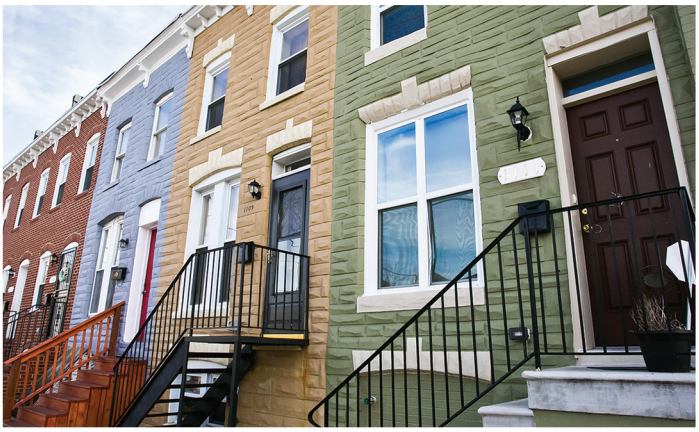
BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING



Planning Department Programs and Services

- Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC)
- Urban Design & Architectural Review Panel (UDARP)
- Forest Conservation Program
- Flood Plain Management
- Critical Area Regulations
- Sustainability Programs
- Growing Green Initiative
- Food Policy Initiative
- Baltimore Energy Challenge
- Planning Commission
- Community Planning
- Investing in Neighborhoods & Schools to Promote Revitalization, Improvement & Excellence (INSPIRE)
- Urban Renewal Areas
- Neighborhood & Area Master Plans
- Capital Improvement Program
- Mapping & Data Requests
- Census Information
- Historic Districts and Landmarks
- Historic Tax Credits
- General Information

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MISSION STATEMENT

To build Baltimore as a diverse, sustainable and thriving city of neighborhoods and as the economic and cultural driver for the region.

Department Overview

The Department of Planning is the City agency entrusted with guiding the physical development of the City of Baltimore. The Department staffs three Mayoral-appointed City commissions:

- Planning Commission
- Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation (CHAP)
- Sustainability Commission

This brochure describes the six divisions within the Department, each with its special focus in support of the mission and the Commissions we serve. Cross-division collaboration is essential to our planning work and is embedded in the Department's culture.

Commissions Staffed by the Planning Department

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission in its current form dates back to a revision of the Baltimore City Charter in 1947. There are nine members of the Planning Commission: six citizen appointees and three ex-officio appointees from the City Council, Mayor's Office and Department of Public Works. The Director of the Department of Planning serves as Executive Secretary to the Planning Commission. The City Charter defines the key responsibilities of the Planning Commission as:

- Developing and maintaining the City's Comprehensive Master Plan
- Preparing and updating plans for the physical development of the City
- Developing a capital budget and six-year Capital Improvement Program
- Reviewing all subdivision applications and Planned Unit Developments
- Reviewing all proposed amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance and making recommendations to City Council
- Reviewing and recommending to City Council on matters relating to Baltimore City Historic Landmark and District Designations.

The Commission meets regularly throughout the year, and its meetings are open to the public.

Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation (CHAP)

The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) was established in 1964 as Article six of the Baltimore City Code. The CHAP mission is to enhance and promote the culture and economy of Baltimore through the preservation of buildings, structures, sites and neighborhoods that have aesthetic, historic and architectural value. CHAP goals include preserving historic architecture and monuments; reclaiming broken neighborhoods; preventing demolition by neglect; and integrating our City's past into its future.

The Commission's key functions are:

- Designating Baltimore City Landmarks and Historic Districts
- Reviewing plans affecting designated structures
- Supporting policies and programs that foster preservation of Baltimore City's historic assets.

CHAP holds monthly public meetings to consider and act upon its agenda items.

Sustainability Commission

The Sustainability Commission was established in 2007 and the first 21 Member Commission was officially appointed in 2008. Sustainability is a holistic approach to City development that seeks to strike a proper balance among environmental concerns, social needs and economic growth. The Baltimore Sustainability Plan was approved in March of 2009.

The Commission's key responsibilities include:

- Developing, updating and monitoring implementation of the City's Sustainability Plan
- Creating an annual progress report on Sustainability initiatives
- Developing partnerships with government, NGO's, businesses and citizens to implement City-wide sustainability programs
- Advising the Administration and key decision makers on Sustainability issues and proposed legislation.

The Sustainability Commission holds monthly public meetings which often feature guest speakers on important and timely sustainability topics.

Department of Planning Divisions

Historical & Architectural Preservation

The Historical & Architectural Preservation division works to preserve and renew the City's historic fabric, as well as to educate residents and stakeholders about the City's rich history. Preservation planners directly support the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) by:

- Providing analysis, evaluation and recommendations for designation of Baltimore City Landmarks and Historic Districts
- Reviewing plans impacting historically designated structures and districts and assisting applicants with the City's historic tax credit process
- Supporting policies and programs that foster preservation of Baltimore City's historic assets, including State and Federal historic guidelines and tax credits
- Overseeing an annual program to maintain and restore City historic monuments
- Assisting other divisions by providing preservation planning expertise on development proposals and neighborhood planning initiatives.

The Division Chief for Historical and Architectural Preservation also serves as Executive Director of CHAP.

Land Use & Urban Design (LUUD)

This Division serves as the first stop for development in the City of Baltimore for projects ranging from individual buildings to large subdivisions and mixed-use developments. LUUD works closely with the Planning Commission to carry out its responsibilities effectively and meet City Charter and State development mandates.

The key functions of the Land Use and Urban Design Division include:

- Review of all new development proposals
- Review and evaluation of all proposed revisions to the Baltimore City Zoning Code
- Providing recommendations to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals on all conditional use and residential building conversion applications
- Coordinating the interagency Site Plan Review Committee's evaluation of the functional aspects of development proposals such as traffic circulation, parking and landscaping treatments
- Staffing the Urban Design and Architecture Review Panel (UDARP) which provides professional design advice to the Planning Director on significant development proposals.

Administration

The Administration Division includes the Director of Planning, Assistant Directors, Administrative Officer and support staff. It provides executive leadership for the Planning Department, advising the Mayor and senior staff, other cabinet agencies as well as the Planning, Preservation and Sustainability Commissions on issues and policies related to development, land use, zoning, capital programming, sustainability and historic preservation. This division also develops the department's annual operating budget and implements its fiscal operations, procurement, accounting and human resource activities.

Research & Strategic Planning

The Research and Strategic Planning Division provides information, research, analysis and evaluation of planning practices to inform the Department's policy-making and neighborhood revitalization activities. The division is responsible for:

- Maintaining and updating the City's comprehensive master plan
- Producing the City's cooperative population and employment forecasts in collaboration with the member jurisdictions of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council
- Preparing for each decennial census and working with the US Census Bureau to produce annual population estimates
- Providing GIS-based information and analysis to support planning initiatives.

The Division also provides City agencies and the Mayor's Office with data analysis, best practice research and grant opportunities for the various fields of planning.

Comprehensive Planning

Comprehensive Planners within this division are assigned to geographic areas (planning districts) and work closely with other City agencies, private citizens, neighborhood and community based organizations, and non-profits to ensure that sound planning principles are the basis for neighborhood planning efforts. Comprehensive Planners provide services such as:

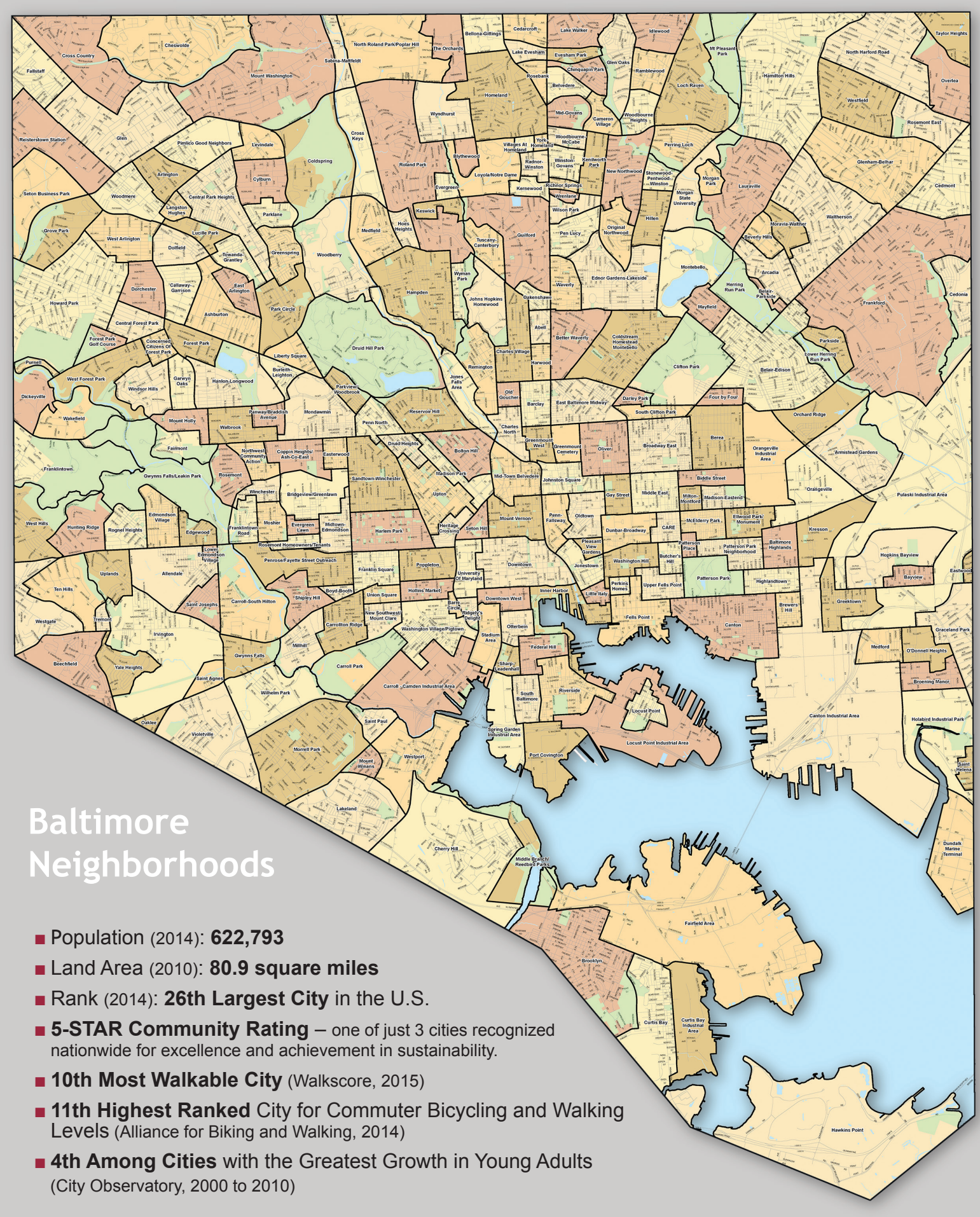
- Developing neighborhood plans, urban renewal plans and plan amendments in collaboration with community stakeholders and agency representatives
- Coordinating appropriate community review of development plans, zoning appeals, and planning-related City Council bills
- Developing a capital budget and six-year capital improvement program (CIP) annually, by reviewing agency capital improvement requests and making recommendations about the placement, reuse, or closing of facilities
- Providing technical assistance and land use/zoning expertise to communities, developers and City officials.

Sustainability & Environmental Planning

The Division of Sustainability & Environmental Planning is the home of the City's Office of Sustainability, which staffs the City Commission on Sustainability. The division actively promotes a Cleaner, Healthier, Greener and Safer Baltimore City by integrating People, Planet and Prosperity into its initiatives. The division also manages the Forest Conservation, Flood Plain and Critical Area Programs to protect property and enhance the City's natural resources. Baltimore's Food Policy Initiative and Food Policy Director are also part of the Sustainability Division team. The division concentrates its efforts in the following areas:

- Climate Change and Resiliency
- Community Greening and Environmental Education
- Green Economy
- Social Equity
- Resource Conservation and Energy Programs
- Pollution Prevention and Waste Management
- Healthy Food Access and Food Desert Strategies

The Division Chief for Sustainability and Environmental Planning also serves as the Director of the City's Office of Sustainability.



Baltimore Neighborhoods

- Population (2014): **622,793**
- Land Area (2010): **80.9 square miles**
- Rank (2014): **26th Largest City** in the U.S.
- **5-STAR Community Rating** – one of just 3 cities recognized nationwide for excellence and achievement in sustainability.
- **10th Most Walkable City** (Walkscore, 2015)
- **11th Highest Ranked** City for Commuter Bicycling and Walking Levels (Alliance for Biking and Walking, 2014)
- **4th Among Cities** with the Greatest Growth in Young Adults (City Observatory, 2000 to 2010)