

Our Baltimore, Your Baltimore: A Comprehensive Plan for the City of Baltimore
Presentation of DRAFT Plan
Planning Commission and Sustainability Commission
May 30, 2024

Questions and Comments

From Webex Chat

Question on Accountability

Who/when are metrics established, including baselines and targets, in order to measure progress?

We want to work directly with residents to define metrics and accountability mechanisms. Please review the [Implementation and Accountability](#) section of the plan and offer your suggestions about how to develop and use metrics. The plan offers a menu of strategies to reach outcomes and we are planning to work with communities to prioritize and target recommendations. In addition to tracking metrics related to this plan, we want to highlight metrics already being measured through many of the [supplemental plans](#).

Question on Land Use

Excited to see all the TOD and high density residential but curious as to the justification for keeping some predominately auto-oriented commercial around those higher density areas.

The [Transit Oriented Development Opportunities](#) map serves as an overlay allowing for property owners to request TOD zoning even if the Land Use Map has another land use category. If there are specific locations where we should revisit the category on the land use map, please identify them: [Baltimore City Proposed Land Use - April 2024 — Felt](#)

Question on Infrastructure

Some of the biggest challenges facing Baltimore is the aging infrastructure and transportation. How will the plan suggest spending money for replacing infrastructure and improving transportation? Will there be areas of greater priority?

Within the Growth and Retention section, there is a section about [Infrastructure](#). While it does not identify specific locations for improvements, it does talk about the challenges and opportunities related to investing in our existing infrastructure. Please review and share your feedback for enhancing this section.

Questions on Community Development Framework

How will "high quality infrastructure" be targeted in the neighborhoods where "full block demolition" is planned?

As part of developing the [Impact Investment Area](#) development strategies, community leaders and City agencies are conducting block-by-block planning, including identifying blocks for full block demolition and infrastructure improvements.

Will there be any attention to lowering the cost of ownership for existing residents in historically under funded neighborhoods? Lower the cost of ownership would involve sealing building envelopes (e.g., weatherization, roof leaks, foundation stabilization), electrification, responsible development (focusing more on function than form).

Yes, the [Vacant Housing Strategy](#) includes close to \$200 million for home repair incentives for items like weatherization and roof repairs.

Questions on New Residential Development

Any Live Baltimore data that shapes policy decisions should have published methods (especially sampling methods). How confident do we feel in the data? How is demand actually measured? Or is it an estimate?

The study is available here: [An Analysis of Baltimore City's Residential Market Potential - Live Baltimore](#)

Listening as I'm walking past a block of vacants. There's a lot of opportunity there, no?

Yes, there are many opportunities to [build new residential units](#). There is enough vacant land to build approximately 36,000 new housing units, which is approximately equal to the market potential over the next five years. In the long-term, there is an opportunity to redevelop underutilized land in addition to vacant land. Underutilized land includes properties with a vacant building notice or where surface parking is the primary use. Redeveloping underutilized land is often quite complicated. The City is leading this effort through the Impact Investments Areas and Vacants Strategy (see [Impact Investment Areas](#)).

The highest demand is on the waterfront. How will the city protect the waterfront as a space for all residents, not just private owners?

The City protects waterfront access in a number of ways. The promenade along the waterfront is required to remain publicly accessible through easements. [Reimagine Middle Branch](#) is heavily focused on waterfront access. Environmental regulations maintain public access in some areas. Public access and public space will be preserved as new development occurs around the Inner Harbor, even if re-located or re-invented. Design guidelines in Urban Renewal Plans protect visual access to the waterfront as new, taller development occurs in waterfront neighborhoods.

Questions on Policy Recommendations

Healthy communities: Does the transition from gas to electric live under healthy communities? As a renter (and as someone who intends on buying a home in Baltimore City), I am concerned about the emissions of my gas stove and the dangers of a gas furnace

These topics are covered in the [Climate Action Plan](#).

Gas and fossil fuels: Are there policies / incentives for new construction to be electric and NOT reliant on fossil fuels?

There are a number of incentives for the construction of high performance and energy efficient buildings offered by [BGE](#), the [Maryland Energy Administration](#), and through City [tax credits](#). The [Climate Action Plan](#) includes recommendations for the City to adopt additional policies that would require new buildings to be solar-ready and all-electric.

Is removing fossil fuels from buildings highlighted in our response to climate change/sustainability plan AND will we ensure that the most vulnerable communities are included in this transition? Many older buildings still have gas lines installed...

The [City](#), [State](#), and [BGE](#) currently offer some resources to improve energy efficiency in existing buildings and transition to cleaner energy sources. As part of the implementation of the [Climate Action Plan](#), the City plans to make additional resources available as well as finding a way to make available resources more accessible to vulnerable communities.

Funding: Are there funding opportunities allocated for each topic as well?

This plan sets the vision for the next ten years. It can be used as an advocacy tool to seek local, state, federal, private, and philanthropic resources.

How do we determine whether the resources are either sufficient (funds/assets) or competent (people) to accomplish the goals and tactics underneath them?

As indicated in the plan, some of the goals and recommendations will require additional resources to implement. This plan can't be implemented without advocacy by residents for resources targeted to priority recommendations.

Food Access: How are we addressing lack of supermarkets in Baltimore City? In order to buy food I have to hop in my car and drive 2 miles. (And it would be great to have public transportation as an option...)

One of the topics in the plan is [Food Access](#). There are four goals dedicated to addressing food access through various mechanisms. Please see Recommendation 1.7 "support alternative modes of food access." This recommendation would need additional funding and resources but would focus on supporting and/or funding food access modes that do not require residents to drive to grocery stores. Also, please see Recommendations 1.2 and 1.3, which focus on increasing awareness and accessibility of online grocery shopping. Please also see the [Transportation Equity](#) topic.

Questions on Plans/Planning

How many different planning processes are there? It seems like there's a lot of different things in the works. Is this the body that coordinates all of them? This is A LOT of plans. At a certain point, maybe we should be consolidating so we can focus on doing, rather than planning?

The Comprehensive Plan is the plan that brings all of the various plans together. Each plan has a different purpose/scope; together they provide a path forward.

Are there guidelines that require updated neighborhood plans? my neighborhood plan has not been updated since 2006

There are not guidelines for the frequency of updating neighborhood plans. Your neighborhood can update your neighborhood plan. Please see the guidelines for Planning Commission review and acceptance of Community Managed Plans. [Neighborhood Plans Policy 1-11.pdf \(baltimorecity.gov\)](#)

With all of these different city/community managed plans for smaller areas, how does this comprehensive plan ensure that it all ties together equitably?

The comprehensive plan serves to bind all of the other plans together. It reinforces the opportunities identified in each plan.

It would be absolutely wonderful to have a summary of the "grand" plan. Like a 2-pager. What is the vision for the city for the next XYZ years? Something I can share with private capital to get interest in coming here to invest in making plans reality?

There is a 2 page summary of the plan available: [Comp Plan Exec Summary Handout \(planourbaltimore.com\)](#)

Southwest seems completely ignored in this plan

The Growth and Retention section and the Policy Recommendations apply citywide. The [Land Use](#) map applies citywide.

In person

Questions

Why hasn't the commission moved to have restrictive covenants removed?

This is outside the scope of this planning process.

Where do the funds come from?

This plan sets the vision for the next ten years. It can be used as an advocacy tool to seek local, state, federal, private, and philanthropic resources.

What can we do about the Highway to Nowhere? Baltimore knows what we want.

The [West Baltimore United \(WBU\) Project](#) is a collaborative effort between the Baltimore City Department of Transportation, Baltimore Department of Planning, Baltimore Development Corporation, and Maryland Transit Administration to advance long-overdue improvements in West Baltimore, where Route 40 has divided neighborhoods for over 50 years. The project was awarded a \$2M federal planning grant to study possible future scenarios for the 16 blocks between the West Baltimore MARC Station and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The project is currently in the initial planning process, and could lead to redevelopment in the future. [Learn more.](#)

Schools don't have the resources they need and that's a reflection of the contractors that have been ongoing with the City for decades and they need to be terminated. That's where corruption comes in – becomes they lobby leaders. The contractors aren't helping out. They're supposed to have the parts but don't have the parts but they can be more proactive. Then when the schools close they can make the repairs. This creates an issue for our young people. This needs to be addressed – how does the plan account for/address this?

[This is outside of the scope of this plan.](#)

I appreciate the focus on equity, but a close second should be sustainability. I suggest that the plan include goals for increasing green infrastructure (e.g., treatment wetlands, bioretention, permeable pavements), increasing renewable energy resources, shifting away from fossil fuels, upgrading municipal pumping stations and lighting with high-efficiency units, using decentralized + small-scale waste water treatment facilities, and smart sensing technologies to optimize system services.

[This plan complements, and builds upon, many plans with a specific sustainability focus.](#) [The 2019 Baltimore Sustainability Plan](#) contains strategies and actions across 23 topic areas, including Green Infrastructure, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Buildings, Transportation, Waste & Recycling, and many others. You can learn more about the progress being made in these areas by reviewing annual sustainability reports [here](#), including the 2023 annual report to be released in June. Baltimore's [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#) was updated this year and identifies the path that Baltimore will pursue to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. The CAP focuses on identifying ways to reduce emissions from Baltimore's greatest sources – energy production, buildings, transportation, and waste – as well as nature-based solutions and other actions.

My goal is to be the owner/developer/architect. Please share some info for grants, or financing. I will gladly take one of your most beat up houses as a start. Thanks!

[You may be interested in the Department of Housing and Community Development's Fixed Pricing Program.](#) Phase Three is targeted to developers, non-profits, and community land trusts. [Fixed Pricing Program | Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development](#)

Is there a plan for the numerous amount of food deserts in the City?

One of the topics in the plan is [Food Access](#). The Food Access topic includes four

community-driven goals to address food access. Please see Goal 1, which recommends working with corner stores to offer healthy foods, addressing food insecurity through online services, and creating more food access points. The historical value and proximity to B&O Railroad and Museum makes this a huge attraction and asset to the Southwest Baltimore communities. It is under utilized when it could be viable fully accessible green space.

The Department of Recreation and Parks is also undergoing a comprehensive planning process, developing the BCRP Playbook. The BCRP Playbook will include a Capital Investment Strategy for investing in City parks and other recreation assets based on a combination of site needs and community needs.

Have not set up a structure for people to keep an eye on what's happening to hold the City accountable. 20 years ago, laws were passed to have low-income housing and only 36 have been created since. So, need to make sure there's a structure to hold the City accountable.

Please check out the [Implementation and Accountability](#) section and offer ideas about what type of structure we should develop.

As I look at Pigtown, the several parcels (DOT land) near MLK show up as white and then the issue of MLK dividing the city into two parts. Is DOT part of this plan? If not, why not?

The Land Use Map (and zoning map) only apply to real property, not right of way. We are showing that in the Route 40 corridor what is currently right of way may be developed in the future. We can explore the same concept along MLK Blvd. Please provide specific suggestions on the proposed land use map: [Baltimore City Proposed Land Use - April 2024 — Felt](#)

Had a slide about internet access, and if we're talking now, could BMore be one of the first to create internet access as a public utility? It's a huge issue for teachers and students and everyone else.

Please check out the [Digital Access and Equity](#) recommendations and add any additional ideas that we should consider.

Comments

Why wasn't anyone from Baltimore planning commission part of the state wide meeting?

Large developers are coming into communities and developing large, taking up land and minimizing opportunities for people to be homeowners, forcing them into rentalship. Where this is seen as problematic, policy like TOPA and COPA are being implemented so that individuals and communities can have a say in how their properties are used when developers pull out, then

tenants who are renting and communities (who are the biggest stakeholders) have an opportunity to purchase. These policies are never brought to us and there's never anything in budgets showing that communities can shape their cities. How are we introducing community ownership and how are we including this in our rebirth. Secondly, sometimes we make things really complicated and don't take basic steps. For over 10 years now, initiatives like reflective painting to reduce warming of the City could be implemented and it previously it was done quickly but it seems like the imagination is gone. Things like reflective painting work and help Black communities. We need to pay back the communities that have held down Baltimore City. How can we reclaim our communities and with all this property available how can we decide how it's owned.

Ultimately, this is all to increase the population of the City but we also need to think about retention, which is important. It's simple – we need to look at our tax base and security – let's focus on lowering taxes and making things safer. We all pay a lot in taxes. Ideally, what every resident wants is for the Mayor and those responsible for the budget to have a meeting like this to ask questions and tell us how the City is going to make those changes.

Talking about retention of citizens in the City, I'm concerned about the preservation of Black communities and how we demolish those neighborhoods to be replaced with high rise apartment buildings, which is a reminder of the projects. Had perkins-somerset – the perkins people who live there, were on the whiter side (East Harbor now), and have move to old town hall. The prime real estate is where perkins actually sat. Now they have 5 large buildings, bringing back the projects. City needs to be mindful of the type of buildings they're putting in these spaces and not prioritize large developers and developments – if you take a home, replace it with it a home.

I like that I have the opportunity to have a laser focus on the areas/issues that affect me most in a micro plan AND the ability to comment on a citywide plan

Sustainability requires and depends on equity -- that should be the big takeaway from the 20th century. I'll be looking at the sustainability plan closely, especially with an eye towards strategies that maximize gathering spaces and community strengthening. Mixed use developments. Neighborhoods with resources within walking distance. Etc. Etc.

The City is incredibly complex, so need to be forward thinking and revisit the plan and update it before 10 years and keep egos in check to revise it and fix it. Everyone came tonight via our own means but not everyone has the ability to do that – reach out to the incarcerated community and get feedback in the moment.