



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

- * At the end of 2010, roughly 7,000 vacant or abandoned properties were titled to the Mayor and City Council and over half of these, 4,000 were vacant lots. This shows a reduction in the number of vacant lots being carried by the **Department of Housing and Community Development** from 5,375 in 2009 to 4,000 in 2010.
- * **Community Greening Resource Network (CGRN)**, a joint initiative of the Parks & People Foundation and MD Cooperative Extension now includes 196 members. In the network, there are 93 Community Gardens, 38 School Gardens, 36 Family/Private Gardens and 29 Advocates. 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 2010, there were 284 adopted lots in the city, which shows an increase of 84 lots since 2009.
- * **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. In 2010, Baltimore Green Space completed a survey of green spaces in Baltimore. Taking photographs and using GPS enabled cell phones volunteers marked the locations of hidden green spaces throughout Baltimore City, to ensure their preservation.
- * In November of 2010, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced the **“Vacants to Value” program**, a six point plan which includes creating new community green space on what once were unused and littered vacant parcels of land. Community organizations, residents and businesses will be encouraged to find innovative and unique ways to create community green spaces in their neighborhoods.
- * In 2010, South Baltimore Neighborhood Association Heath Street Community Garden and Banner Neighborhoods Madeira Street Garden received funding through **Constellation Energy's EcoStar Grants** to transform vacant lots in their communities into vibrant community green space.

CARRYING COST OF VACANT PROPERTIES

3 GRASS CUTTINGS/SEASON

\$760

4 TRASH/DEBRIS REMOVALS/YEAR

\$1,015

TOTAL AVERAGE MAINTENANCE COSTS

2009	\$9,540,625
2010	\$7,100,000

TOTAL VACANT LOTS

2009	5,375
2010	4,000

3 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 figures, the vacant lots the City owns can cost upwards of \$8 million annually. This does not include the direct and indirect costs of the many vacant and abandoned lots not owned by the City. These lots are Mayor and City Council owned properties that are managed by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and maintained out of HCD's budget.