



INSPIRE

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

Draft INSPIRE Recommendation Report Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School Planning Area



May 2016



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I. Introduction

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 new or renovated 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 Kate Edwards, Downtown and East District Planner/INSPIRE Planner, with feedback to this Draft Recommendation Report. (410) 396-5934 or kate.edwards@baltimorecity.gov.

Recommendation Development and Overview

Between September 2014 and March 2015, 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, surveys, and walking tours, stakeholders have helped inform the draft recommendations presented here.

Staff from city agencies, including the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Public Works 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.

The INSPIRE plan will identify short- and long-term recommendations. Short-term recommendations, presented on page 12, are improvements that can be made by the opening day of Fort Worthington. Special attention is paid to physical improvements and maintenance to the perimeter of the school site and to the primary routes leading to the school, shown on page 11. Long-term recommendations are meant to guide future investment, and further address environmental, social, and economic conditions.

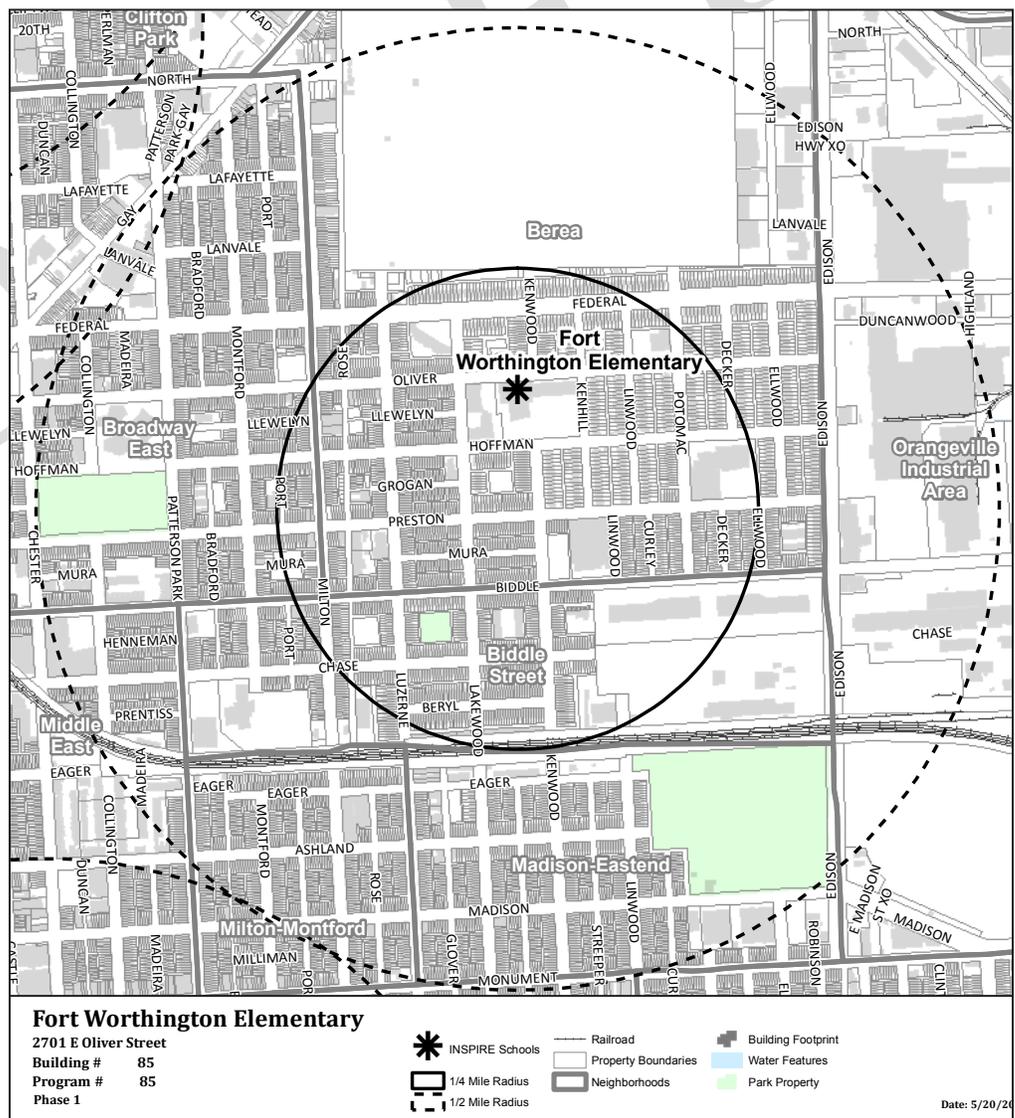
Next Steps

Through mid-June, 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 the fall. Department of Planning staff will work with the community to identify a “signature community project” that we can work on together right away.

INSPIRE Map – Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School Planning Area

Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School is located in the Berea neighborhood of East Baltimore at 2701 East Oliver Street. Fort Worthington currently serves students in the 1st through 5th grades, but will be expanded to serve students in grades k-8. The school is undergoing a complete rebuild. Demolition of the former school building began in January 2016 and construction on the new school began in May. The school is expected to re-open in August 2017, and will accommodate up to 700 students.

The students that attend Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School primarily live in the surrounding neighborhoods of Berea, Biddle Street, and Madison-Eastend.

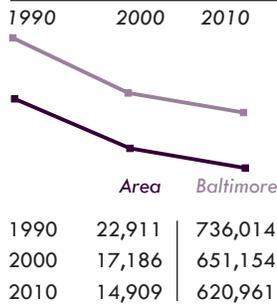




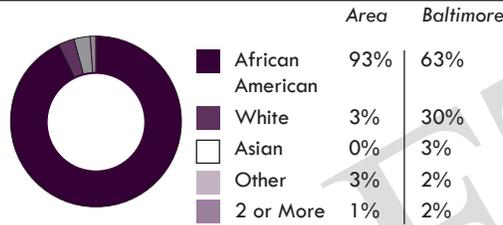
Key Neighborhood and School Data – Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School Planning Area

The charts below depict data from the Census Tracts highlighted in this map (Census Tracts 802, 803.01, 803.02, 804, 701, and 702). Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2014 American Community Survey.

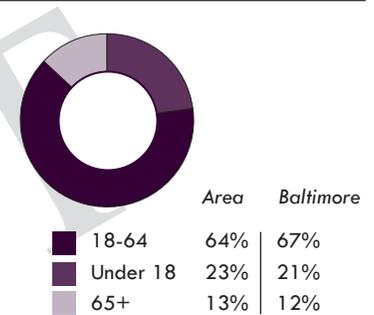
Population Change



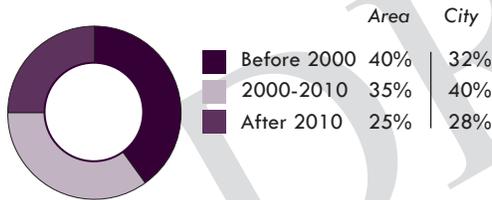
Race



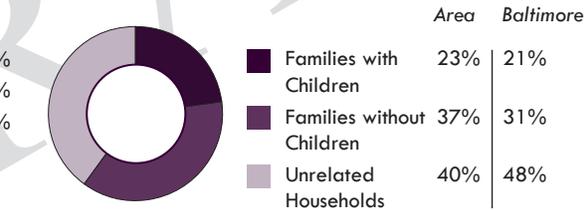
Age



Residence Established



Household Structure



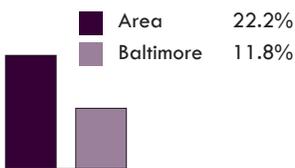
Journey to Work



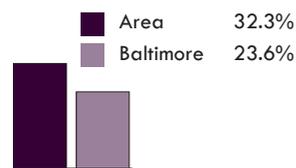
Vehicle Availability



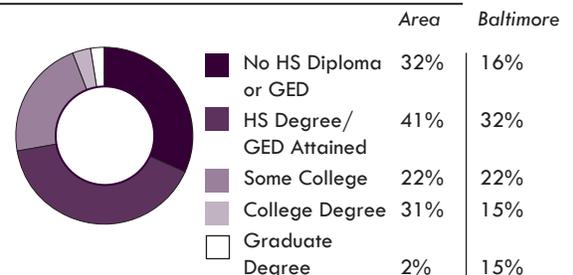
Unemployment Rate



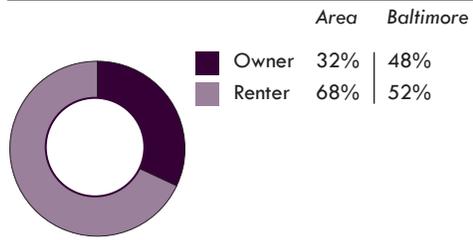
Poverty Rate



Educational Attainment



Housing Occupancy



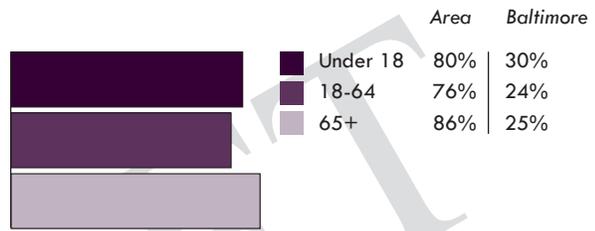
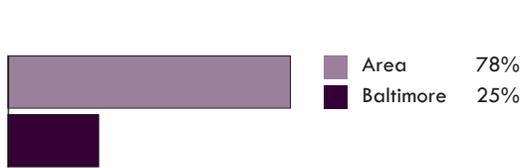
Average Vacancy Rate



Median Housing Value



Percentage of Population Living in a Food Desert

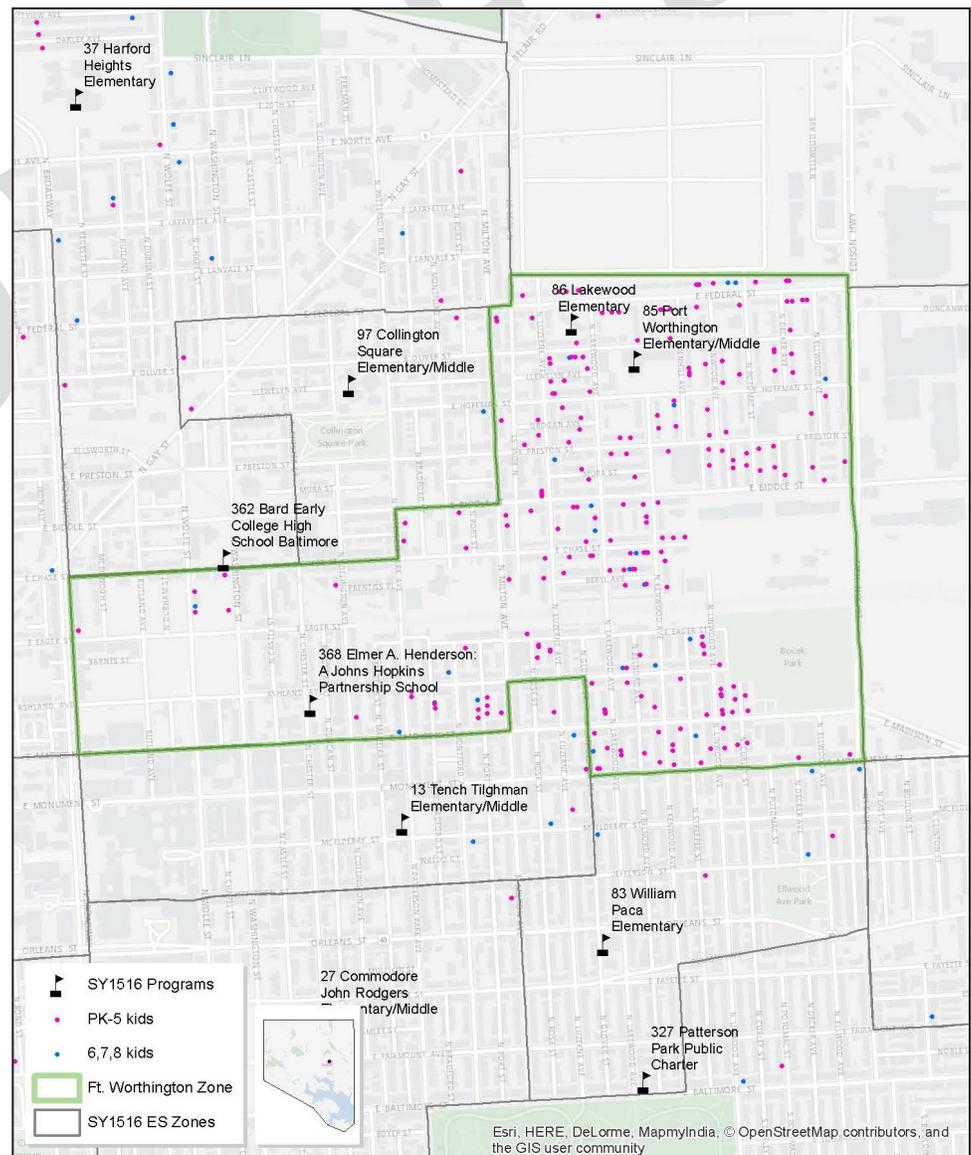


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Student Data

During the 2013-2014 school year, 349 students were enrolled in Fort Worthington. This was an increase of approximately 7% from the 2012-2013 school year. Much like the neighborhoods the school serves, most of the students, 98%, are African-American. A high percentage of students, 94.8%, received free and reduced meals (FARMs).

With the closing of Dr. Rayner Browne Elementary-Middle School at the end of the 2014-2015 school year and the expansion of Fort Worthington to serve grades k-8, the enrollment numbers of the school are expected to increase significantly. The newly-built Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School will be built to accommodate the increase in students and programming - it will have capacity for 700 students.



II. Neighborhood Observations

Housing, Sanitation, and Land Use

The INSPIRE plan area includes the Berea neighborhood, as well as portions of the Broadway East, Biddle Street, and Milton Montford neighborhoods. Berea, where the school is located, is a stable and benefits from a large number of long-term homeowners but is surrounded by less stable areas with more vacancy and less homeownership. The challenge is to preserve and strengthen stable areas and combat the spread of disinvestment while developing creative strategies to improve the less stable areas.

The neighborhoods around Fort Worthington are comprised of a variety of different styles of rowhomes. The Berea community immediately surrounds the school and spreads to the east with primarily two-story homes that are set back from the street with a front yard and/or porch. These are the more stable blocks with very few vacant houses. To the west of Lakewood and south of the railroad tracks are the older three story rowhomes with no front yards or porches. These areas have many more vacant homes and a lower rate of home ownership.

Another essential component of neighborhood revitalization is improving overall quality of life. Sanitation and public safety were the quality-of-life issues that came up most often in community meetings - especially in the areas mentioned above with higher vacancy rates and less so in the area immediately surrounding the school.

Milton Avenue, a major corridor on the western edge of the plan area, suffers from a high number of vacant properties and pockets of retail that contribute to negative activity. The relative weakness of this highly-traveled corridor damages the perception of the community and detracts from the more stable areas. Finding workable strategies to strengthen this corridor and preserve the stable areas is key to supporting neighborhood revitalization throughout the plan area.

There are several large development opportunities to the southwest of the school that could make a large impact in the INSPIRE area. The old Dr. Rayner Browne school site sits at 1000 North Montford Avenue. It is adjacent to a vacant grocery store site. Together, these two properties present a large lot which could be redeveloped. Just west of these sites is the former Hoen Building at 2101 East Biddle Street. This building is proposed for mixed-use redevelopment and could possibly be combined with the adjacent 2200-block of Henneman Street which is mostly vacant.

Recreation and Open Space

The old Fort Worthington School building housed a community recreation center which served as an anchor for the Berea neighborhood for years. It is important to the residents that activities such as community meetings and events, basketball for area youth, and other recreational activities for people of all ages will be available in the new school building. To this end, community members, Recreation and Parks and the Baltimore City Public School System have developed a shared-use agreement for after-school activities in the various shared spaces planned in the new building.

There are two City-owned parks in the neighborhoods around Fort Worthington, offering a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Both need improvements to become true assets to the residents. Luzerne Avenue Park is a small inner block park in the southwest portion of the study area between Lakewood and Luzerne and Biddle and Chase Streets. This park includes a playground which should be promoted for community use. However this needs regular maintenance and monitoring for illegal dumping. Bocek Park sits on the southeast border of the plan area just south of the rail road tracks. The park includes fields, but many residents have complained that the park is over-run with drug and gang activity and is in need of improvements. There is also an opportunity to better connect Bocek Park to the neighborhoods to its north with better signage and more defined entrance on the northern entry way from the Madison-Eastend neighborhood.

There are several vacant lots throughout the area which offer opportunities for additional community managed open space. The community has expressed a desire to adopt one of these lots as a community garden and there are opportunities for improvements to other vacant lots throughout the neighborhood through the Mayor's Growing Green Initiative.

Transportation

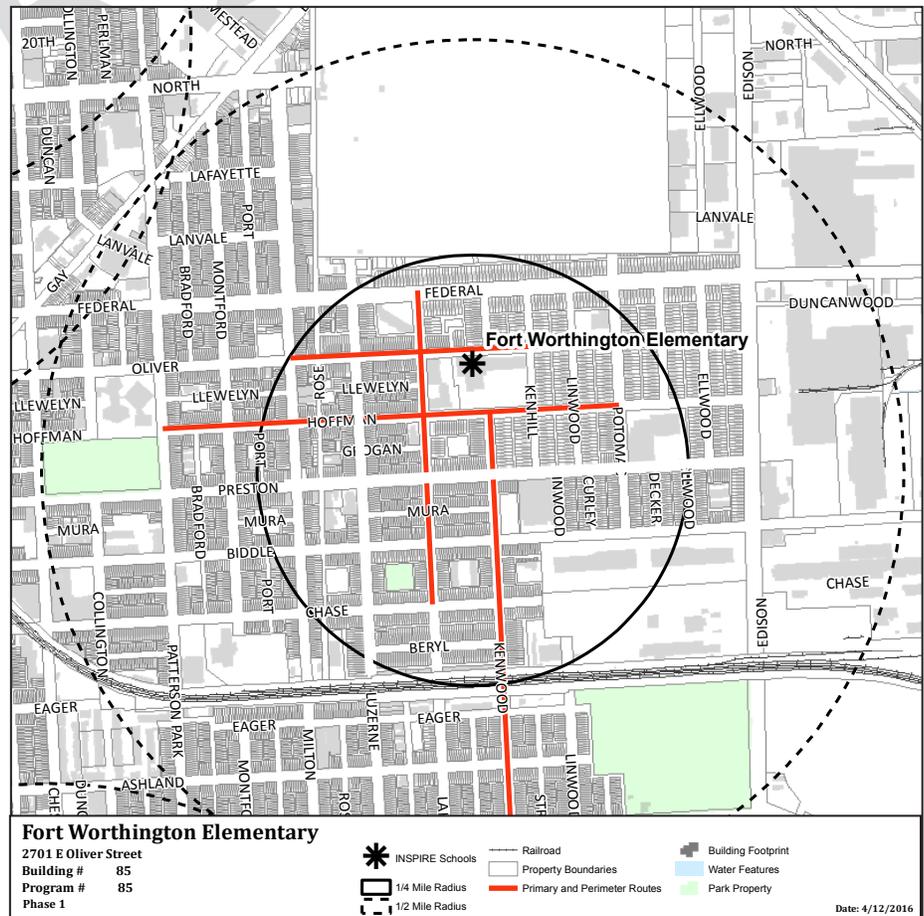
The plan area is bordered by Federal Street to the north, Milton to the west, and Edison Highway to the east and is bisected by Preston Street. These are the primary through-routes for vehicles in the area. Community residents voiced concerns about the speed of traffic along Federal and Preston Streets. Additionally there were concerns about truck traffic along Federal and Oliver Streets which are not designated truck routes. The demographic analysis of the plan area shows that there is low car ownership in this portion of the city. Additionally, many students within the Fort Worthington school zone do not qualify for school bus service. These factors along with safety concerns point to the need to develop solutions to make travel to and from school safer for children, especially in the winter months when it gets dark early.

III. Preparing for Opening Day of the Modernized School

The new Fort Worthington School will be attended by children in Berea, Biddle Street, Madison-Eastend, and other neighborhoods, and used by residents in multiple communities. Through the INSPIRE process, Baltimore City agencies are evaluating the perimeter of the school site and primary routes leading to the school, and will make physical improvements along these routes by opening day of the renovated building, 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 perimeters around Fort Worthington and the primary routes leading to the school. The main walking routes used by students to travel to and from school were identified as Oliver, Hoffman, Lakewood, and Kenwood Streets.



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 11, 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
- Bicycle infrastructure

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

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, including those listed below. Additional community input can be found in the Fort Worthington Workshop Summary and Summary Report, posted on the INSPIRE page of the Department of Planning website.

Assets

Active community organizations	Recreation Center
Good neighbors	Large properties available for redevelopment
Long-term stable homeowners	

Priorities

Maintain recreation center at Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School	Make Bocek park safe and accessible for children and residents
Improve sanitation enforcement to reduce dumping and improper trash disposal	Cleaner environment (less trash)
More recreational opportunities for children, families and seniors	Maintain trees/new trees
Reduce speed of traffic on main roads	Reduce vacancies
Make walking routes safer for children	

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 12.

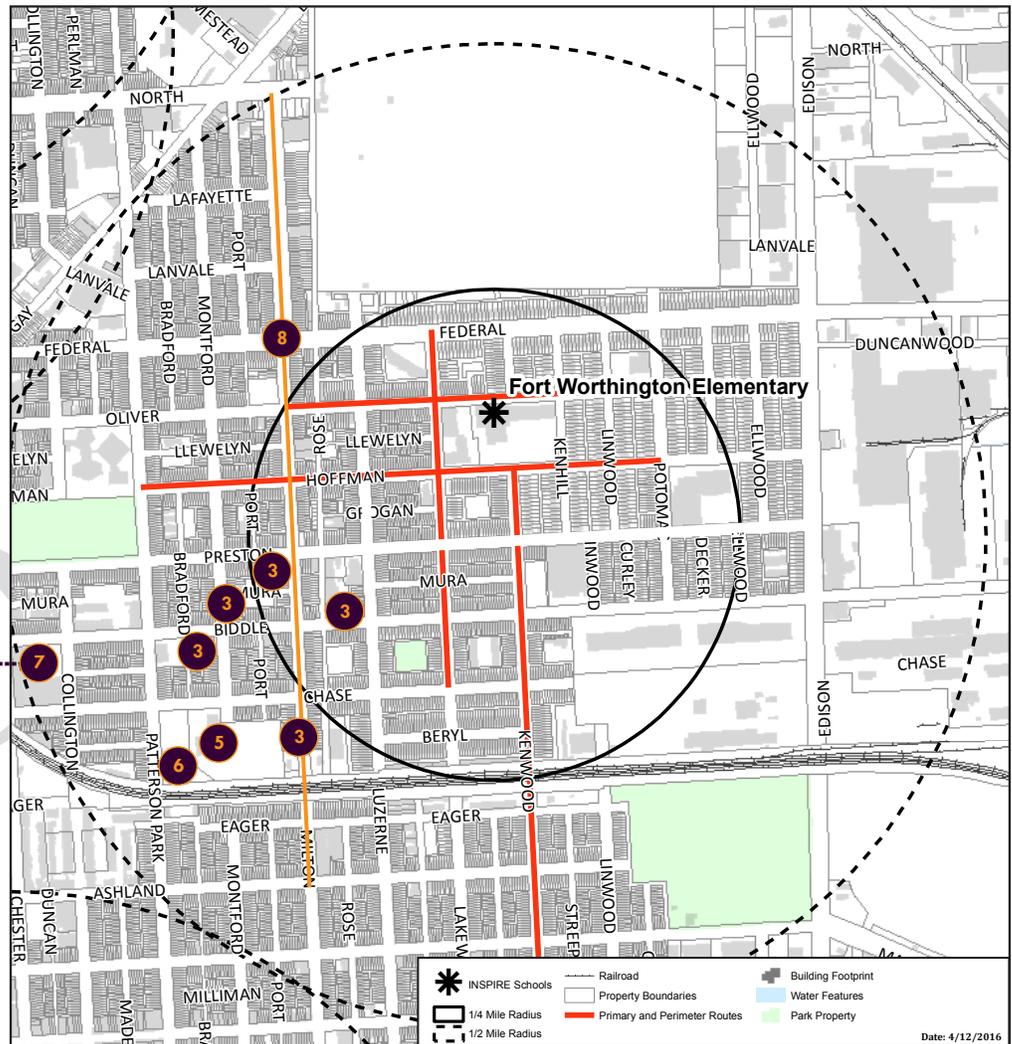
Recommendations presented in this section have been developed by the Department of Planning and informed by the community workshops, surveys, and walking tours. These recommendations are presented as activities that align with broader principles and goals (listed below). Many recommendations described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

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

- **Investing in Housing and Market-Strengthening Development Opportunities**
 - Support and Increase Homeownership
 - Remove blight
 - Create and Maintain High-Quality Rental Housing
 - Promote Large-scale and Strategic Development Opportunities
- **Creating Environmentally-Sustainable Neighborhoods**
 - Turn Blighted Vacant Lots into Positive Uses and Contribute to the Green Network
- **Improving Sanitation**
 - Keep the Neighborhoods Clean
- **Improving Resident Safety**
 - Improve lighting in the neighborhoods
 - Work with the Eastern Police District
- **Creating Opportunities for Health and Wellness**
 - Increase Use of Parks and Playgrounds
- **Creating Connections and Access**
 - Improve Walking and Biking Access and Safety in Neighborhoods

INVESTING IN HOUSING AND MARKET-STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Goals and recommendations address the desire to build on the strong homeownership base immediately surrounding the school, and build confidence in the neighborhood.



Support and Increase Homeownership

1. Promote homeowner assistance programs to help current and new owners maintain and improve their homes.

The INSPIRE area includes a large number of stable longtime homeowners. As these homeowners age, it can be difficult for them to maintain and make improvements to their properties. This can lead to some houses on otherwise stable blocks to fall into disrepair and detract from the appeal of the rest of the block. Programs run by the City and area non-profits that can help these homeowners maintain their properties should be promoted within the plan area to connect people with available resources.

- Connect homeowners with the programs available through Baltimore Housing's Green, Healthy and Sustainable Homes initiative
- Promote the Baltimore Energy Challenge to educate homeowners about getting Home Energy Audits and help with weatherization

2. Use the momentum of the existing Vacants to Value Community Development Clusters to spur further investment in the INSPIRE area.

There are several Vacants to Value Community Development Clusters within the study area. These are identified areas where Baltimore Housing and Community Development (HCD) is working strategically with private developers to rehabilitate numerous vacant houses for homeownership opportunities. As development in these clusters reduces the number of vacant and derelict properties in the community, and strengthens the market, HCD should promote nearby development opportunities to interested developers to encourage further revitalization. Consider opportunities, such as through Live Baltimore, to market the area. *See Appendix B for the CDC clusters.*



Remove Blight

3. Use strategic whole-block demolition to remove the most blighted vacant buildings

A major detraction from the attractiveness of this area for current residents, potential residents, and visitors is the large number of dilapidated and vacant buildings in certain portions of the plan area. Blighted properties which are not suitable for renovation should be prioritized for strategic demolition, and appropriate green land reuse options should be identified and implemented.

Create and Maintain High-Quality Rental Housing

4. Incentivize good landlords to maintain rental units in the neighborhood.

Connect good landlords with financial or other benefits to encourage responsible landlord behavior. With over 60% of households living in rental housing, it is important to incentivize high-quality rentals.

Promote Large-scale and Strategic Development Opportunities

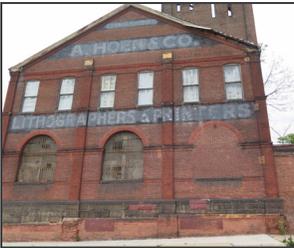


5. Explore reuse of the Dr. Rayner Browne School Building.

The Dr. Rayner Brown School closed at the end of the 2015 school year, and Baltimore City Public Schools has “surplussed” the building so that it can be used in a productive way that benefits the community. The school site is adjacent to a vacant property, and could be combined to form a larger parcel for redevelopment.

6. Redevelop the site of the former grocery store, adjacent to the Dr. Rayner Browne building.

The site of the former Super Pride grocery store is directly adjacent to the Dr. Rayner Browne school building and the two sites could possibly be combined to provide a larger redevelopment site. The site is currently privately owned; the City should either work with the owner on a redevelopment strategy or consider acquiring the property to consolidate it with the Dr. Rayner Browne School building site.



7. Redevelop the Hoen building.

The Hoen Building is a large historic building located at 2101 East Biddle Street that has been vacant since 1981. In 2015, Cross Street Partners and City Life Builders were awarded the right to redevelop the property through the City’s Vacant to Values program. The partnership plans to develop a mix of residential and commercial space, including office space for nonprofits, a production kitchen and a cafe and bakery. HCD should continue to work with the developers to support this project so that it comes to fruition.

8. Develop short-term strategies to improve Milton Avenue from Gay Street to Ashland Avenue.

Milton Avenue is a main route through the east side of the city, and in many ways serves as the “front door” to the INSPIRE area. Unfortunately, years of disinvestment has led to high residential and commercial vacancy rates along Milton Avenue; the few operating business that remain contribute to the negative perceptions of the area. This struggling corridor gives a bad perception to the much stronger neighborhoods that lie to the east of it, including around Fort Worthington. Steps need to be taken to improve the perception and aesthetic appeal of Milton Avenue.

- Work with Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts to beautify vacant buildings along Milton Avenue through community-based art projects
- Identify high vacancy blocks which are appropriate for strategic demolition

Turn Blighted Vacant Lots into Positive Uses and Contribute to the Green Network

9. Conduct a survey of vacant lots in the area to assess green reuse opportunities.

Partner with community and school stakeholders, and the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, to assess where the strongest potential exists for a variety of short- and long-term land reuse opportunities.



10. Develop neighborhood greening projects to turn vacant lots into community assets through the Growing Green Initiative.

There are several vacant lots spread throughout the planning area that could be transformed into community assets. Turning them into attractively landscaped lots, or community gathering areas can help prevent them from becoming illegal dumping targets. Community members have expressed the desire to create a community garden on one of the lots and should work with the Office of Sustainability to further develop this idea and to discuss possible improvements on other vacant lots in the planning area. Specific locations include the following:

- The interior lot between 2700-blocks of Oliver and Federal Streets is City-owned and has been identified by residents as an ideal location for a community garden. The Planning Department and the Office of Sustainability have begun working with the community on improvements to the lot including: fencing, a small shed for tools and equipment, a small deck, and water access. The Berea Eastside Neighborhood Association has adopted the lot through the city's adopt-a-lot program and offered to be the primary steward for the community garden.
- The 1500-block of North Rose Street (both sides of this block) was recently demolished by the City to remove blighted vacant properties. Residents could work with the Growing Green Initiative to develop a greening plan for these lots. Potential uses include a community garden or a pocket park with tree plantings or public art.
- The 2400-block of East Eager Street was recently demolished by the City; there are plans to create an enhanced green space with tree plantings.



11. Plant and maintain new street trees along identified streets.

Certain blocks in the planning area have very few street trees; this detracts from walkability and the aesthetic appeal of these blocks. Trees contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly experience by providing shade and color. Additionally, trees positively impact the quality of life in a neighborhood and have been shown to help increase property values. Once trees are planted it is important that they get off to a

healthy start with regular watering in the first two years and trimming when necessary. Community members could adopt some nearby trees and agree to water them in the first two years. On blocks where community members are not able to adopt trees, the community can partner with a non-profit such as Bluewater Baltimore or the Baltimore Tree Trust which both work with Youthworks summer employees to provide watering and maintenance for street trees.



12. Establish a “Bloom Your Block”-style competition that enhances community pride while residents have fun maintaining and beautifying properties.

“Bloom Your Block”-style competitions engage residents in a fun way to maintain properties and increase neighborhood spirit. Neighbors or blocks of neighbors compete for titles such as Most Green/Beautified Block and Best Community Managed Open Space.



13. Explore opportunities for Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School to become a “Green School.”

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.

IMPROVING SANITATION

Clean streets, sidewalks, vacant lots, alleys, and areas throughout the communities surrounding Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School are important for students as they walk to and from school, for residents in the area, and for projecting a positive image to people passing through.



Keep the Neighborhoods Clean

14. Implement a Code Enforcement Zone Strategy for the west side of the INSPIRE plan area.

The greatest number of sanitation issues are found in the western portion of the INSPIRE area, west of Luzerne Avenue. This area also has a high vacancy rate. Housing inspectors could be placed on a proactive rotating schedule for zones in the plan area. This method helps to ensure consistent enforcement of sanitation regulations by focusing on blocks with the highest occurrence of sanitation issues.



15. Address illegal dumping and clean-up dumping hotspots and dirty alleys.

Many of the vacant lots and alleys throughout the plan area are targets for illegal household trash and commercial dumping. In addition to being unattractive, the trash attracts rats and may contain dangerous materials. This presents health concerns for the community. In addition to residents reporting dumping to the 311 system, the community could work with the Department of Housing and Community Development's Code Enforcement Division to identify repeat dumping sites and evaluate whether camera installation is appropriate to aid with deterrence and enforcement.

Some of the dumping locations include:

- 2600-block of East Oliver Street
- 2400 East Oliver Street (corner vacant parcel)
- 1500 North Montford Avenue

16. Educate residents, landlords, and businesses about proper trash and recycling storage and disposal.

A common complaint is that trash is not properly stored and put out for pick-up in some portions of the plan area. Areas with consistent sanitation violations should be targeted with increased efforts to educate all residents about the proper storage of trash and recycling and when it can be put out for pick-up as well as informing landlords of their responsibilities regarding their tenants' trash storage.

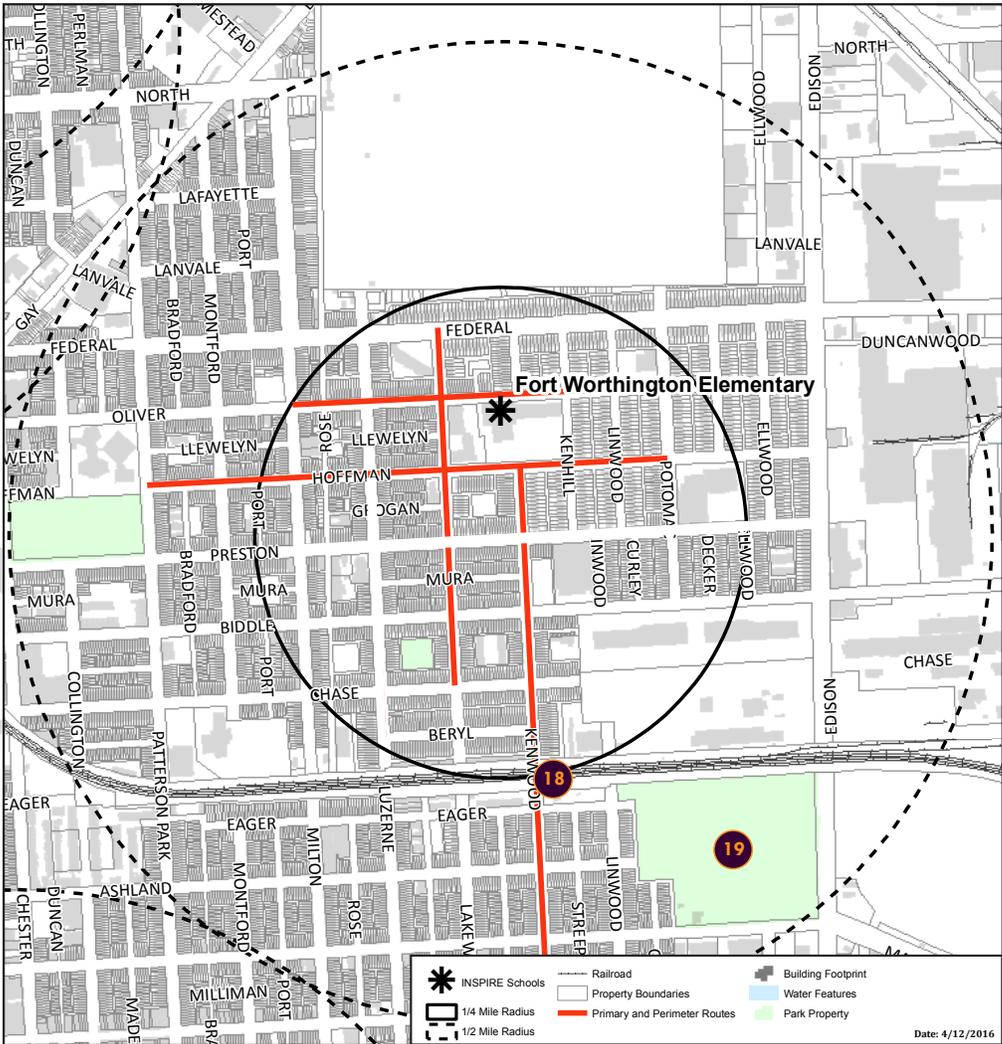


17. Develop community led initiatives to address trash and litter problems.

In addition to increased City efforts, the community should continue their own efforts to address the concerns in their neighborhoods as well as develop new community-led initiatives. Some examples of initiatives include neighborhood adoption of trashcans in key areas to discourage littering, organizing frequent block clean-ups through community organizations, and coordinating reporting and tracking of problem properties through the City's 311 system. Community residents, organizations, and businesses should work with Clean Corps Baltimore to develop community-led trash reduction and clean-up strategies.

IMPROVING RESIDENT SAFETY

This principle addresses the need to connect residents safely and efficiently to the places they need and want to go.



Improve Lighting in the Neighborhoods



18. Evaluate lighting levels to make streets safer.

Many residents discussed how dark their streets are at night, which makes them feel unsafe. Parents also voiced their concern about their children walking home from school in the dark in winter. In addition to assessing the school perimeter and primary walking routes for adequate lighting, the Department of Transportation should evaluate lighting levels throughout the neighborhood. One critical route for improved lighting is the Kenwood Street underpass that connects children walking to school from the southern neighborhoods, under the railroad tracks.

Work with Eastern Police District

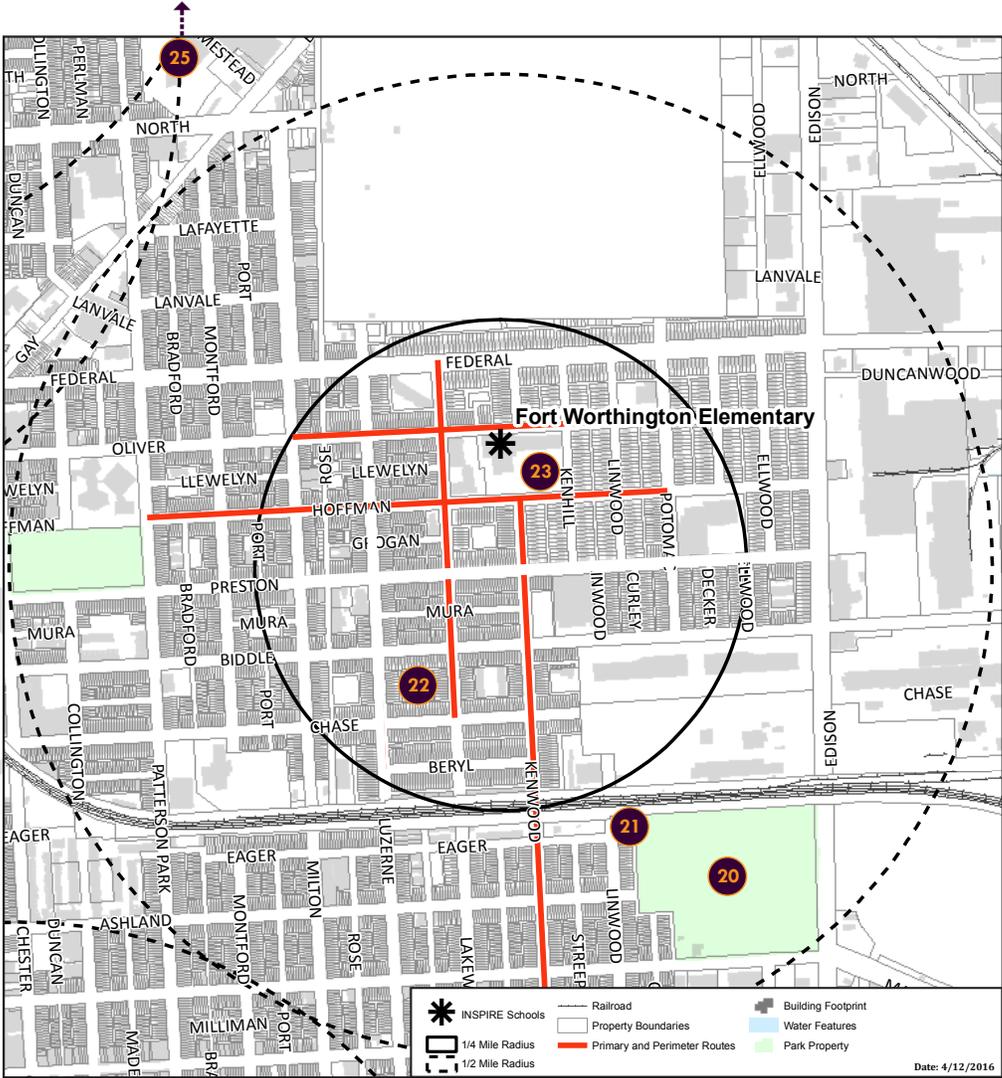
19. Work with the Eastern Police District (major and patrolling officers), and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, to develop recommendations for public safety improvements.

The INSPIRE area is located in the Eastern Police District. In this area there are a number of issues that must be addressed in order to make the neighborhoods safe for the children attending Fort Worthington and for the residents and visitors. Residents have brought up the following issues:

- Major drug activity on western edge of the neighborhood especially along Milton Avenue
- Drug and gang activity in Bocek Park
- Gang activity southeast of Fort Worthington
- Dogs off-leash

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This principle addresses the desire to improve and create new places for children, families, and residents to safely play, recreate, and come together.



Increase Use of Parks and Playgrounds



20. Create partnerships to increase activity programming at Bocek Park.

Bocek Park, consisting primarily of flat, multi-purpose playfields, is located less than half a mile southeast of the school, and just south of the railroad tracks. The park could be a positive neighborhood amenity, however a common complaint from residents is that the park has been overrun by criminal activities. The community should work with the City to increase use of the park for positive activities and to take back ownership of the park for neighborhood activities. This might include working with the Department of Recreation and Parks on upgrades and programming, the Police and Health departments on activities, and community organizations on regular public events. This could help to improve safety and perception in the park.

21. Improve the northwest entrance of Bocek Park and create a better connection between the park and the neighborhoods.

The small entrance to Bocek Park, at the end of Eager Street, is somewhat hidden. Improving this entrance could increase use of the park by residents from the areas immediately north and west of the park. Ideas to consider include the following:

- Place park identification signage at the Eager Street entrance
- Add directional signage in the nearby neighborhoods and common routes to the park to promote usage of the park by nearby residents

22. Proactively monitor Luzerne Park and its playground for illegal dumping.

Luzerne Park is a small inner-block park which includes a playground and serves as an amenity for the surrounding neighborhood residents. The park is in good condition but has been a target for illegal dumping. Regularly monitoring of the park and reporting any illegal dumping immediately will help keep the park maintained in a clean and safe manner for community use.



Enhance Healthy Food Environment

23. Use recreation center and school for meal programs.

Between the school and recreation center, Fort Worthington has served meals to children beyond the school day through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Afterschool Meal Program, and to seniors. These programs should be reinstated when the recreation center is reopened. One goal of the summer meal program is to efficiently provide food to people in need; increasing participation at each existing site, rather than having numerous small sites disbursed around a community helps achieve this. The new school could serve as an ideal program site for this neighborhood. Additionally, recreation centers that participate in summer and/or afterschool meals may have the opportunity to open and serve meals to children during times of emergency when schools may otherwise be closed.

24. Encourage healthy food retail, especially at stores near schools.

Although Fort Worthington students come from neighborhoods that have corner stores, there are only a few stores in the INSPIRE area. Residents and store owners could partner with the Health Department in future planning for the Baltimore Healthy Corner Store Program to engage a store nearby in providing increased amounts of healthy foods and snacks. Currently, the program only operates in West Baltimore, but has plans to expand to East Baltimore in about two years.



25. Engage with nearby Real Food Farm.

Real Food Farm is located in Clifton Park and has a secondary site just south of the park. The farm has a mobile market that brings produce out into the community on a planned weekly route, that comes close to but does not stop in Berea. There may be opportunities to have the route make a stop at the school or another nearby location.

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Improve Walking and Biking Access and Safety in Neighborhoods



26. Evaluate Federal and Preston Streets to determine appropriate traffic calming measures.

The community has identified Federal and Preston Streets as routes where high speed is creating a safety hazard for pedestrians. The Department of Transportation should set up a speed indicator device along these routes immediately before and after the school opens, and then evaluate appropriate traffic calming measures.

27. Enforce truck routes especially along Oliver and Federal streets.

Truck drivers often use streets which are not designated truck routes, especially along Oliver and Federal Streets. The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT) should install signage to alert drivers to the appropriate truck routes and work with police to determine what can be done regarding enforcement of the routes to move trucks off of Federal and Oliver streets.

28. Improve pedestrian safety for students traveling to school from the southern portion of the plan area which requires crossing the underpass below the train tracks.

Most children who will attend Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School will come from further than one-half mile away, but not further than one mile, and are not bused to school. Additionally, many students living near the now-closed Dr. Rayner Browne Elementary-Middle School will attend Fort Worthington when it reopens. This will mean that more students will be coming from further south and many will be walking from south of the train tracks. The Baltimore City Departments of Transportation and Planning should pursue strategies to improve pedestrian safety for these students, families, and community members. Strategies could include the following:

- Analyze the recent 4-way stop evaluation conducted in the neighborhood to determine pedestrian safety precautions that can be taken around the train tracks
- Explore options with the City and with CSX to install lighting under the train underpass at Lakewood where there is none



29. 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 developed 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.

30. Explore ways to accommodate safe bicycle travel to school and in the neighborhood.

Students who want to bike to school should have a safe, easy way to do so. In addition to assessing opportunities along the school perimeter and primary routes, look at the Baltimore City Bike Master Plan to identify other possible methods to make biking safer.

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Appendix A: List of Draft Recommendations

Investing in Housing and Market-Strengthening Development Opportunities

- Support and Increase Homeownership
 - Promote homeowner assistance programs to help current and new owners maintain and improve their homes
 - Use the momentum of the existing Vacants to Value Community Development Clusters to spur further investment in the INSPIRE area
- Remove blight
 - Utilize strategic whole-block demolition to remove the most blighted vacant buildings
- Create and Maintain High-Quality Rental Housing
 - Incentivize good landlords to maintain rental units in the neighborhood
- Promote Large-scale and Strategic Development Opportunities
 - Explore reuse of the Dr. Rayner Browne School Building
 - Redevelop the site of the former grocery store, adjacent to the Dr. Rayner Browne building
 - Redevelop the Hoen building
 - Market the Vacant Rowhouses on 2200-block of Henneman Avenue
 - Develop short- and long-term strategies to improve Milton Avenue from Gay Street to Ashland Avenue

Creating Environmentally-Sustainable Neighborhoods

- Turn Blighted Vacant Lots into Positive Uses and Contribute to the Green Network
 - Conduct a survey of vacant lots in the area to assess green reuse opportunities
 - Develop neighborhood greening projects to turn vacant lots into community assets through the Growing Green Initiative
 - Plant and maintain new street trees along identified streets
 - Establish a “Bloom Your Block”-style competition that enhances community pride while residents have fun maintaining and beautifying properties
 - Explore opportunities for Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle School to become a “Green School”

Improving Sanitation

- Keep the Neighborhoods Clean
 - Implement a Code Enforcement Zone Strategy for the west side of the INSPIRE plan area
 - Address illegal dumping and clean-up dumping hotspots and dirty alleys.

- Educate residents, landlords, and businesses about proper trash and recycling storage and disposal
- Develop community led initiatives to address trash and litter problems

Improving Resident Safety

- Improve lighting in the neighborhoods
 - Evaluate lighting levels to make streets safer
- Work with the Eastern Police District
 - Work with the Eastern Police District (major and beat cops), and the Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice, to develop recommendations for public safety improvements

Creating Opportunities for Health and Wellness

- Increase Use of Parks and Playgrounds
 - Create partnerships to increase activity programming at Bocek Park
 - Improve the northwest entrance of Bocek Park and create a better connection between the park and the neighborhoods
 - Proactively monitor Luzerne Park and its playground for illegal dumping
- Enhance Healthy Food Environment
 - Use recreation center and school for meal programs
 - Encourage healthy food retail, especially at stores near schools
 - Engage with nearby Real Food Farm

Creating Connections and Access

- Improve Walking and Biking Access and Safety in Neighborhoods
 - Evaluate Federal and Preston streets to determine appropriate traffic calming measures
 - Enforce truck routes especially along Oliver and Federal streets
 - Improve pedestrian safety for students traveling to school from the southern portion of the plan area which requires crossing the underpass below the train tracks
 - Create a walking school bus, bicycle train, or block captain sentinel program
 - Explore bicycle facilities to accommodate safe bicycle travel to school and in the neighborhood

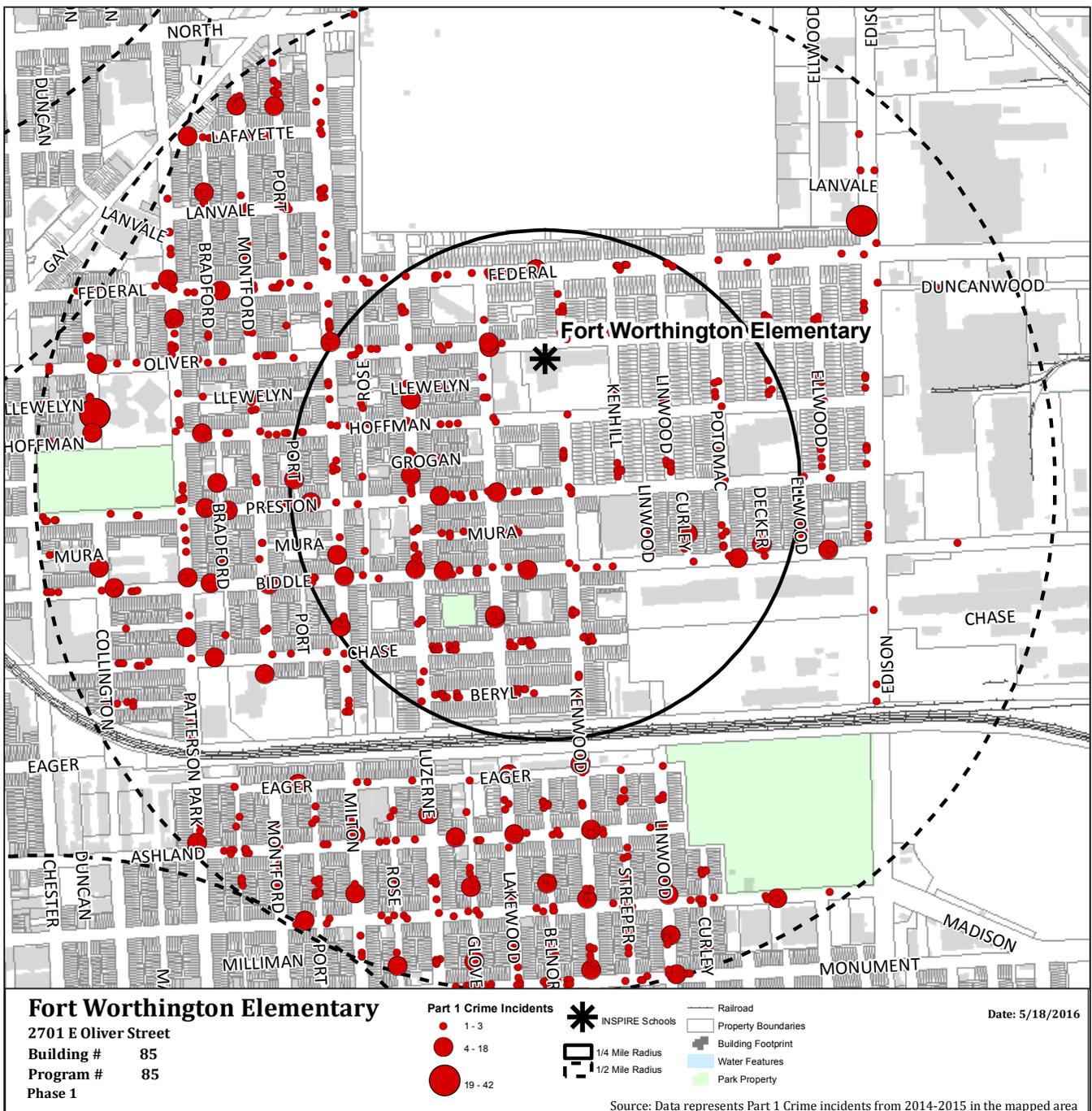
Appendix C: Maps

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

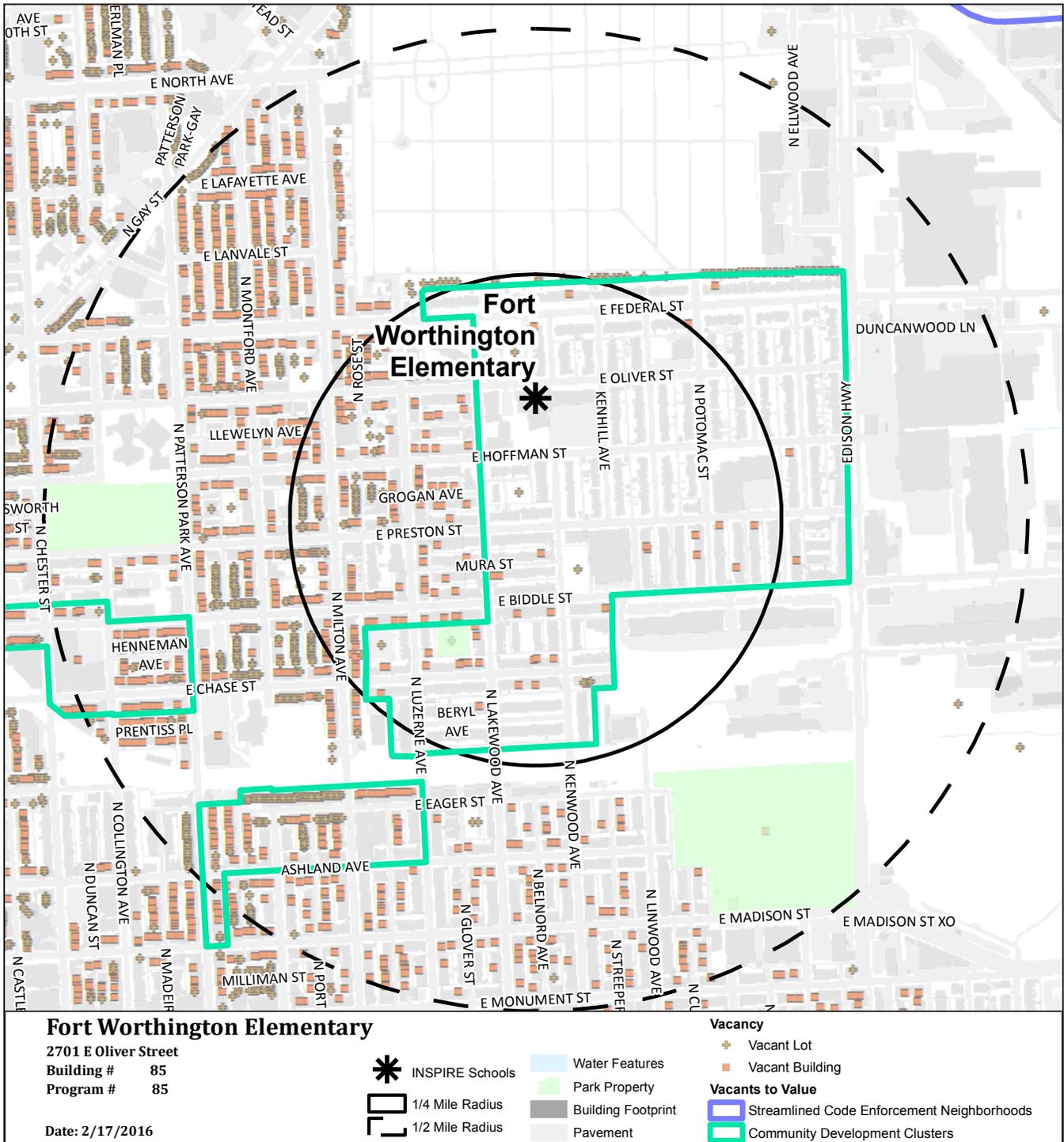


This map shows Part 1 crime incidents from 2014-2015.

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

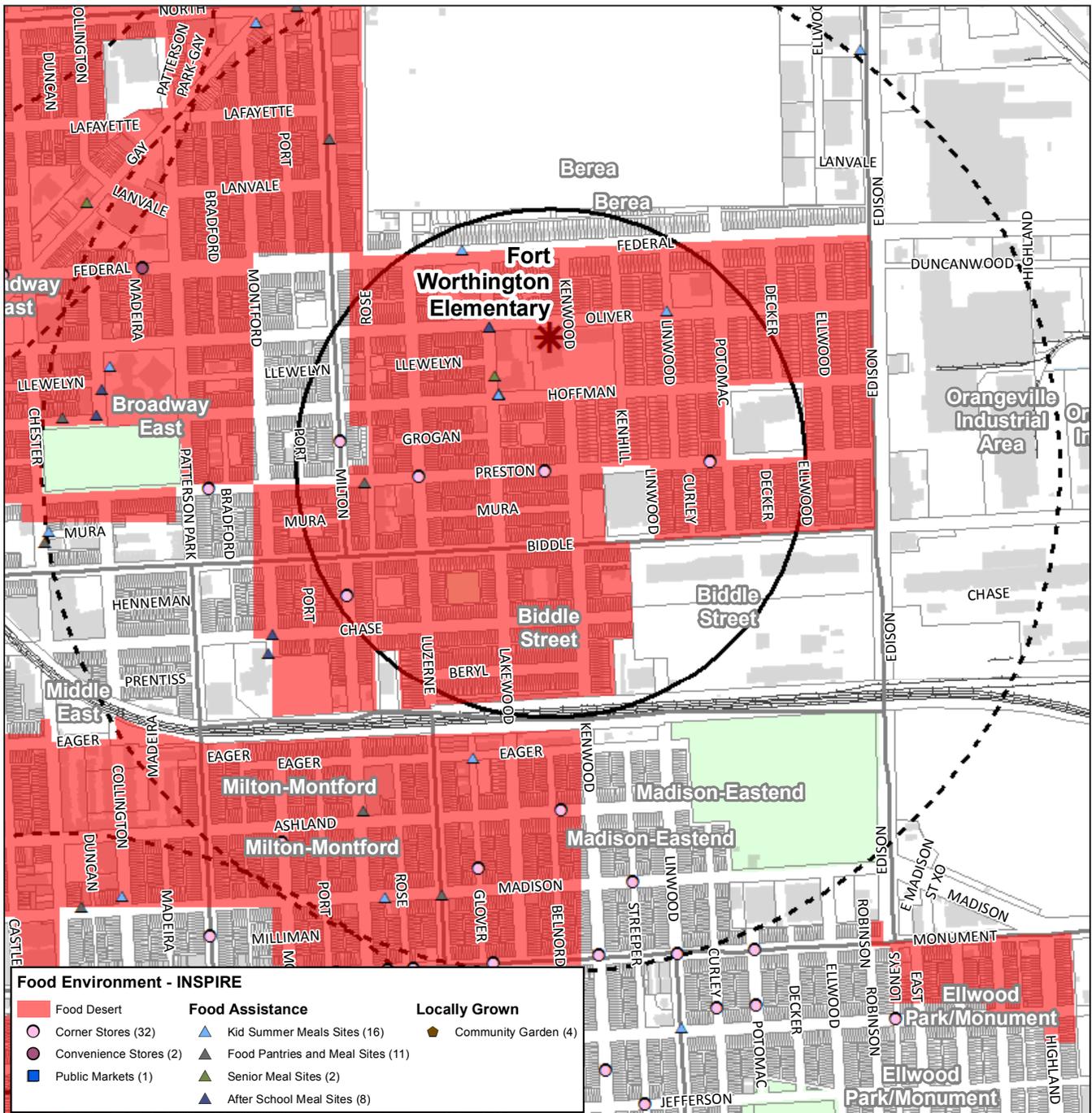


Vacant Properties and Vacants to Value Community Development Clusters



Food Environment Map

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



Appendix C: Description of Area- or City-Wide Programs

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

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.

www.baltimoresustainability.org/projects/baltimore-food-policy-initiative/

Baltimarket Healthy Corner Store Program works with store owners and with communities to make healthy food available in corner stores. The Healthy Corner Store Program is a part of Baltimarket, a suite of community-based food access and food justice programs through the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD).

www.baltimarket.org/healthy-corner-stores/

Baltimore Tree Trust (BTT) is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization committed to restoring the city’s urban forest and making Baltimore a healthier and more beautiful place to live through increased tree plantings, tree stewardship, community engagement, public education, advocacy, and research. BTT works to restore Baltimore’s aging tree canopy by collaborating with the city’s TreeBaltimore program, nonprofit partners, private landowners, city residents, and businesses.

<http://baltimoretreetrust.org/>

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.

www.bluewaterbaltimore.org/

Clean Corps Baltimore is a peer-to-peer network of city neighborhoods, working in partnership with the City and nonprofits to reduce trash and litter in their communities. Clean Corp, uses a peer-to-peer network to distribute information and resources to City residents who are committed to having clean streets and alleys; train engaged community leaders to provide them with the tools and knowledge necessary to educate their neighbors; and engage them in community cleanups, art projects, and advocacy.

cleancorpsbaltimore.org

The Growing Green Initiative is a City-led effort to use sustainable, innovative, and cost-effective practices for stabilizing and holding land for redevelopment, and reusing vacant land to green neighborhoods, reduce stormwater runoff, grow food, and create community spaces that mitigate the negative impacts of vacant properties and set the stage for growing Baltimore.

www.baltimoresustainability.org/projects/growing-green-initiative/

Healthy Neighborhoods helps strong but undervalued Baltimore neighborhoods increase home values, market their communities, create high standards for property improvements, and forge strong connections among neighbors. The initiative provides capital for rehabilitation and purchase of homes, funding community-based projects, marketing neighborhoods to homebuyers and developers, and creating partnerships between neighborhood organizations, non-profits, and lenders.

www.healthyneighborhoods.org/

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 encour-

aging 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.

Vacants to Value is Mayor Rawlings-Blake's initiative to clean up and redevelop vacant properties, help raise property values, create community amenities, increase local tax revenue, and attract new residents and businesses.

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

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/