



Introduction

The Planning Commission in its current form dates back to a revision of the City Charter in 1947. Article VII, § 70 of the City Charter creates a Department of Planning, the head of which is the Planning Commission. Article VII, § 71 stipulates that the Commission shall be a nine-member board composed of six citizens appointed by the Mayor, the Director of the Department of Public Works or his designee, a member of the City Council, and the Mayor or his representative.

The City Charter, Article VII, § 72, also defines the key responsibilities of the Commission as:

- Developing and maintaining a Comprehensive Master Plan for the City;
- Preparing and updating plans showing the physical development of the City;
- Developing a capital budget and six-year capital development program for consideration of the Board of Estimates;
- Reviewing all proposals for the subdivision of land within the City for conformance to specified standards; and
- Reviewing all proposed amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance and making recommendations to the City Council.

The Planning Commission directs its staff, the Department of Planning, to accomplish these mandates, as well as to carry out new and expanded responsibilities the Commission has assumed over the years. The Department's mission is to provide the highest level services and leadership in urban and strategic planning, historical and architectural preservation, zoning, design, development, and capital budgeting to promote the sustained economic, social, and community development of the City of Baltimore.

In pursuit of achieving the afore-mentioned mission, and in adherence to Article VII, § 74, of the City Charter, the Commission has completed **LIVE • EARN • PLAY • LEARN: The City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP)**. Though drafted in a non-traditional business plan format, the CMP, both in text and graphic components, painstakingly meets the requirements of both the City Charter, as well as Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code. A matrix at the conclusion of this plan (see Appendix A) provides you with a point by point reference citing how and where we comply with Article VII and Article 66B requirements.

THE PLAN

LIVE • EARN • PLAY • LEARN: The City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) is a plan that was eight years in the making! The planning process began in 1997. The objective was to create the first new comprehensive plan for Baltimore in over 30 years. While the process was led by the Planning Commission and the Department of Planning, the Fannie Mae Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation partnered with the City, supporting outreach efforts which helped to ensure intergenerational input to this important plan. More than 2,000 citizens participated in a dozen meetings and workshops to provide input into the plan and a draft of the PlanBaltimore document was released in April 1999. Hundreds of additional citizens provided comments on PlanBaltimore through letters, e-mail and at two public review sessions. While the draft was greatly enhanced, it primarily provided policy recommendations instead of concise goals and strategies to move the City of Baltimore forward. Although not formally adopted, PlanBaltimore created the framework for what Baltimoreans want Baltimore to be: a world-class city. **LIVE • EARN • PLAY • LEARN** updates that vision, and focuses on implementation steps needed to make that vision a reality. The Live, Earn, Play, and Learn categories focus the CMP on discrete, attainable goals.

LIVE

LIVE creates the plan that will guide Baltimore as it readjusts its residential land use to account for the changing population, the growing commuter market, the expanding market for condominiums, the impending regional growth over the next 15 years, and the aging housing stock. The need for affordable and moderately priced, quality housing to retain socio-economically diverse current citizens of Baltimore; and attracting new households is a central goal of the CMP. Aided by the wonderful mix of architecture, lifestyles, and neighborhoods that already make Baltimore a premier place to live, **LIVE** sets forth an implementation strategy for how the City can begin to capture the 172,200 individuals that Baltimore has the holding capacity to comfortably absorb. It sets an ambitious goal of adding 10,000 new households over the next 6 years! Furthermore, **LIVE** highlights the potential for growth and increased investment in Growth Promotion Areas, beyond those neighborhoods that are already experiencing renovation, rehabilitation, and new development.

EARN

EARN sets forth strategies to meet the employment needs of residents and local businesses and cultivate seven (7) vital growth sectors: Bioscience; Business Services; Construction; Computer, Internet and Data and Software-Related Services (CIDS); Healthcare and Social Assistance; Hospitality and Tourism; and Port and Port-Related Services. The strategy will aim to capture and encourage biotech job opportunities; plan and implement transportation infrastructure improvements to support port related economic development; create larger tracts of land for commercial or industrial development near transportation centers; and connect residents to available employment opportunities. **EARN** examines the zoning code and the capital budget to determine how they can be retooled to better meet today's and tomorrow's market demands.

PLAY

PLAY guides Baltimore as it enhances our rich cultural, entertainment, and natural resource amenities. Consistently, in bond questions submitted to voters, park and cultural requests get the highest votes. Based on this interest and demand, **PLAY** proposes strategies to make these resources accessible to more of our residents and to introduce these amenities to increasing numbers of visitors from the region, state, country and world. **PLAY** also highlights strategies to increase funding for parks and recreation, and proposes a strategy to tie together heritage tourism, nightlife, parks, trails and other amenities to move us closer to our vision of a 24 hour world-class city.

LEARN

LEARN creates a plan to turn our schools and libraries into community resources, strengthen the connection between communities and their schools and libraries, upgrade and restructure our school facilities to meet the educational needs of today's population, plan and build an additional three (3) anchor libraries in Southwest, Northwest, and Northeast Baltimore (Southeast is currently under construction), and use school dollars efficiently. Furthermore, **LEARN** provides strategies to capitalize on the untapped potential that fourteen colleges and universities provide for Baltimore. **LEARN** focuses on consistent improvements of our schools and on the expansion of higher education opportunities as tools for human, community, and economic development.

Fulfillment of State Guidelines

As Maryland's largest city, growth and development in the City of Baltimore greatly influence and shape overall growth statewide. The two major initiatives taken by the Maryland General Assembly are the Planning Act of 1992, which was intended to establish interjurisdictional consistency in land use policies by setting forth eight visions for each local area to follow, and the Smart Growth Initiative of 1997, which established priority funding in designated Priority Funding Areas (PFA). Given the city's strategic location and existing infrastructure, the entire City of Baltimore was designated as a state PFA.

LIVE • EARN • PLAY • LEARN both conforms to the visions of the 1992 Planning Act and is aligned with the 1997 Smart Growth Initiatives.

Baltimore City’s Visions:

Vision 1 Development shall be concentrated in suitable areas

This Plan reinforces this vision with policies and strategies that encourage development, infill and redevelopment that is transit oriented, brings back vacant areas into productive use, located in Growth Promotion Areas (GPA) and the Central Business District yet preserves and respects our City’s historic character. These efforts will involve local visioning through targeted Area Master Plans and emphasize mixed uses, nodal activity centers and access to multiple modes of transit.

Vision 2 Sensitive areas shall be protected

This Plan highlights updates to the City’s resource inventories, protection measures and implementation of plan recommendations and sets forth a primary policy to protect sensitive areas with appropriate utilization. The Baltimore City Planning Commission adopted the Baltimore City Sensitive Areas Plan on June 12, 1997. Baltimore City’s sensitive areas are protected primarily through the Forests Conservation Act, the Critical Area Management Plan and the Floodplain Management Regulations. Additional regulations such as the City’s tree protection ordinance and a proposed landscape ordinance are expected to add to these protections.

Vision 3 In rural areas, growth shall be directed to existing population centers and resource areas shall be protected

While the City itself no longer has any rural areas, this Plan aims to protect rural areas in surrounding jurisdictions by absorbing the metropolitan growth anticipated to occur in the short- and long-term. The Plan aims to increase the City’s population by 10,000 households in the next 6 years through the development of Growth Promotion Areas and marketing of the City to potential residents and employers.

Vision 4 Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land shall be a universal ethic

This Plan addresses this vision with several strategies to improve water quality and protect the Chesapeake Bay. Recommendations for adopting and implementing Comprehensive Land and Water Sanitation Plans, an Urban Forest Management Plan, and a Comprehensive Water and Wastewater Plan as well as adopting new storm water regulations and watershed plans that include stream stabilization all serve to reduce pollution into and degradation of the Bay and its tributaries. All of these recommendations are consistent with and enhance the region’s Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement of 2005. This Plan also recommends appropriate development of recreational trails and greenways in stream buffers and floodplains for residents to experience, enjoy and exercise stewardship over open space in the City.

Vision 5 Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, shall be practiced

This Plan address this vision by ensuring access to alternative modes of transportation through support of the Baltimore Regional Rail Plan, adoption of the Bicycle Master Plan, and recommendations for developing a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan to facilitate walkability throughout the City. Conservation of energy also underlies several green infrastructure recommendations for new development as well as the rehabilitation of private and public structures. Protection and reuse of historic structures in the City also serves to reduce resource consumption.

Vision 6 To encourage the achievement of paragraphs (1) through (5) of this subsection, economic growth shall be encouraged and regulatory mechanisms shall be streamlined

This Plan encourages economic growth in port- and defense-related industries as well as six burgeoning employment sectors identified by the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board by better articulating the development process and ensuring development compatibility in all parts of the City. The integral role of transportation planning in promoting economic development is also recognized. Importantly, the Plan aims to ensure that the residents of Baltimore are well-equipped to assume existing and future positions by providing better access to educational and job training facilities and programs.

Vision 7 Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the County or Municipal Corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur

This vision is addressed in the Plan with specific recommendations to maintain and improve public schools and libraries, historic and cultural landmarks, and recreational and park facilities. City resources will be leveraged with private funds to ensure access to well-managed resources for all residents and visitors.

Vision 8 Funding mechanisms shall be addressed to achieve this policy

Capital investment decisions for public facilities, infrastructure and services will be consistent with the recommendations in the Plan. Additionally, sustainable funding sources will be identified to ensure affordable housing, adequate park land and priority development projects.

Public Participation

An essential component in the creation of a comprehensive master plan is the role of civic input. This plan is a result of building on the public's vision gathered during the late 1990s PlanBaltimore effort. The input from the over 2,000 participants from the PlanBaltimore effort provided the Department of Planning with a wealth of information and the foundation for the **LIVE • EARN • PLAY • LEARN** themes. With these themes in place, we returned to the community in 2005 to continue to craft concise strategies for improving how current and future Baltimoreans **LIVE, EARN, PLAY, and LEARN**. The Department of Planning pursued a number of steps to insure that the citizens it serves helped to shape this document. Below is a concise summary of this effort, highlighting the many ways in which residents, community leaders, neighborhood associations, government agencies, and others contributed to a shared vision of Baltimore's future.

Advertisement Summary

During the summer of 2005, the Department of Planning launched a large-scale community effort to inform residents about the Comprehensive Master Planning process and to solicit citizen input regarding land use in their neighborhood. This was achieved through community mailings, e-mail notification, and local advertisements. Specifically:

June 27, 2005 Mailing to the 935 associations in Community Association Directory

June 30, 2005 City Paper – Full Page Ad (page 2)

June 30, 2005 Baltimore Messenger – Full Page Ad (back page)

- July 1, 2005** **Baltimore Jewish Times – Full Page Ad (page 17)**
- July 1, 2005** **Baltimore Times – Full Page Ad (page 19)**
- July 2, 2005** **Baltimore Afro American – Full Page Ad (page 2)**
- July 22, 2005** **Mayor’s Neighborhood Newsflash**

Land Use Survey

A returnable survey intended to solicit data regarding neighborhood-level land use was integrated with the CMP Overview advertisement. Over one hundred forty (140) responses were received from citizens in the community, representing over 50 neighborhoods, on how the City should use available vacant or underutilized land. The survey was released to an expansive list of community groups, was advertised in the above mentioned media spots, and available on the Baltimorecity.gov website. The data was collected and incorporated into the CMP (if applicable), and shared with the appropriate neighborhood planner.

Stakeholder/Advisory Meetings

Throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, stakeholders and advisors consistently contributed to this major effort. Multiple meetings were held and valuable contributions gathered from a wide range of leaders during 2005. These meetings were typically organized by the **LIVE, EARN, PLAY,** and **LEARN** Team Leaders, who invited representatives from major city institutions and organizations to express what priorities the city must take as it moves forward and comment on early draft products produced by the four teams. These meetings informed all steps in the Plan’s formation. Briefings to relevant government agencies and City leaders also occurred on an incremental basis.

Open House Events

The Open House Events that occurred during late October 2005 were one of the most important components of the CMP Outreach process. This setting gave citizens and constituents a glimpse of the project’s progression, and an opportunity to provide guided feedback. Attendees were also encouraged to write questions, comments, or suggestions directly on the teams’ displays. The three events took place on: Monday, October 17th from 4-7pm at War Memorial, Saturday, October 22nd from 9am-noon at Poly High School, and on Tuesday, October 25th from 6-8pm at City College High School. To solicit broad based attendance, the Department pursued an extremely thorough notification strategy. This included:

- **E-mail, list-serv, and newsletter submissions**
- **Postering government buildings and all library branches**
- **Attending special Events like the Book Festival and the Farmer’s Market**
- **Mailed flyers to the 935 community associations in the Directory**
- **Posted to the City, Department of Planning, LIVEBaltimore, Baltimore Housing, Coloquio, and BaltimoreFunGuide websites**

Comprehensive Plan Survey

A survey was written to solicit comments related to the topic matter for each of the **LIVE • EARN • PLAY • LEARN** Teams. These surveys were available at the Open House events and could also be completed online. The results helped to shape the objectives and strategies developed for the Plan. In addition, the data collected will be used towards recommendations at the neighborhood level, assisting the efforts of the planners assigned to the City's nine planning districts.

Distributing the Preliminary Plan

Beginning February 21st, 2006, the Planning Commission hosted nine Planning Commission Hearings across the City to review the draft version of the Plan and gather reactions and feedback from citizens. These meetings occurred in each of the nine planning districts to maximize the opportunity to hear from neighborhoods. Copies of the draft were available in every Enoch Pratt Free Library branch, and downloadable from the City of Baltimore website(<http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/planning/compplan/masterplan.php>). There was an extensive publicity campaign undertaken to ensure that residents and other important City stakeholders were aware of the release of the draft and the opportunities for comment. This outreach campaign utilized the same techniques used to publicize the Open Houses in October along with additional resources to increase awareness of this important document.

Per Maryland Code: Article 66B: "The Planning Commission shall make a preliminary report and hold at least one public hearing on the preliminary report before submitting the final report." The Planning Commission submitted a preliminary (draft) plan on February 2, 2006. Far exceeding Maryland requirements, the Planning Commission allowed for over three months of public participation, comment and feedback. This CMP reflects the comments received and presented at a public hearing to the Planning Commission on June 15, 2006. The adopted plan will then be submitted to the City Council for review and adoption.

TransForm Baltimore: The Comprehensive Rezoning Project

After the CMP was adopted by the City Council, the Mayor and the Planning Commission began directing the Department of Planning to rewrite our antiquated zoning code. In Baltimore, our zoning framework dates back to the 1970's. Because our zoning code is outdated, we have used other tools, such as urban renewal plans and planned unit development overlay zones, to accommodate modern land use needs. The first task of comprehensive rezoning was to define the scope and magnitude of the many lifestyle and other changes since 1971 that affect the Zoning Code. These changes include:

- **Redevelopment of the waterfront for tourism, office residential and mixed uses;**
- **Increase in the importance of service, technology, higher education, and health-related industries;**
- **Decline in heavy industry;**
- **Suburbanization of retail development;**
- **Increasing dependence upon the automobile;**

- **Growing interest in historic preservation, adaptive reuse of older buildings, and conservation of community character;**
- **Increasing interest in mixed use neighborhoods;**
- **Increasing desire to protect neighborhoods against adverse influences;**
- **De-institutionalization and increase in the numbers of group homes;**
- **Passage of federal and state legislation affecting planning and land use regulation, including the Federal Fair Housing, Americans with Disabilities, and Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Acts, and the State Smart Growth Law;**
- **Increased use of technology in communications, increasing emphasis on timeliness, and a need to streamline the development process.**

Each of the above changes has implications for the Zoning Code. Some require relatively simple code revisions; others affect multiple code sections and necessitate considerable research and review. The best way at achieving an overall more useful code is to rewrite it in its entirety with the following objectives:

- **Streamlining of zoning and development procedures**
- **Consistency of zoning with existing land use, community character, City plans and projects, and City economic development goals**
- **Conformance to applicable state and federal law**
- **Utilization of state-of-the-art planning and zoning practice and procedures**

The Department of Planning began updating discrete sections of the zoning code in 2004. The Maritime Industrial Overlay Zoning District and a first phase of changes to night life provisions have been enacted. In 2005, provisions related to locating supportive group homes and treatment facilities were proposed and not enacted – but are still under discussion. Throughout 2006, the Department of Planning will propose updates to the City’s Industrial Zoning, zoning in the Southeast District, and begin the total rewrite of the existing code, which will include a proposed transit oriented development overlay zone; a university district overlay zone; mixed-use categories; and a new park zoning classification.

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the Department of Planning solicited ideas about how land could be better used. Additionally, we commissioned commercial and industrial land use studies. The Department also worked with The Reinvestment Fund and the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development to achieve a comprehensive residential land use study resulting in the 2005 Housing Typologies. The results of these combined efforts helped to generate the generalized proposed land use map found in the CMP. The results of the study and analysis, and the proposed land use map, will allow us to move to the immediate next step of comprehensive rezoning for the City of Baltimore. Steps toward the completion of the comprehensive rezoning are listed below, but the time schedule for implementation of this comprehensive rezoning depends on two factors:

- **The size of the annual funding commitment / staff available, and**
- **The extent to which time-consuming individual Zoning Code amendments are implemented in advance of full comprehensive Code revision**

TransForm Baltimore/Comprehensive Rezoning Work Program

Task I: Initial Investigation (completed through the CMP process)

Initial assessment of zoning issues.

Task II. Technical Review/ Code Diagnosis was completed in September 2008

A. Technical Review of Existing Zoning Text

1. Continue the technical review begun in 2001:
 - Review existing zoning ordinance and other relevant documents and procedures
 - Conduct interviews/focus groups with relevant persons
 - Tour affected city neighborhoods
 - Review professional literature
 - Investigate zoning practice in comparable cities
2. Review and analyze existing code as to what works and what doesn't
Product: a Technical Report that will:
 - Review existing text for revisions
 - Identify new and innovative zoning strategies that could be appropriately utilized in Baltimore City
 - Summarize each recommended change, including definition of the problem, proposed text changes, and rationale for the change.

B. Technical Review of Zoning Map

1. Assist the Department of Planning in reviewing the existing zoning map for various neighborhoods and sections of the city, utilizing the existing land use maps prepared as part of the comprehensive rezoning project, and neighborhood land use and/or urban renewal plans. For each neighborhood/section, assess any differences between existing land use and existing zoning, proposed projects that may affect land use, City economic development plans, and neighborhood desires. Utilize existing or proposed urban renewal plans; to the extent they are up-to-date.

Technical review of the zoning map will be conducted in cooperation with the Department of Planning's Comprehensive Planning Division, which will be responsible for neighborhood land use planning and neighborhood liaison.
Product: map identifying areas of potential zoning change.

2. Assist in the review of neighborhood land use plans and zoning maps with affected agencies and neighborhood and civic groups.

C. Establish Zoning Advisory Committee

Present findings to the Zoning Advisory Committee

- Committee to be appointed at the end of the Technical Review Process
- ZAC consists of 30 citizens including City Staff who meet monthly
- Purpose: lend expertise; oversee the comprehensive rezoning project; represent community groups, land use professionals, developers, and other stakeholders; make recommendations to the Planning Commission on comprehensive rezoning

2. Revise Technical Report as per comments of the Zoning Advisory Committee.

Task III. First Draft Zoning Text and Map

A. Annotated Outline

1. Prepare annotated outline of the recommended new zoning text, incorporating changes proposed in the Technical Report.
2. Present to Zoning Advisory Committee for review and comment.
3. Revise outline as appropriate.

B. First Draft Zoning Text

1. Draft new zoning ordinance in sections, utilizing the outline and technical review of issues prepared above
2. Consult with the City Law Department and affected agencies and groups, as appropriate.
3. Present sections to Zoning Advisory Committee for review and comment, as completed.
4. Revise sections as appropriate.
5. For those issues that can be resolved independently of the entire ordinance, propose immediate zoning amendments.

C. First Draft Zoning Map

1. Continue technical review of the zoning map begun in Task II.
2. Based on neighborhood concepts and plans, assist the Planning Department Community Planning Division in preparation of draft zoning maps for neighborhoods. The Community Planning Division will be responsible for neighborhood land use planning and community liaison.
3. Assist in the review of plans and zoning maps with affected agencies, neighborhood and civic groups, and the Zoning Advisory Committee.
4. Revise as appropriate.

Task IV. Final Draft Zoning Text And Map

A. Final Draft Zoning Text

1. Present the complete revised first draft zoning text to the Planning Commission.
2. Hold several public hearing(s) to review proposed zoning ordinance text.
3. In consultation with the City Law Department, revise as appropriate.

B. Final Draft Zoning Map

1. Present the complete revised first draft zoning map to the Planning Commission.
2. Hold a public hearing(s) to review proposed zoning ordinance map.
3. Revise as appropriate.

Task V. Adoption

1. Submit proposed final zoning ordinance text and map to City Council for review and adoption.
2. Attend committee meetings and public hearing(s); make presentation(s) as appropriate.
3. Revise zoning text and map as required prior to adoption.

Visit the Website: <http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/planning/transformBaltimore.php>

The City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan: 2007 - 2012

LIVE • EARN • PLAY • LEARN: The City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan, supersedes the 1971 Master Plan and amendments and sets forth a citywide comprehensive six-year strategy. Different from comprehensive plans of the past, this planning effort sought to merge a business plan and a comprehensive urban development plan into one document. The Baltimore City Planning Commission thought it imperative that this document not be a plan for the shelves, never read, and never truly implemented. Instead, drafted in a business plan format, the CMP seeks to provide clear goals and objectives to direct the City's capital investment, zoning strategies, and public policy in a way that can be read, understood, and implemented by all segments of Baltimore. While realistically, not every goal or policy in this plan will be accomplished within the specific six-year time frame, Baltimore's citizenry must direct elected officials to prioritize and balance many desirable actions with available resources, legal constraints and market conditions. The CMP will support those seeking grants to carry out its purposes, provide protection of and encouragement for private investment, and give greater predictability and certainty to the City's future. The administration, City Council and appointed boards, commissions and committees, as well as the general public, and other City agencies will give and receive guidance from this document and recommend amendments as needed.