

MONUMENT-M^CELDERRY-FAYETTE AREA PLAN



September 2006

***The Monument-McElderry-Fayette
Community | Baltimore, Maryland***

*with technical assistance from
Goody Clancy in association with
Archplan
Kittelson & Associates
Lipman, Frizzell & Mitchell LLC*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS

- To the France-Merrick Foundation for funding the Monument-McElderry-Fayette Area Plan
- To all the residents and other stakeholders who have contributed their time and resources to make the planning process a success.

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Goody Clancy in association with

- Archplan
- Kittelson & Associates
- Lipman, Frizzell & Mitchell LLC

On the cover: This tree-shaded view of the south side of McElderry Street at the corner of North Bradford shows newer houses created in an earlier period of resident activism, as well as the traditional rowhouses of the MMF neighborhood.

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To:

Mayor Martin O'Malley
Baltimore City Council President Sheila Dixon
Councilwoman Paula Johnson Branch
Housing Commissioner Paul T. Graziano
Department of Planning Director Otis Rolley, III

We are pleased to submit the Monument-McElderry-Fayette Area Development Plan for the revitalization of the C.A.R.E. and McElderry Park communities. The plan is the result of a twelve-month planning process and it is more than a document—rather it represents the coming together of residents and other stakeholders to begin to take charge of molding the future of this area. As is described in greater detail in the report itself, there has been extensive community involvement not only in visioning and generating the ideas for the plan, but in developing the citizen-led mechanisms and the initial partnerships to begin working on implementing the plan recommendations.

The Monument-McElderry-Fayette area is ripe for a revival, however, it is critical that the current residents help determine the direction of new development impacting their neighborhoods. We believe this plan lays out the steps to revitalize the area for both existing and future residents. We urge you to support the adoption of this plan by the Baltimore City Planning Commission and to partner with the residents and stakeholders of C.A.R.E. and McElderry Park in renewing our communities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Monument-McElderry-Fayette (MMF) Plan is a community development planning project for the 40-block area bordered by Washington, Monument, Linwood, and Fayette. In late 2005 the France-Merrick Foundation convened a steering committee of community leaders, representatives from Baltimore City, philanthropic institutions, and redevelopment entities to guide the development of a plan to serve as a blueprint for future development and investment in the area. As a precondition to underwriting the costs of the planning process, the France-Merrick Foundation charged the Steering Committee with several prerequisites to ensure that the MMF Plan would be successful:

- The plan must be **community-based**. There should be broad-based input from community stakeholders.
- The plan should be as **comprehensive** as possible. It should not be just a real estate plan, but it should include recommendations for education, recreation, health, transportation, etc.
- The plan should be **realistic**. It must focus on an area large enough to have significant impact, but not so large as to be unmanageable.
- The plan should provide **specific, concrete actions** and recommendations that would improve the overall development of the community.
- There must be a clear understanding that there is **no commitment for funding** for any or all of the recommendations that are developed.
- There must be a commitment from all involved parties to **prevent the process from bogging down** in a “political” quagmire that could hurt the community.

The Steering Committee chose a nationally known planning firm, Goody Clancy, to serve as the lead planner to help develop, coordinate and lead a community planning process in the selected area. The Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC) was selected to act as the fiscal agent and to provide logistical support to the Goody Clancy team. In addition HEBCAC facilitated an assessment of quality-of-life issues for community residents (including safety, education, health and recreation resources) and compiled specific recommendations for improvement.

The Monument-McElderry-Fayette Plan was conducted over the course of eleven months. Goody Clancy outlined a detailed schedule for preparing recommendations and drafting the plan that involved analysis of existing conditions, community visioning, and then developing a strategic framework and action plan. Each step of the process has required the active participation of residents and stakeholders through public workshops and meeting, focus groups, and individual interviews. Special attention has also been given to providing opportunities for children and youth to play a meaningful part in gathering neighborhood information and preparing the vision and course of action for their community.

In setting the planning agenda, residents charted a set of principles to guide the planning process. These Guiding Principles were generally agreed upon at the Monument-McElderry-Fayette Community Meeting on April 19, 2006, at Tench Tilghman Elementary School. (These principles were later amended at a meeting on May 24, 2006). It was recognized that these principles might be modified by the community over time.

Guiding Principles For The Monument-McElderry-Fayette Area Plan

- 1 We see a need for ongoing community dialogue and flow of information from the MMF Planning Group to continue as we implement the plan.
- 2 For the plan to work it must have the support and the consensus of the whole community. Once the plan is complete the community needs to speak in unison in support of the plan.
- 3 Let us finish the plan by the end of July. That is enough time to do a good job, but does not delay our need to respond to a neighborhood that is rapidly changing.
- 4 We do not want people to be forced to relocate through the use of eminent domain.
- 5 We want to have a plan that is realistic so that the city will formally endorse it, but we will be clear about where we will not compromise.
- 6 If more people move into the neighborhood, we do not want this population increase to be at the expense of open space.
- 7 We want a neighborhood that does not concentrate housing, either by type, income level, or ownership status.
- 8 Our vision is to create a mixed-income neighborhood, one that has a healthy mix of ownership and rental housing, and one that has enough affordable housing to accommodate current residents who wish to remain in the neighborhood over time.

OTHER NEEDS

- 1 We want a program that helps renters to become homeowners.
- 2 We want a plan to provide ways to help current homeowners repair/upgrade their property and be able to pay property taxes so that they can stay in the neighborhood.
- 3 We want educational programs and better information to help residents avoid predatory lending.
- 4 We want home-owner counseling and financial literacy programs to begin well in advance of any new housing development so residents (renters and homeowners) will be better prepared and financially capable of purchasing (or renting) these new homes.
- 5 We want to maintain goals for a housing price mix that recognizes that in the MMF area of Baltimore City income levels are different than in the metropolitan area as reflected in the Area Median Income (AMI).

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The MMF planning process engaged a high level of resident participation, with over 380 residents attending nine community meetings held at Tench Tilghman Elementary School. In addition, the McElderry Park Community Association and C.A.R.E. held numerous additional meetings to discuss resident concerns and helped craft a set of recommendations that form the core of the MMF Plan. A summary of concerns and recommendations for action follows.

Housing

What Residents Want

- > A housing development plan that:
 - focuses on **rehabbing vacant rowhouses** to preserve the existing character of the neighborhood
 - **creates new, affordable housing** opportunities for current residents
 - **preserves** and improves existing **green/open space**
 - **guarantees good management** of any and all rental units to ensure good neighbor standards
- > **No project-like buildings** that warehouse low-income residents
- > **No forced relocation of any resident**

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Develop and pursue a strategy of rehabilitation of vacant properties, starting with disposition of city-owned properties to developers and current residents who will create an initial batch of affordable housing.
2. Create or designate a Housing Resource Center to help existing residents and homeowners with housing rehab loans or grants, tax relief programs, and other services. The center would also help first-time homebuyers with financial and housing counseling.
3. Explore the redevelopment of a multifamily site for mixed-income housing with ground-floor retail at a site on Monument Street and Milton Avenue.
4. Identify more ways to develop and deepen partnerships with various housing organizations in order to advocate for and garner funding to create affordable housing for this community.
5. Begin discussions with the City of Baltimore Finance Department on designation of the MMF area as a TIF district.
6. Open discussions on creation of an affordable housing trust with the City of Baltimore and Johns Hopkins University, who may become potential funders.
7. Establish a Housing Subcommittee to further strategize on options to bring housing resources to the community for future development of affordable homeownership and rental opportunities for current residents. Such future development plans must reflect a commitment to providing affordable housing and must include mechanisms to maintain affordability over the long term.
8. Review Middle East Urban Renewal Ordinance Plans with the appropriate elected officials to ensure that the ordinance aligns with the MMF plan and the concerns of the community.

Education

What Residents Want

- > Excellent schools for the neighborhood.
- > Community schools programming for all the schools in the area.

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Establish an Education Subcommittee to advocate for speeding up the Baltimore City Public School System facility recommendations for rebuilding Tench Tilghman Elementary School and for making substantial renovations at William Paca and Commodore Rogers Elementary Schools.
2. Strengthen community school programs at Tench Tilghman, William Paca, and Commodore Rogers Elementary Schools to more firmly establish them as “community centers” and resource points for the neighborhood.

Youth activity

What Residents Want

- > More organized recreational activities in the neighborhood
- > Meaningful youth engagement in implementing the plan.

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Create a Youth Engagement Committee and develop, *with real youth involvement*, a plan to continue to identify and promote youth involvement in activities to revitalize the community.
2. Work with current providers of recreational and educational youth programs (such as Banner Neighborhoods, the Door, the Men’s Center and others) to improve and develop more after-school/ recreation programs for pre-teens and teens.
3. Work to develop a functional recreational facility and community center that meets the needs of youth in the neighborhood.

Employment

What Residents Want

- > Access to job-training opportunities so that residents can get better jobs and improve their earning capacity so their families can become more financially stable.
- > Effective programs to help grow neighborhood businesses and assure that residents financially benefit from the housing development in the area (such as getting construction jobs).

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Ensure that the Family Support Program at Tench Tilghman Elementary School is continued, and strengthen its ability to help families with employment issues.
2. Create an Employment Subcommittee that would work to better connect residents with jobs and training. This effort would include providers of important supportive services such as the Men’s Center, the Door, Healthy Start and others to improve cooperation and collaboration to ensure better access to services and removal of barriers to employment.
3. Open discussions with Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions on ways to promote better employment opportunities for neighborhood residents and to actively recruit residents for job openings.

Parks and open space

What Residents Want

- > Open space and small parks in the neighborhood that are well-maintained.
- > Support for the several open space projects already underway by neighborhood groups.

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Create a Neighborhood Greening Subcommittee of the MMF planning group.
2. Create a detailed Neighborhood Greening Plan for street-tree planting priorities, schoolyard greening, and community garden opportunities, and assisting new and ongoing projects (such as the Amazing Port Street Gardens, Amazing Rose Street Gardens, the Tench Tilghman playground area, Library Square, the Madeira Street Gardens, and others).
3. Seek technical assistance from nonprofit organizations and funding from organizations such as the Parks & People Foundation to support initial greening projects

Monument Street retail district

What Residents Want

- > A safe, clean retail district that offers a wide selection of quality goods and services for current and future residents with community engagement.

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Approach the city and city markets management about expanding and improving the Northeast Market, with particular attention to improving the quality and cost of its food offerings. Any physical improvements at the market should maintain the current architectural character of the building.
2. Recruit a large, full-service pharmacy to Monument Street.
3. Work with the police and with Johns Hopkins to increase the reality and perception of security.
4. Work with retailers to broaden the retail mix.
5. Work with the Monument Street business community and Baltimore City Public Markets Corp. to increase opportunities for resident entrepreneurs and minorities to establish businesses in the Monument Street retail district or in the Northeast Market.
6. Work with property owners to encourage them to improve their properties in ways that will make Monument Street more inviting for shoppers.

Transportation and parking

What Residents Want

- > Changes to certain streets and intersections that make those areas more “friendly” to the residential neighborhood that they serve.
- > More parking for both the retail area and the neighborhoods close to the JHU campus.

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Create a Transportation Subcommittee to advocate and develop plans for improvements.
2. Explore ways to create additional parking spaces near Monument Street to serve current and future merchants and area residents.
3. Work with the city to install signals at the following intersections: Washington and Jefferson; Washington and McElderry
4. Work with the city to lower traffic speeds and reduce truck traffic on Orleans and Fayette.
5. Make the Monument Street parking lots serving the Northeast Market more secure and attractive by upgrading lighting and improving the pedestrian routes from the parking lots to Monument Street and the market.
6. Work with the city to make sure that all residential streets within the Permit 17 area are marked with appropriate signage, and increase enforcement, with special provisions for resident seniors and hardship cases.
7. Explore the creation of appropriate bicycle routes and provide bicycle parking on Monument Street and at other community destinations such as parks, community centers and churches and have the routes included in the city’s Bicycle Master Plan.

Quality of life

What Residents Want

- > A neighborhood that is free from crime and violence.
- > Safe, clean streets and alleys, and a sense that this neighborhood is adequately served by the city.
- > Vibrant neighborhood associations that invite people to be involved and offer real opportunities for residents to make a positive difference in their neighborhood.

What The Plan Suggests We Do

Create a Quality of Life Subcommittee to work with residents and local organizations to address community concerns in the following areas:

1. **COMMUNITY LIFE:** Work to increase the capacity of neighborhood associations and seek to raise their funding levels, enabling them to become more stable and less dependent upon a small group of leaders so these organizations can succeed over time.
2. **PUBLIC SAFETY:** Develop a multi-year, multi-prong anti-crime initiative for the MMF planning area.
3. **PUBLIC SANITATION:** Organize a citizen campaign to monitor sanitation conditions and work with Baltimore City Sanitation Department to address neighborhood concerns.

Health

What Residents Want

- > Programs that address some of the critical health issues that are especially prevalent in the neighborhood.
- > Help for neighborhood residents who are battling drug addiction.

What The Plan Suggests We Do

1. Create a Health Subcommittee to develop strategies that relate to neighborhood health issues, with special attention to substance abuse and mental health.
2. Explore ways of creating and fostering community-based partnerships with the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, the Bloomberg School of Public Health, the public health-related programs of the University of Maryland, and other health-related organizations for outreach and programming targeted to the MMF community.

Leading with the plan: A guide for the Monument-McElderry-Fayette Area Plan implementation

Creating the MMF plan is just the beginning of the community's efforts to shape the change that is coming to this part of East Baltimore. This revitalization plan is merely the tool, resident engagement is the action that is necessary to create change. In order for the plan to be a success, everyone who has participated in the planning process must continue to be involved, with new outreach to enhance participation. Organizational steps must also be taken to make sure that the MMF plan recommendations and action items are acted upon as soon as possible. These initial organizational steps include:

- > Establish a Board of Governors to be the "stewards" of the plan. This Board of Governors will have the responsibility of ensuring that the MMF plan recommendations and action items are implemented.
 - The Board of Governors will consist of 15 members and a MMF plan coordinator.
 - The core Board of Governors will consist of ten residents from the planning area and elected by each of the two primary community organizations in the MMF planning area (five members by C.A.R.E. and five members by the McElderry Park Community Association).
 - The remaining five members should be institutional or other stakeholders who should be selected based on their ability to contribute to the revitalization of the community. These five non-core members will be selected by the ten resident members of the Board of Governors with the assistance of the MMF plan coordinator.
 - The ten core Board of Governors will be elected for terms specified by their community organizations. The remaining five non-core members will serve for a one-year term.

- The Board of Governors will elect two of its members to serve as chair and vice chair. Both offices will have a term of one year. All meetings will be administered using *Roberts Rules of Order* and in the event of a voting tie, it is suggested that the MMF plan coordinator vote. All meetings will be held monthly or as needed, per the Board of Governors. A quorum will be based on a simple majority. Minutes for all meetings will be recorded and provided to the two community associations (C.A.R.E. and McElderry Park Community Association) and available to residents upon request.
 - The Board of Governors will be responsible for the recruitment and oversight of MMF area subcommittees. These subcommittees will review potential revitalization activities and make recommendations to the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors will have sole authority to approve subcommittee recommendations. It is advisable for subcommittee chairs to be members of the Board of Governors.
 - Subcommittees will consist of at least two resident members from each of the two community organizations. The additional members can be institutional partners who can provide professional expertise to the subcommittee matters. At no time will a subcommittee have a minority of resident members. All subcommittees will record minutes and provide these minutes to the Board of Governors. Subcommittees should meet monthly or as directed by the Board of Governors.
 - The Board of Governors will have the authority to create *ad hoc* committees when needed.
 - A communitywide MMF Revitalization Plan meeting will be held annually (September), and two other communitywide MMF plan progress meetings (January and May) will be held to provide residents with progress reports on revitalization activities and initiatives. Additional community meetings may be called at the Board of Governors' discretion in order to pursue further discussions about revitalization strategies or any other related activities.
- > Hire a MMF plan coordinator to perform tasks as stated in the plan. The Board of Governors must review and approve the hiring of the MMF plan coordinator. Other tasks will include providing staff support to the Board of Governors and the subcommittees.



Over the past ten months the residents and members of the Community Active Restoring Efforts (C.A.R.E.) and the McElderry Park Community Association (MPCA) have participated in the Monument–McElderry–Fayette Area Planning process. We have helped draft this Plan Summary and approve the adoption of these recommendations as the blueprint for actions *led by residents* to begin work to revitalize our community. We also understand that when the full MMF Plan is completed, the recommendations in this Plan Summary will be exactly the same as the MMF Area Plan Recommendations. We encourage the City of Baltimore to support this plan as the means to focus the residents’ efforts to improve our community.


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