

middle branch



Transportation routes like the historic CSX Swing Bridge helped industry flourish around the Middle Branch.

Transportation

“The point of cities is multiplicity of choice”

- Jane Jacobs

Transportation allows people to access their needs. Sustainable transportation creates mobility while limiting emissions, waste, and noise. By its very nature it is pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Sustainable transportation facilitates efficient, affordable, easily accessible, and safe connections between and among communities and activity centers. Transportation choices are one of the foundations of healthy communities, encouraging activities such as walking, bicycling, and use of public spaces. Sustainable development is defined by multiple transportation choices and high quality transit. While currently served by one transit line, a systems approach to transportation improvements can be established that encourages transit supported development densities and greatly reduced reliance on the automobile. The Middle Branch is uniquely situated with access to many varieties of rail lines and road systems. These can provide the catalyst for improvements to increase



Modes of mass transit such as the MARC Train and the light rail connect the Middle Branch to the rest of the region.

transportation options.

I. History

Industrial development has largely dictated the flow of traffic in and around the Middle Branch. In the late 1700s, iron ore was discovered near Mount Winans. Regional transportation routes were developed for exporting the fruits of the region's labor: iron ore, tobacco, flour, and bricks. The B&O (Baltimore and Ohio) Railroad was chartered in 1827 and it began serving Baltimore during the 1830s. Later in the nineteenth century, the railroad expanded with construction at Camden Yards and Curtis Bay. These sites facilitated an increase in industrial development on the Middle Branch. In 1903, the Western Maryland Railroad established Port Covington and, with the swing bridge spanning the water from Westport to Swann Park, companies were able to export freight via railroad to ships docked in the port.

In 1865, the wooden Long Bridge was constructed to connect Ferry Bar Park at the end of Light Street across the Middle Branch to Brooklyn. This was replaced by the Hanover Street Bridge in 1916. Both the Long Bridge and the Hanover Street Bridge improved access to Fairfield, Hawkins Point, Brooklyn, and Cherry Hill. As a result, land south of the Middle Branch experienced residential and industrial growth.

In the late 1700s, Annapolis Road was just a dirt path, but in the early nineteenth century it became part of the turnpike. Updated roads and an increasing number of railroad connections meant more development and by the 1920s industrial land use on the Middle Branch had largely replaced recreational uses like swimming and fishing.

In the 1960s the entire Middle Branch and Inner Harbor were threatened by the powerful interstate system. At that time planners believed that super-highways could solve the regions problems and spur economic development. A study was completed in 1968 as part of this proposed interstate system. While most of the proposed system was defeated by the communities it would have destroyed, the I-95 and I-395 connections were constructed over the Middle Branch, effectively bisecting the northern Middle Branch from the rest of the harbor and creating new barriers to the waterfront. The 1968 study proposed filling most of the Middle Branch, thereby creating more land. Luckily, this proposal was never realized. Construction of I-295 followed in the 1980s, improving access from Washington D.C. and points south, but also creating a major barrier across Westport, effectively bisecting the community. I-895 was also constructed along the far southern shoreline, across the Patapsco River, in the communities of Brooklyn and Curtis Bay.

Beginning in 1992, the light rail was completed using right-of-way from the former Baltimore and Annapolis rail line. With stops in Cherry Hill and Westport, this has provided the area with mass transit. Additionally, the Gwynns Falls Trail, completed in 2002, supports bicycle connections to downtown.

II. Existing Conditions

The Middle Branch and its communities are both served by transportation systems, and separated by them. There are three major highway systems and three major railroads traversing three sides of the estuary. Combined with local arterial roads, much of the waterfront is either physically or psychologically separated from the existing communities by these systems. (See map 8)

Major Road Systems

- *I-95*. I-95 crosses from east to west across the northern shore of the Middle Branch, bisecting the northern branch of the estuary. Offering opportunities for vehicular access, with ramps at Hanover Street southbound and McComas Street northbound, these ramps, and the infrastructure they contain, also create barriers for access at some development sites and create unique challenges for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- *I-295*. I-295 travels through the middle of the Westport community on the west side of the estuary. This highway has access ramps directly into Westport, but they were not designed to handle the volume of traffic that will be produced once the waterfront converts from industrial use to residential and commercial uses.
- *I-895*. I-895 travels along the study area's southern border. This highway travels through the communities of Brooklyn and Curtis Bay but does not afford good access due to a lack of ramps. The current system best serves industrial users in these areas.
- *Waterview Avenue*. Waterview Avenue is located just behind the southern shoreline. This arterial is a connection between I-295 and the Hanover Street bridge/Brooklyn Curtis Bay area. It is very wide with no median, creating a physical barrier between the community of Cherry Hill and the waterfront.
- *Northern Hanover Street, above the bridge*. This section of Hanover Street changes from a local street to a major arterial roadway. The location of I-95 entrance and exit ramps create major challenges to establishing new site access points and connecting land uses on the east and west side of the road. A traffic light and a jersey-style left turn ramp, located on the west side of the road, add to confusion and difficulty accessing sites. This presents a major challenge for redevelopment and establishing walkable communities.
- *Southern Hanover Street and Pottee Street bridges*. The 1916 Hanover Street Bridge consists of five lanes in two directions, with one lane acting as a reversible lane at peak hour. Once



Map 6 - Traffic Barriers

across the Middle Branch to the south, Hanover Street divides into two major four-lane, single direction arterials. At Cherry Hill Road, there is room between the arterials for business development. The two roads continue south and cross the Patapsco River. These arterials create a strong barrier between the Cherry Hill community and the waterfront. They also create a pedestrian access challenge to the Harbor Hospital center, which utilizes the land in the median for offices and other uses.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The Gwynns Falls Trail was constructed along the Middle Branch's western and southern shores. This trail begins at the westernmost City line and follows the Gwynns Falls stream to its termination at the Middle Branch, then follows the scenic shores of the Middle Branch to Harbor Hospital. There are also connections to downtown and the Inner Harbor. Plans show the trail continuing south to the BWI Trail and Anne Arundel County.

Rail Roads

CSX Industrial Rail Road – There are three active industrial rail lines traversing the Middle Branch estuary. They each provide unique barriers and challenges to public access and redevelopment.

- *Baltimore Sun.* CSX lines still serve the Baltimore Sun newspaper facility. These lines utilize the land side portion of the old Swing Bridge tracks next to Swann Park. They lie between development parcels and prevent connections between them.
- *Stockholm Street.* A major industrial rail line that crosses between the M&T Bank Stadium and the northern Middle Branch.
- *Kloman Street.* Another CSX spur travels beside Kloman Street, between the Westport community and the water. There are limited locations to provide ingress and egress across the tracks.

The Gwynns Falls Trail connects walkers, bikers, and runners to the Gwynns Falls and the Middle Branch.

Photo by Andrew Nagl



Abandoned Rail Tracks– Some of the old rail lines are no longer in use. The CSX swing bridge across the Middle Branch between Swann Park and Westport is not functional.

- *Light rail.* The Maryland Transit Authority Light Rail system also parallels Kroman Street. The majority of this section of track is elevated above grade, creating less of a physical barrier to the waterfront. A station is located at Kent Street. A light rail station is also located at the intersection of Cherry Hill Road and Waterview Avenue. It is not easily accessible to Cherry Hill residents because it is at the bottom of Cherry Hill Road, which is a long, steep hill. Also, the Cherry Hill Industrial Area sits between the community and the station, creating more distance. There are no parking facilities provided at the station.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

Layered interstate Bridges cross the Middle Branch.

III. Opportunities

The Middle Branch, Cherry Hill and Westport are the only areas of the City directly accessible to both the waterfront and the light rail. Through Transit Oriented Development, there is a very real opportunity to establish an area where life without an automobile can be comfortable and convenient.

- *Light rail stations.* The light rail stations at Cherry Hill and Westport provide an excellent opportunity to support transit-oriented development designs and policies during redevelopment.
- *Bicycle and pedestrian pathways.* Following are a number of opportunities to increase bikeped routes around the Middle Branch:
 - The redevelopment of current industrial waterfront sites allows for the provision of waterfront access with bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout the Middle Branch waterfront.
 - The abandoned CSX swing bridge connecting the Swann Park area to Westport provides an excellent opportunity to establish trail connections between these two points. The bridge most likely cannot support the weight of traffic, but will more than likely support pedestrian and bicycle users.
 - The fifth travel lane on the Hanover Street Bridge may be unnecessary due to travel volumes. Reversible lanes are not ideal for vehicular safety. It may be possible to capture the extra width from this lane and provide a bike trail along the west side of the

bridge.

- The redevelopment of the Westport waterfront allows the opportunity to move the Gwynns Falls Trail from its location along Kloman Street to the waterfront.
- *Create boulevards.* The extra width in major arterials such as Waterview Avenue, Cromwell Boulevard, Hanover Street, and Pottee Street south of the Hanover Street Bridge provides opportunities to establish boulevards with green space and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- *Highway access.* There are many opportunities to take advantage of the number of highways surrounding the Middle Branch to improve access to the area. These improvements could involve existing ramp systems or the creation of new entrance and exit ramps. Ramps may be changed, or added, at Key Highway; I-95 at Cromwell Blvd; Hanover Street and; the I-295 exits to Waterview and Annapolis Road. In addition, new ramps could be added at I-895 to Brooklyn and Curtis Bay.
- *Route improvements.* The southeastern intersection of Frankfurst Ave, Pottee Street, and Hanover Street could be redesigned to allow truck traffic to get from Frankfurst Avenue to Patapsco Ave west, without going through the downtown commercial district of Brooklyn.
- *Transit Improvements.* The Middle Branch should be programmed for greater transit access, including opportunities for trolley, MARC and shuttle bus. Options to be considered should include (but not be limited to) extending the proposed Charles Street Trolley to Port Covington and across the Middle Branch estuary from the CALC peninsula to Westport. Additional options may include adding a MARC station at the Locust Point community, and establishing a shuttle bus system directly serving downtown Baltimore.

IV. Constraints

- *Active Rail Lines.* The industrial rail lines traversing the Middle Branch are still important to the City's commercial shipping operations. It is difficult to create new track crossings. These facilities present barriers between communities and the waterfront.
- *Highway System.* In many cases the highway system acts as a barrier between individual communities and the waterfront.
- *Capacity of existing road systems.* The existing capacity of the road systems surrounding the Middle Branch are average to good. However because there are limited points of access to and from some of the development sites these roads will exceed capacity if the proposed densities are put in place for many of the sites.
- *Light rail.* The light rail system is under capacity and can handle the new influx of users this redevelopment would create. However the transit rail system in Baltimore does not reach enough neighborhoods and employment centers to offer the number of choices needed for maximum use.

Boats docked in the harbor utilize one of the Middle Branch's most important resources: the water.

Photo by Andrew Nagl



V. Guiding Principles

1. Promote new developments and renewal of existing communities that produce vibrant and secure public spaces.

- Locate and design public spaces associated with the new development to activate street life.
- Support non-auto trips and walking.
- Improve existing light rail station areas.
- Mix related uses.
- Orient windows and doors to public streets.

2. Encourage walking, bicycling, water transport, and public transportation.

- Restore abandoned CSX Swing Bridge as a multi-modal trail.
- Link shoreline areas on the west side of the harbor.
- Expand existing water taxi system to the Middle Branch.
- Recognize the variety of water users.

3. Enhance circulation within and between neighborhoods.

- Provide sidewalks and marked bike lanes to enhance the trail system.

Vision

Build a safe, accessible, sustainable transportation system to support Baltimore's natural waterfront with a mix of uses & incomes in new development patterns to enhance community life in and around the Middle Branch Master Plan area.



In the Middle Branch, highways act as barriers by preventing connections between communities or between communities and the water.

Photo by Andrew Nagl

- Provide bicycle parking & amenities at transit and business hubs.
- Include bicycle lanes & pedestrian amenities at Waterview, Hanover, Potee, Annapolis roads.

4. Improve regional access to the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. metro areas for public and private transportation modes.

- Study I-895 access options (including impacts) to improve southeast/downtown access.
- Investigate future MARC station options.
- Investigate shuttle service to regional stations & downtown.

5. Assess the current transportation infrastructure. Ascertain its volume of use and its capacity. Study targeted capacity, proposed facilities and possible connections.

6. Develop governance to guide future transportation planning, to implement the transportation strategies, and to manage and sustain the transportation system.

- Establish ad hoc committee with all modes represented in transportation planning.
- Build an organization to market light rail availability to businesses and households.
- Establish a long-range financing mechanism for road and transit operations improvements.

VI. Recommendations

- Complete an area-wide Transportation Implementation Strategy for circulation, access and demand management.
- Establish design guidelines, street/path connectivity targets and sustainable transportation policy that support walking, transit use and on-street bicycle networks, particularly at major transit nodes/light rail stations.
- Appoint a Transportation Task Force, similar in diversity of interests to the Master Plan Transportation Committee, to advise and review the proposed Implementation Strategy study, which can become the foundation for a Transportation Management Association.
- Provide a shuttle bus system that connects the local streets in Cherry Hill, Westport, and Brooklyn to light rail stops and commercial centers in new villages.
- Acquire the CSX Swing Bridge for trail development.
- Complete a comprehensive transportation Plan for the Port Covington and CALC/Swann Park peninsulas on the north side of the Middle Branch with the goal to allow transit supported increases in density through a high quality, long term transportation program. This Plan should have a systems approach to transportation improvements which are funded at the time of development.

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middle branch



The Middle Branch's water and habitat resources have great potential. Currently, however, islands of trash like this often clog the harbor.

Water Quality and Habitat

“If there is magic on the planet, it is contained in water.”

- Loren Eiseley

A major goal of this Plan and the City's 2006 Comprehensive Master Plan is the sustainable, long-term improvement of the waters and habitat of the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River. The overall goal of the Water Quality and Habitat program is to restore water quality to the Clean Water Act's fishable and swimmable standards by 2020.

- Leaking sewer and storm water pipes will be repaired and monitored to reduce impacts of bacteria on humans and wildlife.
- Storm water run-off pollutants and trash will be captured before flowing into the water.
- River banks will be restored to their green, natural state to reduce stormwater pollution and provide habitat.
- Impervious surfaces will be removed at redevelopment sites to create more green space and treat stormwater.
- Habitat will be improved by retaining and enhancing parks, conservation easements, and playing fields. New habitat areas will be created.



Shore birds like this make protecting Middle Branch's migratory flyways a must.

The Middle Branch is affected by the entire Patapsco River watershed which covers portions of Baltimore City and County. The Middle Branch connects habitats in the Patapsco Valley State Park system, Gwynns Falls Leakin Park, Reedbird Park, Masonville Cove, Swann Park, and the Fort McHenry wetland marsh. On an international level, many bird and fish species use the Middle Branch as a rest stop and feeding area during their annual migrations.

I. History

In the past, the Middle Branch was endowed with rich marshes, wooded shorelines and an abundance of crabs, shad, herring, perch and rockfish. This began to change as industrialization began to impact the watershed and communities were built up stream along the Gwynns Falls. Although the City of Baltimore was one of the last cities to construct a sanitary sewer system, the result may have been beneficial because it was not a combined storm water-sanitary sewer system as installed in other cities. This means Baltimore has two separate pipes – one for sewage waste and one for stormwater from the streets. While this dual system improved the efficient removal of storm water from City streets it also increased the flows of run-off pollutants (heavy, metals, oil) into the streams and thus the Middle Branch.

From the 1920s to the 1970s, industrial activity dominated the Middle Branch shoreline. Locke Insulators, manufacturer of porcelain electrical insulators, opened a branch in the early 1920s. Lyon, Conklin & Company, manufacturer of gutters and galvanized pipe, opened at McComas and Race streets in 1922. Allied Chemical, a wholesale bakers supplies warehouse, and the Baltimore City Central garage were built near the northern shoreline. A junkyard was located along the Middle Branch shoreline at the northeastern intersection of Cherry Hill Road and Waterview Avenue. In addition, many slaughtering houses and meat processing facilities dumped their waste into the Gwynns Falls upstream. All of these elements combined to negatively impact water quality and habitat. By the mid 1980s, Waterview Avenue Industrial park at the base of Cherry Hill comprised 22 manufacturing, warehousing and wholesale retail businesses that produced building supplies, stored

and transported gasoline, fixed automobiles, recycled car parts from several junkyards, and other activities.

In the 1970's, the Clean Water Act began to control or eliminate many "point sources pollutants" or those directly from an identified source. Despite this progress, however, non-point sources remained a major threat. In the late 1970's the City of Baltimore passed the 1978 Middle Branch Park Master Plan and began purchasing land to create the Middle Branch Park. Around the same time, the Carr Lowry Glass Company partnered with the City to create vegetated buffers along their shoreline to improve area habitat.

Today many of the point sources of pollution threatening the Middle Branch have left or are sending their waste water to one of the City's sewage treatment plants. Shoreline habitat has improved thanks to the requirements of the Maryland Critical Area Law.

Major Challenges

The Middle Branch estuary sits at the bottom of the Gwynns Falls and Patapsco River watershed drainage areas. It also receives drainage from the Harbor Watershed. The watershed drainage areas reach beyond the City borders into other jurisdictions. Success is dependent on reaching far beyond the borders of the Middle Branch and into the surrounding Counties to resolve water quality challenges.

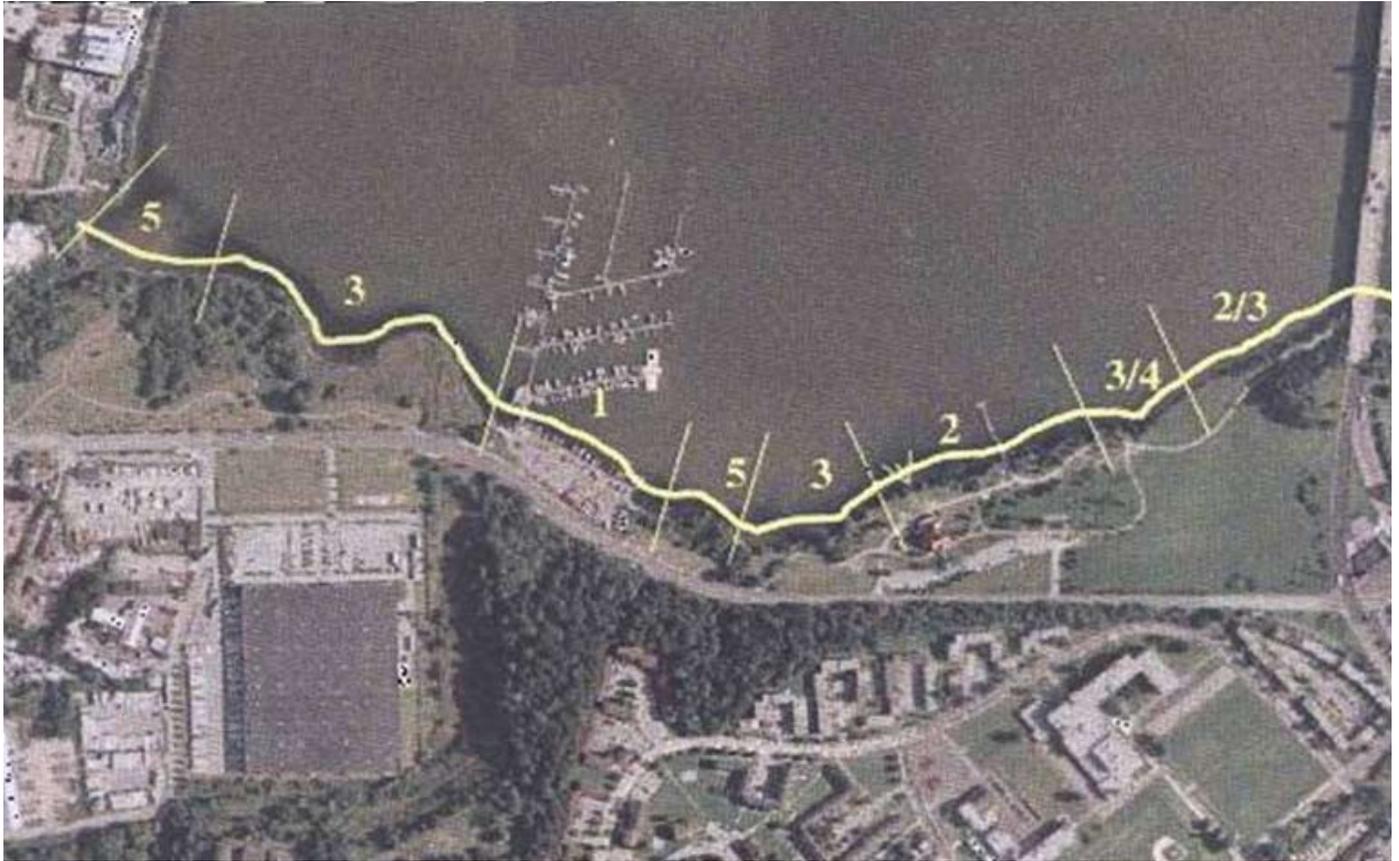
II. Existing Conditions

There are many water quality and habitat issues impacting the Middle Branch. The Water Quality Committee distilled these issues into four major elements which are discussed below. Committee members felt that by concentrating on these elements the majority of water quality and habitat issues in the Middle Branch could be addressed in a reasonable amount of time.

Water Quality:

Trash: A recent study of trash in the Middle Branch found that the problem is widespread and severe. Litter reaches the Middle Branch via storm drains, rivers and streams. It washes from streets, and is dropped into the water from boats and park users. Once in the water, it moves around via the wind and tidal influence and is deposited along the shoreline. Some areas of the Middle Branch receive very heavy depositions of trash. (See Map 7) Trash is unsightly, concentrates bacteria and smothers wetland marsh.

Bacteria: Data indicates that bacteria in the waters of the Middle Branch are a frequent health threat to people and animals. This discourages boating and fishing, prevents swimming, and is a disincentive for redevelopment projects which could otherwise promote the Middle Branch as an amenity. Storm water run-off, sanitary sewer leaks and overflows from the City and County are a primary cause of increased bacteria levels, which frequently exceed ambient standards.



Map 7 - Trash Study
 Middle Branch
 Moffat and Nichols Engineers

Definition of Trash Density Ratings

Rating	Surface Area Trash Coverage
1	0-20%
2	20-40%
3	40-60%
4	60-80%
5	80-100%

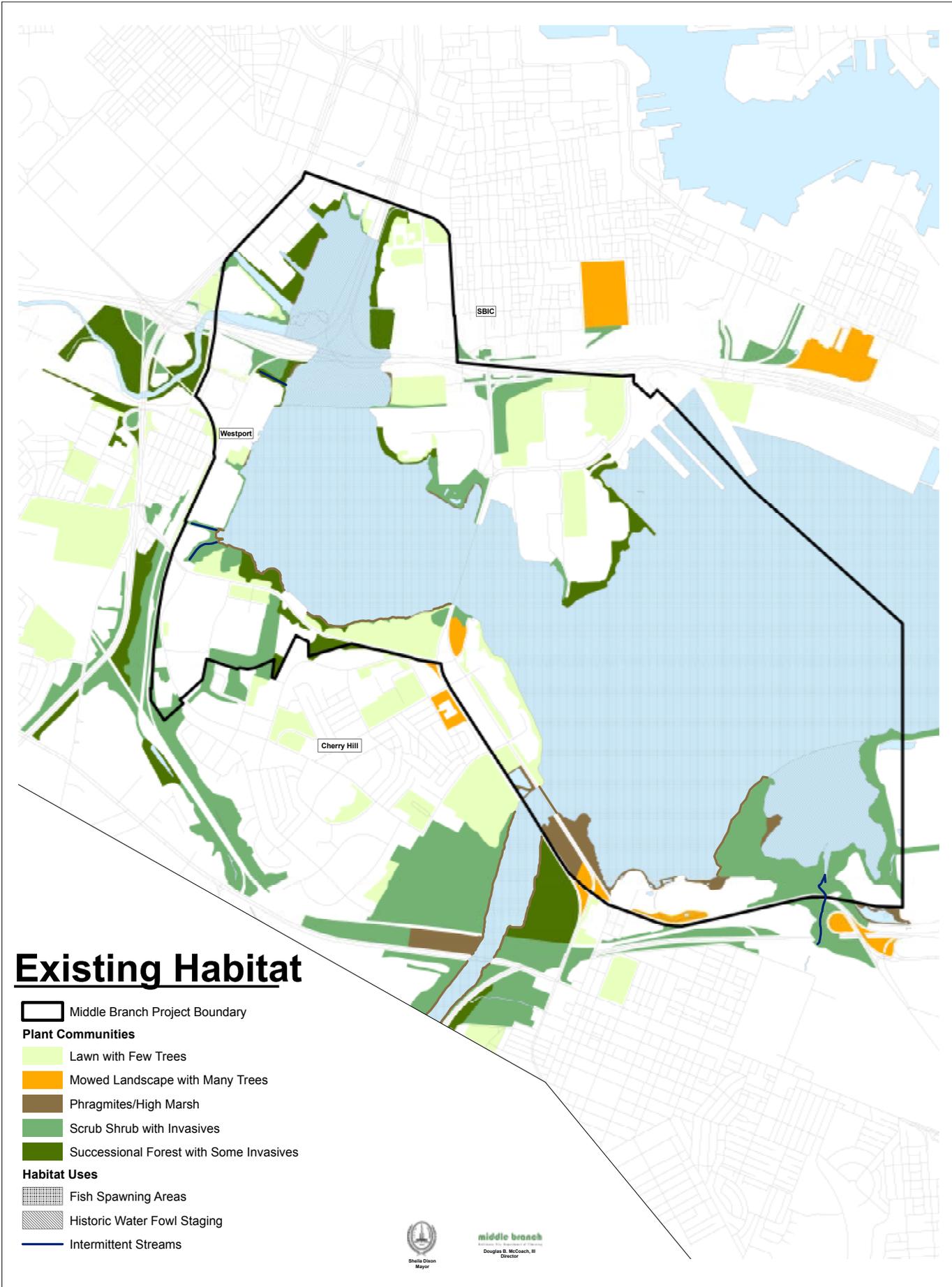
Habitat:

- *Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV).* Nutrient and sediment runoff have harmed bay grasses and bottom habitat. Algae growth has pushed the Middle Branch food web out of balance. Untreated sewage overflows and storm water run-off containing soap, motor oil, heavy metals, road salts and deicers, and animal wastes contaminate and cloud the water. All of these elements limit the growth of SAV which provide habitat for a wide variety of beneficial species. Despite these challenges, the levels of SAV are higher than expected in the Middle Branch. There is hope that more SAV beds can be created.
- *Forest Cover.* The removal of forest cover for development and the resulting fragmentation of forest has reduced habitat for migrating and native bird species.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

- *Wetland marsh.* Areas of wetland marsh are located along the waterward edges of the western shore. There is also wetland marsh along the shoreline of the northern Middle Branch. Wetlands also exist at Fort McHenry; along Pottee Street bridge and Reedbird Park banks (north and south side of Patapsco River); and along Hanover Street and at Masonville Cove. **(See Map 8)**
- *Wetland Health.* The health of the tidal marshes is demonstrated in the numbers of migratory birds that have been counted in the Ft. McHenry wetlands. Over 240 species have been counted here, with over 180 species counted in a single year. These birds use the Middle Branch and the surrounding area to gather food, nest and refuel on migrations. It is interesting to note that 225 species of birds were counted in an 1879 survey in Baltimore, and the survey area was within a fifty mile radius of the Fort. There is also much evidence of invasive plant infestation, especially phragmites. This needs to be addressed by an aggressive removal and revegetation program.
- *Waterfowl Habitat.* The northern Middle Branch and Masonville Cove are documented areas of special importance to wintering waterfowl. Both are “Designated Habitat Protection Areas (DHPA)” under the Critical Area law as historic waterfowl staging and concentration areas with extensive vegetated Buffers. There is also a lower Middle Branch DHPA, all of which provide habitat for wintering waterfowl in tidal wetland marsh and open water areas. The main stem



Map 8 - Existing Habitat

of the Patapsco River, from the Hanoover Street Bridge eastward to the Dundalk Marine Terminal, also support concentrations of various year-round and wintering waterfowl. In addition, the Port Covington 100' wide Critical Area buffer provides acres of native plants used for food, cover and breeding areas for birds. Reedbird Park, consisting of wetland marsh, open grassland, and emergent woodlands, provides a major link to the 14,000-acre Patapsco Valley State Park system. Nearby Ft. McHenry wetlands, a mitigation project for the Ft. McHenry I-95 tunnel, is home to over 30 species of breeding and nesting birds, and where over 100,000 birds and over 250 species have been counted in a given year.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

Some of the heavy industry along the Middle Branch has created toxic sediments that contaminate the soil and water.

Contaminants:

The Middle Branch and adjacent water bodies, including the Baltimore Harbor, are listed as degraded by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), prepared under Sections 303 (d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. Pollutants include chromium, zinc, lead, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and Chlordane. Historic industrial land uses and contaminated sediment washed in from watershed streams have contributed to these levels.

Data from the Maryland Department of the Environments TMDL and 303 (d) programs document the severity of the problem, but specific data is limited. Toxicity levels, especially at depth, are unknown. Although some sources of pollution have been greatly reduced or eliminated over the past several decades, an accumulation of toxics in the sediments remain and acute sediment toxicity has been found in test organisms. Due to the complex physical and chemical nature of the sediments, however, it is impossible to specifically associate the causative factors producing the observed toxicity.

III. Opportunities for Improvements to Water Quality and Habitats

Trash:

- Research- Redevelopment of the Middle Branch provides the opportunity to further study the trash issue in the watershed to develop an organized, multi-faceted approach to the problem. Existing data can help formulate policies to reduce trash, however comprehensive studies are needed to find where the most trash is entering the Harbor and its sources. This can be used

Helpful Definitions

What is a TMDL?

A TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) establishes the maximum amount of an impairing substance or stressor that a waterbody can assimilate and still meet water quality standards and allocates that load among pollution contributors.

TMDLs are a tool for implementing State water quality standards. They are based on the relationship between pollution sources and in-stream water quality conditions.

A TMDL addresses a single pollutant or stressor for each waterbody.

Source: Maryland Department of the Environment WEB site

What is a Watershed?

A WATERSHED is an area where all the water, whether stream flow or ground water, flows to a common waterway. A watershed can be as small as the roof of a house where water drains into the gutter and downspout and from there to the yard. The water then flows to a storm drain or a stream and eventually, in Maryland, to the Bay.

A watershed can be as large as the entire Chesapeake Bay drainage basin, which covers 64,000 square miles. All precipitation falling on this six-state region eventually drains into the Chesapeake Bay. Actually, the Chesapeake Bay watershed is made up of millions of small watersheds and everyone living in these watersheds has an impact on the Bay. As rainwater flows over the ground, it carries with it oil and grime from parking lots, soil from construction sites, fertilizers from lawns, and chemicals from industrial discharges. The pollutants enter one of fifty major tributaries, and ultimately find their way to the Bay itself. Millions of people live in the watershed, and everyone's actions have an effect on the health of the Bay.

Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources WEB site



to create a trash TMDL. It is possible to develop programs to resolve the influx of trash.

- Proposed Maryland Bottle Bill - Negotiations concerning a Maryland Bottle Bill are ongoing and if passed could reduce trash in the Middle Branch up to 50%.
- Volunteers – Expanding populations that live on the water also increase opportunities for volunteer clean up campaigns and an ‘adopt a lot’ style ongoing cleaning programs.



Methods of preventing trash from reaching the Middle Branch harbor, such as trash interceptors, and street sweeping must be utilized in order to keep the water clean.

- City-County Watershed Agreement - The City of Baltimore and Baltimore County have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work jointly on water quality issues facing our streams and the harbor. This Agreement will be overseen by a Working Committee of principals from relevant agencies from both jurisdictions to work with residents and experts from to develop strategies and implement solutions to our water quality issues and will greatly benefit the Middle Branch.

Bacteria:

- Health of the Harbor Initiative - MDE, the City of Baltimore and members of the Baltimore Harbor Watershed Association have joined to create a task force on this issue. The goal is to coordinate existing data collection sets for the Middle Branch and create a comprehensive survey of water conditions. Similar data can be sought from the Baltimore County DPW.
- The City of Baltimore has entered into a consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to update our sewer conveyance system. This Consent Decree is entering the Sewershed Planning and Evaluation Phase (2006 to 2010) and Sewershed Rehabilitation Phase (2008 to 2016). Current efforts will evaluate the sewersheds which should address the more diffuse but chronic source of dry weather overflows. This \$460-650 million effort may dramatically reduce bacterial loadings to the Middle Branch.
- A Bacterial Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan has been prepared for the Gwynns Falls Watershed that can be implemented to improve water quality in the Middle Branch.

- Existing Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permits or MS4's, for the City of Baltimore and Baltimore County will help remove some level of bacterial loadings from non-point sources.
- Volunteers – Expanding populations that live on the water increase opportunities for volunteer driven monitoring using bacterial indicator test kits. This could provide free data and help educate the general public.

Toxics and Sediment:

- Capitalize on proposal to develop the Patapso Urban Restoration Initiative (PURRI) with the USACE. This program will include testing to understand conditions and solutions to contaminants in the sediment. The complexity of the sample design, the costs of sample collection and analysis will be addressed as part of the (PURRI).

Habitat:

Mitigation Opportunities

- The Critical Area (CA) Management Program requires protection of wildlife habitat and protection of the 100-foot Buffer at each new development. Each new redevelopment project in the Middle Branch provides the opportunity to provide some form of environmental restoration. Projects already approved include: 800 new trees in Middle Branch Park, 13 acres of new trees in Reedbird Park, easements and maintenance agreements.
- The Masonville Dredge Management Containment Facility Mitigation includes five trash interceptors, an environmental education center, and trail.
- Tidal Middle Branch Plan -The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) Middle branch restoration plan creates a partnership between the USACE and the City to spend \$6 Million in Section 206 and Section 510 Funding for wetland marsh and habitat creation. Eight Sites are under consideration for tidal marsh creation, marsh islands, beaches for habitat, buffer enhancements.
- Existing Greening Initiatives – There are many existing initiatives that can be tapped into to benefit the Middle Branch habitat restoration. These include the Tree Baltimore goal to double the City's tree canopy, the National Aquarium Center for Aquatic Life and Conservation, the Health of Harbor initiative to clean up bacteria.

IV. Constraints for Water Quality and Habitat

- Lack of Data - There is a need for sufficient, adequate data to inform comprehensive decisions regarding water quality and habitat improvements. While there are many opportunities to obtain that data, constraints of cost and time make it difficult.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

For an urban area, the Middle Branch has a significant amount of vegetated habitat. This should be protected and improved. Paths such as the Gwynns Falls Trail allow people to enjoy this great resource.

- The drainage areas contributing to the Middle Branch are quite large and extend beyond the jurisdictional boundaries of Baltimore. It is a major challenge to address pollution from such a wide variety of sources.
- Many of the water quality issues facing the Middle Branch have not received a great deal of study or implementation elsewhere. For example, the only jurisdiction currently with a trash TMDL is California. In many respects the City of Baltimore is on the 'front lines' in establishing creative ways to address this issue. This is also true for contamination in the sediments.
- Costs- The costs for the different evaluation, restoration and maintenance activities are very high. This can be prohibitive to solving the problem.

Vision:

Restore the Middle Branch to fishable and swimmable levels by 2020, remove trash, and protect and restore wildlife habitat to historic conditions.

V. Guiding principles

Restore Degraded Habitat for Marine and Upland Species

- Create a green buffer around the Middle Branch 100' wide wherever possible.
- Comprehensively plant barren hillsides, shoreline and open areas to improve habitat.
- Consider using native plants for all landscaping projects on development parcels to reduce watering and provide additional habitat.
- Remove invasive plant species, provide ongoing maintenance to keep removing them as they re-appear and replant the areas with new native plants.
- Enforce Critical Area regulations and where appropriate, minimize human impact in areas that are designated as Habitat Protection Areas, Resource Conservation Areas, and the 100' foot Buffer as well as within conservation easements and wetlands.
- Create new conservation easements that will permanently protect land for wildlife.
- Improve and foster Submerged Aquatic Vegetation beds by reducing sediment and improving water quality for sunlight.
- Provide incentives to create new tidal wetland marsh areas adjacent to private development and encourage partnerships for funding and implementation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tidal Middle Branch Restoration Plan (MBRP) and the Patapsco Urban River Restoration Initiative (PURRI).

Improve Water Quality to Fishable and Swimmable Levels By 2020

- Create a monitoring program to provide real-time information about bacterial levels in the Middle Branch, with data posted on a web site for public use.
- Develop an action plan in partnership with MDE, Baltimore City and County for the implementation of the TMDL to address non-point sources of bacterial contamination.
- Provide education about current bacteria, trash and water quality conditions and what potential conditions could be in the future.
- Create an organization or coordinator that has ownership of the Middle Branch that will review data and reports from the various sources, track progress and expedite solutions for bacteria reduction.
- Manage floating debris by constructing trash interceptors, organizing street sweeping programs and adopting broad educational programs.
- Start an education campaign about storm drains and litter using Baltimore's Watershed 263 model. (<http://www.watershed263.org>)
- Incorporate advanced storm water treatment techniques in all new development projects with a goal to treat 100% of the storm water.
- Encourage the expansion of the Brownfield Voluntary Clean-up to cap or mitigate sites to reduce future influx of contaminants into water column.
- Implement identified testing regime from PURRI and Patapsco River restoration.
- Continue to improve water quality throughout drainage basin of Middle Branch by implementing

stream restorations, impervious surface removal, and continue addressing the NPDES TMDL requirements.

- Identify local, state, and Federal funding sources.
- Make implementation strategies measurable and achievable under some type of coordinator/organization that has “ownership” of the Middle Branch.

VI. Recommendations

Create a Comprehensive Monitoring Program that includes an Education Component

1. Conduct surveys and gather and evaluate data from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the City and the County that show bacteria and toxics levels and sources.
2. Develop Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) water quality criteria for Gwynns Falls watershed.

Manage Floating Debris

1. Conduct a systematic, randomized survey of the watershed to identify hot-spots and types of trash.
2. Create an educational campaign on the effects of trash to neighborhoods and wildlife. Focus on children in grades K-12 by coordinating with the Baltimore City Public School System and area nonprofits.
3. Present evidence to MDE that would list the Harbor and Middle Branch as impaired for trash.
4. Consider supporting the Maryland Bottle Bill – this could reduce trash in the Middle Branch up to 50%.

Incorporate Advanced Stormwater Techniques

1. Incorporate advanced stormwater treatment techniques in all new developments to treat stormwater to reduce pollutant loads beyond existing state and city regulations, with an ultimate goal toward treating 100% of the stormwater when possible. (The Middle Branch will not achieve the goal of reaching fishable and swimmable levels without the cooperation and collaboration of public and private partners). Review and revise Baltimore City stormwater treatment standards

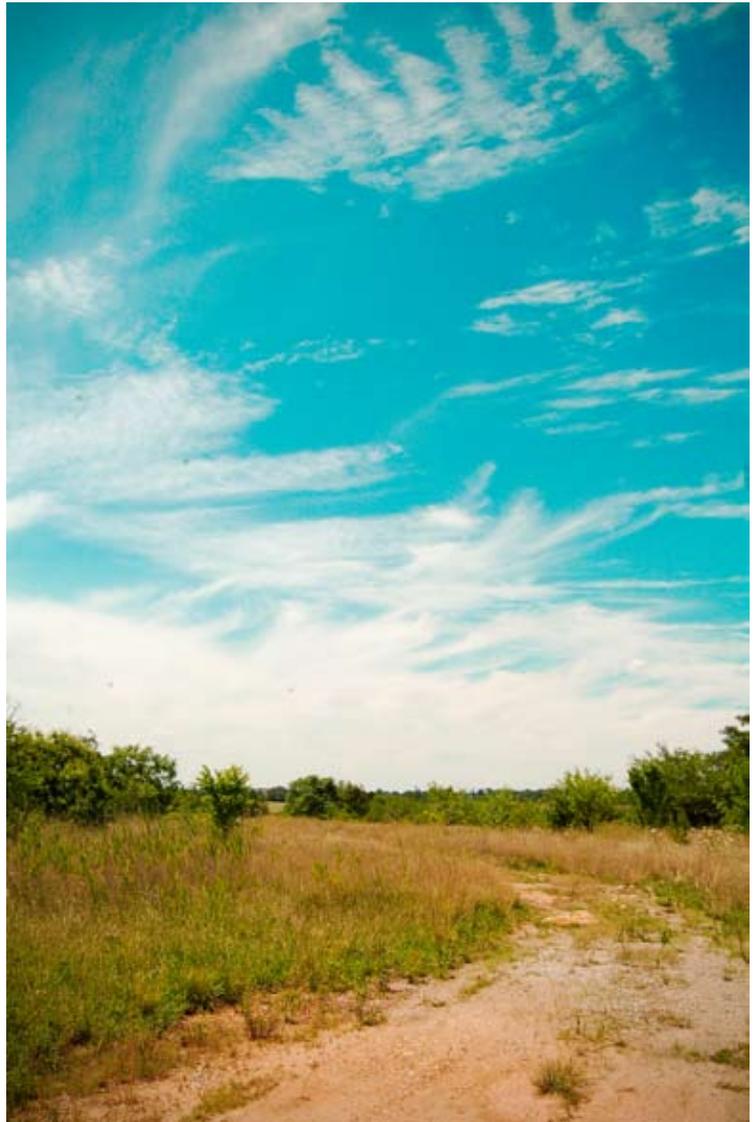


Photo by Andrew Nagl

For many, quiet areas on the Middle Branch are a retreat from the bustle of downtown Baltimore. Environmental considerations must be made in order to preserve these “getaways.”

to encourage creative stormwater management techniques that take into account unique conditions in Baltimore City. Add definition for stormwater treatment – the water quality treatment volume specified in the City’s stormwater manual.

2. Retrofit existing development with Best Management Practices.

Restore Habitat Areas

1. Require a 100’ wide green buffer around the Middle Branch shoreline at sites where it is appropriate.
2. Develop a comprehensive planting, maintenance and invasive control plan to revegetate barren areas.

Enforce Environmental Regulations

1. Enforce Critical Area regulations in designated Habitat Protection Areas, Resource Conservation Areas, and within the 100’ foot buffer.
2. Step-up efforts to meet the requirements of the City’s NPDES permit fund, construct new BMP’s, and restore additional streams in the watershed.

Create New Tidal Marshes

1. Seek innovative funding sources for marsh construction, including incentives to create new marsh areas adjacent to private development
2. Implement the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tidal Middle Branch Restoration Plan (MBRP) and the Patapsco Urban River Restoration Initiative (PURRI).

The Water Quality and Habitat committee completed a detailed report identifying action items, timing and potential cost. This report is available from the Department of Planning or Department of Public Works upon request.

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middle branch



Historic Maryland Yacht Club

Heritage and Tourism

“The world around us, so much of it our own creation, shifts continually and often bewilders us. We reach out to that world to preserve or to change it and so to make visible our desire. The arguments of planning all come down to the management of change...”

-Kevin Lynch

Preserving historic, cultural, and natural resources enhances community building, place making and neighborhood sustainability. Well interpreted resources help connect diverse communities, celebrate places, and nurture self-awareness and discovery. The Heritage and Tourism program strives to preserve historic, and natural resources, develop interpretive programs to celebrate the history of the Middle Branch, and maximize heritage tourism. These efforts contribute to the quality of life of nearby residents and provide unique, authentic experiences for the tourist. Tourism within the Middle Branch adds to the economic sustainability in the Middle Branch area with minimal



Trains would ship freight from industrial sites around the Middle Branch to Port Covington. There, the freight would be loaded onto ships.

impact on the environment. By creating a comprehensive system of hiker/biker trails, interpretive signage, and recreational facilities, the Middle Branch can offer rewarding experiences for residents and tourists alike.

I. History

Since the early 18th century, the Middle Branch has evolved according to the changing needs of Baltimoreans. Today, Baltimoreans envision that the Middle Branch area and the surrounding communities will become dynamic, sustainable places to live, work, and play. Central to this vision is the thriving natural ecosystem of the Middle Branch. The area's history presents an exciting picture of two competing uses vying for space within the Middle Branch: industrial

development and recreational and leisurely activities. These two forces, more than any other, have shaped the area, creating a tension readily seen today in the Middle Branch Landscape.

By the turn of the 19th century, the area's isolation, close proximity to Baltimore, and bucolic scenery marked the area for leisure and recreation. Fletcher's Fish House provided drinks, food, music, and a marina. In 1833, Charles Varle, in his *A Complete View of Baltimore*, described the Middle Branch, "a spacious sheet of water, which I shall call a basin, of about 1 ½ miles in breadth, and 2 in length, perfectly sheltered from the winds by reason of the high grounds surrounding it."

By the 1830s, efforts were made to develop the area west and south of the Middle Branch into South Baltimore, a town separate from Baltimore. Varle promotes this area's future development, "The progress already made in improving this beautiful site, is in earnest of its future rapid growth. There is a commodious wharf built, and a branch of the Ohio railroad, began last summer, will be completed next spring...South Baltimore is a necessary appendage to the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and to the city of Baltimore, as it will afford the most convenient deposit for coal and granite, for exportation and for the steam factories, that cheap fuel will give rise to in all the branches of iron work, which would be an annoyance to the city." Seventy years later, Varle's prediction would be fully realized. In the Colonial Mid-Atlantic Region, African Americans, both slave and free, made up a large percentage of iron-workers. These African Americans, despite the nefarious institution of slavery and racism that embodied it, became highly skilled workers that demanded, and many times received, their freedom. In addition their efforts and skill significantly contributed to Baltimore's African American community.

For most of the 19th century, the Middle Branch thrived as a get-away spot for Baltimoreans. Resorts settled on the shoreline. Klein's Park, Meeter's Park, and Kirby Park, provided music, eating, drinking, swimming and other activities. These parks became so popular that a ferry began regular

runs from the Inner Harbor to the Middle Branch, and in the 1890s the Shoreline Railway, an electric streetcar, connected this area to downtown Baltimore. By the early 20th century, this area became home to many yacht and boating clubs including the Baltimore Yacht club, the Maryland Yacht club, the Corinthian Yacht club, Ariel Rowing Club, the Arundel Boat Club, the Baltimore Athletic Club, and the Iroquois Canoe Club. Also recognized as a get-away area for African Americans, the Middle Branch was home to a couple of “colored” entertainment venues known as The Old Fish House (also called Razor Park) and Lincoln Park. The waters of the Middle Branch additionally served the African-American Christian community as a site for full immersion baptismal ceremonies. In 1904 the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects saw great potential in this area.

A comparatively narrow border of upland on either shore of the Patapsco River would provide, at a small cost, for a park containing within its boundaries a landscape of great extent, while bathing could well be provided for on the channel opposite Ferry Bar, as it now is after a fashion at the private resorts already established there.

In the early 1920s, the City purchased twenty acres to create Broening Park where Harbor Hospital sits today. In addition, the Olmsted Brothers suggested that the city remove the Long Bridge which connected the current area of Ferry Bar to Brooklyn on the east side of the mouth of the Patapsco River. In turn, they recommended aligning the Hanover Street Bridge at its current location, allowing direct access to the Middle Branch shoreline.

Industry has been part of the Middle Branch area since the early 19th century. In the 1830s Varle points out the existence of brickyards, a wharf, and the B&O railroad line. Around 1855, The Gas Light Company of Baltimore, a company that merged with the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, bought approximately nine acres around Spring Gardens (south of Ostend and West of Hanover streets) and built a plant to produce coal gas. By 1869 five gas tanks and numerous buildings occupied the site. In 1889 the Carr-Lowrey Company, a glass manufacturing company that produced pharmaceutical and cosmetic bottles, built an eight-pot furnace plant on the Middle Branch western shoreline. Throughout the 1890s they expanded their operations. Also during this time, the Baltimore Novelty Steam Boiler Works built a plant just south of the mouth of the Gwynns Falls.



Sachse 1869

From the late 1890s to the 1920s industry overwhelmed the Middle Branch. At Spring Gardens, BGE (then BG&E) built three skyline-defining gas tanks (now demolished) and the Westport Power Plant. Western Maryland Railroad established the Port Covington Marine Terminal. Consequently, water quality diminished. By 1926, when the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects published their Report and Recommendations on Park Extension For Baltimore, they lamented:

We therefore believe that the opportunity for securing any considerable waterside park anywhere on the Patapsco River northwest of the line from Sparrows Point to Fort Armistead has now forever disappeared.

The city first zoning plan in 1923 marked all the shoreline property for use by industry. Broening Park, too, was zoned for manufacturing and commercial uses.

From the 1920s to the 1970s, industrial activity dominated the Middle Branch shoreline. Locke Insulators, manufacturer of porcelain electrical insulators, opened a branch in Baltimore at Cromwell and Insulator Drive in the early 1920s. Lyon, Conklin & Company, manufacturer of gutters and galvanized pipe, opened at McComas and Race streets in 1922. In addition Allied Chemical Company, a wholesale bakers supplies warehouse, and the Baltimore City Central garage were built near the northern shoreline.

In the early 1940s private developers laid out three subdivisions for African Americans in the area now known as Cherry Hill. In 1943 City Officials, after a heated debate about location, chose the Cherry Hill area to build 600 apartment units for African American war workers. The whole

Developers should conduct adaptive-use feasibility studies for landmark-eligible properties such as Lock Insulators.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

neighborhood was laid out by the relatively new Planning Commission, according to the best design ideas at the time: curving streets, cul-de-sacs, pedestrian paths, and well-sited green space. When the HABC development opened in January of 1945, Cherry Hill became one of the first African American suburban-style housing projects in the country. Throughout the decades Cherry Hill has grown as new developments have been built. Since its establishment, Cherry Hill has been one of Baltimore's principal African American neighborhoods, contributing its share of political leaders, writers, musicians and others in positions of authority to the City.

In 1968, South Baltimore General Hospital moved to the site of Broening Park and became Harbor Hospital. By the mid 1980s, Waterview Avenue Industrial park comprised 22 manufacturing, warehousing and wholesale retail businesses that produced building supplies, stored and transported gasoline, fixed automobiles, recycled car parts at several junkyards, and other activities. Both the Carr-Lowrey Glass Company and the BG&E power plant continually expanded adding to their buildings.

Industry's hold on the shoreline weakened during the 1970s, and the Middle Branch went through a major master planning process. In the late 1970s the department of Planning recommended creating an extensive Middle Branch Park with boat launches, marinas, playfields, fishing piers, open green spaces, and picnic areas. In the 1990s, the Gwynns Falls Greenway linked the Middle Branch to Gwynns Falls Park with a hiker biker trail.

Since the early 18th century, industrial forces competed with leisure and recreation activities, vying for space within the Middle Branch. Throughout the 19th century recreation and leisure activities dominated the area. During the first decade of the 20th century, industry – almost in blatant disregard to the 1904 Olmsted Park Plan – inundated the shoreline and recreation and leisure activities became muted and marginalized. Industry's hold on the area seemed to be permanent.

By the 1970s, however, signs of post-industrial America crept into Baltimore as industrial activity declined, leaving the Middle Branch vacant and underutilized. Today, the opportunity to transform the Middle Branch area back into a thriving recreational area next to thriving neighborhoods looms before us.

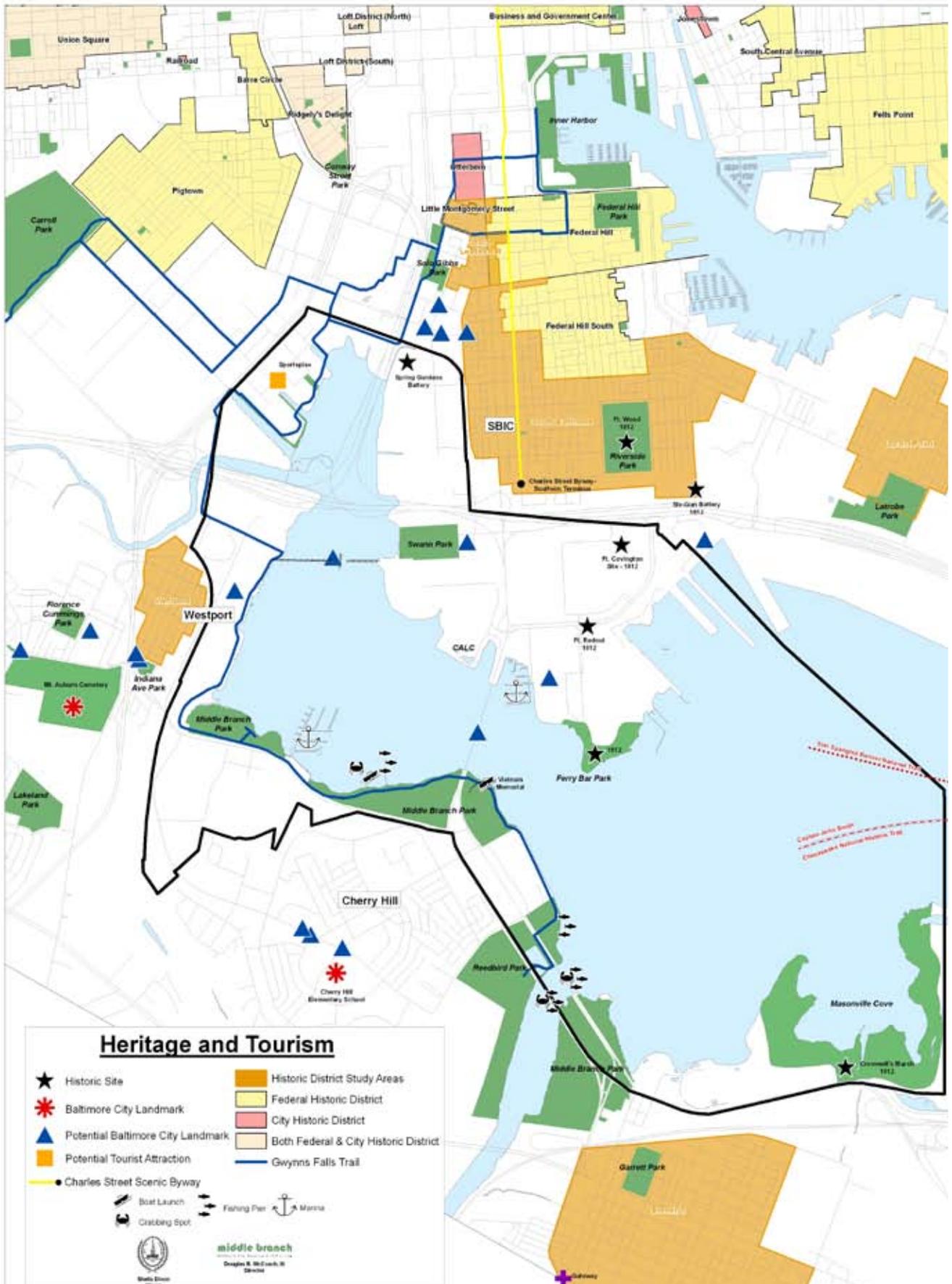
II. Existing Historical, Cultural, and Natural Resources

- Neighborhoods of Cherry Hill, Westport, and South Baltimore are rich in history.
- Several Baltimore City landmark-eligible properties.
- Gwynn's Falls Park.
- CSX Swing Bridge and the Hanover Street Bridge.
- Maryland's Vietnam Veterans War Memorial.
- Captain John Smith Water trail.
- Star Spangled Banner National Trail efforts.
- Several War of 1812 sites.
- Rich industrial, African American, ecological and topographical, and recreation and park history.

The Middle Branch area harbors rich, diverse history that has rarely been told or celebrated. Today, the Middle Branch development and revitalization activities provide far more opportunities than constraints in preserving and celebrating this rich history. In turn, the Middle Branch area's heritage, cultural and natural assets provide opportunities to: strengthen connections between communities, neighborhoods and open spaces; connect new developments to a rich past, placing new communities in a cultural context; attract tourists and tourist-related businesses; and provide a layer of interest and understanding to the area. *(See Map 9)*

III. Opportunities for Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development

- Expand tourism-related recreational opportunities by increasing non-motorized boat rentals; provide canoe, kayak, rowing and sailing classes; expand rowing facilities; and host more non-motorized boating events.
- Educate tourists and Baltimore residents by creating programs to interpret the area's rich history and environmental diversity. As developers begin to transform many of the former industrial sites, ensure that their plans provide for ways to interpret history such as interpretive signage, historical markers, and walking tour brochures. Also, ensure that each development's historical interpretation program is coordinated with one another.
- Coordinate wayfinding, historical, and neighborhood gateway signage to prevent sign clutter and confusion.
- Increase ecological and heritage tourism business opportunities by introducing water taxi stops, by providing for boat tours, linking to the Charles Street Scenic Byway and other trail efforts, and preparing for tourist-related programs for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.



Map 9 - Heritage and Tourism

IV. Constraints

- The Middle Branch is a finite ecological resource that must be respected. Too much development and tourist activity can destroy the environmental integrity of the Middle Branch.
- Interpretive historical signage and markers are prone to vandalism and deterioration. They must be maintained. Businesses, homes corporations, and neighborhood associations can take the lead in creating an “adopt a sign/marker” program.
- Many historical sites have lost their historic structures and characteristics. These sites, at their current existing conditions, greatly limit the visitor experience.
- The north and west shorelines of the Middle Branch are severed from their neighboring community by manmade barriers such as railroad tracks and highways.



Historic buildings such as the Community Baptist Church and the Hemmingway AME Church are just two of the many locations that should receive historic designation in order to be protected and preserved.

Vision

Preserve historic, cultural and natural resources for public enjoyment and heritage tourism development.

V. Guiding Principles

1. Ensure the Preservation of Historic Resources.

- Support landmark designation of the following structures in the Westport area: Westport Academy School (2401 Nevada Street); Fire House (2425 Annapolis Road); Branch Library #27 (2427 Annapolis Road); Mt. Winans United Methodist Church (2501 Waterview Avenue); Al Kaline Home (2203 Sidney Street); and Union Hall building (2219 Annapolis Road).
- Support landmark designation of the following structures in Cherry Hill: Community Baptist Church (827 Cherry Hill Road); Hemingway Temple AME Church (2701 Woodview Road); St. Veronica’s Catholic Church (806 Cherry Hill Road); and the Murphy House (3217 Round Road).
- Support landmark designation of the structures located on the Middle Branch shoreline: Hanover Street Bridge; and CSX Swing Bridge (historic Western Maryland Railroad Bridge).
- Ensure developers create adaptive-use feasibility studies for landmark-eligible properties.

- Ensure developers document and interpret the history of landmark-eligible properties, historic sites, and historic surrounding communities.
- Support local historic district and national register designation of the surrounding communities.
- Ensure stewardship and interpretation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

2. Develop Interpretive Programs for the Following Historic, Cultural and Natural Resources:

- Link War of 1812 sites that are located in the Middle Branch area to the Star Spangled Banner National Trail efforts, spearheaded by the NPS (<http://www.nps.gov/phso/jstarspan/finalreport051904.pdf>).
- Link the Middle Branch to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, created by act of Congress on December 19, 2006 (<http://www.nps.gov/nero/josm/>). In 1608 Captain John Smith left Jamestown to explore the northern regions of the Chesapeake Bay and entered the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River.
- Create a program to interpret the recreation and park history of the Middle Branch. The Middle Branch has been a recreational area since the early-19th century. The Middle Branch accommodated active boating, fishing and other types of recreation until industry laid claim to the area. In the late 20th century, recreational uses were re-introduced into the Middle Branch. This history provides for interpretive opportunities.
- Create program to interpret the industrial heritage of the Middle Branch.
- Create program to interpret Cherry Hill as a unique African American community. Cherry Hill is one of the first suburban-type public housing developments in the country for African Americans. The story of Cherry Hill can help uplift the community and tie the community to future development projects.
- Create a program to interpret the ecology, topographical changes, and rise of environmentalism in the Middle Branch. Middle Branch has been an area rich in natural resources. It has also been identified as part of the “International Flyway”, an instinct-driven stop for migrating birds. The Middle Branch’s rich and unique natural resources provide educational and tourist opportunities.



War of 1812 sites located on the Middle Branch should be linked to the Star Spangled Banner National Trail and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.



Stewardship of Maryland's Vietnam Veteran's Memorial should be ensured.

3. Maximize Heritage tourism of the Middle Branch

- Capitalize on the opportunities provided by the Baltimore Heritage Area Management Plan, link to the Visitors Center, and connect with National, State and City trail systems.
- Link Middle Branch recreational and tourism activities to the southern terminus of the Charles Street Scenic Byway.
- Support marinas in appropriate areas.
- Maximize tourism potential of Masonville and the Center for Aquatic Life and Conservation.
- Develop Gateways into the Middle Branch area and surrounding communities.
- Introduce Water taxi service into the Middle Branch area.
- Support efforts of the rowing club to expand their facilities and to host rowing events.
- Maintain public boat launch.
- Support water-based recreational activities for residents and tourists.

VI. Recommendations

1. Require that an interpretive history program be part of any development along the Middle Branch shoreline.
2. Adopt a requirement that all developers submit a feasibility study prior to development for any Baltimore City historic landmark-eligible property located near the Middle Branch.
3. The Planning Department, CHAP, Baltimore Heritage Area, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, and Maryland Department of Tourism should create a plan to make visitor-friendly all Middle Branch War of 1812 sites for the War of 1812 Bicentennial. This plan should be approved by City officials by July of 2008.
4. Immediately establish Baltimore City Landmark designation for the Hanover Street Bridge and the CSX Swing Bridge.
5. Through the Cherry Hill Master Plan, identify potential historic landmarks and initiate contact with property owners as the first step in the landmark designation process.
6. Through the Westport Area Master Plan, identify potential historic landmarks and initiate contact with property owners as the first step in the landmark designation process.
7. Create a 'maintenance plan' for historical programs, including but not limited to an 'adopt a marker' program.
8. Link the Charles Street Scenic Byway and other nearby trails to the Middle Branch redevelopment.
9. Study creating a historic designation for the Community of Cherry Hill as one of Baltimore's 'Planned Community for the Colored'. Conduct a historic resources survey for Cherry Hill, a nationally significant planned African American community. Pursue local historic district designation for those areas that meet CHAP standards for designation. Celebrate Historic Cherry Hill by creating interpretive programs and publications presenting Cherry Hill as one of the first suburban-style planned African American communities in the U.S.

