



# INSPIRE

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

## REACH! Partnership at Lake Clifton Park + Harford Heights Building Draft INSPIRE Recommendation Report



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## **Overview: 21<sup>st</sup> Century and INSPIRE**

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

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Buildings 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 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.

### **INSPIRE Mission and Objectives**

Each modernized 21<sup>st</sup> Century school represents tens of millions of dollars of public investment into the neighborhood it serves. To leverage this investment, the Department of Planning (DOP) launched the INSPIRE program, 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.

INSPIRE focuses on the quarter-mile area surrounding each 21<sup>st</sup> Century school in order to build from the school investment. In the Bay Brook plan, DOP looks at the half-mile around the school. Plans include recommendations for improvements that affect residents' quality of life.

- Immediate City investments make streetscape improvements (better sidewalks, crosswalks, street streets, etc.) on “primary walking routes” to help ensure that there is safer pedestrian access to the school.
- Plan recommendations are organized into goals related to the housing market and development; safety; sustainability and sanitation; health, wellness, and recreation; transportation; and self-sufficiency and economic development.

## **Recommendation Development and Next Steps**

The Department of Planning staff has worked with members of the school and neighborhood communities to better understand their neighborhood experiences, concerns, and needs.

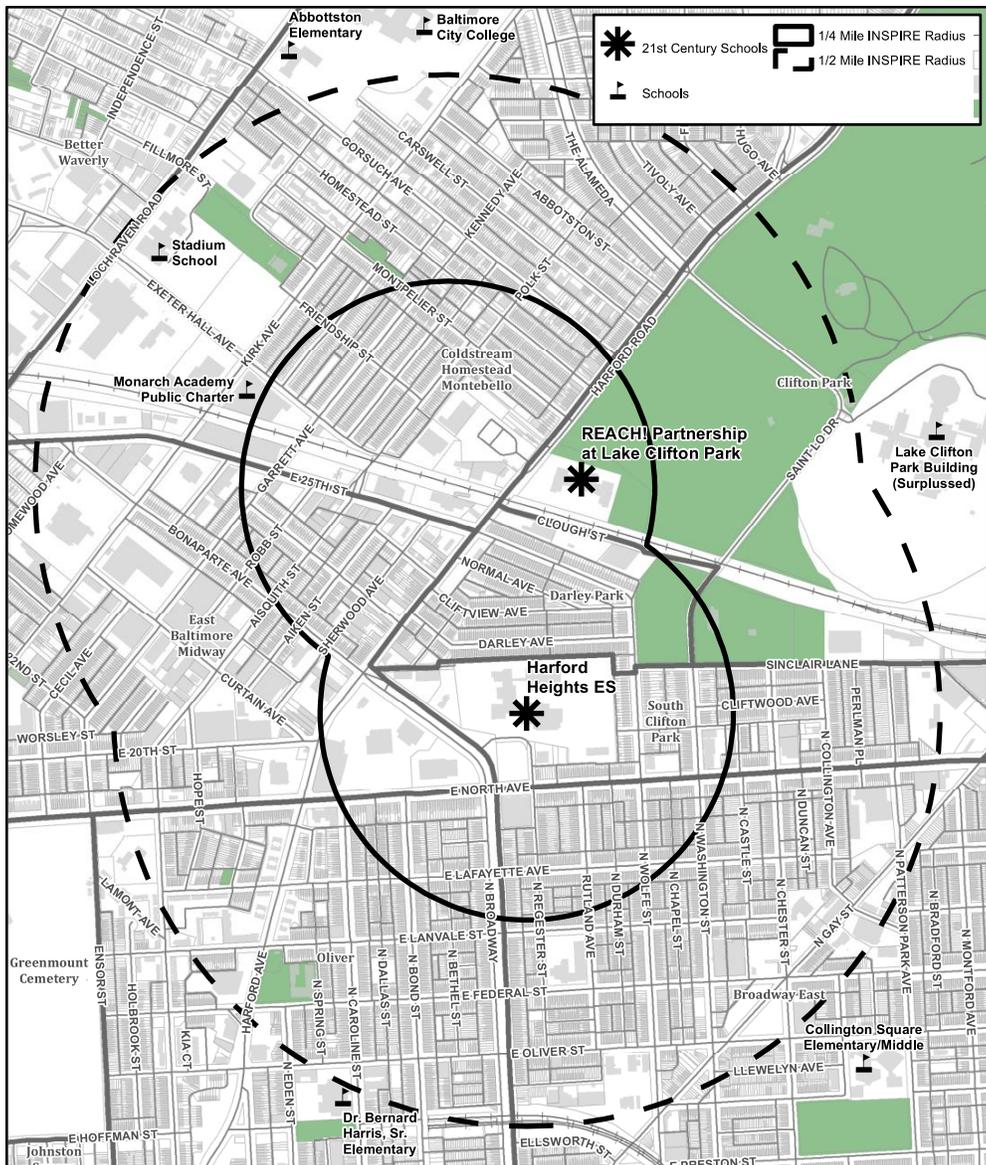
- Stakeholders helped inform the following draft recommendations through various engagements including school assemblies, back-to-school events, and student workshops; community events; surveys; walking tours; neighborhood association meetings; and more.
- Recommendations from previous neighborhood, school, and City plans and assessments were reviewed and included where appropriate.
- Residents, nonprofits, advocates, and others are already leading many efforts. In many cases, INSPIRE recommendations will build on what's already happening; the final plan will include highlights of recent successes and efforts underway.

### **Next Steps**

DOP staff will seek and incorporate neighborhood and City agency feedback to these draft recommendations. Recommendations will also be further fleshed out and incorporated into other efforts underway such as the Impact Investment Area work groups and LINCS. Staff will finalize recommendations and develop the INSPIRE plan which will include an implementation table and show capital investment commitments that have already been made. Presentation to the Planning Commission for plan adoption is targeted for summer. DOP staff will work with community members to identify community projects that can be worked on together.

# INSPIRE Area Map

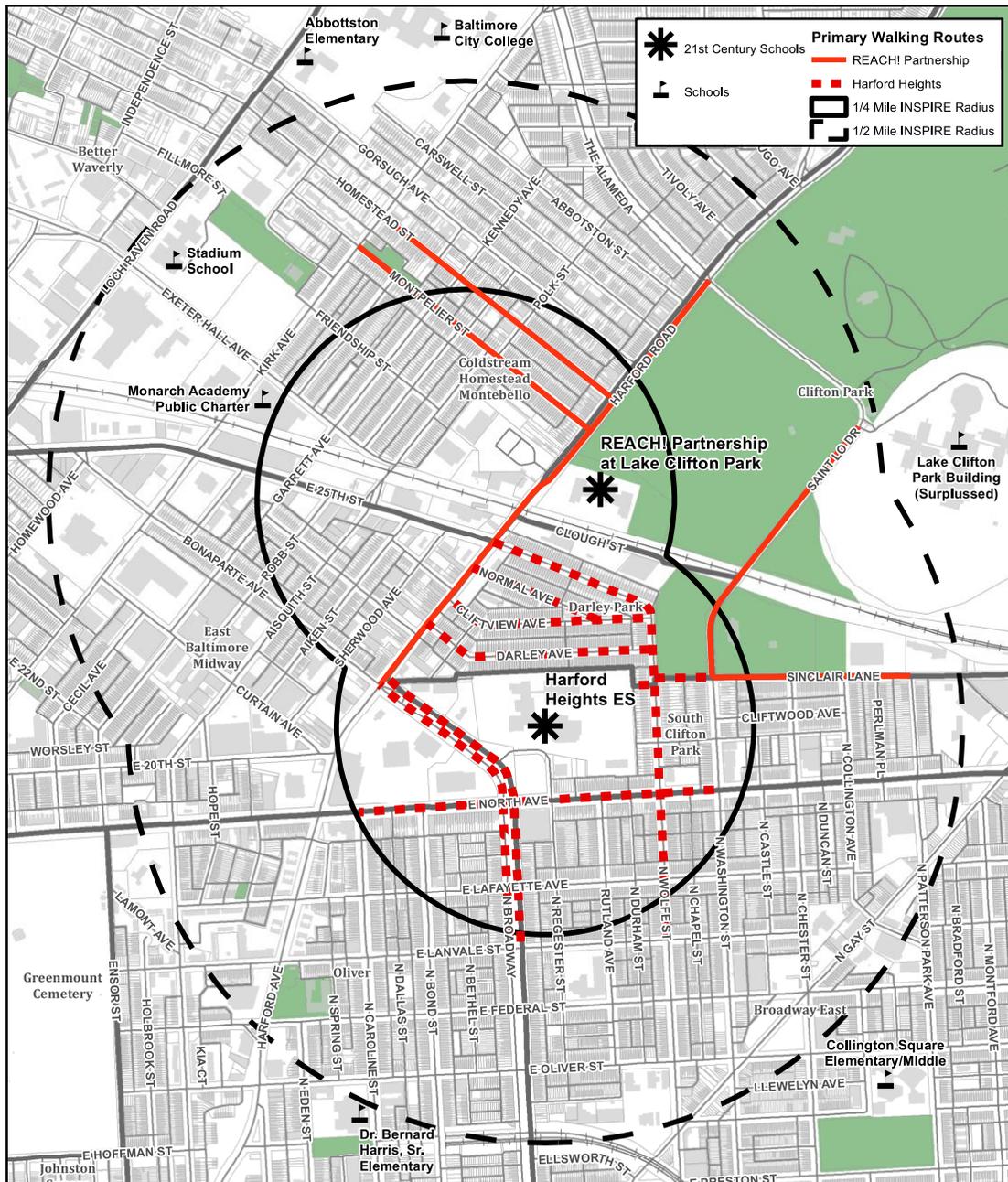
REACH! Partnership at Lake Clifton Park (REACH! Partnership) and the Harford Heights Building are located one-half mile from each other, in Coldstream Homestead Montebello (CHM) and South Clifton Park respectively. Because of their proximity the Department of Planning created one INSPIRE area to include both school buildings. The Harford Heights Building (Harford Heights) will house two programs: Harford Heights Elementary School and Sharp-Leadenhall. The quarter-mile around the schools includes portions of the neighborhoods of CHM, Darley Park, South Clifton Park, East Baltimore Midway, Broadway East, and Oliver. REACH! Partnership is located in the southwest corner of Clifton Park. It is bordered on the east and south by Harford Road and the CSX train tracks. Harford Heights is one block southeast of the park, situated between Broadway and N. Wolfe Street and one block north of E. North Avenue. Because of the proximity to the schools, the primary focus of the recommendations in this plan are CHM, Darley Park, and South Clifton Park.



## Preparing for School Opening Day: Primary Walking Routes and Improvements

The map below identifies the primary routes students walk to get to and from school. The Department of Planning used BCPS student/school zone data and worked with community members; school staff, parents, and students; and the Department of Transportation to identify the routes. REACH! Partnership students also walk across the park from Belair Edison.

These are the blocks prioritized for streetscape improvements including bringing sidewalks up to a safe and standard condition, repainting or adding crosswalks, and pruning and planting street trees.



# INVEST IN HOUSING AND MARKET-STRENGTHENING OPPORTUNITIES

*Stabilize the market, build confidence in the neighborhood, and enhance block appeal.*

As of January 2021 three of the neighborhoods that surround the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools have been designated by the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (Baltimore DHCD) as “Impact Investment Areas”: Coldstream Homestead Montebello (CHM), Broadway East, and East Baltimore Midway. They make up three of the four East Impact Investment Area neighborhoods outlined in Baltimore DHCD’s *A New Era of Community investment – A Framework for Community Development*. Impact Investment Area Working Groups – made up of staff from Baltimore DHCD, DOP, community association leaders, and other stakeholders – will tailor some of the recommendations in this section and identify how best to implement certain strategies. The Working Groups launched in 2019.

Because of their proximity to the schools, the *primary* focus of recommendations in this plan are Darley Park and parts of Coldstream Homestead Montebello and South Clifton Park.

## **Support Homeowners and Market Homeownership Opportunities**

### **1. Connect homeowners to the “My home, My Deed, My Legacy” initiative.**

A home is often someone’s greatest financial asset and the backbone of a wealth-building strategy. Protecting that asset and being able to pass it on through a legal document in the event of the owner’s death is critical. Being on the property’s deed is also required for many home assistance programs. The “My Home, My Deed, My Legacy” initiative is operated by Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, and Baltimore Housing and Community Development. Organizations and schools can request information or speakers for community meetings and events.

### **2. Convene a homeownership counseling workshop to promote homeownership in the area.**

There are a number of organizations near the schools that provide homeownership counseling including Belair Edison, NHS, St. Ambrose, and HARBEL. DOP could work with one or more of these organizations and the Baltimore DHCD Division of Homeownership and Housing Preservation to convene a workshop to talk with residents about the possibility of, and steps to, homeownership and to develop more specific programming based on feedback from residents, neighborhood groups, churches, and the schools. Workshops could also cover “continuing education” for homeowners to help protect against predatory purchasers.

### **Live Near Your Work Homeownership Incentives**

Homeowners and businesses should take advantage of Baltimore DHCD’s LNYW program, which matches employer homebuyer incentives. This could encourage employees to purchase homes in the INSPIRE area. Johns Hopkins Hospital, for example, is less than five miles from Darley Park and offers incentives that increase the closer you are. Other nearby employers include the schools, Morgan State University (MSU), the District Courthouse, and Cloverland Dairy.

## **Improve Affordable and Quality Rental Housing Opportunities**

### **3. Reach out to landlords to engage them with neighborhood organizations and activities.**

Engaging landlords and including them in neighborhood events and “business” can go a long way in making them a part of the community. Sending materials about association meetings and events, school highlights and enrollment, recycling and other information can acclimate them and their tenants to the neighborhood.

### **4. Organize a “Code Enforcement 101 workshop” for residents.**

Understanding the role of code enforcement – what it can and can’t do, and how residents can be active participants – will benefit both the residents and the City. DOP can help coordinate such a workshop with Baltimore DHCD’s Code Enforcement and the Department of Public Works’ liaisons at the request of community associations or the schools.

## **Market the Neighborhoods**

### **5. The neighborhood organizations, schools, and other stakeholders should work together to develop and implement marketing strategies.**

The neighborhoods in the core of the INSPIRE area lack coordinated marketing strategies to encourage either resident retention and investment or to attract new homebuyers. As a first step, the neighborhood associations could request that Live Baltimore or another organization work with them to convene a neighborhood marketing workshop to talk about different strategies, lessons, and activities. Follow-up could include forming marketing committees to further explore identifying target populations, talking with real estate professionals, and to develop actionable marketing strategies and materials. The associations, residents, businesses, and schools should be invited to participate in the workshops.

## **Reduce the Number of Vacancies and Improve Nuisance Properties**

### **6. Strategically acquire and rehab vacant properties.**

To have vacant properties rehabbed in a way that achieves the outcomes residents seek requires intentional intervention: helping market privately-owned properties, pursuing receivership to transfer vacant and tax delinquent privately-owned properties to new owners who will be dedicated to reoccupying them, and having the City acquire them through tax foreclosure. These properties were identified through the CHM Impact Investment Area Working Group and other CHM and Darley Park meetings. Future Impact Investment Area planning in East Baltimore Midway will identify priorities there.

CHM priority blocks in the Impact Investment Area Strategy:

- 2500-2600 blocks Cecil Ave. (both sides)
- 1500-block Abbotston St. (both sides)
- 2500-block Kirk Ave. (south side)
- 1521-1525 Friendship St.
- 2500-2600 blocks Robb St. (both sides)
- 2500-2600 blocks Aisquith S. (both sides)

- 2700-2900 blocks The Alameda (both sides)
- 1700-1800 block E. 28<sup>th</sup> St. (north side)
- 1662-1640 Gorsuch Ave.
- 1700-block Gorsuch Ave. (both sides)
- 2600-2800 blocks Harford Rd. (west side)

Darley Park priority blocks:

- 1600-1700 block Darley Ave. (south side)
- 2100 block N. Wolfe St. (west side)
- 2000 block N. Washington St. (both sides)
- 1754-1840 E. North Ave.
- 1738-1752 E. North Ave. (vacant lots)
- 1500-block Cliftview (north side)
- Block 4165 Lot 088 (garages between City owned land and Gateway Park)

Broadway East priority blocks:

- 1737-1769 E. North Ave.

**7. DOP and Baltimore DHCD should develop a detailed plan for target blocks in Darley Park.**

To further strengthen the blocks closest to the Harford Heights building, DOP and Baltimore DHCD should work with residents to identify and plan for property-by-property interventions and assistance on a few key blocks. This includes various acquisition and disposition tools, code enforcement, lot maintenance, rental registration, and incentives. Initial block suggestions are

- 1600- and 1700-block of Darley Ave. (south side)
- 2100-block of Wolfe St. (west side)
- 2000-block of N. Washington St. (west side)

**8. Neighborhood stakeholders should develop an ongoing partnership with Baltimore DHCD, BCPD, and DPW to focus on abating nuisances on the “top 10” priority properties.**

Community organizations in each neighborhood should identify the top properties of concern in their neighborhood for Baltimore DHCD’s Code Enforcement division, DPW, the Northeastern and Eastern Police Districts, and other agencies to prioritize for nuisance abatement. Properties should be prioritized by the level of safety hazard posed to others, severity of violations, and the degree to which addressing the poor conditions will have an impact on neighborhood stabilization and marketability. For each property, the residents and City should determine the desired outcome and take immediate steps to achieve it (target for code enforcement, prioritize for demolition, initiate receivership, connect owners with assistance programs, adopt-a-lot, police enforcement, etc.). In CHM for example, the top priorities may include the following properties and blocks:

- 2670 Kennedy Ave.
- 2800-block of Kennedy Ave.
- 2767 The Alameda
- 1600- and 1700-blocks of Gorsuch Ave.

- 2643 Cecil Avenue
- 1500-1700-blocks of Carswell St.
- 1600-block of Abbotson St.
- 2600-block of Garrett Ave.

In Impact Investment Areas or in neighborhoods with other initiatives that are already actively collaborating with the relevant agencies (such as LINCS), this prioritization and nuisance abatement accountability should happen in concert with those processes.

### ***Create a Sense of Place and Highlight History***

#### **9. Visibly highlight the entry points into the neighborhoods.**

DOT, the schools, and community association should consider using key locations in the area to promote a community identity that welcomes residents, visitors, and people passing through. This might include public art, creative wayfinding signage, lighting, or other elements that create a sense of place and welcoming. Locations include

- E. North Ave. and Broadway, which leads to these and many neighborhoods in the city
- The Clifton Park entrances at St. Lo Dr. and Sinclair Ln., and St. Lo Dr. and the Alameda near the proposed Tivoly development
- Hillen Rd. and Harford Rd.
- The Alameda corridor from Erdman Avenue to E. 25<sup>th</sup> St.
- 1600-block E. North Avenue (Great Blacks In Wax Museum)
- 2000-block E. North Avenue (Duncan Street Miracle Garden)
- The grassy public right-of-way on Broadway at Register, which could be used to highlight Harford Heights

#### **10. Explore local conservation or district designation in the Broadway East and Oliver neighborhoods.**

The City's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) staff should meet with Broadway East and Oliver leaders and residents to discuss opportunities and benefits of local conservation or historic district designation. Local designation can begin small, such as focusing on the blocks near the Great Blacks in Wax museum and Harford Heights (1600-1800-blocks of E. North Avenue). Additionally, Baltimore National Heritage Foundation should explore expanding the E. North Avenue Heritage District near Great Blacks in Wax to E. North Avenue and Harford Road.

#### **11. Initiate a community-based process to talk about significant places in CHM.**

The northern portion of CHM – as far south as the Alameda – was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. Properties in this area may be eligible for various preservation incentives. The Alameda itself is part of the Olmsted Parkways local landmark. In previous plans residents expressed interest in potentially pursuing historic designation for additional buildings throughout the neighborhood. Upon request, the City's landmark coordinator (DOP, Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation) can meet with residents

to initiate a conversation to hear what places in the community are significant to them and to talk about different tools that can help celebrate heritage or offer preservation incentives.

### **Improve the Commercial Environment**

The 2500- to 2800- blocks of Harford Road should be improved in ways that highlight their location across from Clifton Park and the multimillion-dollar investment into the REACH! Partnership at Lake Clifton Park school. Meetings with BDC have begun to outline a strategy for making the district more attractive to residents, potential businesses, and park users. The Impact Investment Area Working Group will further develop ideas and next steps, including working with BDC.

#### **12. Make physical improvements to the commercial district along Harford Road.**

The following are some highlights from the initial meetings about the commercial corridor.

- Start with the 2500-block. Baltimore DHCD should target resources to implement intensive code enforcement in this block for a one-year period. BDC should work with Baltimore DHCD and DOP to identify a rehabilitation and marketing strategy.
- Code enforcement should continue monitoring the tire shop at 2504 Harford Rd. so that violations are abated. The City has attempted to work with the business owners to improve its environment and operations, which often spill into Harford Road. A significant improvement would be to install a fence and maintain landscaping.
- Request a meeting with the Friends Cemetery (2506 Harford Rd) Friends group to discuss adding external landscaping and fencing.
- Seek opportunities to develop mixed-use units in the 2500-2700-blocks for commercial first floors with housing above.
- BDC, Baltimore DHCD, DOP, and BCPD should develop a strategy to target vacant properties and crime to reduce roadblocks for marketing the area.
- Convene a small group of people to virtually “tour” thriving park/commercial districts to identify elements they like and think could be adapted to work in CHM.

#### **13. BDC should partner with DOP, CHM, and Darley Park to identify and seek commercial uses that would thrive on Harford Road and serve community needs.**

Many of the area businesses do not meet residents’ needs and do not create a welcoming environment. Efforts should be made to work with existing businesses and bring in new tenants that can be successful while serving the community. In a previous commercial survey the top needs identified were for a grocery store, pharmacy, mixed-use retail commercial/residential, coffee shop, and restaurant dining with outdoor seating. BDC should develop a marketing and financing strategy in coordination with Baltimore DHCD, DOP, and CHM. Tools could include incentives for existing and new businesses such as technical assistance for entrepreneurs and small businesses, microloan programs, and façade improvement programs. Additionally, BDC could help prepare existing residents to become successful business owners, and connect them with opportunities to shape the commercial corridor.

**14. Work with the owners of the former Clifton Community Market (Sinclair and Washington) to identify possible business opportunities for this prominent corner.**

With its prime location across from an entrance to Clifton Park and the future football field, and across the street from Harford Heights, this commercial property has the opportunity to become a go-to spot for residents and others visiting the park. In the short-term the owners could activate the space through pop-up retail or events.

# CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

*Create an environment that supports individual and community well-being.*

## **Create or Improve Places for Recreation, Play, and Neighborhood Activity**

### **16. Make capital and programming improvements in Clifton Park.**

Immediate and longer-term actions should take place to enhance this community jewel,

- BCRP and Morgan State should work with residents and community organizations to assess the 2009 Master Plan, identifying the top priorities for Clifton Park. Residents have consistently advocated for improved internal paths through the park and safety enhancements, as a way to connect people living on all sides of the park to the many education and recreation places throughout.
- Residents should work with the Friends of Clifton Park to increase programming and promote the park. BCRP has funding available to support registered Friends groups that have been in operation for over one year.

### **17. Provide low-stress walking and biking connections.**

CHM leaders have consistently advocated for walking and biking connections throughout Clifton Park, the neighborhood, and to schools and recreation destinations in adjacent neighborhoods such as City College, Mergenthaler, Herring Run, Lake Montebello, and MSU. An immediate next step should be for DOT, DOP, and BCRP to meet with community leaders and residents in CHM, Mayfield, and Belair Edison to develop an implementable plan for this, followed by making requests in the CIP. Ideas include

- Creating internal trails/roads to connect to a closed 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, through Mayfield or Belair-Edison, and through the Hooper Fields/Herring Run Park to reach the Herring Run Trail.
- Creating a walking and/or biking connection on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, west of Harford to connect Clifton Park and Lake Montebello and the future Baltimore Greenway on 33<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- Repaving the path in Clifton Park parallel to Harford Rd.

### **18. Activate neighborhood parks through capital and programming improvements.**

Continued investment and regular activity for a range of ages and interests is critical in turning small neighborhood parks into more formal neighborhood assets.

- Baltimore DHCD and BCRP should work with residents in CHM to develop a park design and funding strategy for Briscoe Park at 1441 E. 28<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Residents near Gateway Park in Darley Park could apply to community foundations to fund a public event, and conduct activities such as weekly “fun days,” or garden activities.

### **19. Assess possible closure of the alleys adjacent to Briscoe Park.**

CHM residents have requested that BCRP and Baltimore DHCD renovate Briscoe Park, which is located in the north central section of CHM at 1441 E. 28<sup>th</sup> Street. The western and southern edges of the park are bounded by alleys that are in poor condition. DOT, Baltimore DHCD, BCRP, and residents should determine if closing the alleys and consolidating them with the park would assist in establishing a safer, more accessible site.

## ***Improve the Healthy Food Environment***

### **20. Formalize and enhance an educational partnership among Civic Works' Real Food Farm and Real Food Farm at Perlman Place, the community associations, and schools.**

Civic Works-Real Food Farm should continue to support an educational partnership with the Lillie May Carroll Jackson School through an agreement with the New South Clifton Park Community Association. The partners, working with the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, should seek funding to develop a range of programming and outreach activities such as hosting a "Farm Day" at the farm for the younger residents of South Clifton Park and other neighborhoods, hosting a planting day with the children and families, and applying for a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust or Baltimore Community Foundation to hire area residents for on-farm projects.

### **21. Ensure that future plans for Real Food Farm and other urban agriculture sites in the community abide by the City's updated urban agriculture policy.**

Real Food Farm locations in Clifton Park and at Perlman Place are important elements of the healthy food environment and educational partners for the area schools. Due to property sales and community feedback both locations are slated for relocation or revision within the next two to five years. DOP and the Office of Sustainability should ensure that the City's updated urban agriculture policy for farmers' engagement with the community and transparent lease agreement and management practices is included in the planning process for any new location for Real Food Farm and other agriculture sites.

### **22. Develop and implement a healthy food environment strategy.**

Local champions could use the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative's eight-point Healthy Food Environment Strategy as a template to develop a comprehensive approach to improving access to healthy food. All of those working on the issue, from the neighborhoods as well as organizations and policymakers, should work together to develop a comprehensive strategy.

### **23. Explore using the purchasing power of institutions to partner with small food retail locations to pass along wholesale prices for healthy food.**

One model to explore that does this is Fresh Crate, which uses Loyola University's purchasing power to pass along wholesale prices for fresh fruit, vegetables, and healthy snacks to corner stores in the York Road corridor. DOP should meet with area leaders to gauge interest in learning about what it took to make the program work including marketing, nutrition incentives, and lessons about how to work with corner stores. Follow-up could include reaching out to MSU to gauge their interest.

## CREATE CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS

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

### **Improve Pedestrian Safety around the Schools and Community Assets**

#### **24. Implement a robust pedestrian safety campaign for Harford Heights.**

In partnership with City Schools, DOT, and the Eastern Police District, the school should develop and execute a campaign. This could include educating students and parents with City Schools' Safe Routes to Schools materials, distributing the primary walking route map, and walk to school celebrations.

#### **25. Implement traffic calming along high-speed corridors.**

Significant speeding occurs along many streets, including residential roads that are treated as arterial connections. The community should request from DOT speed cameras and sentries to assess the level of the problem. DOT should then evaluate appropriateness of various traffic calming methods to slow traffic. These are the corridors of most concern and suggestions based on NACTO/Complete Streets Manual Guidance.

- E. 25<sup>th</sup> St. from Harford Rd. to Sinclair Ln.: reclassify from a minor arterial roadway to a local road and add speed tables and other traffic calming features.
- N. Wolfe St. from E. 25<sup>th</sup> to Preston Ave. especially the section from Sinclair Ln. to E. North Ave.; install traffic signals at Lafayette Ave., Lanvale Ave., and Oliver St. Set signal timing to short cycles and time for slow (20 mph) progression speeds to control traffic speeds.
- Sinclair Ln. near the Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson school (2000-2400-blocks)
- Gorsuch Ave. between Harford Rd. and Kirk Ave.: construct speed humps

#### **26. Explore and implement appropriate traffic calming mechanisms to slow traffic on E. North Avenue between N. Wolfe Street and N. Broadway.**

Crossing E. North Avenue is dangerous for many students and families using the Harford Heights/Sharpe Leadenhall campus. Traffic signals are far apart, and vehicles travel at fast speeds along this major road. A community association or resident should submit a 311 request for DOT to conduct a traffic calming study and to request a traffic signal. Ideas to explore should include the following:

- Installing a new traffic signals to fill in the gaps where traffic signals would be needed for safe crossings (one per block or approximately one signal every 300 ft.) and re-time the traffic signals with shorter cycle lengths for slower speeds and reduced pedestrian delay.
- Designating the area as a school zone with appropriate speed limits and signage. Reduce the current speed limit in accordance with the speed limit guidance in the Baltimore Complete Streets Manual.
- Installing speed cameras on E. North Ave.
- Evaluate signal timing and phasing at North Avenue and N. Broadway.

#### **27. Improve pedestrian safety and comfort along Harford Road.**

As a major corridor that also separates residential neighborhoods and Clifton Park, improving the pedestrian experience along Harford Road requires a range of changes including the following.

- DOT should consider adding bus and bike infrastructure along Harford Road.
- DOT should review crosswalk connections to Clifton Park and at Harford and 25<sup>th</sup> in CHM.
- DOT should explore safety improvements to the tri-corridor intersection at Harford Road, Hugo Avenue, and Hillen Road. This intersection poses a challenge for vehicles and pedestrians and it is a gateway into the proposed Tivoly Village development. Directional signage would also help.
- MDOT should add bus shelters along Harford Road between 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and 25<sup>th</sup> Street.

**28. DOT should install traffic calming measures along the roads in Darley Park, especially close to Register Lane, a main pedestrian route.**

The blocks in Darley park are very long, and vehicles are mostly able to travel between Harford Road and N. Wolfe Street without stopping. The Register Lane alley is a primary way students get to school and residents travel through the neighborhood. DOT and neighborhood residents should meet to identify the most effective mechanisms to reduce speed and protect pedestrians. Options might include improving speed hump location and design near Register Lane on 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Normal Avenue, Cliftview Avenue, and Darley Avenue or decorative markings at the Register Lane intersections.

**29. Develop a plan for calming roads in Clifton Park.**

DOT and BCRP should work together to develop an action and funding plan to calm some of the roads in Clifton Park, making use of the park safer and more enjoyable. Changes to consider include

- closing Indian Head Dr. between Belair Rd. and St Lo Dr. to cars while leaving it open as a park road for walking, biking, and golf carts. Maintain local access to Clifton Mansion from St Lo Dr. to Indian Head Dr. and have controlled access/gates to the maintenance building on N. Rose St.
- redesigning St. Lo Drive so it is no longer a through street between Harford Rd. and Sinclair Ln. (consider during planning for the reuse of the former Lake Clifton High School #40 building and Lake Clifton Gate House.)
- closing 32<sup>nd</sup> Street between Harford Road and Erdman Ave.

**Make Community Assets Easier to Find**

**30. Develop a comprehensive wayfinding system through Clifton Park and the surrounding area.**

To connect neighborhoods, make finding amenities in the park easier, and highlight how to travel to special neighborhood places, BCRP, DOT, City Schools, MSU, and others should work together to create a comprehensive wayfinding system designed for people using all modes of transportation. The agencies should look at previous neighborhood plans and work with residents to identify the recreational areas and unique opportunities they think are important to highlight. Residents could also help create signage or artwork.

Some of the places to showcase include Clifton Park amenities, the REACH! Partnership at Lake Clifton Park High School, Harford Heights, Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson Charter school, Real Food Farms at Clifton Park and Pearlman

Place, Briscoe and Gateway parks, Dudley Street Miracle Garden, Great Blacks in Wax Museum, The Baltimore Pump House, the former Eastern District High School (Gompers Building), Collington Square

### ***Improve Alleyways throughout Darley Park***

The alleys in Darley Park are often used as primary pedestrian connections. Those especially important to Harford Heights are the Register Lane and Sinclair alleys, as well as those adjacent to N. Wolfe Street and south of Darley Avenue. The Eastern Police District and school police should be reminded of the student use of alleys and provide regular patrols.

#### **31. Make passage through alleys more comfortable and inviting through wayfinding and lighting.**

DOP, DOT, and residents should explore options to create playful connections through wayfinding, murals, and beautification. Other improvements could include installing lighting such as festival/cafe lighting, LED bricks, solar planters, or motion-detection lights in backyards.

#### **32. Improve the vacant parcel at Holy Cross Lane and Germania Avenue.**

This vacant parcel at 2119 Germania is along one of the alley entrances to Harford Heights. Minimally Baltimore DHCD's Code Enforcement division should request that the owner keep it clean. The school or neighborhood residents could consider further beautification elements in cooperation with DOP's Greening Coordinator and non-profit partners such as BUILD and Parks and People.

#### **33. Improve appearance of alleyways and related parcels**

DPW and Bmore Beautiful should continue to support Darley Park residents' efforts to stem incidents of dumping in the community and to keep the alleys free from vegetation and other obstructions. Baltimore DHCD should work with the Darley Park Association to assess the need to install cameras in areas with persistent dumping. The Association should work with BUILD and a corporate sponsor located near the community, to establish a one-year incentive program for rewarding clean blocks and alleys.

# IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY

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

## ***Prepare Residents for Emergencies***

### **34. Connect community organizations with City support to help residents in times of natural disasters or emergencies.**

Baltimore City's Office of Sustainability (BoS) is working with the Health Department and the Office of Emergency Management to support community organizations working on the frontlines of community service, safety, health, and outreach with City support and resources so that, in the event of a natural disaster or emergency, there is improved provision of emergency response, safety, and recovery services to under-resourced neighborhoods and their most vulnerable residents. Upon request from the community, the BoS will meet with interested community leaders and organizations to provide more information on resilience-building and preparedness resources and partnership opportunities.

## ***Develop Collaborative Public Safety and Crime Prevention Initiatives***

### **35. Develop place-centric strategies around each of the crime hot spots and immediately adjacent to the schools.**

The police, DOP, residents, and others should strive to introduce more active uses of public spaces, that preempt crime while investing in programming, recreation, public art, events, and more. This could require redesigning areas, adding lighting, and placing CCTV cameras in the spaces. In Impact Investment Areas or in neighborhoods with other initiatives that are already actively collaborating with the relevant agencies (such as LINCS), identifying the top two-to-three priority areas should happen in concert with those processes. A few locations for consideration for a comprehensive approach could be:

- 2500-block of Harford Road
- E. 25<sup>th</sup> St. from Harford Rd. to Kirk Ave.
- Holy Cross Ln.: Bonaparte Ave. to Harford Heights' property line
- Germania Ave.: Cliftview Ave. to Holy Cross Ln.
- Cliftview Ave.: Aiken St. to 25<sup>th</sup> St.

## ***Improve Lighting***

### **36. Develop a lighting strategy along primary walking routes.**

Beyond neighborhood advocates and residents working with the City to repair broken lights and identify where additional lighting is needed, a comprehensive strategy should explore a range of creative ways to brighten dark areas. Considerations could include solutions such as a "lighting campaign" to encourage use of porch and lawn lighting to brighten streets and sidewalks, "café lighting in front of houses," and installation of motion-activated lights on the back of houses in alleys known for criminal activity.

**37. Improve lighting under and around the CSX underpass on St. Lo Street.**

The CSX overpass on St. Lo Street creates a dark barrier for people walking through the park, and to many locations including Rita Church Community Center and REACH! Partnership at Lake Clifton Park. Adding light to the overpass itself is challenging, but DOT could add pedestrian light heads to the existing poles on either side.

***Enhance Connections through Resident Engagement***

**38. The schools and community organizations should work together to reach neighborhood residents.**

Promoting these two modernized schools is critical to capturing interest among residents who can send their children or who can participate in other activities there. At the same time, students' and their families can be valuable participants in neighborhood organizations. Students, faculty, community school coordinators, and organization leadership should develop a range of ideas to generate lasting impact. Two ideas are

- students at REACH!, who are required to complete community service hours in order to graduate, could participate in community organization meetings in order to bring youth perspective and energy, and to identify ways to assist in the organization's mission.
- the Harford Heights principal and teachers, who conduct regular community walks, could ask organization members to participate in them. This would give both parties time to get to know each other and talk with residents face-to-face, increasing interest in both the school and the organizations.

**39. Collaborate across neighborhoods to fund organizing support.**

Although there are a number of active community groups in the INSPIRE area, many residents noted that they're not aware of what's going on or what resources are available. Community group leaders in Broadway East, Oliver, and Darley Park already meet to share information with each other and could build on this relationship in order to identify shared outreach needs. Working together, and with the community leaders from South Clifton Park they could develop a funding request to support an intern or organizer.

**40. Activate and beautify public spaces through art and creative placemaking.**

Resident-led projects can help improve neighborhood image, bring together residents to create a lasting benefit for their community, and improve the social value of the places. New opportunities should be pursued to include both resident-led efforts and partnerships with institutions to pursue activities such as alley art and wayfinding, painting and lighting the CSX bridge overpass, and identifying where placemaking could improve safety. Wayfinding between neighborhoods and through the parks could incorporate resident involvement.

# CREATE AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AND CLEAN NEIGHBORHOOD

*Protect residents and improve the natural environment.*

## ***Increase Environmental Stewardship***

### **41. Expand community-led initiatives to address trash and litter.**

Residents and neighborhood associations are leading efforts to reduce litter and trash in the area. For a greater impact, more neighborhood organizations, the schools, businesses, and churches could participate or develop efforts. Specific locations to consider include areas adjacent to schools, alleys used as “roads” to get to Harford Heights, the highly visible main corridors, crime hot spots, and where there is future demolition.

- Associations could request information and resources from Bmore Beautiful to educate residents about litter and proper storage of trash and recycling, and apply to participate in the Care-a-Lot program, which compensates organizations for lot maintenance.
- Resident advocates, along with Baltimore DHCD code enforcement, should ensure that multi-unit rental buildings provide proper trash collection.
- Civic Works may be able to provide technical assistance to groups interested in becoming environmental stewards through educational workshops and organizing stewardship activities.

### **42. Establish programs to honor individual efforts to beautify the neighborhood.**

Community organizations could establish a range of programs to honor residents who keep the neighborhoods clean and beautiful. “Bloom Your Block” competitions engage residents in a fun way to maintain properties and increase neighborhood spirit. Neighbors or blocks of neighbors are awarded titles such as Most Green/Beautified Block and Most Engaging Community Managed Open Space. Another similar effort that enhances community pride is the Community of Curtis Bay’s celebration of tidy and decorated yards by secretly leaving a certificate, yard sign, and Susan B. Anthony dollar coin at “yards of the week.”

## ***Improve Vacant Lots***

### **43. Continue to improve vacant lots in South Clifton Park through the creation of productive green spaces.**

Regularly maintained vacant lots can become valuable community spaces. Treatments can include simple regular cleaning to seeding and fencing, planting trees, installing temporary art, and creating a range of community managed open spaces. The New South Clifton Park Community Association should identify the most strategic locations and match interventions appropriately. Locations could include a vacant lot on an otherwise occupied block, lots that are hotspots for crime or nuisance activity, and those immediately adjacent to the schools.

- Several vacant lots are located adjacent to occupied properties, where greening or side yard strategies could be developed in partnership with Baltimore DHCD and DOP.
- A group of City-owned lots within the central portion of the neighborhood (bounded by E. 20<sup>th</sup>, N. Chester, N. Castle and an alley) should be targeted for interim maintenance and greening treatment

until a development proposal that is acceptable to Baltimore DHCD and the community emerges. Baltimore DHCD and DOP should work with the community association to develop and implement this strategy.

**44. Beautify the vacant lot adjacent to the Great Blacks In Wax Museum.**

Planning, Baltimore DHCD, and BDC should work with the Great Blacks In Wax museum and the Oliver and Broadway East community organizations to create a temporary reuse for the vacant lots adjacent to the museum in the 1600-block of E. North Avenue. Eventually the museum hopes to expand onto the site. In the short-term, the lot could be turned into a minimally landscaped outdoor space that highlights the museum’s contents, includes wayfinding information for nearby attractions, and space for short-term parking.

***Increase Environmental Stewardship***

**45. Explore opportunities for REACH! and Harford Heights 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” or “Green Workgroup” – a team made up of a range of stakeholders that could include faculty, students, administrators, parents, and community members – to focus on greening, sustainability, and environmental education opportunities. Parents, school staff, or students can reach out to Civic Works or the Waterfront Partnership for support in becoming a Green School. Ideas include

- developing and helping implement greening practices determined by the team. This might include recycling, energy conservation, and learning about the sustainable features of the schools or nearby farm sites.
- applying for the Office of Sustainability’s Green, Healthy, Smart challenge grant program for student-led sustainability projects. Each school has been awarded this grant in the past.
- applying 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.

**46. The Duncan Street Miracle Garden volunteers, New Broadway East Community Association, and Baltimore Green Space should coordinate to provide gardening classes to Broadway East and other east Baltimore residents.**

The Duncan Street Miracle Garden and its master gardener are great assets in Broadway East. Hosting classes and events for residents at the garden would allow them the opportunity to learn from and work in an established, permanent garden that is maintained by East Baltimore residents.

**47. Beautify the median at The Alameda and Harford Road.**

CHM should seek the Neighborhood Design Center’s assistance to beautify the median and intersection of this Olmsted Brothers-designed boulevard and Clifton Park. This could include installing a grander community sign and updating the landscaping from Harford Road to 28<sup>th</sup> Street.