

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING



2015 Annual Report



Thomas J. Stosur
Director of Planning



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

BALTIMORE
AND A PORTION OF
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD
SHOWING
EXISTING AND PROPOSED PARK LAND

Scales
0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 FEET
0 1000 2000 3000 4000 METERS

OLMSTED BROTHERS, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS,
BROOKLINE, MASS., 1905

Contour Interval 20 feet.

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Mission Statement

To build Baltimore as a diverse, sustainable and thriving city of neighborhoods and as the economic and cultural driver for the region.



Mayor's Message

Dear Citizen,

I am pleased to share with you the Baltimore City Department of Planning's 2015 Annual Report. In 2015, the Planning Department led many Citywide initiatives to promote community investment through master planning efforts, supporting new neighborhood development projects, and providing oversight to capital projects, including the 21st Century School construction program. The Planning Department also worked with residents and key stakeholders to move forward enhanced food policy measures to support food access in underserved communities and promoted sustainability and energy efficiency programs across the City.

This past year also served as a time to reflect on the City's efforts and continued need to promote diversity - socially, economically and through the built environment - Citywide. The Planning Department's reflection resulted in a new mission statement. The mission statement emphasizes that as we grow as a City, the cultural and economic engine for the region, we must grow in a sustainable way that benefits all of our communities and residents.

We look forward to the Planning Department's continued success in 2016 with more investment and progress in each of our City's 278 neighborhoods. Our collective success depends on your active engagement and I thank you for helping to shape our City's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Rawlings-Blake". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "S" and a cursive "Blake".

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor



Director's Message

Responsible for shaping the direction of Baltimore City's growth and development, the work of the Department of Planning is critical to the future of our City. I'm pleased to share this publication, highlighting our accomplishments during the past year.

In 2015, the city gained momentum towards the Mayor's goal of adding 10,000 new households by 2020. New and exciting development projects moved through the development pipeline in many of our neighborhoods: New East Baltimore, Canton Crossing, Remington and Harbor Point, to name a few. Progress is also being made towards fostering revitalization around schools through the INSPIRE neighborhood planning program and along key commercial corridors through the City's LINCS initiative.

This past year, the Department's work was also informed by the implications of the unrest in April, which underscored a need to refocus on equitable development. Department staff formed an Equity Committee to examine this issue and how it intersects with our work. Other Departmental initiatives are also integrating the equity lens into our work: the recently released Food Environment Map draws attention to the issue of food access across Baltimore neighborhoods, and the upcoming launch of our Sustainability Plan update will examine ways that policies and programs impact low-income residents and people of color. In coming years, the Green Network Plan will aim to transform abandoned properties into new community assets for our most challenged neighborhoods.

Moving forward, Planning Department staff will continue our efforts to support more inclusive development patterns, maintain the city's unique character, and improve its' livability for all residents.

On behalf of all Planning Department staff, we are grateful to be able to serve the citizens, businesses and institutions of Baltimore, and we look forward to working with you in 2016 and beyond to fulfill our mission: To build Baltimore as a diverse, sustainable and thriving city of neighborhoods and as the economic and cultural driver for the region.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Stosur

Thomas J. Stosur
Director

Departmental Overview

WHAT WE DO

The Department of Planning is the City agency entrusted with guiding the physical development of the City of Baltimore.

The Department staffs three Mayoral-appointed City Commissions. This Annual Report describes the accomplishments of the divisions within the Department, each with its special focus in support of the mission and the Commissions we serve.



GOVERNANCE



Planning Commission

The Planning Commission in its current form dates back to a revision of the City Charter in 1947. There are nine members of the Planning Commission: six citizen appointees and three ex-officio appointees from the City Council, Mayor's Office and Department of Public Works.

The key responsibilities of the Commission are:

- Developing and maintaining the City's Comprehensive Master Plan
- Preparing and updating plans for the physical development of the City of Baltimore
- Developing a capital budget and six-year Capital Improvement Program
- Reviewing all proposed amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance



Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) was established in 1964. The CHAP mission is to enhance and promote the culture and economy of Baltimore through the preservation of buildings, structures, sites and neighborhoods that have aesthetic, historic and architectural value.

The Commission's key functions are:

- Designating Baltimore City Landmarks and Historic Districts
- Reviewing plans affecting designated structures
- Supporting policies and programs that foster preservation of Baltimore City's historic assets



Commission on Sustainability

The Sustainability Commission was established in 2007 and the first 21 Member Commission was officially appointed in 2008. The Commission's key responsibilities include:

- Developing, updating and monitoring implementation of the City's Sustainability Plan
- Creating an annual progress report on Sustainability initiatives
- Developing partnerships with government, NGO's, businesses and citizens to implement City-wide sustainability programs
- Advising the Administration and key decision makers on Sustainability issues and proposed legislation

DIVISIONS



Comprehensive Planning Division

Comprehensive Planners are assigned to geographic areas and work to ensure that sound planning principles are the basis for neighborhood planning efforts.

Comprehensive planners provide services such as:

- Developing neighborhood plans, urban renewal plans and plan amendments in collaboration with community stakeholders and agency representatives
- Coordinating community review of development plans, zoning appeals and planning-related City Council bills



Land Use and Urban Design Division

(LUUD) serves as the first stop for development in the City of Baltimore for projects ranging from individual buildings to large subdivisions and mixed-use developments. The key functions of the Land Use and Urban Design Division include:

- Reviewing all new development proposals
- Reviewing and evaluating revisions to the Baltimore City Zoning Code
- Providing recommendations to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals on all conditional use and residential building conversion applications
- Staffing the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel (UDARP)



Division of Historical and Architectural Preservation

works to preserve and renew the City's historic fabric. Preservation Planners serve as the staff for the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) by:

- Providing analysis, evaluation and recommendations for designation of Baltimore City Landmarks and Historic Districts
- Reviewing plans impacting historically designated structures and districts and assisting applicants with the City's historic tax credit process
- Supporting policies and programs that foster the preservation of Baltimore City's historic assets





Research and Strategic Planning (RSP) Division

provides information, research and analysis to inform the Department's policy making activities. The division is responsible for:

- Maintaining and updating the City's Comprehensive Master Plan
- Producing the City's cooperative population and employment forecasts
- Preparing for each decennial census and working with the US Census Bureau to produce annual population estimates
- Providing GIS-based analysis to support planning initiatives



Division of Sustainability and Environmental Planning

manages the Forest Conservation, Flood Plain and Critical Area Programs to protect property and enhance the City's natural resources. Baltimore's Food Policy Initiative is also a part of the Sustainability Division team. The division focuses on the following areas:

- Responding to climate change by developing a resiliency plan for the City
- Improving City quality of life through community-based greening initiatives
- Developing programs to reduce energy and water usage, minimize waste, and maximize the usage of recycled materials
- Fostering green job growth and workforce development opportunities
- Advancing access to healthy foods across the City



More information about the City of Baltimore
Department of Planning

<http://bit.ly/BaltimorePlanning>

Keep up with Planning Department news by
subscribing to our monthly newsletter

<http://bit.ly/BaltimorePlanningCompass>

Comprehensive Planning

Division Chief:
Sara Paranilam



KEY 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Adopted South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan
- Completed Southwest Partnership Vision Plan
- Conducted INSPIRE Planning initiative around the renovation of neighborhood schools
- Launched work on the Greenmount Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue LINC strategies



The South Baltimore Gateway (SBG) Master Plan

Steps are currently underway to implement the SBG Master Plan recommendations, which impact a dozen neighborhoods along Baltimore's Middle Branch of the Patapsco River. Some of the key initiatives outlined in the SBG Master Plan include:

- Expanding trail networks around the Middle Branch
- Developing a world-class waterfront park system
- Improving the quality of water in the Middle Branch
- Promoting transformative redevelopment along Russell and Warner Streets
- Enhancing local business support networks and resources

More information about the The South
Baltimore Gateway Master Plan

<http://www.southbaltimoregatewaymasterplan.com>

Southwest Partnership

The Southwest Partnership vision plan was formally adopted by the Planning Commission in September of 2015. The vision plan includes strategies such as creating a market district along Hollins Street; creating a “pop-up” business program; and enhancing the connections between the B&O Railroad Museum and other historic assets in the area.



The Southwest Partnership

www.southwestpartnershipbaltimore.org

INSPIRE

Through the 21st Century Schools Initiative, Baltimore City Public Schools, in partnership with the Maryland Stadium Authority, Baltimore City, and the State, is investing nearly one billion dollars to renovate or replace schools over the next several years. The Department of Planning is leading an initiative for the neighborhoods surrounding each of the new or renovated schools called INSPIRE, which stands for Investing in Neighborhoods and Schools to Promote Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence.

The INSPIRE plans focus on the quarter-mile surrounding each school. Through a community-based listening process, including workshops and focus groups, Planning will develop individual plans outlining the community's vision for private investment and implementable public improvements to transportation, housing, and open space.

The Department of Planning is currently engaged in the first two stages of INSPIRE planning at nearly a dozen schools across the city. Plans will include commitments to make a variety of improvements including creating safer and accessible pedestrian routes adjacent to, and around the schools; removing blight and creating positive green uses in its place by working with the Department of Planning's Growing Green Initiative; and encouraging redevelopment.

The National Resource Network (NRN), a technical assistance program, whose experts develop innovative solutions to tough economic challenges, is working with the Department of Planning to identify opportunities for strategic partnerships and develop a process for the strategic reuse of the school buildings that are proposed for closure.



INSPIRE Baltimore
<http://bit.ly/INSPIREBaltimore>



In 2015:

10
INSPIRE Areas
1/4 mile
radius
\$5
million investment



LINCS

Leveraging Investments in Neighborhood Corridors (LINCS) is an interagency partnership led by Planning and The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) to revitalize and improve the economic vitality of several of the City's commercial gateways and surrounding communities.

The LINCS interagency team is partnering with the Baltimore Chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and community organizations to conduct two-day Technical Advisory Panels (TAP) for the corridors. The TAP panels will result in an assessment of current conditions and opportunities to improve the design of the corridors and attract new investment.

In collaboration with civic and business partners, the LINCS team will then implement the recommended strategies throughout the corridors:

- Greenmount Avenue
- Pennsylvania Avenue
- Liberty Heights Boulevard
- East North Avenue
- Central Avenue



Capital Improvement Program

To guide the City in making necessary physical improvements, the Planning Department annually prepares a six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for approval by the Planning Commission, Board of Finance and Board of Estimates. In 2015, the Planning Commission approved the FY16-FY21 Capital Improvement Program, which includes more than \$600 million for capital improvements in Fiscal Year 2016 alone.



Baltimore City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
<http://bit.ly/CIPBaltimore>

Park Heights

In 2006, the Planning Commission adopted the Park Heights Master Plan, a blueprint for strengthening the Greater Park Heights community in NW Baltimore. The plan sets forth more than 50 recommendations for the redevelopment of 1,200 acres across 12 neighborhoods and commercial districts, as well as the Pimlico Race Course.

Since the Master Plan was approved, over \$200 million dollars has been invested into the community. The funding has been used to complete Ripken Fields and undertake the expansion of C.C. Jackson Recreation Center. The Fields project replaced 30 vacant and abandoned homes, and the C.C. Jackson expansion is adding 7,000 square feet of recreation space including locker rooms, a fitness area and game rooms. This project represents a total investment of \$7.3 million dollars, including state, city and private funding.

Renaissance Gardens, new affordable housing for low-income seniors, has been developed through a partnership between Park Heights Renaissance, Comprehensive Housing Assistance Incorporated (CHAI) and Baltimore City. This project resulted in 60 new units of affordable housing, a total investment of \$8.9 million dollars.

In December of 2015, demolition on Park Heights Avenue in the Major Redevelopment Area (MRA) began. The redevelopment of this 49-acre area, which includes 400 vacant buildings and lots around Park Heights and Woodland Avenue, is a key component of the Master Plan. Approximately 80% of the vacant houses have been acquired by the City, and an RFQ will be issued for the redevelopment of the site.

The Planning Department is working closely with Baltimore City Public Schools on the 21st Century Schools Initiative to redevelop two schools in the Park Heights community: Pimlico and Arlington Elementary/Middle Schools. Vision plans for the communities adjacent to the schools will be developed through the department-led INSPIRE process.

Planning continues to work with the communities around Pimlico Racetrack and the Pimlico Community Development Authority to develop a spending plan for gaming revenue. The Maryland legislature directed a share of slots revenues to go to neighborhoods impacted by Casinos, in the form of local impact aid. This funding will be used to further implement the recommendations of the Park Heights Master Plan, particularly site assembly in the Major Redevelopment Area.

12
neighborhoods
1,200
acres
50+
recommendations
\$200
million investment



More Information about progress
to date in Park Heights

[http://bit.ly/
ParkHeightsMovingForward](http://bit.ly/ParkHeightsMovingForward)

Land Use and Urban Design

Division Chief:
Woldeyohanes Ararsa



KEY 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Reviewed plans for significant new development projects, including New East Baltimore Community and Nelson Kohl Apartments
- Reviewed major amendments to Planned Unit Developments, such as the Canton Crossing Planned Unit Development
- Contributed to the development of new policies, including the re-write of the Baltimore City Zoning Code

New East Baltimore Community

Several projects in the New East Baltimore Community (EBDI) received approval from the Planning Commission, including a subdivision for the 2000 block of East Eager, a new Marriott Residence Inn and a new townhouse development on Rutland Avenue.

The Townes at Eager Park is a 49-unit townhome development bordered by Eager Street, Rutland Avenue and McDonogh Street.



Canton Crossing Planned Unit Development Master Plan

Corporate Office Properties Trust (COPT) proposed a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning amendment to the Canton Crossing PUD. This amendment proposes a major waterfront development integrating office space, residential units, retail shops, vibrant sidewalk cafes and restaurants; all connected by attractive public spaces.



| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 2.1 million sq. ft. of office | 700 residential units |
| 280,000 sq. ft. of retail | 300 hotel rooms |

Nelson Kohl Apartments

The Nelson Kohl Apartment building is a new, 103-unit rental development by SA + A Development, located in the Charles North neighborhood and Station North Arts and Entertainment District.

The façade of the property was the product of a collaborative design effort between the project team and community and is meant to evoke the creativity of the surrounding area.



Stadium Square

Stadium Square is a new multi-phased, mixed-use development spanning three blocks in the Sharp-Leadenhall neighborhood, near South Baltimore.

The first project in the development is Hanover Cross Street, a 294-unit building with retail at the ground level. Two blocks south of the Hanover Cross Street project is Phase II of the development, a six-story office building that will be the new location for the United Way of Central Maryland.



Harbor Point PUD - Wills Wharf and Point Street Apartments

Wills Wharf is a new 12-story office and hotel complex in the Harbor Point area. The overall vision seeks to establish Harbor Point as a destination, organized around a central plaza, with a public promenade along the water. Point Street Apartments is a new 285-unit apartment building within the Harbor Point PUD.



Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation

Division Chief:
Eric Holcomb



KEY 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Celebrated the 50th Anniversary Reauthorization of the Historical and Architectural Preservation Ordinance
- Revised Historic Preservation Design Guidelines
- Finalized approval for the restoration of one of Baltimore's most iconic buildings, Recreation Pier
- Staffed Special Commission to review Baltimore's Public Confederate monuments
- Increased neighborhood investment through the Property Tax Credit for Historic Restorations and Rehabilitations

CHAP Ordinance and Design Changes in 2015

On September 21, 2015, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake signed into law ordinance # 15-408 *Historical and Architectural Preservation - 50th Anniversary Reauthorization*, which makes several changes to the law that governs CHAP. For example, the Special List was removed and replaced with a Potential Landmark List, which protects historic structures while they move through the landmark designation process.

CHAP also revised its Historic Preservation Design Guidelines to approve the use of alternative replacement materials when appropriate.



In 2015:

813

authorization-to-proceed permits issued

50+

items reviewed in public hearings

New 2015 Landmark Designations and Projects

This year CHAP reviewed several landmark designations worthy of note:

- The Olmsted Parkways, the first historic landscape to be placed on Baltimore's landmark list
- The Eastern Avenue pumping station, the first building directly on the Inner Harbor to be designated as a landmark
- American legion Federal Post No. 9 and the Greater Faith Baptist Church, two landmarks in Baltimore City of historical African American significance

The Commission also reviewed and approved important new construction projects near downtown Baltimore, including:

- 816-824 North Calvert Street and Stadium Place in Sharp-Leadenhall
- H&S Bakery in Fell's Point
- Public works projects at Druid and Ashburton lakes
- Recreation Pier, one of Baltimore's most iconic structures



Recreation Pier



Special Commission to Review Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments

On June 30, 2105, Baltimore City Mayor Rawlings-Blake created a Special Commission to

Review Baltimore's Public Confederate monuments. This commission heard testimony from local and national experts and from the general public. On December 15, 2015, the Commission held a hearing in which 105 people attended and 42 people testified. The Commission will reconvene in 2016 to discuss recommendations and shortly thereafter will present a report with specific recommendations to the Mayor.

Historic Restorations and Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program

Along with the permit review in local historic districts, CHAP helped increase neighborhood investment through the Historic Restorations and Rehabilitation tax credit. In 2015, staff reviewed 520 applications and approved 411 applications for the program. They also granted another 284 final certifications for successfully completed rehabilitation projects. This year alone, the credit helped to leverage almost \$52 million dollars of private investment in 35 neighborhoods across Baltimore. Since 1996, this program has helped leverage three quarters of a billion dollars of investment, making it one of the most successful neighborhood revitalization tools in Baltimore history.



In 2015:

411
applications
approved

\$52
million in
investment

284
projects
successfully
completed

35
neighborhoods

Research and Strategic Planning

Division Chief:
Jessica Varsa



KEY 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Updated the Baltimore Housing Market Typology
- Completed the Industrial Opportunity Project and database
- Updated Baltimore City's Sustainable Communities designation

Housing Typology

Baltimore City's Planning Department and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), in collaboration with The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), released a three-year update of the Baltimore Housing Market Typology (HMT). The HMT assists government officials and community stakeholders identify and comprehend the various elements of the local housing real estate market and apply appropriate interventions.

The data from the HMT is used by the Department of Planning and other agencies to inform policy and decision making strategies.

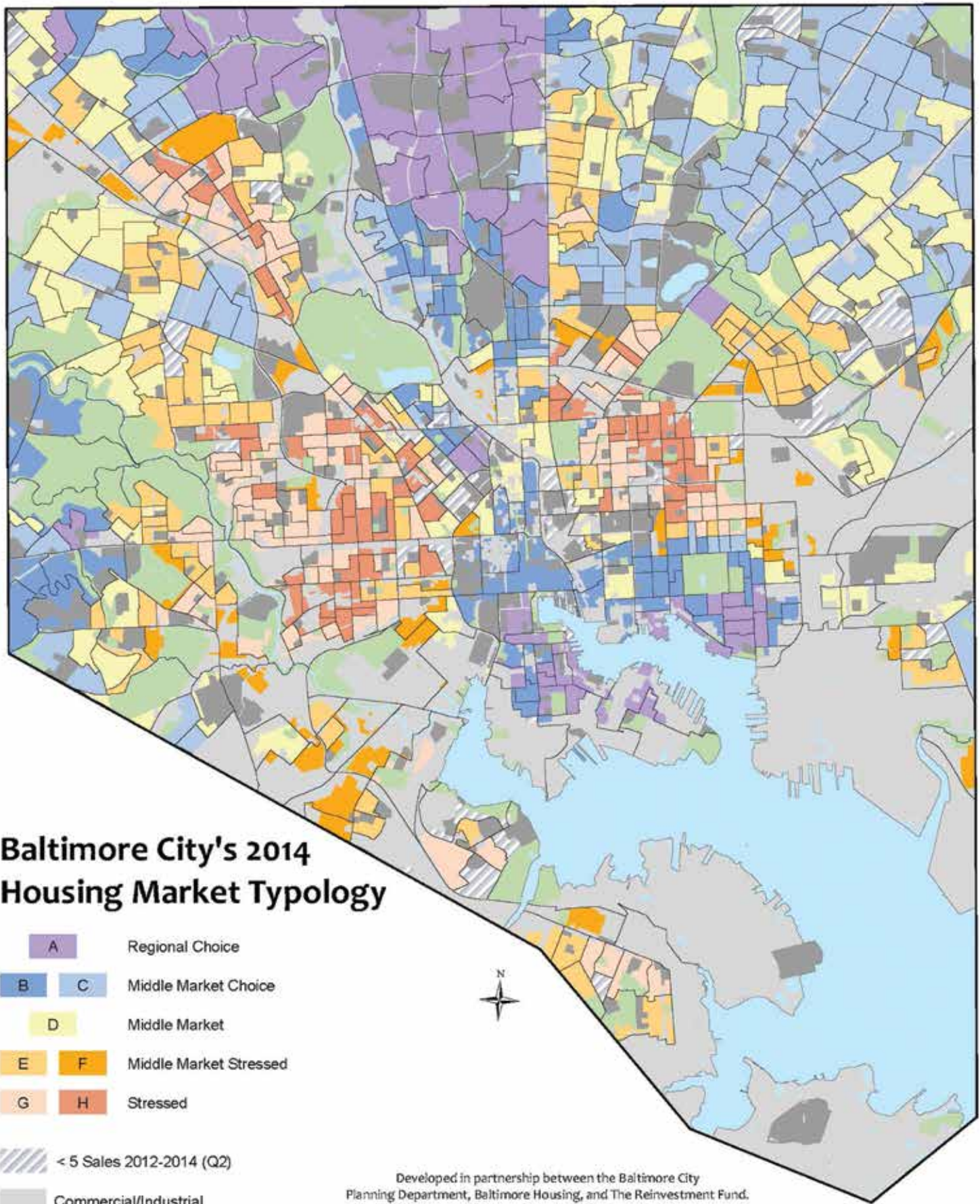


| Map Category | Market Type | Median Sales Price * | Foreclosure Rate * | % Vacant (2014) | % Owner Occupied (2014) |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Regional Choice | A | \$340,685 | 1.4% | 0.3% | 68.1% |
| Middle Market Choice | B | \$192,635 | 2.8% | 1.3% | 40.6% |
| | C | \$115,482 | 5.6% | 1.1% | 68.9% |
| Middle Market | D | \$72,714 | 5.6% | 3.2% | 46.7% |
| Middle Market Stressed | E | \$39,485 | 6.4% | 6.1% | 49.5% |
| | F | \$37,858 | 5.9% | 4.9% | 41.0% |
| Stressed | G | \$19,517 | 4.7% | 16.7% | 34.1% |
| | H | \$11,775 | 2.9% | 33.7% | 21.4% |

* 2012 -2014Q2



More map layers and data available online
<http://bit.ly/HousingTypology>




Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor


Thomas J. Stosur
Director of Planning


Paul T. Graziano
Commissioner


The Reinvestment Fund

**17,822
acres**

existing
designated
Sustainable
Communities area

**37,883
acres**

acres proposed
amended
Sustainable
Communities area



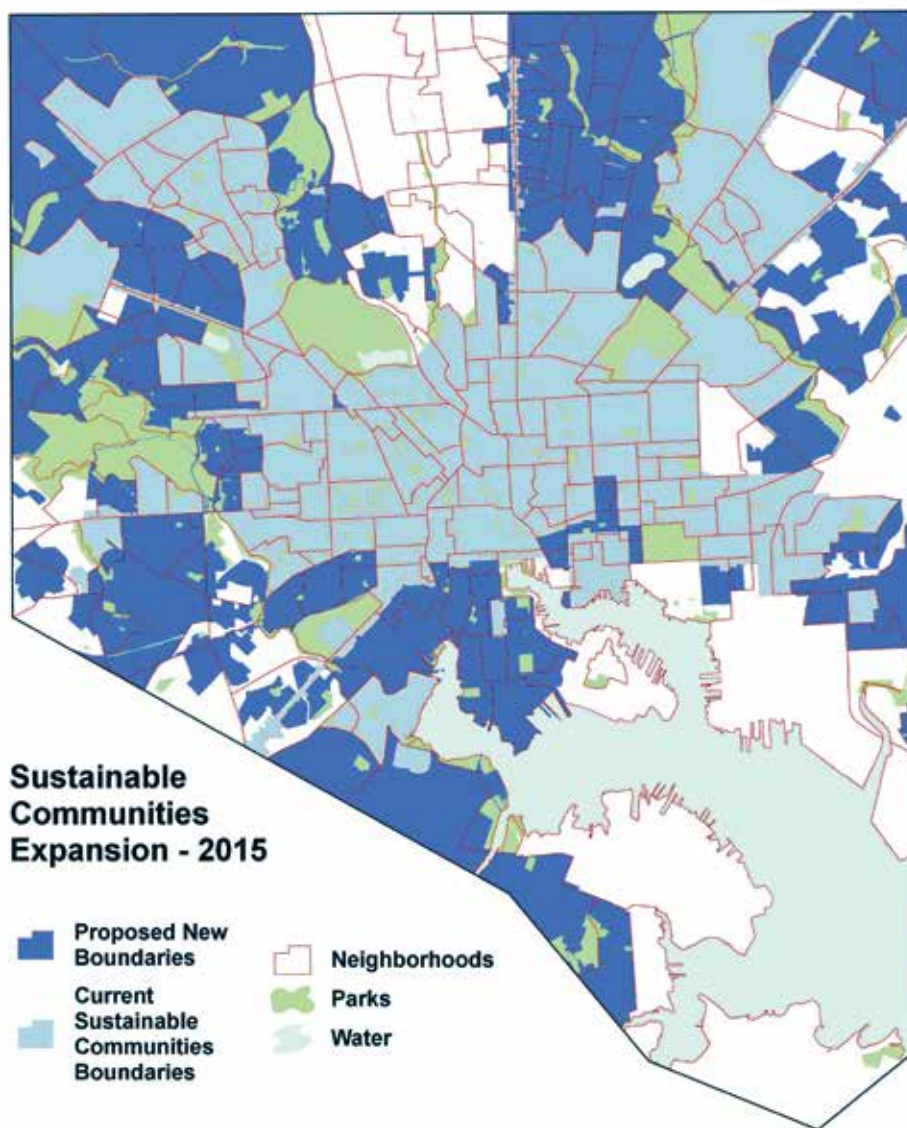
More Information on the
Sustainable Communities
Program

<http://archive.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Planning/SustainableCommunities.aspx>

Sustainable Communities

The State of Maryland adopted the Sustainable Communities Act in 2010. Since this Act was adopted, areas designated as Sustainable Communities in Baltimore gain priority access to state incentive programs to support new investment.

In 2015, four new strategic factors were integrated into the process for designating the Sustainable Communities geographic area: food deserts, community facilities, regional connections and corridors, and diverse housing opportunities. This more than doubled the area designated eligible for financial incentives.



12,283

completed
residential units
since 2010

4,424

units under
construction

2,099

additional units
approved, but
have not received
permits

Residential Development Trends

The Planning Department is responsible for tracking the status of new residential housing units across the City. Planning uses 2010 as the base year, and calculates the residential permit data on a quarterly basis.

RESIDENTIAL UNITS DEVELOPED

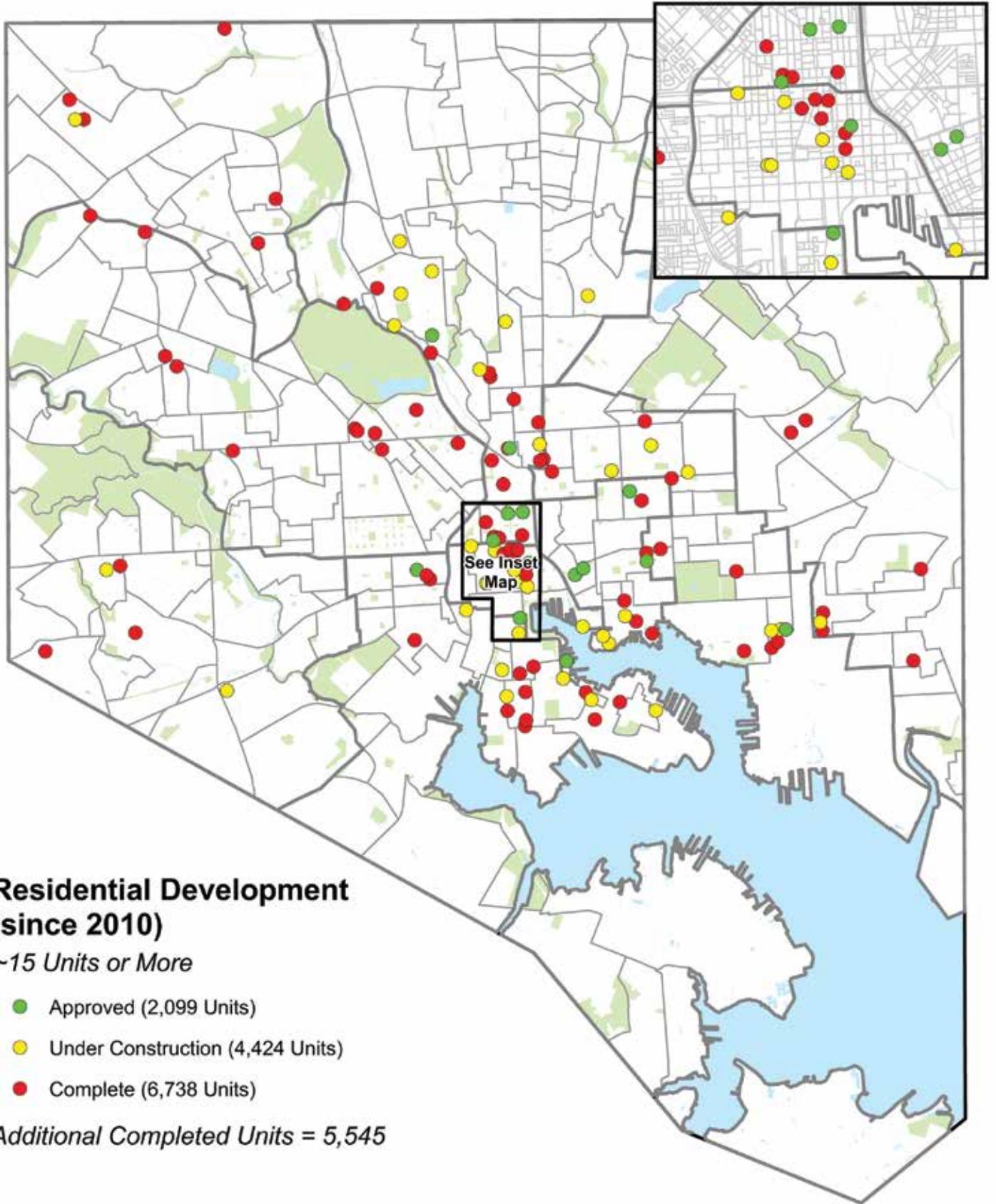


Industrial Opportunity Project

In 2015 RSP completed the Industrial Opportunity Project, which promotes the redevelopment of vacant industrial buildings and lands as centers for job creation and small business growth.

Several recommendations were developed through the research completed for the Industrial Opportunity Project, including: the creation of a fund to support industrial redevelopment projects; the establishment of targets for city-wide industrial land use; and the development of a guide to industrial redevelopment in the flood plain.





Sustainability and Environmental Planning

Division Chief:
Beth Strommen

KEY 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Recognized as a top tier achiever in national sustainability by STAR Community Rating System
- Won Baltimore City Innovation Fund Award for Camp Small Zero Waste initiative
- Engaged local youth as part of the Student Environmental Leadership Action Team
- Launched Green Network Plan
- Baltimore's Growing Green Tracks initiative honored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors



Camp Small Zero Waste Initiative

In April 2015, the Office of Sustainability in partnership with the Department of Recreation and Parks received a Baltimore City Innovation Fund Award to implement the Camp Small Zero Waste initiative.

Beginning in 2016, Office of Sustainability staff will bring on a Camp Small Yardmaster to oversee a new wood reclamation project at the city's primary wood waste processing facility. By sorting and selling our best logs to local sawyers and sawmills, the City will be creating a new sustainable, local wood supply. The Department of Planning expects to save over 4,000 tons of logs annually.

Student Environmental Leadership

Since the adoption of the Sustainability Plan in 2009, more than a hundred Baltimore City public schools have formed student Green Teams to undertake projects such as planting schoolyard gardens, launching recycling campaigns, and implementing energy conservation measures.

In October 2015, the Office of Sustainability intensified its focus on youth environmental leadership by hiring three high school interns to staff the Student Environmental Leadership Action Team. The team made presentations to the School Board; wrote an advocacy letter to the City Schools Food & Nutrition Office; created a "Green Teams Transforming Schools" video; and organized GreenScape, our annual year-end youth celebration.

Community Rating System

Led by the Planning Department, Baltimore submitted an application to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) in an effort to meet the City's Disaster Preparedness Project and Plan (DP3) recommendations and reduce community-wide flood risks.

CRS is a voluntary incentive program that encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. By reducing the risk of flood damage to insurable properties, the City is eligible to receive discounted flood insurance premium rates. In total, 3,041 properties may qualify for savings through CRS certification throughout the City. FEMA will release the city's CRS rating in 2016.



STAR Community Rating System



The STAR Community Rating System is the nation's first comprehensive framework and certification program for evaluating local sustainability.

In 2015, STAR Communities awarded Baltimore a five-star rating for sustainability, the highest possible

score. Baltimore joins only two other communities - Seattle and Northampton, Massachusetts - in receiving the top sustainability rating, out of 45 cities, towns and counties that have gone through the STAR certification process.



Green Network Plan

In support of the future implementation of the Growing Green Initiative, the Green Network Plan will be launched as a collective vision of a comprehensive and interconnected system of new neighborhood green spaces citywide.



This plan will bring together City agencies, residents, neighborhood partners and Baltimore businesses to transform vacant and abandoned properties into community assets such as recreation areas, trails and urban gardens. By focusing resources in areas of underinvestment, the plan will increase opportunity, create safe and healthy spaces, and generate future economic investment.

The Department of Planning is currently in the process of selecting a consultant team to support the planning work and convening a leadership team of agency directors and community stakeholders to serve as advisors for the planning process. It is anticipated that the planning effort will begin in the first few months of 2016.



Growing Green Initiative

The Growing Green Initiative was launched in 2014, and is a city effort to use sustainable practices for stabilizing and holding land for redevelopment, and to reuse vacant land to provide environmental and social benefits.

In 2014, winners for the Growing Green Design Competition were announced. The competition sought proposals from community groups on ways to improve and reuse vacant properties. The winners of the Growing Green Design Competition were awarded \$300,000 to implement their ideas, and began constructing their vacant lot greening projects over the past year. The winners will showcase usage of the Green Pattern Book, a guide to greening vacant land.

In August of 2015, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was joined by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin to help break ground on one of the competition projects that will turn a vacant lot on Riggs Avenue in the Bridgeview-Greenlawn community of West Baltimore into a pocket park for the neighborhood.

In June, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) awarded Baltimore City a Community WINS grant, recognizing its Growing Green Tracks initiative. Growing Green Tracks is a partnership to eliminate blight along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor by combining strategic demolition with the reuse of vacant land, and to provide workforce development opportunities for Baltimore City residents.



Sustainability Site
<http://www.baltimoresustainability.org>



Baltimore Food Policy Initiative

Food Policy Director:
Holly Freishtat



KEY 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

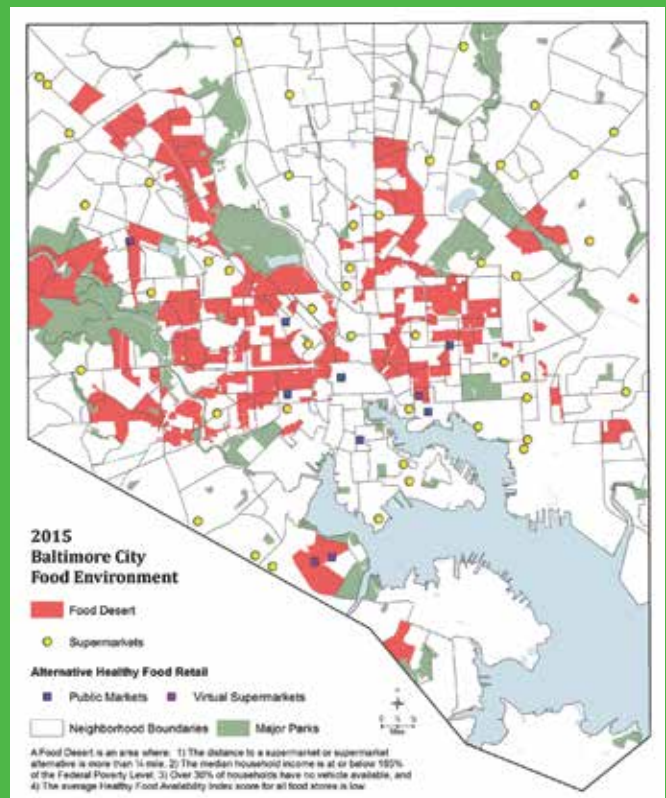
- Released Mapping Baltimore's Food Environment report
- Supported a new tax credit incentive for supermarkets locating in or near food deserts
- Improved the process through which Food Supplement Program benefits are distributed
- Established an Emergency Food Working Group for Baltimore

Food Environment Map

On June 10, 2015 Baltimore City in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF) released Mapping Baltimore's Food Environment: 2015 Report. The report highlights food access patterns in Baltimore City's neighborhoods and informs policy and programming designed to address these issues.

The report offers innovative solutions, including maps and information sheets for each council district to better understand retail, food assistance, urban agriculture, and demographics in geographic and culturally-bound areas of the city. The Food Desert Retail Strategy includes the following:

- Expand and retain supermarkets
- Improve non-traditional grocery retail options
- Improve healthy food availability in the public market setting
- Expand Homegrown Baltimore to serve food desert neighborhoods
- Develop a transportation strategy



The Food Environment Map provides critical information and tools necessary to target underserved areas to increase equity in development and investment throughout Baltimore. Analysis reveals that a lack in food access is disproportionately borne by children and African American residents, and that food deserts are spatially concentrated in areas that have historically experienced disinvestment.

In 2015, the Maryland State Legislature passed enabling language to allow Baltimore City to grant abatements on personal property taxes for supermarkets and grocery stores that locate in and near food deserts. In December of 2015, Mayor Rawlings-Blake and City Council passed a bill to provide an 80% credit on personal property taxes to supermarkets that locate or renovate in or near food deserts. This credit targets healthy food development specifically to the areas that need it most and has been heralded as a strong policy to promote equitable access.

SNAP Benefit Disbursement Period

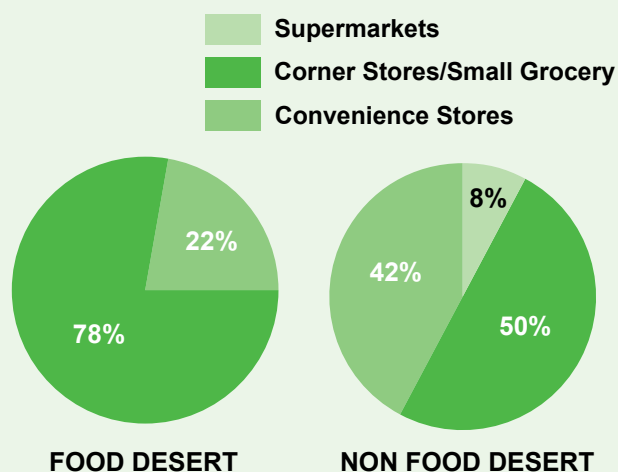
Baltimore Food Policy Initiative has worked with the State of Maryland for several years to change the way Food Supplement Program (FSP, otherwise known as SNAP at the federal level) benefits are distributed in Maryland. In fall of 2015, Maryland extended the number of days that benefits are allocated from ten to twenty. Customers will be able to spend FSP benefits during a longer timeframe, and this will allow retailers to maintain a more consistent business cycle. This will serve as a retailer retention strategy, and allow stores to hire more employees.

25%
of Baltimore
residents

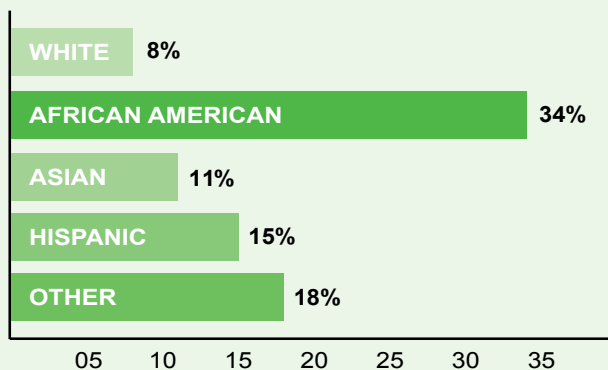
30%
of Baltimore
children

**live in food
deserts**

FOOD RETAIL AVAILABILITY BY NEIGHBORHOOD



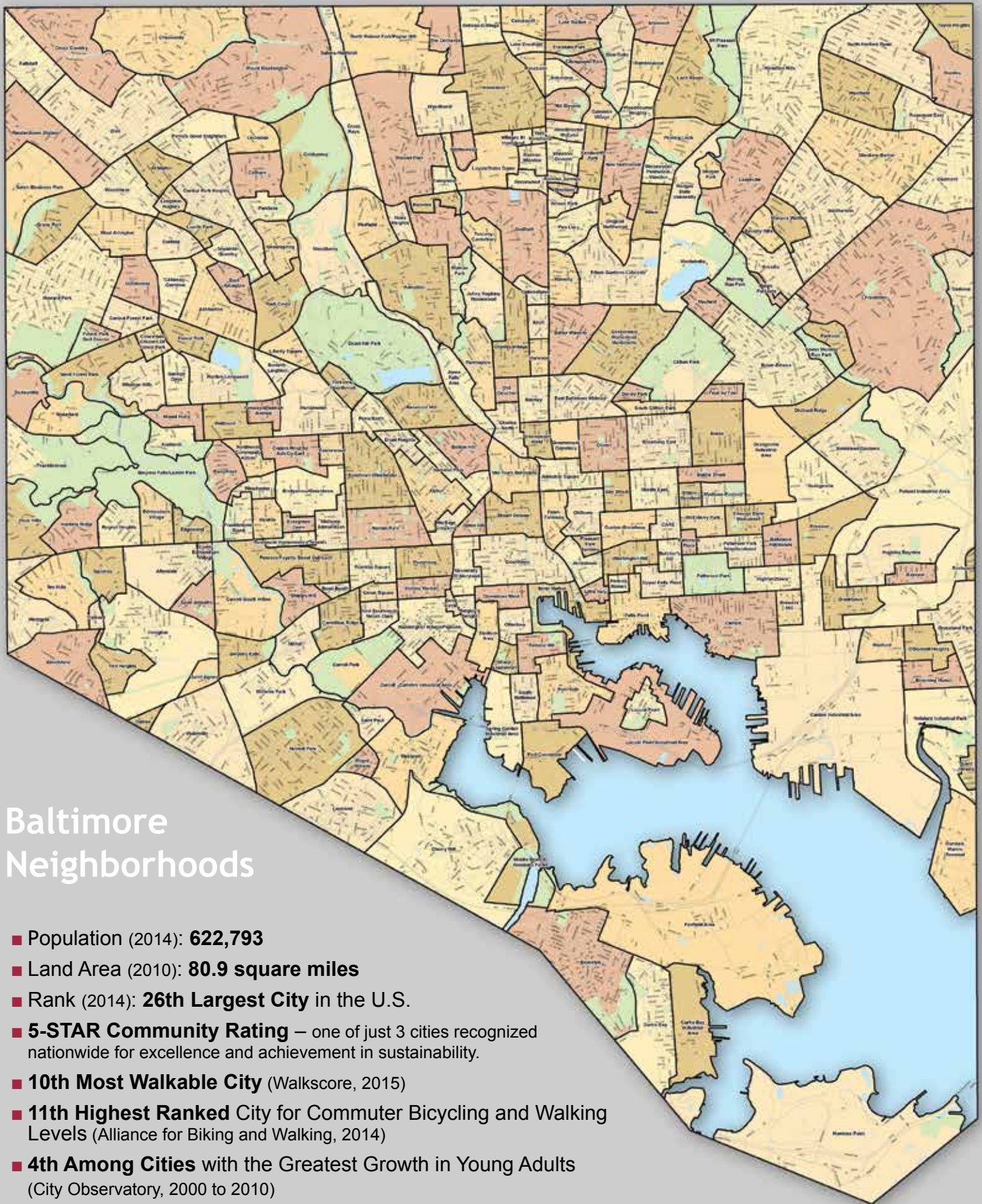
PERCENT OF POPULATION GROUP LIVING IN FOOD DESERTS



Emergency Food Working Group

In fall 2015, an Emergency Food Working Group was created in order to establish and formalize protocols around access to food in emergency situations. The outcome of the Working Group is to improve lines of communication between Baltimore City agencies and partners in addressing the food needs of vulnerable populations during unforeseen events. BFPI is serving as the convening body between over 20 partners, and will generate the final report and recommendations in early spring of 2016.





Baltimore Neighborhoods

- Population (2014): **622,793**
- Land Area (2010): **80.9 square miles**
- Rank (2014): **26th Largest City** in the U.S.
- **5-STAR Community Rating** — one of just 3 cities recognized nationwide for excellence and achievement in sustainability.
- **10th Most Walkable City** (Walkscore, 2015)
- **11th Highest Ranked City** for Commuter Bicycling and Walking Levels (Alliance for Biking and Walking, 2014)
- **4th Among Cities** with the Greatest Growth in Young Adults (City Observatory, 2000 to 2010)

Looking Forward

In 2016, the Planning Department is looking forward to:

- Implementing the City's new zoning code, upon passage by the Mayor and City Council
- Delivering Vision Plans for each of the neighborhoods around the schools that are a part of the INSPIRE planning process
- Finalizing reports for five LINC corridors across the city and expanding the effort to additional corridors
- Engaging a multidisciplinary consultant team to provide technical expertise and launch the Green Network Plan to eliminate blight and develop an interconnected system of green spaces
- Holding a Public Forum on the intersection of urban planning and equity issues in the Spring of 2016



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