



NEWS FROM DOWNTOWN'S WESTSIDE

January 2012

Dear Stakeholders:

Your commitment to revitalizing Downtown's Westside is much appreciated. This update will be distributed monthly, and it has two objectives:

- Provide a progress report on the actions of the Westside Coordinator.
- Provide updates for each working group.

This first issue will summarize the actions taken between July and December 2011.

Downtown's Westside Working Groups

The City and the University of Maryland are partnering to turn downtown's Westside into a true neighborhood – one where people of all income levels will want to live, work and socialize. Several working groups are tackling the fundamental issues that have hindered the area's revival. All groups meet monthly, and in certain instances more frequently, depending upon the urgency of the task. The Westside Strategic Committee working groups are:

- Public Safety, Health and Human Service
- Lexington Market
- Development
- Arts and Culture
- Transportation and Infrastructure

Public Safety, Health and Human Services Working Group

Public Safety: Major Dennis Smith of the Central District Police reports that from mid-September through November 2011, violent crime was cut by half within the area bounded by Paca, Saratoga, Baltimore and Howard Streets.

Major Smith reports that 63% of the calls for service were related to "quality of life"

crimes, such as calls for “disorderly persons” or “controlled dangerous substances (CDS).”

Major Smith credits Citiwatch, the Baltimore Police’s video surveillance system, for contributing to 50% of arrests on the Westside. Of the 112 arrests made during this timeframe, 86 were for controlled dangerous substances (CDS).

Human Services: Since September 2011, the Downtown Partnership has contracted with Trina Morris, a full-time substance abuse addictions counselor, to serve this population in and around Lexington Market. Ms. Morris is the initial point of contact for the Westside human services strategy.

- Of the total number of people engaged by Ms. Morris from September through November 2011, 96 individuals agreed to participate in the treatment referral process.
- Of those who have gotten a treatment slot, 70% have maintained their appointments.

A “continuum of care” has been identified to help people at the Market who have taken the initiative to seek treatment for drug and alcohol-related addictions. Ideally, those individuals would be transferred to a case manager who would facilitate their progression through several stages of treatment and life skills training. Additionally, conversations are underway with the UMB School of Social Work to develop strategies to complement outreach efforts in and around Lexington Market.

Lexington Market Working Group

Holly Freishtat, the City’s food policy director, has completed a Healthy Food assessment of the City’s Public Markets. Carryout businesses make up 70% of the food vendors, according to Ms. Freishtat. At Lexington Market, she is working with selected vendors to establish new healthy menus, part of a \$50,000 pilot program funded by the Lexington Market, Inc.

An implementation planning process for the Market area was launched in November 2011. The working group is now studying the Downtown Partnership’s 2011 Open Space Plan’s recommendations for the Lexington Market and University of Maryland campus area (see pages 115 to 130 in the **Downtown Open Space Plan**)

The working group has reviewed a merchandising study completed for greater

Lexington Market in 2004 (the electronic version can be made available upon request). Several of the group members visited public markets in Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburgh, Lancaster (PA) and Washington, D.C. and interviewed their management and design teams.

The working group's objective is to get a plan approved by the University of Maryland, Baltimore and the Mayor by Fall 2012, for the solicitation of developer interest in available Market and UMB properties. This group's recommendations will focus on how best to achieve the Mayor's vision of a mixed-income Market and a UMB campus that integrates well into the Westside, with active, street-level uses.

Development Working Group

The group is finalizing incentives for owner-occupants, proprietors and small developers to renovate unoccupied upper floors of City-owned Westside buildings.

Transportation and Infrastructure Working Group

The Mayor directed the Department of Transportation to take the lead on a "Full Court Press" for the Westside in September 2011. The goal was to identify superficial, street-level problems that could be resolved in a day or two: missing sidewalk bricks, broken curbs, cleaning out of storm water inlets and replacing manhole lids.

While this effort may not seem like a transformational action, it strengthens the message that we are raising expectations on downtown's Westside. The group's next step is to work with the City's zoning enforcement agency and the Downtown Partnership to prioritize blocks for 2012 capital improvements.

Group members continue to monitor progress on the implementation of the Howard Street Corridor streetscape improvements.

Arts and Culture Working Group

The group is working with the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts (BOPA) to organize all social media, marketing and public relations for the 2012 Open House program. To date, at least two Open House events will be staged on downtown's Westside:

- Thanks to a community development grant from PNC Bank, Fluid Movement's "Wild Westside Roller Skating Bonanza" performances will be at 3pm on March 24, 25, 31 and April 1 in the Stewart's building, ground floor,

228 West Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD 21201 (tickets \$5)

- **The Hippodrome Foodie Experience and Street Festival (May 12), featuring Andrew Zimmerman, host of the Travel Channel's "Bizarre Foods"**

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is seeking to partner with an artist or arts organization for a possible submission for the pending Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts/PNC Bank Transformative Art Project grant. CRS is interested in submissions that focus on the use of the east side of their building, located at 228 West Lexington Street (former Stewart's department store) and/or the adjacent lot.

CRS will host an information session on Monday January 30th, from 11:30 to 1:00 pm in their headquarters at the Stewart's building. Attendance is not mandatory, but is recommended. Submission information will be provided during the session. For more information visit www.Promotionandarts.com and select "PNC Transformative Art Project."

If you plan on attending the information session, **please RSVP by Friday, January 27th** to: Jason.Sullivan@crs.org

Westside Wednesday Walks at 12:30 PM, made possible by Baltimore Heritage:

- February 8 — Meet at Pratt Library Central Branch (Cathedral Street between Franklin & Mulberry Streets)
- March 14 — Meet at Lexington Market (Paca & Lexington Streets)
- April 11 — Meet at Charles Center (Center Plaza)

More information at www.baltimoreheritage.org

How You Can Help - Right Now - on Downtown's Westside

The 311 Smartphone application is a new, free resource available to residents, merchants, property owners and downtown workers for reporting issues related to vacant and unoccupied buildings, graffiti, unsafe sidewalks, and empty tree pits, among other non-emergency issues.

311 smartphone app for iPhones

311 smartphone app for Droids

Brian Greenan

Project Coordinator
Downtown's Westside
The Mayor's Office

