

A Critique of the
2006 City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan

Prepared for
The Abell Foundation

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I. Purpose and Organization of the Report

The Baltimore City Charter requires that the City Planning Commission “adopt and revise a master plan for the proposed physical development of the City.” The Annotated Maryland Code mandates that at least once every six years the City adopt and/or amend a master plan containing various specified elements. The combined master plan requirements of the Charter and the State Code are intended to provide a policy framework for City capital expenditures on transportation, utilities, and other public facilities, as well as for land use and other development regulations and decisions, to assure the orderly development of the City. The State Code also requires the master plan to address the protection of certain sensitive areas and natural resources.

On June 15, 2006, the Baltimore City Planning Commission adopted a City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan, the first new comprehensive plan in 30 years. This action followed many years of preparation, study, community input, and discussion going back to the late 1990s. A resolution (City Council Bill # 06-0466) approving the Plan has been introduced in the Baltimore City Council, with hearings scheduled during September and October of 2006. A copy of the Bill is included as Appendix E.

The Abell Foundation has for a long time played an important role in the social, economic, and physical development of Baltimore City and its metropolitan area. The Foundation has funded many innovative projects and programs in the fields of education, economic and employment development, social services, cultural development, and transportation. It has also been in the forefront of funding studies and reports about important public policy problems and issues.

In recognition of the significance of the new Plan as a framework for Baltimore’s future social, economic, and physical development, the Abell Foundation has commissioned this report. The purpose is to identify and discuss the important public policy issues (including possible legal issues) embodied in the Plan recommendations; to compare it with the City’s previous comprehensive plan, the Comprehensive Policies Plan, that was adopted in components between 1967 and 1974; to compare the Plan with recent comprehensive plans in other American cities; and to examine the implications of the City Council’s adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan.

Section II of the report describes the Comprehensive Master Plan and compares it with Baltimore’s earlier Policies Plan and recent plans from other U.S. cities. **Section III** identifies key public policy issues and questions arising from the new Plan’s recommendations. It also discusses issues not sufficiently addressed in the Plan and strategies that should be added. **Section IV** looks specifically at the need to assess the implications of the plan on City finances. **Section V** summarizes the major findings of the report. **The Appendices** contain information about other city comprehensive plans, legal implications of the Plan, the Plan’s contents, and the report’s authors.

II. General Description of the Comprehensive Master Plan; Its Comparison to the Previous Plan and those in Other Cities

Background

Baltimore's new Comprehensive Master Plan was adopted by the Baltimore City Planning Commission on June 15, 2006. It is contained in one document and covers a six-year period from 2007 through 2012, with some actions extending beyond six years. A resolution approving this Plan is now under consideration by the Baltimore City Council.

The Plan has been prepared and adopted by the Planning Commission to satisfy City Charter (Article VII, Section 74) and Maryland Code (Article 66B, Section 1.03) requirements about comprehensive and master plans and to guide the City's future development. (The State requirements arose after the adoption of the old plan, which only had to comply with the City Charter.)

The previous plan, the Comprehensive Policies Plan, consisted of six documents, each covering a major topic such as housing and economic development. These plans applied to a long-term, 20-year period. The first of these documents, Preservation of the City's Character, was adopted by the Planning Commission in February of 1967. The sixth document, Community Facilities and Services, was adopted in September 1974. (Otis Rolley, III, Director of the Baltimore City Department of Planning, indicates that the new Plan covers only six years in order to encourage the City's Comprehensive Plan being revised regularly and more quickly. The City's Capital Improvement Plan covers six years, and the State requires local consideration of the Maryland Code planning mandates at least every six years.)

Overview

Both the new Plan and previous plan are policy plans that also include master plan maps for land use, transportation, and public facilities. Both are organized under major planning categories. The new Plan has four major categories—Live, Earn, Play, and Learn. The six major topics (in separate documents) of the old plan cover City Character, Leisure Time, Transportation, Housing and Residential Areas, Economic Development, and Community Facilities and Services. The new Plan's "Live" corresponds more or less to the Policy Plan's "Housing and Residential Neighborhoods." The new "Earn" corresponds more or less to the old "Economic Development." The new "Play" corresponds more or less to the old "Leisure Time," and both cover commercial recreation and cultural activities, as well as public recreation facilities. The new Plan's "Learn" covers City schools, libraries, and higher education, topics covered in the Policy Plan's "Community Facilities and Services" and "Economic Development."

Under each of its four major categories, the new Plan sets forth goals, objectives and strategies. Under each of its six major topics, the old plan set forth goals and policies. The goals and objectives in the new Plan are broad and general, as are the goals in the old one. The "strategies" in the new Plan and the "policies" in the old are fairly specific

recommended actions for City agencies and others. Along with the master plan maps, these are the most meaningful aspects of the two plans. The new Plan describes itself as a “business plan,” uses business plan language like “customers” and “market,” but lacks important business plan features such as revenue and expenditure projections.

The new Plan document also contains a history of Baltimore, and key trends. For each of the four activity concepts, it presents background information about the industry, customers, market size and trends, location, and competition. At the end of the report is information about Plan implementation, management, related personnel, and financial considerations, followed by a conclusion and a glossary of terms and acronyms. The appendices are important for justifying compliance with Maryland Code and City Charter. They also contain background on policies and strategies, land use elements, transportation plan elements, sensitive areas elements, and community facilities elements, in addition to plans and maps.

The foundation for the Plan was the PlanBaltimore effort in the 1990s. Many Plan elements are taken from plans prepared, or yet to be prepared, by City agencies or other entities. There are many recommended plans to be produced for implementing the strategies of the Plan. This is true for transportation, water and wastewater facilities, parks and open space, school facilities, and housing typologies.

Historical Context

The planners who produced the former comprehensive plan were strongly influenced by civil rights and anti-poverty issues and programs, so much a part of the national public policy agenda in the 1960s. Although the City’s population and industrial base had not yet experienced the very large decreases that were to occur in ensuing decades, the old plan stresses the declining overall City population, the increasing percentage of low income residents, the change from an industrial to a service economy, the deteriorating municipal budget situation, and the key importance of education. The larger role of, and receptivity to, public sector initiatives in urban development and other policy areas also influenced the plan’s authors at that time.

The planners involved in the current Comprehensive Master Plan are working during a period in which population loss has leveled off, the City has experienced a boom in housing development for higher income households, and there has been at least a temporary improvement in the City’s financial situation. The poverty in large predominantly African American areas of the City has persisted, and vacancies and abandonment have gotten much worse in these areas. There is increasing concern about gentrification and displacement related to the development boom and about the perceived need for more affordable housing in the City. This is also a period in which the market, rather than the public sector, is expected to play a larger role in urban problem solutions.

The influence of its time on the old plan is reflected in a pervasive emphasis on actions to improve job opportunities, housing, services, and equity for the low income population of the City. It is also reflected in the emphasis on improving the City’s tax base and finances through economic development and shifting costs to the State and Federal Governments.

Likewise, the current situation explains the new Plan's emphasis on inclusionary housing policies, affordable housing, and tax policies aimed at encouraging the use of vacant buildings and land. A further reflection of the historical context of the two plans is that the new Plan is referred to as "a business plan" while the old plan was called "a policies plan."

Community Participation in Plan

The new Comprehensive Plan appears to have had much more participation by citizens and community groups than did the former plan. First of all, the new Plan built upon the input by 2,000 participants from the late 1990s PlanBaltimore effort. In the summer of 2005, advertisements were placed in a number of newspapers, and mailings were sent to 935 community associations to inform them about the Plan and solicit input. A returnable land use survey solicited information about neighborhood level land use. Team leaders for Live, Earn, Play, and Learn invited representatives of major City organizations and institutions to advisory meetings. In October 2005, three open house events were held where attendees were able to write questions, comments, or suggestions about the new Plan. Other means of input included nine Planning Commission hearings at various locations in the City after the draft plan was distributed in February 2006. There also appears to have been more media awareness of the new Plan than the old. The hearings that the City Council is holding in September and October 2006 are providing even more opportunity for public exposure and input.

The chief means of community input to the old plan was a large, broadly representative Citizen's Committee that was periodically convened for presentations and for discussions of draft findings and recommendations for the six components of the plan. Furthermore, the longer period of time during which the old plan components were adopted probably affected the continuity of citizen participation.

Vision and Insight

The Plan is a social and policy plan and, to a lesser extent, a physical plan. Neither the new nor the old plans contain dramatic and graphically illustrated physical planning proposals for key areas of the City, major new facilities or projects, or transportation systems. With regard to major urban design elements, they build on pre-existing visions for areas such as the waterfront, downtown, and stream valley parks.

The policy proposals in the former plan were generally more fully developed and detailed than those in the new Plan. For example, the old plan proposed a coordinated city-wide system of decentralized services (health, social services, day care, library) provided in multi-service centers and a citywide system of community planning with district planners working with community councils. Implementation of multi-service centers did proceed during the late 1960s and the 1970s with funding from federal and bond sources. District planning was also established, but based on councilmanic districts rather than community councils. The community council concept was never implemented. The community councils were politically incompatible with the role of the City Council, and the idea is an example of overreaching idealism in the old plan. In the new Plan, many of the recommendations about plans are prescriptive, i.e., a plan or a management plan for the

facilities or services “should be developed” by the responsible agency. There is relatively little of that in the old plan, which more often contains the completed plans which were developed with extensive planning staff involvement.

By the time the Economic Development component of the old plan was adopted in 1973, the City had already passed a \$3 million bond issue for an industrial land bank and had established a quasi-public corporation to develop industrial and business parks. The City Planning Commission had proposed these initiatives in earlier plan drafts and was the chief proponent of these important initiatives.

The Community Facilities and Services component of the old plan contained many innovative policy proposals and mapped plans developed by Planning Department staff working with the operating agencies. In regard to recreation facilities, needs were identified based on standards and population distribution. In contrast, the new Plan contains a general strategy of “develop a strategic recreational plan that will target recreational opportunities to address the City’s needs.”

The Education section of the old plan contains insightful analysis and policy recommendations that are still largely applicable. For example, under Goal I. Ensure a quality education for each child in Baltimore, Policy 1 states “Individualized educational programs must be designed for each student based on diagnosis of the individual’s needs, interests and problems.”

The background texts and tables in the old plan are much more detailed and discerning than in the new. They are more candid in presenting the problems facing the City and provide more useful context information. This is also true of the explanatory texts that accompany the recommendations.

Learning from the Past

The new Plan refers to an earlier comprehensive plan three decades ago, but surprisingly says nothing about the actual proposals in the old plan, how much of the earlier plan was implemented, and what the experience has been with those recommendations that were implemented. This represents a missed opportunity to learn from the past. In its introductory “History of Baltimore,” the new Plan’s section on 1969–1999 makes no mention of the adoption of the former plan. It also does not mention the development of industrial and business parks, incubators, financing programs by BEDCO and then later BDC; the extensive and expensive renewal projects and social programs to improve conditions in the depressed areas of the City, and their limited and transitory success; or other important developments in the City. All that is mentioned is the Inner Harbor, the dollar house program, and suburbanization. This tends to perpetuate the myth that all the City cared about during that period was the Inner Harbor and downtown. There is virtually no analysis of the City’s social, anti-poverty, and neighborhood renewal strategies of that period to derive lessons learned.

Other Observations

With regard to the regional transit and highway plans, the new Plan incorporates the planned routes of the 2002 Baltimore Region Rail System Plan Advisory Committee; the old plan incorporated the then Regional Planning Council's transit lines and the Interstate Division's freeway proposals. Both plans propose fostering development around transit stations, and the old plan also proposed joint development in conjunction with the interstate system.

In both plans, but especially the new Plan, many recommendations represent a continuation of existing policies, projects, and programs. Generally, the old plan was explicit about continuing policies, but the new Plan is not. For the record and better public understanding, it is desirable to indicate when policies and strategies are being continued.

The new Plan places greater emphasis on increasing the City's population and housing densities. It also proposes growth areas, especially around transit stations. With a City population almost a third larger at the time of the old plan, there was more concern about neighborhoods where there was too much density and not enough open space. The old plan did, however, also stress growth areas, including transit station areas. It also proposed two "new towns in town," one at the present Coldspring site and one in Middle Branch. The latter was not for the kind of development that is currently taking place on vacant formerly industrial properties, but for filling in the Middle Branch, an impractical and ecologically questionable idea.

Comparison with other City Plans

Several comparable comprehensive master plans have been produced by other medium-sized or large U.S. cities in recent years. These include ones for Los Angeles (1995); Kansas City, Missouri (1997); Rochester, New York (1999); Minneapolis (2000), and Syracuse, New York (2005). Cleveland and Detroit have recently produced draft Comprehensive Plans that have not yet been adopted by their Planning Commissions or City Councils.

These plans were for periods ranging from 10 (Rochester), to 15 (Los Angeles), to 25 years (Kansas City). All of the completed plans were adopted by their City Councils. All involved significant public participation. Some responded to State mandates, as well as local needs. These plans shared many similarities of content and scope with Baltimore's new Plan.

The Los Angeles General Plan Framework was prepared to set a foundation for managing a projected City population growth of 800,000 (23%). The Plan preparation used development and fiscal models to project environmental, economic, finance and public service outcomes. The Plan presented an Urban Form diagram and definitions for neighborhood districts, community centers, regional centers, and mixed use boulevards. Plan implementation established a program to monitor growth, public service, and infrastructure demands and capacity, and to report annually to City Council.

The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan contains an overall Land Use Policy Map that identifies growth centers, potential growth centers, major housing sites, and industrial park opportunity areas.

The Syracuse Plan acknowledges that Syracuse lacks the fiscal and administrative resources to implement all its recommended actions. It sets a timetable for next steps. Within one year from the Plan's adoption, the City should prepare a City-wide land use map defining proposed land uses on a parcel basis reflecting the Plan's vision, policies, goals and recommended actions. Upon public approval of the land use plan, a timeframe should be set to revise the City zoning map and ordinance. Other implementation steps include preparation of a detailed Action Plan by key City Agencies to implement the Plan.

Themes or goals in these plans which are not found in Baltimore's Plan are:

- Noise (Los Angeles)
- Building metropolitan leadership and regional cooperation (Kansas City)
- Promoting better communication and understanding among residents, eliminating discrimination, and protecting and improving health (Minneapolis)
- Increasing the city's tax base and community wealth (Syracuse)
- Providing cost effective, well-coordinated public services.
- Supporting a quality health care system that is affordable to employees and employers (Rochester)
- Promoting efficient and economic delivery of private utility services to businesses and residents (Rochester)
- Balancing citizens' needs for high quality services with a long term understanding of their ability and willingness to pay for them (Rochester)

A summary of other city plans is contained in Appendix A.

Overall, Baltimore's new plan compares favorably to those in other cities in terms of its range of attention, areas of focus and public involvement in preparation. Other city plans offer examples of ways to strengthened Baltimore's plan by adding more complexity of analysis and clarity of implementation.

III. Issues and Questions About the Plan's Content

Many parts of the Plan are timely and focused on potential opportunities. These worthwhile elements include: support for the Baltimore Region Rail System Plan, developed by a State-appointed Advisory Committee in 2002, as well as support for implementation of the Rail Plan's first priority Red Line and Green Line Extension; support for the creation of Transit Oriented Development along these lines and at other appropriate locations; and emphasis on creating mixed-use centers with some residential zoning. Each of these strategies, if implemented, will help provide and expand the attractive alternative of a walkable lifestyle in an urban environment in Baltimore.

Similarly, the Plan's direct focus on the City's economic engines, including Bioscience, Business Support Services, Information Technology, Healthcare, and Hospitality and Tourism, gives practical attention to those industries that are likely to keep and grow City jobs. Recommendations to pursue designation of Baltimore as a National Heritage Area and to prepare for the bicentennial anniversary of the War of 1812 are measures that can strengthen Baltimore's attraction for historic tourism and Federal funding.

Promoting use of school buildings beyond the school day as Community Schools (community resource centers) is very wise and was also recommended in the Comprehensive Plan of 1974.

The content of the Comprehensive Master Plan raises a number of policy issues and questions. Some are about new territory or new approaches which the Plan recommends. Others are about the basis for recommendations or about the completeness of assessment to warrant Plan proposals. There are also questions about the legal implication of the Plan and its potential passage by City Council. These legal questions are discussed in Appendix B.

New Territory

Several new measures are recommended which need thorough assessment of their implications before they are adopted.

- **Develop and implement a City-wide inclusionary housing plan.**

LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 1: Expand and Protect Housing Choices for all Residents

This action would institute requirement for producing a share of "affordable" housing units in large City development projects. The cost of these units, in some instances, may be offset by City funding or density bonuses. A Task Force appointed by the City Council has just submitted specific recommendations for such a program. Both the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Task Force on Inclusionary Zoning and Housing acknowledge that developers should be "held harmless" for the extra cost of producing affordable housing units. The Task Force also concludes that the kind of density bonuses applied by other jurisdictions that have Inclusionary Housing requirements are not likely to be effective in Baltimore.

The Task Force's recommendations include:

- Requiring that in any development with 30 or more homes, 20% of the homes be affordable, if the project uses a major direct public subsidy or receives significant rezoning. Half of these affordable homes should be at a price affordable to families with incomes between 80–120% of area median income (AMI). The other half should be at a price affordable to families with income less than 80% of AMI. (The 2006 Baltimore AMI is \$72,800.)
- Requiring that any development with 30 units or more, and without major public subsidy or rezoning, offer at least 10% of its units to households with income below 120% of AMI.
- Establishing an Inclusionary Housing Trust Fund to support these requirements. The Fund might be financed by a share of City transfer taxes and recordation fees, increased property taxes, excess revenue from Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts, and possible impact fees.

Legal Questions

- **What are potential legal challenges to an Inclusionary Housing Program in Baltimore?**

If there is a challenge to the legality of the mandatory inclusionary requirement, it is likely to come from a developer of a non-assisted project or possibly one involving a zoning change, and, in either case, where the “benefits” provided by the City may be negligible.

The adoption of an inclusionary zoning ordinance that mandates the provision of no less than 10% affordable units in projects of 30 units or more, would seem on its face to be no more intrusive, and perhaps slightly less, than that implemented in Montgomery County and in many jurisdictions in New Jersey and California. After all, there have been very few reported cases on inclusionary ordinances of this kind, and all the important ones have supported the local laws. In fact, advocates will frequently cite several key cases in New Jersey that seemingly require the use of “mandatory set-asides” for affordable housing. But to do so with regard to the proposed plan would ignore several very fundamental presumptions about the rationale behind the reported cases and the situations they sought to address. In each of the instances to date, the court has been given the benefit of fact patterns that would not be present in Baltimore’s situation

In the New Jersey cases, the court was presented with the existence of both a regional need for affordable housing and a pattern of exclusionary zoning in many of the developing communities. The remedy crafted required “developing” communities to provide for their fair share of the regional needs through whatever means appropriate, including set-asides. While there might be a regional shortage of affordable housing in Baltimore, the City has certainly provided and continues to provide more than its fair share of that requirement. If there is to be a solution comparable to that crafted in New Jersey, it is a State law that requires all of the metropolitan jurisdictions to do more in meeting their fair share of the need.

As for using inclusionary zoning to remedy the past practice of exclusionary zoning, it would be difficult to document that Baltimore is guilty of that offense. Although Baltimore has engaged in practices that isolated the very poorest to specific locations, it was not done with zoning laws. In fact, the presence of large areas within the City that are very affordable would further undermine that argument.

In California, the problem is the total absence of affordable housing in virtually all markets. Because of the clear and widespread need for affordable housing in California, inclusionary housing has been upheld against a variety of claims. However it would be difficult to make the same case in Baltimore. The Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors reported that 20% of active Baltimore City listings in May 2006 were priced below \$100,000, and 30% were priced below \$150,000.

Other factors come into play as well. In both California and New Jersey, the State legislatures have created an affirmative obligation on local governments to provide affordable housing. While Maryland has enabling legislation for inclusionary zoning, there is no affirmative obligation for enactment by the local jurisdictions. Legislation was introduced in 2005 that would have required the City and the counties to have a plan for “workforce housing” as an element of their mandated comprehensive plans, but that bill was not enacted. A State-appointed Workforce Housing Task Force issued a report in June 2006. It contains a number of recommendations for actions to increase the supply of workforce housing, defined as 80–120% AMI. It also includes a model local ordinance from Bedford, New York, which mandates a set-aside of 10% workforce housing and allows both the option to build the affordable units off-site or the option to make a cash payment into a housing fund in lieu of building the required units.

As a result of these very significant distinctions, there may be some very legitimate arguments available to opponents of the proposed inclusionary legislation. The cases most likely to be cited are *Nollan v. California Coastal Commission*, 483 U.S. 825 (1987) and *Dolan v. City of Tigard*, 512 U.S. 374 (1994). Although these cases are not directly on point, and some other lower courts have limited their application to the specific facts relied upon by the court in the opinions, the U.S. Supreme Court has suggested the need for some “rough proportionality” between the impact of a project and the requirements imposed. Given the absence of conditions similar to those found in California and New Jersey, and perhaps Montgomery County as well, a court may find it difficult to accept a situation where the one jurisdiction in the region that contains the great majority of affordable housing is the only one that seeks to require the private sector to provide more. Even more compelling would be a fact pattern where the new housing is being built on land not previously used for housing, so that no affordable units are being replaced.

Other possible challenges would look at the “rent control” aspect of such an ordinance, and whether or not “rent control” is permitted under state law. Yet

another possible challenge would focus on the possibility that separate and individual negotiations on each project's eligibility for funds from the housing fund pool to be made available by the City would trigger concerns about "heightened scrutiny" under the two U.S. Supreme Court cases. In effect, the possible varying results (through negotiation) on two similarly situated developers, might cause a court to require more than a "rational basis" for the law, and thereby apply the "strict scrutiny" normally only used with "suspect categories" such as race or gender.

In defending the legality of inclusionary zoning requirements, the City would, no doubt, point to the provisions of Maryland law that allow the City and counties to enact inclusionary zoning. However the state law provides no guidelines or standards by which such laws are to be framed. The City would also try to make the case that there is a shortage of affordable units in the City, which may be true for certain areas, but not necessarily for the City as a whole, or that displacement of affordable units is a problem, which is not helpful where development takes place on property not previously used for affordable housing. Finally, the City might also try to make its case on the basis of the Plan's stated goal of mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the City. While that may be a laudable objective, a court may find this a peculiarly narrow way of achieving that goal since neighborhood characteristics seemingly play no role in the administration of the proposed law.

It is hard to predict whether a City inclusionary ordinance would be legally challenged by developers and what the outcome would be. Since developments already in the pipeline would probably be exempt from the requirements, it is not likely that there would be legal challenges arising out of a current project. As for developers that do not qualify under any of the "grandfathering" rules, their response is more likely to be a search for other projects in other jurisdictions rather than taking on the costs and delays of a legal challenge to these requirements.

Policy Questions

- **Should an inclusionary housing policy be metropolitan-wide versus City only?**

The Task Force report acknowledges that the City now provides most of the housing for the poor of the region. It also correctly points out that most of the growth in job opportunities for lower income persons is in the suburbs. Yet, the Task Force report says nothing about the need for inclusionary housing in the suburban counties. It is important to consider the potential negative impact of a City-only requirement on the City's competitiveness for development vis-à-vis the counties. A metropolitan-wide enactment of inclusionary housing may be desirable, rather than the City being the first, and probably only, Baltimore area jurisdiction with inclusionary housing requirements.

- **Will an inclusionary housing policy negatively affect new development in the City?**

Even with cost offsets, developers may find it less attractive to develop in the City. The fragility of development within the City is evident in the fact that only 3,000 housing units were authorized in the City during the period 2000-2004, as compared to 13,500 in Anne Arundel County and 14,400 in Baltimore County.

- **What will be the cost of paying for the affordable housing units that a Baltimore inclusionary housing program would require?**

The Comprehensive Plan and Task Force Report do not contain estimates of the annual cost of providing offsets to developers for affordable units. Would the proposed Inclusionary Housing Trust Fund be able to cover such costs with the revenue sources recommended for the Trust? Can the City afford to provide 20% of its transfer tax and recording fee revenues to the Trust Fund? Can it afford to provide 20% of the annual increase in real property tax revenues to the Trust Fund? Can it provide a share of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues to the Fund?

- **Should there be a “Buyout Provision” for developers as an alternative to affordable units?**

A number of inclusionary housing ordinances around the country allow developers to contribute a certain amount of money per mandated affordable unit in lieu of providing the unit in the development. Developers would likely prefer the predictability of a legislated buyout alternative. Buyouts would reduce the need for the City to fund cost offsets and would be another source for the Trust Fund. Furthermore, the availability of the buyout option might reduce the likelihood of legal challenges.

- **How do the State Homeowners’ Tax Credit Program and the Renters’ Tax Credit Program assist in providing affordable housing?**

The Plan and the Task Force do not mention these two existing state programs that reduce the burden of increasing property tax on lower-income residents. The 2006 General Assembly expanded this relief. Homeowners with income up to \$60,000 may apply for tax credit on the first \$300,000 of their home’s value.

- **Establish a multi-tiered property tax to encourage development of vacant property and parcels.**

LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties throughout the City

By taxing vacant property higher than improved property, this Plan measure is intended to encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment of vacant properties and to discourage speculative holding of vacant properties. The strategy refers to the need for State enabling legislation and perhaps a Maryland Constitutional amendment to authorize the strategy. What are the legal issues or problems that would be involved in implementing this strategy?

The legal issues are alluded to in the Plan. Article 15 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights requires that “all taxes...to be levied...by the City of Baltimore...shall be uniform within each class or sub-class of land...” There would need to be state legislation at the very least to avoid any question as to existing authority, although Section 40(a) of Article II of the City Charter attempts to give to the City all of the State’s taxing powers. With the proper state legislation, the constitutional issues can be addressed. Without such legislation, there may be questions raised.

The City would clearly benefit from a tax structure that encouraged the rehabilitation and redevelopment of vacant properties in areas with abandoned structures and blight. However, there are important issues to consider if the multi-tiered tax is to be applied in all areas of the City, as it might have to be.

Industrial Land: Consideration needs to be given to unintended market pressures for more intensive residential or commercial development of vacant industrial land and properties. Zoning alone may not be sufficient to protect vulnerable parts of the industrial and port land inventory. A related question involves the definition of vacant parcel and vacant property. Is a property with periodic storage or parking vacant? What about a building that is mostly vacant?

A Two-Tiered System: Would a taxing system that only differentiated between land and buildings/improvements (as opposed to having vacant buildings as an additional class) avoid these complications? The extensive experience in Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh with a two-tiered tax system should be examined in assessing a multi-tiered tax for Baltimore.

Stable Lower and Medium Density Neighborhoods: In many of the City’s stable residential neighborhoods the existence of vacant parcels adds to a desired sense of spaciousness. In some cases, homeowners have acquired adjoining parcels to make sure they remain vacant. A higher tax on vacant parcels in these neighborhoods could lead to an unintended increase in density and congestion, as well as deterioration of neighborhood attractiveness. This would be counter to the Plan’s goal of strengthening neighborhoods.

- **Develop a vacant housing reclamation strategy for Transitional and Distressed neighborhoods.**

LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties throughout the City

The Plan recommends an aggressive vacant housing reclamation strategy in Transitional and Distressed areas, with measures such as an annual sliding fee and minimum property insurance requirements for buildings that are vacant or abandoned for more than six months.

Will these measures realistically provide enough stimulus for vacant property owners to return vacant properties to productive use? Have such measures been successful elsewhere? Is it possible to obtain insurance for vacant buildings?

- **Create a regional authority to manage public transit services throughout the Metropolitan area.**

LIVE Goal 3: Improve Transportation Access and Choice for City Residents

Objective 2: Facilitate Movement throughout the Region

The emphasis in the Plan is on transferring system control from the State to the region as a way to improve responsibility, responsiveness, and control by those who use the system. However, the State now has total funding responsibility for the system. The fact that it has not had to fund transit subsidies has been very helpful to the City. Any change in control should be accompanied by the transfer of existing taxing sources from the State to the Regional Authority or by the enabling of new revenue sources that do not adversely affect the competitiveness of the Region.

- **Locate dedicated, sustainable funding sources for our parks and cultural assets.**

PLAY Goal 3: Increase the Attractiveness of Baltimore's Natural Resources and Open Spaces for Recreation and to Improve Water Quality

Objective 1: Maintain a Well-managed System of Parks & Open Spaces

The Financial Section of the Plan discusses efforts of the Trust for Public Land and the Baltimore Department of Recreation and Parks to evaluate sustainable funding options for city parks and recreation needs. Identified sources include raising or dedicating city taxes; City general obligation bonds; a regional parks and recreation district funded by property tax, sales tax, or utility fees; or local special tax districts, community benefits districts, or tax increment financing. All raise questions of the extent to which special taxing mechanisms should be employed, for what purposes they should be used, and their financial impact on the City General Fund.

Limited Strategy Definition or Description

Some strategies give limited description or rationale, making it more difficult to evaluate them.

- **Ensure that at least 300 housing units per year are affordable to seniors, disabled, homeless, and low-income households.**

LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents

This is part of the goal of increasing the City housing stock by 1,500 units per year over the next six years. The Plan does not indicate the rationale for setting the goals of 1,500 total units and 300 affordable units. What is the current production rate for both? What measures will be needed to achieve these goals? What will this cost?

- **Strategies dealing with the Housing Typology developed by the Department of Planning, Baltimore Housing, and the Reinvestment Fund presented in the Plan**

LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents

Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties throughout the City

The Typology classifies City neighborhoods based on clusterings of housing market indicators. There are five categories: Competitive, Emerging, Stable, Transitional, and Distressed. Several strategies refer to the Typology and give specific recommendations for actions in certain Typology categories, but the Plan presents no overall set of strategies to be applied to each category. One strategy recommends creating and preserving mixed-income neighborhoods in Competitive, Emerging, and Stable neighborhoods with targeted disposition of City properties. Why is this action not recommended for Transitional and Distressed neighborhoods, and what alternative strategy should be applied there? Poppleton, a neighborhood west of Downtown classified as Transitional and Distressed, would appear to be a desirable location for such a strategy.

The old plan also presents a housing typology based on types of areas to be planned for in the future rather than existing area characteristics. This old plan's types are residential centers, high intensity residential areas, moderate intensity residential areas, and low intensity residential areas. Diagrams illustrate what each of these areas should look like, and there are textual descriptions (prescriptions) of normative characteristics of each area and, to a lesser extent, the policies needed to bring them about. In line with the greater idealism of the old plan, the proposals for the high intensity residential areas include clustering houses, shared parking, and other cooperative arrangements that are not likely to be accepted in Baltimore. Nevertheless, many relevant actions are, in fact, contained in the old plan's recommended policies for housing and residential neighborhoods.

The new Plan needs to spell out the actions appropriate to its housing types, but the concept of suiting actions to types is reasonable. The normative descriptions in the old plan can be useful, but practical actions to improve areas are more important.

- **Create and preserve mixed-income neighborhoods in Competitive, Emerging, and Stable neighborhoods with targeted disposition of City properties.**

LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents

This strategy proposes disposing of City-owned properties in Stable, Competitive, and Emerging neighborhoods in a way that ensures retention and /or creation of mixed-income communities. The Plan should also specify that such actions require sensitivity and planning with the neighborhood to maintain its quality and appeal.

- **Create Area Master Plans in a targeted manner.**

LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 4: Target Neighborhood Planning to Leverage Investment

What is the recommended strategy? Many Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans, Small Area Plans, Master Plans, and amended Urban Renewal Plans have been

recently produced and adopted. What are the next priority areas to target for plans? What are the choices? How do Growth Promotion Areas, those areas recommended to absorb future regional population growth, relate to this recommendation?

- **Insure all residents are within 1.5 miles of quality groceries and neighborhood services.**

LIVE Goal 2: Elevate the Design and Quality of the City's Build Environment

Objective 3: Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Mixed-use Development to Reinforce Neighborhood Centers and Main Streets

What is the basis for the 1.5 mile standard? Is this based on walking or driving time standards? This distance is generally too far for walking.

- **Establish a development mitigation program to reduce congestion effects of new development.**

LIVE Goal 3: Improve Transportation Access and Choice for City Residents

Objective 2: Facilitate Movement throughout the Region

The Plan recommends requiring stronger traffic impact mitigation or development impact fees for new development in congested neighborhoods. The strategy description is too vague to evaluate, but raises questions about its feasibility, impact, and likely effectiveness.

- **Preserve and enhance CBD office space.**

EARN Goal 1: Strengthen Identified Growth Sectors

Objective 3: Retain and Attract Business in Business Support Services

The strategy does not describe measures that will achieve preservation and enhancement of CBD office space.

- **Capture share of regional growth in defense-related industries due to BRAC.**

EARN Goal 3: Improve Access to Jobs and Transportation Linkages between Businesses

Objective 2: Promote Economic Development throughout the City by Improving Business-to-Business Connectivity via Transportation Linkages

The strategy recommends capturing some of the jobs that will be relocating to Maryland as part of the national Base Realignment and Closing Commission action. Jobs are coming particularly to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Andrews Air Force Base, Fort Meade, and the Bethesda National Naval Medical Center. The strategy description gives very limited description of how to carry it out. One measure might be for Baltimore to focus on helping defense industries meet their minority participation goals by linking them to City residents and City training programs.

Strategies to Add

Other parts of the Plan could be augmented. For example, the EARN Section of the Plan does not sufficiently recognize the many economic services and tools that the City now has at its disposal. These include economic development bond financing for business loans, business tax credits, brown field reclamation resources, Emerging Technology Centers, Foreign Trade Zone #74, City-developed industrial parks, and Main Street business assistance. The wealth of economic development experience found at the Baltimore Development Corporation, where all these services can be accessed, is a further existing resource to acknowledge and continue to provide.

Other suggested improvements to the Plan include:

- Adding that the Baltimore City Public Schools should play a major role in achieving the goal of improving the City's Labor Force Participation Rate among City Residents (EARN Goal 2)
- Recognizing that the City's higher education institutions are significant economic engines, and attempting to link them to City economic strategies. (Add to EARN Goal 1: Strengthen Identified Growth Sectors and link with LEARN Goal 2: Capitalize on Untapped Potential of Higher Education Institutions.) The City liaison recommended to be a general advocate for the schools in City government should also integrate higher education institutions into the City's economic development program.
- Emphasizing the need to have a reliable street maintenance system in neighborhoods throughout the City. This might be one of the prototype strategies identified with Housing Typology categories.

IV. Municipal Finance

The new Comprehensive Plan contains many recommendations for increasing staff and services for worthwhile purposes, but does not indicate the anticipated impact of these measures on City revenues, expenditures or the overall affordability of City services. The old Plan also had recommendations for operating budget increases, but it has many references to the City's difficult fiscal situation and the need for increased federal and state aid, as well as tax base growth. Furthermore, the old plan's economic development document presents trend information and projections of City revenues and expenditures that show a deteriorating budget picture for the City. The new Plan contains little or no information about budgetary trends and projections. The Plan's goals and objectives also do not address City fiscal stability and strength..

Expanded General Fund Demand

Many Plan strategies point to City General Funds as their only funding source. Fifty nine strategies out of a total of 140 would be dependent on General Funds. Examples are expanding eviction prevention services to help households retain their housing, eliminating homelessness City-wide, targeting housing and sanitation code enforcement, increasing the number of zoning code enforcers, updating City-wide historic preservation guidelines, creating a Strategic Convention Center Area Master Plan, and options for greening at least three school facilities per year. The list of solely General Funded strategies is shown in Appendix C.

Other Funding Questions

The Plan recommends marketing and promoting the City through increased funding for the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (BACVA) (PLAY Goal 1: Enhance the Enjoyment, Appreciation, and Stewardship of Baltimore's Historical and Cultural Resources; Objective 1: Market, Develop and Promote Visitor Attractions in Baltimore City). The increased funding is to come from increasing BACVA's share of Hotel Occupancy Taxes by 20%. What are the implications of this increase on current uses of these funds?

Another strategy recommends reinstating the "Shuttle Bug" system along main streets and shopping districts within the City (PLAY Goal: Improve Nightlife, Entertainment, and Recreation Experiences for Residents and Visitors; Objective 2: Promote Unique Retail Venues as Shopping and Tourist Destinations). The strategy states that funding for this service would be a joint effort, with the City paying one-third of the cost and the State paying two-thirds of the cost. How much funding would be required from the City for this commitment?

As has been discussed in the previous report section, the impact on City finances from the proposed Regional Transit Authority, a dedicated funding source for park and cultural assets, and an Inclusionary Housing Trust Fund all need to be weighed.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Our review of the new Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan and comparison of it with Baltimore's previous plan and recent plans in other cities lead us to the following conclusions and recommendations:

- Baltimore's Plan, the planning principles it applies, the range of topics and issues it addresses, and the scope of its direction are similar to those of Baltimore's previous (1967 – 1974) Comprehensive Policies Plan, and recent plans which City Councils around the country have adopted.
- The Plan attempts to comply with Baltimore's Charter and Maryland Code requirements. It provides considerable documentation of this intent.
- Endorsement of the Plan by City Council, as proposed by City Council Bill 06-0466, does not appear to raise legal liabilities for the City or grant the Planning Commission or Planning Department undue authority.
- The new Comprehensive Master Plan does not provide as much useful, insightful background analysis and explanation of recommendations as the City's former plan. However, it has had more input by citizens and is likely to have more ongoing political support from the Administration and City Council. The new Plan is also more practical and in line with political and operational realities.
- The Plan proposes several specific strategies which raise significant policy issues that need very careful assessment and review of implications before being imposed. These include:
 - Development and implementation of a City-wide inclusionary housing plan.
 - Establishing a multi-tiered property tax to encourage development of vacant property and parcels.
 - Creating a regional public transit authority.
 - Locating a dedicated, sustainable funding source for parks and cultural assets.
- Many strategies that are vague need more detail in order to be meaningful actions. Some of these are:
 - Strategies best targeted to each Housing Typology classifications.
 - A development mitigation program to reduce congestion
 - Preserving and enhancing CBD office space
 - Capturing regional growth in defense-related industries due to BRAC
- Some strategies should be added. These include:
 - Continue to use key economic services and tools provided by Baltimore Development Corporation
 - Recognize the major role of the Baltimore City Public Schools in achieving an improved City labor force participation rate.
 - Assure a reliable street maintenance system throughout City neighborhoods.

- Throughout the plan indicate when policies and strategies are new vs. being continued.
- The fiscal implications of the Plan need to be seriously assessed. The added costs of the recommendations need to be compared with projections of revenues they are likely to generate or other sources of funds that might be obtained. The assessment should predict different scenarios over time based on different paces of development. City Council should call for such an assessment as part of its action on the Plan.
- City Council should also establish a mechanism for managing and evaluating the Plan's implementation. Conformance of the Capital Improvement Plan to the Comprehensive Plan is required by the City Charter. A timetable for Zoning Code revision, as was requested in Syracuse, could be set. An annual report on Plan implementation progress, as is required in Los Angeles, would be desirable.

Appendix A: Comparison with Recent Comprehensive Plans of Other Cities

Several comparable comprehensive master plans have been produced by other medium-sized or large U.S. cities in recent years.

- Los Angeles prepared a General Plan Framework, which provided a long range growth strategy, in 1995.
- Kansas City, Missouri, completed a Phase I Policy Plan and Vision in 1994 and a Phase II Comprehensive and Strategic Plan in 1997.
- Rochester, New York approved its “Rochester 2010: The Renaissance Plan” in 1999.
- Minneapolis adopted a Comprehensive Plan, which it calls a collection of ideas and recommendations about how to make decisions about future growth and development, in 2000.
- Syracuse, New York, adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in 2005. Its last such plan had been prepared in 1919.
- Cleveland and Detroit have recently produced draft Comprehensive Plans, but they have not been adopted by their Planning Commissions or City Councils.

These plans were for periods ranging from 10 (Rochester), to 15 (Los Angeles), to 25 years (Kansas City). All of the completed plans were adopted by their City Councils. All involved significant public participation. Some responded to State mandates, as well as local needs. These plans shared many similarities of content and scope with Baltimore’s new Plan. They contained a few differences.

Los Angeles: The city’s General Plan Framework was the first citywide view in nearly 20 years. It contains long range policies for Land Use, Housing, Urban Form and Neighborhood Design, Open Space and Conservation, Economic Development, Transportation, and Infrastructure and Public Service. Its overarching goal was to develop a reasonable and realistic foundation upon which to manage a projected population growth of 800,000 (23%).

The Framework was developed with extensive public outreach and participation. Plan preparation used development and fiscal models to project environmental, economic, fiscal, and public service outcomes. The Plan contains an Urban Form diagram and definitions for neighborhood districts, community centers, regional centers, and mixed-use boulevards, an evolution of the Centers Concept from 1974. It directs growth around transit stations and along boulevards served by electric buses. Plan implementation established a program to monitor growth, public service, and infrastructure demands and capacity, and to report annually to City Council.

The Los Angeles General Plan now contains Elements on Land Use (including 35 Community Plans), Air Quality, Conservation, Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources, Housing, Infrastructure, Noise, Open Space, Public Facilities and Services,

Safety, and Transportation. Seven (Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise and Safety) are mandated by the State of California.

Kansas City, Missouri: Called FOCUS Kansas City, this plan was the first since 1947. Phase I presented long term vision and principles for policy. The Phase II Comprehensive and Strategic Plan has seven components: Physical Environment, Citywide Physical Framework, Neighborhood Prototypes Plan, Preservation, Urban Core, Northland (existing neighborhoods), Human Investment, and Governance. These components are connected through twelve overarching strategies, called FOCUS Building blocks, which guide implementation. Examples are Access and Communication, Competitive Economy, Investing in Critical Resources, and Neighborhood Livability. Citizen participation in the formulation of both Phase I and Phase II of the Plan was widespread.

Rochester, New York: Rochester's Comprehensive Plan was developed by identifying visions, issues, and goals in eleven subject areas: Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Education, Environmental Management, Housing, Human Services, Land Use/Zoning, Parks/Recreation/Open Space, Public Infrastructure, Public Safety, and Transportation. These topics were then encompassed by a set of City "Campaigns" under three renaissance sub-themes: Responsibility, Opportunity, and Community. The Campaigns (priority initiatives) are: Involved Citizens; Educational Excellence; Health, Safety and Responsibility; Regional Partnerships; Economic Vitality; Quality Service; Tourism Destination; Healthy Urban Neighborhoods; the Region's Center City; and World-class Arts and Culture.

Rochester's City Council approved a comprehensive set of goals and policies in 1999. Subsequent strategies to carry them out were developed by the City administration.

Minneapolis: This Comprehensive Plan gives long range guidance to the city and meets State Metropolitan Land Planning Act requirements. It contains a Vision for the City's Future, which includes population and job growth, eight Goals and nine Chapters, each with policies and implementation steps. The Chapters are Community Building; Market (Economy); Growth Centers; Neighborhoods; Learning; Leisure and Culture; Natural Features; Movement; and City Form. There were many opportunities for citizen involvement in the Plan's preparation, and City agency heads, City Council, and the Mayor participated in key reviews of Plan issues and direction. The Plan contains an overall Land Use Policy Map that identifies growth centers, potential growth centers, major housing sites, and industrial park opportunity areas. Since its March 2000 adoption by the Mayor and City Council, the Plan has been amended several times.

Syracuse, New York: The City's Plan, which identifies Syracuse as "a great place to live, learn, work, and play," examines Assets and Trends and presents a Vision for the Future. It then identifies Policies, Goals, and Recommended Actions in four categories: Work; People, Visitors, and Play; Place; and Government. The Plan's preparation was overseen by an Advisory Committee and several Working Committees, with general public review of the final draft. The Plan includes identification of strategic economic areas and focuses on sustainable energy technology systems and facilities as a key economic goal.

The Plan acknowledges that Syracuse lacks the fiscal and administrative resources to implement all its recommended actions. It directs that, within one year of the Plan's adoption, the City should prepare a Citywide land use map defining proposed land uses on a parcel basis reflecting the Plan's Vision, Policies, Goals, and Recommended Actions. Upon public approval of the land use plan, a timeframe should be set to revise the City zoning map and ordinance accordingly. Other implementation steps include expanding the City's Capital Improvement Plan to reflect the Comprehensive Plan and preparation of a detailed Action Plan by key City Agency personnel to implement the Plan.

Additional Themes

While many of these plan components mirror those in Baltimore, some additional themes or goals that appeared in these plans from other cities were:

- Build Metropolitan Leadership and Regional Cooperation (Kansas City)
- Community Building—Promote residents knowing each other, eliminating discrimination, and protecting and improving health. (Minneapolis)
- Increase the City's Tax Base and Community Wealth. (Syracuse)
- Provide Cost Effective, Well-Coordinated Public Services. (Syracuse)
- Support a quality health care system that is affordable to employees and employers. (Rochester)
- Promote efficient and economic delivery of private utility services to businesses and residents. (Rochester)
- Balance citizens' needs for high quality services with a long term understanding of their ability and willingness to pay for them. (Rochester)

Appendix B: Legal Implications of the Plan

There are a number of questions about the implications of the Plan and its potential passage by City Council.

What is the significance of City Council adoption of the Plan?

Had the City chosen to do so, the Plan could have incorporated regulations by which the various “visions” involving directed development, sensitive areas, conservation of resources and the like, were to be implemented, thereby eliminating the need for additional legislations. Had those regulations been in the Plan, adoption of the Plan by the City Council would have made those regulations law. Otherwise, a revision of a master plan can be approved either by the Planning Commission (with at least six votes in favor) or the City Council (through an ordinance approved by at least three-fourths of the members).

The City Law Department asserts that City Council adoption of the Plan is required by Article 66B of the Maryland Code. It is not clear that such action is required.

Does City Council action enlarge the authority of the Planning Commission, Planning Department, and the Comprehensive Master Plan? Has the Planning Commission exceeded its authority with this Plan, which contains many proposals that affect management and funding decisions in City operating agencies?

Baltimore’s new comprehensive Master Plan intends to cover the areas of planning that are mandated by the City Charter (Article VII) and the Maryland Annotated Code (Article 66B), or are logical extensions of these authorities. The Plan’s structure, scope, and content comply with broad comprehensive planning principles, and are similar to those of the Baltimore Plans of 1967–1974, as well as recent large city plans in the United States. (Comparison of the Plan with Baltimore’s previous Comprehensive and with recent comprehensive plans from other cities is presented in Section III.)

City Council’s adopting a plan will not create power in the Planning Department that was not previously there. However to the extent that any zoning or land-use action requires, as a condition, that it be consistent with the Master Plan, the Department would be in a position to make recommendations based upon this plan. Where there may have been silence before, there may now be in the Plan a specific statement that the Planning Department can latch onto, with regard to its position on a specific request.

Does the Plan, especially if adopted by City Council, open the City to legal liability if Plan elements are not implemented? For example, what if the strategy to “eliminate homelessness City-wide” (LIVE Goal 1, Objective 1) is not successfully carried out?

Plans are recognized as goals, oftentimes only partially achievable, if at all. It is unlikely that the City would face any real exposure if it did not achieve the elimination of homelessness or any other laudable goal. Plans can be a source of litigation if they identify a property for acquisition, and the City fails to follow through. Some courts view this as a “taking,” and there may be some cases along those lines in Maryland as well.

While State and local laws may require that certain actions be taken in accordance with or be consistent with a master plan, it is very unlikely that the City would be exposed to liability for not implementing one or more, or even many, of the recommendations. Clearly some other actions taken by the City may be challenged as inconsistent with the plan, such as zoning a projected park area for a waste disposal site, but the remedy is invalidating the zoning and not holding the City liable for damages.

Appendix C: Strategies for Which Only General Funds are Shown as the Funding Source

The following strategies show only General Funds as their funding source:

- Develop and implement City-wide inclusionary housing plan.
- Expand eviction prevention services to help households retain their housing.
- Create and preserve mixed income neighborhoods in Competitive, Emerging and Stable neighborhoods with targeted disposition of City properties.
- Eliminate homelessness City-wide.
- Establish a multi-tiered property tax to encourage development of vacant property and parcels.
- Develop a vacant housing reclamation strategy for Transitional and Distressed neighborhoods.
- Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards.
- Target housing and sanitation code enforcement using the Housing Typology.
- Create a comprehensive City-wide sanitation plan.
- Develop design guidelines to respond to the unique character of Baltimore city.
- Create and adopt a City-wide landscape ordinance.
- Update building code to promote sustainable or high performance buildings through incentives and regulations.
- Create standards for hiring design professionals to foster the design of high quality city projects.
- Modernize zoning codes to meet current needs.
- Improve efficiency of One-Stop Shop permitting center.
- Increase number of zoning code enforcers.
- Create a task force on interagency coordination for web-based, real time access to development projects.
- Implement a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) strategy to foster stronger neighborhood centers.
- Create mixed-use with residential zoning category.
- Ensure all residents are within 1.5 miles of quality groceries and neighborhood services.
- Update City-wide historic preservation guidelines.
- Promote use of Maryland Building Rehabilitation Code.
- Simplify and actively pursue the local historic district designation process for Baltimore neighborhoods.

- Adopt and implement the Comprehensive Water and Wastewater Plan.
- Create a regional authority to manage public transit services throughout the metropolitan area.
- Protect and create Rights-of-Way on existing and proposed rail lines. Establish a development mitigation program to reduce congestion effects of new development.
- Create an industrial mixed-use zoning district.
- Create a Bioscience Development District.
- Amend the zoning code to broaden the definition of Health Clinics to include non-residential substance abuse treatment centers.
- Create a Strategic Convention Center Area Master Plan.
- Create a Strategic Plan for MOED that links employers to job seekers.
- Expand the number of participants in the Commuter Choice program throughout the Baltimore Region.
- Support efforts to implement the Baltimore Regional Rail Plan and its Red and Green Line priority segments.
- Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies with large employers and institutions.
- Create Transit-Oriented Development zoning and incentive programs for transit nodes throughout the City.
- Integrate land use and transportation planning to ensure movement of freight into and throughout the City.
- Capture share of regional growth in defense-related industries due to BRAC.
- Increase Baltimore City Heritage Area funding through general funds.
- Pursue designation of Baltimore as a National Heritage Area.
- Prepare for the bicentennial anniversary of the War of 1812.
- Teach American History using Baltimore's history museums, establishing links to the City's public and private school curriculums.
- Expand "Authentic Baltimore" program and link to Baltimore City Historic landmark program.
- Establish regional policy to increase regional funding resources for cultural activities within Baltimore City.
- Create Mixed-use zoning categories that allow nightlife and extended closing hours where appropriate.
- Designate Main Street areas as local and/or national historic district in order to access tax credits.
- Increase retail space downtown by 400,000 sq. ft. to 1 million sq. ft.

- Draft and adopt a City-wide plan for parks and open space.
- Locate dedicated sustainable funding sources for our parks and cultural assets.
- Improve park stewardship and safety by expanding current parks partnership program.
- Develop and implement menu of options for greening at least 3 school facilities per year.
- Develop Community Schools Policy to facilitate the use of school buildings beyond the school day.
- Market Baltimore as a higher education hub and a great place to live and work after college.
- Increase funding for internships, service learning, fellowships, and mentoring for students pursuing higher education.
- Establish a City liaison to integrate higher education institutions into the City's economic development program.
- Develop a new zoning district that encompasses mixed-use development related to residential neighborhoods, colleges and universities.
- Prioritize City funding for school readiness related activities.
- Create a coordinating entity for lifelong learning service providers.
- Develop transit routes, schedules and amenities to provide reliable transportation to schools.
- Integrate college based shuttle services with public transit.

Appendix D: Report Authors

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**Appendix E: Baltimore Council Bill 06-0466 – The Baltimore City
Comprehensive Master Plan**

See attached bill.