



# INSPIRE

Investing in Neighborhoods and Schools to Promote  
Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence

## Draft INSPIRE Recommendation Report Arundel Elementary and Cherry Hill Elementary-Middle School Planning Area



October 2016



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# I. Introduction

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## INSPIRE Program Background



Through the 21st Century Schools Initiative, Baltimore City Public Schools, in partnership with the Maryland Stadium Authority, Baltimore City, and the State of Maryland, will be investing nearly one billion dollars to renovate or replace schools over the next several years. New and renovated schools will help transform student opportunities and achievement, provide jobs and resources to families, and help revitalize neighborhoods.



To leverage this investment in the schools, and to enhance the connection between the schools and the surrounding neighborhoods, the Department of Planning launched a new program called INSPIRE. INSPIRE stands for Investing in Neighborhoods and Schools to Promote Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence. This planning program focuses on the neighborhoods immediately surrounding each of the modernized schools that are part of the 21st Century program, specifically the quarter-mile surrounding each school.



Focusing on a limited geographic area will allow plans to include recommendations for specific, implementable public investments to the surrounding neighborhood, improving the environment and quality of life for students, their families, and neighborhood residents. The plans will also articulate the community's long-term vision for guiding private investment, and address environmental, social, and economic conditions.



**Contact Brent Flickinger, Southern District Planner/INSPIRE Planner, with feedback to this Draft Recommendation Report. (410) 396-5936 or [brenton.flickinger@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:brenton.flickinger@baltimorecity.gov).**

## **Recommendation Development and Overview**

Between February and August 2016, Department of Planning staff worked with members of the school and neighborhood communities to better understand their neighborhood experiences, concerns, and needs. Through community workshops—including sessions with middle school students, surveys, and walking tours, stakeholders have helped inform the draft recommendations presented here. Recommendations from previous plans—the Cherry Hill Master Plan from 2008, the South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan from 2015, and the Cherry Hill Vision Plan from 2016—were evaluated and included where appropriate. Workshop participants also included representatives from Harbor Hospital, Catholic Charities (which owns the Town Center shopping center), staff from the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers (ABAG), and from Blue Water Baltimore, which is working on tree planting and other environmental initiatives in Cherry Hill.

Staff from City agencies, including the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Health also participated in meetings and/or the walking tour, and worked with the Planning Department staff to address stakeholder priorities. Stakeholders, community staff, and community organization leaders helped ensure community participation in the process thus far. In addition, the Department of Planning worked with the National Resource Network (NRN) to help frame potential opportunities to work with anchor institutions in Cherry Hill. NRN also created different “future scenarios”(Cherry Hill ten years from now) for an INSPIRE workshop, in order to talk about improvements in the neighborhood anchored in the future that stakeholders would like to see. A Steering Committee of parents, residents, and other stakeholders is serving as a small advisory group to the process.

The INSPIRE plan will identify short- and long-term recommendations. Short-term recommendations, presented on page 13, are improvements that can be made by the opening day of the two schools in the Fall of 2018. Special attention is paid to physical improvements and maintenance to the perimeter of the school sites and to the primary routes leading to the school, shown on page 12. Long-term recommendations are meant to guide future investment, and further address environmental, social, and economic conditions.

### **Next Steps**

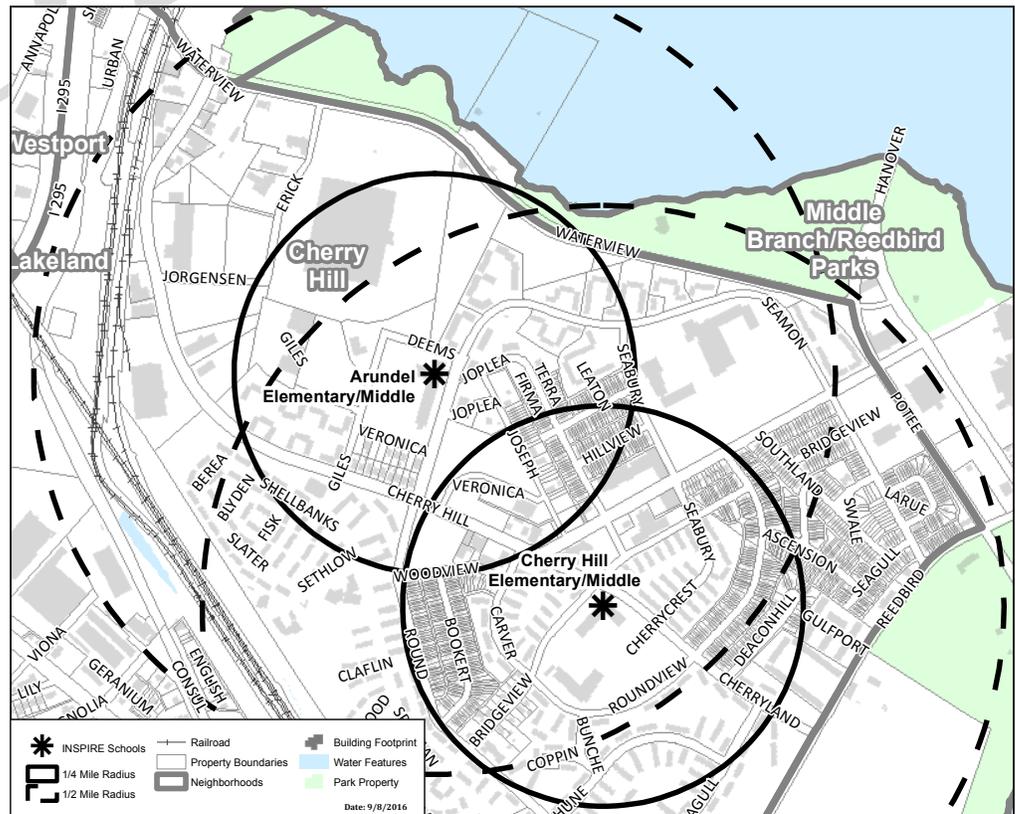
Through mid-October, Department of Planning staff will seek and incorporate additional community and agency feedback to the draft recommendations presented in

this report. We will finalize recommendations, and develop the INSPIRE plan which will include commitments from city agencies, an implementation plan, and additional information including relevant citywide initiatives, other agency efforts, and existing plans for the area. Planning staff will seek additional feedback from community stakeholders about the plan. The final plan will be presented to, and adopted by, the Planning Commission in early 2017. Department of Planning staff will work with the community to identify a “signature community project” that we can work on together right away.

DRAFT

## INSPIRE Map – Arundel and Cherry Hill Schools Planning Area

Arundel Elementary and Cherry Hill Elementary-Middle Schools are located one-half mile from each other in the Cherry Hill community. The quarter-mile INSPIRE areas around them (shown in the map below) make up the heart of Cherry Hill and the Department of Planning is producing a single INSPIRE plan for the schools. Both schools, along with Carter G. Woodson, currently serve students in pre-kindergarten through 8th grades. Once the Arundel and Cherry Hill Schools re-open as 21st Century School buildings in the 2018-2019 school year, each of the school buildings in the neighborhood will serve a different grade range. Arundel has been designated as the “early learning center” of the community and will include a Judy Center for infants through preschool, a Head Start program, and students in pre-K through second grade. The current 62,909 sq ft. building will be demolished and a new 112,259 sq ft. building will accommodate up to 636 students. The Cherry Hill building, which will educate children in grades three through eight, will retain its 1945 historic portion on Bridgeview and will gain a new addition. The school will grow from 63,853 sq ft. to 128, 275 sq ft. The new building will accommodate 932 students. This school will be adjacent to the new Middle Branch recreation/aquatic center which is on the same construction schedule. Carter G. Woodson is slated to close when the modernized Arundel and Cherry Hill buildings open in the Fall of 2018. New Era (not a part of the 21st Century program) will continue to educate high school students.



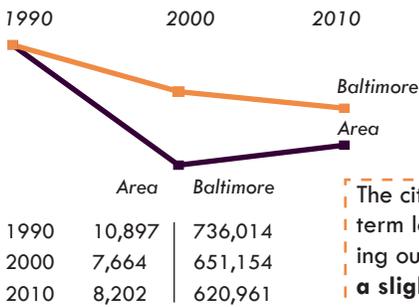


## Key Neighborhood and School Data – Arundel and Cherry Hill Schools Planning Area

The charts below depict data from the Census Tracts highlighted in this map (Census Tracts 2502.03, 2502.04, and 2502.07). Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2014 American Community Survey.

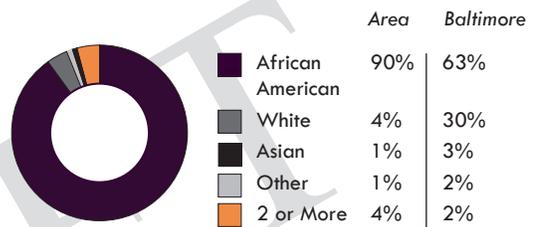
Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

### Population Change Since 1990

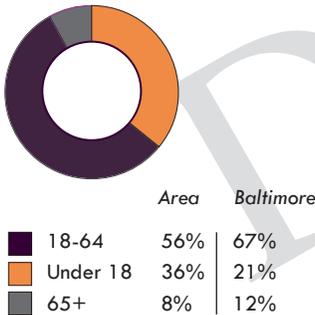


The city has sustained long-term losses that are flattening out. Cherry Hill has seen a slight increase since 2000.

### Race

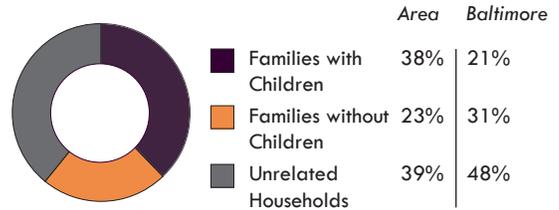


### Age

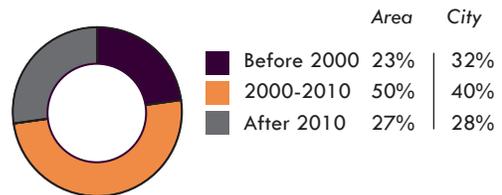


Children make up a substantially higher percentage of the Cherry Hill population than the citywide population: **36% versus 21%**. In the section of the area where public housing units are concentrated, **45% of the population is under 18**.

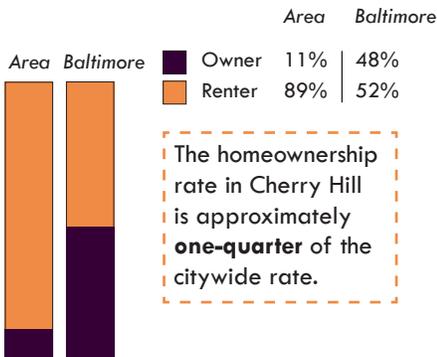
### Household Structure



### Residence Established

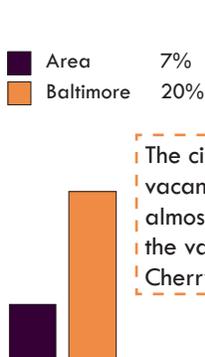


### Housing Occupancy



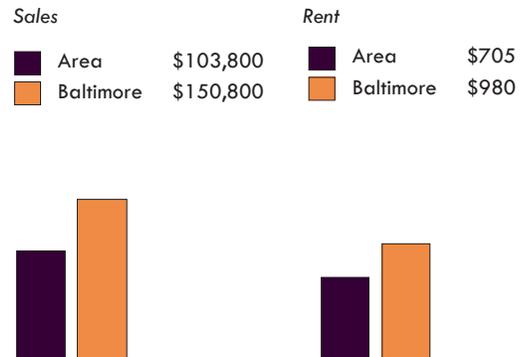
The homeownership rate in Cherry Hill is approximately **one-quarter** of the citywide rate.

### Average Vacancy Rate

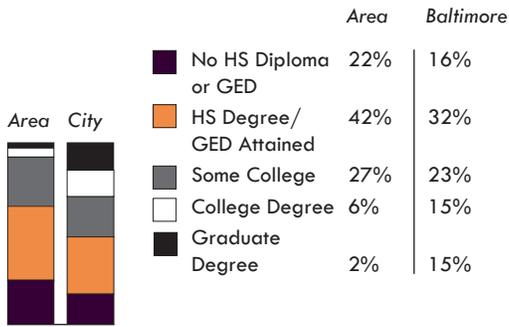


The citywide vacancy rate is almost **three times** the vacancy rate in Cherry Hill.

### Median Housing Sales and Rent



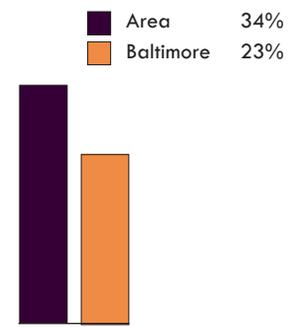
### Educational Attainment



### Unemployment Rate

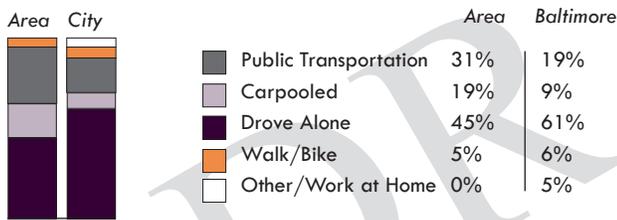


### Poverty Rate

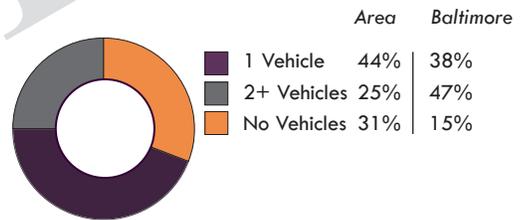


77% of area residents have earned a high school diploma or a GED - a **slightly lower rate** than residents citywide (85%). The rate of higher educational attainment in Cherry Hill is significantly lower.

### Journey to Work



### Vehicle Availability



The percentage of households in Cherry Hill without access to a car is more than **double the rate citywide**. Twice as many households in the area carpool, and 64% more households (about a third of the households) use public transportation.

### Percentage of Population Living in a Food Desert - Total and by Age Group



**Cherry Hill has one of the highest rates of people living in a food desert in the city.** Food access is a significant challenge for residents of all ages.

## II. Neighborhood Observations

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The INSPIRE plan area is located in Cherry Hill, a geographically self-contained peninsula in South Baltimore. The neighborhood is partially surrounded by the Patapsco River and railroad tracks. The neighborhood can be seen as encompassing several discrete “zones”: a residential area with a small commercial district north of Cherry Hill Road, a residential area composed of mostly public housing units, the Middle Branch Park and the properties along Waterview Avenue (Reedbird Park and Reedbird Avenue on the southern edge of the neighborhood), and a light industrial section across from the Light Rail stop. The development of nearby Port Covington, by Sagamore, offers opportunities for Cherry Hill. A partnership is forming between Sagamore and six neighborhoods in South Baltimore, including Cherry Hill. Technical assistance and funding will be directed to neighborhood initiatives, including those related to education and the schools.

### **Housing, Land Use, and Safety**

The majority of the residential area of the neighborhood is on a hill about 100 feet above the intersection of Waterview Avenue and Cherry Hill Road. The housing is generally two- and three- stories high with hilly, winding roads and open space. Residential vacancy is fairly low – just over one-third of the city’s average. While there are stable blocks made up almost entirely of homeowners, there are also over 800 private, subsidized apartment units and approximately 1,100 public housing rental units. Relatively new housing, occupied by homeowners, has been built near Potee Street, and a senior housing building sits near the Town Center, Arundel Elementary, and the Urban Garden site.

The public housing units have been constructed or updated at different times, and vary slightly in building type. Some complexes and a few buildings are four-stories tall. Some of the units at the foot of Round Road and Spelman Avenue, adjacent to the CSX railroad tracks, are very well constructed and are subject to flooding because of their position at the bottom of a hill and the poor drainage at that location.

Demolition of a large number of public housing units over the years has created several large tracts of land vacant. One portion of a four-acre site closest to the heart of Cherry Hill, and across the street from Arundel Elementary School, known as Fishers Cove, is being used for an urban garden and farm stand. The Cherry Hill Development Corporation (CHDC) envisions mixed-income housing on the site in the future.

Another large, vacant lot, located on Round Road across from the regional recreation center that is being constructed is also being considered for new housing. Two other sites on Reedbird Avenue may be appropriate for mixed-use development.

A Light Rail stop and Middle Branch Park, at the bottom of the hill on Cherry Hill Road, abut a major tract of land that is currently primarily zoned industrial. This area is envisioned as a future transit-oriented development site. Over 30 acres of this land along Waterview Avenue is owned by Continental Realty.

Flooding has been a major issue for years along Spelman Avenue and Round Road, and the roadbed along this stretch of Spelman has deteriorated. An upgrade to a major storm water pipe that empties along Patapsco Avenue, planned for fiscal year 2018, will relieve much of the flooding. In addition, Blue Water Baltimore's Deep Blue program is focused on additional storm water mitigation and tree plantings.

Safety – both crime- and pedestrian-related – is a concern for residents. Although there has been a history of violent crime and gang activity in the community, a number of gang members recently were indicted or sent to prison, and shootings are now rare. The Safe Streets program has also made a big contribution to the decrease in violent crime in the last two years.

### **Education Strategy**

The Cherry Hill Community Coalition (CHCC) and Cherry Hill Education Committee (CHEC) affiliated with Cherry Hill Trust have a strategy to develop a “cradle to careers” school continuum within the neighborhood. The Baltimore Public School System (BCPSS) has designated Arundel Elementary as the “early learning center of the community.” At the high school level, the CHEC is in conversations with the Port Alliance (an alliance of major businesses at the Port), BCPSS, and Baltimore City Community College about career path training for jobs in the transportation sector. This jobs sector may be a popular career choice for existing or new Cherry Hill residents due to the neighborhood's proximity to the Port, the airport, and major highways. As the education strategy advances, it may be possible for children in Cherry Hill to begin school as infants and take courses up to the community college level all within walking distance from home.

### **Recreation and Open Space**

Cherry Hill is well-served by both indoor and outdoor recreation spaces. The new recreation center will be a regional aquatic center adjacent to Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School in the heart of the neighborhood and just one mile from the Light Rail station. Middle Branch Park is a significant amenity on the edge of Cherry Hill that provides access to water-based recreation on the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River. Currently, the Baltimore Rowing Club serves residents and school programs

throughout the region. Plans are being considered to designate part of the trail along the Middle Branch adjacent to Cherry Hill as a trail to celebrate the voyage of John Smith. There is a considerable grade difference between the heart of the neighborhood and Cherry Hill Road leading to the park. Middle Branch Park is underutilized by neighborhood and Baltimore residents. Providing easier access to the park from the residential portion of the neighborhood is a priority for community leaders.

Cherry Hill Homes, a public housing complex, has several play areas. Residents report that it would be desirable to upgrade equipment at some of these sites.

### **Transportation**

Although Cherry Hill is somewhat physically isolated, major roads connecting South Baltimore with downtown and major interstate highways run along the edges of the neighborhood (Waterview Avenue, Patapsco Avenue, Hanover Street, and Potee Street). Interstate 95 and MD 295 are easily accessible. Hanover Street intersects with I-895 in nearby Brooklyn and becomes Ritchie Highway to the south in Anne Arundel County where major shopping areas exist. Cherry Hill Road bisects the neighborhood, and connects Arundel and Cherry Hill Schools. In addition to serving local traffic, it is also a through-street from Potee and Hanover to Waterview Avenue and MD 295. This often results in unsafe, high speed traffic which must be addressed. This is compounded by students and other residents not using designated intersections to cross Cherry Hill Road.

Cherry Hill is a walkable neighborhood, and many residents do not have access to a vehicle. Once the 21st century school building re-opens, families may have children in two or three different schools in the neighborhood, and providing safe crossings across Cherry Hill Road will become even more of a priority than it is now.

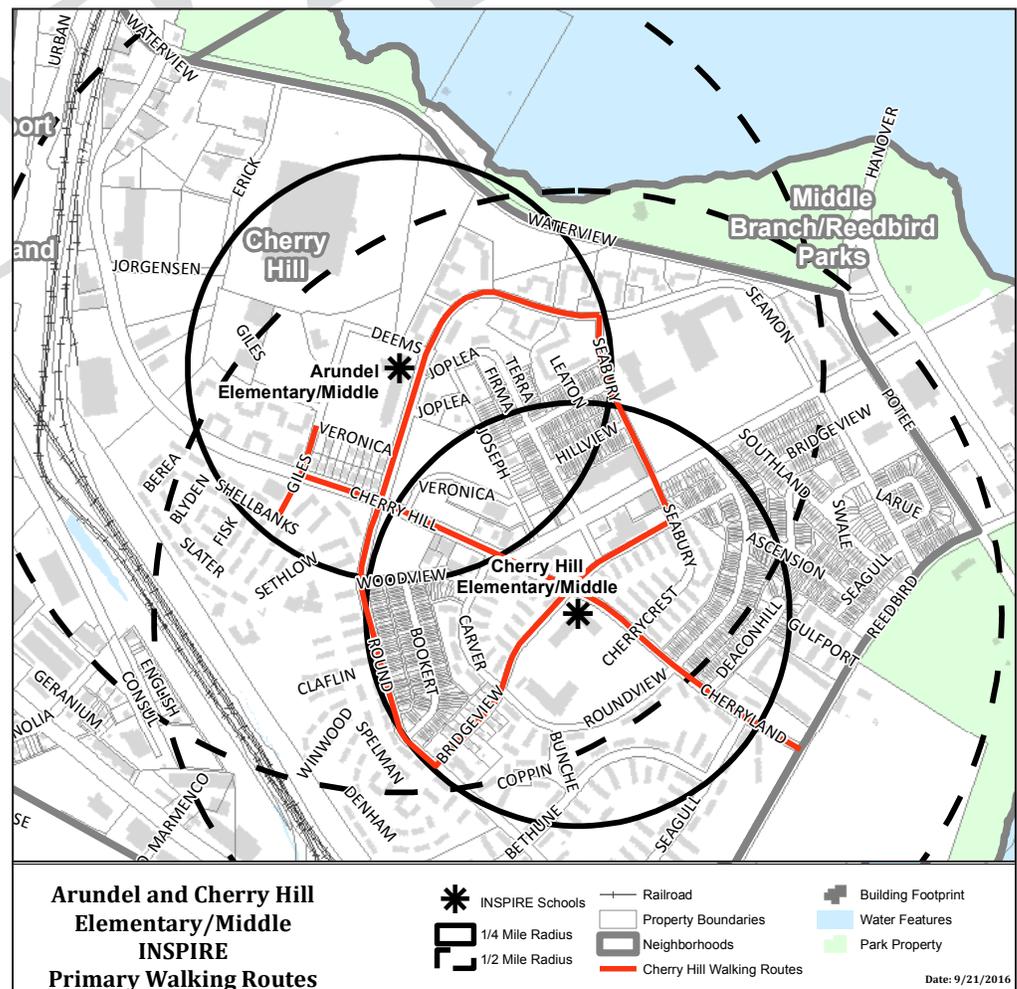
The Cherry Hill Light Rail stop provides convenient access to downtown. Its location at the bottom of the hill near Middle Branch Park, however, is inconvenient for many residents living a considerable distance away. Some of these individuals find it more convenient to make a dangerous crossing over the CSX railroad tracks near Spelman Avenue and Round Road to access the Patapsco Light Rail stop in Baltimore County or shops on Patapsco Avenue.

# III. Preparing for Opening Day of the Modernized School

According to SY2015-2016 data, approximately 90 percent of students attending Cherry Hill and Arundel schools live in the neighborhood. The high school draws from a larger area. Through the INSPIRE process, Baltimore City agencies are evaluating the perimeter of the school sites and primary routes leading to the schools, and will make physical improvements along these routes by opening day of the modernized buildings, making travel to and from the school safer and more comfortable for students, families, and community members.

## School Perimeter and Primary Routes to School

The map below identifies the primary routes leading to the schools. These routes were identified as Cherry Hill, Round, Giles and Cherryland Roads, Bridgeview and Seabury Avenues.



## City Improvements to be Completed by Opening Day

The departments of Transportation, Housing and Community Development, Public Works, and Recreation and Parks will assess the school perimeter and primary routes, shown on page 12, and with the Department of Planning will develop an implementation plan to address the following:



- Trash and dumping
- Open and accessible vacant houses
- Market- and owner-sensitive code enforcement and nuisance abatement interventions
- Street tree health and density
- Safe Routes to School
- Sidewalk maintenance
- Street resurfacing and re-striping
- ADA ramps at intersections
- Safe lighting levels
- Intersection improvement
- Speeding
- Pedestrian countdown clocks/traffic signals
- Crosswalks
- Crossing guards
- School signage and beacons

**The recommendations presented in the remainder of this report are in addition to those that address the issues listed above.**

# IV. Stakeholder Priorities and Draft Recommendations

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## Assets and Priorities

Through community workshops and surveys, residents provided input that informed the draft recommendations included in this report. Input included identifying assets and priorities, as listed below. Additional community input can be found in the Arundel and Cherry Hill Workshop Notes, posted on the INSPIRE page of the Department of Planning website.

### Assets

Defined neighborhood borders – a “city-within-a-city”	Active community and faith-based organizations
Strong family and community ties	Low rate of housing vacancy
Town Center with resources such as a library and health center	Health care facilities – Medstar Harbor Hospital and family health center
Recreation center and swimming pools	Walkable neighborhood
Middle Branch Park	Waterfront
Police station	Rowing Club

### Priorities

Locate affordable and accessible grocery store/food market in or near Cherry Hill	Reduce speed of traffic near the schools
Improve public transportation and prevent reduction of services	Make walking routes between schools safe for children
Improve public housing units – safer, cleaner	Increase affordable housing opportunities – allowing people to move from public housing
Expand business development, incubation and jobs	Increase retail along Reedbird Road
Provide more recreational opportunities for children and families	Help families flourish and prepare children for success in school
Move the methadone clinic away from its location near Arundel Elementary	Improve safety around the light rail station
Change public perceptions about the neighborhood	Provide support to expand homeownership

## **Draft Recommendations**

The recommendations presented in the remainder of this report are in addition to those that address the issues along the school perimeter and primary routes listed on page 13.

Recommendations presented in this section have been developed by the Department of Planning and informed by community workshops, surveys, and walking tours. These recommendations are presented as activities that align with broader themes and goals (listed below). Many recommendations described can achieve multiple goals. Stakeholders in the Arundel and Cherry Hill Schools Planning area are already undertaking activities that address the themes.

The Department of Planning is seeking community feedback about these themes, goals, and recommendations.

### **Investing in Housing and Market-Strengthening Development Opportunities**

- Increase Quality Housing Options
- Promote Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities
- Remove Uses that Create Unsafe Environments for Students
- Improve Safety Near Light Rail and along CSX Tracks

### **Creating Connectivity and Access**

- Improve Walking and Access and Safety in the Neighborhood
- Improve Street Infrastructure
- Increase and Improve Public Transportation

### **Creating Opportunities for Health and Well-being**

- Enhance the Healthy Food Environment
- Improve Recreational Opportunities
- Improve Community Cohesion

### **Improving Sanitation**

- Use Code Enforcement to Improve Appearance and Safety

### **Creating an Environmentally- Sustainable Neighborhood**

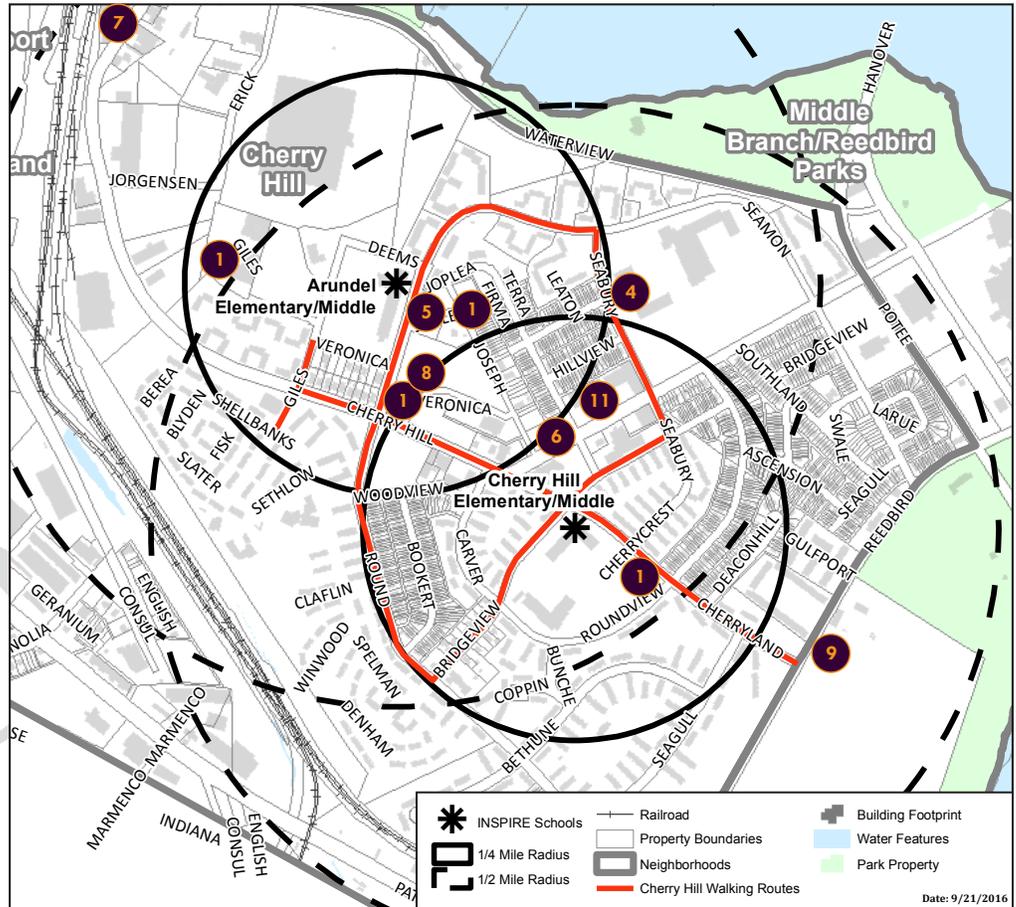
- Create a Clean and Green Neighborhood

### **Community-led Recommendations**

- Strengthen the Connection among Residents, the Retail and Community Facilities, and Community-Based Organizations
- Expand Recreational Programming
- Expand Employment Opportunities and Workforce Development
- Address Education/School/Family and Student Needs
- Market Cherry Hill

# INVESTING IN HOUSING AND MARKET-STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*Diversify housing stock, and owner and rental options*



## **Increase Quality Housing Options**



### **1. Develop a range of mixed-income housing for rent and for ownership.**

The large number of publicly-subsidized and private affordable rental units in Cherry Hill meets an important need, and residents want to preserve housing affordability in the neighborhood. There is interest also in introducing housing options for households earning a range of incomes, both for rent and ownership. For people currently living in Cherry Hill who want to move into a market-rate rental or to become a homeowner, there is currently little opportunity; there is also little inventory to draw people into the neighborhood from other areas. Multiple housing models and ownership structures should be considered, including a community land trust to preserve affordability in some of the vacant scattered-site houses. Although there is a limited amount of vacant land in the residential section of the neighborhood, there are tracts of land in the industrial area and along the waterfront. A few larger sites in the residential area can accommodate new infill housing, including the following:

- Properties in the 2800-2900 blocks of Joseph Avenue and Joplea Road
- 820 Cherry Hill Road (HABC, Fisher's Cove)
- 2490 Giles Road (currently the methadone clinic behind Arundel)
- 800-block of Roundview Road (vacant HABC site across from the new recreation center)

### **2. Improve the quality of public housing and the living situation for public housing residents.**

The quality and design of the public housing in Cherry Hill has a significant impact on public housing residents and residents in the neighborhood. Community leaders would like to see significant rehabilitation and redevelopment of these units. This could include utilizing programs such as HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to improve existing units. There is also strong interest from community leaders in redevelopment of vacant, public housing sites to include a mix of incomes and high-quality affordable housing units that could serve neighborhood residents.



### **3. Promote homeownership assistance programs to help current and new owners maintain and improve their homes.**

Explore philanthropic or publicly-funded programs to help renters who want to become homeowners and assist low-income or elderly homeowners with critical repairs.

## **Promote Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities**



### **4. Continue to explore reuse of Carter G. Woodson school building.**

The Carter G. Woodson Elementary-Middle School is currently slated to close, after which the site will undergo a process to “surplus” the building so that it can be reused in a productive way. Initial conversations have included providing transportation-related or other career training in the building, although further community visioning is needed.



### **5. Explore redevelopment opportunities with the owner of the vacant land directly across Round Road from Arundel as well as maintenance of the site prior to any new development project.**

The reuse of this site – 2800 Joplea Avenue – located across the street from Arundel Elementary, can have a positive impact on the school. Until the site is redeveloped, it should be well-maintained.



### **6. Explore opportunities to redevelop the former BGE site and other properties near the Town Center for new businesses.**

The Town Center on Cherry Hill Road serves as the primary retail and service area in the community. It is also a central gathering place. While this site may not be able to accommodate all of the residents’ desires – such as a bank, clothing store, movie theater, post office, and restaurants – residents are interested in seeing the Town Center area grow into a true community hub. The properties in the 700-block of Cherry Hill Road from Terra Firma to the site of the former BGE substation on the northwest corner of Cherry Hill Road and Joseph Avenue adjacent to the Town Center is one area that could be redeveloped for pop-up and permanent businesses.

### **7. Work with property owners to identify and pursue transit-oriented development opportunities adjacent to the Light Rail station on Cherry Hill Road.**

As highlighted in the South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan and Transform Baltimore, vacant or underutilized properties in close proximity to the Light Rail station should be prioritized for mixed-use transit-oriented development. Developing a major project on these underutilized parcels, potentially including a supermarket or pharmacy, makes use of valuable land near public transit and could draw a critical mass of people from the larger geographic area.



### **8. Continue to evaluate short-term use and long-term redevelopment of Fisher’s Cove site.**

This HABC site at the corner of Round Road and Cherry Hill Road covers more than four acres of mostly vacant land. Although the site – across the street from Arundel Elementary – offers many possibilities for redevelopment, a recent study indicated that large subsidies would be required in order to support developing new mixed-

income housing. The Cherry Hill Development Corporation is exploring options for reuse of the site. Currently, the Cherry Hill Urban Garden, which has grown vegetables for several years for sale to Cherry Hill residents and through the Farm Alliance, operates on a portion of this property as an interim use until new investment takes place.



**9. Determine best uses for vacant HABC properties along Reedbird Avenue.**

These vacant HABC properties, across from a former incinerator and landfill, are likely unsuitable for redevelopment as housing. However, with easy access to Potee and Hanover Streets and Harbor Hospital, offices or businesses may be suitable uses.

**10. Develop space for retail incubators.**

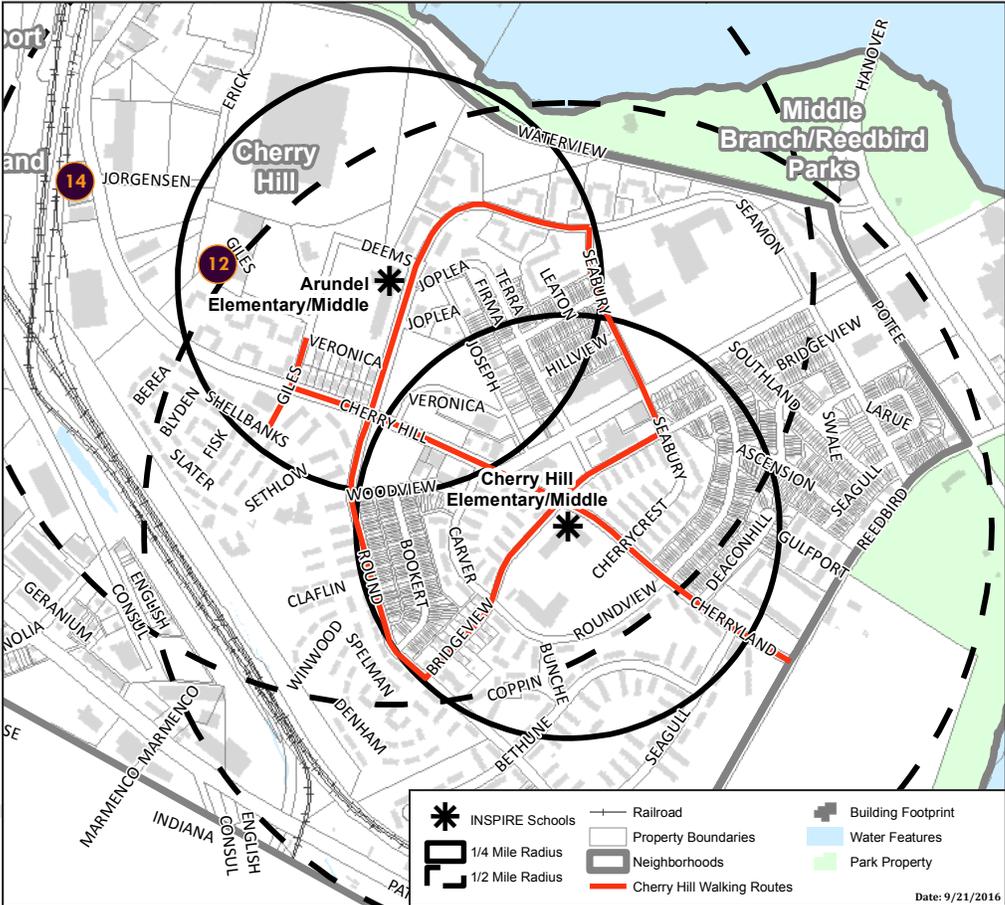
Incubator spaces of all kinds are popping up throughout Baltimore, from City Garage to Open Works and the Food Hub. Incubator spaces in Cherry Hill would be intended to target people living in Cherry Hill who have business ideas but need a place to test them out.

**11. Promote improvements to the exterior façade and design of the Town Center.**

Catholic Charities, the owners of the site, and Baltimore Development Corporation are having ongoing discussions about ways to upgrade the Town Center.

# IMPROVING SAFETY

Create a positive and safe environment for current and future residents.



## **Remove Uses that Create Unsafe Environments for Students**

### **12. Relocate the methadone clinic on Giles Road.**

A methadone clinic, housed in property owned by the City of Baltimore, is located behind Arundel Elementary, creating a situation of incompatible uses. Relocating the clinic to a more appropriate location, when the lease expires in 2017, will create a safer environment for the children and one that is more hospitable for the clients. Ideally, such an outpatient clinic would be operated in partnership with the inpatient behavioral health program at Medstar Harbor Hospital.

### **13. Work with Southern Police District police to determine if there are physical improvements that can help mitigate crime hot spots near the schools.**

The INSPIRE area is located in the Southern Police District, and the substation is located at Potee and Cherry Hill Road. There are a number of issues in the INSPIRE area that must be addressed in order to make the neighborhood safe for children, residents, and visitors.

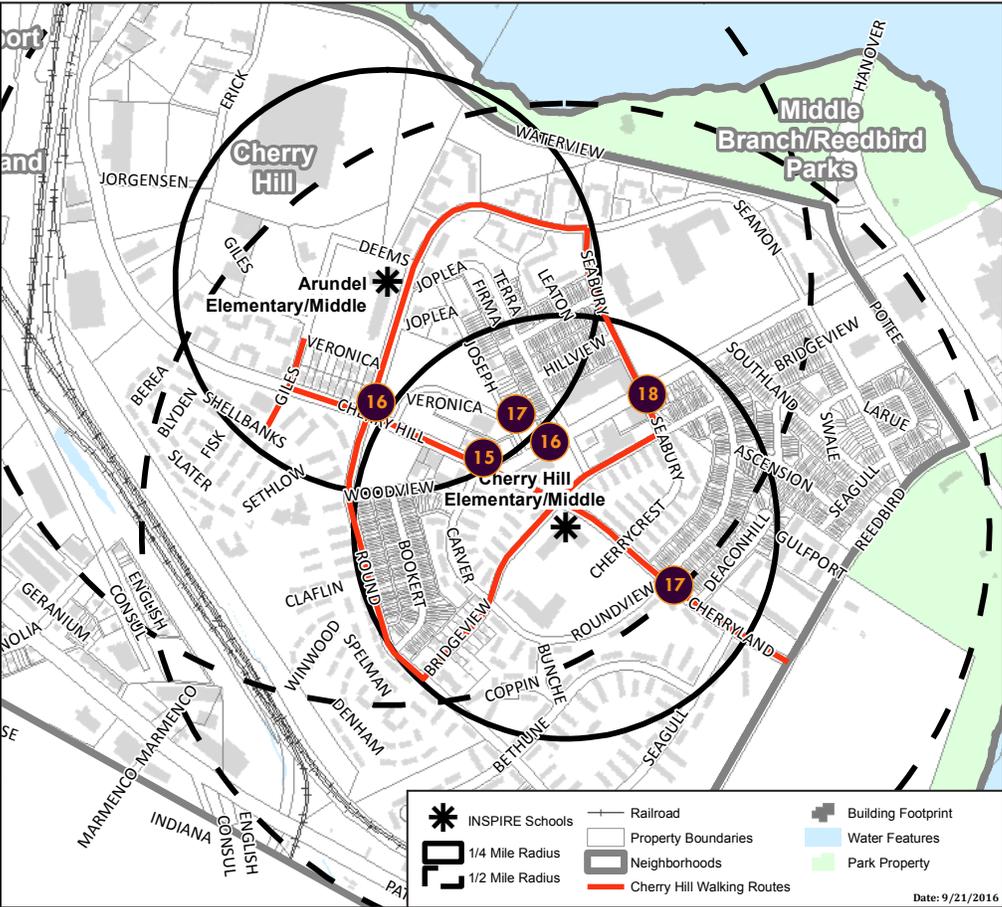
## **Improve Safety Near Light Rail and along CSX Tracks**

### **14. Improve lighting and security around the Light Rail tunnel and deter drug activity.**

Many residents discussed feeling unsafe around the light rail tunnel on Cherry Hill Road. DOT is developing designs to upgrade the station and make it safer. Improvements will be made with federal funds that DOT has received.

# CREATING CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS

Improve connections throughout the neighborhood and between Cherry Hill and the rest of the city.



## **Improve Walking Access and Safety in the Neighborhood**

### **15. Work with DOT to make the intersection at Cherry Hill and Cherryland safer.**

The community has identified the intersection at Cherry Hill and Cherryland as one that is unsafe due to the configuration of the streets and the traffic signal. DOT should explore options to make this safer.

### **16. Slow traffic on Cherry Hill Road between Giles and Seabury Roads.**

Cars turning onto Cherry Hill Road – from Potee and Hanover at one end and Waterview at the other – often speed up the hill, leading past the schools and the Town Center. Students and residents report high speed traffic as a critical safety issue. Mechanisms to reduce speed, such as bump outs, should be explored at the intersections approaching the schools and the Town Center.

### **17. Add missing sidewalks on well-traveled routes.**

Missing sidewalks force people to cross the road or walk in the street, where they are more likely to be hit by a vehicle. One location that should be assessed is on Cherryland between Roundview Road and Deacon Hill. Another location is at the end of Joseph Avenue where it intersects with Cherry Hill Road.



### **18. Improve the connection from Seabury Avenue to Cherry Hill Elementary-Middle School by way of Bridgeview Avenue.**

Bridgeview Avenue is one of the main, and less-trafficked, routes to Cherry Hill Elementary-Middle School. A popular path to access Bridgeview Avenue from Cherry Hill Road is through a vacant parcel adjacent to the Family Health Center (and directly across from the Town Center at Seabury Avenue). The poorly maintained lot and informal path could be transformed through grading and landscaping.

### **19. Make a safe crossing from Round Road and Spelman Avenue to Patapsco Avenue shopping area.**

The South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan presents the idea of a pedestrian bridge over the CSX tracks, linking this part of the neighborhood with the stores on Patapsco Avenue. Safer ways of accessing these businesses must be considered.



### **20. Create a walking school bus, bicycle train, or block captain sentinel program.**

With most students likely not qualifying for school bus pickup, measures should be taken to ensure safety for children during travel to and from school. Explore models and opportunities for walking school buses (a group of children walking with one or more adults), bicycle trains (a group of children biking with adults), and block captain sentinel programs. *See Appendix D for more information.*

## **Improve Street Infrastructure**

### **21. Repair streets that are in poor condition.**

The community has identified streets that are in significantly poor condition with broken paving or narrow right-of-ways. Department of Transportation should assess these and other sites for improvements:

- Seabury and Seamon
- Joseph Avenue
- Roundview Road and Cherryland
- Seagull Avenue between Round Road and Cherryland

## **Increase and Improve Public Transportation**

### **22. Improve access to public transportation.**

Cherry Hill has been described by many residents as a walkable neighborhood, which is important given that a large percentage of the population does not have access to a vehicle. Many residents rely on the Light Rail or bus to take them where they need to go. Both buses and Light Rail currently serve the neighborhood but during the State's LINK process of improving bus service, some changes are being considered. One of the changes mentioned by residents is to expand Sunday transit service to enable residents to efficiently travel to and from work seven days a week. Additionally, a shuttle service connecting the South Baltimore neighborhoods that are part of the South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan area could be established, potentially funded through a casino Local Impact Grant.



### **23. Add a Circulator route through Cherry Hill to Harbor Hospital connecting to downtown routes.**

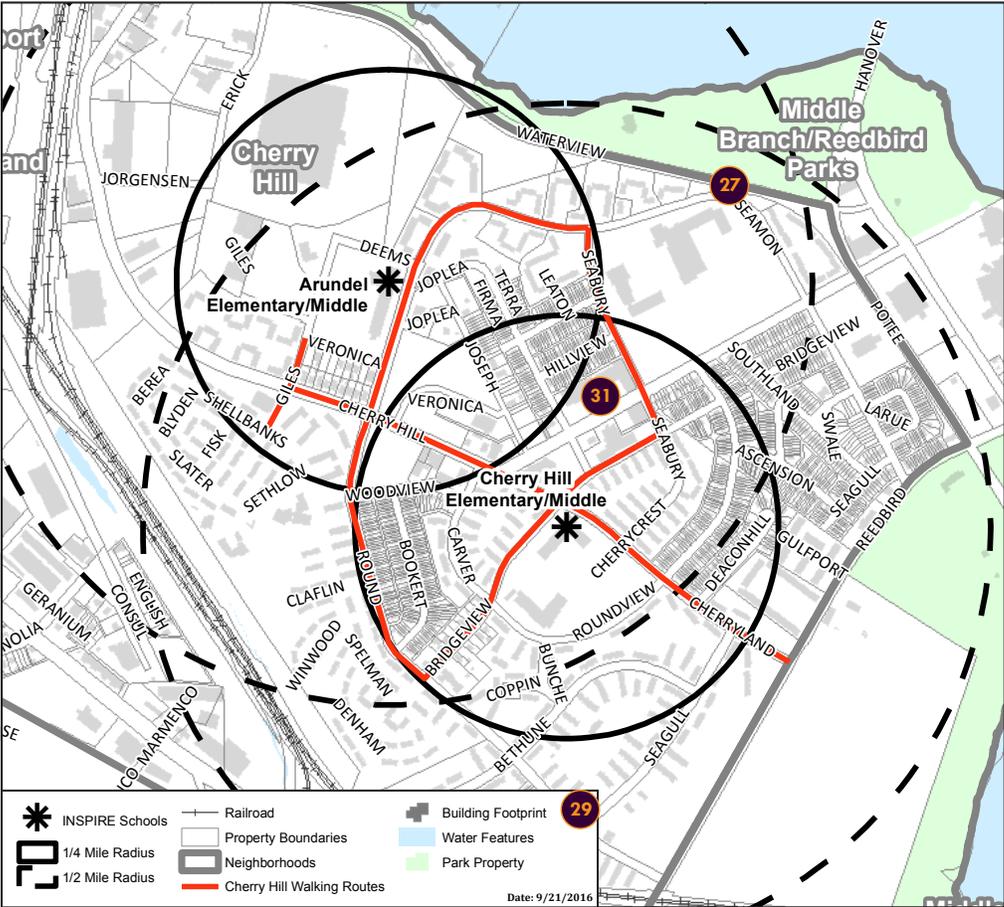
One option for a shuttle service that improves transportation connections in Cherry Hill is an expansion of the Circulator bus service. The Department of Transportation Circulator bus facility is located in the industrial park of Cherry Hill, yet the service that provides free transportation in other areas of the city does not serve residents of the neighborhood. Partnerships to create a new route linking Cherry Hill to Harbor Hospital, and then to downtown routes, should be explored.

### **24. Install more covered bus shelters.**

Residents stressed the need for additional bus shelter locations. Specific sites should be identified through the planning process and requests made to the MTA.

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Provide better access to healthy foods, expand recreational activities, and increase community cohesion.



## **Enhance the Healthy Food Environment**

### **25. Open an affordable grocery store or supermarket that is conveniently located to serve Cherry Hill.**

Accessing healthy food in Cherry Hill is a challenge for residents, and the neighborhood is considered a food desert. Although many residents used to meet their grocery needs at a Walmart in Port Covington before it closed, that was the only nearby option; even that could be a challenge for households without access to a car. Today, the nearest supermarkets are on the South Baltimore peninsula or on West Patapsco Avenue across the CSX tracks near Lakeland. In the neighborhood, the Family Dollar in the Town Center offers a very limited selection of mostly processed foods while the Virtual Supermarket meets the needs of a limited number of households. A supermarket in Cherry Hill could serve residents in other nearby neighborhoods – Mt. Winans and Westport – which are also considered food deserts.

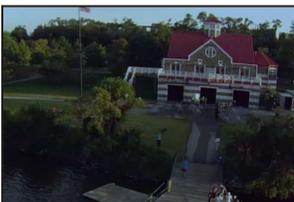


### **26 Develop and implement a comprehensive food access strategy.**

Securing affordable and healthy food access in Cherry Hill will require multiple methods. A comprehensive food access strategy should be developed by bringing together all of the organizations, businesses, and policymakers who participate in creating a healthy food environment in the neighborhood. Some of this is already taking place, although so far it has been done independently. Working together these groups should explore things such as community gardens, a mobile food market, a farmers' market, healthy fast food retail, nutrition education, and other opportunities. Specific ideas community residents have mentioned include the following:

- Expanding the hours for purchasing food from the Cherry Hill Urban Garden
- Encouraging eligible residents to use online food ordering and delivery, as provided by programs like the virtual supermarket

## **Improve Recreational Opportunities**



### **27. Improve connections to the waterfront and Middle Branch Park.**

The waterfront and the two waterfront parks in Cherry Hill could be a few of Cherry Hill's greatest recreational assets. Middle Branch Park is not easily accessible from the residential part of the neighborhood, however, and has only one, dangerous, at-grade crossing (along Seaman Avenue).



**28. Provide more formal and informal places for children to play throughout the neighborhood.**

Studies have shown that play is critical to the health and well-being of children, but many are not getting the play they need to thrive. Although there are a few formal playgrounds and recreational areas in the INSPIRE area, regular walking trips connecting the schools, recreation center, parks, playgrounds, and shopping area offer opportunities to incorporate active play and learning throughout the day. A “playability walk” with community members – especially children – can help identify locations and opportunities for playful design.



**29. Upgrade poorly-maintained playground equipment.**

Certain playgrounds in the neighborhood have, or are becoming, rundown and need to be restored. Some sites, including one in the 3400-block of Spelman, are on HABC property.



**30. Improve trails and walking paths.**

Residents have expressed interest in being able to safely exercise by walking throughout the neighborhood and its amenities. Numerous opportunities exist to meet this interest, including:

- Improving the safety of Gwynns Falls Trail walking paths
- Developing a “medical mile” walking path between Harbor Hospital and the Family Health Center.

**Improve Community Cohesion**



**31. Provide benches and public spaces at the Town Center.**

The Town Center is a central gathering space in Cherry Hill. However, there is not space for neighbors to sit and meet with each other so that the Town Center acts as a true town square. Many residents have voiced interest in benches or other publicly-designed spaces that allow for community interaction.

**32. Install plaques to showcase local leaders and success stories.**

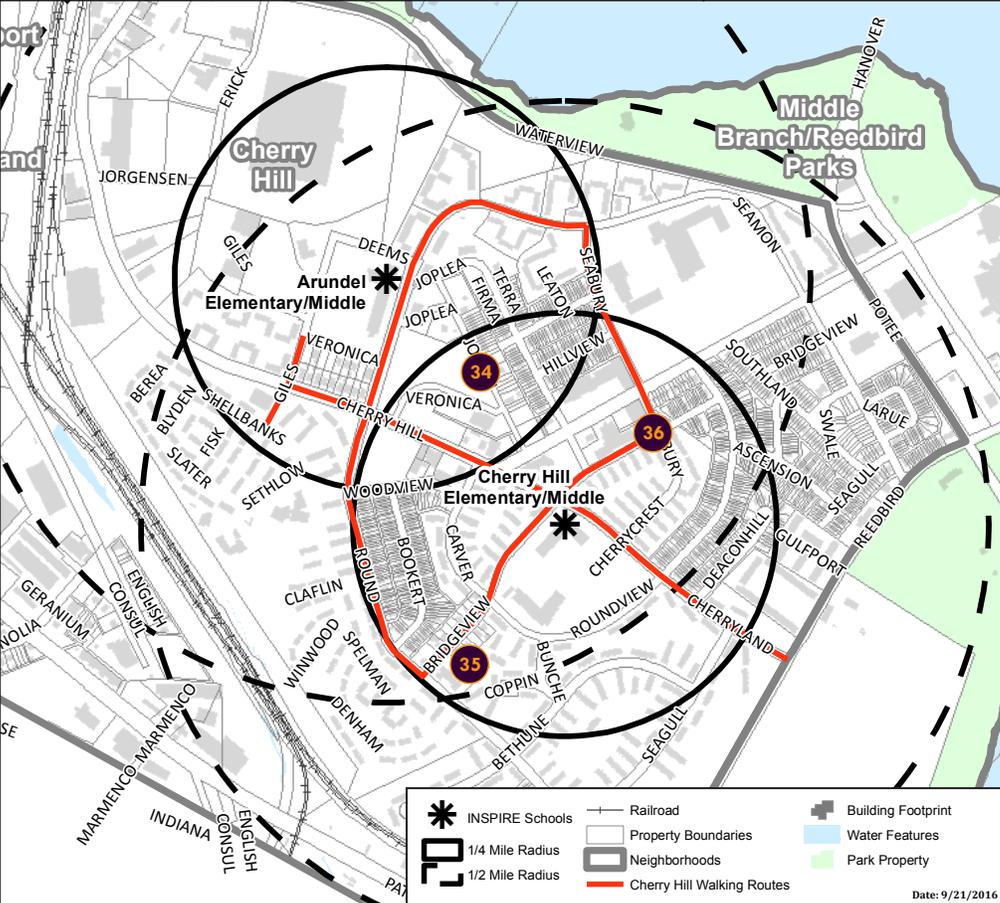
Residents of Cherry Hill are proud of the people that have come from their neighborhood. Plaques or signage throughout the community would teach and inspire current and future generations about the important contributions residents have made.

**33. Install new neighborhood signs.**

Community signs are posted on the southbound side of Potee Street and along Cherry Hill Road adjacent to Cherry Hill Homes. To further identify Cherry Hill as an important Baltimore neighborhood, other locations at community entryways could be added, especially along Waterview Avenue and Cherry Hill Road.

# IMPROVING SANITATION

Improve the appearance of the neighborhood.



## **Use Code Enforcement to Improve Appearance and Safety**



### **34. Address illegal dumping and clean-up dumping hotspots and dirty alleys.**

Overall, the INSPIRE area is fairly clean. There are, however, a few spots that are targets for illegal dumping of debris. In addition to residents reporting dumping to the 311 system, the community should work with the Department of Housing and Community Development's Code Enforcement Division to identify solutions for repeat dumping sites, including:

- Joseph and Veronica Avenues

### **35. Address overgrown yards and deterioration of vacant properties.**

Some properties that have been vacant for extended periods of time, such as a house on an otherwise well-maintained block in the 500-block of Bridgeview near Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School, require intervention from Code Enforcement to clean them up.

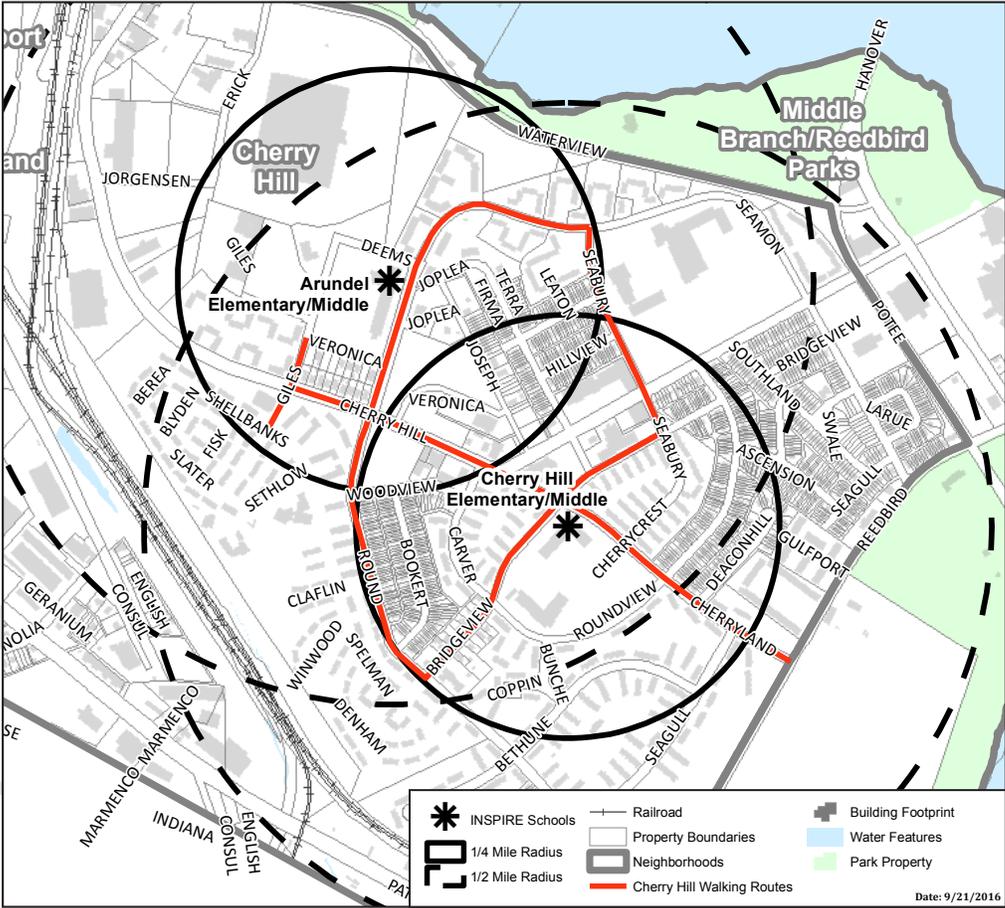


### **36. Develop a neighborhood greening project to landscape the vacant parcel next to the Family Health Center.**

This poorly maintained vacant parcel of land adjacent to the Family Health Center parking lot (and directly across from the Town Center) could be transformed into an attractively landscaped lot. Further improvements, such as grading, would make it a pleasant route to walk to Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School from Cherry Hill Road over to Bridgeview, rather walking further down the busier Cherry Hill Road.

# CREATING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY-SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Improve the natural environment.



## **Create a Clean and Green Neighborhood**

### **37. Explore opportunities for Arundel and Cherry Hill to become “Green Schools,” utilizing the surrounding neighborhood for projects.**

The City’s Office of Sustainability offers a Green, Healthy, Smart Challenge grant program for student-led sustainability projects. There are ample opportunities in the community to identify projects of interest, including the school garden at Cherry Hill assuming it is included as part of the new design.



### **38. Increase the street tree canopy in the community.**

Although Middle Branch and Reedbird parks provide significant green space and trees in the neighborhood, certain streets in the INSPIRE area could benefit from additional trees. Residents and other stakeholders are interested in bringing back cherry trees, or other flowering trees, to make the streets more inviting and better stitch together the neighborhood. Flowering trees are slated to be planted along Cherry Hill Road. Other locations near the bottom of Round Road and Seagull Avenue should be considered for stormwater mitigation.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND STRENGTH**

*Address social and programming needs and desires of the residents.*

### **Strengthen Connections among Residents, the Retail and Community Facilities, and Community-Based Organizations**

**39.** Have an Advisory Board for tenants selection of local businesses in Town Center.

**40.** Expand faith-based community activities (mentor at schools, have health fairs, prayer walks, focus on healthy foods, etc.).

**41.** Strengthen family and community ties in the neighborhood.

**42.** Strengthen collaborations between community organizations and the schools.

**43.** Teach kids, families, and other residents how to row & swim through programming at the recreation center and Rowing Club.

### **Expand Recreational Programming**

**44.** Create partnerships to increase programming and activity in Middle Branch Park.

**45.** Create more effective communication about what's happening and opportunities for people to be involved.

### **Expand Employment Opportunities and Workforce Development**

**46.** Ensure that new and expanding businesses hire from the neighborhood.

**47.** Tailor job training for placement at Under Armour and Harbor Hospital.

**48.** Address the barrier to employment of criminal records.

## **Address Education, School, Family, and Student Needs**

**49.** Bring the families between schools together before opening day.

**50.** Pay senior citizen mentors/tutors for elementary schools.

**51.** Expand/enhance after-school programs to keep kids busy from 3-6 p.m. (Boys and Girls Club); help middle school students see alternatives/shift attitudes; include homework time/preparation kids for tests.

**52.** Improve Enoch Pratt Library and coordinate resources with schools.

**53.** Expand Head Start.

**54.** Help families to better participate in getting children prepared; improve parent involvement. Help families flourish.

**55.** Address social/emotional needs, including chronic absences.

**56.** Continue to expand the infants-through-community college-jobs approach, including developing relationships with Ben Franklin at Masonville Cove High School in Brooklyn.

**57.** Continue/expand partnership with police.

## **Market Cherry Hill**

**58.** Partner with different media to show the positive things in the community and schools.

**59.** Create/expand community newsletter.

**60.** Create “one voice” – unity among community partners/ churches/ neighborhood stakeholders.

**61.** Develop community pride through an external marketing campaign.

**62.** Effectively communicate what’s happening in the neighborhood/ opportunities for people to be involved.

# Appendix A: List of Draft Recommendations

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## **Investing in Housing and Market-Strengthening Development Opportunities**

- Increase Quality Housing Options
  - Develop a range of mixed-income housing for rent and for ownership
  - Improve the quality of public housing and the living situation for public housing residents
  - Promote homeownership assistance programs to help current and new owners maintain and improve their homes
- Promote Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities
  - Continue to explore reuse of Carter G. Woodson school building
  - Explore redevelopment opportunities with the owner of the vacant land directly across Round Road from Arundel as well as maintenance of the site prior to any new development project.
  - Explore opportunities to redevelop the former BGE site and other properties near the Town Center for new businesses
  - Work with property owners to identify and pursue transit-oriented development opportunities adjacent to the Light Rail station on Cherry Hill Road
  - Continue to evaluate short-term use and long-term redevelopment of Fisher's Cove site
  - Determine best uses for vacant HABC properties along Reedbird Avenue
  - Develop space for retail incubators
  - Promote improvements to the exterior façade and design of the Town Center
  - Improving Safety
- Remove uses that Create Unsafe Environments for Students
  - Relocate the methadone clinic on Giles Road
  - Work with Southern District police to determine if there are physical improvements that can help mitigate crime hot spots near the schools
- Improve Safety Near Light Rail and along CSX Tracks
  - Improve lighting and security around the Light Rail tunnel and deter drug activity

## **Creating Connectivity and Access**

- Improve Walking and Access and Safety in the Neighborhood
  - Develop a range of mixed-income housing for rent and for ownership
  - Work with DOT to make the intersection at Cherry Hill and Cherryland safer
  - Slow traffic on Cherry Hill Road between Giles and Seabury Roads
  - Add missing sidewalks on well-traveled routes
  - Improve the connection from Seabury Avenue to Cherry Hill Elementary-Middle School by way of Bridgeview Avenue

- Make a safe crossing from Round Road and Spelman Avenue to Patapsco Avenue shopping area
- Create a walking school bus, bicycle train, or block captain sentinel program
- Improve Street Infrastructure
  - Repair streets that are in poor condition
- Increase and Improve Public Transportation
  - Improve access to public transportation
  - Add a Circulator route through Cherry Hill to Harbor Hospital connecting to downtown routes
  - Install more covered bus shelters

#### **Creating Opportunities for Health and Well-being**

- Enhance the Healthy Food Environment
  - Open an affordable grocery store or supermarket that is conveniently located to serve Cherry Hill
  - Develop and implement a comprehensive food access strategy
- Improve Recreational Opportunities
  - Improve connections to the waterfront and Middle Branch Park
  - Provide more formal and informal places for children to play throughout the neighborhood
  - Upgrade poorly-maintained playground equipment
  - Improve trails and walking paths
- Improve Community Cohesion
  - Provide benches and public spaces in Town Center
  - Install plaques to showcase leaders and success stories
  - Install new neighborhood signs

#### **Improving Sanitation**

- Use Code Enforcement to Improve Appearance and Safety
  - Address illegal dumping and clean-up dumping hotspots and dirty alleys
  - Address overgrown yards and deterioration of vacant properties.
  - Develop a neighborhood greening project to landscape the vacant parcel next to the Family Health Center

#### **Creating an Environmentally- Sustainable Neighborhood**

- Create a Clean and Green Neighborhood
  - Explore opportunities for Arundel and Cherry Hill to become “Green Schools,” utilizing the surrounding neighborhood for projects
  - Increase the street tree canopy in the community

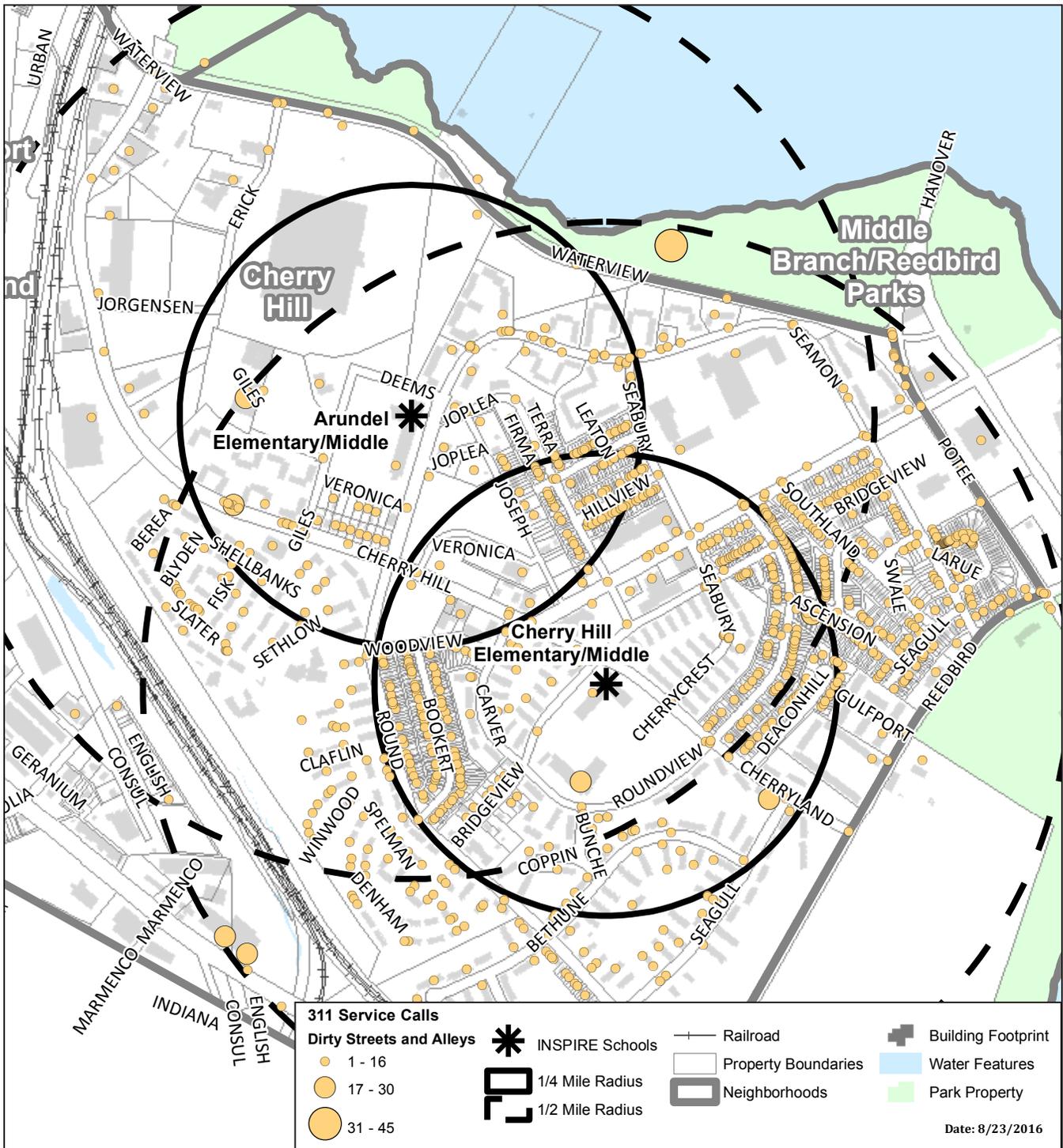
#### **Building Community Partnerships and Strength**

- Strengthen the Connection between Residents, the Retail and Community Facilities, and Community-Based Organizations
  - Have an Advisory Board for tenants selection of local businesses in the Town Center
  - Expand faith-based community activities (mentor at schools, have health fairs,

- prayer walks, focus on healthy foods, etc.)
- Strengthen family and community ties in the neighborhood
  - Strengthen collaborations between community organizations and the schools
  - Teach kids, families, and other residents how to row & swim through programming at the recreation center and Rowing Club
  - Expand Recreational Programming
    - Create partnerships to increase programming and activity in Middle Branch Park
    - Create more effective communication about what's happening/opportunities for people to be involved
  - Expand Employment Opportunities and Workforce Development
    - Ensure that new and expanding businesses hire from the neighborhood
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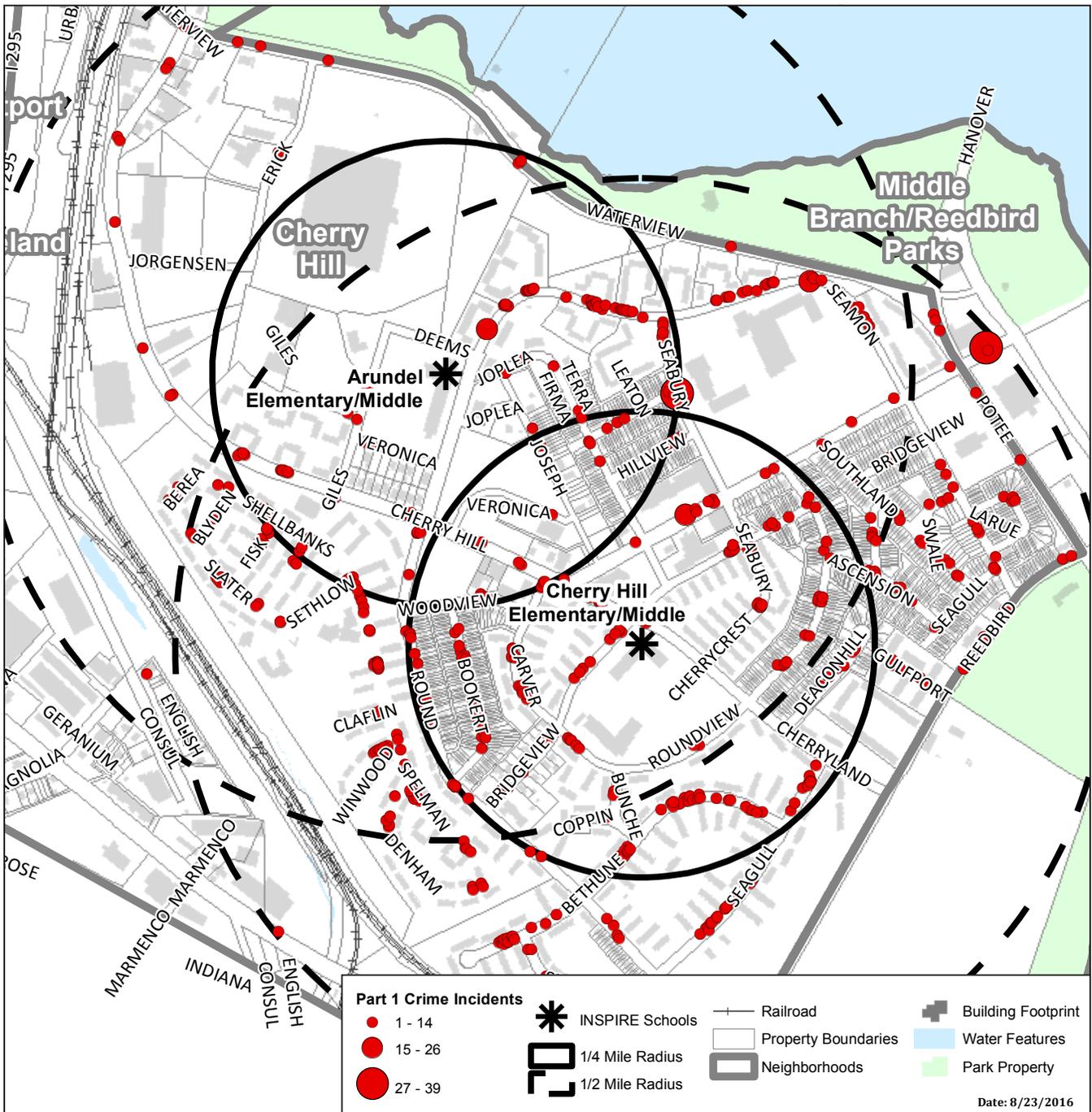
# Appendix C: Maps

This map shows 311 calls for dirty streets and alleys (January-May 2015).



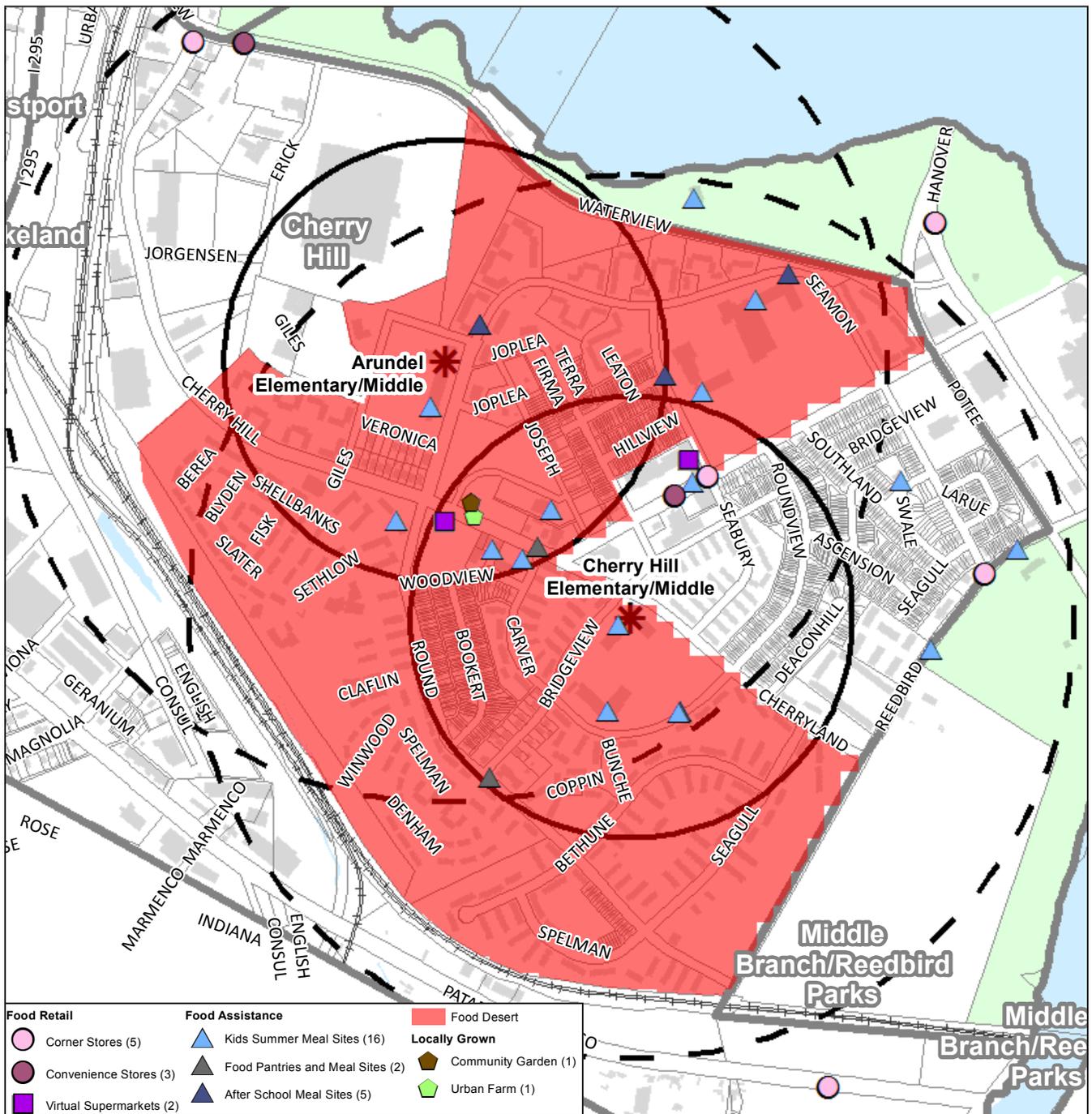
**This map shows Part 1 crime incidents from 2014-2015.**

Part 1 crimes are incidents of homicide, rape, aggravated assault, arson, robbery, burglary, larceny, and auto theft.



### Food Environment Map

The Food Environment Map includes food retail, food assistance, and food production. It does not include establishments such as restaurants.



# Appendix D: Description of Area- or City-Wide Programs

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See below for information and links to the programs mentioned in this draft recommendations report.

## Community Plans

**The Cherry Hill Community Master Plan** was adopted by the Baltimore City Planning Commission in July 2008. This plan takes a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of life in the neighborhood.

[http://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/071008\\_Cherry\\_Hill\\_Master\\_Plan.pdf](http://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/071008_Cherry_Hill_Master_Plan.pdf)

**The Cherry Hill Vision Plan** was completed by the Neighborhood Design Center in February 2016. Many of its recommendations focus on improving access and connectivity as well as visual suggestions for redevelopment of key sites in the neighborhood.

The **South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan** is a comprehensive, 20-year plan for the more than a dozen neighborhoods surrounding the Horseshoe Casino. These neighborhoods are eligible for Local Impact Grants funded through casino revenues that go to the City. Cherry Hill is one of the eligible neighborhoods in the plan.

<http://www.southbaltimoregatewaymasterplan.com/>

## Programs and Initiatives

**Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI)** is an intergovernmental collaboration between the Department of Planning, Office of Sustainability, Baltimore City Health Department, and Baltimore Development Corporation. It was founded in 2010 to “improve health outcomes by increasing access to healthy affordable food in Baltimore City’s food deserts.” With each agency lending its expertise, the City creates comprehensive strategies that tackle food access from many perspectives, and implements programs and policies with multi-sector support. Interested parties can contact BFPI through the Planning Department to learn more about food-related issues in Baltimore.

<http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/projects/baltimore-food-policy-initiative/>

**Blue Water Baltimore** is a not-for-profit organization with a mission to restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams and harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities. Blue Water Baltimore is working to make our streams, river and Harbor healthy, thriving ecosystems that are accessible and safe for citizens, visitors and commerce. To achieve these goals, Blue Water Baltimore mobilizes volunteers to monitor the Baltimore area streams for pollution. They organize trash cleanups, plant trees on public land, and provide a helping hand to property owners who want to do their part to reduce runoff from their properties. Blue Water Baltimore advocates for stronger laws for clean water, both locally and statewide. Its Deep Blue program is targeting Cherry Hill for tree planting and storm water runoff remediation.

<http://www.bluewaterbaltimore.org/>

**The Green, Healthy, Smart Challenge** is a grant program for student-led sustainability projects in Baltimore City Public Schools. Students must be a part of an organized green team that meets to complete their project. The aim is to have projects encourage and assist schools in reaching Maryland Green School Certification. The 2016/2017 application is due October 28, 2016.

<http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/projects/green-schools-initiative/green-healthy-smart-challenge/>

**The National Resource Network** is a core component of the Obama Administration's Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative, and develops and delivers innovative solutions to American cities to help them address their toughest economic challenges. The Network works with local leaders to identify practical solutions, share real-world expertise and best practices, and help cities develop the tools and strategies they need to grow their economies.

<http://www.nationalresourcenetwork.org/en/home>

**Safe Routes to School** programs operate throughout the country, including here in Baltimore City and throughout the state of Maryland. The purpose of this program is to substantially improve safety for students in grades K-8 who walk and bike to school. The three main goals of the program are: to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school; to make biking and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation choice, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and to aid the planning and building of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution nearby primary and middle schools.

**A walking school bus** is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. That may sound simple, and that is part of the appeal. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school or as structured as a planned route with meeting points, a timetable and a schedule of trained volunteers. A variation on the walking school bus is a bicycle train where a group of children and adult leaders ride together to school.

[http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/walking\\_school\\_bus/](http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/walking_school_bus/)

DRAFT