

# middle branch



## Middle Branch Master Plan

Baltimore City Planning Commission  
Adopted Plan - September 20th 2007



# Middle Branch Master Plan

## City of Baltimore



Sheila Dixon  
Mayor  
**City of Baltimore**



Douglas McCoach, III  
Director  
**Department of Planning**

### **Department of Planning** *Mission Statement*

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***To provide the highest level of services and leadership in urban and strategic planning, historical and architectural preservation, zoning, design, development and capital budgeting to promote the sustained economic, social and community development of the City of Baltimore.***

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# OUR PARTNERS

The City of Baltimore Middle Branch Master Plan was prepared by the Department of Planning in partnership with the Baltimore Harbor Watershed Association.



Advice and assistance was generously given by the Baltimore Development Corporation, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Commission on Historic and Architectural Preservation, the State of Maryland and over one-hundred citizens of Baltimore. The high level of cooperation and support from all of these people and organizations allowed us to create a quality Plan in a very short period of time. Your guidance and assistance was most appreciated.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### **Water Quality and Habitat Co-chairs**

- Bill Stack (Water Quality Manager, Bureau of Water and Waste Water, Department of Public Works)
- Phil Lee (Baltimore Harbor Watershed Association)

### **Open Space and Recreation Co-chairs**

- Beth Strommen (Manager, Office of Sustainability and Environmental Planning, Department of Planning)
- Mary Porter (Supervisor, Capitol Planning Division, Department of Recreation and Parks)

### **Design and Development –Co-Chairs**

- Doug McCoach (Director, Department of Planning)
- Kimberly Clark (Vice President, Baltimore Development Corporation)

### **Transportation – Co-Chairs**

- Yolanda Takesian (Transportation Analyst, Kittelson and Associates, Inc.)
- Greg Hinchliffe (Chair, Mayor’s Bicycle Advisory Committee)

### **Heritage and Tourism Chair**

- Kathleen Kotarba (Director, Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation)

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## SPECIAL THANKS

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# middle branch



## Executive Summary

*“Let the river roll which way it will, cities will rise on its banks.”*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The Middle Branch has always been Baltimore’s lesser known harbor. Located less than one mile south of the Inner Harbor, it is completely different in character. Where the Inner Harbor is compact and deep enough to accommodate large ships, the Middle Branch is expansive and shallow. The Inner Harbor’s shoreline is bulkheaded and lined with an extensive brick promenade so that people are physically separated from the water. In contrast, the Middle Branch has limited bulkhead areas—the majority of the shoreline is green, stepped down to the water to afford greater physical access. While the Inner Harbor has no identified wildlife habitat areas, the Middle Branch has some of the best waterfront habitat in the City; Masonville Cove, along the estuary’s southern shore, is one of the best waterfowl staging areas in the State of Maryland. Both harbors suffer from water pollution, trash and the challenges of contaminants left over from former industrial developments.

The lands adjacent to the shores of the Middle Branch have gone through many changes, from farmland and resorts to heavy industry. The Middle Branch is now poised for a major rebirth. The majority of the older industrial uses occupying the shoreline are either vacant or are being relocated. The Middle Branch has not experienced this many opportunities for change since the 1800's. This document has been prepared to highlight these opportunities, outline the current assets and liabilities facing the area and make recommendations to capitalize on these opportunities and bring about a new century of success.

The unique qualities of the Middle Branch allow us to create a new waterfront community that is completely distinct from the Inner Harbor, yet which will be equally vital to the City of Baltimore and the surrounding region. The Inner Harbor was one of the first areas to capture and celebrate the industrial waterfront, converting abandoned port facilities into vibrant community space. Plans for the Middle Branch also embrace the waterfront, but as an ecosystem that is integrated into the larger community.

## I. Goal of Middle Branch Master Plan

Through the Middle Branch planning process it is our goal to highlight and capitalize on the uniquely green character of the Middle Branch estuary to build a model community based on sustainable principles. These sustainable principles include economic prosperity, environmental improvement and social equity.

According to the American Planning Association, planning for sustainability "...promotes responsible development – not-anti-development. It requires a democratic process of planning to achieve the greatest common good for all segments of our population, protect the health of the environment and assure future generations of the resources they will need to survive and progress." The Middle Branch's unique qualities as an environmental oasis, located minutes from downtown and surrounded by challenged communities, create a perfect opportunity to employ these principles.

### *The Vision*

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***Redevelop and revitalize the Middle Branch estuary and waterfront as a mixed-use community through economic and community redevelopment, ecosystem restoration and protection, and recreation and education programs coordinated within a sustainable framework.***

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## II. History – Lessons Learned

We have learned a great deal from our experience in guiding the development of the Inner Harbor. Our biggest successes include: tourist attractions and special events that attract millions of visitors per year; creative new architecture, such as the National Aquarium, and successful reuse of significant architecture, such as the Power Plant complex; the water taxi system that carries thousands of people between and among venues; and, the waterfront promenade, which provides seven miles of continuous public waterfront access.

We have also wrestled with many new challenges. The Inner Harbor and downtown areas still lack sufficient transportation choice, causing high demand for parking and creating a wall of vehicles between the harbor and downtown. As the mix of public and private components of the promenade were built, a cohesive maintenance and management system was needed to ensure the public spaces along the waterfront were kept consistently clean and safe. As the Inner Harbor became more attractive to recreational boaters, conflicts and safety issues developed among water users. Coordination was needed to assure safety and organized use of the water. Success is attractive—a wide variety of organizations and businesses approach the City every year



1861 topographic map of the region

for new licenses to use our public spaces, and others attempt to take advantage of the space without permission. Strong leadership is needed to maintain control and direct activities to best serve the larger needs of the community. Having learned from the experiences stemming from the development of the Inner Harbor, we have been proactive in our recommendations for the redevelopment of the Middle Branch.

## **Comprehensive Master Plan – LIVE, EARN, PLAY, LEARN**

The Middle Branch Master Plan is an appendix to Baltimore’s Comprehensive Master Plan of 2007, and incorporates goals from each of the major chapters, Live, Earn, Play, and Learn. The Comprehensive Master Plan created a broad vision for the City of Baltimore. The Middle Branch Master Plan brings that vision into focus on a smaller segment of the City. This plan represents an initial step in implementation of the goals and recommendations of the broader, citywide plan. The relationship of the chapter recommendations to the Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix A.

## **Baltimore BRACtion Plan**

In 2005, federal base realignment decisions prescribed the movement of military workers from out of state to Maryland military bases, specifically Aberdeen Proving Ground and Ft. George G. Meade. The Baltimore BRACtion Plan is a guidebook for the City to absorb new populations and jobs based on these base closures. Current estimates indicate that the State of Maryland could receive an influx of as many as 60,000 new jobs over the next decade. The city of Baltimore is in a unique position to absorb the population moving to Maryland, particularly in redeveloping areas such as the Middle Branch.

Building from the foundation established by the City’s recently adopted Comprehensive Master Plan, the BRACtion Plan articulates strategies for Population Growth, Workforce Development and Education, Minority and Women-Owned Business Development, and Business Attraction. The Middle Branch Master Plan is referenced in the Plan, along with key infrastructure improvements relative to the Middle Branch. The document Executive Summary is included in Appendix A.

### III. Plan Process and Committees

The Middle Branch Master Plan developed through a major public process that included input organized through six committees and two communities. Over 100 people participated, including citizens, scientists, architects, environmental groups, developers and representatives from multiple government agencies. The public input process began in November 2006 at the Middle Branch Forum, where over 90 people were in attendance. Presentations focused on the history, existing



The Middle Branch has the potential to become Baltimore’s “Green Gateway.”

conditions and potential of the Middle Branch. The first draft vision statement was presented and the Master Plan concept introduced. Attendees were enthusiastic and expressed interest in moving forward with the formal master plan process.

To develop the master plan, major issues were identified and then organized into a committee structure. Individuals were selected and invited to chair the committees based on their expertise. Each committee was given specific objectives to accomplish over a three month period. These committees were Water Quality and Habitat, Open Space and Recreation, Design and Development, Transportation, and Heritage and Tourism. During the Master Plan process, it became clear that some issues crossed the boundaries of all committees and needed special discussion within the Plan document. These were Management and Maintenance and Sustainable Communities. These issues have separate discussion and recommendations within the Plan document.

Finally, an Executive Committee was established to assure continuity of information and to include a broader spectrum of higher-level decision makers. This committee was chaired by the Mayor's Office, and included representatives from State agencies who could make decisions regarding policy and funding. A complete listing of the committees and their charge is provided below.

Each committee studied issues surrounding its topic and developed a vision statement and guiding principles. These were then distilled into major recommendations for immediate action. The vision statement, guiding principles and major recommendations are provided below. For more detail, see the complete plan.

## Water Quality and Habitat

### *Vision*

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#### I. Guiding Principles

1. Restore degraded habitat for marine and upland species
2. Improve water quality to fishable and swimmable levels by 2020

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

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#### II. Recommendations

##### **Create a Comprehensive Monitoring Program that Includes an Education Component**

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

##### **Manage Floating Debris**

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

##### **Incorporate Advanced Stormwater Techniques**

1. Incorporate advanced stormwater treatment techniques in all new developments to treat stormwater to reduce pollutant loads beyond existing state and city regulations, with an ultimate goal toward treating 100% of the stormwater when possible. (The Middle Branch will not achieve the goal of reaching fishable and swimmable levels without the cooperation and collaboration of public and private partners. Review and revise Baltimore City stormwater treatment standards to encourage creative stormwater management techniques that take into account unique conditions in Baltimore city. Add definition for stormwater treatment – the water quality treatment volume specified in the City's stormwater manual.

2. Retrofit existing development with Best Management Practices.

### **Restore Habitat Areas**

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

### **Enforce Environmental Regulations**

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

### **Create New Tidal Marshes**

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

## **Open Space and Recreation**

### **I. Guiding Principles**

1. Ensure public access along the waterfront.
2. Increase environmental education opportunities.
3. Create a continuous open space system.
4. Protect and enhance natural resources.
5. Create unique recreational opportunities.

### *Vision*

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***Develop a comprehensive open space and recreation system that protects and promotes the natural shoreline, water-based activities and resources of the Middle Branch.***

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### **II. Recommendations**

- Create a study group with membership from the Department of Recreation and Parks and local rowing clubs to explore expansion of rowing facilities and the Rowing Center.
- Create a Friends Group to begin programming and volunteer opportunities for Middle Branch Park and Reed Bird Park.
- Implement USACE Tidal Middle Branch Project.

- Establish a group tasked to recommend habitat improvements and guide the location and expansion of water based recreational facilities.
- Create a new comprehensive recreational path system that links existing and new communities, the waterfront, downtown, Masonville Cove, and the Gwynns Falls Trail.

## Design and Development

### I. Guiding Principles

1. Ensure land use that promotes healthy communities.
2. Facilitate more effective, sustainable infrastructure.
3. Capitalize on the unique presence of open space surrounding the water.
4. Develop and maintain a strong connection to the land.

### *Vision*

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***Ensure that opportunities for economic development integrate and support the Middle Branch ecosystem, existing communities and the unique character and location of the Middle Branch.***

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### II. Recommendations

- Adopt zoning changes recommended in this plan.
- Continue with a more focused planning process for the following development areas to create a more detailed development and implementation strategy: Waterview Industrial Area; Harbor Hospital; and, Port Covington.
- Adopt or amend Urban Renewal ordinances to implement the goals of Master Plan, based on the principles of public access, green shoreline, sustainable development practices and habitat restoration.
- As development plans proceed, adopt Planned Unit Development to ensure the goals and principles of the Master Plan are implemented.
- Complete a study of existing utility infrastructure to guide improvements, green building goals and design guidelines.
- Complete a comprehensive transportation Plan for the Port Covington and CALC/Swann Park peninsulas on the north side of the Middle Branch with the goal to allow transit supported increases in density through a high quality, long term transportation program. This Plan should have a systems approach to transportation improvements which are funded at the time of development.

## Transportation

### I. Guiding Principles

- Promote new developments and renewal of existing communities that produce vibrant and secure public spaces.
- Encourage walking, bicycling, water transportation, and public transportation.
- Enhance circulation within and between neighborhoods

### *Vision*

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

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- Improve regional access to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. metro areas for public and private transportation modes.
- Assess the current transportation infrastructure. Ascertain its volume of use and its capacity. Study targeted capacity, proposed facilities, and possible connections.
- Develop governance to guide future transportation planning, to implement the transportation strategies, and to manage and sustain the transportation system.

## II. Recommendations

- Complete an area-wide Transportation Implementation Strategy for circulation, access and demand management.
- Establish design guidelines, street/path connectivity targets and sustainable transportation policy to support walking, transit use and on-street bicycle networks, particularly at major transit nodes and light rail stations.
- Appoint a Transportation Task Force, similar in diversity of interests to the Master Plan Transportation Committee, to advise and review the proposed Implementation Strategy study, which can become the foundation for a Transportation Management Association.

## Heritage and Tourism

### I. Guiding Principles

1. Ensure the preservation of historic resources.
2. Develop interpretive programs for historic, cultural and natural resources.
3. Maximize heritage tourism of the Middle Branch.

### *Vision*

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

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### II. Recommendations

- Require that an interpretive history program be part of any development along the Middle Branch shoreline.
- Adopt a requirement that all developers submit a feasibility study prior to development for any property eligible for Baltimore City Historic Landmark designation located near the Middle Branch.
- The Planning Department, the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP), Baltimore Heritage Area, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, and Maryland Department of Tourism should create a plan to make visitor-friendly all Middle Branch War of 1812 sites for the War of 1812 Bicentennial. This plan should be approved by City officials by July of 2008.
- Immediately establish Baltimore City Landmark designation for the Hanover Street Bridge and the CSX Swing Bridge.
- Through the Cherry Hill Master Plan, identify potential historic landmarks and initiate contact with property owners as the first step in the landmark designation process.
- Through the Westport Area Master Plan, identify potential historic landmarks and initiate contact

with property owners as the first step in the landmark designation process.

- Create a 'maintenance plan' for historical programs, including but not limited to an 'adopt a marker' program.
- Link the Charles Street Scenic Byway and other nearby trails to the Middle Branch redevelopment.
- Study creating a historic designation for the Community of Cherry Hill as one of Baltimore's 'Planned Community for the Colored'. Conduct a historic resources survey for Cherry Hill, a nationally significant planned African American community. Pursue local historic district designation for those areas that meet CHAP standards for designation. Celebrate Historic Cherry Hill by creating interpretive programs and publications presenting Cherry Hill as one of the first suburban-style planned African American communities in the U.S

## **Sustainable Communities**

This chapter incorporates current planning efforts in the Cherry Hill, Brooklyn and Westport communities, which are situated adjacent to the Middle Branch but behind the waterfront.

The Middle Branch Master Plan acts as an overlay plan to existing communities. It is not intended to replace the authority of local communities to guide their future, but to complement and support existing plans and programs. See Map 11 for Middle Branch community locations.

### *Vision*

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***Include existing communities in the restoration of the greater Middle Branch through connectivity, housing opportunities, job creation, access to open space and the waterfront, and preservation of community character.***

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### **I. Guiding Principles**

1. Reduce poverty.
2. Reduce crime.
3. Prevent displacement and support affordable housing choices.
4. Increase employment.
5. Plan for human-scale development.
6. Provide for a well-balanced, well-designed transportation system.
7. Improve educational attainment.
8. Create job opportunities and job training programs for existing residents.
9. Provide for open space and recreation along the waterfront and connect existing parks to the waterfront and the surrounding communities.
10. Protect the character of existing communities.

### **II. Recommendations**

1. Educate Residents regarding how to purchase homes, improve homes and reduce impacts on

- property tax increases through a series of housing workshops.
2. Study ways that new, unique housing assistance programs can be initiated within surrounding communities to assure residents can remain.
  3. The Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City should work with surrounding communities to create specific plans with time lines for City controlled properties.
  4. Enforce the new Baltimore City Inclusionary Housing regulations in new development projects with the goal to provide additional, affordable housing in new developments.
  5. The recommendations contained in community Master Plans should be the foundation for establishing Urban Renewal Ordinances, Planned Unit Developments and capital improvements.
  6. Work with the State of Maryland and the Baltimore Development Corporation to offer tax incentives to new developments for employment of district residents.
  7. Provide 'first source' employee recruitment from new developments in surrounding communities.

## **Management and Maintenance**

We have learned that a key element to the long term viability of major waterfront redevelopment efforts is Management and Maintenance. The large amounts of open space, new wetlands and public trails in the Middle Branch will require a cohesive authority to oversee and coordinate maintenance and management.

### **Recommendations**

The Middle Branch Master Plan recommends creation of a committee to study the maintenance and management issues of the Middle Branch in more detail, including funding sources, responsibilities, membership, organizational structure, mission and phasing. The committee will then recommend a program for establishing the Maintenance and Management organization. The organization should be created at the early stages of redevelopment so that it can grow with the Middle Branch.

## **Implementation**

Managing large areas of land for redevelopment is complex and time consuming. This is especially true when it comes to moving from a vision to a strategic plan and then to the details of implementing projects. To assure the vision is implemented, an appropriate team of individuals is needed. This team must have sufficient authority and expertise to make the difficult decisions needed and leverage resources for implementation activities.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive Committee recommends the immediate appointment of the Middle Branch Advisory Committee (MBAC) to oversee implementation of the plan and carry forward its vision, guiding principles and recommendations. The MBAC will provide the cohesive leadership needed to maintain control and direct activities in the redevelopment area. They will bring the master plan's vision to fruition by ensuring and overseeing the plan's next steps. This missing MBAC is as follows:

## *Mission*

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***To oversee the implementation of the vision, goals, guiding principles and recommendations of the Middle Branch Master Plan by calling on the expertise of professionals, recommending sources of funding, and guiding the design of redevelopment sites and environmental restoration areas.***

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*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

The Middle Branch has an economically and environmentally bright future.



# middle branch



*Photo by Paul Burke*

## Introduction

*“The best way to predict the future is to invent it.”*

*- Alan Kay*

The Middle Branch of the Patapsco River is a natural resource of significant unrealized potential. Located one mile south of the Inner Harbor, it is almost three times its size. Through careful planning and development, this water body could become the City’s most extensive shoreline recreation facility and a major component of Baltimore’s community economic revitalization.

Unlike the Inner Harbor, the Middle Branch of the Patapsco is a shallow estuary. It is located on the southern end of the South Baltimore peninsula, close to the City line. Where the Inner Harbor has a hard bulkhead along the water’s edge with active boating and commercial activity, the Middle Branch is Baltimore Harbor’s softer, quiet side. Even after 200 years of activity, the shoreline maintains a more natural edge. Hundreds of shore birds visit its coves during the spring and fall migration despite years of industrial uses.

The lands adjacent to the shores of the Middle Branch have gone through many changes, from farmland and resorts to heavy industry. The Middle Branch is now poised for a major rebirth. The majority of the older industrial uses occupying the shoreline are either vacant or are being relocated. The Middle Branch has not experienced this many opportunities for change since the 1800's. This document has been prepared to highlight these opportunities, outline the current assets and liabilities facing the area and make recommendations to capitalize on these opportunities and bring about a new century of success.

The qualities and differences of the Middle Branch allow us to create a new waterfront community that is completely unique from the Inner Harbor, yet equally as vital to the City of Baltimore and the region. The Inner Harbor was one of the first areas to capture and celebrate the industrial waterfront, converting abandoned port facilities into a vibrant community space. Plans for the Middle Branch also embrace the waterfront, but as an ecosystem that is integrated into the larger community.

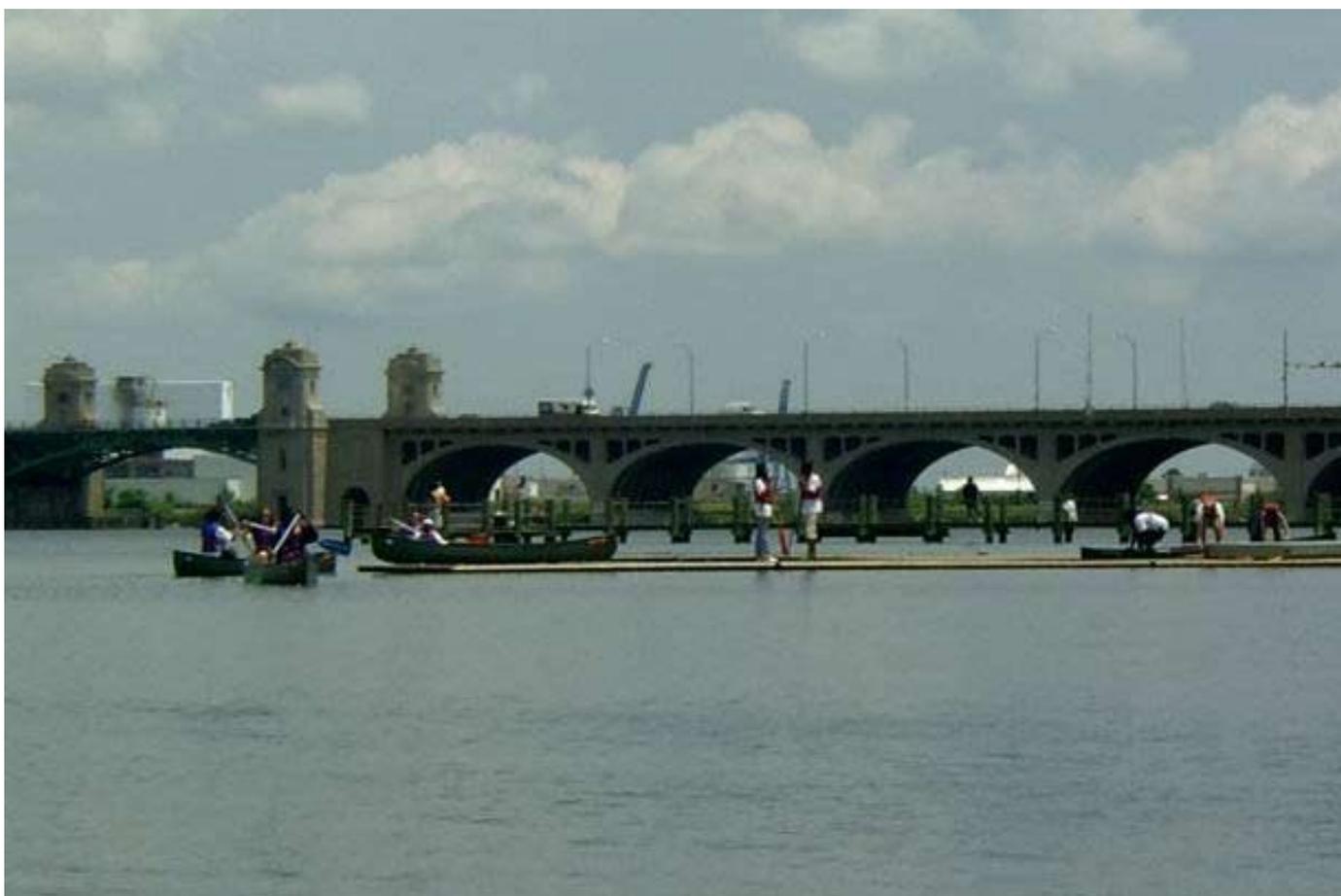


Photo by Gary Letteron

## *The Vision*

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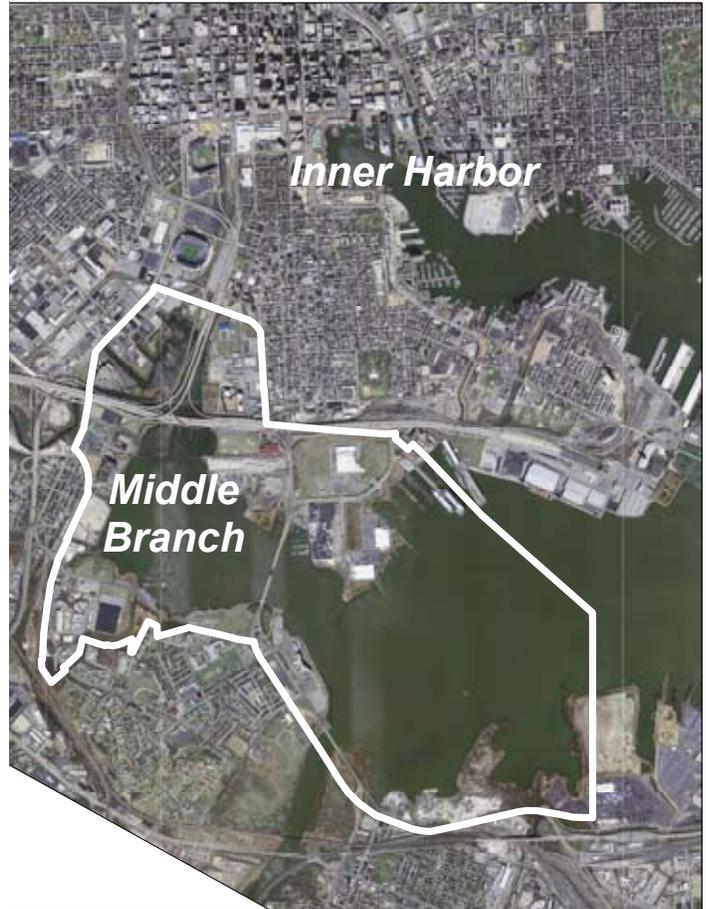
***Redevelop and revitalize the Middle Branch estuary and waterfront as a mixed-use community through economic and community redevelopment, ecosystem restoration and protection, and recreation and education programs coordinated within a sustainable framework.***

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# Goal of Middle Branch Master Plan

Through the Middle Branch planning process it is our goal to highlight and capitalize on the unique green character of the Middle Branch estuary to build a model community, based on sustainable principles. These sustainable principles include economic prosperity, environmental improvement and social equity.

According to the American Planning Association, planning for sustainability "...promotes responsible development – not-anti-development. It requires a democratic process of planning to achieve the greatest common good for all segments of our population, protect the health of the environment and assure future generations of the resources they will need to survive and progress." The Middle Branch's unique qualities as an environmental oasis, located minutes from downtown and surrounded by challenged communities, create a perfect opportunity employ these principles.



## Plan Process and Committees

The Middle Branch Master Plan developed through a major public process that included input organized through six committees and two communities. Over 100 people participated, including citizens, scientists, architects, environmental groups, developers and government agencies. The public input process began in November 2006 at the Middle Branch Forum, where over ninety people were in attendance. Presentations focused on the history, existing conditions and potential of the Middle Branch. The first draft vision statement was presented and the Master Plan concept introduced. Attendees were enthusiastic and expressed interest in moving forward with the formal master plan process.

The Middle Branch is located within one mile of the Inner Harbor.

To develop the master plan, major issues were identified and then organized into committees. Individuals were selected and invited to chair the committees based on their expertise. Each committee was given specific objectives to accomplish over a three-month period. During the Master Plan process, it became clear that some issues crossed the boundaries of all committees and needed special discussion within the Plan document. These were Management and Maintenance and Sustainable Communities. These issues have separate discussion and recommendations within the Plan document.

Finally, an Executive Committee was established to assure continuity of information and to include a broader spectrum of higher-level decision makers. This committee was chaired by the Mayor's Office, and included representatives from State agencies who could make decisions regarding policy

and funding. A complete listing of the committees and their charge is provided below.

## Committee Chairs

The five committees and their chairs were as follows:

- *Water Quality and Habitat* Cochairs Bill Stack (Water Quality Manager, Bureau of Water and Waste Water, Department of Public Works) and Phil Lee (Baltimore Harbor Watershed Association)
- *Open Space and Recreation* Cochairs Beth Strommen (Manager, Office of Sustainability and Environmental Planning, Department of Planning) and Mary Porter (Supervisor, Capitol Planning Division, Department of Recreation and Parks)
- *Design and Development* Cochairs Doug McCoach (Director, Department of Planning) and Kimberly Clark (Vice President, Baltimore Development Corporation)
- *Transportation* Cochairs Yolanda Takesian (Transportation Analyst, Kittelson and Associates, Inc.) and Greg Hinchliffe (Chair, Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Committee)
- *Heritage and Tourism* Chair Kathleen Kotarba (Director, Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation)

## Responsibility of Committees

The five committees were charged with completing the following:

- Review proposed goals and objectives statements, refine language, expand as needed, and establish guiding principles.
- Obtain, review and select data and background information to be used for creating an implementation strategy.
- Develop strategies to achieve goals and objectives to include:
  - An implementation timetable (See implementation chapter)
  - Proposed funding sources
  - Land use or policy recommendations
  - Recommendations for short-term and long-term maintenance issues

## Organization of Document

Individual chapters in the document are organized according to each of the five committees. Each chapter presents a discussion of the elements of sustainability relevant to that committee's subject, provides a history of that issue focused on the Middle Branch, and discusses existing conditions, opportunities and constraints. This information was then used to create a vision statement and guiding principles. Finally, recommendations for accomplishing the vision were presented.

In addition, three chapters are included on other elements relevant to the redevelopment of the Middle Branch. These are Sustainable Communities, Implementation Strategies and Management and Maintenance. Several appendixes are also included. These contain more detailed information related to the Plan's relationship to Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan, and specific recommendations from the Sustainable Communities.

## **Comprehensive Master Plan – LIVE, EARN, PLAY, LEARN**

The Middle Branch Master Plan is an appendix to Baltimore’s Comprehensive Master Plan of 2007, and incorporates goals from each of the major chapters, *Live, Earn, Play, and Learn*. The Comprehensive Master Plan created a broad vision for the City of Baltimore. The Middle Branch Master Plan brings that vision into focus on a smaller segment of the City. This plan represents an initial step in implementation of the goals and recommendations of the broader, citywide plan. The relationship of the chapter recommendations to the Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix A.

## **Baltimore BRAction Plan**

In 2005, federal base realignment decisions prescribed the movement of military workers from out of state to Maryland military bases, specifically Aberdeen Proving Ground and Ft. George G. . The Baltimore BRAction Plan is a guidebook for the City to absorb new populations and jobs based on these base closures. Current estimates indicate that the State of Maryland could receive an influx of as many as 60,000 new jobs over the next decade. The city of Baltimore is in a unique position to absorb the population moving to Maryland, particularly in redeveloping areas such as the Middle Branch.

Building from the foundation established by the City’s recently adopted Comprehensive Master Plan, the BRAction Plan articulates strategies for Population Growth, Workforce Development and Education, Minority and Women-Owned Business Development, and Business Attraction. The Middle Branch Master Plan is referenced in the Plan, along with key infrastructure improvements relative to the Middle Branch. The document Executive Summary is included in Appendix A.



# middle branch



*The Rowing Club was constructed in the 1980's and is still operating successfully today.*

## Open Space and Recreation

***“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.”  
- William Shakespeare***

Sustainable open space and recreation systems protect and enhance the social, ecological and economic viability of community open spaces. These spaces are not treated as ‘isolated’ or ‘empty’ areas between properties, but rather inter-connected elements, with each serving as integral pieces of a larger system. In the Middle Branch Plan, the water and ecological systems provide the foundation of the waterfront community. The overall goals of the Middle Branch Open Space and Recreation program are to maintain a sufficient amount and distribution of open space such that diverse uses and opportunities can be created, including natural habitat areas, passive recreation areas and active recreation areas.

- Natural habitat areas will be set aside for visual enjoyment and guided education only. These areas will ‘belong’ to the birds and animals for their use.
- Passive recreation areas will include spaces for sitting, picnicking and quiet contemplation.
- Active recreation areas include spaces for ball playing, scull racing, fishing or other water-based recreation.



People escaped the city and came to the quiet Middle Branch to recreate. By the 1920's, industrial land use had replaced many of the harbor's recreational opportunities.

All of these spaces will highlight the intrinsic attributes of the Middle Branch's environment, minimize ecological impacts and provide economic and social benefits on a long term, sustainable basis. In the Middle Branch, open space and recreation will contribute to the quality of life, accessible to everyone. Our open space and recreation system will bring communities together through accessibility, programming and education.

## I. History

Historically, the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River was endowed with rich marshes, a wooded shoreline and a complex marine community including shad, herring, perch and rockfish. It's more isolated location south of the Harbor allowed it to become an important recreation area for the growing city. In the early 1800's a resort known as Spring Gardens was opened on the location now containing the BGE Spring Gardens gas storage facility on the northeastern shore of the Middle Branch. By 1815, an elegant resort known as Fletcher's Fish House operated on the south shore of the River, with a marina, restaurant and other facilities for recreation. Other recreation facilities included Klein's Park, Meeter's Park and the Maryland Yacht Club located on the shores now occupied by Harbor Hospital. Members of a rowing club known as the Patapsco Navy proudly raced in its waters.

The Middle Branch recreational sites also always shared space with industrial uses. Other development along the north and northwest shores during the 1800s included a few breweries, coal yards, Carr Lowry Glass Company and some residential development.

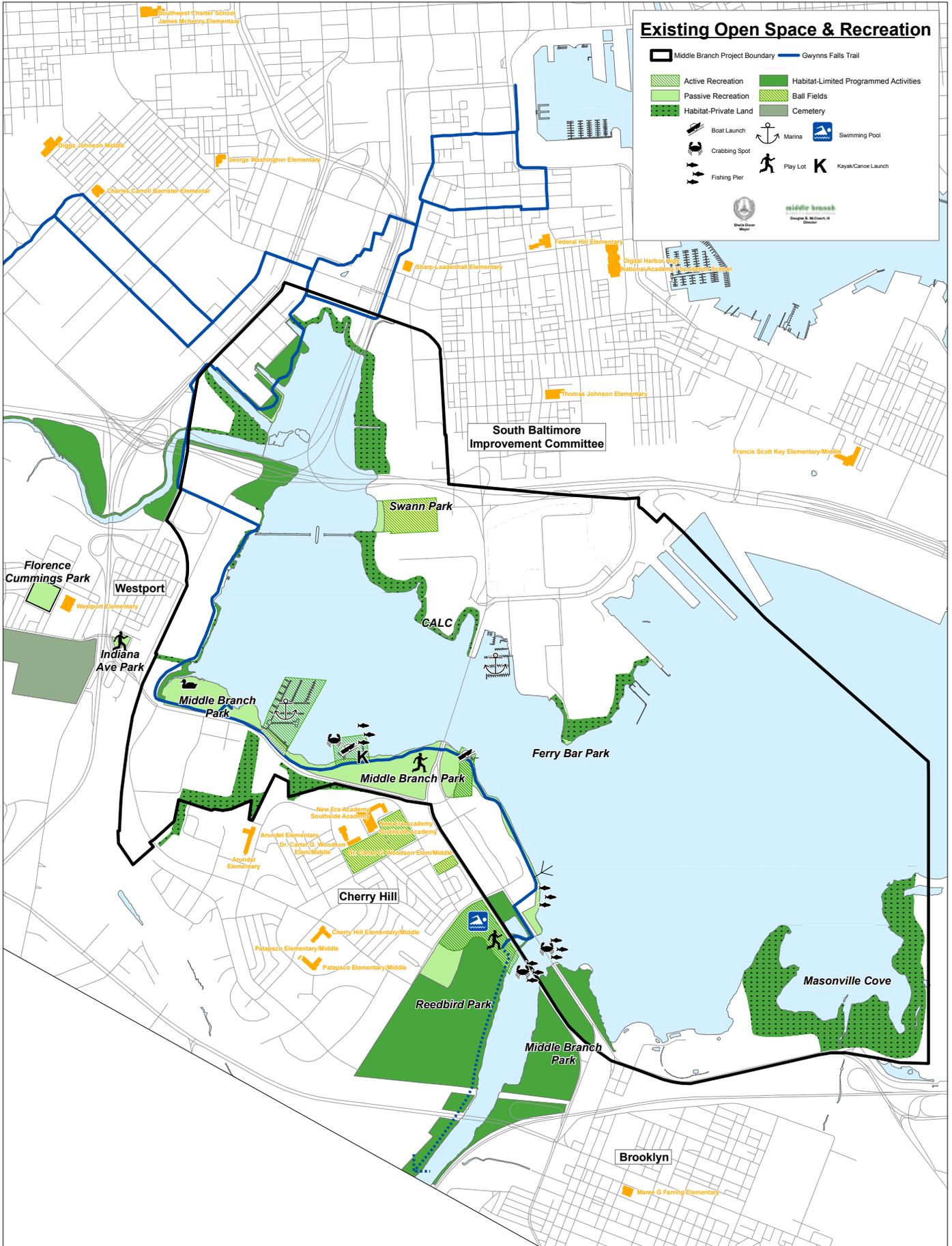
In the 1970's Baltimore began its first renaissance, establishing the now famous Inner Harbor out of abandoned shipping piers. At that time the City also began the revitalization of the Middle Branch, establishing the 1978 Middle Branch Park Plan. City agencies set about purchasing and relocating a junkyard on the south side of the River. Waterview Avenue was also moved away from the shoreline, creating a forty acre waterfront park on what was wasteland. The shoreline park – stretching along Waterview Avenue from Kloman Street to the Hanover Street Bridge, includes the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial and Harbor Hospital Center. The Reedbird landfill was closed in the 1970's, stretching

the open space system to the Patapsco River on its east side. The Middle Branch Park system now offers the largest expanse of natural shoreline in the entire Baltimore Harbor. The Baltimore Rowing and Water Resources Center (the “Rowing Center”) was constructed in the 1980’s and is still successfully operating today.

Throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s, the remaining industrial and recreational uses had an awkward relationship, neither really complementing nor harming the other. The Carr Lowry Glass Company and BGE Gas processing facility partnered with the City to create vegetated buffers along their shoreline to improve habitat in the area, but the facilities could not allow public access to their waterfront because of safety and security concerns.

## II. Existing Parks, Recreation Facilities And Activities

- *The Baltimore Rowing Club and Water Resources Center (located in Middle Branch Park).* The first floor of the Rowing Center is leased to local boating clubs for boat storage space. The second floor of the Rowing Center is rented to the public for private events. The facilities are well appointed and have excellent views. It is very popular and affordable and is booked most weekends. The Rowing Center also houses the offices of the Aquatics Division of the Department of Recreation and Parks. **(See Map 1)**
- *Middle Branch Park (101 acres).* Middle Branch Park is currently not programmed for daily recreation activities but is the location for several special events including the July 4th concert and youth fishing instruction. It is used occasionally for picnicking, but could host more regional events given its size and location. The shoreline of Middle Branch Park is predominately open lawn with easy access to the water. The park includes piers for both motorized and non-motorized boat launch as well as several fishing/crabbing piers. The Waterview West portion of the park includes a bird observation deck and restored natural habitat. The Gwynns Falls Greenway passes through the park.
- *Reedbird/Cherry Hill Park (40 acres).* This park is used primarily by residents from the adjacent community of Cherry Hill. There are basketball courts, tennis courts, a playground, a swimming pool with spray pad and limited areas for picnicking. The athletic fields can accommodate football, soccer and baseball and are home to Baltimore’s oldest cricket league. The community utilizes the park for its annual picnic. The shoreline of Reedbird Park is vegetated with few formal access points to the water. The park is the terminus of the Gwynns Falls Greenway
- *Swann Park (11 acres).* Athletic fields are the dominant use of this shoreline park. The current field layout includes 4 baseball/softball fields and one football field. The park shoreline is not heavily vegetated but there are no formal access points or docks. This park was recently found to have unsafe levels of arsenic in the soil and was closed for cleanup and renovation. It is anticipated to re-open in 2008.



Map 1 - Existing Open Space & Recreation

- *Ferry Bar Park (0.4 acres)*. Ferry Bar Park is a passive park area, popular for picnics and boat watching. The shoreline is a gently sloping pebble beach.
- *Sculling and Canoeing*. The Baltimore Rowing Club and other clubs practice in the Middle Branch, using the Rowing Center facilities as a base. In addition the Department of Recreation and Parks sponsors canoeing trips.
- *Fishing and Crabbing*. There is a considerable amount of recreational and subsistence fishing and crabbing from existing piers in Middle Branch Park, Harbor Hospital, and from informal locations along the Hanover and Potee Street bridges.
- *Swimming*. The swimming pool at Reedbird Park was recently restored and is well used by the community. The waters of the Middle Branch are not yet clean enough for beach swimming.
- *Walking and Biking*. The Gwynns Falls Greenway is located along the southern shore of the Middle Branch, extending from the City line in west Baltimore 14 miles to the Middle Branch and from the Inner Harbor 1.0 miles to the Middle Branch. This facility is used for biking and walking.
- *Baseball/Softball/Football/Soccer*. Swann Park and Reedbird Park contain athletic fields that are used by local leagues. The Swann Park fields are very popular for baseball, softball and football. Digital Harbor High School plays their home games for baseball, football, soccer and lacrosse at Swann Park. The fields of Swann Park will be cleaned and restored in 2008. The Reedbird Fields are not as popular for league play as field flooding sometimes interrupts games. Athletic fields are also located on the grounds of Southside High School (soccer).
- *Small Parks and Playgrounds*. Playgrounds can be found in several park and school locations near the Middle Branch: Middle Branch Park, Reedbird Park, Indiana Ave, Florence Cummins Park, Westport Elementary School, Carter G. Woodson Elementary and Cherry Hill Elementary.

At Middle Branch, there is a unique opportunity to help students attending local schools learn about the environment and their impact on it.



### III. Opportunities for Improvements to Recreation and Open Space

- *Capitalize on the shallow, quiet nature of the Middle Branch estuary for passive boating and fishing recreation.* Increase non-motorized boat rentals and use of the Middle Branch for small paddle vessels. Increase number of fishing and crabbing piers.
- *Expand rowing facilities.* The number of Rowing groups is almost double the amount of available space for scull storage and club events. There is a serious need for more waterfront space for sculling groups. There may be room to expand the existing Rowing Center to meet these needs, or to capitalize on the south parking lot at Harbor Hospital for a new facility.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

Fishing is just one of the many water-based activities that this master Plan hopes to facilitate.

- *Expand special event rental facilities at existing Rowing Center.* The facility is in high demand for much of the year. The meeting space is limited to 100 persons and has limited kitchen capacity for catering. The Department of Recreation and Parks should consider expanding the facility to add additional, more flexible space with a modernized catering-friendly kitchen. The enlarged facility also could include facilities for park users such as public bathrooms and information regarding activities at Middle Branch Park.
- *Educational opportunities.* Restoration efforts and existing habitat provide a unique opportunity to educate local youth and citizens about the environment and their impacts on it.
- *Business opportunities.* Vending stands, kayak rentals and eco-tourism provide opportunities to encourage community based youth and senior enterprises to help educate and support the local community. These opportunities should be considered as the park system is improved and expanded.
- *Restore existing play fields.* There are several opportunities to restore community play fields at Carter G. Woodson Elementary School, Florence Cummings Park and Swann Park.

- *Recreational trails.* The Middle Branch estuary is enclosed in a fashion similar to the Inner Harbor and bisected by a series of bridges. In addition, the Gwynns Falls Greenway already passes through the area along the southern shore. This creates wonderful opportunities to establish a series of loop trail systems around the Middle Branch waterfront, connecting development villages and surrounding communities with the larger Baltimore community.
- *Parks programming.* Increased population and activity along the waterfront provides new opportunities to establish park friends groups for the Middle Branch Park system to adopt, program and care for park areas.
- *Public access.* Much of the Middle Branch shoreline is already preserved for public access through the Middle Branch Park system. The foundation of the success of Baltimore's Inner Harbor is the continuous access to the waterfront. Public access is also imperative to the success of the Middle Branch waterfront redevelopment and will be an integral part of the green necklace around the water.
- *The United States Army Corps of Engineers Tidal Middle Branch Restoration project.* This project creates excellent opportunities for wetland marsh creation and habitat restoration along the waterfront that can be integrated into the park system.
- *Masonville Cove Environmental Center.* The proposed Environmental Center at Masonville Cove provides excellent opportunities for eco-tourism and environmental education. This facility also provides public access to the waterfront for the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay communities.

## IV. Constraints

- *Middle Branch is a finite ecological resource.* While the Middle Branch estuary is large and can accommodate a wide variety of use, it is not infinite. Intensive programming or encroachment into ecologically sensitive areas will destroy the ecological balance we hope to achieve. Baltimore cannot expand recreational uses and activities to the point that they hurt the environmental integrity and habitat of the Middle Branch. Thoughtful consideration must be given to the location and types of recreational uses.
- *Distribution of waterfront uses.* There must be a balance in the type of habitat/open space provided in the Middle Branch Estuary. The types of planting areas, wetlands and uses should be distributed to maximize and protect habitat.
- *Trash and water quality issues.* Floating debris and bacteria are major impediments to the use of the Middle Branch for water based recreation. The floating debris also destroys wetlands marsh and underwater grasses by smothering them. These issues must be dealt with for the revitalization of the Middle Branch to be a success. (See Water Quality chapter)

- *Water depth.* The Middle Branch estuary is very shallow, with depths averaging three feet or less in many areas at mean low tide. This situation was created by continuous deposition of silts and sediments from feeding streams, rivers and tidal deposition. While this creates an excellent condition for non-motorized boating, if allowed to continue with no intervention the estuary will become too shallow for recreational use.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

- *Surrounding topography and road network.* While the immediate southern shore area of the Middle Branch is somewhat flat, the topography rises steeply just beyond Waterview Avenue. This creates a large physical separation between Cherry Hill and Middle Branch Park. In addition, on the southeastern shore, Cherry Hill residents are separated from the waterfront by Hanover and Potee Streets, two major thoroughfares into the City. The situation is also challenging for the Westport community where CSX rail lines and the light rail are between them and the waterfront. A network of highways, including I-95, poses a challenge for people to access the waterfront from the northern communities.

Some estuaries will be reserved for “passive recreation.” Wildlife will be protected and people will be able to participate in low-impact activities such as environmental education and photography.

## V. Guiding Principles

### 1. Ensure public access along the waterfront

- Maximize and protect public access to the waterfront at all waterfront sites.
- Provide a variety of experiences at the waterfront, including fishing piers, bird watching, sitting, etc.
- Create a comprehensive recreational path system that links communities, the waterfront, downtown, Masonville Cove and the Gwynns Falls Greenway.
- Implement the recommendations of the Baltimore Bicycle Master Plan.
- Encourage “defensible” space in all public access designs.
- Limit parking lots and transportation corridors in pedestrian zones.
- Link existing public access systems to new waterfront trails, paths and parks.

### *Vision*

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***Develop a comprehensive open space and recreation system that protects and promotes the natural shoreline, water based activities and resources of the Middle Branch.***

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## 2. Increase environmental education opportunities

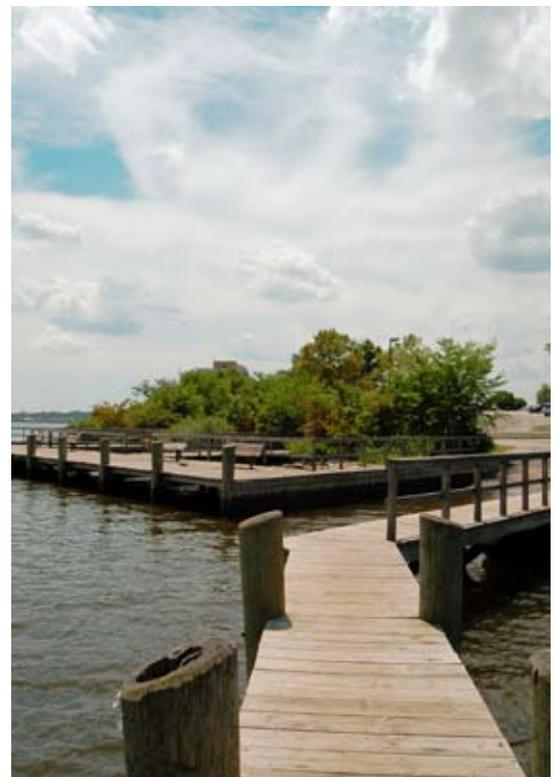
- Expand educational resources that capitalize on the unique qualities of the Middle Branch Estuary for the benefit of all City residents. (Support development of CALC and Masonville Cove Environmental Center).
- Identify ecologically sensitive areas that are protected for wildlife habitat and organized environmental education
- Assure that environmental education programming is linked to surrounding communities by bicycle paths and provides opportunities for local youth to participate.
- Build on the eco-tourism potential of the area by identifying and documenting shore bird sightings and educational signage.
- Utilize environmental education to establish an environmental job training program for City youth.

## 3. Create a continuous open space system

- Require waterfront sites to maintain a continuous public walkway, with fishing piers when possible.
- Link all major parks with waterfront green system; create 'nodes' of green space and activity linked by the greenway system.
- Consider acquisition of the CSX Swing Bridge as part of the continuous open space experience.
- Create a continuous green buffer along the waterfront at appropriate sites.

## 4. Protect and enhance natural resources

- Embrace guidelines of the Critical Area Management Program, enforce Critical Area regulations at all development sites.
- Do not expand recreational and development activities to the point that they hurt the environmental integrity and habitat of the Middle Branch. Thoughtful consideration should be given to the location and types of recreational uses.
- Remove invasive exotic plants from forests, green spaces and replace them with native species.
- Implement the United States Army Corps of Engineers Middle Branch Restoration Plan and the Patapsco Urban River Restoration Program.
- Preserve scenic vistas and views to the Middle Branch from surrounding communities and waterfront sites.
- Protect water quality by planting riparian buffers, creating rain gardens, etc.

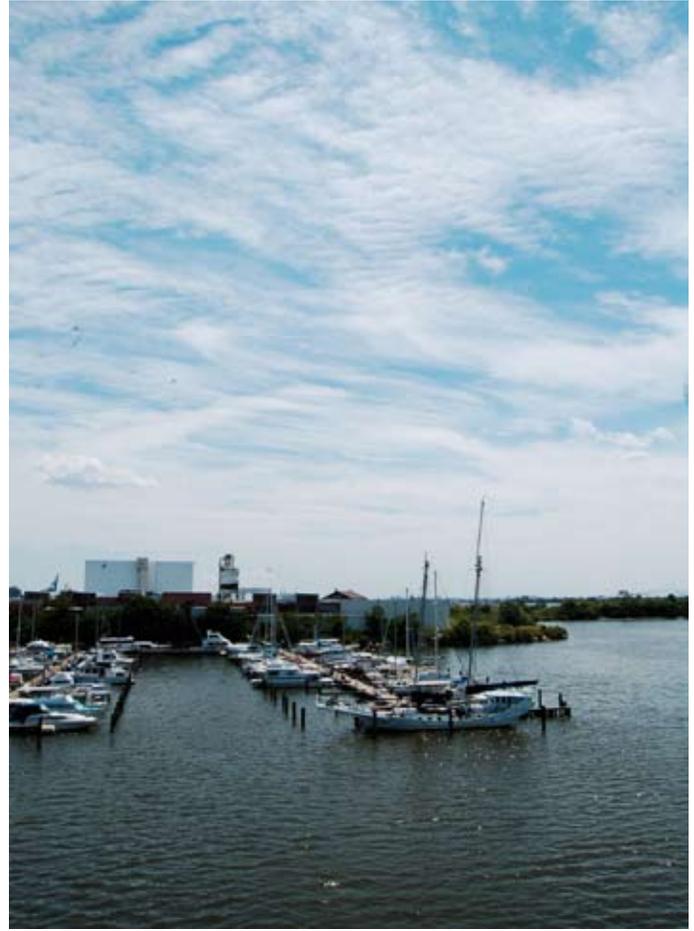


*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

Boat launch - Broening Park

## 5. Create unique recreational opportunities

- Capitalize on the unique nature of estuary as 'safe harbor' for non-motorized boating such as canoes, kayaks, rowing sculls, paddle boats and small sailboats.
- Discourage increases in motorized boating.
- Consider creating a 4 knot speed limit for motorized vessels within the Middle Branch west of the Hanover Street Bridge.
- Increase programmed activities at appropriate areas of parks, and create park friends groups to increase a sense of ownership.
- Create an organized program to maximize navigational safety amongst water based users.
- Consider expanding existing rowing facility at Middle Branch Park or creating new facility on the south parking lot of Harbor Hospital.
- Limit expansion of 'non-water dependent' recreational uses into existing waterfront park areas unless it is appropriate from an ecological perspective.
- Encourage community based youth and senior enterprises on the water.



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

Recreational sailing is one of the many things that attract people to the area.

For a detailed view of existing and proposed open space and recreation facilities, **see Map 2.**

## VI. Recommendations

- Create a study group with membership from the Department of Recreation and Parks, communities and local rowing clubs to explore expansion of rowing facilities and the Rowing Center.
- Create a Friends Group to begin programming and volunteer opportunities for Middle Branch Park and Reedbird Park.
- Implement USACE Tidal Middle Branch Project.
- Establish a group tasked to recommend habitat improvements and guide the location and expansion of water based recreational facilities.
- Create a new comprehensive recreational path system that links existing and new communities, the waterfront, Downtown, Masonville Cove, and the Gwynns Falls Trail.

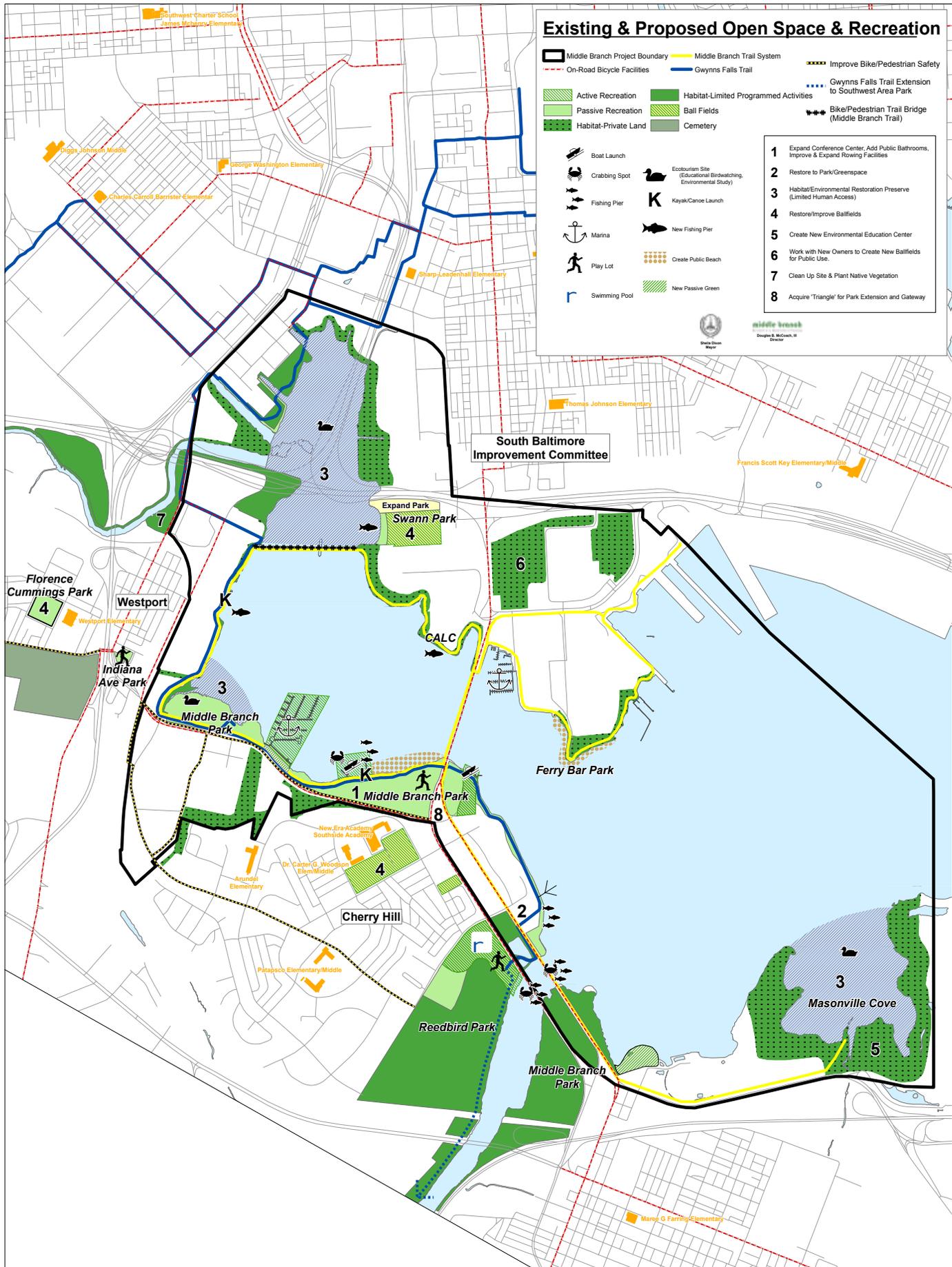
# Existing & Proposed Open Space & Recreation

Middle Branch Project Boundary	Middle Branch Trail System	Improve Bike/Pedestrian Safety
On-Road Bicycle Facilities	Gwynns Falls Trail	Gwynns Falls Trail Extension to Southwest Area Park
Active Recreation	Habitat-Limited Programmed Activities	Bike/Pedestrian Trail Bridge (Middle Branch Trail)
Passive Recreation	Ball Fields	
Habitat-Private Land	Cemetery	

Boat Launch	Ecotourism Site (Educational Birdwatching, Environmental Study)
Crabbing Spot	Kayak/Canoe Launch
Fishing Pier	New Fishing Pier
Marina	Create Public Beach
Play Lot	New Passive Green
Swimming Pool	

- 1 Expand Conference Center, Add Public Bathrooms, Improve & Expand Rowing Facilities
- 2 Restore to Park/Greenspace
- 3 Habitat/Environmental Restoration Preserve (Limited Human Access)
- 4 Restore/Improve Ballfields
- 5 Create New Environmental Education Center
- 6 Work with New Owners to Create New Ballfields for Public Use
- 7 Clean Up Site & Plant Native Vegetation
- 8 Acquire 'Triangle' for Park Extension and Gateway



Map 2 - Proposed Open Space and Recreation



# middle branch



*Careful planning will help the Middle Branch estuary become a healthy, mixed use community.*

## Design and Development

*“We shape our buildings, then our buildings shape us.”*

*- Winston Churchill*

Sustainable design and development caters to the health of both communities and their surrounding environment. Intent on improving citizen quality of life, it promotes connectivity by encouraging compact, pedestrian scaled mixed-use development and focusing development around expanded high quality mass transit resources. It respects the natural environment by promoting buildings that are energy efficient, protect natural habitat and green spaces, and utilize creative stormwater management techniques for greater water quality.

In the Middle Branch, the water and ecological systems provide the foundation of the community. New developments along the waterfront will capitalize on its unique character to attract a new population to Baltimore. Land uses will speak to each other across the water, acting as a series of “villages” connected by a green thread, much like a charm bracelet. Each “village” will be unique, yet all will

respect the ecosystem of the Middle Branch so as to protect the habitats and wildlife that make the Middle Branch special. Furthermore, these “villages” will connect to existing communities, improve overall access, and establish new connections to green space and the water.

## I. History

Land uses along the shores of the Middle Branch have historically lacked a strong residential component. The Middle Branch evolved from a recreational resource and small industrial center in the 1800’s into a solid industrial area by the mid 1950’s before being forgotten as an industrial backwater by the 1970’s.

Land use along the north and northwest shores during the 1800’s included a few breweries, coal yards, the Carr Lowry Glass Company and some limited residential development.

The development and expansion of the B&O and Western Maryland railroads and completion of the Hanover Street Bridge in 1916 provided direct transportation links to Brooklyn, Fairfield, Hawkins Point and Cherry Hill, and opened these areas to increased residential and industrial growth. By the 1920’s industries had expanded and built new facilities replacing much of the recreational activities. However, as the Middle Branch silted in and became less useful for shipping, industry began to turn its back on the waterfront, using it instead for storage of materials or merely as a dumping ground.

In 1971, the City zoned nearly the entire waterfront of the Middle Branch for light and heavy industry reflecting the intense industrial economy at that time. By the 1970’s major land uses included the City’s Central Repair and Maintenance Garage, the Western Maryland Railroad yard at Port Covington, Allied Chemical Company, BGE Spring Garden gas processing facility, BGE Westport power generating station, Carr Lowry Glass Company, several junkyards, and the Locke Insulator Manufacturing, Inc. By this time, virtually no recreational resources remained, and the Middle Branch was forgotten as an ecological resource.

Starting in the 1950’s industrial development in Baltimore began to stagnate and entered a period of slow decline. The underlying reasons for this decline included the deterioration of the railroad’s facilities due to lack of investment and competition from other transportation modes, and increased industrial competition from other regions and countries. Slowly many of the industrial waterfront properties along the Middle Branch became vacant and prime for speculation and eventual redevelopment. Beginning in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s the rail yard and docks at Port Covington



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

The master plan promotes land use that ensures healthy communities. Neighborhoods like this one should be protected and should benefit from development.

began to fall into disuse. In the early 1990's BGE closed the Westport power plant, and Carr Lowry Glass Company closed their doors in 2004 after over 100 years of operation. During the late 1990's, the old Western Maryland rail yards at Port Covington were finally redeveloped as a shopping center including with a Wal-Mart and Sam's Club and printing press for the Baltimore Sun. Most recently, in 2006 the Carr-Lowry Glass Company was demolished in preparation for the Westport Waterfront mixed use development. Today there exists only a few remaining stable industrial users along the Middle Branch; they include Locke Insulator, the Baltimore Sun, Browning Ferris Industries, Baltimore Gas and Electric power generating facility and the gas processing facility.

The real estate boom of the early part of this decade saw a renewed interest in waterfront property for residential and mixed use development. For the first time, non-industrial users noticed the available land along the shores of the Middle Branch, and began to purchase marginal or vacant industrial sites for redevelopment. Today the majority of waterfront land has been purchased by groups interested in redeveloping the waterfront into mixed use communities.

## II. Existing Conditions

### North Shore

The north shore of the Middle Branch begins at the southern end of M&T Bank Stadium. It is dominated by highway and rail infrastructure, with I-95 and I-395 slicing through and over the land. It is also a major gateway to the city along Russell Street through the Carroll Camden Industrial Area. The light rail parallels I-395 crossing north to south, and CSX rail lines are located along the northern border between the stadium and the water.

Land uses are currently dominated by industrial and commercial uses including:

- *The Baltimore Animal Shelter*
- *BGE Spring Garden, a gas processing and storage facility*
- *RESCO trash incinerator*
- *Gateway South Redevelopment.* This site currently houses an architectural salvage company, a chemical company, and the Greyhound Bus facility. The Baltimore Development Corporation has selected a developer to convert the area to a Sportsplex with 600,000 square feet of offices.

### West Shore

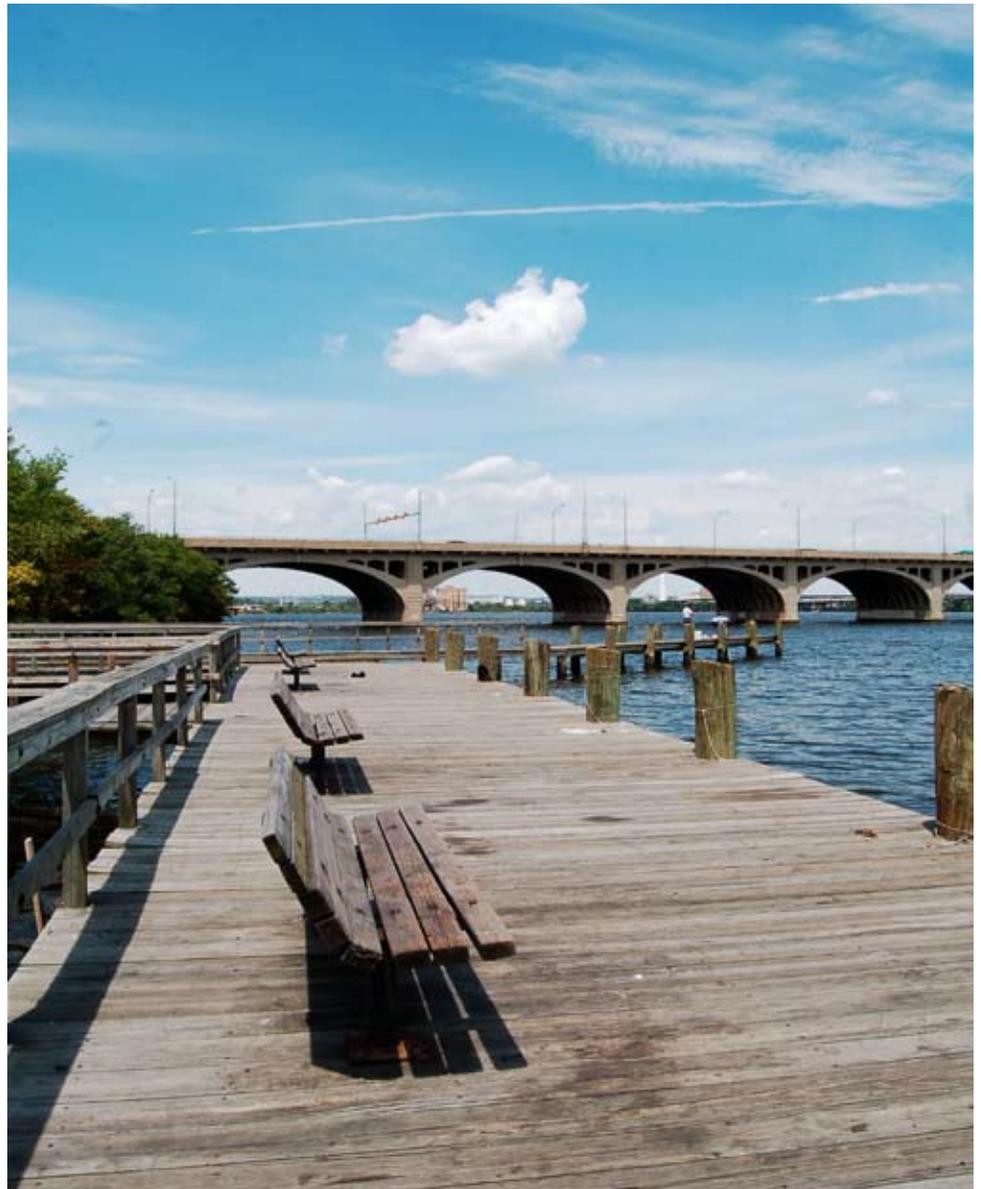
Until recently, the west shore was dominated by vacant or marginal industrial uses. Today it's receiving the most advanced activity toward land use changes and redevelopment.

Major sites on the West Shore include:

- *Brice Concrete.* This site is located at the northeast intersection of Waterview Ave, adjacent to the water; it has contained a variety of different concrete batching facilities over the past twenty years.
- *Westport Waterfront Redevelopment.* This site extends almost the entire length of the western waterfront and is over 40 acres in size. The Turner Development company has proposed to

convert the area to a mixed use, transit oriented community. Plans are for over 1600 units of new housing, and over 3 million square feet of office space.

- *BGE power substation site.* The substation is located west of Kloman Street, adjacent to the proposed redevelopment site. This facility, behind the northern portion of the Westport Waterfront Redevelopment, consists of a field of electrical transformers with some limited space for offices. Given its visual appearance it presents a challenge to redevelopment.
- *Kloman ballfields.* An open space located south of I-95 along the waterfront that is owned by the City of Baltimore. This site is designated Resource Conservation in the Critical Area Management Plan, and is preserved for habitat enhancement.



The inclusion of public access to the waterfront is an important part of design and development on the Middle Branch.

*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

## South Shore

The south shore of the Middle Branch study area is dominated by habitat and parkland with some industrial and institutional uses mixed in.

- *Masonville Cove*. The Masonville Cove is owned by the Maryland Port Administration and located adjacent to their facilities. This shallow habitat area is one of the largest waterfowl staging areas in the City. Remarkably, it is surrounded by heavy industry and commercial shipping.
- *Harbor Hospital*. Harbor Hospital Center maintains a green buffer along the water with a public access easement containing the Gwynns Falls Trail. There are also two public boat ramps on this property, and the Middle Branch Park system.
- *Waterview Industrial Area*. A large industrially zoned area is at the southwest intersection of the Middle Branch. There are a variety of industrial uses located here including warehousing and light manufacturing, garages for various types of mechanics, a gas station, a scrap yard, and a bus lot. The majority of the operations are marginal and several vacancies exist within this area. The largest site contains a large modern warehouse that is in good condition, but currently unutilized.
- *Cherry Hill*. The community of Cherry Hill is located at the top of a ridge overlooking the Middle Branch. This community is 96% African American. Cherry Hill has a home ownership rate that is higher than the city average. Land is available for redevelopment within the community at now-vacant public housing sites.
- *Middle Branch Park*. Middle Branch Park encompasses the entire southern shore and includes a play lot, rowing facilities for the Baltimore Rowing Club and rental facility for special events. The western edge of this 40 acre park is a natural habitat area with boardwalks for viewing wildlife.

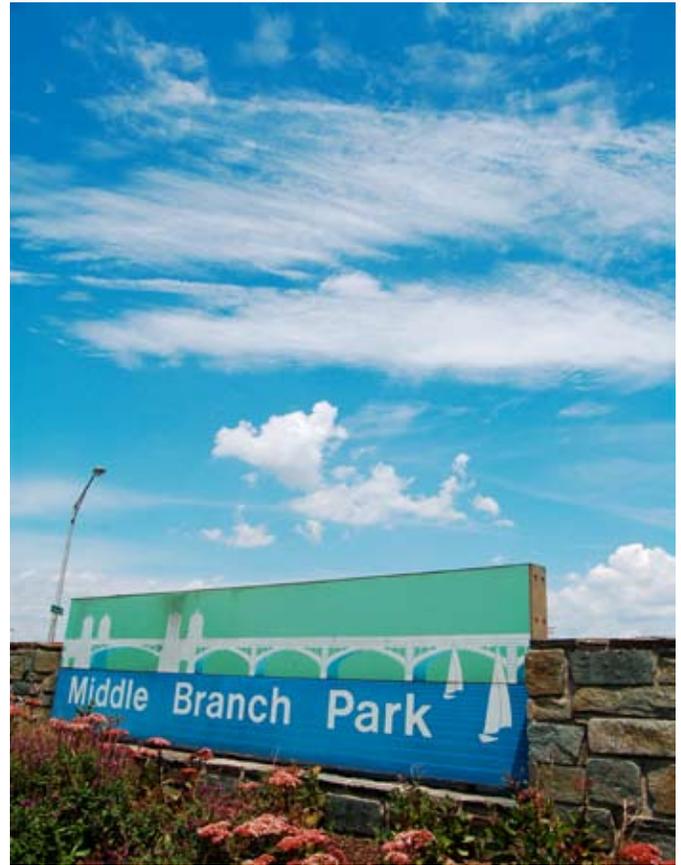


Photo by Andrew Nagl

## East Shore

The east shore is comprised of the lands of the former rail yards of the western Maryland railroad, which include Port Covington, Swann Park and the Dickman Street area.

Major sites include:

- *American Forestry Products*. A lumber yard.
- *Schuster Concrete*.
- *Swann Park ballfields*.

- *Browning Ferris Industries.* Offices and truck storage for a waste management company
- *Baltimore City's central repair garage.*
- *Port Covington industrial and commercial center.* This facility contains a Sam's Club, Wal-Mart and the Baltimore Sun newspaper plant. Major areas of flat, clear developable land are available.
- *Tidewater Yacht Services.* An industrial repair marina is located along the north east shore adjacent to the South Locust Point Marine Terminal and other deep water commercial shipping uses.
- *Nick's Seafood Restaurant and marina.*
- *Locke Insulator Company, Inc.*

### III. Opportunities

The Middle Branch is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and is geographically situated to have great views of downtown and the harbor. The past industrial activity has left many large vacant brownfield sites which are ready for redevelopment and renewal. These are opportunities that must be capitalized on to release the full potential of the Middle Branch. (See Map 5 - Issues and Opportunities)

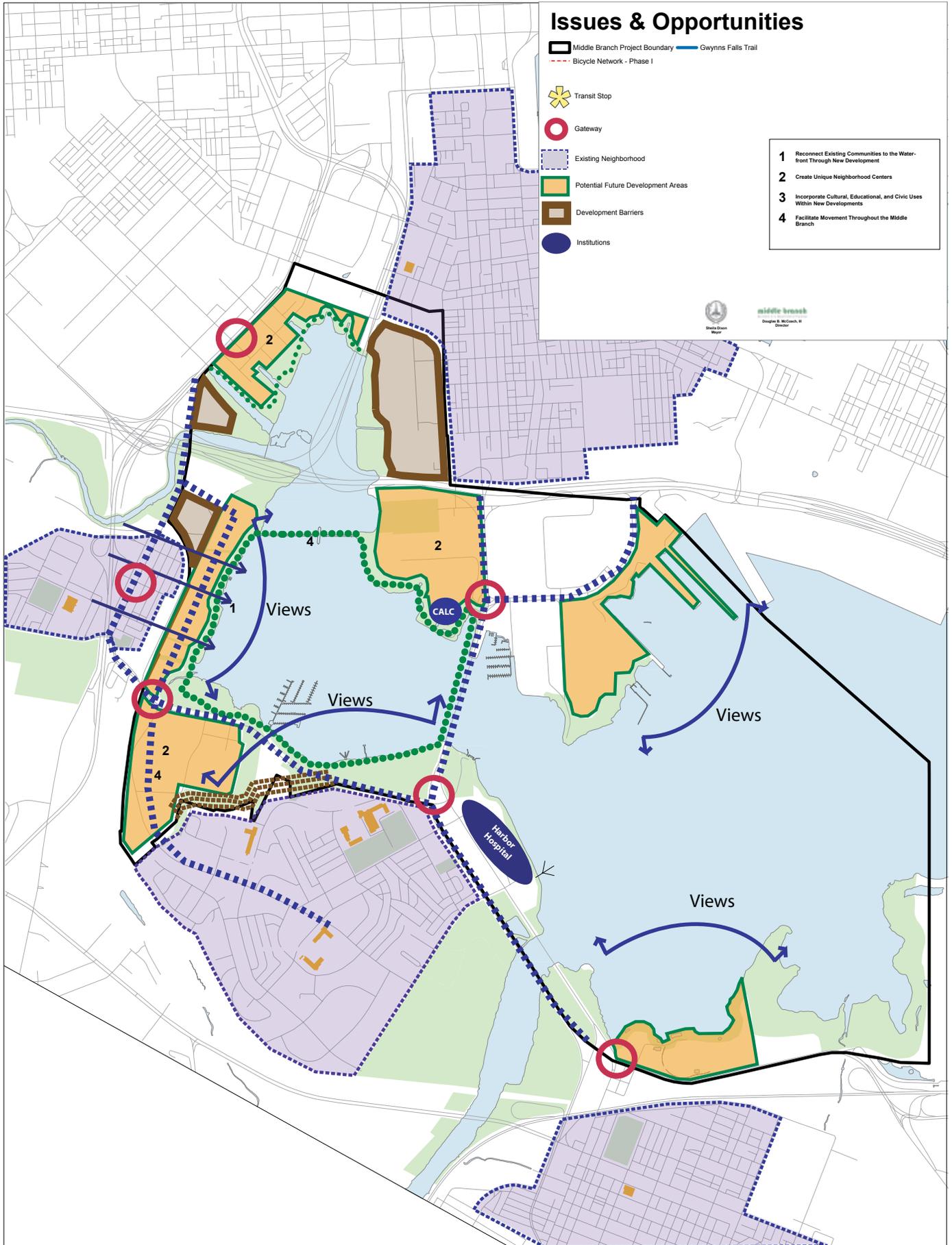
Below is a detailed list of the opportunities for the redevelopment of the Middle Branch:

- Acres of large vacant or underutilized waterfront property ready for development.
- Links to mass transit and Interstate roadways.
- Gateway to the city from the South.
- Existing green waterfront and the Middle Branch Park system.
- The natural habitat of the Middle branch estuary.
- Close proximity to downtown and Baltimore-Washington International airport.
- Spectacular views of both downtown and the outer harbor.
- Public institutions like Harbor Hospital and the National Aquarium Center for Aquatic Life and Conservation.
- Bike trail connections and potential bike loop around the Middle Branch.

### IV. Constraints

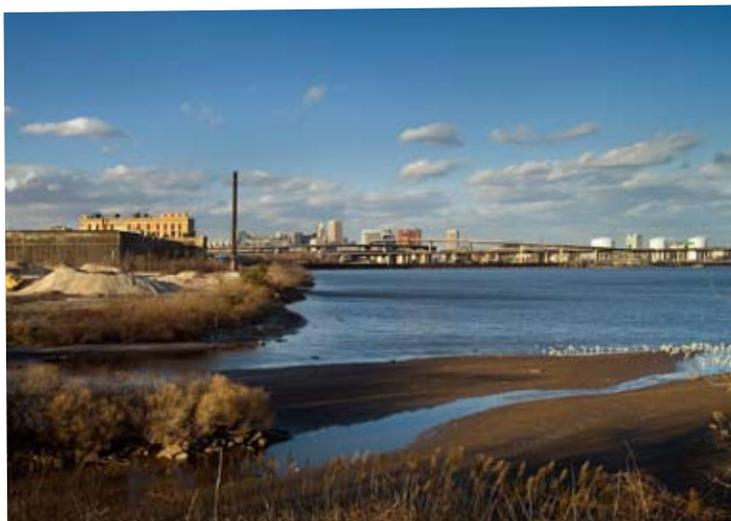
The redevelopment and revitalization of the Middle Branch has been slow to progress. While great potential exists for the area, several obstacles lie in the way of this progress. Poor and outdated infrastructure, disconnection from the city transportation grid, and contaminated brownfield sites are just a few of the challenges that must be overcome. The following is a detailed list of the issues that must be resolved in order for the successful redevelopment of the Middle Branch to occur:

- Establishing connections to existing communities to connect them with the waterfront.
- Overcome topographical conditions to link existing communities to new development areas.



Map 3 - Issues and Opportunities

- Remediate polluted brownfield sites.
- Repair the ecosystem—habitat and water quality.
- Upgrading and expanding the utility infrastructure to meet new service demands (Sewer/Water/ Electric)
- Repair and upgrade the road system of the Middle Branch to manage potential increased traffic volume
- Linking the Middle Branch area with the transportation grid of the city
- Ensuring traffic and other impacts are properly mitigated and managed
- Ensure compatible development with existing heavy industrial uses such as RESCO and BGE Spring Gardens



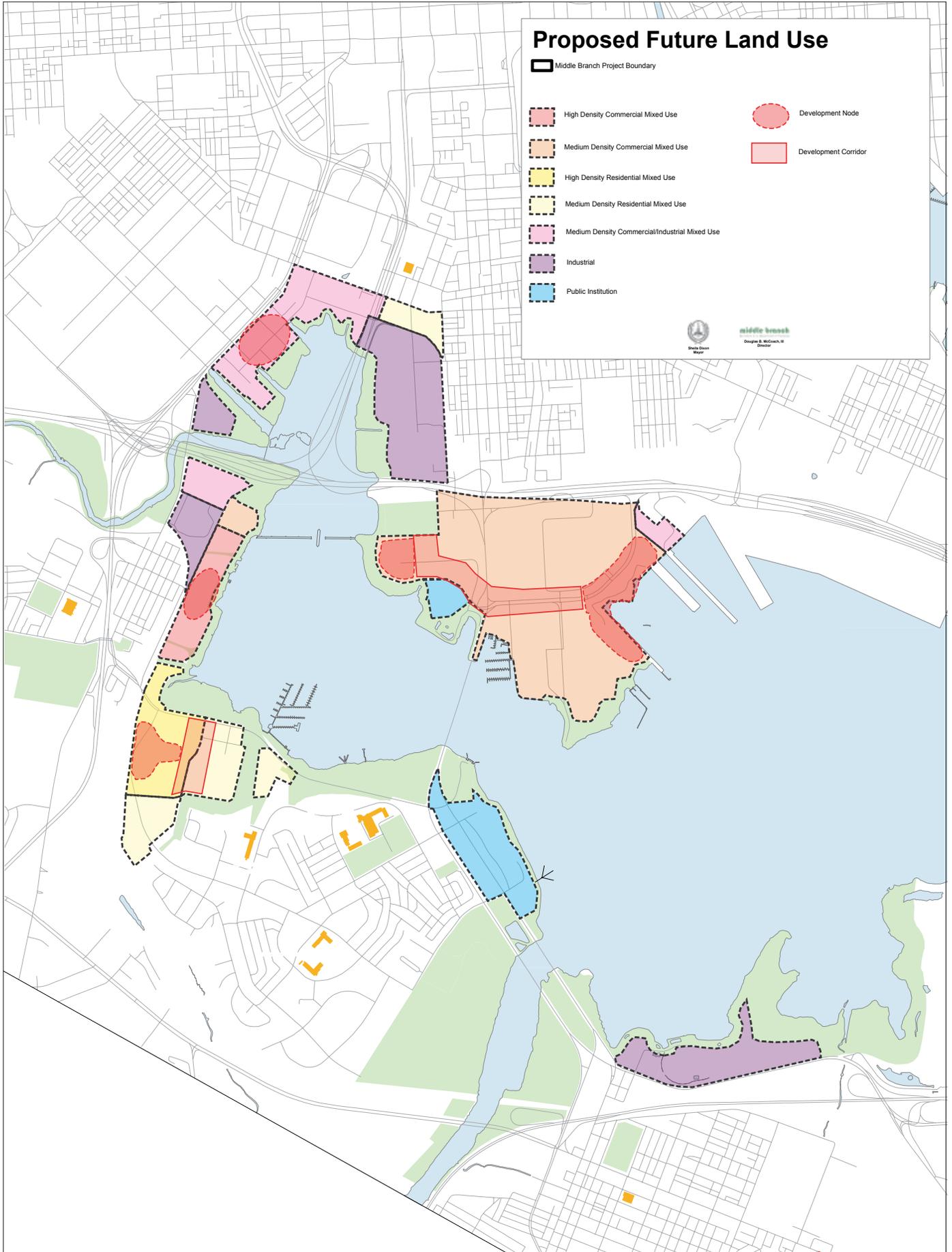
*Thoughtful urban design has the power to improve quality of life.*

## *Vision*

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***Ensure that opportunities for economic development integrate and support the Middle Branch ecosystem, existing communities and the unique character and location of the Middle Branch.***

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Map 4 - Proposed Future Land Use

# V. Guiding Principles

## 1. Ensure land use that promotes healthy communities

- Promote mixed use communities that are diverse in income, age, and family type.
- Ensure existing communities benefit from new development.
- Promote distinct and unique developments around the Middle Branch.
- Locate high density and traffic intensive uses around existing and planned high quality mass transit resources.
- Change outdated zoning and land use regulations.
- Promote communities that provide basic needs including: public institutions, affordable housing, and neighborhood retail.
- Ensure a proper buffer between new development and existing industrial and maritime land uses.
- Promote sustainable land use practices such as energy and water conservation, green roofs, and walkable communities.
- Encourage walking and bicycling to destinations by creating pedestrian and bicycle friendly street systems with commercial and park destinations within close proximity to residences.

## 2. Facilitate a more effective and sustainable infrastructure

- Improve movement throughout the Middle Branch.
- Redevelop existing roadways as pedestrian friendly parkways and boulevards.
- Benchmark existing utility and transportation infrastructure capacity and coordinate improvements to meet increases demand from new development.
- Promote sustainable stormwater solutions for run-off from streets and other impervious areas and on-site stormwater treatment within buildings.
- Coordinate acquisition and parcel assembly for greatest overall benefit.

## 3. Capitalize on the unique presence of open space surrounding the water

- Develop guidelines for the placement and design of tall buildings and urban form.
- Increase neighborhood connectivity, both visually and physically, to the waterfront.
- Create connections from new developments to existing communities and the water.
- Promote open space as the connecting tissue between new and existing communities.
- Establish a sustainability policy for the Middle Branch related to design and development.
- Preserve scenic views and vistas to the Middle Branch from surrounding communities and waterfront sites.

#### 4. Develop and maintain a strong connection to the land

- Respect sensitive habitat and shoreline conditions by defining generous setbacks and buffers to them.
- Identify and develop “gateway entrances.”
- Ensure protections to the watershed through sustainable storm-water treatments.
- Encourage interaction with the waterfront at strategic locations.
- Create new green spaces and habitat areas within developments.
- Link all development sites through a waterfront green system that integrates parks, habitat areas and connections to the surrounding communities.
- Require that all waterfront sites maintain a continuous green buffer along the waterfront where appropriate.



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

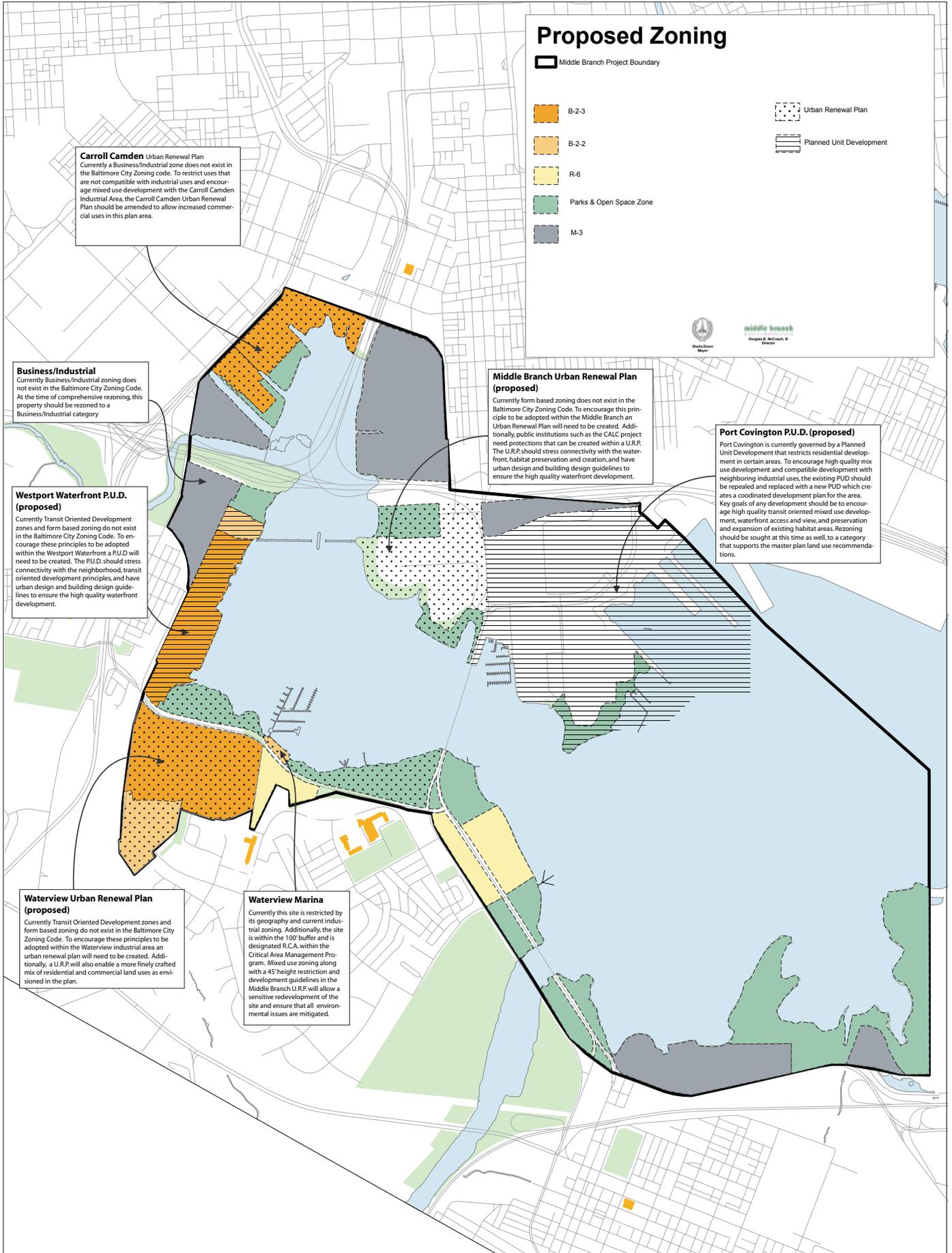
A comprehensive trail system will be part of the Middle Branch redevelopment.

## VI. Recommendations

Recommended Land Use Densities and Zoning Maps indicating proposed land use densities and zoning have been created according to the existing conditions, opportunities and constraints, and guiding principles identified in this Chapter.

### North Shore

The north shore has many existing heavy industrial land uses, and is in close proximity to the Carroll Camden Industrial Area. This area benefits from good highway access and proximity to the Hamburg Street Light Rail stop. This area is proposed to have Medium Density Commercial/Industrial land uses to ensure appropriate neighboring land uses that are compatible with the existing industry, but allow for a range of commercial development to take advantage of the good transportation access. Many of the properties in the North Shore are small in size and need more intense zoning to achieve the same build-out as larger parcels in other parts of the plan. For this reason higher zoning categories have been chosen in this area. Since a business/industrial zone currently does not exist in the Baltimore City Zoning Ordinance, the recommendation for implementation of the master plan is to rezone the properties to a business zone, B-2-3, and amend the Carroll Camden Urban Renewal Plan to only allow mixed-land uses which are compatible with existing industry.



### Proposed Zoning

- Middle Branch Project Boundary
- B-2-3
- B-2-2
- R-6
- Parks & Open Space Zone
- M-3
- Urban Renewal Plan
- Planned Unit Development

Douglas S. McCasch, III  
 Director

**Carroll Camden Urban Renewal Plan**  
 Currently a Business/Industrial zone does not exist in the Baltimore City Zoning code. To restrict uses that are not compatible with industrial uses and encourage mixed use development with the Carroll Camden Industrial Area, the Carroll Camden Urban Renewal Plan should be amended to allow increased commercial uses in this plan area.

**Business/Industrial**  
 Currently Business/Industrial zoning does not exist in the Baltimore City Zoning Code. At the time of comprehensive rezoning, this property should be rezoned to a Business/Industrial category.

**Westport Waterfront P.U.D. (proposed)**  
 Currently Transit Oriented Development zones and form based zoning do not exist in the Baltimore City Zoning Code. To encourage these principles to be adopted within the Westport Waterfront a P.U.D. will need to be created. The P.U.D. should stress connectivity with the neighborhood, transit oriented development principles, and have urban design and building design guidelines to ensure the high quality waterfront development.

**Waterview Urban Renewal Plan (proposed)**  
 Currently Transit Oriented Development zones and form based zoning do not exist in the Baltimore City Zoning Code. To encourage these principles to be adopted within the Waterview industrial area an urban renewal plan will need to be created. Additionally, a U.R.P. will also enable a more finely crafted mix of residential and commercial land uses as envisioned in the plan.

**Waterview Marina**  
 Currently this site is restricted by its geography and current industrial zoning. Additionally, the site is within the 100' buffer and is designated R.C.A. within the Critical Area Management Program. Mixed use zoning along with a 45' height restriction and development guidelines in the Middle Branch U.R.P. will allow a sensitive redevelopment of the site and ensure that all environmental issues are mitigated.

**Middle Branch Urban Renewal Plan (proposed)**  
 Currently form based zoning does not exist in the Baltimore City Zoning Code. To encourage this principle to be adopted within the Middle Branch an Urban Renewal Plan will need to be created. Additionally, public institutions such as the CALC project need protections that can be created within a U.R.P. The U.R.P. should stress connectivity with the waterfront, habitat preservation and creation, and have urban design and building design guidelines to ensure the high quality waterfront development.

**Port Covington P.U.D. (proposed)**  
 Port Covington is currently governed by a Planned Unit Development that restricts residential development in certain areas. To encourage high quality mix use development and compatible development with neighboring industrial uses, the existing PUD should be repealed and replaced with a new PUD which creates a coordinated development plan for the area. Key goals of any development should be to encourage high quality transit oriented mixed use development, waterfront access and view, and preservation and expansion of existing habitat areas. Rezoning should be sought at this time as well, to a category that supports the master plan land use recommendations.

Map 5 - Proposed Zoning

## West Shore

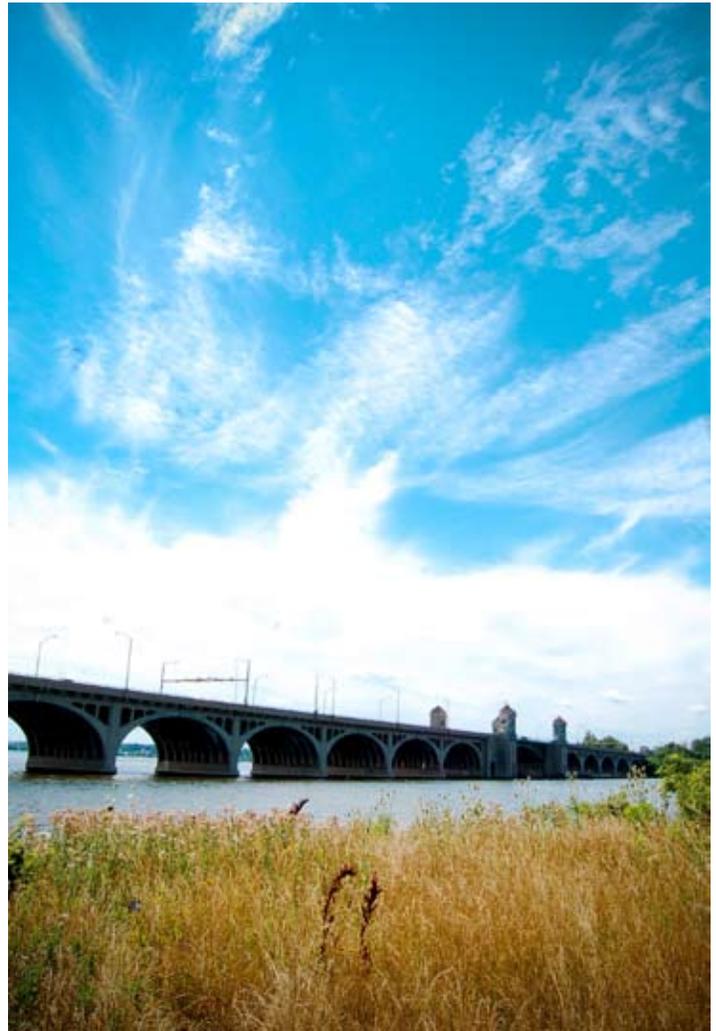
The west shore has excellent transportation access and resources with multiple access ramps to I-295 and a light rail stop in the Westport community. To encourage transit oriented development and redevelopment of the Westport neighborhood, High Density Commercial Mixed Use is recommended for the Westport Waterfront. This will allow a range of economic and residential development which will provide both employment and housing opportunities for existing and new residents. Because Transit Oriented Development zoning is not a part of the Baltimore City Zoning Ordinance, to implement the master plan the properties should be rezoned to a high density business zone, B-2-3, and a Planned Unit Development will be required. To implement the transit oriented principles as well as provide for high quality waterfront development that integrates with the existing neighborhood, urban design and building guidelines should be part of the Planned Unit Development.

## South Shore

The south shore has a mix of transit access and resources. The Waterview Industrial Area is in close proximity to the Cherry Hill light rail stop, but much of the area does not have direct access to a highway or mass transit. Recognizing this limitation, primarily residential land uses are envisioned with limited supporting commercial for this area. Close to transit areas, High Density Residential Mixed Use is recommended, while farther away Medium Density Residential Mixed Use is. Given the lack of a transit oriented development zone in the current Baltimore City Zoning Ordinance, the High Density areas close to transit will be rezoned to a high density business zone, B-2-3. Additionally, they will be overlaid with an Urban Renewal Plan to tailor the land use and limit the size and nature of commercial uses and provide guidelines for transit oriented development. Medium density areas will be rezoned to a medium density business zone, B-2-2, and have either a Planned Unit Development or an Urban Renewal Plan to tailor and limit commercial land uses.

## East Shore

The east shore has excellent highway access to I-95 and possesses a greater potential connection to the south Baltimore peninsula than any other area in the plan. It also enjoys a long shoreline with excellent views of the outer harbor and the Middle Branch Basin. This



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

Developing Middle Branch into Baltimore's "Green Gateway" will allow man and nature to coexist in a comfortable and attractive way.

plan proposes high intensity mixed use land use in this area to take advantage of these opportunities. However, the area lacks any high quality mass transit connections and is isolated physically from the South Baltimore Neighborhoods by the I-95 overpass. Additionally, the area is served by only a limited number of roadways, most of which are regional connections, which are unable to handle a large growth in local traffic. Overcoming these issues and creating major transit connections is imperative to allowing high intensity development in the area. Currently, no high quality mass transit connections to this area are planned, however this plan recommends that a study be undertaken immediately to more comprehensively plan transportation options for this area. Following this study, rezoning recommendations for high intensity zoning (density above 70 units/acres and FAR above 4) can be made based on the principles of Transit Oriented Development. The eastern shore is made up of two principle areas, Port Covington, and the Aquarium/Dickman Street Area. The current recommendations for these areas are as follows:

**Port Covington:** Port Covington is a large area comprising over 165 acres with well defined natural and physical boundaries. The area also benefits from relatively few property owners. The lack of high quality mass transit connections prevents any long range opportunity of high intensity transit oriented development from occurring. Additionally, some current properties in the area are active industrial businesses which would potentially be threatened by immediate mixed use rezoning of the area. Along with the proposed transportation study, this plan proposes a detailed planning process to begin with all the property owners of the Port Covington area to develop a plan for long range high intensity development based on the planning and implementation of high quality mass transit connections. At the conclusion of this process and contingent upon private/public partnerships to achieve the development of high quality mass transit, high intensity zoning recommendations will be made, a new Port Covington Planned Unit Development will be created to implement a development plan for the area, and design guidelines and form controls will be created to ensure high quality transit oriented development.

**Aquarium/Dickman Street Area:** While having excellent views to the middle branch basin, this area suffers from inadequate connections to the transportation roadway system. Planning has been underway to add an additional access point to this area but there are several obstacles still to overcome. Beginning with the proposed transportation study, this plan proposes a detail planning process to begin with all property owners of the aquarium dickman street area, in conjunction with the port covington property owners, to develop a plan for long range high intensity development based on a quality mass transit connections. At the conclusion of this process and contingent upon private/public partnerships to achieve the development of high quality mass transit, high intensity zoning recommendations will be made, planned unit developments and urban renewal plans will be created to implement a development plan for the area, and design guidelines and form controls will be created to ensure high quality transit oriented development. If the transportation study concludes that additional access points can not be created and mass transit connections can not be achieved, then high density can not be recommended for this area. The recommendation will then be developed in this area as a medium density commercial mixed use area. Properties will be zoned to a medium density business zone, B-2-2. This will allow a substantial amount of development in this area, but ensure the viability of the transportation roadway network to handle increased traffic

## General Development Recommendations

- Adopt zoning changes recommended in this plan.
- Continue with a more focused planning process for the following development areas to create a more detailed development and implementation strategy: Waterview Industrial Area, Harbor Hospital, and Port Covington.
- Adopt or amend existing or new Urban Renewal Ordinances and/or Planned Unit Developments to implement the opportunities, guiding principles and recommendations contained in the Master Plan based on the principles of public access, improved transit, green shoreline, sustainable development practices and habitat restoration.
- As development plans proceed, adopt Planned Unit Developments to ensure the Goals, Opportunities, Principles, and Recommendations of the Master Plan are implemented.
- Complete a study of existing utility infrastructure to guide improvements, green building goals and design guidelines.
- Begin a transportation study to plan for increased transportation options, focusing on mass transit connections, to the East Shore *area*.
- The recommendations contained in the community master plans should be the foundation for approving zoning changes, urban renewal ordinances, planned unit developments and capital improvements.



# middle branch



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

## Transportation

*“The point of cities is multiplicity of choice”*

*- Jane Jacobs*

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



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

transportation options.

## I. History

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

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

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

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

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

## II. Existing Conditions

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

### Major Road Systems

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



Map 6 - Traffic Barriers

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

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

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

## Rail Roads

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

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

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

*Photo by Andrew Nagl*



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

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



Photo by Andrew Nagl

Layered interstate Bridges cross the Middle Branch.

### III. Opportunities

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

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

bridge.

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

## IV. Constraints

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

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

*Photo by Andrew Nagl*



## V. Guiding Principles

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

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

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

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

### 3. Enhance circulation within and between neighborhoods.

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

## Vision

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

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

*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

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

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

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

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

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

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

## VI. Recommendations

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

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# middle branch



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

## Water Quality and Habitat

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

*- Loren Eiseley*

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

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



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

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

## I. History

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

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

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

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

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

## Major Challenges

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

## II. Existing Conditions

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

### Water Quality:

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

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



Map 7 - Trash Study  
 Middle Branch  
 Moffat and Nichols Engineers

## Definition of Trash Density Ratings

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

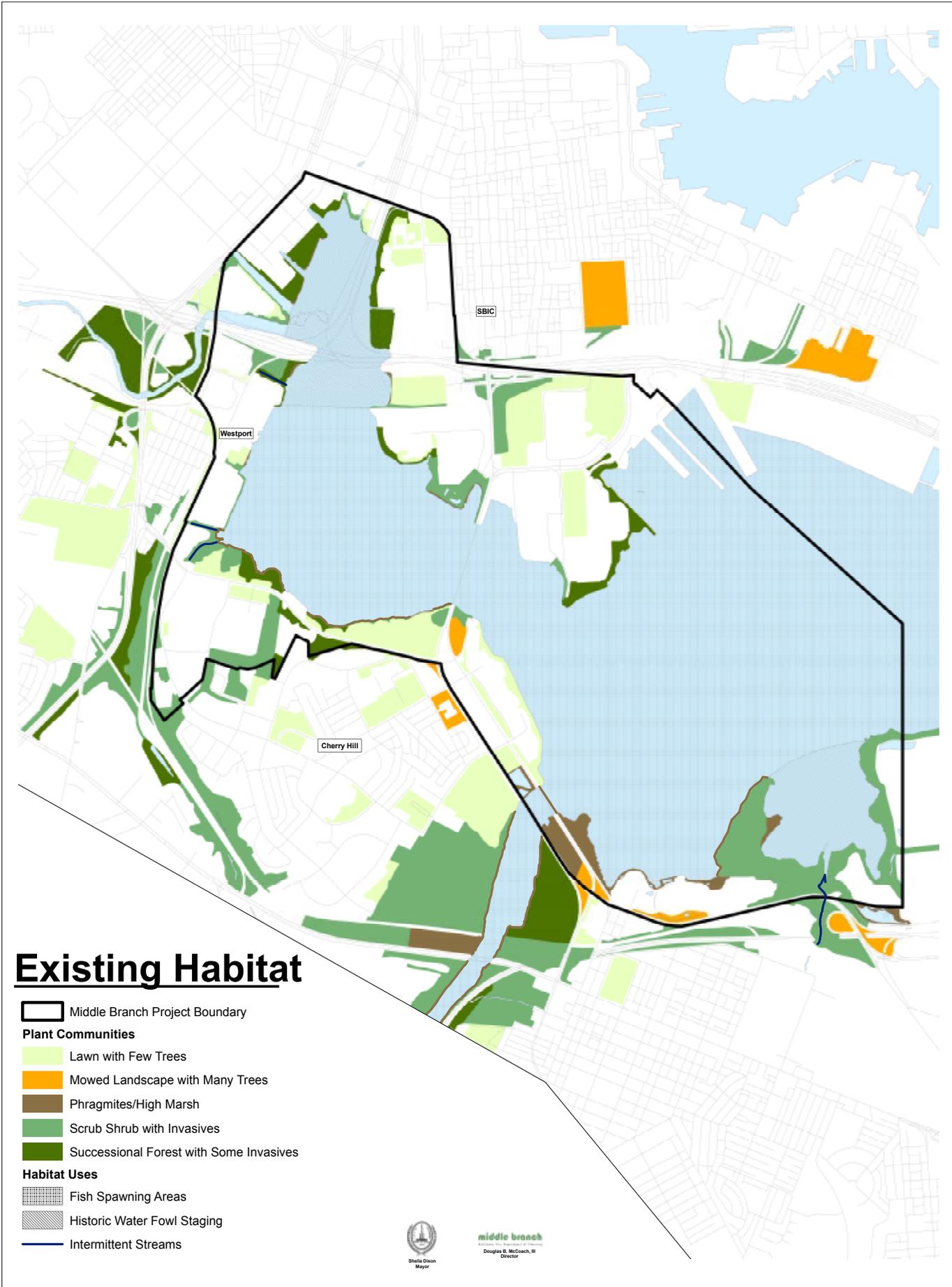
## Habitat:

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



Photo by Andrew Nagl

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



Map 8 - Existing Habitat

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



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

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

## **Contaminants:**

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

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

## **III. Opportunities for Improvements to Water Quality and Habitats**

### **Trash:**

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

# Helpful Definitions

## What is a TMDL?

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

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

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

*Source: Maryland Department of the Environment WEB site*

## What is a Watershed?

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

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

*Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources WEB site*



Source: Retooling Baltimore, Author: Mark Jones and Kevin Moore, Date: June 1998

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

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



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

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

## **Bacteria:**

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

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

## **Toxics and Sediment:**

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

## **Habitat:**

### **Mitigation Opportunities**

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

## **IV. Constraints for Water Quality and Habitat**

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



Photo by Andrew Nagl

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

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

Vision:

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

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# V. Guiding principles

## Restore Degraded Habitat for Marine and Upland Species

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

## Improve Water Quality to Fishable and Swimmable Levels By 2020

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

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

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

## VI. Recommendations

### Create a Comprehensive Monitoring Program that includes an Education Component

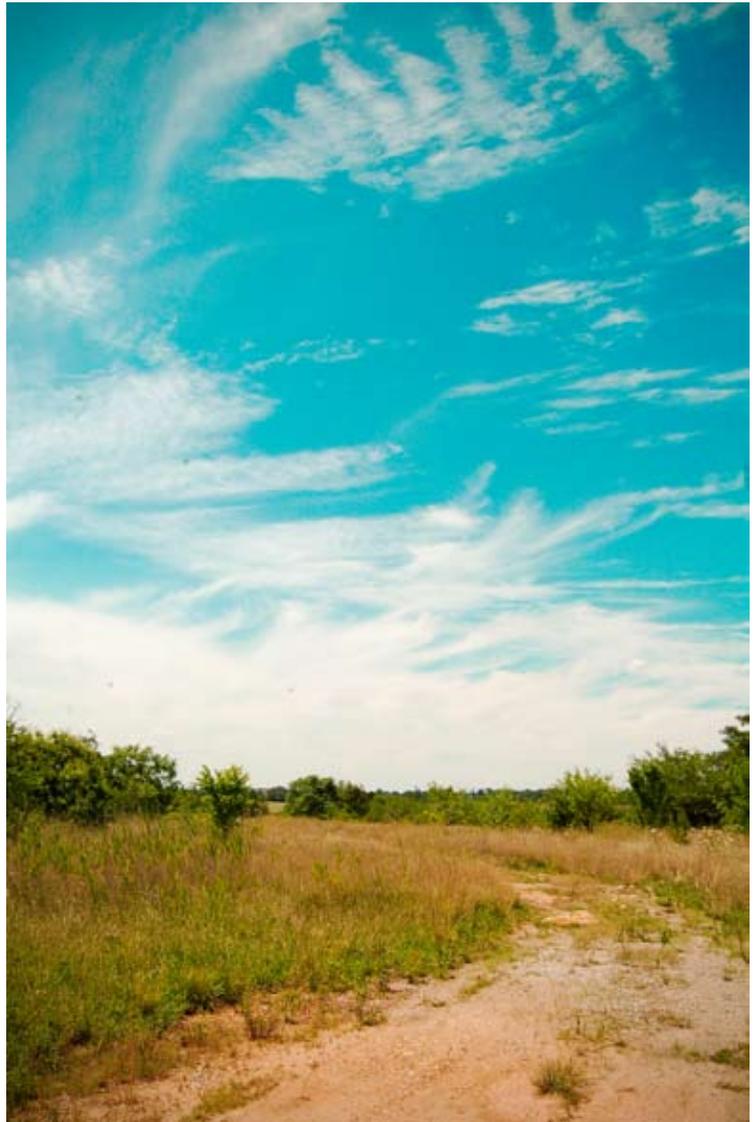
1. Conduct surveys and gather and evaluate data from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the City and the County that show bacteria and toxics levels and sources.
2. Develop Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) water quality criteria for Gwynns Falls watershed.

### Manage Floating Debris

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

### Incorporate Advanced Stormwater Techniques

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



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

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

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

2. Retrofit existing development with Best Management Practices.

### **Restore Habitat Areas**

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

### **Enforce Environmental Regulations**

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

### **Create New Tidal Marshes**

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

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

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# middle branch



Historic Maryland Yacht Club

## Heritage and Tourism

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

*-Kevin Lynch*

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



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

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

## I. History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Sachse 1869

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo by Andrew Nagl

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

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

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

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

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

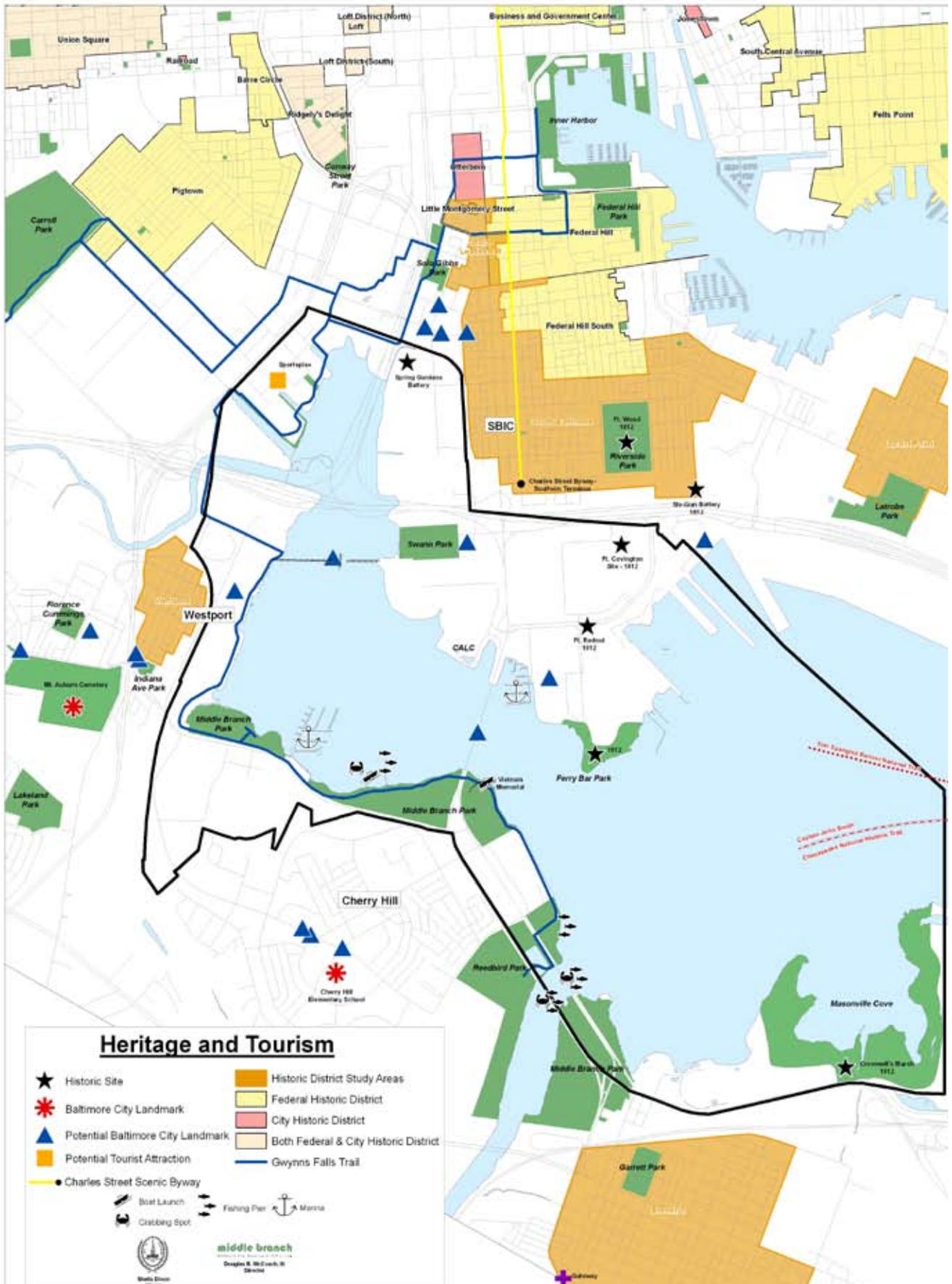
## II. Existing Historical, Cultural, and Natural Resources

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

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

## III. Opportunities for Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development

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



Map 9 - Heritage and Tourism

## IV. Constraints

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



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

### *Vision*

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

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## V. Guiding Principles

### 1. Ensure the Preservation of Historic Resources.

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

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

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

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



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



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

### **3. Maximize Heritage tourism of the Middle Branch**

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

## VI. Recommendations

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



# middle branch



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

Murals like this one are representative of the local communities' vibrant culture. Through thoughtful urban design, these communities will maintain their unique identities.

## Sustainable Communities

***“Never doubt that a small number of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”***

***- Margaret Meade***

Sustainable communities are the foundation of a healthy city. These communities have a unique sense of place, preserve natural and cultural resources, embrace local enterprise, promote stable employment, and increase social equity through the fair distribution of the costs and benefits of development.

Redevelopment of the Middle Branch will create major changes to both the waterfront and its adjacent communities. The challenge presented is to capture the opportunities to ensure these changes

have a positive impact on existing communities. Redevelopment of the waterfront will allow us to restore and improve walkable connections from existing neighborhoods to the park system, trails, transportation and shops. Housing can be stabilized by directing private and public funds to renovation of existing homes. New mixed-use development will increase the number of jobs. Light Rail stops that were originally located without improving local access can be improved with new sidewalks and facilities that encourage their use. The unique character of surrounding neighborhoods can be acknowledged and celebrated as a part of these changes. Mixed-income communities are the strongest communities. Redevelopment of the Middle Branch provides the opportunity to increase housing opportunities for low and moderate income residents through home ownership and new rentals.

The Middle Branch Master Plan acts as an overlay plan to the existing communities. It is not intended to replace the authority of local communities to guide their future, but to complement and support existing plans and programs. See Map 11 for community locations.

## **I. History**

### **Cherry Hill**

In the early 1940's private developers laid out three subdivisions for African Americans in the area now known as Cherry Hill. In 1943 City Officials, after a heated debate about location, chose the Cherry Hill area to build 600 apartment units for African American war workers. The whole neighborhood was laid out by the relatively new Planning Commission, according to the best design ideas at the time: curving streets, cul-de-sacs, pedestrian paths, and well-sited green space. When the HABC development opened in January of 1945, Cherry Hill became one of the first African American suburban-style housing projects in the country. In 1945, these units were opened. Shortly after the war, the Cherry Hill Homes were converted to low-income housing. HABC added another 632 units in 1952 and 360 units in 1956. In 1980, HABC added another 121 units to Cherry Hill, making it one of the largest housing projects east of Chicago. The neighborhood in the 1990's went through major changes including the demolition of public housing units built in 1952 and 1956 and the renovations of hundreds more.

### **Brooklyn**

Throughout the 19th century, the Brooklyn and 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. These farms trucked their goods to market in Baltimore. On the Middle Branch shoreline, several waterfront resorts and hotels opened, catering to Baltimore resident truck farmers. The Walnut Spring Hotel, built in the 1850's, became a popular rest stop for farmers, a resort for city residents, a communal hall to villagers, and a terrapin farm.

By the mid-19th century, two initiatives transformed Brooklyn. First, in 1853 the Patapsco Land Company formed, hoping to create a deep water port. Second, in circa 1856, the Long Bridge was built, connecting Brooklyn to South Baltimore. Other changes encouraged growth in Brooklyn. In 1878, the State of Maryland purchased the Long Bridge and eliminated its toll, and in 1882, the B&O railroad extended a rail line across to Curtis Bay. Subsequently, in Curtis Bay the B&O railroad erected a coal shipping facility in 1884 and a train station in 1886. Several years later, the Baltimore

and Curtis Railway began streetcar service from Brooklyn to Baltimore. By the 1890's, suburban and rowhouse developments were being erected in this area. In 1918, Brooklyn became part of Baltimore City.

## **Westport**

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Westport grew into a small village catering to local farms and several resorts located along the Middle Branch shoreline. The Middle Branch shoreline attracted resorts that offered everything from crabcakes to gambling.

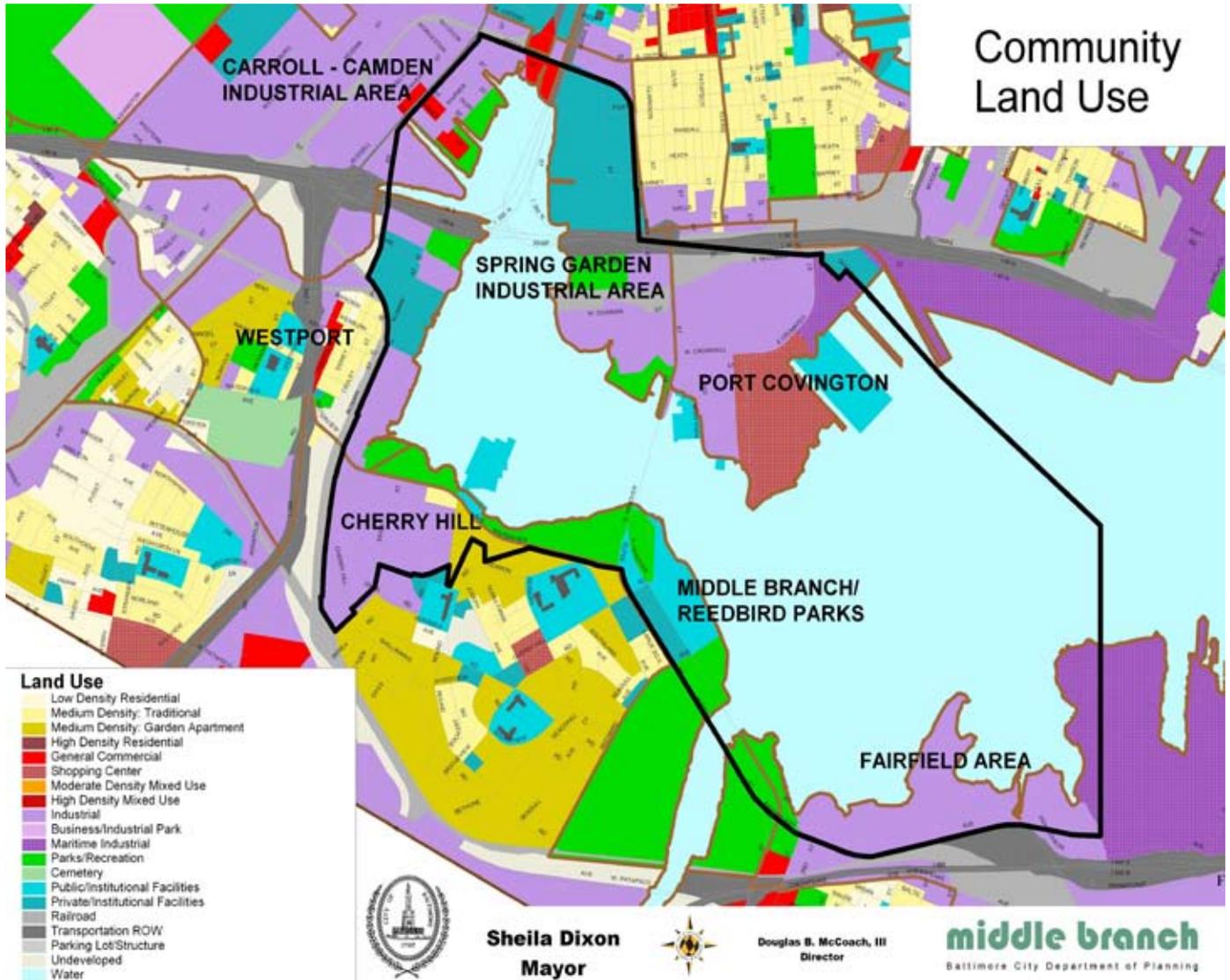
By the turn of the 20th Century, industry loomed over the Westport area. Carr-Lowrey Glass Company built a glass manufacturing plant on the shores of the Middle Branch in 1889. Several years later, the Baltimore Novelty Steam Boiler Works built their plant just north of Carr-Lowrey Glass Company, and in 1905 BG&E constructed the Westport Power Plant. The first residential rowhouses were constructed between 1898 and 1915. Between 1915 and 1924, the porch-front rowhouses were constructed. Industrial workers settled into these houses as the existing industries in the area expanded and new industries moved in. The residential neighborhood centered on Annapolis Road, and seamlessly meshed with the Mt. Winans community (that was centered on Hollins Ferry Road). The construction of I-295 split the community in half and destroyed a large swathe of the neighborhood.

## **II. Existing Conditions**

The existing neighborhoods span the Middle Branch geographically, historically, and in their character. Along the west shore, Westport is situated behind the industrial waterfront, physically separated from the water. Westport worked with the City to create a master plan in 2004. A major development project planned for the site of former industrial plants will once again connect this neighborhood to the beautiful Middle Branch waterfront. The community is divided in half by I-295, and is ringed by heavy industrial uses along its northwestern edge including Patapsco Excavating Company and Wimpey Minerals, U.S.A. These uses create dust and truck traffic. (See Map 10)

The community of Cherry Hill sits behind the southern shoreline of the Middle Branch overlooking the estuary. This community is home to over a dozen churches, a major park, a health center, a library branch, and many other services. The rate of home ownership is higher than in the city as whole. The community has made great strides in public safety and school programs in recent years and sponsors collective activities such as regular neighborhood clean-ups and citizens-on-patrol programs. The Cherry Hill Master Plan demonstrates a wealth of successes and new initiatives in areas as diverse as expanded economic development and increased voter participation.

Cherry Hill has seen the demolition or impending demolition of hundreds of public housing units, opening the door for new development. Much of the public housing is located south of Cherry Hill Road. Several privately owned apartment complexes are located along the northern edge of the community, closest to the waterfront. Currently these units are very affordable. The Cherry Hill Master Plan recommends determining the future plans of the management companies controlling these properties. There is concern regarding their future availability for low- and moderate- income tenants given the pending changes along the waterfront. The Cherry Hill plan looks favorably upon mixed-income redevelopment. This redevelopment should include a significant percentage of af-



Map 10 - Community Land Use

fordable housing. The Cherry Hill Public Housing Tenants’ Council has right of first refusal on any development project on HABC owned land. The Tenants’ Council must, therefore, be a partner in any redevelopment scheme utilizing public land that was formerly public housing.

Light Rail stops are located in both the Westport and Cherry Hill communities and allow a rider to reach downtown Baltimore in a matter of minutes. A sixty-acre industrial area is located in the western edge of the community between residential uses and the light rail station. This area is marginally productive, containing a mix of active and vacant properties.

The far southern end of the Middle Branch is home to the community of Brooklyn. In contrast to the row houses in the other neighborhoods, Brooklyn has many detached houses. It can be accessed directly from the Hanover Street Bridge and is the neighborhood closest to Anne Arundel County. Brooklyn is also adjacent to the Port of Baltimore and I-895 can be accessed from the main street. This community is also separated from the Middle Branch by waterfront industrial uses. Growing out of its master plan, efforts are being made to enhance its commercial area, upgrade housing, and support waterfront open space projects. Its recent designation as a City Main Street is a testimony

to these initiatives.

Though all existing communities should benefit from the recommendations of the Middle Branch plan, of primary importance are Westport and Cherry Hill. In the 2006 Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City, there is a discussion of the 2005 Housing Market Typology. Every city neighborhood is categorized as to its condition and the likely resource allocation needed to stabilize or upgrade each area. Westport and Cherry Hill are both communities that are in need of additional resources.

The Cherry Hill and Westport neighborhoods need a certain amount of government resources to maintain or upgrade their quality of life, such as jobs training and access to health care, in addition to housing market intervention.

### III. Opportunities

There are many benefits from economic investment, including:

- Increased population and restoration of vacant homes
- Increased number and types of jobs
- More customers for local shopping centers
- Expanded waterfront access and better care of parkland
- Improvements to transportation
- More recreational and educational opportunities

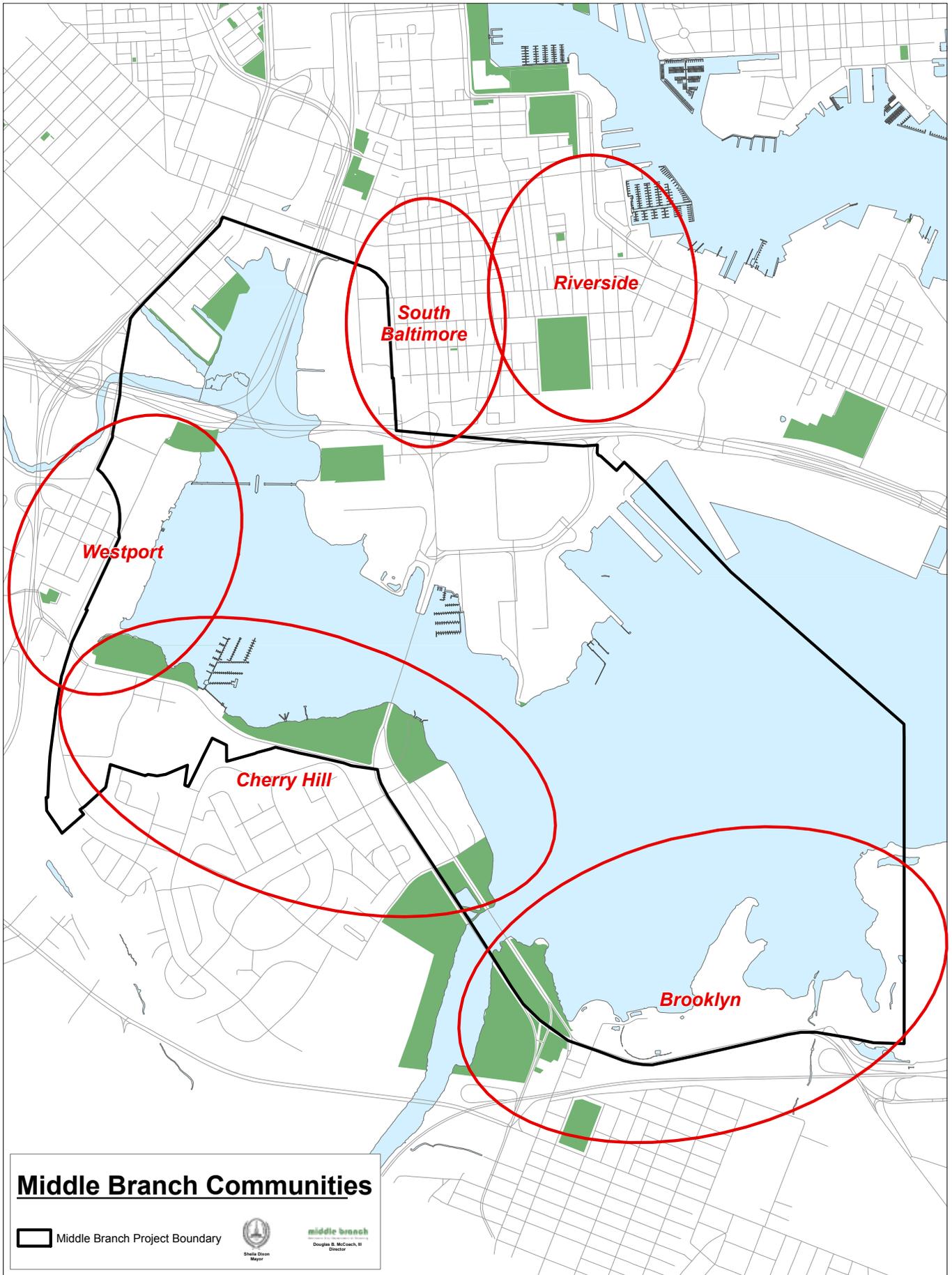
### IV. Constraints

- New development and increases in demand for housing often raise prices, forcing existing residents to move out because of higher property taxes and changing rents.
- Gentrification and new populations force major changes in the character of historic communities. These changes are not always beneficial to existing residents.



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

Rowhouses such as these can easily be an important part of a sustainable community.



**Middle Branch Communities**

 Middle Branch Project Boundary
 


Map 11 - Middle Branch Communities

## V. Guiding Principles

While each of the communities surrounding the Middle Branch is unique in character, all have similar requirements for a successful and sustainable community. Over arching community Vision and Principles as they relate to the larger Middle Branch are presented here in this section.

- *Reduce poverty.* Both local and regional economic development efforts should be targeted to reducing poverty by promoting jobs that match the skills of existing residents, improving the skills of low-income individuals, addressing the needs of families moving off welfare, and insuring the availability in all communities of quality affordable child care, transportation, and housing.
- *Reduce crime.* Public safety initiatives should be comprehensive and coordinated.
- *Prevent displacement and support affordable housing choices.* As development pressures mount, programs should be in place to assist existing residents to remain in their homes, relocate nearby, or, if renters, become homeowners if appropriate.
- *Increase employment.* Utilize city and state programs to assist existing small businesses to remain while also encouraging new businesses to locate in the communities for greater access to services and employment opportunities.
- *Plan for human-scale development.* Streets, pedestrian paths, and bike paths should contribute to a system of fully connected and interesting routes to all destinations. Their design should encourage pedestrian and bicycle use through narrow widths and spatially defined buildings, trees, and lighting. This will discourage high-speed traffic. Community design should help conserve resources and minimize waste.
- *Provide for a well-balanced, well-designed transportation system.* A key element of a livable community is a system that allows people to get around by car, transit, bicycle, and walking. As many activities as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit stops. In the Middle Branch area, especially Westport, a plan for routing truck traffic onto the main roads and not on local streets is very important.
- *Improve educational attainment.* The success of students should be of concern to all citizens. Schools should also be used as centers for the community.
- *Create job opportunities and job training programs for existing residents.* To be sustainable, emphasis should be placed on career building and not simply entry-level jobs. Coordination among existing and new employers with job training programs will offer the best path for job advancement within the area.
- *Provide for open space and recreation along the waterfront and connect existing parks to the waterfront and the surrounding communities.* Existing parks, such as Reedbird Park, should offer a connection to the waterfront through Middle Branch Park. Any new waterfront projects should be planned to provide easy connections to the adjacent neighborhoods, both physically and psychologically.
- *Protect the character of existing communities and limit displacement of current residents as changes occur.* Preserve community affordability, character and sense of place by initiating spe-

## Vision

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***Include existing communities in the restoration of the greater Middle Branch through connectivity, housing opportunities, job creation, access to open space and the waterfront, and preservation of community character.***

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cial programs and initiatives.

## VI. Recommendations

Surrounding communities will be exposed to new investment patterns and gentrification as a result of land use changes along the waterfront. The residents of these communities should remain an important part of the area as it evolves. To preserve community character and sense of place, special commitments, programs and initiatives will be needed. Therefore, the Middle Branch Master Plan recommends the following actions take place immediately:

### Prevent Displacement

1. Educate Residents regarding how to purchase homes, improve homes and reduce impacts on property tax increases through a series of housing workshops. This will help existing homeowners deal with inquiries from investors, help renters purchase homes, and assist elderly residents who want to stay in their homes. *(See Appendix B for existing housing programs in Maryland)*
2. Study ways that new, unique housing assistance programs can be initiated within surrounding communities to assure residents can remain.
3. The Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City should work with surrounding communities to create specific plans with time lines for City controlled properties.
4. Enforce the new Baltimore City Inclusionary Housing regulations in new development projects with the goal to provide additional, affordable housing in new developments.
5. The recommendations contained in community Master Plans should be the foundation for approving zoning changes, Urban Renewal Ordinances, Planned Unit Developments and capital improvements.



Photo by Andrew Nagl

Urban blight can threaten the health and sustainability of a community.

### Increase job opportunities

1. Work with the State of Maryland and the Baltimore Development Corporation to offer tax incentives to new developments for employment of district residents.
2. Provide 'first source' employee recruitment from new developments in surrounding communities.

## Individual Recommendations by Community

Each community impacted by the Middle Branch redevelopment has completed a master plan or is in the process of completing a plan. The recommendations contained in this section are taken from these plans. For more detailed information, see the Baltimore City website:

<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/planning/available.html>

### Brooklyn

The Brooklyn-Curtis Bay SNAP plan recommends several strategies for housing investment, which could also apply to Westport and Cherry Hill.

A few of these recommendations are:

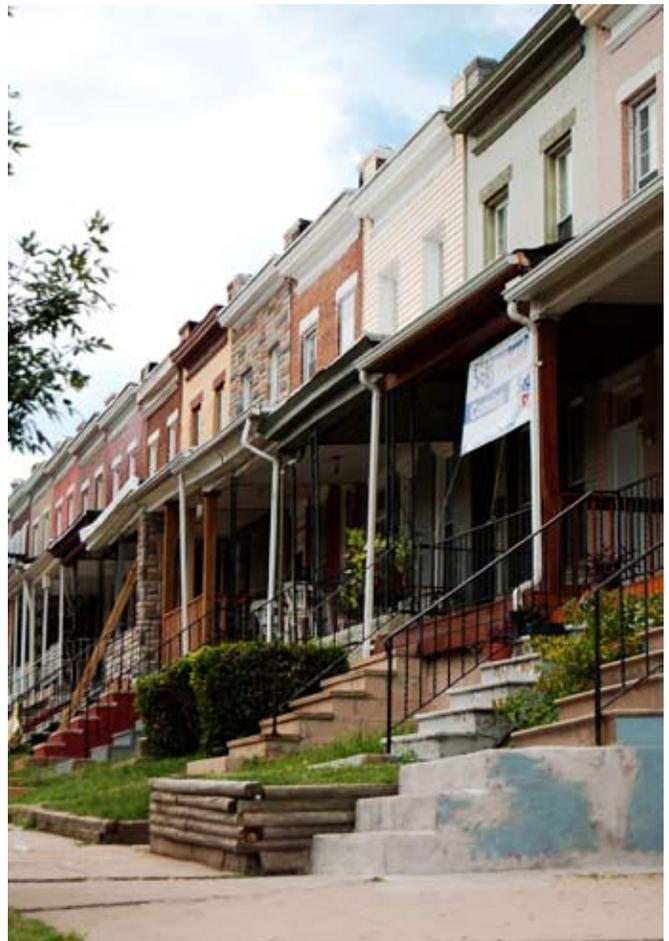
- Market the community to home buyers
- Improve housing conditions on the edges of strong areas
- Assist homeowners in making needed repairs
- Improve rental housing conditions
- Develop long-term strategies to revitalize weak housing areas.

The plan also recommends:

- Encourage the redevelopment of the commercial corridors, and especially the parcel at Garrett and Potee streets, just southeast of I-895.
- Develop the nature preserve at Masonville Cove with accompanying educational center resources
- Improve the appearance of industrial areas and work with City agencies and local residences and industries to establish community-industry partnerships to address common issues.

### Westport

- The Westport-Mt. Winans-Lakeland plan recommends that the eastern area of Westport between I-295 and the proposed new waterfront project should be a higher-density mix of homes, stores, and parks. Westport could accommodate more than double the number of existing housing units.
- West of I-295 provides the best opportunity for large-scale redevelopment.
- The east side of Westport is the most vulnerable to investment pressures and gentrifica-



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

In a healthy, mixed-use community, people living in rowhouses like these will have easy access to basic needs like recreation and grocery stores.

tion. The neighborhood associations in the area are planning a series of housing workshops to help existing residents deal with inquiries from investors and assist elderly residents who want to stay in their homes.

- Make rehabilitation assistance programs available to existing property owners and help first-time home buyers purchase properties.

Other recommendations that need immediate attention are:

- Work with stakeholders in Westport to develop a detailed mini-plan for the future of the area between the Light Rail station and I-295, including a corridor plan for Annapolis Road, the main street in Westport. This plan should incorporate the vision for connecting the existing community to the new waterfront development project and to green spaces and the waterfront.
- An immediate action plan should be undertaken for the redevelopment of Westport Homes Extension that takes into account the needs of existing residents and relates to the plan mentioned above for the eastern part of Westport.
- The waterfront development project should provide for convenient access and parking for the Light Rail stop that prevents a spillover of traffic and parking into the existing neighborhood.
- The waterfront development project should provide a multi-purpose building near the water for educational, recreational, and other programs that will serve not only the new residents and employees but also the existing residents.
- Transportation improvements should be studied to make automobile and truck access to and around Westport and Mt. Winans less confusing. This should include a thorough analysis of the functionality of Hollins Ferry Road and a plan to keep trucks off of local streets. A study of enhanced transit services should also be undertaken.
- Facilities for recreation, especially for youth, must be upgraded and new facilities put in place.



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

Opportunities for small craft boating in the Middle Branch are immense and access to them should be expanded for all residents.

### **Recommendations from the Draft Cherry Hill Master Plan**

- Support the reconfiguration of Cherry Hill Road to connect to the new “main street” in Turner Development’s Westport waterfront project.

- Create an active list of available properties that could be purchased by existing residents. Also, establish a series of housing workshops to help existing residents deal with inquiries from investors and assist elderly residents who want to stay in their homes.
- Develop a public relations campaign to market Cherry Hill as a place to live and work.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all existing infrastructure—roads, storm drains, lights, etc.—and create a plan for upgrading deficient infrastructure components.
- Cherry Hill is developing a Master Plan. The recommendations in the Cherry Hill Master Plan should be the foundation for establishing Urban Renewal Ordinances, Planned Unit Developments and capitol improvements within and near the community.
- Provide a shuttle bus system that connects the local streets in Cherry Hill, Westport, and Brooklyn to the Hamburg Street, Westport, Cherry Hill, and Patapsco Light Rail stations and commercial centers in new development projects.

Human service needs are also a major focus of the draft Cherry Hill Master Plan. Recommendations include:

- Ensure that new development adjacent to the Light Rail stop contains significant employment opportunities for existing Cherry Hill residents.
- Provide adequate job training, including programs for ex-offenders.
- Promote shopping in the Town Center, partly by bringing additional traffic to the neighborhood.
- Develop a comprehensive youth center with longer hours.
- Keep recreation centers open and fully staffed.
- Create youth apprenticeships and job opportunities.

***“The time is always right to do what is right.”***

***- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.***



# middle branch



## Maintaining Our Momentum

*“Another flaw in the human character is that everyone wants to build and nobody wants to do maintenance.”*

*- Kurt Vonnegut*

We have learned a great deal from our experiences guiding the development of the Inner Harbor. The Harbor has been a huge success that attracts millions of visitor’s per year, but this success has not come without challenges along the way. As the mixes of public and private pieces to the promenade were built, a cohesive maintenance and management system was needed to assure these spaces were kept consistently clean and safe. As the Inner Harbor became more attractive to recreational boaters, conflicts and safety issues developed among water users. Coordination was needed to assure safety and organized use of the water. Success is attractive - a wide variety of organizations and businesses approach the City every year for new licenses to use our public spaces. Others simply attempt to take advantage of the space without permission.

We have learned that a key element to the long term viability of major waterfront redevelopment efforts is Management and Maintenance. The large amounts of open space, new wetlands and public

trails in the Middle Branch will require a cohesive authority to oversee and coordinate maintenance and management.

This document proposes creation of a Middle Branch Advisory committee (see Implementation Chapter). This authority will establish a subcommittee to study the maintenance and management issues of the Middle Branch in more detail, including funding sources, responsibilities, membership, organizational structure, mission and phasing.

# **I. Management and Maintenance Considerations for the Middle Branch**

## **Responsibilities**

When fully developed, the Middle Branch will consist of a complex mix of land uses, habitat, and waterfront recreational uses. Some of the resulting issues the maintenance and management organization must address will include:

- Maintenance of public and private waterfront parks, gardens, and trails
- Maintenance of wetlands through upkeep such as invasive species and trash removal
- Daily trash removal and shoreline/water maintenance
- Management of volunteers involved in environmental education, clean-ups, and other activities
- Program coordination for special events
- Management of water safety and navigation
- Management of land trusts where appropriate
- Fundraising and Grantsmanship
- Coordination with city agencies involved in water quality monitoring, infrastructure improvements and other activities
- Partnerships with other organizations

## **General Considerations**

### **Recommended Board Members**

The Board membership of most maintenance and management organizations reflect the citizens and businesses of the area they represent. Therefore the following individuals and organizations should be considered for membership:

- Local/state/federal government officials (including scientists from land agencies and representatives from housing, minority business development, and environmental agencies)
- Rowing Club officers
- Port Authority
- Experts in water quality, habitat, finance, etc.

- Attorneys
- Elected city officials including members of city council and the mayor
- Community leaders
- The National Aquarium in Baltimore
- Land Owners and Developers along the Middle Branch waterfront
- Citizens from surrounding communities

### Potential Sources of Funding

- Special Taxing District
- Federal TOD (FTA)
- Grants
- Local corporations and Foundations
- Tax Increment Financing
- City of Baltimore



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

The Middle Branch is home to a great variety of recreational uses. With people wanting to row, sail, fish, and swim, sometimes these uses may conflict. They need to be monitored and managed for everyone's safety and enjoyment.

## II. Examples of Existing Management and Maintenance

### Partnership for Baltimore's Waterfront

#### Purpose

Partnership for Baltimore's Waterfront (PBW) coordinates with public and private sectors to determine and realize competitive standards for services like hospitality and landscaping. They do this in order to improve the harbor experience for those who visit, work, and live in the area.

#### Authority

In 2005, Mayor O'Malley's Inner Harbor Advisory Committee suggested the formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) to create higher standards and oversee management in the Inner Harbor area. In a BID, local property owners participate in a self-imposed tax to support additional services that supplement the City's basic provisions. With this in mind, City Council passed the Waterfront Management District Bill (Ordinance # 07-417) in early 2007. It created the Waterfront Management District and gave PBW the authority to perform specific supplemental services like extra landscaping and ambassadors to greet visitors. Under the ordinance, the City will maintain a baseline level of services like street sweeping and police patrols. Both the PBW's and the City's respective responsibilities are outlined in the Waterfront Services Agreement.

In order to operate legally, the District must be supported in a 'Special Election.' All commercial

property owners within the District will have the opportunity to vote in favor of or against the District's creation. Ballots were collected by May 25, 2007. The Waterfront Management District will be certified to operate if 58% of the votes cast support its creation.

The Waterfront Management District will function for four years. During this period, all commercial property owners in the area will pay a surcharge on their property taxes. Homeowners in the region will not have to pay this fee. At the end of four years, the Mayor and City Council will decide whether or not to reinstate the District for another four year period.

## **Responsibilities**

PBW is responsible for managing:

- Operations on the waterfront from the Rusty Scupper to Bond Street Wharf
- Landscaping along the promenade
- Upkeep of lawns and flowerbeds
- The provision of visitor guide pamphlets
- Cleaning and maintenance services that exceed those provided by Baltimore City
- Positive publicity for the waterfront

## **Funding**

The Partnership for Baltimore's Waterfront has gotten its funding from the contributions of founding partners, area corporations, local foundations, several tenants, all commercial property owners within the district and the City of Baltimore. Sixty percent (60%) of the Budget for the 2007 fiscal year comes from private sources, while 40% is from the city.

Commercial property owners are required to pay a fee based on a value assessment of their property. Currently, for every one hundred dollars of property they own, they pay fifteen cents. City funding is in the form of a \$300,000 service contract. Baltimore City also contributes the revenues it receives from docking fees for transient boaters, wharfage agreements and leases above a set 2004 baseline level.

## **Board**

PBW is governed by a 20 member Board of Directors. The board includes major local property owners and attractions such as the National Aquarium and Maryland Science Center. Nonprofits such as Living Classrooms and residents of the community are also involved. Finally, key employers, city agencies, and city elected leaders are also vital members.

## **Downtown Partnership**

### **Purpose**

Downtown Partnership knows that attracting more retailers, residents, and investment, will make Baltimore even more vibrant. With the intention of bringing more activity to the area, the Downtown Partnership works to make downtown cleaner and safer. They coordinate with the public and private sectors to make Downtown Baltimore an even better place for businesses, employees, resi-

dents, and visitors.

## Authority

Downtown Partnership of Baltimore is a Business Improvement District (BID) created by an ordinance of the Mayor and City Council. It is also enabled under state law. Business Improvement Districts charge local commercial property owners additional taxes or a surcharge to support services that supplement the city's basic provisions. These fees are essentially self-imposed because a majority of the business owners have chosen to pay for the extra services. City Council will soon schedule a vote on the renewal of the Downtown Management Authority.

## Responsibilities

Downtown Partnership is responsible for managing:

- Cleaning services that include picking up trash, removing graffiti, power washing sidewalks, pruning trees, and weeding
- Safety services including Public Safety Guides who give directions, check on businesses, provide homeless outreach, deter panhandling, act as safety escorts, and assist the police
- Beautification services that focus on sidewalks, streets, facades, and parks
- The Downtown Management Authority (DMA)

## Funding

Commercial property owners in the district pay a fee of 14.39 cents annually for every one hundred dollars of property value they own.

## Board

The Downtown Partnership is advised by a large board including members from Mercy Medical Center, prominent area businesses, Baltimore Development Cor-



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

The Gwynns Falls Trail System is a great place to recreate today, but it must be kept up or it will fall into disrepair.

poration, banks, elected city officials, city and state agencies, and museums and attractions.

### III. Conclusions

These are excellent examples of the form of organization needed to maintain the redevelopment of the Middle Branch. There are a few differences, however, that must be considered. For example:

- A Middle Branch entity will have more responsibilities including environmental protection
- There may be fewer commercial entities to draw funds from
- There are more opportunities for funding related to environmental restoration and management

It follows that the management and maintenance entity will be appropriate guides for the Middle Branch. By thoughtfully customizing the new organization to the region, we can expect it to become the catalyst needed to bring about positive change on the Middle Branch.



*Photo by Andrew Nagl*

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# middle branch



*Photo by Andrew Nagl  
An implementation entity must be created in order for the master plan's vision to be realized.*

## Implementation

***“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.”***

***- Peter Drucker***

This master plan envisions an environmentally sustainable and economically prosperous future for Baltimore’s Middle Branch. The Plan’s goal is to help connect people, with each other and with the Middle Branch estuary, through thoughtful urban design, efficient transportation options, ecological protection, historic preservation, and a diverse array of recreational opportunities. In order for these intentions to be realized, however, implementation of the Plan must be considered. Without an effective way to execute recommendations or manage and maintain the Middle Branch development, the Plan will not be successful.

Managing large areas of land for redevelopment is complex and time consuming. This is especially true when it comes to moving from a vision to a strategic plan and then to the details of implementing projects. To assure the vision is implemented, an appropriate team of individuals is needed. This team must have sufficient authority and expertise to make the difficult decisions needed and leverage resources for implementation activities.

# I. Recommendations

The Middle Branch Master Plan is a powerful tool that can guide the area to an exciting future. In order to maintain current momentum, however, it needs a potent driving force. Lessons learned from other development programs such as East Baltimore Development Initiative and Battery Park City suggest the need for an entity to oversee the implementation of the Plan. The Executive Committee recommends the immediate appointment of the Middle Branch Advisory Committee (MBAC) to oversee implementation of the Plan and carry forward its vision, guiding principles and recommendations. The MBAC will provide the cohesive leadership needed to maintain control and direct activities in the redevelopment area. They will bring the master plan's vision to fruition by ensuring and overseeing the plan's next steps.

# II. Mission

Oversee the implementation of the vision, goals, guiding principles and recommendations of the Middle Branch Master Plan by calling on the expertise of professionals, recommending sources of funding, and guiding the design of redevelopment sites and environmental restoration areas.

# III. Responsibilities of MBAC

- Assure that new development meets guiding principles as outlined in the Plan.
- Review and make recommendations regarding passage of the Urban Renewal Ordinance(s) as the legal means to govern new development.
- Review and make recommendations on all Planned Unit Developments, major park improvements or other redevelopment efforts.
- Develop recommendations for funding Middle Branch programs.
- Establish subcommittees to implement specific plan recommendations. Provide guidance on major issues and questions as they arise.
- Complete a study to guide the future management and maintenance of the new projects in the Middle Branch estuary. This will include recommendations for appropriate legislation to create the Management and Maintenance entity, identify its mission, and other needs.



*Photo by Kim Trueheart*

Community involvement is important to the successful implementation of this plan.

## IV. Membership of MBAC

The membership of the Task Force should reflect the membership of the Master Plan Executive Committee, with the addition of private sector experts in architecture, environmental restoration, development, and finance. The member list would contain:

- Chair: Deputy Mayor
- Five Committee Chairs (or persons with similar expertise)
- Director of Planning
- Director of BDC
- Director of R&P
- Director of Department of Public Works
- Director of Department of Transportation
- City Council Member
- Federal Agency representatives, as appropriate (USACE, NOAA, NPS)
- State DNR representative
- State MDE representative
- State Department of Business and Economic Development representative
- Habitat expert
- Green Architecture expert
- Financial expert
- Residents from Cherry Hill, Westport, and Brooklyn community associations



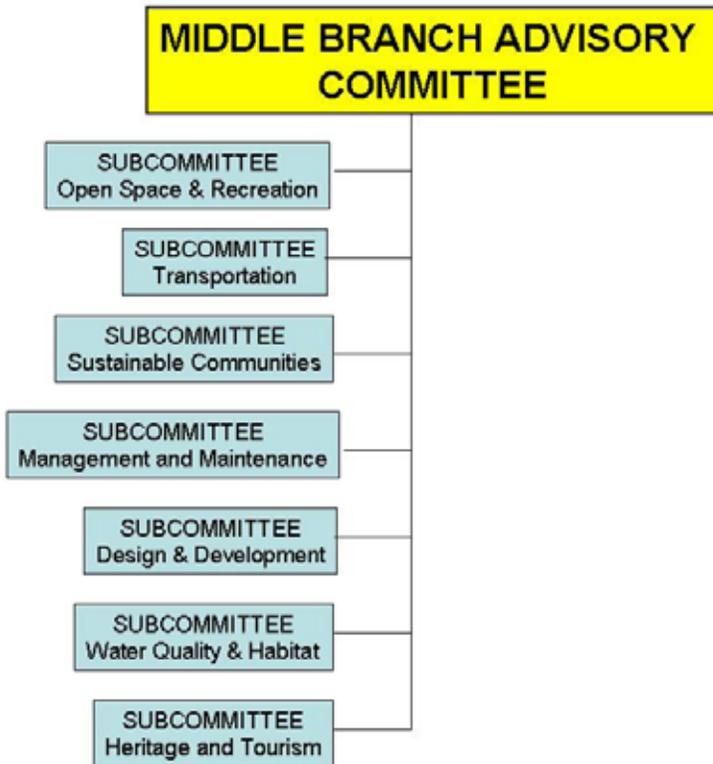
Photo by Andrew Nagl

*Due to the area's many resources, environmental grants may be one source of funding for a management and maintenance entity on the Middle Branch.*

# V. Structure of MBAC

The structure of the Advisory Committee should include a series of subcommittees focused on implementing the chapters of the Plan. Members will chair subcommittees as needed.

The MBAC will report to the Mayor and City Council.



*Ensuring that the necessary studies on water quality and the area's transportation infrastructure are conducted will be among the implementing entity's many responsibilities.*

# Implementation Time Tables

Water Quality and Habitat			
Objective	Implementing Bodies/ Agents	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline
<p><b>1. Create a Comprehensive Monitoring Program that includes an Education Component</b></p> <p>a.) Conduct surveys and gather and evaluate data from MDE, the City, and the County that show existing bacteria and toxics levels and sources.</p>	MDE, USACE, DNR, DPW	A comprehensive report with a quantitative understanding of the bacteria and toxics impacting the Middle Branch.	Long-term
b.) Develop a bacteria TMDL for the Gwynns Falls.	MDE, USACE, DNR, DPW	Bacteria TMDL	Short-term
<p><b>2. Manage Floating Debris</b></p> <p>a.) Conduct a systematic random-based survey of the watershed to identify hot-spots and types of trash.</p>	MDE, DPW, local non-profits	A GIS map showing regional trash hot-spots.	Short-term
b.) Create an education campaign on the impact of trash on neighborhoods and wildlife.	Baltimore City Public School System, local nonprofits, MDE, DPW	Greater citizen understanding of trash; Reduced environmental impact from trash	Long-term
c.) Present evidence to MDE to get the Harbor and Middle Branch listed as impaired by trash.	DNR, USACE, MDE	The Inner Harbor and Middle Branch given "impaired" status for trash by MDE	Long-term
d.) Support the proposed Maryland Bottle Bill.	City of Baltimore, Bottle Bill Groups	Helps to reduce floating trash in the Middle Branch by up to 50%.	Short-term
e.) Construct additional trash interceptors where appropriate and direct street sweeping programs to high trash streets.	City of Baltimore, MPA, Federal Partners.	Reduced levels of trash in the Middle Branch	Short-term
<p><b>3. Incorporate Advanced Stormwater Techniques</b></p> <p>a.) Incorporate advanced storm water treatment techniques in all redevelopment projects with a goal to treat 100% of pollution in storm water.</p>	Baltimore Department of Public Works	Reduction of trash and pollutants in the Middle Branch	Mid-term
b.) Retrofit existing developments with Best Management Practices	Baltimore Department of Public Works	Reduction of trash and pollutants in the Middle Branch	Short-term
<p><b>4. Restore Habitat Areas</b></p> <p>a.) Require a 100 foot wide green buffer around the Middle Branch shoreline.</p>	Baltimore Department of Planning	Request buffer creation or mitigation on all waterfront development projects	Immediate
b.) Develop a comprehensive planting, maintenance, and invasive species control plan to revegetate barren areas.	DNR, CAC, DOP, Department of Recreation and Parks, local nonprofits	Improved habitat and aesthetic value from formerly barren areas	Long-term

5. Enforce Environmental Regulations a.) Enforce Critical Area regulations in Designated Habitat Protection Areas, Resource Conservation Areas, and the 100 foot Buffer	Baltimore Department of Planning, CAC	Existing and new zoning enforced consistently and according to the vision of CA program	Immediate
b.) Step-up efforts to meet the requirements of the City's NPDES permit-fund, construct new BMP's, and restore streams in the watershed.	DNR, MDE, DPW, Local nonprofits	Improved water quality and restoration of degraded watersheds	Long-term
6. Create New Tidal Marshes a.) Seek innovative funding sources for habitat restoration, including incentives to create new habitat and marsh areas adjacent to private development	DPW, DOP, MDE, DNR, Middle Branch Advisory Committee	Additional funds located to restore and maintain the habitat in the Middle Branch and its watershed	Immediate
b.) Implement the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tidal Middle Branch Restoration Plan (MBRP) and the Patapsco Urban River Restoration Initiative (PURRI).	USACE, DNR, DOP, Middle Branch Advisory Committee	MBRP and PURRI are in full effect and are improving the region	Long-term

### Open Space and Recreation

Objective	Implementing Bodies/ Agents	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline
Create a group with membership from the Department of Recreation and Parks, local rowing clubs, and communities to explore expansion of rowing facilities and the Rowing Center.	Department of Recreation and Parks, rowing clubs, communities	Local rowing facilities and the Rowing Center expanded along the Middle Branch	Short-term
Create a Middle Branch Park Friends Group to begin programming and volunteer opportunities for Middle Branch Park.	Community members, local nonprofits, Department of Recreation and Parks	Local adoption of Middle Branch Park; More programming; More community involvement in the park	Immediate
Implement USACE Tidal Middle Branch Project.	USACE, DOP, DPW	Creation and restoration of up to six new wetland projects in the Middle Branch	Mid to Long-term
Establish a group tasked to recommend habitat improvements and guide the location and expansion of water based recreational facilities.	DNR, rowing clubs, Baltimore Bird Club, Department of Recreation and Parks, DOP, wildlife profession	The quality of habitat and the quantity of recreational facilities are managed to complement each other and grow	Mid-term
Assure that the green shoreline and public access to the waterfront are protected at all private redevelopment sites.	Baltimore Department of Planning, Middle Branch Advisory Committee, local nonprofits	The public has consistent access to the Waterfront area	Immediate
Acquire CSX 'Swing Bridge' for Trail system, extend Gwynns Falls Trail to Southwest Area Park	Department of Planning, Recreation and Parks, Gwynns Falls Trail Council, Communities	Completion of Trail systems	Short-term and Ongoing

## Design and Development

Objective	Implementing Bodies/ Agents	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline
General Recommendations  Adopt zoning changes recommended in the Middle Branch Master Plan.	Baltimore Department of Planning, Baltimore City Council	New zoning in the Middle Branch Master Plan study area	Short-term
Create a more focused plan for the following development areas: Waterview Industrial Area, Harbor Hospital, and Port Covington.	Baltimore Department of Planning, BDC, DOT, Communities	Development in the Waterview Industrial Area, Harbor Hospital, and Port Covington is consistent with recommendations of the Middle Branch Advisory Committee	Mid-term
Adopt or amend existing Urban Renewal Ordinances to implement the goals of Master Plan.	Baltimore City Council, Baltimore Department of Planning, communities	An effective Urban Renewal Ordinance is adopted for the area	Immediately
As development plans proceed, adopt Planned Unit Developments as appropriate to ensure the goals and principles of the Master Plan are implemented.	Baltimore Department of Planning, Baltimore City Council	New PUD's realize the goals of the Master Plan	Short-term
Complete a study of existing utility infrastructure to guide physical improvements, green building goals and design guidelines.	Baltimore Department of Public Works, DOT, DOP	A comprehensive report that details the current utilities and guides improvements	Short-term
Study waterfront view corridors from existing communities and key waterfront locations.	Department of Planning, Communities	Establish criteria for protection in development plans, PUD's and Urban Renewal Ordinances.	Immediate

## Transportation

Objective	Implementing Bodies/ Agents	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline
Complete an Area-wide Transportation Implementation Study for circulation, access and demand management.	Baltimore Department of Transportation, Department of Planning	Gather accurate data for planning changes to and improvement of the transportation infrastructure	Short-term
Establish design guidelines, street/path connectivity targets, and sustainable transportation policies that support walking, transit use, and on-street bicycle networks particularly at major transit nodes/light rail stations.	Baltimore Department of Planning, Baltimore Department of Transportation, MTA, Middle Branch Advisory Committee	Improved traffic circulation, safety, and variety of transportation choices	Mid-term
Appoint a Transportation Subcommittee of the Middle Branch Advisory Committee with diverse interests to advise and review the proposed transportation studies and other information. This can become the foundation for a Transportation Management Association.	Baltimore Department of Transportation, local transportation consultants, local trail activists, Middle Branch Advisory Committee	Creation of a finalized Implementation Strategy to facilitate the formation of a Transportation Management Association	Long-Term

## Heritage and Tourism

Objective	Implementing Bodies/ Agents	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline
Require that an interpretive history program be part of new development along the Middle Branch shoreline.	CHAP, developers	Signage; Documentation of pertinent historical elements of Middle Branch development sites	Immediate
Adopt a requirement that all developers submit a feasibility study prior to developing any Baltimore City historic landmark-eligible properties located in the Middle Branch Master Plan area or adjacent neighborhoods.	Baltimore Department of Planning, CHAP, developers	The city's historic buildings on the Middle Branch are protected and documented	Short-term
Create a plan to make all Middle Branch War of 1812 sites visitor-friendly for the War of 1812 Bicentennial.	CHAP, Baltimore Heritage Inc., Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, and Maryland Department of Tourism	War of 1812 sites around the Middle Branch have improved access, signage, publicity, and informative interpretation	Immediate - City officials should approve this plan by July of 2008
Establish Baltimore City Landmark designation for the Hanover Street Bridge and the CSX Swing Bridge.	CHAP, local railroad museums, CSX	Hanover Street Bridge and the CSX Swing Bridge will be preserved and protected	Short-term
Through the Cherry Hill Master Plan, identify potential historic landmarks and initiate contact with property owners as the first step in the historic landmark designation process.	Baltimore Department of Planning, CHAP, Cherry Hill community	Local historic Landmarks are designated and the culture of Cherry Hill is protected.	Short-term
Through the Westport Area Master Plan, identify potential historic landmarks and initiate contact with property owners as the first step in the landmark designation process.	Baltimore Department of Planning, CHAP, Westport community	Local historic Landmarks are designated and the culture of Westport is protected.	Short-term
Create a 'maintenance plan' for historical programs, including but not limited to an 'adopt a marker' program.	Middle Branch Advisory Committee, CHAP, Heritage Office, Baltimore citizens	Regional landmarks are protected and remain attractive	Long-term
Link the Charles Street Scenic Byway and other nearby trails to the Middle Branch redevelopment.	Baltimore Department of Planning, local trail advocates, Baltimore Department of Transportation	Improved access to a historical resource	Long-term

## Sustainable Communities

Objective	Implementing Bodies/ Agents	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline
Educate community residents regarding existing home ownership programs, home repair and housing assistance to prepare them for coming changes.	HCD, HABC, State HUD, Cherry Hill Development Corporation, Westport Community, Brooklyn Community	Residents educated and connected to existing housing programs.	Immediate
Create group to study the establishment of additional home ownership protection programs unique to Middle Branch communities	Middle Branch Advisory Committee, HCD, HABC, Department of Planning, State of MD, Community Groups	Creation of new programs to assist existing homeowners and renters to remain in their communities despite rising property taxes.	Immediate
City agencies work closely with communities to develop plans for re-use of publicly controlled lands.	HCD, HABC, DOP, local communities.	Clear development goals and time line are established for publicly owned tracts of land.	Immediate
Budget improvements to surrounding communities to coincide with physical improvements at new waterfront developments.	DOP, DPW, DOT, HCD, HABC	Physical improvements to surrounding communities such as street resurfacing, lighting, building improvements complement the improvements to the waterfront.	Ongoing as dev. occurs
Support recommendations of community master plans	All City Agencies	Implementation of local Master Plan goals.	Ongoing

## Implementation of Middle Branch Master Plan/Maintenance and Management

Objective	Implementing Bodies/ Agents	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline
Creation of Middle Branch Advisory Committee (MBAC) to oversee implementation of Plan and its recommendations	Those identified in Middle Branch Master Plan	Implementation of Plan recommendations.	Immediate and ongoing
Preparation of report with recommendations for establishing a Maintenance and Management entity for for the Middle Branch.	MBAC and selected experts.	Separate report with distinct recommendations for legislation, funding and mission for new Management and Maintenance organization.	Short-Term



# middle branch

## Appendix A:

# City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan & Middle Branch Master Plan Guiding Principles

## DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### 1. ENSURE LAND USE THAT PROMOTES HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Live – Goal 1, Objective 1 (Expand housing choices for all residents)
- Live – Goal 1, Objective 3 (Maintain and create safe, clean and healthy neighborhoods)
- Live – Goal 2, Objective 1 (Elevate the design and quality of the city's built environment)
- Live – Goal 2, Objective 3 (Promote transit oriented development (TOD) and mixed-use development to reinforce neighborhood centers and main streets)
- Earn – Goal 1, Objective 1 (Retain and attract businesses in all growth sectors)
- Earn – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Enhance transportation options to provide workers with commuting options and mitigate traffic congestion)

### 2. FACILITATE A MORE EFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Live – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Facilitate movement throughout the region)

### **3. CAPITALIZE ON THE UNIQUE PRESENCE OF OPEN SPACE SURROUNDING THE WATER**

- Live – Goal 1, Objective 4 (Target neighborhood planning to leverage investment)
- Live – Goal 2, Objective 1 (Improve design quality of Baltimore’s built environment)
- Play – Goal 1, Objective 1 (Market, develop, and promote visitor attractions in Baltimore city)

### **4. DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A STRONG CONNECTION TO THE LAND**

- Play – Goal 3, Objective 3 (Ensure public access to the Waterfront)
- \*\*Live – Goal 2, Objective 3 (streamline and strengthen the development process (modernize zoning codes to meet current needs))

## **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

### **1. ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS ALONG THE WATERFRONT**

- Live – Goal 2, Objective 1 (Improve design quality of Baltimore’s built Environments)
- Play – Goal 1, Objective 1 (Market, develop, and promote visitor attractions in Baltimore City)
- Play – Goal 2, Objective 3 (Improve local participation in city recreational activities)
- Play – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Maintain a well-managed system of parks and open spaces)
- Play – Goal 3, Objective 3 (Ensure public access to the Waterfront)

### **2. INCREASE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- Live – Goal 1, Objective 6 (Improve neighborhood schools)
- Earn – Goal 2, Objective 2 (Increase qualifications/skill sets of city residents)
- Learn – Goal 3, Objective 3 (Improve and expand learning opportunities for all Baltimoreans to create active and well-educated citizens)

### **3. CREATE A CONTINUOUS OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**

- Play – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Maintain a well-managed system of parks and open spaces)

### **4. PROTECT/ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES**

- Live – Goal 1, Objective 3 (Maintain and create safe, clean and healthy neighborhoods)
- Live – Goal 2, Objective 5 (Improve water quality and the environmental sustainability of the Chesapeake Bay)
- Play – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Protect and enhance Baltimore’s Natural Habitat and Environmental Resources)

### **5. CREATE UNIQUE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Play – Goal 2, Objective 3 (Improve local participation in city recreational activities)
- \*\* Live – Goal 1, Objective 6 (Improve neighborhood schools)

## **HERITAGE AND TOURISM**

### **1. ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

- Live – Goal 2, Objective 4 (Protect and enhance the preservation of Baltimore’s historic buildings and neighborhoods)

- Play – Goal 1, Objective 4 (Strengthen stewardship of historical and cultural resources)
- 2. DEVELOP INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS FOR THE FOLLOWING HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES...**
    - Live – Goal 2, Objective 4 (Protect and enhance the preservation of Baltimore’s historic buildings and neighborhoods)
    - Play – Goal 1, Objective 2 (Increase everyday historical and cultural encounters for Baltimore City residents)
    - Play – Goal 1, Objective 4 (Strengthen stewardship of historical and cultural resources)
  - 3. MAXIMIZE HERITAGE TOURISM OF THE MIDDLE BRANCH.**
    - Earn – Goal 1, Objective 7 (Retain and attract business in hospitality and tourism)
    - Play – Goal 1, Objective 1 (Market, develop, and promote visitor attractions in Baltimore City)

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

- 1. PROMOTE NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND RENEWAL OF EXISTING COMMUNITIES THAT PRODUCE VIBRANT AND SECURE PUBLIC SPACES.**
  - LIVE – Goal 1, Objective 2 (Strategically redevelop vacant properties throughout the city)
  - LIVE – Goal 1, Objective 3 (Maintain and create safe, clean, and healthy neighborhoods)
- 2. ENCOURAGE WALKING, BICYCLING, WATER TRANSPORT, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.**
  - Live – Goal 2, Objective 3 (Promote transit oriented development (TOD) and mixed-use development to reinforce neighborhood centers and main streets)
  - Live – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Create a comprehensive transportation plan to improve mobility, accessibility and choice)
  - Live – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Facilitate movement throughout the region)
  - Earn – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Enhance transportation options to provide workers with commuting options and mitigate traffic congestion)
  - Play – Goal 2, Objective 3 (Improve local participation in city recreational activities)
  - Play – Goal 3, Objective 3 (Ensure public access to the Waterfront)
- 3. ENHANCE CIRCULATION WITHIN AND BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS.**
  - Live – Goal 2, Objective 3 (Promote transit oriented development (TOD) and mixed-use development to reinforce neighborhood centers and main streets)
  - Live – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Facilitate movement throughout the region)
  - Earn – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Enhance transportation options to provide workers with commuting options and mitigate traffic congestion)
  - Earn – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Promote economic development throughout the city by improving business-to-business connectivity via transportation)
- 4. IMPROVE REGIONAL ACCESS TO THE BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON, D.C. METRO AREAS FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION MODES.**
  - Live – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Facilitate movement throughout the region)
  - Earn – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Promote economic development throughout the city by improving business-to-business connectivity via transportation)

**5. ASSESS THE CURRENT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE, ITS USE, AND ITS CAPACITY; ADDING TARGETED CAPACITY, FACILITIES AND CONNECTIONS.**

- Live – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Create a comprehensive transportation plan to improve mobility, accessibility and choice)
- Live – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Facilitate movement throughout the region)
- Earn – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Enhance transportation options to provide workers with commuting options and mitigate traffic congestion)

**6. DEVELOP GOVERNANCE TO GUIDE FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING, TO IMPLEMENT THE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES, AND TO MANAGE AND SUSTAIN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

- Live – Goal 3, Objective 1 (Create a comprehensive transportation plan to improve mobility, accessibility and choice)
  - \*\*Learn – Goal 4, Objective 1 (Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to schools and libraries)
  - \*\*Learn – Goal 4, Objective 2 (Encourage the use of public transit to travel to schools)

## **WATER QUALITY AND HABITAT COMMITTEE**

**1. RESTORE DEGRADED HABITAT FOR MARINE AND UPLAND SPECIES**

- *Live – Goal 2, Objective 5 (Improve water quality and the environmental sustainability of the Chesapeake Bay)*
- *Play – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Protect and enhance Baltimore’s Natural Habitat and Environmental Resources)*

**2. IMPROVE WATER QUALITY TO FISHABLE AND SWIMMABLE LEVELS**

**BY 2020**

- *Live – Goal 1, Objective 3 (Maintain and create safe, clean, and healthy neighborhoods)*
- *Live – Goal 2, Objective 5 (Improve water quality and the environmental sustainability of the Chesapeake Bay)*
- *Play – Goal 3, Objective 2 (Protect and enhance Baltimore’s Natural Habitat and Environmental Resources)*

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# middle branch

## Appendix B:

# Housing Assistance Programs

There are many federal, state, and municipal programs in place to assist future and current homeowners. A number of the relevant programs are highlighted in this Appendix. Community organizations should work with the City of Baltimore to provide free housing workshops and counseling for residents. The education gained through these services will help residents take full advantage of the available housing programs.

## Current Homeowners

### Repairs

#### **Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program (MHRP)**

MHRP is a state program that offers loans for property rehabilitation with below-market interest rates. The rehabilitation must mitigate health safety violations or significant deficiencies in necessities such as furnaces, boilers, and water heaters on owner-occupied properties. Loans are granted for up to 95% of the property value. Households with income levels below 80% of the Maryland state medium income levels or \$50,624 for a two-person household can qualify. Additionally, all Baltimore City houses and condos are eligible if the owner has the title and can assume the debt. For more information and an application, contact:

Baltimore Housing  
Office of Rehabilitation  
417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 1125  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-396-4151

### **Deferred Loan Program**

This program offers loans for property rehabilitation with below-market interest rates. Loans of up to \$10,000 are granted. Qualifying repairs include, but are not limited to furnace, roof, electrical, and plumbing repair, and accessibility improvements for elderly or handicapped homeowners. Households earning below 50% of the city's median income or \$30,000 for two people are eligible. Additionally, all Baltimore City houses and condos are eligible if the owner lives on the property. For more information and an application, contact:

Baltimore Housing  
Office of Rehabilitation  
417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 1125  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-396-4151

## **Tax Protection**

### **Homestead Property Tax Credit**

This state program limits the amount by which taxable assessments can increase per year for owner-occupied properties. The city has capped the annual property tax increase at 4%. All owners currently living in their properties are eligible to limit their tax increase. If the property is transferred, the new owner must submit an application to the State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) within 180 days in order to qualify for the Homestead Property Tax Credit. For more information and an application, contact:

Darlene Warren, Acting Supervisor  
Collections Division Customer Service  
410-361-9057  
[Darlene.warren@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Darlene.warren@baltimorecity.gov)

### **Baltimore Cash Campaign**

Baltimore Cash Campaign is a local coalition of volunteers, foundations, nonprofits, the IRS, community organizations, and Baltimore City government agencies. They provide free income tax preparation to low and moderate income families, and during this process, they help people receive the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other tax credits. They also offer financial literacy counseling and workshops. For more information about their services contact:

Baltimore Cash Campaign  
c/o Maryland Volunteer Legal Services  
One North Charles St., Suite 222  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-539-6800  
[Baltimorecashcampaign.org](http://Baltimorecashcampaign.org)

### **Home Improvement Property Tax Credit**

This program is intended to promote the improvement of residential properties and decrease the financial burden on property owners. It provides a 5-year tax credit with complete relief from city property tax increases in the first taxable year. The credit then declines by 20 percentage points thereafter. Credit is limited and will not cover improvements exceeding \$100,000. If the property

is sold, the new owner is eligible for the remaining credit. Credit is only applied to the value of the property that has been increased by the improvements. It is automatically renewed annually for five years as long as the property is in compliance with the Housing Code. The owner must live in the property for more than six months each year and there must be proof that the improvements resulted in an increase in the dwelling's value in order to be eligible. For more information and the application, contact:

SDAT  
Phone (410) 767-8250  
Fax (410) 333-4626  
[baltcity@dat.state.md.us](mailto:baltcity@dat.state.md.us)

Hattie Scott, Assistant Supervisor  
Accounting Section  
443-984-3498  
[Hattie.Scott@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Hattie.Scott@baltimorecity.gov)

## Eviction prevention

There are many resources available to help prevent eviction. First, residents should consider homeowner counseling services (see attached "Homeowner Counseling Agencies"). These programs will increase financial literacy and will help people find and create the means to remain in their homes. Residents can also work with the Baltimore Homeownership Preservation Coalition. This partnership of public and private funders, lenders and nonprofit practitioners strives to reduce the occurrence of foreclosures in the city. Finally, by dialing 311, homeowners can be transferred to a national hotline that will help them with methods to avoid eviction.

# Opportunities to become a Homeowner

## Renters become homeowners

### Tenant Conversion Mortgage Program

This state program helps tenants buy the home they are currently renting. It provides mortgage loans at a five percent interest rate. To be eligible, family incomes cannot exceed \$41,750 and the price of the house cannot exceed \$77,000. Finally, there is a minimum cash requirement of approximately \$850. For more information, contact:

Department of Housing and Community Development  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
1-800-756-0119 (Toll-Free in Maryland)  
410-514-7000  
[customerservice@dhcd.state.md.us](mailto:customerservice@dhcd.state.md.us)

## Grants and Subsidies

### Baltimore City Employee Homeownership Program

This is a city program that helps employees of the City of Baltimore become homeowners within the city limits. Recipients get \$3,000 for down payment and closing assistance. Additionally, \$750 is given for homes purchased in Healthy Neighborhoods target blocks. All employees of Baltimore

City's agencies and quasi-agencies who have worked for at least 6 months are eligible. The buyer must contribute at least \$1,000 towards purchase and must use the property as their main residence. Only one City employee per household may receive assistance. Finally, the loan is forgivable over 5 years, reducing 20 percent for each year of occupancy. For more information contact:

HABC/HCD  
417 E. Fayette St., Suite 1339  
Baltimore, Md. 21202  
Phone: 410-396-3237  
Fax: 410-545-3238

#### **Baltimore City Live Near Your Work Program**

This is a partnership between the city and participating employers. The program provides a \$2,000 minimum grant to be used toward down payment and closing. It is meant to encourage homeownership near the place of one's employment. Please note that the potential homeowner's employer must be one of the participating employers in order to qualify. Employees must be first-time homebuyers in the City of Baltimore, they must contribute at least \$1,000, and the dwelling must be their main residence in order to be eligible. Participating employers may have additional requirements. Finally, the loan is forgivable over 5 years, reducing 20 percent for each year of occupancy. For more information contact:

HABC/HCD  
417 E. Fayette St., Suite 1339  
Baltimore, Md. 21202  
Phone: 410-396-3237  
Fax: 410-545-3238

## **Loans**

#### **Homeownership for Individuals with Disabilities Program**

This is a state program that uses some city settlement funds. It offers loans at a 3 percent interest rate. The loan amount cannot exceed \$100,000, although the sale price can be as high as \$155,000. To qualify, at least one borrower must have a disability and the family income cannot be more than \$41,387. The minimum cash requirement is approximately \$700. Please see the State's Web site at [www.dhcd.state.md.us](http://www.dhcd.state.md.us) for more program details or contact:

Department of Housing and Community Development  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
1-800-756-0119 (Toll-Free in Maryland)  
410-514-7000  
[customerservice@dhcd.state.md.us](mailto:customerservice@dhcd.state.md.us)

#### **American Dream Downpayment Initiative**

This federal program provides funding that can be used to cover closing costs and the downpayment for a home. It is for \$10,000 structured as a 5-year loan that is forgivable at 20 percent per year. First-time homebuyers with family incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income are eligible. For example, the 2007 income limits are:

- 1 person \$41,300
- 2 person \$47,200
- 3 person \$53,100
- 4 person \$59,000
- 5 person \$63,700
- 6 person \$68,450
- 7 person \$73,150
- 8 person \$77,900

The buyer must contribute at least \$1,000 and the property must be their principal residence. Finally, the home must be inspected by a member of the National Association of Home Inspectors or the American Society of Home Inspectors. It must be free of flaking, peeling or chipping paint, and the home inspection must document no unstable paint surfaces. Closing on the property must occur within 90 days of the contract date. For more information call or e-mail:

443-984-2222  
[arilineramsey@habc.org](mailto:arilineramsey@habc.org)

## Education

Financial education is a vital part of becoming a successful homeowner. One can take better advantage of the above programs if they follow these steps (for a more complete description see attached "How to Maximize Your Homebuying Experience"):

1. Enroll in and Complete a Housing Counseling Workshop
2. Research Mortgage Options
3. Begin Loan Application Process
4. Identify a Real Estate Agent
5. Identify a Home
6. Identify Other Professionals to Help You
7. Finalize the Loan Process

Taken from Baltimore Housing's Office of Homeownership (08/01/07)  
[http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/ps\\_homeownership\\_maximize.asp](http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/ps_homeownership_maximize.asp)

## Seniors

### Senior Roof Repair Program

This program offers loan funds to homeowners' ages 62 and older, needing roof repairs. Applicants with special needs may also be considered. It is a loan with an easement for up to \$5,000 for repairs. The grant amount is reduced 20% for each year of occupancy after the award is made. After five years of occupancy, the owner is not obligated to repay. Additionally, there is no monthly payment required. The homeowner must have the property title and deed, they must occupy the dwelling, and their income must be below 50% of the Baltimore City median income levels (i.e. \$30,300 for a two-person household). For more information and an application contact:

Baltimore Housing  
Office of Rehabilitation  
417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 1125  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
P: 410-396-4151

## Public housing

### **Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program**

This is a federal program created to help current Housing Choice Voucher Program participants purchase homes by converting their monthly rental assistance payments to mortgage payments. To be eligible, a minimum of one percent of the purchase price must come directly from the purchaser and homes must be purchased within Baltimore. Finally, participants must meet regular program eligibility requirements in addition to the new regulations governing the Homeownership program. For more information call or e-mail:

443-984-2222  
[arilineramsey@habc.org](mailto:arilineramsey@habc.org)

### **How to Maximize Your Homebuying Experience**

Copied from Baltimore Housing's Office of Homeownership (08/01/07)  
[http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/ps\\_homeownership\\_maximize.asp](http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/ps_homeownership_maximize.asp)

### **Enroll in and Complete a Housing Counseling Workshop**

This valuable first step will help provide a strong primer for the homebuying process from start to finish. Baltimore Housing maintains a list of City-approved counseling agencies

### **Research Mortgage Options**

There are many free options for researching mortgage products. Many banks have brochures and pamphlets that explain the types of mortgage products. In addition, the Internet, certified housing counseling agencies, and public libraries are great sources for information. Among the information you want to understand is: types of mortgage product options, rates and terms of these products.

### **Begin Loan Application Process**

Most lenders will require potential mortgage borrowers to complete a loan application in order to determine information vital to ensuring loan qualification. Although many homebuyers first identify the desired home before completing the application, a best practice is getting pre-approved prior to identifying the home to determine how much one can afford. The pre-approval process requires some time commitment and as much information as the full loan application process. Pre-approval is a commitment to provide mortgage financing and all Baltimore Housing loan products require loan application information.

The recommended steps for working with a lender are:

- Gather all required documents including tax forms, pay stubs, bank statements, proof of other funding sources (e.g., brokerage reports or mutual fund balances). Most lenders will provide a specific checklist.
- Prepare any questions regarding financing you have. This will help ensure that you accomplish

your objective to be educated about the process and loan products.

#### Identify a Real Estate Agent

Any homebuyer has the option of speaking with more than one real estate agent in advance of executing any documents.

#### Identify a Home

Prepare a list of desires and needs for your home. Be certain to delineate between those items that are necessities and bonuses. Give thought to the other factors, including community amenities such as schools, parks, retail establishments, and proximity to preferred transportation routes.

#### Identify Other Professionals to Help You

Engaging a real estate attorney can be helpful (but may be an additional cost) in giving the homebuyer another set of trained resources. Free and/or reduced rate legal services in connection with a home purchase are available through the Civil Justice Network and St. Ambrose Legal Services. Research home warranties (if applicable). Engaging the services of a good home inspector can also be helpful.

#### Finalize the Loan Process

Contact your chosen lender to begin the process of finalizing your loan process. Collect and provide updated documents to the lender as soon as possible. This will ensure that the lender has the most up-to-date financial information and will make for a more smooth loan approval and closing process. Please keep in mind that time is of the essence as interest rates or other factors may change and impact your loan. Get a sense of the timing for a financing decision. Most lenders will be able to give a clear indication of the decision turnaround time as well as provide details about your application or types of loan products. Your lender will be able to provide you with a good faith estimate, itemizing the various fees and costs and the amounts due at closing.

## Homeownership Counseling Agencies

Taken from Baltimore Housing's Office of Homeownership (08/01/07)

[http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/homeownership\\_counseling.pdf](http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/homeownership_counseling.pdf)

Acorn Housing Corp.

Linda Lee

16 W. 25TH Street, 21218

410-243-9791 / Fax 410-243-9794

[ahcmdlbamgr@acorn.org](mailto:ahcmdlbamgr@acorn.org)

Baltimore Urban League

Nolan Rollins

512 Orchard Street, 21201

410-523-8150 / Fax 410-523-4022

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# middle branch

## Appendix C:

# BRACTION Plan for Baltimore City

## Executive Summary

### I. Population Growth

Currently, the projected household impact for Baltimore City is as many as 2,552 new households from now to 2018. Baltimore City's preparation for BRAC related population growth will require strategic improvements to its transportation and infrastructure. Additionally, land use and zoning policies must be pursued as directed by the Comprehensive Master Plan. The City will capture its share of BRAC-related growth and maximize the opportunity that BRAC presents through an effective marketing campaign lead by Live Baltimore.

### IA. Population Growth: Transportation & Infrastructure

1. Ft. Meade Oriented Transportation Access Improvements to/from Middle Branch/Westport
  - a. Russell Street/MD-295 Ramp & Intersection Upgrades
  - b. Russell Street Gateway – Phases II & III
  - c. Annapolis Road Bridge Over 295
  - d. Annapolis Road, Waterview Road and Maisel Street Bridges
  - e. Kent Street Improvements to Link Light Rail with Westport redevelopment
  - f. Examine feasibility of MARC Camden Line Station near Westport

2. Aberdeen Oriented Transportation Improvements
  - a. Create a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Southeast Baltimore (See Live G3,O1)
  - b. Boston Street Widening/Reconstruction
3. Rail and Transit
  - a. Advocate for expansion of MARC service from Penn Station to Aberdeen; construct East Side MARC Station at EBDI or Bayview
  - b. Actively support efforts to implement the Baltimore Regional Rail Plan and its Red and Green Line priority segments (LiveG3O2S2)
  - c. Protect and create Rights-of-Way along existing and proposed rail lines (See Live,G3 O2,S3)
  - d. Promote the Commuter Choice Program to encourage transit use
4. Water and Wastewater
  - a. Comprehensive Water and Wastewater Master Plan

### **IB. Population Growth: Planning and Zoning**

5. Create Neighborhoods of Choice Through Targeted Comprehensive Planning
  - a. Create Area Master Plans for Priority Development Areas Related to BRAC
    - i. Westport/Middle Branch/Cherry Hill
    - ii. West Baltimore MARC Station TOD Plan
    - iii. Uplands
    - iv. Edmondson Village
  - b. Link school facilities planning with neighborhood planning.
  - c. Encourage Improvements to the Housing Stock in areas most impacted by BRAC (Middle Branch/Poppleton /Westport/Uplands/Cherry Hill/Gateway South/East Baltimore).
  - d. Diversify our housing product through strategic investment of City resources and development incentives.
6. Streamline and Strengthen the Development Process
  - a. Update the City Zoning Code through the Comprehensive Rezoning.
  - b. Create Transit-Oriented Development zoning and incentive programs for transit nodes throughout the City (i.e. State Center, West Baltimore Marc) (See Earn G3,O2,S2).
  - c. Create a Master Development Database.

### **IC. Population Growth: Marketing and Policy**

7. Develop a Coordinated, Inclusive and Holistic Approach to Marketing the City and the Region
  - a. Coordinate City web information through the Mayor's Office, BDC and Live Baltimore web-sites.
  - b. Provide comprehensive neighborhood profiles to households or firms interested in locating in the City.
  - c. Create a targeted, inclusive and complete set of information resources for potential residents, including special interest groups.
  - d. Promote the affordability of Baltimore's housing stock.
  - e. Encourage local cultural and artistic institutions to approach potential future membership.
  - f. Connect and Coordinate Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative with local BRAC marketing and homeownership initiatives.

8. Develop Policies to support BRAC-related planning
  - a. Create an Ongoing Education Campaign on BRAC and Baltimore City for Publicly Elected Officials.
  - b. Utilize the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Property Taxes to examine ways to make the City's Rates more competitive with the Region.
  - c. Develop a legislative agenda to support BRAC-related planning.
  - d. Create a BRAC budget.

## **II. Workforce Development**

Not all employees surrounding the closing bases will want to relocate. Instead, there will be some combination of new households and new jobs. Current estimates indicate that Baltimore City will receive as many as 3,145 new jobs, many of which will come to the City vacant. It is crucial that we prepare our existing and future workforce for these jobs. The City, lead by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development and the Baltimore City Public School System, will need to not only ensure the development of training programs and curricula in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, but will need to partner with the BRAC employer community and the region to effectively address the issue of obtaining security clearances for prospective area jobseekers.

1. Reach Out to the BRAC Employer Community
  - a. Develop relationships with relocating Department of Defense agencies and their leadership.
  - b. Market MOED's job posting, job matching and job training capabilities through participation in defense-related job fairs.
  - c. Survey military employers to determine employment needs (See Earn G1O1S4).
2. Connect BRAC relocating spouses to area job opportunities
  - a. Market MOED's job matching and job training capabilities through targeted publications at relocation fairs.
3. Prepare the School-Age Population and the Existing Workforce for BRAC jobs
  - a. Develop a short and long-term communication and marketing plan that will expand the number of skilled job candidates for BRAC-related employment, with a specific emphasis on math and science skills and eligibility requirements for security clearances.
  - b. Examine Charter Schools as a means of satisfying BRAC-related education needs.
  - c. Support the development of strong math and science curricula for BCPSS students at all levels, through programs such as CTE.
  - d. Assess needs in education and training for secondary and spin-off jobs.
  - e. Support the development of programs in building trades.
4. Strengthen Partnerships with Institutes of Higher Learning to Coordinate BRAC Preparedness
  - a. Continue to Actively Support the Development of Higher Education institutions and training programs.
  - b. Create an Outreach, Recruitment, and Referral Arm from Baltimore City's Colleges, universities, professional schools and companies to regional training programs and employment opportunities.
  - c. Develop and promote comprehensive programs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

5. Continue to Actively Support Regional Workforce Development Efforts
  - a. Continue to utilize the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board to coordinate local and regional workforce development efforts to prepare for BRAC.

### **III. M/WBE Contracting Opportunities**

In addition to new households and new jobs, BRAC will bring a multitude of direct and indirect business & contracting opportunities to the City of Baltimore. The department responsible for the coordination of these opportunities is the Mayor's Office of Minority & Women-Owned Business Development. Ms. Carla A. Nelson, the Director of the department, will work directly with City agencies and our regional partners to lead the City's effort in maximizing business and contract opportunities for Small, Local, Minority and Women-Owned businesses here in our City .

1. Reach Out to the Defense Industry
  - a. Create an alliance with the Defense Industry to formalize the connections with small, local, minority & women-owned businesses.
  - b. Explore possibility of creating a Reciprocity Certification Process for firms certified with the City of Baltimore, the State's MDOT certification and the Federal SBD certification or DOD requirements for DISA.
  - c. Seek out opportunities for direct & indirect product & service contracts with the military, corporate companies working with the military, and the surrounding community.
2. Reach Out to Contractors
  - a. Utilize the MBE Directors Alliance to specifically look for opportunities through BRAC for Small, Local, Minority & Women-Owned firms.
  - b. Continue Procurement and Outreach Fairs and provide a BRAC connection.
  - c. Support efforts to create small-business incubators.
  - d. Provide good news information for the media about M/WBE firms benefiting from BRAC.
  - e. Tailor marketing strategies to minority ethnic groups and M/WBE firms.
3. Coordinate with Business and Workforce Development Initiatives
  - a. Utilize the MBE Directors Alliance to coordinate efforts.
  - b. Actively provide marketing and outreach to the business community on BRAC opportunities.
4. Track BRAC related M/WBE Outcomes
  - a. Create a web database of contractors.
  - b. Create a monthly BRAC MBE Stat report.
  - c. Explore ways to quantify forecasted contracting opportunities that will result from BRAC.

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