

# Madison Square

## Area Master Plan

Baltimore City Department of Planning



*Approved*  
The City of Baltimore Planning Commission  
January 19, 2006



*Martin O'Malley,  
Mayor  
City of Baltimore*



*Otis Rolley, III  
Director, Department of Planning  
City of Baltimore*



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New Friendship Baptist Church

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**Kevin Quinn, Comprehensive Planner  
Planning Team Leader**

**Planning Team**

**Keia Butts, Comprehensive Planner  
Eddie Leon, Historic Preservation Planner  
Thor Nelson, Architect  
Sylvia Paylor, Development Specialist  
Tim Schneid, Real Estate Agent Supervisor**

## Department of Planning Mission Statement

To provide the highest level services and leadership in urban and strategic planning, historical and architectural preservation, zoning, design, development, and capital budgeting to promote the sustained economic, social, and community development of the City of Baltimore.

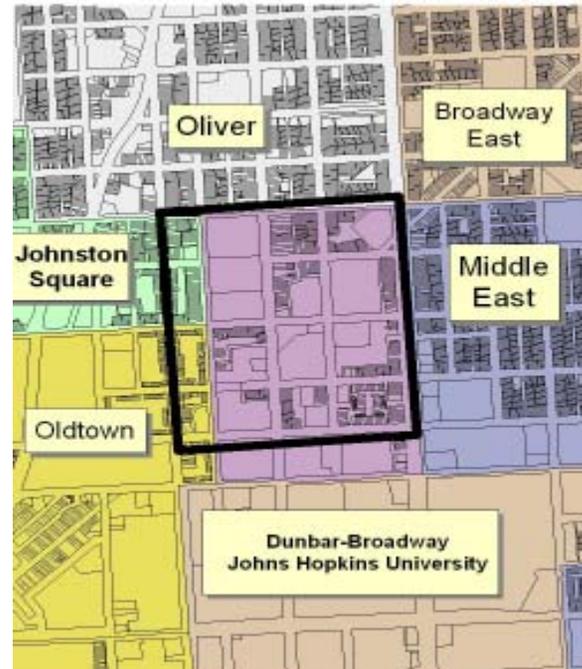
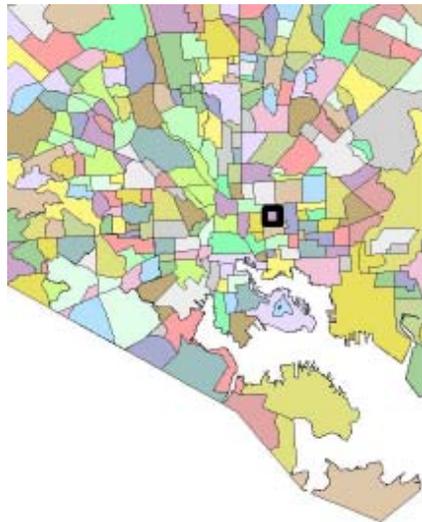
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# Neighborhood Planning In East Baltimore

Continuing the administration's philosophy of putting Neighborhoods First, in 2003 the Department of Planning began preparing Small Area Plans to approach neighborhood planning from an asset-based standpoint. In addition to this Small Area Plan for the Madison Square area, there are several other areas throughout Baltimore City that have completed plans or are underway. They include: Barclay-Midway-Old Goucher, Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello, Locust Point, Mount Vernon/Charles North, Park Heights, Pen Lucy, Penn North, Poppleton, Westport/Cherry Hill, Reservoir Hill, Rosemont, Sharp-Leadenhall, Uplands, and Woodberry.

The Small Area Plan (SAP) initiative was done in addition to the six Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAP) that the Department was already preparing. While the SNAP plans focus on neighborhoods that are stable but are beginning to show signs of deterioration, the SAP's focus on reinvestment and redevelopment areas where heavy intervention is often necessary.



The Madison Square Small Area Plan is bounded by Biddle Street on the north, Broadway on the east, Madison Avenue on the south, and Central Avenue on the west. The boundaries include the majority of the neighborhood known as Gay Street I. However, the boundaries also go one block outside the Gay Street I neighborhood to the west, including homes on the north side of Biddle Street (1400 to 1600 blocks) in the Oliver neighborhood, as well as homes on Eden Street (1000 and 1100 blocks), on the east end of the Johnston Square neighborhood. The Faith Lane Community Association is the predominant community association in the neighborhood.

The planning process began in February 2005. The public input portion of this process consisted of small group meetings, block captain meetings, and larger neighborhood meetings. Each meeting had a specific focus, such as housing, recreation, or retail. Residents, block captains, church leaders, and City officials took part in these meetings.

## Why Madison Square?

### An Asset-Based Strategy: Community Assets

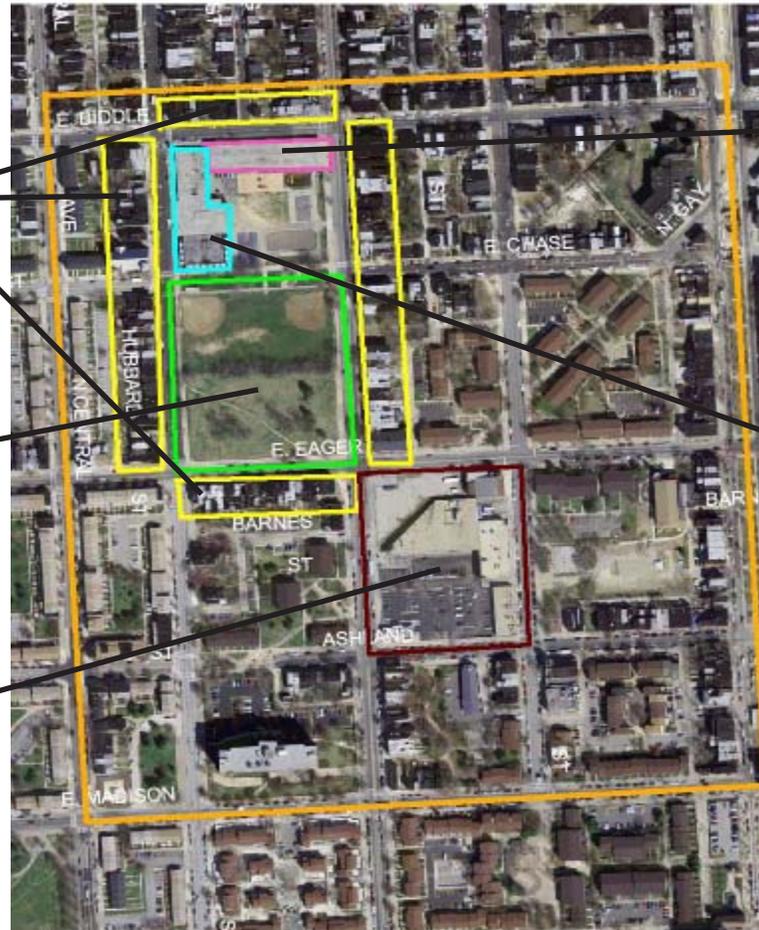
Over the next few years, East Baltimore will undergo a renaissance of new development and community growth. Within East Baltimore, Madison Square was identified as a desirable neighborhood because of community assets and development taking place nearby. Some community assets include:

#### City-Owned Properties:

Several vacant houses in the area are owned by Baltimore City. The City has the ability to award these properties to a developer for rehabilitation.

Open Space: Most of East Baltimore lacks any large passive or active recreation space. Madison Square has an active football field as well as a vacant lot that has potential as a successful open space.

Church Square Shopping Center: Managed by Streuver Bros., the shopping center has a Stop, Shop, and Save, a Laundry Land, salons, and other small stores.

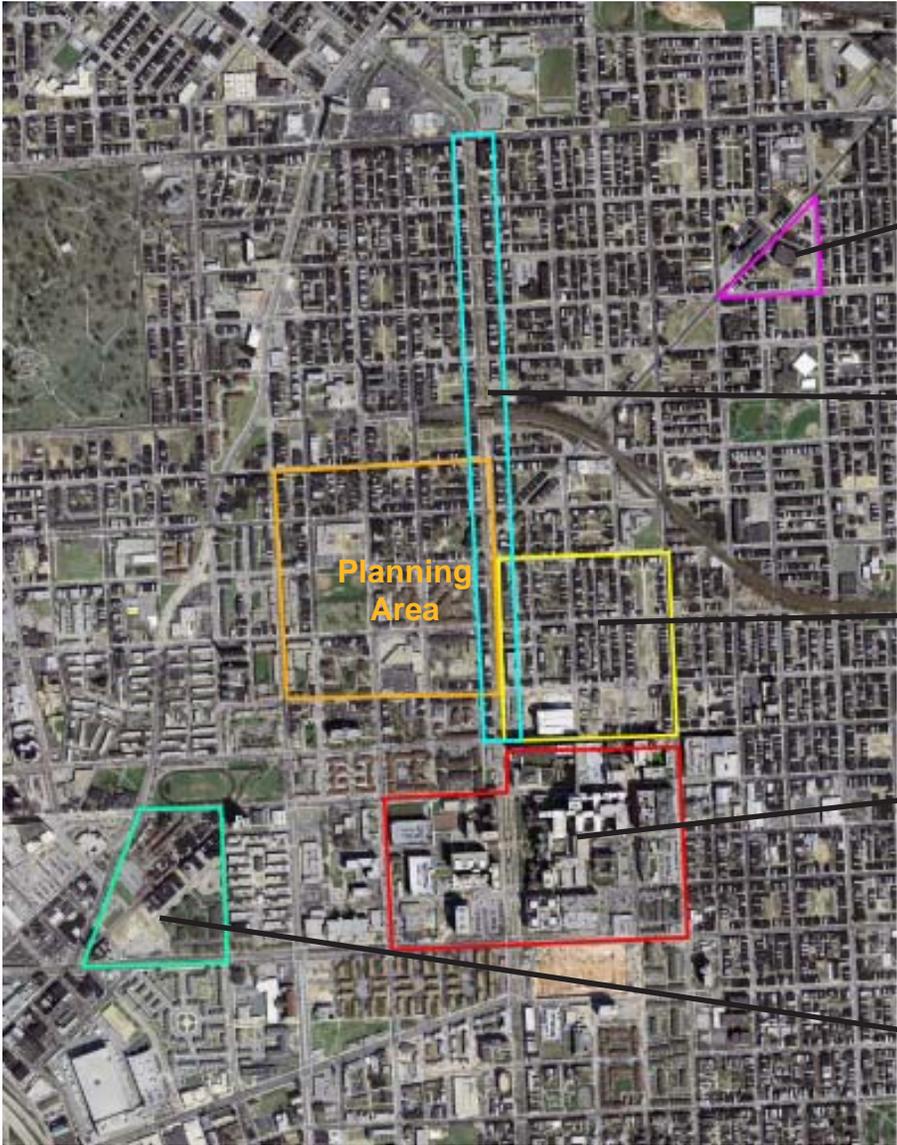


Madison Square Elementary School: The school is currently occupied by the Community Initiatives Academy, a private, religious school started by a local church.

Madison Square Recreation Center/The Dome: The recreation center is a valuable resource that serves the community in recreational as well as academic capacities. The Dome is an outdoor, covered basketball court that has recreational leagues and a strong historic presence in the community.

### An Asset-Based Strategy: Development Projects

There are several large development projects currently taking place in East Baltimore. These projects provide a foundation from which a solid real estate market can grow. Some projects include:



The American Brewery Building: HCD issued a Request-For-Proposals (RFP) in July 2005 and received three responses from developers. A developer will be chosen in Fall 2005.

Broadway Rehabs: In the spring of 2005, HCD awarded approximately 70 rowhomes from the 800 to 1800 blocks of Broadway to City Life Historic Properties. These homes will be completely rehabilitated.

East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI): Also known as the New East Baltimore Community, this project will bring up to 1.6 million square feet of biotech space, up to 160,000 square feet of retail space to the area, and 600 to 800 new units of housing.

The Johns Hopkins University: A presence in East Baltimore since the university opened in 1876, Johns Hopkins University is one of the largest research institutions in the country.

Oldtown Mall: In March 2005, The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) awarded several large vacant lots adjacent to Oldtown Mall to Continental Realty Corporation (CRC) for the development of retail, most importantly including a new grocery store.

## History

The Madison Square-Oliver area is a neighborhood of mid-nineteenth through early-twentieth century brick rowhouses interspersed with numerous churches, schools, small commercial establishments, and other neighborhood service buildings from the same period of its development. This area must be considered as part of the continuing north-eastward expansion of Baltimore City along its major thoroughfares. Harford Avenue and Gay Street were old thoroughfares along which grew farms and businesses, and between which developed some of the many rope walks so vital to maritime economy. It was closely connected to the area to its south, though much of that area has been lost to urban renewal. The area south of Hoffman Street was generally referred to as Madison Square, after the public park situated within it which was purchased by the city in 1853 for \$30,000 dollars. The region to the north was known as Oliver, after merchant Robert Oliver, whose estate, Green Mount, comprised both the present Greenmount Cemetery and much of the land surrounding it in the early nineteenth century.

Development began around Madison Square shortly after the Civil War, hit a peak in the early seventies, slumped later in that decade, picked back up in the later 1880's when it reached Hoffman Street, and spread sporadically to the north in the early 1890's, filling most of the land by 1896. Churches tended to precede rowhouses, then were replaced with larger structures in the same area. Schools were often associated with these churches, which represented a wide variety of denominations. In 1847, the Fathers of St. James Church invited the School Sisters of Notre Dame to come from Germany to teach school at the church. The sisters were given a building just south of the church, soon began accepting boarders, and quickly developed this enterprise into the Institutue of Notre Dame.



*1865 Sachse Birds-Eye View of Baltimore and the Oliver-Madison Neighborhood*

Most of the early churches were of brick, the largest being stone, but after the 1890's most churches were made of the more expensive stone. Two prime examples are Holy Innocents Episcopal Church of 1874, Frank Davis, and Faith Presbyterian Church of 1882 by Charles Carson.

Madison Square-Oliver was predominately German, Irish, and strongly Catholic in the 19th century, with quite a few important Catholic institutions either within its bounds or nearby. These include St. Joseph's Hospital of 1873 and 1898, and St. Paul's Church of 1902, by Thomas Kennedy. Another building of note is the George Baurenschmidt House of 1890, by George A. Frederick (architect of City Hall).



*Built in 1874, Grace Memorial Baptist Church is a Gothic Revival stone church with gable roof and corner tower*

From 1900 to the end of World War II marked a period of stability throughout the Madison Square area. The area was built out by this time. No land other than that of the square remained open. As German and Irish families moved into the area the older ones began eyeing the opportunities that lay in the newly acquired suburban sections of the city. The neighborhood would go through little change despite the onset of two world wars, a depression

and prohibition. The end of the Second World War marked significant change in the community and the suburban flight that was occurring all over the city. Returning GI's who were now armed with the GI Bill and Loans were ready to move out of their old neighborhoods and stretch their arms in Baltimore's suburbia. As they moved out, new families that were once segregated into smaller parts of the city began moving in.

The neighborhood continued to be a stable area to live and raise a family until a new Cold War era period of social and economic unrest returned. Many of the neighborhoods' businesses began closing and also moving further out into the suburban areas, as did the jobs that once supported the families in this community. Socially, the area was greatly affected by the fight for Civil Rights.

The Madison Square community greatly escaped the rioting that occurred in other parts of the city but suffered the same fate as other neighborhoods did as more and more families moved to other suburban enclaves. Today the area is marked with abandoned houses and few job opportunities, yet there are still residents remaining that recall the glory days of families gathering around the square, sitting on their front steps, and talking about community.



*Built in 1867, East Baltimore Deliverance Baptist Church is a brick Renaissance Revival style church*

# Area Profile

This plan takes a comprehensive look at the planning area and includes recommendations for the community as well as city agencies. To research the area, we conducted a neighborhood analysis of existing data, known as an Area Profile. The Area Profile examined:

- Assets
- Challenges and Constraints
- Demographics
- Property Ownership



*Located just 2 blocks from Madison Square, the New East Baltimore Community project will create new jobs, over 1 million square feet of Life Science space, and hundreds of new residential units*

## Assets

The Madison Square area has the potential to succeed because of the number of nearby assets. We view these strengths as the building blocks of future development in the neighborhood. The community has both physical and social attributes that add capital to this area. Some assets include:

- Abundance of city-owned properties
- Availability of recreation space
- Presence and proximity of recreation center
- Dedicated resident population and community association
- Active churches
- Located in close proximity of the East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI)
- Located in close proximity of a small, local shopping center
- Increasing private development activity taking place along Broadway, at Oldtown Mall, and at the American Brewery Building
- Nearby colleges and universities, including The Johns Hopkins University and Sojourner Douglass College

## Challenges & Constraints

The challenges and constraints in the neighborhood are wide and varied. Some of the major challenges are:

- High housing vacancy: Dozens of vacant houses in the area create structural problems for residents, make it difficult to get homeowners insurance, and cause the neighborhood to appear as though it is neglected.
- Failing housing market: Due to high housing vacancy, median sales prices are extremely low. Little market activity has taken place in the past few years.
- Crime, or the perception of crime: High profile crime in the area, such as the tragic firebombing of the Dawson House, has created a stigma where housing developers are reluctant to invest in rehabilitated housing or new construction. This also deters new residents from moving into the neighborhood.
- Deterioration of housing stock: Homes left vacant for long periods of time are in extremely poor condition. Some homes that are currently occupied have been altered from their historical origins.
- Limited retail and commercial opportunities: While Church Square serves some local needs, the Stop, Shop, and Save is regarded as a grocery store of last resort for many residents. Many residents needs, such as a large grocery store or pharmacy, are not met by current businesses.



*Vacant houses, like this structure on Caroline Street overgrown with ivy, have long been neglected*

## Demographics

According to Census 2000 data, the Madison Square area is no different than much of East Baltimore. This is a primarily residential area that saw a drop in population from 1990 to 2000. As a result, there was a significant increase in vacant houses. The redevelopment of this area depends on re-populating the area, rehabilitating vacant homes, increasing property values, and building on the existing assets of the community.

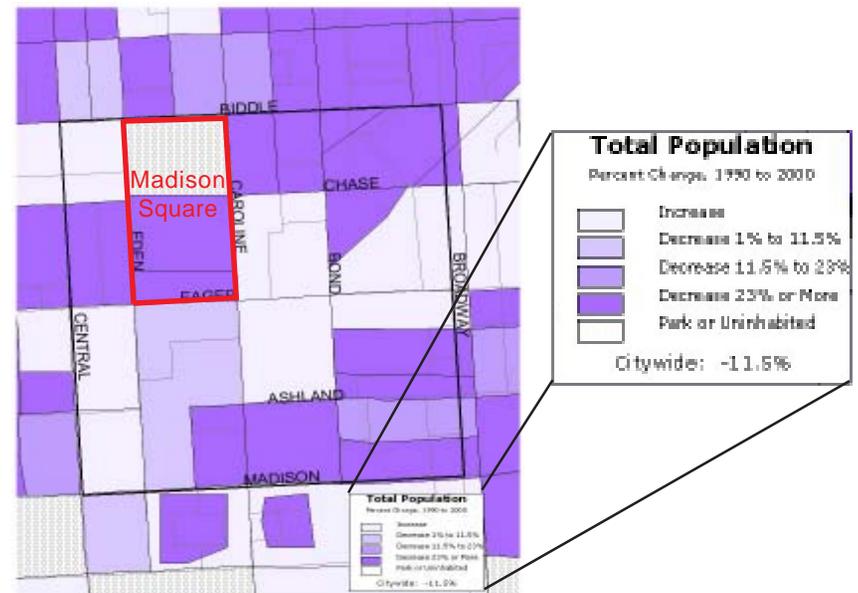
### Population

The Population Change map shows a decrease of 23 percent or more in most of the plan area. However, in a couple of specific areas, there was an increase in population. In particular, population increased along Central Avenue as a result of the new construction of homes along that street. There was also an increase in the Clay Courts development on the east-side of the planning area. Population loss led to a significant increase in vacant housing as residents left the area.

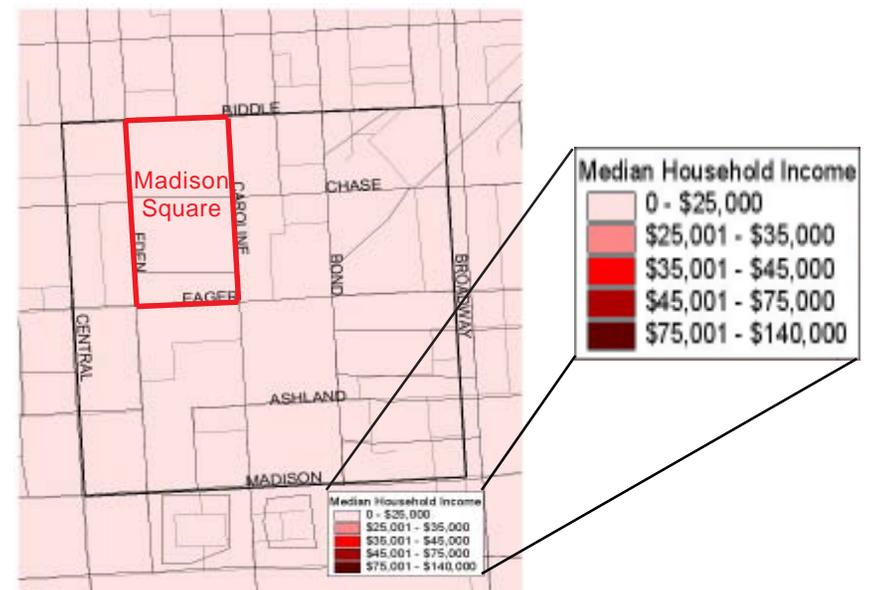
### Median Household Income

The adjacent map shows the Median Household Income by blockgroup using Census 2000 data. According to this data, each blockgroup in the Madison Square area had a median household income of less than \$25,000. This is consistent with most of East Baltimore.

### Population Change



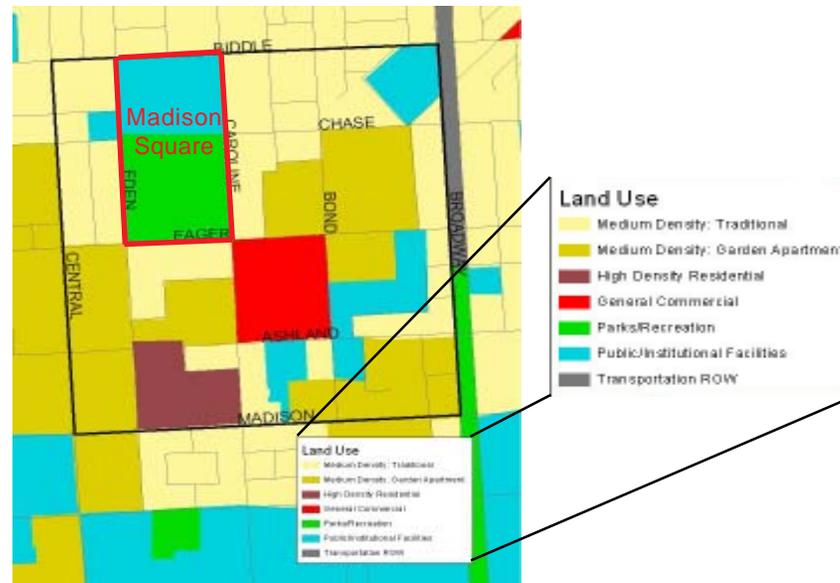
### Median Household Income



## Land Use

The Madison Square area is composed of primarily medium density residential uses in the form of rowhomes and garden apartments. Church Square is the only General Commercial land use in the area. The Madison Square Elementary School as well as several churches are identified as Public/Institutional Facilities.

### Land Use



## Zoning

The zoning in the plan area is mostly R-8, which is a high density residential zoning category. Church Square is zoned B-2-2, a community commercial category. The south-western part of the plan area is zoned R-9 because it is a higher density of residential units.

### Zoning



## Property Ownership

Several properties in the Madison Square planning area are owned by the Mayor and City Council (MCC) or the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC).

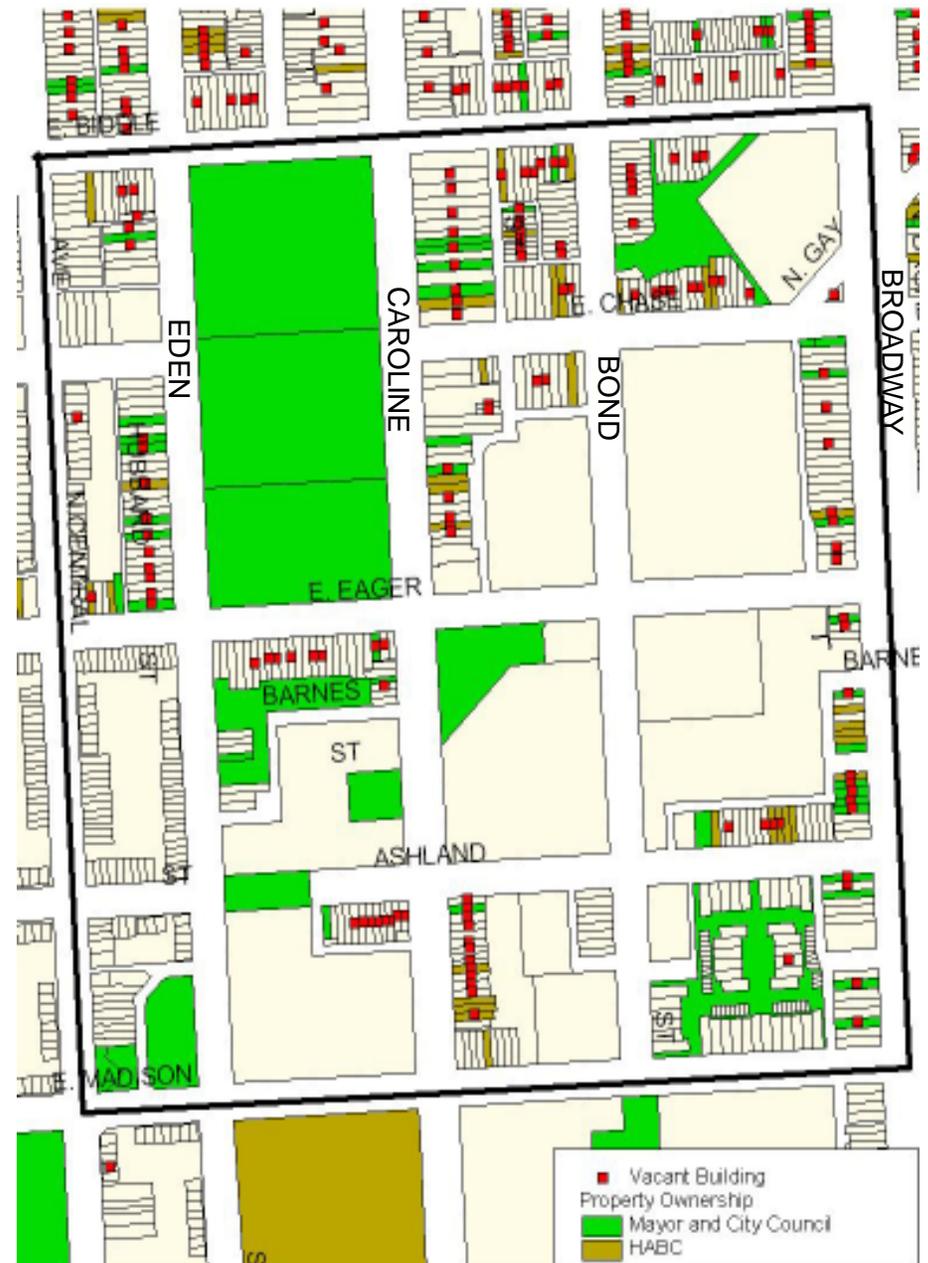
### **Mayor and City Council (MCC)**

The Mayor and City Council own several important properties in the area. They own the land on which the Madison Square Elementary School sits, as well as the Recreation Center. The City also owns the middle portion of Madison Square (football fields) and the southern portion of the square (vacant lot).

Baltimore City also owns several awkwardly shaped lots, including 911 North Eden Street, located behind homes on the 1400 block of East Eager, and 1107 North Bond Street, also known as Faith Lane. The City also owns the paved lot at the northwest corner of Church Square.

### **Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC)**

The Housing Authority owns several scattered site public housing units throughout the planning area. Many of these homes will have ownership transferred to the Mayor and City Council, who would then have the ability to redevelop the properties.



# Goals for Revitalization

## Guiding Themes

A consensus emerged from the planning process. Community residents, church leaders, community leaders, planners, and City officials identified seven key themes:

- 1) The vacant lot at the south end of the square (former Harry Mills Terraces site) should have an appropriate and community-friendly use.
- 2) Encourage rehabilitation of vacant houses and new construction in mid-blocks where demolition has occurred. Investigate the possibility of rehabilitation loans and grants for area homeowners.
- 3) Provide recommendations for future use of the Madison Square Elementary School.
- 4) Examine the use of the Madison Square Recreation Center for larger community purposes, including information dissemination, senior programs, and housing program availability.
- 5) Examine possible partnerships with local colleges
- 6) Encourage new businesses to enter the area.
- 7) Investigate the possibility of historic preservation programs for the area.

These themes were used to help form recommendations for housing, recreation, retail opportunities, and community needs in the area.



*Vacant rowhomes along North Caroline Street*



*Playground behind Madison Square Elementary School*

# Historic Madison Square

The original Madison Square included what is now the vacant lot on which the Harry Mills Terrace once stood, as well as the football fields. Thomas Scharf, in History of Baltimore City and County, originally published in 1881, describes the Square:

“The square slopes gently to the south, a fountain and basin, with swimming fish, forming the centre, around which are ranged rustic seats, beneath the shade of large willow trees. Gracefully winding walks, paved with concrete and bordered with shade-trees, lead in every direction. Beds of bright-colored coleus and roses, backed by the green of the sward, give delightful variety to the scene. The iron railing was removed in 1880 and eight entrances made, each

marked by urns of blooming plants, mounted upon pedestals of pressed brick with marble panels, the effect being altogether inviting.”



This aerial photo, taken in 1968, shows the criss-crossing paths of the original Madison Square. Many residents involved in the planning process recalled the historic square from their childhood.

In the 1970's, a small development of public housing, Harry Mills Terrace, was created on the southern portion of the site. The upper portion of the park was created into playing fields. In the mid-1990's, the public housing was torn down because of poor conditions, leaving a vacant lot.



*A city-block size vacant lot lies where the historic Madison Square and Harry Mills Terrace once stood*

We recommend returning the park to the historic Madison Square for several reasons. First, recreating a historic square in this area would help to stimulate the real estate market. Homes would look out on the square and would be the largest passive park in the area.

Second, because of covenants on the property, the site can only be used for public purposes, such as public housing or a public park. Third, the openness of the space should be treasured. There is little open space or parks in East Baltimore. This vacant lot presents an opportunity to recreate an historic park and give the community something it has not had in several decades: a well-maintained historic park.

## A Neighborhood Park

Below is a rendering of a re-constructed historic park. This plan recommends that the Department of Planning and Department of Recreation and Parks work with the community to re-create Madison Square.

The conceptual site plan attempts to recreate the criss-crossing design of the original square. A fountain or other focal point at the top of the square gives the park a defining element. The park would also contain a flowers, shrubbery, and trees along the perimeter.

As with most projects, cost is a significant issue. We recommend that the proceeds from the sale of the Madison Square Elementary School go towards funding design and construction of the park. The Department of Recreation and Parks will request any additional funds for design in their FY07-08 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget, with construction funds requested in FY08-09.



We examined re-opening Chase Street through Madison Square to continue the street grid. Doing so, however, would take space away from the football field, which could be dangerous to athletes. Additionally, with Chase Street closed, the Madison Square neighborhood isolates itself as a small pocket community in East Baltimore. Because the closed road creates a sense of place, we recommend that the street remain closed.

The pedestrian area between the football fields and The Dome needs improvement. The sidewalk is cracked and should be replaced. We recommend that an MVR recommendation be made for pathway improvements to this area.

Additionally, we examined re-construction of the historic square to its original size (extending from Eager to Chase Street). In order to do this, it would require us to relocate the football field. Because of the small amount of open space in East Baltimore, an adequate replacement field could not be located. As a result, we recommend keeping the athletic field.

## Historic Madison Square Recommendations

- The Department of Recreation and Parks will request funds in FY07-08 for design and construction of the park.
- The Departments of Housing and Community Development will transfer ownership of the site to the Department of Recreation and Parks.
- The Department of Planning will make an MVR recommendation to improve the sidewalk/pathway where Chase Street used to go through Madison Square.

# Housing

Like much of East Baltimore, there are many vacant houses that need to be redeveloped if neighborhoods are to improve. Many homes can be rehabilitated while others need to be demolished. In some areas, new construction and infill housing should be built to complete blocks where scattered demolition has taken place.

This section will first examine local and Baltimore City housing data. Next, we will make recommendations for properties around the square, properties in the planning area, and propose sites for infill housing and demolition. We will also look at other strategies to improve the area, such as facade grants and code enforcement.

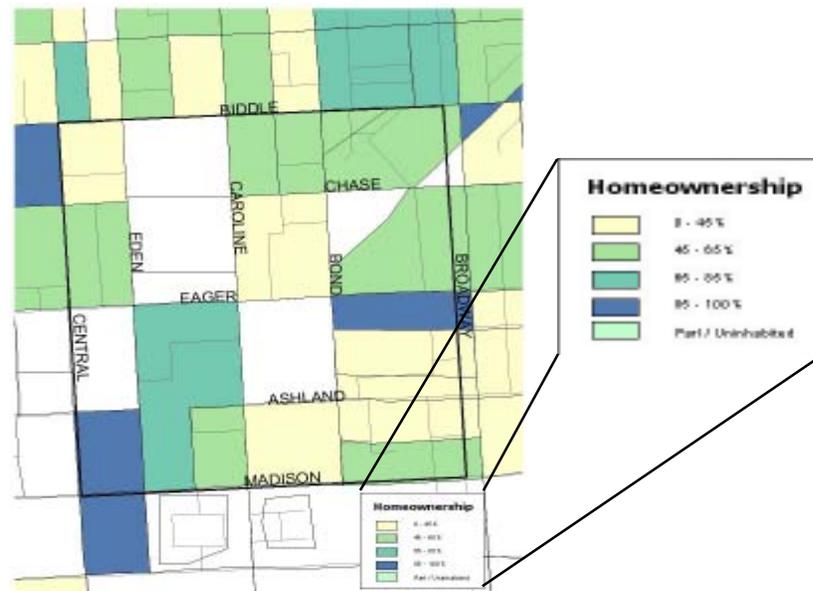
## Homeownership

Homeownership throughout the planning area is varied. Most of the area has a homeownership rate between 45 and 65 percent. Many homeowners have lived in this area for 20-40 years, some since they were children.

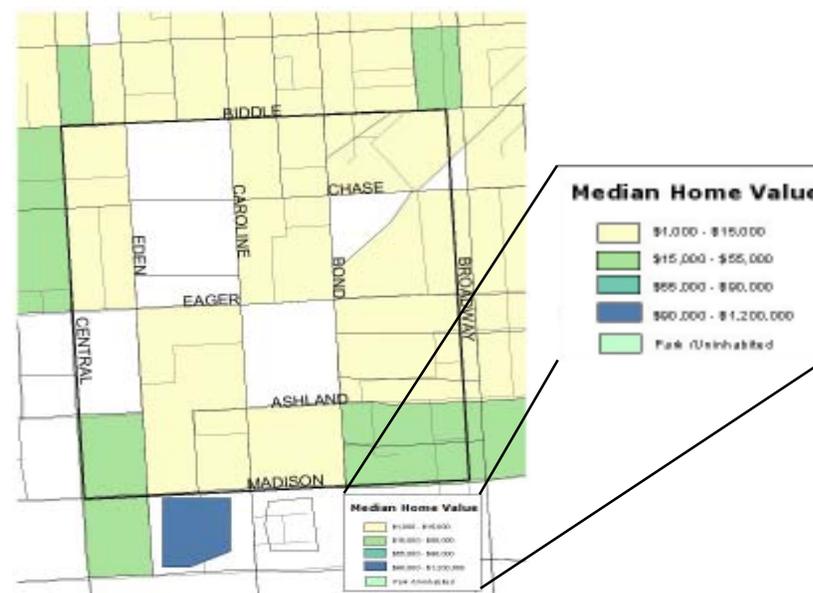
## Median Home Values

Most blocks in the area are over 40% abandoned. Vacant houses are scattered throughout the neighborhood. As a result, median home values in the area are primarily between \$1,000 and \$15,000.

### Homeownership



### Median Home Value



## Redevelopment of Vacant Properties Properties Facing Madison Square

The abundance of vacant properties has taken its toll on the Madison Square area. In an effort to redevelop the neighborhood, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) placed several homes in the Madison Square area in the Project 5000 program. Project 5000 is Mayor Martin O'Malley's initiative to return 5,000 vacant and abandoned property to productive use. In this program, properties are acquired through tax sale foreclosure, quick take, and traditional acquisition.

The City owns or is looking to acquire a total of 18 homes along Madison Square along the following blocks:

- 1000-1100 North Eden Street
- 1000-1100 North Caroline Street
- 1400 East Eager Street
- 1400 East Biddle Street



*Homes located along the 1400 block of East Biddle Street*

We recommend that HCD, in collaboration with the Department of Planning, issue a Request-for-Proposals (RFP) for the rehabilitation of these properties. Because of market forces in the area, we recommend that this RFP be timed to coincide with the delivery of housing in the EBDI project area, estimated to be Summer 2007. The approximate release date for this RFP would be in the spring of 2006. A release date at this time would result in a similar completion date. Additionally, waiting for the RFP will give time for national, state, and local historic designation to take effect, allowing anyone rehabing a house to take advantage of tax credits.

The redevelopment of the vacant properties along these blocks would restore the fabric of the blocks, increase the homeownership rate, and increase the median home value. As with all Department of Housing and Community Development and Department of Planning processes, selected respondents to the RFP will make presentations to the community.

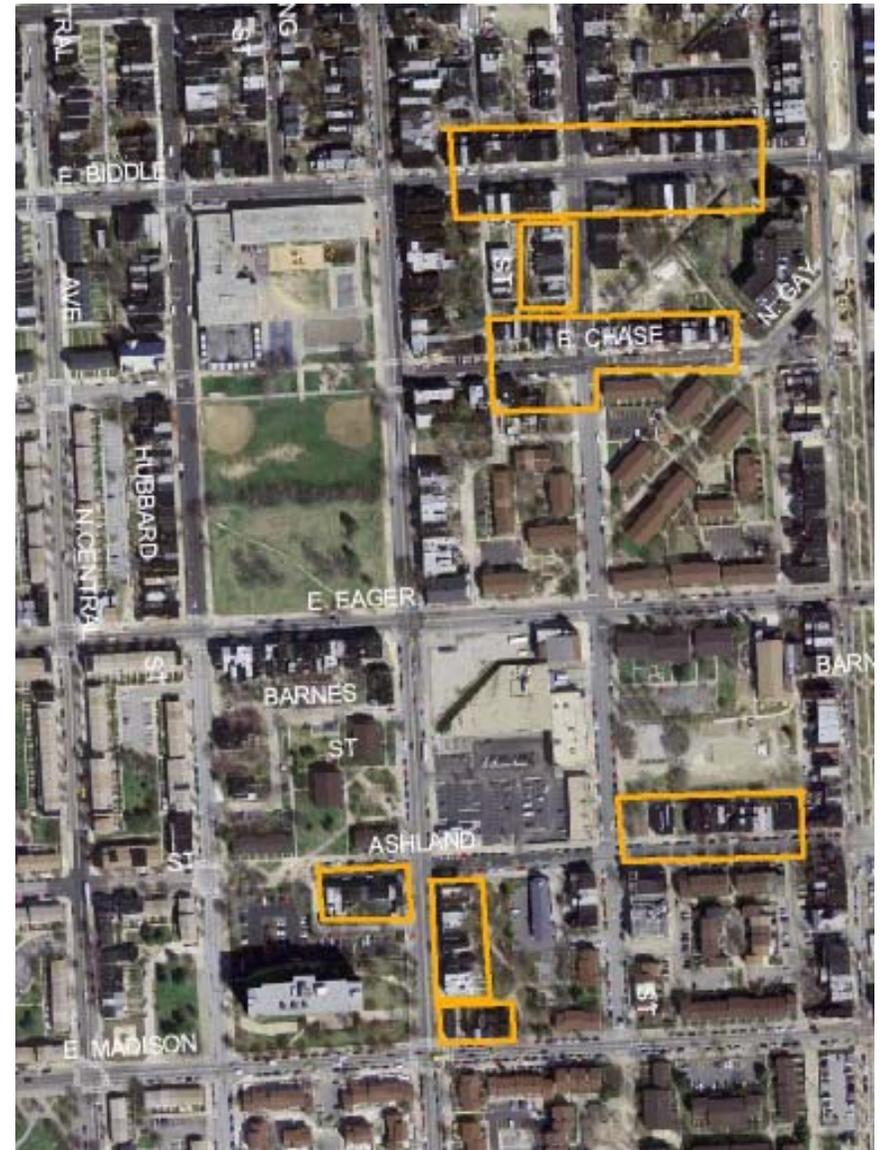
## **Redevelopment of Vacant Properties** Remaining Properties in the Planning Area

While the square is a central part of the plan, the area to the south and east of the square must not be forgotten. Targeted acquisition will take place in these areas. Although the City does not have the funds to acquire every vacant building in the area, specific properties can be acquired that, when redeveloped, can help to stimulate the private market. Acquisition in this second phase includes properties on the following blocks, outlined in orange on the adjacent map:

- 1500-1600 E Biddle St
- 1100 N Bond St
- 1500-1600 E Chase St
- 1600 Ashland Ave
- 1500 E Madison
- 800 N Caroline St

We recommend that the Department of Housing and Community Development will acquire available tax sale certificates for properties on these blocks.

Once targeted acquisition has taken place on these blocks, HCD will issue a second Request-for-Proposals (RFP) for rehabilitation. It is hoped that the two RFP's, a new Madison Square park, and development taking place in the area will stimulate the private market.



## Infill Housing

Scattered and mid-block demolition have left several blocks incomplete. In order to restore these blocks to their historic condition, we recommend adding new construction of infill housing to the first RFP, or issuing a second RFP specifically for new construction. Sites identified for infill construction include:

- 928 North Caroline Street
- 1036-1040 North Eden Street
- 1033-1037 North Caroline Street

Filling these gaps will help to restore the residential fabric of the community. These vacant lots serve as ideal areas for illegal dumping as well as drug dealing. Infill housing would eliminate these vacant lots and give security to adjacent homeowners.

**1036-1040 North Eden Street**



**928 North Caroline Street**



**1033-1037 North Caroline Street**



## Demolition

Demolition will be necessary for some housing in the area. Two areas specifically will require large-scale demolition

### 1100 block of North Dallas Street

The 1100 block of North Dallas Street is composed of nine two-story rowhomes, all but one of which are vacant. Although the City tends to avoid inner-block demolition, these homes serve as a perfect setting for crime and drug activity. The Mayor and City Council already own one property; the Housing Authority owns one property as well. We recommend the acquisition of the remaining seven homes and demolition of this block.

Redevelopment could come in the form of a parking lot. There are several churches in the area, many of which may be willing to purchase the lot for the private parking of their church members. The selected organization would be responsible for paving, lighting, and cleaning the lot. Nearby businesses may also have a use for this lot.



*Boarded up rowhomes along  
1100 North Dallas Street*

### 1400 block of Ashland Avenue

The 1400 block of Ashland Avenue is composed of three structures. The block is composed of 12 parcels, most of which contained houses. Eight were demolished because of their poor condition. Of the remaining properties, three are owned by Baltimore City.



In order to keep the residential nature of the area, this site would be ideal for new housing. As a result, we recommend acquisition of the non city-owned vacant lots and a subsequent RFP for new construction. New housing so close to Madison Square and the New East Baltimore Community should make this an attractive site for new residents.



## Strategies for Miscellaneous City Properties

### 1501 East Eager Street

This property is a vacant lot measuring approximately 33,000 square feet, located in the northwest corner of the Church Square Shopping Center. It is currently used by New Friendship Baptist Church for parking of their buses used to pick up church-goers on Sundays. The parcel, like the rest of Church Square, is zoned B-2-2, which is a retail business zoning. As such, we recommend that the lot be placed in an RFP for business use. One community meeting was dedicated to businesses the community wanted to see in the neighborhood. These uses will be detailed in the section entitled: "Business: Revitalizing the Community".



*This vacant lot, located in the north-west corner of Church Square, is currently used by a local church to park their buses*

### 1107 North Bond Street

This property consists of a Recreation and Parks -managed property, also known in the area as Faith Lane. While it is an inner-block park hidden from the street, it currently serves as a community-gathering area. Residents often have barbeques and birthday parties on the site.

The majority of resident complaints about this area concern lighting and proper maintenance of trees. Lighting the area and providing other improvements would make it a more attractive community space and may deter crime.



## 911 North Eden Street

This property is an awkwardly shaped vacant lot located south of 1400 East Eager Street. In planning meetings, many residents of the 1400 block of East Eager complained about trash and crime in their backyards as a result of customers at the liquor store located on the 900 block of North Eden Street.

The area is designated a park and has a playground with some odd playground equipment. There are also picnic tables and basketball courts. Unfortunately, the old cement playground equipment serves as a loitering area for patrons of the adjacent liquor store.



## 911 North Eden Street: Site Design

In an effort to improve the area, we looked at two schemes that incorporated parking and tried to eliminate negative influences.

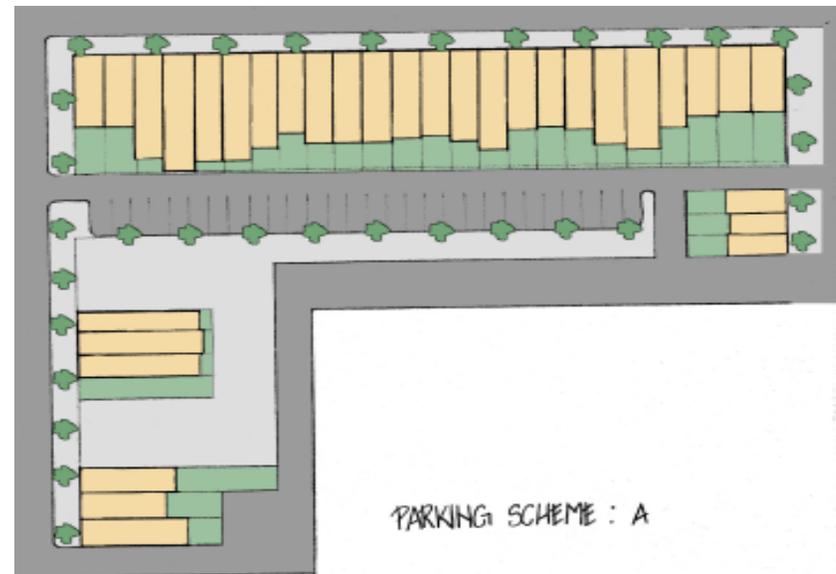
### **Parking Scheme A**

The first scheme creates parking spaces for the residents of the 1400 block of East Eager Street. Using this scheme, approximately 28 spaces would be created. Doing this, however, involves demolishing and possibly relocating the basketball court, as well as opening an alley to the backs of the houses.

### **Parking Scheme B**

The second scheme attempts to create more defined spaces in the area. First, the playground equipment would be demolished and removed. A new parking lot would be created for residents of 1400 East Eager, as well as patrons of the liquor store on Eden Street that current park on the street. We could also consider connected the parking lot to the alley and created a small through-street.

Working with the community, we hope to gain consensus around one scheme, or any combination of schemes.



## Façade Improvement Grant Program

In November 2003, a Programmatic Agreement (PA) was signed between the City of Baltimore, East Baltimore Development Incorporated (EBDI), the Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, Second Chance Incorporated, and the Maryland Historical Trust. The PA states that “The City/EBDI shall establish a façade improvement grant program that provides grants to all property owners who own historic buildings facing Collington Square and Madison Square.” Because the area is considered historic, the PA also states that “The façade improvement program shall require rehabilitation of facades in strict adherence to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and specifically prohibit the use of artificial building materials (e.g. vinyl or aluminum windows, vinyl or aluminum wrapped windows, vinyl or aluminum siding, etc.)”

There are approximately 74 property owners facing Madison Square. In an effort to fulfill the commitment made in the Programmatic Agreement, this plan recommends that HCD establish a façade grant program for each property owner in the plan area. This facade grant will be requested in HCD’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 06-07.



*The Madison Square Façade Grant Program could be used to replace a vinyl-covered cornice, such as this one on North Eden Street*

## Code Enforcement

While the city has made an effort to acquire properties along Madison Square and throughout the planning area, there will still be vacant properties that remain. These properties will be recommended for stepped-up code enforcement in HCD’s Targeted Enforcement for Visible Outcomes (TEVO) Program.

TEVO is designed to address the blight inflicted on our communities by abandoned buildings on otherwise healthy blocks. Through TEVO, intensified code enforcement and legal action are applied to the owners of over 6,000 targeted vacant and abandoned properties. The program focuses on buildings

that lie on highly occupied blocks, where the rehab or sale of rare vacant properties will significantly improve the quality of life for surrounding residents.



*Small red rowhome located on North Eden Street*

## Housing Recommendations

### *Short-term: One to two years*

- Issue Request-for-Proposals (RFP) for rehabilitation of all properties along Madison Square in the spring of 2006. Include Vacant Lots identified as New Construction Infill Housing in the RFP.
- To fulfill obligations made in the Maryland Historical Trust Programmatic Agreement, HCD will allocate funding in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for facade grants. These grants will be available for all property owners in the Madison Square planning area.
- Step-up code enforcement for vacant houses that will not be acquired. Vacant structures will be placed in the Targeted Enforcement for Visible Outcomes (TEVO) Program.
- Begin and/or complete acquisition of properties on blocks identified for demolition.

### *Long-term: Two to five years*

- Begin targeted acquisition of vacant properties.
- Once targeted acquisition is complete in the remainder of the planning area, HCD will issue a second RFP for rehabilitation.
- Demolish properties identified for demolition.



*Small garage located on East Biddle Street*



*Homes located on North Eden Street*

# Madison Square Elementary School

Madison Square Elementary School is a former Baltimore City public school built in 1962. It has been leased from the Mayor and City Council for the past three years by the Community Initiatives Academy.

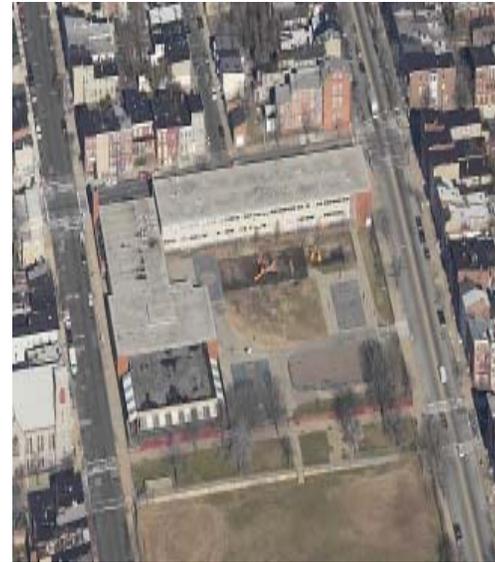


The Academy serves as a private religious school for approximately 100 students that was started by Reverend Christina Holtsclaw, of nearby East Baltimore Deliverance Baptist

Church. The Community Initiatives Academy has a strong presence in the community.

The Community Initiatives Academy has wanted to purchase the building for many years. However, the Department of Housing and Community Development was reluctant for two main reasons. First, HCD felt that a neighborhood plan needed to be done prior to giving up such a large and important city-owned property. Second, HCD felt it would be unfair to simply award the school to the Community Initiatives Academy without a competitive bidding process, such as a Request-for-Proposals.

This plan recommends that HCD issue an RFP for the school. The awarded party should propose a use that serves the surrounding community, such as a school or workforce training center. We also recommend that the building be fully utilized by the awarded user.



*Aerial view of Madison Square Elementary School*

The adjoining Madison Square Recreation Center has also been present since 1962. Because the school and recreation center are contained in the same building, they have the same heating and cooling system. The Departments of Housing and Community Development and Recreation and Parks have expressed frustration with this utility arrangement. Having two users has

made it difficult to determine who is responsible for maintaining and paying for utilities.

## **Madison Square Elementary School Recommendations**

- The Department of Housing and Community will issue an RFP for the Madison Square Elementary School. The RFP will state that the site will be fully utilized and have a use that serves the surrounding community. Additionally, The awarded party will be also responsible for subdivision of the property and establish separate utility systems for both the School and Recreation Center.
- The Department of Housing and Community Development will transfer ownership of the Recreation Center to the Department of Recreation and Parks.

# Madison Square Recreation Center

The Madison Square Recreation Center was built in conjunction with the elementary school in 1962. When the school was closed, the Department of Recreation and Parks continued to keep the Recreation Center open. They currently offer recreation opportunities as well as academic assistance to young people. Knowing what a vital recreation center this was, the Department of Recreation and Parks are making several improvements this year, including new floors, restroom renovation, ADA entrances and re-finishing the gym floor.

## Programming

One planning meeting was dedicated solely to the Recreation Center. Residents spoke of several services they would like to see added to the Center. First, many of the residents were interested in a senior club for the area based at the Recreation Center. Although there are other senior clubs within a few blocks of this neighborhood, residents were not aware of them. Local organizations include a senior program at the Oliver Center as well as the Knox Golden Nuggets, a senior club run out of the Knox Presbyterian Church. A speaker from the Commission on Aging and Retirement (CARE) came to speak with residents about establishing a senior club for the area. A Representative from CARE was open to working with residents to establish a new senior program for Madison Square. Working with the local community association, residents need to find out if there is enough interest in started a senior club for the Madison Square area.

## The Dome

Attached to the Madison Square Recreation Center is a covered basketball court, known as "The Dome." The court has a long history in East Baltimore as the former playing grounds of several NBA stars such as Juan Dixon and LeBron James. Currently, the Johns Hopkins University helps to fund the Craig Cromwell League during the summer. As a result of it's status and purpose, it is important to maintain this valuable community resource. Several improvements are bring made at the Dome as well, including new lighting and renovating the bleacher area.



*Aerial view of the Madison Square Recreation Center and the Dome*

## Football Field

Just south of the Recreation Center and The Dome is a football field. Recreation and Parks is the responsible agency for the city and maintain the field. Lining the field, however, is handled by the Pop Warner football league that plays at the field.



Residents had several concerns regarding the football fields. First, they felt that football players were leaving trash on the field after practices and games. Second, players are loitering after practices for several hours after the coaches leave. Residents have concerns about the unsupervised teenagers and requested a meeting with the coaches to express their concerns. As a result of this meeting, it is hoped that coaches would take responsibility for picking up litter after practices and ensuring that players do not loiter at the field.



*While the Madison Square field has backstops for baseball, it is primarily used as a football field*

## Recreation Center Recommendations

- Residents should work with the local community group to survey the neighborhood to see if there is enough interest in a Madison Square senior group. If so, they can contact CARE to set up events and group outings.
- Recreation and Parks should continue to support leagues and other tournaments that take place at The Dome.
- Recreation and Parks, Police, football coaches, and residents should have a meeting regarding players littering and loitering on the football field.

# Access to Education: A City of Baltimore Partnership with Sojourner-Douglass College

At several planning meetings, residents expressed interest in local colleges and universities playing a greater role in their community. Their main concern were young people in the area and their access to higher education.

Hearing resident concerns, the Department of Planning met with officials at Sojourner Douglass College (SDC) about the needs of Madison Square and the possibility of an internship program. School officials were pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the revitalization of the community. Sojourner Douglass College, a local college with historic roots in East Baltimore, had been looking for ways to participate in the community; seniors at SDC are required to complete 200 hours of community service in East Baltimore.

As a result of the Madison Square Small Area Plan, Sojourner Douglass College and the City of Baltimore will be partnering on a pilot internship program aimed at bringing information directly to residents. This collaboration intends to satisfy the College's need for internship opportunities as well as residents' need for information and access to higher education in their community. The internship will be coordinated through SDC with training materials provided by the Baltimore City Department of Planning and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

## Implementation

Interns will work closely with the local community organization, helping to create newsletters, flyers, and ensuring that area residents are aware of the programs and opportunities available to them. Interns will have information on:

- Façade grants
- Local certified contractors
- Available housing programs offered through Baltimore City, including low-interest loans
- Tax programs, such as the State of Maryland Homeowners Property Tax Credit
- Senior programs and events
- Courses at Sojourner Douglass College

Representatives from the Department of Planning and HCD will compile information on city, state, and federal programs. These representatives will also work with SDC to train the interns and put them in contact with the local community association. The Department of Recreation and Parks have agreed to allow interns to have space in the Madison Square Recreation Center to set up materials. It is hoped that this program, if successful, will be expanded to other recreation centers and community groups in East Baltimore.

## Recommendations

- The Department of Planning and Department of Housing and Community Development will compile information on various programs offered by Baltimore City and the State of Maryland.
- Sojourner Douglass College, working with various city agencies and community groups, could begin the internship program as early as Spring 2006.

# Business: Revitalizing the Community

Commercial and retail uses are an important part of every community. Residents were very vocal about business they would like to see in their area.

## Retail Options in East Baltimore

Shopping in East Baltimore has become quite limiting for area residents.

Monument Street is the main commercial corridor, located approximately 10 blocks from Madison Square. Oldtown Mall, although a designated historic commercial area,

is only 50% occupied and provides limited retail options. Forest City, the developer for the New East Baltimore Community, projects Ashland Avenue as a new retail area, but this is several years down the line.

Church Square represents the closest commercial area for residents in the Madison Square planning area. The center houses 10 ground level stores, a Stop, Shop and Save, and second-floor office space.



## Resident Requests

The primary establishment that residents wanted to see was a new, large grocery store in East Baltimore. Residents expressed a want for more variety and higher quality foods, such as those found at the larger store chains. Most residents currently travel north on Harford Road to the Safeway. Others make their way to the Safeway on 25<sup>th</sup> Street or even travel to the Safeway in Canton. They are concerned that they have to travel so far to go grocery shopping.

Residents also expressed a need for a pharmacy and a bank. Other notable requests included sit-down restaurants, a convenience store, and a hardware store.

We recommend that the Department of Planning and the Baltimore Development Corporation work with the property manager, Streuver Bros., to introduce new businesses to Church Square. Agencies should also work with Streuver Bros to make basic capital improvements, such as better lighting and signage. Residents also expressed feeling unsafe at Church Square; as a result, security at the site should also be examined.



## 1501 East Eager Street

This property is a vacant lot measuring approximately 33,000 square feet, located in the northwest corner of the Church Square Shopping Center. It is currently used by New Friendship Baptist Church for parking of their buses used to pick up churchgoers on Sunday mornings. The parcel, like the rest of Church Square, is zoned B-2-2, which is a retail business zoning.

Initial calculations of the site indicate that it could accommodate a business use of approximately 20,000 square feet, as well as 30 parking spaces. We recommend that the lot be placed in an RFP for a business use suggested by the community.

Because the lot is currently used by New Friendship Baptist Church for parking their buses, the Departments of Planning and Housing and Community Development will help find another location for storage of these vehicles.



## Business Recommendations

- Work with BDC and Streuver Bros to investigate the possibility of new businesses and improvements at Church Square.
- Housing and Community Development, with the assistance of the Baltimore Development Corporation should issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for 1501 East Eager Street for a business use.



*Stop, Shop, and Save at Church Square Shopping Center*

# Historic Preservation: A Tool for Revitalization and Neighborhood Sustainability

In May 2005, the East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI) and the Department of Housing and Community Development hired a historical consultant to perform a survey of properties in East Baltimore. The survey area includes the Madison Square Planning Area, the Oliver neighborhood, and homes along the 800 to 1800 blocks of Broadway. This survey will be used to apply for local, state, and national historic tax credits.

Once the area is a registered district, residents will be able to receive tax credits for rehabilitation that is done to historic standards. The survey is expected to be complete in 2006. If the application for a National Registered District is accepted, home improvements would qualify for tax credits.

We also recommend that the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) investigate making the homes along the square a Local Historic District. A local designation would also provide tax credits for homeowners.

Many residents are concerned that their properties are not currently up to historic standards. Residents can be assured that homes are not required to be brought up to historic standards from their current condition. Only future renovations to homes will be required to meet historic standards.

## Historic Preservation Recommendations

- EBDI, HCD, and the Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) should ensure that the historic district application is processed and the area receives National Historic District designation.
- CHAP should investigate making the homes along Madison Square a Local Historic District.
- If the tax credit application is approved, CHAP and the Department of Planning should work to ensure that residents and property owners are aware of the tax credits available to them.

# Summary of Recommendations

Rehabilitate Properties Facing Madison Square:  
Offer approximately 20 city-owned vacant houses for rehabilitation in RFP

Madison Square Elementary School: Offer school in RFP for a use that serves the surrounding community.

Design and Re-Construct Historic Madison Square:  
CIP money will be used for design and construction of Madison Square.

Re-Construct Park as Defensible Space: Park will have improvements made that allow this to be a safe, usable space for children.



Acquire and Rehabilitate All Other Vacant Properties:  
HCD will acquire remaining vacant houses that are available through tax sale foreclosure; Properties will be offered in an RFP for rehabilitation.

Demolish 1100 N Dallas:  
Demolish vacant block and offer in RFP for a local business use.

New Business at 1500 E Eager: Property will be offered in an RFP for a new business.

Improve Church Square:  
Work with Streuver Bros to improve current business and attract needed new businesses.

## Implementation

Task	Responsible Agency	Timeline
Per the Maryland Historical Trust Programmatic Agreement, HCD should make a recommendation for façade grants to be placed in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). These grants will be available for all property owners in the Madison Square planning area.	HCD, Planning	CIP recommendation made in FY08-09.
Step-up code enforcement for vacant houses.	HCD	January 2006
Begin targeted acquisition of remaining vacant properties throughout the planning area.	HCD	January 2006
Begin and/or complete acquisition of properties on blocks identified for demolition.	HCD	January 2006-December 2006
The Department of Housing and Community should issue an RFP for the Madison Square Elementary School.	HCD, Planning	Issue RFP December 2005
Issue Request-for-Proposals (RFP) for rehabilitation of all properties along Madison Square. Include Vacant Lots identified as New Construction Infill Housing in the RFP.	HCD, Planning	Issue RFP May 2006
Once targeted acquisition is complete, HCD will issue a second RFP for rehabilitation in the area.	HCD	Issue RFP Spring 2007
Demolish properties identified for demolition.	HCD	Priority properties demolished by Spring 2007
Housing and Community Development, with the assistance of the Baltimore Development Corporation should issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for 1501 East Eager Street for a business use.	HCD, Planning, BDC	Spring 2006

Task	Responsible Agency	Timeline
In addition to funds received from the sale of Madison Square Elementary School, funds for park design and construction will be requested in FY07-08. Work with the community to create an appropriate layout for the re-creation of the Madison Square.	Recreation and Parks, Planning, HCD	Spring 2006
Recreation and Parks should continue to support leagues and other tournaments that take place at The Dome.	Recreation and Parks	Ongoing
CARE should work with the local community organization to see if there is enough interest to support the creation of a new senior organization.	Recreation and Parks	Ongoing
Work with local colleges and universities to establish an intern program at the Recreation Center where interns could help residents get information on housing grants/loans, senior programs, tax programs, and a list of certified contractors.	Planning	Program established by Spring 2006
Planning, Recreation and Parks, Police, football coaches, and residents should have a meeting regarding players littering and loitering on the football field.	Community Association, Residents, Planning, Recreation and Parks	Fall 2005
EBDI, HCD, and the Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) should ensure that the historic district application is processed.	EBDI, HCD, CHAP	Spring 2006

## **Baltimore City Homeownership Incentive Programs**

The City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland and the federal government offer many incentives for people looking to move into homeownership. The programs are offered through Baltimore Housing. The available programs offer incentives to a range of people including, but not limited to first time homebuyers, low and moderate income families and those in special designated districts such as Healthy Neighborhoods. Below is a snapshot of some of the programs that are available to residents in the Barclay-Midway-Old Goucher planning area. All of the programs have specific eligibility criteria. A full listing of incentive programs and their specific criteria can be found on Baltimore Housing's website: [www.baltimorehousing.org](http://www.baltimorehousing.org).

### **Baltimore City Employee Homeownership Program**

This program was created to help the employees of city agencies and quasi-city agencies become homeowners in the city. There are very specific terms of eligibility criteria for the program. They include such things as: must be employed and paid by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City for minimum of 6 months, must purchase a property within Baltimore City and occupy as primary residence. There are several neighborhoods that are ineligible to receive this incentive.

### **Buying Into Baltimore Home-Buying Fairs and Neighborhood Trolley Tours**

This program allows buyers to get \$3,000 towards the purchase of a new home in Baltimore City. There are down payment & closing cost awards are available to the first 50 participants who close on a house within 90 days of the events. This program is a joint venture of the City of Baltimore and the Live Baltimore Home Center.

### **Tenant Conversion Mortgage Program**

This program allows tenants to buy the home where they are currently renting. This program provides 5% interest, mortgage loans. There are eligibility requirements.

### **Baltimore City Section 8 Homeownership Program**

The Baltimore City Section 8 Homeownership Program is a federally funded program open to Section 8 participants who select the homeownership option as a use for their Housing Choice Voucher. HUD implemented these regulations to encourage and promote homeownership opportunities among low to moderate-income participants. The amount of subsidy will depend on family size, income, purchase price, etc., and will reflect each individual family's level of affordability.

### **Section 32 Public Housing Homeownership Program**

This program allows for the sale of public housing units to low-income families assisted by the Housing Authority. Participants for this program must select homes from current Housing Authority inventory. Participant affordability will be based on federal guidelines.

### **Vacant House Loan Program (VHLP)**

This program offers a first mortgage loan of up to \$80,000 at a 30-year fixed rate, along with a home repair loan of up to \$25,000. There are stipulations that apply. Among them: the borrower must agree to rehabilitate a vacant home and occupy it as a primary residence for at least 10 years.

## Homeowner Emergency Loan Program (Baltimore Help)

The goal of this program is to help prevent foreclosures by predatory lenders. This program is funded primarily through Fannie Mae and HUD – provides eligible struggling homeowners with intervention against the existing mortgage lender; •

There are also tax incentives offered through Baltimore City. The available tax incentives are listed below. More specific information is available on Baltimore Housing's website.

- Newly Constructed Dwelling Tax Credit
- Rehabilitated Vacant Dwelling Tax Credit
- Home Improvement Tax Credit
- Historic Landmarks and District Tax Credit