



EQUITY FOR EASTERWOOD





PO Box 50001, Baltimore, Maryland 21211 www.skateparkofbaltimore.com skateparkofbaltimore@gmail.com

May 25, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council,

The Skatepark of Baltimore, Inc. is submitting the following testimony on behalf of the tax-paying skateboarding community of Baltimore on the Mayor's FY 24 proposed budget at the annual Taxpayers' Night.

We respectfully request that Baltimore City follows through on its original promise to the community and stand by the commitment made by BCRP and the Administration to build a professionally-designed skatepark in Easterwood Park with funding previously allocated for the project. If additional improvements to park infrastructure are needed outside what was previously approved, additional funding to support those park improvements should be included in the FY24 CIP request. **That funding has not been included in the Mayor's proposed budget as currently drafted.**

Efforts to build a skatepark in Easterwood Park have been underway for over 5 years. It is shovel-ready. Throughout the process of developing the Easterwood skatepark project, we have worked in partnership with community members and BCRP to ensure that all plans reflected community needs and desires. Ultimately, the Easterwood skatepark is a community-driven and fully funded project that would make a significant difference in the lives of young people within that community.

Despite the promises made to this community, we were recently informed that BCRP intends to reallocate the entirety of the \$1,150,000 (**\$300,000 in FY20 and \$850,000 in FY22 CIP funding**) that was **specifically** earmarked to investigate and develop a small skatepark, design and build a new basketball court, and support overall park improvements was to be used for deferred maintenance issues in Easterwood Park. **The decision to divest or not build upon these funds is not only an injustice, but a waste of resources, the City has already spent \$24,500 on designs and construction documents for the skatepark. Excluding additional funding of Easterwood- skatepark or overall improvements in Easterwood Park in the Mayor's FY 24 proposed budget adds insult to injury.**

That \$1.15 million, which is still pending, represents an opportunity to bring the very first skatepark to a predominantly black community in our city, and to do so in a neighborhood that has been historically disinvested. Rather than respond to these needs, BCRP has voiced its intention to use this funding – the funding that our efforts have raised - to make up for the historic neglect of the park.

It is clear there are no plans for moving the skatepark forward in the near future and no plans for requesting additional funding, as evident by the lack of additional funding for future years in BCRP's FY24 CIP request for the \$650,000 skatepark feature, or any other park improvements. This funding and the project it intended to build has already been promised to the community, has received favorable recommendation by the Planning Commission, and was committed to by the administration in TWO previous budget cycles.

This is yet another example of historic divestment in communities such as Easterwood Park. The Department of Audits found in its Biennial Performance Audit inequity in maintenance of parks. This report confirms that Easterwood has been neglected for decades. It wasn't until the skate community spent half a decade engaging in site identification, community outreach, advocacy for multi-

year funding and completing the design and construction documents, that BCRP decided to reallocate the funding for other purposes – that are, ultimately, a direct result of a well-established pattern of ignoring ongoing maintenance and investment. This is an affront to this community and community organizers who have worked so hard to improve their neighborhoods.

Any further delay diminishes faith in Government. Youth voices deserve to be heard, administration promises need to be realized, and fiscal commitments need to be upheld. **The money is there, the community wants this skatepark along with long neglected overall improvements. If there is not presently money to do both it should be included in the Mayor's FY 24 proposed budget.**

The first step towards achieving equity is not repeating the mistakes of the past but infusing resources and new and exciting opportunities into communities that have been neglected.

City of Baltimore - Capital Budget FY 2020
Ordinance of Estimates Recommendation for - Dept. of Recreation & Parks

Agency: Recreation

474-132 Solo Gibbs Master Plan Implementation

Description: Master plan for Solo Gibbs Park, located in the community-based plan for Solo Gibbs Park.

Location: Solo Gibbs Park, 1044 Lombard St, Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Impact On Operating Budget: 0

Source of Funds	Appr. To Date	Agency	Planned	BOF	BOE	Ordinate of Estimates	Total
990 - Other Funds (Not Capitalized Assets)	0	108	108	108	108	108	108
Total	0	108	108	108	108	108	108

474-133 Skatepark Improvements

Description: Install and design a small skatepark in West Baltimore and install the existing equipment for the park.

Location: West Baltimore, Carroll Park

Impact On Operating Budget: 0

Source of Funds	Appr. To Date	Agency	Planned	BOF	BOE	Ordinate of Estimates	Total
500 - Capital Fund	0	0	300	300	300	300	300
Total	0	0	300	300	300	300	300

474-134 Ambrose Kennedy Park

Description: To create a skate park area from the demolition recently completed by the Department of Housing and Community Development. Improvements will include pathways, office, court ground and lighting.

Location: Ambrose Kennedy Park

Impact On Operating Budget: 0

Source of Funds	Appr. To Date	Agency	Planned	BOF	BOE	Ordinate of Estimates	Total
600 - State Open Space Grants	0	0	0	Zero	500	500	500
Total	0	0	0	0	500	500	500

City of Baltimore - Capital Budget FY 2022
Ordinance of Estimates Recommendation for - Dept of Recreation & Parks

Amended: 11/15/2021

474-130 Pool Improvements

Description: Renovate and repair existing swimming pools and bath houses and bring pools into ADA compliance. Locations include Towson, Calverton, Greater Model, Central Recreation, C.N. Springs and others in separate based on their 2020 BCRP Pool Assessment/grading.

Location: Towson, Calverton, Greater Model, C.N. Springs and Central Recreation

Impact On Operating Budget: 0

Source of Funds	Appr. To Date	Agency	Planning	BOF	BOE	Balance of Estimates	Total
100 - General Obligation Bonds	0	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
890 - Other State Funds	0	0	0	Zero	3,000	3,000	3,000
Total	0	1,500	1,500	1,500	4,500	4,500	4,500

474-133 Easternwood Park Improvements

Description: Design and build a new basketball court adjacent to the existing Net Court. This new court is replacing the existing basketball court that is being removed to accommodate the new stadium.

Location: West Baltimore, Easternwood Park

Impact On Operating Budget: 0

Source of Funds	Appr. To Date	Agency	Planning	BOF	BOE	Balance of Estimates	Total
100 - General Obligation Bonds	0	350	350	350	350	350	350
890 - Other State Funds	0	0	0	Zero	500	500	500
Total	0	350	350	350	850	850	850

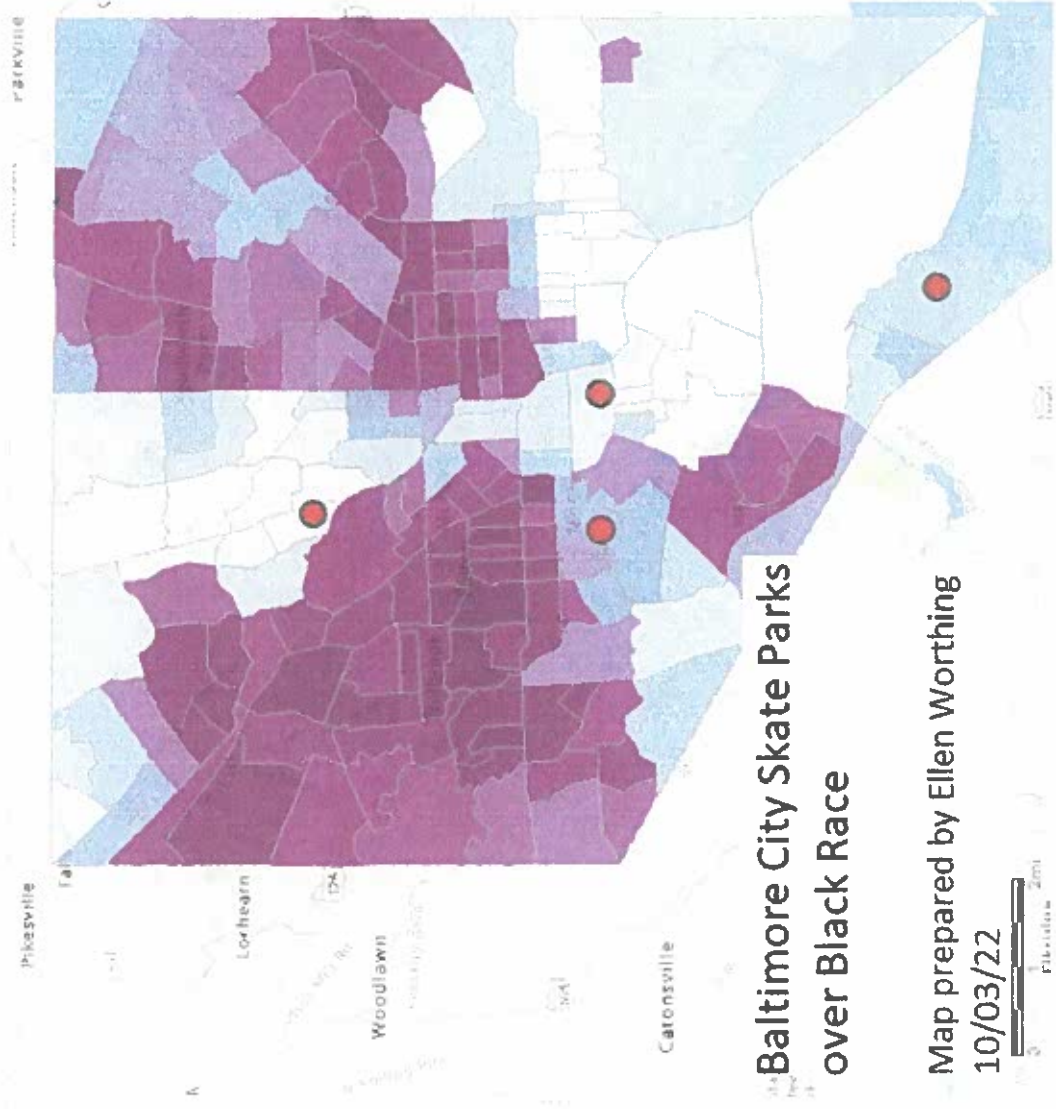
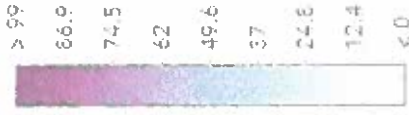
Legend

Baltimore City Skate Parks Locations



Census Tracts Black Race Percentage

Pct_Black



Baltimore City Skate Parks over Black Race

Map prepared by Ellen Worthing
10/03/22

Legend

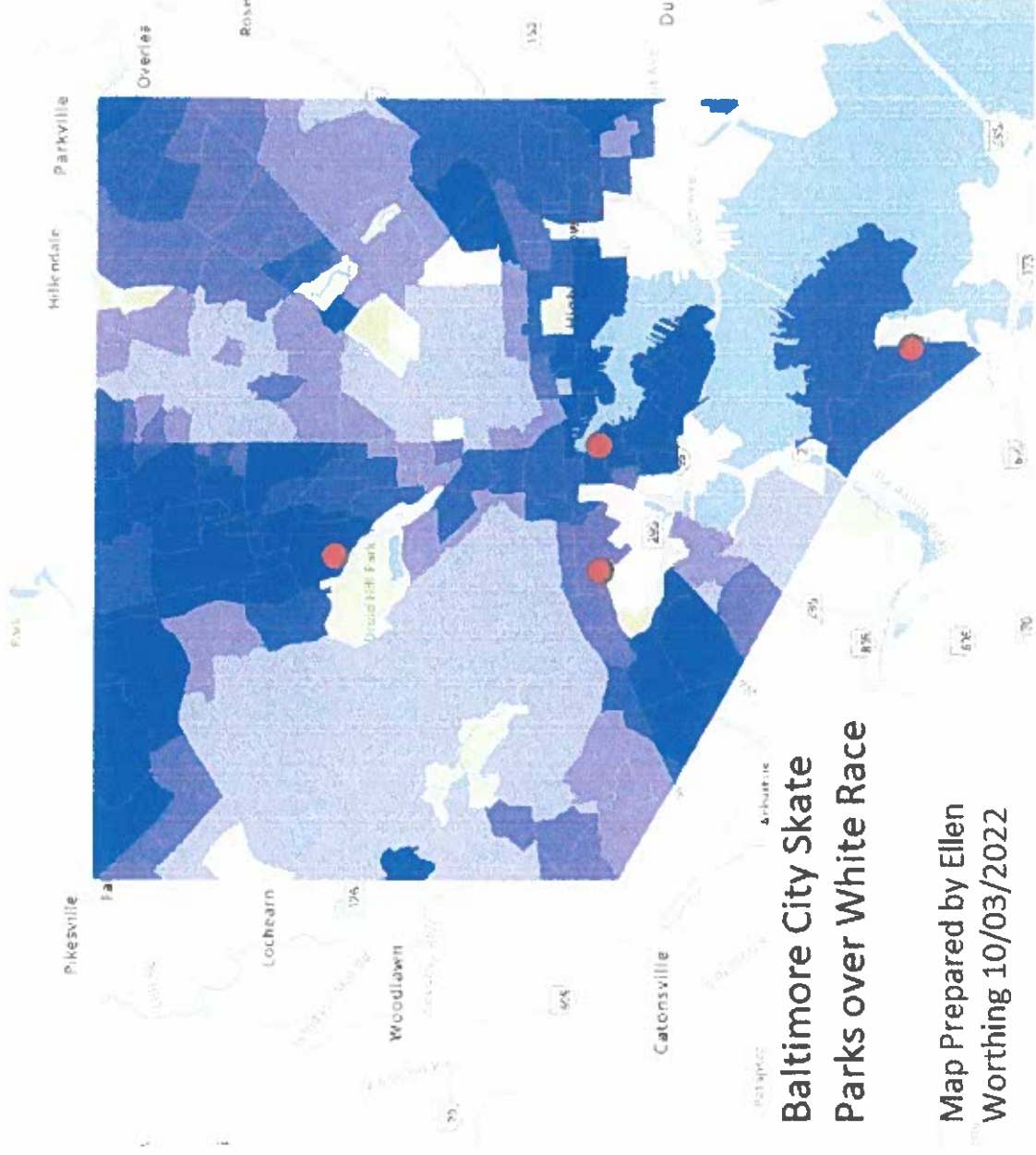
Baltimore City Skate Parks Locations



Census Tract White Race Percentage


Pct_White

- 69.59 - 94.43
- 45.69 - 69.36
- 23.27 - 45.68
- 7.35 - 23.26
- 0.00 - 7.34



Baltimore City Skate Parks over White Race

Map Prepared by Ellen Worthing 10/03/2022

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Reginald Moore Executive Director <i>Reginald Moore</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Recreation and Parks 3001 East Drive, Baltimore, MD 21217		
	SUBJECT	Community Catalyst Grant – Intent to Commit Funding	MEMO	

TO:
 Department of Housing & Community Development
 COMMUNITY CATALYST CAPITAL GRANTS
 417 E. Fayette St, 10th Floor
 Baltimore, MD 21202

DATE:
 3/21/19


To whom it concerns,

The Department of Recreation & Parks is currently requesting \$300,000 in General Funds as part of the FY20 Capital Improvements Program for the design and implementation of a skatepark in Easterwood Park adjacent to the existing Easterwood Recreation Center. On February 19, 2019, the Baltimore City Planning Commission preliminarily recommended that this funding be approved. Baltimore City Recreation & Parks is committed to providing funding for this project and sees this grant as an opportunity to supplement the funding that we've requested in the upcoming fiscal year.

Thank you for your consideration.

CC:

Adam Boarman, RLA, Chief of Capital Development, Baltimore City Recreation & Parks
 Stephanie Murdock, President, Skatepark of Baltimore
 Dr. Marvin L. "Doc" Cheatham, Sr, President, Matthew Henson Neighborhood Association

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Reginald Moore Executive Director <i>Reginald Moore</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Recreation and Parks 3001 East Drive, Baltimore, MD 21217		
	SUBJECT	Community Catalyst Grant – Property Control	MEMO	

TO:
 Department of Housing & Community Development
 COMMUNITY CATALYST CAPITAL GRANTS
 417 E. Fayette St, 10th Floor
 Baltimore, MD 21202

DATE:
 3/21/19

To whom it concerns,

The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore are the legal owners of the property located at 1522 N. Bentalou St. and referred to as Easterwood Park. This 7.26 acre park is managed by the Department of Recreation & Parks. The agency has authority to review, approve, and/or implement all capital improvements to the property. The park consists of a small recreation center, basketball courts, a playground, ball fields, and a multipurpose field. A skatepark is a desired amenity for this location that would activate another portion of the park and provide activity for another set demographic of park users.

Thank you for your consideration.

CC:
 Adam Boarman, RLA, Chief of Capital Development, Baltimore City Recreation & Parks
 Stephanie Murdock, President, Skatepark of Baltimore
 Dr. Marvin L. "Doc" Cheatham, Sr, President, Matthew Henson Neighborhood Association

ANTONIO HAYES
Legislative District 40
Baltimore City

Finance Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 222
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3656 · 301-858-3656
800-492-7122 Ext. 3656
Antonio.Hayes@senate.state.md.us

District Office
12 W. Madison St.
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-862-0437

June 11, 2019

Ms. Ann Sherrill
Neighborhood Housing Service
25 E 20th Street, Suite 170
Baltimore, MD 21218

Dear Ms. Sherrill:

Thirteen years ago, the Skatepark of Baltimore (SOB), was formed to facilitate the construction of a public, concrete, destination skatepark in the City of Baltimore. I have worked extensively with the Skatepark of Baltimore to meet the recreational needs of the citizens of Baltimore by supporting Bond Bills requesting State funding for their efforts.

The SOB has worked extensively with Baltimore City Department of Recreation to develop the Skatepark of Baltimore at Roosevelt Park, in Hampden, a 16,000 square foot recreational facility that serves over a 100 youth a day.

We are requesting the support and assistance of the Skatepark of Baltimore to provide a desperately needed and comparable recreational option to youth and young adults in this West Baltimore neighborhood. It will not only provide a safe place for youth to skate but will provide accessible recreational opportunities for area youth to congregate and socialize.

For thousands of skateboarders that reside in Baltimore City, this development will open the door to Baltimore as a City with premiere recreational facilities. It will also create safe streets for bikers, skaters and automobile drivers, who struggle to co-exist on crowded roadways.

It is my hope that you see the Skatepark Baltimore and the Matthew A. Henson Community worthy of your support they seek to acquire the funding needed for the construction of the skatepark. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns or if you want to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antonio L. Hayes'.

Antonio L. Hayes,
State Senator
40th Legislative District – Baltimore City



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILMAN LEON F. PINKETT, III

Seventh District

Room 518, CITY HALL
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202
TELEPHONE: 410-396-4810
FAX: 410-396-4414
EMAIL: leon.pinkett@baltimorecity.gov

COMMITTEES

VICE CHAIRMAN:
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
TAXATION, FINANCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MEMBER:
JUDICIARY & LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS
LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC SAFETY

June 1, 2019

I am writing in support of the Skatepark of Baltimore's efforts to develop the Skatepark of Baltimore at Easterwood Park. The installation of a skatepark facility will provide a desperately needed recreational option to youth and young adults in this West Baltimore community.

I have worked with Skatepark of Baltimore for quite some time dating back to their first project developing the Skatepark of Baltimore at Roosevelt Park in Hampden. I have supported this organization as they engaged the residents of the Hampden community, local government and various funders to garner support in building Baltimore's first professionally designed and constructed, concrete skatepark. It is one of the most popular and diverse public recreational facilities in my district.

I believe that a skatepark in Easterwood Park will spur waves of newcomers, especially college graduates and young families attracted to the affordability of housing, the mix of retail with residential, the easy access to Downtown Baltimore, and the lively spirit of the neighborhood.

Additional funding would allow the Skatepark of Baltimore to construct a world class facility in Easterwood Park that would not only enhance the overall appeal of the neighborhood, but also serve the youth of Baltimore City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leon F. Pinkett, III".

Leon F. Pinkett, III
Councilman
Baltimore City, 7th District

MATTHEW HENSON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

P.O. BOX 23761 - BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21203



From the Office of:
Dr. Marvin L. 'Doc' Cheatham, Sr.
Chief Executive Officer
410/669-8683 – civilrights@verizon.net

June 18, 2019

The Skatepark of Baltimore (SOB) presented a proposal to install a public, concrete skatepark in Easterwood Park to the Mathew A. Henson Community Development Corporation community meeting of June 18th 2019. We believe that the installation of a skatepark facility in Easterwood Park will provide a desperately needed recreational option to young people in West Baltimore. It will not only provide a safe place for youth to skate but will offer accessible recreational opportunities for area adolescence to congregate and socialize.

The Mathew A. Henson Community Development Corporation voted in favor of installing the Skatepark of Baltimore at Easterwood Park to be located within Senator Troy Brailey Easterwood Park located at 1522 N. Bentalou St., Baltimore, 21216. Specifically, the proposed skatepark will occupy roughly 15,000 square feet in Easterwood Park's South-East corner, directly across Bentalou St. from Carver Vocational-Technical High School.

It is my hope that you see the Skatepark of Baltimore and the Matthew A. Henson Community worthy of your support as they seek to acquire the funding needed for the construction of the skatepark. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns or if you want to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Marvin L. 'Doc' Cheatham, Sr.

Dr. Marvin L. 'Doc' Cheatham, Sr.
C.E.O.
Mathew A. Henson Community Development Corporation

"HOME OF THE EASTERWOOD/SANDTOWN PARK & PLAYGROUND"



MATTHEW HENSON/ EASTERWOOD
VISION PLAN

the
Neighborhood
DesignCenter

Project #3406

2020 June 21



APPROACH

PRIORITIES

On September 6, 2017, the MHCDC held a community visioning charrette hosted by 40th legislative district Senator Barbara Robinson and attended by federal, city and state elected officials as well as officers and members of various neighboring community associations. Prioritized needs identified were as follows:

- Food Market
- Other neighborhood retail such as:
 - Laundromat
 - Bank or Credit Union
 - Pharmacy
- Community Action Center/ Outreach Village
- Community and Mental Health Services Facilities
- Senior Center and Services
- Job Training and Rehabilitation Services Center
- Outdoor Athletics Complex
- State-of-the-Art Recreation Center
- Skateboard Park
- Improved mobility with better bus access and alternative mobility options

The Matthew Henson Easterwood neighborhood is a unique enclave in West Baltimore. While the neighborhood does suffer from a concentration of blight on its east end, the majority of the neighborhood benefits from high owner-occupancy affording the community with a measure of stability. This is noticeable when walking some of the neighborhood streets such as Ruxton Avenue which has well maintained front facades, yards and sidewalks with few vacant houses scattered in between.

The strength of the neighborhood is in its legacy residents, some of whom are among the first African Americans to move into the area following the diaspora of the historic Jewish community that once resided there. These life-long residents recall a safe neighborhood with supportive amenities, populated by families with strong relationship investments in the neighborhood. The holdouts to this former era have longed to reestablish the neighborhood to what they believe it can be.

The vision for the Matthew Henson Easterwood neighborhood is to transform it to be a safe and quiet neighborhood where there is a variety of housing options that accommodate a diverse community. The desire is to make the neighborhood livable with quality amenities and services such as a food market, recreation center and community services.

To achieve this, the vision plan builds upon the strengths and unique characteristics of the neighborhood while also targeting its specific challenges.

The plan supplants blighted or underutilized sites with new or updated uses such as new housing types, neighborhood retail, and community service facilities. Meanwhile it considers how streets can be utilized for transformation, by limiting traffic flow through residential areas while simultaneously improving streetscaping with street trees and other improvements.

At the same time, the plan considers how the neighborhood can be rebranded, with new gateway conditions marking entrances into the neighborhood. Also, the plan promotes the improvement of open spaces such as the Easterwood Park and school grounds to better serve the local community.

These improvements are done within a framework of enforcing Matthew Henson/ Easterwood as an enclave in West Baltimore. By building upon existing assets, the neighborhood is to be improved to be livable and beautiful as a place that is set apart. To do this, the plan takes advantage of the existing boundaries that form the edges of the neighborhood to consider them as thresholds. As one enters through these thresholds, the plan seeks to establish a strikingly different environment with a community focused character where children and families can lay down roots and thrive.

Ultimately, the vision for the neighborhood is to create an amenity and services rich environment that meets people's needs and promotes investment and ownership.

