

NEIGHBORHOODS

DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

Baltimore's greatest assets are its people and its neighborhoods. With over 200 neighborhoods, Baltimore's future success depends on their preservation and improvement. Good urban planning, design patterns and neighborhood revitalization strategies, involving early community input, fosters choice and access to what is important to people: a mix of affordable housing, aging in place, physical locations for people to gather, connections to reliable transit, healthy foods, living wage jobs, good schools, well-maintained open space, cultural and recreational opportunities and successful commercial corridors. When the right mix of ingredients in place, neighborhoods become thriving, desirable places to live.

CURRENT STATUS

Many Baltimore neighborhoods developed prior to the proliferation of the automobile and were designed for walkability to desirable locations. Other neighborhoods were designed around major corridors and are primarily served by cars and public transportation. Some of our neighborhoods have deteriorated due to population loss and disinvestment. Infrastructure needs are great and go far beyond available funds. As public improvements and private developments are planned their benefits must be evaluated to benefit the public realm.

EQUITY INDICATORS

Neighborhoods are the root of quality of life for residents. But certain neighborhoods have been left behind. Those with the least means have the least ability to make changes when their neighborhood feels unsafe or otherwise unhealthy. Effectively addressing the problem of concentrated poverty and neighborhood distress requires expanding our portfolio of place-conscious strategies. Good planning improves neighborhood conditions while opening up access to opportunity-rich communities, and realigning development strategies to better connect low-income people and places with opportunities. The best neighborhoods are built from the community up.

STRATEGIES

1. Develop neighborhood revitalization strategies that leverage public dollars with private investment.

Action 1 – Build upon existing neighborhood strengths, leverage community and partners skills and resources, build partnerships with community members, government, financial institutions, investors, anchor institutions and the philanthropic community to develop strategies to strengthen and revitalize neighborhoods, beginning with those that are disenfranchised.

2. Increase the number of safe, clean, well-maintained indoor and outdoor public gathering places.

Action 1- Working with the community, city agencies and partners to identify areas lacking safe, well maintained gathering spaces.

Action 2 –Working with the community, determine if there existing spaces could be made safe and desirable and identify new possibilities. Look at design options for various spaces.

Action 3 – Identify strategies for improving and creating community spaces. Evaluate short and long-term options and if it can be done as part of a larger project.

3. Continue to improve quality of the built environment by reducing vacants, developing high quality infill development, renovation and new construction. As improvements move forward insure they include public realm elements that support walking, transit use and mixed-use development.

Action 1 – Continue to monitor existing liquor outlets to make sure they follow all land-use and licensing and are not operating in a nuisance manner.

Action 2 - Explore expanding historic, incentives and other renovation tax credit programs to reduce vacant buildings while maintaining neighborhood character.

Action 3 - Adopt Design and Landscape Guidelines for the Zoning Code and monitor their impact. Amend as needed to insure these requirements are leading to improvements in the public realm. This includes storefront designs, new construction and open space and landscaping required of any development.

Action 4 - Require walkability standards for new development that include sidewalks on both sides of roadways, street trees, crosswalks, roadways designed for maximum speeds of 25 miles mph and maximum block lengths in transit-served areas and areas identified for compact, mixed-use development.

4. Improve quality of life through walkability

A good neighborhood has quality housing of varying types, access to desirable locations such as good schools, relevant recreation, well-maintained open space, jobs and transit.

Action 1 - Work with communities to analyze existing walkability and transit issues and challenges and identify priorities for improvement.

Action 2 - Support community driven educational and outreach events that promote walking, recreation and alternative transportation. This could include community walks, bike to work, neighborhood based recreation or community activities in neighborhood schools and many more.

Action 3 - Work with Baltimore Development Corporation and main streets to encourage neighborhood commercial uses and other opportunities for small businesses within neighborhoods.

METRICS FOR SUCCESS

Strategy 1: Quantify the number of safe neighborhood gathering places and increase the number by 20% in 5 years.

Strategy 2: Quantify the walkability of city neighborhoods through Baltimore designed metrics and improve by 20 % in five years.

Strategy 3: