REINVEST Baltimore

Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Welcome!

Call to Order

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Open Meetings

- The BVRC meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act. At any open session the general public is invited to attend and observe.
- Except in instances when the BVRC expressly invites public participation, no member of the public attending an open session may participate in the session.
- A person attending an open session may not engage in any conduct, including visual demonstrations, such as the waving of placards, signs, or banners, that disrupts the session or that interferes with the right of members of the public to attend and observe the session.

Meetings Being Recorded

- BVRC meetings are recorded.
- A member of the public, including any representative of the news media, may record an open session of BVRC; the recording cannot create an excessive noise that disturbs members of the BVRC or other persons attending the session.

Agenda

- Call to Order (5 minutes)
- Adoption of Meeting Minutes (5 minutes)
- BVRC Shared Values (30 minutes)
- Vacancy Reduction Geography (20 minutes)
- Constraints and Obstacles Strategy Session (40 minutes)
- Working Groups (20 minutes)

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Shared Values

Vacancy Reduction Geography

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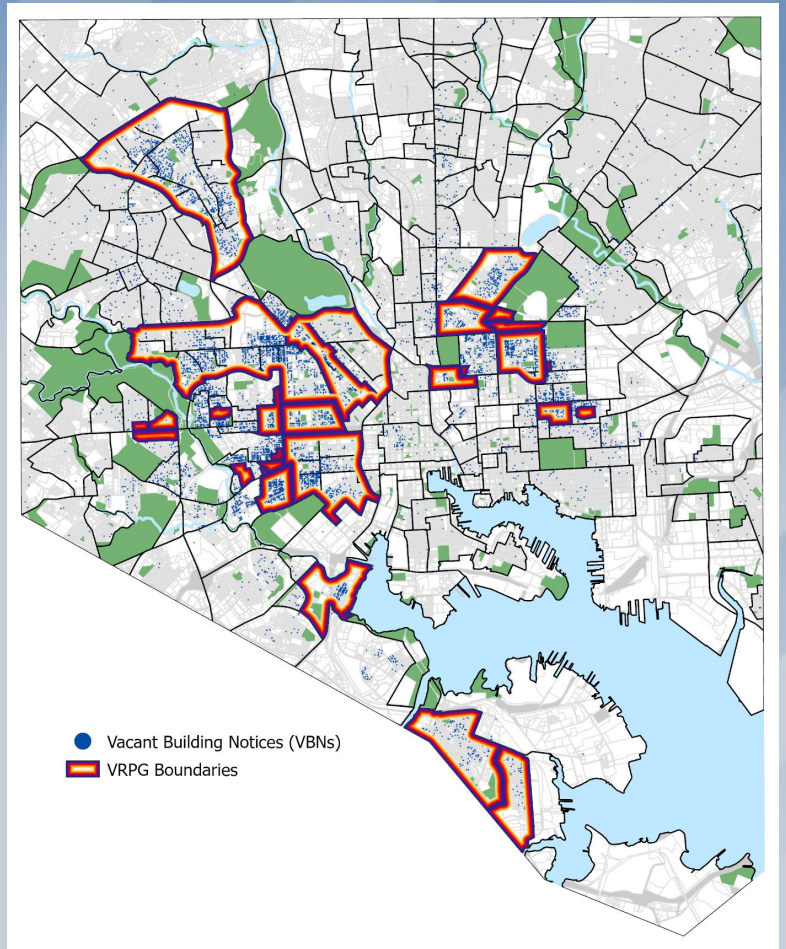
Vacancy Reduction Priority Geographies

Categories of the Vacancy Reduction Priority Geography:

- Impact Investment Areas
- Neighborhoods
- Strategic Blocks within Neighborhoods

Range of vacancy rates:

- In IIAs, vacancy rates range from 0% - 40.1%
- In Neighborhoods, 5.5% - 40.1%
- In Neighborhood Strategic Blocks, 1.9%-28.8%
- See handout and BVRC dashboard for more detail. Vacancy rates can be viewed for every neighborhood in the city with multiple ways to view and filter.

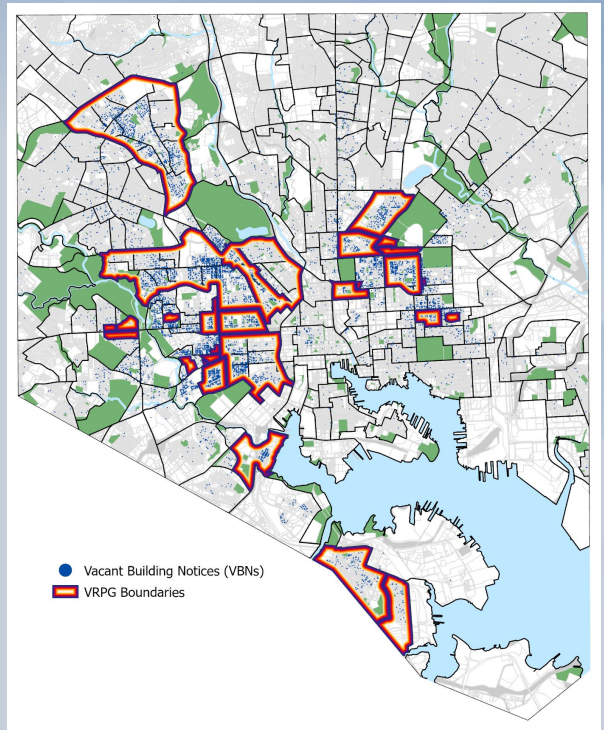


Vacancy Reduction Priority Geographies

Selection Criteria | Moving from *theory* to *implementation*

Significant clusters of vacants with vacancy rates up to 40%

- Adjacent to neighborhoods of strength/anchor institutions
- Strong community engagement
- Existing network community assets/develop-ment projects

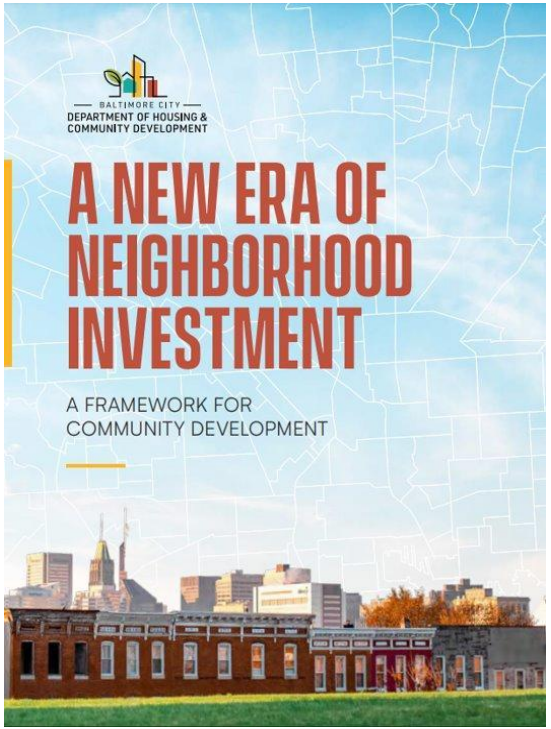


In 2019, the City issued the Framework for Community Development.

Assigned all neighborhoods into 3 types of categories

1. Impact Investment Areas (Whole Block Outcome neighborhoods)
2. Middle Markets
3. Asset Building Areas

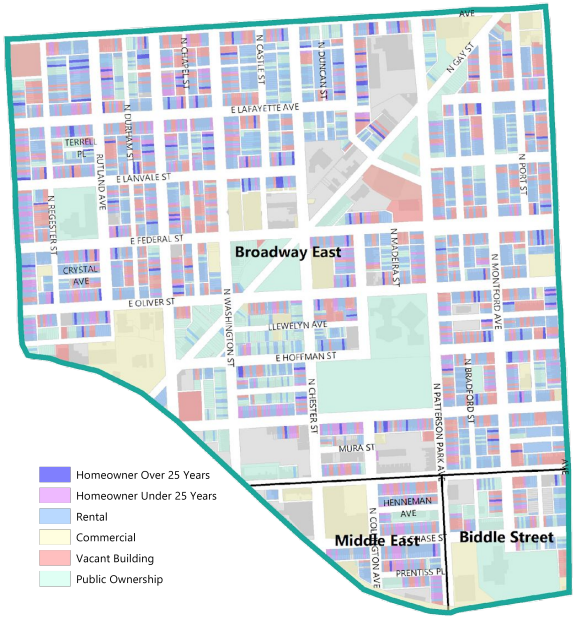
Established a theory of development: using different City DHCD tools based on the market conditions of the neighborhood. I.E. receivership in Middle Markets vs Acquisition, Demo, & Rehab in Impact Investment Areas



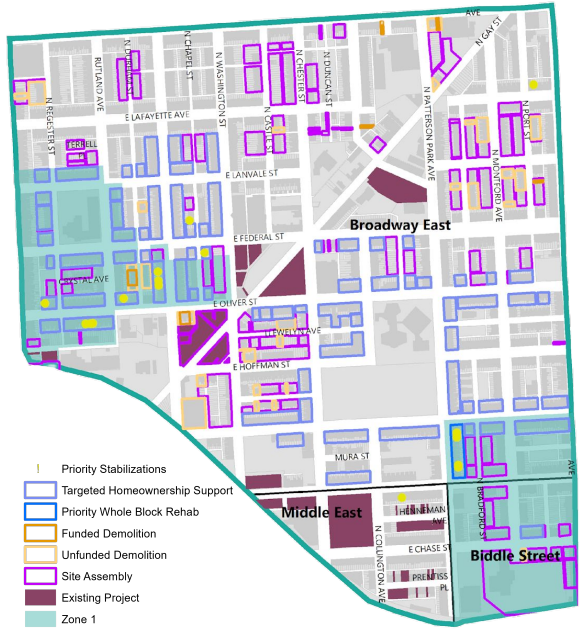
City DHCD's community development strategy is community led, data-driven, and based on deep market knowledge.

ASSET MAPPING

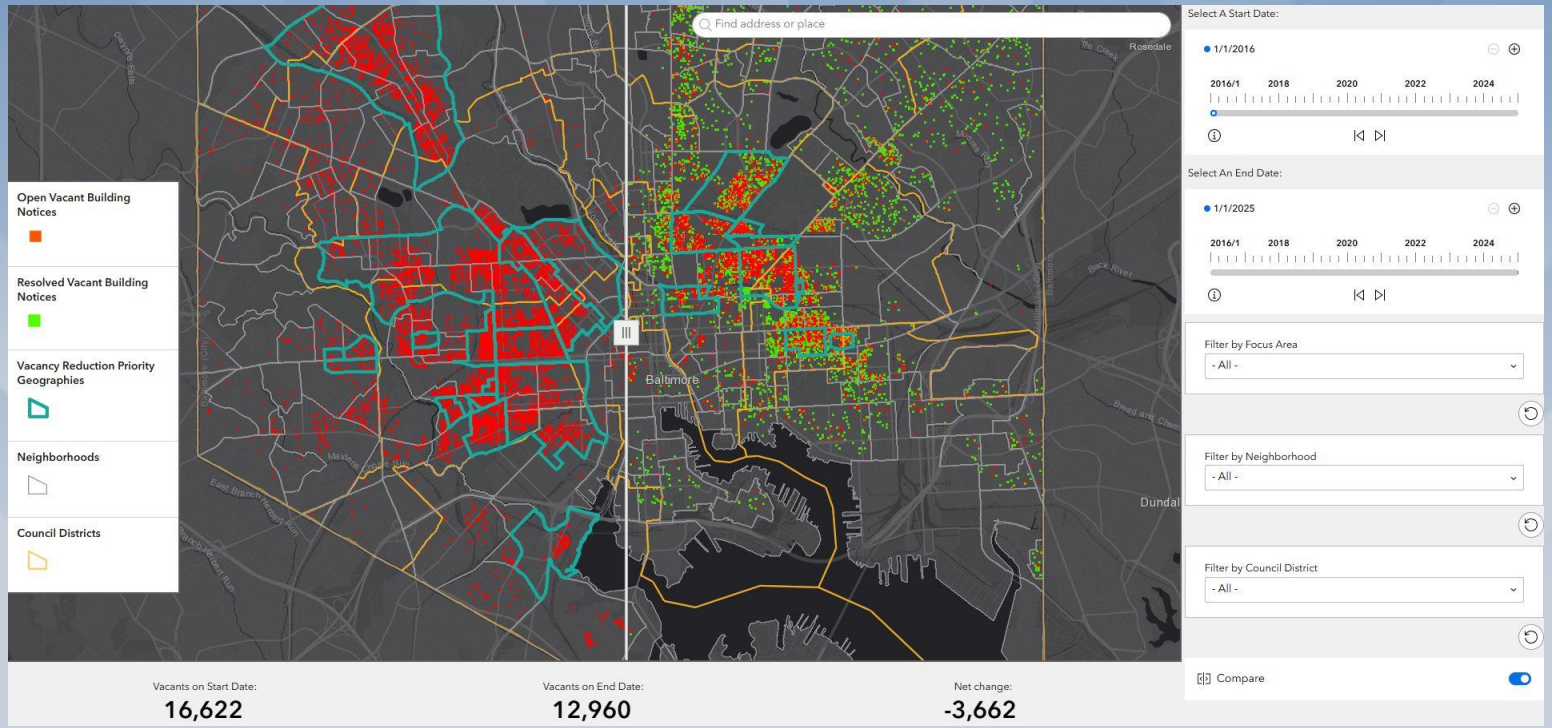
MARKET CONDITIONS



BLOCK-LEVEL PLANNING



Vacancy Change Over Time



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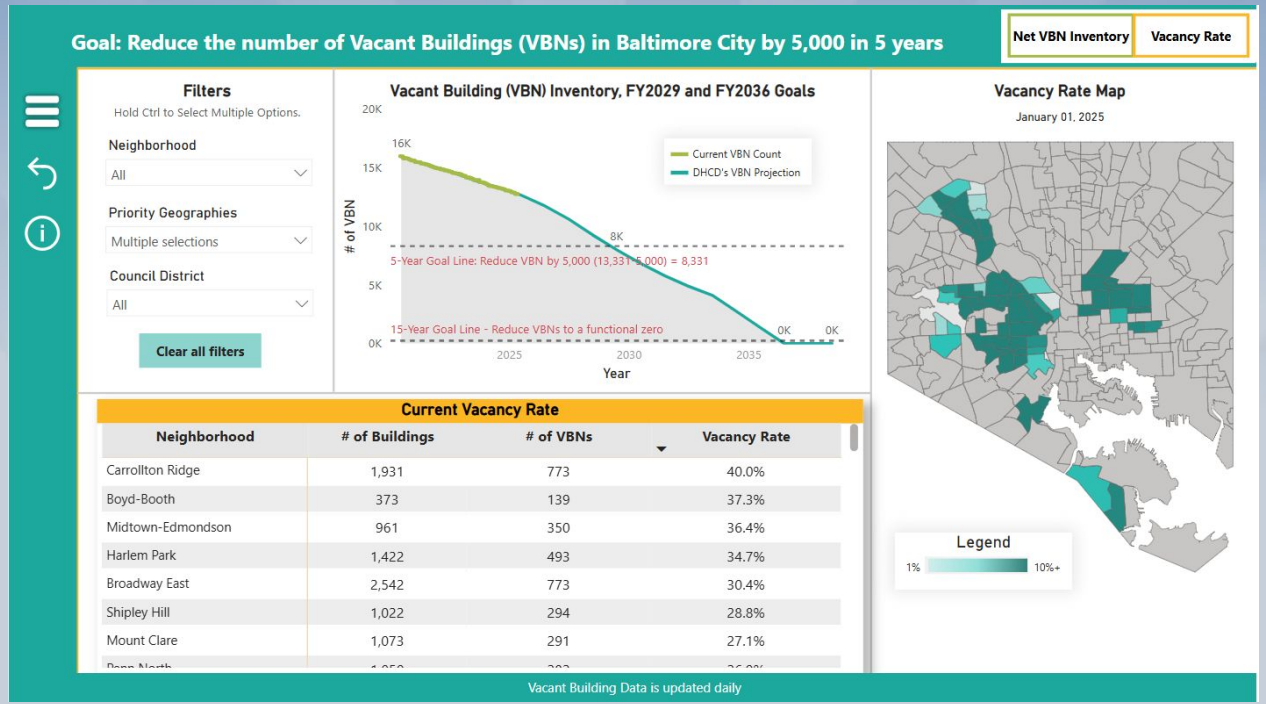
Vacancy Rates by Vacancy Reduction Priority Geographies



See handout and [BVRC dashboard]() for more detail. Vacancy rates can be viewed for every neighborhood in the city, with multiple ways to view and filter. This screenshot shows a filtered view of the current vacancy rate of all VRPG in table form and a map.

Constraints and Obstacles: Vacant Building Notices

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What is a vacant building?

Goal: Reduce the number of Vacant Buildings (VBNs) in Baltimore City by 5,000 in 5 years

Net VBN Inventory | Vacancy Rate

Filters

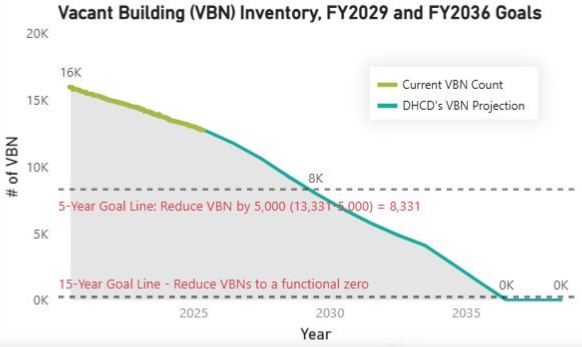
Hold Ctrl to Select Multiple Options.

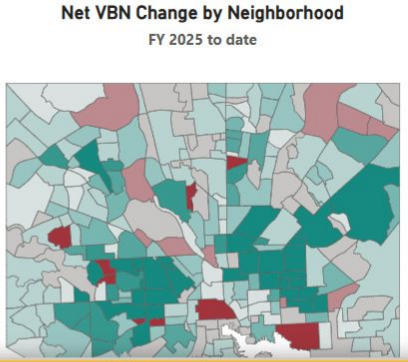
Neighborhood: All

Priority Geographies: All

Council District: All

Clear all filters





What is a Vacant Building?

DHCD follows the definition of Vacant Structure stated in Section 116, Unsafe Structures of the Baltimore City Building, Fire and Related Codes (Code). According to the Code, a vacant structure means a structure or distinguishable part of a structure that is:

- Unoccupied; and
- Either:
  - ✓ Unsafe or unfit for human habitation or other authorized use; or
  - ✓ Nuisance property as defined below

An unsafe structure, unfit for human habitation includes but is not limited to:
1) structures that are boarded up,
2) no proper ventilation,

What is a Vacant Building Notice (VBN)?

This is a code violation placed on a property when it is vacant, abandoned, and uninhabitable.

The VBN lists the requirements needed to rehab the property and bring the property up to code to remove the VBN.

The two ways to remove (abate) a Vacant Building Notice (VBN) are ***Rehabilitation*** which requires a Use & Occupancy Permit and ***Demolition.***

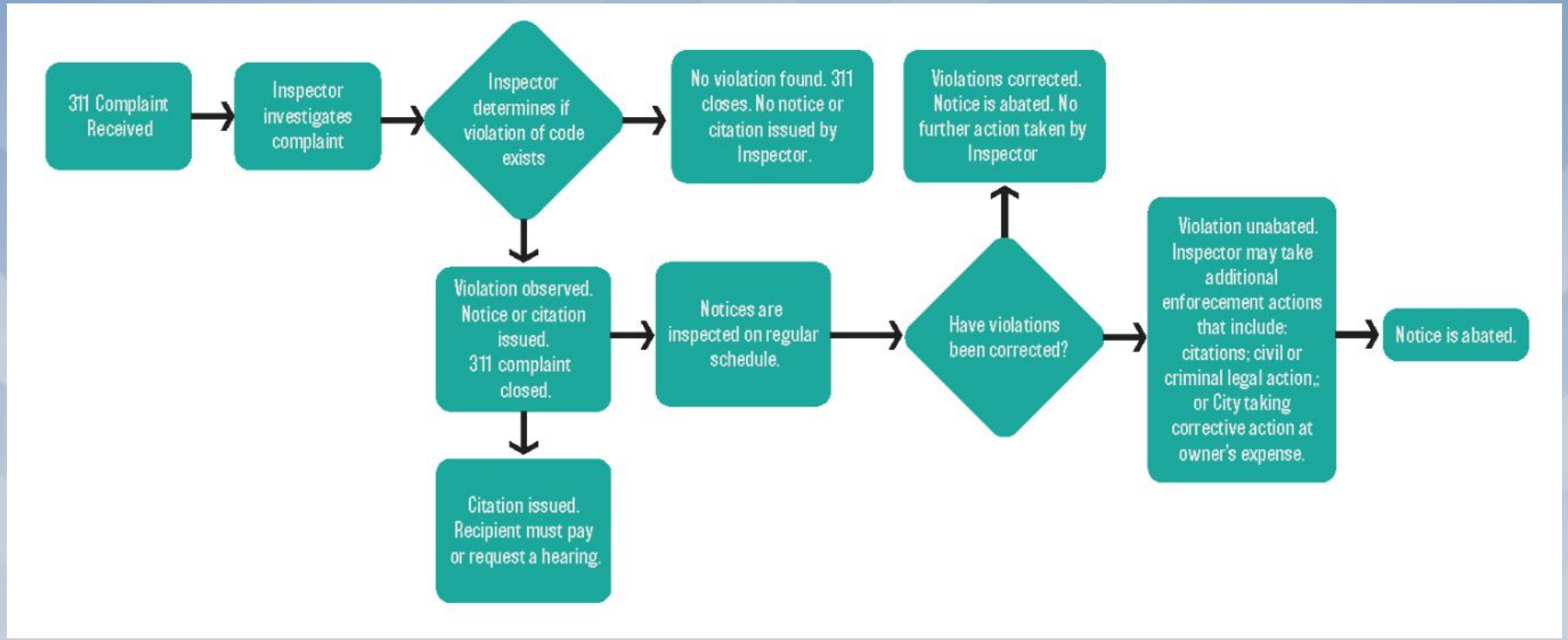
The VBN remains on the property until the violation is corrected and any fines paid.

How is a vacant building notice abated?

Use and Occupancy permit issued; property is ready for the market

Demolition completed

What is the process for issuing a Vacant Building Notice?



Baltimore City DHCD Resource: " Vacant Properties When and How to report Violations" + Process for VBN notice for 311 complaints

Whole Block Outcomes: Preventing and Addressing Vacants

Whole Block Outcomes: Preventing and Addressing Vacants

A key feature of the Vacants Reduction Strategy is focusing on interventions that prevent and anticipate vacant properties. Baltimore City DHCD has a variety of programs and partnerships:

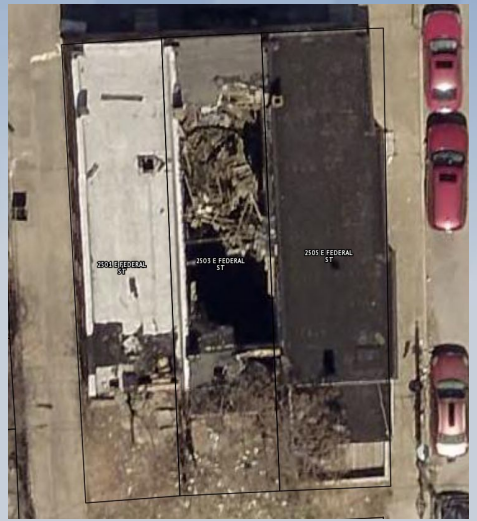
- Housing and Homeownership Preservation- Home Repair Grants
- Innovation Teams Prevention Focus
  - Vacants Research
  - Tax Sale Letters
- Community Code Enforcement Partnerships
- Code Enforcement has evolved into more targeted roles and inspections are continuing to ramp up. See dashboard for code enforcement to see how many FTAs citations have been issued.

Home in Park Circle – part of Park Heights IIA, renovated using Lead Hazard Reduction Funds

Whole Block Outcomes: Preventing and Addressing Vacants – AI Roof Detection

In 2022 DHCD partnered with Data Science for Social Good at Carnegie Mellon University which resulted in an machine-learning AI model to identify properties with damaged or missing roofs using aerial imagery and code enforcement data.

- The model utilized training data collected by YouthWorks interns in 2018
- The output of this model is used to identify new vacant buildings, emergency demolitions, and stabilizations
- Awarded the 2022 MACo County Innovation Award
- Will continue to update and improve model using latest imagery and data
- Roof data is available to view on CoDeMap



2018 & 2022: Collapsed Roof Identified by model
2022: Stabilization Complete
2023: Receivership Filed
2024: Adjacent Property (right) sold to homeowner
2025: Adjacent Property (left) undergoing significant rehab

Whole Block Outcomes: Preventing and Addressing Vacants - Identifying Unoccupied Buildings

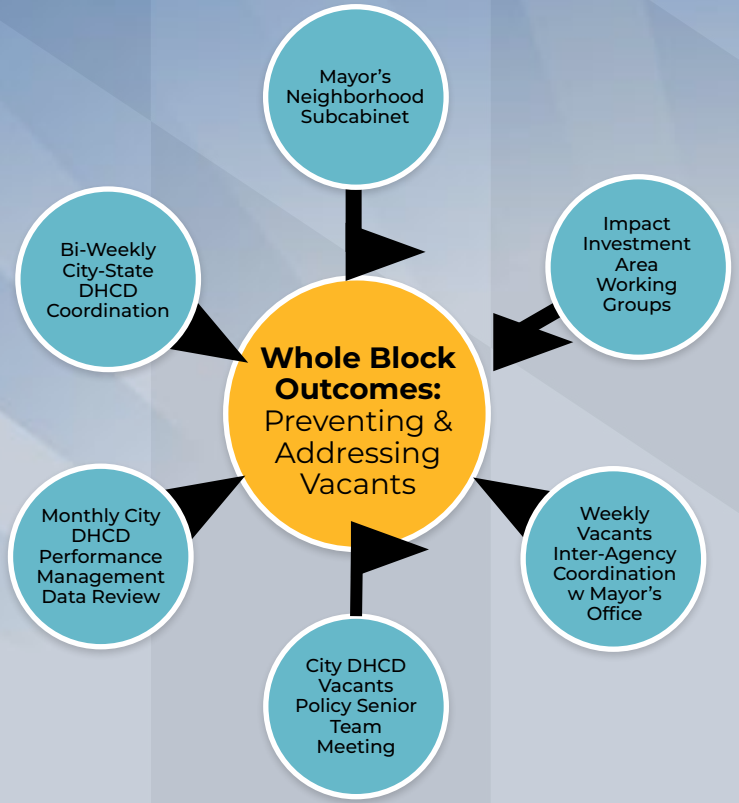
Baltimore City DHCD is developing new tools to identify unoccupied buildings that do not have Vacant Building Notices using a variety of data sources:

- Water Usage (DPW)
- Code Enforcement Violations/Citations
- 311 Service Requests
- Fire/Code X Data
- BGE Accounts
- Undelivered Mail

This work has resulted in additional VBNs being issued and also enables early interventions to assist occupants/owners with financial and programmatic support.

Whole Block Outcomes: Preventing and Addressing Vacants

Since the announcement of the Vacants Elimination Strategy in December 2023, much has been accomplished.



Property Outcomes Since January 1, 2024

Intervention	Outcome
Vacant Building Notices Abated	**1,454**
Use & Occupancy Permit	*1,280*
Demolition	*174*
Acquisition	
Completed	313
Underway	1,675
Disposition	
Completed	157
Underway	369
Home Repair Grants	
Completed	94
Underway	65
Permits Issued	**44,636**
Inspections Completed	**145,364**
Homeownership Incentives Distributed	**555**
In-Rem Foreclosure Cases	
Completed & Acquired	201
Underway	725

VBN Issuance Assessment - ReBUILD Metro Study

- Physical study of **4,000 properties**
- Of the surveyed properties: **18%** were vacant, **15%** had VBNs
  - Inspection of the vacant properties without VBNs showed only 38 were “distressed enough to qualify as VBNs” indicating a less than 1% increase in the VBN count
- **“This field comparison with the city’s VBN records indicates that the city’s VBN identification process is working as intended”** - Sean Closkey (ReBUILD Metro)

VBN Reduction Projections

Activity	FY24 (Actual)	FY25 Projections	5-Year Projections (FY25-FY29)	15-Year Projections (FY24-FY38)
VBNs rehabbed	1,208	1,449	8,652	27,205
VBNs demolished	263	277	1,809	6,071
Total VBNs abated	**1,471**	**1,726**	**10,461**	**33,276**
VBNs issued	858	986	5,026	16,376
Change in VBNs	**-613**	**-740**	**-5,435**	**-13,998***

*This total reflects that years 14 & 15 in the projections begin and end with 0 VBNs.

Data To Be Developed

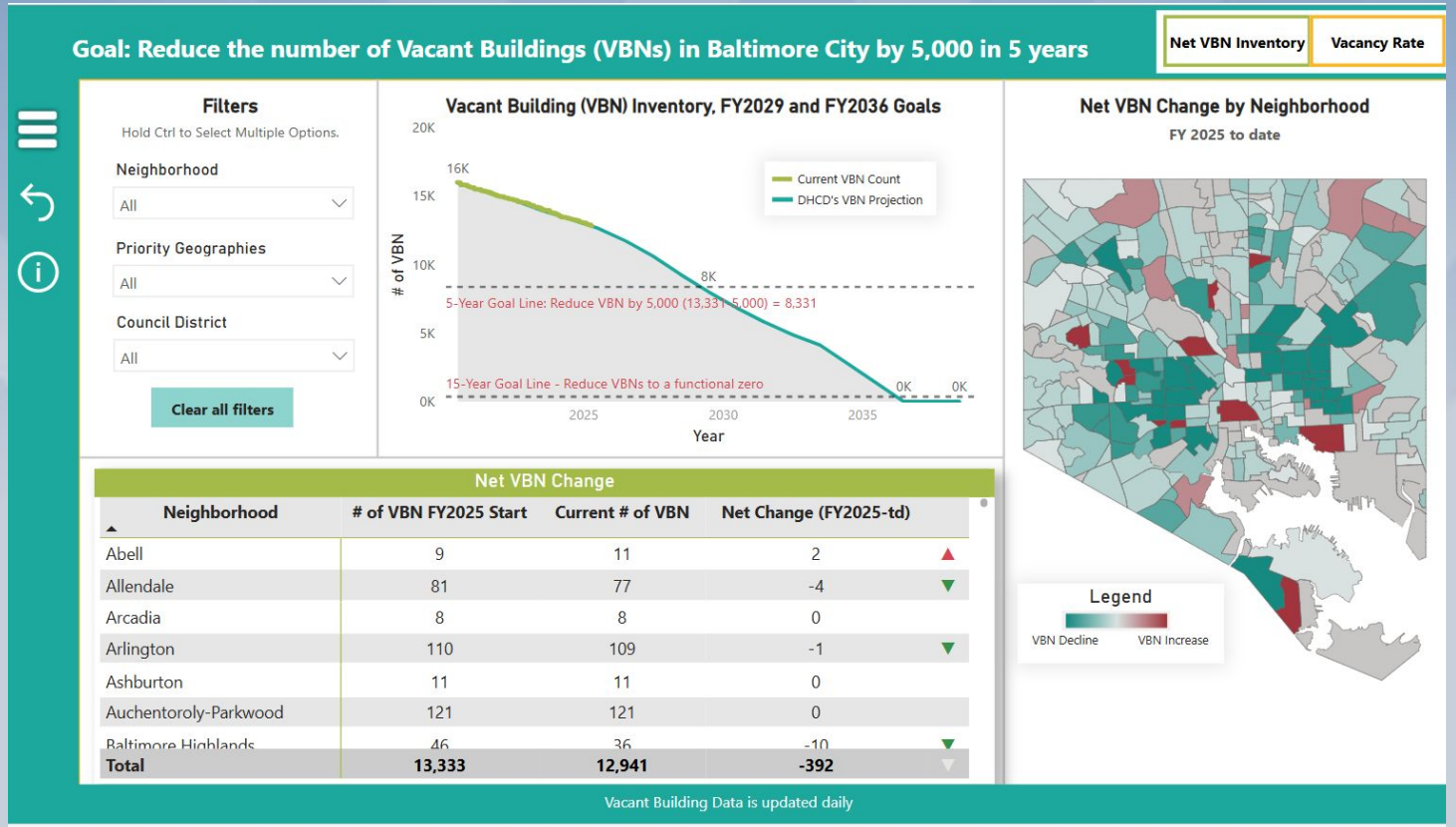
- Buildings and lots acquired, disposed of, demolished and stabilized and compare to actual data from 2024

- Monthly performance compared to baseline data; for example, show the numbers of properties to be demolished by year and by month and how many have been actually demolished to show if the city is achieving its goals month over month.

- Rehab starts compared to actual data from 2024.

- Level of VBN-related inspections and if inspections have gone up or down.

Vacancy Dashboard - VBNs



Working Groups

Working Groups Process

- Working Groups to include BVRC members, practitioners and partners
- Form small working groups (no more than 9 members) to ensure productive, efficient meetings
- Three BVRC members per working group; council members assign additional members
- Form to be developed to express working group interest

Initial Working Groups

- Brainstorm Working Group Ideas
  - Fundraising
  - Delivery Chain
    - Process improvements to the development pipeline through disposition and permitting
  - Capacity Building
    - Developer, construction trades, non-profit, legal
  - Economic Opportunity
    - Maximizing job development opportunities
    - Supporting small developers
    - Maximizing place-based economic development and small business growth

Closing Remarks