



# INSPIRE

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

## *Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School and Forest Park High School* INSPIRE PLAN



February 2018



*Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School  
and Forest Park High School*

**INSPIRE PLAN**



Adopted by the  
Baltimore City Planning Commission  
February 1, 2018

Published  
February 2018

# *Letter from the Director*

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Greetings,

It is with great pleasure that I share the Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School and Forest Park High School INSPIRE plan. I want to express sincere thanks to the many residents and community stakeholders who played a role in shaping this plan, and for their commitment to working in partnership with the City to make their neighborhood a great place to live. INSPIRE plans are created through a collaboration with many stakeholder partners including neighborhood residents, organizations, businesses, and developers; the philanthropic community; anchor institutions; City agencies; and more. Together we are maximizing the impact around the modernized schools being built around Baltimore so that when the doors open for students on their first day, there will be a noticeable difference in the neighborhoods surrounding the new 21st Century facilities.

Every division of the Department of Planning has been involved either in developing the INSPIRE plan or in supporting the 21st Century School process. From offering urban design, architecture, and landscape design expertise, to identifying opportunities to increase access to healthy food or to secure a site and funding resources for a community garden, my team has been committed to working with others to develop the highest-quality school facilities and INSPIRE recommendations that will strengthen the connection between each school and its surrounding neighborhoods.

Our commitment doesn't end here. INSPIRE plans provide a roadmap for achieving longer-term goals around housing, environmental sustainability, safety, sanitation, transportation, and health. We will continue to work with our partners – public agencies, institutions, businesses, non-profits, philanthropy, neighborhood organizations and residents – to achieve holistic progress towards the community's aspirations. New and improved school facilities both improve quality of life for existing students and families, and serve as catalysts for attracting new residents to Baltimore neighborhoods. INSPIRE plans like this one aim to capture that potential. We welcome new ideas and partnerships to help us achieve that goal.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Stosur  
Director of Planning  
City of Baltimore

# *Acknowledgments*

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The Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School and Forest Park High School INSPIRE Plan was created by the Baltimore City Department of Planning (DOP), but is the result of a collaborative process involving significant community and City agency input. Chad Hayes, Western District Planner, led the creation of this plan, along with Mary Colleen Buettner, INSPIRE Planner. The Department of Planning thanks everyone who attended workshops, shared their ideas, and provided support.

Special thanks go to:

Mayor Catherine E. Pugh

State Senator Nathaniel Oaks

State Delegate Bilal Ali

State Delegate Angela Gibson

State Delegate Sandy Rosenberg

Council Vice-President Sharon Green Middleton

Councilman Kristerfer Burnett

Councilman Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer

The many residents and stakeholders from who shared their vision and recommendations for their community.

The Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School and Forest Park High School scholars, their parents, and school leadership and faculty for their dedication to making their school and community thrive.

*Thank you to these City agencies, from which staff helped develop this plan.*

Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW)

Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP)

Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT)

Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD)

Baltimore City Public Schools System (BCPS)

Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)



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# *Overview and Introduction*

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**21<sup>st</sup> Century School Buildings Program**

**INSPIRE Mission and Objectives**

**INSPIRE Process**

## 21st Century School Buildings Program

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In the fall of 2010, groundwork was laid to address Baltimore City's aging and inadequate public school buildings. Community, education advocacy groups, the school system, and other stakeholders built a coalition of support for legislation and funding to modernize all of Baltimore's public schools. The promise of replaced and renovated schools is meant to help transform student opportunities and achievement, provide jobs and resources to families, and help revitalize neighborhoods.

The 21st Century School Buildings Program (the Program) will support excellence in teaching and learning with flexible and adaptable space, learning areas designed for interaction and collaboration, and technology-equipped classrooms, enabling students to meet today's—and tomorrow's—high standards, and will provide communities with a shared public resource that will enrich their neighborhoods. Baltimore City will benefit for decades to come from this historic effort to provide the healthy, safe, efficient, and modern school buildings all children deserve. As a result, students in Baltimore City Public Schools will benefit from:

- Replaced or renovated school buildings across the city;
- School environments that support teaching and learning to prepare students for college and career success;
- Schools that become hubs of resources supporting entire communities;
- Modern, efficient, and inspiring educational facilities that also provide recreation and community use; and
- Partnerships that encourage businesses and neighborhood residents to connect with their local schools.

All of the major renovation and replacement projects in the Program will meet or exceed U.S. Green Building Council's LEED-Silver standard. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; LEED-certified buildings are resource-efficient and save operating costs. Each school design team works with a sustainability consultant, to ensure certification.

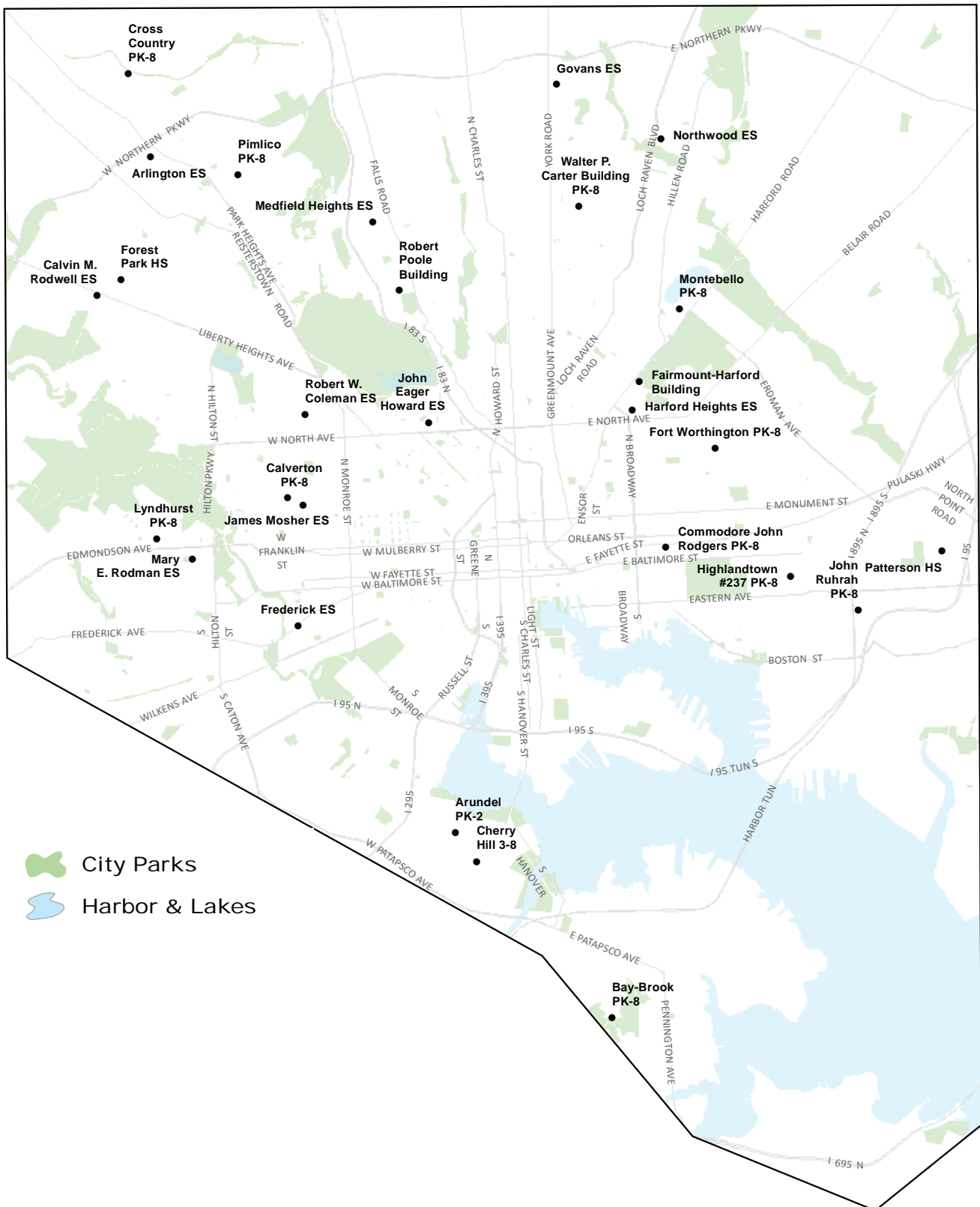
### Financing and Administering the Program

The Baltimore City Public School System Construction and Revitalization Act of 2013 resulted in a partnership between the City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, and Baltimore City Public Schools, financing a program that is leveraging \$60 million/year to provide approximately \$1 billion in bond proceeds for school construction issued by the Maryland Stadium Authority. Additionally, The City of Baltimore, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Interagency Committee on Public School Construction, and Maryland Stadium Authority are partnering through a Memorandum of Understanding in order to manage and oversee the plan.

School construction is typically funded by municipalities and states on a project-by-project basis. Alternative financing for school construction using this method for the Program allows Baltimore City Public Schools to expedite the process of significantly renovating or replacing 23-28 school buildings over a seven year period.

*Find out more about 21st Century Schools Building Program, partnerships, school project statuses, community engagement, job/contract opportunities, and more at <http://baltimore21stcenturyschools.org>.*

# 21st Century School Buildings Renovation/Replacement – Phase 1



## INSPIRE Mission and Objectives

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Each modernized 21st Century school represents tens of millions of dollars of public investment into the neighborhood it serves.

To leverage this investment, and to enhance the connection between the schools and the surrounding neighborhoods, the Department of Planning launched a new program called INSPIRE, which stands for Investing in Neighborhoods and Schools to Promote Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence. This planning program focuses on the neighborhoods surrounding each of the schools, specifically the quarter-mile around the schools.

### **Focusing on a Quarter-Mile**

Focusing on a limited geographic area allows plans to concentrate impact around the school so that assets and investments support the school as a community resource, build on each other, and continue to expand further into the neighborhood. Recommendations in the plan don't simply stop at a quarter-mile marker; a guiding principle however, is considering concentration of impact. In this way, the INSPIRE plans respond to the aspirations of the neighborhood and school stakeholders in a way that is achievable.

### **Making an Impact**

INSPIRE plans seek to lead to improvements in the



environment and in the quality of life for students, their families, and neighborhood residents and businesses. The plans will also articulate the community's long-term vision for guiding private investment, and address environmental, social, and economic conditions.

To achieve this, there are two categories of recommendations.

- To strengthen the connection between the school and community, the first set of recommendations focuses on blocks that have been designated as "primary walking routes." Standard improvements along these routes will help ensure that students and other community members have safer and more walkable access to the school. See page 26 for details.
- To address environmental, social, and economic conditions, and to help guide future investment, the second set of recommendations is divided into six goals. While all INSPIRE plans start with the same goals, community stakeholders help prioritize them; strategies and recommendations are developed in response to their input..
  - Invest in housing and market-strengthening development opportunities

- Improve safety
- Improve sanitation
- Create environmentally-sustainable neighborhoods
- Create opportunities for health and wellness
- Create connections and access

### **Implementing the Plans**

Implementing recommendations that have been developed in partnership with community stakeholders is arguably the most important step. Throughout the planning process, the Department of Planning has met with City agencies, neighborhood stakeholders, and others who are critical partners in ensuring that recommendations become reality.

City agencies and others have committed to start making improvements by allocating staffing resources

and capital dollars, and the Department of Planning is using General Obligation Bond funding (currently 2.5 million dollars per Fiscal Year starting in FY 2016) to support improvements along the primary walking routes and community-selected projects. In some cases, recommendations highlight efforts already happening, or suggest programmatic partnerships. In others, stakeholders can decide to organize neighbors to implement a recommendation. Full implementation of the plans requires the engagement of the private market, anchor institutions, and the philanthropic community. The plans provide clear priorities to guide that investment.

Pages 43-47 contains implementation tables for all of the recommendations, and shows commitments that have already been made.



## INSPIRE Process

The Planning Department works with community members, school stakeholders, City agencies, citywide organizations, and others to guide the INSPIRE process. Throughout the process we LISTEN, CREATE, and DELIVER.

- **LISTEN: Gathering Information**

Community stakeholders, Department of Planning staff, and other City agency staff examine existing conditions around the school and identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. The Department of Planning reviews neighborhood history and plans, collects demographic data, conducts walking tours with an INSPIRE Steering Committee, convenes workshops, and conducts surveys to gather information from stakeholders.

- **CREATE: Drafting and Reviewing Recommendations**

Based on stakeholder input, Department of Planning staff drafts recommendations. Relevant City agency representatives will help identify where agencies can coordinate. Draft recommendations are shared with stakeholders, and are revised and prioritized.

- **DELIVER: Writing, Reviewing, and Executing the Plan**

Department of Planning staff write the INSPIRE plan and share it with the community. After the plan is reviewed by the community, it is submitted to the Planning Commission for adoption.

The following chart depicts the general process flow, although each planning process is unique.



# INSPIRE Planning Area Background

Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School #256, located at 3501 Hillsdale Road, sits at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road in the Howard Park neighborhood. Less than one-half mile away is Forest Park High School #406, located at 3701 Eldorado Avenue in the Dorchester neighborhood. The quarter-mile INSPIRE area contains several neighborhoods including Howard Park, Dorchester, West Arlington, and Central Forest Park.

The Grove Park Elementary/Middle School program in the Grove Park neighborhood is slated to close at the end of the 2017-18 school year. Students currently zoned for that school will attend the Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School.



## Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle and Forest Park High School Modernization

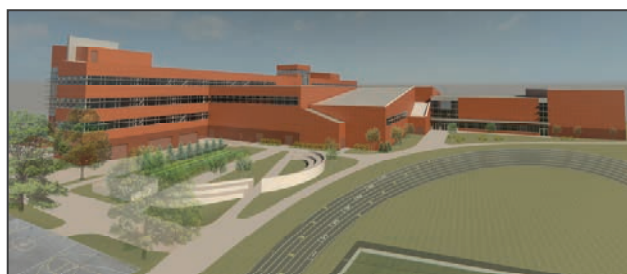
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Calvin M. Rodwell currently serves students in pre-kindergarten through 5th grade but will expand to serve pre-kindergarten through 8th grade beginning September 2018. In SY2016 Calvin M. Rodwell's enrollment was 350 students and the SY2022 enrollment is projected to be 629 students. The increase in enrollment is attributed to the closure of the Grove Park Elementary/Middle School program at the end of the 2017-18 school year. Homes that are currently in the Grove Park Elementary/Middle School zone will be re-zoned to the Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School. The current 37,537 sq. ft. Calvin M. Rodwell building will be demolished and a larger building will be constructed to accommodate the increased number of students. The new school building is expected to open in January 2020.



Forest Park High School is currently under construction and will continue to serve students in 9th through 12th grade when the building reopens for the 2018-19 school year. The building was built in 1979 and is being renovated to include an addition that will extend to the northeast of the site. The gross floor area of the building will increase from approximately 182,000 sq. ft. to 203,508 sq. ft. when the construction is complete. The new school building is expected to have a state rated capacity of 927 students and the enrollment for SY2122 is projected to be 812 students.

The modernized school buildings and sites will be different from the old schools in many ways. Flexible and adaptable space, learning areas designed for interaction and collaboration, and technology-equipped classrooms will be featured. Below are some of the highlights.



### Forest Park High School

- The existing building is being renovated. The modernization includes an addition to the existing building on the northeast portion of the campus visible from Belle Avenue. The project was designed by Smolen Emr Ilkovitch Architects and is being constructed by HESS Construction. The school building and site improvements represent a \$73 million investment in the community.
- The scope of work includes facade upgrades, classroom modernization, and repairs to the existing swimming pool.
- The two building additions include an addition to the cafeteria and an art classroom, auxiliary gymnasium, black box theater, and 2,000 square feet of community space.
- The building was designed with an emphasis on community space with a separate community entrance, family resource space, and a community room.
- The new building will maximize daylight into instructional areas and provide clear sightlines of adjacent spaces.



- The historic steps to enter the site from Chatham Road will remain.
- A new central staircase will connect all floors of the school and allows for natural lighting.
- Site work includes a new track, updated stadium seating, a culinary arts garden, and outdoor classroom space.



#### **Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School**

- The existing Calvin M. Rodwell school building will be demolished and a new school building will be built. The new school is expected to be a 3-story building with a gross floor area of 101,670 square feet. Design Collective has been selected to design the new school building.



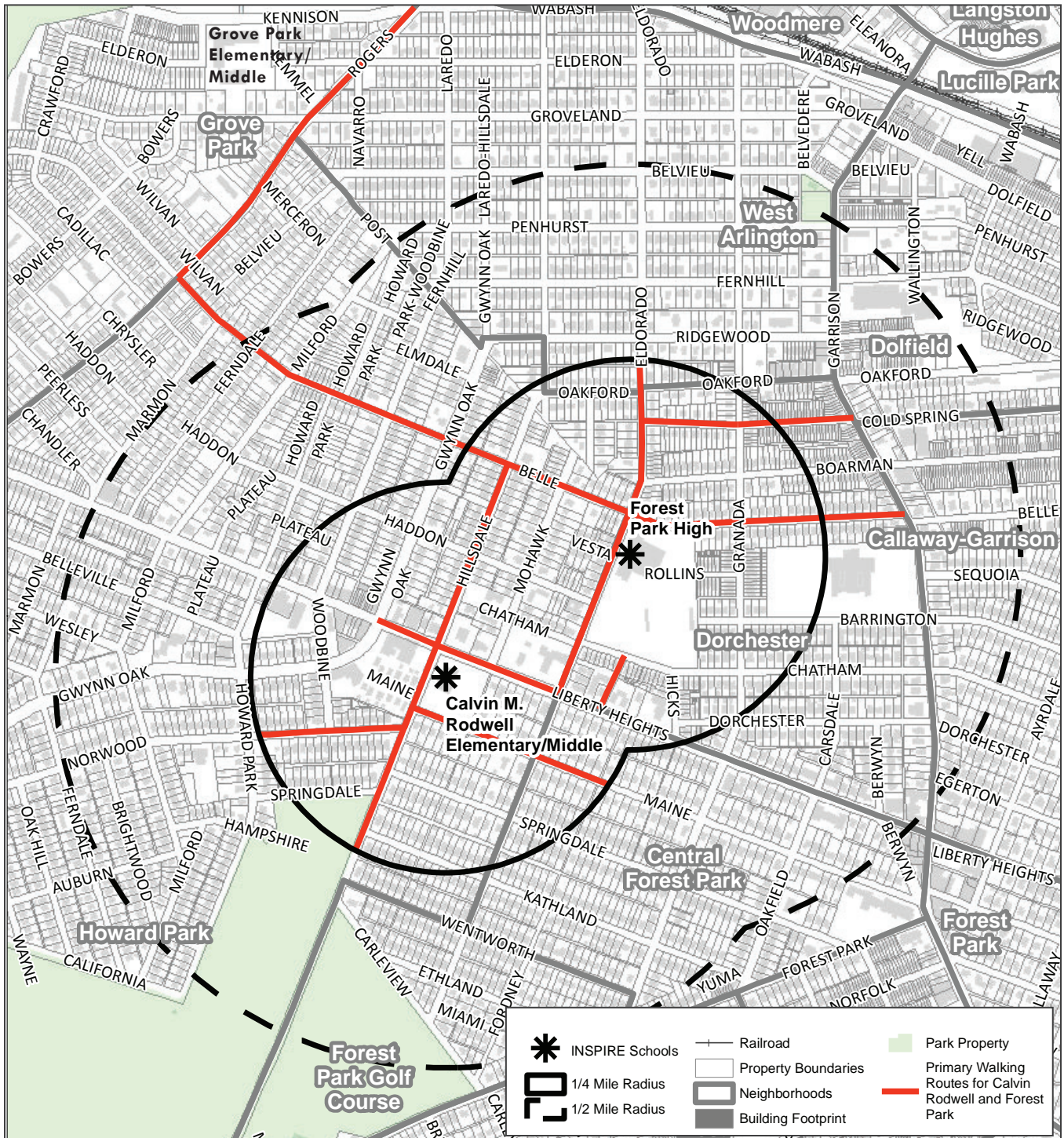
- The location of the main entry is expected to face Liberty Heights Avenue, a secondary entrance will remain on Hillsdale Road, and a separate community entrance will be provided.
- The elementary and middle school students will be separated with the elementary students on the 1st and 2nd floors and the middle school students on the 3rd floor.
- The cafeteria is expected to be situated at the north end of the site with the gym to the south.
- The new layout will allow for an expansion of the parking lot along Liberty Heights Avenue and will expand the cafeteria to an appropriate size for the school.



## Primary Routes to School

The map below identifies the primary routes leading to the schools. These routes are Hillsdale Road, Eldorado Avenue, Belle Avenue, Carleview Road, Maine

Avenue, Norwood Avenue, N. Rogers Avenue, Liberty Heights Avenue, and W. Cold Spring Lane.





## Neighborhood History

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Calvin Rodwell Elementary School and Forest Park High School are located within the Howard Park and Dorchester neighborhoods respectively. The schools serve multiple early 20th century suburban-style neighborhoods typically comprised of detached single-family homes surrounded by landscaped lawns.

Northwest Baltimore was historically home to extensive farm land and large country estates that, in the area surrounding Liberty Heights Avenue and Garrison Road, remained largely undeveloped throughout the 1800s. Initial development came in the form of real estate speculators who saw the potential to duplicate the success of Walbrook and Highland Park developments and thus financed the 1890s installation of the Walbrook, Gwynn Oak, and Powhatan Electric Railroad over a four-and-a-half-mile route northwest of Walbrook. This line served country hotels and large single-family homes that were integrated into the rural landscape.

More development followed this initial investment, with the majority of housing constructed by 1930. This growth was a result of private car ownership, as well as the introduction of street car lines into the new

development, notably along Liberty Heights Avenue. Development was also spurred by the 1918 annexation of the area to Baltimore City, which brought amenities such as sewer, water, gas, electricity, and paved streets, which were not provided in the county.

The Howard Park Elementary School, located at the intersection of Liberty Heights, Howard Park, and Woodbine Avenues, was constructed in 1908, to serve the white Baltimore County population. When the area was annexed in 1918, the school was incorporated into the Baltimore City School system as Public School 218, and continued to serve only white students. This community landmark saw several additions, before it was decommissioned as a school in 1980 following the construction of Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary School. Today the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and functions as a senior center. Other schools were constructed in the area to continue to serve the growing population:







Forest Park High School (1924) at the corner of Chatham Road and Eldorado Avenue and Garrison Junior High School (1932) at the corner of Barrington Road and Garrison Boulevard. These two schools were constructed in the highly ornamental Collegiate Gothic architectural style that was popular in the early 20th century for academic buildings. The original Forest Park High School was demolished in 1981 to allow for the construction of the current building, which is located within the same parcel. The Garrison Middle School program closed in 2013 but the building is currently functioning as a swing space for multiple schools that are undergoing modernization through the 21st Century School Buildings program.

The commercial and civic center of the area was also located along Liberty Heights Avenue, and served many of the adjacent neighborhoods. The commercial corridor, known as Gwynn Oak Junction, was built up along with the residential neighborhood and by 1951 included two movie theaters, a bowling alley, an A&P Grocery Store, and Reads Drug Store, among many other businesses.

One of the movie theaters was the Ambassador Theater, a Baltimore City Landmark. Constructed in 1935 it was the second theater completed in the commercial district and incorporated the latest advancements in theater design.

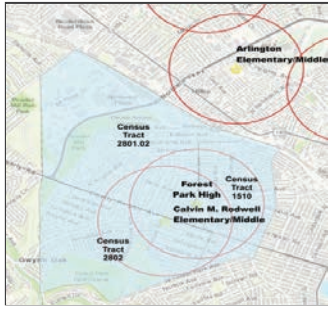
In the first half of the 20th century, the area was home to a large Jewish population. The area continued to grow in population along with the rest of the city into the 1950s. It was during the 1950s and 1960s that the demographics of the neighborhood began to change as middle- and upper-class white residents moved away from the city. These residents were

replaced with a largely middle-class African American population who sought a suburban-style neighborhood. Baltimore native Barry Levinson wrote and directed the movie, *Liberty Heights*, about the many changes that were taking place in this community. The residents of the community today still primarily consist of middle-class African American families.

The second half of the 20th century saw disinvestment in the community with the commercial center losing many anchor businesses. The suburban-style housing stock largely remains intact, although some large single-family homes have been divided into multiple units.



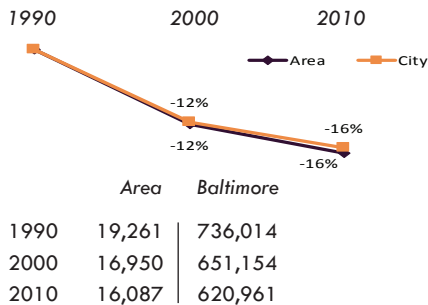
## Key City and Neighborhood Data



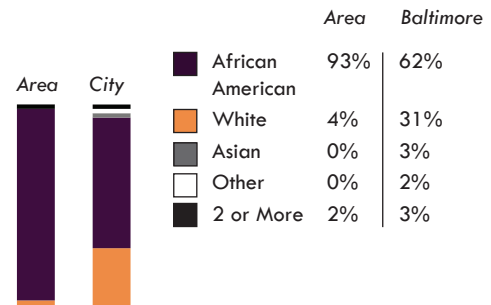
The charts below depict data from the Census Tracts highlighted in this map (Census Tracts 1510, 2801.02, 2802). Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 5-year Community Survey (area data) and 2015 1-year American Community Survey (City data). Housing data is from the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development.

Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

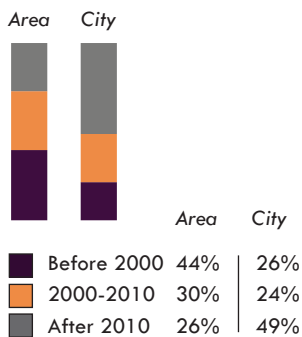
### Population Change Since 1990



### Race



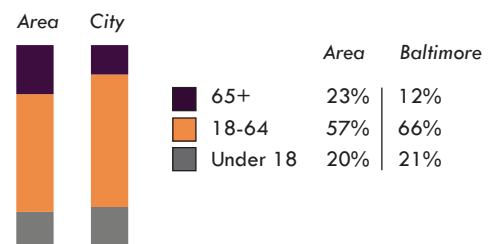
### Residence Established



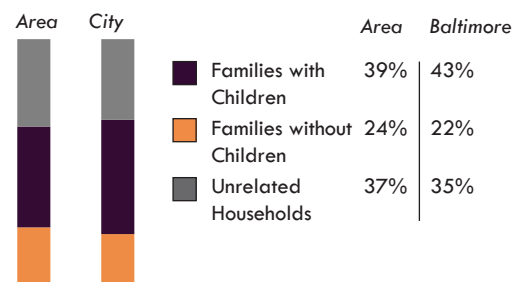
The percentage of residents living in the plan area that are 65 years or older is almost double the percentage of residents that age citywide.

The percentage of long-term residents is significantly higher in the area than the percentage for the city as a whole.

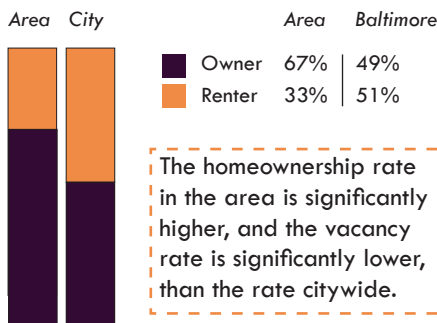
### Age



### Household Structure

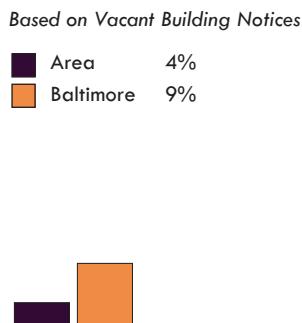


### Housing Occupancy

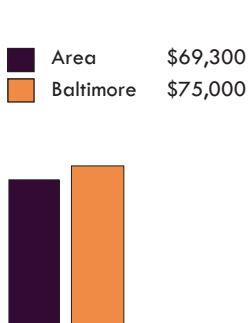


The homeownership rate in the area is significantly higher, and the vacancy rate is significantly lower, than the rate citywide.

### Average Vacancy Rate



### Mean Housing Sales



## Median Income

Area	\$40,781
Baltimore	\$44,165



## Unemployment Rate

Area	13%
Baltimore	10%



The unemployment rate in the plan area is slightly higher than the citywide average.

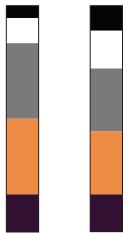
## Poverty Rate

Area	25%
Baltimore	23%



## Educational Attainment

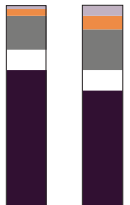
Area City



	Area	Baltimore
No HS Diploma or GED	18%	15%
HS Degree/ GED Attained	34%	30%
Some College	31%	25%
College Degree	11%	17%
Graduate Degree	6%	13%

## Journey to Work (Workers 16+)

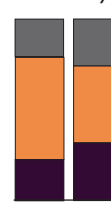
Area City



	Area	Baltimore
Public Transportation	18%	20%
Carpooled	8%	9%
Drove Alone	68%	58%
Walk/Bike	3%	8%
Other/Work at Home	3%	6%

## Vehicle Availability

Area City



	Area	Baltimore
No Vehicles	22%	31%
1 Vehicle	51%	39%
2+ Vehicles	27%	30%

The percentage of household vehicle access in the area is much higher than citywide.

## Percentage of Population Living in a Food Desert



Area	0%
Baltimore	25%

25% of Baltimore residents live in a food desert but this area is not considered a food desert.

## Neighborhood Observations

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The majority of the INSPIRE plan area is located in the Howard Park and Dorchester neighborhoods in Northwest Baltimore City. Both neighborhoods share Eldorado Avenue as a border, with Dorchester to the east and Howard Park to the west. Both are strong, stable neighborhoods that share many similarities. Howard Park is significantly larger than Dorchester. Liberty Heights Avenue creates the southern edge of Dorchester; Howard Park extends all the way down to the southern tip of Forest Park Golf Course, and west to the city-county line. Dorchester and Howard Park have many assets to build from but there are also some challenges that need to be addressed to keep them thriving.

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

The majority of the Dorchester neighborhood is zoned for low-density residential buildings. There is an assortment of housing options that include single-family detached homes, single family semi-detached homes, rowhouses in the northeastern section of the neighborhood, and several apartment buildings along Liberty Heights Avenue and Garrison Boulevard. According to the 2014 Housing Market Typology a majority of the Dorchester neighborhood is in the Middle Market Stressed category, meaning there are slightly lower home sales values than the city's average, and there has not been significant price appreciation. This type of housing market may have higher than average vacancy or foreclosure rates. Residential vacancy is relatively low however, with the exception of the 4000-block of Boarman Avenue. A small part of the southern portion of the neighborhood is in the Middle Market category. Middle Market areas are characterized by high homeownership rates and median sales values that are higher than the City's average. On the other hand, they have higher foreclosure rates when



compared to more competitive markets and have also experienced slight population loss.

A majority of Howard Park's housing stock consists of large single-family detached homes, several pockets of semi-detached homes, and a few small apartment buildings scattered throughout the neighborhood. Two sections in the community are commercially zoned. The first is located at 5500 Gwynn Oak Avenue which is a two-story building with six ground floor retail units as well as office space on the second floor. The other commercially zoned area in Howard Park is the business district that stretches from the 4500-block to the 5100-block of Liberty Heights Avenue. There are some residential vacancies but they aren't concentrated in a particular area. Howard Park is categorized as Middle Market as well as Middle Market Choice according to the 2014 Housing Market Typology. Middle Market Choice markets have housing prices above the City's average, strong homeownership rates, and a low vacancy rate.

Within the Howard Park and Dorchester neighborhood boundaries are several large tracts of land. One of those land parcels is the former Garrison Middle



School (building #42), located at 3910 Barrington Road, one block east of Forest Park High School. The Garrison Middle School program was closed in 2013 but the building is still operating as swing space for schools undergoing construction as part of the 21st Century program. Garrison Middle School is a historic brick building that was built in 1932. The building is more than 165,000 square feet and sits on 12.1 acres of land that is accessible from Barrington Road as well as Garrison Boulevard. The land is zoned R-3, which is a Detached Residential Zoning District, intended for neighborhoods of detached dwellings located on lots of at least 5,000 square feet. It is comprised of open green space surrounding the school building which is situated in the center of the parcel abutting the northern property line.



### **Recreation and Open Space**

The schools are the hubs of recreational activities in these neighborhoods. Forest Park High School offers residents recreational opportunities with free access to the school's fields and facilities. Forest Park High School has tennis courts, a basketball court, a running track, and an indoor swimming pool that are all available to the public. Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School has a playground that is accessible to children when school is not in session. In addition, students are offered recreational opportunities through the school's many after school programs which include dance, art, music, martial arts, spirit squad, flag football, basketball, and culinary arts.

There are two public parks in the vicinity of Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School and Forest Park High School. Penhurst Park, located at the corner of Garrison Boulevard and Penhurst Avenue, is a small park with a playground, swings, and a limited amount of open space. Hillsdale Park (as it's referred to by many residents) is located a few blocks south of Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School. The largest feature of the park, the 176-acre municipal Forest Park Golf Course, is split into two sides by Hillsdale Road. While many residents consider Forest Park Golf Course a tremendous asset, the adjacent land offers little in the form of recreational opportunities to non-golfers. There are several sections of the park that are underutilized, particularly the large, heavily wooded section at the northwestern edge of the golf course just south of California Boulevard and east of Royal Oak Avenue. If designed properly, this urban forest has the potential to reintroduce residents to nature and create a connection between Forest Park Golf Course and Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park.

Additional recreational opportunities are available for senior citizens at the Forest Park Senior Center on the 4800-block of Liberty Heights Avenue. The Forest Park Senior Center offers line dancing, ballroom dancing, arts and crafts, bingo, aerobics classes, martial arts, and other physical fitness programs. The center also functions as a hangout where seniors go to socialize. The Forest Park Senior Center is a very large building that is equipped with meeting rooms that are frequently used by community groups and neighborhood associations, making it an asset to residents of all ages.

### **Transportation**

There are several major streets in the area including Liberty Heights Avenue and Garrison Boulevard. Liberty Heights Avenue is used by residents heading northwest to points of interest in Baltimore County as well as those heading southeast to areas downtown and beyond. It is a heavily traveled corridor with

exceptional bus service. Under the new MTA BaltimoreLink bus system, Liberty Heights Avenue is one of the 12 CityLink Routes (Lime Route) that service major arteries 24-hours a day. Liberty Heights Avenue is an ideal thoroughfare for motorists seeking consistent and rapid vehicular movement. However, these same conditions that benefit drivers have created a less than ideal situation for pedestrians and cyclists. High traffic volumes and fast rates of speed make large sections of Liberty Heights Avenue unattractive to individuals walking or bicycling in the neighborhood. An exception exists where street parking is provided and used, narrowing four lanes of traffic to two – as is the case for several blocks of Liberty Heights Avenue west of Hillsdale Road. This creates a choke point that slows down traffic and creates safer conditions for pedestrians crossing from one side of the street to the other.

Garrison Boulevard is the road that many residents in Northwest Baltimore use when traveling to destinations to the north or south. It consists of one wide travel lane equipped with bicycle sharrows in each direction, as well as street parking on both sides. The limited number of traffic signals and stop signs on Garrison Boulevard make it an ideal street for motorists seeking consistent and continuous movement. Garrison Boulevard also offers access to public transit as it is serviced by the LocalLink 80 bus line which connects to the Rogers Avenue Metro Station to the north. The West Cold Spring Metro Station is another public transit hub within close proximity to the schools. Both of the metro stations are approximately one mile from Forest Park High School and offer convenient and affordable subway service to residents traveling as far northwest as Owings Mills and as far southeast as Johns Hopkins Hospital.

When pedestrians veer off of the major thoroughfares, the neighborhoods surrounding the schools become quite walkable. Most streets in this section of Northwest Baltimore have sidewalks that are in decent condition and many have a tree-lined plant-

ing strip separating the street and sidewalk. There is street parking which both creates an additional buffer between the street and sidewalk and narrows the travel lanes, forcing vehicles to slow down. Most of the interior streets have 25 mph speed limits and four-way stops at intersections, which keeps vehicular speeds relatively low. Most of the homes have parking pads in the rear accessible only through the alley. Very few homes have driveways in the front so the curb remains intact on most streets limiting the opportunity for conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.



Even though the neighborhoods are generally pedestrian friendly there are plenty of opportunities to improve walkability. For example, there are several streets such as Post Road, Milford Avenue, and Laredo Avenue that have no sidewalks at all. In addition, the lack of four-way stops on Hillsdale Road and Eldorado Avenue enables vehicles to speed where many students walk to and from school. There are very few crosswalks, pedestrian street lights, and ADA-compliant curb ramps within the interior of the neighborhoods.



## Existing Plans, Assessments, and Strategies

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A number of plans, strategies, and assessments have been produced in the Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle and Forest Park High School planning area. The INSPIRE plan has been informed by each of them.

### ***Liberty Heights Avenue and Garrison Boulevard LINCS (2017)***

Leveraging Investments in Neighborhood Corridors Strategy (LINCS) was created to provide residents and stakeholders with an opportunity to develop a plan for major thoroughfares going through their neighborhoods. Significant feedback and project ideas were collected in the public meetings and listening sessions. That information was used to create an implementation matrix focused on making Liberty Heights Avenue and Garrison Boulevard more reflective of the strong neighborhoods that surround them

### ***Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor Assessment (2015)***

The Liberty Heights Corridor Comprehensive Real Estate and Economic Development Assessment was completed by Partners for Economic Solutions in 2015. This in-depth report evaluated the market conditions of Liberty Heights Avenue and was the springboard that helped launch the LINCS initiative for Liberty Heights Avenue and Garrison Boulevard.

<https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/LibertyHeightsCorridorAssessment.pdf>

### ***Greater Northwest Community Coalition Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (2005)***

The Greater Northwest Community Coalition Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (GNCC SNAP) was a comprehensive community planning initiative created to help improve the quality of life for the 35,000 residents of the nineteen neighborhoods within the GNCC boundaries. The plan's boundaries are Northern Parkway to the northwest, Wabash Avenue to the northeast, Dukeland Street to the east, Gwynns Falls Parkway to the south, and Baltimore County to the west.

<https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/GNCCSNAPApril2005.pdf>

# *INSPIRE Recommendations*

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## **Recommendation Development and Overview**

### **Standard Improvements – Primary Walking Routes**

#### **Goals, Strategies, and Recommendations – Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle and Forest Park High School Planning Area**

## Recommendation Development and Overview

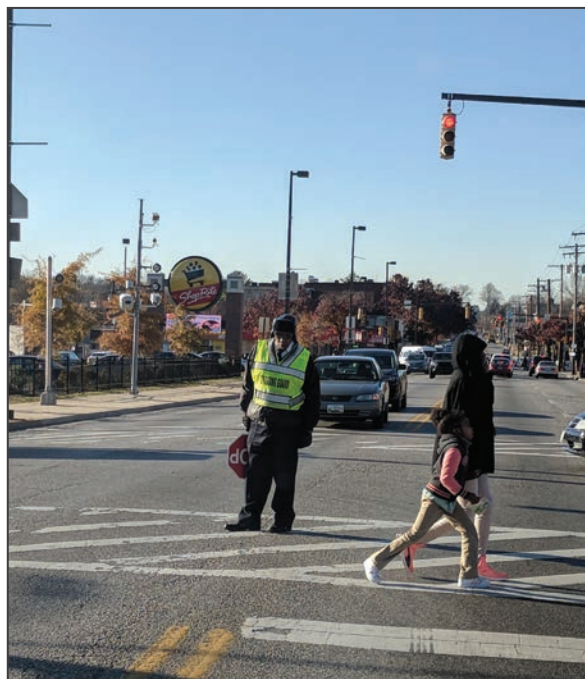
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Between March 2016 and October 2017, Department of Planning (DOP) staff worked with members of the school and neighborhood communities to better understand their neighborhood experiences, concerns, and needs. Through surveys and community workshops, stakeholders have helped inform the draft recommendations presented here. Recommendations from the planning initiatives described on page 23 were evaluated and included where appropriate.

- DOP held INSPIRE workshops on March 23, 2016 (to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities), June 8, 2016 (to discuss priorities and recommendations), and September 27, 2017 (presentation of recommendation report).
- DOP administered a survey to parents, family members, and residents through meetings and online. Responses helped inform recommendations.
- DOP representatives attended Calvin Rodwell and Forest Park High public workshops organized by Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS). These meetings were targeted to residents and parents to gather input during the planning and design phases for the new schools. While BCPS representatives focused on the school and campus there was significant feedback provided by residents regarding the areas surrounding the campus.
- In addition to multiple site visits, the Department of Planning also attended several walking tours hosted by the neighborhoods of Howard Park (9/2/14), West Arlington (6/8/17 and 11/2/17), and Dorchester (7/7/17).

Staff from City agencies, including Housing and Community Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Recreation and Parks, and Department of Public Works also participated in meetings and/or worked with Planning Department staff to address stakeholder priorities.

## Standard Improvements – Primary Walking Routes



Through commitments from many City agencies, these key improvements will be made along the primary walking routes:

- Bringing sidewalks up to a safe and standard condition
- Repainting or adding crosswalks
- Assessing the need for repairs to ADA ramps at intersections
- Marking Safe Routes to School footprints (Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School only)
- Assessing crossing guard deployment
- Pruning and planting street trees
- Assessing street lighting
- Boarding open vacant buildings
- Picking up trash and maintaining vacant lots

Ensuring that students and other community members have safe and attractive pedestrian access to the school is critical to strengthening the connection between the school and community. Therefore, one part of each INSPIRE plan is a focus on the blocks that have been designated as the “primary walking routes.” See page 15.

The Department of Planning used BCPS student/school zone data, and worked with community members, school staff, and the Department of Transportation, to identify the predominant routes that students use to get to and from the school. Within the ¼-mile INSPIRE planning area, blocks on these routes have been designated as the primary walking routes. These blocks are being prioritized for consistent streetscape improvements that will occur prior to the school reopening.



## **Goals, Strategies, and Recommendations – Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle and Forest Park High School Planning Area**

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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 26. Many recommendations described could easily fit under more than one goal.

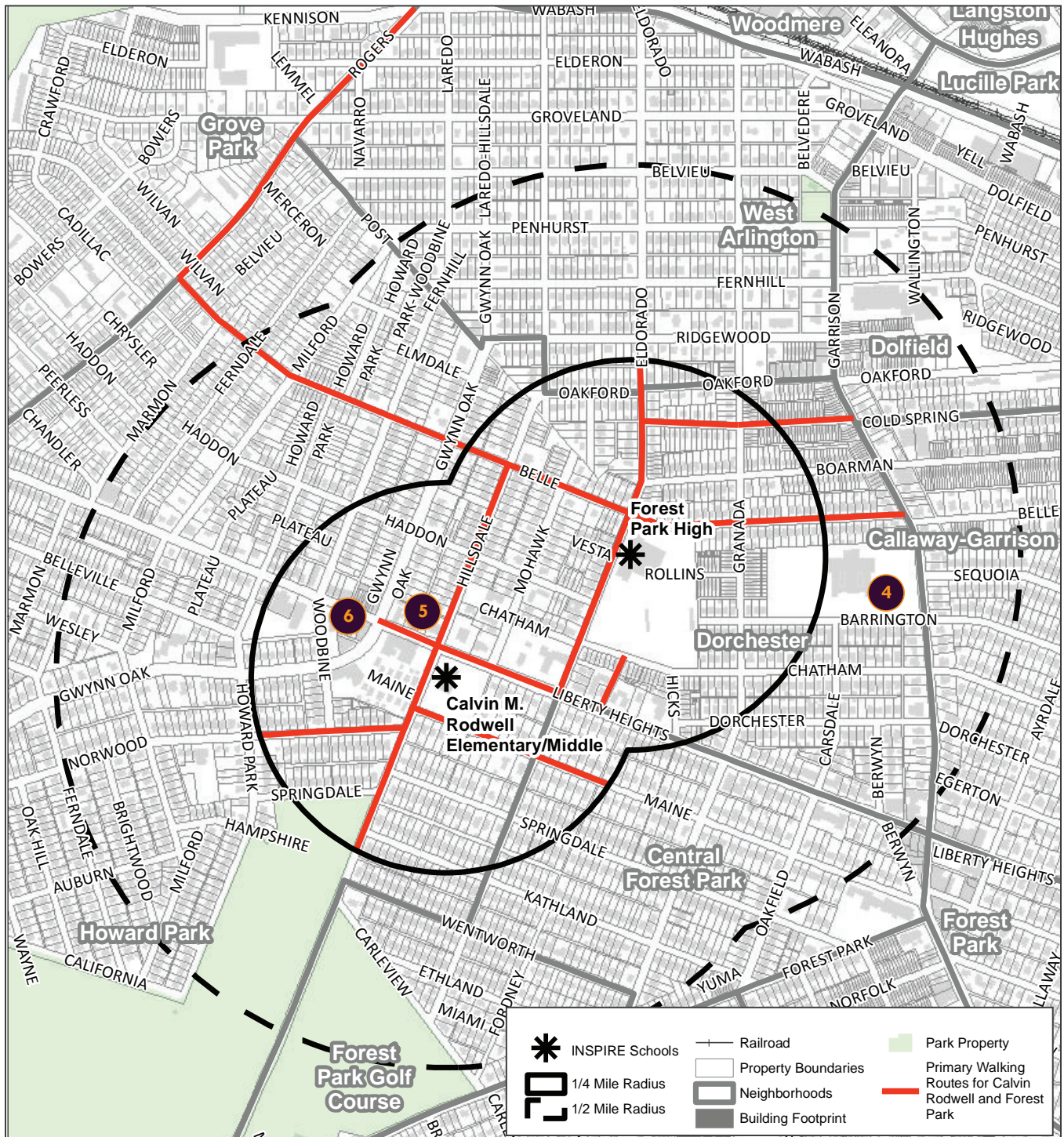
Recommendations for the Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle and Forest Park High Schools planning area fall under these goals and strategies:

- Invest in Housing and Market- Strengthening Development Opportunities
  - Create and Maintain High-Quality Owner-Occupied Housing
  - Promote Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities
  - Improve Retail Businesses and Seek Quality Entrepreneurs in the Community
- Improve Safety
  - Promote Public Safety
- Create Transportation Connections and Access
  - Improve Street Infrastructure, Traffic Conditions, Pedestrian Safety, and Walkability
- Create Opportunities for Health and Wellness
  - Offer Healthy Food Options for Students
  - Create New Places for Play and Recreation in the Community
- Create an Environmentally-Sustainable and Clean Neighborhood
  - Make the Neighborhoods Cleaner and Greener



# INVEST IN HOUSING AND MARKET-STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*Build on the strong homeownership base and cultivate a vibrant retail presence.*





## *Create and Maintain High-Quality Owner-Occupied Housing*

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



Many of the residential blocks near the schools have a significant number of homeowners. Maintaining these blocks, and keeping the homeowners, is critical to building confidence and stability in the neighborhood. Programs run by the City and non-profits that can help homeowners maintain their properties should be promoted within the plan area. DHCD and DOP should connect with schools, churches, and community associations to promote these opportunities at meetings and events:

- DHCD's Green, Healthy and Sustainable Homes division offers assistance including rehabilitation services (loans and grants), home improvement incentives, homeownership incentives, lead hazard reduction, and energy conservation incentives.
- DHCD's Baltimore Energy Challenge educates homeowners about lowering energy bills.

### **2. Reduce the number of vacant homes within a quarter-mile of the schools.**

The majority of the area surrounding the schools is a stable and sought-after housing market. The two modernized school buildings may draw even more families to the area. There are very few vacant homes within the quarter-mile INSPIRE planning area. Research suggests that the few vacancies that do exist may have become vacant due to mortgage foreclosure or death of the owner. It is important to reoccupy these properties as quickly as possible, so that any new vacancies do not overwhelm the area and tip the market in the wrong direction. Many vacant properties are being rehabbed and will be reoccupied when complete. Some however, are likely to remain in limbo if no interventions are taken. The largest cluster of vacant buildings is located on the 4000-block of Boarman Avenue. Special attention is needed for the seven vacant homes on this block. DHCD should consider pursuing receivership or other effective interventions for the following locations:

- 4002, 4003, 4004, 4006, 4012, 4027, 4027 ½ and 4100 Boarman Avenue
- 4020 and 4022 Belle Avenue
- 4107 Chatham Road
- 4404 Chatham Road
- 4101 W. Cold Spring Lane
- 4000 Eldorado Avenue
- 3700 Gwynn Oak Avenue
- 4205, 4208, and 4210 Granada Avenue
- 4403 Haddon Avenue
- 3716 Hillsdale Road
- 4301, 4307, 4401, 4403, and 4407 Liberty Heights Avenue
- 4211, 4312, 4400, 4403, 4409, and 4501 Maine Avenue
- 3607 and 3611 Mohawk Avenue
- 4107 Rollins Avenue
- 4400 Springdale Avenue
- 3608 and 3615 Woodbine Avenue

### 3. Explore acquisition opportunities for vacant lots and sell them for new construction of single-family homes.

There is significant demand for newly-constructed single-family homes in the neighborhoods that surround the schools, although there is very little vacant land on which to build. Privately-owned vacant lots in the area could provide an opportunity if they were made available. Given their development potential, DHCD should consider opportunities to acquire the following vacant lots that are within a quarter-mile of the schools:

- 4033 and 4034 Belle Avenue
- 4017 Chatham Road
- 3604 Hillsdale Road
- 4406 Maine Avenue
- 4700 Norwood Avenue

## *Promote Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities*

### 4. Explore reuse options for the Garrison Middle School building.



The 12.1-acre Garrison Middle School property is situated along Garrison Boulevard and Barrington Road, one block east of Forest Park High School. The Garrison program was closed in 2013 and the building (building #42) will be utilized as swing space for

multiple schools in the 21st Century program. City Schools expects to surplus the building in 2023 and there are no definitive reuse plans currently in place. The City should conduct community stakeholder engagement and analysis, including explaining the surplus school disposition process, sharing profiles of potential re-uses, engaging residents about desired uses, and engage stakeholders about concerns for the site. Discussions about desired uses could include short- and long-term uses, indoor and outdoor uses, as well as shared use and open space opportunities.



### 5. Explore opportunities to redevelop and reuse the Ambassador Theater.

The Art Deco-style Ambassador Theatre (4604 Liberty Heights Avenue) opened in 1935 and was once the jewel of Liberty Heights Avenue. The theater closed in 1968 and has since been used in a number of different ways including a dance hall and catering business, a roller-skating rink, a cosmetology school, and a church. The property has been vacant since at least 2009 and suffered extensive fire damage in 2012. The building sits directly across the street from the new ShopRite grocery store as well as Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School. Its reuse is a top priority for the community. In addition to the poor condition of the building, reuse of the Ambassador Theater is challenged by a lack of off-street parking and the large size of the building. The privately-owned Ambassador Theatre received historic landmark designation from

the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) in 2016 and is undergoing receivership. The City and partners should undertake several short-term steps to help attract a buyer to re-develop the Ambassador in a way that will benefit the community:

- Stabilize the roof to prevent further structural damage.
- Complete a market assessment that includes construction costs of recently completed local theater renovations that can be provided to prospective buyers.
- Discuss preferred reuse options with stakeholders including residents, local business owners, CHAP staff, etc., and determine the financial feasibility of those uses.

## *Improve Retail Businesses and Seek Quality Entrepreneurs in the Community*

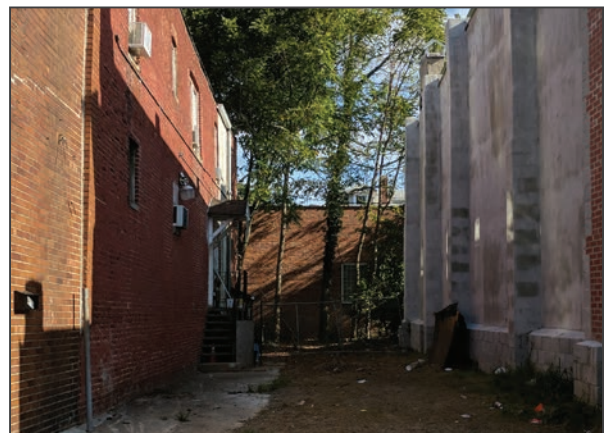


### **6. Make strategic improvements to the Howard Park Business District.**

The Howard Park Business District runs from the 4500- to 5100-blocks of Liberty Heights Avenue with the core of commercial activity being located in the 4600 and 4700 blocks. There are many things working in the business district's favor. The opening of the ShopRite grocery store in 2014 was an enormous investment which created an anchor in the district. In addition, the core of the business district has all of the

qualities of a traditional Main Street including wide sidewalks, a tree lined street, and ground-floor commercial storefronts with no setbacks. Despite all of this potential, the business district isn't as strong as it could be. While there are some neighborhood serving businesses such as the ShopRite and Wells Fargo bank, most residents agree that the district is lacking in terms of quality retail options. Some of the current offerings include carryout restaurants, convenience stores, and a liquor store. There are many challenges facing the business district including high vehicular speeds, the presence of loitering and drug dealing, and the visibility of the blighted Ambassador Theater. Given that it is more difficult than ever to run a profitable brick-and-mortar business and that attracting high-quality retail to neighborhoods has become fiercely competitive, much has to be done to make the Howard Park Business District more attractive to potential business owners. Some steps that should be taken include:

- Consider the installation of a CitiWatch camera at the corner of Liberty Heights Avenue and Gwynn Oak Avenue to deter loitering and other illegal activity.
- DHCD should acquire the vacant lots located at 4704 Liberty Heights Avenue and 4712 Liberty Heights Avenue for potential pocket parks or consolidation with the neighboring businesses. Consider installing decorative fencing along the front of these lots to solidify the street wall and eliminate the gap-toothed





appearance of the business district. Explore reuse options for these lots such as outdoor seating for restaurants.



- Amend the Howard Park Business Area Urban Renewal Plan to discourage undesirable commercial uses and encourage aesthetically-pleasing business facades. Examples of amendments could include new regulations that limit the amount of advertisements on storefront windows and prohibit the installation of new solid metal security doors on commercial facades.
- BDC should work with businesses in the commercial district to make façade and signage improvements.
- The City's Code Enforcement, Health Department, and the Board of Liquor License Commissioners should coordinate inspections to ensure that businesses are compliant with the law.

- DOT should explore opportunities to remove mid-block curb cuts and restore level sidewalks to create a pedestrian-friendly business district. As a starting point, consider blocking off the alley that separates 4716 and 4718 Liberty Heights Avenue with decorative bollards and install a curb to prevent vehicle access from Liberty Heights Avenue.



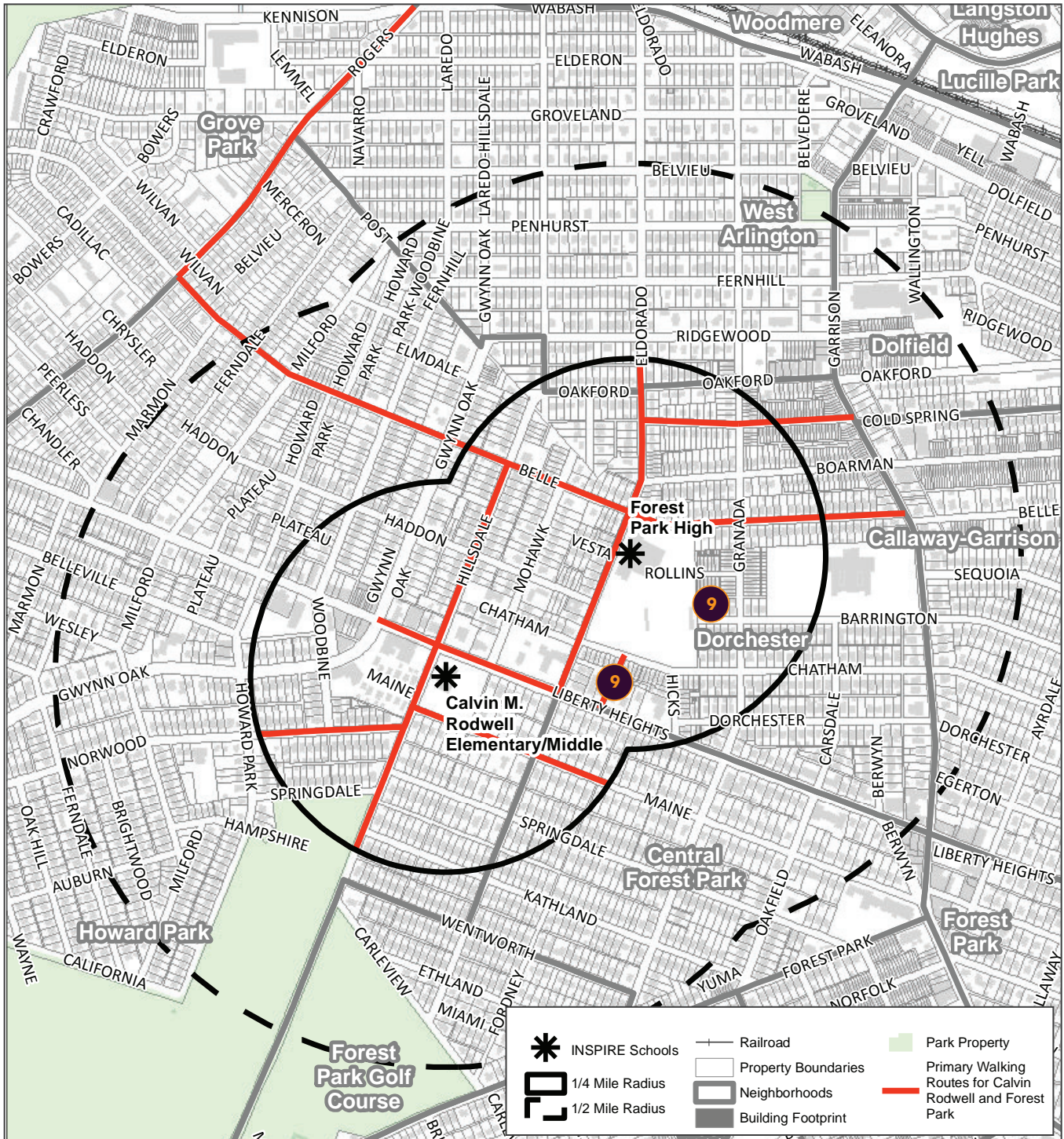
## 7. Provide resources to existing retail establishments.

Nuisance and unkempt businesses near residences and the schools detract from the quality-of-life in the neighborhood. BDC and community leaders should explore opportunities to work with local business entities to provide business assistance for these establishments. Examples of BDC programs include microloan programs, façade improvement programs, technical assistance for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and corner store support. Upon engaging these businesses, BDC should provide periodic updates to the community as to the status of these establishments receiving assistance for improvements.



## IMPROVE SAFETY

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





## *Promote Public Safety*

### **8. Engage the Police Department Dirt Bike Violators Task Force.**



Residents have raised concerns about the use of illegal dirt bikes in the neighborhood. In the City of Baltimore no person may drive or ride any dirt bike or other unregistered vehicle on public or private property. Additionally, no service station or any other person may sell or dispense motor fuel for delivery into any dirt bike or unregistered vehicle. The Baltimore City Police Department's Dirt Bike Violators Task Force is actively working and taking tips via phone or email. To curtail this activity, the community should work with the task force on proactive enforcement and report locations where dirt bikers frequent..

### **9. Evaluate lighting levels and make improvements to make streets safer within the quarter-mile plan area.**

Adequate street lighting is always important but even more so along the routes that children traverse to and from school. In addition to evaluating the lighting levels along the primary walking routes there are several other locations that require immediate attention due to safety concerns. These locations include:

- The alley that connects Barrington Road and Rollins Avenue, east of the football field/bleachers at Forest Park High School: Unlit

alleys are not unusual, but the lack of light at this location is very problematic because this is where dirt bikers are cutting holes in the fence in order to get in and out of the athletic field area, and dirt bikes have done extensive damage to the athletic fields and track. Additional lighting at the entry and exit point may deter this activity.

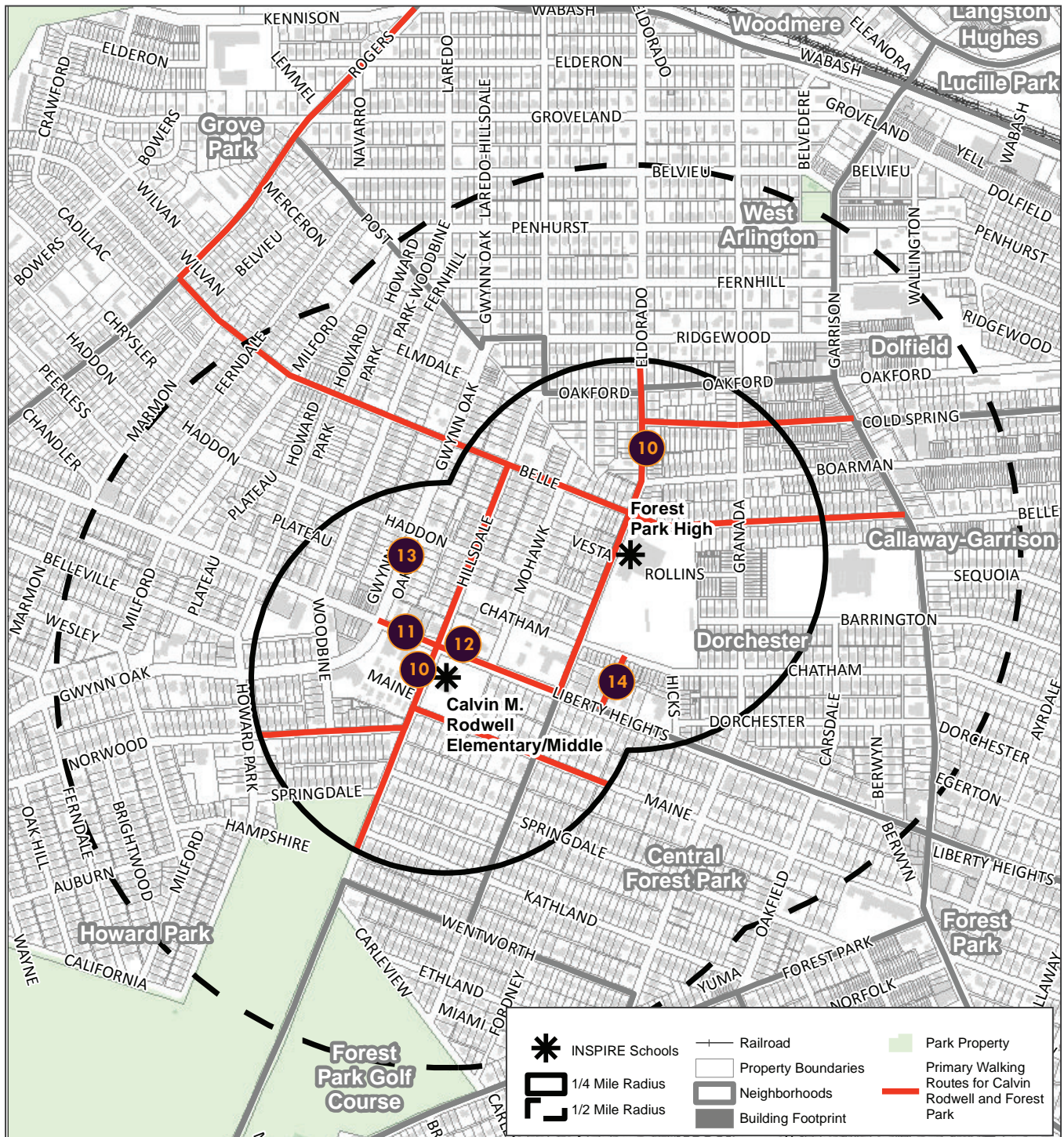
- The pedestrian alley known as the 3600 block of Fordney Lane: The pedestrian alley is a direct connection from the bus stop on the 4300-block of Liberty Heights Avenue and the steps that lead to the Forest Park High School campus. It is highly underutilized primarily due to a lack of lighting and poorly maintained sidewalks. Significant improvements are needed at this location and pedestrian light installations are the top priority.





# CREATE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS

*Connect students and residents safely and efficiently  
to the places they need and want to go.*





## *Improve Street Infrastructure, Traffic Conditions, Pedestrian Safety, and Walkability*



### **10. Slow traffic on Hillsdale Road and Eldorado Avenue.**

The new Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle School building's entrances will face both Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road. Hillsdale Road is a heavily-traveled two-way street that many students use to walk to school. Forest Park High School is located on Eldorado Avenue, a one-way street (south-bound) from Wabash Avenue down to Liberty Heights Avenue, where it converts into a two-way street. Residents have raised concerns about the high speed at which vehicles travel on Hillsdale Road and Eldorado Avenue. Measures must be taken to slow down drivers on these primary walking routes. In particular, DOT should consider installing 4-way stops at the following intersections:

- Hillsdale and Haddon
- Hillsdale and Penhurst
- Hillsdale and Fernhill
- Hillsdale and Ridgewood
- Eldorado and Belvieu
- Eldorado and Penhurst
- Eldorado and Fernhill
- Eldorado and Ridgewood
- Eldorado and Oakford
- Eldorado and W. Cold Spring
- Eldorado and Chatham

### **11. Install covered bus shelters.**

Residents stressed the need for bus shelters so that riders have some protection from the elements. Many bus stops don't have sufficient space in the public right-of-way to install bus shelters, but there are some major bus stop locations that have exceptionally wide sidewalks that could accommodate them. MTA should identify opportunities to install bus shelters at bus stops, especially at the stop on the south side of the 4600-block of Liberty Heights Avenue in front of the ShopRite Grocery Store.

### **12. Improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road.**



Many residents have expressed concern over the high vehicular speeds experienced on both major thoroughfares that Calvin Rodwell sits on: Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road. In addition, many parents park on the west side of Hillsdale Road when dropping off and picking up their children. This has created a situation where many students are crossing Hillsdale Road mid-block where there is no crosswalk. Extra care needs to be taken at this intersection to protect students that are crossing the street. DOT should explore the following:

- Create visual cues on Hillsdale Road from Maine Avenue up to Liberty Heights Avenue that alert motorists that they need to be extra careful in the school zone. Some options include blinking school zone signs, painted streets, or radar speed indicator signs.
- Reactivate the speed cameras and red light cameras at the intersection of Liberty Heights

Avenue and Hillsdale Road to slow down traffic.

- Retrofit the existing pedestrian signals at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road to the modernized audible pedestrian countdown signals.
- Restripe the crosswalk at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road.



### **13. Explore ways to accommodate safe bicycle travel to school and in the neighborhood.**

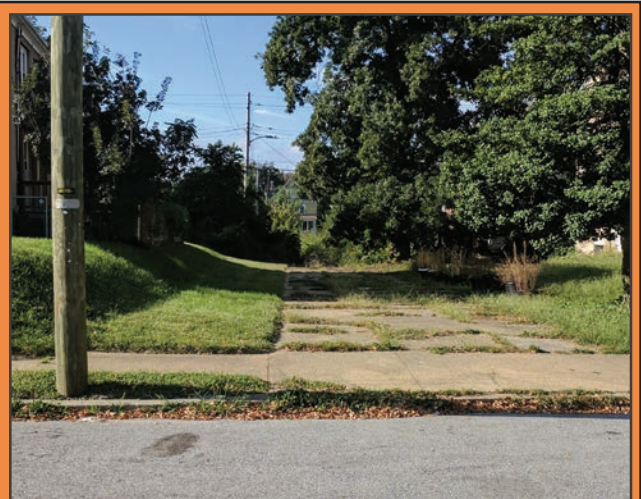
The existing bicycle lanes on Gwynn Oak Avenue have become very faded and need to be restriped. In addition, to further encourage bicycle travel, bicycle racks are needed throughout the neighborhoods. The modernized schools will have secure racks, but DOT should assess opportunities to add others.

### **14. Enhance the Fordney Lane pedestrian alley.**

The 3600-block of Fordney Lane is a pedestrian alley between Eldorado Avenue and Hicks Avenue that connects Liberty Heights Avenue and the southern end of the Forest Park High School campus along Chatham Road. The pedestrian alley leads to a set of steps remaining from the original 1924 school building. The school modernization project will connect this entry on the south side of the campus to the new school building by installing a new walking path. Currently, students cannot use the 3600-block of Fordney Lane to get to school due to its very poor condition. The sidewalk is broken up and overgrown with weeds, tree limbs hang down into the walking path, and there is no pedestrian-level lighting making the alley very unwelcoming at night. The 3600-block of Fordney

Lane could become a new gateway to the Forest Park High School campus. The following improvements to the pedestrian alley should be explored:

- Cut back any existing overgrowth to create a clear walking path.
- Remove the existing sidewalks and install new concrete sidewalks in order to provide a fresh look to the pedestrian alley.
- Install decorative fencing that separates the adjacent private property from the pedestrian alley.
- Install pedestrian-level lighting so that all portions of Fordney Lane are visible at night.
- Plant trees along the east and west sides of the pedestrian alley or consider other landscaping enhancements.



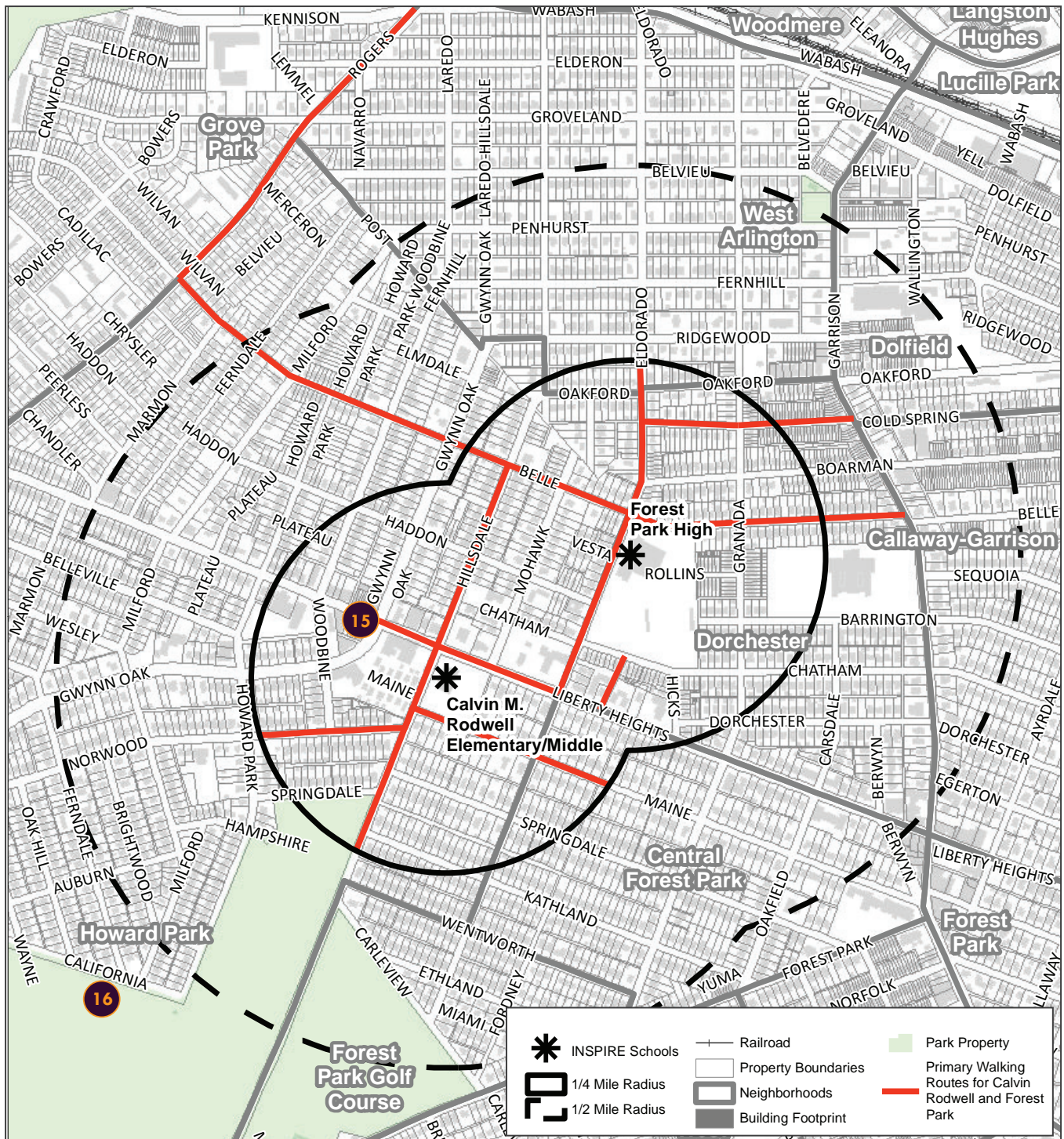
## ***INSPIRE Community Project***

Stakeholders around the two schools showed a great interest in the Department of Planning using INSPIRE GO Bonds to make safety and beautification enhancements to the 3600-block of Fordney Lane – a pedestrian alley that connects Liberty Heights Avenue to the Forest Park High School campus. This pedestrian alley is very deteriorated and needs significant investment to make it an asset for the community. The Department of Transportation and the Department of Planning will work with neighborhood and school stakeholders to develop a scope of work, create designs, and make the enhancements to the pedestrian alley.



# CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

*Provide better access to healthy foods and recreational opportunities.*





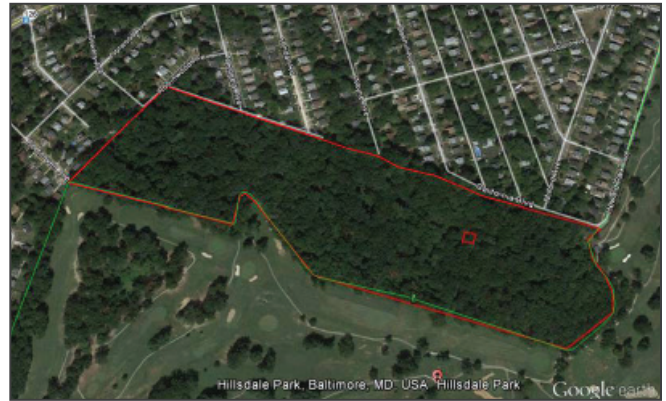
## *Offer Healthy Food Options for Students*



### **15. Encourage healthy food retail, especially at convenience stores near the schools.**

Many students purchase snacks in the convenience stores in the Howard Park Business District before and after school. These stores have a low availability of healthy food. Residents and store owners should partner with the Health Department and the Baltimore Development Corporation to explore opportunities for these stores to become part of the Baltimarket Healthy Corner Store Program, which assists stores in stocking and marketing healthy food, as well as informing stores about changes to federal nutrition programs, such as SNAP.

## *Create New Places for Play and Recreation in the Community*



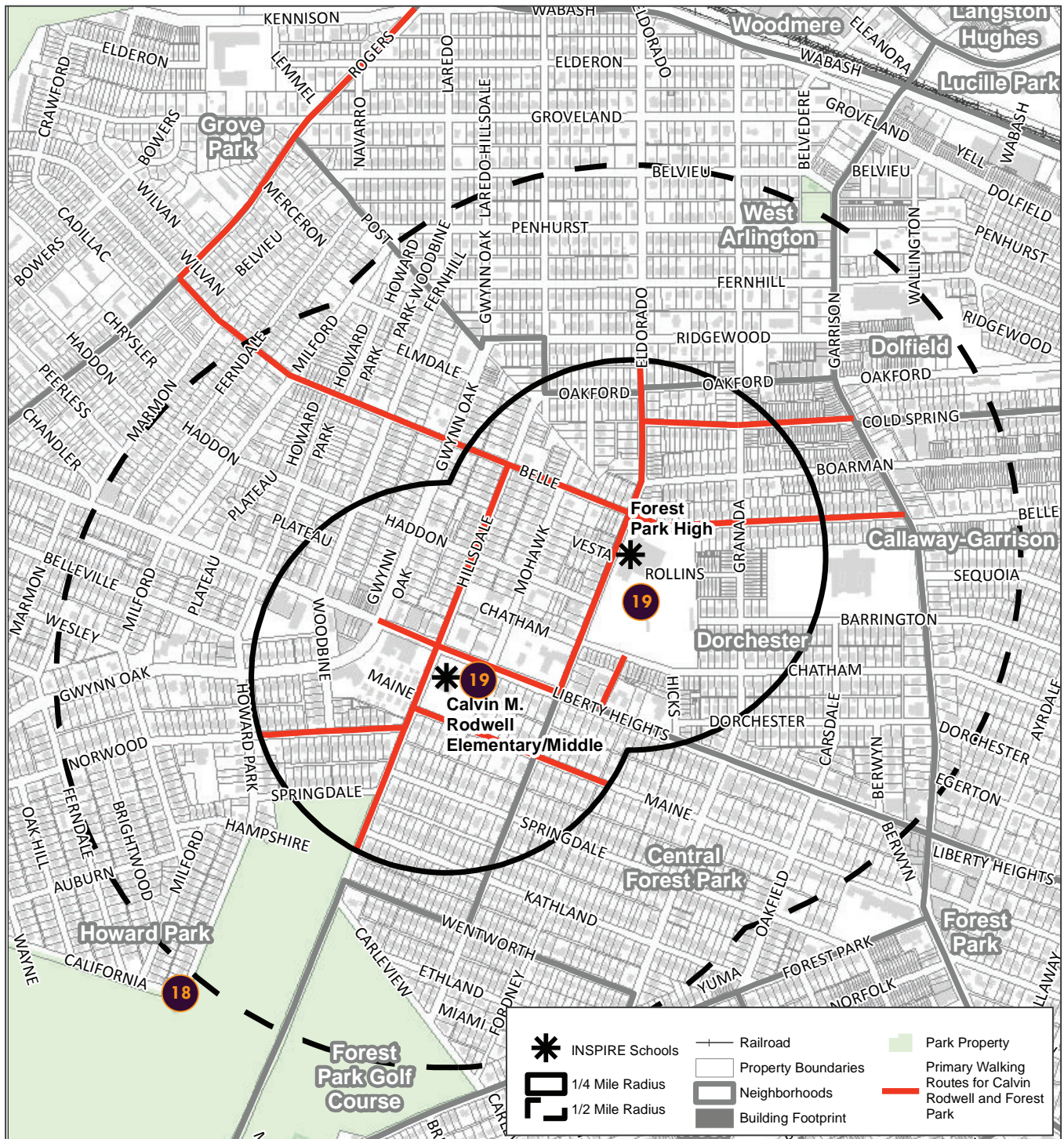
### **16. Activate Hillsdale Park through capital and programming improvements.**

Many residents expressed the need for enhancements to activate the large wooded area of Hillsdale Park – the portion that is between the Forest Park Golf Course and California Boulevard. Although the golf course is well used, this section of the park is underutilized and residents are interested in being able to use the area for recreation. Residents' ideas have included walking paths, playgrounds, and recreational space. Significant community outreach and land use planning is needed for further plan development. BCRP and DOP should collaborate with residents to design and implement improvements to Hillsdale Park.



# CREATE AN ENVIRONMENTALLY-SUSTAINABLE AND CLEAN NEIGHBORHOOD

*Improve the natural environment.*





## *Make the Neighborhoods Cleaner and Greener*



### **17. Trim existing street trees and plant new ones where additional tree canopy is needed.**

Trees contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly experience by providing shade and color, and they 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. Most of the blocks in the quarter-mile planning area have canopies of mature trees that provide shade, greenery, and visual interest. However, there are several blocks where additional street trees are needed. TreeBaltimore in the Forestry Division in BCRP should evaluate where additional street trees are needed, as well as identify where existing trees need to be trimmed back. Special attention is needed on the following blocks:

- Belle Avenue (4000 block)
- Boarman Avenue (4000 block)
- Chatham Road (4000- 4300 blocks)
- Eldorado Avenue (4000-4100 blocks)
- Granada Avenue (3500-4300 blocks)
- Liberty Heights Avenue (4300-4700 blocks)
- Oakford Avenue (4000-4100 blocks)
- W. Cold Spring Lane (4000 block)



### **18. Prioritize California Boulevard for cleaning and possible camera locations to deter illegal dumping.**

The 5000- to 5500-blocks of California Boulevard create one of the northern boundaries of Forest Park Golf Course. This stretch of road is heavily forested with several dead ends and has become a hotspot for people to dump broken tree limbs and yard trimmings. California Boulevard should be targeted by the DPW and DHCD's code enforcement staff for the most effective remedies to prevent the illegal dumping that occurs.

**19. Explore opportunities for Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/ Middle School and Forest Park High School to become “green schools.”**

There are ample opportunities for the schools and students to adopt sustainability practices both inside and outside of the schools. School leadership might consider forming a “Green Team” that could include faculty, students, administrators, parents, and community members to focus on greening, sustainability, and environmental education opportunities, including the following:

- Develop and help implement greening practices – a requirement for all Baltimore City schools. This might include recycling, energy conservation, and green cleaning.
- Apply for the Office of Sustainability’s Green, Healthy, Smart Challenge grant (GHSC) program for student-led sustainability projects. Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary School applied for this funding from 2011-2014 but did not continue pursuing these types of projects through GHSC. These grants are a great way to leverage additional greening funding and environmental education opportunities.
- Apply for the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education’s Maryland Green Award, through which students and staff can promote responsible environmental stewardship practices and awareness of the connections between the environment, public health, and society.



# Plan Implementation

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**The INSPIRE plan is already beginning to be implemented. Although not everything can happen right away, the Department of Planning is committed to continuing to work with community members to see recommendations become reality.**

**The Department of Planning, community stakeholders, and others should continuously refer to this section to hold each other accountable. This section:**

- **Sets forth a desired time frame for implementation**
- **Identifies lead and support agencies/organizations**
- **Estimates the cost of implementation and identified or potential funding sources**
- **Identifies commitments already made**

**As part of completing the plan, City agencies have already made some funding and staffing commitments. Complete implementation however, will require more resources.**

**We believe that the significant investment in Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/Middle and Forest Park High School, in addition to the commitments represented in these tables, can encourage additional resources.**

## **Timeframe**

Short: 0-2 years

Medium: 3-5 years

Long: 5+ years

## **Estimated Cost of Improvements**

\$ = \$5,000 or less

\$\$ = \$5,001-\$50,000

\$\$\$ = \$50,001-\$250,000

\$\$\$\$ = \$250,001 - \$500,000

\$\$\$\$\$ = More than \$500,000

## **Lead Responsibility**

BCRP: Baltimore City Recreation and Parks

BCPD: Baltimore City Police Department

BCHD: Baltimore City Health Department

BDC: Baltimore Development Corporation

BLLC: Baltimore Liquor Board

DHCD: Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development

DOP: Baltimore City Department of Planning

DOT: Baltimore City Department of Transportation

DPW: Baltimore City Department of Public Works

MTA: Maryland Transit Administration

Community: Residents, groups, businesses, etc.

## Implementing Area Recommendations

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

Recommendation & Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding
<b>Create and Maintain High-Quality Owner-Occupied Housing</b>				
1. Promote homeownership assistance programs to help current and new owners maintain and improve their homes				
Connect homeowners with programs available through Baltimore Housing's Green, Healthy and Sustainable Homes division by sharing program information at community association meetings, community events, and through the school.	Short, Ongoing	DHCD	\$\$\$	CDBG, CIP
Promote the Baltimore Energy Challenge to educate homeowners about lowering energy bills by sharing program information at community meetings, school events, and other gatherings	Short, Ongoing	BEC	\$	Grant Funding
2. Reduce the number of vacant homes within a quarter-mile of the schools.	Medium, Ongoing	DHCD, Property Owners, Homebuyers	\$	Capital
Locations for increased code enforcement, receivership, disposition or demolition include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4002, 4003, 4004, 4006, 4012, 4027, 4027 ½, 4100 Boarman Ave.</li> <li>4020, 4022 Belle Ave.</li> <li>4107 Chatham Rd.</li> <li>4404 Chatham Rd.</li> <li>4101 W. Cold Spring Ln.</li> <li>4000 Eldorado Ave.</li> <li>3700 Gwynn Oak Ave.</li> <li>4205, 4208, 4210 Granada Ave.</li> <li>4403 Haddon Ave.</li> <li>3716 Hillsdale Rd.</li> <li>4301, 4307, 4401, 4403, 4407 Liberty Heights Ave.</li> <li>4211, 4312, 4400, 4403, 4409, 4501 Maine Ave.</li> <li>3607, 3611 Mohawk Ave.</li> <li>4107 Rollins Ave.</li> <li>4400 Springdale Ave.</li> <li>3608, 3615 Woodbine Ave.</li> </ul>				
3. Explore acquisition opportunities for vacant lots and sell them for new construction of single-family homes.	Long	DHCD	\$\$\$	Operating Budget
Potential vacant lots to be acquired include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4033 and 4034 Belle Ave.</li> <li>4017 Chatham Rd.</li> <li>3604 Hillsdale Rd.</li> <li>4406 Maine Ave.</li> <li>4700 Norwood Ave.</li> </ul>				
<b>Promote Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities</b>				
4. Explore reuse options for the Garrison Middle School building.	Long	DOP		

Recommendation & Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding
5. Explore opportunities to redevelop and reuse the Ambassador Theater.				
Stabilize the roof to prevent further structural damage.	Short	DHCD	\$\$\$\$	Liberty Heights Avenue CIP Funds (BDC), Pimlico Local Impact Aid
Complete a market assessment that includes construction costs of recently completed local theater renovations that can be provided to prospective buyers.	Short	DOP		
Discuss preferred reuse options with stakeholders including residents, local business owners, CHAP staff, etc., and determine the financial feasibility of those uses.	Short	DOP		
<b>Improve Retail Businesses and Seek Quality Entrepreneurs in the Community</b>				
6. Make strategic improvements to the Howard Park Business District.				
Install a CitiWatch camera at the corner of the Liberty Heights Avenue and Gwynn Oak Avenue intersection to deter loitering and other illegal activity.	Medium	MOCJ, BCPD		
Acquire the vacant lots located at 4704 Liberty Heights Avenue and 4712 Liberty Heights Avenue. Offer the lots through the Adopt-A-Lot program or sell them to the neighboring property owners	Long	DHCD	\$\$	
Amend the Howard Park Business Area Urban Renewal Plan to Encourage more diverse retail uses and aesthetically-pleasing business façades.	Medium	DOP		
Work with businesses in the commercial district to make façade and signage improvements	Short	BDC		BDC Façade Improvement Grant
Coordinate multi-agency inspections to ensure that businesses are compliant with the law.	Short, Ongoing	DHCD, BCHD, BLLC	N/A	Operating
Explore opportunities to remove mid-block curb cuts and restore level sidewalks to create a pedestrian-friendly business district. As a starting point, consider blocking off the alley that separates 4716 and 4718 Liberty Heights Avenue with decorative bollards and install a curb to prevent vehicle access from Liberty Heights Avenue.	Long	DOT		
7. Provide resources to existing retail establishments.	Short, Ongoing	BDC	Unknown	BDC Loan Programs

## Improve Safety

Recommendation & Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding
<b>Promote Public Safety</b>				
8. Engage the Police Department Dirt Bike Violators Task Force.	Ongoing	Community		
9. Evaluate lighting levels and make improvements to make streets safer within the quarter-mile plan area.	Short, Ongoing	DOT		
Specific locations for evaluation include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The alley that connects Barrington Road and Rollins Avenue, east of the football field/bleachers at Forest Park High School</li> <li>The 3600 block of Fordney Lane (pedestrian alley)</li> </ul>				

## Create Transportation Connections and Access

Recommendation & Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding
<b>Improve Street Infrastructure, Traffic Conditions, Pedestrian Safety, and Walkability</b>				
10. Slow traffic on Hillsdale Road and Eldorado Avenue.	Medium	DOT		
Intersections to be evaluated include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hillsdale and Haddon</li> <li>Hillsdale and Penhurst</li> <li>Hillsdale and Fernhill</li> <li>Hillsdale and Ridgewood</li> <li>Eldorado and Belvieu</li> <li>Eldorado and Penhurst</li> <li>Eldorado and Fernhill</li> <li>Eldorado and Ridgewood</li> <li>Eldorado and Oakford</li> <li>Eldorado and W. Cold Spring</li> <li>Eldorado and Chatham</li> </ul>				
11. Install a covered bus shelter.	Medium	MTA	\$\$	
South side of the 4600-block of Liberty Heights Avenue in front of the ShopRite Grocery Store (eastbound)				
12. Improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road.				
Create visual cues on Hillsdale Road from Maine Avenue up to Liberty Heights Avenue that alert motorists that they need to be extra careful in the school zone. Some options include blinking school zone signs, painted streets (similar to painted bus lanes), or radar speed indicator signs.	Medium	DOT		
<i>Reactivate the speed cameras and red light cameras at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road to slow down traffic</i>	Short	DOT		
Retrofit the existing pedestrian signals at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road to the modernized audible pedestrian countdown signals	Medium	DOT		
Restripe the crosswalk at the intersection of Liberty Heights Avenue and Hillsdale Road.Short	Short	DOT		
13. Explore ways to accommodate safe bicycle travel to school and in the neighborhood.	Long	DOT		
14. Enhance the 3600 block of Fordney Lane pedestrian alley.	Short	DOT		
Examples of potential improvements to Fordney Lane include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut back any existing overgrowth to create a clear walking path.</li> <li>Remove the existing sidewalks and install new concrete sidewalks in order to provide a fresh look to the pedestrian alley.</li> <li>Install decorative fencing that separates the adjacent private property from the pedestrian alley.</li> <li>Install pedestrian-level lighting so that all portions of Fordney Lane are visible at night</li> <li>Plant trees along the east and west sides of the pedestrian alley or consider other landscaping enhancements.</li> </ul>				



## Create Opportunities for Health and Wellness

Recommendation & Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding
<b>Offer Healthy Food Options for Students</b>				
15. Encourage healthy food retail, especially at convenience stores near the schools.	Medium	BDC		Agency initiatives
<b>Create New Places for Play and Recreation in the Community</b>				
16. Activate Hillsdale Park through capital and programming improvements.	Long	BCRP		

## Create an Environmentally-Sustainable and Clean Neighborhood

Recommendation & Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding
<b>Make the Neighborhoods Cleaner and Greener</b>				
17. Trim existing street trees and plant new ones where additional tree canopy is needed.	Medium	BCRP		
Potential locations for new street trees include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belle Avenue (4000 block)</li> <li>Boarman Avenue (4000 block)</li> <li>Chatham Road (4000- 4300 blocks)</li> <li>Eldorado Avenue (4000-4100 blocks)</li> <li>Granada Avenue (3500-4300 blocks)</li> <li>Liberty Heights Avenue (4300-4700 blocks)</li> <li>Oakford Avenue (4000-4100 blocks)</li> <li>W. Cold Spring Lane (4000 block)</li> </ul>				
18. Prioritize California Boulevard for cleaning and possible camera locations to deter illegal dumping.	Short	DPW, DHCD		
19. Explore opportunities for Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary/ Middle School and Forest Park High School to become “green schools.”	Short, Ongoing	DOP, schools		
Opportunities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and help implement greening practices – a requirement for all Baltimore City schools. This may include recycling, energy conservation, and green cleaning.</li> <li>Apply for the Office of Sustainability’s Green, Healthy, Smart challenge grant program for student-led sustainability projects.</li> <li>Apply for the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education’s Maryland Green Award, through which students and staff can promote responsible environmental stewardship practices and awareness of the connections between the environment, public health, and society.</li> </ul>				

# *Appendix A: Maps*

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**BaltimoreLink Routes**

**Housing Market Typology**

**Vacancy**

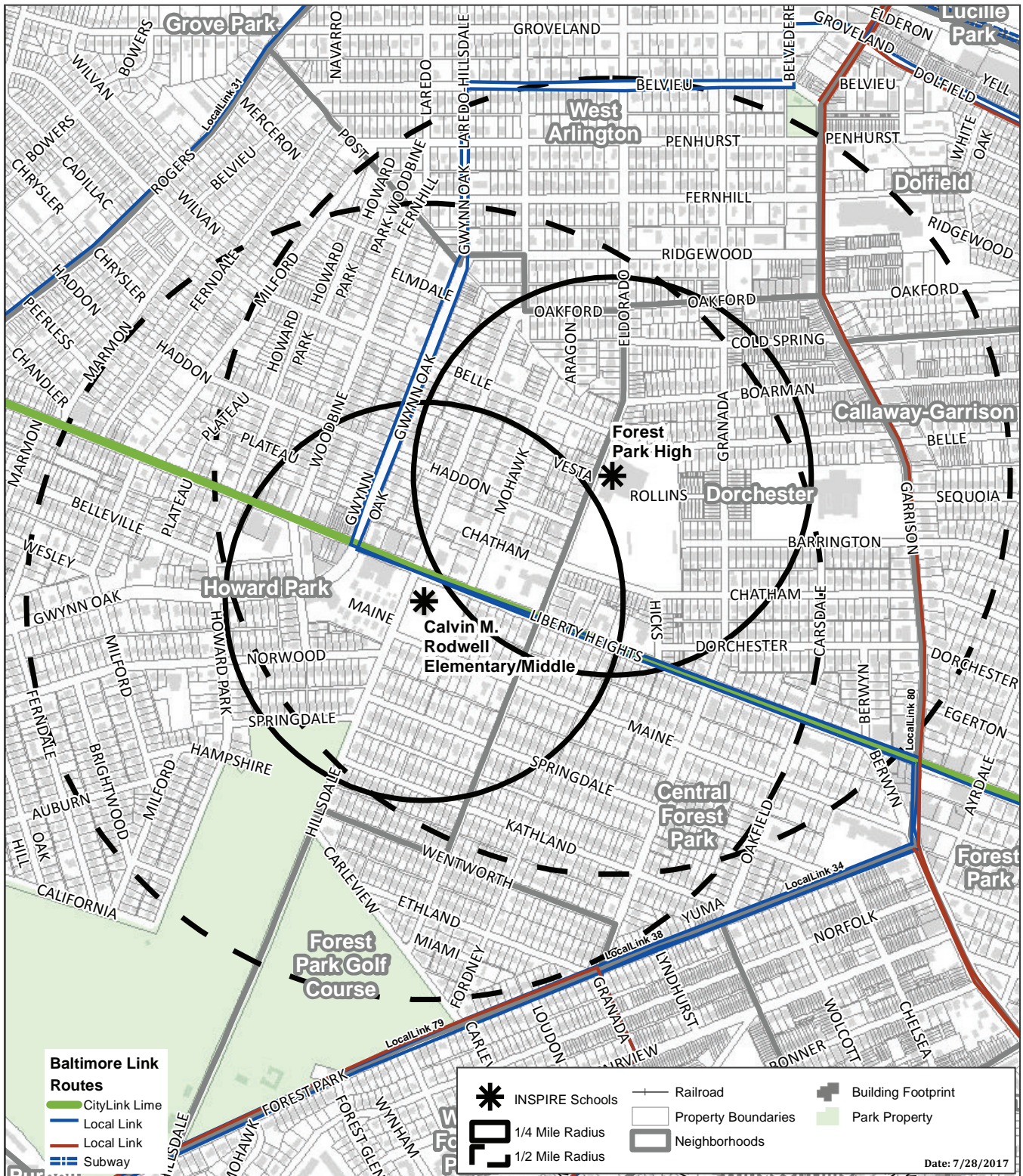
**Zoning**

**Tree Canopy**

**Hillsdale Park**

## BaltimoreLink Routes

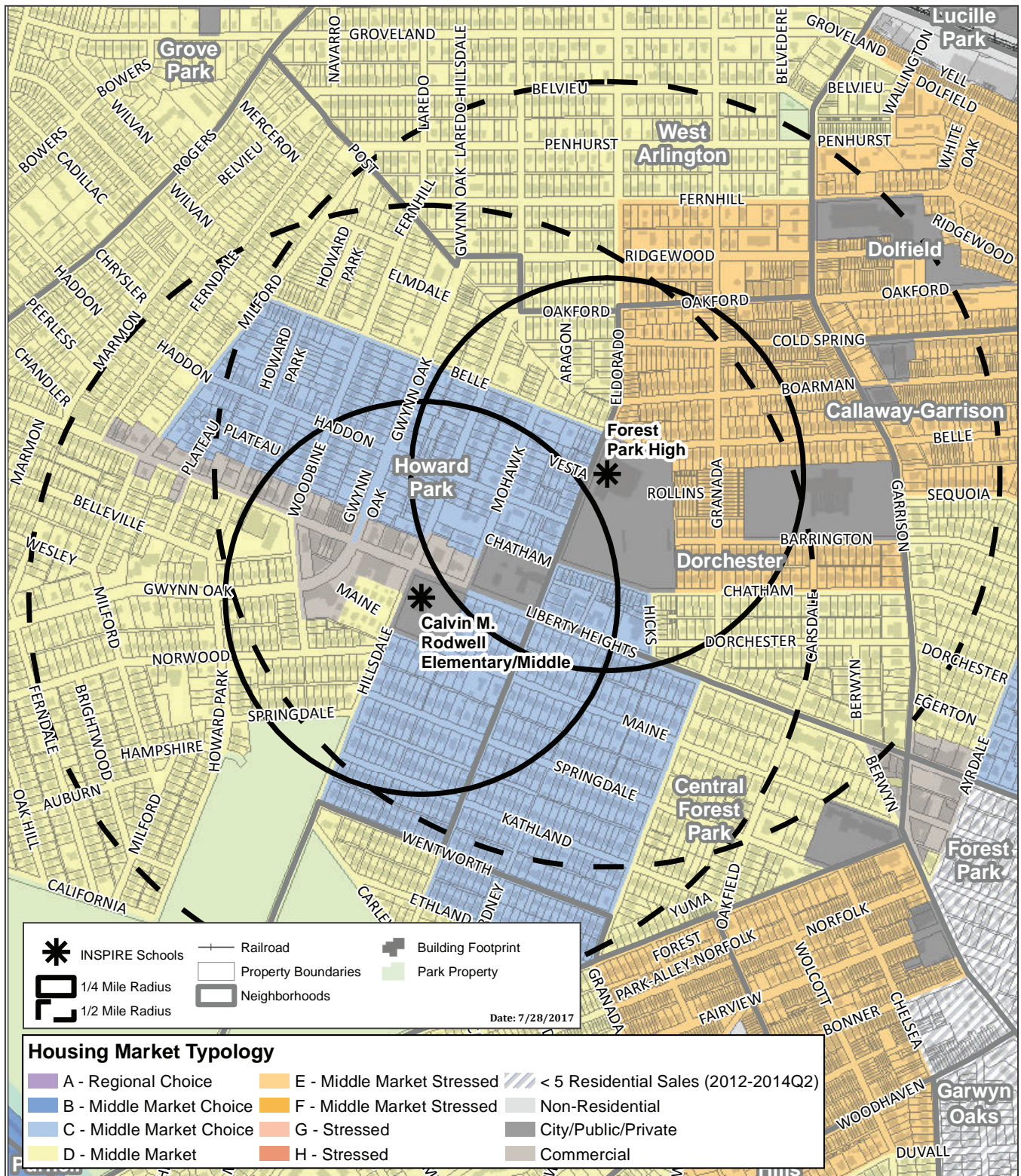
This map shows the new MTA CityLink and Local Link bus routes.





## Housing Market Typology

This map shows the strength of the local housing market based on ten variables that were aggregated to the census block group level.





Neighborhoods in the **Regional Choice** market category represent competitive housing markets with high owner-occupancy rates and high property values in comparison to all other market types. Foreclosure, vacancy and abandonment rates are low. Market interventions are not necessary in the Regional Choice market, but basic municipal services such as street maintenance are essential to maintaining these markets.

Neighborhoods in the **Middle Market Choice** category have housing prices above the city's average with strong ownership rates, and low vacancies, but with slightly increased foreclosure rates. Modest incentives and strong neighborhood marketing should keep these communities healthy, with the potential for growth.

Neighborhoods in the **Middle Market** category have median sales values above the City's average, as well as high homeownership rates. These markets experienced higher foreclosure rates when compared to higher value markets, with slight population loss. Interventions are geared toward aggressive code enforcement, in an effort to move vacant buildings as quickly as possible to rehabilitation, which in turn supports existing homeowners. Significant portions of the Middle Market spectrum are covered by Streamlined Code Enforcement.

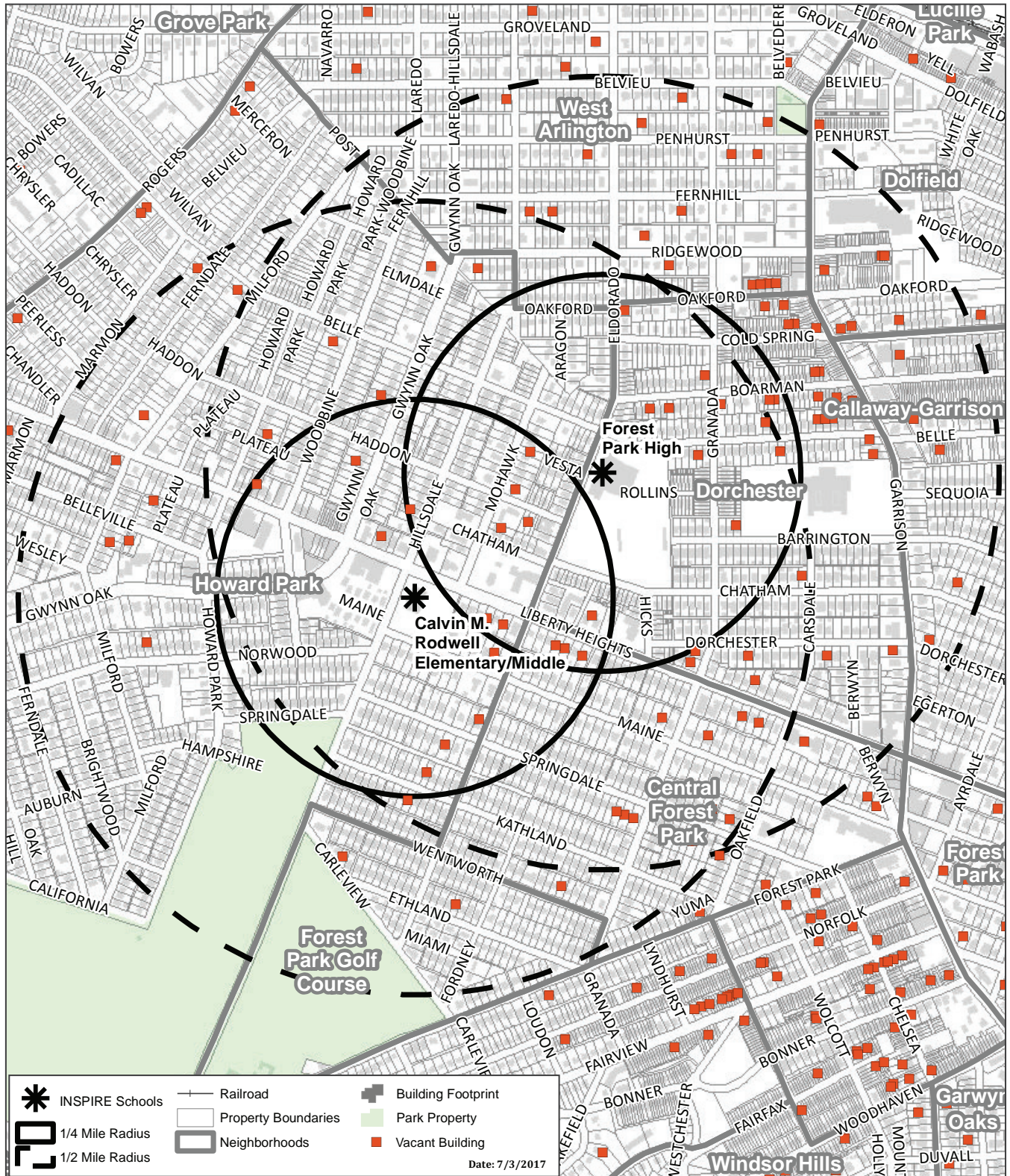
Neighborhoods in the **Middle Market Stressed** category have slightly lower home sale values than the City's average, and have not shown significant sales price appreciation. Vacancies and foreclosure rates are high, and the rate of population loss has increased

in this market type, according to the 2010 Census data. Based on these market conditions, intervention strategies should support homeowners who may be facing economic hardships due to the national economy. These communities often have under-appreciated assets such as historic housing stock, significant park spaces and choice locations that can serve as building blocks for future revitalization efforts.

Neighborhoods in the **Stressed** category have experienced significant deterioration of the housing stock. This market category contains the highest vacancy rates and the lowest home ownership rates, compared to the other market types. It also has experienced some of the most substantial population losses in the city during the past decade. Comprehensive housing market interventions should be targeted in this market category, including site assembly, tax increment financing, and concentrated demolitions to create potential for greater public safety and new green amenities. Support for stable residential blocks is also necessary.

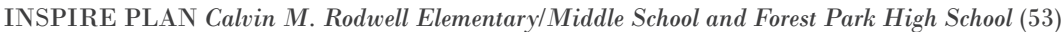
## Vacancy

This map shows the locations of active vacant building notices.





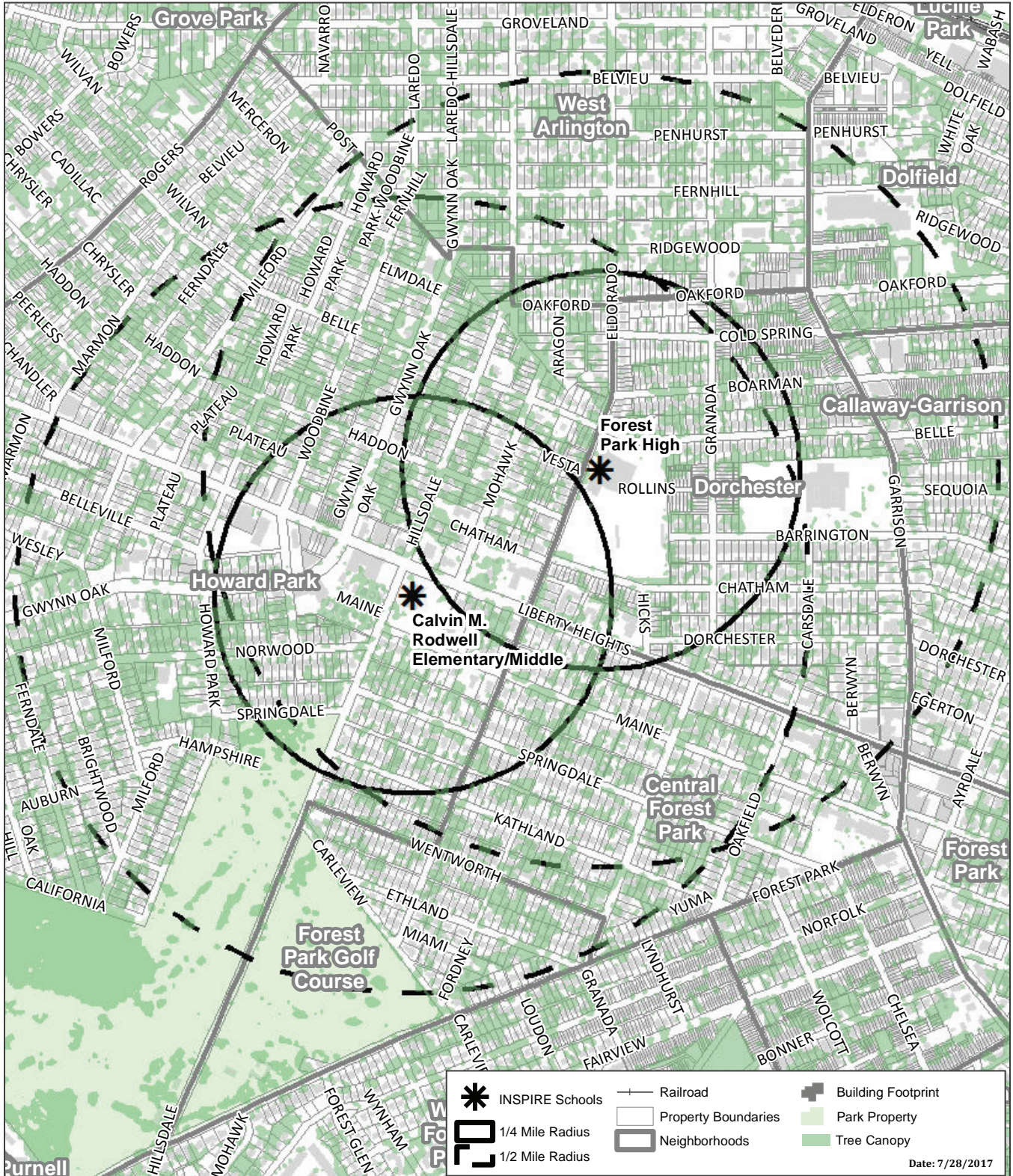
This map reflects the new zoning categories, as defined in Transform Baltimore.





## Tree Canopy

This map shows where existing tree canopy exists and helps to identify areas where there are a limited number of mature trees growing.





## Hillsdale Park

This map identifies the wooded area in the Forest Park Golf Course that many residents refer to as Hillsdale Park.



**This Appendix contains information about, and links to, the programs and initiatives mentioned in this plan.**



The **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).

<http://www.baltimarket.org/healthy-corner-stores/>

The **Baltimore Energy Challenge** teaches low to no cost ways to save energy to Baltimore City residents, businesses, and nonprofits through a grassroots effort in neighborhoods and schools. The website provides information about the Community Engagement Program, Energy Efficiency Program, the Baltimore Business Energy Challenge, and more.

<https://baltimoreenergychallenge.org/about>

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

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

The **Baltimore Housing** website provides information about many programs and incentives, including homebuyer incentives, weatherization and energy efficiency programs, and more.

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

The **Maryland Green Schools Award** is a program of the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education that allows schools and their communities to evaluate their efforts in environmental sustainability. Participating schools empower youth to make changes to reduce environmental impact, encourage sustainability and foster environmental literacy.

<http://maeoe.org/green-schools/>

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

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

**TreeBaltimore** serves as the umbrella organization for all City agencies, private organizations, and individuals in their effort to increase the tree canopy of Baltimore. TreeBaltimore partners with individual homeowners, communities, schools, and businesses to increase the urban tree canopy through the establishment, management and preservation of trees. TreeBaltimore is a mayoral initiative led by the Baltimore City of Recreation and Parks in partnership with Blue Water Baltimore, the Parks & People Foundation, Baltimore Tree Trust and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

<http://treebaltimore.org/>