



Goal 3: Transform vacant lots from liabilities to assets that provide social and environmental benefits

Vacant properties can become targets of illegal dumping and litter, leading to an overall perception of neighborhood neglect. However, lots can also be transformed into useful community spaces through redevelopment or the creation and maintenance of open space.

KEY FACTS AND RELATED EFFORTS

- * As of the end of 2009, roughly **10,000 vacant or abandoned lots**, of an estimated 30,000 city-wide, were titled to the Baltimore Mayor and City Council. Over half of these (5,375) were vacant lots.
- * **Community Greening Resource Network (CGRN)**, a joint initiative of the Parks & People Foundation and MD Cooperative Extension, had an estimated membership of 1,281 adults and 2,378 children from organizations, block clubs, businesses, neighborhood groups, churches, and schools in 2009. CGRN facilitates activities on city-wide and local levels to help groups connect to one another and take advantage of existing resources, ideas, lessons learned, and support in our gardening community.
- * The City of Baltimore's **Adopt-A-Lot Program** is specifically designed for gardens and neighborhood beautification. Residents and neighborhood groups that complete an Adopt-a-Lot License Agreement can use a City-owned vacant property as a garden. As of the end of 2009, there were approximately 200 adopted lots in the city.
- * **Baltimore Green Space (BGS)** preserves community-managed open spaces such as community gardens, pocket parks, horseshoe pits – any space that is taken care of by people in the neighborhood. BGS purchases established community-managed open spaces on behalf of neighborhoods. For each site, the land trust enters into a long-term management agreement with the “site manager” and a “community partner” organization. In 2009, the City of Baltimore approved criteria and a process for transferring City-owned land to BGS.
- * As of the end of 2009, BGS protected three **community-managed open spaces**: a horseshoe pit in Pigtown, a community garden in Upper Fell's Point, and a half-acre fruit and vegetable garden in East Baltimore. In addition, Charm City Land Trust protected one large garden, the Amazing Port Street Garden, which occupies 12 lots in East Baltimore's McElderry Park neighborhood.

CARRYING COST OF VACANT PROPERTIES

3 grass cuttings per season

\$760

4 trash/debris removals per year

\$1,015

TOTAL AVERAGE MAINTENANCE COSTS

\$1,775

TOTAL ESTIMATED 2009 MAINTENANCE COST

$\$1,775 \times 5,375 = \$9,540,625$

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STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- Work with your neighbors to preserve a community open space
- Work with your neighbors to create and manage a community open space
- Volunteer with CGRN

« These figures represent the average carrying cost of City-owned vacant lots. Based on these estimate, the vacant lots alone the City owns can cost upwards of \$9.5 million annually. This does not include the direct and indirect costs of the many vacant and abandon lots not owned by the City.