The Westside
Baltimore, Maryland
A Vision for the Westside Neighborhood

December 5–10, 2010
An Advisory Services Program Report

Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Suite 500 West
Washington, DC 20007-5201
The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to:

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI’s membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has nearly 30,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world’s most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.
About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI’s Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI–member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI’s Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI’s interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel’s conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel’s visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI’s five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor’s issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI’s unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

ULI Program Staff

Gayle Berens
Senior Vice President, Education and Advisory Group

Thomas W. Eitler
Vice President, Advisory Services

Patrick Pontius
Director, Education and Advisory Group

Theodore C. Thoerig
Manager, Education and Advisory Group

Caroline Dietrich
Panel Associate, Education and Advisory Group

Gwen McCall
Senior Administrative Manager, Education and Advisory Group

James A. Mulligan
Managing Editor

Laura Glassman, Publications Professionals LLC
Manuscript Editor

Betsy VanBuskirk
Creative Director

Deanna Pineda, Muse Advertising Design
Layout Artist

Craig Chapman
Senior Director, Publishing Operations
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The panel recognizes the efforts and contributions of the many individuals and organizations that made this study possible. In particular the panel would like to thank the city of Baltimore Development Corporation; Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.; Greater Baltimore Committee; University of Maryland, Baltimore; University of Maryland BioPark; the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc.; University of Maryland Medical System; Lexington Market; Maryland Department of Planning; Westside Renaissance, Inc.; France-Merrick Foundation; 1st Mariner Arena; the Abell Foundation; and the Baltimore City Department of Planning for their sponsorship and participation.
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ULI Panel and Project Staff

Panel Chair

Glenda E. Hood
Former Mayor of Orlando
Former Secretary of State of Florida
Orlando, Florida

Panel Members

Abigail Ferretti
Principal
Partners for Economic Solutions
Washington, D.C.

Owen Lang
Consultant
Owen Lang Consulting
Petaluma, California

Stanley Lowe
Managing Partner
Fourth River Development, LLC
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Betty Massey
Executive Director
Mary Moody Northen Endowment
Galveston, Texas

Ehud Mouchly
Owner
READI, LLC
Los Angeles, California

Tom Murphy
Senior Resident Fellow, ULI/Klingbeil Family Chair for Urban Development
Urban Land Institute
Washington, D.C.

Ranne Warner
Developer
Zeckendorf Development
New York, New York

ULI Project Staff

Patrick Pontius
Director, Education and Advisory Group

Theodore C. Thoerig
Manager, Education and Advisory Group

Caroline Dietrich
Associate, Education and Advisory Group
Baltimore is one of the United States’ oldest and most historic cities. The port city, founded in 1729, was an important engine of economic growth and trade; by the time of the Civil War, the city was second only to New York City in population. Like many other industrial towns, Baltimore suffered from the country’s post–World War II suburbanization and economic shift from manufacturing to service industries, steadily losing population and significance through the second half of the 20th century. More recently, however, Baltimore has reinvented itself: revitalization efforts have restored the city’s waterfront and historic neighborhoods, and the growth of life sciences, health services, and financial sectors has buoyed the local economy. The city, with abundant cultural amenities, historic character, and an affordable housing market, now stands primed to attract new residents.

Baltimore is also a city of neighborhoods. The city’s vitality can be measured by the strength of these enclaves: Fells Point, picturesque seaport by day and hip dining and entertainment by night; Federal Hill, a neighborhood that escaped the boom-and-bust cycle and preserves the city’s history and has attracted young professionals and families with its active Main Street and nightlife; Mount Vernon, the city’s center for culture and arts; and Harbor East, a former brownfield industrial district transformed into a new neighborhood of upscale boutiques, residences, and restaurants—to name a few. The resurgence of Baltimore’s neighborhoods, many of them historic, was led by strong partnerships between the city and the business community. Baltimore became a pioneer in large-scale urban revitalization, creating a blueprint for other cities on how to restore economic vitality through historic preservation.

Unfortunately, similar success has not taken hold in the Westside neighborhood. The Westside was once the unquestioned retail center of Baltimore, a regional destination anchored by four major department stores. Changing retail patterns and middle-class flight to the suburbs led to its steady decline throughout the second half of the 20th century. Today, the Westside remains seriously challenged by issues of retail vacancy, public safety, and lack of sustainable private investment.

The commitment to Baltimore’s Westside revitalization began ten years ago. Over that time, the private and public sectors have made investments of more than $800 million. Although the Westside’s rebound has trailed similar redevelopment areas in the city, the vision and potential to restore the area to its former glory—albeit in a different form, as a predominantly residential mixed-use neighborhood—remains strong.
The Westside study area is bounded roughly by Charles Street to the east, Pratt and Camden streets to the south, Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to the west, and Chase Street to the north. The approximately 100-square-block neighborhood is connected to four adjacent and strong submarkets: Mount Vernon and Seton Hill, historic residential neighborhoods; University Center, the academic, research, and institutional center of the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS), and University of Maryland BioPark; the central business district (CBD); and a sports and entertainment district, with Camden Yards, M&T Bank Stadium, and the convention center. The area is home to major downtown employers, medical and educational institutions, arts and cultural attractions, and historic sites. The Westside is well served by transit, with access to the city’s light-rail and Metro subway systems, the free Charm City Circulator, and regular bus service.

The Panel’s Assignment

The city of Baltimore sponsored the ULI Advisory Services panel to examine the Westside neighborhood. The panel was asked to determine how the area can attract new residents and businesses with consideration for its market potential; historic character; access to transportation; arts, retail, and residential uses; open-space potential; and anchor institutions, as well as to address possible implementation strategies. Although the sponsor asked the panel to address many issues, its assignment can be distilled into the following questions:

- What types of uses and density best address the current and future market demands?
- Where are the best areas to achieve a critical mass of activity, and most important, how can this development be implemented?
- What is the future identity of the Westside? What does the city need to do to create a sense of place?

Summary of Recommendations

The panel spent considerable time reviewing documents, being briefed by city and agency staff, and interviewing close to 100 key community stakeholders. As Baltimore’s native son H. L. Mencken has often been quoted as saying: “For every complex and difficult problem, there is an answer that is simple, easy, and wrong.” With that warning in mind, the panel approached the enormity and complexity of the Westside, arriving at the following recommendations:
Form the Westside Task Force. The panel recommends the creation of a task force, cochaired by the mayor and the UMB president, to create a strategic plan to realize the vision for the Westside. The task force will provide direction and engage with the coordinating redevelopment organizations, such as the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) and the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc. A host of private, nonprofit, and quasi-governmental organizations are also committed to a resurgent Westside and should be either at the table or closely involved. The Westside Task Force will provide two elements that are critical to the revitalization of the neighborhood:

- Renew authority and urgency. Through the panel’s briefings and interviews, it learned that no single person has been granted the authority, power, and immediate availability of resources to lead the Westside revitalization. The panel believes that the mayor, in making this a centerpiece of her vision for the city, should appoint an individual to implement the strategic plan. Without a clear vesting of authority in one person who has the ability to draw on political capital and the strength to pull multiple agencies and resources into a cohesive team, the Westside will remain seriously challenged by the same issues of vacancy, public safety, and lack of private investment.

- Forge a critical partnership. The panel believes that UMB, the largest employment partner institution in the Westside neighborhood, should be fully involved in leading this revitalization. The opening up of the university and its tremendous resources to the neighborhood could catalyze residential development and improve public safety.

Understand the demographics and market demand. Residential, rather than retail development, will lead the Westside renaissance. The market analysis section of this report shows that the Westside neighborhood could support the development of more than 2,000 new residential units in the next
decade, with immediate potential in housing for graduate students. The city should also explore employer-assisted homeownership programs, because the neighborhood currently lacks homeownership options for the thousands of people who work there.

- **Resolve issues related to historic preservation.** The stalled Superblock project has been a drain on the neighborhood’s redevelopment for too long. The panel recommends that either the project be developed by the current developer with the approval of the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), or the land disposition agreement be dissolved. No more extensions should occur. The city should then establish a framework to better understand the overall costs of rehabilitating the neighborhood’s historic buildings.

- **Address public safety issues.** Without addressing the real and perceived public safety issues on the Westside, particularly around Lexington Market, the neighborhood’s revitalization will not occur. Addressing the public safety issues, through partnerships with the university and social service agencies and providers, is a first-order priority for the task force.

- **Develop a network of connectivity.** Many of the existing assets in the Westside are isolated and disconnected. The city should focus on strengthening connections, particularly on east-west streets, to link the university campus and the CBD. Green streetscape improvements, additional open space, and new wayfinding and signage will also give the neighborhood a distinct identity. In particular, the arena site presents an opportunity for a large urban park.

1. Since the panel issued its recommendations on December 10, 2010, the following actions have occurred on the Superblock/Memorandum of Agreement: on December 22, 2010, the Baltimore City Board of Estimates approved a six-month extension of the Land Disposition Agreement with developer Lexington Square Partners (LSP). On the same day, the MHT issued a conditional approval of the current LSP plan, which the BDC then accepted on December 30, 2010. At the date of publication, the LSP plan is in the city and state approvals processes.
Market Potential

Many conceptions have surfaced for what the Westside should be—an arts and entertainment district, for instance, or a restored regional retail destination replete with urban big-box stores. This section shows what the neighborhood can realistically support in terms of residential, retail, office, and arts and entertainment uses.

Overall Economic and Demographic Conditions

Economic conditions in the national and regional marketplace are affecting spending and development opportunities. The Baltimore region lost 54 percent of manufacturing jobs between 1990 and 2009. In 2009, Baltimore city had 326,654 jobs, down from 369,787 in 2002. The economic downturn has stopped much of the region’s new commercial development activity because of lack of financing and weakening in the underlying economic fundamentals.

Although these numbers highlight the challenges in the marketplace, from 1990 to 2009, the Baltimore region actually increased the number of jobs in professional and business services by 15 percent and in education and health care by 68 percent. These industry sectors, which figure prominently in Baltimore’s economic base, continue to thrive today. For the city of Baltimore, both education and health services industries gained almost 10,000 jobs in the last decade. The Westside in particular has benefited from the gains in these sectors because of the presence of UMB, UMMS, Baltimore Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center, and Maryland Institute College of Art and University of Baltimore to the immediate north of the Westside.

Residential

Since the 1990s, central Baltimore has enjoyed a residential revival with conversion of office buildings to residential use as well as extensive construction of new condominiums, apartments, and townhouses, mostly to the east of the former CBD. This renaissance reflects a shift from the previous decades of urban flight. Baltimore’s uptick in new residents interested in affordable downtown living marks a city in transition.

Citywide, Baltimore saw more than 4,400 new housing units authorized by building permits from 2000 through 2007, dominated by single-family homes. As in most markets, new construction slowed to only 1,233 units in 2008 and 341 units in 2009. Several neighborhoods attracted new households drawn by the appeal of historic rowhouses, access to the waterfront, the city’s restaurants and entertainment, and proximity to their jobs. The affordability of Baltimore’s housing relative to much higher prices in the Washington, D.C., market attracted homebuyers who could enjoy the city’s urban neighborhoods while commuting by train to jobs in Washington.

Projected Growth in Households, 2010–2025

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westside Study Area</td>
<td>7,414</td>
<td>9,171</td>
<td>9,760</td>
<td>10,100</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area’s Share of City (%)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>266,200</td>
<td>276,700</td>
<td>282,200</td>
<td>286,300</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Round 7 C; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2010.
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The Westside neighborhood’s daytime population (employees and visitors), residents, and adjoining neighborhoods provide customers for Westside businesses. Westside and citywide demographics from 2000 to 2010 show declines in population estimated as a loss of 2.7 percent for the city of Baltimore and only modest gains of 6.1 percent (529 new residents) in the Westside. According to data provided by the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, the Westside has approximately 5,000 residents.

The Westside market area can best be understood in the context of the major arterials that divide the market; West Franklin Street serves as a dividing line within the market. This analysis reflects this division by distinguishing between the North Market Area and the South Market Area, as separated by Franklin Street. The accompanying figure shows these areas and the respective demographics for each, based on data provided by ESRI.

In the Westside, mid-rise structures with rental and for-sale multifamily developments have attracted young students and childless couples. Charles Towers’ and 39 West Lexington’s occupancy rates of nearly 100 percent reflect the strength of the demand for rental housing in the area. Graduate students at the University of Maryland Baltimore and other Baltimore colleges and universities are a major source of demand.

The existing supply of rental properties within this area features mid- to high-rise buildings, including 39 West Lexington, the Atrium at Market Place, Avalon Centerpoint, Chesapeake Commons, Charles Towers, and the Zenith. These apartments target single-person households, childless couples, young professionals with roommates, and to a lesser degree, some families. The majority of the units have one or two bedrooms. The rents range from $1.50 to $2.10 per square foot, reflecting the low vacancy rates at most buildings of below 5 percent—the typical measure of a market’s health. However, a few of the most recently renovated projects boast occupancy rates at 100 percent, which show either an ability to raise rents or artificially high occupancy based on concessions. Condominium development has been relatively limited, except for a few developments during the early half of the 2000s.

Baltimore has been successful with HOPE VI projects just outside the Westside, such as Heritage Crossing, Towns at the Terraces, and the Poppleton housing rehabilitation, which included the addition of more than 350 new housing units. These projects demonstrate the Housing Authority of Baltimore City’s successful affordable housing projects and the ever-present demand for these units.

Downtown Baltimore and the Westside are potentially well positioned to capitalize on shifting demographics. As generation Y (children of baby boomers born between 1982 and 1995) comes of age and begins to form new households, significant numbers are seeking walkable communities with easy access to transit. They are willing to accept smaller housing units, exchanging suburban yards and large homes for easy access to the urban amenities of restaurants, arts, entertainment, and shops, as well as shorter commutes to work. This age cohort includes a shifting submarket of married couples without children. This group, within the generation Y age cohort, earns more on average, accepts density and ethnic diversity, and has no children who require schools. In a recent article, John K. McIlwain, Senior Resident Fellow...
at the Urban Land Institute, notes that housing for generation Y is decidedly not the “now-cheap housing in the foreclosure-devastated exurban cul-de-sac even though that is where housing is most affordable.” A neighborhood like the Westside offers many of these amenities, providing a stable housing option for this target audience.

One factor that has stymied significant residential development is the neighborhood’s lack of coherence and continuity. Individual buildings have suffered from the lack of an integrated neighborhood without strong connections to UMB, area hospitals, State Center—currently home to a large cluster of state offices—and downtown employment centers as well as support retail, services, and restaurants. The Westside also lacks a strong identity as a desirable urban neighborhood, and personal safety issues dissuade some prospective residents.

For the North Market Area, demand exists based on projected growth by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council and other market conditions. This market benefits from proximity to large institutions such as Maryland Institute College of Art, University of Baltimore, and other institutional anchors. Proposed new residential development will be driven in the midterm by the catalytic growth at State Center, a new proposed mixed-use development just outside the Westside, which will include significant new residential development. Drawing on the base of strong residential demand in both Mount Vernon and Seton Hill, potential exists to incorporate new infill townhouse development to match the character of these successful residential enclaves. The projected residential growth for the North Market Area consists of 300 to 400 rental units (apartments) and 450 to 500 for-sale units (townhouses) by 2020.

### Households by Income, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Incomes</th>
<th>Baltimore</th>
<th>North Market Area</th>
<th>South Market Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>36,957</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000–14,999</td>
<td>16,567</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000–24,999</td>
<td>33,189</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000–34,999</td>
<td>31,342</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000–49,999</td>
<td>35,718</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000–74,999</td>
<td>48,732</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000–99,999</td>
<td>19,734</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000–149,999</td>
<td>13,610</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000–199,999</td>
<td>3,145</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 or More</td>
<td>3,574</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Households</strong></td>
<td><strong>242,568</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,697</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$36,650</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$24,139</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Household Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$48,101</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$33,693</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ESRI, 2010; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2010.*

*Note: The boundaries for the North Market Area and the South Market Area match the Westside study area boundaries with the definition meaning north of Franklin or south of Franklin.*
In the South Market Area, the greatest potential lies in more extensive housing for graduate students in the near term, focused in locations that would help link the UMB community to the Lexington Market and some sections of street-level retail and restaurants. As the South Market Area continues to transform, the projected residential growth could include 950 to 1,140 rental units and 450 to 500 for-sale units by 2020.

### Retail

Retail market analysis provides a backdrop for understanding the existing retail conditions, current obstacles for retail, and the realistic potential for future retail. Demand for retail space relates to a number of factors, including household density, household incomes, site location, accessibility, visibility, and the competitive environment. Demand for goods, services, and dining is generated by local residents, nearby daytime population, and visitors from other parts of the city and the region.

Each group is driven by different shopping patterns and needs. Local residents rely on retail uses for their daily errands, such as dry cleaning, convenience groceries, and hair styling, whereas nearby daytime employees and students need places to have lunch, relax after work or between classes, or run quick errands. Their retail needs are focused on restaurants (mostly quick-bite opportunities) and errand-oriented shopping over lunch breaks and after work.

Daytime employees and students cluster to the west of Howard Street and are focused largely on institutional users, including the following:

- University of Maryland, Baltimore;
- University of Maryland Medical System and Baltimore VA Medical Center;
- University of Maryland BioPark companies;
- Maryland General Hospital; and
- State government offices.

Of all the demand generators, employees are the most time restricted because of limited lunch hours, particularly in the area hospitals. Therefore, analysis of employee demand is limited to the quarter-mile radius.

Daily visitors to the Westside include residents drawn from throughout the city to major social service agencies and drug treatment facilities. Higher-income patrons of the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center and Hippodrome Theatre and the soon-to-be-relocated Everyman Theatre and 1st Mariner Arena represent a potential market for local restaurants and entertainment venues. The arena is well situated to generate customers for Westside businesses, but plans to relocate this venue may shift this driver out of the immediate area. The Camden Yards sports facilities and the Convention Center attract large crowds, but few venture north of Pratt Street.

Retailers choose sites by first evaluating several factors that characterize their target market, including the number of households nearby, household income, retail expenditures, value of housing stock, education levels, and family makeup. In an urban environment, household and employee or student density are particularly important because they translate into more residents, shoppers, and visitors. The size of the required market varies with store type: grocery stores, for example, use larger trade areas, anticipating demand across sectors but requiring a minimum of 40,000 residents within three miles for most national chains. Typically a drugstore, such as a Rite Aid, CVS, or Walgreens, requires only 25,000 residents and can survive without residents on the same scale of daytime employees or students.

These factors are meaningful only in the context of the competitive environment. Retailers consider whether they can compete with existing and planned...
Retailers to “capture” an adequate share of consumer spending to be successful. Consumers select shopping alternatives for several reasons, including atmosphere and safety, convenience, variety of goods offered, familiarity with the store, and product. Retailers need to understand the existing shopping patterns and how the subject site measures up to the competition.

The Westside area’s growing resident and daytime populations create new opportunities. As an up-and-coming neighborhood, the Westside’s retail demand will increase over time. Within the neighborhood, two different retail districts have emerged and are separated by a major east–west arterial, Franklin Street—the same delineation as seen in the residential market analysis. The North Market Area, in particular north of West Madison Street, houses many historic destination retailers along the ground floor and a few neighborhood service and restaurant operations. In the South Market Area, limited retail along Lexington Market, Eutaw Street, and Howard Street relates primarily to the demands of the clientele coming to the social service providers—low- to moderate-income individuals living along popular bus routes to the west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and other local transit riders. Patronage by university and hospital employees, students, and visitors is constrained by public safety and public space maintenance issues.

Extraordinarily high retail vacancies negatively affect Westside retailing. Existing retailers are essentially marooned in a sea of vacancies. Stores and restaurants are rarely exposed to customers drawn to the area by other retailers. With the exception of those focused around the Centerpoint Apartments, retailers are scattered and lack a collective identity with a broad customer base. Most significant, the large amount of underused or vacant space awaiting redevelopment generates a sense of unease in a pedestrian or potential customer. In an urban environment, stores, restaurants, cafés, and service retailers function as an extension of the public realm. Walking through the Westside is unsettling because the rhythm of storefront uses frequently alternates between occupied and vacant spaces, and the perceived level of criminal activity closer to Lexington Market deters anyone from claiming the surrounding retail area.

The existing retail base consists of business owners and entrepreneurs struggling to make a profit and offering products targeting only the existing customer base. As such, the local retail environment does not fully satisfy the range of purchases demanded by the Westside households. As a consequence, local residents travel elsewhere to meet their retail needs, choosing more competitive locations. Current area businesses would prosper and perhaps offer more retail growth throughout the Westside with additional support from the customer base and government. The Downtown Partnership of Baltimore operates several programs that benefit downtown businesses and target area retailers—for instance, the transformation of a pawn shop into a jewelry store—as do BDC programs throughout the Westside. These should be continued, along with an affordable tenant retention plan to preserve the retail pioneers that have weathered the neighborhood’s retail down cycle.

Other retailers bypass the Westside for several reasons:

- Its limited residential base and household income levels relative to what the retailer needs to be successful;
- Its location on the outskirts of the CBD and proximity to other retail destinations such as the Gallery at Harborplace;
- Its lack of quality retail space; and
- Opportunities in better located shopping areas with stronger anchors and market draws.

In the regional context, the Westside is viewed as a crime-ridden location that cannot provide modern retailers with a safe environment. Flight from downtown to the suburbs in the mid-20th century created the atmosphere for retail demise that reverberates today. While surrounding retail areas sprouted and prospered, the Westside became a void in the local retail market where demand for stores and restaurants is no longer generated or fulfilled.

The Westside has been marginalized by clusters of competition at the Inner Harbor, suburban malls, and other neighborhood main streets with a stronger residential base. In the past, Baltimore’s retail core was focused on parallel lines along Charles and
Howard streets. Now, customers’ existing shopping habits prohibit the return to those shopping patterns. Most important, retail cannot survive with vacant commercial, limited housing density, disinvestment, and perception of crime. Given the strength of the competition, the Westside cannot continue in its current configuration.

The North Market Area sits on the edge of several other retail trade areas. These retail nodes offer restaurants, carryout food options, convenience shopping, and other neighborhood goods and services. The proposed redevelopment at the State Center complex offers a new cluster of retail activity that would serve as an anchor for the North Market Area. In total, the North Market Area could support only a minimal amount of retail consisting of 15,000 to 20,000 square feet. This space would most likely include 6,000 square feet of neighborhood goods and services, two small restaurants or cafés (4,000 square feet), and potentially one or two small boutique general apparel or other merchandise operations (up to 5,000 square feet).

While the Westside struggles to compete with larger regional retail and entertainment attractions, an opportunity exists for the South Market Area. The reconfiguration of the retail environment to attract new residents and UMB employees, students, and faculty by creating an appealing sense of place provides a niche opportunity for the South Market Area within the Westside. Both the daytime employee and student base and nearby residents have a retail gap of unmet needs. Filling this gap would most likely include the addition of 57,000 square feet of neighborhood goods and services, 60,000 square feet of food and beverage, and 21,000 square feet of general apparel or other merchandise operations.

### Arts and Entertainment

Typical entertainment uses include live-music venues, movie theaters, live performance theaters, bowling alleys, recreational rental facilities (bikes, skates, and so on), and other similar uses. Eating and drinking are often associated with and may be one component of this demand. The Inner Harbor and Harbor East both prove that clusters of sit-down restaurants, bars, cafés, delis, ice cream shops, and other food outlets can be a powerful entertainment draw.

The ability to capture customer spending on food and beverages away from home depends on density of the customer base, customer spending capacity, quality of the environment, uniqueness of experience, competition, and number and character of other area restaurants. The Westside has the advantage of the historic Hippodrome Theatre and the new Everyman Theatre coming to the area.

The Westside’s strongest competition comes from the powerful draw of the Inner Harbor, Harbor East, Federal Hill, Fells Point, and Station North, each of which enjoys existing clusters of restaurants and entertainment venues. Plans exist to expand the activities at the Hippodrome by offering the venue for rental to a variety of other city arts groups in need of performance space. An estimate of current visitation includes current attendance at local
venues, events, and festivals, as well as activity at sites outside the Westside, totaling an estimated 400,000 visits annually. An estimate of spending by arts patrons considers the average expenditure for food and beverages, which includes purchasing a meal or drinks before or after attendance at these arts activities and the amount likely to be captured by area businesses. It resulted in more than $3.7 million in annual spending. This level of spending might support two restaurants or bars in the Westside neighborhood.

The potential relocation of the 1st Mariner Arena creates an opportunity for outdoor event space to further expand the arts environment. The expansion of arts activity with the addition of outdoor shows, more performances at the Hippodrome, the addition of the Everyman Theatre, and other arts-related activities will draw more patrons to the Westside. These individuals live in the broad community but may not otherwise be engaged in the Westside. These arts patrons may include nearby dinner or drinks as part of their evening, and the expanded arts activity creates a significant critical mass. Currently, the level of arts activity could support a couple of smaller bars and one or two restaurants. A boost in arts activity, estimated as a 25 percent increase in arts visitation to the area, could support an additional restaurant but runs the high risk of cannibalizing other city arts areas such as Station North.

Office

This assessment considers the Westside’s ability to compete for office development based on its competitive advantages and disadvantages, including access, major employment centers, workforce, office environment, cost, support services, and other factors.

Baltimore’s downtown office market continues to lag behind the suburban market and struggles to absorb space. Baltimore’s Class A inventory offers gross lease rates of $24 per square foot, compared to Class B space, which leases at $19 to $22 per square foot. Baltimore’s vacancy rate reached 16.6 percent in the CBD as of the third quarter of 2010, according to Grubb and Ellis. Major mergers and acquisitions resulted in the consolidation of office space during the first half of the decade. Baltimore lost several office—space users to more affordable suburban locations with ample parking. Since 2005, the traditional downtown Baltimore office core has expanded geographically with the development of Harbor East to the east of the CBD.

The demand for office space relates to the number of employees who require office space. Typically, office sectors such as information, finance, professional and business services, and government offer the base of employment that requires office space. From 2002 to 2009, these sectors declined by 16.6 percent. The most dramatic drop occurred in financial activities, which lost more than 10,980 jobs.

Fortunately, Baltimore has a bright spot for office demand based on its continued gains in popularity as a location for biotech and life sciences tied directly to the hub of educational institutions. UMB, Johns Hopkins institutions, and other educational institutions account for an estimated $2.4 billion in research dollars annually. UMB anticipates climbing to $700 million annually. A natural synergy exists between medical office, research and development, and the expected hospital and university growth in Baltimore’s Westside.

Westside office demand is driven almost exclusively by the major institutions, although it also has a smattering of businesses serving neighborhood residents and businesses as well as nonprofit organizations attracted by inexpensive office space. The available inventory consists of older mid-rise
structures, with limited parking, offering primarily Class C space. Limited reinvestment is evident from the exteriors. Development of modern, competitive office buildings would require assembling larger parcels.

Downtown’s larger corporate office users (for example, attorneys, financial services firms, architects, engineers, and other professional services firms) tend to look for Class A office buildings with prominent locations, state-of-the-art building systems, high-quality standard finishes, and views of the harbor. Additional factors that Class A office tenants consider are good access to support services and retail, the proximity of executive housing, the presence of a skilled labor force, and the quality of neighboring office space. These aspects play a substantial role in determining an area’s competitiveness and demand for new office space.

The Westside does not offer many of the ideal characteristics for major office development because of its isolated location, lack of visibility, limited services and amenities, and failing retail center. Its greatest opportunities lie in attracting UMB and UMMS or other institutional office users. Both anchor institutions on the Westside have a vested interest in continuing and expanding their impact on the neighborhood. UMMS is keeping pace in the dynamic field of health care and plans to expand its presence on the Westside. During the course of the last decade, UMB expanded to include 65 buildings and employs an estimated 8,000 in a series of educational and administrative spaces throughout the Westside. The prospects of an extended-stay lodging facility should be further investigated.

In addition to these alternative office-demand drivers, neighborhood-serving office tenants, such as dentists, real estate agents, tax preparation offices, and others would work well as infill ground-level and second-story office spaces.
The vision for the Westside is to create a dynamic, predominantly residential, urban mixed-use neighborhood rooted in historic fabric with strong anchor institutions and new connections to adjacent established districts. The realization of this vision will require strong leadership, new partnerships, and a renewed sense of urgency from all stakeholders. It will also require a sober assessment of the problems that have vexed redevelopment efforts for decades and the existing assets upon which the Westside’s renaissance will rely.

The Westside enjoys a number of strengths: the presence of UMB and UMMS, architecturally and historically significant buildings, a diverse population, proximity to stable subdistricts, a unique urban character, the tradition of Lexington Market, excellent access to transportation, committed organizational partnerships, and demand for a variety of housing.

However, the neighborhood faces serious challenges: real and perceived public safety issues, depressed office and retail market demands, an impasse between historic preservation and new construction interests, and a lack of recreational and open space.

The city should recognize both these strengths and challenges as the framework for the Westside’s regeneration. The vision must reflect the community that will live and work in the Westside and should ensure that all future residents, when asked, will describe the Westside neighborhood as the beating heart of Baltimore.

Context

Baltimore wrote the book on how to successfully revitalize an older city ravaged by deindustrialization and white flight to the suburbs. Revitalizing the city has not been easy, nor has it been quick. However, Baltimore’s success has come at the expense of some downtown neighborhoods—specifically the Westside. The center core of the Westside is surrounded by four of these success stories—UMB and UMMS with their 25,000 employees, students, and faculty on the west; the Inner Harbor and its 2.3 million square feet of retail, restaurant, and entertainment space to the southeast; the vibrant residential and cultural areas of Seton Hill and Mount Vernon to the north; and the Convention Center, Camden Yards, and M&T Bank.
Stadium to the south. These areas are strong economic generators that should have created the energy to revitalize the entire area but instead created a vacuum that has been filled with Class C retail, empty and deteriorating buildings, poverty, methadone clinics, drugs, and crime.

The challenge in the Westside has been and continues to be how to reverse these forces and create positive energy for the area. The panel believes traditional urban renewal techniques will not be successful in the Westside. Instead, this area needs to be stitched back together through a granular, block-by-block effort rather than with mega-projects.

Redirecting the Energy

The development work to date has recognized that the Westside needs to be regenerated using its existing resources. The panel believes that the area’s historic resources are its distinguishing characteristic—what creates a “there” there. The area is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places, making three tiers of historic tax credits available to developers. Some of the development work has been started—the restoration of the Hippodrome Theatre, the former Stewart’s Department Store, and 39 West Lexington, for instance. Avalon Centerpoint and the Atrium at Market Place also offer examples of how to successfully blend historic preservation and new construction.

Historic preservation efforts must be supplemented with new construction. A quick walk through the Westside reveals dozens of underused or vacant parcels, which offer tremendous opportunity for infill development.

Focus Areas

When people talk about the Westside as a decaying neighborhood, they are referring to a relatively small segment of the entire area. As discussed before, a significant portion of the neighborhood is vital and economically stable.

The areas that are not vibrant or successful, however, cast a shadow across the entire area. The panel has identified four focus areas—three in the South Market Area and one in the North Market Area—that currently suffer from disinvestment and neglect. The city must target its redevelopment efforts and
energies in these four areas, ranked by priority in the following discussion.

Area I

Area I is roughly delimited by Greene Street to the west, Liberty Street to the north, Baltimore Street to the south, and Lexington Street to the north. This area is already home to a number of anchor institutions—Lexington Market, the Hippodrome Theatre, new residential buildings, the rehabilitated Stewart’s building, and the site of the Superblock—making it a logical starting point. Lexington Market, in particular, is a critical piece for the neighborhood’s redevelopment.

This is also the prime area for residential development, along with neighborhood retail and restaurants. In particular, Baltimore Street—from the university campus to the CBD—represents a key axis along which to continue to incentivize retail and residential efforts.

Area II

Area II is bounded by West Franklin Street to the north, Eutaw Street to the west, Saratoga Street to the south, and Park Street to the east. Here, the city facade improvement program could be used to encourage individual owners to restore their facades with residential lofts above. Retail may be slow in coming, but it must focus locally, serving the nearby students and residents. The city, which owns many buildings in the 400 block of this area, must get the properties in private hands with incentive programs so they can be restored. This area is a critical link in connecting the core area to historic neighborhoods and State Center, as the first step in strengthening the Howard Street spine.

Area III

Area III is defined roughly by Eutaw Street to the west, Baltimore Street to the north, Howard Street to the east, and Pratt Street to the south. Here, the city must encourage residential development with restaurants that serve the Convention Center and the sports facilities. The creation of a gateway could draw visitors and residents north across Pratt Street, which has historically served as a barrier between the Westside and the Inner Harbor area. In addition to the north-south axis, the east-west access connecting the CBD must be addressed. The site of the 1st Mariner Arena, if vacated, could become the location of a large urban park.

Area IV

Area IV is roughly bounded by Eutaw Street to the west, Chase Street to the north, Park Avenue to the east, and Franklin Street to the south. This area can serve as a bridge from State Center and the Seton Hill and Mount Vernon neighborhoods to the heart of the new Westside. It also presents an opportunity for infill residential and medical, research, or academic uses. The entire area needs design controls and a signage program, plus transit improvements, new sidewalks, street lights, benches, and flower boxes. In general, the area needs to become a unified place that says one is no longer in the institutional environments of the Medical Center and current State Center but rather in a place to live and shop.
Planning and Design

As the task force pursues this strategic development plan, it should consider specific design and planning options. The panel’s approach to the planning and design of the Westside embraces its characteristics as a neighborhood with great history and physical assets. Regeneration efforts should take advantage of these assets for place-making, open-space, and streetscape recommendations. The Westside neighborhood has excellent “bones”—components or building blocks including streets, places, and a rich fabric of historic resources. Viewed comprehensively, these assets represent a solid framework upon which to organize and structure redevelopment of the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, these assets are unconnected. Each exists as an island, unable to realize the benefits of agglomeration and connectivity. The Westside is transit rich, but the neighborhood and the CBD remain poorly connected.

The panel’s approach to reviving the Westside is deeply cognizant of the heritage of the neighborhood, looking for every opportunity to integrate the rich layers of history, landmarks such as the Lexington Market, and the university, into the neighborhood. The regeneration will be an iterative process, and each piece that is implemented should be viewed as a series complementary steps:

- **Reconnect the neighborhood and the university with the CBD.** The city should concentrate on strengthening the east-west corridors in the Westside. In particular, University Square Park should be connected to the potential urban park on the current arena site through wayfinding, facade, and landscaping improvements along West Baltimore Street. Another connection opportunity is along Saratoga Street, connecting the university and Lexington Market to Charles Center and the CBD.

- **Capitalize on urban open-space opportunities.** The site of the current arena offers a great opportunity for the creation of a large urban park in the center of downtown. Cities such as New York, Boston, and Chicago have shown that dynamic urban parks can attract businesses and private investment, serving as anchors for economic development. The park would also serve as the hinge between the Westside and the CBD, providing a common space for students, arts patrons, and downtown office workers.

- **Integrate transit.** With existing light rail, Metro subway, proposed Red Line, Charm City Circulator, and regular bus service, the Westside is well served by transit. However, these transit options are poorly linked. The city, state, university, and transit agencies need to establish a collaborative relationship to plan for and anticipate future needs. The city should integrate public art initiatives as part of transit-station area planning and design to strengthen Westside’s neighborhood identity.
• **Fix Howard Street.** The alignment and obtrusiveness of the Howard Street light-rail train discourages pedestrian and retail activity along this corridor. The city and the state of Maryland have already budgeted $6.2 million of streetscape improvements for Howard Street to mitigate the presence of the light rail and enhance the pedestrian experience. New station shelters, street furniture, and signage, as well as the removal of the catenary system and the realignment of the light rail, should begin Howard Street’s return to its former prominence.

• **Create a place-making vision for the Westside neighborhood.** The previous recommendations, as well as current initiatives such as the $6.2 million streetscape improvements for the Howard Street light-rail train corridor, should be comprehensively addressed, rather than in a piecemeal fashion. All station area planning, streetscape improvements, and wayfinding must be coordinated with UMB to create a seamless integration between the university campus and neighborhood.

Integrating transit options and mitigating the presence of the light rail will improve the circulation patterns on Howard Street, the historic spine of the Westside.
The panel advocates that the regeneration of the Westside be managed by a task force headed by the mayor and the UMB president. The panel envisions a new unified narrative to overcome the apparent inertia of many groups working at cross purposes or implementing conflicting strategies. To get redevelopment moving, the task force will need strategic financing.

Financial Czar

As noted below, the panel recommends that a smorgasbord of financing vehicles be evaluated, reevaluated, and implemented selectively. To avoid wasteful duplication of programs and efforts, a single person—reporting to the mayor and the UMB president—should be responsible for managing and coordinating the various financing programs and mechanisms.

Homeownership

To become vibrant and economically viable, the Westside must become a “24/7” community. The role of housing in the regeneration of the Westside cannot be overstated. A respectable amount of market-rate and subsidized low- and moderate-income housing has been developed in recent years. Sadly, however, development of ownership housing—a powerful incremental housing absorption element—has lagged.

The panel feels strongly that development of ownership housing—attached townhomes and stacked-flats condominiums—should be made a priority. The following community benefits would flow from increased homeownership:

- Incremental higher-density absorption inside the Westside boundary;
- Higher community awareness, commitment, and civic pride;
- Improved community maintenance;
- Residents with higher disposable income; and
- A more stable population and a safer environment for individuals and families.

Although dropping in recent years, the national homeownership rate still exceeds 65 percent in most communities. This is not the case in Baltimore. With the exception of high-end waterfront condominiums, Baltimore homeownership rates are unusually low. A likely reason is that property tax rates in Baltimore are more than double the rates outside the city limits. Homeowners association fees join in making monthly occupancy costs for middle-income owners noncompetitive with rentals, as has the difficulty in recent years of obtaining credit and downpayment requirements. Care should be taken, however, through market segmentation, to monitor and avoid cannibalizing demand from rental housing.

The Westside is blessed with several significant employment centers, such as UMB, UMMS, Baltimore VA Medical Center, and State Center. The panel is informed that total employment in the Westside is more than 34,000 individuals, about 15,000 of whom are employed by UMB and UMMS alone. The majority of these people commute daily into and out of the Westside. They constitute an impressive pool of candidates for employment-adjacent rental and ownership housing. This pool of candidates for Westside housing is being supplemented by gen-Y young professionals who increasingly show a preference for nontraditional in-town living.

Westside employers should give urgent consideration to constructive intervention in the housing market. The most important benefit to employers is that support for housing near work has proven to be an effective tool for
Financing Toolbox

The panel has no monopoly on knowledge of all available and suitable financing programs and mechanisms at the city’s disposal. Items on the following list are not mutually exclusive. The list is incremental and complementary with a multitude of potential combinations. It is best approached as a reminder checklist. Some of these programs have already been implemented in Baltimore; some have been tried and failed; others should be reevaluated.

1. Area designations to promote area benefits: business improvement districts, empowerment zones, enterprise zones, special assessment districts, tax increment financing project areas, and the like.

2. Sources of funds for development and permanent debt (equity investment, loans, bonds, credit enhancement, guarantees)
   - Commercial lenders;
   - Institutional lenders and investors;
   - Socially responsible or “double bottom line” investors;
   - Private sector investors;
   - Private foundations;
   - City of Baltimore;
   - State of Maryland; and
   - Federal (for example, community development block grants).

Attraction and retention of employees. They include university faculty and staff, medical staff, and management and staff of business enterprises and public sector organizations. Housing for graduate students, for singles and families, offers another incremental housing absorption opportunity. Furthermore, notwithstanding the excellent transportation hub in the Westside, increased near-work housing will promote green commuting—walking and bicycling—reducing traditional commuting costs and time.

To enhance and accelerate this regeneration, employers, the city, charities, and civic and faith-based organizations should consider active support for homeownership in the Westside by providing “soft” assistance that may include combinations of

- Downpayment assistance;
- Employer-assisted soft second mortgages;
- Mortgage tax credit certificates;
- Abatement or reduction in property tax rates;
- Support for lease-to-own programs, which allow residents to begin their tenure as renters and later convert to ownership of their units (but such a program requires construction to condominium standards, which is more expensive than construction of rental units); and
- Reduction in the price of entry through modified ownership structures involving shared-equity mechanisms. In such programs appreciation is typically capped to maintain lower pricing for future homebuyers.

“Hard” employer or city assistance should also be considered. This program would entail employer-assisted or city-assisted housing production on the employer’s or city’s real estate assets under a ground-lease mechanism. Using a modified community land trust shared-appreciation model, the following steps are taken:

- The employer, the city, or another owner of the candidate property places a vacant parcel or an underused structure into a trust. Units are constructed and sold to homeowners with priority given to employees of the landowner or subject to city criteria.
- Homeowners receive title to their units and enter into individual sub-ground leases with the landowner. Homeowners enjoy all financial, tax, social, and psychic benefits of homeownership.

Properly structured, these or similar programs would contribute quickly to incremental absorption of housing units in the Westside and accelerate its regeneration into a 24/7, safe and flourishing community.
3. Sources of funds: cash equivalents
   - Land swaps; and
   - Land contributions (for example, outright $1 conveyances, non-market-rate ground leases).

4. Direct and indirect public subsidies for development
   - Historic tax credits;
   - Low income housing tax credits;
   - New markets tax credits;
   - Property tax credits; and
   - Abatements and tax holidays.

5. Gap financing: Projects financed with reliance on tax credits often require gap financing or credit enhancement during construction. In such cases, the city may be the only source or issuer of financing.

6. Easing of underwriting of permanent debt and enhancement of postconstruction project feasibility: This strategy could prove a double-edged sword because it may affect the city’s property tax receipts. The city’s receipts could be enhanced by voluntary or negotiated payments in lieu of taxes by tax-exempt institutions.

7. Dispositions and acquisitions of land or existing structures
   - Public sector assemblages and single-parcel requests for proposal;
   - Public sector one-off small parcel or existing structure auction;
   - Public sector write-downs of value for disposition of land or structures; and
   - Free-market or small-parcel acquisitions.

8. Revenue-generating public sector land uses and revenue bonding potentials
   - Arena;
   - Lexington Market; and
   - Parking.
The panel’s recommendations for the Westside will not occur without strong leadership and renewed partnerships. The regeneration effort currently enjoys very strong support from Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake; this political support will be critical in realizing the vision of a mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood steeped in historic character. This renewed focus must, however, be supplemented with key partnerships—particularly with UMB—to maintain momentum in the event of any changes to the political dynamics. The effort must also be imbued with a sense of urgency: past disputes and operational processes must be put aside in preparation for a new discipline and spirit of collaboration among the many contributing stakeholders. The panel’s implementation recommendations, therefore, center on a visible leadership entity that can expedite redevelopment and resist the inertia that has slowed the Westside’s revitalization.

Leadership Structure

Mayor Rawlings-Blake should form the Westside Task Force, to be cochaired by the mayor and the UMB president. The task force’s sole responsibility is the revitalization of the Westside community. Its leadership comprises stakeholders including but not limited to BDC, UMMS, Baltimore’s housing commissioner, the Downtown Partnership, the director of the Baltimore City Planning Department, the city of Baltimore’s historic preservation officer, representatives of the Maryland Department of Transportation and Baltimore City Department of Transportation, the commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, a high-level representative of the governor, and the president of Lexington Market. On behalf of the mayor and the UMB president, the Downtown Partnership should facilitate the conduct of these meetings including but not limited to production of minutes and agendas, physical arrangements, and follow-up information gathering for the continuing decision-making process.

The task force must develop a new strategic plan that clearly states the vision and action items, ensures that an expedited process is in place for investment, and measures the outcomes and return on investment both directly and indirectly. The task force should also begin a branding process to secure buy-in for the Westside plans from all areas and residents within the community. Everyone must understand that when the Westside is safe, clean, and economically strong, it benefits the city as a whole.

These goals will be best served through a focused community outreach and citizen engagement process designed specifically for the Westside initiative. All communication from the mayor and the city to the citizens, the business community, and the media should elevate the vision for the Westside. All speeches, newsletters, and meetings should link the value and importance of the Westside neighborhood priority with other city initiatives.

Multiple attempts have been made to redevelop the Westside. The problems the neighborhood faces are formidable. Therefore, the task force needs to achieve a collective vision at its first meeting. Then the staff can begin the necessary transportation, streetscape, financial, and architectural plans to illustrate the vision.

The panel believes the strategic plan should be looked at in two ways. As shown in the image accompanying the “Vision and Development Strategy” section, the neighborhood is divided into four focus areas for redevelopment, and redevelopment activities need to happen concurrently in all four areas. The panel also sees the activities happening in two broad phases. The first six months lays the foundation for bold actions: the projects initiated in the first six months should be high profile and achievable, because they will serve as the public face of the revitalization efforts. After these priority initiatives (discussed below) are underway, equally important, transformational projects must happen with a commitment to partnership and excellence.
Priority Initiatives

After the leadership structure is established, the task force must create an agenda. The panel recommends the following priority initiatives, which involve the highest-profile areas and address the Westside’s most commonly cited problems.

Public Safety

The Westside suffers from real and perceived public safety issues. In the majority of the panel’s interviews, stakeholders cited public safety as a major issue holding back the neighborhood’s progress. Perception of crime and drug activity, along with the presence of multiple methadone clinics, makes the neighborhood appear dangerous and unclean to visitors. The city can address this perception in a variety of ways: stepped-up police presence, partnerships with the UMB security and police force, and coordination with social service agencies and providers to better monitor and serve their clients. Allaying public safety concerns should be the city’s first priority—without it the Westside renaissance will not take place, and the problems could eventually radiate into other areas of the city.

MOA and Superblock

The redevelopment of the Superblock—a four-block area roughly circumscribed by Clay, Liberty, Howard, and Fayette streets—has languished for nearly a decade. The redevelopment is governed by a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the city and the MHT that gives the trust legal authority to block any project that does not adhere to the preservation plan outlined in the MOA. To date, the MHT and the selected developer have not reached an agreement on an appropriate design, creating an impasse that has stalled development along a critical area of Howard Street.

The panel recommends that the MOA be honored—any resulting development by the current developer should receive the approval of the MHT. However, if the developer and the MHT cannot come to an agreement by the expiration date of the land sale agreement, that agreement should be dissolved. The Superblock’s redevelopment has languished too long under the current arrangement to merit any further extensions.

To avoid future stalemates between historic preservation and economic development, the panel recommends that the Westside Task Force establish a framework to better understand the cost and utility of rehabilitating the Westside’s historic buildings. This information is an essential component of understanding the overall reclamation costs for the Westside. The alternative is slow but steady demolition by neglect: Baltimore is losing the Westside, not to bulldozers and wrecking balls, but to gradual and painful decline because all parties are not talking to each other and all parties do not have the complete story. When the city and its partners have the full picture, then all stakeholders can understand the breadth of the financial commitments and the amount of public subsidy that will be necessary to put together a comprehensive development plan.

Disposition of BDC Properties

The panel believes that BDC must get city-owned properties onto the market in small packages at the block level, generating activity with a number of smaller developers rather than through large-scale disposals. As mentioned in the “Financing” section, the task force should authorize the use of New Market Tax Credits to create a loan fund for small developers.

The Lexington Market, in operation for more than 220 years, is a critical node of activity. Unfortunately, perception of public safety issues has limited its potential.
Baltimore has dozens of financial institutions—all of them eager to do business with the city of Baltimore and UMB. Collectively, these two institutions have budgets that exceed $3 billion. The bulk of the city’s funds are located in one financial institution. The task force should examine the city’s depository strategy: can the city pursue reciprocity and require its deposits be used to finance community redevelopment in the Westside?

Unique Opportunities

A few unique sites offer tremendous transformative potential. The task force should focus on these potential anchors for the neighborhood.

Lexington Market. In existence for more than 220 years, Lexington Market is the epicenter of both public life and public safety concerns in the Westside. The historic market occupies two sites: the original building and addition that provides fresh and prepared foods at approximately 140 merchant stalls, and the Market West building that provides food, clothing, and household items. In 2004, the market completed an approximately $4 million renovation, but the tenant mix and perception of crime and illegal activity persist.

The market sits in the footprint of the UMB campus, and the university should consider the market an asset and put resources toward ensuring it is successful and safe. Social services may have to be blended into the market’s management—a tool used at Seattle’s Pike Place Market—including a 24/7 child care facility, partnerships with social service agencies, a daycare center for seniors, or even charter schools. The panel also believes Lexington Market would benefit from expanded open space, potentially on the Post Office Square site or the existing Market West building.

Urban Park (Arena Site). The proposed relocation of the 1st Mariner Arena offers a tremendous opportunity for an urban park. As mentioned earlier, urban open spaces can generate economic development and increase property values. Baltimore has the opportunity to create another great urban space in America, like the CityGarden in St. Louis, Discovery Green in Houston, and Millennium Park in Chicago. A new urban park would also better connect the Westside, serving as a gateway between the neighborhood and the CBD.

University–Research Corridor. Capitalizing on the Westside’s growing academic, medical, and life sciences sectors, the task force should consider the potential for a research corridor—much like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s University
Park—along Howard Street, linking the Maryland General Hospital and the university. Interspersed with housing, the corridor could revitalize this moribund stretch with potential uses such as an extended-stay hotel; daycare and services for seniors; and a business incubator, school of social work, medical offices, and other space related to the university and the hospital.

**Social Security Administration Building.** The Social Security Administration Building—an 11-acre site bounded by Saratoga, Greene, and Franklin streets and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard—is in the process of being vacated. The site represents a valuable resource for the community; the potential reuse of that property creates additional opportunities, which could include the expansion of the campus northward or a mixed-use project developed with UMB.

**Cultural Core.** The Hippodrome Theatre and Everyman Theatre are two highly regarded arts venues located in the Westside neighborhood; together, they constitute an arts and culture core for the community. The two theaters will not bring enough patrons to drive other uses in the area, but they can take advantage of a growing residential population.

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### Historic Preservation Examples

A number of cities have made preserving historic buildings the centerpiece of revitalization efforts. Rather than clearing older neighborhoods to build mega-projects such as baseball stadiums or convention centers, the following cities have focused on promoting and restoring their historic character to draw people back downtown.

- **Lower Downtown (LoDo), Denver, Colorado**
- **SoHo, New York, New York**
- **Portland, Maine**
- **Charleston, South Carolina**
- **Savannah, Georgia**
- **Miami Beach, Florida**
Conclusion

The panel has attempted to build a foundation for the Westside neighborhood vision. To help the city build the future for the Westside, the panel assessed the neighborhood’s assets and challenges and interviewed dozens of stakeholders. The panel quickly realized that a lack of leadership and urgency has plagued the neighborhood over the years, as well as a lack of understanding of market realities. Also, critical partnerships with key stakeholders and employers have been left unexplored. However, Mayor Rawlings-Blake’s clear commitment to the area represents a turning point, creating momentum for redevelopment and filling the leadership void.

The panel’s main recommendation is that the mayor and the UMB president cochair a Westside Task Force. This entity’s sole mission will be to expedite, promote, and ultimately realize the vision for the Westside: the creation of a predominantly residential mixed-use neighborhood that is connected to the adjacent established districts. A new strategic plan should focus on implementing near-term, highly visible goals, such as improving public safety around the Lexington Market and breaking the impasse on the Superblock development. It should also address several design issues, such as improving links to the adjacent subdistricts, enhancing transit connectivity, and adding open space. Also, it must recognize that existing assets—the Lexington Market, the UMB campus, and historic structures—will provide the framework for the Westside’s new identity.

The ULI Advisory Services panel was inspired by the extraordinary commitment to neighborhood preservation and revitalization that Baltimore has demonstrated over the past decades. Although economic conditions may be challenging at this time, the task force can build on existing assets and incremental opportunities for near-term achievement. The tasks may seem daunting, but the truth remains that Baltimore has traveled this road before and been successful.
Glenda E. Hood

Panel Chair
Orlando, Florida

Hood served as Florida secretary of state from 2003 to 2005 and as mayor of Orlando from 1992 to 2003. Before being elected Orlando’s first woman mayor, she served as a City Council member for 12 years and was president of her own public relations firm.

She is a strong advocate of growth management strategies and smart growth principles to build safe, livable neighborhoods, revitalized downtowns, and strong local economies. Under her leadership, Orlando’s land area grew by 50 percent; older and historic in-town neighborhoods were revitalized; compatible new mixed-use infill was constructed; the city’s largest parks initiative built new parks and refurbished existing ones; unprecedented partnerships in education were established; transportation alternatives were championed; Orlando became a high-tech center and competitive world marketplace; and the arts became a civic priority. She spearheaded the reuse plan for the Orlando Naval Training Center, the most ambitious economic development project in the city’s history, which has been recognized across the country as one of the finest examples of reuse of former government properties and a model for incorporating all elements of smart growth, and she has been a key adviser on domestic security and disaster preparedness for the state of Florida and the federal Department of Homeland Security.

As secretary of state, Hood was responsible for the department’s divisions of Administrative Services, Corporations, Cultural Affairs, Elections, Historical Resources, and Library and Information Services. She was Florida’s chief elections officer, widely credited for overseeing the seamless 2004 election cycle as well as assisting counties in election preparation during hurricane recovery efforts; and chief cultural officer, commissioning economic impact studies to assess Florida’s programs in the arts, historic preservation and libraries and developing the state’s ten-year cultural strategic plan, Culture Builds Florida’s Future.

Hood has served as president of the National League of Cities and the Florida League of Cities and as chair of the Florida Chamber of Commerce. She is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, an active participant with the Urban Land Institute’s Advisory Services panels and ULI’s Daniel Rose Center for Land Use and Leadership, and a longstanding board member and past board chair of Partners for Livable Communities.

Hood is president of Hood Partners LLC, a business development and consulting group.

Abigail Ferretti

Washington, D.C.

As a founding principal of Partners for Economic Solutions, Ferretti focuses on managing the firm’s urban practice with an emphasis on revitalizing older communities. In all her work, she dedicates herself to finding the best available data that accurately portray current and potential development. She uses geographic information systems extensively to inform the analyses of existing conditions, competitive projects, and opportunities for new development. This relentless pursuit of actual data to build sound conclusions serves as a guiding principle for all Partners for Economic Solutions projects.

With more than 12 years of experience managing small and large redevelopment projects, Ferretti is fully versed in a variety of approaches and strategies. She is currently working on a market analysis for the Mount Pleasant neighborhood in the District of Columbia. Beginning with her work with streetscape and small business loans in Baltimore County business districts, she has extended her experience to include such commercial corridors as Washington, D.C.’s Georgia Avenue and Rhode Island Avenue,
U.S. Route 1 between Washington and Baltimore, and U.S. 40 in Howard County, Maryland. In both urban and suburban business districts, her detailed analysis provides invaluable input to crafting realistic redevelopment plans that can succeed within the local market.

Ferretti analyzes development projects’ financial performance to determine the need for public investment and the potential return available in return for that public support. In Arlington County, Virginia, her financial analysis demonstrated the feasibility of developer inclusion of affordable housing in return for additional project density.

With the Maryland Department of Transportation, Ferretti has worked extensively in evaluating opportunities and planning for redevelopment in transit-station areas, particularly commuter-rail stations that offer access to downtown Washington and Baltimore. In this work, she helped communities understand and leverage the public resources (including not only land but also funding opportunities) to support redevelopment.

Ferretti works closely with stakeholders to understand their views, interests, concerns, and resources so as to forge consensus on the plan and the implementation strategies. She is particularly skilled in helping community members and other stakeholders understand market opportunities and constraints so that the plans are market-based and realistic. She excels in public speaking and working with large groups to respond to questions and educate stakeholders at large about the economic realities of the project and environment.

**Owen Lang**

**Petaluma, California**

Lang has more than 35 years of significant site and urban design experience. His expertise includes urban mixed-use districts, downtown revitalization plans, urban waterfronts, community design plans, corporate/commercial facilities, transit-oriented developments, and recreation/resort facilities.

His broad range of experience involves working with multijurisdictional agencies, special interest groups, and community groups, forging a shared understanding and support for public and private improvements. His strong physical design sense and graphic skills allow him to communicate design concepts throughout the progressive phases of a project.

Before entering private consultancy, Lang was a principal of Sasaki Associates’ San Francisco office from 1983. His prior professional history includes planning and design of the built environment at nationally renowned firms including POD, Inc., SWA Group, EDAW, Wallace McHarg Roberts and Todd, Sasaki DawsonDeMay & Associates, and Lawrence Halprin & Associates. A Bay Area native, Lang is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and received a master’s degree in landscape architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and a BS in landscape architecture from Cal Poly Pomona.

His award-winning project experience includes the Port of Los Angeles Wilmington Waterfront Development Master Plan, the Aerojet Properties Master Plan in Folsom, the North Embarcadero Alliance Visionary Plan in San Diego, the San Francisco Urban Waterfront Transportation Projects, the Presidio Trust Management Plan in San Francisco, and the Sacramento/West Sacramento Riverfront Master Plan. Currently, he is consulting to the Los Angeles Municipal Water District of Southern California and the Hawaii Community Development Authority in Honolulu.

Lang served as a ULI panel member for Sacramento’s Stockton Boulevard Neighborhood in the summer of 2009. His recent professional activities include the discussion titled “Civic Amenities and Economic Prosperity: Developing a Strategy to Expand Arts, Culture, and Recreation in the Sacramento Region” for the November 2008 Urban Land Institute and Partnership for Prosperity event. In April 2007, Lang was a panelist for a forum titled “Urban Assets and Sectors: Outlook for Office, Industrial, Retail, Hotel and Housing” for IMN’s Second Annual Opportunity and Private Fund Forum on Urban Rejuvenation and Brownfields.
Stanley Lowe

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The managing partner in charge of Gulf Coast operations for Fourth River Development LLC, Lowe directs development and consulting activities in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Gulf Coast communities. He is currently working with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, Northrop-Grumman Ship Systems, and the city of Pascagoula to develop Northrop Grumman East Bay shipyards into a 1,100-unit mixed-income residential community. Building on the Pascagoula East Bay Plan, this multimillion-dollar initiative will immediately provide housing for Gulf Coast workers. Lowe will also engage in opportunities for private/public partnerships involving Historic and New Markets Tax Credit projects.

Lowe was the first person to lead the National Trust’s new Department of Community Revitalization, which brought together three of the Trust’s most successful programs: its National Main Street Center, which worked with more than 1,500 communities in 50 states on the economic revitalization of downtown business districts; the Community Partners program, which assisted with the revitalization of historic low-and moderate-income residential districts through pilot projects in 16 communities; and the Preservation Development Initiative.

Lowe was formerly employed by Pittsburgh’s mayor Tom Murphy as director, neighborhoods and policy planning, and as executive director of the city’s housing authority. During his tenure as executive director, Lowe secured McKinsey Consultants to develop a strategic plan to remove the Pittsburgh Housing Authority from the HUD “troubled” list, obtained national accreditation for Pittsburgh Housing Authority Police Department, and secured $3 million for a new police station. He secured over $90 million in HOPE VI funding for public housing development, increased tenant employment from 3 to 15 percent, and secured a HUD “Moving to Work” designation.

Among his many other positions, Lowe served as vice president, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, where he managed a $4 million neighborhood revolving loan fund. It leveraged $25 million in neighborhood rehabilitation and was responsible for organizing a citywide conference regarding underuse of vacant buildings and land. As executive director of Manchester Citizens Corporation, Lowe was responsible for assisting the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh with implementing a $27 million urban renewal program that established Manchester as Pittsburgh’s largest National Register African American Historic District.

He has been a guest lecturer at several universities and a consultant to many preservation and community-based organizations throughout the country; has served on numerous boards of directors; and is the recipient of city, state, and national awards for his contributions to Pittsburgh’s revitalization. A 1972 graduate of Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina, Lowe received a BA in history and education; he is a 1992 graduate of the National Development Training Institute of Baltimore, Maryland.

Betty Massey

Galveston, Texas

Massey works as the executive director of Mary Moody Northen Endowment, a private foundation based in Galveston, Texas, and working in Texas and Virginia. Among her responsibilities are the operations of two historic properties, the 1895 Moody family home in Galveston and Mountain Lake Conservancy and Hotel, a historic mountain resort near Blacksburg, Virginia.

Following the September 2008 landfall of Hurricane Ike, Massey, then chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee for the city of Galveston, was appointed chair of the city’s Long Term Recovery Committee. This 330-member citizens’ committee developed Galveston’s roadmap for recovery. At the same time, Massey led the effort to establish and served as the first chair of the Galveston County Recovery Fund, a coalition of four private foundations, two United Ways, the city of Galveston, and Galveston County, formed for the purpose of soliciting and distributing private charitable resources after Hurricane Ike. Recently, Massey was appointed to the board of commissioners of the Galveston Housing Authority and from that position will help guide the reconstruction of public housing on the island.
Before joining the endowment in September 2000, Massey served 11 years as executive director of Galveston Historical Foundation, the second-largest locally based preservation group in the United States. During her tenure, the organization was recognized with the Texas Governor’s Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Trustee Award for Organizational Excellence. The foundation’s program of work included museum operations, educational programming, commercial redevelopment, and neighborhood revitalization.

Massey served as a member of the board of advisors for the National Trust for Historic Preservation from 1997 until 2006 and as regional chair for two years. She served on the board of directors of Preservation Texas from 1990 until 1997 and as its president for two of those years. She has served on the city of Galveston’s historic review board, and as a member of the city’s Historic Resources Recovery task force that documented historic structures in the city over a two-year period immediately before Hurricane Ike. Currently, Massey serves on the board of advisors for the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia and as a member of Virginia Tech’s Pamplin School of Business Advisory Board. She is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley.

**Ehud Mouchly**

*Los Angeles, California*

Mouchly owns READI, LLC (“Real Estate Assets Development & Investments”). He has over 30 years of experience in development, redevelopment, asset management, and financing of sustainable infill projects, mixed-use development projects, master-planned communities, workforce housing communities, and employer-assisted housing projects.

Previously, he was vice president and general manager of UniDev, LLC’s West Coast office, focusing on the design, development, financing, and management of workforce housing communities. Earlier, Mouchly was a member of SunCal Companies’ master-planned communities’ acquisition, entitlements, and startup team; general manager of Anaverde (formerly City Ranch), KB-Homes’s 2,000-acre, 5,000-unit master-planned community in Palmdale, California; principal and co-developer of a 160-acre commercial mixed-use development in San Joaquin County, California; managing director in the Real Estate Group of Price Waterhouse; founder and president of a national real estate consulting company; and developer/builder of residential and retirement communities.

Mouchly has served as chairman and vice chairman of several flights of the Community Development Council of the Urban Land Institute, vice chairman of the ULI National Program Committee, a ULI council counselor, and member of the ULI-LA District Council Executive Committee. He is a member of the California Redevelopment Association and its Housing Committee, the National Association of Home Builders, the National Community Land Trust Network, the Counselors of Real Estate, and Lambda Alpha International. He is a former fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

An adjunct professor in the Master of Real Estate Development program at the University of Southern California, Mouchly has also served as an expert witness in U.S. district and state superior courts. He is an occasional author, instructor, and frequent speaker on real estate matters in the United States and overseas. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Columbia University in New York.

**Tom Murphy**

*Washington, D.C.*

Senior resident fellow and ULI/Klingbeil Family Chair for urban development, Murphy joins six other ULI senior resident fellows who specialize in public policy, retail/urban entertainment, transportation/infrastructure, housing, real estate finance, and environmental issues. A former mayor of Pittsburgh, his extensive experience in urban revitalization—what drives investment, what ensures long-lasting commitment—is a key addition to the senior resident fellows’ areas of expertise.

Since January 2006, Murphy had served as ULI’s Gulf Coast liaison, helping coordinate with the leadership of New Orleans and the public to advance the implementation of rebuilding recommendations made by ULI’s Advisory Services panel last fall. In addition, he worked with the Louisiana state leadership, as well as with leadership in hurricane-affected areas.
in Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida to identify areas appropriate for ULI involvement.

Before his service as the ULI Gulf Coast liaison, Murphy served three terms as the mayor of Pittsburgh, from January 1994 through December 2005. During that time, he initiated a public/private partnership strategy that leveraged more than $4.5 billion in economic development in Pittsburgh. Murphy led efforts to secure and oversee $1 billion in funding for the development of two professional sports facilities and a new convention center that is the largest certified green building in the United States. He developed strategic partnerships to transform more than 1,000 acres of blighted, abandoned industrial properties into new commercial, residential, retail, and public uses; and he oversaw the development of more than 25 miles of new riverfront trails and urban green space.

From 1979 through 1993, Murphy served eight terms in the Pennsylvania State General Assembly House of Representatives. He focused legislative activities on changing Western Pennsylvania’s economy from industrial to entrepreneurial.

Murphy served in the Peace Corps in Paraguay from 1970 through 1972. He is a 1993 graduate of the New Mayors Program offered by Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. He holds an MS in urban studies from Hunter College, New York, and a BS in biology and chemistry from John Carroll University, Ohio.

He is an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, a board member of the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities, and a board member of the National Rails to Trails Conservancy. He received the 2002 Outstanding Achievement of City Livability Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors and was selected as the 2001 Pittsburgh Man of the Year Award by Vectors Pittsburgh.

Ranne P. Warner

New York, New York

For more than 20 years, Warner ran her own real estate development firm, based in New England and active at the local, national, and international levels. She has extensive experience in all phases of real estate development, including site identification and acquisition, development strategy, permitting and zoning, finance, construction, marketing, leasing, property management, and sales for new buildings and adaptive use and historic preservation projects.

Recently, Warner relocated to New York City where she works for Zeckendorf Development and the sponsors of 15 Central Park West. Previously, she converted two historic textile mills in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, into 60 live/work artist’s loft condominiums. Reviewed by the New York Times, this successful project attracted significant new investment to downtown Pawtucket, helping revitalize this depressed mill town.

In 1980, Warner founded Centros Properties USA in partnership with two British developers. She built the firm’s portfolio in the United States from zero to $140 million in value in over one-half million square feet of first-class institutional-quality office, research and development, and industrial properties.

Warner was an early adapter in developing environmentally sensitive properties by creating buildings designed to the highest energy-efficiency standards and whenever possible using materials made from recycled or renewable resources. She has been a pioneer in attempting to incorporate economical alternative energy sources in her buildings. Sound land planning and a focus on creating walkable communities are hallmarks of her development strategies.

An author, lecturer, and active civic volunteer and corporate board member, Warner’s personal passion is revitalizing our inner cities through adaptive reuse and historic preservation. She received an MBA from Harvard Business School and a bachelor of journalism in advertising from the University of Missouri School of Journalism.