



VOLAR
Village of Love and
Resistance
Co-creating a
cooperative
community in East
Baltimore owned by
Black and Brown
people, to create
opportunities for
historical residents
to acquire, co-own,
rehab, and sell/rent
property to generate
alternative sources
of income.

VOLAR - 2026.08



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The Road to Building the VOLAR Intentional Cooperative Community

The road to building the VOLAR Intentional Cooperative Community (VICC) occurred through many hearts and hands. It's took a few minutes - the renovation of VOLAR's 3,500 sq feet cooperative housing from an abandoned rectory (1031 E. Monument) of the adjacent Old Centennial Church (1025 E. Monument Street). VOLAR purchased these two properties in November 2020. After fundraising, for renovating it into 7 units of intentional cooperative housing, the project broke ground for rehab in August 2023. (See timeline with images on our [website](#))

After approximately 1 year of design work by the architecture firm Adams Design Group (ADG), 8 months of patiently waiting for a building permit from the Baltimore's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and 3 years of physical rehabbing by Bristol Community Construction (initially presented as 6 months), and many

lengthy periods of sit-and-wait due to the city of Baltimore Fire inspection process and delayed construction schedules, we are nearing substantial completion in September 2026. Since the hiring of ADG in 2022, VOLAR's Renovation Committee met weekly throughout this entire period to oversee and work with its project manager, 7th Street Consultants. Community input was gathered on all aspects of design and construction.

To say it was an easy process would be false. It has been a labor-intensive process and required more meticulous oversight than we anticipated. VOLAR is committed to hiring local and minority businesses and this resulted in more time spent identifying contractors and vendors, as well as a mix of joys and disappointments in the service delivered at times.

--continued page 2

Board

VOLAR received its federal nonprofit tax exempt status in July 2019. It is officially a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization. **DONATE HERE:**

<https://www.volar.site/donate>

VOLAR Board
Marisela Gomez, President
Pam Jordan, Treasurer
Katherine Williams



The Road ... cont.

The ability to rehab this rectory was supported by funding from the generous donations of individual donors, a loan from cooperative lender Seed Commons, and grants from Kataly Foundation, Baltimore City DHCD, and a bond from Maryland General Services department-led by Delegate Stephanie Smith. Many provided letters of recommendation including community leaders, St. Phillips Lutheran Church, Henson Development, city council members, and state delegates.

Throughout this process of building, the Community Law Clinic at the University of Baltimore Law School and Gilmore Khandhar Solidarity Law Firm provided advice and action in the legal formation of the housing as a limited liability cooperative.

VOLAR's Cooperative Living Committee worked on developing a housing manual to guide how those living in the intentional cooperative housing would live together and share responsibilities in stewarding and making decisions on all things concerning the housing. Last year, the social housing organizer and property manager firm Properties and Co. joined the team in detailing an application process for recruitment of housing cooperators. Keys to the Kingdom consultant will be assisting with recruitment.

Many hearts and minds contributed to this process of redevelopment, from community members choosing the colors for the walls, advising how people would live together in the housing, to assuring that the housing would be affordable. The process has been collectively informed and accountable to the residents of the community in which the development is occurring and in doing so, VOLAR confirms this African proverb: If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together

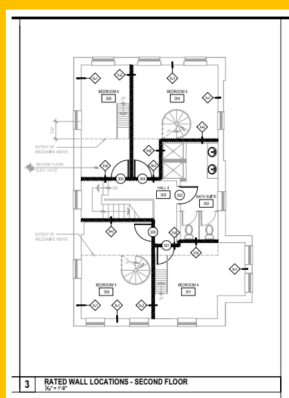
Caretaking Council

VOLAR's Care-Taking Council ("CTC") is a nonhierarchical decision-making body that has the powers of making the day-to-day decisions in operating the organization.

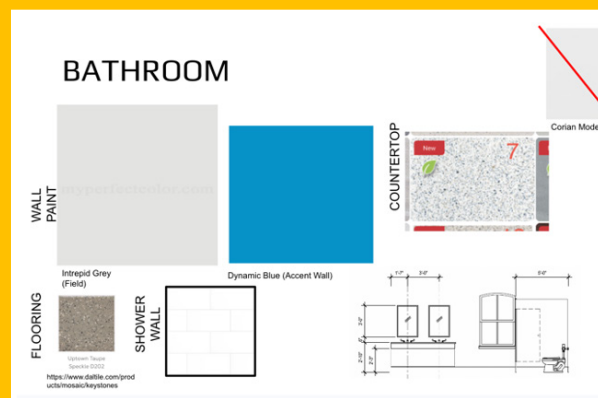
Marisela Gomez
Pam Jordan
Katherine Williams

Contact VOLAR

Check out VOLAR online at volar.site or contact volaro18@gmail.com to learn about upcoming events, how to volunteer, or to join as a Friend of VOLAR.



Bathroom Floor Plan

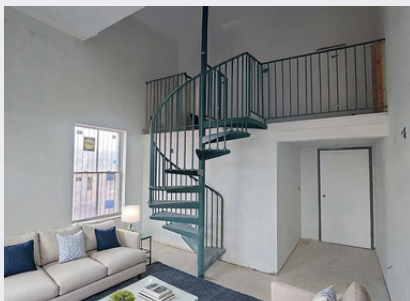


Bathroom Finishes

VOLAR Intentional Cooperative Community

RIBBON CUTTING EVENT

Date To Be Announced
1031 E Monument Street



CELEBRATE WITH US AND TOUR THE PROPERTY

A home for activists, organizers, students, and creatives interested in intentional living and contributing to a community grounded in values of racial and social justice and collective decision-making.

FEATURES

✓ 7 bedrooms

✓ 4 baths

✓ Kitchen and Lounge area

CONTACT

✉ cynthiapkeenan@gmail.com



Cooperative Housing Renovation Photos



Kitchen



Community Room



Loft Unit

VOLAR Cooperative Living Committee

VOLAR's Cooperative Living Committee (CLC) meets roughly twice per month to discuss updates and strategize around our soon-to-open housing cooperative at 1031 E. Monument Street. Committee members include VOLAR members Marisela Gomez and Kenneth Clemons; Property Manager, Rockell Jackson; and VOLAR's Social Housing Organizer, Cynthia Keenan (myself).

As is typical for VOLAR meetings generally, CLC meetings begin with a grounding and check-in – allowing all of us a moment to pause, reconnect with ourselves and each other, and build energy and focus for the conversation ahead. Our agenda then moves on to major updates.

Of course, one major point of discussion is the construction timeline for the property, which in turn dictates the timeline for ribbon cutting and occupancy. As anyone familiar with construction understands, delays are inevitable. While we have thankfully moved past permitting-related delays, the timeline for substantial completion continues to be pushed. As of writing, we anticipate that the construction will be completed in September, with a ribbon cutting to follow.

Another point of discussion is any communication that occurred with our attorneys at Gilmore Khandhar, LLC. In particular, they are reviewing our legal documents – including our Cooperator Housing Manual and Contract – to ensure that everything is in order.

The CLC has been engaged in marketing efforts for the Cooperative, and we have employed social media, flyer and radio ads to this end. Our Property Manager, Rockell, is leading the application process and regularly updates us on any inquiries that have come through.

As VOLAR's Social Housing Organizer, it is my responsibility to ensure that we are ready to orient and onboard prospective and new Cooperators. I have created two separate orientation presentations – one that will be conducted during the application process, and another that will be conducted at move-in. I am also working on trainings that will be conducted once the Cooperators have begun living in the building. These topics include consensus decision-making, conflict resolution, and meeting facilitation, among others. Updates to these orientations and trainings are also a regular discussion point during our CLC meetings.

We end each meeting with a final check-in, taking stock of how each person feels about where we are and where we are going. Our progress overall has been slow and steady, and we have so much to look forward to as we build this cooperative community.

Cynthia Keenan, VOLAR Social Housing Organizer

Ceremony for Oldtown's Essence Mural Unveiling



Photos (from Top L, clockwise) 1) Kenneth Clemons speaking, 2) mural, 3) Kenneth and supporters, 4) Title and artist block

Oldtown's Essence Mural

Oldtown's Essence is the name of the mural that is located on the corner of Gay St. and Orleans St., which is at Oldtown Mall entrance. The mural serves as a marker for the current revitalization of the Perkins Somerset and Old town (P.S.O) project.

The mural captures the past, and the present -- the essence of the community (people, places, transportation, and notable references) has produced since 1818. (Fun fact: Oldtown Mall was originally known as Bel Air Market). I totally believe that the bright and vibrant colors depicted in the mural will bring Oldtown Mall to life and bring forth a prosperous future due to the revitalization.

I was hired to produce this mural through word of mouth due to prior experience and knowledge of painting murals around Baltimore City. I did major research of Oldtown Mall from walking through the mall and taking pictures, to watching a handful of YouTube videos about the history of Oldtown Mall.

I had two well-known muralists, Artist Gary Mullen and Artist landry Randriamandroso assist me in painting the mural. I've occasionally assisted them in their public artwork as an art assistant in their past murals. The mural wouldn't have been possible without the knowledge, time, and energy spent assisting me to install the mural onto this challenging wall on historical ground.

A huge, special shout-out goes to Dana Henson, who gave me this wonderful and tremendous opportunity to install my mural within the city skyline corner of Baltimore City and very, very, very fortunate and grateful for the opportunity. I also recognize the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC), Mission First, and US Department of Housing and Urban Development for various contributions.

Additional shout-outs to HABC Janet Abrams, Councilmen Jones, and Senator McCray, for your presence and wonderful words you expressed at the mural ceremony.

Create Baltimore (formally BOPA) conducted the pre interview before the ceremony. I will continue creating more beautiful murals in Baltimore City one building at a time...

THANK YOU BALTIMORE

Kenneth Clemons,
Baltimore City Muralist
VOLAR Member

Co-operative Housing Key Info and Dates

- Cooperative Housing Building
- Construction completion: Fall 2026
- Applications open date Fall 2026
- Units – 7 one-bedroom unit (1 ADA unit)
- Shared spaces – Bathrooms (include showers), kitchen, dining, laundry
- Amenities – Large porch and outdoor space, adjacent courtyard

Page 1 image. Gay and Orleans Street

Right: Oldtown's Essence Mural by K Clemons.
Left: Historic Old Engine House #6, completed in 1853,
now the Baltimore Fire Museum.
<https://baltimoreheritage.org/old-town-firehouse/>

Cooperative Housing Renovation: A Journey of Learning and Community

Our Co-op Housing Renovation has and continues to be a Journey of Learning. We have Encountered Numerous Unforeseen Challenges and Developments. Each challenge has given us an opportunity to Learn and find Practical Solutions. Throughout our Journey, we have gained a deeper appreciation for Patience, Teamwork, and the Planning Process. As we continue to move forward, we will take these Valuable Lessons that we have learned with us, and are Thankful and Appreciative to Everyone who has/is contributing their Time, Energy, Ideas, and Support in helping us to Create a Meaningful Community.

Pam Jordan

Village of Love and Resistance (VOLAR) is a 501c3 nonprofit.

Village of Love and Resistance (VOLAR)

Baltimore, MD

<https://www.volar.site/>

@volarbmore on IG, Facebook, and Twitter.

To:

