

Urban re-greening, community identity, and perceptions of wellbeing  
in Harlem Park, West Baltimore

By  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Racial disparities of health and wellbeing within Baltimore have been created and perpetuated through a variety of avenues including socio-economic inequity, physical and political shaping of the public space, and ecological management. In West Baltimore's Harlem Park neighborhood, resident perceptions of health and wellbeing, relationships to urban green space, and civic engagement approaches are informed by historical urban land use practices, current re-greening efforts, and value-seeking processes. This study is a first step towards unpacking the historical, structural, and value trends underpinning the social and decision processes that shape urban communities.

## **PREFACE**

I first learned about urban re-greening and neighborhood revitalization efforts in Harlem Park through my involvement in the Ecological Society of America's Earth Stewardship Initiative (ESI) during August 2015 (Chapin III et al., 2015). As an ESI fellow, I spent one week in Baltimore working with the Parks & People Foundation, landscape architects and designers, ecologists, and Harlem Park community members, as part of a team of graduate students tasked with envisioning potential urban ecology design experiments (Felson & Pickett, 2005; Felson et al., 2013). Through that experience, I was invited to serve as a Teaching Fellow for the Fall 2016 Ecological Urban Design class, a joint class between Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and Yale School of Architecture. During that term, I acted as student, mentor, and researcher in conjunction with Yale University graduate and undergraduate students, Harlem Park residents, and Parks & People Foundation. In Spring 2016, Harlem Park residents invited me to continue my research on urban re-greening processes and perceptions of resident wellbeing. From May 15, 2015 to July 31, 2016, I conducted field research in Harlem Park. My on-the-ground research practices were greatly informed by my background as a communications professional and grassroots community organizer

(see Appendix 1.1 for methodologies). I oriented towards resident-driven initiatives (Bobo et al., 2001; Gecan, 2006; Kahn, 1991; Minkler, 1997), long-term relationship building (Christens, 2010; INCITE!, 2007), and building community capacities for adaptive learning and change-making (Handley et al., 2006; Wenger, 1998 & 2000).

Despite the limited duration of my ten-week field research, I implemented—to the best of my ability—action-based, participatory science approaches that acknowledge residents as experts within their own communities (Argyris, 1983; Argyris and Schon, 1989; Brydon-Miller et al., 2003; Greenwood and Levin, 2006; Lewin, 1946; Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

Initially, I intended to talk with Harlem Park community residents regarding their perceptions of wellbeing and the relationship of that perception to urban green spaces. As the daughter of an outdoor education teacher, I harbor the belief that access to green space can be a primary pathway to achieve respite, rejuvenation, and realize self-agency. My interest in the relationship between green spaces and health was grounded in the extensive literature focused on the mitigating effects of green spaces—or nature access—on mental fatigue, stress, healing times, and toxic stress (Berman et al., 2008; Hartig et al., 2003; Hartig and Staats, 2006; Rodiek, 2002; Roe and Aspinall, 2011; Takano, et al., 2002; Ulrich, 1979; Ulrich and Addoms, 1981). Prior to attending Yale, I completed a holistic health degree program at St. Catherine University in Minnesota where I became particularly interested in allostatic load and toxic stress syndrome (Clark et al., 2007; Juster et al., 2010; McEwen and Stellar, 1993), and the mitigating effects of greenspace on experiences of poverty, discrimination, and crime (Kuo, 2001; Kuo and Sullivan, 2001; Talen, 1999).

However, after arriving in Harlem Park and talking with residents, I realized what was top of mind for me (urban re-greening and stress reduction) was not what was top of mind for the residents I was working with most closely (agency and respect in the revitalization processes). As I continued to engage with residents and become integrated into community organizations and social groups, the lines between my professional research and personal life blurred. My approach became more ethnographic in nature. I became interested in the social customs, value expectations, and lived experiences of Harlem Park residents, and my presentation of this research leans heavily on the

ethnographic style and presentation of modern sociologists and social scientists in my analysis of the ‘ghettoization’ of black Americans (Anderson, 1990 & 1999), the impact of root shock and community neglect (Fullilove, 2009), and spatial stigma (Keene and Padilla, 2010 & 2014).

As I continued to talk with Harlem Park residents and City of Baltimore representatives, I began to hear themes regarding value assertions, expectations, and deprivations. To analyze the emerging themes, I drew on Lasswell’s value categorization (Lasswell, 1971). Within this approach, participants are assumed to seek eight value categories: affection, enlightenment, power, rectitude, respect, skill, wealth, and wellbeing. Participants seek values that they believe will leave them better off and society’s institutions provide a space for value seeking. This value-seeking process has identifiable outcomes and long-term effects on both people and their environment. Additionally, this approach calls on a researcher to be standpoint aware, contextual, and oriented towards human dignity (Clark, 2002). Despite my interest in implementing collaborative, action-based research from a bottom-up approach, my use of Lasswell’s value framework is inherently top-down as it assigns predetermined categories to organize, analyze, and represent research data. However, it does provide a clear language for distinguishing and discussing values, implicit and explicit assumptions, and resulting policy implications.

Given my background in community organizing, holistic health, and environmental education, I strongly orient towards values of affection, enlightenment, skill, and wellbeing. I hold the principle of contextuality central to my understanding of ecologies. The whole is not just the sum of its parts, but the parts themselves cannot be understood except within the context of the whole (Lewontin, 1996). In other words, all things are interconnected, knowledge is situated, and meaning depends on context—including our own standpoints, which determine how we attend to environmental ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ (Bonnett, 2013; Haraway, 1988; Lasswell, 1965 & 1971; Schwartz, 1992).

In addition to filling the requirements for my Hixon Fellowship, I offer this research as an initial step towards exploring environmental decision making in a highly interactive and living urban environment with the understanding that I too am in a

constant state of discovery.<sup>1</sup> This writing represents a snapshot of my thinking and application to-date. The views, opinions, and findings contained within this research are my own and should not be construed as an official position, policy, or decision unless so designated by other official documentation.

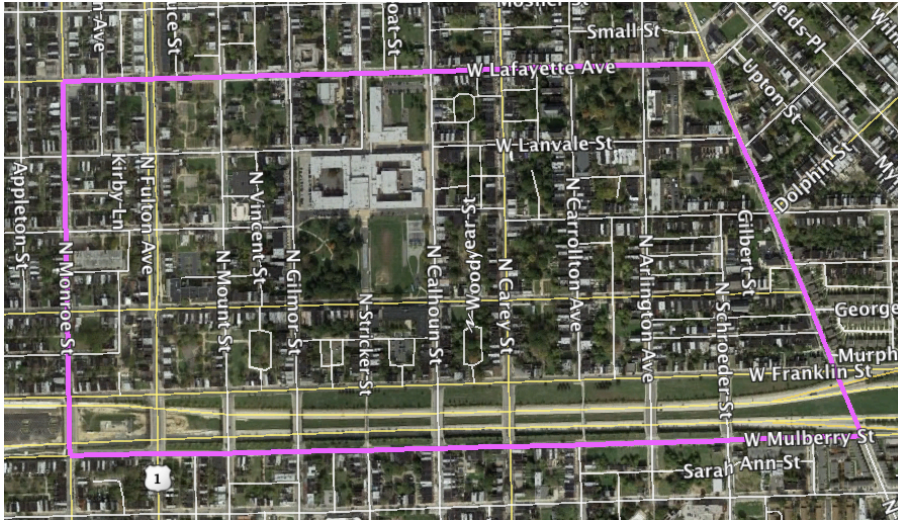
I am deeply grateful for the many people and institutions that made this research possible. I cannot possibly acknowledge every person I owe a debt of gratitude to, but I would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who deeply impacted my perspective: United Urban Roots, Parks & People Foundation, Hixon Center for Urban Ecology, Baltimore Ecosystem Study, Urban Ecological Design Lab at Yale University, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, City of Baltimore, Anthony & Angela Francis, Steve Preston, Valerie Rupp, Emily Collins, Rachel Marino, Tissa Thomas, Amity Doolittle, Timothy Terway, my peer colleagues at Yale, and especially my parents Ann and Bill Collett. I owe an enormous amount of gratitude to the many residents of Harlem Park and Baltimore City who welcomed me into their communities and shared their local knowledge, experiences, and perspectives.

#### **A Note on Data Sources & Neighborhood Boundaries**

Primary data consisting of oral histories and geospatial data is specific to the Harlem Park neighborhood, which is defined by the City of Baltimore as being bordered by North Fremont Avenue on the east, Interstate 40 on the south, North Monroe Street on the west, and West Lafayette Avenue on the north.

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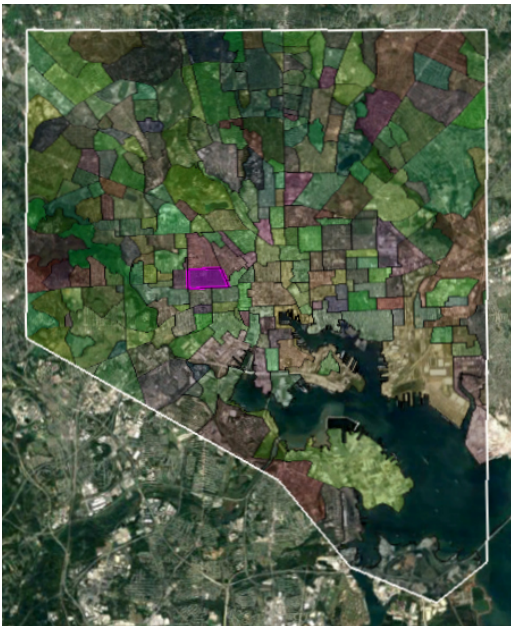
<sup>1</sup> As researchers, we extract knowledge and data from communities to draw conclusions within our disciplines for our benefit through either publication or degrees awarded. Far too often, the research results are not communicated to the communities from which they are drawn. I remain dedicated to practicing science from within, which removes the wall between researcher and subject, and reorients a researcher from hidden to active participant within our highly interactive world (Umpleby, 2016a). This repositioning of researcher from hidden observer to active participant is at the heart of second-order socio-cybernetics (Brier, 1996; Umpleby, 2005, 2016a & 2016b; Von Foerster, 1984 & 2007). While I begin to articulate the macroconditioning factors (Lasswell, 1965; Bonnett 2013) that have led to the effects and outcomes of urban renewal and re-greening, this analysis is limited in that it does not go far enough to acknowledge how our created stories of self—and self in-relation to all else—impact our definitions of nature, environment, and world (Bonnett 2013; Haraway, 1988; Lasswell, 1965).



**Figure 1: Harlem Park neighborhood boundary.**

*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

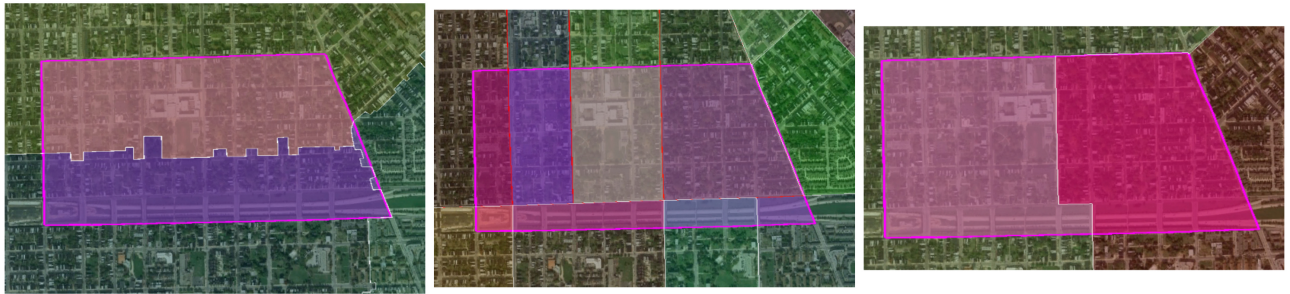
Within Baltimore City, Harlem Park is located to the west of downtown, in a quadrant of the city referred to as West Baltimore. To the north of Harlem Park is the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood. While socio-economically similar, Sandtown-Winchester and Harlem Park are distinct neighborhoods. However, many secondary data sets collapse the two neighborhoods and refer to them as Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park.



**Figure 2: Baltimore City neighborhoods (Harlem Park–bright purple; Sandtown-Winchester–light pink and directly north of Harlem Park).**

*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

In addition to using a variety of neighborhood boundaries, secondary data comparisons are made difficult by the additional bureaucratic fragmentation of Harlem Park. Harlem Park consists of three zip codes, three census tracts, and two state legislative districts.<sup>2</sup> Future studies should carefully consider how and where neighborhood boundaries are drawn. For this research, primary data is specific to Harlem Park, whereas secondary data is presented as Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park.



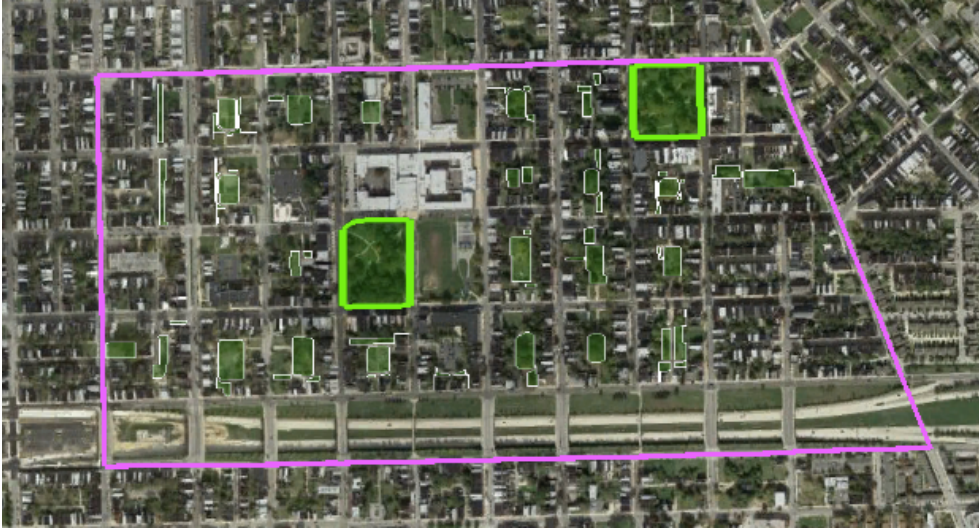
**Figure 3: Harlem Park fragmentation. Left to right: zip codes; 2015 census tracts; legislative districts.**  
*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

### A Note on Language & Terminology

In this paper, I define ‘neighborhood’ as the physical or built environment, whereas ‘community’ references human social or ecological groupings. ‘Harlem Park’ refers to the neighborhood of Harlem Park whereas Harlem Park Square refers to the historic square park located along Edmondson Avenue between North Calhoun Street and North Gilmore Street. A second historic square park, Lafayette Square Park, is located just south of West Lafayette Avenue between North Arlington Avenue and North Carrollton Avenue.

<sup>2</sup> Utilizing predetermined geographic units of analysis can create limitations. There is wide variety between disciplines, researchers, and data collecting organizations regarding the preferred unit of analysis: individual, neighborhood, census tract, socio-economic status, race, population, etc. The variability in unit size makes comparisons, collaboration, and data sharing significantly more difficult. This has been particularly apparent in the environmental justice and public health fields (Braverman et al., 2005; Diez Roux, 2011; Mohai et al., 2009). Variations in units of analysis are an apt illustration that the ways in which we attend to the world around us can determine our problem scopes, goal definitions, and policy recommendations or applications. For this research, I had planned to talk with Harlem Park residents about perceived boundaries and thresholds. Thresholds and boundaries are instrumental in defining space within communities. In this case, I define boundaries as any type of physical infrastructure that impedes physical movement, delineates private space, or limits movement through the community. For example, a fence or the highway drop-down would both be observable, physical boundaries. Thresholds, on the other hand, delineate a change in space usage but may not provide a physical barrier. Painted lines, zoning boundaries and ecosystem shifts (i.e., paved to green space) would all be defined as thresholds within the Harlem Park community. This could also include the thresholds between vacant and occupied homes. To examine resident perceived boundaries and thresholds, I proposed utilizing PhotoVoice, a participatory action research method combining photography and community mapping. However, due to an escalation of gang-related violence regarding a territorial dispute—a type of boundary—residents were hesitant to participate and I was unwilling to risk their safety. Instead, I use author-captured photographs and geo-spatial data collected at the block level seek to communicate the importance of community identity and land use.





**Figure 4: Harlem Square Park (lower left) and Lafayette Square Park (upper right).**  
*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

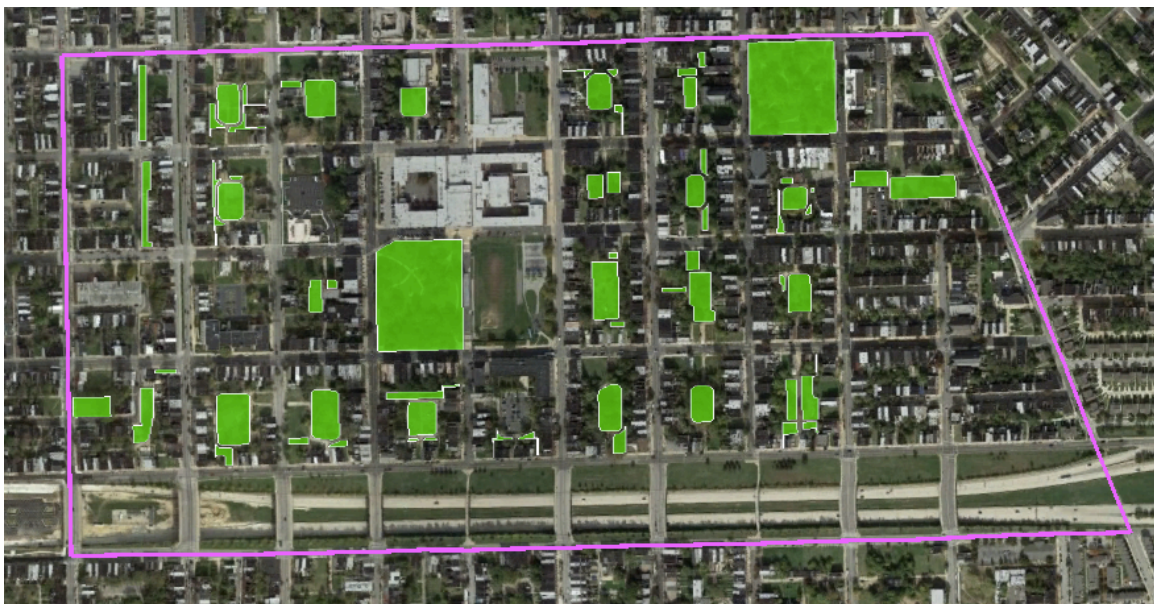
## INTRODUCTION

There has been a renewed focus on ‘urban blight’ in Baltimore City since the April 2015 civil unrest during which inequity of living conditions, race relations, and health disparities in West Baltimore received nationwide attention.<sup>3</sup> Urban blight, also called urban rot and urban decay, is the process by which an urban neighborhood falls into disrepair. The short-term outcomes for communities include vacant houses, overgrown parks and vacant lots, trash dumping activity, and economic divestment. The long-term effects for community residents include increased distrust of outsiders, feelings of neglect, despondence, anger, and a breakdown in communication between residents and stakeholders—such as technical experts, elected officials, and nonprofit professionals—in how to define, approach, and ameliorate blight conditions. Public places such as streets and parks become highly contested territories where competing visions for the future of a neighborhood is debated, and private buildings—and, most importantly, the land on which they are situated—promises an inexpensive but risky return on investment.

<sup>3</sup> I specifically use the term ‘inequity’ rather than ‘inequality’. The World Health Organization summarizes the relatedness of health inequality and inequity as follows: “Health inequalities can be defined as differences in health status or in the distribution of health determinants between different population groups. For example, differences in mobility between elderly people and younger populations or differences in mortality rates between people from different social classes. It is important to distinguish between inequality in health and inequity. Some health inequalities are attributable to biological variations or free choice and others are attributable to the external environment and conditions mainly outside the control of the individuals concerned. In the first case it may be impossible or ethically or ideologically unacceptable to change the health determinants and so the health inequalities are unavoidable. In the second, the uneven distribution may be unnecessary and avoidable as well as unjust and unfair, so that the resulting health inequalities also lead to inequity in health (“Glossary of terms...”, 2016). In the case of Harlem Park, many residents perceive the health and wellbeing inequalities they experience as inequities, as will be discussed in Parts 2 and 3.

In West Baltimore, residents have experienced decades of displacement due to institutionalized urban planning processes. Today, continued fear of displacement and distrust of institutionalized forms of power and control is pitted against the very real need for increased access to transit, healthy green spaces, and reliable municipal services—the very improvements that could lead to displacement through modern urban renewal programs or gentrification. In light of the continued inequities faced by West Baltimore residents, important questions are raised about the future of development, revitalization, and re-greening projects. How are goals related to wellbeing being articulated and acted upon? Who is designing and implementing these strategies; and what stake do they have in the outcome or effect? What is being taken for granted? How do these perspectives influence the viability of future projects, especially when framed around green spaces? What could this all mean for the residents of ‘blighted’ communities?

Harlem Park, the neighborhood directly south of Sandtown-Winchester—where the April 2015 unrest primarily occurred—is currently at the center of several revitalization and re-greening efforts that are framed as pathways to wellbeing. The neighborhood has unique inner block parks, historic row houses with high vacancy rates, and is in close proximity to Baltimore’s already revitalized Inner Harbor downtown area. All of these elements make Harlem Park an ideal urban setting for revitalization efforts.



**Figure 5: Harlem Park's public inner block parks and historic square parks.**  
*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*



While this research is a case study of urban-blight management and its impacts on one neighborhood, it is representative of larger trends in urban revitalization and re-greening efforts. There is a long history in Baltimore of using institutionalized power and control to dictate changes at the neighborhood scale through strict enforcement of coding violations, displacement through massive infrastructure projects, excessive policing, and the more insidious denial of basic services. Given past traumatic experiences with City-driven revitalization efforts, residents respond first from a place of extreme distrust, which encourages intolerance towards new-comers or strangers, and the entrenchment of isolationist parochialism at best and violence at worst. Residents adopt a siege mentality of us versus them, insider versus outsider, and good versus bad. In return, many well-intentioned city representatives, elected officials, and residents of non-blighted neighborhoods respond by patronizing low-income residents, advocating for elitist viewpoints of what makes a ‘good’ neighborhood, and act out their own version of isolationism rooted in fear causing them to avoid entire sections of Baltimore. As this fear of the other takes hold, residents of blighted communities become not humans, but objects to manage and problems to solve. Low-income, high-poverty communities become police-states and the marginal areas that represent transitions between predominantly black and predominantly white, or predominantly low-income and predominantly high-income, or perceived unsafe and perceived safe neighborhoods, become the contested grounds in the battlefield of urban revitalization.

There are, of course, individuals and groups on all sides that buck these trends. Their processes tend to favor transparency and dialogue, but can be seen as prohibitively time-consuming with no guarantee of clear consensus. As urban neighborhoods continue to grapple with conditions of inequity resulting in the degradation of human and ecological communities, it will become increasingly important to acknowledge that the ways in which we organize information has consequence, the way we think about and interpret information has consequence, and the ways in which we clarify our own and each other's standpoints has consequence.

# 1

## HARLEM PARK HISTORY: PLACE IN CONTEXT

Harlem Park, located in the western half of Baltimore City, is a case study of an urban neighborhood dealing with a long history of racial and class transition and discrimination, the effects of deindustrialization, and modern approaches to urban management. The Harlem Park neighborhood is predominantly black American, with residents ranging from low-income to very poor, with some middle-income residents living on the fringes and in the western half of the community. Though only 0.31 square miles (198.93 acres), the neighborhood has 26 public parks (23.817 acres; 12 percent of the neighborhood's land) including two historic, full-block public square-style parks with legacy trees, meandering walking-paths, and public art. The history and transitions of Harlem Park are deeply informed by the legacy of Baltimore City, its peoples, and their philosophies.

### Early Baltimore History

Baltimore was founded in 1729 and initially settled by Europeans of German and Scottish descent<sup>4</sup>. The original city charter was adopted in 1796 and included a provision allowing for the use of police power to preserve order, and secure property and people from danger, violence, and destruction.<sup>5</sup> Codified into the creation of the city was the understanding that the protective powers of police departments could be called upon to enforce social norms and expectations. While doubtlessly well intentioned, this code would eventually be used to justify racial segregation in Baltimore City neighborhoods throughout the city's history.

The Harlem Park neighborhood in West Baltimore initially consisted of large manor houses, such as the Sellers Mansion, which were surrounded by acres of privately owned and public green space. As Baltimore's population grew through the 1800's,

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<sup>4</sup> Prior to European settlement, what would become Maryland was settled by the Sesquehannock and Piscataway Native Americans.

<sup>5</sup> Halpin, Dennis P. "'The Struggle for Land and Liberty'" Segregation, Violence, and African American Resistance in Baltimore, 1898-1918." *Journal of Urban History* (2015).

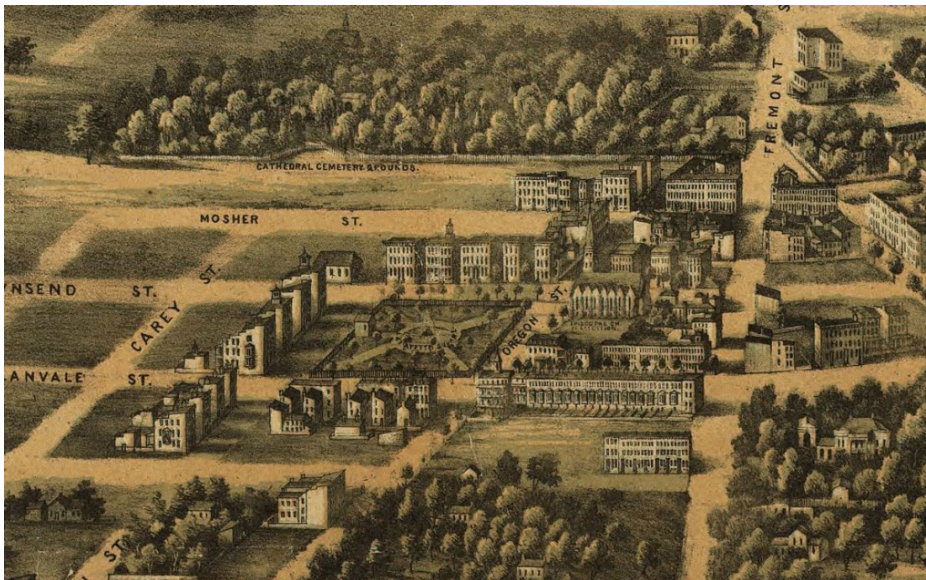
Harlem Park developed as well. In addition to large manor, three-story Italianate row houses were built on main streets, and two-story row houses on narrow alley streets in the center of city blocks.<sup>6</sup> The street-facing homes housed white, middle-class families, while homes built in the center of blocks housed low-income, typically black, servants and caretakers. The inner-block homes were constructed from wood, rather than stone or brick, and densely placed.

In the second half of the 1800's there was a growing movement in America to create urban green spaces for inhabitants of quickly urbanizing industrial U.S. cities—especially on the east coast. Lafayette Square Park was constructed in 1857 and provided a public gathering space for Harlem Park residents. Shortly thereafter, residents formed the Lafayette Square Association to oversee management of the park and the surrounding blocks. Arguably, the design and intended use of Lafayette Square Park was an early example of the mentality that would later inspire the City Beautiful Movement. The City Beautiful Movement sought to increase the beauty of urban areas through architecture and design of public green spaces, but was grounded in the philosophical belief that the beautification of such spaces could encourage social order through aesthetics.<sup>7</sup> The Lafayette Square Association, under the control of white homeowners in Harlem Park, sought not only to beautify the neighborhood's public space, but to also enforce social norms and expectations within the community through their management of the public sphere.

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<sup>6</sup> "Harlem Park". Baltimore Heritage. (n.d.). <http://baltimoreheritage.org/history/harlem-park/>.

<sup>7</sup> Bluestone, Daniel M. "Detroit's city beautiful and the problem of commerce." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47, no. 3 (1988): 245-262.



**Figure 6: Depiction of Lafayette Square in Harlem Park, 1869.**

*Image: Baltimore Heritage*

During the Civil War, Maryland sided with the Union despite being a slave state. By 1810, Baltimore residents owned 4,672 slaves.<sup>8</sup> The tension of being a Union-identified slave state did not go unchallenged and a riot in 1861 erupted after Confederate supporters attacked Union soldiers. In response, the Union army occupied Baltimore until 1865. As part of that occupation, Harlem Park manor homes were commandeered by Union soldiers and used as barracks and hospitals.<sup>9</sup> Park spaces were also used to hold temporary barracks for Union soldiers.

### **The Great Migration, West Ordinance & Redlining**

In the 1870's and 1880's, Joseph Cone, a private developer, built hundreds of row houses in Harlem Park. Unlike the manor houses that preceded them, row houses are dwelling units joined by common sidewalls; by design, their stability is dependent on the neighboring homes. While the decision to build row houses was primarily a financial decision on the part of Cone, it would create the lasting street-oriented—rather than backyard-oriented—culture of the community that persists today. The homes had the latest advances including gas lights, door bells, and hot water, but life happened on the streets; the front of the row houses had large, marble stoops where families could sit and converse with neighbors, watch the neighborhood happenings, and interact with passersby. The row houses were also more affordable than the large manor houses that

<sup>8</sup> Watkins, Dwight. *The Beast Side: Living (and Dying) While Black in America*. Skyhorse Publishing, Inc., 2015.

<sup>9</sup> "Harlem Park". Baltimore Heritage. (n.d.). <http://baltimoreheritage.org/history/harlem-park/>.

had previously dominated Harlem Park's housing typology, and thus attracted more middle-class homebuyers to the neighborhood.

During this time, the Lafayette Square Association was heavily advocating for Baltimore churches with white congregations to build around Lafayette Square Park. In 1869, the Episcopal Church of the Ascension built a large cathedral-style building on the northeast corner of the park. They were joined in 1871 by the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, which built an equally ornate building on the south side of Lafayette Square Park. In 1878 a Catholic church moved into a building on the west side of Lafayette Square Park, and a Presbyterian church established themselves along the south side of the square in 1879.

As Harlem Park developed, demand grew for more public green spaces and Harlem Square Park was designated in 1876. The heirs of Dr. Thomas Edmondson donated 9.75 acres of his estate to create Harlem Square Park, which was more than double the size of Lafayette Square Park. Harlem Square Park was four full city blocks and would become the center of the neighborhood. It featured colorful beds of flowers laid out in star, diamond, heart, oval, and circle patterns.

In addition to diversifying housing stock, Harlem Park began to diversify racially as well. In the decades after the civil war, more than 25,000 black Americans relocated to Baltimore—more than doubling the city's black American population.<sup>10</sup> In September 1899, the first recorded incident of violent confrontation regarding residential space occurred.<sup>11</sup> Just a few blocks east of Harlem Park, John Lang, a 55-year old black construction worker, moved with his family into a house on Druid Hill Avenue. Upon returning from work the next day, Mr. Lang found his family barricaded inside their new home as a group of young, white men broke the windows in the rear of the house. The next day, a larger crowd of angry, white residents returned and continued to break windows. Lang quickly opted to vacate the home after the landlord returned his rent money; it is unknown what happened to them or where they went next.

Racial tensions in West Baltimore would increase when in 1903 a black American congregation attempted to purchase St. Paul's English Lutheran Church on Druid Hill

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<sup>10</sup> Halpin, Dennis P. "'The Struggle for Land and Liberty' Segregation, Violence, and African American Resistance in Baltimore, 1898-1918." *Journal of Urban History* (2015).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Avenue. In response, St. Paul's church leaders burned the mortgage and adopted a resolution to forbid the sale of the property to black Americans.<sup>12</sup>

In 1906, white residents of Harlem Park formed the Harlem Park Protective Association when the Colored Independent Methodist Church bought property on North Gilmore Street with the hopes of creating a colored orphan society. The Association's vocal opposition to the sale was successful in getting it annulled and the property was again put up for auction. However, the segregationist's win was short-lived as Harry S. Cummings, a black politician, purchased the property. In response, the secretary of the Association issued a statement saying the group would "fight anything likely to degrade the neighborhood" and that it was not "only for Gilmore Street and the vicinity that we intend standing for, but it's for the whole west end."<sup>13</sup>

Fight for the whole west end they did; in 1907, several segregationist neighborhood associations joined force to create The Neighborhood Improvement Association. Together, they advocated for strict segregation of Baltimore neighborhoods. In 1908, the Harlem Park Protective Association rebranded and became the Harlem Park Improvement Association.

Between 1910 and 1930, the black population of Baltimore increased 3.38 percent each year.<sup>14</sup> During the 'Great Migration' millions of black Americans left Southern states for industrial cities along the eastern coast seeking improved race relations, economic opportunity, and a new beginning.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "Will oppress Negroes." *The Baltimore Sun*. (1906, April 6). 12.

<sup>14</sup> Trotter, Joe William. *The Great Migration in historical perspective: New dimensions of race, class, and gender*. Vol. 669. Indiana University Press, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Harrison, Alferdteen, ed. *Black exodus: The great migration from the American south*. Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1991.

**Increase in Black Population for Selected Cities, 1910–1930**

City	Population			Percent Increase		Average Annual Increase
	1910	1920	1930	1910–1920	1920–1930	1910–1930
Norfolk	25,039	43,392	43,942	73.3	1.3	3.77
Atlanta	51,902	62,796	90,075	21.0	43.4	3.68
Baltimore	84,749	108,322	142,106	27.8	31.2	3.38
Birmingham	52,305	70,230	99,077	34.3	41.1	4.47
Charleston	31,056	32,326	28,062	4.1	– 13.2	– .48
Houston	23,929	33,960	63,337	41.9	86.5	6.72
Jacksonville	29,293	41,520	48,196	41.7	16.1	3.23
Memphis	52,441	61,181	96,550	16.7	57.8	4.20
New Orleans	89,262	109,930	129,632	13.1	28.4	2.26
Richmond	46,733	54,041	52,988	15.6	– 1.9	.68
Median						3.53

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States, 1920–1932* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), p. 55.

**Table 1: U.S. census data showing impact of Great Migration on several United States cities.**

The increase in population and the corresponding need for affordable housing to satiate the growing city, led to additional racial conflict over housing opportunities. The Harlem Park Improvement Association continued their effort to halt the ‘negro invasion’<sup>16</sup> and in 1910, the Baltimore City Council passed the West Ordinance.<sup>17</sup> Citing Baltimore’s original 1796 charter, the West Ordinance institutionalized residential segregation on the grounds that the presence of black Americans in primarily white neighborhoods degraded property values and incited disturbances of peace.<sup>18</sup> The West Ordinance was the first residential segregation ordinance in the country, and firmly established a precedent that black residents were at fault for racialized, residential violence. While the West Ordinance was redrafted, struck down, and instituted again over the course of the next several years, it was not permanently dismantled until 1918 when

<sup>16</sup> Boone, Christopher G. "An assessment and explanation of environmental inequity in Baltimore." *Urban Geography* 23, no. 6 (2002): 581-595.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Power, Garrett. "Apartheid Baltimore style: The residential segregation ordinances of 1910-1913." *Md. L. Rev.* 42 (1983): 289.

Maryland courts ruled the Supreme Court's decision to strike down Louisville's segregation ordinance in 1917 also applied to Baltimore.

Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, the population of Baltimore continued to grow and the churches surrounding Lafayette Square transitioned from white congregations to predominantly black American congregations.<sup>19</sup> Metropolitan United Methodist Church relocated to Lafayette Square Park in 1928. St. John's African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church joined them in 1929, and was followed by St. James Episcopal Church in 1932 and Emmanuel Christian Community in 1934. Along Harlem Square Park, the predominantly white congregation of Methodist Episcopal Church left their building in 1930 and over the next two years, it was converted into the Harlem Theatre which had its grand opening in October 1932.



**Figure 7: Harlem Theater in Harlem Park, West Baltimore.**

*Image: Baltimore Heritage*

This demographic shift in the faith community corresponded with the beginning of redlining practices throughout Baltimore. Redlining, a discriminatory pattern of divestment and predatory lending practices enabled extensive 'white flight', or the

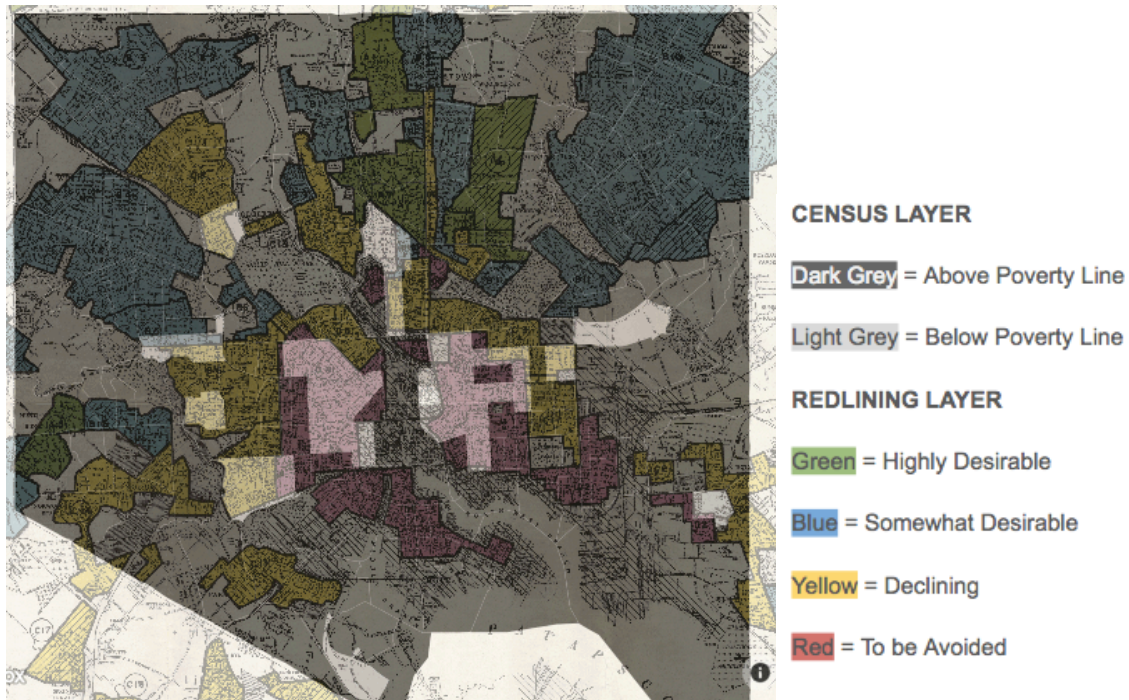
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<sup>19</sup> Halpin, Dennis P. "'The Struggle for Land and Liberty'" Segregation, Violence, and African American Resistance in Baltimore, 1898-1918." *Journal of Urban History* (2015).



movement of whites from a city's inner core to suburban homes, while simultaneously restricting the movement of black American homebuyers to designated communities, such as Harlem Park. As neighborhoods transitioned from predominantly white to predominantly black, the areas were classified by lending institutions as unfit for economic investment or development.

Redlining practices would have devastating and lasting effects on the economic health of Baltimore's inner-core urban communities (*see Fig. 8 below comparing poverty line information from the 2010 Census with an original 1937 redlining map*).<sup>20</sup> Entire neighborhoods, including the bulk of West Baltimore, were labeled unfit for economic investment. As the more affluent members of society fled the inner-core neighborhoods for the suburbs<sup>21</sup>, their business investments left with them.<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 8: The Home Owners Loan Corporation's 1937 redlining map of Baltimore City overlaid with poverty line data from the 2010 U.S. Census.**

*Image: Map, Evan Tachovsky<sup>23</sup>, Key, Amber Collett*

<sup>20</sup> Bliss, Laura. "After nearly a century, redlining still divides Baltimore". *CityLab*. (2015, April 30). <http://www.citylab.com/politics/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/>.

<sup>21</sup> Luckey, Irene, Douglas S. Massey, and Nancy A. Denton. "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass." (1995): 733-735.

<sup>22</sup> Badger, Emily. "The long, painful and repetitive history of how Baltimore became Baltimore". *The Washington Post*. (2015, April 29). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/04/29/the-long-painful-and-repetitive-history-of-how-baltimore-became-baltimore/>.

<sup>23</sup> Bliss, Laura. "After nearly a century, redlining still divides Baltimore". *CityLab*. (2015, April 30). <http://www.citylab.com/politics/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/>.

## Post-Industrial Urbanism & Urban Renewal

As the automobile became the preferred mode of transportation for middle-class American residents, cities that had experienced white-flight from their cores began to cater planning and design towards the residents now commuting into downtown from suburbs. In 1944, Robert Moses, a then celebrated urban planner, proposed that the City of Baltimore build a 400-ft wide sunken east-west freeway along Orleans Street, and the Franklin-Mulberry corridor in West Baltimore. The freeway would cut through the middle of Baltimore City and connect with an extensive network of additional, but as of yet unplanned, urban freeways.

Moses's freeway plan gained popularity when in 1948, Maryland transferred the responsibilities of design, planning, and construction of controlled access facilities—such as high-speed roadways—within Baltimore from the state to the city. In 1949, Title I of the Housing Act initiated federal funding for 'urban renewal' projects dealing with slum clearance. The swift population growth in urban areas following the Great Migration—as well as increased immigration from Europe—had led to crowded urban centers and poorly built, and even informal, housing structures.

What would follow became the all too typical tale of a post-industrial American city. Baltimore's population peaked in 1950 at 950,000; at that time, more than 34 percent of the labor force was employed in manufacturing.<sup>24</sup> A combination of technological advancements and increased globalization would lead to Baltimore losing more than 46,000 manufacturing jobs between 1950 and 1970, causing increased disinvestment, unemployment, and housing vacancy.<sup>25</sup> The urban decay, or 'blight', that followed in the wake of the industrial city's demise became the impetus and justification for massive, large-scale infrastructure projects under the banner of urban renewal and 'blight removal'.

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, Harlem Park was at the center of urban renewal and community revitalization projects in Baltimore. In Harlem Park, the Harlem Park Planning Office, in conjunction with the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA), boiled down the conditions in Harlem Park down to an

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<sup>24</sup> Bellush, Jewel, and Murray Hausknecht. "Urban renewal: an historical overview." *Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books (1967): 3-16.

<sup>25</sup> Levine, Marc V. "A third-world city in the first world: Social exclusion, racial inequality, and sustainable development in Baltimore." *The social sustainability of cities* (2000): 123-156.

“outstanding problem as being one of too many buildings on the land” and therefore recommended the “clearance and demolition of interior structures”.<sup>26</sup>

Nationwide, the urban renewal approach was a systematic attempt by cities across the country to remove ‘slum’ areas from urban centers to enable neighborhood repurposing. Often urban renewal plans included the demolition of entire city blocks, the planning and construction of interstates or freeways, and forced development of public buildings, housing projects, and green spaces. Proponents of urban renewal believed the program would eliminate blighted buildings and efficiently renovate public infrastructure leading to increased economic development opportunities and economic growth.

However, by targeting blight, the majority of projects implemented were located within predominantly black American communities, with little to no community involvement. In 1961, black Americans accounted for ten percent of the United States population, but represented more than 66 percent of residents living in areas identified for urban renewal, leading to the slogan ‘Urban renewal is Negro removal’.<sup>27</sup> Through the process of eminent domain and demolition, residents were displaced from their homes and communities. Eminent domain, a process by which government agencies claim the use of private property for public projects and provide compensation, is a form of legalized land taking. Between 1951 and 1964, close to 90 percent of citizens displaced by urban renewal projects were residents from low-income black American neighborhoods.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the immediate consequences of psychological trauma, loss of monetary resources, and degradation of social organization, urban renewal forced on black American communities the “long-term consequences [of] social paralysis of dispossession, most importantly, a collapse of political action.”<sup>29</sup>

Through eminent domain, large tracts of urban land in Baltimore were repurposed into cleared space for freeways. America’s highway and interstate system was born out of post-World War II policy actions meant to increase the country’s defense systems in

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<sup>26</sup> “Minutes of Harlem Park Neighborhood Council General Meeting”. *Harlem Park Neighborhood Council*. University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Authority collection, series X, box 6, folder “Harlem Park Neighborhood Council.” 1958, January 30.

<sup>27</sup> Bellush, Jewel, and Murray Hausknecht, eds. *Urban renewal: People, politics, and planning*. Anchor Books, 1967.

<sup>28</sup> Mohl, Raymond A. “Stop the road freeway revolts in American cities.” *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 5 (2004): 674-706.

<sup>29</sup> Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. “Root shock: the consequences of African American dispossession.” *Journal of urban health* 78, no. 1 (2001): 72-80. Quote: p. 72

times of war.<sup>30</sup> Also called the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 was the largest public works project in the history of America at the time, and authorized the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate. The plan envisioned a network of high-speed roadways connecting military bases and urban centers. The roadways would be “broad ribbons across the land” that would go around and through America’s urban centers.<sup>31</sup> As early as 1957, engineers attending the Hartford Conference on New Highways began raising concerns about the displacement impacts of urban freeways.

Between 1951 and 1971, more than 25,000 black American families in Baltimore were displaced to build new highways, schools and housing projects.<sup>32</sup> Two-way residential streets were converted to faster-flowing one-ways that could accommodate the city’s growing use of automobiles, and help to alleviate the rush hour traffic created by suburbanite commuters. Despite the neighborhood’s origins as a wooded estate, Harlem Park had rapidly developed. In the early 1960’s, when Harlem Park Elementary and Middle School was proposed, it was originally strongly opposed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as the original plan sited the school grounds in the center of Harlem Square Park which was now one of the few remaining green spaces remaining in the neighborhood. Under pressure from neighborhood organizations and the NAACP, the school site was shifted north resulting in the demolition of three full blocks of houses. In the end, the school only claimed half of the remaining Harlem Square Park and offered to include recreational fields as part of the grounds design.

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<sup>30</sup> For clarity, a freeway is a multilane roadway with higher speed limits that is separate from other traffic and only accessible by ramps. A highway is also a multilane roadway with higher speed limits but is not necessarily separated from other traffic roads. An interstate is a multilane roadway with higher speed limits that crosses state lines. A U.S. Highway can also cross state lines, but is managed and maintained by states rather than the federal government.

<sup>31</sup> “Highway History: The greatest decade 1956-1966”. *U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration*. (2015). <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/50interstate.cfm>.

<sup>32</sup> Badger, Emily. “The long, painful and repetitive history of how Baltimore became Baltimore”. *The Washington Post*. (2015, April 29). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/04/29/the-long-painful-and-repetitive-history-of-how-baltimore-became-baltimore/>.



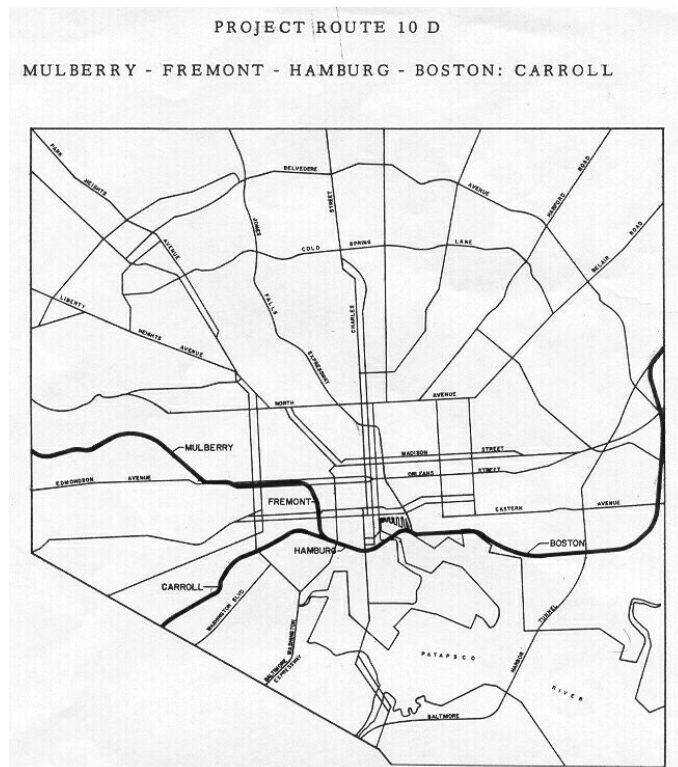
**Figure 9: Shaping timeline of Harlem Park 1914, 1980, and 2015.**

*Image: Amber Collett, Juan Pablo Ponce de Leon, & Kate McMillan*

### **Baltimore's Interstate Division, the Urban Design Concept Team, and Civic Unrest**

In Harlem Park, urban renewal processes in the 1960's led to massive neighborhood and community changes (*for timelines of significant events and Baltimore freeway planning proposals, see Appendix 1.3 & 1.4*). In 1961, J.E. Greiner, an engineering firm hired by the City of Baltimore, proposed the 10-D freeway plan that would create a network of freeways around and through Baltimore. As planned, the freeways would bisect the Inner Harbor (downtown), Fells Point, Federal Hill, Canton, Franklin and Mulberry, and Rosemont communities. Inner Harbor would have been particularly impacted by the creation of a 14-lane low-level bridge that would have cut through the center of downtown Baltimore. Included in the plan was Robert Moses's 1944 plan for the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, a 400-ft sunken east-to-west expressway that would cut along the southern boundary of Harlem Park and require the removal of ten full blocks of houses, business, schools, and parks. To compensate for the loss of homes and public space, an urban renewal plan was proposed in 1961 that called for the demolition of inner-block alleyway houses to create 29 inner block parks. While the blight management plan for Harlem Park was approved, there was no language indicating

which city agency or department would be in charge of managing the 29 new public parks.



**Figure 10: Baltimore's 10-D interstate system, approved in 1962.**  
*Image: Maryland State Highway Administration*

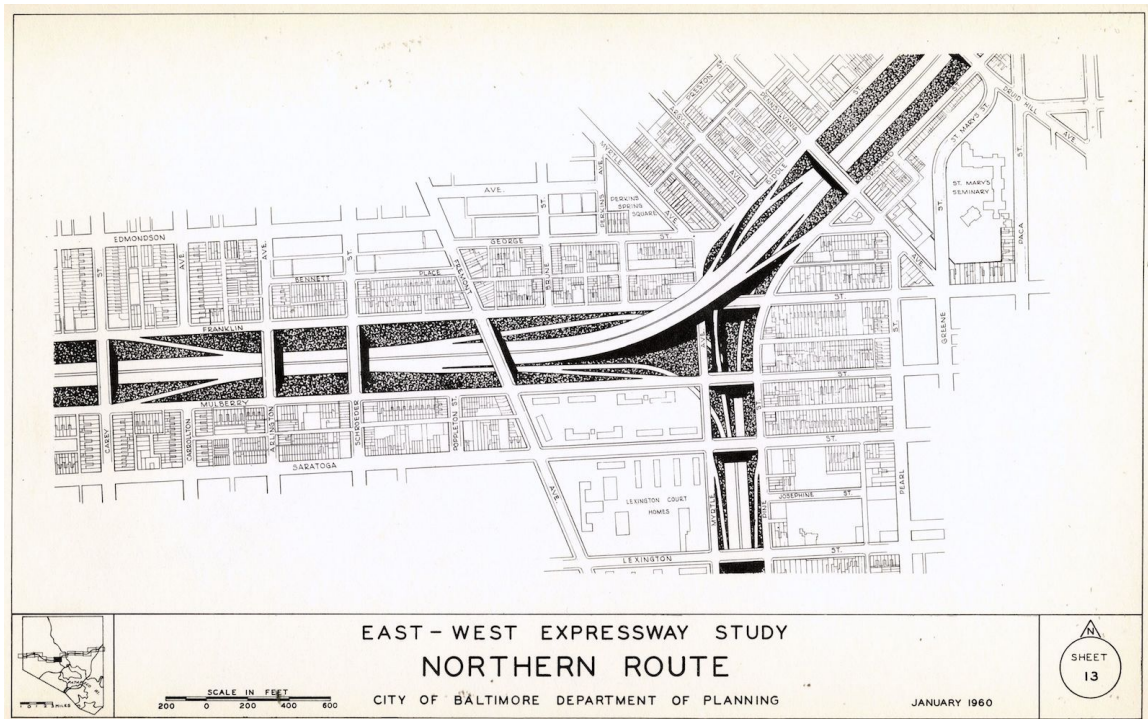
The Franklin-Mulberry Corridor was located squarely in the center of Baltimore's primary black community. Despite containing several business nodes for the surrounding communities of Poppleton to the south and Harlem Park to the north, the corridor had been floated as a possible highway route since 1944 and remained part of every highway plan for the next three decades.<sup>33</sup> Knowing the area was condemned by a succession of highway plans, made it all the more easy for city officials and independent business investors to justify decisions to divest in the area, which arguably enabled the continued decline of possibilities for the residents.<sup>34</sup> At the time, the groups tasked with urban planning decisions for Baltimore were comprised of primarily white, male, well-educated individuals who viewed West Baltimore as a quadrant of the city comprised of degraded housing stock occupied by low-income residents. From their perspective, the area was a

<sup>33</sup> Moses, Robert, and W. Earle Andrews. "Baltimore arterial report." (1944).

<sup>34</sup> Gioielli, Robert. "'We Must Destroy You to Save You' Highway Construction and the City as a Modern Commons." *Radical History Review* 2011, no. 109 (2011): 62-82.



threat to the economic vitality of the whole city and needed ‘slum clearance’ to enable the whole of Baltimore to thrive. This purely economic calculation failed to take into account the various structural and discriminatory practices that had created severe racially delineated socio-economic disparities, and sought to disperse urban poverty through demolition and forced relocation.



**Figure 11: Franklin-Mulberry Corridor: 1960 plan for highway placement through Harlem park.**

*Image: Baltimore Heritage*

As nationwide concern over the construction of freeways in urban areas grew, experts gathered at the Hershey Conference on Freeways in the Urban Setting in June 1962.<sup>35</sup> At the conclusion of the conference, delegates issued a declaration that “freeways cannot be planned independently of the areas through which they pass” and that “the planning concept should extend to the entire sector of the city within the environs of the freeway.”<sup>36</sup> They went on to note that “when properly planned, freeways provide an opportunity to shape and structure the urban community in a manner that meets the needs of the people who live, work, and travel in these areas” and that teams of technical experts including city planners, engineers, and architects should be created to manage

<sup>35</sup> Weiner, Edward. "Urban transportation planning since the federal-aid highway act of 1962." *Journal of transportation engineering* 113, no. 6 (1987): 658-671.

<sup>36</sup> Hershey Conference, Freeways in the Urban Setting, Sponsored by American Association of State Highway Officials, American Municipal Association, and National Association of County Officials, Automotive Safety Foundation, Washington, D.C. June 1962.

urban freeway design and implementation.<sup>37</sup> Critically, the declaration also called upon those teams to include public outreach stating “the planning effort should be carried out in a manner that involves participation by the community.”<sup>38</sup>

In Baltimore, the 10-D plan was facing turmoil. In 1964, Mayor McKeldin (R) invited the Greater Baltimore Commission (GBC), an organization primarily made of business leaders in the Baltimore region, to help manage and align the interests of the Baltimore City Planning Commission (BCPC) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) which were conflicted over how—if at all—to implement the 10-D plan. That same year, David Barton was appointed the chair of the BCPC. Skeptical of the 10-D plan to bisect central, historic communities, Barton would spend his time on the BCPC advocating for a freeway planning approach that minimized intrusion into Baltimore neighborhoods.

In 1966, Mayor McKeldin and the Maryland State Roads Commission created the Interstate Division for Baltimore City (IDBC), a joint city-state freeway-planning agency. At the same time, Mayor McKeldin also formed the Policy Advisory Board (PAB), chaired by him, to advise the IDBC. After reviewing the 10-D plan, IDBC proposed dividing the plan into four quadrants, each to be designed by a different firm.

The four-quadrant plan quickly became unpopular. The Baltimore chapter of the American Institute of Architects raised objection almost immediately, and the GBC and IDBC responded by appointing an advisory committee to review the proposals for each of the quadrants. Archibald Rogers, a prominent local architect, was appointed to chair the review committee and after reviewing the state of affairs suggested the planning process to-date be scrapped in favor of a new planning process. Rogers persuaded the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland to hire the firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) to restudy the freeway proposal, and on Oct. 26, 1966, Rogers formed the Urban Design Concept Team (UDCT) to act as the new planning team. Consisting of engineers, planners, and architects, Rogers hoped that the UDCT would be better able to garner professional and residential support. However, it would have to do so without the significant federal funding enjoyed by its predecessors.

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<sup>37</sup> Hershey Conference, Freeways in the Urban Setting, Sponsored by American Association of State Highway Officials, American Municipal Association, and National Association of County Officials, Automotive Safety Foundation, Washington, D.C. June 1962.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



Only two weeks after the UDCT was announced, Spiro Agnew (R) was elected Maryland's 55<sup>th</sup> governor, replacing the democrat, George P. Mahoney. Governor Agnew would go on to become Vice President under President Nixon, but in Maryland, one of his first actions as governor was to suspended UDCT contract negotiations and appoint Jerome Wolff to head the Maryland State Roads Commission. Wolff was vocally opposed to the SOM/UDCT freeway approach in Baltimore, preferring to keep the Baltimore freeway plan as close as possible to the 1961 10-D freeway proposal.<sup>39</sup> A former engineer, Wolff would later provide testimony that would result in the forced resignation of Spiro Agnew from the office of Vice President once it came to light that Agnew had received contract kickbacks, a form of commission-style bribery, from engineering firms bidding for federal projects.<sup>40</sup>

The planning and implementation of major freeway projects in Baltimore was a slow-moving process. As planners, designers, and politicians made high-level decisions about neighborhood structure, the residents of those areas lived with the consequences. Through eminent domain, houses were purchased, families relocated, and buildings demolished before plans were finalized. In Harlem Park, buildings were left vacant for years as the freeway route was frequently modified. The property values of nearby homes continued to plummet, meaning that the remaining residents received even less compensation for their houses when faced with eminent domain themselves, as the eminent domain process only offered market value for the remaining houses. Construction activities left the air heavy with dust, and residents felt inundated by the dirt and noise. As one long-time Harlem Park resident I spoke with noted, "I was living here when they put the highway in. It was a lot of dust and dirt. And all of that to go nowhere. It was supposed to clear up the traffic from the county to the social security building. But then they just moved the building."<sup>41</sup>

In the fight to protect their own homes and businesses, communities were pitted against each other in the freeway planning process. The route would be shifted a block here, or a block there, to protect churches or vocal businesses, but the result would

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<sup>39</sup> Wong, Sidney. "Architects and Planners in the Middle of a Road War The Urban Design Concept Team in Baltimore, 1966–71." *Journal of Planning History* 12, no. 2 (2013): 179-202.

<sup>40</sup> Kelly, Jacques. "Jerome B. Wolff, former state roads chief who testified in case against Agnew, dies". *The Baltimore Sun*. (2016). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/obituaries/bs-md-ob-jerome-wolff-20160830-story.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Participant 57 in discussion with the author, July 19, 2016.

always be the same: another set of homes demolished, and another set of families displaced. As the process rolled on, it became clear to residents in West Baltimore that in-fighting among themselves would be less effective than advocating together for a voice in the planning process.

In 1967, residents of Harlem Park and Rosemont formed the first anti-highway grassroots coalition, the Relocation Action Movement (RAM).<sup>42</sup> The organization was grounded not only in frustrations over the freeway planning process, but also in mounting dissatisfaction at decades of divestment which created the blight conditions. West Baltimore continued to lack basic sanitary services, adequate police and public service protection, and transportation service. Now, the citizens were faced with the prospect of massive infrastructure projects in their backyards and potential displacement. RAM's mission statement read, "for too long the history of Urban Renewal and Highway Clearance has been marked by the repeated removal of black citizens. We have been asked to make sacrifice after sacrifice in the name of progress, and when that process has been achieved we find it marked 'White Only'."<sup>43</sup>

Resigned that the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor would be built, RAM focused on ensuring that displaced homeowners received fair compensation for their seized homes. Baltimore lacked a fair housing ordinance, and the discriminatory impacts of redlining practices in Baltimore meant that black residents were constrained to a limited number of areas within the city. As residents were displaced by freeway construction, home and rent prices in those areas increased dramatically at the same time that the market value of the houses along the freeway corridors rapidly declined. Maryland's State Road Bureau was restricted to offering only fair market value to displaced residents, but with the help of the Baltimore chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, a nationwide civil rights organization, RAM was able to advocate for a state law that required the Road Bureau to offer fair replacement value for homes rather than fair market value.<sup>44</sup>

In spring 1967, RAM delivered to Mayor McKeldin their position statement along with 450 resident signatures. In the statement, the residents demanded that "services for

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<sup>42</sup> Gioielli, Robert. "'We Must Destroy You to Save You' Highway Construction and the City as a Modern Commons." *Radical History Review* 2011, no. 109 (2011): 62-82.

<sup>43</sup> "Position Statement, Relocation Action Movement". Relocation Action Movement. University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, MAD collection, series VII, box 1, folder "Relocation Action Movement". (1968, January 16).

<sup>44</sup> Massard-Guilbaud, Geneviève, and Stephen Mosley, eds. *Common Ground: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

the Departments of Sanitation and Police be increased to meet the rising needs of the area and also to correct the negligent method of condemnation which often left one or two families stranded in a block of vacated, boarded-up, garbage-infested, city-owned houses causing increased problems of vandalism [and] rats.”<sup>45</sup> After several more months of public pressure, the City Council passed a moratorium on condemnations along the east-west expressway to allow time for the City to develop a plan to provide fair compensation to displaced residents. However, despite the moratorium, residents continued to be pressured to leave their houses by the Department of Public Works who would enforce condemnation notices without providing the finances to safely relocate residents. Frightened and angry, Harlem Park residents and RAM sent a letter to Mayor McKeldin in August 1967 proposing a meeting during which the parties could “fairly and peacefully” come to a solution, or else the help of the Congress of Racial Equality and “other more militant organizations” would be enlisted to help enforce residents’ civil rights.<sup>46</sup>

In the autumn of 1967, Thomas D’Alesandro III was elected Mayor of Baltimore. D’Alesandro III was a liberal-leaning democrat who campaigned as a mayor ‘of all races’ in what would become one of the first political campaigns to appeal directly to the growing electoral power of black Americans in Baltimore City.<sup>47</sup> Freeway planning and construction continued, and in April 1968, Baltimore was rocked by six-days of civil unrest in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. A week after the unrest, the PAB rejected an alternative freeway bypass plan which would have spared the predominantly black American Rosemont community—located just west of Harlem Park—from the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor plan. The PAB’s reason for rejecting the bypass plan was that it would have required a tunnel through Western Cemetery, which PAB felt would be cost-prohibitive. RAM members interpreted PAB’s decision as a public declaration that “dead white bodies [were] more important than living black ones”.<sup>48</sup> West Baltimore residents began to communicate their concerns regarding the corridor plan to residents throughout the city and in the summer of 1968, a group of Catholic

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<sup>45</sup> “A history of the Relocation Action Movement”. Relocation Action Movement. University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, MAD collection, series VII, box 1, folder “Relocation Action Movement”. Date unknown.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Durr, Kenneth D. *Behind the backlash: White working-class politics in Baltimore, 1940-1980*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2003.

<sup>48</sup> Wong, Sidney. “Architects and planners in the middle of a road war: The Urban Design Concept Team in Baltimore, 1966–71”. *Journal of planning history* 12, no. 2 (2013): 179-202.

social workers hosted a public forum to discuss the highway planning and construction process in Baltimore. Out of this meeting came Movement Against Destruction (MAD), a coalition which included RAM, and which was created to directly oppose the City of Baltimore's planned highway network.

MAD, in coalition with other civil rights and neighborhood advocacy organizations, provided an opportunity for residents to envision alternatives to the highway plans put forth by the city officials, business leaders, and highway engineers. After the 1968 riots in Detroit, MAD issued a statement that "the city of Detroit stands as an example of what happens when massive numbers of people are uprooted for a property they are not permitted to participate in. We will make our stand in the streets and in the doorways of our homes. Unless black people's demands are satisfied, the [east-west] Expressway WILL NOT be built" (*emphasis in original*).<sup>49</sup>

In addition to activating residents, MAD created a platform for collective action and a pathway for residents to articulate their lived-understanding of urban space and community identity, which manifested in expressions of value demands and expectations. Through MAD, residents were advocating for the rectitude and power to participate in design decisions impacting their neighborhoods, and for the opportunity to benefit from the wealth and wellbeing that could be generated through a revitalization process. By connecting residents with like-minded planning and engineering professionals, lawyers, and civic engagement experts, MAD was able to increase the negotiating and political skills of Baltimore residents who were advocating for increased transparency in governance and decision processes.

Conversations about structural racism and its impacts were happening not just in Baltimore, but nationwide. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) required that freeway planning processes had to host public hearings. In response to the FHA decision, Baltimore held the Rosemont Hearings on the proposed highway system. The hearings became an institutionalized opportunity for RAM, MAD, historical preservationists, and others concerned with civil liberties to advocate for changes to the Baltimore freeway plan.

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<sup>49</sup> "Position Statement, Relocation Action Movement". Relocation Action Movement. University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, MAD collection, series VII, box 1, folder "Relocation Action Movement". (1968, January 16).

After delays, the State of Maryland was finally able to fund the UDCT with a \$4.8 million grant from the federal government. Soon after contract negotiations, however, the members of UDCT found themselves in a difficult position. The City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland, their clients, were seeking to keep the Baltimore freeway plan as close to the 1961 proposal as possible. In contrast, the community residents and progressive organizations were advocating for significant changes to be made to the 1961 given the severely disproportional impact the 10-D plan would have on low-income, black American communities. Representing the firm hired by UDCT, SOM's founding partner, Nathaniel Owings, took a leading role in the UDCT administration. Imbued with optimism for the future, Owings stated that their "real client was the multifaceted body politic of the numerous neighborhoods and communities lying within the city limits" and that the new freeway plan created under his tenure would be "an instrument of basic corrective surgery and do good to the community pattern".<sup>50</sup> Rogers, who had been critical of the closed-door design and decision-making process that dominated highway-planning to-date, envisioned the planning process undertaken by UDCT as an opportunity to democratize transportation policy and planning.<sup>51</sup>

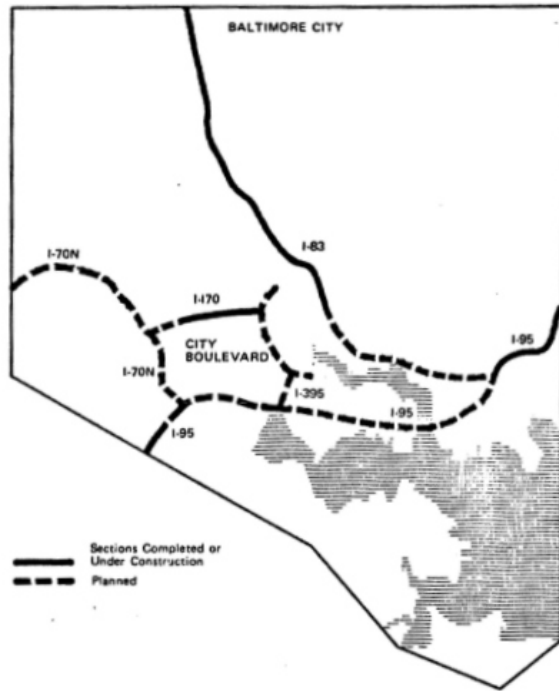
Sensing the overwhelming community opposition to the 10-D plan, the SOM planners submitted an alternative, the 3-A plan. The 3-A plan incorporated a boulevard system for downtown, moved the freeway out of the Rosemont community, reduced the number of traffic lanes in the elevated freeway proposed for Fells Point, and replaced the 14-lane Inner Harbor freeway bridge with a harbor crossing near Fort McHenry. While SOM was developing the 3-A plan, Joseph Axelrod, a close friend of Baltimore City engineer Bernie Werner, was appointed chief of the IDBC.<sup>52</sup> Together, Wolff, Werner, and Axelrod rejected the 3-A plan. Greiner, the firm responsible for the 10-D plan, submitted an alternative to the SOM 3-A plan, called the 3-C system that merely added a southern bypass to the 10-D system.

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<sup>50</sup> Wong, Sidney. "Architects and Planners in the Middle of a Road War The Urban Design Concept Team in Baltimore, 1966–71." *Journal of Planning History* 12, no. 2 (2013): 179-202.

<sup>51</sup> Massard-Guilbaud, Geneviève, and Stephen Mosley, eds. *Common Ground: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Weiner, Edward. "Urban transportation planning in the United States: An historical overview". *U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration*. November 1992. <http://ntl.bts.gov/DOCS/UTP.html>.



**Figure 12: 3-A freeway plan, 1968.**

*Image: Baltimore Regional Environmental Impact Study, Technical Memorandum No. 5*

At this point, the relationship between UDCT and their clients deteriorated dramatically. Ultimately, the UDCT would cost \$66 million and generate social and environmental impact studies, displacement effect studies, and devise countless mitigation measures for the Baltimore freeway system. The UDCT also revolutionized the way that planners, architects, and engineers working on public infrastructure projects would engage with community residents. By hosting public meetings and integrating public comments into their designs, they did what they could to make transportation planning more transparent and accessible to community residents.

Owings, the founding principal of SOM and leader of UDCT, faced extensive pressure from Wolff, Werner, and Axelrod to accept the 3-C plan, but had himself been publically opposed the 10-D version of the freeway plan. In September 1968, Owings again stated his disappointment with the 10-D plan at a meeting of the Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA). In response, Axelrod withheld a \$700,000 payment and shut down the UDCT's community relations program.

UDCT's community relations program went above and beyond engaging members of the public. Planners sympathetic to the plight of community members

formed alliances with RAM and MAD, and attended after-work meetings where they leaked planning documents to the community groups, counseled them on how to use transportation and engineering data to support their causes, and consulted on community created plan alternatives.<sup>53</sup> Thomas Fiorello, a MAD member, remarked during a 1969 one public hearing that UDCT engineers “came around at night” to describe the latest freeway plans and that the community members would then “go to their bosses the next day” having been “prompted by the best in the business”.<sup>54</sup> As MAD members honed their planning and design skills, they returned again and again to the UDCT and the City of Baltimore with nuanced requests for altered freeway plans. In some cases, the groups’ goals aligned—both sought to reduce congestion and air pollution—but MAD advocated for a more transparent planning process that put the community in the driver’s seat, so to speak. In a September 1968 meeting, MAD members derided professional elites they felt were trying to plan the city without citizen input: “Planning is determined by existing powers, rather than by the future needs to the community...Councilmen abdicated their responsibility to engineers...Reaching and influencing the engineers and technicians...counterbalancing vested interests with the people and mass transit vs. automobile interests”.<sup>55</sup>

After the defeat of the 3-A plan, the PAB held a closed-door meeting on October 18, 1968 where the 3-C alternative was approved. A week later, Baltimore Mayor D’Alesandro III announced that the USDOT office had endorsed the 3-C plan and that it would be moving forward. Backlash was immediate: David Barton, the Baltimore City Planning Commission chair said that government agencies weren’t properly consulted; City Council President William Schaefer publically stated he had preferred the 3-A plan; and citizen advocacy groups were outraged that the 3-C plan still contained the Inner Harbor bridge which had been widely decried.<sup>56</sup> Less than two months later, Mayor D’Alesandro III reversed his decision and adopted the 3-A plan instead. In protest, Werner resigned his post as chief of the IDBC, the National Park Service publically

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<sup>53</sup> Massard-Guilbaud, Geneviève, and Stephen Mosley, eds. *Common Ground: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Keidel. “An expressway bridges a gulf between people”. *The Baltimore Sun*; UDCA, “Baltimore’s Interstate Expressway Newsletter”; Axelrod to Asato. (1969, March 13).

<sup>55</sup> MAD meeting minutes, September 16, 1986

<sup>56</sup> Wong, Sidney. “Architects and Planners in the Middle of a Road War The Urban Design Concept Team in Baltimore, 1966–71.” *Journal of Planning History* 12, no. 2 (2013): 179-202.

opposed the Fort McHenry crossing, and Locust Point residents formed the Southeastern Council Against the Road (SCAR).<sup>57</sup> In its final rendition, the 3-A plan created a freeway bypass around the central business district and spared Baltimore's downtown from being bisected.

### **Harlem Park's Urban Renewal: Broken Promises and Inner Block Parks**

The same could not be said of Harlem Park. Despite extensive community organizing and public resistance, the 3-A plan sanctioned the development of the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. During the public debates of 1968, residents of Harlem Park had released a position paper on the corridor in which they stated, "This road...will destroy a black middle-income community and bisect other communities. It will destroy historic sites; remove schools; greatly reduce community and commercial facilities; and has and will have a degrading effect [on] neighborhoods adjacent to the highway. The highway will...cause the relocation of thousands of people who cannot find decent, safe and healthy houses in which to live".<sup>58</sup>

Called the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor because it was to run directly between the neighborhood's two primary streets, Franklin and Mulberry, the expressway would come to be called Interstate 170 by planners, then known as U.S. route 40 when the east-west expressway project failed, and now colloquially as the 'Highway to Nowhere', 'the pit', 'Interstate Zero' and 'the ditch'. RAM, the anti-highway organization founded by West Baltimore residents, was highly active in Harlem Park. In response to the continued citizen advocacy, the sympathetic UDCT proposed a plan of 'joint-development' along the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. In the joint-development plan, community centers, state-of-the-art schools, and parks were planned along the demolition corridor and on properties that had previously been condemned but not ultimately included in the highway route.

For nearly five years, UDCT planners and community members met regularly to co-design futuristic public facilities and green spaces. However, despite the projects good-intentions to bring community members into the design process, their plans were

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<sup>57</sup> Wong, Sidney. "Architects and Planners in the Middle of a Road War The Urban Design Concept Team in Baltimore, 1966–71." *Journal of Planning History* 12, no. 2 (2013): 179-202.

<sup>58</sup> Gioielli, Robert. "'We Must Destroy You to Save You' Highway Construction and the City as a Modern Commons." *Radical History Review* 2011, no. 109 (2011): 62-82.



ultimately thrown out because of concerns about air and noise pollution from the highway.<sup>59</sup> For a community that was already feeling alienated and powerless, the joint-development process would be more than another disappointment. It would come to represent a pattern of broken promises and reinforce feelings of isolation and distrust of institutionalized power and their agents.

Originally selected for urban renewal by the Federal Housing Administration and the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA), the Harlem Park neighborhood was meant to serve “as the guinea pig for an intensive joint effort to identify and remove the roadblocks to residential rehabilitation”.<sup>60</sup> In the early stages of urban renewal in Harlem Park—between 1955 and 1965—property owners received eight million dollars in funding to rehabilitate homes; at the same time, joint spending efforts by Federal programs and the City of Baltimore resulted in paved roads, new street lights, more than 900 street trees, and renovations to two local schools.<sup>61</sup>



**Figure 13: Harlem Park residents attending a street tree planting, 1959.**

*Image: City of Baltimore*

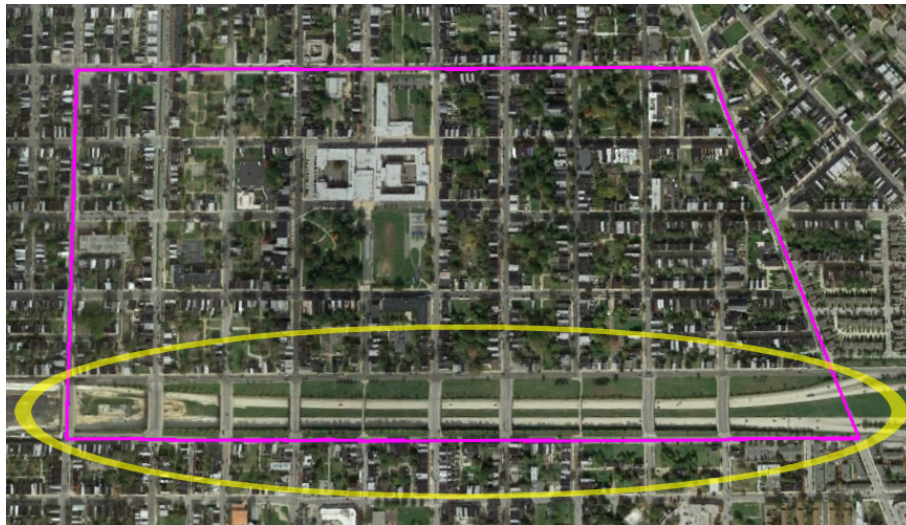
<sup>59</sup> Gioielli, Robert. ““We Must Destroy You to Save You” Highway Construction and the City as a Modern Commons.” *Radical History Review* 2011, no. 109 (2011): 62-82.

<sup>60</sup> “Residential Rehabilitation in the Harlem Park Area, Baltimore, Maryland”. *Federal Housing Administration*. University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, 321 Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Authority collection, series X, box 6, folder “Harlem Park Neighborhood Council” (1962).

<sup>61</sup> Giguere, Andrew. “...and never the twain shall meet”: Baltimore’s east-west expressway and the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere”. College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University. (2009, June). [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws\\_etd/document/get/ohiou1243879048/inline](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/ohiou1243879048/inline).

The addition of attractive green spaces was originally a major selling point in convincing Harlem Park residents to support urban renewal designs for their neighborhood. Moses' 1944 freeway and renewal design included plans for fields and playgrounds along the expressway route, and a *Baltimore Evening Sun* article noted that a playground that consisted of “two sliding boards, a sand pit, four swings, water font and a shelter...reached by clambering up gravel and mud banks” would be replaced with “softball and baseball fields on the land not required for the expressway proper”.<sup>62</sup>

The green spaces included in UDCT's joint-development plan were of two types: a) permanent parks around schools, community centers, and in the center of blocks; and b) temporary, interim uses of demolished properties that may be included in expressway routes. While demolition in preparation for the construction of the expressway had begun in 1966 in Harlem Park, the construction of the roadway did not take place until 1972 leaving many properties vacant for more than five years. For example, from 1969 and 1972, a large segment of land along the southern edge of Harlem Park was left vacant and surrounded only by a chain-link fence. The Harlem Park Neighborhood Council appealed that the land be available for interim uses, in addition to being reserved for green space development after expressway construction. Today, the area is still visible from areal photographs as a large green space between the remaining houses in southern Harlem Park and the small section of completed expressway (see Fig. 14-16 below).



**Figure 14: Large tracts of green space on either side of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor.**

Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth

<sup>62</sup> “Expressway plan calls for improved play area”. *Baltimore Evening Sun*. Newspaper clipping. 1944, October 18. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Room, V.F.Streets-Balto-Franklin.





**Figure 15: Harlem Park resident crosses the large green space next to Franklin Mulberry Corridor, 2016.**  
*Image: Amber Collett*



**Figure 16: Large green space separating Franklin-Mulberry Corridor (left, sunken) and Harlem Park homes (right), 2016.**  
*Image: Amber Collett*

The tension between residents and the City of Baltimore over the use of Harlem Park land were clearly evident in a March 1969 meeting between residents of Harlem Park, MAD, and a Conceptual Review Committee chaired by Joseph Axelrod. During the meeting, residents requested playgrounds and open green space to be used for ball fields. Residents were angered that homes had been taken through eminent domain, but appeared to be demolished for no reason due to expressway route changes, and that the resulting green spaces were left unavailable for community use as either temporary or permanent recreational sites. However, a month later, in a correspondence between Joseph Axelrod and David Fisher, a member of Baltimore's PAB, Fisher notes that the design team should proceed with caution regarding the development of temporary-use park spaces as "the people in the area would be reluctant to give them up when the land was required for construction purposes".<sup>63</sup> In the same correspondence, Fisher goes on to say that the lots were provided with "temporary seeding," although that still might not make the areas "attractive or usable".<sup>64</sup>

In an effort to encourage more rapid development of green space during the expressway construction, MAD members established a community recreational council to plan and advocate for "increased recreational and cultural facilities for approximately 15,000 culturally, socially, and economically deprived people of the Rosemont-Franklin-Mulberry Corridor."<sup>65</sup> Despite their efforts, the interim green spaces did not materialize. Condemned but still standing homes began to deteriorate and vacant lots filled with garbage and debris from construction efforts. Charles Curtis, the president of the Harlem Park neighborhood council, voiced many of the residents' concerns saying: "Here in Harlem Park since 1956 these people have been under the gun. We spent over four and a half million dollars improving our homes. We are supposed to be an example for the whole country, urban renewal has. Then they come along, tear down all these houses. Now we are overcrowded, the rats are running us out because of this highway, because of this proposed highway... There are 18,000 of us who are getting pretty sick from all this

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<sup>63</sup> Fisher, David. "Interim use, Franklin-Mulberry Corridor." University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, MAD collection, series II, box 1, folder "Axelrod, Joseph M., 1968-1973." 1969, April 17.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> "MAD newsletter, Vol I. No. 11" May-June 1970. *The Movement Against Destruction*. University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Authority collection, series IIIA, box 1, folder "MAD Interstate Newsletter: 1969-1971; 1973."

devastation, which is one block from us... You can't even keep your street clean any more.”<sup>66</sup>

Similarly, during the Rosemont hearings, Rosemont resident Dallas Bartlett noted, “[The road] will only serve a segment of the population, suburbia, and the people passing through the city. It's major cost and upkeep will be borne by the very people most affected by it, the city dwellers. They have to give up homes, park lands, community services and many other things if this road becomes a reality.”<sup>67</sup> Hezekiah Morris, a member of the African American Western Community Improvement Association, had harsher words: “We believe that a road is an anathema, an eating disease penetrating through the city, taking neighborhood properties, graveyards, anything else in its way...and what do they leave behind? People without property, old folks that have homes and are too old to get no more because they ain't going to give you no more homes after you get so old, so what do you have left? They are on the Welfare, or out begging. It leaves behind destruction, rats and everything, and the world is turned upside down, people fighting against each other, separate.”<sup>68</sup>

Residents were desperate for alternative approaches to urban design in the wake of the expressway planning process. In one attempt, Harlem Park residents began working with the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC), a group that provided planning services to a variety of Baltimore neighborhoods. The plan created with NDC called for the “Franklin Mulberry Linear New Town” which included plans for mass transit, low-income housing, cultural attractions, parks, and recreational facilities.<sup>69</sup> In the end the plan would come to nothing and serve as yet another design and planning process that made large promises to Harlem Park residents without being able to follow through.

One aspect of the Harlem Park urban renewal plan that would move forward was the creation of 29 inner block parks in the 1960's. Intended to create additional green spaces and increase property values in Harlem Park, the inner block parks (IBPs) were located in the center of blocks, similar to a courtyard, to make the best use of existing

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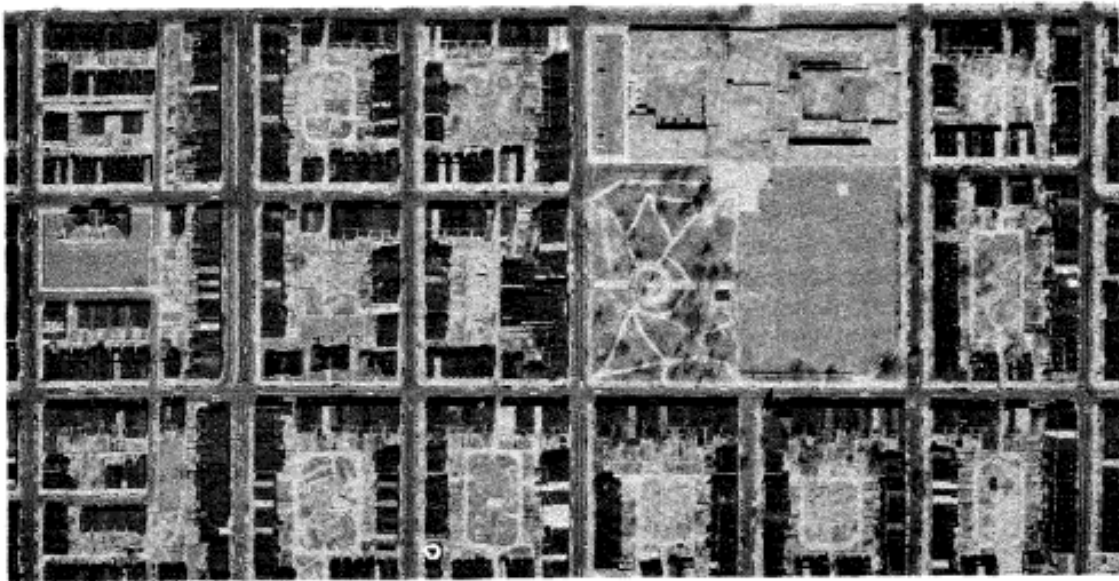
<sup>66</sup> Gioielli, Robert. ““We must destroy you to save you”: Highway construction and the city as a modern commons.” *Radical history review* no. 109 (2011): 62-82.

<sup>67</sup> Massard-Guilbaud, Geneviève, and Stephen Mosley, eds. *Common ground: Integrating the social and environmental in history*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> “Hearings on the Rosemont bypass.” Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Room, Baltimore, Maryland. 1969, August 9.

<sup>69</sup> Giguere, Andrew. “...and never the twain shall meet”: Baltimore's east-west expressway and the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere”. College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University. (2009, June). [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd\\_document/get/ohiou1243879048/inline](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd_document/get/ohiou1243879048/inline).

block structures and to create a dedicated space for recreational activities separate from traffic (at the time, children would frequently play in the streets at the front of homes).



**Figure 17: Aerial photograph of completed inner block parks, 1970s.**

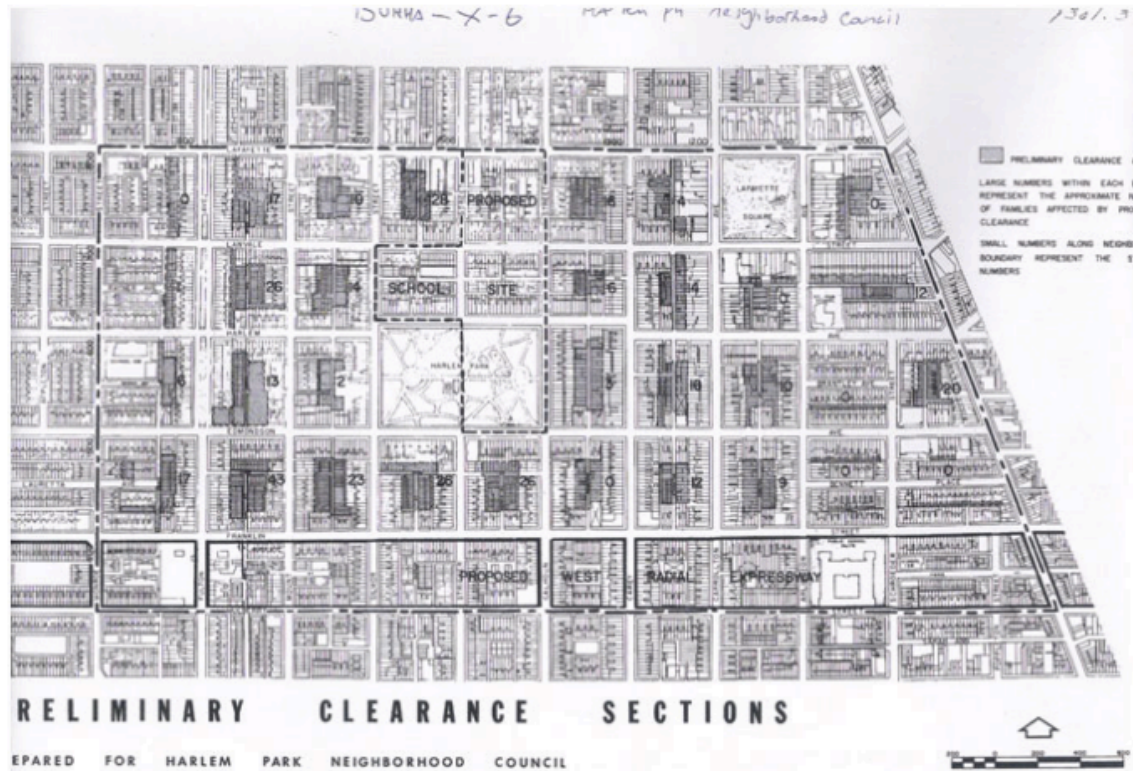
*Image: "Recreational use of space", Brower*

According to a report generated by the City of Baltimore and BURHA in 1965, the inner block parks were the “the most feasible way to give a little breathing space and a new spirit to an older row house neighborhood” by accomplishing four goals: a) “reduction of the density of population and intensity of land coverage”; b) “removal of interior streets or alleys which frequently were repositories for unsightly debris”; c) “provision of open space, attractively landscaped, which would beautify the neighborhood and at the same time create additional space for play or passive recreation”; and d) “provision of a dramatic symbol of renewal that would inspire residents to lift their sights to better living standards”.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> "A demonstration of rehabilitation Harlem Park Baltimore, MD". City of Baltimore, Board of Estimates, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency Commission. (1965, June). Retrieved from: The Special Collections Department – Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore.





**Figure 18: Bureau of Urban Renewal and Housing Authority planning document showing the proposed inner block parks in Harlem Park.**

*Image: Langsdale Library Special Collections, BURHA*

In accomplishing these goals, the two-story houses in the center of blocks were removed and the street-facing homes would have half of their backyards and any rear structures, such as garages or sheds, seized for park space. The 1965 BURHA report notes that the loss of “their rear yards was not appealing to some of the owners, especially the resident ones. Several of them bewailed the future reduction of yard space, while others regretted the loss of a favorite rose bush or fruit tree. They had no previous experience from which they could visualize the advantages of combining portions of many rear yards to form an inner park that could be enjoyed by the whole block.”<sup>71</sup> From the language of the 1965 BURHA report, it is clear the planners and designers had good intentions; they truly believed in the benefits of a shared inner park. They also believed that the benefit of those parks would justify the use of the controversial practices of residential demolition and eminent domain. In this Machiavellian approach, it is also apparent that the individuals who had the technical expertise and political support to

<sup>71</sup> "A demonstration of rehabilitation Harlem Park Baltimore, MD". City of Baltimore, Board of Estimates, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency Commission. (1965, June). Retrieved from: The Special Collections Department – Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore.

exact control felt that they were bringing enlightenment to the residents of Harlem Park which would counter the residents' lack of "previous experience" from which they "could visualize the advantages" of the City's plans. Resident concerns were depicted as inconsequential ("bewail[ing]... the loss of a favorite rose bush or fruit tree") and frivolous.

The 1965 BURHA report was the result of the Urban Renewal Committee's previous experiment in urban design in Harlem Park. In 1958, a single block of Harlem Park was selected as a demonstration block for which the Urban Renewal Committee (URC) could test the inner-block park design. They had two primary research questions: 1) "Would the interior park arouse the residents from their apathetic acceptance of slum surroundings"; and 2) "Would the park serve as sufficient motivation to assure that they [the residents] would maintain it in good condition?"<sup>72</sup>



Figure 19: Left—Inner block demolitions plan for showing planned demolition of 10 inner block houses and Houses in the interior of the block, now demolished

<sup>72</sup> "A demonstration of rehabilitation Harlem Park Baltimore, MD". City of Baltimore, Board of Estimates, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency Commission. (1965, June). Retrieved from: The Special Collections Department – Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore.



**private backyards. Right—A typical inner block home in Harlem Park.**

*Image: "A demonstration of rehabilitation...", 1965*

The URC's questions are illuminating; while we now may reject the idea that residents were apathetic—as their continued civic engagement in opposition to the renewal plan and expressway would prove—the questions asked by URC articulate the approach of the urban planning decision makers at the time. For example, the language of the research questions was unquestionably patronizing. In calling Harlem Park residents apathetic, the researchers and planners were communicating an implicit assumption that the residents were lacking either the skill to care for their properties, or the interest in doing so. This presupposition was a perpetuation of the entrenched cultural iconography of the 'lazy' black American (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Maddox & Gray, 2002). By using the urban re-greening process as motivation to encourage residents to behave in a desirable manner, the City of Baltimore was implicitly attempting to redefine social norms and expectations while firmly placing blame for deviant behavior on the residents themselves—rather than on the lack of readily available civic services such as sanitation, or the systematic and persistent economic devaluation of the neighborhood and therefore the people residing within its' boundaries.

Again, the use of green space and public space to influence behavior harkens back to the City Beautiful Movement in which the seizure of private lands for public good was used as an attempt to control civic engagement norms.<sup>73,74</sup> As the Urban Renewal Area's demonstration report noted, "residents of Harlem Park frequently complained that their neighborhood, like other blighted ones, did not get its fair share of the city's housekeeping services."<sup>75</sup> The plan therefore called for an increase in police protection, more frequent trash collection, street lighting, and more prompt street and alley maintenance. However, the plan did not provide any guidelines or suggestions for financing the equalization of municipal services, nor did it provide a roadmap for holding City agencies accountable. In 1969, Baltimore's Department of Recreation and Parks allocated \$15,000 for the yearly maintenance of each inner block park, but that amount

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<sup>73</sup> Peterson, Jon A. "The City Beautiful Movement: Forgotten origins and lost meanings." *Journal of urban history* 2, no. 4 (1976): 415.

<sup>74</sup> Szczygiel, Bonj. "'City Beautiful' revisited: an analysis of nineteenth-century civic improvement efforts." *Journal of urban history* 29, no. 2 (2003): 107-132.

<sup>75</sup> "A demonstration of rehabilitation Harlem Park Baltimore, MD". City of Baltimore, Board of Estimates, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency Commission. (1965, June). Retrieved from: The Special Collections Department – Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore.

was only half of what they felt was actually necessary to adequately maintain the spaces.<sup>76</sup>

Prior to construction, a full-time Community Organization Advisor was hired by the City of Baltimore to go house-by-house through the demonstration block and talk with residents. The staff member's role was to "explain the program and enlist cooperation", but they reported being met with a "prevailing attitude [of] distrust".<sup>77</sup> By this time, the interactions between Harlem Park residents and the City of Baltimore had become a relationship defined by regulatory action. Harlem Park residents had been in active opposition of the east-west expressway plan for more than ten years, homes were condemned through a process of extensive code enforcement, and families relocated into an already overcrowded and restricted housing market. Sifting through layers of bureaucracy, and the valuing of technical expertise over experiential expertise had left residents with little voice in Baltimore's urban planning process.

As residential control over private property continued to erode and promises of increased services were left unfulfilled, the culture of distrust would deepen into intense parochialism on both sides. Harlem Park residents began to regard City officials and representatives as outsiders; as one resident I spoke with noted, "Anything that's not born here, raised here, lives here is invasive."<sup>78</sup> In this sentiment, outsiders are dangerous and a direct threat; protecting your neighborhood becomes a fight against "invasive" people who are outsider, phenotypically white, and exerting control. At the same time, City officials remained entrenched in their belief that residents did not possess the 'right' kind of knowledge, or the technical expertise, to know what was best for their own community. The skills brought by engineers, designers, architects, and city planners to address the technical problems of blight were valued far more than the resident voices raised in opposition to blight management tactics. This knowledge hierarchy was made possible by the rendering of all problems facing the community and neighborhood as technical, and therefore manageable only through expert application of skills.

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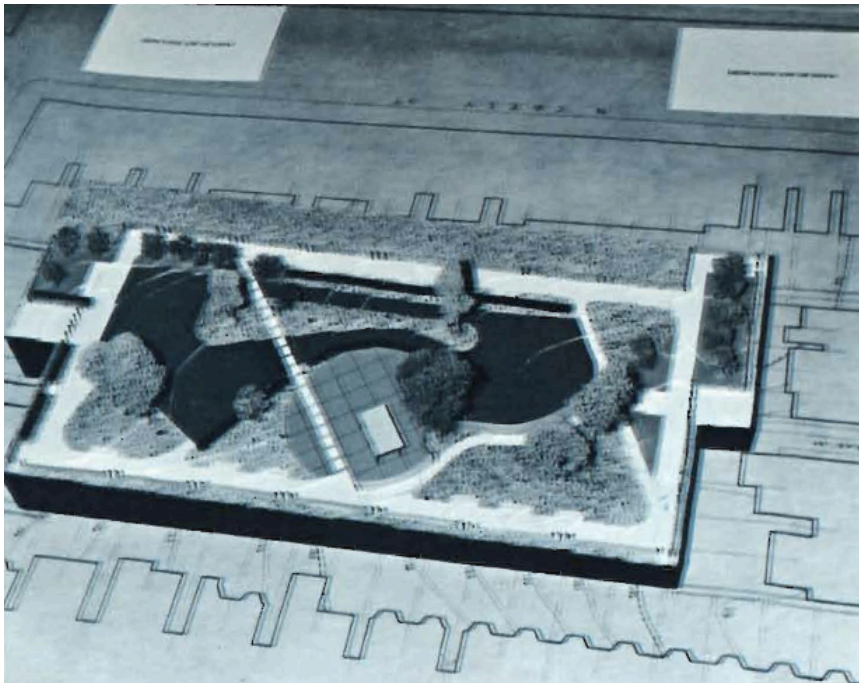
<sup>76</sup> Brower, Sidney. "Recreational uses of space: An inner city case study." *Social ecology* 3 (1975): 153-166.

<sup>77</sup> "A demonstration of rehabilitation Harlem Park Baltimore, MD". City of Baltimore, Board of Estimates, Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency Commission. Retrieved from: The Special Collections Department – Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore. (1965, June).

<sup>78</sup> Participant 20 in discussion with the author, June 7, 2016.

### Designing Inner Block Parks

After the demonstration block project, the construction of 28 additional inner block parks commenced. The original design of the IBPs was constricted to two assumed uses: 1) passive enjoyment of the park space through sitting on park benches; 2) use of the park as play space by children.<sup>79</sup> To address these, and only these uses, the inner block parks were designed with playground equipment, paved walking paths, and large shade trees.



**Figure 20: An architect's model of a proposed inner block park.**

*Image: "A demonstration of rehabilitation...", 1965*

The City's requirement that planners and designers only consider recreational uses of the parks was done with the full knowledge that the spaces may be used for other, more illicit purposes. However, as the researcher Sidney Brower examines in his 1972 review of the inner block park plan, the decision was philosophical: "...to have adapted one's designs to the inadequacies of present-day society would have been to deny a responsibility to build for future, less troubled generations. Non-recreational behaviors, it was argued, were violations of a social contract and were therefore a concern for sociologists and community organizers rather than for park designers".<sup>80</sup> The IBP designers were also forbidden from making recommendations for use of space outside of

<sup>79</sup> Brower, Sidney. "Recreational uses of space: An inner city case study." *Social ecology* 3 (1975): 153-166. Quote p. 156.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

the park itself; if Harlem Park residents requested sitting areas, or playground areas, they had to be contained within the park as separate and distinct from the public street context surrounding them. The parks could only be accessed from the main streets via alleys used by sanitation services. Otherwise, they were completely surrounded by row houses and nearly invisible to individuals walking on sidewalks or in the street, or to people sitting on front stoops.



**Figure 21: Three-story row houses blocking view of an IBP from the street, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett*



**Figure 22: Entrances to IBPs in Harlem Park, 2016.**

*Images: Amber Collett*

Despite good intentions, theoretical design can lead to bad outcomes when it ignores the broader context of a neighborhood and a community. Cultural assumptions, which broadly encapsulate the values, beliefs, and practices of a social group, have both implicitly and explicitly shaped the policies and public works projects implemented in Harlem Park. Tellingly in Baltimore, it was often the white, politically empowered individuals within the city planning and design departments, the architects and engineers in charge of creating public works processes, and the policymakers themselves that shifted their cultural assumptions and understanding of what a city environment and community should look and feel like on top of the cultural understandings, needs, and desires of the residents within low-income, high-poverty, predominantly black American communities.

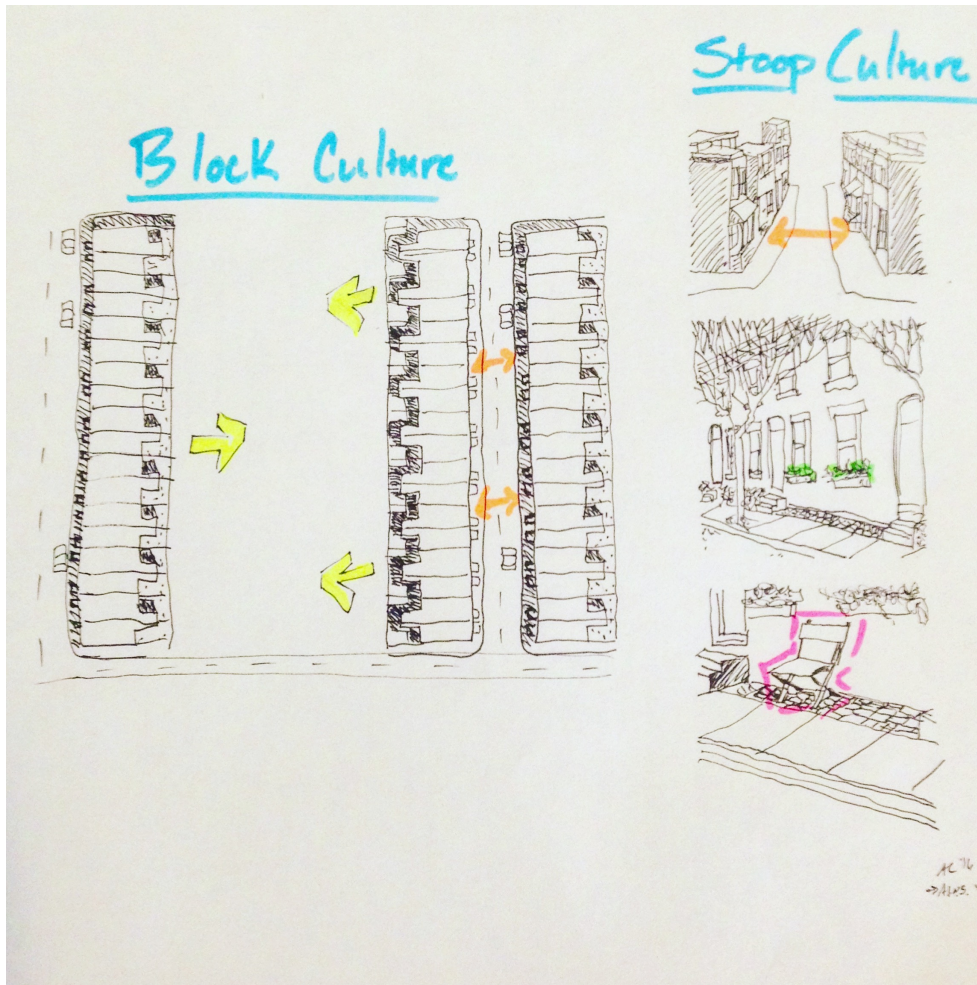
The inner block parks, while an attempt to respond to resident requests for usable green spaces, were ultimately doomed to fail. From the start, the parks required the demolitions and relocation of community members. One long-term Harlem Park resident remembered, “In the back...there were houses back there. A bar back there. On Sunday, they came in and tear down the houses. Tear down the bar...[the people were] moved up and moved out...I couldn’t do it anymore. I just want to live my life.”<sup>81</sup>

In a shocking lack of cultural reflexivity, the design of the IBPs failed to take into account the stoop culture of Baltimore urban streets. Stoop culture is defined by strong street-by-street and neighbor-to-neighbor social ties, as opposed to block-by-block social ties which dominate white, middle-class, suburban neighborhoods—the type of neighborhood from which many of the designers themselves originated. In stoop-culture streetscapes, home improvements are oriented towards the front of homes (i.e., window boxes) and social interactions primarily occur at the front of homes (*see Fig. 23 below*). Social relationships are developed between neighbors next to each other, or across the street, rather than as a block. In block street-scape culture, neighborhood affiliations are typically oriented around shared back-yards.

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<sup>81</sup> Participant 62 in discussion with the author, June 7, 2016.





**Figure 23: Orientation diagrams of block-by-block and stoop (street-by-street) cultures.**  
 Image: Amber Collett, as inspired by Ann Winston Spirn

There is extensive literature that examines the development of community social structures and orientations (Anderson, 1990; Liebow, 1967; Suttles, 1970; Whyte, 1943). In many low-income communities, the orientation is towards informal or chance meetings for which street-front spaces are more suitable than back-yard spaces, which are the preferred in middle-income and higher-income communities.<sup>82</sup> By creating inner-block spaces, designers inadvertently created no-mans-lands between four, usually distinct, social territories.

Territorial ownership over space—and the corresponding rectitude to enforce norms of behavior—was also street-oriented in Harlem Park. During urban renewal, Harlem Park was facing the effects of deindustrialization, poverty, and overcrowding leading to petty and sometimes violent crime against community members. Streetscapes

<sup>82</sup> Brower, Sidney. "Recreational uses of space: An inner city case study." *Social ecology* 3 (1975): 153-166.

were more visible and more likely to be full of witnesses or community elders. Residents self-policed through the enforcement of social norms, which manifested in clean stoops, window decorations, street-side seating on sidewalks, and by being physically present. Unfamiliar visitors could be questioned more safely on the streets; in contrast, parks were areas open to all people, at all times, where the sounds of fighting could not be distinguished as easily from sounds of playing. Residents became unsure of their ability to enforce social norms of acceptable, civic behavior within the park spaces.



**Figure 24: Harlem Park residents socializing at the front of row houses, circa 1960's.**  
*Image: "Recreational use of space...", Brower*

Structurally, the remaining street-facing row houses that lined the IBPs had few windows looking out over the courtyard-like parks. As discussed earlier, the street-facing, three-story row houses originally housed the neighborhood's middle-class residents, while the inner block buildings were reserved as the homes of servants and low-income residents. To maintain the decorum of the day, the street-facing row homes were constructed without windows facing the interior of blocks. After the construction of the IBPs, the lack of courtyard facing windows and the 'eyes-on-the-street' they would have afforded meant the park spaces were relatively unsupervised.

Given these conditions, rather than play exclusively in the IBPs, children in Harlem Park played in the streets, in alleyways, on front stoops, and on sidewalks; that the parks had been purposefully designed to be distinct spaces separate from the vibrant



street culture of the community would mean the parks would be used well below their capacity and not for intended purposes.<sup>83</sup>

Combined with the lack of social ownership Harlem Park residents felt towards the new green spaces, and the corresponding lack of community policing that would result, the parks became havens for illicit activities including prostitution, drug trading, public drinking, and trash dumping—activities that persist in many of the parks today.



**Figure 25: Trash dumping in dilapidated inner block park, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

### **Effects and Outcomes**

Decisively, the UDCT would be disbanded in 1971 having created dozens of environmental impact statements and design reports, but with many of the projects unfinished. In 1972, Baltimore's Mayor William Donald Schaefer (D) proclaimed that finishing the highway would be a major goal of his administration. He had been City Council President during the Rosemont hearings and had heard both residents' frustrations with inaction and city officials' accounts of ongoing project costs. In a *Baltimore Sun* article, Schaefer was quoted as stating he was "not going to let that

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<sup>83</sup> Brower, Sidney. "Recreational uses of space: An inner city case study." *Social ecology* 3 (1975): 153-166.

[*Franklin-Mulberry*] land sit there”.<sup>84</sup> The article went on to note that for the Rosemont neighborhood—with similar conditions in Harlem Park— that “the neighborhood deteriorated, the city bought \$5 million worth of homes—and then the route of I-170 was changed to a different location. Rehabilitating Rosemont homes costs another \$5 million. Schaefer said he will not make a similar mistake of indecision during his remaining three and a half years in the mayoralty.”<sup>85</sup>

In response, MAD brought suit against the 3-A plan claiming that an environmental impact statement had not been properly conducted. The suit would go on for more several years but would ultimately fail to suspend or prevent the construction of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. By 1977, MAD was nonfunctional. Despite the group’s failure to prevent expressway construction throughout Baltimore, they were able to delay construction and provide time for grassroots mobilization.

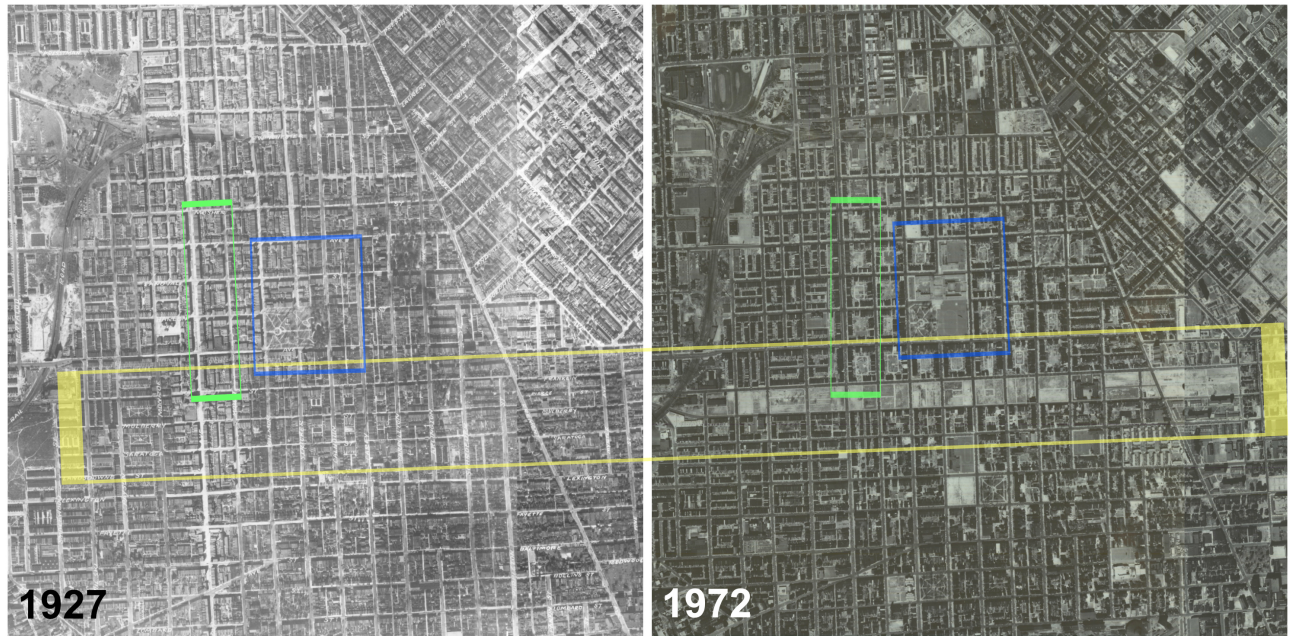
At the federal level, the Federal Urban Redevelopment Program was abandoned in 1974 to be replaced with the Community Development Block Grant program and the Urban Development Action Grant program. The 1973 oil crisis would place highway expansion efforts under additional scrutiny, and as the country struggled with tightened purse strings, many projects were abandoned or only partially completed. In Baltimore, the east-west expressway was left half-finished, with I-170 in Harlem Park being integrated into the Highway 40 route. The ‘Highway to Nowhere’ was left as a 400-ft sunken highway along the southern edge of the neighborhood while the promised additional infrastructure including increased mass transit—primarily through a light-rail line—never materialized. Two projects did proceed: Lafayette Square Center, a community services center, opened in 1974, and in 1978 the N.M. Carroll Manor was built to provide affordable senior housing. However, the Harlem Theater, once a community institution and gathering spot, was closed in the mid-1970’s, and the Sellers Mansion, one of the few remaining historic manor homes around Lafayette Square Park, fell into disrepair.

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<sup>84</sup> “Schaefer firm on x-way.” *The Baltimore Sun*. University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library, MAD collection, series VIII, box 1, folder “Schaefer, William D.” 1972, June 9.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.





**Figure 26: Aerial photographs of Harlem Park from 1927 and 1972 showing impacts of urban renewal projects: Highway to Nowhere (yellow), Harlem Park Elementary (blue), and inner block parks (green).**

*Image: Amber Collett/City of Baltimore*

Ultimately, the stakeholders involved in Harlem Park's urban renewal plan and implementation were seeking different outcomes. While all believed they were seeking wellbeing, their approaches varied dramatically based on their implicit goals. Business interests believed that urban renewal would boost property values and increase wealth throughout Baltimore. Elected officials believed urban renewal would increase tax revenues affording them the means to govern more effectively. Social welfare leaders and religious institutions hoped to increase the wellbeing of residents through better living conditions, and Harlem Park residents sought the power, respect, and rectitude to control the conditions in their own neighborhood.

Nationwide, the legacy of urban renewal would become one of disassociation. Black Americans, who bore the disproportional effects of urban renewal projects, were once again told, and shown, that decision-makers may not take seriously their concerns or interests. The activism of RAM and MAD had started as opposition to the very real, physical destruction and reconstruction of Baltimore neighborhoods, but it would evolve into an ideological and governance fight as well; what was being debated was the role of residents in planning projects, but what was at stake was the ongoing relationship between a city and her people.

# 2

## HARLEM PARK TODAY: PEOPLE IN CONTEXT

### **Deindustrialization, Drugs, and Demolitions**

Between 1970 and 1995, Baltimore lost another 55,000 manufacturing jobs.<sup>86</sup> The economic destruction in the wake of mass deindustrialization and an increasingly global economy would only further destabilize black families, and therefore whole communities. Being forced to compete for scarce economic resources was a lose-lose proposition for many black Baltimoreans. Already their housing market had been restricted through economic sanctions in the form of redlining, and an undercurrent of structural racism continued to limit and segregate housing options, job opportunities, and educational attainment. Distrust between Harlem Park residents and city officials continued to fester, and many of the older residents were left embittered by their experiences opposing urban renewal practices and attempting to advocate for increases in municipal services. One life-long Harlem Park resident I spoke with lamented, “They [the City] are so conniving that you, they deceive you greatly by being nice. You know? You think they’re nice! But they’re not—they’re, what’s that word? Nice-nasty? They are! Really! I don’t trust ‘em.”<sup>87</sup>

To frame the situation within Lasswell’s value categorizations, black American residents in Harlem Park were suffering from extreme deprivations of wealth, rectitude, respect, power, and wellbeing while also facing limitations on how they were able to seek and express enlightenment (only some forms of knowledge were valued, in this case the technical over the experiential), skill (menial jobs were acquirable, but not necessarily ones that left a participant feeling valued), and affection (communities were repeatedly subjected to relocation and demolition projects, limiting their ability to develop and maintain affection for the people and spaces around them).

Limited in their participation in the broader culture that pinned the American dream as one of accumulation—of wealth, property, status symbols, and power—a street-

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<sup>86</sup> Gioielli, Robert. “We must destroy you to save you: Highway construction and the city as a modern commons.” *Radical history review* 2011, no. 109 (2011): 62-82.

<sup>87</sup> Participant 70 in discussion with author, July 6, 2016.

oriented subculture developed in low-income black American communities. In this short review, I cannot do justice to the nuances that exist within the social order of many black American, low-income, urban communities, but sociologist Elijah Anderson summarized two main categories of residents as “decent” and “street-oriented”<sup>88</sup>, or traditional and inverted:

*The resulting labels are used by residents of inner-city communities to characterize themselves and one another...most residents are decent or are trying to be...they share many of the middle-class values of the wider white society...At the extreme of the street-oriented group are those who make up the criminal element. People in this class are profound casualties of the social and economic system...they tend to lack not only a decent education—though some are highly intelligent—but also an outlook that would allow them to see far beyond their immediate circumstances...they model themselves after successful local drug dealers and rap artists...In their view, policemen, public officials, and corporate heads are unworthy of respect and hold little moral authority. Highly alienated and embittered, they exude generalized contempt for the wider scheme of things and for a system they are sure has nothing but contempt for them.*<sup>89</sup>

The resulting disenfranchisement from wider society entrenches an ‘us vs. them’ mentality that simultaneously rejects and villainizes traditional approaches to gaining value affordances, while increasing the desire to accumulate values of respect and wealth. Wealth then becomes an avenue through which a person demands respect, as denoted by physical status symbols such as cars, clothing, or jewelry. With respect as the main value being sought while simultaneously unmoored from more traditional pathways of accumulating respect (i.e., civic service or engagement), many people turn to the underground economy—especially the drug trade—to gain material wealth. Correspondingly, violence becomes the primary tactic to enforce or demand behaviors of respect as well as territories for drug distribution. When I spoke with residents of Harlem Park about the rates of violence in their neighborhood, many of them attributed it to the drug trade. Their lived experiences of violence are a direct result of the generational shift from traditional expressions of respect to attempts to gain or maintain inverted respect:

*I’ll say this: The crime in Baltimore is related to crime related things. Drug activity. Gang violence And I’m not saying there isn’t random crime, because*

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<sup>88</sup> While I agree with Anderson’s distinction, I find the term “decent” problematic. It implicitly reduces the street-oriented individuals to being categorically non-decent. I prefer the terms “traditional” and “inverted”.

<sup>89</sup> Anderson, Elijah. *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*. WW Norton & Company, 1999.

*there is random crime. But what I'm saying is that most of the murders that happen in this city are either drug or gang related... You've got this, and I don't, so guess what, you're gonna catch it.*<sup>90</sup>

*I came home one day and there was a young man sitting on my stoop. And I said to him, you know, it's ok for you to sit on my stoop. But I don't support what you're doing here [selling drugs]. So, with respect, if you're going to keep doing that, don't sit on my stoop because I can't support it. And he didn't come back. It was really respectful...but it's all about having respect for each other.*<sup>91</sup>

*It [Harlem Park] was a lot of love then [in the 1980's]. It was a beautiful place...and then the kids got old. The area changed. There's no respect. No respect [for civility]. I can't blame it on one thing. We all had a role to play. We had houses. People would shovel snow for each other. The parks were nice. It was a beautiful place, this neighborhood.*<sup>92</sup>

*It's undisciplined is what it is. It's just disrespectful....that's why you see a lot of the things [violence] going on. Bullying, fighting, and all of that. There's just no respect. That's what it is.*<sup>93</sup>

For Harlem Park, the crack epidemic of the 1980's and early 1990's would have devastating impacts on the community and neighborhood.<sup>94</sup> In its wake, drug addiction exacerbates a variety of ills such as death, homelessness, teenage pregnancy, violence, and incarceration. During those same years in Harlem Park, housing vacancy rates skyrocketed due to foreclosure, infrastructure divestment, and the movement of the black middle-class to suburbs and surrounding neighborhoods seen as more desirable.

To contend with disintegrating buildings, additional housing demolitions programs were created during the 1990's, which dramatically altered the viewscape of the neighborhood and further reduced residential housing options. This phenomenon created "missing teeth" streetscapes, where the typology of the tall, slender row house remained, but buildings became isolated or gaps (vacant lots) developed within rows of houses.<sup>95</sup> This can be particularly problematic as center-row houses are designed to have buildings on either side to structurally support them. When one is demolished, or left to collapse, it threatens the structural stability of the houses next to it as well. After a center-

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<sup>90</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with author, July 22, 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Participant 57 in discussion with author, July 19, 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Participant 18 in discussion with author, June 7, 2016.

<sup>93</sup> Participant 55 in discussion with author, June 7, 2016.

<sup>94</sup> Agar, Michael. "The story of crack: Towards a theory of illicit drug trends." *Addiction Research & Theory* 11, no. 1 (2003): 3-29.

<sup>95</sup> Whiston Spirn, Ann. "Vacant Land: A resource for reshaping urban neighborhoods". *West Philadelphia Landscape Plan*. University of Pennsylvania. (1991) [http://web.mit.edu/spirn/www/newfront/book/pdf/vacant\\_land.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/spirn/www/newfront/book/pdf/vacant_land.pdf).



row house is demolished, its neighbor's external wall needs to be reinforced to prevent damage to the remaining houses in the row. If the new external wall is not reinforced, that remaining house too will fail in time (*see Fig. 28 below*).



**Figure 27: Missing and collapsing row houses in Harlem Park – the “missing teeth” streetscape.**  
*Images: Amber Collett*





**Figure 28: Occupied row house incurring damage because of destabilized wall from demolition of neighboring house, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

In this scenario, blight only begets more blight. However, reinforcing walls is an expensive task, costing nearly as much as the demolition itself. I spoke with a demolitions expert within the City of Baltimore who stated, “It costs \$13,000 to demolish a house. And wall support is another \$13,000. Whole block demolition is much more cost effective.”<sup>96</sup> Whole block demolition, which is far more controversial from the perspective of the residents as it usually requires relocation, has recently become the City’s preferred method of building acquisition and blight removal.

Currently, the City of Baltimore only reinforces a wall post-demolition if the remaining adjacent building is considered occupied. However, on-the-ground conditions with regards to occupancy change rapidly. Additionally, the bureaucracy of removing a vacancy notice on a house can be problematic for residents. One resident I spoke with is a private developer, but was not informed when she purchased a house in Harlem Park that it had an existing vacancy notice on it. Only after being served several fines and attending meetings with City representatives was she able to have the vacancy notice removed—

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<sup>96</sup> Participant 32 in discussion with author, June 2, 2016.

after someone had been living in the house for more than two years. Notably, though the owners have acquired an occupancy permit for the house, the GIS data from the City of Baltimore continues to list the property as vacant.

In other cases, an occupied home may be next to a home that is structurally unsound but not yet collapsed. Throughout that process of collapse, the structurally viable home is also threatened. One young homeowner in Harlem Park I spoke with expressed deep frustration with the management of structurally unsound properties saying, “The building next to me for eight years has been without a roof. For eight years, I’ve had to watch my house slowly bow out. For eight years, I’ve had to watch the amount of money I will have to put into my house to repair it because the City simply will not put a few thousand dollars of their money into helping their residents out... Yeah, that’s a slap in the face.”<sup>97</sup>

In this scenario, a resident’s only recourse is to contact the City and register their complaint. Given the sheer volume of blighted buildings in Baltimore, it has become unlikely the City will be able to respond in a timely manner, leaving a resident feeling more alienated from the official governance process. Even when the City is able to respond, it can take 18 months to prepare a property for demolition.

The City, for their part, has had their hands tied by lack of funding which leaves tremendous gaps in the budget required to manage demolitions. There are three types of demolitions that take place in Baltimore:

1. Emergency Demolitions: These demolitions require no legal process as the property is immediately condemned as a public safety threat. Typically, emergency demolitions account for approximately 20 demolitions each year. In 2016, the City had already managed close to 100.<sup>98</sup> These buildings are not viable for rehabilitation, and emergency demolitions are critical to maintain the safety of residents and residential areas. However, because of time and budget restraints, not all buildings that pose a threat are demolished soon enough. In March 2016, Thomas Lemmon, a 69-year old retired truck driver and West Baltimore resident, was crushed to death when a vacant row house

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<sup>97</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with the author, July 22, 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Participant 32 in discussion with the author, June 2, 2016.

collapsed onto the car he was sitting in on the 900 block of North Payson Street in Sandtown-Winchester.<sup>99</sup>

2. **Constituent Services Demolitions:** This type of demolitions result from constituent driven requests for demolition, usually as reported through a City Council member or the public assistance number, 311. Properties must go through the legal due process, in which the City determines ownership and can seek receivership. Through receivership, the City is able to hold the property—in case its value should increase—or sell it ‘as is’. Receivership also gives the City the ability to pursue demolition on the property. However, the City can only seek receivership on vacant buildings, not on vacant lots. Receivership is, in essence, another form of legalized land taking similar to eminent domain. Constituent services demolitions account for very few of the City of Baltimore demolitions each year.
3. **Strategic Demolitions:** In the strategic demolitions process, specific properties are targeted for demolition to best support development or greening plans. In an ideal scenario, the City solicits information from and works with a variety of stakeholders to determine locations for strategic demolitions. For example, the demolitions expert I spoke with noted that working with “the community, police, and schools” is top of her mind, and the goals of strategic demolition in Baltimore are to “make the community safer by reducing blight and crime,” and to “increase investment” by providing strategic demolition where investment is already taking place, in which case, “whole block demolition is preferred, and is more attractive to developers”.<sup>100</sup>

To make matters more acute, there are now more than 17,000 vacant notices in the City of Baltimore, but the actual number of vacant buildings and houses is likely much higher. In Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, the residential population continued to decline in the early 2000’s, from 17,496 in 2000 to 14,896 in 2014.<sup>101</sup> One resident I spoke with referred to Harlem Park a “ghost town” saying, “The whole house is gone! It

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<sup>99</sup> Prudente, Ttim. “When vacant house fell in West Baltimore, a retiree was crushed in his prized Cadillac”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2016, March 30).<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-cadillac-crushed-20160329-story.html>.

<sup>100</sup> Participant 32 in discussion with the author, June 2, 2016.

<sup>101</sup> “Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park”. Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance .(2014). [http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester\\_Harlem%20Park/](http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester_Harlem%20Park/).

don't look right. Ain't nobody around. Need more people, a better community.”<sup>102</sup>

Another noted that Harlem Park has “changed a lot in these them years. There wasn't an empty house in this block. Not one...And you see all that other housing be empty. What are they [the City] doing to help? You know? I mean, when I was younger, you'd have a clean block. You fix a block up. 20 years later, people were gone.”<sup>103</sup>

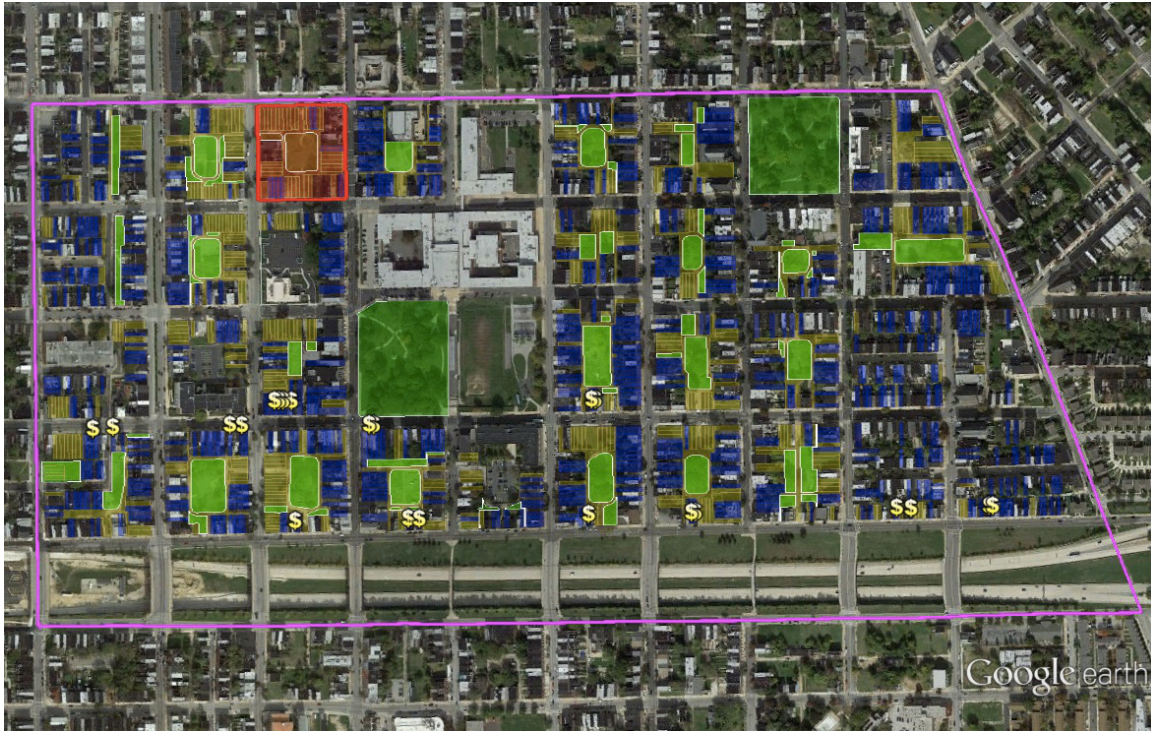
In 2011, the City of Baltimore and Mayor Rawlings-Blake (D) announced the Vacants to Values program which combines strategic demolition with property rehabilitation to “help raise property values, create community amenities, increase local tax revenue, and attract new residents and businesses”.<sup>104</sup> The initiative, which is active in Harlem Park, provides a variety of services including marketing of properties acquired through receivership, stronger code enforcement for areas with scattered vacants, home buying incentives, weatherization subsidies, and support for large-scale redevelopment in highly distressed areas (i.e., whole block demolition with an emphasis on attracting whole-block developers, typically through large, affordable or mixed-rate housing complexes). Only very seriously dilapidated buildings become part of the Vacants to Value program. Moreover, the housing market in a neighborhood determines if a house is rehabilitated or demolished, though all houses are competitively bid. Given the high cost of initial investment, a purchaser must be able to prove that they have the funds to rehabilitate a house. This has meant that it is primarily developers who have utilized the program, rather than interested individuals. In Harlem Park, there are currently 22 Vacant to Value properties along Edmondson Avenue and West Franklin Street, all in the southern half of the neighborhood. There is also an active site of whole-block demolitions through the Vacant to Value program located on the 800 block of West Lanvale Street (*see Fig. 29 below*).

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<sup>102</sup> Participant 65 in discussion with the author, June 7, 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Participant 62 in discussion with the author, June 7, 2016.

<sup>104</sup> “About Vacants to Values”. *City of Baltimore*. (2016). <http://www.vacantstovalue.org/About.aspx>



**Figure 29: Vacant to Value properties (\$ sign) and demolition (red) in Harlem Park, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

In 2014, the City released an additional \$7.5-10 million in dedicated for strategic demolitions throughout Baltimore. The ongoing stated goal of City funded and executed demolitions plans is to ensure that “vacant properties are being demolished, rehabilitated or redeveloped, making way for new housing and green space opportunities for families who want to live and work in Baltimore.”<sup>105</sup> In the case of Baltimore, the demolitions, urban re-greening, and redevelopment programs together support a process of land banking, or the practice of acquiring land as an investment. That land is then held for future use, namely development, while making few to no specific plans for its development.

Like many post-industrial cities, Baltimore has faced years of barely balanced budgets.<sup>106,107</sup> Determining the priority use for limited funds requires the City to engage with a diverse set of stakeholders, and to explicitly state goals and strategies for spending. However, even with local-level processes, state level decisions can supersede. In 2015, for example, a plan to realize the light rail line that was originally part of the urban

<sup>105</sup> “About Vacants to Values”. *City of Baltimore*. (2016). <http://www.vacantstovalue.org/About.aspx>

<sup>106</sup> Dresser, Michael. “O’Malley to close \$400 million budget shortfall”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2015, Jan. 6). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-omalley-budget-cuts-20150106-story.html>.

<sup>107</sup> The Baltimore Sun Editorial Board. “SRB: Don’t let a deficit go to waste”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2015, Nov. 15). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-baltimore-budget-20151115-story.html>.

renewal plans for West Baltimore, was stopped in its tracks with the election of a new Governor in Maryland. As stated earlier, one of the results of the 1960's UDCT joint-planning process was the integration of an east-west light rail line, called the Red Line, to be built along Fremont Avenue. When the renewal project ran out of funding, however, the light rail plan was abandoned. Residents of Harlem Park were now bounded in on the south by the sunken highway, and left with fewer transportation options that could connect them to more prosperous areas of the city, to jobs, and to basic services. Decades later, in 2002, neighborhood organizations banded together to form the West Baltimore Coalition. That group, and after a ten year trust-building and community dialogue process, submitted a request for technical assistance to Smart Growth America to take their request for an east-west light rail line to the Federal level.<sup>108</sup> This request reinitiated Red Line planning, and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) spent more than \$288 million on planning and development, which included revitalization efforts for communities along the corridor, and pledged another \$900 million in federal funding for construction of the light rail line.<sup>109,110</sup> In return, the State of Maryland committed \$1.235 billion to the project.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Belzer, D., Miller-Travis, V. & Preuss, I. "Suggested next steps as outcome of technical assistance". *Smart Growth America Technical Assistance Tool*. (2014, June 12).

<sup>109</sup> Mock, Brentin. "West Baltimore will get a \$700 million makeover – just not the one it needs". *City Lab*. (2016, Jan. 11). <http://www.citylab.com/commute/2016/01/west-baltimore-will-get-a-700-million-makeover-just-not-the-one-it-needs/423156/>.

<sup>110</sup> Schmitt, Angie. "Civil rights groups challenge Maryland Gov. Hogan's Red Line cancellation". *Streetsblog USA*. (2015, Dec. 21). <http://usa.streetsblog.org/2015/12/21/civil-rights-groups-challenge-maryland-gov-hogans-red-line-cancellation/>.

<sup>111</sup> Weigel, Brandon. "A look at the NAACP and ACLU's federal Red Line complaint". *City Paper*. (2015, Dec. 22). <http://www.citypaper.com/blogs/the-news-hole/bcpnews-a-look-at-the-naacp-and-aclu-s-federal-red-line-complaint-20151221-story.html>.





**Figure 30: Existing and proposed light-rail transit infrastructure in Baltimore region.**

Image: Opportunity Collaborative<sup>112</sup>

Just as the project seemed finally poised to break ground, Maryland elected Republican Governor Larry Hogan to office, who, as one of his first acts, vetoed the Red Line light rail project on the grounds that it was too costly and a “wasteful boondoggle [which] is not the best way to bring jobs and opportunity to the city.”<sup>113,114</sup> However, just a few weeks later, Governor Hogan redirected the same amount of state funding towards state-wide highway and interstate maintenance.<sup>115</sup>

In response, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. (NAACP LDF) filed a Title VI Civil Rights Act complaint in December 2015 against Governor Hogan’s administration stating, “The Red Line corridor is sixty percent African-American and contains forty-three separate Environmental Justice (EJ) areas. Unemployment rates in the neighborhoods along Edmonson Avenue are extremely high: 17.5 percent in 17.5 percent in Poppleton; 17.9 percent in Allendale; 22.7 percent in Edmondson Village and in Harlem Park/Sandtown-

<sup>112</sup> “Baltimore regional plan for sustainable development”. Opportunity Collaborative and Baltimore Metropolitan Council. (2015). Retrieved from: [http://www.opportunitycollaborative.org/assets/RPSD\\_Final\\_June\\_2015.pdf](http://www.opportunitycollaborative.org/assets/RPSD_Final_June_2015.pdf).

<sup>113</sup> Dresser, Michael & Luke Broadwater. “Hogan says no to Red Line, yes to Purple”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2015, June 25). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-md-hogan-transportation-20150624-story.html>.

<sup>114</sup> The Baltimore Sun Editorial Board. “Hogan goes off the tracks”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2015, June 25). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-light-rail-20150625-story.html>.

<sup>115</sup> Dresser, Michael. “NAACP, ACLU challenge Hogan administration over scrapping Red Line”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2015, Dec. 21). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-md-red-line-complaint-20151221-story.html>.



Winchester; and 24.1 percent in Greater Rosemont—compared to the city’s overall unemployment rate of 14.2 percent. Travel poses a barrier for jobseekers in these neighborhoods; less than two percent of jobs within the city of Baltimore, let alone the metropolitan region, are located in these communities. The regional job centers are located downtown, in Woodlawn, and in other outlying suburban areas, which are difficult to reach on the public bus routes which are currently the only available form of public transportation.”<sup>116</sup>

### **Lasting Impacts: Social Order & Civic Engagement**

Today, the complex interplay between historical trauma as experienced through urban renewal practices, high vacancy rates, and the demolition of housing has altered Harlem Park's social order. The degradation of social networks has stark implications for resident participation in political and civic processes—the processes by which the physical structure of the neighborhood is often determined.

Condemningly, urban renewal caused a profound shift in the political and social engagement of the black American community. Notably, “prior to urban renewal, urban African American communities were improving steadily in the number and effectiveness of their social and political institutions. After the displacement, the style of engagement was angrier and more individualistic. Instead of becoming stronger and more competent in politics, the communities became weaker and more heavily affected by negative forces, such as substance abuse and crime. The ethos of neighborliness faded. People remained helpful to their friends, fellow church members, and family, but withdrew from extending support to people whose only connection was that of geographic proximity, that is, they were neighbors.”<sup>117</sup>

This shift from public-to-individual is not only symptomatic of increased parochialism, but of trauma.<sup>118,119,120</sup> Harlem Park residents, and residents of many predominantly black American communities, became distanced and wary of civic

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<sup>116</sup> Complaint pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Baltimore Regional Initiative Developing genuine Equality, Inc., and Earl Andrews, Individually vs. State of Maryland, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Transit Administration, and Maryland State Highway Administration. (1964). [http://www.naacpldf.org/files/case\\_issue/Baltimore%20Red-Line-Complaint.pdf](http://www.naacpldf.org/files/case_issue/Baltimore%20Red-Line-Complaint.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Root shock: the consequences of African American dispossession." *Journal of Urban Health* 78, no. 1 (2001): 72-80. Quote p. 78.

<sup>118</sup> Paffenholz, Thania, and Christoph Spurr. "Civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding." *Social development papers: Conflict prevention and reconstruction* 36 (2006).

<sup>119</sup> Putnam, Robert D. "The prosperous community." *The American prospect* 4, no. 13 (1993): 35-42.

<sup>120</sup> Regehr, Cheryl, and Thomas Gutheil. "Apology, justice, and trauma recovery." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law online* 30, no. 3 (2002): 425-430.

engagement. A young resident I spoke with said, “People know [the problems] and the change still doesn’t happen. I don’t think that anything happens is by accident. The people in power make really huge mistakes. I think people genuinely don’t care about lower income civilians and the things they do on a day-to-day basis. People see money in the vacant homes. It’s not about the money going to the community, or helping the little boy that has to walk past.”<sup>121</sup>

The shift from egalitarian-centric to individual-centric engagement was only further compounded in the 1980’s as President Reagan, and more conservatively influenced Congress and state legislatures, further weakened low-income, high-poverty communities by advancing what Robert Bellah and colleagues termed the ‘first language of American life’, or individualism, as public policy.<sup>122</sup> By simultaneously drawing on and reinforcing dominate American cultural myths (i.e., the “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” mentality<sup>123</sup> and neoliberal economics as natural order<sup>124</sup>), our language of politics and political engagement shifted away from language centered around humanitarian and egalitarian values that emphasize interdependence, towards a language centered on values of freedom that emphasizes personal responsibility, self-determination, self-discipline, and limited government.<sup>125</sup>

Today, we see this linguistic and political shift play out in how individuals perceive blame within the framing of social problems. In the individualistic frame, social ills are the fault of laziness or degraded family structure. In contrast, the egalitarian frame places the fault in the lack of equitable services and opportunities. In other words, social ills are the result of structural barriers that create and often perpetuate vicious cycles such as poverty and violence.

In my conversations with Harlem Park residents and stakeholders, there was an apparent divide along socio-economic status with the middle-to-upper class individuals

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<sup>121</sup> Participant 5 in discussion with the author, July 25, 2016.

<sup>122</sup> Bellah, Robert N., Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. "Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life." *Journal of Leisure Research* 25, no. 1 (1993): 100.

<sup>123</sup> Howell, Jeremy, and Alan Ingham. "From social problem to personal issue: The language of lifestyle." *Cultural Studies* 15, no. 2 (2001): 326-351.

<sup>124</sup> Gray, Ian, and Geoffrey Lawrence. "Neoliberalism, individualism and prospects for regional renewal." *Rural Society* 11, no. 3 (2001): 283-298.

<sup>125</sup> Wallack, Lawrence, and Regina Lawrence. "Talking about public health: developing America's "second language"." *American Journal of Public Health* 95, no. 4 (2005): 567-570.

expressing dominate individualistic frames when asked how to address social ills, and the low-income individuals gravitating more towards community-centric frames:

Individualistic → *Why is the education system broken? Because there is a broken family structure. And with the family structure you're getting into a whole vicious cycle and that leads to those [low-income] neighborhoods...It starts at home. And it's part of that vicious cycle.*<sup>126</sup>

Egalitarian → *Everything is lesser. Even the stuff we get. If they opened up a Starbucks right now in Harlem Park, it would be lesser than any other Starbucks in the United States. I guarantee it...The Target that was in Mondawmin [a nearby predominantly low-income, black American community] had, oh my god, had rat feces all throughout the bread aisle. My mother went to pick up croutons, and the croutons fell out the bottom of the bag. We were trying to figure out how that happened so we look at the bottom of the bag and it's been bit open. Long story short, we go ask for a manager...the manager comes about 45 minutes later and tells my mom that he's aware of the problem. But, why are you still allowing product to be sold off of those counters if you're aware of the problem? Stuff like this would never go down in certain other neighborhoods. If Target had rat feces in Columbia, Maryland, it would make news [a wealthy town in Maryland]...but here, it's been an issue for months. Food and rats mixed together for months. And no one cares...we get used to lesser, so then they think we don't know any better...How is there a ghetto Target? How is that possible?*<sup>127</sup>

Within the public health field, there is an ongoing conversation about more clearly articulating a 'second language of American life', or one centered on egalitarian values, in response to the predominant first language of individualism. Wallack and Lawrence (2005) argue that because public health advocates lack an articulated language framing with which to express values that run counter to American individualism, they have difficulty overcoming the moral resonance of individualism. While they raise the point that public health is particularly prone to asking questions about societal structure in their analysis of population level health effects, I argue that the development of a language of interconnectedness is vital not only to the continued efforts of public health advocates, but any field attempting to advance human dignity. Moreover, the development of language framing is only the first step; words can only do so much in a world of action. Turning a language of interconnectedness and humanism into acts within our personal spheres and policy frameworks may be one of the only ways to begin to address the deep and persistent inequities in American society.

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<sup>126</sup> Participant 8 in discussion with the author, July 7, 2016.

<sup>127</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with the author, July 22, 2016.

### Current Trends: Biophysical & Health

In no uncertain terms, the use of public policies and practices to dictate the physical and environmental shape of West Baltimore have had lasting impacts on the wellbeing, vitality, and social structure of Harlem Park. Today, the technical—or physical—problems in Harlem Park are visible and the top of minds for both Harlem Park residents and City of Baltimore officials.

### Demographics

Before examining the physical condition of the Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park neighborhood, it is important to review current demographic information to better understand the standpoint and lived experiences of many residents in the area.

In 2014, from which the most recent census data available, 96.6 percent of Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park residents identify as black American.<sup>128</sup> 34.8 percent of households have children under the age of 18, 33.3 percent of Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park households live below the poverty line, and 52 percent of children in the area live below the poverty line.<sup>129</sup>

Indicator	Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park	Baltimore City
Percent of residents identifying as black Americans	96.6	63.8
Percent of households with children under the age of 18	34.8	28.4
Percent of children living below the poverty line	52.0	34.6
Percent of family households living below the poverty line	33.3	19.5

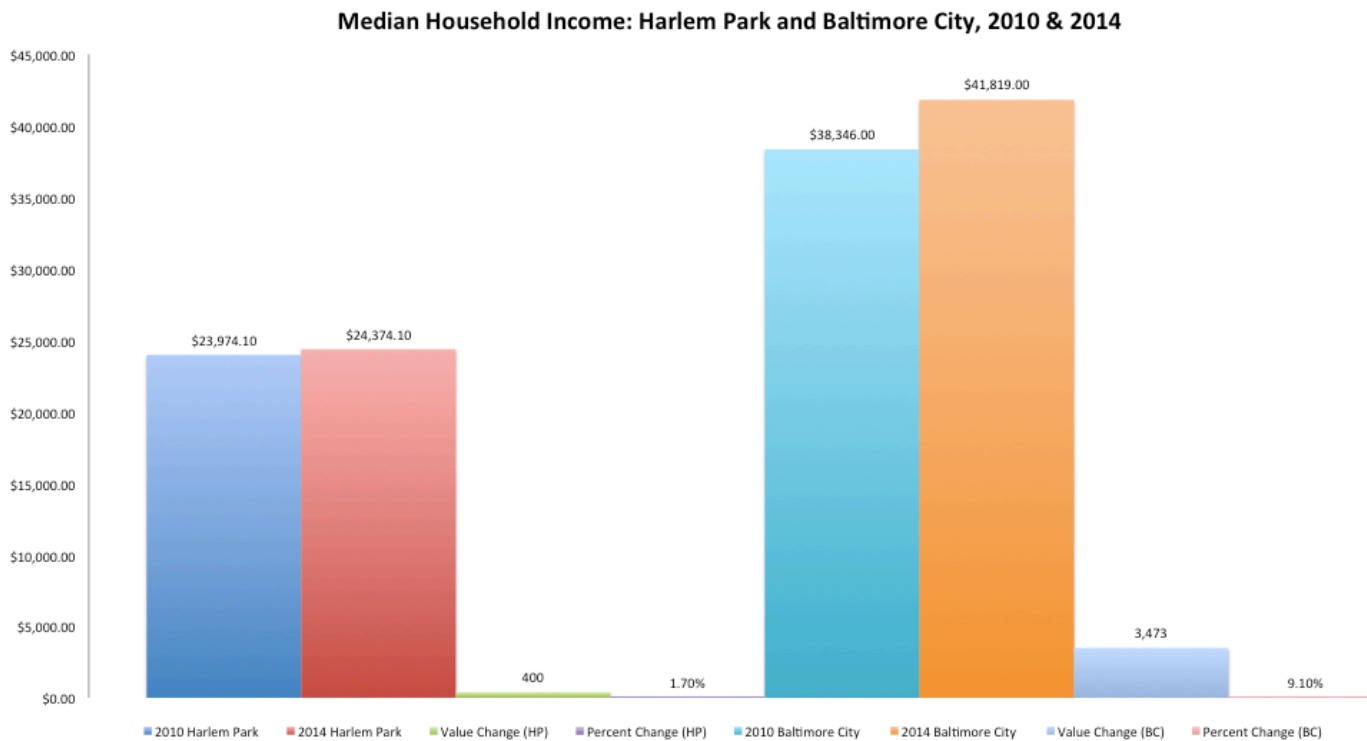
**Table 2: Demographics and income indicators, 2014.**

*Source: Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance*

<sup>128</sup> “Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park vital signs”. Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance. University of Baltimore, Jacob France Institute. (2014). [http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester\\_Harlem%20Park/](http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester_Harlem%20Park/).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

The median household income in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park for 2014 was \$24,374.10, compared to Baltimore City's median of \$41,819.<sup>130</sup> As can be seen in Fig. 31 below, median household income for both Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park and Baltimore City increased from 2010 to 2014, but Baltimore City's increased \$3,073 more (a 9.10 percent increase, as compared to Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park's of only 1.7 percent).<sup>131</sup>



**Figure 31: Median household income comparison.**

Source: Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance

### ***Built Environment: General***

The built environment of a neighborhood can significantly impact the health and wellbeing of community residents. In short, the built environment is the “humanitarian-made space in which people live, work, and recreate on a day-to-day basis”.<sup>132</sup> It includes buildings, transportation infrastructure, public green space (parks, streetscapes, gardens, etc.), water supply infrastructure, energy networks and infrastructure, and any additional

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Roof, Karen. "Public health: Seattle and King County's push for the built environment." *Journal of environmental health* 71, no. 1 (2008): 24.



human-constructed elements or structures that influence how we engage with the spaces that surround us.

The impact of the built environment on the wellbeing of Harlem Park residents is vital to review. One of the stated goals of urban re-greening projects is that they will increase the wellbeing of Harlem Park residents. To evaluate that claim, it is important to know the significant barriers Harlem Park residents face in achieving greater wellbeing—including health—and how current re-greening or community development and demolitions projects may impact existing health and wellbeing disparities.

Having already reviewed the physical and social history of Harlem Park, and the outcomes for residents, it is important to examine the structures existing in Harlem Park today that are influencing resident wellbeing. This is, in part, an articulation of social determinants of health. Social determinants of health, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) are the “conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life including economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems.”<sup>133</sup>

Unfortunately, the current built environment in Harlem Park poses significant barriers to health and wellbeing for residents due to the quality of and perceived safety of public spaces, the types of shops and commercial properties, the quality and affordability of housing, and access to transportation services (*see Fig. 32 below for common social determinates of health and Harlem Park’s ranking among 55 Baltimore neighborhoods with comparative health score*).

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<sup>133</sup> “Social Determinants of Health”. *World Health Organization*. (2016). [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/).

Social Determinants	Rank of 55 (1=Best)	Health Score
Kindergarten Readiness	34	●●
3rd Grade Reading	51	●
8th Grade Reading	39	●
Elementary School Absenteeism	14	●●●
Middle School Absenteeism	44	●
High School Absenteeism	40	●
Adults w/ High School or Less	52	●
Adults w/ Bachelor's or More	50	●
<b>Community Built Environment</b>		
Liquor Store Density	50	●
Tobacco Retail Density	54	●
<b>Community Social Environment</b>		
Juvenile Arrests Rate	47	●
Domestic Violence Rate	55	●
Non-Fatal Shooting Rate	46	●
Homicide Incidence Rate	50	●
<b>Housing</b>		
Lead Paint Violation Rate	50	●
Energy Cutoff Rate	54	●
Vacant Building Density	52	●
Vacant Lot Density	51	●
<b>Food Environment</b>		
Fast Food Density	1	●●●
Carryout Density	35	●●
Corner Store Density	49	●
Supermarket Proximity (Driving)	16	●●●
Supermarket Proximity (Bus)	8	●●●
Supermarket Proximity (Walking)	10	●●●

#### Health Score Key

Below Average (Least Healthy Third)	●
Average (Middle Third)	●●
Above Average (Healthiest Third)	●●●

Figure 32: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park neighborhood health rating.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. "Neighborhood Health Profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park". Baltimore City Health Department. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.

For example, alcohol store density in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park is 8.1 stores per 10,000 residents, compared to 4.6 stores per 10,000 residents in the whole of Baltimore City. Tobacco store density is just as striking, with 56.1 tobacco stores per 10,000 residents of Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, but only 21.8 tobacco stores per 10,000 residents of Baltimore City (*see Table 3, below*).<sup>135</sup> Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park ranks 54 of 55 Baltimore City neighborhoods for tobacco retail density, and 50 of 55 for liquor store density, with a ranking of 1 being optimal for health. The greater the liquor and tobacco store density, the easier it is to access and use products that are detrimental to individual and community health.

Indicator	Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park <sup>136</sup>	Baltimore City <sup>137</sup>
Alcohol store density	8.1	4.6
Tobacco store density	56.1	21.8
Fast food density	0	2.4
Corner store density	19.6	9

**Table 3: Built environment health indicators, per 10,000 residents/units, 2011.**

At first glance, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park compares favorably to the rest of Baltimore City with regards to density of fast food restaurants in both Fig. 32 and Table 3. However, this statistic can be misleading. Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park has experienced decades of economic disinvestment, and the lack of fast food restaurants is more emblematic of the lack of restaurant options overall, rather than a measure of health. Additionally, when comparing corner store density, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park had 19.6 corner stores per 10,000 residents in 2009, while Baltimore City had just nine.<sup>138</sup> While corner stores may increase access to some food items, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park is considered by the United States Department of Agriculture

<sup>135</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. "Neighborhood health profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park". *Baltimore City Health Department*. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Santo, Raychel, Anne Palmer, & Amanda Buczynski. "Researching the Baltimore food environment: Contributions from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health". *Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future*. (2015). [http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/\\_pdf/research/clf\\_reports/baltimore-food-environment-report2015.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/_pdf/research/clf_reports/baltimore-food-environment-report2015.pdf).

(USDA) to be a food desert because residents are unable to easily access fresh, affordable, and healthy foods.<sup>139</sup> Food dessert designations are another area of research where the unit of analysis and guidelines can vary significantly. For example, the USDA does not include corner stores as viable food markets, whereas some Baltimore City organizations do consider corner stores as places where residents can easily access food items. For this research, I prefer the USDA guidelines as few corner stores in low-income communities consistently stock fresh fruits and vegetables at affordable prices.

### ***Built Environment: Housing***

Perhaps one of the most visually apparent discrepancies in the built environment of Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park as compared to Baltimore City is vacant building density and vacant lot density. According to the Mayor's Office of Information Technology and the Baltimore City Housing Department, in 2009, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park had 2,411.5 vacant buildings per 10,000 housing units – compared to Baltimore City's rate of 567.2 per 10,000. That same year, vacant lot density in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park was 1,507.1 of 10,000 housing units, compared to 593.1 in Baltimore City (*see Table 4 below*). In other words, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park's vacant building density was more than four times that of Baltimore City, and the vacant lot density was just under three times that of the City as a whole.

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<sup>139</sup> "USDA: Food access research atlas". *United States Department of Agriculture*. (2015, March 11). <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>.

Indicator	Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park <sup>140</sup>	Baltimore City <sup>141</sup>
Vacant building density per 10,000 units <sup>142</sup>	2,411.5	567.2
Percentage of residential properties that are vacant and abandoned	35.0	8.1
Percentage of residential properties with housing violations (excluding vacants; 2010)	10.5	3.8
Vacant lot density	1,507.1	593.1
Lead paint violations	39.8	11.8
Percentage of housing units that are owner-occupied	30.3	56.1
Median price of homes sold	\$18,000.00	\$126,325.00
Lead paint violations	39.8	11.8

**Table 4: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park and Baltimore City housing indicators, 2014.**

Today, the Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park community faces a vacancy rate of 35 percent.<sup>143</sup> At a community meeting about adding a public garden space to the front of the Western District Police Station in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, a Harlem Park resident commented that in her community, “people are walking with their heads down”

<sup>140</sup> “Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park vital signs”. *Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance*. University of Baltimore, Jacob France Institute. (2014). [http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester\\_Harlem%20Park/](http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester_Harlem%20Park/).

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. “Neighborhood health profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park”. Baltimore City Health Department. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.

<sup>143</sup> “Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park vital signs”. *Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance*. University of Baltimore, Jacob France Institute. (2014). [http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester\\_Harlem%20Park/](http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester_Harlem%20Park/).



because they are tired of looking at the vacant buildings that surround them.<sup>144</sup> Another resident I spoke with about the density of vacant homes in Harlem Park commented that he finds it “depressing” to be in the area.<sup>145</sup> The volume of vacant buildings was of deep concern to both residents and City officials.



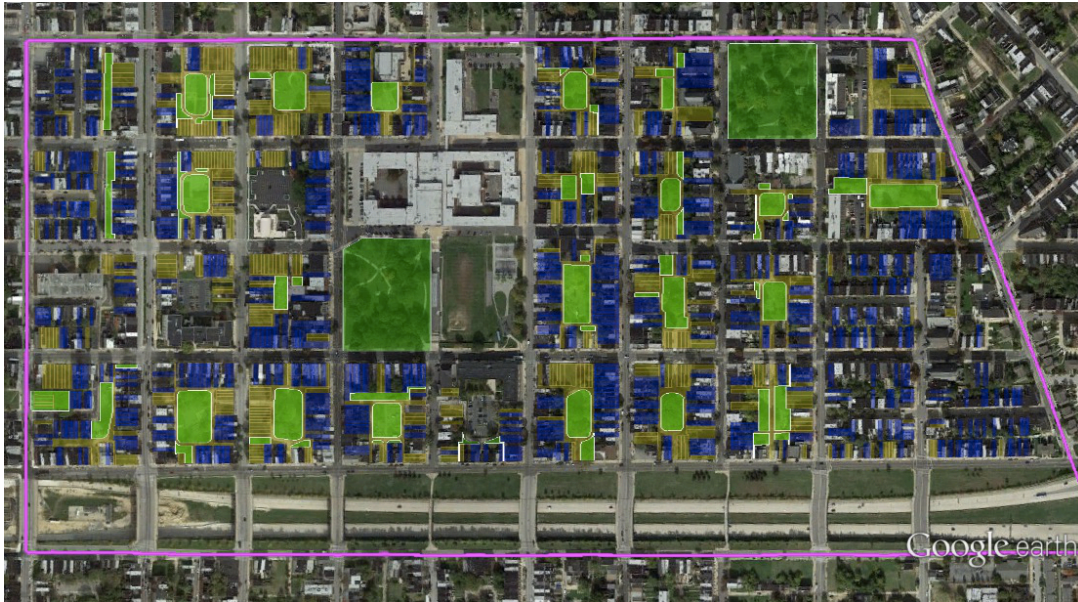
**Figure 33: Vacant buildings in Harlem Park, 2016.**  
*Images: Amber Collett*

Figure

Fig. 34 (*below*) depicts vacant buildings (blue), vacant lots (yellow), and public parks (green) as marked by the City of Baltimore.

<sup>144</sup> Participant 40 in discussion with author, June 3, 2016.

<sup>145</sup> Participant 59 in discussion with author, June 7, 2016.



**Figure 34: Current built environment conditions of Harlem Park.**

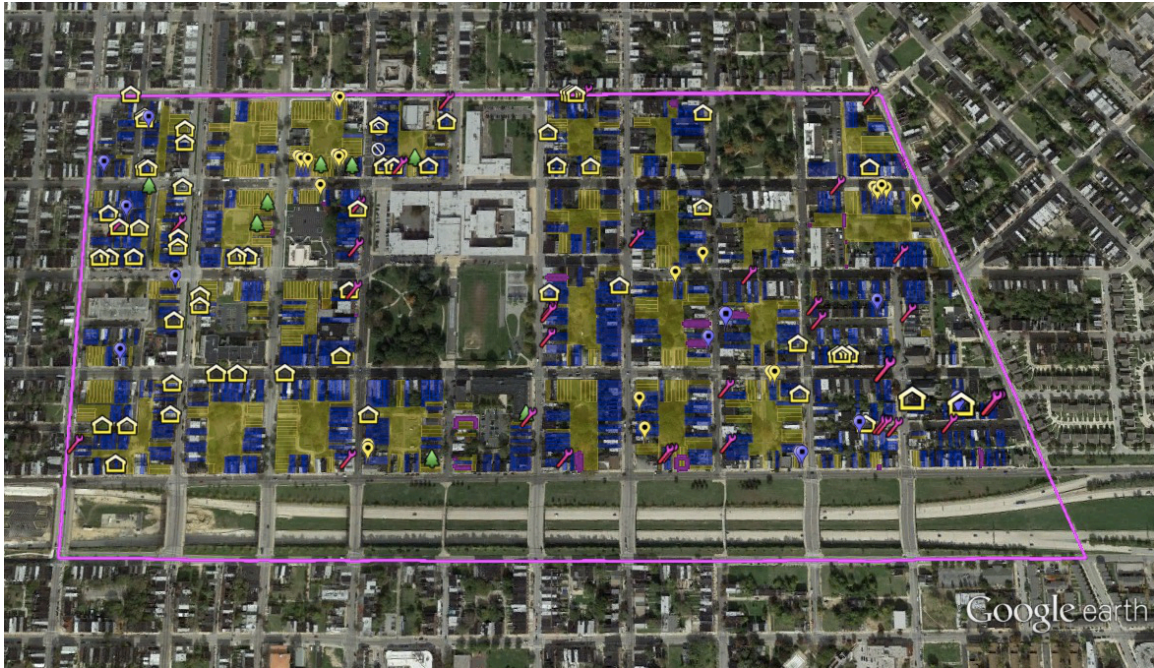
*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

Over the course of my field research, it became apparent that the Baltimore City GIS data was out-of-date with regards to Harlem Park. On the ground, determining if a building is vacant or occupied is challenging and conditions change rapidly. The City defines a vacant building as one that is either unoccupied or unfit for habitation (i.e., open to the elements). A building is deemed vacant by a housing inspector, and must pass an inspection before a vacant notice is removed. Then, a property must obtain a use and occupancy permit or a certification of occupancy. According to the most recently available GIS data from Baltimore City Open GIS Data, there are 702 vacant buildings in Harlem Park. However, I observed construction activity or clear improvements made (i.e., new windows) on 33 buildings marked vacant. Moreover, clear signs of inhabitation (i.e., windows open in the house, persons visible inside the house, etc.) were observed in an additional 56 buildings currently marked vacant. Whether the City legally sanctions the occupation of these homes is unknown.

Additionally, I observed twelve houses marked occupied that were now vacant (i.e., boarded windows and doors, open to the elements, etc.). Regarding vacant lots, the Baltimore City Open GIS Data has approximately 416 lots marked vacant. I say approximately as the inner block parks are classified as both vacant and as public parks. I observed an additional 23 vacant lots not captured in the GIS data. 23 lots marked vacant



had been fenced in by neighboring properties and nine had clear improvements made (i.e., gardens or tended trees).



**KEY**

Shaded Yellow = existing vacant lots

Yellow Pin = new vacant lot

Shaded Blue = existing vacant buildings

Blue Pin = new vacant building

Yellow House = occupied building listed as vacant

Pink Wrench = building marked vacant with clear signs of improvement

Tree = lot marked vacant with clear signs of improvement

Dark Purple lines = vacant lots with resident built fences

**Figure 35: Ground-truthed vacant lot and vacant building data.**

*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*



**Figure 36: Lots considered vacant with resident added fencing.**

*Images: Amber Collett*



**Figure 37: An occupied home considered vacant by the City of Baltimore.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

Some residents have used street art to lessen the visual impact of the vacant housing in Harlem Park. Street art, also called urban art or guerrilla art, is art that is created in public locations. Street art can also be considered public art, but for this purpose, public art is sanctioned and commissioned whereas street art is unsanctioned. Street art includes but is not limited to graffiti, stencil graffiti, wheat-pasted poster art, sticker art, street installations, sculptures, video production, yarn bombing (in which a structure is covered by yarn), and lock on (typically occurring on a bridge or fence when padlocks are placed on it, unauthorized). While street art can be dismissed as a sign of dereliction, I argue that it can also be beautifying. Art in the public sphere tends to increase property values,<sup>146</sup> positively impact the perceived status and profile of urban neighborhoods,<sup>147</sup> enhance social interactions,<sup>148</sup> and increase feelings of pride and confidence in local identity.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Selwood, S., 1995. *The benefits of public art: The polemics of permanent art in public places* (Vol. 770). London: Policy Studies Institute.

<sup>147</sup> Roberts, Marion. "For art's sake: Public art, planning policies and the benefits for commercial property." *Planning practice and research* 10, no. 2 (1995): 189-198.

<sup>148</sup> Bovaird, Anthony. "Public art in urban regeneration: An economic assessment." *e-π ο λ ι σ e-π ο λ ι σ* (2005): 116.

<sup>149</sup> Blackman, Fiona. "The Angel of the North: public art and wellbeing." PhD Diss., Durham University, 2014.



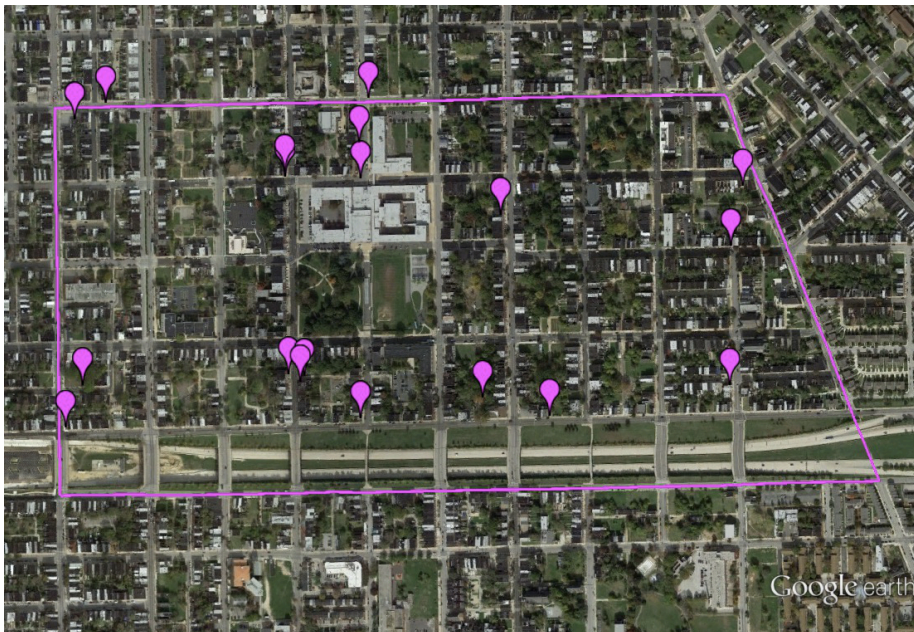
In Harlem Park, I observed several instances of street art used to beautify vacant buildings. For example, the doors and windows would be painted with an encouraging message such as “BMORE POSITIVE” or a blocked wall was painted to memorialize past residents.



**Figure 38: Street art in Harlem Park, 2016.**

*Images: Amber Collett*

Overall, Harlem Park has 17 locations with street or public art, and an additional two murals that are immediately visible but technically located in Sandtown-Winchester along West Lafayette Avenue.



**Figure 39: Locations of public and street art in Harlem Park, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett*



There are six official public art projects in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, compared with 218 throughout Baltimore City, making Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park one of the least active neighborhoods for public art projects in Baltimore (*see Table 5 below*).

Indicator, 2014	Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park <sup>150</sup>	City of Baltimore <sup>151</sup>
Number of Public Murals	6	218
Public Art per 1,000 Residents	0.7	1.2
Number of Businesses that are Arts-Related per 1,000 residents	0.0	0.7
Number of employees in the Creative Economy	0	12,619

**Table 5: Public art and murals in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park and the City of Baltimore, 2014.**

*Source: Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance*



**Figure 40: Public art in a reclaimed vacant lot, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

<sup>150</sup> “Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park vital signs”. *Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance*. University of Baltimore, Jacob France Institute. (2014). [http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester\\_Harlem%20Park/](http://bniajfi.org/community/Sandtown-Winchester_Harlem%20Park/).

<sup>151</sup> “Vital signs for Baltimore City”. *Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance*. (2014). <http://bniajfi.org/community/Baltimore%20City/>

In addition to street art, Harlem Park residents have also taken independent steps to ameliorate the look of vacant buildings by adding crate basketball hoops to the front door boards of vacant buildings, placing flowers on the steps of vacant buildings, and painting boarded windows.



**Figure 41: Resident beautification of vacant buildings, 2016.**  
*Images: Amber Collett*

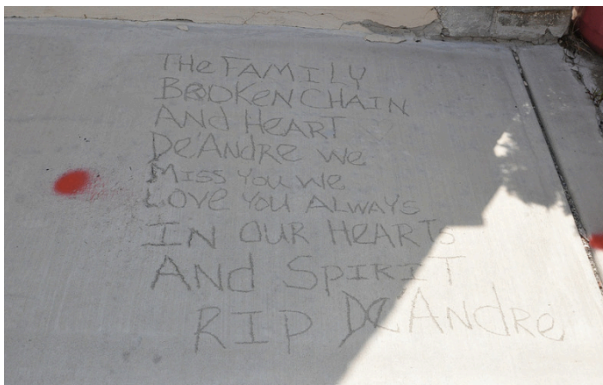


Another form of street art are memorials to victims of violence. Street memorials typically consist of beer and wine bottles, balloons, stuffed animals, graffiti, and photos of the deceased.



**Figure 42: Shooting memorial at 2400 East Hoffman Street.**  
*Image: Trent Reinsmith, Vice<sup>152</sup>*

Other memorials may be longer lasting and be either etched in fresh pavement or graffiti-ed on front steps.



**Figure 43: Memorial in pavement, Harlem Park.**  
*Image: Amber Collett*

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<sup>152</sup> Reinsmith, Trent. "Here are some of Baltimore's many May murder scenes". *Vice*. (2015, June 4). <http://www.vice.com/read/photos-of-some-of-baltimores-may-murder-scenes-604>.

### ***Built Environment: Lead Poisoning***

In addition to vacancy, buildings in Harlem Park pose a threat to resident wellbeing through lead dust. Lead dust, which is a primary pathway for lead poisoning, is especially prevalent in older row houses. In Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, the number of lead paint violations per year, per 10,000 households (2000-2008) was 39.8, compared to 11.8 in Baltimore City (*see Table 4 above*).<sup>153</sup>

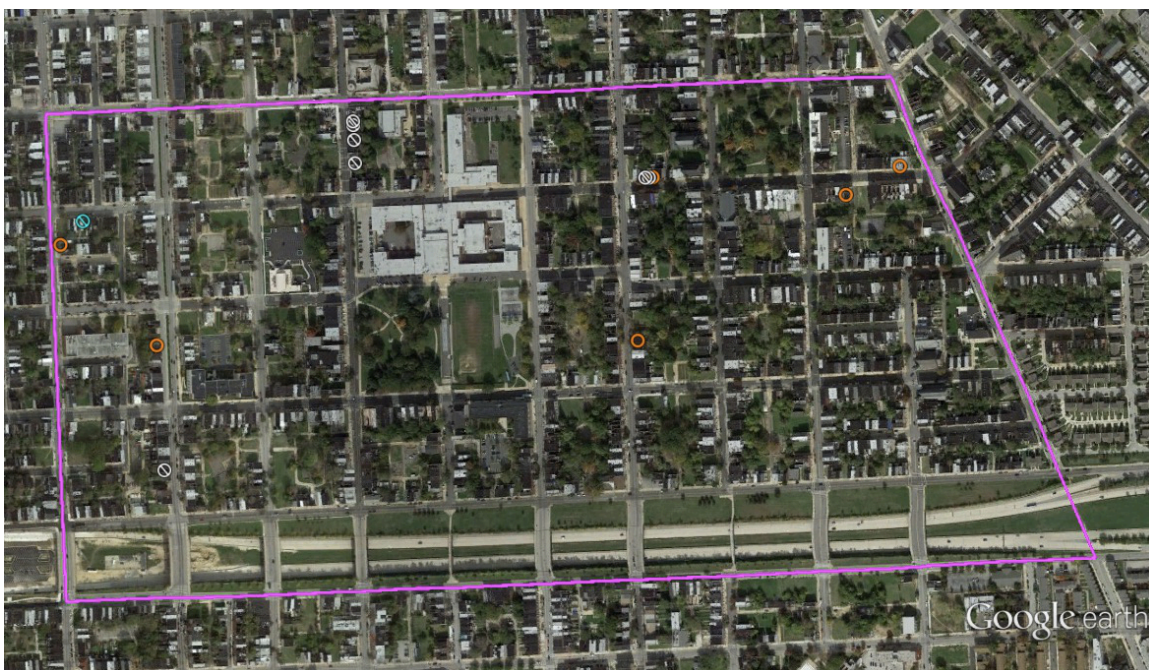


**Figure 44: Harlem Park house with lead paint violation.**  
*Image: Amber Collett*

Overall, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park ranks 50 of 55 neighborhoods in Baltimore City for lead paint violations. While conducting field research, I observed only six vacant buildings with lead paint notifications, one building with a condemnation notice, and seven buildings marked as unstable structures by the fire department.

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<sup>153</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. "Neighborhood health profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park". Baltimore City Health Department. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.



**Figure 45: Map of lead paint violations (orange), condemnation notices (blue), and fire hazard buildings (white).**  
 Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth

Children are especially susceptible to lead poisoning, which can negatively impact emotional and intellectual development, and inhibit decision-making processes later in life or lead to erratic behavior. Children are at additional risk to lead poisoning for several reasons: first, young children can absorb four to five times as much ingested lead as adults from a given source because of their smaller body mass;<sup>154</sup> second, age-appropriate hand-to-mouth behavior results in children mouthing and swallowing lead-containing or lead-coated objects at a higher rate than adults;<sup>155</sup> third, children typically have thinner skin and are thus able to more easily absorb lead through dermal contact.<sup>156</sup> Additionally, as lead enters a body, it is distributed to organs, but also stored in teeth and bones where it can accumulate.<sup>157</sup> According to the World Health Organization, “undernourished children are more susceptible to lead because their bodies absorb more lead if other nutrients, such as calcium, are lacking.”<sup>158</sup>

<sup>154</sup> “Why young children are so vulnerable to lead”. *The New York Times*. (1990, Nov. 1).

<http://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/01/us/why-young-children-are-so-vulnerable-to-lead.html>.

<sup>155</sup> “Lead poisoning and health”. *World Health Organization* (2015, August). <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs379/en/>.

<sup>156</sup> “Who is susceptible to lead poisoning?”. *Emergency Medical Services Authority*. (n.d.)

<https://www.emsaonline.com/mediacenter/articles/00000459.html>.

<sup>157</sup> “Lead poisoning and health”. *World Health Organization* (2015, August). <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs379/en/>.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*



Between 1993 and 2013, the Maryland Department of the Environment found more than 65,000 children living in Baltimore with blood-lead levels 10 µg/dL or greater. Today, children in Baltimore City have a lead poisoning rate nearly three times the national rate—with the majority of cases occurring in West Baltimore neighborhoods. In 2008, the Maryland Department of Education’s Lead Poisoning Prevention Program found that 4.9 percent of children ages zero to six living in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park had blood-lead levels 10 µg/dL or greater, compared to 3.4 percent of children ages 0-6 in all of Baltimore City.

Lead poisoning is a technical problem that can be addressed through remediation and renovation. However, when not addressed, it exacerbates structural inequities by impacting the potential of young generations through degradation of their mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

***Built Environment: Inner Block Parks & Vacant Lots***

The inner block parks (IBPs) created during urban renewal have remained, but many have fallen into disrepair. Three IBPs have been privatized and converted into parking lots.



**Figure 46: Park with artistic fencing, murals, and art installations that has not been properly maintained, Harlem Park, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

Overall, the inner block parks continue to be underutilized. When asked if they spend time in the inner block parks, or if they see others using them, residents responded:

*No, no. It's too crazy. People make it crazy...[it needs to be] more safer. I'd imagine more security.*<sup>159</sup>

*Park? (laughs) We don't call that a park! I don't call that a park! If a person is missing, that's where I'd look. I call it Dead Man Alley...I'm joking. A bit.*<sup>160</sup>

*It's mostly destroyed. There's a lot of trash and it looks dangerous...We used to play basketball, but then the hoops broke.*<sup>161</sup>

*The parks used to be our life. We'd sit out on the grass with blankets. But then they removed the benches; where do we sit now? There used to be lights, but those were removed and now it's too dark...The parks went downhill. The grass isn't mowed and people hide their drugs in the parks...I walk through the park because I take care of some folks around the corner, but I'm afraid to walk through at night.*<sup>162</sup>

*Kids used to play in the park, but now it's vacant.*<sup>163</sup>

Many residents note the lack of upkeep in the parks as a determining factor limiting their use of the green spaces. Mowing, trash dumping, and lack of infrastructure were significant barriers. A City of Baltimore representative I spoke with noted, “Recreation and Parks has no interest in the inner block parks; they don’t even mow them.”<sup>164</sup> Additionally, residents felt the areas were unsafe. Beyond the social barriers to safety, several parks had infrastructure failings including a missing sewer grate leaving exposed a more than six-foot deep hole in the center of a sidewalk (see Fig. 47 below).



**Figure 47: Pavement tiles, a 6-ft deep uncovered sewer-grate in center of a sidewalk, and crushed pavement.**  
*Images: Amber Collett*

<sup>159</sup> Participant 37 in discussion with the author, June 8, 2016..

<sup>160</sup> Participant 2 in discussion with the author, June 8, 2016.

<sup>161</sup> Participant 46 in discussion with the author, July 15, 2016.

<sup>162</sup> Participant 47 in discussion with the author, July 15, 2016.

<sup>163</sup> Participant 25 in discussion with the author, July 7, 2016.

<sup>164</sup> Participant 22 in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.



Playground equipment that was installed in the 1960's as part of the initial park openings is still the main recreational option for children in the parks. The equipment is little more than repurposed concrete sewer pipe that was fashioned to look like trains.



**Figure 48: Concrete sewer pipe as playground equipment.**

*Image: Amber Collett*



**Figure 49: Concrete sewer pipe and abstract structures as playground equipment.**

*Images: Amber Collett*

In nearby Bolton Hill, a wealthy and predominantly white neighborhood, an inner block park was also added during the urban renewal period.<sup>165</sup> However, the initial infrastructure investment in that park is noticeable. Rather than using concrete as the main building material, Rutter's Mill Park was constructed with red-brick and pavers, has a sheltered picnic area, a water fountain for children to play in, and is lined with old fashioned gas-light lanterns.

Though the Bolton Hill and Harlem Park neighborhoods are only a mile away from each other, they represent two polar experiences in West Baltimore with relation to access to city and municipal services, public infrastructure investments, and socio-economic outcomes. Though it is not a focus of this research, an additional area for inquiry would be a comparison of inner block parks throughout Baltimore with regards to their initial installation, upkeep, and current condition in relation to neighborhood socio-economics and rates of vacancy. From my short time in Baltimore, there appear to be striking differences in initial investment, maintenance regularity, and allocation of city services.<sup>166</sup> The extent to which other inner block parks are maintained, or adopted, by the surrounding neighbors or independent organizations is unknown.



**Figure 50: Rutter's Mill Park in Bolton Hill, 2016.**

*Images: Amber Collett*

<sup>165</sup> Shoken, Fred. "Bolton Hill History". *Bolton Hill Neighborhood Association*. (2003, February). [http://www.boltonhill.org/neighborhood/n\\_history.htm](http://www.boltonhill.org/neighborhood/n_history.htm).

<sup>166</sup> Additional information about city-wide inner block parks is available upon request and includes field notes, author captured images, resident comments, and geo-spatial data.



In Harlem Park, the original entrances to the parks were trash alleys—themselves not appealing entrances to many residents—but as the parks were utilized for illicit activities, the entrances became more socially stigmatized and less maintained. Today, it can be difficult to tell where the entrances are because of overgrowth. Alternatively, even the clear pathways into the parks may be unappealing to residents, as they require walking through narrow, unlit alleyways. Residents now commonly use vacant lots as entrances to parks, as they provide the most open sight lines and direct routes.



**Figure 51: Entrance to an inner block park with extensive overgrowth and trash dumping.**

*Image: Amber Collett*



**Figure 52: Pathway through vacant lots.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

Trash dumping is also a barrier to safe park use, as well as the appearance and upkeep of vacant lots. As can be seen in Fig. 53 (*below*), trash dumping is most common at the entrances to IBPs and around the edges of the inner park space. Dumping is also more prevalent in the northern half of Harlem Park, and especially in the north-west quadrant.





**Figure 53: Trash dumping activity in Harlem Park, May 2016-July 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*



**Figure 54: Trash dumping along edge of inner block park.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

Trash dumping is viewed in different terms within the Harlem Park community and the City. A Harlem Park resident believed that the trash dumping—and rioting—was the act of disenfranchised people to gain some sense of control and authority:

*There is literally no escape... We're looking at it and we're like, 'They're crazy! They're burning their own backyards!' But we really need to sit down and think about it like—that's not their backyard. They don't look at it as their backyard. They look at it as they don't own; they can't own anything. They pay taxes. They live here. But they don't own. They don't take ownership over anything because the City doesn't do anything for them. So it's about the haves and have nots... so F the city. I'm going to dump here, you know, I don't have any ownership over it. It's the mentality. If they did, they would dump in their own backyards. Literally. They don't do that. They go to another neighborhood and dump. So it's a mental thing... but when the City continually, for lack of a better word, takes a crap on the people of Baltimore, they [the people] continue to follow suit. If Baltimore City doesn't pick up the trash, and provide trash cans, what do people do? Throw the trash anywhere. Don't want to get me a trash can? That's the mindset... And the city—the people, when we asked that they gave us trash cans, their excuse was that they piled the trash up next to the trash can. Instead of putting it in. But my thing is: how is that a problem? The trash is either going to end up spread out throughout the streets, or piled up in one spot for the city to do what? To do what they're supposed to do—get the trash. So for that to be the city's excuse for why the haven't given us trash cans is just ridiculous. That's silly, you know. Because they're going to throw the trash down. Look, I'd rather have a pile of trash next to the trash can than to go down Edmondson Avenue and see all that trash spread throughout the street. You have to start somewhere.<sup>167</sup>*

In contrast, an aspiring politician in Baltimore I spoke with prescribed trash dumping to lack of family structure and education about traditional behaviors, saying:

*There is trash everywhere... We have people that come and clean up around... putting trash in the trash cans. I don't know how you behaviorlize that to get people to do that. But again, that probably starts before you can even behaviorlize it. It starts at home. And it's part of that vicious cycle. Mom is brigning home pizza and that's that and then you throw it wherever you want. It probably starts at home. I'm assuming.<sup>168</sup>*

However, trash dumping activity is noticeably less frequent on blocks that have rehabilitated IBPs, and where residential occupation is greater. Parks & People Foundation, a Baltimore nonprofit that creates and sustains parks, natural environments, and recreational opportunities, is currently working with Harlem Park residents to

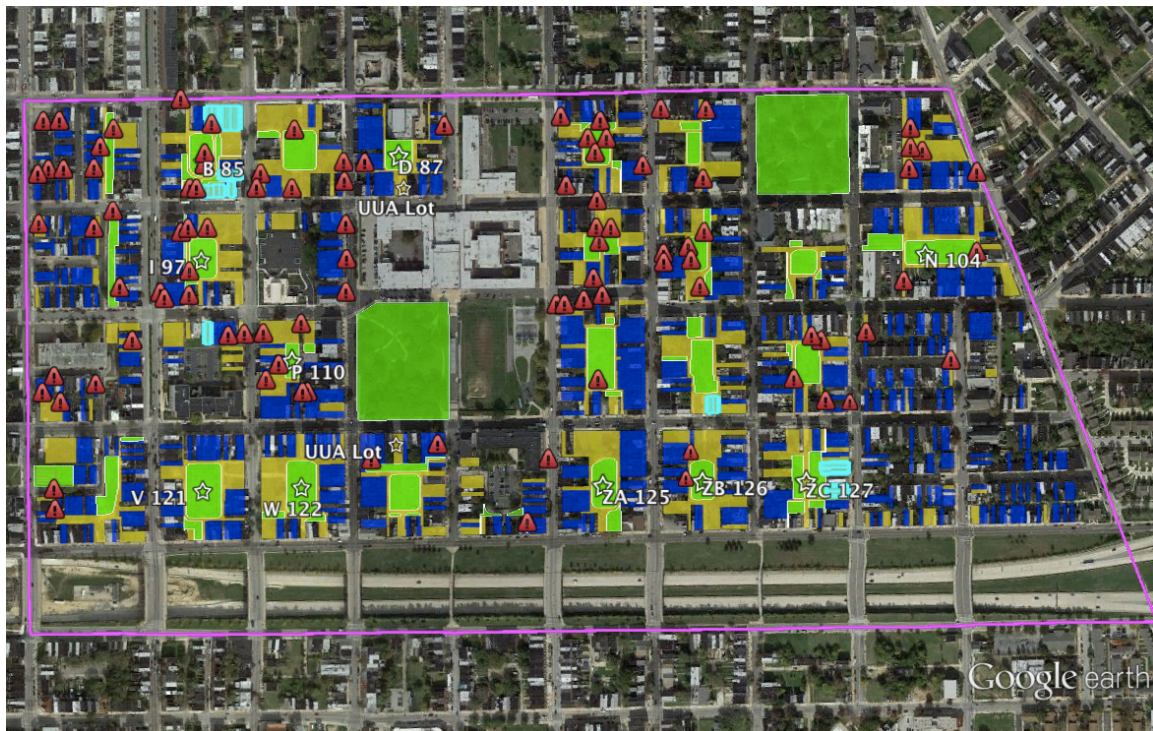
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<sup>167</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with the author, July 22, 2016.

<sup>168</sup> Participant 8 in discussion with the author, July 7, 2016..



rehabilitate ten IBPs in Harlem Park, add street trees, and finance adopt-a-lot initiatives.<sup>169</sup> At the time of my field research, they had completed or were in the process of rehabilitating five parks along Fremont Avenue in Southern Harlem Park (V 121, W 122, ZA 125, SB 126, and ZC 127), one along West Lanvale Street (D 87), and one along North Freemont Street (N 104). After I completed my field research, they began work on I 97 and P 110 as well (*see Fig. 55 below*). Rehabilitation of the parks includes pavement removal, removal of rusted fencing and/or damaged amenities, installation of porous walkways, the addition of new trees, removal of dead and/or damaged trees, grass re-seeding, and natural landscaping.



**Figure 55: Trash dumping in relation to vacant buildings (purple), vacant lots (yellow), parks (green), rehabilitated parks (stars), and adopted lots (blue).**

*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

One park in particular, ZA 125, set a gold standard for revitalized IBPs. Starting in 2011, Parks & People Foundation partnered with CultureWorks, a community-based cultural organizing nonprofit, and the Watershed 263 Council, a council of 20 residents living within the watershed's twelve neighborhoods, to rebrand ZA 125 into Hidden Streams Park. The IBPs had never been given names, and the identifying letters and

<sup>169</sup> Additional information about Parks & People Foundation supported rehabilitation and re-greening projects in Harlem Park is available upon request and includes park design plans, before and after photos, and staff commentary.

numbers currently associated with the parks felt impersonal and remote. While working with the Earth Stewardship Initiative in August 2015, we held a community charrette to solicit design ideas from Harlem Park residents regarding the reclamation of vacant lots and inner block parks. One charrette attendee stated that there was a lost opportunity to use park names to memorialize historic people and inspirational figures in the community.

To create an art and community space, ZA 125 was given the name Hidden Streams Park for the underground stream that runs underneath Baltimore City, and which can be heard flowing at the intersection of North Carey Street and West Franklin Street. The effort to involve residents in the naming of the park was intentional; it was meant to inspire affection for the space as well as restore rectitude with the hopes that it would increase community stewardship of IBPs.



**Figure 56: Public art and sculpture in Hidden Streams Park, 2016.**  
*Image: Amber Collett*

In March 2015, Parks & People Foundation undertook a more dramatic revitalization of Hidden Streams Park. At a cost of \$17,916—which included project management, design, permitting, and installation costs—Parks & People Foundation and



their partners the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, the Maryland Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services, and the Baltimore Ecosystem study, contracted the removal of 14,150 square feet of impervious surface and returned the area to lawn, added 16 new trees, and re-painted community benches and art features. The project was funded in part by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Chesapeake and Atlantic Coast Bays Trust Fund.



**Figure 57: Hidden Streams Park after pavement removal, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

Hidden Streams Park continues to be utilized, with one resident creating a small community garden. The rehabilitation projects have also inspired resident actions to upkeep inner block parks. A long-time Harlem Park resident noted, “IBP 127 used to be a playground with swings and tunnels. Back then, the City took care of it. But then the kids grew up. They [the City] took out the trees. And now it’s a lot for dumping. On my block, we do it ourselves. The City hasn’t been responsive. I promised the kids on the block that we’d do a cookout once a month in the summer now that Parks and People redid the park. We grill out, have chips. I got applesauce for the kids and they love it. Now every time I grill, the kids come running over asking if it’s the cook-out. The kids keep coming back,



and they help clean up the park. One of the other residents, he gives them shovels and brooms and they go around and sweep up, pick up the trash. They help now.”<sup>170</sup>

IBP M 103, along Rice Street and Harlem Avenue was renamed ‘Love Park’ by residents and a homemade park sign was placed in the center of the park’s main green space. Dilapidated seating from the original installation of the park was repainted, as were bricks bordering a flower garden. This park too had minimal trash dumping, as it was clearly cared for and self-policed by nearby residents.



**Figure 58: Love Park (IBP M 103), a resident managed space.**  
*Images: Amber Collett*

<sup>170</sup> Participant 57 in discussion with the author, July 19, 2016.



Additionally, Parks and People Foundation partners with community residents and organizations to support the adoption and stewardship of vacant lots throughout Harlem Park. One group, United Urban Roots, is actively installing artistic gardens in adopted vacant lots. Through Parks & People Foundation, residents can apply for small grants to care for, or adopt, vacant lots throughout Baltimore. The initiative is working collaboration with the City of Baltimore's Growing Green Initiative (GGI). Launched in May 2014, the GGI seeks to find "cost-effective practices for stabilizing and holding land for redevelopment, and reusing vacant land to green neighborhoods, reduce stormwater runoff, grow food, and create community spaces that mitigate the negative impacts of vacant properties and set the stage for growing Baltimore."<sup>171</sup> Notably, like Vacants to Values, the GGI has a stated goal of holding land for redevelopment through the development of community green spaces. In the case of Harlem Park, an adopted lot is not owned by the caretakers or grantees, but still owned by the City of Baltimore and can be redeveloped at a later date.

Regardless, United Urban Roots is actively creating vacant lot gardens in at least two locations in Harlem Park. The first is located at 1518 West Lanvale Street, and the second at 1521 Edmondson Avenue. United Urban Roots was founded by the mother-son duo Angela Francis and Anthony Francis. Both outspoken advocates for Harlem Park, Anthony had the following to say about their work:

*We call ourselves dirt roots, because there is something under grassroots. There are people there that aren't always included...If we didn't do what we're doing in the lots, people would keep dumping in them every day. The City wasn't picking up what they were supposed to, and they weren't responsive, so we started doing it ourselves...I saw what Harlem Park could be if the City ever got stuff together. So that's why I believe this area has potential to be one of the most prestigious places in Baltimore. I really do...{United Urban Roots} it's a nonprofit that we started mainly because I live in this neighborhood and I see every day. I literally walked past a garden and it looked like it needed some help...Hence the word United in United Urban Roots because we want to be open to anybody—white, black, Latino, we don't care...we started with the gardens because it's visual. They see that there was a bunch of trash, dumpsters and tires in this lot, and now it's a beautiful garden.<sup>172</sup>*

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<sup>171</sup> "Growing Green Initiative". *Baltimore Office of Sustainability*. (2016). <http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/projects/growing-green-initiative/>.

<sup>172</sup> Francis, Anthony (entrepreneur and nonprofit manager) in discussion with the author, July 22, 2016.



**Figure 59: United Urban Roots volunteers installing a garden in vacant lot near IBP D 87 and Harlem Park Elementary/Middle School.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

Another group adopting vacant lots is the Baltimore Ecosystem Study (BES). BES is supported by the National Science Foundation's Long-term Ecological Research (LTER) Program and is one of the longest running urban ecology research projects in the country. They are currently adopting and managing vacant lots in Harlem Park as part of a wildflower study (*see Fig. 60-61 below for images and locations*). Study plots are seeded with mixed wildflowers and denoted by simple wooden fences. Harlem Park residents I spoke with had mixed reviews of the wildflower plots. One resident felt the wildflower plots were a visual reminder that the community was not worth investing in and that outsiders "don't want anything in the neighborhood. Just throw some wildflower seeds down to keep it moving."<sup>173</sup> Another resident felt that the flowers were adding to the neighborhood's beauty.<sup>174</sup> Baltimore Ecosystem Study plans an extension of the wildflower study and will be adopting additional vacant lots within Harlem Park throughout 2016 and 2017.

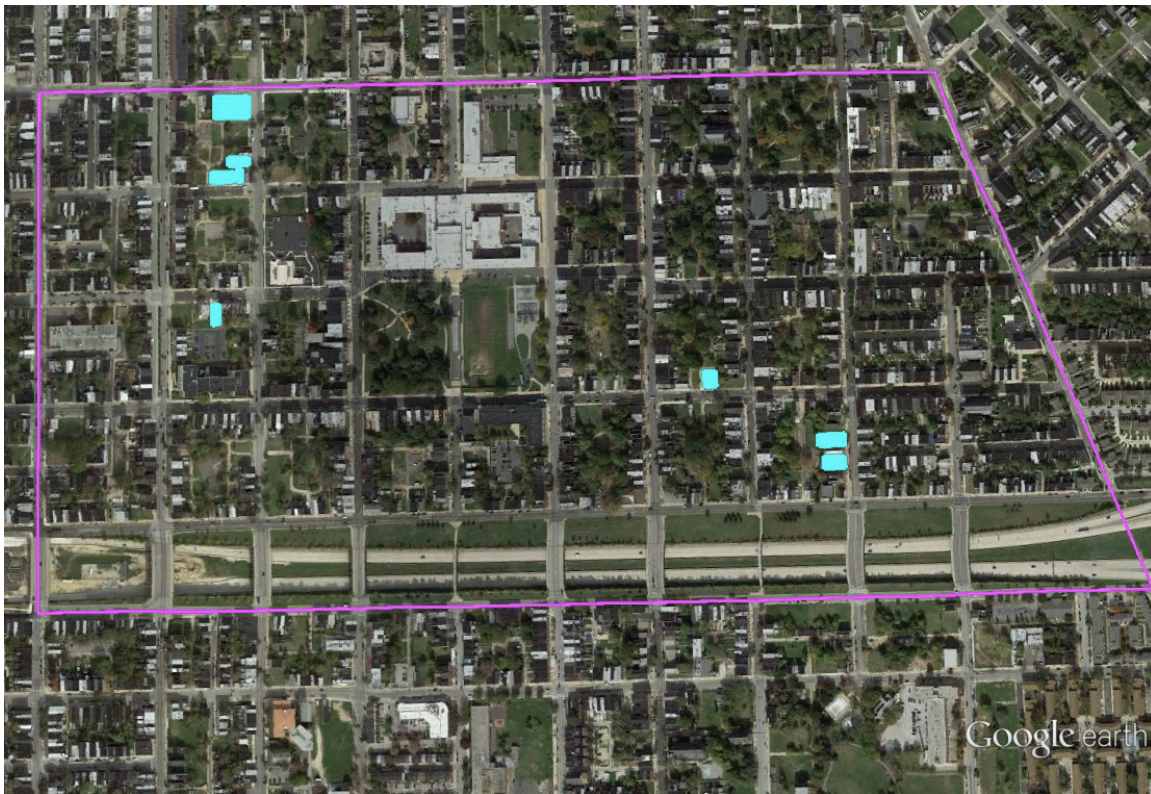
<sup>173</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with the author, July, 22, 2016..

<sup>174</sup> Participant 5 in discussion with the author, July 25, 2016..





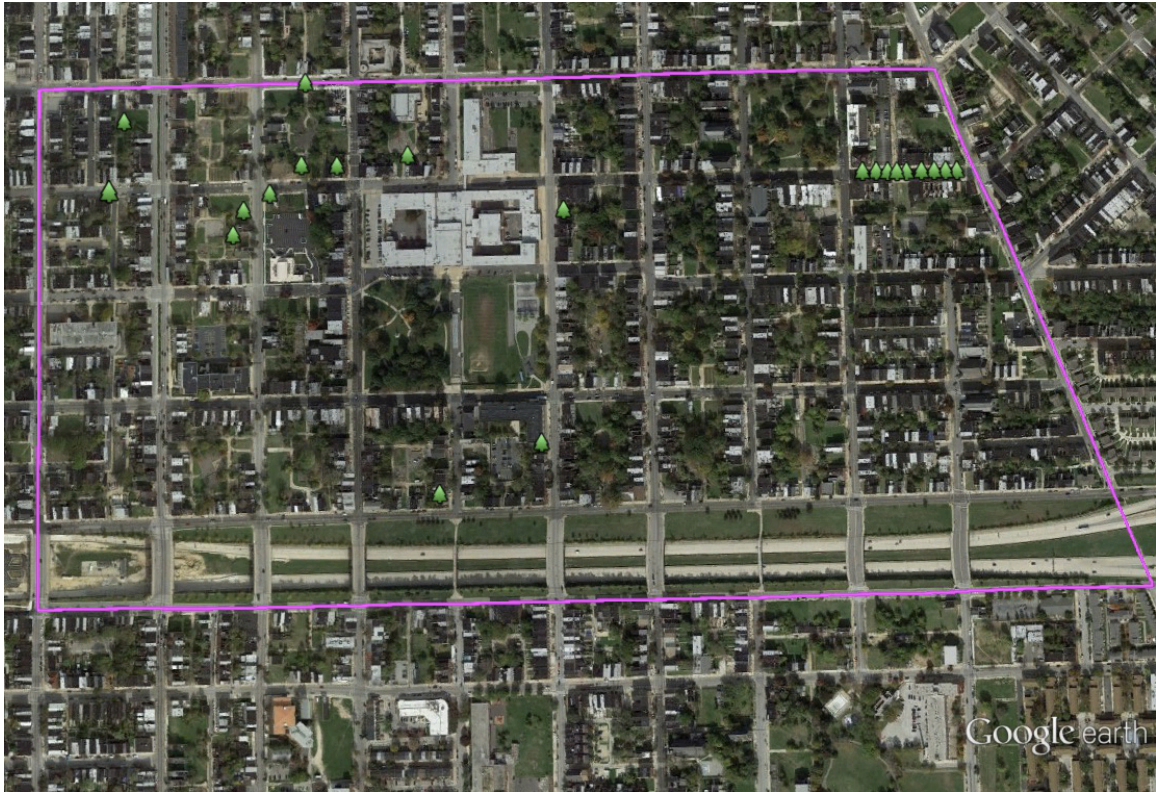
**Figure 60: Baltimore Ecosystem Wildflower study plots in Harlem Park, 2016.**  
*Images: Amber Collett*



**Figure 61: Baltimore Ecosystem Study wildflower plot locations (blue), July 2016.**  
*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*

In addition to the work of Parks & People Foundation, United Urban Roots, and Baltimore Ecosystem Study, there are unofficial and official adopted lots throughout Harlem Park. For example, at 715 North Calhoun Street, several vacant lots have been fenced in and a highly maintained garden has installed with a sign attributing it to “Harlem Park Students on the Move” (*see Fig. 63 below*). Residents have also added wooden boxes and mulch around street trees along West Lanvale Street near Lafayette Square Park, a rose garden along North Mount Street, and a garden with a walking path.





**Figure 62: Greening improvements in Harlem Park, 2016.**

*Image: Amber Collett/Google Earth*



**Figure 63: Street tree with resident improvements and Harlem Park Students on the Move garden.**

*Images: Amber Collett*

However, many lots remain vacant and unmowed after demolition. As part of the City of Baltimore's demolition process, a demolitions contractor is responsible for grass seeding a lot when a building is removed. After seeding, the lot is managed by the City of Baltimore, which includes regular mowing. As with vacant buildings, the overwhelming



number of vacant lots in both Harlem Park and throughout the City of Baltimore has left city departments with a tight budget and limited man-hours to manage the lots. When a lot is left unmanaged, it becomes ‘blighted’ and is likely more susceptible to activities such as trash dumping.



**Figure 64: Unmowed vacant lot; plants beginning to overtake sidewalk.**

*Image: Amber Collett*

### ***Social Environment***

In addition to the built environment, resident health and wellbeing can be significantly impacted by an area’s social environment. A social environment is not only the surrounding physical and social settings, but the culture, people and institutions that make up the social aspect of a person’s daily life.<sup>175</sup>

In Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, the Baltimore Police Department reported 91.2 non-fatal shootings per 10,000 residents from 2005-2009, compared with 46.5 per 10,000 residents in Baltimore overall. The number of homicides that occurred per 10,000 residents in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park during the same years was 45.3,

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<sup>175</sup> Barnett, Elizabeth and Michele Casper. "A definition of" social environment"." *American Journal of Public Health* 91, no. 3 (2001): 465.

compared with 20.9 in Baltimore City.<sup>176</sup> The juvenile arrest rate in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park from 2005-2009 was 252.3 per 1,000 10-17 year olds, compared with 145.1 in Baltimore City, and the number of reported domestic violence incidents reported per 1,000 residents in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park was 68.1, compared to 40.6 in Baltimore City.<sup>177</sup>

Indicator	Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park <sup>178</sup>	Baltimore City <sup>179</sup>	State of Maryland
Juvenile arrest rate	252.4	145.1	405.5 <sup>180</sup>
Domestic violence rate	68.1	40.6	2.5 <sup>181</sup>
Non-fatal shooting rate (per 10,000)	91.2	46.2	<i>n/a</i>
Homicide incidence rate (per 10,000)	45.3	20.9	<i>n/a</i>

**Table 6: Social Environment Health Indicators, per 1,000 residents/units**

When compared to other neighborhoods in Baltimore City, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park ranks 46 of 55 for non-fatal shooting rate, 50 of 55 for homicide incidence rate, 47 of 55 for juvenile arrests rate, and 55 of 55 for domestic violence incidents, where a ranking of one is considered optimal (*see Fig. 32, above*).

Exposure to community violence has a direct and detrimental impact on individual and community health. In children and adolescents, particularly, exposure to community violence can result in depression and anxiety, aggressive behavior, anger management issues, PTSD, and academic problems.<sup>182</sup>

A younger, relatively new resident of Harlem Park commented on the civil unrest that shook West Baltimore in April 2015 and noted that when he was growing up in the

<sup>176</sup> "Baltimore Police Department's Open Data". *Baltimore Police*. (2016). <http://www.baltimorepolice.org/content/crime-statistics>.

<sup>177</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. "Neighborhood Health Profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park". Baltimore City Health Department. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> "Kids Count data center". *The Annie E. Casey Foundation*. (2014). <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/4461-juvenile-arrests?loc=22&loc=2#detailed/2/any/false/869,36,868,867,133/any/10020,15102>.

<sup>181</sup> "Crime in Maryland: 2014 uniform crime report". *Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention*. (2014). <http://www.goccp.maryland.gov/msac/documents/2014-crime-in-maryland-ucr.pdf>.

<sup>182</sup> Margolin, Gayla, and Elana B. Gordis. "The effects of family and community violence on children." *Annual review of psychology* 51, no. 1 (2000): 445-479.

suburbs, “If you had anger issues, you could go outside. There were kids playing basketball. Go play basketball for a while to take your mind off of it. Or go to a youth center. Somewhere where the youth could go. But all they have [in Harlem Park] are these streets. They leave their houses, which sometimes is a messed up situation, just to go outside to an even worse situation. So there is literally no escape. It’s all they know. Never been shown any love or support, so how do you expect them to react? I’m not condoning it, but you gotta understand. To them, it’s totally normal.”<sup>183</sup>

### ***Spatial Stigma: Social & Built Environments Internalized***

Spatial stigma, or negative representations of a place, also plays a significant role in negatively impacting health and perpetuating health disparities. Spatial stigma can impact health through at least three pathways: 1) access to material resources; 2) processes of stress and coping; and 3) processes relating to identity formation and identity management.<sup>184</sup>

First, residents in stigmatized communities are at greater risk for being denied services. Living in a stigmatized community and being denied access to critical services can negatively impact residents’ health and wellbeing. For example, ride-share services and taxi drivers, home health and social service workers, food and grocery deliverers, and even the police force have been known to stigmatize neighborhoods.<sup>185</sup> Larger investors such as grocery stores, businesses, and regional drivers of investment are also more likely to avoid stigmatized places.<sup>186</sup> As a result, real-estate values are influenced by both the negative stereotypes of a neighborhood, and the neighborhoods difficulty in attracting services, which can lead to negative health outcomes and reduce resident socioeconomic status.<sup>187</sup> In this way, stigma not only impacts individuals, but the very place they live as well.<sup>188</sup>

A resident I talked with spoke at length about feeling as though he was denied basic services because he chooses to live and work in Harlem Park:

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<sup>183</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with the author, July 22, 2016..

<sup>184</sup> Keene, Danya E., and Mark B. Padilla. "Spatial stigma and health inequality." *Critical Public Health* 24, no. 4 (2014): 392-404.

<sup>185</sup> Macintyre, Sally, and Anne Ellaway. "Neighborhoods and health: an overview." *Neighborhoods and health* (2003): 20-42.

<sup>186</sup> Eisenhauer, Elizabeth. "In poor health: Supermarket redlining and urban nutrition." *GeoJournal* 53, no. 2 (2001): 125-133.

<sup>187</sup> Musterd, Sako, and Roger Andersson. "Employment, social mobility and neighbourhood effects: the case of Sweden." *International journal of urban and regional Research* 30, no. 1 (2006): 120-140.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

*We're just now getting trash cans. Just now. We get one trash day. Other parts of the city get two. Stuff like that. We don't get a recycling truck. There is no recycling. We can't recycle. Why? Who knows. You're not allowed to recycle! You're not even worth the money to put in a recycling program. That's what that is. Basic human rights and needs are being – what, and you've got millions of dollars for Port Covington?<sup>189</sup> I mean, that is ridiculous. If you're a human being, you should feel some type of, you know, anger about that. I'm sorry. I'm just like: wow...But we have police officers that don't care and we don't have any infrastructure. You have to walk three miles to a grocery store with rotten fruit and flies, you know what I'm saying. But it just adds up. I've lived here for eight years. And I'm twice the angry. I'm twice as angry as I've ever been. My own mother had to check me. Are you ok? Do you need to move from the city? Because I was becoming bitter. I'm a real social experiment. I've lived in the suburbs; I've live din cities; I've lived in both. And living here was making me want to treat people not as well. You don't have as much patience...Imagine if you went through generations of living in a city. How would you feel? I might be out there burning up some stuff too. That's all I'm saying...these people walk through Bolton Hill, and then to walk just one block away and see how their neighborhood looks, that has to have an effect on you mentally to see that your whole life. Basic services like a trash can don't have anything to do with being rich. I get not having a pond in every hood. Or a gated community. Those are the things that luxury pays for. But a trash can? A park bench? Those are basic needs. A grocery store is a basic need. Can we get the basics?<sup>190</sup>*

Additionally, for a community such as Harlem Park, which is already experiencing decreased access to public transportation services, grocery stores with fresh, health foods, and access to safe, affordable housing, the additional role that spatial stigma can play in socially isolating and preventing residents from accessing services can increase chronic stress leading to additional mental and physical health concerns. Sense of place and the built environment greatly influence the health and wellbeing of

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<sup>189</sup> One of the largest modern urban renewal projects in America, the Port Covington project was proposed by Sagamore Development, a private real estate firm owned by billionaire Kevin Plank, the CEO of Under Armour. Port Covington is a waterfront industrial and residential area in South Baltimore that Sagamore would like to develop into a new headquarters location for Under Armour. As part of the development of the area, Sagamore intends to also include additional office, home, shopping, restaurant, and park spaces in the 260 acres targeted for development. The project is estimated to cost \$5.5 billion, and Sagamore requested \$1.1 billion in local, state and federal government support, including a tax-increment financing (TIF) deal from the City of Baltimore (Marton, A., Natalie Sherman, and Caroline Pate, 2016). The TIF would be \$535 million, and is the largest ever proposed in Baltimore and one of the largest in the country. Supporters of the project contend that the TIF subsidy will more than pay for itself as the development will attract new families to Baltimore and generate new property taxes. Critics argue that the subsidy was too large considering the wealth of Sagamore and the Plank family, and the critical blight problems faced by other Baltimore neighborhoods that need additional investment and public spending.

<sup>190</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with the author, July, 22, 2016.



residents.<sup>191</sup> Spatial stigma can lead to residents internalizing negative narratives surrounding their place of residence, and apply those narratives to their own identity formation which leads to increased psychosocial stress,<sup>192</sup> comparisons to others residing in less marginalized communities leading to additional stress and frustration,<sup>193</sup> and an increased reliance on coping mechanisms,<sup>194</sup> which is especially detrimental in neighborhoods with exceptionally high density rates for alcohol and tobacco stores, such as Harlem Park. Even the term ‘urban blight’ implies that ‘blighted’ neighborhoods—and the community members that live there—spoil, harm, or damage the world around them.

### ***Black Mortality***

Nationwide, black Americans are faced with persistent racial disparities in health. Mortality data in the United States has revealed that black Americans have consistently higher death rates for eight of the top ten leading causes of death, and that despite investments in public health campaigns and efforts to increase access to adequate health care, age-adjusted all-cause mortality for black Americans was one and a half times higher than that of whites in 1998—identical to the rates observed in 1950.<sup>195</sup> Such large and persistent racial inequalities in health are deeply disturbing and have profound implications for the functionality and wellbeing of entire communities, as well as the urban centers in which they are situated.

In Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, life expectancy at birth is 65.3 years, which is more than six years shorter than the Baltimore City life expectancy of 71.8.<sup>196</sup> Condemningly, the Maryland State Vital Statistics Administration found that 50.8 percent of deaths in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park would be classified as ‘avertable deaths’, or deaths that could have been prevented if the neighborhood had the same death rates as the five highest-income neighborhoods in Baltimore City.

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<sup>191</sup> Wakefield, Sarah, and Colin McMullan. "Healing in places of decline:(re) imagining everyday landscapes in Hamilton, Ontario." *Health & Place* 11, no. 4 (2005): 299-312.

<sup>192</sup> Link, Bruce G., and Jo C. Phelan. "Stigma and its public health implications." *The Lancet* 367, no. 9509 (2006): 528-529.

<sup>193</sup> Kawachi, Ichiro, and Lisa Berkman. "Social cohesion, social capital, and health." *Social epidemiology* (2000): 174-190.

<sup>194</sup> Wilkinson, Richard G., and Kate E. Pickett. "Income inequality and population health: a review and explanation of the evidence." *Social science & medicine* 62, no. 7 (2006): 1768-1784.

<sup>195</sup> Williams, David R., and Chiquita Collins. "Racial residential segregation: a fundamental cause of racial disparities in health." *Public health reports* 116, no. 5 (2001): 404.

<sup>196</sup> "United States Census 2010". *United States Census Bureau* (2010). <http://www.census.gov/2010census/>.

Indicator	Sandtown- Winchester/Harlem Park	Baltimore City	State of Maryland
Life expectancy at birth (in years)	65.3	71.8	78.7 <sup>197</sup>
Age-adjusted mortality (Death per 10,000 residents)	143.7	110.4	<i>n/a</i>
Total annual years of potential life lost (years per 10,000 residents)	2,321.3	1,372.3	<i>n/a</i>
Avertable deaths	50.8%	36.1%	<i>n/a</i>
Percent of children with elevated blood lead levels (>10mg/dL)	4.9%	3.4%	0.3% <sup>198</sup>
Infant mortality rate (IMR) per 1,000 live births (2005-2009)	21.2	12.1	6.63 <sup>199</sup>

**Table 7: Health outcomes.**

The following chart, taken from the Neighborhood Health Profile for Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park highlights the top ten causes of death for residents, in comparison to that of Baltimore City:

<sup>197</sup> "Life expectancy by gender". *Kaiser Family Foundation*. (2009). <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/life-expectancy-by-gender/>.

<sup>198</sup> "Number of children tested and confirmed BLL's greater than or equal to 10 mg/dL by State, Year, and BLL Group, Children < 72 months old". *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (2014).

<sup>199</sup> "Stats of the State of Maryland". *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (2015). [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/MD\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/MD_2015.pdf).

Cause of Death	Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park			Baltimore City		
	Rate <sup>1</sup> (Deaths per 10,000)	Percent of Total Deaths	Percent of YPLL	Rate <sup>1</sup> (Deaths per 10,000)	Percent of Total Deaths	Percent of YPLL
1. Heart Disease	36.3	25.4%	14.2%	28.4	25.8%	15.4%
2. Cancer	28.0	19.7%	13.4%	23.1	20.8%	14.8%
Lung Cancer	7.7	5.4%	3.2%	6.9	6.3%	4.2%
Colon Cancer	2.3	1.7%	1.1%	2.3	2.1%	1.3%
Breast Cancer <sup>2</sup>	4.9	3.9%	4.3%	3.3	3.2% <sup>2</sup>	4.1%
Prostate Cancer <sup>2</sup>	5.0	3.0%	0.4%	3.1	2.5% <sup>2</sup>	0.6%
3. Stroke	6.2	4.3%	2.1%	5.2	4.7%	2.6%
4. HIV/AIDS	6.8	4.4%	7.3%	3.9	3.5%	7.6%
5. Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease <sup>3</sup>	3.4	2.4%	1.3%	3.9	3.5%	1.6%
6. Homicide	8.2	5.6%	16.4%	3.5	3.4%	12.5%
7. Diabetes	4.3	3.0%	1.2%	3.5	3.2%	2.0%
8. Septicemia (Blood Poisoning)	5.0	3.5%	2.4%	3.5	3.1%	2.1%
9. Drug-induced Deaths of Undetermined Manner <sup>4</sup>	6.6	4.2%	8.0%	3.2	2.8%	6.9%
10. Injury	3.5	2.5%	4.3%	2.8	2.5%	4.8%

Sources: Maryland State Vital Statistics Administration & the 2010 US Census.

<sup>1</sup> Rates are annual averages for 2005-2009 and are age-adjusted.

<sup>2</sup> The statistics accounted for by breast and prostate cancers are based only among deaths and populations of women or for men, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> These are deaths due to chronic diseases that affect the lower respiratory tract (which includes the lungs); includes Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthma.

<sup>4</sup> These are deaths due to legal or illegal drug poisoning that are not accidents, suicides, or homicides.

**Table 8: Top causes of death in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park and Baltimore City, 2010.**<sup>200</sup>

The top three causes of death in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park are: 1) heart disease (25.4 percent); 2) cancer (19.7 percent); 3) homicide (5.6 percent). Little research is available regarding these three causes of mortality within Harlem Park specifically, but nationwide trends observed in similar low-income, black American communities are applicable.

### Heart Disease

Heart disease, or coronary heart disease, is a disorder of the blood vessels of the heart that can lead to heart attack. In what can be a long process, an artery becomes blocked, preventing oxygen and nutrients from traveling to the heart.<sup>201</sup> Smoking, high blood pressure, eating a fat-rich diet, obesity, and lack of physical

<sup>200</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. "Neighborhood health profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park". Baltimore City Health Department. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.

<sup>201</sup> "What is Heart Disease?". *National Institute of Health*. (2014, August 26). <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/hearttruth/lower-risk/what-is-heart-disease.htm>.

activity all increase the likelihood of an individual developing heart disease. In Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, the density of tobacco stores, the lack of access to fresh, healthy foods, and the unavailability of safe, free spaces for recreation could all play a role in the high rate of heart disease.

Additionally, research is now associating blood lead levels below 10 µg/dl with increased blood pressure, hypertension, and high rates of heart disease.<sup>202</sup> As previously discussed, Baltimore City has one of the highest rates of childhood lead exposure and poisoning in the country, with the bulk of those exposures are occurring in low-income, high-poverty communities, including Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park. Blood lead levels and their correlation to heart disease is yet another example of the complex interplay between policies (redlining and renters rights), the built environment (access to affordable, safe housing), and health.

### **Cancer: Lung Cancer**

Cancer is the second most prevalent cause of death in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park (19.7 percent of deaths). The highest frequency deaths from cancer are: lung cancer (5.9 percent), breast cancer (3.9 percent), prostate cancer (3.0 percent), and colon cancer (1.7 percent).<sup>203</sup> Focusing on lung cancer, smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke are the preeminent causes of lung cancer, but exposure to environmental toxins such as particulate matter in air pollution and asbestos can also play a role.<sup>204,205,206</sup>

Individual smoking rate data for Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park is unavailable, but according to the Neighborhood Profile, 14.6 percent of pregnant

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<sup>202</sup> Markowitz, Gerald, and David Rosner. *Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children*. Vol. 24. Univ of California Press, 2013.

<sup>203</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. "Neighborhood Health Profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park". Baltimore City Health Department. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.

<sup>204</sup> Pope III, C. Arden, Richard T. Burnett, Michael J. Thun, Eugenia E. Calle, Daniel Krewski, Kazuhiko Ito, and George D. Thurston. "Lung cancer, cardiopulmonary mortality, and long-term exposure to fine particulate air pollution." *Jama* 287, no. 9 (2002): 1132-1141.

<sup>205</sup> Turner, Michelle C., Daniel Krewski, C. Arden Pope III, Yue Chen, Susan M. Gapstur, and Michael J. Thun. "Long-term ambient fine particulate matter air pollution and lung cancer in a large cohort of never-smokers." *American journal of respiratory and critical care medicine* 184, no. 12 (2011): 1374-1381.

<sup>206</sup> Hodgson, J.T. and Darnton, A., 2000. The quantitative risks of mesothelioma and lung cancer in relation to asbestos exposure. *Annals of Occupational Hygiene*, 44(8), pp.565-601.



women residing in the community reported smoking during pregnancy.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, individuals with less than a high school education, or its equivalent, are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors, including cigarette smoking. In Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park, 75.5 percent of residents 25 years and older had a high school degree or less. Finally, the availability of tobacco stores is correlated with increased rates of smoking. With tobacco store density rates as high as they are in Harlem Park (56.1 tobacco stores per 10,000 residents of Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park), it is increasingly clear why lung cancer is so prevalent in the community.

### **Homicide**

Homicide is the third most prevalent cause of death in Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park. The Harlem Park residents I spoke with repeatedly stressed that the gun violence in their community is not random, but associated with gangs and drug trade. Residents said: “These gang kids are messing up the neighborhood”<sup>208</sup> and “the crime in Baltimore is related to crime related things. Drug activity. Gang violence...It’s not random pedestrian crime.”<sup>209</sup> Residents are aware that Harlem Park, because of its location within West Baltimore has a reputation for being a violent neighborhood, and have internalized that message. Shooting memorials are few and far between in Harlem Park, but the reputation remains.

### **Contextualizing Impact**

The legacy of trauma and loss experienced by Harlem Park residents through the historical social and decision processes rooted in parochialism, as discussed in Part One, combined with the persistent health inequities as a result of problematic built and social environments, has left Harlem Park residents and stakeholders struggling to see viable paths forward that adequately address the wide variety of social and environmental ills with which they are contending.

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<sup>207</sup> Ames, Alisa, Mark Evans, Laura Fox, Adam J. Milam, Ryan J. Petteway, & Regina Rutledge. “Neighborhood health profile: Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park”. Baltimore City Health Department. (2011, December). <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/47%20Sandtown.pdf>.

<sup>208</sup> Participant 37 in discussion with the author, June 8, 2016..

<sup>209</sup> Participant 31 in discussion with the author, July 22, 2016..

# 3

## HARLEM PARK TOMORROW: ACTION IN CONTEXT

### **Project C.O.R.E. & Modern Urban Renewal**

In addition to the psychological and physiological impacts of living in a neighborhood considered ‘blighted’, physical and social trends within Harlem Park have been shaped by and are continuing to shape resident relations with the City, nonprofit organizations, and the broader Baltimore community. The management of vacant buildings and lots constitutes a significant technical problem that needs to be addressed in order to achieve greater wellbeing. However, the preferred methods of managing blight-like conditions differ greatly between residents and city officials given the ways in which each group defines the problem.

On January 5, 2016, Maryland’s Governor Larry Hogan and Baltimore City’s Mayor Rawlings-Blake announced a new partnership to address urban decay, or blight, throughout Baltimore City. Named Project Creating Opportunities for Renewal and Enterprise (Project C.O.R.E.), the partnership is a multi-year, nearly \$700 million initiative to utilize demolition and reinvestment funds to spur economic growth and revitalization in Baltimore City. The locations of demolitions and redevelopment are still being determined, but the demolished areas will be temporarily transformed into green spaces as part of the City of Baltimore’s Green Network Plan.<sup>210</sup>

According to the September 2016 version of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development’s website, Project C.O.R.E. “means a new canvas for Baltimore, clearing the way for new green space, new affordable and mixed use housing, new and greater opportunities for small business owners to innovate and grow. The initiative will generate jobs, strengthen the partnership between the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland and lead to safer, healthier and ore attractive spaces for

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<sup>210</sup> Anderson, Jessica. “Baltimore mayor announces new plan to create ‘green network’ to fight blight”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2015, June 15). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-ci-green-network-20160615-story.html>.

families to live and put down roots.”<sup>211</sup> Taken literally, the stated goal of Project C.O.R.E. is to reduce blight through demolition, which will in turn create a City owned land-bank of urban land for economic redevelopment in the form of green space, housing, and privatization.

During the January 2016 press event announcing Project C.O.R.E., Governor Hogan stated:

*Fixing what is broken in Baltimore requires that we address the sea of abandoned, dilapidated buildings infecting entire neighborhoods. Together, we will transform these neighborhoods from centers for crime and drugs, to places our city, and our entire state, can be proud of.*<sup>212</sup>

In this short quote, Governor Hogan makes clear several presuppositions: 1) Baltimore is broken; 2) Dilapidated buildings (or blight) cause the problem—namely lackluster economic growth—by sickening and “infecting” neighborhoods; 3) Neighborhoods transformed through demolition will see a reduction in crime—and a corresponding removal of those that perpetrate those crimes— and become something new and economically viable; 4) Together, the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland have the expertise to diagnose, manage, and ultimately control.

In a similar vein, Mayor Rawlings-Blake (Baltimore, D.) commented on Project C.O.R.E. saying:

*Transforming vacant homes and vacant buildings into inviting green space and livable new developments is a critical part of our goal of attracting 10,000 new families to Baltimore City and dramatically improving the quality of life for current city residents. The governor’s commitment of new state dollars will enable us to accelerate the progress we have made through our nationally recognized Vacants to Value program and deliver new opportunities to more neighborhoods. Under my Vacants to Value program, I quadrupled Baltimore City funding for demolition to \$10 million per year, and I welcome this significant new commitment from Governor Hogan.*<sup>213</sup>

Mayor Rawlings-Blake’s statement emphasizes the benefits that will come from “transforming” vacant properties into “inviting green space” and “new developments”, or by removing what is currently there for something new and as of yet unrealized. This

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<sup>211</sup> “Creating Opportunities for Renewal and Enterprise”. *Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development*. (2016, September). <http://dhcd.maryland.gov/ProjectCORE/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>212</sup> “Governor Hogan, Mayor Rawlings-Blake partner to address blight in Baltimore City, announce state project.”. *The Office of Governor Larry Hogan*. (2016, Jan. 5). <http://governor.maryland.gov/2016/01/05/governor-hogan-mayor-rawlings-blake-partner-to-address-blight-in-baltimore-city-announce-state-project/>

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

vision of new-ness extends not just to the land and property in Baltimore, but the residents themselves. Mayor Rawlings-Blake makes reference to a goal of attracting 10,000 new families to Baltimore City as a means of increasing wellbeing for future and current residents.

Both Governor Hogan and Mayor Rawlings-Blake are obfuscating through the use of more neutral language an underlying doctrine: namely, that wellbeing can be achieved through economic growth. Paired with the historic trend of rendering blight a primarily technical problem, this belief is foundational in determining which strategies are considered and implemented in Baltimore City with regards to blight and green space management.

While all parties—city representatives, residents of Harlem Park, nonprofit stakeholders, and re-greening advocates—agree that the technical barriers to wellbeing exist and need to be addressed, the social and decision making processes by which problems are defined and courses of action determined are worth examining.

For example, within the social process, or the arena in which the variety of stakeholders are interacting, blight is the agreed upon problem. However, with regards to the City, those with the perceived expertise—the knowledge and skill—and the political power to ameliorate the blight, are also those who are aligned with the problem definition. Meaning, they are the same group tasked with addressing the problem, or creating the strategy, and the ones implementing it, or creating the solutions. If they, as suggested by their public comments, are primarily focused on achieving wellbeing through economic growth, that growth becomes the goal while demolition and development become the course of action. Therefore, economic growth, not wellbeing as advertised, becomes the primary decision driver.

In contrast, Harlem Park residents throughout history have offered a different problem definition—one that points to the historic inequalities in services and transportation options, the lack of gainful employment opportunities, and the ability to attain quality education, as key drivers of health disparities and blight. However, because the residents are not seen to have the technical expertise to both diagnose and ameliorate the root causes of blight, their experiential knowledge is more likely to be discarded or



devalued. The Project C.O.R.E. social process is then a direct outcome of a decision process based heavily on a singular, weighted form of intelligence, or enlightenment.

As with previous urban renewal and demolitions programs, the ‘problem’ facing Baltimore is being defined in physical terms. In this scenario, wellbeing is reduced to concrete and measurable items such as economic growth, increases in green space, or buildings removed. Through rendering as technical, technocrats transform complex problems into linear processes that can be diagnosed, engineered, managed, and therefore controlled. In this both the doctrine of scientism and scientific management are present, unquestioned, and influential in shaping urban blight management approaches. Scientism, a belief system that places empirical science as the authoritative worldview, often excludes other, valid, knowledge sources and approaches to knowledge acquisition (i.e., cultural learning). Scientific management is the system developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor that encourages an intense focus on productivity and efficiency in decision-making, design, and policy. Scientism and scientific management both demand a strong bias towards the rational-utilitarian, the quantified, and the mechanistic—which in turn render problems not only technical, but require the use of expert or specialized knowledge or skills. In this manner, technocracy becomes situated as the norm through which control of society, or elements of society, is dictated by an elite of technical experts. At risk, is the very human dignity that urban renewal projects claim to be seeking. In relying on scientism and technocracy, there is a concerning tendency to downplay human nature and therefore seek to control the outcomes of the collaboration of human beings as completely as the output of a machine.<sup>214</sup> Lest it go unsaid: human beings are not machines; which may go a long way towards explaining why previous demolitions-centric approaches to managing urban blight have not met their stated goals of achieving wellbeing for residents and economic growth for persistently low-income communities.

Project C.O.R.E., as a primarily technical prescription, is thus limited in its ability to declare ‘victory’ in the fight against blight. By focusing on the technical problem of vacant buildings, it reduces blight and blight conditions to articles that can be observed,

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<sup>214</sup> Merkle, Judith A. "Scientific management." *International encyclopedia of public policy and administration* (1998): 2036-2040.

measured, and evaluated. It excludes other possibilities such as persistent racial bias, historic trauma, and parochialism rooted in deep distrust. Instead, scientific knowledge is presented to the public as justification for action, thereby removing the blame from the decision process stakeholders and shifting it into the realm of unquestioned doctrine. In this case, the doctrines of economism (wellbeing as achieved through accumulation and consumption), scientism (blight can be observed, measured, and evaluated—and therefore solved through scientific inquiry and management), and technocracy (only certain types of knowledge and skills, or expertise, are valid ways of approaching a problem once it is rendered technical). By so heavily relying on unquestioned doctrine in decision-making, the blight management approach selected in Project C.O.R.E. neglects other routes and avenues for change such as localized action, cultural shifts, and even serendipity.

Moreover, in order to promote yet another demolitions program, Project C.O.R.E. messaging reverts to promises of increased and beautified green spaces—similar to the promises made during the post-World War II urban renewal period. Journalistic press about the blight problem is amplified,<sup>215</sup> residents are mailed flyers informing them of the benefits of demolition and the correspondingly created green space,<sup>216</sup> and public meetings are held to enlighten residents about the plan rather than seek their input.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> News coverage of vacant and blighted buildings in Baltimore, as showcased by just a few of many examples: A) Wenger, Yvonne. “City to take earlier, more aggressive approach to abandoned houses”. *The Baltimore Sun*. (2015, January 25). <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-vacants-20150121-story.html>; B) McCoy, Terrence. “Baltimore has more than 16,000 vacant houses. Why can’t the homeless move in?”. *The Washington Post*. (2015, May 12). [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/baltimore-has-more-than-16000-vacant-houses-why-cant-the-homeless-move-in/2015/05/12/3fd6b068-f7ed-11e4-9030-b4732caefe81\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.4b67e9ce33f7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/baltimore-has-more-than-16000-vacant-houses-why-cant-the-homeless-move-in/2015/05/12/3fd6b068-f7ed-11e4-9030-b4732caefe81_story.html?utm_term=.4b67e9ce33f7); and C) Calvert, Scott. “Baltimore grapples with blight quandary”. *The Wall Street Journal*. (2015, May 25). <http://www.wsj.com/articles/baltimore-grapples-with-blight-quandary-1432586983>.

<sup>216</sup> See Appendix 1.2 for Project C.O.R.E. flyer

<sup>217</sup> On June 29, 2016, representatives from the City of Baltimore and State of Maryland held a public ‘Citywide demolition and stabilization meeting’ at a high school gym in West Baltimore. As a former community organizer, I am well versed in planning and hosting public meetings of all sizes. This meeting failed to provide basic conveniences typical of public meetings. Despite the high temperatures, the meeting was held at a location without air conditioning, providing unnecessary physical stress for elderly and frail attendees. Though held from 6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m., during dinner hours, no snacks or refreshments were offered. It was difficult to hear presenters over the loud fans that had to be brought in to cool down the crowded space, the presentations were projected onto a screen that was not visible to the majority of attendees, and despite being advertised as a community dialogue, the format was presentation heavy with the community question and answer period held to three questions from the audience. During the presentations, the officials relied heavily on technocratic language and insider terms without clarification including, “housing typology”, “traditional market forces”, “stressed markets”, and “CDC”. At one point, a representative from the state housing authority stated that their greening plan had the support of community-centric organizations such as Parks & People Foundation. However, a Parks & People Foundation staff person in attendance was visibly upset at that announcement. When I questioned them later, I was told that the department did not have permission to claim the support of Parks & People Foundation but that the staffer was not given time during the Q&A to clarify their organization’s position. After the presentations, residents were encouraged to participate in three work stations: 1) Voting for their favorite garden and green space designs (without information regarding possible uses, placements, or likelihood); 2) Marking on a map where they would like to see demolition and/or stabilization occur; 3) Marking on a map where they see green spaces being actively cared for. While I applauded the efforts to gather community feedback, there was no information provided regarding how residents could continue to engage with the Project C.O.R.E. process, how or if their feedback would be taken into account, and where to address future questions about the project. During the meeting, residents I spoke with described the mapping process as “confusing” and “discouraging”. I spoke with a city planning official two weeks after the meeting who noted that the meeting was just an example of “ticking a box,” and that Baltimore’s Housing Department was “moving so fast they lose track of

What these doctrines neglect are open dialogue and transparent decision-making. Instead, citizens are left battling it out or giving up, while Project C.O.R.E. supporters feel overly confident in their approach grounded in scientific justifications, and the Harlem Park stakeholders remain frustrated at the limitations of action and possibility. Meanwhile, processes continue. Despite the removal of homes, economic inequities will likely continue, crime will likely continue, and perceived safety will likely not increase.

Project C.O.R.E. then, to paraphrase the great thinker Einstein, is an attempt to solve a problem with the same thinking that created the problem in the first place. By so heavily relying on the belief that economic growth will increase wellbeing, Project C.O.R.E. fails to pass even a basic pragmatic test. In short, it will likely fail to achieve its stated goals as the expectations of radical improvement will likely not be upheld given the existing and unquestioned barriers to achieving human dignity. Additionally, given the extensive history of failed demolitions-centric approaches to blight management in Baltimore City, Project C.O.R.E. will likely also fail a substantive test in that solving blight through technical application only ignores broader cultural and community context.

While using the allure of additional green space as a way to promote a demolitions-centric blight management strategy, the greening would be temporary at best. Should Project C.O.R.E. achieve its goal of increasing development interest in neighborhoods that are blighted, the re-greened land will be soon developed and transitioned from green space to either commercial or residential use. However, again, the whole strategy relies on continued wealth accumulation through consumption—which is fundamentally at odds with many re-greening efforts to create more environmentally resilient communities.

### **Acting in Relation for Tomorrow**

While Project C.O.R.E. has already been initiated, the redevelopment subsidies and methods have not yet been finalized. There are several key technical and infrastructure investments that could be made to ameliorate both blight and the impacts of demolitions. Fremont Avenue along the eastern boundary of Harlem Park is a major

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the voices on the ground” and that it was impossible to “fix sixty years of disinvestment in three years” through programs such as Project C.O.R.E.

thoroughfare and would benefit from a bridge crossing the Highway to Nowhere. This bridge would directly connect Harlem Park residents, and West Baltimore residents in general, with more affluent and economically prosperous communities to the south, which have seen rapid gentrification and development. Moreover, the east-west light rail line, or Red Line, would significantly increase transit service access and regularity within Harlem Park. It would provide direct, reliable, and affordable transportation to major employers located downtown and in Eastern Baltimore.

Politically, measures to repair relationships between the City of Baltimore and residents in blighted communities must be taken. These actions could include appointing third party mediators for public meetings, providing financial incentives to residents for opening businesses within target neighborhoods, the inclusion of equity and anti-displacement measures within city comprehensive planning processes similar to the approach undertaken in Portland, Oregon,<sup>218</sup> and balancing mixed development with historic preservation.

Ultimately, the key to all of these processes and actions will be radical transparency. In Baltimore, it is clear that how we attend to people and place matters. Decisions made outside of context and in service to unquestioned doctrine threaten the resiliency of human-ecological communities. During the original urban renewal process in Harlem Park, decision-making processes, which lacked transparency, led to varying problem definitions, and therefore differences in desired solutions. As the social process continued, the lack of transparency created public engagement opportunities that were limited, which intensified distrust, and increased feelings of disassociation and anger. In response, parochialism on both sides intensified leaving degradations of human dignity, violent poverty, and the continued reliance on scientism and technocracy as methods to orient and place self in relation to world. Today, Project C.O.R.E. is on the precipice of repeating those same missteps in the name of progress, economic growth, and wellbeing. Building opportunities not just for discussion, but for active collaboration and

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<sup>218</sup> In July 2015, members of Portland's Planning and Sustainability Commission recommended including eleven equity and anti-displacement measures in the latest version of the city's comprehensive plan. The measures include options such as: using community benefits agreements to stabilize current residents and households previously displaced; creating permanently affordable homeownership and rental housing in market-rate developments; using land-banking and community benefits agreements as an anti-displacement tools; increase tenant protections; and require mitigation for anticipated displacement and housing affordability impacts of plans, investments, and development ("Report on Progress...", 2015).



understanding through *learning* dialogue may be critical to bridging the gaps in problem conceptualization, goal clarification, policy crafting, implementation, and evaluation.

Creating psychologically safe spaces where personal and cultural assumptions can be examined individually and within a learning group, or community, may be a way forward. Focusing on building “communities of commitment” as an exercise in personal commitment and community building shifts the focus from problem solving and learning (fact gathering) to generativeness and relatedness (belonging in relation to people and place).<sup>219</sup> Cultivating a continued commitment to place and networks will be vital for residents of Harlem Park to overcome spatial stigma and rebuild disintegrated social support ties.

Moreover, more inclusive processes will help blur the distinctions between fragmented approaches to problem solving that seek to gnaw complex systems into bite-sized pieces that can be addressed by appointed and area-limited experts. Through this hard work of commitment, we may be better able to overcome fragmentation, the disintegration of social networks, and the breakdown in genuine empathy for ecological and human communities. The possibilities for moving from individual thinker to systems thinker – meaning thinking in terms of being and relatedness – are fundamentally generative rather than simply subtractive, additive or competitive. Rather than creating and adopting a second language of American life, we need to create a second way of acting in the world, which becomes, quite literally, the American life.

However, this type of dialogue and collaboration relies on the ability of all involved to set aside their biases and belief in the power of their fragmented expertise. Critical too will be the ability of the players and stakeholders to be equally open to having their understandings, definitions and positions challenged by the other in community with them, while reflectively challenging themselves to acknowledge underlying held assumptions (or stories or biases) encompassed within their own disciplines or positions. This type of generative dialogue would need to be done in a manner that both acknowledges the expertise (meaning the value of an individual’s

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<sup>219</sup> Kofman, Fred, and Peter M. Senge. “Communities of commitment: The heart of learning organizations.” *Organizational dynamics* 22, no. 2 (1993): 5-13

contribution in relation to the whole of which they are a part) in the room while providing a platform for the clarification and development of common language, approach, and goals. Working interdisciplinary – by which I mean melding, bridging, and transcending the boundaries of epistemological communities – these types of learning communities may begin to conceptualize a different set of problems than originally perceived, leading to transformative, collaborative, and embedded approaches to addressing some of Harlem Park’s most pressing and persistent ecological, economic, and health challenges.

## APPENDIX

### 1.1 Methodologies

I am invested in building a more engaged and informed citizenry, and creating opportunities for participatory decision-making processes that increase human and ecological dignity. Throughout my life, and in my research, I benefit from having relatively few value deficits within Lasswell's framework, and am grateful to have had the privileges and affordances that have led me to this research within this context. In recognition of my affiliations and privileges, my methodological choices were undertaken in an effort to extend the value affordances I have and provide a platform for collaborative research and effort with community residents and stakeholders.

#### *Oral History*

I began talking with and collecting oral histories in May 2016 and used a “snowball” technique to identify participants. Beginning with Harlem Park residents and stakeholders that were familiar with Parks & People Foundation, I asked each person I spoke with for other individuals or organizations to contact. This method was ideal for establishing rapport, if not representativeness, and was important for working in and with a community that has deep distrust of institutional representatives. In an effort to broaden my outreach, I also spent two months walking block by block through Harlem Park.

During my walks, I groundtruthed existing GIS data on conditions in Harlem Park, but also spoke with residents on their stoops, in parks, on corners, and on the street. I also attended organized public meetings on urban development and greening, neighborhood association meetings, and urban greening volunteer events. Each public meeting resulted in at least one additional one-on-one interview.

Finally, I organized a public comment opportunity in the historic Lafayette Square Park on July 19, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. At the event, I provided coffee, donuts, and fresh fruits. Residents were invited to share written thoughts on and experiences in Harlem Park on comment cards, or had the option of speaking directly with a representative from the City of Baltimore's Planning Department, a representative from Parks & People Foundation, or myself.

In total, I spoke with 52 Harlem Park residents from May 2016 through July 2016, and in September 2016. The residents were all black American, and comprised of both

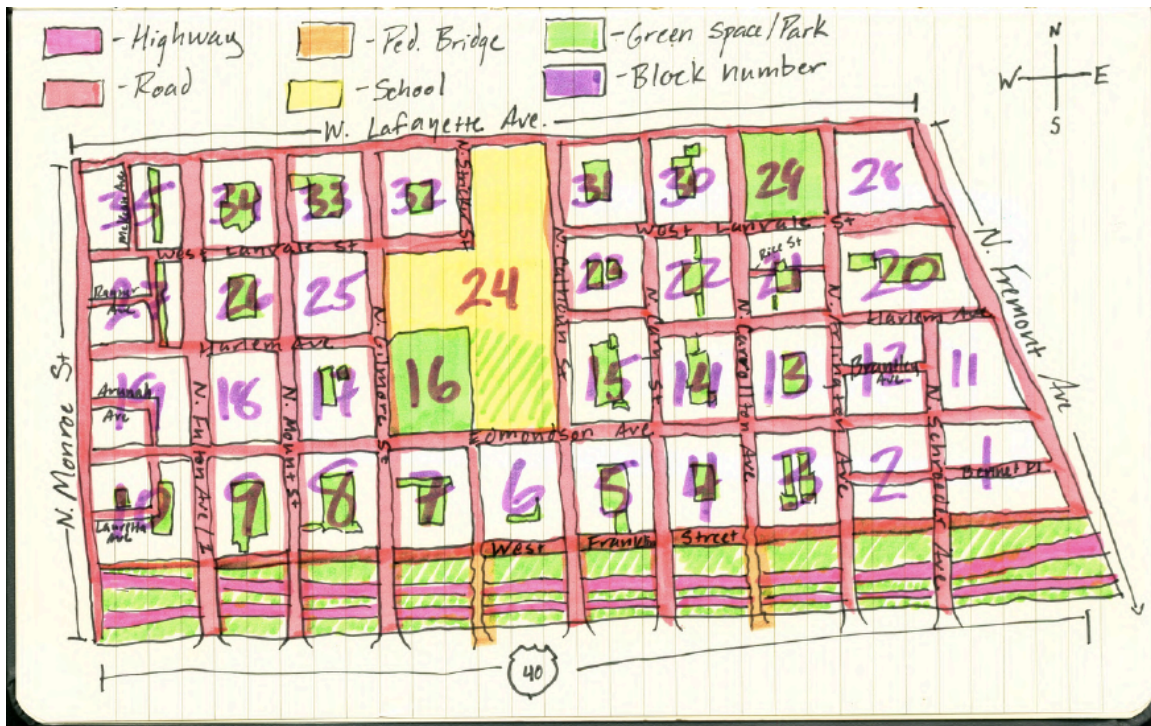
homeowners and renters between the ages of 18 and 80. 29 of the residents were male and 23 were female. Of those conversations, nine (eight male, one female) were audio recorded—with resident permission—and transcribed. I intentionally chose oral history over survey or formal interview because I wanted to leave space for residents to tell me what was most important, and what to pay attention to, rather than approach them with a preconceived idea of themes. I wanted leave space to recognize and respect resident expertise on the conditions within their own community while also being open to emergent themes as determined through conversation with residents. Each conversation represents an interaction with a whole human being. While the oral histories are necessarily presented here in a fragmented and descriptive manner, they contain the stories that individuals shared that connect consciousness to life experiences, politics, relationships, and sense of place.

Field notes and notes during public meetings were taken by hand and digitally transcribed, oral histories were digitally recorded and transcribed, and public informational flyers were digitally scanned. All digital materials were then coded via Nvivo and analyzed. All research was conducted in compliance with Yale University Institutional Review Board's Human Subjects Committee (HSC).

### ***Geo-Spatial Condition Mapping***

From May 2016 to July 2016, I walked street by street through every block in the Harlem Park neighborhood, moving east to west and south to north. I assigned each block a unique number:





**Figure 65: Field map of Harlem Park.**

*Image: Amber Collett.*

Using publicly available geospatial data from Baltimore City Open GIS Data,<sup>220</sup> I visually groundtruthed available map data on the following: vacant lots; vacant buildings; park properties; businesses (i.e., mini-marts/corner stores, bars, liquor stores, barber shops, restaurants, funeral home, etc.); churches and places of worship; schools and daycares; condemned houses; lead paint violations; houses marked as fire hazards; and police and fire stations. Additionally, I also geospatially mapped the following data: street trees and other re-greening activities; historical markers (i.e., former movie theater, former publishing business, and the Sellers Mansion); unreinforced walls on row houses; City of Baltimore housing demolitions (planned and in-progress); Parks & People Foundation re-greening projects; Vacant2Value properties; public art; fenced properties or lots; Baltimore Ecosystem Study plots; occupied houses coded as vacant; properties marked vacant but showed construction activities; houses for auction or sale; resident modified lots or buildings (i.e., a garden, basketball hoop on a boarded door, flowers on a vacant property's stoop, etc.); trash and/or dumping activity; and additional items of interest (i.e., pigeon keeping, shooting memorials, scenes of accident/violence, salt boxes,

<sup>220</sup> "Open Baltimore". *Baltimore City Open GIS Data*. (2015). <http://gis.baltimore.opendata.arcgis.com/>

homeless encampments, and hot corners or drug related activity). While collecting and mapping this information, I also geo-tagged 684 photographs and inputted all geospatial data into Google Earth Pro. This data provides a highly-accurate snapshot of current conditions in the Harlem Park neighborhood.

## 1.2 Table of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>Acronym/Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
<b>AME</b>	African Methodist Episcopal
<b>BCPC</b>	Baltimore City Planning Commission
<b>BURHA</b>	Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency
<b>(D)</b>	Democrat
<b>DPW</b>	Department of Public Works
<b>ESI</b>	Earth Stewardship Initiative
<b>FHA</b>	Federal Housing Administration
<b>GBC</b>	Greater Baltimore Commission
<b>GGI</b>	Growing Green Initiative
<b>IDBC</b>	Interstate Division for Baltimore City
<b>MAD</b>	Movement Against Destruction
<b>NAACP</b>	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
<b>NDC</b>	Neighborhood Design Center
<b>PAB</b>	Policy Advisory Board
<b>Project C.O.R.E.</b>	Project Creating Opportunities for Renewal and Enterprise
<b>(R)</b>	Republican
<b>RAM</b>	Relocation Action Movement
<b>SOM</b>	Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
<b>UDCT</b>	Urban Design Concept Team
<b>URC</b>	Urban Renewal Committee
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>USDOT</b>	United States Department of Transportation

### 1.3 Timeline of Major Events in Baltimore History

Major Events in Baltimore History	
<b>Early Baltimore</b>	
1729	Baltimore is founded; initially settled by people of German and Scottish Descent
1796	Baltimore adopts original city charter, which authorizes the use of police power to preserve order and secure property and people from violence, danger, and destruction. The charter would be cited as justifications for later use of police power to segregate residential neighborhoods based on race.
1810	Baltimore residents own 4,672 slaves.
1857	Lafayette Square Park constructed to provide public gathering space for Harlem Park residents.
April 12, 1861 – May 9, 1865	The American Civil War
1861	Riots throughout Baltimore as Confederate supporters attacked Union soldiers.
1861–1865	Union soldiers occupy City of Baltimore and use Harlem Park manor homes and parks as barracks and hospitals.
1869	Episcopal Church of the Ascension builds cathedral-style building on northeast corner of Lafayette Square Park.
<b>The Great Migration, West Ordinance, &amp; Redlining</b>	
1870–1880	Joseph Cone, a private developer, builds hundreds of row houses in Harlem Park.
1870–1890	More than 25,000 black Americans relocate from southern states to Baltimore.
1871	Grace Methodist Episcopal Church builds on south side of Lafayette Square Park.
1878	Catholic church builds on west side of Lafayette Square Park.
1879	Heirs of the Dr. Thomas Edmondson estate donate 9.75 acres to the City of Baltimore to create Harlem Square Park.
September 1899	First recorded incident of violent confrontation regarding residential space occurs on Druid Hill Avenue, a few blocks east of Harlem Park.
1903	Black American congregation attempts to purchase St. Paul's English Lutheran Church on Druid Hill Avenue. Church leaders burn mortgage and adopt a resolution forbidding the sale of the property to black Americans.
1906	White residents of Harlem Park formed the Harlem Park Protective Association when the Colored Independent Methodist Church bought property on North Gilmore Street with the hopes of creating a colored orphan society.
1907	Several segregationist neighborhood associations form The Neighborhood Improvement Association to advocate for racial segregation of residential neighborhoods in Baltimore.
1908	Harlem Park Protective Association rebrands and becomes the Harlem Park Improvement Association.
1910–1930	Black American population of Baltimore increases 3.28 percent each year; part of larger trend throughout Northern cities termed the 'Great Migration'.

1910	Baltimore City Council passes the West Ordinance; the first residential segregation ordinance in the country.
1918	West Ordinance dismantled after Maryland courts ruled the Supreme Court's decision to strike down Louisville's segregation ordinance in 1917 also applied to Baltimore.
1928	Metropolitan United Methodist Church, a black American congregation, relocates to Lafayette Square Park.
1929	St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church, a black American congregation, relocates to Lafayette Square Park.
1930	Methodist Episcopal Church, a white congregation, leaves their building along Harlem Square Park.
1932	St. James Episcopal Church, a black American congregation, relocates to Lafayette Square Park.
October 1932	Harlem Theatre, located in the former Methodist Episcopal Church building, opens.
1934–1968	FHA mortgage insurance requirements utilize redlining.
1934	Emmanuel Christian Community, a black American congregation, relocates to Lafayette Square Park.
<b>Post-Industrial Urbanism, Urban Renewal, &amp; Interstate Design</b>	
1944	Robert Moses proposes the City of Baltimore build a 400-ft wide sunken highway along the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor.
1948	Maryland transfers responsibilities of design, planning, and construction of controlled access facilities to the City of Baltimore.
1949	Title I of Housing Act initiates federal funding for 'urban renewal' projects dealing with slum clearance.
1950	Baltimore's population peaks at 950,000; more than 34 percent of labor force employed in manufacturing.
1950-1970	Baltimore loses more than 46,000 manufacturing jobs; more than 25,000 black American families in Baltimore are displaced by urban renewal projects.
1951–1964	Close to 90 percent of citizens displaced by urban renewal projects are from low-income black American neighborhoods.
1956	National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, or the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, becomes the largest public works project in the history of America at the time, and authorizes the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate.
1957	Engineers attending the Hartford Conference on New Highways express concerns about displacement impacts of urban freeways.
1958	Urban Renewal Committee tests inner-block park design in Harlem Park with a demonstration block.
Early 1960's	Harlem Park Elementary/Middle School built. Originally slated to be built within Harlem Park, NAACP and others voiced opposition, as the park was one of the few green spaces within the neighborhood. School site was shifted, which then required the condemnation of three full blocks of homes along the north side of the park. The school also, ultimately, took approximately half of the park for use as recreational fields.
1961	Black Americans account for 10% of the United States



	population, but represent more than 66% of residents living in areas identified for urban renewal.
1961	J.E. Greiner, an engineering firm hired by the City of Baltimore, proposes the 10-D freeway plan.
1961	Inner block park plan for Harlem Park proposed to offset the loss of homes and public space because of the 10-D interstate plan and urban renewal projects.
June 1962	Hershey Conference on Freeways in the Urban Setting – calls for community involvement in planning of urban freeways.
1964	Mayor McKeldin (R) invites the Greater Baltimore Commission (GBC), an organization primarily made of business leaders in the Baltimore region, to help manage and align the interests of the Baltimore City Planning Commission (BCPC) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) which were conflicted over how to—if at all—implement the 10-D plan.
1964	David Barton appointed chair of BCPC; is skeptical of the 10-D plan.
1966	Mayor McKeldin and the Maryland State Roads Commission created the Interstate Division for Baltimore City (IDBC), a joint city-state freeway-planning agency.
1966	Mayor McKeldin forms the Policy Advisory Board (PAB) to advise IDBC.
1966	IDBC proposes dividing 10-D plan into four quadrants to be designed by different firms.
1966	Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) hired to study freeway plans.
1966	Housing demolition begins in Harlem Park to prepare for freeway building.
Oct. 1966	Urban Design Concept Team (UDCT) created to review freeway plan.
Nov. 1966	Spiro Agnew (R) elected Maryland's 55 <sup>th</sup> governor; he suspends the UDCT contract negotiations.
Nov./Dec. 1966	Jerome Wolff appointed to head Maryland State Roads Commission; vocally supports 1961 10-D freeway plan.
1967	Harlem Park and Rosemont residents form Relocation Action Movement (RAM), the first anti-highway grassroots coalition.
Nov. 1967	Thomas D'Alesandro III (D) elected Mayor of Baltimore; left-leaning.
April 1968	Baltimore has six-days of civil unrest after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.
May 1968	PAB rejects alternative freeway plan that would have eliminated the Franklin-Mulberry corridor.
1968	Coalition of anti-highway neighborhood groups form Movement Against Destruction (MAD).
1968	The Civil Rights Act of 1968 passed by congress; Federal Highway Administration (FHA) required that freeway planning processes had to host public hearings.
1968	SOM planners submit 3-A plan after holding the Rosemont Hearings to gather community feedback regarding the 10-D

	freeway plan. It is rejected by the IDBC. Greiner, the firm responsible for the original 10-D plan submits the 3-C plan as an alternative to the 3-A plan.
October 18, 1968	PAB holds closed-door meeting and approves the 3-C freeway plan.
October 1968	Baltimore Mayor D'Alesandro III announces the USDOT office endorsed the 3-C plan and that it would be moving forward.
1969-1970	Harlem Park's inner block parks are constructed.
1969	Baltimore's Department of Recreation and Parks allocates \$15,000 for the yearly maintenance of each of Harlem Park's inner block parks, but that amount was only half of what they felt was actually necessary to adequately maintain the spaces.
1971	UDCT disbanded.
1972	Mayor William Donald Schaefer (D) announces that finishing the freeway would be major goal of his administration.
1972	Freeway construction in Harlem Park begins after more than five years of demolitions.
1972	Sidney Brower releases study of inner block parks and predicts their failure.
1972-1973	MAD brings suit against the 3-A plan claiming that a proper environmental impact statement had not been conducted.
1973	Oil crisis puts highway expansion efforts under additional scrutiny.
1974	Federal Urban Redevelopment Program replaced with the Community Development Block Grant program.
1974	Lafayette Square Center, a community services center, opens.
1977	MAD nonfunctional.
1978	N.M. Carroll Manor built to provide affordable senior housing in Harlem Park.
Late 1970's	Franklin-Mulberry corridor not fully completed and becomes known as the "highway to nowhere"; additional projects such as light-rail and community spaces are never provided.
<b>Contemporary Baltimore</b>	
1970-1995	Baltimore loses an additional 55,000 manufacturing jobs.
1980's-1990's	Crack epidemic devastates black American communities.
2000-2014	Population of Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park decreases from 17,496 to 14,896.
2002	Neighborhood organizations create West Baltimore Coalition to engage in trust-building and community dialogue process to create an east-west light rail line proposal.
2011	Mayor Rawlings-Blake (D) announces the Vacants to Values program to combine demolition with property rehabilitation.
2011	Parks & People Foundation begins inner block park revitalization process.
2014	City of Baltimore releases an additional \$7.5-10 million in dedicated for strategic demolitions throughout Baltimore
May 2014	City of Baltimore's Growing Green Initiative (GGI) launched.
March 2015	Parks & People Foundation and partners revitalize Hidden Streams Park.

December 2015	Gov. Hogan (R) vetoes Red Line light-rail project, an east-west light-rail line. In response, NAACP files a Title VI Civil Rights Act complaint.
January 5, 2016	Maryland's Governor Larry Hogan and Baltimore City's Mayor Rawlings-Blake announced a new partnership to address urban decay, or blight, throughout Baltimore City, named Project Creating Opportunities for Renewal and Enterprise (Project C.O.R.E.).

#### 1.4 Timeline of Baltimore Freeway Plans

Date	Name	Main Features
1944	Robert Moses Plan	Proposes sunken highway along Franklin-Mulberry corridor.
1961	10-D Plan	Creates an extensive network of interstates around and through Baltimore. Interstates planned to bisect the Inner Harbor (downtown), Fells Point, Federal Hill Canton, Franklin and Mulberry, and Rosemont communities. Inner Harbor would have 14-lane low-level bridge through the center of downtown Baltimore.
1966	10-D Plan: Four quadrant proposal	IDBC proposes dividing 10-D plan into four quadrants to be designed by different firms.
1968	Rosemont bypass proposal	PAB rejects an alternative freeway bypass plan which would have spared the predominantly black American Rosemont community—located just west of Harlem Park—from the Franklin-Mulberry corridor plan
1968	3-A Plan	Submitted by SOM planners; incorporated a boulevard system for downtown, move the freeway out of the Rosemont community, reduce the number of traffic lanes in the elevated freeway proposed for Fells Point, and replace the 14-lane Inner Harbor freeway bridge with a harbor crossing near For McHenry. It is rejected by the IDBC.
1968	3-C Plan	Greiner, the firm responsible for the 10-D plan, submitted an alternative to the SOM 3-A plan, called the 3-C system that added a southern bypass to the 10-D system. PAB holds

		closed-door meeting and approves the 3-C freeway plan.
December 1968	Modified 3-A Plan (final)	After widespread opposition to 3-C plan, Mayor D'Alesandro III reverses decision and adopts the 3-A plan with a freeway bypass around the central district of Baltimore's downtown. The plan includes the Franklin-Mulberry corridor in Harlem Park.
1970's	Plan actualization	The project runs out of money; Franklin-Mulberry corridor is left half constructed along the southern border of Harlem Park but the light-rail transit service and other community benefits included in the plan are never finalized.



## 1.5 Project C.O.R.E. Community Mailer

Front & back:



Inside:

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING DEMOLITION



Fencing and barriers will be put up before demolition so the site is safe and secure.

Dust created by the work will be controlled by water.



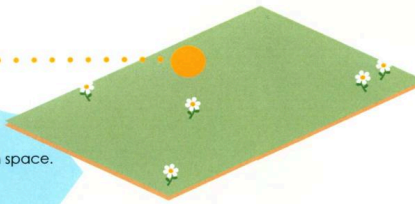
Debris removal will be performed in a timely fashion.



Dumpsters and dump trucks will be sprayed down and covered before leaving the site.



When the work is done, the site will be cleaned up, leaving behind a new green space.



For more information about Project C.O.R.E. and what to expect around your neighborhood during demolition, please contact us: [project.core@maryland.gov](mailto:project.core@maryland.gov) | 800-756-0119

## SAFEGUARDS



Keep windows and doors **CLOSED** as much as possible.



**DO NOT** dry clothes using outdoor clotheslines.



**STAY OUT** of the work area.



Keep pets **INDOORS**.

## FAQs

- 1 When will clean up start?**  
Once demolition begins, debris removal will start within 48 hours.
- 2 How do I contact Project C.O.R.E.?**  
We want to hear what you think! How should the space be used in the future? Email your ideas to: [project.core@maryland.gov](mailto:project.core@maryland.gov)
- 3 Will there be job openings?**  
To learn about job opportunities or receive training, contact the Mayor's Office of Employment Development at 410-396-3009.
- 4 What will happen to my neighborhood?**  
Demolition will result in community green space in the short-term, with opportunities for the redevelopment of housing and other amenities in the future.

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