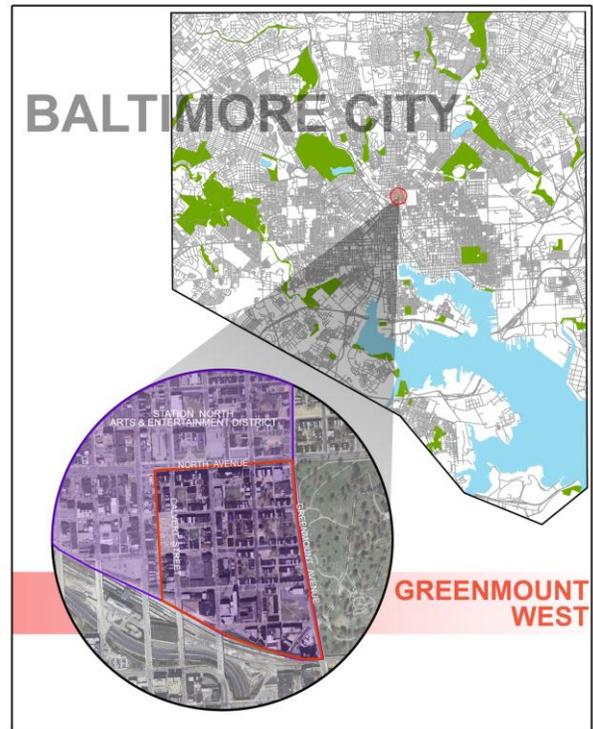


# 1 Neighborhood

## 1.1 Overview

This Plan is the product of collaboration between the New Greenmount West Community Association and the Baltimore City Department of Planning. The Greenmount West neighborhood is located in central Baltimore, just south of North Avenue, west of the historic Green Mount Cemetery on Greenmount Avenue, and east of Calvert Street adjacent to the Charles North community. Collectively Greenmount West and Charles North comprise the Station North Arts and Entertainment district.



The intent of this Plan is to respond to the mounting pressures of development within the neighborhood as its proximity to Penn Station, downtown Baltimore and the historic mid-town neighborhood of Mount Vernon to the south have made it attractive for development. It is the neighborhood's goal for this document to provide a roadmap for achieving a diverse, mixed-income community without displacing existing low-income residents, many of whom have been renting in the area for extended periods.

The tool identified within this Plan to prevent the displacement of existing residents is the creation of new housing stock within the community through the renovation of vacant structures and the development of vacant lots. Expanding the existing housing stock within Greenmount West allows for a limited influx of new residents at a market-rate price point while providing additional affordable housing units to accommodate existing long-term renters.

The City's significant land holdings within the neighborhood provide leverage in achieving both the goals of the City and the Greenmount West community through new reinvestment within the community, although the ultimate success of this Plan is the responsibility of both the New Greenmount West Community Association and the City.

## 1.2 Community Planning Principles

**The following principles were developed by the New Greenmount West Community Association in order to guide and inform the planning process which resulted in this Master Plan.**

1. Rebuild the economic health of the community by encouraging access to employment opportunities for local residents and maximize employment for local residents within the community.
2. Develop a diverse mix of retail, service, and office land-use throughout the neighborhood, particularly encouraging home-based businesses.
3. Maintain a balance of three complementary goals:
  - a. Expand the proportion of middle-income families and residents throughout the neighborhood.
  - b. Maintain and create affordable housing options for long-term residents.
  - c. Encourage a range of income levels throughout the neighborhood.
4. Encourage the development of community-based arts, both its creation and presentation, and help low-income artists to secure affordable live/work space in the neighborhood.
5. Focus the educational and recreational resources that exist within the community to serve children in our neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods.
6. Develop passive and active green spaces that attract users throughout the neighborhood.
7. Seek to build the capacity and influence of neighborhood citizens and institutions in all new development.
8. Maintain the neighborhood's historic architectural fabric - residential, industrial, and commercial and to the extent possible, the industrial use of the existing industrial buildings.
9. Support homeownership through consultation, development programs, and financial support.
10. Provide residents with a variety of interconnected transportation options, including walking, bicycling, transit and vehicular choices.

### 1.3 Community Vision Statement

The New Greenmount West Community Association (NGWCA) organized a group of NGWCA members, residents, and other various stakeholders invested in the community to take a pragmatic look at the area and work cooperatively to describe the direction they wanted the community to go. The following Greenmount West Community Vision Statement represents what the community and stakeholders value about the neighborhood as well as what they would like to see improved and changed in the next five to twenty years and their commitment to seeing their vision realized.

Our vision for Greenmount West is that our community continues to be welcoming to emerging and successful working people, professionals, as well as artists and artisans. We believe the neighborhood population will grow substantially and become a more diverse community, in both age and income, while maintaining our ethnic, racial, and lifestyle diversity. We also envision that Greenmount West will be an attractive low- to medium-density housing alternative situated next to the higher-density residential and entertainment development envisioned for Charles North, encouraging more family oriented and long-term residential households.

#### **Residential Make-Up**

Greenmount West has the potential (i.e., carrying capacity) to double or triple in household units over the next twenty years, supporting the existing housing stock. The existing vacant and City-owned properties will act as the catalyst for development with an end result of attracting new residents to the neighborhood. In order to support an economically diverse community, Greenmount West aims to include more housing for stable working households by providing moderately priced and market-rate housing, while ensuring that the existing or “legacy residents” currently residing in our neighborhood are not displaced. Accordingly, Greenmount West is dedicated to ensuring that efforts are made to provide outreach and education pertaining to owner-occupied housing rehabilitation programs, funding sources, tax abatements, and additional resources in order to support affordable high-quality living for lower-income legacy residents who want to stay in the neighborhood.

We anticipate that Greenmount West will continue to be predominantly rowhouse in character and will become more of a homeownership community. A mixture and variety of housing types at various price ranges affordable to all income groups, particularly targeting moderately priced housing options, will be encouraged and made available to the greatest extent possible. In keeping with the character of the neighborhood, rowhouse development will be encouraged throughout the neighborhood. In addition to rowhouses, adaptive

reuse for multi-family and apartment style residential housing and some new low and medium density multi-family buildings will also be encouraged at sites large enough to accommodate them.

### **Commercial Development**

Greenmount West residents desire future commercial development to be limited to home-based businesses and occasional convenience retail/services and office space mixed in at the inner residential core, except on North Avenue and the southern portion of the neighborhood. North Avenue will continue to be redeveloped primarily as a retail and commercial zone. The southern portion of the neighborhood will continue to encourage artist live/work space, light “green” industry, and large-scale artisan production space. Greenmount West will strive to be a community that compliments the surrounding communities, including the Charles North neighborhood, by providing a strong residential population to patronize the businesses and retail in the area and take advantage of the arts and entertainment offered there.

### **Transportation**

With the entire neighborhood located within a 10-minute walk of Baltimore's Pennsylvania Station and MTA Light Rail, Greenmount West is uniquely suited to be a transit oriented residential neighborhood. The community will be able to draw commuters who will use the station to reach local and regional employers alike. Greenmount West's existing bus lines, the free downtown circulator, Amtrak, MARC, Light Rail, and Johns Hopkins shuttle provide easy access to downtown and Washington D.C. to the South, the Johns Hopkins medical campus to the east and University to the north. Easy access to I-83 and I-695 connect to all points north and south, making the neighborhood an ideal location for employees relocating to Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Harford County and Forte Meade in Anne Arundel County under the BRAC plan.

Our community is uniquely situated to become a walkable community due to already existing mass transportation access. Creating a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly community will encourage legacy residents to remain in the community and will attract future residents regardless of their age or physical ability because residents of Greenmount West can get from one place to another without driving. Parks and roadway corridors will be improved in order to encourage multi-modal transportation as well as implementation of traffic calming devices throughout the neighborhood. Such efforts will also beautify the neighborhood, creating a Greenmount West that is attractive, accessible, and safe.

### **Sustainable Development**

Sustainability is a major value of the Greenmount West community. It's our vision that all new development is encouraged to be qualified for Leadership In Energy and Environmental Design - Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) status. Parks and green space, vegetable gardening, alternative energy sources and weatherization will complement pedestrian and mass transit oriented development in Greenmount West. Open spaces will be developed as functional recreation areas to attract residents by providing a diversity of opportunities for varying populations. It is also in our community's interest to strategically place open space near or next to existing/future community service or commercial buildings to provide a readily available administrative agency to oversee the grounds, maintenance, and security, ensuring a safe, vibrant, and accessible community.

### **Community Engagement**

In order to engage Greenmount West residents in the planning and development process, Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) will be encouraged by neighborhood organizations to be incorporated in all development projects where there are public subsidies provided and/or where there substantial public interest changes (e.g. zoning changes). CBAs may not only include aspects of the development project that will make it harmonious with our community development plan, also include employment for community residents both during construction and after completion, business contracting opportunities, and a sustainable contribution to actively enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Greenmount West community leaders will continue to work closely with Baltimore City to be vigorous in its code enforcement efforts supplementing the development plan. While it is anticipated that development will take decades to fully implement, it is the community's goal that development begin immediately - the first phasing to revitalize some strategically located City owned vacant rowhouses and development on several of the medium density residential projects. Success in these activities will reinforce confidence, build momentum and signal the predominantly residential character of the future of Greenmount West.

## 1.4 Community Strengths

The diverse population of Greenmount West and the surrounding institutional stakeholders serve as strong anchors for the community and offer stewardship for the future development of the neighborhood. Greenmount West is strategically situated because of its central location and transportation assets. Just over a mile north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor and adjacent to the historic neighborhood of Mount Vernon, Greenmount West is poised to build off of the successes of Baltimore's downtown and midtown neighborhoods as well as benefit from its proximity to Penn Station and the North Avenue corridor. The Greenmount West neighborhood has strong assets in its existing housing and commercial structures, including the many historic rowhomes, loft buildings and commercial/industrial structures. Existing recreation and open space could be strengthened through community management; vacant land can provide short term opportunities for community gardens and long term potential for infill development and the creation of new permanent open space.

### People

Greenmount West benefits from the diversity of its residents. Citizen leadership through the existing neighborhood association indicates the investment of residents in the well-being of the neighborhood, which will contribute greatly in the implementation of this Plan. The neighborhood also has a significant concentration of residents involved in the arts, which contributes to the neighborhood's distinct character.

### Institutions

The Greenmount West Community Development Corporation coordinates programs and services benefiting the community. The Baltimore City Montessori Public Charter School attracts families with young children to the area. The neighborhood's proximity to the Maryland Institute/College of Art and the University of Baltimore provides nearby educational and employment opportunities and enhances the diversity and creativity of the Greenmount West population. The Department of Social Services and the nearby Headquarters of Baltimore City Public Schools are stable employment centers that provide necessary resources to the residents of Greenmount West and Baltimore City. Greenmount West's inclusion in the Station North Arts and Entertainment District catalyzes investment in the area and strengthens the Baltimore arts community.



### **Housing and Building Stock**

Greenmount West currently provides a range of housing types, including single- and multi-family housing options. The presence of affordable housing and live/work space supports the diversity of the community. Included in the National Register of Historic Places' North Central Baltimore Historic district, the historic architecture found throughout Greenmount West contributes to the character of the area and offers renovation opportunities of the existing housing stock for homeownership. The existing vacant lots are consolidated and lend themselves well to infill development because of their size and location. The development of the Station North Townhomes in 2006 paved the way for the future infill development in other parts of the neighborhood.



Existing historic storefronts within the residential core of Greenmount West provide opportunities for small, community-based businesses to locate in the area that could provide amenities for residents. There are several opportunities for larger-scale commercial, light industrial, or artist live/work infill development on Greenmount Avenue and in the existing loft style structures that could generate employment opportunities for neighborhood residents.

### **Recreation/Open Space**

Greenmount West's Calvert & Federal Park is located on a prominent corner and in close proximity to the Montessori School. There are many opportunities for new open space throughout the neighborhood, including both community-managed open space and the potential for some of the existing vacant land to be retained as permanent open space. Underperforming open space and vacant land provides the opportunity for new development, with the interim potential for a variety of open space and urban agricultural uses through the City's Adopt-A-Lot program.

The historic Green Mount Cemetery forms the eastern border of the Greenmount West neighborhood and is easily accessible to the community. The proximity to the Jones Falls Trail offers the community opportunities for hiking and biking and provides pedestrian access to Druid Hill Park.



### Transportation/Location



Greenmount West is centrally located, in close proximity to both the Central Business District and the intersection of major corridors which serve as a City-wide transit hub. The east/west North Avenue corridor and the north/south corridors of Greenmount Avenue and Calvert Street provide the neighborhood with connectivity to downtown and greater Baltimore through access to multiple bus lines on Greenmount, Calvert and North Avenue. Proximity to the Amtrak and MARC trains and the light rail at Baltimore's Pennsylvania Station and the Light Rail makes the neighborhood well-situated for residents who utilize public transit or who commute by train to D.C..

## 1.5 Relationship to Local Plans

### **Greenmount West Urban Renewal Plan (1978)**

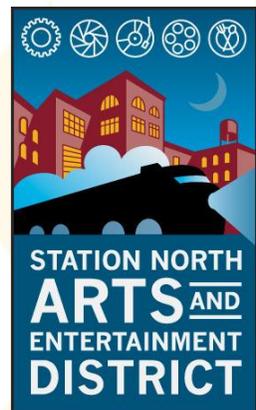
The Greenmount West Urban Renewal Plan (URP) was originally adopted on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1978 and has been amended seven times, the most recent of which was on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2003, although the area has not been studied comprehensively since the URP was originally adopted. The objectives and reasons for the various provisions listed in the Urban Renewal Plan include:

- To protect the area from blighting influence through clearance, rehabilitation of basically sound structures, and establishment of regulations;
- To provide housing resources for low- and moderate-income families through rehabilitation;
- To facilitate the development of community facilities; and
- To bring about a general physical improvement in the area by coordinating public improvement.

Over time, the clearance of blighting influences, as recommended in the Urban Renewal Plan's objectives, has led to a substantial amount of vacant land which necessitates an updated comprehensive planning process to guide redevelopment. While many of the objectives of the existing Greenmount West URP remain the same – encouraging revitalization through guiding City acquisition and restricting land uses – the amount of infill development required to knit together the urban fabric of the Greenmount West community was not anticipated. This allows opportunities to consider the development of programmed open space and infill construction in order for Greenmount West to provide more varied housing types and centrally located, functional open space resources.

### **Station North Arts and Entertainment District (2002)**

The Station North Arts and Entertainment District was established in 2002 to encourage centralized business and economic development specific to the arts. A City tax incentive for resident artists to renovate properties within the Arts and Entertainment districts was enacted the same year to promote additional live/work artist space in the Station North community, which includes both Greenmount West and the adjacent neighborhood of Charles North.



**Greenmount West Arts and Entertainment District Planned Unit Development**

(2003) After the establishment of the Station North Arts and Entertainment district in 2002, it became apparent that many of the uses required for artists to develop live/work spaces were not permitted under the existing residential and industrial zoning districts. Since a zoning classification that accommodated these uses did not exist in the Zoning Code at that time, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) was established by City Council approval that allowed for select arts-related industrial and commercial uses in addition to residential uses. As part of the current Comprehensive Master Plan and subsequent Zoning Code rewrite process known as TransForm Baltimore and because of the success of the Greenmount West Arts and Entertainment District PUD, the creation of a new zoning classification for live/work loft districts will look to replicate this mix of uses in other areas of the City.

**Charles North Vision Plan (2008)**

The Charles North Vision Plan is an ambitious vision for the neighborhood directly to the west of Greenmount West, completed in 2008 through a collaboration between the Central Baltimore Partnership (an umbrella organization of area community associations, institutions, stakeholders, and government officials) and the Baltimore Development Corporation, focusing on the existing commercial areas centered at the intersection of Charles Street and North Avenue.



The plan envisions Charles North as the gateway to the City because of its proximity to Baltimore's Pennsylvania Station, with the development of additional tourist attractions and hotel accommodations planned. Development plans include the potential capping of the portion of the Amtrak rail lines which separate Charles North and Mount Vernon adjacent to the train station to allow for the creation of additional developable land for both mid- and high-rise mixed-use new construction as well as a new public green that could serve as a gathering and performance space. The development of additional retail and other commercial uses is centralized around two themes: an "Asia Town" concept and the existing arts and entertainment district. This Plan was funded through a public-private partnership with the intention that the primary mechanism for implementation would be through private sector investment.

## 1.6 Relationship to Citywide Plans

### **LIVE-EARN-PLAY-LEARN: The City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan (2007-2012)**

The Comprehensive Master Plan includes a series of goals, objectives and strategies aimed at recreating Baltimore as a world class city.



The following have particular relevance to the Greenmount West Community:

- LIVE Goal 1: Build human and social capital by strengthening neighborhoods.  
Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents  
*Strategy 6: Create and preserve mixed-income neighborhoods in Competitive, Emerging and Stable neighborhoods with targeted disposition of City properties.*  
Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties throughout the City  
Objective 3: Maintain and create safe, clean and healthy neighborhoods.  
*Strategy 1: Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Standards.*
- LIVE Goal 2: Elevate the design and quality of the City's built environment.  
Objective 1: Improve design quality of Baltimore's built environment.  
Objective 3: Promote transit oriented development and mixed-use development to reinforce neighborhood centers and Main Streets.  
Objective 4: Protect and enhance the preservation of Baltimore's historic buildings and neighborhoods.
- LIVE Goal 3: Improve transportation access, accessibility and choice for City residents.  
Objective 1: Create a comprehensive transportation plan to improve mobility, accessibility and choice.  
*Strategy 4: Create traffic calming policies and procedures.*  
Objective 2: Facilitate Movement throughout the Region.  
*Strategy 4: Create intermodal transit hubs in areas of low automobile ownership.*  
*Strategy 5: Establish a development mitigation program to reduce congestion effects of new development.*
- EARN Goal 3: Improve access to jobs and transportation linkages between businesses.  
Objective 2: Promote economic development throughout the City by improving business-to-business connectivity via transportation linkages.
- PLAY Goal 2: Improve nightlife, entertainment, and recreation experiences for residents and visitors.  
Objective 1: Expand Access to Nightlife  
*Strategy 1: Create mixed-use zoning categories that allow nightlife and extended closing hours where appropriate.*  
Objective 2: Promote unique retail venues as shopping and tourist destinations.  
*Strategy 2: Designate Main Street areas as local and/or national historic districts in order to access tax credits.*  
*Strategy 4: Designate and support Arts and Entertainment Districts.*

In addition to the formal goals, objectives and strategies, the Comprehensive Master Plan includes a broad vision that relates to Greenmount West:

“Cities that are diverse, cities that nurture creativity, cities that are culturally alive and preserve their history are cities that thrive – because they create a better quality of life; they create new businesses; they create living neighborhoods; they retain and attract members of a growing creative class.

Baltimore is simmering with creativity and entrepreneurs, musicians, artists, architects, engineers, researchers, and scientists are already moving our local economy forward... This year (2006), Entrepreneur Magazine reported that Baltimore moved from 30th to 12th on their list of best cities for entrepreneurs, and we're number two in the East.

Qualities embedded in the urban fabric are attracting new residents to Baltimore: pedestrian friendly environments promote less driving; historic architecture and streetscapes provide tangible connections to the past; restaurants, coffee shops, and pubs just a walk away offer social places where basic human connections are made; and cultural institutions produce character-defining activities that are enjoyed by all.

Making bold decisions in times of extraordinary change leads to reinvention... Baltimore's history tells us something more. Cities never cease to change, and unknown reinventions will be part of providing our children's children with a place to live, earn, play and learn in Baltimore,” (Comprehensive Master Plan, Page 47).

### **Sustainability Plan and Cleaner Greener Baltimore (2009)**



The Sustainability Plan was recently adopted as an appendix to the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan (2007-2012). Recent sustainability planning efforts and initiatives provide an opportunity to make

Greenmount West a more attractive, healthy place to spend time.

The following have particular relevance to the Greenmount West Community:

- CLEANLINESS GOALS: Towards Our Vision of a CLEAN Baltimore  
Goal 3: Transform vacant lots from liabilities to assets that provide social and environmental benefits.
- POLLUTION PREVENTION GOALS: Towards Our Vision of a HEALTHY Baltimore  
Goal 5: Improve the health of indoor environments.
- GREENING GOALS: Towards Our Vision of a GREEN Baltimore  
Goal 3: Provide safe, well-maintained recreational space within ¼ mile of all residents.
- TRANSPORTATION GOALS: Towards Our Vision of a MOBLIE Baltimore  
Goal 2: Make Baltimore bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- GREEN ECONOMY GOALS: Towards Our Vision of an INVESTED Baltimore  
Goal 1: Create green jobs and prepare City residents for these jobs.  
Goal 3: Support local Baltimore businesses.