



Brooklyn and Curtis Bay

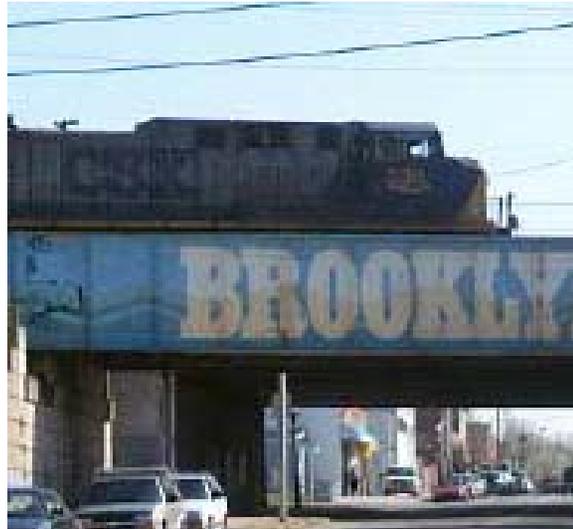


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What is SNAP?

In 2002 Mayor Martin O'Malley launched the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) program to create comprehensive plans for select clusters of neighborhoods throughout the city. Following his administration's philosophy of putting Neighborhoods First and building on established strengths, SNAP establishes four central planning guidelines:

Partnership: Residents work with their neighbors across traditional boundaries, as well as with City agencies and other stakeholders (including nonprofits, churches, institutions, and businesses). During an era of limited resources, a broad stakeholder group has greater capacity to both create and implement the plan.

Priorities: Plans identify key assets in each cluster and build upon these strengths within a framework of market demand. Cluster priorities target implementable agency actions and services for maximum impact.

Participation: The planning process is inclusive. Residents and other stakeholders have opportunities for decision-making and for carrying out improvement projects with the City's support.

Perspective: No one issue is the key to a successful plan. Neighborhood revitalization must be comprehensive, addressing many issues and priorities and establishing a long-term framework for future development and change.

In September 2002, the Planning Commission adopted the pilot plan for the SNAP program, the Operation ReachOut Southwest (OROSW) SNAP for a cluster of neighborhoods in Southwest Baltimore.

Following the program's launch, fifteen clusters citywide applied for SNAP designation. In January 2003, six clusters were selected citywide:

- Brooklyn and Curtis Bay
- Midtown/Reservoir Hill/Seton Hill (Midtown)
- Northwest Community Planning Forum (NWCPF)
- Greater Northwest Community Coalition (GNCC)
- Southeast Neighborhoods Development (SEND)
- York Road Partnership

Each of the SNAPs help inform the citywide comprehensive plan, which the Department of Planning will update by the end of 2005.

Executive Summary

The Brooklyn Curtis Bay Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) is one component of Mayor Martin O'Malley's citywide initiative to reverse decades of disinvestment in Baltimore's older neighborhoods by strengthening their character, quality, and livability to benefit existing residents and attract new private investment.

Waterfront-related development

Baltimore's waterfront development activity has leapfrogged southwest from the Inner Harbor to the Middle Branch. A number of recent projects, including a National Aquarium facility and a market-rate residential subdivision in Cherry Hill, are underway. Brooklyn and Curtis Bay should encourage new mixed-use development, while balancing this demand with the operation of the industrial waterfront protected in recent legislation.

The SNAP recommends waterfront access at Masonville Cove with educational and recreational resources for Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents, as well as commercial development guidelines that anticipate the redevelopment potential of the cluster's commercial and industrial corridors.

Outer-city revitalization

Like many other Baltimore neighborhoods citywide, Brooklyn and Curtis Bay lie outside the historic 1918 boundaries of Baltimore City. These neighborhoods share several characteristics that should be the seeds of future revitalization:

- varied housing product, including suburban-style conditions

These include single-family houses on quarter- to half-acre lots with access to ample open space.

- reliance on links to employment centers and services

Both neighborhoods enjoy easy access to highways linking the City to the region and downtown, as well as proximity to the local industrial base.

- opportunities to create regional draws

Because of their proximity to highways and communities outside Baltimore City, Brooklyn and Curtis Bay should develop retail, open space, arts and entertainment, and other attractions that draw people from the region.



*Martin O'Malley
Baltimore City Mayor*



*Otis Rolley, III
Director, Baltimore City
Department of Planning*

The Department of Planning is updating Baltimore City's citywide comprehensive plan, which establishes categories of Live, Earn, Play, Learn as a framework to guide Baltimore City's 21st century development. The following are key goals of the SNAP as they relate to those four categories.

1. Attract new residents (LIVE)

Facilitate rehabilitation of vacant properties, marketing of existing homes, and development of new infill buildings, while boosting local home values.

2. Retain existing residents and stabilize existing housing stock (LIVE)

Address key quality-of-life issues, prioritize buildings for code enforcement, and aggressively pursue negligent property owners.

3. Improve the image of high-visibility areas (LIVE)

Beautify key gateways and commercial corridors, establish guidelines for future development, and prioritize buildings for code enforcement

4. Improve public/open spaces (LIVE/PLAY)

Develop master plans for Farring Baybrook Park and Masonville Cove, a new waterfront nature preserve.

5. Grow the local employment base and improve access to jobs (EARN)

Promote and protect key industrial businesses, access routes, and zoning.

6. Encourage a balanced mix of uses in new development (LIVE/EARN/PLAY)

Require mixed-use development at key commercial nodes as described in Brooklyn Curtis Bay Urban Renewal Plan and accommodate needs of commercial, industrial, and residential uses,

7. Provide quality education opportunities to all residents (LEARN)

Partner with educators and students to encourage enrollment in strong local high schools such as New Era and Southside Academies in Cherry Hill.

Planning Process

Led by the Brooklyn Curtis Bay Coalition, the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay SNAP Steering Committee organized multiple Town Meetings, attracting hundreds of stakeholders. The first Town Meeting inventoried local assets (see page 8), produced five strategic priorities, and formed subcommittees to address them:

Housing
Economic Development
Environment
Safety
Education/Social Programs/Health

All of the committees addressed complex issues that cut across committee structures and the sections of this plan. For instance, the Economic Development Committee addressed Commercial Revitalization, Employment Opportunities, and Transportation, Streetscapes, and Gateways. The Environment Committee interpreted its mission to encompass Open Space and Recreation, Sanitation, and Community Building.

These committees, in partnership with city agencies and other stakeholders, developed action items and other revitalization strategies. The public reviewed an initial draft SNAP in September 2003; the South Baltimore Business Alliance, a group representing local industrial businesses, reviewed a draft SNAP in May of 2005. The Department of present the SNAP to the Baltimore City Planning Commission for formal adoption in June 2005.

Neighborhood Profile

Area Map/Boundaries

Baltimore City defines neighborhood boundaries as shown on the right. According to these boundaries, Brooklyn is bounded to the north by Chesapeake Avenue and Patapsco Avenue, to the east by West Bay Avenue, to the south by Church Street, and to the west by the border with Anne Arundel County and the Patapsco River. Curtis Bay is bounded to the north by Patapsco Avenue, to the east by Curtis Avenue, to the south by Curtis Creek, and to the west by the border with Anne Arundel County.

Adjacent neighborhoods include large swaths of industrial land in the Curtis Bay Industrial Area to the east, Fairfield to the north, and Hawkins Point to the south.

In reality, these boundaries tend to be fuzzy. Brooklyn Park in Anne Arundel County shares many of the same assets and issues as Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. The Courthouse, the northern tip of Hanover Street, and the waterfront are considered by many locals to be part of Brooklyn. Similarly industrial businesses rely on access routes, provide jobs, and have impacts on residents that cut through official boundaries.

While adhering to the boundaries set by the City, this plan by necessity takes into account a slightly larger area, including neighboring residential communities, industrial areas, and waterfront .



Overview

Neighborhood Map

Neighborhood Map

Parks/Open Space

- Farring Baybrook Park
- Garrett Park
- Middle Branch Park
- Poe Park

Public Schools

- #124 Baybrook Academy
- #239 Ben Franklin Middle School
- #207 Curtis Bay Elementary School
- #203 Marie Farring Elementary School

Institutions

- Brooklyn and Curtis Bay Coalition
- Chesapeake Center for Youth Development
- Enoch Pratt Library
- Mitchell District Courthouse
- O'Malley PAL Center
- Recreation Centers (Curtis Bay, Farring Baybrook)

Industrial Areas

- Fairfield, Curtis Bay Industrial Area, Hawkins Point



Zoning and Land Use

For more than a century, homes, industrial businesses, stores, and institutions have all co-existed in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. The chart below shows the acres of land zoned residential (R), commercial (B), and industrial (M). The R-zoning category includes all parks and school grounds.

	Brooklyn	Curtis Bay
R-zone	440	163
(Parks and Schools)	(89)	(20)
B-zone	62	21
M-zone	45	144
TOTALS	547	328



History

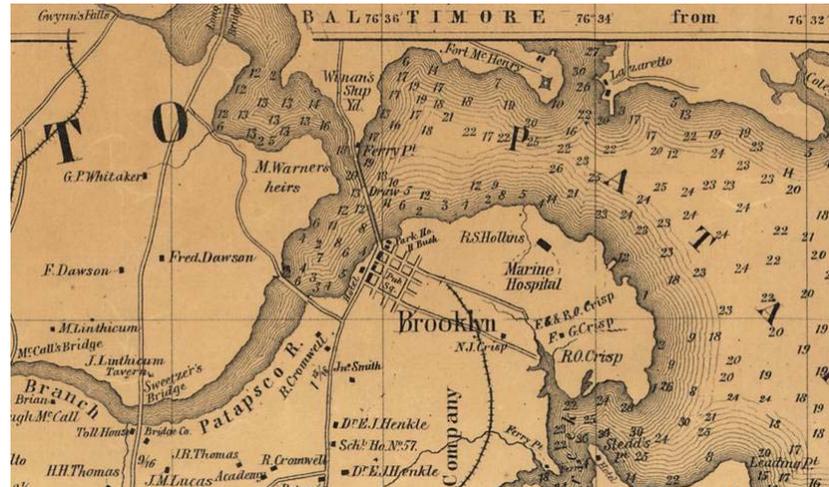
For much of the nineteenth century, the Brooklyn Curtis Bay area was a village that catered to truck farmers in northern Anne Arundel County. Hundreds of farms, ranging from ten to fifty acres in size, circled the City, transporting their produce to market before it spoiled. These farms spawned cross-road villages that provided needed services, hotels, and resorts. Along the south-side of the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River, there were several waterfront resorts - Acton's Park was the most well-known. The Walnut Spring Hotel, built by the 1850s, served several purposes: rest stop for traveling farmers, resort for city residents, communal hall for town residents, and a terrapin farm.

In the 1850s, two important initiatives began to change the Brooklyn Curtis Bay area. First, in 1853 several Baltimore business leaders and local land owners formed the Patapsco Land Company as a real estate venture. They hoped to create a deep-water harbor and a residential neighborhood. Secondly, in 1856, a long wooden bridge known as the Long Bridge or the Brooklyn Bridge was built connecting Brooklyn to south Baltimore at Ferry Point (what is now Ferry Bar Park near Walmart).

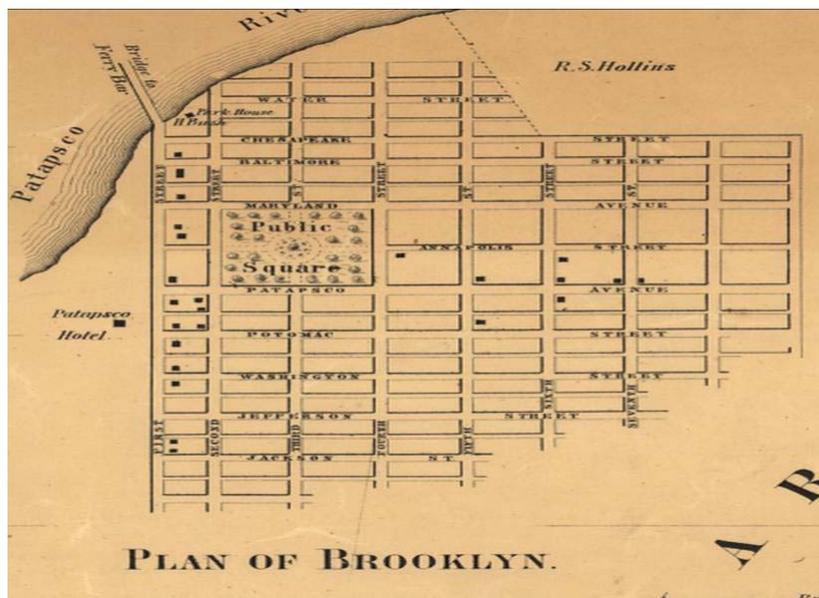
The 1890s saw extraordinary growth along the Curtis Bay shoreline, due in part to three initiatives in the 1870s and 1880s. First, in 1878, the state of Maryland purchased the Long Bridge and eliminated its toll, providing incentives for crossings. Second, in 1882, the B&O Railroad extended a rail line across Ferry Branch and to Curtis Bay; subsequently, they erected a coal shipping facility in 1884 and a train station in 1886. Third, in 1892 the Baltimore and Curtis Railway began streetcar service from Brooklyn to Baltimore. All three events connected Brooklyn and Curtis Bay to Baltimore and the nation.

Eliminating the toll on the Long Bridge and beginning streetcars service created a residential building boom in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. On April 30, 1893, the **Morning Herald** published an extensive article on the new suburban villages on Baltimore. Curtis Bay and Brooklyn were featured:

There are now laid out miles of streets graded and paved, with over 200 houses and stores fronting on the same. The water works are a novel in their completeness, and furnish to the inhabitants of this embryo municipality drinking water which is both pure and wholesome. It has also an organized and well-equipped fire department...



Regional map, from S.J. Martenet's Map of Anne Arundel County, 1860



Brooklyn plat map, from Martenet's Map of Anne Arundel County, 1860

The town is also well lighted, and the rolling condition of the surroundings makes the drainage natural, which is as near perfect as could be desired. The company has acquired the ownership of about 1,500 acres of land and five miles of waterfront... Among the industries established at Curtis Bay are a sugar refinery, barrel factory, car works, foundry, and nut and bolt manufactory. Many more are either in process of erection or under contemplation.

Industrial and residential development grew together and knitted much of Brooklyn, Curtis Bay and Fairfield with one another. The Southern Baltimore Car Wheel Company, a railroad car and wheel manufacturer established in 1887, was the first industrial company to open in the area. In 1893, the Martin A. Wagner Company built a neighborhood next to his newly developed Oyster Packing plant. Wagner built seven blocks of two-story rowhouses accompanied with four three-story storefront rowhouses in what is now known as Fairfield. Today, the Wagner's Point residential section has been demolished.

In 1909, the Davison Chemical Company, a company active in Baltimore since 1832, moved its chemical plant to Curtis Bay; by the 1920s, the company grew to become the largest manufacturer of superphosphates and the third largest producer of fertilizer in the world. The Mathieson Chemical Corporation and the General Refractories Company Plant also moved into the area. The B& O Railroad also reinvested in their Curtis Bay coal shipping facility. In 1917 they rebuilt their coal shipping facility, making it one of the largest mechanical loading piers in the country. The electronically operated pier, built of concrete and steel, was 1,100 feet long and 117 feet wide. The pier could move 2,000 tons of coal hourly.

In the 20th Century, the area gained international attention for its ship-building facilities in Fairfield. The Bethlehem Steel Corporation and the Maryland Shipbuilding and Drydock Company moved to the area in 1918 and 1920. In early 1941 the Bethlehem Steel Corporation signed a contract to build Liberty ships for the U.S. Military. They originally contracted to build 200 ships, but by the end of the War, they had built over 384. This became the largest shipyard operation in the world. Over 47,000 people were employed.

The War effort put extraordinary pressures on Baltimore and the Brooklyn Curtis Bay area in particular. The Federal Works Administration, and local entrepreneurs developed almost every site available. Temporary war housing was erected at Masonville, Fairfield and near Bay Brook Park. Permanent housing was built in Fairfield, Curtis Bay and Cherry Hill.

Analysis and Recommendations

Housing

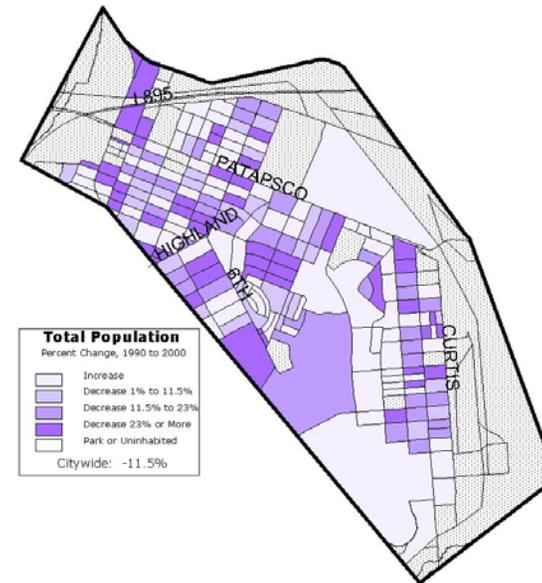
The housing stock in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay encompasses a broad range of homes--from single family houses to garden style apartments, rowhouses to public housing. The condition of this housing stock varies widely from block to block. Some areas have suffered from severe abandonment while other blocks have remained strong for decades.



Affecting this physical landscape are a number of demographic trends that are not as visible as a contractor's scaffolding or boarded-up windows. While Brooklyn and Curtis Bay's population has remained relatively stable compared to Citywide trends, vacant units have increased dramatically and statistics suggest a continued loss of middle-class households.

This section recommends the cluster should capitalize on the growing demand for affordable urban neighborhoods, as people around the country rediscover the pleasures of city living. In particular, the neighborhoods should focus on opportunities to boost local housing values, whether through financial incentive programs, new infill construction, or beautification.

Total Population



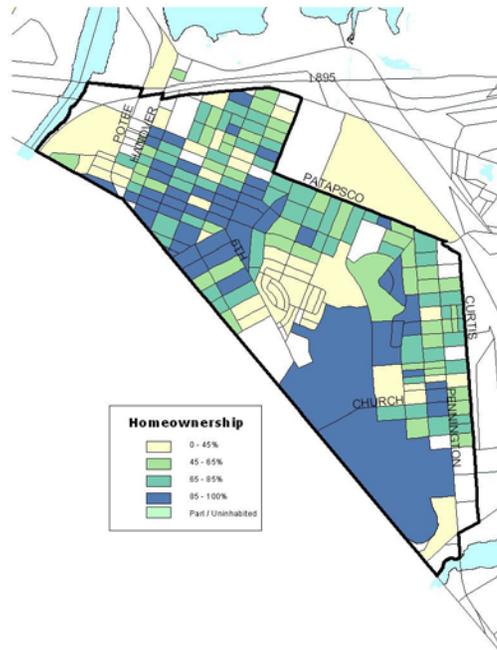
Countering citywide trends from 1990 to 2000, Brooklyn and Curtis Bay retained most of its population. Curtis Bay's population actually grew slightly from 1990 to 2000, as shown in the table below.

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Change</u>
<i>Curtis Bay</i>	3,944	3,982	+1.0%
<i>Brooklyn</i>	9,586	9,129	-4.8%
<i>TOTAL</i>	13,530	13,011	-3.8%
<i>Citywide</i>	736,013	651,014	-11.5%

The darker shades on the map show areas where the cluster lost a large number of residents. These areas also tend to be ones where abandonment increased.

Many other factor contribute to population change. The economic status of households, abandonment rates and home values, resident diversity, and homeownership rates all help provide a fuller picture of who lives in a given area and the strength of the housing market. The remainder of this section examines these factors.

Abandonment



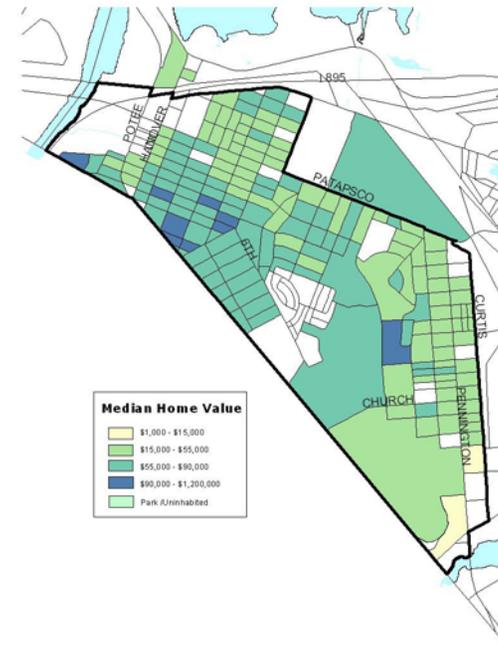
The abandonment rate rose sharply in the cluster between 1990 and 2000, as shown in the chart below

Abandonment (as % of total housing units)

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Curtis Bay	7.1%	16.1%
Brooklyn	7.4%	16.3%
Citywide	8.9%	14.1%

Severe abandonment is visible in the 800 and 900 blocks of Jeffrey, Jack, and Stoll and along Curtis Avenue. Several prominent slum landlords and speculators engaged in “flipping”--rapid change of ownership at illegally inflated prices--have contributed to disinvestment in these areas.

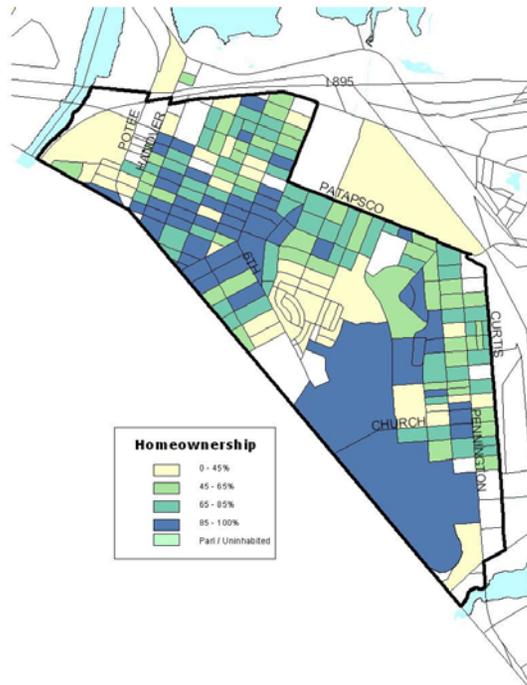
Median Home Value



Median assessed values vary greatly in the cluster, but the median sales prices have remained stable in recent years. According to data from Live Baltimore, from 1998 to 2002 the median sales price in Brooklyn ranged from a high of \$51,400 in 2000 to a low of \$46,900 in 2002. During that time, the median home sales price in Curtis Bay was highest in 2002 at \$45,000 and lowest in 2000 at \$39,900.

At these relatively low, unchanging prices, housing is affordable to many income levels. However, homeowners have less incentive to spend money to maintain their properties because they see no resulting increase in their value; and developers or prospective residents are less likely to rehabilitate a vacant house or build new homes.

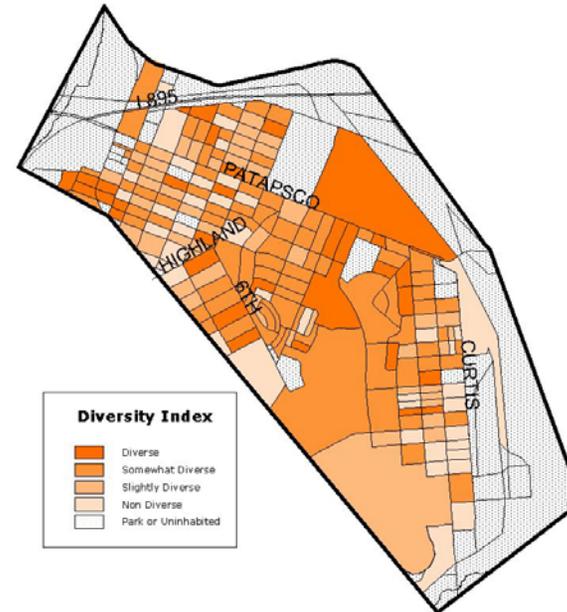
Homeownership



52% of the cluster's residents are renters; 48% are homeowners. The homeownership rate in Brooklyn declined by nearly 11% from 1990 to 2000, while remaining fairly constant in Curtis Bay (+1.1%) Homeownership is strongest in the area between 2nd and 6th Street (from Jeffrey Street to the County Line) and in the Inner Circle area of Curtis Bay, directly east of the northern section of Baybrook Park.

A major goal of the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay Coalition is to retain existing homeowners and to increase homeownership opportunities for cluster residents. At the same time, the Coalition understands that renters are equally important to the cluster's future. Slum landlords must be addressed--their poor management of properties has contributed to the rapid deterioration of distressed residential blocks.

Diversity



Diversity maps show where a resident is likely to interact with someone of a different race; areas with a diverse mix of races appear in dark orange on this map.

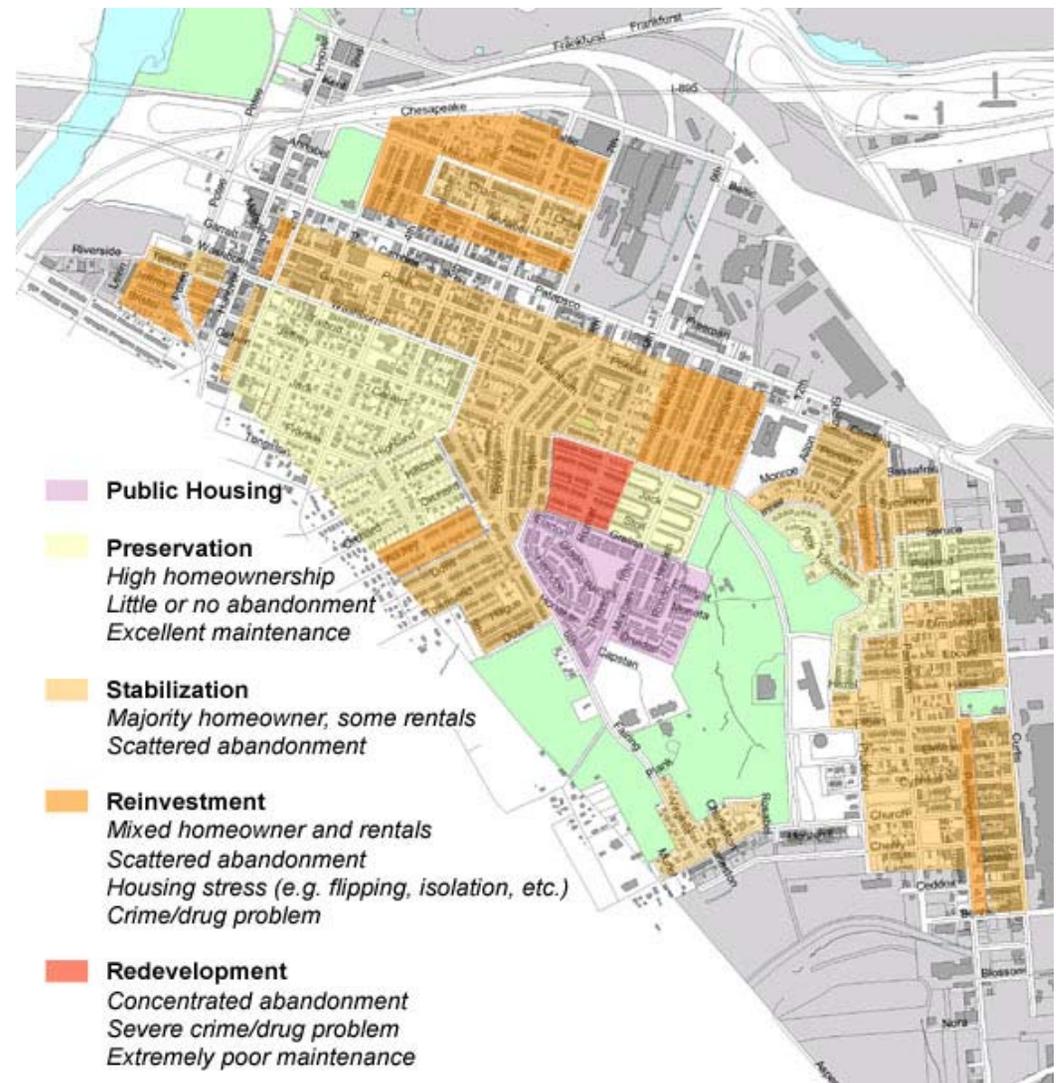
There are more African American and Latino residents in the cluster than ever before. In 1990, 98% of Curtis Bay residents were white; in 2000, 76% were white, 18% African American. In recent years, Brooklyn schools have seen a noticeable rise in Latino enrollment.

More African American and Latino residents in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay means greater demand for housing from a broader cross-section of people--an important factor in housing revitalization.

Block-by-block Analysis

Housing conditions in Baltimore often vary greatly from block to block. Understanding this variation affects what housing strategies to use: for instance, demolition might be appropriate in some areas and too extreme or expensive in others.

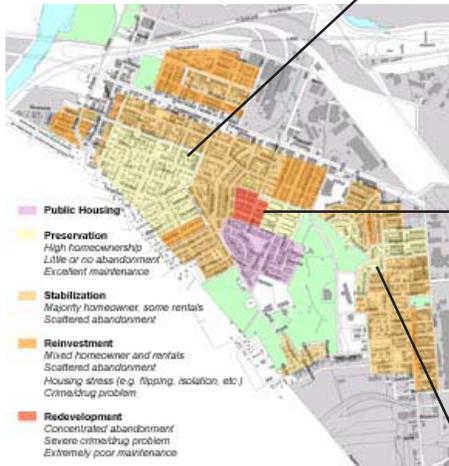
In addition to abandonment, median home value, and homeownership, the Department of Planning used maintenance, crime statistics, and resident priorities to create the block-by-block analysis shown at right. The map shows housing conditions ranging from weak (red-shaded or "Redevelopment") to strong (yellow-shaded or "Preservation"). The plan recommends targeting interventions to middle-range blocks (orange-shaded) directly adjacent to strong blocks, gradually expanding areas of housing strength.





Washburn to County Line, 2nd to 5th St

The strong housing market and good housing conditions in this area suggest little or no City intervention is necessary. Block beautification projects and other community-based, small scale improvements that enhance the appearance of these blocks are recommended.



800-900 blocks Jeffrey Jack Stoll

The weak housing market and other negative social indicators suggest a strong need for City intervention. However, the absence of significant City ownership or tax liens makes it difficult for the City to assemble properties for redevelopment. The costs of preparing these blocks for redevelopment (including acquisition, demolition, and relocation of existing residents) would be extremely high. Given that the original housing stock is relatively intact, stepped-up code enforcement and partnerships with housing organizations such as Habitat For Humanity are recommended.



3800-3900 blocks Pascal Ave

A block with significant abandonment and deteriorated stock directly adjacent to strong blocks and a key asset (Baybrook Park) suggests the need for targeted City intervention. Strict housing code and sanitation enforcement will help preserve housing stock and appearance. Rehab assistance and tenant organizing are appropriate in this area.

Baltimore City initiatives

Targeted Enforcement toward Visible Outcomes (TEVO)

TEVO is designed to address the blight inflicted on Baltimore communities by abandoned buildings on otherwise healthy blocks. Through TEVO, intensified code enforcement and legal action are applied to the owners of over 6,000 targeted vacant and abandoned properties. The program focuses on buildings that lie on highly occupied blocks, where the rehab or sale of rare vacant properties will significantly improve the quality of life for surrounding residents.

As a part of the new program, the Code Enforcement Legal Section is aggressively searching for violators, taking owners to court, and applying fines of up to \$500 per day. Instead of applying the same amount of legal pressure to every vacant property, TEVO concentrates legal tools on relatively strong blocks where the threat of prosecution, coupled with community pressure, is likely to convince property owners to act.

Code enforcement depends on the City's ability to locate and contact violators. To that end, Code Enforcement has hired six new investigators to track down violators and immediately notify them of outstanding violations and the legal consequences of noncompliance. If the owners have the ability to comply but do not comply in a timely manner, they are swiftly taken to Housing Court.

Inspectors and investigators are initially concentrating on ten select neighborhoods, including Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. TEVO properties can be found online at http://www.baltimorehousing.org/CELS/TL_TEVO_Map.aspx or at 410-396-4170.

Project 5000

In 2002, Mayor O'Malley launched this ambitious effort to return 5,000 vacant and abandoned properties to productive use. The City has targeted strategic properties through foreclosures and other methods, and has leveraged over \$5 million of donated legal and business services. The City has acquired 5,035 properties to date, with dozens more being acquired each month.

Healthy Neighborhoods

The Mayor's Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative focuses on strengthening Baltimore neighborhoods and keeping them strong. A collaboration between City and State agencies, local foundations and banks, and community groups, Healthy Neighborhoods makes available financial resources, training and technical assistance to implement an innovative program of lending, neighborhood pride projects, and outreach and marketing tailored to the neighborhood's needs.

The program is currently targeted towards ten of Baltimore's "neighborhoods in the middle" like Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. This plan encourages that future rounds of the program include the cluster.

Housing Opportunities

Waterfront Demand

Waterfront neighborhoods are now among the most desirable in Baltimore. Throughout the City, new development has reconnected people to the water through a dense mix of homes, stores, and entertainment, as well as recreation, open space opportunities, and majestic views.

Most recently, waterfront demand has reached the Middle Branch, helping to improve the local housing market in distressed neighborhoods along the water. In Westport and Cherry Hill, the Department of Planning has recommended rezoning industrial land to allow for new mixed-use development.

This plan encourages waterfront access at Masonville Cove and new mixed-use development that responds to market forces, but recommends no industrial rezoning. Separate sections of the plan address zoning issues in more detail, including:

Maritime Industrial Zoning Overlay District

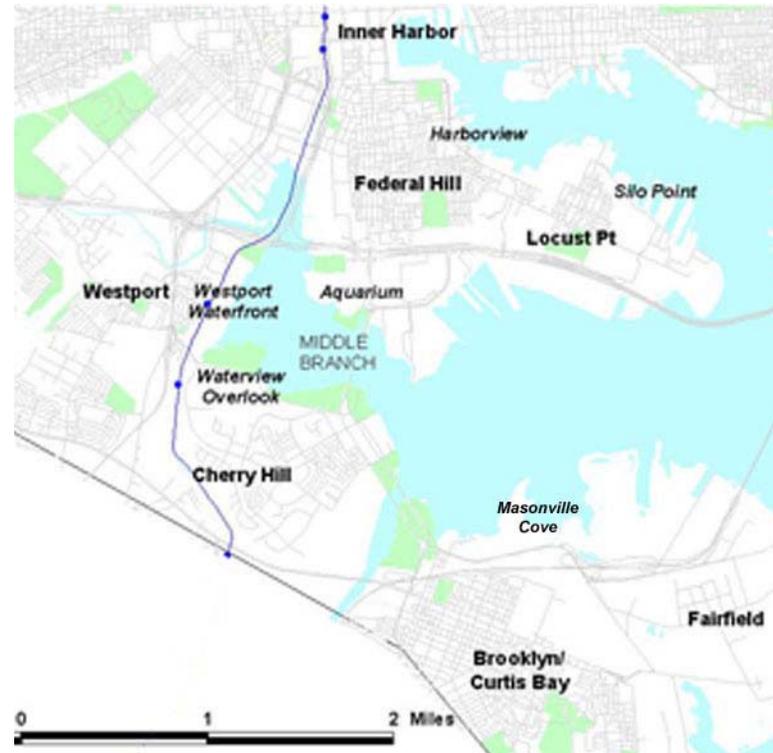
City legislation that preserves waterfront industrial zoning and uses: see pg 42.

Change of use decisions

General guidelines for conversion of industrial to non-industrial uses and zoning: see pg 44.

Density

Strategies to increase the area's population and retail base, including Infill residential development and commercial redevelopment: see pgs 19, 27.



Infill construction opportunities

6th Street

The Brooklyn Curtis Bay Coalition has purchased a half-block of properties on 6th Street and Annabel, near the Courthouse. The City demolished the existing abandoned structures, and the Coalition is now working with the J. French Companies, a local developer, to provide market rate houses for homeownership.

1400 block Cherry

Developers have proposed building new townhomes in keeping with the existing character of neighboring homes.

“Poe Property”

Since fire gutted its interior several years ago, this property at 4015 Pennington Avenue has been a prominent eyesore. Several developers have approached the Department of Planning to explore redeveloping this parcel, including demolishing the existing burnt-out shell and building new rowhomes.

MTA Park-and-Ride lot

This City-owned parcel at 3404 Hanover Street (shown below) is an approximately 3.8-acre Park-and-Ride parking lot. During peak usage, the lot remains mostly empty. The City is working with the MTA to issue a Request for Proposal for the lot, which could be developed as new homes or a mix of uses, in concert with the Hanover Street Gateway beautification project (see pg 27).



Historic Preservation opportunities

The Community of Curtis Bay association is working with the Historic Preservation division of the Department of Planning to determine which areas of the neighborhood may be eligible for local historic district designation. Initially, one focus area will be Pennington Avenue and Curtis Avenue from Church Street to Benhill Avenue.

Goal: Improve the Housing Market and Attract Homeowners

Strategies and Achievements

1. Maintain the appearance of stronger blocks.

- √ Coalition partnered with Neighborhood Design Center to offer assistance to homeowners for landscaping and facade improvements.
- √ Coalition awarded 8 blocks \$1000 Baltimore Community Foundation grants for block improvements. Coalition has won second round of funds (\$10,000) to be awarded in 2005.
Explore local historic status designation

2. Improve housing conditions on the edges of strong areas.

- √ Coalition has acquired ten houses, rehabbed nine, and sold eight to qualified homeowners. Seven other homes were acquired and demolished to make way for new construction.
- √ HCD Office of Neighborhood Conservation will acquire three homes: 3717 2nd St, 3718 2nd St, and 102 Pontiac St.
- √ HUD has designated cluster as a "Revitalization Area," making it easier for Coalition to acquire properties and sell at discount.

3. Assist homeowners in making needed repairs.

Coalition has applied for Community Legacy funds to offer loans/grants to homeowners.

Coalition is developing an internship program with Chesapeake Center for Youth Development and the Home Builders Institute to train young people to do rehab work;

Coalition will continue working with the Hammers, a group of local retired skilled laborers, on rehab projects.

4. Market the community to homebuyers.

- √ Partnered with Bank of America to offer homeownership seminars to local first-time homebuyers.
- √ Coalition offers matching \$3000 closing grants to homebuyers who purchase Coalition properties at annual HUD Housing Festival.
Offer lunchtime seminars on homeownership opportunities to local employees and employers.

5. Improve rental housing conditions.

- √ The Coalition has hired organizers to work with tenants to help them understand their rights and receive better services.
- √ Housing Committee has recruited local landlords; Continental Realty will offer screening service to local landlords.
Work with Housing Authority of Baltimore City to ensure long-term maintenance and improvements of Brooklyn Homes. Renovate playground on 10th St near Brooklyn Homes Community Center.

6. Develop long-term strategies to revitalize weak housing areas.

Work with nonprofit housing partners and City agencies to rehabilitate units and crack down on quality of life violations (e.g. dumping, housing code violations, etc.)

Commercial

Long-time Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents remember walking to thriving commercial districts on Hanover and Potee Streets and on Patapsco, Curtis and Pennington Avenues. In recent decades, these streets have declined as residents moved to the suburbs, and malls, big-box stores, and the Internet came to dominate the retail landscape. As a result, many key services and desirable commercial activities (such as groceries, drug stores, movie theaters, and clothing stores) have left Brooklyn Curtis Bay.



This section of the plan focuses on revitalizing commercial businesses, while recognizing that the commercial streets include residences and industrial businesses. The plan recommends market incentives, disposition of City-owned land, beautification efforts, and development guidelines to encourage attractive, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use redevelopment on the commercial corridors, particularly at key strategic locations such as Patapsco and Hanover.

Analysis and Recommendations

Commercial

Market Study

In 2004, Randall Gross Economic Development, Inc, completed a six-month market study of Brooklyn and Curtis Bay's commercial corridors. The study included extensive field work, interviews, visits, and research on all available data relating to commercial and residential uses on the commercial corridors. Key findings include:

1. Regional potential

Over the next five years, spending power is expected to decline slightly in Brooklyn, Curtis Bay, and other adjacent City neighborhoods such as Cherry Hill and Lakeland. However, regional spending power (including Anne Arundel County neighborhoods) is expected to experience modest growth.

Major corridors that pass by Brooklyn receive high daily traffic counts, including nearly 60,000 vehicles daily on I-895 and roughly 20,000 on both Ritchie Highway a 1/2 mile south of Patapsco and Patapsco Avenue west of Ritchie Highway.

2. Vacant buildings and "dead spaces"

Key concentrations of vacant properties are at 3400 and 3600 blocks of Hanover; and the 400-500 and 800 blocks of Patapsco. Additionally, a number of buildings present vacant or poorly maintained side lots, parking, or other empty spaces on Pennington. These include the 4100, 4400, 4600, 4700, 5000, and 5100 blocks of Pennington.

3401 S. Hanover (36,000sf) and 3437 S. Hanover (9,000sf) are two opportunities for rehabilitation and tenanting.



Land Use: Patapsco Ave and 10th St area

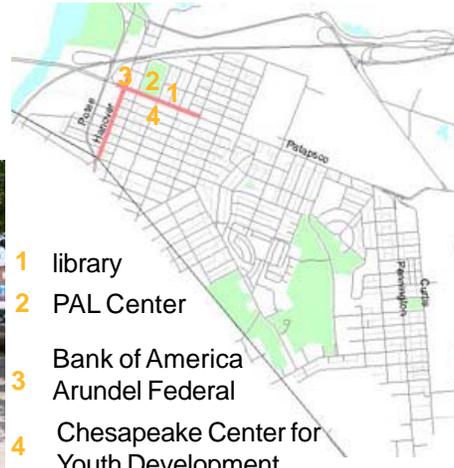
	CURTIS BAY	BROOKLYN
Buildings	259	370
Commercial corridors, total space	154,000sf	633,000sf
Commercial space	66,000sf	243,769sf
Vacant	30%	11%
Retail	43%	40%
Office and civic	14%	30%
Warehousing/distribution	0%	11%
Residential	12%	8%

STREET

Patapsco Avenue
(Hanover to 4th St)
Hanover Street
(Patapsco to County line)



MAP/KEY FEATURES



- 1 library
- 2 PAL Center
- 3 Bank of America
Arundel Federal
- 4 Chesapeake Center for
Youth Development

ANALYSIS

Past streetscape investments (such as brick-paving and street trees), the presence of several cluster anchors, and the gateway intersection of Hanover and Patapsco suggest that this area should be preserved as a kind of Town Center. Small businesses should be retained; new businesses should be family- and pedestrian-oriented.

Parking availability is an issue, and new parking opportunities that preserve existing character should be explored.

Numerous community anchors, listed at left, are located between Hanover and 4th Street on Patapsco. Safe, attractive pedestrian access should be established here; a median strip should be constructed.

Patapsco Avenue
(from 5th to 10th St)



- 1 Courthouse

Development in these areas reflects high-speed, high-volume traffic on Patapsco Ave. Intensive streetscaping is not appropriate in this area, but businesses in this area should be required to provide adequate screening and landscaping. Concentrations of abandoned buildings should be evaluated as potential redevelopment sites.

Safe, attractive pedestrian access should be established to the Courthouse, to connect residents to this community asset. A median strip should be constructed in this portion of Patapsco.

Analysis and Recommendations

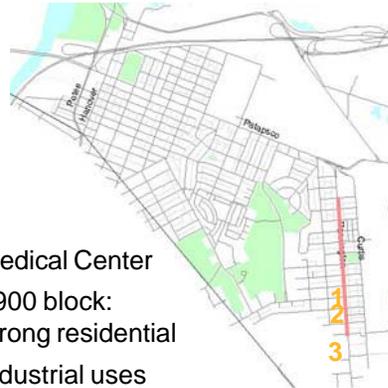
Commercial

STREET

Pennington Ave



MAP/KEY FEATURES



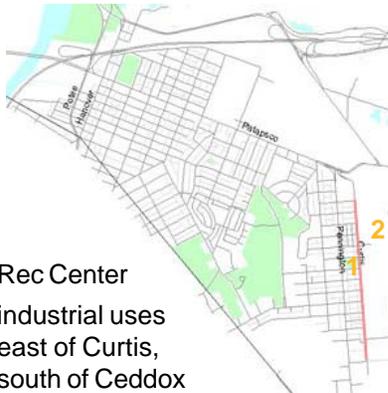
- 1 Medical Center
- 2 4900 block:
strong residential
- 3 industrial uses
south of Church

ANALYSIS

Businesses on Pennington Ave are scattered among residential blocks of mixed quality. Abandoned buildings, undeveloped lots and side yards on the 4100, 4300, 4400, 4600, 4700, 4900, and 5100 blocks detract from the corridor's appearance and continuity. Commercial nodes should be established on Pennington to concentrate retail activity. Additional auto-oriented uses should be discouraged from Sassafras Street to Church Street.

Pennington Ave's width (60' right-of-way) is appropriate to a residential street, and from Sassafras to Church, Pennington runs through the heart of a residential area. South of Church, industrial uses predominate. Heavy trucks bound for industrial businesses on South Pennington share Pennington with residential and commercial vehicles.

Curtis Ave



- 1 Rec Center
- 2 industrial uses
east of Curtis,
south of Ceddox

Industrial uses line the east side of Curtis Avenue, including several multi-block warehouse buildings. The west side of the street is characterized by a mix of homes, bars, and industrial uses. On this side of the street, abandoned buildings and undeveloped lots on the 4700, 4800, and 5000 blocks detract from the corridor's appearance and continuity.

The streetbed of the southern end of Curtis Avenue is in poor condition and should be prioritized for future resurfacing.

FOCUS AREA: Potee-Garrett site



This site on the western boundary of Brooklyn was once considered for the District Courthouse, which was eventually built at 7th and Patapsco. The site has been vacant for several years.

The northern site, approximately 8 acres, is owned by the State; the southern site, approximately 8.8 acres, is owned by the City. The underlying zoning for both parcels is M-2; in 1986 the Brooklyn Curtis Bay Urban Renewal Plan proposed changing that zoning to B-3.

The Baltimore Development Corporation is working with the federal Environmental Protection Agency to test the site for potential contamination. When the testing is complete, BDC will work with local stakeholders to issue a Request For Proposals from developers to redevelop the site.

The site could be a major opportunity for the cluster to generate jobs and commercial activity. Uses and landscaping should be appropriate to a gateway location. The conceptual plan illustrates one potential scenario for future development that preserves an existing stream, provides visibility (especially for the northern parcel), and allows for a mix of uses.



Commercial Corridor Initiatives

Hanover Street Gateway Beautification

Long considered Brooklyn's "Main Street," Hanover Street is home to a number of popular small businesses, including a tanning salon, restaurants, a hardware store, and a large-venue nightclub. Residents and local business owners spearheaded an intensive community process to develop strategies to improve the appearance and attractions along this key commercial corridor.

1. Replace neighborhood sign and add trees at intersection of Hanover, Potee and Route 2 at southern gateway.
2. Add neighborhood sign on the median at the intersection of Hanover and Chesapeake at the northern gateway.
3. Repaint the CSX rail bridge.
4. Work with MTA and City agencies to dispose of underutilized Park and Ride lot at 3404 Hanover Street.
5. Work with neighborhood volunteers and Recreation and Parks to plant trees along Hanover and clear invasives at the northern gateway that obstruct views of downtown and the water.
6. Work with BDC to implement street lighting improvements and add trash receptacles.
7. Strictly enforce design standards as detailed in the Urban Renewal Plan.

Traffic calming

Traffic regularly exceeds speed limits along Patapsco Avenue, which includes many key community assets such as a library, the O'Malley Police Athletic League (PAL) Center, Garrett Park, two bank branches, the Chesapeake Center for Youth Development, and the District Courthouse.

The Department of Transportation will replace an existing flashing yellow light with a full stoplight in front of the Courthouse, replace signs stating truck restrictions on Patapsco Avenue, and will review a number of additional strategies to calm traffic (such as additional stoplights, pedestrian bulbouts, and medians).

Market Incentives

To encourage property owners, businesses, and developers to invest on the cluster's commercial corridors, this plan recommends increasing the density allowed on Hanover, Patapsco, Pennington, and Curtis by changing the existing B-2-2 zoning along these streets to B-2-3.

This change would effectively double the amount of square footage of building that could be constructed on a given property. In addition, the change would allow more residential units to be developed on a given property. Currently, the B-2-2 zoning requires a given lot must have 1,100 sf per unit (e.g. a 5000 sf lot must have 1,100 sf per unit; this lot can support only have 4 units). The recommended zoning change would require only 550 sf per unit (e.g. the same 5000 sf lot could support 9 units)

The Baltimore Development Corporation will offer facade improvement low-interest loans and grants to business owners interested in rehabilitating their buildings.

Urban Renewal Plan

The Baltimore City Zoning Code establishes guidelines for development citywide. In designated areas throughout the city, Urban Renewal Plans establish additional guidelines, serving as an overlay for that area. The existing Brooklyn Business Area Urban Renewal Plan was created in 1983.

In 2004 the Urban Renewal Plan was amended to reflect priorities identified through the SNAP planning process, current market and demographic trends, and extensive input from the South Baltimore Business Alliance, an industrial businesses group. Specifically, amendments to the Urban Renewal Plan include the following:

1. BOUNDARIES

Extend boundaries to include all of Patapsco, as well as Curtis and Pennington Avenues as far as Ceddox Street.

2. USES

Limit certain uses from opening new businesses within the boundaries of the plan, including bailbonds offices, pawnshops, liquor stores, gas stations, and garages. (Existing businesses are grandfathered in and may remain indefinitely.)

3. NEIGHBORHOOD-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT

In order to encourage a lively, welcoming street experience, establish guidelines for new development, including

- * parking must be placed at the rear of the buildings
- * buildings must be built to the front lot line
- * wide sidewalks and planting areas must be provided
- * at strategic locations, commercial or office uses on first floor are required. These locations are: the intersection of Hanover and Patapsco, Patapsco from Hanover to 4th Street; and Pennington from Plum to Locust, and from Cypress to Cherry on the west side of the street.

4. ZONING

In order to provide market incentives for redevelopment, propose zoning change on Hanover, Patapsco, and Pennington from B-2-2 to B-2-3, allowing for more density and buildable area on these streets.

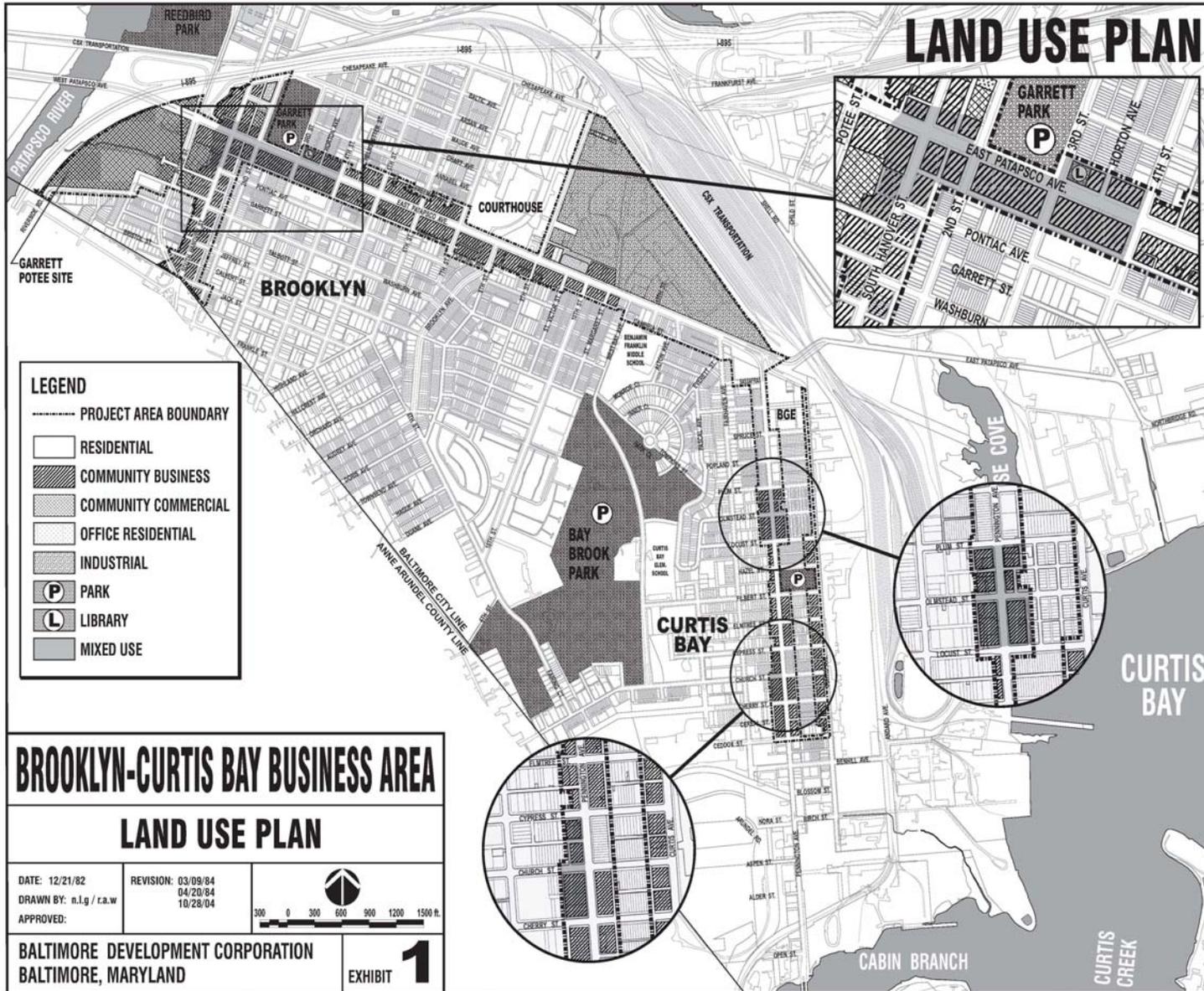
Propose zoning change on Hanover Street from B-3 to B-2, to be consistent with the commercial zoning on Patapsco, Pennington, and Curtis.

5. ACCOMMODATING A BALANCE OF USES

Encourage future co-existence and growth of commercial, industrial, and residential uses and development by requiring buffers where deemed necessary; traffic studies to measure impact of new development on existing truck routes and traffic patterns; and stakeholder review of new significant development plans. Recognize the close proximity of industrial businesses and the nature of such operations, including noise, dust, truck traffic, and noxious odors.

Analysis and Recommendations

Commercial



Goal: Improve Commercial Corridors and Assist Business Owners

Strategies and Achievements

1. Create pedestrian-friendly, attractive commercial “nodes” with a mix of businesses and homes.

- √ New Brooklyn Curtis Bay Urban Renewal Plan signed into law December 2004 extends boundaries to cover Hanover, Patapsco, Pennington, and Curtis; restricts certain uses; and establishes development guidelines in 3 commercial nodes . (see pg 26-27)
Work with Department of Transportation and local stakeholders to address street network improvements (e.g. Patapsco Avenue median).

2. Improve appearance of gateways.

- √ 30 banners, 15 mesh trash cans, and 15 security cameras have been installed along commercial corridors
- √ Coalition has recieved \$50,000 in Community Legacy funds for business facade improvements.
Hanover Street gateway project designs completed; implementation of north and south signage/planting improvements expected by end of 2005.

3. Encourage redevelopment on commercial corridors.

- √ Allow rezoning of existing B-2-2 zones on Hanover, Patapsco, Pennington, and Curtis to B-2-3 to incentivize redevelopment at higher densities.
- √ Market study completed; implement recommendations for visual improvements and business recruitment.

4. Redevelop Potee-Garret parcel.

Final federal environmental testing completed; community planning process to begin summer 2005 and to result in a Request for Proposal.

Analysis and Recommendations

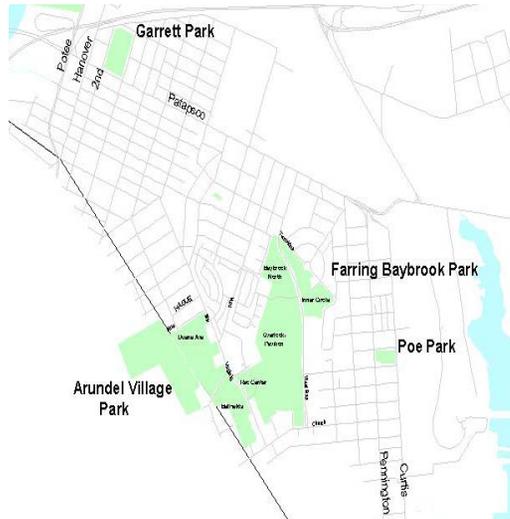
Open Space and Recreation

Open Space and Recreation

Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents have four City parks within the cluster, an unusually generous amount of open space. The key challenge for the cluster is to maintain and improve the quality of this open space and the recreation opportunities it offers.



Residents, Planning, and Recreation and Parks have identified Farring Baybrook Park--the central green space in the cluster--as the main open space and recreation priority. Residents will also work with the City to transform unattractive or underutilized spaces into vibrant, community greening projects, such as a vegetable garden and grass fields at a local schoolyard. Long-range plans include establishing a nature reserve at Masonville Cove, where residents would enjoy access to the waterfront.



cluster parks

PARKS	SIZE (acres)	FEATURES
Poe/Curtis Bay	1.9	Neighborhood Park Curtis Bay Recreation Center, playground, basketball courts
Garrett	6.6	Neighborhood Park Playground, basketball courts, tennis courts, ballfield
Farring Baybrook	86.3	Regional Park Trails, woods, overlook, Myers Soccer Pavilion, Recreation Center, pools, ballfields, basketball courts, playgrounds

SCHOOLGROUNDS

Marie Farring	1.5
Curtis Bay	6.3
Ben Franklin	7.8
Baybrook Academy	10.6

Farring Baybrook Park

Overview

Located in the heart of Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, Farring Baybrook Park is one of the cluster's hidden treasures. The park is home to ballfields and pools, woodlands and trails, three schools, beautiful views of the Harbor and downtown, and the popular Myers Soccer Pavilion. An extremely diverse set of residents in both Baltimore City and Anne Arundel County live along the park's edge, from public housing tenants to homeowners.

Despite these many assets, few residents use it on a regular basis. People complain about safety, difficulty in getting from one part of the park to another, and areas in the park that "feel empty."

Through SNAP, residents and the Planning Department recognized Baybrook Park as a key cluster asset. Improvements to open space in other areas of Baltimore, such as Patterson Park, have created more recreation opportunities for residents, brought neighbors together for events, and helped stimulate housing investment along the park's edges. Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents are hoping for a similar transformation.

History

Through the 1950s, Baybrook Park was not a park at all. The land was home to temporary housing for wartime industrial workers at Fairfield, an extensive street network, and acres of forest. Marie Farring, a longtime Brooklyn resident, donated land to the Department of Recreation and Parks, which created the design for Farring Baybrook Park in the early 1970s.

Design

Because Baybrook was not originally designed as a park, but was only later assembled as one, it has an irregular shape. Two major streets--West Bay Avenue and Virginia/6th Street--divide the Park into five distinct sections:

- Overlook/Central
- Ballfields
- Inner Circle
- Northern Triangle
- Duane Ave

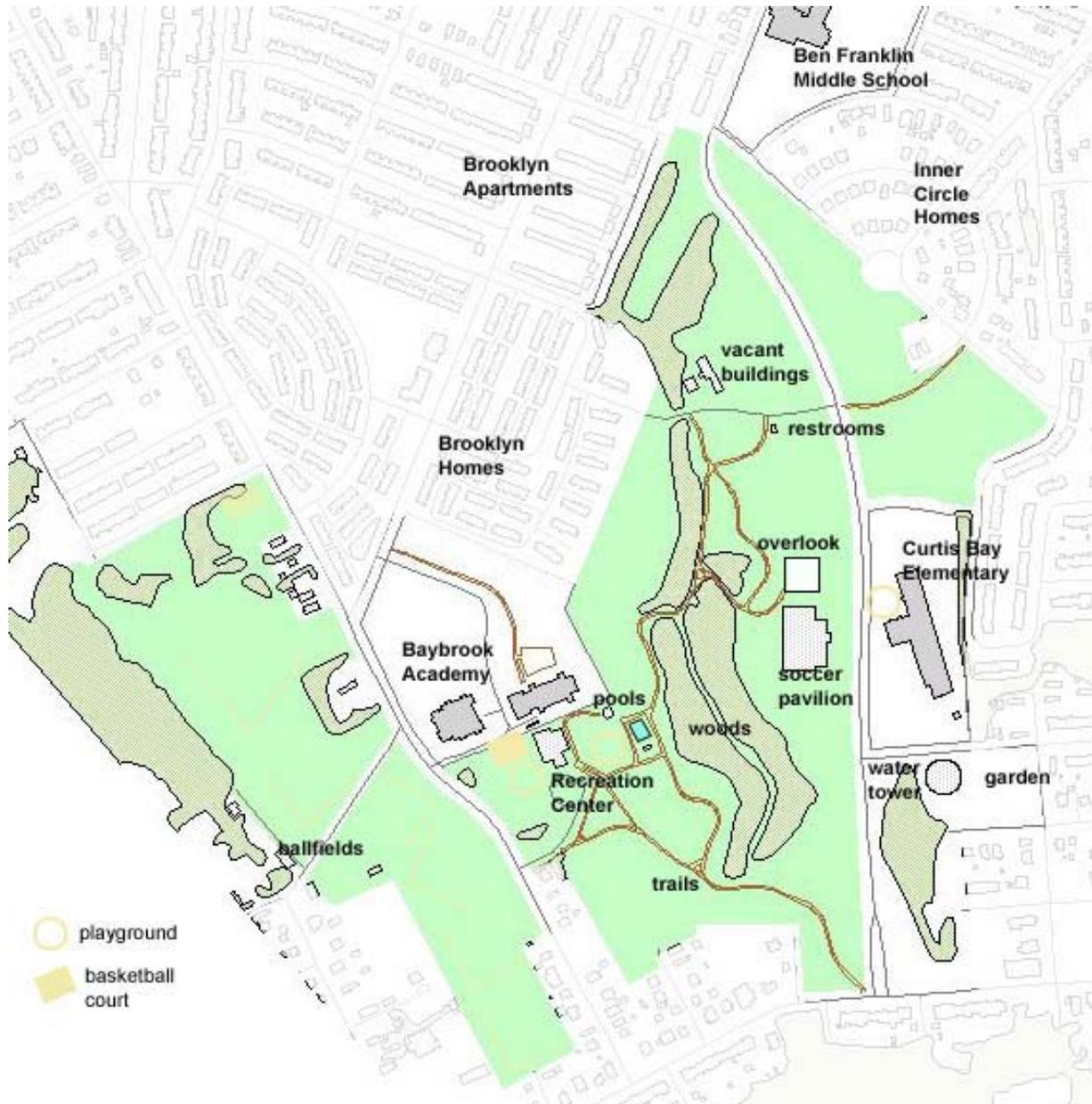
The following maps and text describe the main features of the park and issues of maintenance, entrances, circulation, and "empty space" that must be addressed.



park pieces

Analysis and Recommendations

Open Space and Recreation



Farring Baybrook Park: major assets and surroundings



Ben Franklin Middle School



View to downtown from West Bay Ave



Water Tower

Entrances

The maps below compare Patterson Park in East Baltimore to Baybrook Park. Dense residential blocks front Patterson Park; Baybrook Park is less well defined. Its irregular shape and sparsely located adjacent create rough and uninviting edges. New signage and artworks are recommended to announce more clearly the entrances to the park.



Farring Baybrook: 3.8 million sf



Patterson Park: 4.9 million sf

Maintenance

An underutilized park will fall into disrepair. Through numerous walkthroughs and workshops, residents have identified priority areas for improvements. These are focus around Activity Centers/Gateways.

Activity Centers/Gateways

Activity centers are areas of the park with the most activity or usage, such as the Soccer Pavilion and the Rec Center. Since most people who use the park use these areas, they should have high priority for maintenance and improvements.

Gateways are areas of high visibility, such as the entrance from Church Street. These areas should announce the park's presence, either through signs or other landmarks.



Activity Centers and Gateways



soccer pavilion



swimming pools

Analysis and Recommendations

Open Space and Recreation

Access



The Park offers very few ways to cross from east to west--for instance, to get from the pools to the Overlook, or from Brooklyn Homes to the Soccer Pavilion. The park contains only two east-west footpaths over a stretch of more than 800 feet--about the length of three football fields. Only Church Street south of the park and a service road leading to the Brooklyn Homes parking lot allow people to drive east-west.

The wooded areas of the park offer a rare escape from the City. But as the black bars in the map above show, these woods also can serve as a barrier if there aren't enough routes to the various destinations within the park.

This plan recommends adding new paths to create more east-west access. The proposal above shows new paths (from Filbert Street north of the Water Tower and from the northern end of Curtis Bay Elementary) that would join the central path through the woods.

At the same time, the plan recommends clearing brush and trash along the path through the woods to increase safety and making this key east-west route easier and more attractive to travel.

Empty Space



One of the most frequent complaints from residents and park users is that the park “feels empty.” In fact, the park contains numerous facilities. But it also has stretches of land that do not have enough trees, benches, ballfields, paths, or other elements that help define open space. These “empty spaces” are shown above in red circles.



To transform this empty space to attractive open space, the plan recommends new trees and ballfields. The map above shows where more than 250 new trees--in rows along main roads (filled green circles), for instance, or in groves of 20-40 trees (open green circles). In addition, two of ballfields in the park’s northwest section bounded by 6th Street have severe drainage issues and are deteriorated. The plan recommends regrading this area and replacing the existing baseball fields with a flexible soccer/football field, which is a top priority for residents.

Analysis and Recommendations

Open Space and Recreation

Master Plan for Farring Baybrook

The Capital Improvement Plan for 2006 includes \$50,000 for a master plan for Farring Baybrook Park. In fall of 2005, Planning and Recreation and Parks will work with community stakeholders to develop the plan, based on previous workshops and brainstorming sessions conducted during the SNAP planning process.

The master plan should address the following issues:

Access/circulation: improve access to the park from all adjacent residences, including Brooklyn Homes and Brooklyn Apartments, which currently have only informal access to the park.

Ballfields/playfields: Determine location for new flexible soccer/football fields; repair or eliminate baseball diamonds with drainage problems.

“Empty spaces”: Encourage creative landscaping and art installation concepts to enliven large unprogrammed, unplanted areas, bringing new uses and activities.

Park edges: Explore potential benefits/drawbacks to disposing of existing park land on the perimeter for housing redevelopment to improve safety and access, and bring more people to the park.

Programming: Develop new leagues and activities for youth and adults

Views: Preserve and enhance views to the water and downtown

Vacant buildings: Demolish or improve maintenance of existing vacant restroom and storage buildings. If buildings are to be preserved, consider allowing local residents to use them.

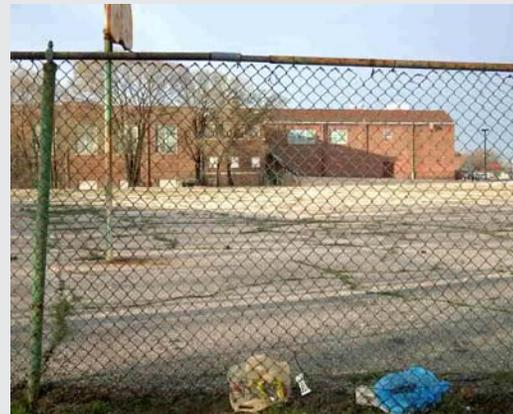
Friends of Baybrook Park

A key element to successful parks in Baltimore are Friends of the Park groups. Throughout the City, residents and other stakeholders partner with Rec and Parks and other City agencies to prioritize, implement, and raise funds for improvements.

FOCUS AREA: Green Schools Initiative

This joint project partners the Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Department of Planning, Public School System, and Maryland Port Administration (MPA) to replace unwanted asphalt lots with green space. With funding from the Department of Planning and project work from the MPA (as part of its mitigation requirements), consultants work with school staff, students, parents, and residents to develop a plan for the new space. During the year, classroom curriculum is integrated in to the construction project, giving students a chance to learn first-hand about the environment.

Consultants have already produced a plan for Ben Franklin Elementary School, and in 2005, the \$100,000 construction project will be completed. Design and community workshops will begin at Curtis Bay Elementary in fall of 2005.



Masonville Cove

Brooklyn and Curtis Bay are waterfront neighborhoods with little direct access to the water. One of residents' top priorities through this plan is to create waterfront access points.

One area currently under study is Masonville. Located about a mile north of Patapsco Avenue, Masonville is currently a key site for the Maryland Port Authority's (MPA) operations, particularly for the shipment and distribution of cars. The Port has done extensive work in the area in recent years, and future plans call for additional land fill using material dredged from the 50 foot shipping channel that brings ships to the Port of Baltimore.

In order to meet required environmental mitigation standards, the Port will create a nature reserve directly west of Masonville, in an area known as Masonville Cove. The State Critical Areas Commission has designated the Cove a Habitat Protection Area. A fully restored Masonville Cove will create a unique resource for Baltimore City.

Consultants working for MPA have held several community meetings to discuss the potential locations for and activities associated with a Masonville Cove Nature Center. Preliminary concept plans include preserving more than 50 acres of undeveloped waterfront land for trails, wetlands, habitat areas, an observation deck, and a nature center.

The City will work with local stakeholders and property owners to explore pedestrian and bicycle access (tying in the Gwynns Falls Trail) to Masonville Cove from Frankfurst Avenue, making sure that such access can safely share this corridor with heavy industrial traffic.



Analysis and Recommendations

Open Space and Recreation

Goal: Improve neighborhood parks and recreation opportunities

Strategies and Achievements

1. Develop master plan for Farring Baybrook Park and establish Friends of Baybrook Park.

- √ Friends of Baybrook Park has been established. Regular park clean-up events have been held. Targeted improvements, such as new banners designed by local middle-school students, have been implemented. Master planning will begin in fall 2005.

2. Develop nature preserve at Masonville Cove with accompanying educational center/resources.

The Maryland Port Administration will continue to work with local stakeholders to develop an easement agreement, access routes, funding sources, and a timeline for creation of the nature preserve.

3. Re-establish vegetable garden at Water Tower.

- √ Curtis Bay Elementary School and Community fo Curtis Bay Association have been awarded a Parks and People grant to work on the garden.

4. Implement “Green Schools” program at Ben Franklin Middle School and Curtis Bay Elementary School.

- √ Parents, school staff, and students developed a greening/planting plan for Ben Franklin, which will be implmeneted in fall 2005. Curtis Bay Elementary is slated for 2006.

Industrial

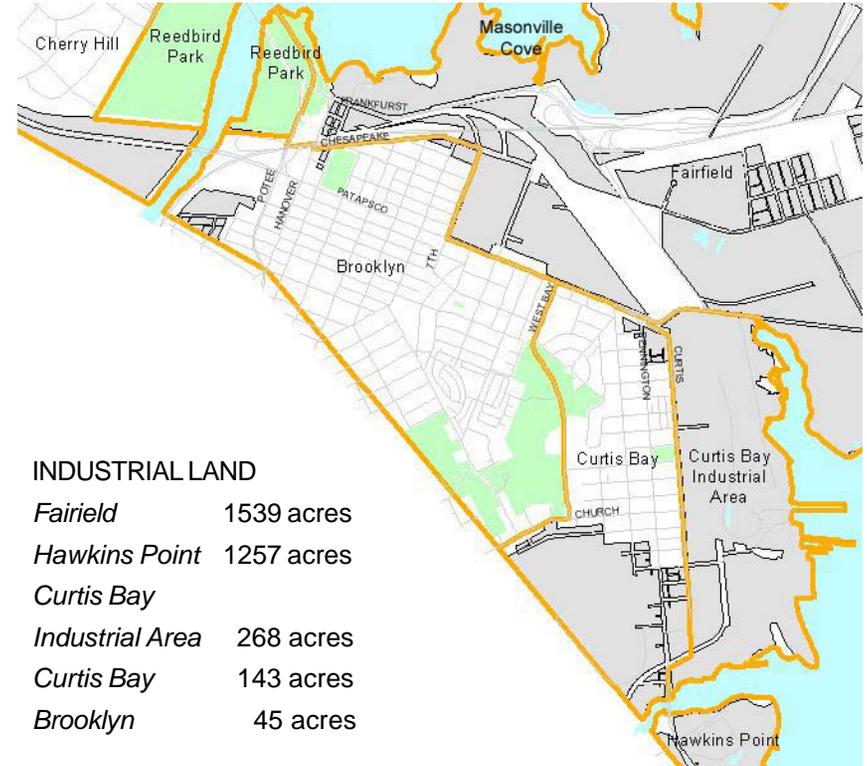
Industrial businesses are a key asset for the cluster, the City, and the region; they are also a link to the global economy.

In recent decades, advanced technology has helped industrial businesses increase productivity with fewer workers. During that time, many Baltimore companies also moved to other parts of the country and the world. As a result, the number of Baltimore’s industrial jobs has declined steadily since the 1970s.



Recently, many formerly industrial areas around the City have been converted to new homes, businesses, offices, and stores, often drawing high-income residents and workers. In neighborhoods such as Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, surrounded by heavy industrial areas, the City must balance the needs and futures of industrial businesses and employees with those of many other stakeholders.

This section describes the City’s efforts to protect industrial zoning that is waterfront dependent as a key component of its economic development growth strategy, as well as provisions to ensure that new development is compatible with existing uses. This section also proposes new partnerships between industry and local residents and nonprofits, and “good neighbor” policies.



INDUSTRIAL LAND	
<i>Fairfield</i>	1539 acres
<i>Hawkins Point</i>	1257 acres
<i>Curtis Bay</i>	
<i>Industrial Area</i>	268 acres
<i>Curtis Bay</i>	143 acres
<i>Brooklyn</i>	45 acres
TOTALS	3252 acres

	<i>Brooklyn</i>	<i>Curtis Bay</i>
<i>M-1</i>	1.3 acres	0.0 acres
<i>M-2</i>	40.4 acres	28.0 acres
<i>M-3</i>	3.4 acres	115.3 acres
		(includes 78 acres of City landfill)
TOTALS	45.1 acres	143.3 acres

Analysis and Recommendations

Industry

Maritime Industrial Zoning Overlay District

In order to protect businesses along Baltimore's industrial waterfront, the City enacted legislation in 2004 that preserves approximately 2700 acres citywide of heavy industrial waterfront land with deep water access. Within the boundaries of the Maritime Industrial Zoning Overlay District (MIZOD), mixed use development and zoning overlays that allow such development are prohibited. The MIZOD boundaries includes significant portions of Hawkins Point, Curtis Bay Industrial Area, Fairfield, North and South Locust Point, Canton Industrial Area, and Dundalk Marine Terminal.

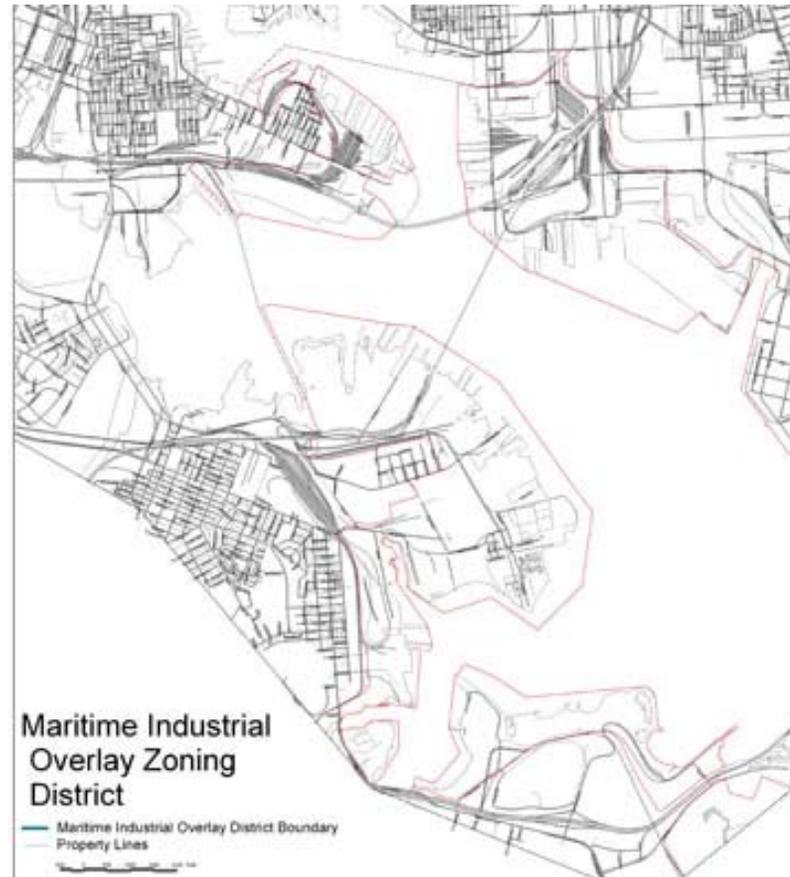
Rail and Truck Access

One of the most important factors for the continued co-existence of industrial and non-industrial uses in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay is transportation, particularly rail lines and truck routes. Industrial businesses have expressed concerns that increased traffic from new development may impact truck routes or that new residents may complain about pre-existing rail operations. Residents and other drivers have complained about noise, road damage, and the presence of large industrial vehicles in predominantly residential areas.

The Brooklyn Curtis Bay Urban Renewal Plan acknowledges the importance of access routes for industrial businesses, and establishes guidelines for studies to measure the impact of new development on commercial, industrial, and residential traffic flow.. However, the City should continue to seek ways to lessen the impact of industrial traffic on residences, without reducing services to industry.

One strategy to achieve this is to encourage trucks to use Chesapeake Avenue and Shell Road, rather than Patapsco Avenue, to travel between Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. Patapsco Avenue has restrictions on through traffic for trucks, as well as many more traffic lights and more overall traffic volume than Chesapeake or Shell. The plan recommends prioritizing Shell Road in future budgets for road improvements to encourage usage.

Additionally, as part of its Port of Baltimore landside access study, the Maryland State Department of Transportation is reviewing tolls and access from Interstate 895 to Curtis Bay. The study is scheduled for completion in summer 2005.



Community-Industry Partnerships

Industrial businesses are involved in numerous community improvements, from clean-ups to regular forums. This section highlights existing community-industry partnerships that could serve as models for future collaboration in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay.

Community Advisory Panel (CAP)

Brooklyn and Curtis Bay have produced numerous neighborhood activists who worked tirelessly to promote environmental justice and public health in the cluster. Working with industrial representatives, these community leaders pioneered community-industry partnerships to ensure that local businesses met water, air, and other environmental standards.

Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents continue to serve on the Community Advisory Panel. The non-profit, volunteer CAP serves as a forum for open discussion between chemical company representatives, public agencies and local communities in southern Baltimore City and north Anne Arundel County. The panel's objective is to provide a mechanism for discussion and education of the issues of concern for plant operations and communities. The plan recommends volunteer partnerships of this kind.

Good Neighbor Policies

Many Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents have concerns about health risks associated with living in close proximity to industrial businesses. Often these fears can be dispelled by open lines of communication about operations and future plans.

The Fairfield Urban Renewal Plan, for instance, contains provisions that encourage more transparency among existing and prospective industrial businesses hoping to locate in the area. These provisions include a questionnaire designed to educate the general public about a company's practices, including Notices of Violations (NOV), Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), EPA recognition of environmental leadership, community outreach efforts, and information about permits. Additional questions should focus on hours of operation and noise levels. This plan encourages industrial businesses and organizations to enter into similar agreements as businesses in Fairfield or to provide similar information through community-industry partnerships.

Proximity of Uses

The Brooklyn Curtis Bay Urban Renewal Plan (see page 26) establishes measures to help ensure that new development does not negatively impact existing industrial businesses. One such measure is including buffers such as plantings or undeveloped open space to separate uses.

This plan recommends that these strategies be applied not just to non-industrial but to all new development, particularly where residential, commercial, and industrial uses are in close proximity. The photo below shows an example of an existing industrial use planting trees in front of its property, a strategy that could be easily replicated by other developers and existing property owners.



Industrial Land Uses

Industrial Land Use Study

In 2004, the Baltimore Development Corporation and Department of Planning released an Industrial Land Use Study, which examined the conversion of industrial to non-industrial land uses. The study's purpose was to document supply and demand of industrial real estate in Baltimore City and provide tools for decision-making on changes of use.

The study balances the demand for redevelopment of industrial sites and the need to protect viable industrial businesses. Sites and addressed by the study include those that:

- can meet the needs of industry and compete for users
- have deepwater access, are in close proximity to such sites;
- have existing concentrations of industrial space with adequate infrastructure;
- do not have good access, have adjacent or nearby residential uses, or have historic, multi-story buildings; industrial sites requiring expensive environmental remediation;
- have strong redevelopment potential (i.e. sites in which the intensity of uses, investment levels, and economic benefits of conversion far outweigh the benefits of alternative industrial uses, so long as nearby viable industries are not damaged).

The entire study can be downloaded at:

http://www.baltimoredevelopment.com/files/pdf/industrial_development/final_baltimore_industrial_report.pdf

Baltimore City Comprehensive Plan

As part of the Department of Planning's update of Baltimore's Comprehensive Plan, which was last revised in 1971, the City's industrial zoning categories will be reviewed to ensure maximum flexibility for industrial businesses seeking to locate within the City and to address compatibility issues for industrial and non-industrial uses in close proximity.

Goal: Promote industrial activity consistent with community revitalization

Strategies and Achievements

1. Preserve existing sites with deep-water access for industrial use.

- √ The Maritime Industrial Zoning Overlay District was adopted in 2004, preserving M-3 waterfront land.

2. Develop policies and strategies to ensure that a wide range of uses can co-exist.

Where necessary, encourage buffers, traffic studies, or other site planning strategies to ensure that new development does not adversely impact adjacent residential, commercial, or industrial uses where these uses are in close proximity.

3. Work with BDC, which markets vacant and underutilized industrial sites to businesses.

- √ In 2004, the Community of Curtis Bay Association met with and approved of numerous prospective businesses, including auto-body shops on Hanover St and Patapsco Ave, and an auto-recycler and a bus-storage lot on Curtis Ave.

4. Improve the appearance of industrial areas.

- √ Community of Curtis Bay Association raised funds to work with artist Peggy Ward to paint 20 individual murals on the Harris Heller building at in the 4700 block of Curtis Avenue; additional murals will be painted this summer at from the 4600-4900 blocks of Curtis.

Department of Forestry will donate trees to Community of Curtis Bay Association to be planted in existing traffic islands on the 6200 block of Pennington Avenue.

5. Work with City agencies, area industrial businesses, and local residents to establish community-industry partnerships.

These groups will work to develop a voluntary committee to address common issues.

Quality of Life

Quality of life issues (such as safety, schools, and sanitation) are important factors in attracting new residents and retaining existing ones. Mayor O'Malley has made these issues a top priority for his administration. Recognizing that coordinated services that address quality of life concerns can make a big impact in these areas, the plan outlines ways that residents, City agencies, and other stakeholders are addressing some of residents' most pressing day-to-day concerns.



FOCUS AREA: Polish Home Hall

Build in the first decade of the 20th century, the Polish Home Hall on Filbert St was originally used as both a social hall and horse-drawn fire station. In 1925, the United Polish Societies of Curtis Bay purchased the building as a community center and school for Polish immigrants. For years first generation Polish children and adults learned English here; later generations studied Polish in the building. The upstairs social hall hosted dances, parties, baptisms, and wedding receptions.

During the 1990s the building fell into disrepair and was occupied by squatters. After much research, the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay Coalition located the surviving directors, who deeded the property to the Coalition. In 2004, State Senator George Della and Delegates Pete Hammen, Carolyn Krysiak, and Brian McHale introduced legislation for a state bond bill. The Coalition was awarded a \$150,000 matching grant to begin the restoration.

Once the Hall reopens, it will again be available for community activities and special events. The Coalition is also planning to offer job training in catering and event management.



Public Safety

The cluster is served by the Southern District Police Department. “Hot spots” of drug activity and prostitution include the 900 block of Patapsco Ave, the 800-900 blocks of Jeffrey, Jack, and Stoll, and Doris Ave near the County Line.

Citizen involvement is a key strategy to reduce crime and make Brooklyn and Curtis Bay safer neighborhoods. Residents throughout South Baltimore have partnered to hold joint Citizens On Patrol (C.O.P.) walks. Working in teams, residents from more than 8 neighborhoods patrol one neighborhood on a given night, reporting suspicious activity to the Southern District. In addition, the Mayor’s new Office of Crime Watch has held community workshops to help citizens become more active in crime prevention.

On the main commercial streets, the Coalition won funding to install surveillance cameras. And the City is partnering with Brooklyn residents to install new lights and trash cans on Hanover Street.

In coming months, the Coalition hopes to partner with local nonprofits and institutions on the following strategies: recruit residents to provide impact statements during court proceedings and implement Court Watch program; send letters to landlords of buildings cited for drug nuisance violations; and to address root causes of prostitution.



Sanitation

In 2003, Mayor Martin O’Malley launched Reveal Baltimore, a program designed to improve sanitation conditions throughout the city. As part of this program, Baltimore City purchased 100,000 heavy-duty Rubbermaid trash cans at a significant discount. The City made these “BELIEVE” trash cans available to priority neighborhoods, including those in the SNAP program.

The City required each SNAP cluster to create a sanitation strategy that mobilized residents to monitor conditions in their neighborhood and select priority blocks to receive BELIEVE cans.

In the summer of 2003, members of the Environment Committee and other residents surveyed every block in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, and determined which ones should receive cans based on sanitation conditions. By September, more than 1600 cans had been distributed.

Using the priority blocks map, the Environment Committee has also forwarded addresses to the City’s Department of Housing and Community for enforcement.



Analysis and Recommendations

Quality of Life

Community Job Board

The unemployment rate in the cluster is about 10%, almost identical to the citywide rate. About 37% of residents do not have a high school level education, as compared to 26% of residents citywide. And a significant percentage of cluster residents (20% compared to 12% of all Baltimore City residents) are single parents who have children under 18 and who are living at or below the federal poverty level.

In the summer and fall of 2003, the Brooklyn Curtis Bay Coalition, and the Baltimore City Department of Planning and Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) contacted dozens of local industrial businesses to help create a Community Job Board. In the proposed initiative, MOED and local community groups would work to connect businesses with job openings to qualified or trainable resident job-seekers. Ideally, job-ready residents would be identified and matched with employers, minimizing time lost listing positions or searching for candidates.

This plan encourages future efforts to realize the Community Job Board concept.



Education

Brooklyn and Curtis Bay have four public schools and several other parochial schools. In schools around the City, the Department of Planning works with Baltimore City Public Schools Systems, parents, and other partners (BCPSS) to make schools a vital part of neighborhood life--as

community centers and as providers of open space, lifelong learning opportunities, or other services.

This section focuses on efforts to improve the high-school graduation rates of local students, through enrollment in nearby top-performing high schools and through an innovative program to establish a local alternative high school in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay.



High-School Graduation

According to the Baltimore City Data Collaborative, the truancy rate for Brooklyn and Curtis Bay students more than doubles when they enter high school--in 2000, 21% of students in grades 6-8 were truant, while 52% of students in grades 9-12 were truant.

Residents, parents, local school staff, and youth believe that the distance between these students' zoned high school (Southwestern) and their homes is the main reason why students get to school late, don't stay after school to get additional assistance, or stop attending school altogether.

To address these issues, the Education Committee is exploring opportunities for local students to attend quality high schools closer to home. The Committee has worked with Ben Franklin Middle School, the Middle and High School Area Offices, and the principals of New Era Academy and Southside Academy to inform Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents about two high school options less than a mile away. Both New Era Academy and Southside Academy are high-achieving programs located in Cherry Hill and open to Brooklyn and Curtis Bay students.

In addition, the Education Committee has met with Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) staff to discuss establishing a non-traditional high school known as the M.E.T. Based on an educational model developed in Providence, Rhode Island, these schools have successfully educated students who would not have remained in traditional schools by connecting learning to real life experiences through internships.