

Brownsville Neighborhood Planning Process: FAQ's



Vacant, City-owned land on Chester Street

What is the Brownsville Neighborhood Planning Process?

There are a lot of vacant lots in Brownsville, many of which are controlled by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). The City wants to respond to residents' desire to see the vacant spaces activated into affordable housing, community spaces, and new stores. In addition, there are several sister agencies working in the neighborhood on initiatives around safety, health, criminal justice, economic development. HPD wants to collaborate with sister agencies and the community to ensure that future development is coordinated and working to achieve the local vision for the future of the neighborhood.

What are the goals?

The preliminary goals, based off what we have heard so far, are to:

1. Build new affordable housing integrated with neighborhood amenities
2. Expand retail options along Livonia Avenue
3. Promote public safety by decreasing vacant space, activating key corridors
4. Improve mobility
5. Create job opportunities for neighborhood residents
6. Support small businesses and local economic development
7. Improve health through investments in parks, streets, housing, and community spaces
8. Support local arts and incorporate local artists in the process

What will be the result of this process?

This process will conclude with the release of a neighborhood plan, which will be a document outlining the goals and vision of the community and concrete policies the City will implement to achieve those goals. The neighborhood plan will include projects and programs that are already planned or underway, as well as a vision for future investments in the neighborhood. Not everything in the plan will be funded at the conclusion of this process. HPD will take steps following the release of the plan to develop vacant, City-owned land.

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What does this process look like?

- 1. Public Meetings:** Starting this summer, HPD will bring together all the agencies working in the neighborhood in one room to listen and learn from the community; share information; identify goals and priorities; and share draft strategies that respond to what we heard.
- 2. Community Events:** HPD will meet the community where they are by tabling at community events to collect feedback, provide information, and conduct surveys.
- 3. Online Platform and Texting Campaign:** HPD is working with a group called coUrbanize to create a website to centralize information about the project. The website includes an interactive map where residents can engage with each other and City agencies to share ideas and inform the development of the plan. Signs have been placed throughout the neighborhood asking residents to text comments in to the interactive map.
- 4. Community Partners Group:** HPD will convene community groups, TA presidents, gardeners, and interested individuals in the neighborhood to ensure we are getting good feedback about what's working well, what could be better, and how the City can help facilitate a more inclusive, empowering, transparent, and meaningful process. This group is also helping to conduct outreach and ensure broad community participation. This group is open to all who are interested and will likely start meeting in the fall.

Is this a rezoning like in East New York?

In Brownsville, HPD and its sister agencies will create a plan for future City investments – this is not a neighborhood rezoning. HPD owns a significant number of vacant properties in the neighborhood that the agency would like to redevelop with affordable housing, retail, and community facilities. In total, we estimate capacity for almost 2,000 new units of affordable housing. We recognize that many other agencies are working in the area, and we would like to facilitate a process that ensures these initiatives are codified in a single plan document and coordinated in a manner which supports the redevelopment of these large areas of vacant land. If needed, rezoning of specific sites would occur after a developer has been designated, and those potential rezonings would be decided based on specific development plans that are informed by the community throughout this process.

Which vacant land does the City own?

This map shows privately-owned and City-owned vacant land. Some of the City-owned land already has development planned or in progress. You can see large concentrations of sites along Livonia Avenue and just north of Pitkin Avenue. There are also a number of smaller sites scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Vacant Land in Brownsville

