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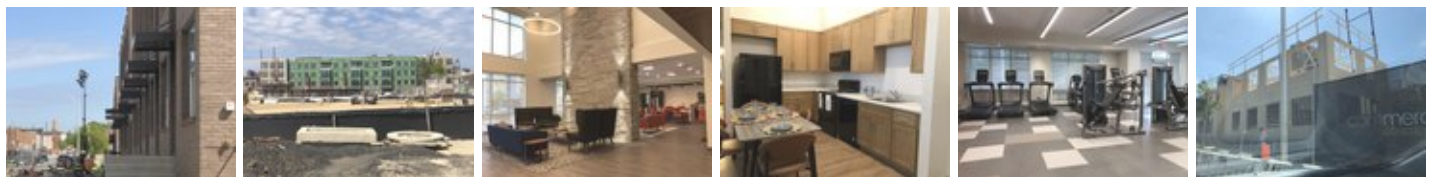
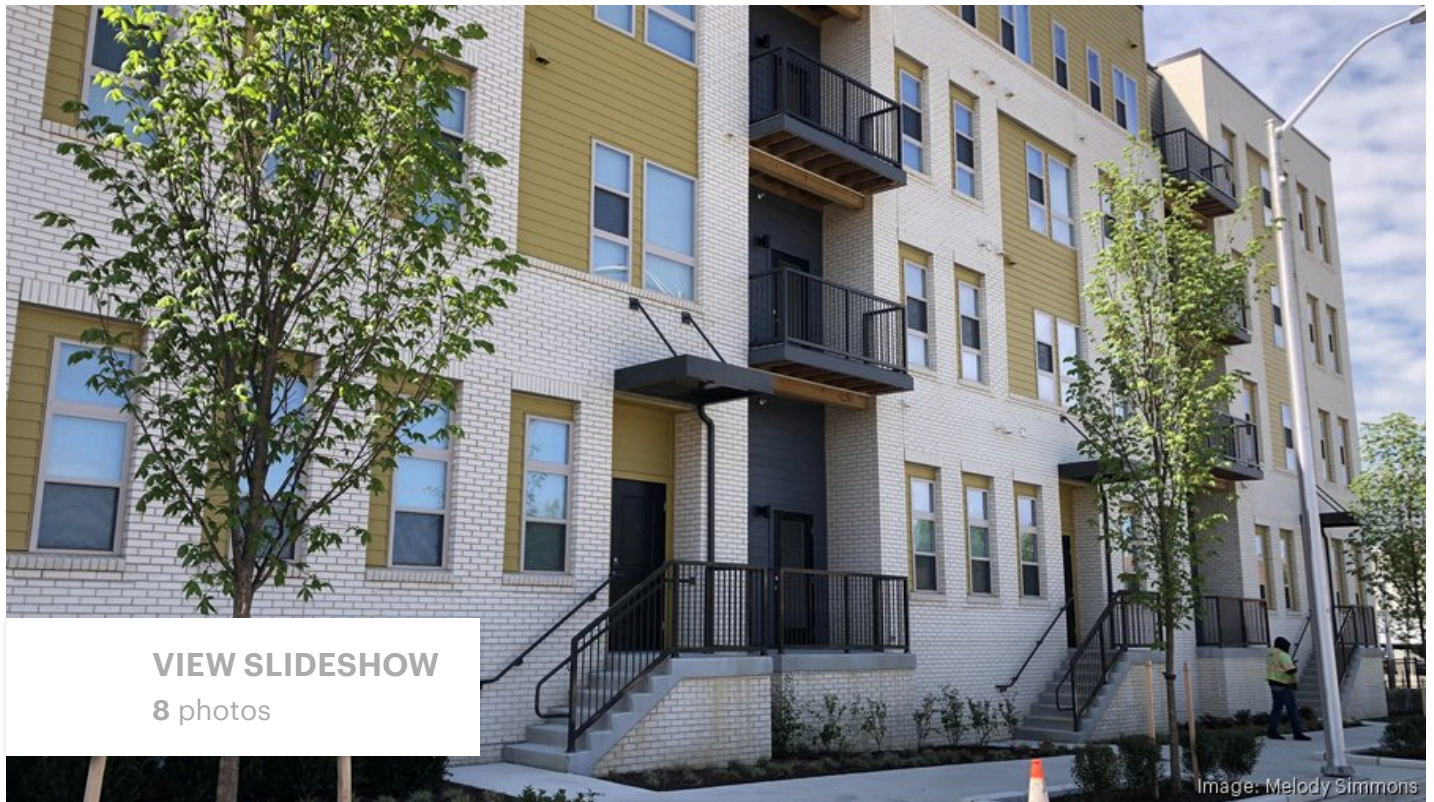
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# Perkins Homes redevelopment readies for first tenants (PHOTOS)



The apartment development has an entry off Pratt Street east of Broadway.



By [Melody Simmons](#) – Senior Reporter, Baltimore Business Journal  
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The mission to remake Perkins Homes in East Baltimore into a modern community will move one step closer to reality this spring.

That is when the first residents are set to move into 103 new apartments and townhomes that have replaced the blighted public housing project built during World War II. The former two-story projects were razed over the past few years to make way for [a \\$1 billion overhaul that encompasses 200 acres](#) and has infused East Baltimore with new infrastructure, streets and residential development.

"When I saw it, it was like the old Perkins was never there, like it disappeared," said Sharone Henderson, a 39-year resident of Perkins Homes who will move into a new apartment next month.

"I can't believe the changes that are happening in our community. It was too long coming."

Henderson is a member of one of 48 families from the old Perkins Homes returning to new dwelling units at the rebranded Perkins Square. The development near Broadway and Caroline Street will officially open on Saturday with a ribbon cutting and street party sponsored by the development team, which is headed by St. Louis-based McCormack Baron Salazar and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City.

The \$50.2 million Perkins Square redevelopment includes new infrastructure, demolition, site preparation and the construction of the first phase. The project was supported by a Choice Neighborhoods grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that totaled \$30 million as well as state and local funds.

Perkins Square is part of [a larger effort to redo a massive footprint north of Harbor East](#). The area includes the former Somerset Homes public housing site, which is already transformed with three new affordable apartment towers,

and the Old Town Mall site, a redevelopment yet to launch. A Lidl grocery is expected to be built at the Somerset site in the coming year or so, and plans also call for a new City Springs Elementary-Middle School near Perkins Square.

Rhonda Richetta, principal at City Springs for 17 years, said Friday that enrollment at the public school has dropped by hundreds of students during the redevelopment of Perkins Homes.

"Before they started relocating families, we had 842 students. This year, our enrollment is 468," she said. "It has been very challenging."

The new residents will boost the school's enrollment in the coming year, she said, just as a new school is being built near the existing building.

The first phase of the Perkins redo has brought a sense of optimism to the community, she added. And it promises to bring more diversity through mixed-income residents.

Danielle Tunstall, manager of Perkins Square, was busy on Friday putting finishing touches on the apartment tower. She said she has received dozens of calls this week from prospective new residents, including some employees of nearby Johns Hopkins Hospital who could walk to work.

"This is part of the new East Harbor. The vibe is great," she said, of the emerging community that sits near Little Italy and Harbor East.

Tunstall said the residential units are being marketed on social media platforms and have attracted interest from as far away as North Carolina. The one, two and three-bedroom apartment units are modern with wood floors, high ceilings, a washer and dryer and large closets. The 14 three-story townhomes in the first phase all have three bedrooms and two-and-a-half baths.

Of the first 103 units available, 10 will be leased at market-rate and 93 units will be affordable, she added.

"We have our second phase that is getting ready to open in July with more apartments and townhouses," she said.