

The Green Pattern Book

Patapsco Watershed (Baltimore, MD); 2014 – Present

Summary

One of the location's top priorities is addressing Baltimore's 30,000 vacant properties that pose economic, public health, and environmental problems. These vacant properties, once an eye sore, present an opportunity to create greener neighborhoods.

The Green Pattern Book is a resource of strategies to help green Baltimore's vacant lands, improve water quality, and implement stormwater solutions. The Green Pattern Book features eight green project types or patterns, focusing on urban agriculture, stormwater management, urban forests, parks, and related topics. The strategies have helped empower residents, build attractive communities, and reduce toxins in the Patapsco Watershed.

Federal Agency Partners include:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Non-Federal Partners include:

Baltimore Growing Green Initiative, City of Baltimore, City of Baltimore Department of Planning, Baltimore Office of Sustainability, Baltimore Green Space, Baltimore Orchard Project, Baltimore Tree Trust, Blue Water Baltimore, Civic Works, Chesapeake Bay Trust, Community Law Center, Neighborhood Design Center, Parks and People Foundation, TreeBaltimore, Banner Neighborhoods, Bon Secours of Maryland Foundation, Druid Heights Community Development Corporation (CDC), Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition, Park Heights Renaissance, and Reservoir Hill Improvement Council

Goals

The Green Pattern Book seeks to establish a common language for agencies, community-based organizations, individual residents, and other stakeholders. It also seeks to address goals of Baltimore's Sustainability Plan, including:

- Transform vacant lots from liabilities to assets that provide social and environmental benefits,
- Reduce impervious surfaces and increase on-site stormwater treatment,
- Increase Baltimore's tree canopy to 40 percent by 2037,
- Establish Baltimore as a leader in sustainable, local food systems,
- Provide safe, well-maintained recreational space within one-quarter mile of all residents, and
- Improve health through increased numbers of trees and green spaces, which are shown to help reduce asthma, encourage physical activity, contribute to healthy eating, and lower the ambient air temperature.

Major Actions to Date

Since 2014, the Green Pattern Book has been a leading resource on strategies to address the city's vacant land problem and helping Baltimore become a healthier, more sustainable city. To date, the book has led to the following:

- The Green Pattern Registry, an interactive map showing available, vacant lots and potential uses,
- Growing Green Design Competition: Vacant Lots Transformed, a competition which sought proposals from community groups and designers on ways to improve vacant properties with the Green Pattern Book, and
- 18 urban farms operating and selling produce at local markets.

In summary, the Green Pattern Book has provided valuable visioning tools, guidelines, and site selection criteria to transform vacant areas into an integrated network of green spaces, including parks and squares, rain gardens, urban farms, forests, and community gardens.

