

Leveraging Investments in Neighborhood Corridors (LINCS)

Overview

Mayor Rawlings-Blake initiated **Leveraging Investments in Neighborhood Corridors (LINCS)** to continue her efforts to Grow Baltimore. LINCS is an interagency partnership to revitalize the major corridors that connect neighborhoods and communities throughout the City, to enhance the aesthetics and economic vitality of these key gateways, while seeking to improve quality of life and increase community capacity.

Baltimore's neighborhood corridors are the primary routes for navigating in and around the city. They play a significant role in shaping the perception and the reality of adjacent communities. In their current conditions many of the city's commercial corridors do not adequately reflect the strength of the communities that support them. **LINCS** will leverage existing city programs with key mayoral initiatives, and be initially piloted in five of City's most heavily traveled corridors.

Process

Recognizing that each corridor presents its own unique set of conditions, **LINCS** will evaluate each corridor individually to determine its strengths, challenges and opportunities. This initiative is designed to utilize the capacity of our community partners to manage community engagement, while City staff will provide technical assistance. Coordinated through the Baltimore City Planning Department, **LINCS** will use a team approach, with each team consisting of a design planner, transportation planner, a commercial market analyst, and Baltimore Housing representative. Staff members will work collaboratively on the needs of the targeted commercial corridors.

The **LINCS** teams will perform assessments of each corridor and then use the results to guide the teams in recommending strategic actions that target existing city programs and services to address the specific needs of each corridor. In collaboration with our civic and business partners, the **LINCS** teams will implement these programs and services throughout the commercial corridor.

The implementation strategies will focus on five areas:

- Economic Development,
- Land Use and Zoning,
- Transportation
- Public Safety and Health
- Sanitation

Under each strategic focus area, a toolbox of existing and renewed programs and services will be employed to improve the character of these key corridors and strengthen the neighborhoods that surround them.



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

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Greenmount Avenue

Where: Eager St to 29th St



Liberty Heights Blvd

Where: Druid Park Drive to Northern Pkwy.



Central Avenue

Where: E. Fayette St. to Fleet St.



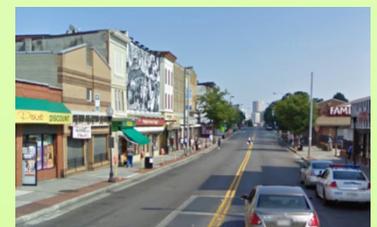
East North Avenue

Where: Greenmount Ave. to Belair Road



Penn North

Where: North Fulton Ave. to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.



Corridor Profile: The Greenmount Avenue Corridor

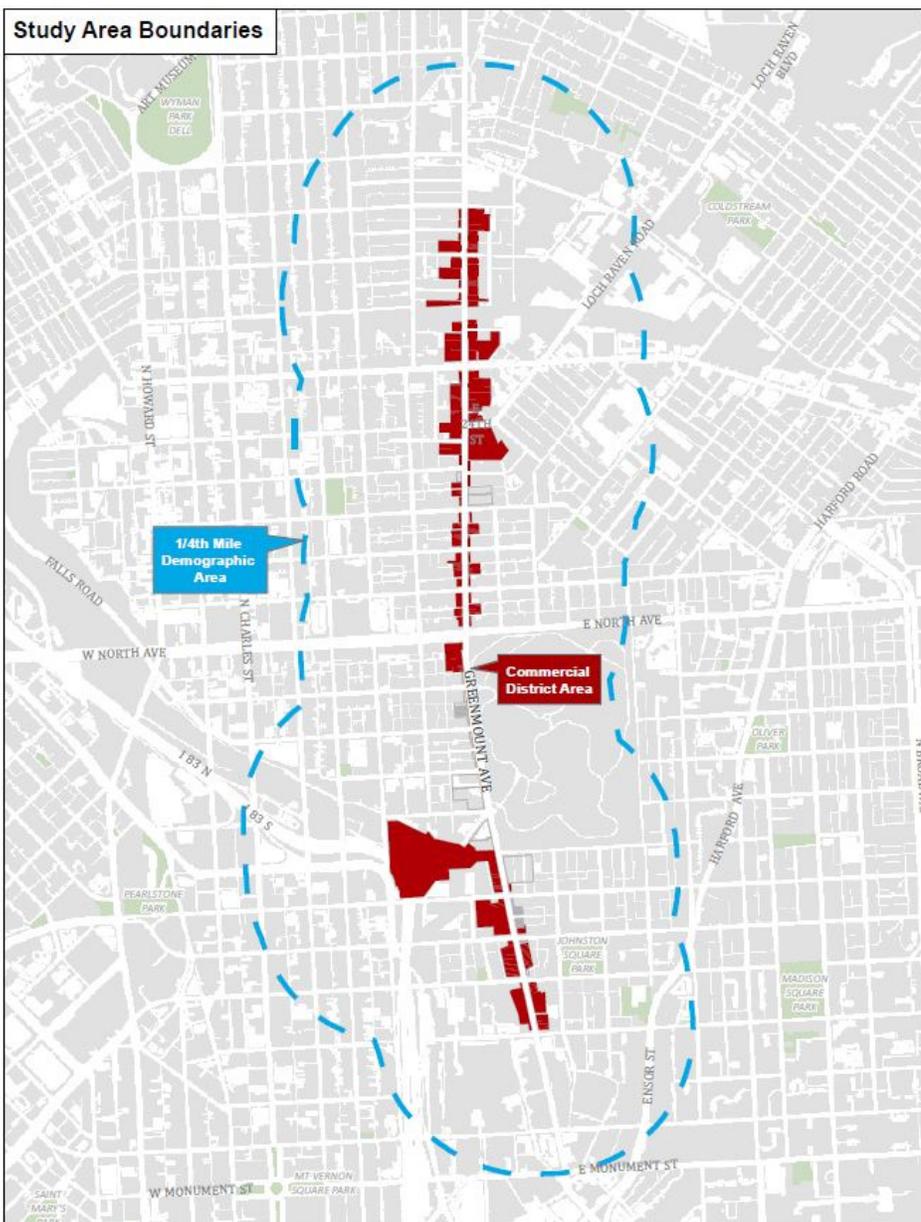
The Greenmount Avenue corridor from Eager Street north to 29th Street has seen improvements in some of the surrounding neighborhoods, but requires City assistance and targeted interventions to reach its full potential. The corridor is bookended by activity centers that could be leveraged to improve the corridor as a whole. On the north end is the Waverly Main Street area which is a thriving business district with strong community support, and could benefit from additional investment. The southern end of the corridor is included in the Station North Arts and Entertainment District and has started to see a wide variety of arts and housing related investments and activities.



Community Partner
Strong City Baltimore

Issues Facing the Corridor

- Retail mix does not meet the needs of diverse residential population.
- Some of the surrounding neighborhoods are experiencing increased residential development.
- Speeding is an issue and pedestrian safety is a concern.
- Real and perceived public safety concerns.



Greenmount Ave and E 25th St



Existing Conditions:



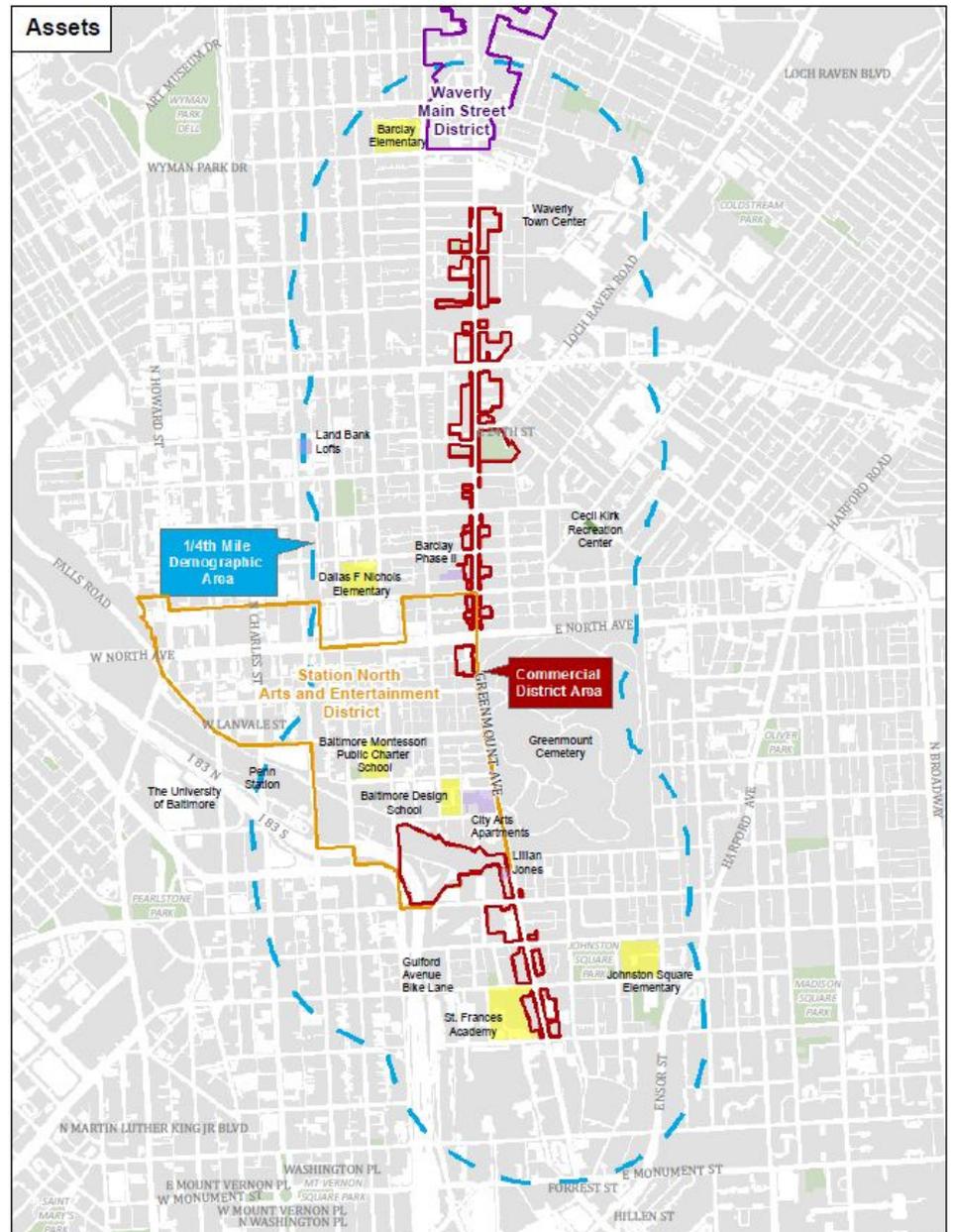
City Arts Apartments



Lillian Jones Apartments



Barclay Phase II



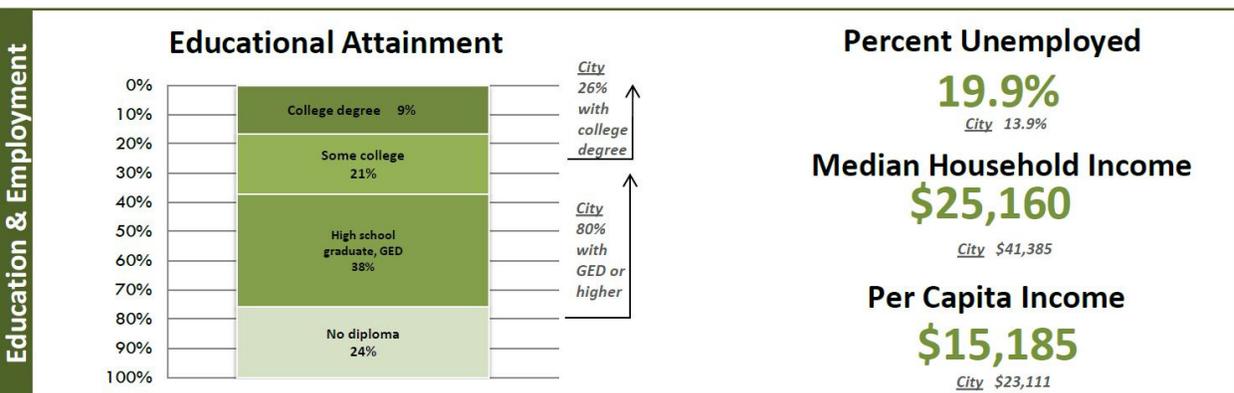
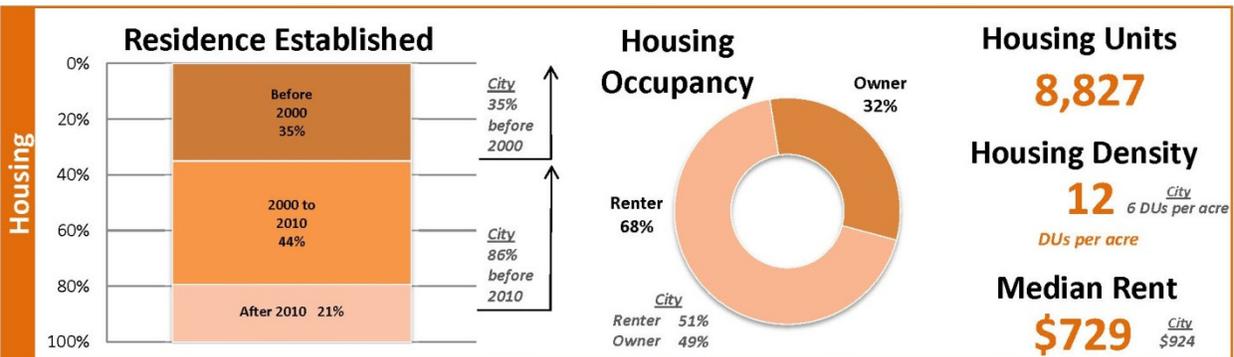
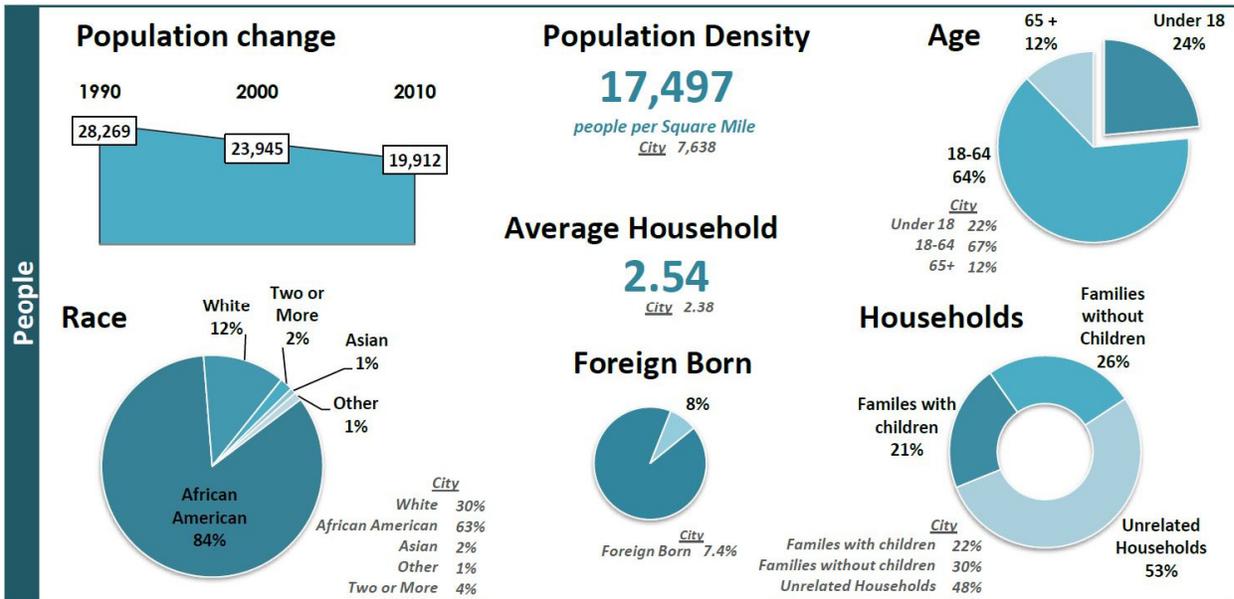
Strengths

- 1 – Greenmount’s proximity to Penn Station, MICA, University of Baltimore, and the artist community at Station North make it ripe for redevelopment
- 2 – A few bright spots highlight the struggling corridor district such as City Arts and the Lillian Jones apartments
- 3 – Building types on Greenmount Avenue offer diverse options and smaller floor plates that small businesses/entrepreneurs need

Weaknesses

- 1 –The commercial district properties have a high degree of vacancy and abandonment
- 2 – Historic Greenmount Cemetery on the east represents a large area with no potential active uses
- 3 – Retail businesses on Greenmount are not well-maintained and have low quality facades and design

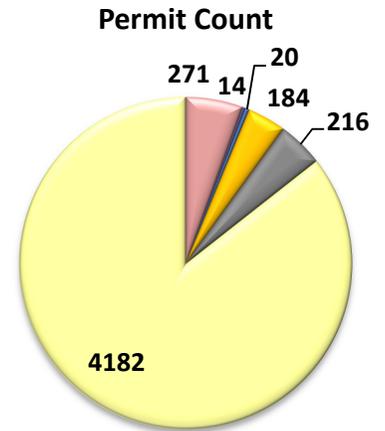
Demographic Indicators:



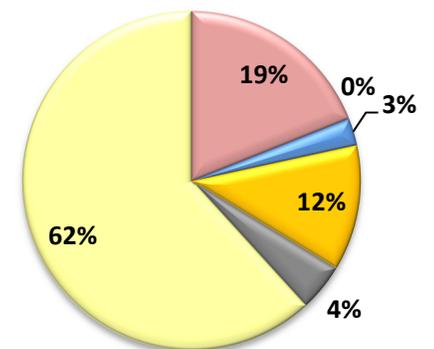
Land Use and Zoning:



Building Permits 2010-2014



Permit Costs



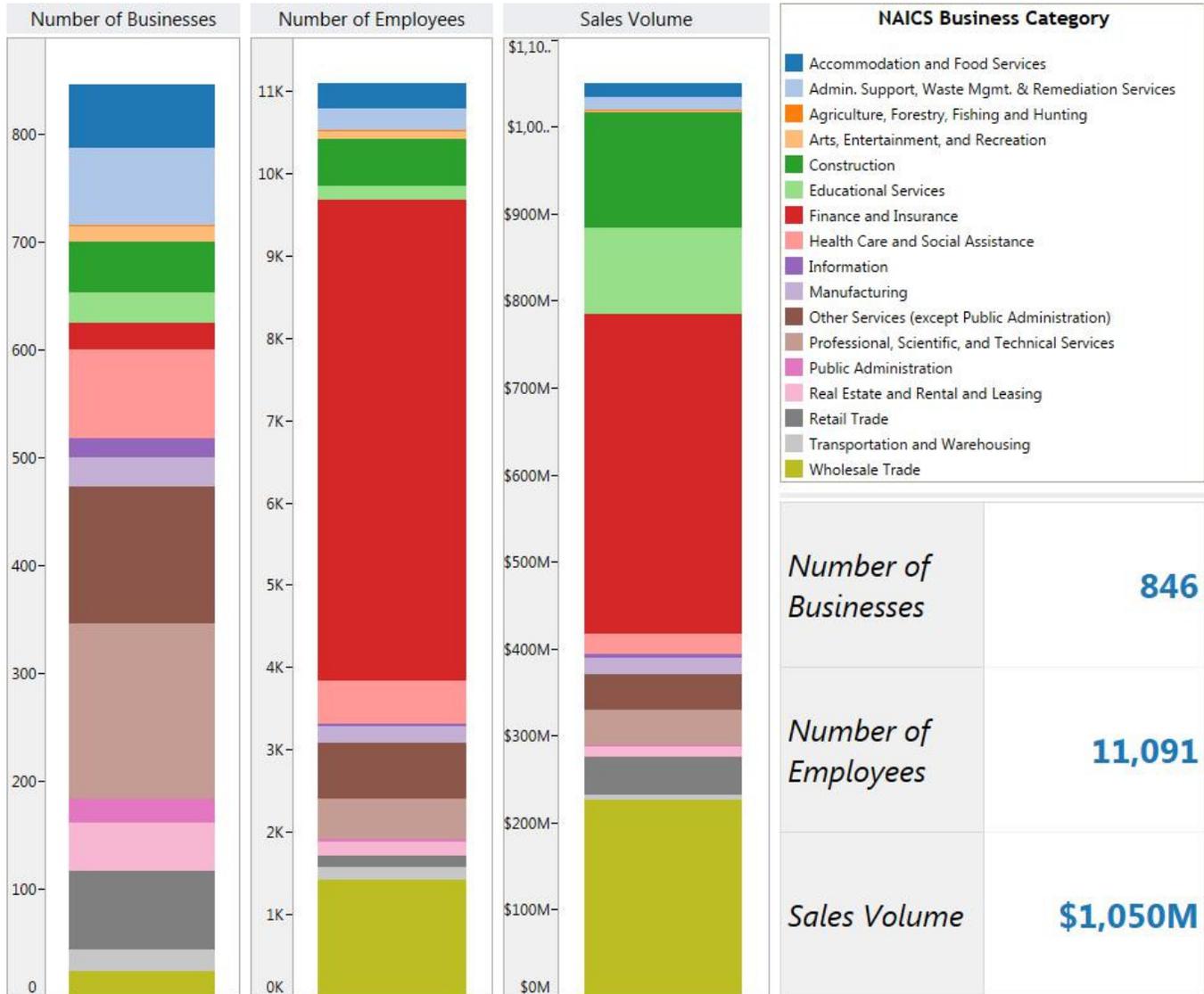
5-Year Permit Total:
4,888

5-Year Permit
Investment:
\$ 126,500,200

Source: 5-Year Building Permit data from the City of Baltimore records, 2010-2014.

Economic Vitality:

Corridor Businesses



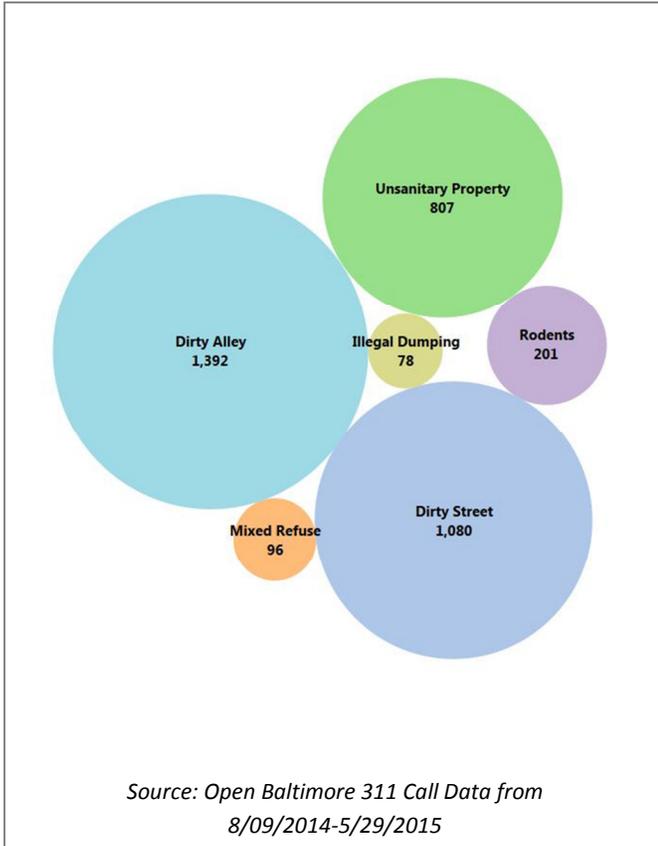
Source: The business data was collected from ESRI Business Analyst for 2013 and includes the Corridor's 1/4th mile demographic area.



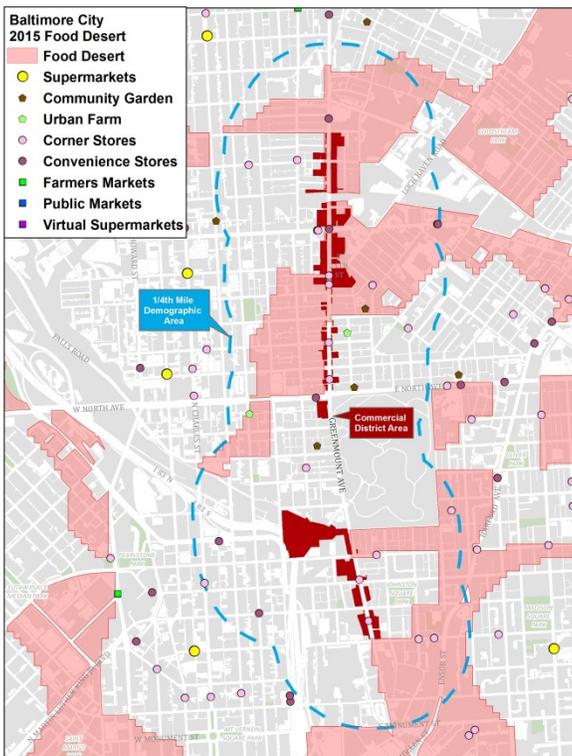
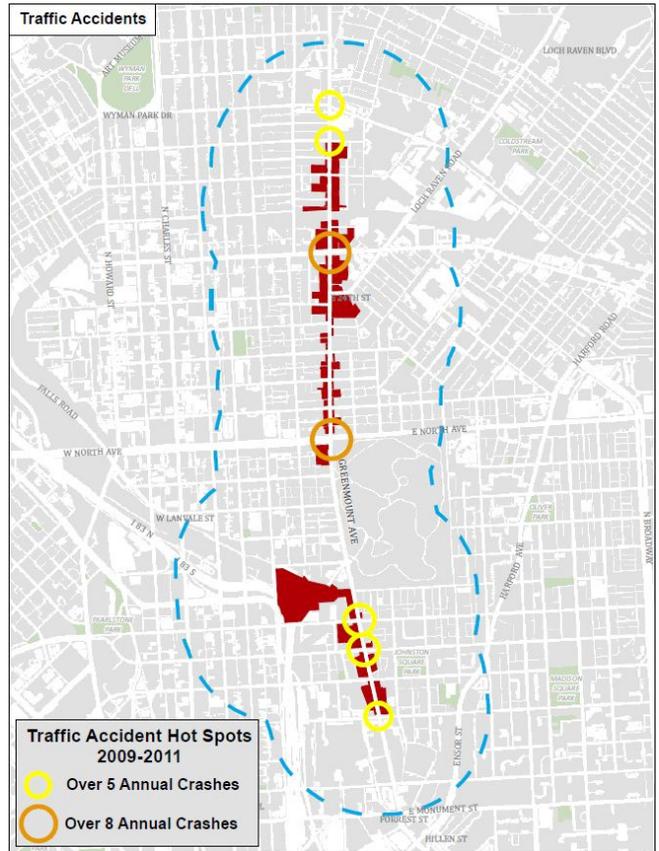
Source: The vacancy data is from the May 2015 Real Property parcel layer. Commercial District Area properties are defined as properties zoned commercial that are adjacent to the Greenmount Corridor.

Public Safety and Health:

Public Sanitation Service Requests



Traffic Accident Hot Spots



Food Environment

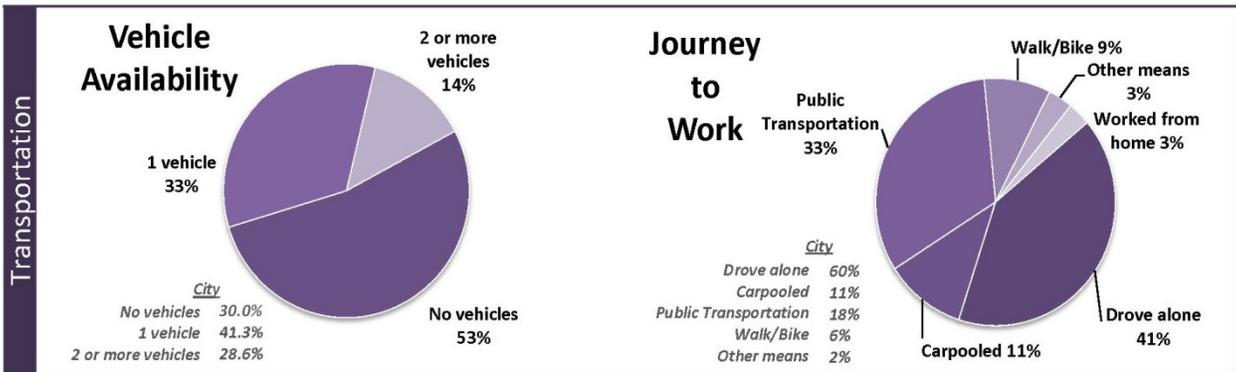
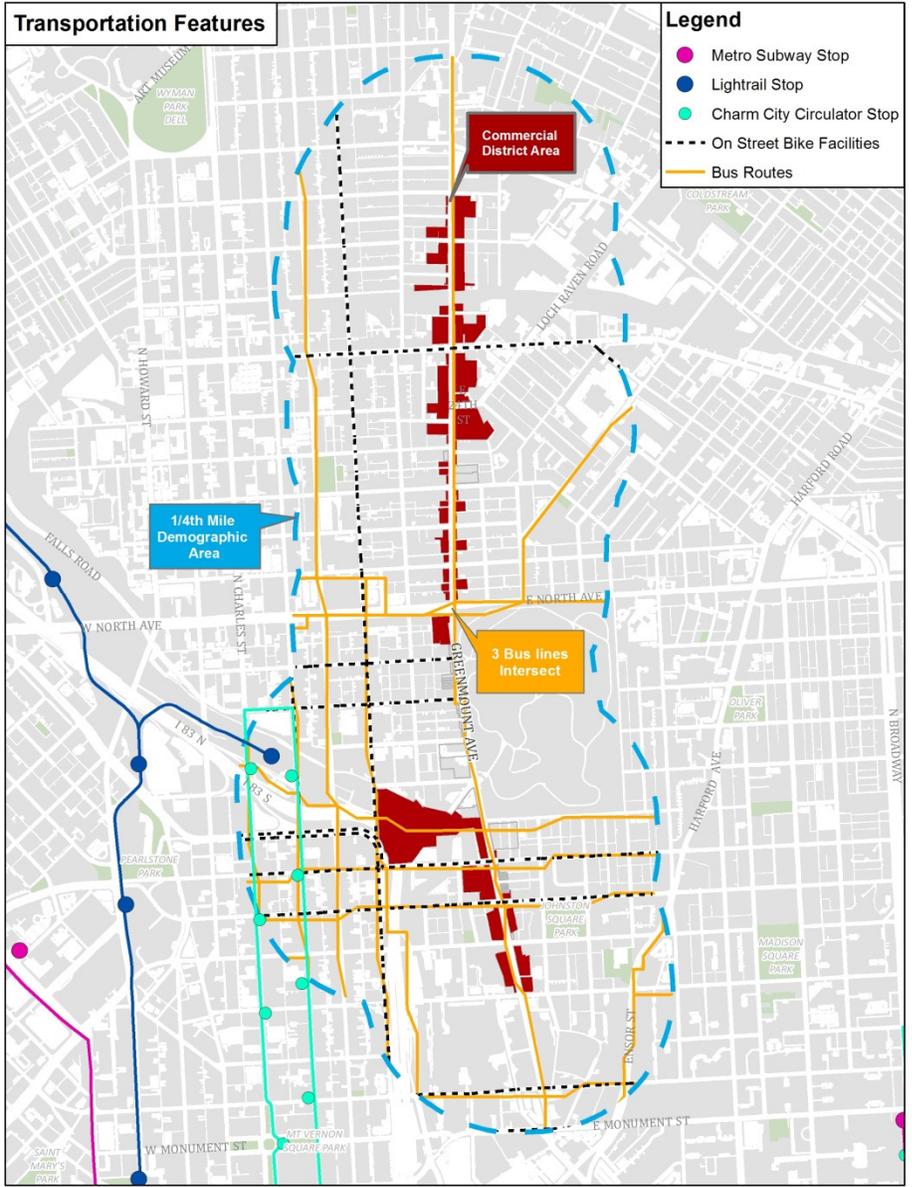
Within the ¼ mile area surrounding the corridor there are:

- 5,500 people (or 27% of the population) living in a Food Desert*
- No supermarkets
- 3 community gardens
- 2 urban farms
- 18 corner stores
- 7 convenience stores
- No farmers markets
- No virtual supermarkets

*A Food Desert is an area where:

- 1) The distance to a supermarket or supermarket alternative is more than ¼ mile,
- 2) The median household income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level,
- 3) Over 30% of households have no vehicle available, and
- 4) The average Healthy Food Availability Index score for all food stores is low.

Transportation:



Recommendations

1. Increase the number of crosswalks across the corridor, as crosswalks are too far apart to be useful.
2. Have community partner's work with Rec and Parks to improve the Greenmount Recreation Center.
3. Perform a cost analysis for expanding the Greenmount Recreation Center.
4. Address the outstanding 41% vacancy in commercially-zoned properties
5. Find a way to attract small businesses and entrepreneurs best suited to occupy the small floor plates of the vacant storefronts.
6. Improve the streetscape to better suit the character of the existing buildings without hindering bus and commuter traffic. The heavy traffic and speeding doesn't fit the built environment of a commercial district that was developed when high speed traffic was less extreme.
7. Improve the safety of the traffic accident hotspot intersections at Greenmount and North Ave and Greenmount and E 25th St.
8. Work to improve access to transit in the corridor to assist the majority of the population without vehicles.
9. Improve healthy food access in the areas of the corridor that are in a food desert.
10. Partner with the Greater Homewood Community Corporation to identify community concerns and issues.
11. Identify the most appropriate land uses for each area of the corridor.
12. Determine how new construction should relate to the street and adjoining neighborhoods.



Toolkit:

The City of Baltimore has many potential programs and services that can be targeted at Greenmount Corridor:

- **Economic Development Tools**
 - Neighborhood Development (Baltimore Development Corporation)
 - *Façade Improvement Grant, Baltimore MICRO, and Enterprise Zone Tax Credits*
 - Various grants, loans, and tax credit programs will be targeted in Greenmount Corridor to support business operations and provide critical financing for expansion.
 - *Market Study Analysis*
 - Utilizing both in-house analyst and hired consultants, a market study will be performed for the commercial corridor. The assessment will provide government decision-makers, private investors, and community leaders with a realistic understanding of the potential for development of the different types of land uses that make up the corridor.
 - *Targeted Code Enforcement*
 - To maintain safe and attractive neighborhoods and business districts throughout the city, Baltimore Housing's Code Enforcement Division enforces the city's housing, zoning, building and related codes in target areas.
- **Planning**
 - Planning Department
 - *Design and Zoning*
 - The Land Use Planning Division directs the physical development of the City in coordination with comprehensive plans.
 - *Comprehensive Planning*
 - The Comprehensive Planning Division incorporates a variety of planning disciplines including land use, environmental planning, transportation planning, and community planning to ensure that the City is provided with realistic, implementable plans.
- **Transportation**
 - Department of Transportation
 - *Streetscape*
 - Roadway improvements that include but are not limited to tree plantings, lighting enhancements, sidewalk repair, roadway resurfacing, traffic calming, and landscaped medians.
 - *Bike Baltimore*
 - Bike Baltimore is a Mayoral initiative to institute infrastructure improvements, policy recommendations, educational goals and enforcement strategies designed to make Baltimore a bike friendly city.
 - *TreeBaltimore (Recreation and Parks)*
 - TreeBaltimore is a Mayoral initiative led by the Baltimore City of Recreation and Parks in partnership with Blue Water Baltimore, the Parks & People Foundation, and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay that will be used to bolster street tree coverage.
- **Sanitation**
 - Department of Public Works
 - The Department of Public Works has the ability to target priority areas in the corridor with their Corner Can Initiative, Mechanical Streetsweeping, Community Service Workers, Community Pitch-In Program, and Graffiti Removal.