

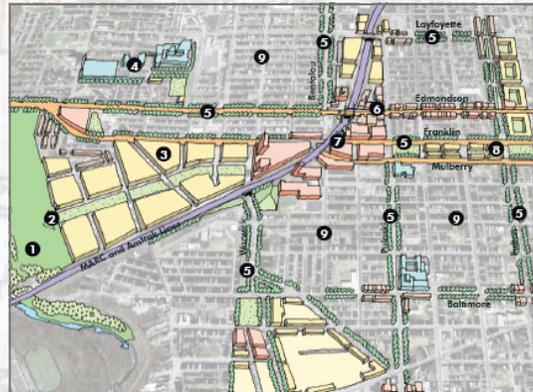
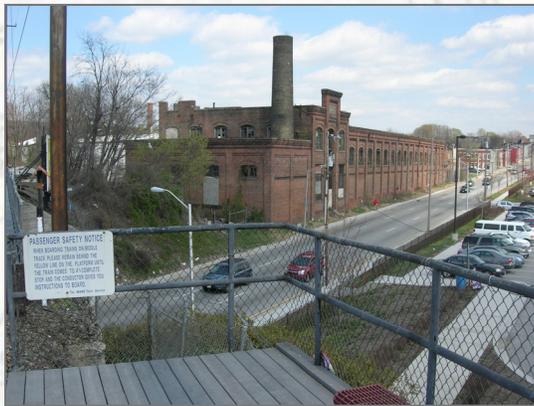


# West Baltimore MARC Station AREA MASTER PLAN



Maryland Department  
of Transportation

*A Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy*



November 2008

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide the highest level services and leadership in urban and strategic planning, historical, and architectural preservation, zoning, design, development, and capital budgeting to promote the sustained economic, social, and community development of the City of Baltimore

# Acknowledgements

## The Department of Planning wishes to thank the following agencies and stakeholders:

Maryland Department of Transportation  
Maryland Transit Administration  
Maryland Department of Planning  
Maryland Department of  
Housing and Community Dev.  
Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

Baltimore Housing  
Baltimore Development Corporation  
Baltimore City Transportation Department  
Baltimore City Police Department  
Lockerman Bundy Elementary School  
Councilwoman Agnes Welch, 9th District



Sheila Dixon,  
Mayor

## Thanks also to consultants:

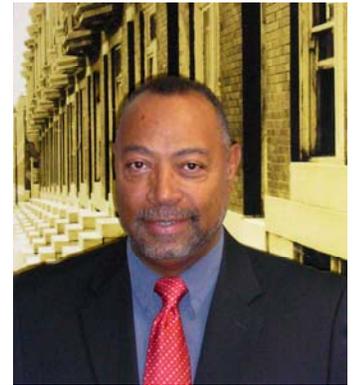
PB PlaceMaking  
Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership

Bay Area Economics

## Thanks to the following community organizations and non-profits:

West Baltimore Coalition (WBC)  
Alliance of Rosemont Community Organiza-  
tions (ARCO)  
Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative  
b'more mobile  
Baltimore Region Environmental Justice and  
Transportation Project (BREJTP)  
Bon Secours Foundation  
Boyd-Booth Community Association  
Boyd-Booth Concerned Citizens, Inc.  
Bridgeview Greenlawn Community Association  
Citizens Planning and Housing Association  
(CPHA)  
Coppin State University

Edmondson Community Organization  
Evergreen Protective Association  
Fayette Street Outreach  
Franklin Square Community Association  
Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, Inc.  
Lafayette Square Community Association  
Midtown Edmondson Avenue  
Improvement Association (MEAIA)  
Morgan State University  
Neighborhood Design Center  
Operation Reach Out Southwest  
Rosemont Homeowners /Tenants Association  
The Enterprise Foundation  
Transit Riders Action Council



Gary Cole,  
Planning Department  
Acting Director

## This Plan would have not been possible without the invaluable contribution of the following people:

Zelda Robinson, WBC  
John Hailey, ECO  
Joyce Smith, ORSWO  
Arlene Fisher, Lafayette Square  
Rev. Parham, ECO  
Monica Bland, Evergreen Lawn  
Dan Pontious, CPHA

Calvin Peete, CPHA  
Ann Sherill, BNC  
Art Cohen, B'more mobile  
Klaus Philipsen, Arch Plan  
Marty Baker, MDOT  
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John D. Porcari,  
Maryland Transportation  
Secretary

***Thanks to all the West Baltimore community members who generously gave their time to help envision the future of the West Baltimore MARC Station Area***

SHEILA DIXON  
Mayor



GARY W. COLE  
Acting Director

September 19, 2008

As the Acting Director of Baltimore's Department of Planning I would like to give the residents of West Baltimore my heartfelt *thank you* for working countless hours in partnership with the City and the State to create a vision to improve your neighborhoods. It is this kind of civic engagement and civic passion that truly makes a difference in our community and that should be embraced by government as a resource and guide to our own work.

Also, I would like to thank Secretary Porcari and his staff at the Maryland Department of Transportation, and all the other State agencies, for their leadership and generous support for this planning effort. This plan is an example of the great things that can come out of the partnership between City and State agencies when they work together collaboratively. We look forward to many more opportunities for this kind of partnership and to the State's support in implementing this vision.

I cannot overstate the importance of the West Baltimore MARC Station Area Master Plan – A Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy. The residents of West Baltimore were amongst the first in the City to understand and embrace the potential that Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and transit can bring to neighborhoods. They have broadened the focus of the planning process to include a more holistic approach of Transit-Centered Community Development. They have used the planning process to come together as one community to learn, grow and become stronger.

It is with great pride that the Department takes this plan to the Planning Commission for adoption this Fall on behalf of West Baltimore residents and our partners at the Maryland Department of Transportation. After two years of intense work and great collaboration, we feel that formal adoption of this plan by our Commission and the City is the deserved corollary for this process. Moreover, adoption of this plan by the City will facilitate the implementation process. By having the Commission adopt this plan the City will be able to move forward with the rezoning of this area, the introduction of the needed new TOD District within the parameters of our TransformBaltimore Zoning Code Rewrite process, and the set-aside of Capital Improvement dollars for the elimination of blight and the improvement of local infrastructure.

On behalf of the Baltimore City Department of Planning I congratulate the community, State, and the various stakeholders for their many efforts and look forward to working with you on implementing this great vision and plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary W. Cole".

Gary W. Cole  
Acting Director



**June 2008, Mayor Sheila Dixon and West Baltimore Coalition leaders tour the communities around the station area to talk about TOD and the Red Line**



**Maryland Department of Transportation**  
The Secretary's Office

**Martin O'Malley**  
Governor

**Anthony G. Brown**  
Lt. Governor

**John D. Porcari**  
Secretary

**Beverley K. Swaim-Staley**  
Deputy Secretary

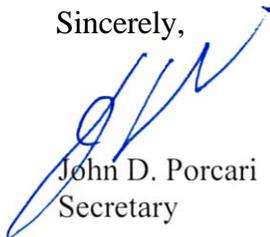
September 2, 2008

I am pleased to join the communities of West Baltimore in introducing the West Baltimore MARC Station Area Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy. This Strategy document reflects the successful outcome of an intensive collaboration between the residents of West Baltimore, the City of Baltimore, and Maryland State agencies led by the Department of Transportation (MDOT). It is our hope that it will guide future investment in West Baltimore for decades to come, to help achieve the community's ambitious vision.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a major policy priority for MDOT and West Baltimore is a key location to focus this policy. This area's strong bus ridership, as well as the current MARC Station and plans to develop the "Red Line," makes transit a significant element of the West Baltimore landscape. It is all the more important, therefore, that transit be designed as an amenity to the area, and that land use planning reflect the needs and opportunities that transit investment can bring. The citizens of West Baltimore not only understand this, but with courage and energy have re-emphasized that transportation planning should look beyond system efficiencies to support the community development needs and opportunities of current residents. It is for this reason that the Strategy document outlines recommended actions not merely to promote "TOD," but to achieve "Transit-Centered Community Development" for and with the residents of West Baltimore.

This Strategy document is symbolic of the unique partnership and energetic leadership of those involved in its production. Committed residents and area stakeholders partnered with a broad array of State and City agencies, to create a process that was not only *for* the community, but *by* the community. On behalf of the Maryland Department of Transportation, I congratulate and thank the leaders of this effort for the creativity, energy and commitment they have demonstrated over the course of this interactive process. This collective spirit is testimony to the potential of the area and marks a brave step forward toward a better future for West Baltimore.

Sincerely,



John D. Porcari  
Secretary



West Baltimore  
Coalition

*Our Mission is to advocate for the communities in the West Baltimore Community to maintain affordable inclusionary housing, share economic vitality, re-establish safe, secure and effective transportation, and promote community development.*

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**A Journey: Creating a Future**

Finally, we have a document “The Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy” that articulates the heart of the community charting the course for new beginnings in West Baltimore.

**“Community participation from the bottom up”** distinguishes this documents direction for future development opportunities that give back benefits and amenities directly to the people that are affected the most in the development areas.

With the advent of Transit Oriented Community Development a glimmer of hope for our West Baltimore Community “whose time has come”, after years of being overlooked and uncared for will once more become a jewel in the crown of the city of Baltimore.

Based on nearly two years of meetings and conversations, this document contains the key principles that the communities decided were paramount for West Baltimore to become a viable, thriving, productive and diverse community. Clearly, the people’s choices were for economic development, improved education, mixed-income (including a sufficient amount of affordable) housing, safe and efficient transportation, with future development clearly guided by Community Benefits Agreements. Such agreements can help to ensure self-determination by the communities. Within the document, each principle mirrors the community’s desires and wishes as expressed in the workshop process of 2006 and 2007.

The vision of each person in the community, incorporated into a strategy document going beyond the scope of the conventional Transit Oriented Development approach, brings a fresh new glimmer of hope for the future. When community’s voice is heard and heeded, the results can be phenomenal.

We thank each person that participated and contributed to a production that will continue to grow and develop in the years to come.

  
Zelda Robinson, Chair  
West Baltimore Coalition

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***Public Participation from the Bottom Up!***  
*The communities’ right to self-determination: a principle of the West Baltimore Coalition.*

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LETTER FROM THE WBC

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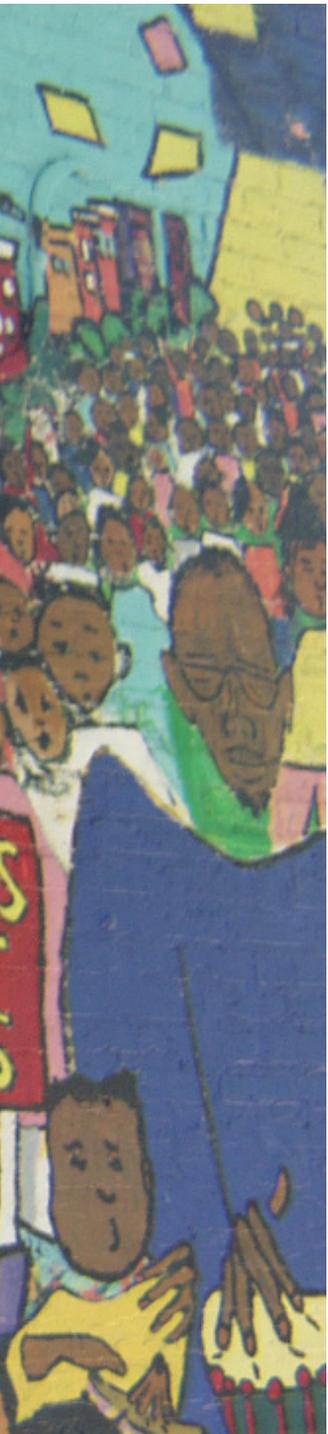
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## West Baltimore MARC Station Area Master Plan

A Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy for the West Baltimore MARC Station Area





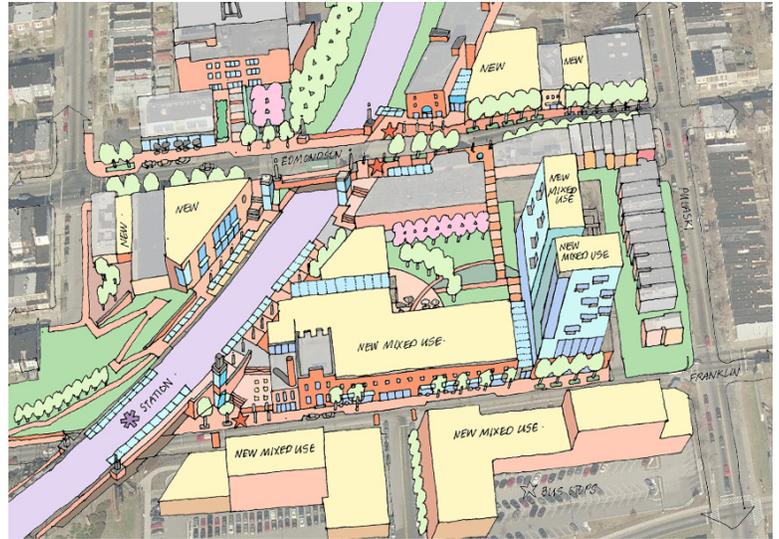
The West Baltimore MARC Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy provides community-supported guidance for future change in West Baltimore. The Strategy includes foundational principles and recommended implementing actions. The underlying belief of the Strategy is that the existing MARC regional rail service and the future Red Line transit investment can help in West Baltimore's revitalization efforts. The strategy does not specify specific transit alignments or land use locations, rather it provides the community with general guidance to consider when specific projects are proposed. It is not the final word on how West Baltimore will redevelop – it is the first.

The Strategy is based on community input given at workshops and meetings from 2006 through 2008. Important to the planning process, the community generated development principles that specify how the community wants future development to occur and “behave”. The principles form the foundation of the Strategy's development concept that envisions a future where a variety of housing is available, jobs are accessible and plentiful, and transportation serves the community. It imagines a future where the needs of current residents are met, residents are trained and qualified for new jobs, and the area becomes a destination attracting visitors from across the region.

All participants in the West Baltimore Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy process believe that West Baltimore can benefit from improving the connection between development and transit while acknowledging the area's unique economic, housing, and cultural assets and resources. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a major policy priority for Baltimore City and the Maryland Department of Transportation. The West Baltimore MARC station is an important TOD site because it is a stop on the MARC commuter rail line between Washington, DC and Aberdeen and because the area will be served by the future Red Line.



Before: West Baltimore MARC Station



After: West Baltimore MARC Station



Before: Ice House



After: Ice House



Before: MARC Platform



After: MARC Platform

## KEY PRINCIPLES FROM COMMUNITY

### Housing

- Avoid displacement.
- Maintain housing affordability. Increase housing diversity.
- Increase the amount of occupied housing.
- Preserve the character of existing viable housing stock.
- Draw early investment to opportunity-driven places.



▲ Housing

### Economic Development

- Cultivate large-scale economic development opportunities.
- Attract and develop businesses and facilities to serve the local population.
- Promote small business development and entrepreneurship.
- Enhance local workforce, employment opportunities and local business participation.



▲ Economic Development

### Transportation

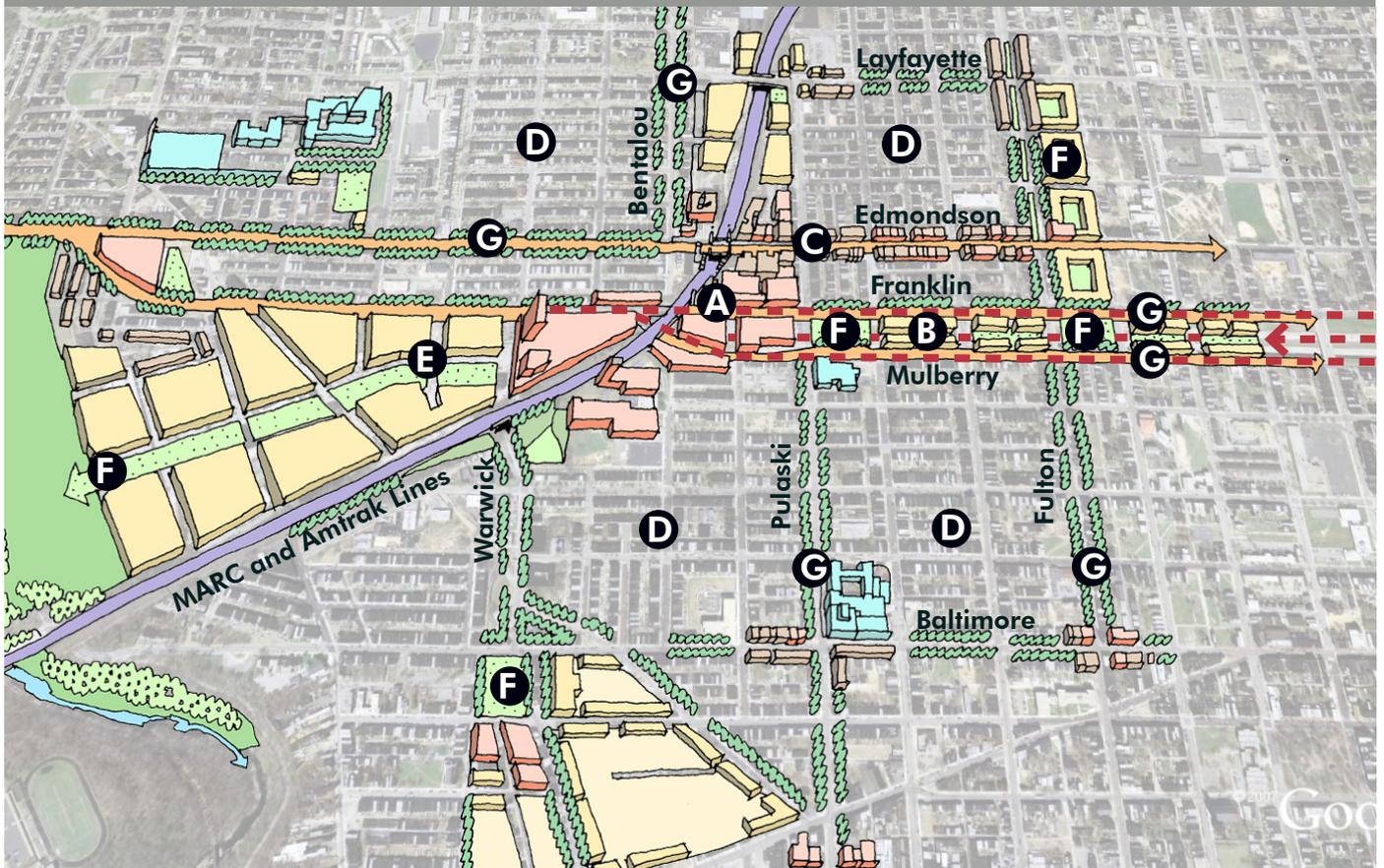
- Use the MARC station and other transit to bring about community improvement.
- Make walking and biking – especially to buses and trains – safer and more inviting and convenient.
- Be aware of, and sensitive to, existing community transportation plans.
- Design streets to tame traffic and make West Baltimore more livable.



▲ Transportation

## CONCEPT SUMMARY

Over time, redevelopment and infill projects will strengthen and preserve the best areas of West Baltimore. Housing and good jobs will be available to everyone who wants to live and work here. Transportation facilities and transit systems will serve the community – not sever it.



### **A.** West Baltimore MARC Station/Ice House

1. Will provide a community access point for commuter rail service and future Red Line transit service.
2. Will become a community activity center with retail and office uses (such as dry cleaner, bank, child care, café, civic space/library) for residents and commuters.
3. Will improve pedestrian and handicapped access to the station platform and make it easier/safer for people to cross the streets surrounding the station.
4. Will manage station area parking and leverage potential benefits of commuters as station area business customers. Transit oriented development should be encouraged close to the station and park and ride vehicles should be kept one or two blocks away.

### **B.** Highway to Somewhere

1. Not market feasible at this time, eventually the existing Route 40 corridor should be transformed from a high-speed automobile trench into an infill development area.
2. The redefinition of the highway ditch could be realized in nodes of activity around potential Red Line stations, rather than a continuous strip.

### **C. Edmondson Avenue**

1. Revitalize Edmondson Avenue with mixed-use development, similar to its function in the past.
2. Design speed and speed limit posting should not exceed 25 mph. Residents should accept some traffic congestion in this area, as it will be an indication of the street's desirability!
3. This is traditionally an on-street, parallel parking environment and new or additional parking should follow best management practices such as: putting parking behind, above, or to the side of buildings; sharing surface parking areas between uses and managing them communally; and keeping unsecured parking areas in clear view of active, adjacent uses.

### **D. Residential Neighborhoods**

1. Support and enhance West Baltimore's many existing owner-occupied residential areas.
2. Enhance neighborhood character by aesthetic, recreational, and personal safety improvements.
3. Vacant housing should be sensitively renovated and/or redeveloped, respecting the character of adjacent buildings and uses, although a more diverse housing stock is encouraged.
4. Some local serving retail or commercial development should be allowed, as long as it respects the residential qualities of the neighborhood.
5. Work with Bon Secours, Coppin State, and OROSW to improve facilities and connections to community.

### **E. Southwest Industrial Area**

1. The triangular piece of land bounded by Franklin Street to the north, the railroad tracks to the south, and the cemetery and Gwynns Falls to the west (currently low-density industrial uses).
2. Because of the area's proximity to the MARC Station and Gwynns Falls, the area should transition from primarily industrial to more mixed-use character, with higher intensity uses closest to the station.
3. Enhance the character by creating an internal street network, providing a linear path or greenway connection to the Gwynns Fall Trail, and providing personal safety improvements.

### **F. Parks and Open Space**

1. A variety of parks and open spaces are envisioned for West Baltimore. These spaces will provide important recreational, social, environmental, and wildlife benefits.
2. The comprehensive open space concept includes a pedestrian promenade, improved streetscapes, parks, and open spaces trails, including a link to the Gwynns Falls Trail.

### **G. Improved Streets**

1. Many of West Baltimore's streets (Franklin/Mulberry, Fulton, Pulaski, Lafayette, Bentalou and Warwick) could benefit from traffic that has been calmed by the provision of wider sidewalks, more pedestrian amenities, and greening with trees and landscaping.
2. New construction should create and support active corners and ground level uses. This means creating active, well-lit streets that are fronted by uses that provide "eyes on the street" at all times to deter crime and improve the safety and security of residents and visitors.
3. West Baltimore's streets should function appropriate to their context. That is, residential streets should be designed differently than a transit boulevard which is designed differently from a city

## PHASING AND ACTION STRATEGY

The Strategy proposes a comprehensive implementation approach that requires the involvement and coordination of many stakeholders. Multiple issues, such as criminal activity, building and property code violations, deteriorating infrastructure, and MARC operations, will need to be addressed. Although complex, the Strategy provides tools that identify numerous action items and potential responsible parties to help the community realize the Strategy vision.

Initially, a period focused on revitalization needs to occur. This phase will set the stage for attracting development. Key issues to address initially include crime and safety; building code violations and dangerous conditions of property; improving public infrastructure (such as streets); beautification and image improvement; local organizational capacity building; and public/public and public/private partnerships.

**Phase I (2013-2028):** This is the first phase of major development activity. Key sites of focused mixed-use development include the City-owned land that currently serves as MTA commuter lots, and the site of the former Ice House (due to the limited number of land owners, parcel size, and direct access to MARC).

**Phase II (2023-2043):** Development in this phase begins to stretch northward along both sides of the tracks from the MARC station. Key sites include the Acme Industrial Complex, small infill sites, and the “Highway to Somewhere” closest to the MARC station.

**Phase III (2038 and beyond):** Later phases include the Southwest Industrial Area and the “Highway to Somewhere” parcels further from the MARC station.

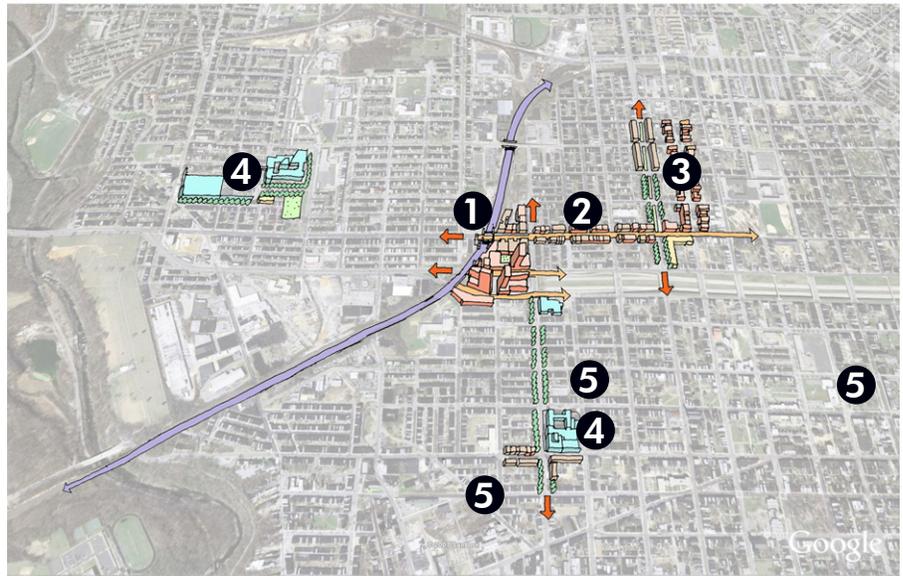
Keep in mind that this is a complex, long-term effort requiring the cooperation of multiple stakeholders and strong local, City and State leadership. However, it is important to begin the process with a focus on improving the station area and streets immediately adjacent to it.



▲ Phasing and Action Diagram

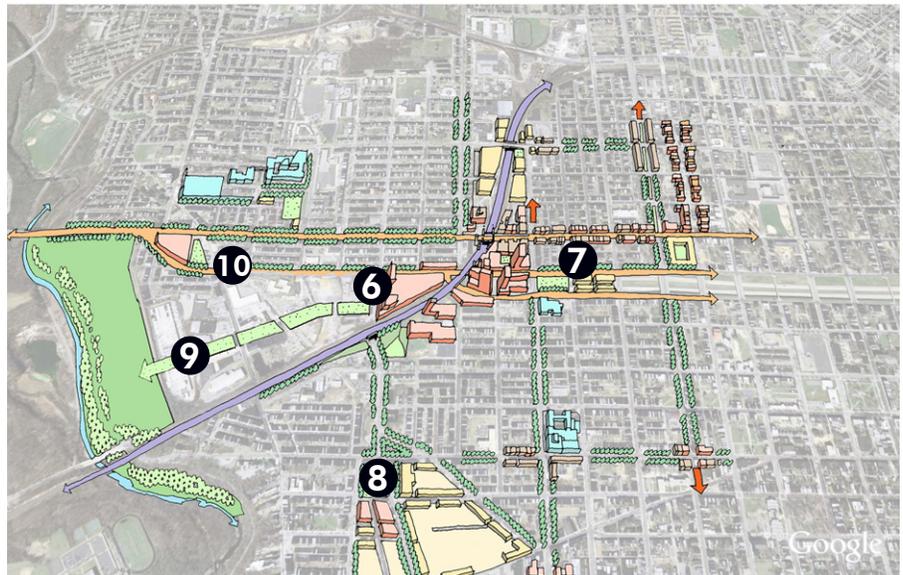
## Phase 1

- 1 West Baltimore MARC/ Ice House
- 2 Edmondson Avenue
- 3 Mount Street Housing
- 4 Institutions– Coppin State & Bon Secours
- 5 Operation Reach-Out Southwest (OROSW) Community Improvements



## Phase 2

- 6 West Side of MARC Station and North/South along alignment
- 7 First 2 blocks of Highway to Somewhere
- 8 Shipley Hill/ Southwest Town Center (OROSW)
- 9 Green connections through industrial/ Gwynns Falls Vista Park (OROSW)
- 10 Franklin Mulberry Corridor (Future Red Line)



## Phase 3

- 11 Industrial property
- 12 Highway to Somewhere

