Park Heights

February 2006

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Acknowledgements

The creation of this plan was a collaborative effort and was created at the direction of the Honorable Mayor Martin O'Malley.

This plan would not have been possible without

- the vision and dedication of

  hundreds of Park Heights residents, institutions, and other stakeholders who participated in this planning process and previous planning processes.

- the financial support of

  Baltimore Housing
  Baltimore Development Corporation
  Department of Transportation
  Department of Planning

- the generosity of

  Pimlico Elementary School
  Good Shepherd Baptist Church
  3939 Reisterstown Road
  Arlington Elementary School
  Malcolm X Youth Center

- the commitment, talent, and collaboration of

  Baltimore Housing
  Baltimore Development Corporation
  Department of Transportation
  Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods
  Department of Recreation and Parks
  Mayor's Office of Employment Development
  Goody, Clancy & Associates
  Managing Opportunity
  ZHA
  FON Architects
  Kittelson & Associates
  KFH group
  Mt. Auburn Associates
  Delon Hampton & Associates
  MuniCap
  Lipman Frizzell & Mitchell LLC

- the leadership and encouragement of

  the Baltimore City Planning Commission, Congressman Elijah Cummings, Senators Ralph Hughes and Lisa Gladden, Delegates Salima Siler Marriott, Tony Fulton (deceased), Catherine Pugh, Marshall Goodwin, Sandy Rosenberg, Nathanial Oaks, Jill Carter, and Councilpersons Rochelle "Rikki" Spector and Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

In 2003, the Department of Planning, Baltimore Housing, Baltimore Development Corporation, and the Department of Transportation contracted with Goody Clancy, and Associates to produce the "Park Heights Neighborhood Master Plan." In 2005, the Department of Planning contracted with Managing Opportunity to produce the "Park Heights Human Services Plan." This plan is based on both documents, with updated information that reflects additional planning that has taken place since the plans were completed.

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Introduction

Park Heights lies approximately 10 miles northwest of downtown Baltimore and within two miles of the Baltimore County line. A 1,500-acre community, Park Heights comprises many smaller neighborhoods that together contain approximately 30,000 residents. It is bounded on the south by Druid Park Drive, on the west by Wabash Avenue, on the east by Greenspring Avenue, and on the north by Northern Parkway. Interstate-83 is less than a half mile to the east. Two major roadways—Park Heights Avenue and Reisterstown Road—run north-south through Park Heights, serving as the neighborhood's "Main Streets" as well as commuter corridors. Limited commercial uses—primarily retail—are scattered along these roads; there is also some industrial activity on the neighborhood's western edge. Otherwise, Park Heights is characterized by residential uses, which run the spectrum from stable, well-tended streets to entire blocks of abandoned houses and lots. Major health care, educational, and social service institutions are located throughout the community, as well as one of Baltimore and the State of Maryland's most well-known landmarks, Pimlico Racetrack.

Challenged Community

Much like the rest of Baltimore, Park Heights has been losing population. Park Heights has experienced nearly double the city's rate of out-migration since this trend began in the 1970s. The neighborhood's largest demographic segment consists of children under 18; nearly half of them are being raised in single parent households. The percentage of children born to 10- to 17-year-olds is roughly 30% higher than the city average. The median household income of Park Heights residents is nearly $7,000 less than that of the city and more than $26,000 less than that of the region. Only 30% of residents have any education beyond high school. The neighborhood contains more than 2,000 vacant lots and buildings.

Driving along the main streets of Park Heights, the devastation is plain to see: half of the buildings, both residential and commercial, are vacant and boarded up; throngs of men can be seen on street corners at all hours of the day giving a firsthand glimpse of the area's economic stagnation; and both men and women can be observed in plain view buying, selling and using drugs on sidewalks or in trash ridden parks and playgrounds. In addition to the visible economic deterioration and crime, the widespread drug activity has placed Park Heights on a deadly track.

Despite of all these hurdles, Park Heights residents who participated in shaping this plan are committed to shaping a better future and there are many assets to build upon, including attractive residential pockets, established major employers, and strong transportation services and infrastructure.

Time for Change

Through the planning process many residents of Park Heights said that they wanted to see Park Heights change. They were frustrated with the status quo and the lack of attention and investment over the last several decades. This plan tries to address this desire for change by providing a bold blueprint for positive change. Although everyone wants to see change, there was a clear directive that the changes must first and foremost be responsive to the needs of current residents and stakeholders. This plan meets that directive. By reading this plan, residents can learn what types of investments are planned and participate in improving their neighborhood.

How does the plan affect me?

In addition to seeking positive change for Park Heights as a whole, many residents want to know how the plan will personally affect them and how they will personally benefit from the plan. As Park Heights is rebuilt, everyone in Park Heights will be affected and everyone will benefit. There will be a better mix of stores, there will be less problems with crime, and people will once again be proud to call Park Heights home. More specifically, residents will also benefit from the specific strategies that will be implemented in the portion of Park Heights where they live. To find out details about how the plan affects a particular property, look at the map insert, identify the property you are interested in, check the legend to identify the strategy for that area, and read the appropriate section of the plan.

Planning Process

The city's Department of Planning, Baltimore Housing, Baltimore Development Corporation, and the Department of Transportation formed a steering committee and hired a multi-disciplinary team led by Goody, Clancy & Associates to develop the Park Heights Master Plan. The planning process is based on meaningful participation by residents and business owners; by community, faith-based, nonprofit, institutional, and business leaders; by city staff and elected officials; and by other stakeholders. This process encouraged open dialogue about Park Heights issues and opportunities by conveying the economic and physical realities of revitalization, gathering public feedback about and building consensus for the plan's vision and recommendations, and fostering community stewardship that would support implementation efforts and partnerships.

The planning team initiated work in Fall 2003 by reviewing prior plans and other technical documents for Park Heights. Consultants also conducted numerous reconnaissance trips within the study area. These findings were supplemented by a series of interviews with more than 70 community, religious, and business leaders, residents, and city and state elected officials.

The planning team conducted two neighborhood open houses and a community workshop and design charrette in December 2003 to get a more detailed understanding of neighborhood views and priorities.

- Southern Park Heights Neighborhood Open House (December 8, 2003, city offices at 3939 Reisterstown Road)
- Northern Park Heights Neighborhood Open House (December 9, 2003, Arlington Elementary School)
- Two-day Park Heights Community Workshop and Design Charrette (December 12 and 13, 2003, Good Shepherd Baptist Church)

Approximately 250 people attended these forums. The workshops began with the planning team's discussion of the justification, goals, and timing of the plan and a review of the plan's core topics. Small group discussions on neighborhood specific issues followed in the open houses. In these and subsequent public events, Park Heights stakeholders stressed a "skeptical optimism" about the prospects for revitalization of Park Heights, sharing both fears and hopes for the neighborhood.

The draft plan materials were presented at:

- Neighborhood-wide Public Workshop #1 (February 23, 2004, Arlington Elementary School)
- Neighborhood-wide Public Workshop #2 (March 22, 2004, Malcolm X Youth Center)

The two workshops tended to confirm the vision statement, priority areas, and recommendations developed by the planning team, but added nuance and detail to the further refinement of the plan. Participants reiterated their feeling that the plan's major priorities were accurate, but also stressed the need for a complementary human-services plan that would directly address shortcomings in Park Heights' education, youth-programming, and family and social-support systems.

Planning Director Otis Rolley introduced the draft plan at workshops attended by more than 300 people.

Managing Opportunity, Inc, a team of local human services experts, was hired to lead the process of coming up with human services recommendations.

To begin the human services needs assessment process, the first of four community-wide meetings was held on April 28, 2005. Over 350 residents and service providers attended the meeting.

Managing Opportunity team members attended 26 community meetings in order to inform the community about the planning process and to elicit input regarding top human service priorities.

In June 2005, street intercept surveys were conducted at six different commercial locations throughout the community. Passersby were asked to complete a short and simple questionnaire which asked them to list the top three human service problems in Park Heights, and the top three solutions they would recommend. 1,016 individuals completed the street intercept survey.

Ten focus groups were held in June and July with a total of 71 participants. The primary aim of the focus groups was to capture the personal insight of resident sub-populations from Park Heights whose direct input is typically either excluded or neglected in community planning processes, and whose condition and needs are also not adequately revealed by official statistics. The four sub-populations highlighted by the focus groups were: Recovering Addicts, Individuals with HIV, Ex-Offenders, and Youth.

In-depth family interviews were conducted with a total of three families living in Park Heights during July and August. Three different family compositions were targeted for these interviews to learn about common Park Heights household types, such as single mother head of household and multi-generation households.

Three additional community-wide meetings were held between July and September 2005: July 14, September 8, and September 29. The purpose of these meetings was to share findings-to-date with community residents and stakeholders, elicit feedback, and to encourage residents to become active participants in the planning process. Break-out sessions were conducted at all but the final community-wide meeting. At all of the meetings stakeholders were encouraged to prioritize human service problems and brainstorm possible solutions.

Vision Statement

Park Heights is more than a geographically organized collection of streets and places, it is a community of people who, though highly diverse in terms of age, family type, economic status and other social characteristics, share a common aspiration to rebuild a community that offers enhanced quality of life and economic opportunity. A renewed vision for Park Heights emerged from the community-based planning process that embodies these facets:

- A community of physical and social well-being—shared by healthy people who work together, with safe streets, houses, parks, and a wide spectrum of neighborhood serving institutions and services.

- A community of character—graced by signature main streets, notable gateways, attractive residential blocks, and a new generation of beautiful civic and commercial buildings surrounded by public spaces.

- A community of opportunity—one that attracts private investment, which in turn generates economic opportunity and advancement for all residents and businesses.

- A healthy community—defined by
  - A safe, nurturing environment for children and youth.
  - Strong, committed and principled leadership.
  - A vital, diverse local economy.
  - Residents who are gainfully employed and able to meet their family's financial needs.
  - Residents who are empowered, informed, educated and actively involved.
  - Safe and affordable housing.
  - Cleanliness and orderliness.

Stakeholder Feedback

How can I be part of the plan?

We hope everyone - residents, businesses, churches, service providers, investors, etc. - will be part of the plan. “Being part of the plan” is as easy as acting in accordance with either a specific recommendation contained in the plan or the plan priorities outlined below..

For inspiration about how you or your organization can contribute to implementation of the plan, or to confirm that your actions contribute to implementation, contact the Department of Planning.

Major Plan Priorities

Stakeholders articulated clear desires:

• It is time for the community to come together and work cohesively to rebuild this neighborhood. The plan should be based around neighborhood-wide initiatives that encourage community organizations to work together.

• Make this effort different from prior efforts. Create a plan with real political and financial support that leads to real change.

• Get commitments from community stakeholders and city and state representatives; carry out several early-action initiatives to demonstrate commitment to revitalization.

• Build on numerous initiatives, assets, and resources already in place.

• Focus first on sound housing strategies that will promote development, rehabilitation, code enforcement, and higher rates of ownership; ensure that current citizens can share in this reinvestment.

• Enhance the appearance, mix, usability, and vitality of businesses and small commercial districts in the neighborhood. Focus on healthy neighborhood businesses; discourage those that are detractors. Provide more neighborhood oriented services.

• Focus on physical improvements, cleanup, and other development efforts that will improve the image of Park Heights. This could lead residents to have more stewardship and pride, and attract investors, shoppers, and visitors.

• Overcome the safety and security problems that keep residents from actively and easily using public spaces, sidewalks, parks and recreational facilities.

• Improve public transportation by addressing scheduling, access, and security limits. Improve roadways by lowering speeds, reducing intersection congestion, and improving overall pedestrian safety.

• Provide a more comprehensive and accessible network of support to Park Heights residents, ranging from better education to skills training and job-preparedness so they can enter the workforce. Keep any existing jobs in Park Heights, and support local entrepreneurship, especially employment that offers living-wage jobs easily accessible by residents.

History

Park Heights follows a classic pattern of many older American urban neighborhoods. Initially it was central to Baltimore's growing economy. Early in the 19th century, for example, Reisterstown Road served as a major route for transporting wheat and corn from farms northwest of the city to the port, where it was shipped down the Chesapeake Bay to the West Indies and Europe. The city began the formal annexation of Park Heights in 1888, but it was not until 1911 that the Reisterstown tollgates— one of which was located at what is now Park Circle—were dismantled.

Starting in the early 19th century, Baltimore became a major port of entry for European immigrants. Many settled in the northern and western reaches of the city, with Park Heights serving as a kind of way station for several generations. By 1950, the neighborhood had been settled by the children of Jewish immigrants who had migrated from the Reservoir Hill area of Baltimore and before that from as far as the Jonestown area of Baltimore.

During the late 19th century, as streetcars became a primary source of transportation, Park Heights' neighborhoods sprang up around an intricate system of streetcar lines. By 1920 two major streetcar routes ran along Park Heights Avenue and three crosstown lines on Belvedere Avenue. This dictated the positioning of retail and commercial nodes along these lines, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. One observer described how

> *houses were built on a street grid along Reisterstown Road and Park Heights Avenue and within a five-minute walk of a streetcar or bus stop…. A design for walkers and streetcar and bus users that evolved stayed functional for over forty years…. The combined space—stores, non-commercial places, broad sidewalks, bus and streetcar waiting places—comprised a mixed public and private space built cheek to jowl with residences…. No residential street was more than two blocks from a few places to buy things.*
>
> Roderick Ryon, Northwest Baltimore and Its Neighborhoods (2000), p. 56.

A major destination reachable by streetcar was the Pimlico Race Course, which opened in 1870 as the Pimlico Fairgrounds and which triggered the development of nearby hotels, restaurants, and other entertainment venues. Those venues are now gone, but Pimlico remains. One day a year, during the running of the Preakness Stakes, it draws national attention and crowds of more than 100,000 to Park Heights.

By 1945 the neighborhood was largely built out in its present form. Park Heights resembled a classic "streetcar suburb," with lively commercial districts serving handsome, tree-lined residential blocks.

Today, Park Heights is largely poor and more than 96% African American. This population shift occurred relatively quickly during the 1960s as a result of various social, economic, racial, and political factors faced by the city, state, and nation. These factors led to an exodus of whites from Baltimore into the surrounding counties. This dramatic shift is now reflected in the changed patient demographics of Sinai Hospital, the community's largest employer and primary health care provider. As one of only a dozen officially Jewish hospitals in the country, Sinai's patients were once close to 100% white and Jewish. Today, more than 50% of Sinai's patients are African American. The Star of David, carved in stone on the community's Baptist and Pentecostal churches, serves as a visible reminder of this recent and dramatic population shift.

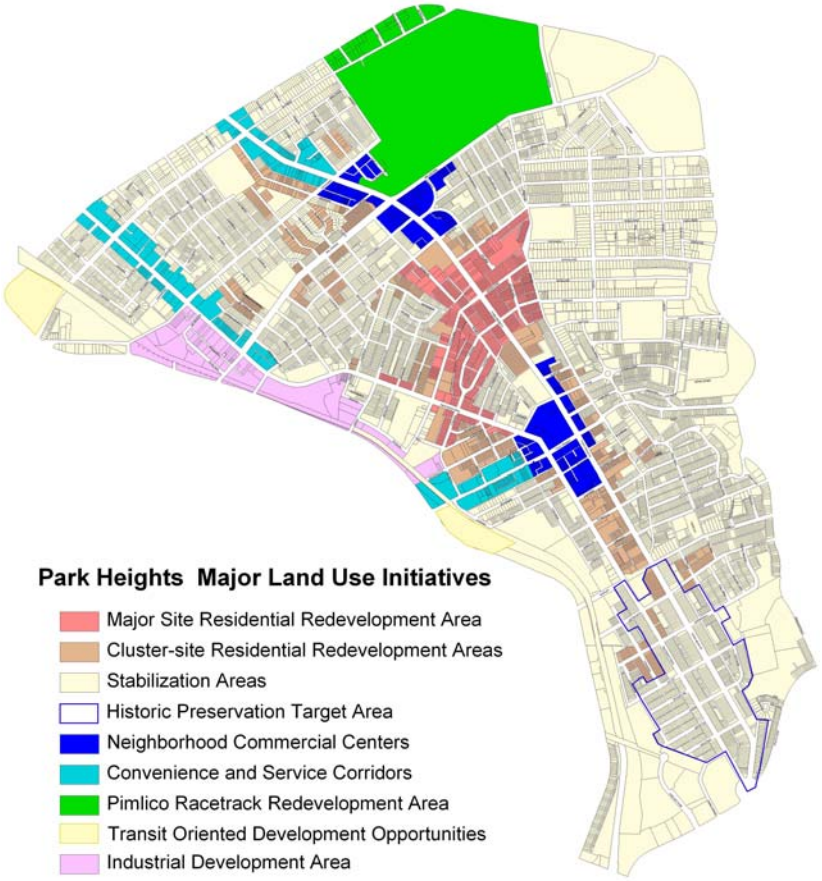
Land Use

OVERVIEW

The land use portion of the master plan provides comprehensive recommendations for the built environment, including residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, and open space. Park Heights has a range of existing land uses and the master plan recommends retaining a range of land uses, but consolidating commercial and industrial uses in core areas and corridors in a way that is more complimentary to the primarily residential nature of Park Heights. Commercial uses would be concentrated at two village centers, Park Heights-Cold Spring-Reisterstown and Park Heights-Belvedere. These village centers would be enhanced with a range of commercial uses, improved design, and a mix of complimentary office, residential, and institutional uses to create a vital commercial hub. Industrial uses would be relocated from the main corridors, where they are highly visible and often a nuisance to their neighbors, to sites that better meet their needs.

In the past, many plans for Park Heights have focused on individual projects. When the project is complete, there are more blighted houses around the corner that need attention and there's another trash strewn vacant lot at the end of the block. This plan attempts to be more comprehensive, to provide broad land use strategies that will yield lasting change. The broad land use strategies outlined in this plan will provide context for individual projects. In addition, they will allow larger projects and more projects to be completed so that change can happen at a sufficient scale to have an impact.

For an overview of the land use recommendations, refer to the Land Use Initiatives map insert. Each strategy that appears in the legend of the map is defined in more detail on the pages that follow. The map illustrates where to apply each of the strategies defined on the following pages.



Housing

Introduction

Throughout Park Heights there is a range of housing conditions. Some areas have very high levels of vacancy, and all of the problems associated with vacancy, ranging from crime to sanitation. Other areas have relatively low levels of vacancy. These areas may have blocks with no vacants, or only one or two vacants. This plan identifies ways to improve all parts of Park Heights by offering different strategies based on the different conditions that exist within Park Heights.

Based on the different conditions in Park Heights, there are four basic strategies for addressing housing in Park Heights:

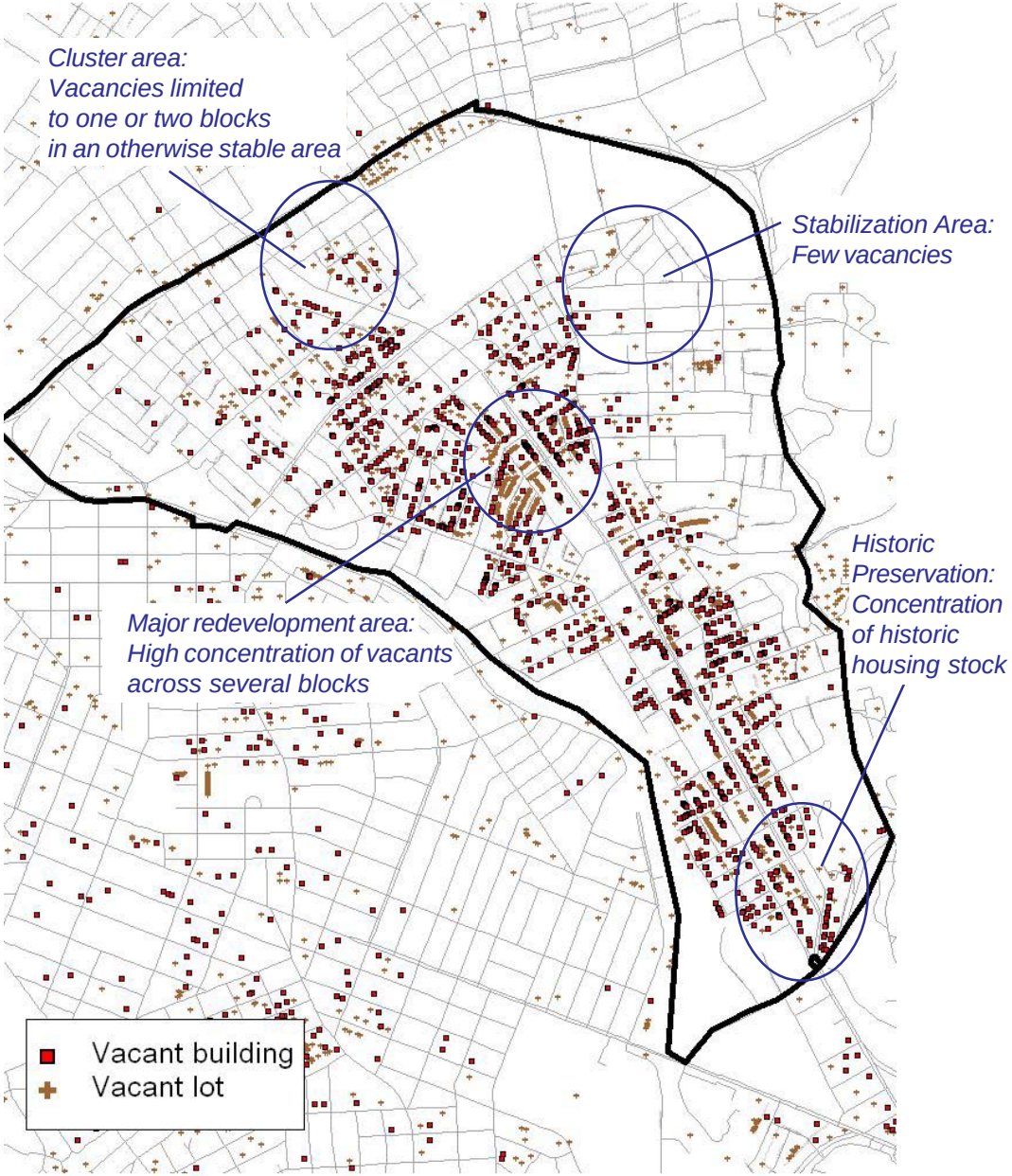
Historic Preservation: Areas with concentrations of historic housing stock. Requires strategy that preserves historic fabric of the neighborhood through historic district designation.

Stabilization Area: Areas with relatively few vacants. Requires strategy that addresses scattered vacants and promotes investment by existing homeowners and local contractors.

Cluster Redevelopment: Areas with significant vacancy, but not as concentrated as major redevelopment area. Requires strategy tailored to each block to address vacant houses, vacant lots, and houses in poor condition on that block.

Major Redevelopment Area: Area with extremely high concentration of vacant houses. Requires comprehensive strategy to reverse widespread disinvestment over multiple blocks.

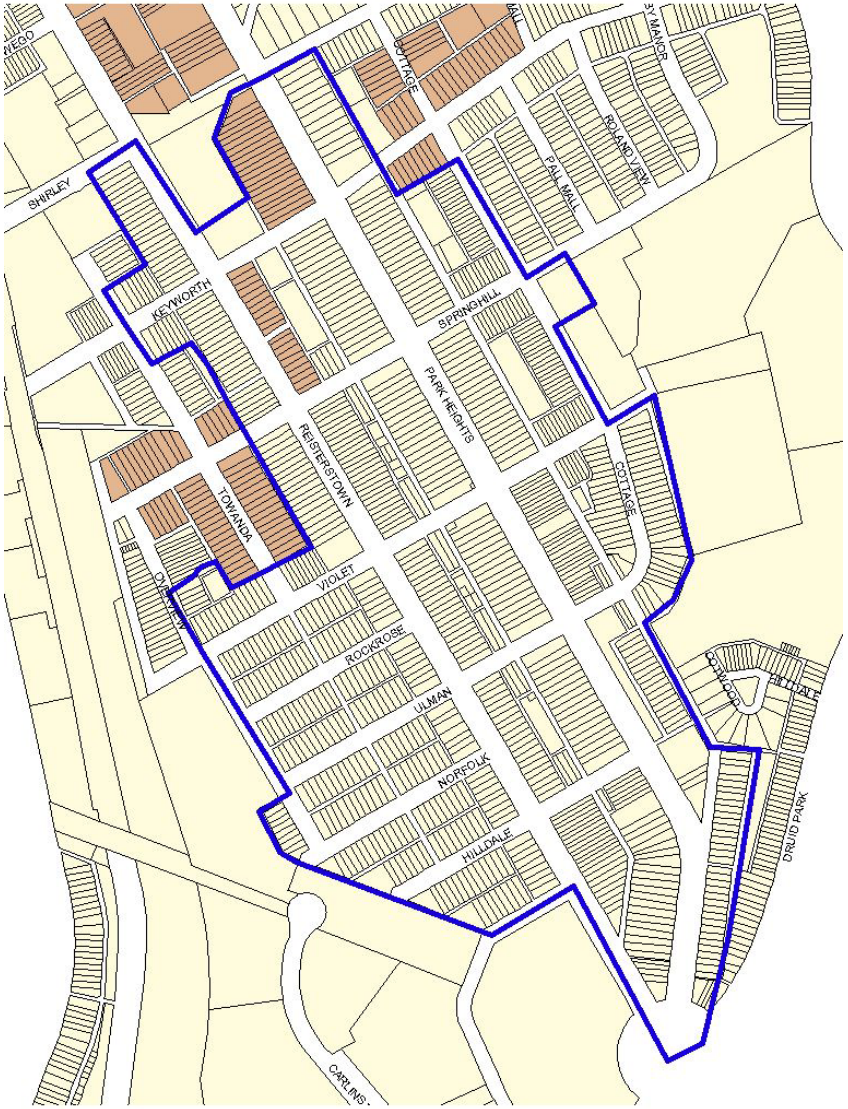
A successful housing strategy for Park Heights also includes design standards and vacant land management.



Historic Preservation Areas

This plan seeks to preserve and build upon Park Heights' strong architectural character. Although some parts of the neighborhood warrant significant physical redevelopment there are also a wide array of architectural and community resources that are worthy of preservation. This plan envisions retaining and over time attracting reinvestment in more than 80% of Park Heights' existing housing stock; the exception are buildings that are vacant and deteriorated or located in areas overwhelmed by adjacent vacant buildings and lots. Through the application of regulatory and financial tools, historic preservation could play a significant role in retaining unique physical landmarks and overall character that has defined Park Heights' neighborhoods, blocks, and spaces.

Though no properties in Park Heights are currently designated or nominated for historic preservation status (Local or National Register), a number of buildings, landmarks, or even districts could qualify for either type of district. Park Circle, outlined on the map to the right, is the first candidate for National Register Historic District. By designating this area, we would provide incentives to preserve the handsome housing stock that lines Park Heights Avenue as one enters Park Heights from downtown. Once designated, qualifying properties are then eligible for local, state, and/or national technical and financial assistance. For instance, the city's Property Tax Credit for Historic Restorations and Rehabilitations program encourages both commercial and owner-occupied residential property owners to complete substantive rehabilitations and restorations. The program applies the increase in property tax generated by improvements as a credit against property taxes owed for a period of 10 years following rehabilitation. Such tools can directly advance Park Heights residents' opportunities for home improvement and neighborhood investment. Additionally, the retention of Park Heights distinctive properties, architectural character, and sense of place can help guide the design of new development. Modern architectural styles will add to the area's richness and appeal if they take their cues from existing building sizes, materials, proportions and rhythms.



Proposed Park Circle National Register District

Stabilization Areas

Despite popular opinion, most of Park Heights consists of neighborhoods with relatively healthy housing markets, few vacants, high rates of homeownership, and well maintained homes. In these neighborhoods, the strategy is to make the housing market stronger by supporting the existing homeowners and encouraging investment.

Home Improvement Incentives

To promote investment in the Stabilization Areas, homeowners will be offered home improvement incentives. Many homeowners in this area need to make improvements to their homes, such as a new porch, a new roof, new windows, etc., but have hesitated to make these improvements. The incentives will motivate people to make improvements to their homes and once people start making improvements to their homes, the housing market will begin to appreciate, making it easier to get a home equity line to make further home improvements.

The incentive could take several forms, but one idea is to create a loan/grant combination package. For example, if a homeowner takes out a $5000 loan, the City would match that investment with a $1000 grant (the homeowner would have to commit to continue living in the house for a certain period of time).

As homeowners invest in their homes, many of them will hire contractors to provide the labor and expertise to complete their home improvement projects. Park Heights has a tremendous wealth of local licensed contractors that can do this work as well as renovate the vacant houses in the stabilization areas.

Infrastructure Improvements

In addition to offering homeowners incentives to invest in their homes, the City will be making an investment in the public infrastructure. In fiscal year 2006, the City has committed $1,000,000 for resurfacing local neighborhood streets within the stabilization areas. The streets to be resurfaced include Edgecombe Circle, Poe (from Oakley to Ruscombe), Dupont (from Laurel to Pimlico), Virginia (from Laurel to Pimlico), Hamlin (from Ingleside to Hayward), Nelson (from Rogers to Lewiston), Fairlawn (from Rogers to Newbern), Rockfield (from Fairlawn to Crismer), and Laurel (from Cylburn to Lanier). Additional public infrastructure improvements will be made in future fiscal years.

Wealth Building through Home Equity

As individual property owners and the City make investments in the stabilization areas, and the surrounding areas are improved through implementation of the rest of the master plan, the property values in the stabilization areas will begin to appreciate.

Owning a home is considered the primary way to build wealth in American society, especially for low and moderate income households. Homeowners are able to leverage their home equity to send their children to college, open new businesses, save for retirement, and enjoy significant tax relief. However, to enjoy the full benefits of homeownership, housing values need to appreciate so that homeowners can build equity in their house. For a long time, housing values in Park Heights have been stagnant, or even decreasing. An increase in housing values is the best way to build equity, and thus build personal wealth.

Property Taxes

Increased housing values means increased home equity, which homeowners usually enjoy, but it also usually means increased taxes, which homeowners usually resent. However, Baltimore City has an annual 4% cap on tax increases. For example, if someone owns their home, and the value increases by 20%, their taxes will only increase by 4% each year. The 4% cap is applied automatically.

Low income homeowners, such as elderly homeowners who are on a fixed income, can apply for additional tax caps. The State of Maryland has developed a program which allows credits against the homeowner's property tax bill if the property taxes exceed a fixed percentage of the person's gross income. In other words, it sets a limit on the amount of property taxes any homeowner must pay based upon his or her income.

Cluster Redevelopment Areas

The stabilization strategy is appropriate for areas that have very few vacants, but it is not appropriate for areas where vacancy is concentrated on one or two blocks in an otherwise stable area. These areas need a different strategy. They have been identified as potential areas for “clusters” of redevelopment.

There are approximately two dozen potential cluster sites in Park Heights. Redevelopment in these areas would occur at a less intensive scale than the major redevelopment area. Each area identified as a cluster area needs to be evaluated on a block by block basis and the best mix of specific tools applied to each property on that block. Some houses may need renovations, others may need to be demolished. Some vacant lots may be appropriate as side yards or another type of open space and some should be developed with infill housing.

Each cluster area will be different, with a customized strategy based on the housing conditions on that particular block. For example, areas within clusters that are similar to the one pictured on the top right, might require renovating the remaining rowhouses and transforming the vacant lots into side yards for the adjacent property owners. A cluster like the one on the bottom right might require a strategy that is predominantly focused on infill new construction on the existing vacant lots. The strategy might also include renovation or demolition of existing homes depending on the condition of the homes.

This approach of looking at the entire block is what sets the cluster strategy apart from the other strategies in Park Heights. The stabilization strategy applies to *individual* vacant houses or houses that need renovation. The redevelopment strategy applies to *multiple adjacent blocks* of mostly vacant houses. In the cluster area, there needs to be mix of tools applied to the *entire block* in order to have an impact on the long term viability of the area.

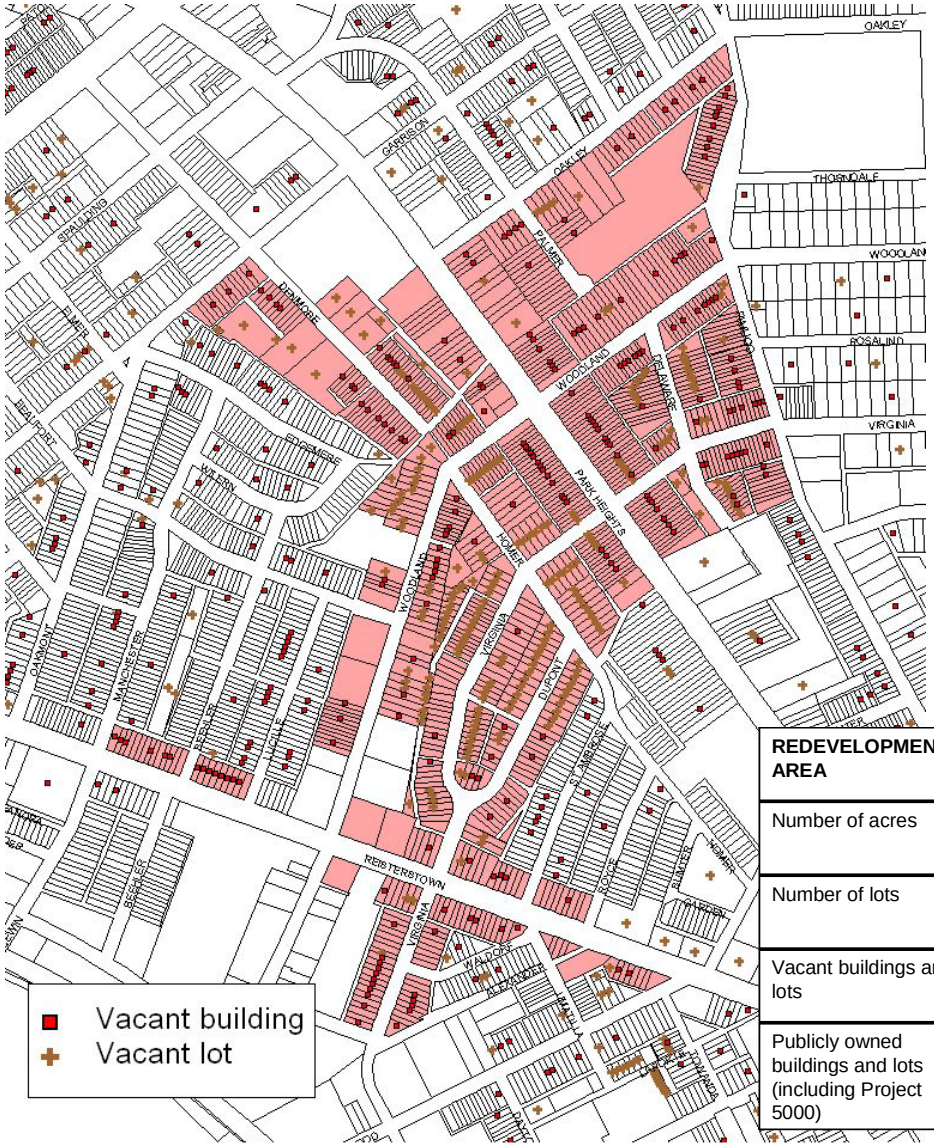
Major Redevelopment Area

The area surrounding Park Heights and Woodland has extremely high concentrations of vacancy. In the past, strategies have been attempted in this area that addressed individual houses or even entire blocks, but that have not been successful because they have not addressed the massive scale of the vacancy problem in this area.

Under most circumstances, high concentrations of vacancy are considered a liability for a community, but this plan attempts to reverse that way of thinking. Vacant land can be transformed into an asset by creating a large site for new construction. The old negative images of Park Heights will be replaced by positive images of brand new housing, and this will create renewed interest in investing in Park Heights.

The major redevelopment area, centered at Park Heights and Woodland, covers roughly 75 acres, and currently contains approximately 500 vacant buildings and lots. Redevelopment could accommodate between 700-800 or more new housing units, along with new parks, streetscape improvements, and other amenities.

Major Redevelopment Area:
Demolish existing houses - mostly vacant - to create site for new construction



REDEVELOPMENT AREA	Approx.
Number of acres	75
Number of lots	900
Vacant buildings and lots	500
Publicly owned buildings and lots (including Project 5000)	350

Site Assembly: Acquisition and Relocation

Although the redevelopment area was selected based on the dense concentration of abandoned buildings and vacant lots, not all of the properties within the redevelopment area are vacant. Some of the properties are occupied by homeowners or renters. Unfortunately, in order to turn around the blighting forces that are negatively impacting Park Heights and complete the vision of creating a new mixed-income community, it will be necessary for the City to acquire and demolish all of the properties within the redevelopment area, including those that are occupied.

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (section 104(d)) and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA) govern the acquisition and relocation process. The City will have two appraisals done and the higher of the two establishes the Fair Market Value that will be offered to the homeowner for the property. If the homeowner is unsatisfied with the selected appraised value, the homeowner can challenge it in court.

When the City has completed the appraisal process and is ready to make an offer, the residents will meet with a relocation officer who will help them through the process. The relocation officer will work with the homeowner to identify the household's housing needs as well as assess the features of the current property in order to find a comparable home. For example, if the homeowner lives in a three bedroom, one and half bath house, the relocation officer will find a three bedroom one and a half bath house that is decent, safe, and sanitary in a neighborhood that is convenient to transportation, schools, and shopping. The goal is first and foremost to afford opportunities for those who wish to remain in Park Heights to be able to do so. The price of the comparable house establishes the maximum relocation benefit. With the fair market value and relocation benefit, including moving expenses ,in hand, residents are free to move elsewhere in Park Heights, elsewhere in Baltimore City, or any where else they choose.

Creating a Mixed Income Neighborhood

Baltimore is benefiting from demand for market-rate housing in its urban neighborhoods at a level not seen in decades. To date, Park Heights has not fully participated in this renewed interest in older neighborhoods. While housing values rose 26% across the city between 1990 and 2000, they fell by nearly 20% in Park Heights. Park Heights has 50 times more children living in poverty per square mile than the Baltimore region. Children who are born into poverty are more likely to be poor as adults. In addition, researchers have found that there is a correlation between individuals living in geographic concentrations of poverty and reduced chances of individual success. Living in concentrated poverty increases the likelihood of low school performance, low earnings and employment levels, high teenage pregnancy rates, and higher incidents of crime and drugs. In addition to limiting an individual's likelihood of achieving the American Dream, living in a neighborhood with concentrations of poverty means fewer amenities. Neighborhoods with a concentration of poverty have a hard time attracting outside investment. For example, basic services, such as grocery stores, often refuse to locate in poor neighborhoods.

Major new housing will effectively begin to break down the concentration of poverty that hinders almost every aspect of Park Heights' revitalization. The number of vacant buildings and lots has roughly doubled since 1990, which strongly suggests that the market cannot rebuild the district's housing stock without a notable and early public role. New residents will bring disposable income and other resources to support local retail and services and many other aspects of community life. At the same time, the private investment in this new housing will provide badly needed jobs and other benefits for the Park Heights' economy.

Higher prices for this new housing will boost the value of existing homes, making it possible (for the first time in many years) to reinvest in renovations and improvements of existing stock. Focusing new development in concentrations of vacant buildings and lots will mean that the area's most distressed housing will be replaced by high-quality stock. This aggressive, comprehensive approach will attract new market-rate housing interest while achieving visible transformation in Park Heights.

Development Concept

New housing should include a wide range of housing types–from free-standing single-family houses to row houses to multi-family– reflecting the diverse nature of demand. A majority of new residents will likely consist of younger or older households without children; a significant share will probably be single individual households and "non-traditional" households. A potential development scenario is illustrated in the concept plan on the right. Single family detached housing should be built in the eastern section of the redevelopment area to continue the single family detached housing pattern that exists in Cylburn. Density will increase towards Reisterstown Road, with opportunities to create a connection to the Cold Spring Metro Station via Virginia Avenue.

In addition, new housing should be mixed-income to preserve the community's diversity and offer better housing opportunities to existing residents. Based on an initial consultant assessment, projected sale values for new housing might range from $140,000 for a condominium to $225,000 for a single family home.

Detached	$225,000
Semi-detached	$190,000
Townhouses	$190,000
Condominiums	$140,000

Rental values have not been projected, but it is assumed that a percentage of the new units would be sublet in the rental market.

The city's initial assumption is that 25% of the new housing units would be affordable. Within this 25%, the planning study has assumed that there would be an even mix of low-income housing units and moderate income housing units financed through tax credits and other housing subsidy programs. For example, 25% of the homes can be targeted to incomes between 50% - 115% of the regional median family income, which would mean sale prices ranging between $84,000 and $207,000.

The redevelopment could be pursued as a single large project, or could be divided into smaller projects of at least 300-500 units, the size at which the city can attract major developers who can create housing that establishes a strong new sense of place.

The sketch above, looking from Pimlico Road westward to Park Heights Avenue, illustrates some of the desired urban design principles for a major new housing development.

Several streets are extended and linked to rationalize the size and shape of blocks, increase frontage for new development, and create a walkable neighborhood. The cost of these new roadways should be offset by the development potential they unlock.

Small neighborhood parks (built and maintained as part of the new development, but publicly accessible) are located and configured to be safe, useful, and to add value to new development. Visibility is maximized by framing the parks with streets and surrounding them with continuous rows of residences. Signature parks strengthen neighborhood identity.

Maintenance and Design Standards

Residential streets are the fundamental building blocks of the Park Heights neighborhood. The following design principles define clear and well-functioning transitions from the public and private realms by ensuring quality pedestrian zones through sidewalk, landscaping and street buffers, and creating appropriate separation and individualization of yards and houses.

Public Realm Urban Design Principles

Sidewalks: 5-6' walkways.

Street lighting: pedestrian-scaled streetlights every 60-80'.

Trees: single row of canopy trees (4" caliper minimum) planted 25-35' on center or less in 4-7' tree lawn. Residents are encouraged to plant trees in private yards.

Roadway travel lanes: two lanes 10-11', one in each direction.

On-street parking: parking lanes 7-8', on both sides of the street

Private Realm Urban Design Principles

Land Use: residential, with limited neighborhood institutional uses.

Height: minimum two, maximum four to five story height, with a transition to lower existing buildings (above a maximum 6' raised first floor). Inhabited attics with gables and dormers are not counted as a story.

Front yard setback: 4-16' setbacks with landscaped front yards; where appropriate, match existing setbacks. Open porches and stoops are allowed to project 8' into the front yard; bay windows or balconies are allowed to project 4'.

Massing: new residential development should reflect the scale and rhythm of existing Park Heights buildings, including traditional building widths, bay rhythms, and variety of design details. Single buildings with more extensive widths along the street–those exceeding 100'–should pay special attention to reinforcing traditional massing and façade patterns.

Vacant Land Management

There are approximately 900 vacant lots in Park Heights. While vacant land provides an opportunity for new development and open space in the future, its current condition has a negative impact on the image and marketability of the community. As the Park Heights community begins to revitalize, new development must be complemented by short term, cost efficient blight elimination strategies. These strategies must be capable of addressing the short-term quality of life, marketability, and property value interests of residents, property owners, and prospective developers. One strategy is to “clean and green” vacant lots through a Vacant Land Management Program. The program begins with removing bulk trash, debris, pavement, and other materials from vacant lots. The entire lot is planted with grass. Trees are planted along the edge of the lot, creating a natural fence that deters dumping and provides an attractive pedestrian environment along the sidewalk.

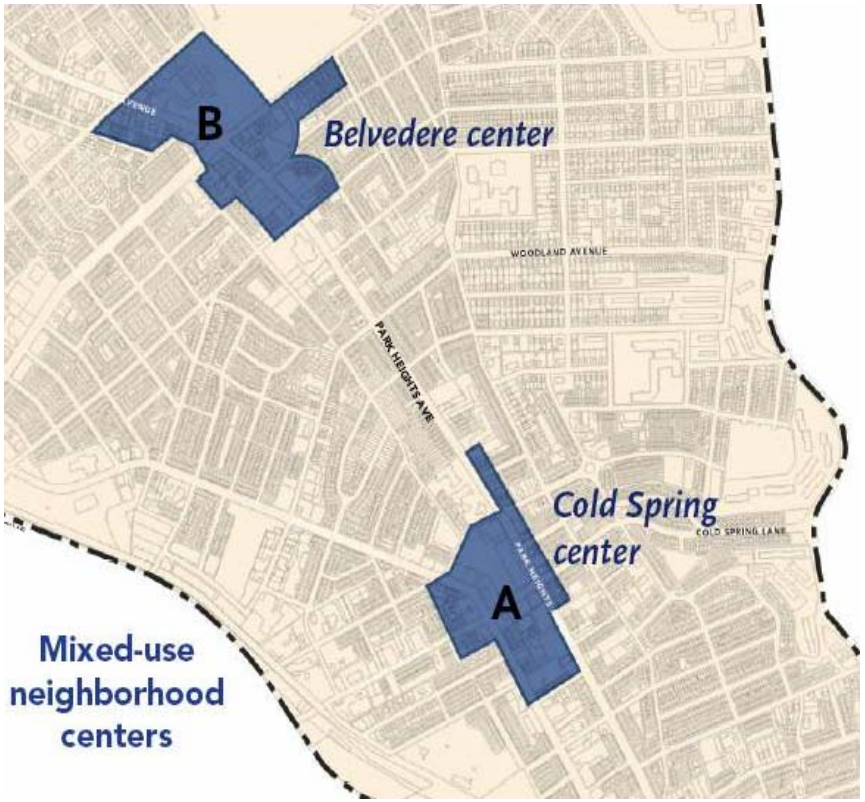
Baltimore Housing will contract with Bon Secours of Maryland Foundation, an organization with extensive vacant land management experience, to administer a vacant land management program in Park Heights.

Before

After

Commercial

A substantial majority of Park Heights' existing retail and commercial space is scattered along Reisterstown Road and Park Heights Avenue north of Cold Spring Lane. Most retail businesses are convenience-oriented but few provide the basic goods and services found in grocery stores, banks, etc. In addition, auto-oriented businesses in the midst of traditional neighborhoods negatively affect livability and market appeal.



Commercial Neighborhood Centers

By not serving the community adequately, local businesses pay a significant price: residents spend more than half the retail dollars that could go to Park Heights businesses outside the district. Transforming concentrations of commercial activity that already exist around the district's two busiest intersections into lively neighborhood centers would help reverse this dynamic. These centers could recapture lost Park Heights spending because they would serve the community's needs. In addition, they would provide an amenity that encourages people to live and shop in Park Heights. In an era when very few communities single-handedly have disposable income to support diversified neighborhood commercial districts, these centers—located along and near significant regional roadways— are in a strong position to attract regional support with new larger retailers who would serve as destinations mixed together with a range of smaller retailers.

Revitalized neighborhood centers—with the critical mass of attractive, convenient, and safe services, parking, and streetfronts—represent key opportunities to establish more sustainable economic development and socially-stimulating environments for Park Heights, based on the quality and mix of neighborhood services.

The two centers lie within a ten-minute walk of most Park Heights residents, providing an amenity that is increasingly valued in urban communities. These centers would play a particularly important role in supporting the introduction of significant amounts of new market-rate housing, whose new residents, in turn, would frequent these centers.

Cold Spring

Neighborhood Center

Redevelopment of the large parking lots and some of the existing commercial lots in the blocks that face Cold Spring Lane, from Reisterstown Road to Park Heights Avenue could create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use commercial center that would be a proud addition to any urban community. An initial assessment suggests that in the long term this center could support a total of 100-150,000 sq ft of commercial development, including a 40,000 to 60,000sq ft single large retailer (a home-goods store or possibly a supermarket if one cannot be accommodated at the Belvedere center) and 15- 20 small stores with housing above them. The city's ability to assemble a relatively large site, consisting of more than twelve acres of developable land with prominent frontage along major roadways and pedestrian access to transit, would make this center attractive to a wide range of developers and retailers.

Cold Spring Neighborhood Center Redevelopment:
One phase of the redevelopment of this commercial center might feature a 50,000sq ft grocery store while maintaining the pedestrian oreintation along Cold Spring Lane. Later phases might bring denser development along the Park Heights Avenue, Cold Spring Lane, and Reisterstown Road street edges featuring a mix of land uses, from retail to residential to institutional.

Belvedere Neighborhood Center

Redevelopment of the frontage along Park Heights and Belvedere avenues represents an important opportunity to create a more regionally significant mixed-use development and second vital neighborhood center. While there is only limited land for redevelopment at present, incorporating the “dog leg” portion of the Pimlico site (which appears to be able to be separated off without compromising future development on Pimlico) would unlock the ability to create a second neighborhood center that represents a key opportunity to establish economic development and a socially-stimulating environment for the community that is based in attracting nearby residents as well as those from surrounding neighborhoods and the region.

The Belvedere center could include a single large destination retailer, such as a supermarket, together with a wide range of retail, restaurants, and entertainment. It is worth noting the critical value of incorporating the roughly 15-acre portion of the Pimlico site. On the one hand, it would not be possible to assemble a sufficiently large and contiguous parcel to create the Belvedere center without the parcel; on the other hand, a well planned and designed center would not only serve the surrounding areas of Park Heights, it would also provide the first integral, pedestrian-friendly, connection between Park Heights and Pimlico, and offer Pimlico patrons their first real opportunity to shop, eat, and seek entertainment in Park Heights—and support the Park Heights economy. Like the Cold Spring center, this reinvigorated area could accommodate a similar size and mix of retail businesses, while emerging as a more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use area with tree-lined sidewalks along both sides of Park Heights Avenue. Like the Cold Spring center, the Belvedere center could also include housing above shops and other street level uses. The emerging Caribbean commercial district could be a vital, and distinctive, part of the center.

Commercial Convenience Corridors

While new retail and related commercial development should be encouraged in the two neighborhood centers, a large portion of Park Heights' retail businesses will continue to be located in two parallel corridors that extend north of Hayward Avenue along Reisterstown Road and Park Heights Avenue. These corridors together include approximately 44 acres of land, primarily occupied by strip retail and related auto-oriented uses, with some institutional and residential uses. Many of these businesses depend on drive by traffic from Northern Parkway. Making these heavily traveled corridors more attractive and pedestrian-friendly through streetscape, façade and other building improvements, while working to reduce residential conflicts, will enhance quality of life and livability. They should continue to feature a wide range of retail and service businesses that serve the community, including community- based and national operators.

Auto Related Businesses

The concentration of auto-related business along a quarter-mile stretch of Reisterstown Road (between Cold Spring Lane and Shirley Avenue), while important in terms of providing some limited jobs, creates an unattractive environment near residential areas.

The Northwest Baltimore Auto Association has been actively looking for a site where it could create an auto-related zone for these businesses. One option would be to relocate, possibly within the Wabash corridor. A less desirable, but perhaps more feasible solution, at least for the short-term, would be to make the area as attractive as possible with streetscape improvements and landscaping and fences that separate auto-related businesses from residential blocks.

Improving the look and pedestrian-friendly qualities of these corridors will make these businesses better neighbors and contribute to improving Park Heights' appeal to existing and potential new residents. Improving the auto-related strip will particularly benefit nearby residential blocks along and near Reisterstown Road.

Institutional Uses

Numerous community-serving institutions— schools, churches, health services, recreational facilities, government and public offices, community development organizations, and others—are located throughout Park Heights, frequently in areas that may not be visible or convenient to their constituents. Because they are important community anchors—symbols and sources of the community's values, identity, and traditions—they should be interwoven into the area's major north-south and east-west corridors and neighborhood centers, where they can have a more visible and convenient presence in the life of the community. It is highly desirable for these institutions to find addresses in or near the neighborhood centers and along Park Heights' major commercial corridors. In particular, these institutions can draw people to the neighborhood centers, supporting businesses and contributing to the liveliness of these areas and the sense that they represent centers of community life. Conversely, the traffic they generate and other aspects of their operation and growth can have negative impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods. Locations along Park Heights Avenue, Reisterstown Road, and other major streets would also underline the civic importance of these institutions.

Wabash Avenue Corridor

The Wabash Avenue industrial corridor largely accommodates smaller industrial businesses that seek an urban location and are not involved in retailing activities or displays that require a more visible public face.

The corridor faces a series of significant challenges. The relatively small size of most parcels (generally less than one acre) which often requires using public streets for loading and employee parking, limits buildings to a size not competitive for many users and makes it more difficult to set land aside for onsite landscaped buffers adjacent to residential or other non-industrial abutters; poor streetscape conditions including lack of lighting, sidewalks, and recent street paving; access problems related to the need to bring trucks through local residential streets to reach many of the sites; and security concerns all represent problems that must be resolved to insure that the corridor can continue as a source of jobs and other economic benefits for Park Heights. In addition, brownfield concerns can discourage businesses interested in owning sites. The relatively low price of land in the corridor is one indicator of soft long-term demand. In addition, the close proximity of industrial uses to residential blocks represents a blighting influence, aggravated by the need to use these streets for truck access to a number of businesses in the corridor.

It is critical to respond to the challenges recommended above. While there is no indication that a range of smaller industrial businesses will no longer be interested in locating in the corridor, continuing to compete almost solely on basis of low land cost will result in a high turnover, limit the quality and number of jobs available in the corridor, and leave the corridor—and the community—particularly vulnerable to periodic downturns in the market for industrial space. Improving the corridor's appeal to a wider range of users would also increase the ability to implement requirements for better upkeep of sites, good quality landscaping facing residential blocks, and other requirements that represent costs that are more able to be supported by larger industrial businesses and at the same time produce businesses that are better neighbors.

Offering larger sites, creating a better physical environment, focusing on uses that would draw fewer trucks through nearby residential streets, and fostering an increased sense of security would provide opportunities to strengthen this industrial corridor.

Potential industrial businesses include industrial users who generally provide niche support to larger businesses or growing industrial sectors—the most likely examples for the corridor include a number of businesses that provide good quality jobs, often sponsor in-house skills training, and would be interested in one to two acre, or slightly larger, sites.

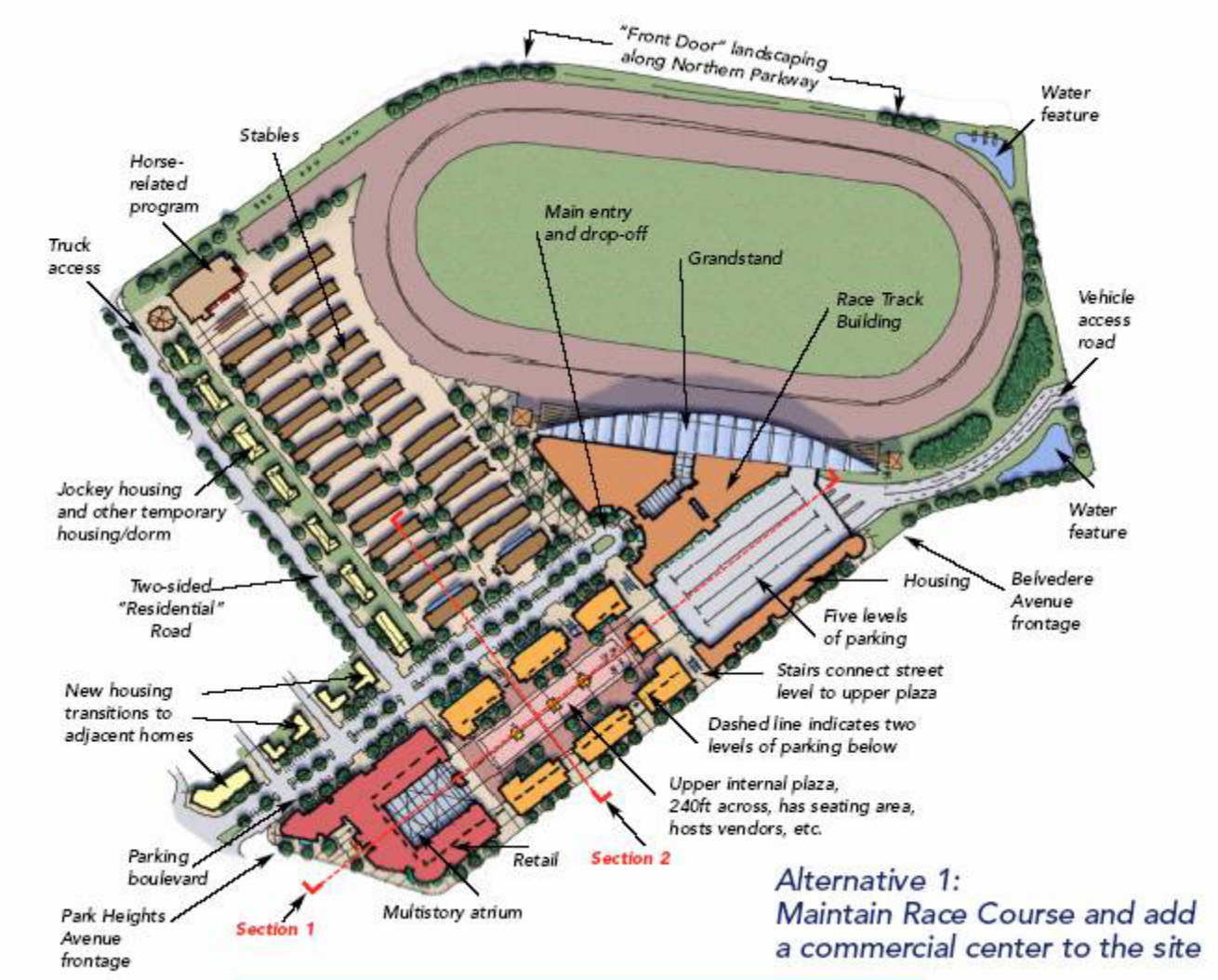
- Most of the users would require a minimum of one to two-acre sites; at this size threshold, these sites can accommodate on-site loading, employee parking, a range of building sizes suitable to many smaller industrial users, and site landscaping and fencing where appropriate.
- Most of these users would prefer more attractive public environments than currently exist in the corridor.
- Most of these users generate relatively low levels of heavy truck traffic.
- Consistent street lighting and other public security measures would be important to all of these users.

Pimlico

Host to the famed Preakness, the Race Course is a historic source of pride for Park Heights and all of Baltimore. Yet, Pimlico's 140+ acres also represent one of the most underutilized sites in the city and an untapped resource of immense potential value to Park Heights. For most of the year, Pimlico sits as a collection of empty parking lots. Even on a race day, few Pimlico patrons venture onto Park Heights Avenue or visit businesses in the district. Redevelopment of the track should better integrate the site with Park Heights Avenue. At present, the site's configuration isolates it from nearby Park Heights Avenue, so that even on days when the race track is active, local businesses reap little economic benefit from proximity to the racetrack. Reversing this situation, so that Pimlico patrons are encouraged to shop, eat, or listen to music along Park Heights Avenue, would begin to reverse the current reality in which Park Heights businesses realize very little economic benefit from hosting Pimlico. Future configurations must better connect racetrack patrons to the new restaurants, entertainment, and other businesses that will be located in the "shared" corner at the Pimlico site and Park Heights Avenue. As noted in the commercial recommendations, making a small portion of the Pimlico site (roughly 15 acres) available to create a neighborhood center would significantly increase the prospects of creating an effective, pedestrian-friendly connection that draws Pimlico patrons into Park Heights to shop and enjoy restaurants and entertainment.

While mixed-use development that provides a direct connection to Park Heights would be highly desirable, Pimlico also offers a far more exciting and significant set of opportunities. If the racing activities are relocated, the site's 140+ acres would represent possibly the most exciting redevelopment opportunity in the Baltimore region. The site has excellent regional vehicular access via Northern Parkway and is a short trip from downtown. Its size and location next to Sinai Hospital and across Northern Parkway from affluent neighborhoods qualify Pimlico as an unparalleled opportunity for large developments of 1,000 or more units of mixed-income housing, possibly in conjunction with significant office and other jobs-producing uses. This new housing or mixed-use development, framed around a network of streets, squares, and parks that weave well into adjacent portions of Park Heights, would represent an entire new Baltimore neighborhood in which 2-3,000 people live and possibly work.

While Baltimore is poised to capture the benefits of renewed interest in urban living, close to downtown and the city's cultural and other amenities, taking advantage of this trend requires sites capable of supporting large amounts of new, high-quality housing. Pimlico offers an unparalleled opportunity to create housing to accommodate this growing demand at a critical mass that would have strong market appeal, adding large numbers of middle income and affluent households to Park Heights and the city. The site also represents an important opportunity to attract high-paying white-collar jobs to the city, taking advantage of excellent regional access and proximity to the hospital.



Alternative 1

Maintain Race Course and add a commercial center to the site. The addition of entertainment, related retail, one or more hotels, and similar facilities would transform Pimlico into a year-round destination and provide a functional basis for connecting activities on the site to Park Heights Avenue and the district's life and economy. These facilities should have a neighborhood face and presence, opening directly onto the new neighborhood center at Park Heights and Belvedere avenues. Accommodate much more of the site's parking in structures, freeing up interior land for entertainment-related, mixed-use development and land on the site's edges for landscaping and other kinds of transition to nearby residential neighborhoods.

Alternative 2

If the race track relocates (for example to a site with better regional access and greater synergy with the region's tourism economy), create a 21st-century, mixed-income residential neighborhood. Using highly conservative assumptions, the site could accommodate 1,000 units of high-quality housing; with a mix of single-family detached, row, and multifamily housing, the total rises to 2,000. This new mixed-income neighborhood should include:

- A limited amount of new retail, generally an essential element to attract large numbers of new residents to new urban residential developments.
- A new network of residential streets and blocks that connect directly to adjacent neighborhoods by extending the existing street grid into the site, including a major east/west street that connects to the new neighborhood center at Park Heights Avenue.
- A large public park that also serves adjacent neighborhoods, as well as a network of smaller parks.

Alternative 3

Create a live/work, mixed-use neighborhood, including a business park. Even with 1,000 or more housing units, there would be space for 1,000,000sq ft or more of new office and possibly research buildings—accommodating as many as 3,000 to 5,000+ new jobs. This new urban office park could have direct frontage on Northern Parkway, with residential blocks separating these commercial buildings from nearby residential neighborhoods.

Alternative 4

Use the entire site for an urban office park, as described in Alternative 3.

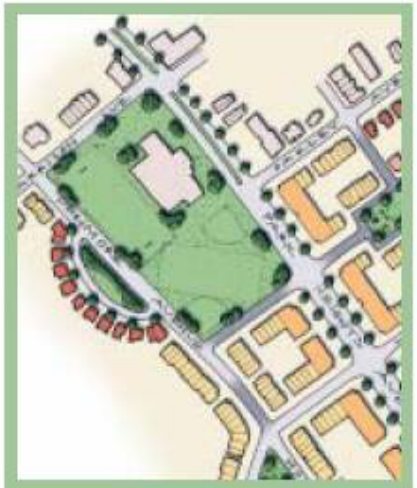
Open Space

To provide recreation opportunities for Park Heights' residents, especially youth, Park Heights needs a system of large open spaces that provide adequate, safe, active play space. Park Heights already has an extensive system of large open spaces, including Towanda Park, Jack Paulsen Park (formerly known as Lucille Park), and Edgecombe Park. These three parks provide convenient play space for central and southern Park Heights, but the area north of Garrison Avenue is not within a half mile of any of these parks. To address this gap, the open space at CC Jackson Recreation Center, at the intersection of Park Heights Avenue and Garrison Avenue, should be expanded. With the enlargement of the open space at CC Jackson, and the fields at Arlington Elementary, nearly 100% of Park Heights residents will be within a half mile of large open space.

Expansion of fields at CC Jackson Recreation Center

The CC Jackson Recreation Center is already home to an outdoor pool and a baseball field, and can be expanded as part of the major residential redevelopment effort to include regulation sports fields, possible replacement of the abandoned basketball court on Denmore Avenue, and other elements that support both formal and informal uses. This is a logical location for a park complex since it benefits from easy accessibility for residents, contains existing recreational programming and supervision, and has easy visibility from the street.

Alternative A



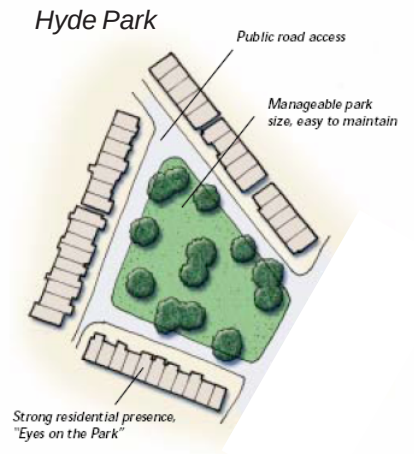
Alternative A: The expanded park site is about 3 acres—large enough to accommodate a football field, a small soccer field, overlapping softball fields, and the existing pool. Ninety parking spaces are provided along the public streets that surround the park.

Alternative B

Alternative B: The facility extends one block south for a total of 4 acres—large enough to accommodate a 400-meter track with a football field inside, two basketball courts and the existing pool. A 50-60 space parking lot could be provided.

Small Neighborhood Open Spaces

Park Heights has more small open spaces than can be managed and maintained with the resources available. Some of these sites are well-used and should remain or be improved. Several parks are model sites that benefit from good design and community stewardship. For example, Hyde Park, located between Reisterstown Road and Park Heights Avenue, behind the Cold Spring shopping area (along Wylie Avenue) provides an excellent model of a passive park.



However, several open spaces are unsupervised due to their inaccessible or out-of-the-way locations, and could be converted to better uses. Choices need to be made about the best uses of these properties. The network will function better if marginal or unsafe properties, such as those listed below, are converted to other uses, such as new housing or private yards:

Pall Mall & Wylie

Quantico

Oswego & Cottage

Homer & Virginia

Delaware

Classen & Park Heights

Maintenance and Design Standards

The existing open spaces, both large and small, should be improved to benefit residents and enhance Park Heights' overall appearance and identity. Desired improvements will vary from site to site, but all should be improved to meet the following standards:

- Visible and physical access to a major public street along at least two edges.
- Consistent adult supervision and/or locations in areas with "eyes on the park" provided by adjacent recreation centers, schools, houses, businesses, institutions, etc.
- Regular maintenance combining professional and volunteer programs.

New Residential Development, New Open Spaces

Where major new development occurs, there will be opportunities to create new parks that serve the new residential areas. All new parks should have public roads on at least three sides and active residential uses on all sides where possible.

Transportation

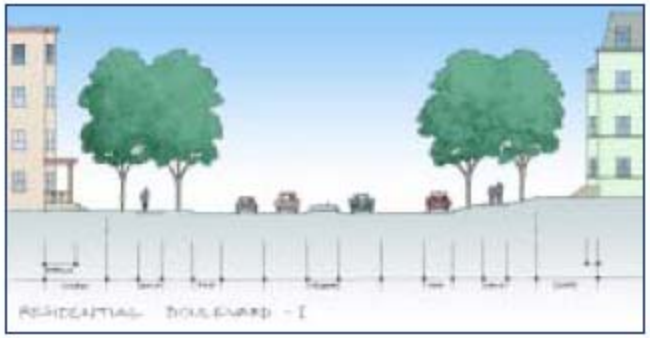
For the most part, Park Heights' transportation and transit systems serve it well. A hierarchical road system includes major arterials, secondary, and neighborhood streets that are used effectively by both area residents and commuters. Three major Metro stations are situated on the western edge of the neighborhood, with two light rail stations less than a mile east of Greenspring Avenue. An extensive network of bus lines, stops, and shelters serves the neighborhood. The transportation system is made more complex by the high volume of pedestrians, and to a limited extent, bicyclists who also share these resources. Park Heights would benefit from improved accessibility, safety, and operations for pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and transit users, as well as to fine-tune the parts of these systems—from arterial streets to gateways, bike routes, and transit services. The goal is to create maximum functionality among transportation resources so that they serve Park Heights users better while strengthening the neighborhood's character as it undergoes physical revitalization. The impact of these improvements will be evident not only in overall quality of life but also in economic health, providing residents easier access to and from Park Heights; attracting more visitors via multiple forms of transportation; and making it easier and more enjoyable to get around, whether on foot or by bike, car, bus, or Metro.

Park Heights Avenue and Reisterstown Road

Park Heights' major arterials, Park Heights Avenue and Reisterstown Road, carry high volumes of automobile traffic, particularly during commuting hours. These roadways are not adequately configured—Park Heights Avenue could accommodate more traffic, while Reisterstown Road should carry less. Traffic data indicate that adjusting on-street parking and redistributing traffic from Reisterstown Road would create a stronger southern residential neighborhood and a better defined northern commercial corridor. Shifting additional volume to Park Heights Avenue would fortify its role as the primary main street of the neighborhood.

Park Heights Avenue is the north-south spine of the neighborhood; it contains the complete mix of community elements found in Park Heights, from housing to stores to churches to community centers. It is an extremely important destination for all residents, as well as a major corridor that carries commuters into downtown. Park Heights Avenue presents the neighborhood's "public face." Due to its dual neighborhood and regional roles, it should act as an official, signature street and be an attractive, thriving, pedestrian-friendly boulevard. Improvements, such as street trees and curbside parking, should be implemented in a coordinated fashion to convey a sense of cohesiveness, but should accommodate variations in character that support different uses and activities—from residential to commercial to institutional uses—that occur along the Avenue's length.

Reisterstown Road is the other major north-south corridor for commuters. Reisterstown Road should be treated as a working Main Street in its middle and northern sections, with improvements that respect and enhance its commercial and industrial uses while making them more visually and functionally attractive to a wide range of users. The southern section should be treated to strengthen the residential feel and character.



An example of the types of street improvements, setbacks and landscaping that could improve Park Heights' major corridors.

Park Circle

The Park Circle intersection, located at the convergence of Park Heights Avenue, Reisterstown Road and Druid Park Drive, forms the southern entryway to Park Heights. There were 92 collisions between January 1, 1999 and November 30, 2003 at the Park Circle intersection. The most frequent types of crashes were rear-end (22%) and sideswipe (18%) collisions. In addition:

• Vehicles traveling southbound on Reisterstown Road or Park Heights Avenue make unprotected U-turns onto Reisterstown Road south of the intersection to head northeast on Druid Park Drive.

• The intersection's wide paved area can be confusing for entering motorists, particularly under poor lighting conditions.

• The intersection creates a hostile environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, given the length of crossings, lack of delineation for non-auto modes, and limited sight distance allowed by the skewed approaches.

Prior to 1948, a signalized traffic circle controlled the intersection accommodating 40,000 vehicles and multiple streetcars daily. A traffic study performed at that time suggested that the circle's small size and system of signalized movement created confusion for drivers. Accordingly, the intersection was converted to a highly channelized signal- controlled intersection. Recent advances in roundabout intersections, however, could offer an efficient and safe solution within the existing right-of-way. Motorists entering a roundabout yield to vehicles in the circulating lane. Thus, motorists traveling southbound on Reisterstown Road will yield to southbound traffic on Park Heights Avenue. Under this system, the priority that Park Heights Avenue's southbound traffic has for entering the roundabout over Reisterstown Road's southbound traffic should encourage motorists to choose Park Heights Avenue over Reisterstown Road during congested periods. Furthermore, such a circle could create a strong neighborhood entrance, better orienting and directing drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

The Park Circle intersection is currently a confusing place for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Bicycle Network

Currently, Park Heights lacks a designated comprehensive bicycle-path network. In a neighborhood where approximately 40% of residents do not own cars, a highly functioning network takes on added importance. Cycling behavior in Park Heights tends to be dangerous for bikers and drivers. Major roadways and complicated oneway and discontinuous street patterns create significant challenges. While a number of streets have volumes that support cyclist activity, they tend to be one-way and are occasionally too narrow to allow cyclists and motor vehicles to travel side-by-side. Riders need more designated travel ways and education on how to share the road safely. Drivers need to be made aware that cyclists belong on the roadway network and should be given visual cues about the presence of bicyclists. An on-road bicycle network will attract users for short neighborhood trips, access to parks, and trips to schools.

Public Transit

The high level of transit service available to residents represents an important community asset. No part of Park Heights is more than a quarter mile from existing transit (Metro, light rail, or bus) services, with the exception of a small area (along Laurel Avenue between Dupont and Oakley avenues); bus service is generally frequent and comprehensive. Building on these major assets could help retain current residents and employers, and make Park Heights attractive for new residents,

businesses, and shoppers. Targeted enhancements could include physical and safety improvements at transit stations and bus shelters that are coordinated with streetscape and transportation improvements. Minor scheduling adjustments could improve service quality. Concerns about safety and vandalism have undermined the overall high quality of Park Heights' transit services, particularly at bus stops and shelters. Vandalism has prompted the removal of several bus shelters; safety issues deter some riders from using the service at night, or at all. In some cases, service does not fully meet the needs of riders with off-peak work hours or people traveling to out-of-the-way locations.

Transit Oriented Development

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a strategy calling for high density, compact development around transit stops to bring more potential riders in close proximity to transit access. Park Heights includes two potential TOD sites with direct access to transit at the Cold Spring Lane Metro Station and the Rogers Avenue Metro Station.

While TOD can also focus on other higher density types of development including office and research, retail and entertainment, or civic uses, housing is more often than not the primary use in TOD projects. TOD in Park Heights should focus on housing for three reasons:

• TOD sites are unique from a market perspective. Because they connect to regional transit, they are tied more to regional real estate development dynamics than other sites in the same neighborhood, and as a result offer the opportunity to initiate development in areas, like Park Heights, that have suffered from years of disinvestment. The development of new commercial neighborhood centers along Park Heights at Cold Spring Lane and Belvedere, within walking distance of these TOD sites will significantly enhance their appeal.

• High-quality housing on one or more of Park Heights' TOD sites would help spur interest in other nearby residential development opportunities and bring badly needed disposable income into the community.

• There does not appear to be significant demand for office or other employment generating uses for these sites and retail development would compete with the proposed neighborhood centers.

While the two Park Heights' sites have very different characteristics—Rogers Avenue is 10 acres and Cold Spring Lane is four acres, planning and development of both sites should respond to some common criteria.

Park Heights has only two TOD sites, and similarly the rest of Baltimore possesses a fixed number of sites; when these sites are under-developed, an important opportunity is lost. The two sites could accommodate 500 or more housing units. At this scale, it would be appropriate to introduce taller, elevator, buildings—possibly up to eight stories. A density of roughly 40 units to the acre as appropriate for TOD sites (corresponds to a floor area ratio of approximately 1.5). Both sites are sufficiently separated from traditional residential blocks to represent one of the very few opportunities in Park Heights to create taller buildings. TOD would also offer an opportunity to create a broader range of housing options than is readily available elsewhere in Park Heights—elevator buildings and possibly loft-like apartments. Both of these developments also represent additional opportunities—along with the major housing sites—to begin large scale housing redevelopment, in this case with no displacement. At the same time, these two developments will need to support significant costs—including replacement parking at Rogers Avenue.

Human Services

Today, although Park Heights is a community devastated by poverty and the concomitant problems of drug addiction, homelessness, and violence, it continues to be a community rich in resources. If one ventures into the neighborhoods, one begins to witness the richness of Park Heights. Homeowners cultivate flower and vegetable gardens, children play in the yards, adults chat across fences. Park Heights is home to more than 60 neighborhood associations, an indication of grassroots infrastructure that is rare in blighted areas. Some are 50 members strong representing several square blocks; others represent just one block, having sprung up overnight during a conversation in someone's kitchen. The residents talk about the need for employment, the need for absentee landlords to take care of their properties, and the need to make the streets safer for children and elders. Over the years, their organized strategic actions have included some 65 tons of garbage being hauled away by the city's sanitation department in one day as well as the court-ordered razing of a store that had been a front for the sale of crack cocaine and automatic weapons.

While their concerns are many, residents worry most about the growing drug culture and its grip on their community and the next generation. Early in the morning, they watch as adolescent "drug couriers" gather at several main corners and recruit younger children who are heading off to school.

Because of the extraordinary saturation of illicit drugs in Park Heights, there is a need to affect as many individuals, generations and layers of the community as possible so that the community-as a whole-experiences recovery. Indeed, this may be the only way to reverse the trend of more and more drug addiction and crime.

Over the years, a significant allocation of resources toward tailoring health care and substance abuse services for the underserved have failed to bridge the ever-widening gap between providers and disadvantaged consumers. At the crux of the problem is the fact that narrowly-defined medical interventions cannot hope to identify, let alone address, the complex social problems that often accompany poverty. Programs trying to effectively engage and serve impoverished families must be prepared to address any number of non-medical problems that distract a person's energy and attention away from primary health care for themselves or their children.

In fact, a family's circumstances-which may include inadequate housing, poor eating habits, lack of transportation, drug addiction, chronic unemployment, depression, family violence, and immature parenting-may well need to be addressed *first* or at least simultaneously with health needs. Children living in dire poverty cannot develop in a healthy way physically because of poor nutrition and a lack of protection from disease and the elements, or emotionally due to their parents' drug addiction, depression or violence which impedes their ability to parent. The health of these families can be significantly and positively impacted by a long term caring relationship with someone who is able to convey pertinent health information in a non-threatening way, and who is personally aware of the toll that the day-to-day grind of poverty takes. Intensive case management services can be offered in conjunction with health care and substance abuse treatment to provide essential support and guidance that many of these underserved individuals never received in the context of their own childhood and adolescence.

Health

Park Heights has been designated a Medically Underserved Area and the entire community has been designated as a Medically Underserved Population by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These designations are based on four factors: the infant mortality rate, the percent of the population that is 65 years or over, the percent of the population living below the Federal Poverty Level, and the ratio of primary care physicians per 1,000 population. Park Heights exceeds the criteria for designation in all four categories.

Leading Causes of Death

HIV, homicide and drug overdose are among the top six leading causes of death in Park Heights, that nationally are not even among the top ten leading causes of death. All three suggest a compromised life expectancy in that they are not associated with deaths of individuals over age 60.

	Park Heights	United States
Heart Disease	1	1
Cancer	2	2
HIV	3	not in top 10
Stroke	4	3
Drug Overdose	5	not in top 10
Homicide	6	not in top 10
Septicemia	7	10
Respiratory Disease	8	4
Diabetes	9	6
Unintentional Injury	10	5
Pneumonia/Influenza	not in top 10	7
Alzheimer's Disease	not in top 10	8
Nephritis	not in top 10	9

Hospital Utilization

From July 2004 to June 2005, Sinai Hospital's emergency room (ER) served a total of 28,876 patients who reside in the 21215 zip code area. Of these patients, 54.7% were female and 45.3% male; 89.7% were African American; 77.4% were adult patients and 22.6% were pediatric patients. The top five diagnoses among adult patients were chest pain, asthma, traumatic injury, abdominal pain, and neck sprain. Given the gender imbalance in Park Heights, it is of value to explore ER data specifically relating to African American men from the 21215 zip code area to understand life-threatening health concerns. Among these male patients, the number one ER diagnosis was traumatic injury. Further, the top twenty inpatient diagnoses for the same demographics included HIV disease, severe and psychotic depression, and schizophrenia. These data highlight a disproportionate incidence of traumatic injury, HIV disease, and severe mental illness. The top five diagnoses among pediatric patients were asthma, and various types of infection and fever.

Health Professional Shortage Area

The Bureau of Health Professions has designated Park Heights as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) in the areas of both primary care and dental health. A HPSA designation is made based on a shortage of physicians overall and/or on a shortage of physicians willing to treat low-income and Medicaid-eligible populations. If an area has a ratio of more than 3,500 residents or more than 3,000 Medicaid eligible residents per practicing physician, it can be designated a Primary Care HPSA. The Bureau of Primary Health Care recommends a ratio of one (1) primary care physician per 1,500 population.

Lack of Health Insurance

According to Baltimore Health Care Access, the City's initiative to increase city residents' insurance enrollment, an estimated 20-22% of individuals citywide are uninsured. Park West Health System, the Federally Qualified Health Center that serves Park Heights via three community health centers, reports that close to half of new patients enter the Park West system uninsured. Many of these uninsured patients end up qualifying for Medicaid, Child Health Insurance Program, or Medicare. In 1998, Sinai Hospital, the acute care hospital located in southern Park Heights, reported that 22.6% (22,614) of its total inpatient/outpatient population (100,000) came into the hospital system uninsured and that almost half of these uninsured patients resided within the 21215 zip code area. Many of these uninsured patients also ended up qualifying for Medicaid, Child Health Insurance Program, or Medicare. It is crucial that health care providers in Park Heights have the staff capacity to conduct outreach with this low-income population and routinely screen patients for their eligibility in Medicaid, the Child Health Insurance Program, and Medicare.

By adding one health care provider a year over the next five years in a Park Heights health center, we could provide increased services for the uninsured and underinsured population within Park Heights. Based on estimates, patients make 2 visits per year so about 1,250 patients would be served with one provider, about 20% of the estimated 6000 people in Park Heights with inadequate insurance.

Substance Abuse

According to the Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, a total of 24,700 individuals sought drug treatment citywide in 2003. A significant majority of these individuals (71.2%) sought treatment for heroin abuse, more than half (53.4%) sought treatment for crack cocaine abuse, and 39.0% sought treatment for alcohol abuse. These numbers suggest a complex, multi-drug addiction for many individuals.

As of October 2005, a total of 1,595 individuals were enrolled in the seven drug treatment programs located within the Park Heights community:

Sinai Hospital Addictions Recovery Program	666
I Can't We Can Recovery Program	300
Harambee Treatment Program/University of Maryland	175
Next Passage Program/Bon Secours Hospital	172
Gaudenzia	135
Northwest Baltimore Youth Services	100
Hidden Garden Program/Park West Health System	47

Considering that the fifth leading cause of death in Park Heights is drug overdose and that substance abuse is a major barrier to employment, drug treatment slots should be expanded from the current 1,600 slots to a minimum of 6,000 slots (in annual increments of 900 slots over five years) at existing facilities.

HIV Disease

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials have stated that zip code areas 21215, 21216, and 21217 in Baltimore City have HIV transmission rates that are among the highest in the country. In 2004, the AIDS Administration of the Maryland Department of Health determined that of the 200 tracts in Baltimore, the census tracts with the 1st, 2nd and 4th highest number of AIDS cases are located within Park Heights.

As reported in the *Maryland 2003 HIV/AIDS Annual Report,* the mode of transmission for both males and females in Baltimore City is more likely to be intravenous drug use and less likely to be either men having sex with men or heterosexual contact. Just over 50% of all HIV/AIDS cases reported injection drug use as the mode of transmission with only 14% reporting sexual contact between men as the mode of transmission, further justification for addressing the drug addiction in the community.

As of October 2005, a total of 1,022 individuals with HIV disease were considered active patients by the three infectious disease providers that serve Park Heights:

Infectious Disease Ambulatory Clinic/Sinai Hospital	430
Imani Center/Bon Secours Hospital	414
(including 100 new patients in 2005)	
Hidden Garden Program/Park West Health System	178

Quality medical care is available to individuals with HIV disease in Park Heights, however, the volume of available openings or “slots” for such treatment do not address the scale of the HIV epidemic in Park Heights. HIV prevention and treatment sites and slots should be expanded from the current 1,000 treatment slots to a minimum of 1,500 (in annual increments of 100 slots) at existing and planned/new facilities. The infectious disease providers themselves note that not all of their “active patients” receive regular care due to appointment non-compliance and chaotic lifestyles, especially if they have a drug abuse problem and are not also receiving treatment specifically for that problem. These providers recognize that their outreach and case management capability is insufficient, leading to a lack of regular appointments by enrolled patients and a lack of new requests for services by individuals not yet receiving treatment. In addition, adequate outreach and case management is essential in order to reach Park Heights residents who are infected with HIV but who have not yet been diagnosed. The number of outreach workers should be increased from the current 6 outreach workers to a total of 10. This will reduce both transmission of the disease as well as morbidity and mortality among those who are infected. In particular, case management can enhance medication adherence. A minimum of 95% adherence is required in order for HIV treatment to be effective. Over the past decade, an additional strain of HIV that is resistant to drugs has surfaced in Baltimore City due, in large part, to a widespread lack of medication adherence.

Infant Mortality

Infant mortality refers to death following a live birth and before one year of age. A comparison of the infant mortality rates on national, state, city, and community level show an almost 400% increase in infant mortality, from a national average of 7.0 deaths per 1000 live births to 27.0 deaths per 1000 live births in one census tract in the Park Heights. The Healthy Start infant mortality reduction model should be expanded. The expansion should include expansion of the street outreach and home visiting component to target women in their reproductive years (ages 15-44). An array of existing social service providers (family outreach centers, church ministries, after school programs) should be available as a base for the home visitors to use throughout the community. In collaboration with Sinai Hospital’s OB/GYN and Pediatric Residency Programs, a home visiting rotation should be created in Park Heights for high risk pregnant women and high risk infants and toddlers Ensure that holistic services are available to high risk women and expectant mothers living in Park Heights, including domestic violence shelters, drug recovery services, mental health services, support groups, and WIC assistance.

Mental Health

In addition to primary and dental care, Park Heights has severe mental health needs and a shortage of mental health providers. HSPA mental health designation should be requested for Park Heights census tracts. In addition, mental health treatment sites and slots should be expanded from the current approximate 300 slots to a minimum of 2,500 slots (in annual increments of 500 slots) at existing and planned/new facilities.

Health Education

Many residents are not accessing care regularly or are not going to the doctor until their symptoms are severe. The Park West Health System reports that they could be serving an additional 5,000 primary care patients with their current level of staffing and facilities. In addition, the infectious disease specialists in the community report a high caseload, but insufficient utilization among their patients. Utilization of primary and preventive care can be increased by conducting regular community-wide health education campaigns that inform and motivate residents towards healthier behaviors and lifestyles. Utilize media outlets such as radio, television, billboards, and newspapers. Also utilize effective community-based techniques such as door-to-door canvassing. Such a health education campaign would focus on the benefits of a healthy life, the price/burden of an unhealthy life, healthy behaviors and lifestyles, prenatal care, nutrition, family planning, availability of preventive and primary care in the community, chronic disease management (asthma, hypertension, heart disease), HIV prevention, testing and treatment, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, etc. In addition to a comprehensive education campaign, health care providers should host regular health fairs based in the community.

A full-time nurse should be placed in every public elementary school. School-based clinics should be instituted or expanded at each middle and high school, including health education staff to focus on drug prevention, pregnancy prevention, and violence prevention. Enlist and train four (4) or more Americorps volunteers to conduct health education on the street, in homes, and in community centers and churches on a range of topics, including prenatal health, smoking cessation, family planning, and preventive health screenings. These volunteers would be trained and supervised by staff at the two primary care providers in Park Heights: Park West Health System and JAI Medical System.

There is also a need for patient counseling services that assist with public assistance enrollment, purchase of prescription medications and follow-up medication adherence, adherence to other chronic disease regimens, reminders related to annual or other regular screenings (e.g., PAP smears), and compliance with referrals to specialty medical providers. One solution is to establish a clearinghouse/storefront office to conduct health care referrals and screen residents for eligibility in public assistance programs. The clearinghouse would coordinate and maximize provision of free services (city, state, federal, private, Sinai Hospital, non-profit) by collaborating with the Park West Health System and JAI Medical System to offer regularly-scheduled and well-publicized health services, including immunizations, flu shots, prostate screenings, mammograms, HIV testing, blood pressure, glucose level, vision/hearing tests, etc.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Residents need convenient access to fresh, affordable produce.

Finally, in addition to information about healthy lifestyles, residents need convenient access to healthy lifestyle choices. Hypertension, heart disease and diabetes are disproportionately prevalent among African Americans, and are either leading causes of death or leading contributors to death. Many of the primary risk factors for these chronic diseases can be prevented or reversed through changes in individuals' lifestyles, including poor nutrition, insufficient physical activity, and smoking. The first step to making it easier for people to live healthy lifestyles is to attract at least one major grocery store to the community. In addition, resident groups should expand the Farmer's Market, facilitate access to farm collaboratives and cooperatives, and establish a resident-run Food Cooperative.

Employment

By and large, the job training and workforce development services in Park Heights are tailored for a population with needs that range from insufficient skill base to community re-entry from correctional facilities. Despite these programs and their relatively positive reputation in the community, 56.1% of residents over age 16 are unemployed or not in the labor force. 7.2% are unemployed and an additional 49.1% are categorized as "not in [the] labor force." Some of the residents not in the labor force are in school or retired, but most of them have withdrawn from the labor force. Whether this is due to a lack of education and basic skills, drug addiction and despair, or barriers to hiring such as felony conviction or HIV diagnosis, the residents of Park Heights need adequate training, adult education, social support, and assistance with securing long-term employment at a livable wage.

Employment Centers

Of the top ten employers located inside of Park Heights, seven are health-related, one represents the horse racing industry, one is public-safety related, and one is education-related. These top ten employers are:

Sinai Hospital	2690 Employees
Life Bridge Health	1403 Employees
Pimlico Racing Association	600 Employees
Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center	419 Employees
Police/Northwestern District	233 Employees
Pleasant Manor Healthcare	135 Employees
Blue Point Nursing and Rehab	100 Employees
Millennium Health and Rehab	90 Employees
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary	65 Employees
Park West Health System	65 Employees

(Figures are not available on the proportion of these employees who are Park Heights residents.)

The Park Heights community also boasts a large number of small businesses, ranging from restaurants and drug stores to auto body shops, although there is considerable business turnover.

Job Training

There are approximately 1,135 job training and skill development slots provided by six employment development programs serving Park Heights: STRIVE/Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development; the apprenticeships and on-site employment for individuals enrolled in the I Can't We Can Recovery Program; the "Learn to Earn" Program of the St. Ambrose Family Outreach Center; healthcare training for youth (16-21 years) at Healthcare Careers Alliance; We Teach and Tutor; and machinist training through the Magna Vocational Training Program.

STRIVE	350 job training slots
I Can't We Can Recovery Program	300 job training slots
St. Ambrose Family Outreach Center	200 job training slots
Healthcare Careers Alliance	100 job training slots
We Teach and Tutor	100 job training slots
Magna Technical Training Program	85 job training slots

In addition, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Baltimore City's largest employment and training agency, provides direct employment opportunities and customized and occupational skills training through its Northwest Career Center located at Mondawmin Mall.

Given the extremely low labor force participation rate in Park Heights, job training programs sites and slots should be further expanded from the current 1,000 slots to 5,000 slots (in annual increments of 800) at existing and planned/new facilities over five years. Upgrade existing programs to include a range of services, including comprehensive intake and assessment (employment history, educational attainment, physical and mental health screenings), adult education, GED preparation, work readiness training, case management, targeted skills training, job

placement, job coaching, and ongoing support groups. Increase training that specifically targets an industry, trade or employer, such as nursing or medical clerkship within LifeBridge Health or construction jobs created by the redevelopment initiative. Provide training to existing providers in order to ensure that all programs have established goals and measurable objectives as well as evaluation and accountability mechanisms in place.

Park Heights Partnership for Jobs

Under the direction of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development,

establish a community coalition, the "Park Heights Partnership for Jobs," to develop and implement a re-education, re-entry, and re-training program for Park Heights residents. For example, the partnership would host quarterly or bi-annual job fairs, work with areas businesses to encourage hiring of ex-offenders and to establish career ladder programs, and advocate for City/State abatement/payment programs related to child support arrears (e.g., while incarcerated).

The Partnership would establish partnerships between workforce development providers and potential employers (local businesses, corporations and City). For example, the redevelopment initiative provides an opportunity to train and hire residents of Park Heights for construction related jobs located in Park Heights.

In addition, the Partnership would help workforce development providers establish partnerships with companies to facilitate the hiring of qualified applicants with felony convictions and/or a history of drug abuse/ addiction. Companies might be willing to hire residents who have documentation of enrollment/completion and/or ongoing support from rehabilitation programs.

Partnership should develop a strong liaison with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to develop and support a mechanism for "behind the fence" assessment and providing information to those about to be released as well as strong referral process to one of the training providers.

Establish storefront employment agency, including day labor opportunities, with rigorous requirements such as weekly pay vs. daily pay, continual/random drug testing, along the lines of a Work Projects Administration project to do cleaning and boarding, landscaping, and general community maintenance. In addition, participants should be exposed to opportunities to participate in job training programs and/or on the job training.

Develop approaches that specifically target ex-offenders, e.g., training programs that begin immediately upon re-entry into the community as well as programs that begin in pre-release facilities and extend into the re-entry phase. Expand the services provided by the ReEntry Center at Mondawmin Mall. The ReEntry Center provides training opportunities, One-Stop Career Center Services, child support modification, 48 hour driver's license reunification, paternity testing, assistance with retrieval of needed IDs, housing referrals, free resources, and state of the art technology. These services need to be widely publicized to Park Heights residents and inmates that will be returning to Park Heights. As services are publicized, demand will grow, and services should grow accordingly.

Education

There are nine public schools in Park Heights: five elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. Many of these schools are under-enrolled. There is also a Catholic K-8 school. Student scores, particularly beyond elementary school, are extremely low in all areas, including language arts, math, and science. Mobility, truancy, and drop-out rates are high, while the high school graduation rate is below 75%. Among adults, functional illiteracy is widespread. Many residents are not computer literate. Almost one-half of adult residents did not complete high school. The widespread low educational attainment, poor quality of schools, and dearth of adult education services contributes to the high rate of unemployment and serves to sustain the community's high poverty rate.

Public Schools

The five elementary schools in Park Heights all outperformed the citywide average for MSA proficiency for third graders. However, with the exception of KIPP Ujima Village Academy, the middle and high schools have extremely poor test scores and attendance levels. In addition, the middle and high school buildings are operating significantly below their capacity levels in terms of the number of students enrolled compared to the number of students the building was built to serve. As the New Facilities Solutions plan is completed, it should yield recommendations that will address the facilities issues, as well as potentially address the academic performance. The elementary schools, which are community based, appear to be serving the students well, while the middle schools, which are not community based, appear to be failing to serve the

	MSA Proficieny Levels % Advanced or Proficient 3rd, 7th, or 10th Grade	% of classes not taught by Highly Qualified Teachers	Mobility % Entrants	Attendance	Enrollment	Capacity	Building Condition	State Status Adequate Yearly Progress
Elementary Schools								
Arlington	76	40.7	15.4	94.4	553	548	Poor	Acceptable
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	82	42	20.4	93.7	567	712	Poor	Improved
Edgecombe Circle	69.7	64.1	25.4	93.4	524	575	Poor	Improved
Langston Hughes	75.9	83.3	17.7	95.2	225	296	Poor	Acceptable
Pimlico Elementary	63.7	34.1	21.7	94.7	567	756	Poor	Met state standards, but remains on alert
Baltimore City Elementary Schools	61	57.9*	21.9	94.1				
Middle Schools								
KIPP Ujima Village Academy	73.4	65.6*	7.4	97.3				Acceptable
Dr. Roland Patterson	21	62.1	21	80.5	756	2009	Poor	Failed to meet state standards; facing overhaul
Pimlico Middle	28.6	66.2	19.5	84.7	839	1479	Poor	Failed to meet state standards for at least 2 yrs
Baltimore City Middle Schools	39.7	57.9*	22.6	87.6				
High Schools								
Northwestern	6.4	56.4	22.4	80.4	1154	1701	Poor	Failed to meet state standards; must restructure
Baltimore City High Schools	18.6	57.9*	22.3	82.3				

*Includes additional grades.

students' needs. One solution might be to create community based middle schools, by having some of the elementary schools become K-8 schools. Another solution might be to offer parents and students more choices between schools so that they can select the school that is best suited to them. For example, parents and students can choose to attend the KIPP Ujima Village Academy and they understand that making that choice means a commitment to excellence, as well as a commitment to hard work. The results speak for themselves. Almost twice as many seventh graders at KIPP Ujima Village Academy are proficient than at the other two middle schools in Park Heights. As part of the facilities master plan, parents and school administrators should explore (1) the desirability and feasibility of K-8 schools, (2) new opportunities for charter schools, particularly middle and high schools, (3) expanding the 20th Century Community Learning Center, currently at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to additional sites, and (4) implementing the Communities in Schools model. Commission curricula supplements that are both culturally congruent with the student body and designed to enhance student engagement and self motivation. In addition, establish supportive partnerships for each school with corporations, non-profits, or neighborhood associations to assist with resources including volunteer staff or building repair hours.

Beyond the academic and facility issues, many of the schools, particularly the middle and high schools, have encountered problems with safety. Place a social worker and/or violence prevention specialist in both middle schools, schools that are presently being considered for the State's "persistently dangerous" status. Increase truant officer staff at each school to a ratio of one truancy staff to no more than 500 students with a history of chronic truancy; provide training in social work. Create effective mental health and social work referral mechanisms in every school.

The final, and probably most important, ingredient in improving schools is strengthening parent involvement. Establish community-wide Resident/Parent Council on education to monitor public school performance. Establish community-wide Task Force to address the extensive public school inadequacies, including safety concerns and curriculum development. Such a task force would include teachers, principals, guidance counselors, truancy officers, school nurse, parents and students. Host monthly meetings with BCPSS superintendent, area office directors, School Board reps, school principals to identify key points of breakdown and areas of input. Establish PTAs/PTOs at every school. Conduct a community-wide educational campaign on the benefits of education. Conduct parenting education on homework, Individual Education Plans (IEP), existing services within BCPSS, testing, college entrance, GEDs, and other school system resources. Establish parent security forces at each middle and high school to monitor hallways, bathrooms, playgrounds/parking lots, and other areas of the school.

Adult Education

Among adults, functional illiteracy is widespread. Many residents are not computer literate. Almost one-half of adult residents did not complete high school; over 300 residents have had no formal schooling whatsoever. Of the adults over 25 years who reported educational attainment to the Census in 2000, one-quarter had attended one or more years of college, close to one-third had received their high school diploma or GED, and approximately half reported either leaving school before graduating from high school or having had no formal schooling.

Doctorate Degrees	.2%	31
One or more years of college	24.1%	4,895
High school diploma or GED	30.3%	6,157
Left high school without graduating	35.3%	7,163
No high school	8.4%	1,708
No formal schooling	1.7%	340

Expand adult education and literacy programs sites and slots from the current 50 slots to a minimum of 2,000 slots (in annual increments of 500 slots) at existing and new/planned facilities. Establish goals, measurable objectives, accountability mechanisms for adult education programs. Request expansion and upgrade proposals from existing adult education providers. Establish partnerships with local colleges and universities, especially Historic Black Colleges and Universities, such as Coppin, Morgan, and Sojourner Douglass.

Community of Learners

Establish collaborative/coalition of education providers: Head Start, Public schools, Charter schools, Parochial schools, Literacy and adult education programs, and After school and tutoring programs. Establish a Park Heights college scholarship fund.

Early Education

Expand Head Start sites and slots from the current 250 slots to a minimum of 1,000 slots (in annual increments of 250 slots) at existing and new/planned facilities. Request expansion and upgrade proposals from existing and new Head Start providers.

After School Activities

Expand after school sites and slots from the current 150 slots to a minimum of 2,000 slots (in annual increments of 500 slots) at existing and new/planned facilities. Establish goals, measurable objectives, accountability mechanisms for after school programs. Request expansion and upgrade proposals from existing and new after school providers.

Library

Open a northwest anchor library in Park Heights that provides internet access, computer trainings, literacy classes, etc. Make regular visits throughout the community with the library's bookmobile.

Family Intervention

Use schools as portal to families to identify and refer needy and high risk families, and utilize public school buildings for extended day/ evening activities. Programs for youth, parents, residents, and non-profit organizations can take place in schools from 4-10pm on school days as well as during the summer and weekends. Locate a family support center "hub" in select schools, which might include: WIC centers, soup kitchens, food pantries, clothing give-a-ways, DSS, Officer Friendly outpost, energy emergency assistance, emergency rental assistance, eligibility screening and enrollment assistance related to public assistance programs, crisis intervention, and social service referrals. etc. Provide health and other education to those in reception and waiting areas via pamphlets and educational videos. Provide family support services that require parental involvement in schools, and are time-limited to encourage independence and self-sustainability.

Safety

Despite both routine and targeted law enforcement activities, incidents of violence and property crime occur with staggering frequency in Park Heights. Many residents are verbally and physically threatened by drug dealers along main commercial corridors as well as on side streets tucked away throughout the many residential neighborhoods.

Residents do not feel safe in their community. Some residents, especially elders, do not leave their homes after dusk. Some parents do not allow their children to play outdoors, even during daylight hours. Children at the middle and high school levels feel unsafe inside of school buildings, which is no wonder because school suspension rates for violent offenses are very high. Law-abiding business owners suffer continual financial losses due to theft and loitering that scares away potential customers. Some business owners collude with drug dealers and prostitutes by allowing illegal activities to take place covertly inside of their stores. Homes are not immune to the violence. Child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence rates are disproportionately high.

The violent crime rate in Park Heights is 14% higher than the citywide rate. In parts of Park Heights, particularly the southern portion of the neighborhood, the violent crime rate is even higher - one and a half times the citywide rate. Similarly, in parts of Park Heights the aggravated assault rate is almost twice the citywide rate. The juvenile arrest rate in portions of Park Heights is up to 56% higher than the citywide juvenile arrest rate. Well over one-third of juvenile arrests resulted from drug-related offenses, and close to one-tenth resulted from violent offenses. Seventy-five percent of juvenile arrests are juveniles who have had at least one prior offense.

Police

Police patrol deployment patterns show a discrepancy between the need for law enforcement and the capacity of the police. The Northwestern District responds to 12.4% of the city's violent crime but is staffed by only 9.3% of the city's patrol officers. The number of Northwest District patrol officers routinely assigned to the Park Heights community should be increased from the current six (6) officers to a minimum of twenty (20) officers for a period of at least six months. Similarly, the number of Northern District patrol officers routinely assigned to the Park Heights community should be expanded from the current two (2) officers to a minimum of eight (8) officers for a period of at least six months. Besides a lack of manpower in the district, patrol officers complain of time lost due to calls for back-up. The feasibility of increasing all patrol cars from one officer to two officers should be explored.

While two person patrol cars would be a big help, police in patrol cars are still reacting to crimes after the fact. Foot patrols, especially in heavily travelled areas, would help provide a deterrent from crime as well as help the police connect with residents and be more responsive to crimes that are in progress. The only foot patrols in Park Heights are in the West Belvedere/Park Heights Avenue commercial district (one officer) and the Oswego Mall Apartments from 12 midnight until 8:00 a.m. (two officers). Increase the total of foot patrol officers from both Northwest and Northern Police Districts from the current total of three officers (3) to a minimum of ten officers (10) in teams of two assigned to multiple targeted residential as well as commercial areas throughout the community. Another way to make police more accessible and integrated into the community is through mini-substations. Establish a minimum of two (2) mini sub-police stations in Park Heights to conduct crime prevention, crime intervention, community outreach and education, and data reporting.

In addition to responding to calls for service, police should pro-actively work to make the community safer by working to shut down businesses that provide sanctuary for drug sales or use and/or for selling illicit drug-related paraphernalia and enforcing traffic laws, such as speeding, running red lights/stop signs, improper parking, unregistered vehicles, dirt bikes illegally driven on the street, commercial vehicle restrictions, etc.

Last, but certainly not least, provide police with additional training about how to build trust, work with residents, use restraint tactics, etc.

Community

The responsibility for public safety is not just the responsibility of the police. The community can be a partner in preventing and fighting crime. Train residents about their role in fighting crime, how to report crime, citizen rights, witness protection, etc. Conduct community education in collaboration with neighborhood associations and churches on citizens' role in crime prevention and intervention. Initiate ride-a-long opportunities for residents with patrol officers. Initiate collaborative programs where police and residents work together to increase the support of police statements and evidence, and residents' testimony in court.

Host monthly resident/police forums to elicit resident and police concerns, brainstorm solutions together, and get to know one another. Institute regular communication mechanisms between law enforcement, service providers and residents about crises, trends, and intervention opportunities. Create police/youth task force to identify and address youth-related concerns. Re-initiate the Officer Friendly program throughout the community (targeting children, youth, adults and elders).

Explore, implement and expand use of successful civilian models for improving public safety, such as Guardian Angels, National Guard, C-SAFE, and Citizens on Patrol throughout all 12 neighborhoods. Plan and implement actions in collaboration with police.

Issue an RFP (Request For Proposal) for establishment of a domestic violence shelter and support services in a location that is both safe and convenient to Park Heights.

Ex-Offenders

The impact that incarceration, and particularly drug offenses, have on individuals go well beyond the prison term. Anyone who is arrested for a drug offense, even if the arrest does not result in a conviction, is barred from public housing. This causes an immediate housing challenge, both for the individual in question as well as the ability of that individual to live with or reunite with his (or her) family. Further, studies show that one-third of ex-offenders have a health concern that requires, treatment, ranging from vision or hearing impairment to HIV disease. However, ex-offenders are unlikely to be able to afford health insurance and rarely qualify for public assistance according to increasingly stringent welfare reform criteria. In addition, ex-offenders encounter serious barriers to employment. Studies show that "having been in jail is the single most important deterrent to employment" over both the short and long terms. Again, unemployment burdens the individual, but also negatively impacts the individual's children and other family members. Given the tightening of drug laws, more and more ex-offenders are ex-felons. More and more convictions are also leading to longer sentences, and what were legitimate job skills upon entry into prison may no longer have relevance once a person is released.

Link residents and returning inmates to the ReEntry Center located in Mondawmin Mall. Link youth and returning juvenile delinquents to the City's Youth Opportunities Center. These centers are one stop centers that can provide the services and referrals mentioned above, in addition to other services specifically targeted to ex-offenders. As part of their services, the centers provide housing referrals, but limited housing options are available in Park Heights that will promote a clean lifestyle. Transitional housing that specifically meets the needs of ex-offenders should be developed in Park Heights.

Upgrade the capacity of parole/probation enforcement to enable regular contact, reasonable caseloads (e.g., no more than 50 ex-offenders per 1 staff), support groups, and restitution/victim mediation programs. Develop specialized intensive parole/probation approach for repeat violent offenders, and mandate reasonable caseloads for intensive services, e.g., no more than 15 ex-offenders per 1 staff.

Expand activities that foster non-criminal lifestyles and reduce recidivism. Develop youth development and mentoring programs for youth who have been released from the Department of Juvenile Justice to reduce recidivism (especially among violent and drug-related offenders), including access to quality education, comprehensive job readiness and skills training, and living wage employment.

Develop a community-based residential lockdown facility for Park Heights juvenile violent offenders, particularly those youth currently incarcerated at the Hickey School who will be temporarily sent out-of-state. Consider re-opening Police Athletic League/PAL Centers, especially for younger non-offending youth, ages 8 to 14, to create positive relationships with police.

Sanitation

Park Heights' residents utilize the City's 311 phone-in service to register complaints or concerns about sanitation in Park Heights, primarily for dirty alleys, dirty streets and general trash. The most common complaint is dirty alleys, including trash due to illegal dumping, which receives an average of 1-2 calls per day. 311 receives approximately 4 calls a day about sanitation problems in Park Heights.

In addition to better vigilance on the part of City crews, there are a number of community based solutions to address these ongoing sanitation problems.

- ·Continue the efforts of the Park Heights Sanitation committee.
- ·Continue to organize community clean-ups through neighborhood associations, block parties, Mayor's Clean Sweep, etc.
- ·Educate community residents on a variety of topics:
  - ·City services and mandates.
  - ·Burden of uncontrolled trash and littering.
  - ·Burdened of uncontrolled pets.
  - ·Health risks and hazards of uncontrolled trash.
  - ·Environmental risks and hazards of uncontrolled trash.
  - ·Proper trash storage and disposal, including recycling.
  - ·Proper toxic waste disposal.
- ·Launch a "Rat Rub-Out" program.
- ·Launch a "Clean and Green" program. Increase planting of trees along vacant lots to discourage and prevent illegal dumping (see Housing Recommendations).
- ·Create a Park Heights Volunteer Beautification Corps" to conduct regular sanitation efforts.

Summary of Recommendations

Park Heights Community Development Corporation

Create a Park Heights-based community development corporation (CDC) with the capacity to:

- Effectively manage the components of the Park Heights Master Plan related to housing, economic development, and human services.
- Serve as a positive and effective bridge and communication link between and among community residents, elected officials, other stakeholders, investors, and the City.
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation of all implementation activities.

Community Leadership and Mobilization

Strong, committed, and organized community leadership is a fundamental requirement for the successful revitalization of Park Heights. Such leadership and organization will enable residents to contribute effectively and strategically to the revitalization of the Park Heights community. Conduct community organizing activities to develop functional representation within all areas of Park Heights.

- Create a representative Residents' Council. Council should have broad geographic, age, gender, etc representation.
- Provide training in a range of subject areas, including community organizing, leadership development, computer and other technology skills, media relations, public speaking, citizen rights, electoral process, economic development, and so on.
- Establish a user-friendly community-wide communication mechanism to notify residents about meetings, future events, crisis alerts, public safety notices, existing services, etc.
- Plan and implement a series of neighborhood-level and community-wide actions to mobilize the community that rely on a coordinated and collaborative effort on the part of residents and leaders from all sub-neighborhoods.

Housing

Pursue National Register designation for Park Circle Historic District and individual historic buildings.

In areas with low vacancy, stabilize and improve market conditions through home improvement incentives and public infrastructure improvements.

In areas with limited, concentrated vacancy, pursue clusters of redevelopment (renovation, new construction, demolition, side yards, etc.).

In area with widespread, concentrated vacancy, assemble land for major redevelopment (700-800 new units).

Create maintenance and design standards for existing homes and new construction.

Prior to redevelopment, vacant land should be kept clean and serve as a neighborhood asset with grass and trees.

Commercial

Create the market dynamics and site to attract a grocery store.

Concentrate commercial activity in commercial areas. Limit commercial activity in non-commercial areas.

Enhance Neighborhood Centers at Cold Spring and Belvedere as pedestrian friendly, mixed use commercial centers.

Improve the appearance of commercial convenience corridors.

Explore the best way to support auto related businesses while eliminating the tension between auto related businesses and residential neighbors.

Institutional uses should be located on major thoroughfares, particularly in or near neighborhood centers.

Explore the best way to support the Wabash Industrial Corridor while eliminating the tension between industrial users and residential neighbors.

Pimlico

Consider four alternatives for 140 acre site: racetrack, residential community, employment center, or mixed use development

Open Space

Expand play fields at CC Jackson Recreation Center.

Consider re-use for unsafe small neighborhood open spaces.

Improve neighborhood parks according to maintenance and design standards.

Provide new open spaces, with public access, as part of new development.

Transportation

Improve streetscape along Park Heights Avenue and Reisterstown Road.

Explore improvements to Park Circle intersection.

Improve neighborhood bicycle network.

Continue high levels of public transit and make improvements to make transit safer and more user-friendly.

Maximize Transit Oriented Development opportunities at metro stations.

Health

Increase mental health slots from 300 to 2500 in annual increments of 500.

Increase substance abuse slots from 1600 to 6000 in annual increments of 900.

Increase HIV prevention and treatment slots from 1000 to 1500 in annual increments of 100.

Increase # of HIV outreach workers from 6 to 10.

Expand Healthy Start infant mortality reduction model.

Create an infant mortality home visiting rotation.

Conduct a comprehensive health education campaign.

Explore creating a storefront office to provide health care referrals and screen for public assistance eligibility.

Employment

Increase job training slots from 1000 to 5000 in annual increments of 800.

Establish a Park Heights Partnership for Jobs, administered by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, to create working partnerships between residents, employers, workforce development providers, ex-offenders, youth, day laborers, etc.

Education

Implement the recommendations of the New Facilities Solutions Plan.

Increase school safety, through increased ratio of social worker and truancy officers.

Improve parent involvement through resident/ parent council.

Increase adult education slots from 50 to 2000 in annual increments of 500.

Increase Head Start slots from 250 to 1000 in annual increments of 250.

Increase after school slots from 150 to 2000 in annual increments of 500.

Open a library in Park Heights.

Use schools as a portal to provide family intervention and support services.

Safety

Increase police officers assigned to Park Heights: Northwest from 6 to 20, Northern from 2 to 8.

Explore staffing patrol cars with two officers.

Increase officers assigned to foot patrol in Park Heights from 3 to 10.

Establish two mini-sub police stations.

Provide police additional training in community policing.

Increase community participation in public safety initiatives.

Provide support mechanisms for ex-offenders returning to the community.

Appendix A

Properties in Major Redevelopment Area (Acquisition and Relocation)

This plan does not provide the City with acquisition authority. In order to acquire property, the City would have to pursue tax sale foreclosure, Abandoned Property Quick Take, private sale, or an Urban Renewal Ordinance.

Delaware Avenue
4650 Delaware Ave
4653- 71 Delaware Ave, Odd side only
4701 - 26 Delaware Ave

Denmore Avenue
4900 -44 Denmore Ave
4956 Denmore Ave
4973 Denmore Ave
4975 Denmore Ave
4976 - 4994 Denmore Ave, Even side only

Dupont Avenue
3300 - 20 Dupont Ave
3322 Dupont Ave
3400 - 31 Dupont Ave
3433-39 Dupont Ave, Odd side only

W. Garrison Avenue
3301 -27 W Garrison Ave, Odd side only

Homer Avenue
4700-1 7 Homer Ave, Odd side only
4800 - 11 Homer Ave

Oakley Avenue
2901-31 Oakley Ave, Odd side only
3001-39 Oakley Ave, Odd side only
3101-11 Oakley Ave, Odd side only

Palmer Avenue
4800 Palmer Ave
4801 Palmer Ave
4802-20 Palmer Ave, Even side only
4821-26 Palmer Ave

Park Heights Avenue
4648-52 Park Heights Ave, Even side only
4654-85 Park Heights Ave
4700-55 Park Heights Ave
4800-47 Park Heights Ave
4900 Park Heights Ave

Pimlico Road
4654-70 Pimlico Road, Even side only
4700-36 Pimlico Road, Even side only
4806 Pimlico Road
4814-4856 Pimlico Road, Even side only

Reisterstown Road
4500-16 Reisterstown Road, Even side only
4522 Reisterstown Road
4526 Reisterstown Road
4530-34 Reisterstown Road, Even side only
4543-59 Reisterstown Road, Odd side only
4600 Reisterstown Road
4601 Reisterstown Road
4603-34 Reisterstown Road
4636 Reisterstown Road
4637 Reisterstown Road
4638 Reisterstown Road
4640 Reisterstown Road
4641 Reisterstown Road
4642 Reisterstown Road
4644 Reisterstown Road
4660 Reisterstown Road
4727-43 Reisterstown Road, Odd side only
4801-27 Reisterstown Road, Odd side only

Virginia Avenue
3140 Virginia Ave
3142 Virginia Ave
3144 Virginia Ave
3201-12 Virginia Ave
3300-34 Virginia Ave
3336-48 Virginia Ave, Even side only
3400 Virginia Ave
3401 Virginia Ave
3402 Virginia Ave
3404 -24 Virginia Ave
3426- 3438 Virginia Ave, Even side only
3440 -44 Virginia Ave
3500 Virginia Ave
3502-3 8 Virginia Ave
3540 Virginia Ave

Woodland Avenue
3000 Woodland Ave
3002-33 Woodland Ave
3035 Woodland Ave
3037 Woodland Ave
3100 Woodland Ave
3102-3129 Woodland Ave
3202-3222 Woodland Ave
3300-35 Woodland Ave
3337-51 Woodland Ave, Odd side only
3400 Woodland Ave
3401-09 Woodland Ave, Odd side only
3410 Woodland Ave
3411-19 Woodland Ave, Odd side only
3500-3522 Woodland Ave, Even side only