnston Square are low-income homeowners and renters, efforts must be made to ensure that these residents are not displaced by redevelopment.

Under the *Displacement Prevention* section of the *Vision Plan* numerous recommendations are made, including:

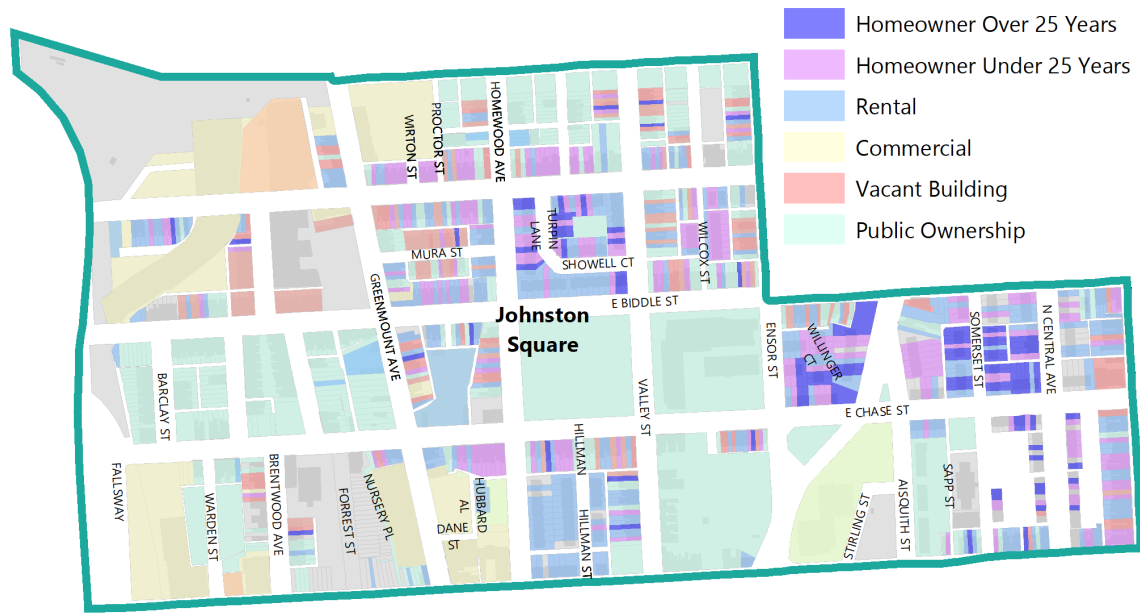
MAINTAIN AFFORDABLE HOUSING COSTS: Ensure new housing built in the neighborhood—including redeveloped rowhomes and new multifamily housing developments—is rented or sold at a range of affordable levels.

Table 2, Homeowners, including long term

	Homeowner Occupied	Private Rental Occupied	% Long-term (15+ years) Homeowner / Homeowner Occupied
Johnston Square	281	302	180(64%)

*Data Sources: City Real Property File, DHCD Administrative Data.
Date Analyzed: November 2022 by Baltimore City DHCD Research & Analytics Team.*

Figure 6, Current Homeowners in the JS IIA



Rehab Priorities

High Priority Blocks: Community Development Zones (CDZs)

Many Baltimore neighborhoods, including Johnston Square, suffer from blight and vacancies which inhibit comprehensive community development. By working with local communities and stakeholders, and developing detailed data and planning analyses, the City has identified high priority blocks in Impact Investment Areas and is committed to proactively addressing conditions on these blocks. Called “Community Development Zones”, these blocks represent transformative opportunities that could leverage neighborhood-wide outcomes. The City is committed to providing investment of staff and resources and securing capital needed to address vacancies through a range of strategies. These CDZs have been ranked by priority through these analyses and discussions with the Johnston Square IIA Work Group. The top priority areas are identified as Zone 1A, next is Zone 1B, then Zone 2 and so on.

Community Development Zones (CDZs) are defined by the following criteria:

1. Collaboration to develop vacant properties with community partners, neighborhood associations, and quality developers
2. Targeted resources for existing and legacy homeowners
3. Proactive stabilization of vacant properties which are missing roofs or otherwise in danger of further decline.

Figure 7, JS IIA Community Development Zones

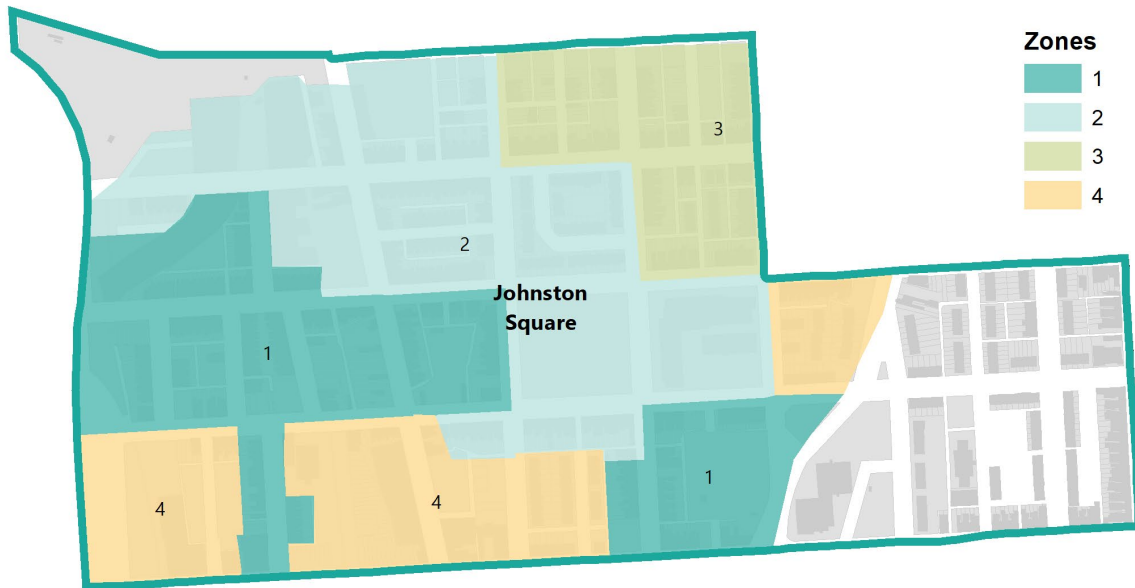


Table 3, Johnston Square CDZ - Zone 1 Property Rehabilitation Data

VBNs Total	Private VBN	HABC Owned VBNs	City Owned VBNs	Receiverships Filed	Private VBN In Rem Eligible	Homeowner Occupied	Private Rental Occupied
55	21	0	34	4	2	17	107

Data Sources: City Real Property File, DHCD Administrative Data.
 Date Analyzed: November 2022 by Baltimore City DHCD Research & Analytics Team.

The Rehab Toolkit

- **Homeowner Supports:** As discussed above, support for legacy homeowners in Impact Investment Areas, with a focus on Community Development Clusters as possible, is a critical strategy to ensure existing residents benefit as neighborhood’s improve.
- **Stabilization:** For some vacant properties which are roofless or otherwise in severely deteriorated condition, stabilization is a preferred method of intervention before the property reaches an emergency situation. Many buildings are in the middle of stable and resilient blocks and so, demolition would require further substantial construction. Additionally, Baltimore is home to many unique and beautiful buildings. Stabilization would preserve their inherent value for future use.
- **Acquisition through Tax Sale Foreclosure and Condemnation:** In many situations, the City has the authority to actually take title to a vacant property. This provides the City significant leverage in supporting specific outcomes for the redevelopment of the property through a subsequent competitive bid process. This could include production of affordable units and/or homeownership units.
 - For abandoned properties where owners fail to pay property taxes for a significant period of time, the City may exercise tax sale foreclosure in order to positively repurpose the property. DHCD pursues tax sale foreclosure only on vacant properties where the value of the lien owed to the City is above or near the actual market value of the property. In many instances, the properties are literally abandoned: owned by defunct corporate entities or deceased parties.
 - There are also situations in which the City may utilize powers of eminent domain to acquire vacant properties through “condemnation” as a result of blighting conditions, code violations or through legislation. The City uses this power selectively and in concert with community development plans. Property owners are compensated at market value through court processes, therefore, DHCD must have an identified budget for any properties that will be acquired through this method.
 - The City can also engage in Donations, Negotiated Sales, and Property Swaps as methods of property acquisition.

- **Receivership:** Where a whole block strategy is not required, Receivership can be an effective code enforcement mechanism to address vacant properties at a large scale and low cost. The City is able to sue owners who fail to make their vacant property code compliant and ask a judge to appoint a receiver to auction the property. Bidders who have been pre-qualified to renovate participate in the action. Receivership has accounted for hundreds of vacant building rehabs in the city and Baltimore is nationally-recognized as a leader in the practice.

Vacant Property Rehabilitation Example

The 700 & 800 Blocks of E. Preston Street: Mi Casa, Inc. rehabbed 27 vacant homes along the 700 & 800 blocks of E. Preston Street between 2012 & 2014. Of those 27 homes, 25 remain owner occupied; two are now rentals. Ten vacant homes remain to be rehabbed.

Table 4, Priority Rehab Sites in the Johnston Square CDZs

Project Location	Description	Site Lead/Developer
Henrietta Lacks Park Expansion	Parks & People has fundraised for design and implementation of Phase 2 expansion	Parks & People
400 - 600 blocks of E. Biddle 1200 block of Brentwood	Stabilization, Rehab, & some demolition for Multifamily New Construction	ReBuild Metro
700 block of E. Preston	Stabilization & Rehab for homeownership	ReBuild Metro
700 block of Mura Street	Stabilization & Rehab for homeownership	ReBuild Metro
Odd side 800 block of E. Chase Street & even side of 1000 block of Valley	Stabilization & Rehab for homeownership across from Johnston Square Park	ReBuild Metro
Odd side 1100 block Greenmount	Stabilization + Rehab	Johnston Square Partners
Even side 1100 & 1200 block Homewood	Stabilization + Rehab	Johnston Square Partners
900 block E Chase	Stabilization & Rehab	

Hoffman Street Corridor	Strategic housing infill, greening & traffic calming improvements, community composting site & gardening	Johnston Square Partners
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Why These Zones Were Selected

Block-level housing strategies have been developed and are being modified as needed. Priority areas, or Zone 1As, have been selected using community and agency input. The overriding logic for the selection of priority zones is building from strength. The neighborhoods to the east have a stronger housing market than the neighborhoods within the Impact Investment Area.

The 2017 Housing Market Typology (HMT) map is another visual and analytical tool that informed the prioritization outlined in this document. The HMT uses 8 variables to assign an "A" through "J" for all 270+ neighborhoods across the City; "A" being the strongest housing markets and "J" being the weakest. The majority of the Johnston Square Impact Investment Area falls within the "H" and "J" categories. H&J clusters are noted for having exceptionally low median sales prices and building permit activity, and high levels of vacant residential property and bank foreclosure. These attributes conspire to severely restrict redevelopment. Specifically, these areas experience a massive gap between the cost of construction and the market values of homes or commercial properties constructed. The Johnson Square Vision Plan notes this problem and emphasizes the rehabilitation and re occupancy of the 180 vacant single family homes.

The destabilizing effect of the vacant buildings extends beyond market price and community perception, vacant homes represent a true threat to occupied homes that share party walls. The existing stock of vacant homes undermine the occupied homes energy efficiency, are a gateway for rodents and vermin to enter the occupied homes, and allows significant water penetration from missing roofs and windows. The water penetration is the most serious of the threats, as it compromises the structural integrity of occupied homes and encourage further abandonment. Citywide the vacancy rate is increasing by an average of 3 units each day. This increased vacancy is most often generated by the existing vacant housing stock. The Johnson Square Vision Plan specifically calls out and targets the scattered site vacancy as the primary concern for the neighborhood.

Zone 1 was selected because it coincides with the Master Plan and focus on the park as the centerpiece.

- Greenmount Park will span from Barclay Street to Forest Street and will serve as an anchor to the west side of the Neighborhood. It will bring the students of St. Frances

outside of their walls to interact with the Community and give the Community a place for recreation and interaction.

- A mixed-use building is planned on the east flank of Greenmount Park along Greenmount Avenue between Chase and Biddle to capture the commercial traffic along Greenmount Avenue and the amenity of the park on the west.
- A mixed use building is planned for Barclay Street between Chase and Biddle overlooking the park.
- Residential rehabs along the 400 and 600 blocks of E. Biddle are planned to overlook the park.
- The 1200 block of Brentwood will be demolished to provide parking to support the renovation of the 400 & 600 blocks of E Biddle for rental properties.
- Finally, a third all residential building will span the 400 block of E. Chase and the 1000 block of Brentwood and overlook the south side of the park.
- The newly constructed multifamily building at 700 E. Chase was completed in 2021 and is now fully leased.

Zone 2 has been slated for renovation with a collaboration with HABC to focus on strengthening the inner blocks to deter displacement. There is also a Greenmount LINCS initiative to help identify opportunities for small businesses.

Zone 3 has a greening focus that includes a partnership with the 6th Branch and JSP. There is a long-term focus to incorporate renovation along the small inner blocks for both homeownership and rental.

New Development

Disinvestment in Baltimore neighborhoods, including the Johnston Square Impact Investment Area, has led to specific blocks with near-total vacancy, partial demolition, incoherent ownership patterns and obsolete organization of parcels, streets and alleys. Until these conditions are remediated it is not reasonable to expect re-investment or any positive outcomes for the neighborhood. In these cases, the public sector must play the central role in clearing, acquiring, appropriately stewarding, and repurposing the land to the benefit of the neighborhood.

Such new development can fundamentally reposition a neighborhood for investment. In addition to removing the current blighting conditions, rebuilding on these medium- and larger-scale sites can diversify housing stock - allowing for a range of income and provide opportunities for affordable housing. These sites also could be re-visioned for large scale greening and passive uses.

The City engages with community stakeholders to envision the future re-uses and uses a variety of tools for this purpose including blight-remediating demolition and the acquisition methods discussed above. The cost of clearing land and title is substantial, and the time required for legal and regulatory processes is measure in years. Nonetheless, these types of sites are critical components of the holistic neighborhood vision.

Johnston Square Partnership has more than 500 properties in its portfolio, as outline in the JSP LDA. The challenge is that most of these properties are dispersed throughout the IIA, there are very few clusters of contiguous properties over which the City has site control. The planning members of JSP have a very clear vision for these properties, which means many of those city-owned areas are already ear-marked for certain uses, i.e urban farming or recreation space. Both are an incredible opportunity and a challenge - not many communities have enough space for three parks and a urban farm. Any plan for new development must be approved by the JSP.

In addition, JSP is interested in developing the 508 E Preston Street site as well as the 400 E Eager Street Sieck Florist site and working with the current owners to determine feasibility.

Opportunity for Interagency Collaboration

Warden St is currently being used as a surface lot for the Baltimore Correction Center, this is a suboptimal land use. As both the Correction Center and Johnston Square redevelopment move forward, these City owned lots which are listed in the LDA should be redeveloped with or as a support to both Greenmount Park and the privately held Sieck site. Given the scale and scope of the Correction site redevelopment, parking should be internal not external to the campus.

704 E. Chase Street (Boot Site)

Original site was comprised with over 30 city-owned and privately-owned vacant lots. The full site was later acquired and consolidated by DHCD and sold to ReBuild Metro in August 2019. In Fall 2020, the \$16 million development project was constructed into new affordable rental units- Greenmount and Chase apartments. The apartment building is fully occupied with tenants and offers community and office space for the ReBuild Johnston Square neighborhood association.

Table 6, Potential Development Opportunities in the Johnston Square IIA

Project Location	Strategy/Notes	Status
1200 block Valley Street	53% vacant, possibly more given the 3 HABC units on the block. The community has expressed interest in building on the homeownership strength of	

	Wilcox Street. One major challenge is the train tracks under E. Hoffman Street will always prevent development along that corridor.	
1300 block Wilcox Street	99% of the vacant lots are city-owned. Currently 6 th Branch is maintaining and utilizing the lots for greening through the AAL program. Great opportunity for future new development however the end lot on E. Hoffman St. prohibits development.	
1234 Greenmount Avenue	Former Yellow Bowl property was offered by DHCD as an RFP in the 2016 Surplus Sale. The building has not been awarded and currently sits vacant and has significant structural issues. Major challenges for the site include crime and illegal activity on the corner of Greenmount & E. Preston; lack of off-street parking, and one-way traffic pattern on E Biddle Street.	Available for sale
700 block Mura Street	This largely vacant block offers a good opportunity to catalyze neighborhood revitalization through a whole block outcome. The small houses can be combined into more marketable double-wide homes while reducing the need for parking. Block is about 80% vacant with 5 vacant HABC units. Some of	

	<p>the HABC residents have been relocated. HABC resident on odd side of block does not want to be relocated. Community is working with resident to ensure she is not relocated. Community garden located at 729+731 Mura St. Community would like to build homeowner strength on this block.</p>	
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Conclusion

The neighborhoods within the Johnston Square Impact Investment Area have experienced a significant resurgence in recent years. Community-centric planning combined with strong community organizations and an increased focus from City and State partners has helped to leverage investment and guide strategies that will help the area to continue to grow. Now is the time to double down and build on the many assets in Johnston Square.

We must continue to follow the lead of the community to make sure that these neighborhoods can experience sustainable revitalization without displacement. Collaboration is key to success so it is critical that all of the stakeholders continue to work toward the goal of incremental change over time. This is a living document and will be regularly updated as we progress in partnership with our residents in the Johnston Square Impact Investment Area.