City-Owned Vacant Lots

Real Estate and Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation (NIDC)

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

City-Owned Vacant Lots

2025 - 2026

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Overview of Vacant Lot Inventory**
- **City-Owned Vacant Lot Strategy**
  1. Maintain Existing Inventory
  2. Interim Uses on City-Owned Land
  3. Side Lot Sales
  4. Sale for New Construction
- **City-Owned Vacant Lot Strategy for 2026**

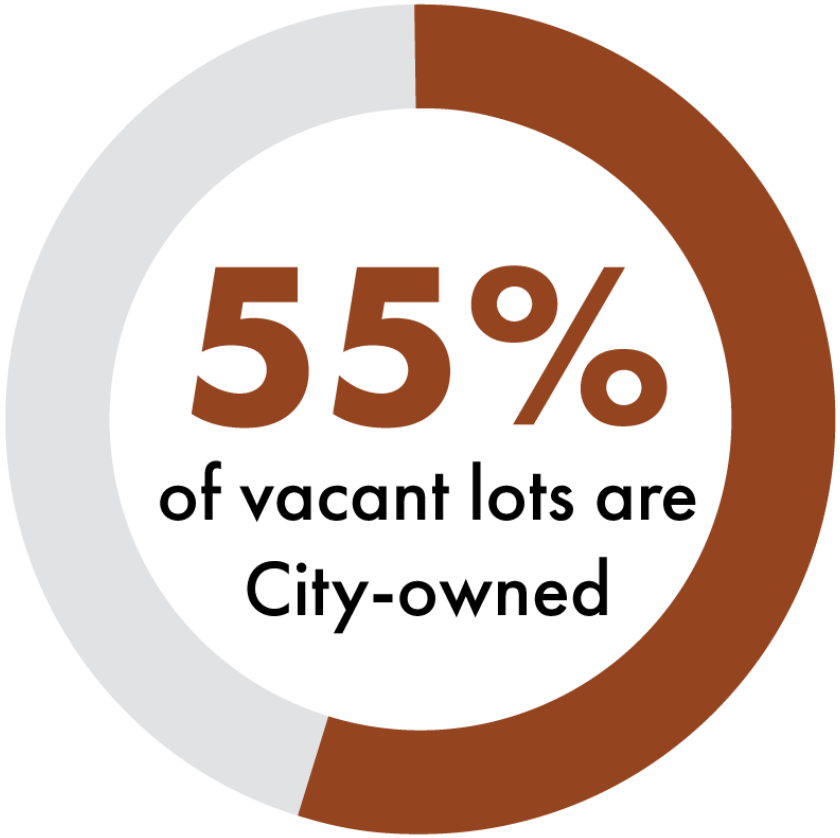
City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

Overview of City-Owned Vacant Lot Inventory

City-Owned Vacant Lots

Inventory Details

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT



includes City of Milwaukee, HACM, and RACM
parcels with land uses codes 8880 & 8885

City-Owned Vacant Lots

Inventory Details

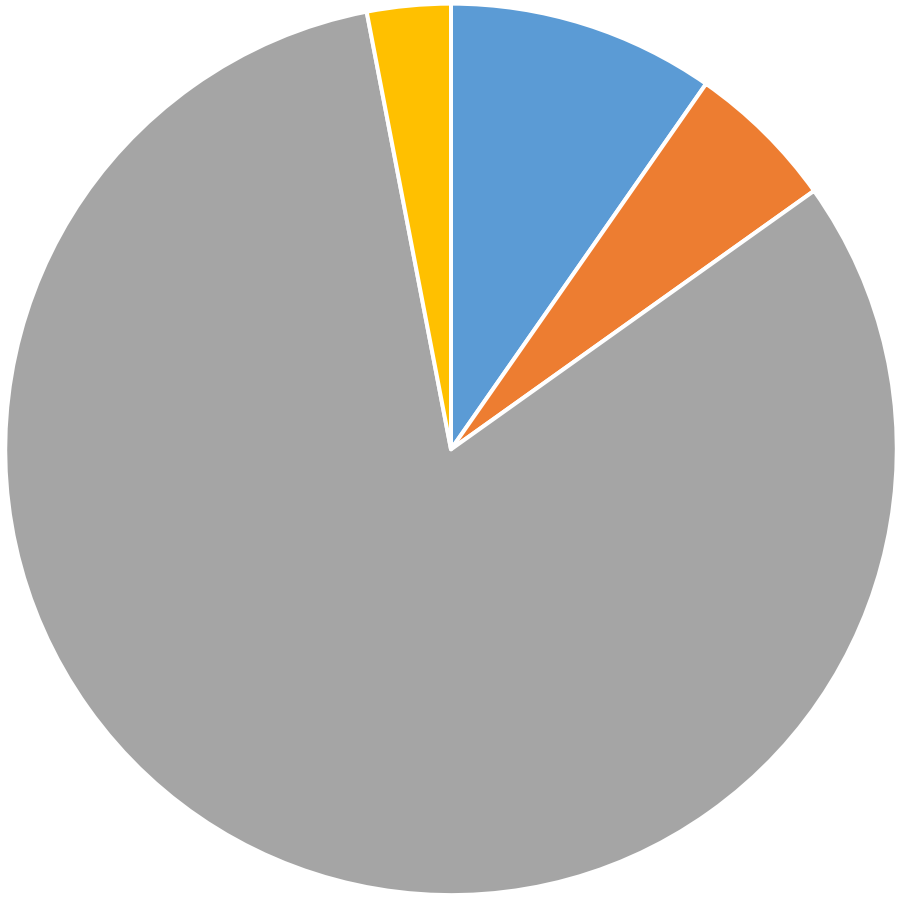
City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

Breakdown of 3,307 Vacant Lots:

280 are unbuildable or currently unsellable

320 are only buildable if combined with adjacent lot

Approximately 2,700 buildable lots



City-Owned Vacant Lots

Inventory Details

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Unbuildable or Unsellable**
  - Rear and side lots, miscellaneous sites that require more research
  - 280 lots
- **Buildable if Combined**
  - If combined with an adjacent lot, would be buildable as one combined lot
  - 320 lots
- **Buildable**
  - Good and potentially good build sites
  - Approximately 2,700 lots

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

Maintaining Existing Vacant Lot Inventory

Maintain Existing Inventory

- **Current Inventory**
  - 3,307 vacant lots
  - Approximately 600 are not buildable in current condition, but still require maintenance
- **DCD Real Estate Property Management**
  - Staff spends nearly equal time on vacant lots as improved properties
  - Respond to calls and emails about illegal dumping and nuisances
- **Contracts**
  - Mowing and snow removal
  - Trash removal
  - Brush and tree removal

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

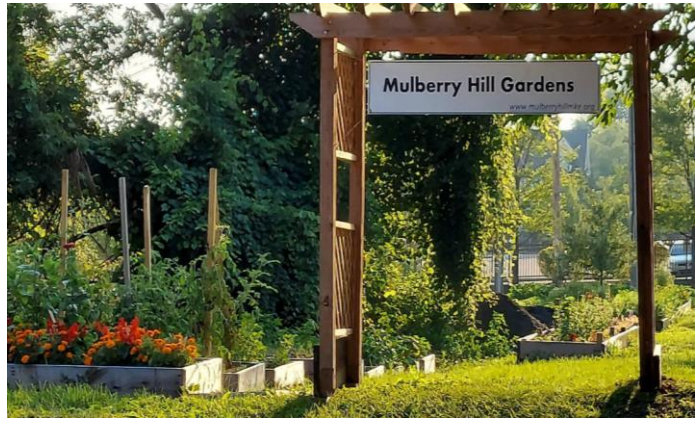
Interim Uses on City-Owned Land

Interim Uses

Community Improvement Projects (CIP)

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Activity Since 2021**
  - Annually, two city-wide events: Bloom and Groom and Fall Frolic
  - 50 projects: Neighborhood signs, pocket parks, community gardens, tree canopy project, rainwater catchment systems, art/mural installations, benches, etc.
  - Matching grants: Over $280,000
  - Residents engaged: Over 2,000

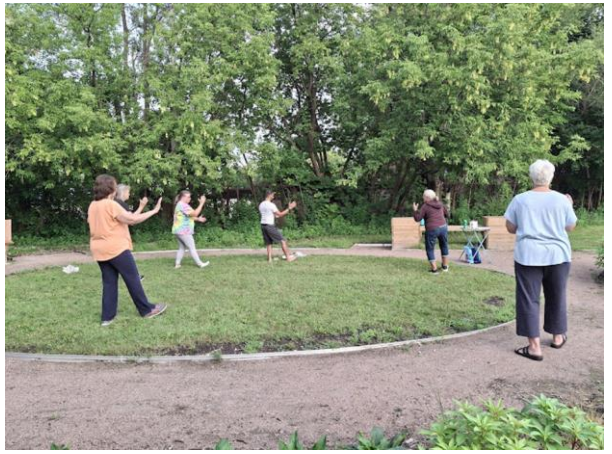


Interim Uses

Healing Space Initiative (HSI)

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Activity Since 2021**
  - 13 sites: Peace parks, little free libraries, sensory gardens, benches, etc.
  - 11 activation grants: Craft night, gardening class, meditation, yoga, tai chi, etc.
  - Grants: Over $70,000
  - Residents engaged: Over 400



Side Lot Sales

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

Side Lot Sales

Subsection of Total Inventory

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Unbuildable or Unsellable**
  - Rear and side lots, miscellaneous sites that require more research
  - 280 lots
- **Buildable if Combined**
  - If combined with an adjacent lot, would be buildable as one combined lot
  - 320 lots
- **Buildable**
  - Good and potentially good build sites
  - Approximately 2,700 lots

Green Space Land Sales:

Side Lot Sale Program & "Sliver" Lots

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Side Lot Sales**
  - Owner occupant neighbors adjacent to a City-owned lot can apply to buy the lot for additional yard space.
  - Lots that are not great for new construction may qualify. Eg: a front/back lot situation
  - 17 of these sales completed in 2024

- **"Sliver" Lots**
  - Very small/awkward shaped lots the City owns that cannot be developed on their own are deeded to adjacent neighbors for free
  - New program in 2025
  - DCD has been working with sliver lots in the 10th and 13th Aldermanic Districts so far, with intent to expand

Miscellaneous Lots

Example

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

Sale for New Construction

Sale for New Construction

Inventory Details

- **Unbuildable or Unsellable**
  - Rear and side lots, miscellaneous sites that require more research
  - 280 lots

- **Buildable if Combined**
  - If combined with an adjacent lot, would be buildable as one combined lot
  - 320 lots

- **Buildable**
  - Good and potentially good build sites
  - Approximately 2,700 lots

Breakdown of Buildable Lots

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Great Build Sites**
  - Not narrow, has yard space, large enough for off-street parking, located in residential areas (not next to any noxious uses)
- **Potential Build Sites**
  - Buildable based on lot size, alley access, etc.
  - Strategic planning meetings with local alder for these types of lots would be invaluable
- **Maybe Build Sites**
  - Lots are technically buildable based on size, but marketability depends on location and economics

Sale for New Construction

Working with Community Partners

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Early Childhood Educators Initiative**
  - Four developers working on 40 new construction single family homes, affordably priced exclusively for qualifying daycare providers
  - Construction fully completed by 2026, split between 6th, 7th, 12th, and 15th Aldermanic Districts
- **MCC YouthBuild Initiative**
  - 2-3 new construction homes per year, 2025 homes being built in 7th Aldermanic District
- **VIA CDC New Build Townhomes**
  - 10 new duplex townhome units, to be built in 2026, in the 12th Aldermanic District

Sale for New Construction

Walnut Circle and Josey Heights

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Walnut Circle and Josey Heights Neighborhoods**
  - Market rate single family models cost between $380,000 - $450,000 to construct
  - Focus neighborhoods in 15th Aldermanic District
  - $1,000 land sale + $30,000 subsidy offered through DCD for down payment assistance
  - Must owner occupy for 7 years
  - Three new homes built in the last 24 months

Sale for New Construction

Backbone TID Strategy

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

- **2024 Midtown Homeownership Initiative**
  - 34 single family homes, 20 duplexes will be built on city-owned lots by 2028
- **2025 Harambee Homeownership Initiative**
  - 59 single family homes will be built on city-owned lots by 2030
- **2026 Anticipate Creating Amani Homeownership Initiative**
  - Potentially 50 single family homes to be built over a 5-year period on city-owned lots

Sale for New Construction

Revive Housing Development

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

Affordable Homeownership Model

- **Homebuyers: 80% AMI households**
- **New construction attached housing**
  - Potential Styles:
    - Townhomes or Rowhouses
    - Duplexes
      - Side-by-side or stacked
    - Small multifamily buildings
      - Condominiums or cooperative units

Photo: www.dreeshomes.com

Photo: www.urbanrowduplexes.com

Sale for New Construction

Revive Housing Development

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

Affordable Homeownership Model

- **Prove/understand the market and obstacles in constructing attached housing styles**
- **Late 2025 RFQ for qualified developers to build new affordable units for homeownership**
  - Likely subsidize $100,000-$125,000 per unit
- **$2,800,000 pool of funds (approx. 23-25 units)**
  - Federal PRO Housing Grant - $1,200,000
  - Revive 2026 Proposed City Funds - $1,600,000

Photo: www.thehousedesigners.com

Photo: www.remax.com

City of Milwaukee
DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

City-Owned Vacant Lot Strategy for 2026

Goals for 2026

- **Clean up inventory**
  - Dispense of unbuildable and unsellable parcels wherever possible
- **Strategic planning by district**
  - Meet with local alders in districts with vacant lot inventories and develop criteria for lot sales
- **Active and creative marketing**
  - District 10: Ideas for community education
  - Local non-profit development partners
  - Social media
  - Explore alternative and emerging building technologies