



DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE  
THE STRATEGIC PLAN

2011

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## INTRODUCTION

What does it take to transform a city, especially one with as rich a history as Baltimore? Many of this city's great strengths - an unfussy working-class temperament, nostalgia for its storied past, strong civic pride even among those who moved out of the city a generation ago - can be double-edged, often leading people to see only what was, not what could be.

Redevelopment of the Inner Harbor was contentious and famously went to a voter referendum where it won by a narrow margin of about 16,000 votes. Moving the Orioles out of Memorial Stadium to Camden Yards was hotly debated. Few thought the former warehouses in Canton, Harbor East, or Locust Point could ever regain their usefulness. Fewer still thought that more than 40,000 people would eventually be living in Baltimore's Downtown.

In each of these examples, Baltimore overcame skepticism and embraced new ideas, reinventing itself in the process. And, each time, it was at the forefront of urban renewal patterns that became national trends: waterfront revitalization; new-urbanist stadia; mixed-use industrial conversion; and downtown residential development.

In 2011, Downtown Baltimore is at another important juncture. The global recession reined in the dramatic investment, development, and residential growth of the past decade. Despite impressive job growth, even during the recession, the commercial vacancy rate within the Central Business District hovers at about 19% and planned office districts on Downtown's outer perimeter could put further strains on occupancy. New uses must be found for older towers that no longer work as office space. Aging infrastructure needs updating, yet governments are facing dramatic budget shortfalls. And, cash-strapped governments are looking for new income from Downtown in the form of new fees and regulations that could choke future growth.

If we've learned anything from Downtown's ebb and flow over the past several decades, it's that market forces, alone, will not determine Downtown's fate.

Deliberate intervention by the public and private sector is needed to address challenges and create new opportunities. Accordingly, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore developed this *Strategic Plan for Downtown Baltimore* to guide the way forward. It reflects thousands of hours of community meetings, business outreach, and consultation with urban design scholars and civic leaders from across the country.

Since its inception more than a quarter century ago, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore has been the primary organization dedicated to improving the economic and cultural heart of Greater Baltimore. In that time, The Partnership has successfully created public and private initiatives that have increased investment, improved Downtown infrastructure, and attracted and retained employers, employees, and residents. The Partnership has also produced economic data benchmarking Downtown's progress and analyses that shape and provide solutions to lingering challenges.

Early in 2011, The Partnership released its *Open Space Plan for Downtown*, a set of recommendations and guidelines that were developed as a companion to this *Strategic Plan*.

Together, the two plans provide a roadmap for Downtown evolution in the decades ahead. Both documents incorporate the growing mix of Downtown constituencies, such as residential and retail uses, and coalesce months of planning, community meetings, and consultations with leading thinkers about urban renewal. The plans complement, and will build upon, the existing Pratt Street Revitalization effort, and they will readily incorporate forthcoming information, such as the findings of the Mayor's Downtown Task Force and the recommendations of Transform Baltimore (the updating of zoning codes and regulations by the Planning Department).

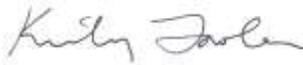
*NOTE to view report by the Downtown Task Force, [Click Here](#)*

The goal of connecting islands of Downtown development into one seamless, mixed-use district is not a new one. The new plans pick up where others left off by addressing key questions: How do we find new uses for older buildings? How do we create memorable, attractive places? How do we retain and grow businesses and residents? How do we compete for limited government and corporate investment?

On behalf of Downtown Partnership, we thank everyone who participated in the planning process, took walking tours in inclement weather, and who brought ideas and critical thinking to the table. In particular, The Honorable Thomas Murphy, an Urban Land Institute Senior Resident Fellow for Urban Development and former Pittsburgh Mayor, was instrumental to our planning process and provided an invaluable outside perspective.



**John Frisch**  
*Chair, Board of Directors*



**Kirby Fowler**  
*President*



## vision for downtown baltimore

Downtown Baltimore will be the center of the Baltimore metropolitan region in all respects - business, residential, retail, tourism, education, medicine, and government. It will be a dense, mixed-use district with new residents who will continue to add vibrancy and attract retail, restaurants, and entertainment venues. The street-level experience will be dynamic, safe, and seamlessly positive -- from one end of Downtown to the other - and people will be drawn to our world-class harbor and our engaging and pleasant open spaces.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- New residents are critical to generating activity, day and night, and to bringing life to older buildings.
- Downtown must offer superior quality of life on par with the best downtowns in the country.



- Downtown must remain the premier commercial center of the Region.
- Open spaces - of the highest quality and filled with activity - are economic catalysts.
- Downtown must create a transformative public space in the historic core.
- Improved physical connections must be made from areas of strength into the core of Downtown. Streetscaping and ground-level building spaces should activate every block and encourage pedestrians to explore.
- Downtown must be clean, inviting, and safe.
- A diverse economy and population are the backbone of future success.
- Future development and transportation decisions must focus on sustainability.
- Urban design shall embrace modernity, while respecting historic buildings when feasible.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **NEW RESIDENTS** Downtown's top priority should be continuing its rapid residential growth. Residents drive street-level and nighttime activity, patronize retail and cultural destinations, and contribute to the City's economic output. Creating new residential space, at a range of price points, needs to happen in the near-term. Currently, there is not enough rental housing to meet the growing demand.
- **OPEN SPACE** The recommendations of the Open Space Plan for Downtown Baltimore should be adopted. Attention should be paid to its key focus areas, such as One Light Street and Hopkins Plaza, and to the way they are connected by open space improvements.
- **UNDERUTILIZED BUILDINGS** Finding new uses for underutilized properties, such as 10 Light Street and 2 Hopkins Plaza, should be a high priority for public and private agencies, and requires focused Mayoral involvement to move the process forward.
- **FUNDING** A multi-property Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district should be created in the oldest parts of Downtown to fund much-needed capital improvement projects and thereby encourage new development.



- **OFFICE MARKET** There must be renewed efforts to attract and retain businesses, using a coordinated campaign that promotes Downtown’s dynamic urban lifestyle and that identifies available incentives and resources.
- **STREET-LEVEL RETAIL** Destination retail, especially at the street level, should be encouraged by property owners -- even if it means giving away space. Retail is a critical amenity for office tenants and the growing residential base. Empty space does no good for the property owner or the community.
- **CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES** City-owned properties are underutilized assets. Deadlines should be set for the City to improve, lease, or sell its empty buildings. Redevelopment of key City projects - the Superblock, Lexington Market, and a new arena - must be a near-term priority.
- **HOTELS** Hotel space that is currently in development should be finished as soon as possible, but there should be no incentives for new hotel construction until overall occupancy improves.
- **RETAIL SPACES** While there is growing demand for retail stores, Downtown lacks spaces large enough to accommodate the kinds of clothing, furniture, and grocery stores that Downtown residents would like to have. Larger retail, for example, should be accommodated at the former Mechanic Theatre and at new space built on the north side of Pratt Street.
- **HISTORIC LANDMARKS** Many of Downtown’s oldest and most significant structures are vulnerable because they have not been landmarked. The list of these properties is generally agreed upon, so there should be no impediment to landmarking them as soon as possible, before they become targeted for development.
- **PARKING LOTS** Surface parking should be discouraged through the possible imposition of fees that could be refunded to the property owner once the site is developed.



## DOWNTOWN TRENDS, STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

More than 200 years ago, the City of Baltimore sprang up around its famous harbor, and Downtown has been the region's leading commercial center ever since. Today, Downtown Baltimore is affordable and enjoys a well-educated workforce. Its diverse

### downtown baltimore's economic engines

- Financial and Legal Services
- Medicine/Biotech
- Technology
- Government/NonProfit
- Hospitality/Tourism

base of more than 4,000 companies is strengthened by a sizable public sector workforce and by the presence of several major medical and educational institutions, including Mercy Medical Center, Maryland General Hospital, the University System of Maryland, and the Johns Hopkins Medical institutions that are nearby.

The Inner Harbor remains Downtown's most obvious physical asset and continues to attract people and investment more than three decades after Harborplace opened. Downtown also benefits from its proximity to Washington, D.C. and a central mid-Atlantic location with inter-modal transit connections along the East Coast and into the Midwest. From Downtown, businesses have easy access to a variety of regional markets, and Downtown residents are conveniently close to a variety of landscapes, including farmland, mountains, beaches, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Within a one-mile radius of Pratt and Light streets, Downtown Baltimore has the region's largest concentration of employment with approximately 113,000 employees. As a result, Downtown ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in the country for job density. In the same geographic area, Downtown's residential population of more than 41,000 ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the country, ahead of other healthy downtowns in Atlanta, Denver, Portland, and Washington, D.C. According to the 2010 Census, Downtown was one of the few areas in Baltimore that gained population. This growth is part of a five-year trend that saw the number of Downtown Baltimore residents rise 11.6% between 2006 and 2010.

Residential demand is driven by two different populations. Younger adults weaned in suburbia are choosing to live and work in dynamic, walkable neighborhoods. On the other end of the spectrum, downsizing Baby Boomers are moving into waterfront and cultural districts. In both cases, the demand for Downtown living represents an attitudinal sea change from even a decade ago.

Transit connectivity, as well as investments in housing, nightlife, infrastructure, and sports stadia, have improved the area's quality of life, helping attract new jobs, residents, and retail. Other assets include Downtown Baltimore's economic diversity that, in addition to legal and financial service sectors, has a large number of medical, government, and higher education jobs which has been relatively recession-proof.

Downtown is part of a national trend that has swung back in favor of city centers. As reported by *The Wall Street Journal*, ([Downtowns get a Fresh Lease: Suburbs Lose Office Workers to Business Districts, Reversing a Post-War Trend](#), published on December 13, 2010), "Statistics show that suburban office markets were hit harder by the recession than their downtown counterparts and are recovering more slowly."

In the same article, Christopher Leinberger, a Brookings Institution Fellow, wrote about the growing popularity of urban centers when he observed, "Young people don't want to be out on the fringe . . . and as people are beginning to figure that out, it's beginning to get factored into office relocations."



PHOTOS: Areas of Downtown are thriving while others are struggling to attract tenants

Aside from this new popularity, Downtown was already the single most important economic resource for Baltimore City in terms of jobs, tax base, and residential density. An earlier report, *Downtown Baltimore: Its Impact on the City Economy*, released by Downtown Partnership of Baltimore in the Fall of 2010, showed that Downtown Baltimore is just 3.8% of Baltimore's total area but contains 17% all Baltimore businesses and 27% of all jobs. It also provides \$17 billion in direct economic output which is nearly 30% of the Baltimore City total.

Downtown properties, both commercial and residential, pay \$106 million in property taxes, 13.5% of Baltimore's total, while its 40,000 plus residents pay \$64 million in income taxes which is 24% of the Baltimore total. Relative to its size, Downtown Baltimore provides almost four times its weight in property taxes and six times its weight in income taxes.

Despite Downtown Baltimore's overall success, its traditional core needs help. Many of the older buildings and public spaces are showing their age, and increasing vacancies could become persistent if new investment is not realized. In addition, large new office districts are being planned on Downtown Baltimore's perimeter in Westport and State Center, and significant resources are being used to ensure their success.

In some ways, the issues facing Downtown Baltimore have remained consistent for decades. News clippings from the early 1990s and 2000s, for example, detail concerns about vacant offices and storefronts, about competition from neighboring office

districts, and about the need for investment. These are concerns that Downtown, and most office markets across the country, continue to face in the wake of the national economic slowdown.

Other concerns are more specific. Within Downtown, the older office districts are not doing as well as those nearest the water and are weakest on the Westside and around Hopkins Plaza (which is the southern end of Charles Center, the historic development that initially revitalized Downtown a generation ago). Vacancies in this historic core are relatively high and there has not been a new office building constructed there in more than twenty years.

In City Center and the Westside of Downtown, some property owners are sitting on space that is leased but unoccupied. This may be fine for their bottom line but contributes to a lack of street level activity and the sense that Downtown is faltering. Other key projects have stalled or are making slow progress, including several hotel conversions and the Superblock. And, Downtown is pockmarked by lots where buildings have come down to make way for new development, only to have the project mothballed.

Some of the biggest development opportunities in Downtown - a new arena, Convention Center expansion, and Lexington Market improvements - need new vision and a plan for moving forward. Many smaller City-owned properties sit empty. Even when these properties have been identified for development, there lacks a sense of urgency, particularly on Downtown's Westside - although legal challenges and negotiations about preservation have tied the City's hands in some cases. Whatever the reason, vacancies, particularly at the street level, inhibit vibrancy.

The demand for new residential units, particularly rental units, is a positive trend that will grow the city's population and stimulate new retail demand. Here, too, development has stalled. There are currently no new apartment buildings under construction despite occupancy rates in the mid-to-high 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. It is in the best interests of the public and private sectors to push for new housing and increased population density.

Finally, negative perceptions about Downtown's safety persist, despite data that shows Downtown, already one of the safest areas in Baltimore, had a 53% reduction in crime between 2000 and 2009. Vacancies, poor infrastructure, panhandling, and rowdy crowds associated with nightclubs feed into these misperceptions.

Physical improvements to buildings and streetscapes are needed to improve perceptions and the curb appeal of Downtown properties. As part of its Strategic Planning process, Downtown Partnership has released a companion report, *The Downtown Baltimore Open Space Plan*, that details current conditions of Downtown parks and plazas, and maps out steps to improve parks and the physical linkages between them. The plan calls for the creation of transformative, buzz-worthy spaces that will support adjacent commercial development and provide places for the community to gather.

While the challenges may sound familiar, the conditions on the ground are much improved and Downtown Baltimore has entered the current decade in a position of relative strength that would have been enviable ten years prior.



## funding open space improvements

Improving Downtown's curb appeal is one of the most important tools for attracting new residents - a top priority of this Plan - and for building Downtown's office market. When people think about what makes a vibrant and attractive city, they often think about the buildings that comprise the skyline. Most don't realize that cities are just as defined by the open spaces between the buildings.

Around the globe, the best communities have well-designed streetscapes, parks, and plazas that bring people outside and invite interaction. Studies show that these kinds of spaces bring direct economic benefit by: fostering commerce; making it easier to attract tenants, employees and customers; by allowing buildings to charge higher rents; and by stimulating additional tax revenue for the jurisdiction.

Much of Downtown Baltimore is well-served by open space, but its best parks, such as Center Plaza, can feel disconnected from each other and the surrounding streets.

There are also older areas, particularly on the Westside, that lack parks and well-maintained streetscapes.

To address both the opportunities and challenges presented by open spaces in Downtown Baltimore, Downtown Partnership initiated an Open Space Planning process in conjunction with the Baltimore City Department of Planning and the Baltimore Development Corporation.

Thanks to funding provided by the Department of Planning, The Partnership hired Mahan Rykiel Associates and its team, including Project for Public Spaces, Flannigan Consulting, and Sabra Wang & Associates, to complete the study. The team focused its attention on an area bordered by Pratt Street to the south, Centre Street to the north, the Jones Falls Expressway to the east, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to the west.

The resulting Open Space Plan for Downtown Baltimore was released earlier in 2011 and is incorporated into this Strategic Plan. The open space recommendations are grounded in four guiding concepts: connecting isolated public spaces into networks; improving sustainability; maximizing transit connections and walkability; and using placemaking principles to create a strong sense of community and express each neighborhood's distinct identity. Below are some signature projects recommended by the Open Space Plan.

## **FUNDING OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS**

Government funds and private grants, the typical means of financing public space improvements, cannot be counted on until the national economy recovers more fully. Fortunately, with the limited funds available, Baltimore City and charitable foundations are stepping forward to help fund some open space improvements.

However, alternative strategies are needed, which could include: (1) the creation of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District; (2) use of the Downtown Management Authority surcharge funds; and (3) creation of Transit Oriented Development districts.

### **Downtown Baltimore TIF District**

A Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district uses incremental increases in future tax revenues to fund public space and infrastructure improvements. Under a “pay-go” TIF, a portion of the future increased tax revenue would be used to fund public improvements, but only as the taxes are being paid annually. In other words, as the tax money comes in, some funds are available for incremental improvements to public spaces.

Under the more traditional “bond” TIF approach, a portion of future increased tax revenue is used to pay debt service on a bond that would be issued at the start of the TIF process. Such a bond would provide a large lump sum to initiate significant public space projects immediately, although the debt repayment obligation would last for numerous years. For a “bond” TIF, a Special Tax District must be created to pledge private funds for debt service in the event that the future increased tax increment is not sufficient to make debt payments on the bond.

Downtown Partnership is considering the proposal of a hybrid model, blending some “pay-go” funds with traditional “bond” funds. The Partnership’s proposed Downtown TIF district would be smaller than the one-mile radius of Downtown and cover the area in most need of new public space investment. Specifically, the proposed district would be bordered by Pratt Street on the south, Paca Street on the west, Centre Street on the north, and Guilford Avenue/South Street on the east.

With TIF funds, work could begin on many of the public spaces identified in the Open Space Plan. In addition, bonds could be issued for the purpose of making more immediate, transformational improvements to parks, plazas, or public buildings. The Partnership considers the following spaces as the top three candidates for TIF-funded improvements: (1) McKeldin Plaza/Pratt Street; (2) Hopkins Plaza/possible park on the current arena site; and (3) Lexington Market renovations and a related park space connection to University of Maryland, Baltimore. As of this writing, The Partnership hopes to receive approval for a Downtown TIF district in the summer of 2011.

## Downtown Management Authority Surcharge

In 2010, Downtown property owners and tenants supported a 50% increase in the private surcharge that funds the Downtown Management Authority (DMA) district. This increase provides approximately \$1.8 million of additional funding, each year, for capital improvements within the DMA. Many projects were underway the first year of the increase and many more are in the pipeline. With guidance from the Open Space Plan, funds are currently being used for such public space improvements as:

- Removal of the skywalk and the addition of new green space at Hopkins Plaza;
- Irrigation and landscaping at Preston Gardens;
- Creation of an improved space to be named The Hub @ Wilkes Lane (the plaza is located between the office buildings at 7 Saint Paul Street and 120 East Baltimore Street and includes an MTA Metro stop);
- Installation of a prototype landscaping scheme at 100 East Pratt, consistent with the vision of the Pratt Street Master Plan;
- Hiring of a full-time Park Steward to maintain Preston Gardens;
- Scheduling of regular events in Center Plaza, Hopkins Plaza, and Preston Gardens;
- Repair and beautification of the facades of City-owned properties on the Westside;
- Funding numerous new street-level businesses and arts ventures as part of the *Operation: Storefront* initiative to bring new uses to vacant street-level spaces; and
- Minimizing the negative impact of vacant windows by covering them with images of Downtown.

## **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) District**

The City and Downtown Partnership are seeking State approval for the designation of one or more Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) districts in Downtown. Under the State's recently adopted legislation, a TOD designation gives the districts priority for State funding and State office relocations, and for leveraging state-owned land or assets, among other benefits. As of the spring 2011, there is strong support for the creation of a TOD district that would encompass the Lexington Market area, which is a critical transit center in the City and the home of State offices and the University of Maryland, Baltimore. The City and Downtown Partnership are also advocating for the creation of a TOD district adjacent to the Charles Center Metro Stop, along Baltimore Street from Liberty to Calvert.

## PROMOTE & SUPPORT DOWNTOWN OFFICE SPACE

Multiple City, State, and private organizations are charged with business attraction and retention. These efforts are constrained by budgets and generally leave room for improvement.

- More should be done to promote Downtown as an office location for both large and small employers.  
Coordination of attraction/retention efforts between the Baltimore Development Corporation, Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, and Downtown Partnership should improve with formal monthly meetings about prospects.
- Government at all levels contributes significantly to the Downtown workforce. Whenever possible, City, State, and Federal agencies should be encouraged to renew leases or move into Downtown.
- When handling prospects, public agencies and private brokers must give priority attention to the core of Downtown.
- The creation of incubators to grow innovative companies and support entrepreneurs should be explored.
- The Marketing partners must identify, promote, and improve incentives available to businesses.

### mayor's downtown task force

In the fall of 2010, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced the creation of a Downtown Task Force that held meetings and conducted research on approaches to addressing Downtown office vacancy. The Mayor's Task Force evaluated two types of vacancy issues: (1) cyclical vacancy, which can be attributed to the national recession and is a function of the business cycle; and (2) structural vacancy, which relates to office buildings that are becoming obsolete and are in need of new uses. The Mayor's Report is to be released separately, but many of the recommendations have been incorporated into this Downtown Strategic Plan. Of particular note are the recommendations pointing to the need for: (1) better promotion of the office market; (2) better coordination on business attraction efforts by government and private organizations; (3) better communication between the Federal, State, and City governments regarding space needs in Downtown; and (4) investigation of possible incentives to support the office market and/or the conversion of obsolete buildings. DPOB greatly appreciates the Mayor's genuine interest in this issue and the support of her administration during this process.

These include:

- Tenant improvement loans;
- Enterprise Zone tax credits;
- Parking subsidies;
- Transit ridership incentives;
- Live Near Your Work incentives; and
- State Transit-Oriented District designation.

## ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS

As with the office market, residents are incredibly important to Downtown renewal



and regeneration, and residential growth is the single most important factor in Downtown's evolution. The residential population grew by almost twelve percent between 2006 and 2010 and Downtown Baltimore ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation for residential density. This base of residents must be built upon, particularly in the historic core of Downtown.



Because demand for new Downtown rental housing is strong, it is imperative to push for the continued conversion of outdated office buildings through incentives such as Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) and historic tax credits. Improved recruitment and retention of residents should include regional marketing, the development of new rental properties, continued emphasis on transit connectivity, and

expanded retail attraction. To help with these efforts, Downtown Partnership has just hired a Residential Outreach coordinator, who is in regular contact with residents for the purpose of identifying their needs and concerns.

## BUILD ON RETAIL GROWTH

Downtown residents and employees want to support Downtown retail but are often forced to shop in the surrounding counties because of a lack of stores (particularly the

larger chains) and diverse merchandise. New retail space is needed to accommodate this usage, as most available space is small and not suited to current retail floorplate requirements. Meanwhile, smaller available space needs to be filled with dynamic ground-level activity such as shops, cafes, and arts venues. These uses are preferable to ground-level office space or vacancy.

Harborplace and The Gallery should be encouraged to continue their efforts to lure larger retail stores, such as H&M and Urban Outfitters, to the Inner Harbor. The addition of such stores will appeal to residents and office workers, many of whom previously viewed Harborplace as an attraction intended primarily for tourists. Also, this destination will continue to benefit from additional investment in maintenance and general aesthetic improvements.

## HOTEL SECTOR

Downtown has an abundance of hotel space, and demand could be improved. There are several hotels in an advanced stage of development and they should come on-line as quickly as possible. Half-built projects at key Downtown corners seriously undermine the street-level experience. However, planning for new hotel rooms should cease until demand and room occupancy rates improve. Instead of hotel pace, new residential projects should be a priority.

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## WHAT TO DO WITH UNDER-UTILIZED PROPERTIES?

Downtown Partnership of Baltimore has identified those buildings, surface parking areas, and vacant lots that are most in need of attention. General strategies for improving under-utilized properties are to the right. Below are lists of properties and site-specific recommendations for improvement.

Buildings with an Uncertain Future	Address	Strategy
Bank of America	10 Light Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain architect or development consultant to evaluate conversion</li> <li>2. Ask Mayor to meet with property owner and lead tenant</li> <li>3. Urge property owner and lead tenant to allow submarket lease of retail spaces (or Operation: Storefront tenant)</li> <li>4. If conversion option, evaluate incentives</li> <li>5. If to remain office, highlight on new office website and other marketing</li> </ol>
PNC/Mercantile	2 Hopkins Plaza	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain architect or development consultant to evaluate conversion</li> <li>2. Ask Mayor to meet with property owner</li> <li>3. Evaluate possibility of demolishing Kaiser Permanente building</li> <li>4. If conversion option, promote opportunity and evaluate incentives</li> <li>5. If to remain office, highlight on new office website and other marketing</li> </ol>
Former Provident HQ	114 E. Lexington Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain architect or development consultant to evaluate conversion</li> <li>2. If conversion option, promote opportunity and evaluate incentives</li> <li>3. If to remain office, highlight on new office website and other marketing</li> <li>4. Explore interest by Mercy Hospital or court agencies/law firms</li> </ol>
Former JHU Downtown Center	10 N. Charles Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet with property owner to discuss new uses for the space</li> <li>2. Promote availability of space; potentially consolidate urban design organizations in this location</li> <li>3. Evaluate financial assistance</li> <li>4. Encourage submarket lease of space (or Operation: Storefront tenant)</li> </ol>

Redwood Trust	200 E. Redwood Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote opportunity to lease or purchase (particularly as hotel conference/ reception space)</li> <li>2. Evaluate financial assistance</li> </ol>
Bank of America	225 N. Calvert	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain architect or development consultant to evaluate conversion</li> <li>2. Meet with City officials to evaluate demolition and creation of large development parcel, to include City parking garage and former Health Dept.</li> <li>3. If conversion option, promote opportunity and evaluate incentives</li> <li>4. If to remain office, highlight on new office website and other marketing</li> <li>5. Explore interest by Mercy Hospital, court agencies/law firms, back office</li> </ol>
MECU	7 E. Redwood Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue discussions with City (current owner) and Legg Mason (future owner)</li> <li>2. Assist in improving exterior lighting and immediate streetscaping</li> </ol>
Appraiser's Store	Gay and Lombard	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue discussions with U.S. General Services Administration in support of market rate project</li> <li>2. Retain architect or development consultant to evaluate conversion</li> <li>3. Promote project to potential bidders</li> </ol>
Baltimore City Community College	Market Place and Lombard Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support demolition of existing building and relocation of Holocaust Memorial</li> <li>2. Support mixed use plan for the site</li> </ol>
Equitable Building	10 N. Calvert Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain architect or development consultant to evaluate conversion</li> <li>2. If conversion option, promote opportunity and evaluate incentives</li> <li>3. If to remain office, highlight on new office website and other marketing</li> <li>4. Encourage property owner to invest in Wilkes Lane alley and plaza near MTA</li> </ol>

<b>Surface Parking Lots</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
One Light	1 Light Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Urge property owner to create a plan for development and submit designs to Urban Design Advisory Panel (“UDARP”) by October 1, 2011</li> <li>2. Urge property owner to participate in Operation: Storefront program and allow submarket rental of street-level spaces</li> <li>3. Verify compliance with surface parking ordinance</li> <li>4. Support condemnation of site, if no real plan emerges on this schedule, or if there is no participation in Operation: Storefront program</li> <li>5. Urge inclusion of McDonald’s site in condemnation plan</li> <li>6. Push for reuse of site for park space and low-scale building</li> </ol>
Sheraton 4 Points	25 S. Calvert Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Urge installation of new, tall, attractive fencing</li> <li>2. Encourage a landscaping plan</li> <li>3. Evaluate temporary uses (e.g., art installation, nursery for downtown trees and plants)</li> <li>4. Ask Mayor to meet with new owner to address plans for the site</li> </ol>
McCormick	414 Light Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verify compliance with surface parking ordinance</li> <li>2. Ask Mayor to meet with new owner to address plans for the site</li> <li>3. Seek additional green space and trees</li> </ol>
300 E. Pratt	300 E. Pratt Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verify compliance with surface parking ordinance</li> <li>2. Ask Mayor to meet with new owner to address plans for the site</li> <li>3. Seek additional green space and trees</li> <li>4. Require new and attractive fencing</li> <li>5. Encourage substantial contribution to implement landscaping scheme consistent with Pratt Street Master Plan</li> </ol>
Edison Lot	200 block E. Baltimore Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verify compliance with surface parking ordinance</li> <li>2. Ask Mayor to meet with new owner to address plans for the site</li> <li>3. Seek additional green space and trees</li> <li>4. Require window treatments on 200 East Baltimore building</li> <li>5. Urge Edison to allow submarket lease of retail space (or Operation: Storefront tenant)</li> </ol>

**Vacant Buildings**

**Address**

**Strategy**

**with Stalled Developments**

Mechanic	1 W. Baltimore Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support expeditious review of final design plans by UDARP</li> <li>2. Support PILOT legislation</li> <li>3. Identify funds for public improvements</li> </ol>
Lexington Square	Lexington, Fayette, Howard, Park	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Urge completion of Land Disposition Agreement and sale of City-owned property to Lexington Square by October 1, 2011</li> <li>2. If no agreement completed on this deadline, evaluate new strategy for buildings</li> <li>3. Improve facades if demolition/renovation do not occur by December 31, 2011</li> </ol>
Sonesta	301 N. Charles Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask Mayor to meet with property owner to review plans</li> <li>2. Evaluate conversion opportunities</li> <li>3. If hotel is no longer an option, support conversion to residential</li> <li>4. Expand window treatments</li> <li>5. Incentivize owner to enter into submarket lease of retail space (or Operation: Storefront tenant)</li> </ol>
Hotel Indigo	207 E. Redwood Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor status of bankruptcy proceedings</li> <li>2. Upon resolution of bankruptcy, encourage expedited completion of hotel</li> </ol>
Staybridge Suites	2 E. Fayette Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor status of bankruptcy proceedings</li> <li>2. Upon resolution of bankruptcy, ask Mayor to meet with property owner to review plans</li> <li>3. Evaluate conversion opportunities</li> <li>4. If hotel is no longer an option, support conversion to residential</li> <li>5. Maintain window treatments</li> <li>6. Incentivize owner to enter into submarket lease of retail space (or Operation: Storefront tenant)</li> </ol>
Tran properties	15 - 19 S. Charles Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask Mayor to meet with property owner to review plans</li> <li>2. Evaluate conversion opportunities</li> <li>3. If hotel is no longer an option, support conversion to residential</li> <li>4. Maintain window treatments</li> <li>5. Incentivize owner to enter into submarket lease of retail space (or Operation: Storefront tenant)</li> </ol>
F&D Building	210 N. Charles Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask Mayor to meet with property owner to review plans</li> <li>2. Evaluate conversion opportunities</li> <li>3. If hotel is no longer an option, support conversion to residential</li> <li>4. Incentivize owner to enter into submarket lease of retail space (or Operation: Storefront tenant)</li> </ol>

Hyatt Place	Calvert & Lombard	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Urge completion of Land Disposition Agreement and sale of</li> </ol>
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		<p>City-owned property by October 1, 2011</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. If no agreement completed on this deadline, evaluate new strategy for buildings</li> <li>3. Improve facades if demolition/renovation do not occur by December 31, 2011</li> </ol>
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## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- A new arena and expanded convention center are a necessity. For the past seven years, The Partnership has pushed for a new arena because the current arena - although very successful in selling out concerts - will continue to show its age. At some point, its obsolescence will hinder the ability to attract top name acts. In addition, the nearly 50-year-old design - with its blank walls frustrating any attempt at street level activity - inhibits the connection between City Center and University of Maryland, Baltimore.
- The City should create no new disincentives to development (taxes, fees, costly mandates).
- City zoning and licensing laws should not promote the concentration of adult entertainment establishments in Downtown. In addition, the venues on The Block must be pressed to eliminate criminal activities and to improve their appearance. As establishments close, all efforts should be directed at adding healthier, non-adult entertainment businesses to the mix.
- Illegal vending and criminal activity near Lexington Market must be eliminated.
- Wherever possible, small streets should accommodate two-way traffic.
- New nightclubs, while important to creating a vibrant Downtown, should not be supported if they are proposed to be located too close to hotels or

residences.

- The condition of transit stops and the delivery of transit service should be improved and customer-driven. New transit offerings, such as the proposed Red Line, are a priority.
- Historic buildings should be proactively landmarked, before they become targeted for redevelopment. Below is a list of Downtown’s most important buildings and their landmark status as of November 2010.

Historic Name	Current Name	Address	Protected
Baltimore Trust Company	Bank of America	10 Light Street	
Garrett Building	Garrett Building	233 E Redwood	√
One Charles Center	One Charles Center	100 N Charles St	√
Baltimore Equitable Society	Alewife	21 N Eutaw	√
Keyser Building	Hotel Indigo	207 E Redwood	√
Goodwill Building	Goodwill Building	222 E Redwood	
Old Town National Bank	UTZ Building	221 N Gay	√
Abell Building	Abell Building	329 W Baltimore	√
Fidelity Building	Fidelity Building (F & D Building)	200 N Charles	√
Pennsylvania Railroad Building	Pennsylvania Railroad	200 E Baltimore	
Mercantile Bank Building	Redwood Trust	202 E Redwood	√
BGE Building	39 West Lexington	39 West Lexington	√
Fish Market	Market Place	35 Market Place	√
Howard Uniform Company Building	Neil Katz	311 W Baltimore	
Baltimore Life Building	Royal Sonesta	301 N Charles	
Civic Plaza Building	Grasmick State Education Building	200 W Baltimore	
Fish Market (106 N. Eutaw)	Divine Seafood	106 N Eutaw	√
Hippodrome	Hippodrome Theatre	12 N Eutaw	√
One Charles Center	One Charles Center	100 N Charles	
Old Federal Reserve Bank	Provident Bank	114 E Lexington	√
St. Alphonsus School	The Saratoga	105 W Saratoga	
Terminal Warehouse Building	Terminal Warehouse PUD	211 E Pleasant	√
Hansa House	Hansa Haus	2 E Redwood	
Kresge Building	Kresge Building	117 W Lexington	√
Masonic Temple	Tremont Grand	229 N Charles	√
Mayfair Theater	Mayfair Theatre	500 M Howard	√
NE Corner Howard & Franklin			√
Faust Brothers Building	Faust Brothers Building	307 W Baltimore	√
Eutaw Savings Bank	Equitable Building	10 N. Calvert	
Appraiser's Store	Appraiser's Store	103 S. Gay	√
Orchard Financial	MECU Building	7 E. Redwood/14 Light Street	
*List is based on Baltimore City Code landmarked building list as of 11/3/2010			

## MOVING FORWARD

*The following was written by The Honorable Thomas Murphy, an Urban Land Institute Senior Resident Fellow for Urban Development and former Pittsburgh Mayor, whose insight and guidance were instrumental to the strategic planning process.*

As a country, we are falling in love with cities again. Residential trends are up significantly for many downtown neighborhoods across the country; industries connected to health and educational institutions, most often in central cities, are becoming the major employers in most cities. And, even as we become more connected technologically, the places that shout vitality and celebrate humanity are where people want to be - Millennium Park in Chicago or the Inner Harbor in Baltimore.

Years ago, Baltimore was one of the first places to challenge the notion that people wouldn't come to cities by pursuing the vision of the Inner Harbor. I remember coming to Baltimore in the mid-1970s and looking in awe at the Otterbein neighborhood, completely vacant and fenced off, thinking about the scale of imagination and vision that had shaped that development.

Thirty-five years later, it has been a humbling experience for me to participate in a series of discussions with many civic leaders about Baltimore's future. Downtown Partnership's initiative brought together private, public, and institutional leaders in a manner that was timely and important. There are organizations similar to Downtown Partnership in many cities, but rarely do they command both the respect and leadership to undertake such a task.

The process included a charrette about, and a walking tour of, each area in Downtown. This got participants right to ground level where the opportunity to meet stakeholders was invaluable to our understanding of the dynamics in each neighborhood. The discussions after the tours about what could be were an exhilarating experience. The real test, that of implementation, lies ahead and each individual project must be seen in the context of an overall strategy.

In many ways, the center of the city is like a jigsaw puzzle with the pieces now needing to be put together - the Inner Harbor; Westside and the University of

Maryland, Baltimore; the ballparks, convention center and arena; Harbor East; the medical facilities; the cultural district, a growing residential population, and City Center . . . all the pieces of a remarkable city are there. The challenge is to connect them in a way that creates vibrancy and activity so that people will choose to move seamlessly between them. The connections are architectural, programmatic, and management-oriented. Wide streets, surface parking lots, unattractive first floor building uses all discourage walking. Programming events that draw people to areas work, but nothing will work if people do not feel safe.

Baltimore has demonstrated its ability to succeed in the face of high odds. Who could have imagined the success of the Inner Harbor, or the impressive growth of the University of Maryland, Baltimore campus, or the growing residential population in the traditional business district? Over my years in public life, I have learned a lesson: that every time someone suggests a new idea, there will be at least a hundred people to give you a reason not to do it--“It’s the wrong place,” “It’s too big or small,” “We don’t need it!”—and, of course, there is never enough money. At the end of the day, remarkable things happen because of leadership and community will. Baltimore has written the book on it. Now, it must do it again.



## acknowledgements

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For more information about Downtown Partnership, and for the full Downtown Strategic Plan, please visit [www.GoDowntownBaltimore.com](http://www.GoDowntownBaltimore.com), or call 410.244.1030.

This Plan is produced by Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc., which is solely responsible for its content. Downtown Partnership is a 501(c)(6) non-profit incorporated in the State of Maryland. It has approximately 650 member firms throughout the mid-Atlantic region, and it operates the 106-block Downtown Management Authority (DMA) district in Downtown Baltimore.

## LINKS TO RELATED PLAN MATERIALS

[Open Space Master Plan for Downtown Baltimore \(full report\)](#)

[Open Space Master Plan for Downtown Baltimore \(condensed\)](#)

[Strategic Plan for Downtown Baltimore \(condensed\)](#)

[Pratt Street Master Plan](#)

[Economic Impact Analysis of Downtown on Baltimore City](#)

[Outlook 2012](#)

[Retail Assessment and Strategy](#)

[Historic Preservation Report](#)

[List of Participants](#)