

**Jacob France Institute**  
**Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator's Alliance**  
**Grow Baltimore Focus Groups**  
**December 2014**

**KNOWLEDGE** THAT  
**WORKS** FOR Government  
AND Nonprofit  
Organizations

**Jacob France Institute**  
**Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator's Alliance**  
**Grow Baltimore Focus Groups**  
**December 2014**

**Submitted to:**

**David Epstein, Ph.D.**

Research Associate  
Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance  
Jacob France Institute  
University of Baltimore  
Office: 11 W. Mt Royal Street, Room 360  
Mail: 1420 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
410-837-6651  
[depstein@ubalt.edu](mailto:depstein@ubalt.edu)

**Submitted by:**

**William Wells, M.P.A.**

Survey Research Manager  
Schaefer Center for Public Policy  
1402 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
410-837-6188  
[wwells@ubalt.edu](mailto:wwells@ubalt.edu)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Purpose

The focus groups are part of a larger initiative by the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator Alliance (BNIA) at the Jacob France Institute (JFI) to better understand the behavior and motivations behind resident's decisions to either move into/within or out of Baltimore City. Specifically, the focus groups focused on eliciting responses that would help understand why people who have recently moved choose to move into/within the City of Baltimore from surrounding counties, or what former Baltimore City residents have chosen to move out of the city and into the surrounding counties. Two broad areas were explored in both groups: why recent movers chose to move and what was important about the places that they chose to move to. For the group of individuals who moved out of the city, an additional aspect of what could have been done to keep them living in the city was also explored.

### Methods

Participants were selected by BNIA staff members after a larger invitation was sent out via email to recruit recipients. For the Baltimore City resident group, respondents to an earlier web survey hosted by BNIA were asked if they would be interested in participating in a later focus group, and those who indicated that they would be interested were contacted about the focus group. For the county resident group, a paper mail invitation was sent to residents who had lived in Baltimore City but had moved in the last five years to surrounding county (Baltimore, Howard, and Anne Arundel).

BNIA staff members ranked the responses to the invitations to ensure a mixture of participants from geographic areas and demographic backgrounds. The Schaefer Center then contacted these participants and attempted to schedule them for the appropriate group.

The focus groups were held at the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy in a room that was wired for video and sound recording. Each focus group was designed to elicit the opinions about where the participants live and where they used to live.

The first group – City Residents – was comprised of current residents of Baltimore City who had moved into the city from a near-by county within the last five years, or who had moved from one city neighborhood to another within the last five years. These participants were recruited from an online survey fielded by BNIA that focused on living in Baltimore City and asked for demographic information that allowed a group to be selected that met these inclusion criteria.

The second group – City Movers – was comprised of current residents of three counties that surround or are close to Baltimore City (Baltimore County, Howard County, and Anne Arundel County) who had moved to that county from Baltimore City within the last five years. A postcard was mailed to county residents who had been identified as having moved from Baltimore City in the last five years. The postcard invited them to log into an online survey that asked demographic questions that allowed the researchers to select participants who met the inclusion criteria.

The focus groups were held on two different days in December of 2014, in the evening, at the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore. Participants were provided with refreshments and a light meal before and during the focus groups and received a \$75 incentive at the conclusion of each

group. Those participants who had utilized the University of Baltimore parking garage were given parking vouchers to pay for their parking fees in the garage.

All participants were all at least 18 years of age and verified that they met the eligibility requirements for each group in terms of a recent move (in the last 5 years) and that they either moved into or within Baltimore City or from Baltimore City to a surrounding county. The Baltimore City resident group was comprised of nine individuals, four women and five men. The county resident group was comprised of eight individuals, all women.

Throughout this report, word clouds have been used to describe responses to certain questions. This is done when the number and variety of responses were sufficient enough for the word cloud to be meaningful. In interpreting the word clouds, the deeper, or bolder the blue color is and the larger the font, the more frequently that comment was made. The word clouds take the verbatim comments and aggregate them into common categories to show overall consensus or variety in the comments. The order of the words are random and nothing should be read into where the words appear in the word cloud.

## Results

Focus group participants were asked a series of questions to understand the motivations and behaviors that influence residents' decision to reside in or move out of Baltimore City. The moderator provided participants with opportunities to respond to all the questions, and participant responses were categorized based on the responses provided to the questions. Below are the questions asked during the focus groups and a summary of the responses given by participants.

### *City Residents*

Participants responded that access to amenities, location, housing, green space, and neighborhood attributes are the factors that contribute to their decision on where to live. The cost of housing was the most frequently mentioned, along with access to amenities. Participants also emphasized the importance of green space, proximity to major highways, parking, and access to public transportation.

Furthermore, green space and growth and energy of neighborhoods were also important attributes that attract residents to certain neighborhoods. When asked what attributes have met their expectations, current city residents mentioned walkability and proximity the most. Current city residents were split when asked to identify what changes they would like to see in their current neighborhoods. Some that were mentioned include increased trash collection, greater transportation options, more police presence, and proper maintenance of vacant homes.

For current city residents who previously lived in another city neighborhood, they mentioned parking and the cost of living as some of the negative attributes of that area. One participant mentioned a positive attribute, which was the presence of a community market. Among current city residents who migrated from outside of the city, they identified cost of living, distance from amenities, and parking as the negative attributes of their previous neighborhoods. However, they also mentioned the availability of high-end grocery stores, a shopping mall, and public parks as positive attributes.

### *City Movers*

Participants who moved out of the city to live in other areas identified good public schools as the attribute that most influenced their decisions to leave the city. Particularly, participants mentioned focusing on graduation rates, tests scores, and demographics when researching schools. Other attributes that were also mentioned included green space, lower taxation and cost of insurance, access to amenities, and the demographic composition of the area.

In commenting on their current living situations, participants said that lower taxes and the education system have met their expectations for their new communities. On the other hand, qualities such as access to transportation, parking, and lower insurance costs in their new communities have not met participants' expectations. The former city residents also commented that living close to work and staying close to Baltimore City was important in deciding where to move.

When asked to reflect upon time spent living in the city, most participants felt the walkability of their old neighborhoods was the biggest characteristic they missed. However, participants did not miss the lack of easy ways to travel through the city, specifically traveling east to west, and dealing with traffic congestion. Furthermore, participants agreed that they felt there was a crime and drug problem in the city when they lived in their former neighborhoods.

As for what could have helped convince the "City Movers" to stay in Baltimore, participants mentioned increasing public safety and decreasing taxes and insurance costs. However, they also mentioned encouraging changes the city is already making to be more attractive, such as summer festivals and the city's art scene.

## CURRENT BALTIMORE CITY RESIDENTS – “CITY RESIDENTS”

The current Baltimore City residents attended a single focus group on December 11, 2014. After the participants were given an overview of the agenda and some focus group etiquette, they were led through an ice-breaker by the moderator, and then led through the questions in the moderator’s guide (see Appendix B).

### Participant Demographics

The focus group of current city residents was made up of nine individuals, almost evenly split between men (5) and women (4). Since all participants met the inclusion criteria, they had all moved into or within Baltimore City within the last five years. In fact, five had moved within Baltimore City, three had moved from Baltimore County, and one had moved from Howard County.

All respondents were in either the 25 – 34 year old age group or the 45 – 54 year old age group. Two participants indicated that they had teenage children, between 15 – 18 years old. Racially, most participants identified as White (4), while three identified as Black, one as Asian, and one as two or more races. The majority of the group were home owners (6), as opposed to renters (3).

In terms of the area where the participants lived, only two lived in the same neighborhood (Greater Charles Village / Barclay). The areas that the participants were living at the time of the focus group were:

- 2 Greater Charles Village / Barclay
- 1 Canton
- 1 Highlandtown
- 1 Howard Park / West Arlington
- 1 Lauraville
- 1 Midtown
- 1 Northwood
- 1 Washington Village / Pigtown

### City Resident Results

#### What made you decide to live where you live?

Participants replied with a variety of answers. Aesthetics of the neighborhood were important, with tree-lined streets and green space mentioned several times. “Neighborhood beauty” and proximity to parks were also important to multiple participants. The unique design of the row homes in four participants’ neighborhoods was attractive to them.

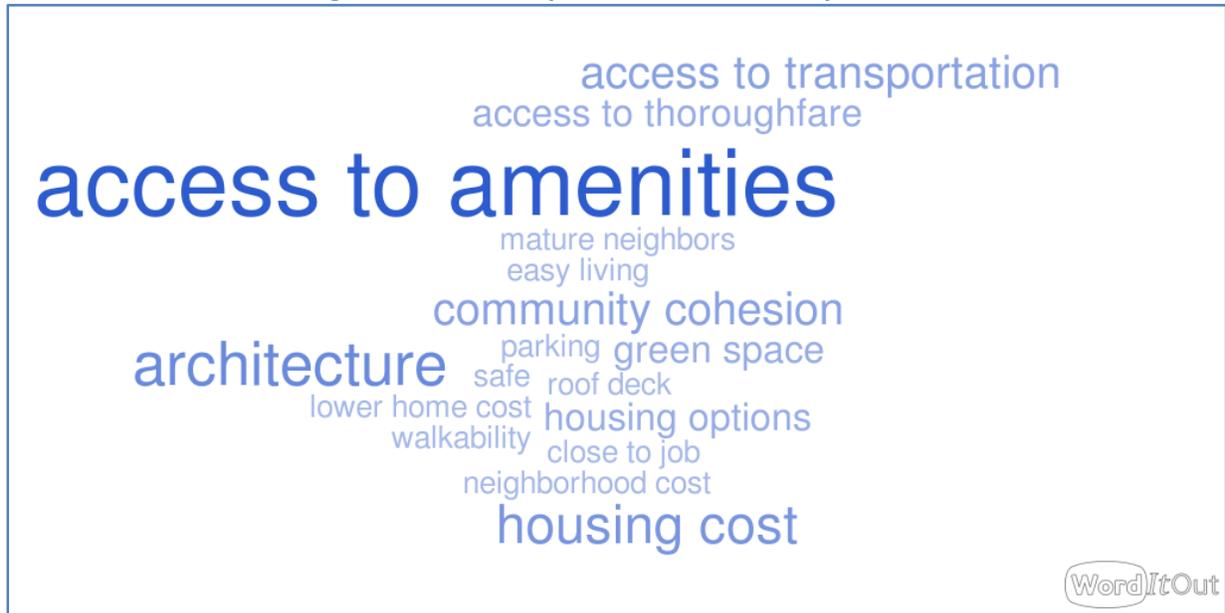
Other than aesthetics, cost was a deciding factor when participants considered which neighborhood to live in. Getting more house for the money was important to participants. “Hidden costs” like fixing a window after a car break-in were also discussed.

One participant mentioned that he and his family chose a neighborhood partially based on ease of obtaining an apartment there.

Proximity to transportation and walkability were mentioned multiple times. Proximity to I-95 and I-695 were mentioned specifically as being important to two participants. Ample parking was a concern for several participants. Proximity to bars, restaurants, the Inner Harbor, and Hollins Market were all mentioned as important factors for most participants.

One participant said that he was looking for a “low-hassle” neighborhood where he and his girlfriend could easily park their cars and take their dogs out for walks, etc. Several participants were also looking for a family-oriented neighborhood where most of the neighbors were homeowners, where there was familiarity between neighbors, and where there was a low crime rate.

Figure 1: What made you decide to live where you live?



**Table 1: What made you decide to live where you live?**

<b>Green Space/Parks</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amenities</b>	<b>People-focused Community Attributes</b>
proximity to park	cost	proximity to 95, 695	close to bars	safe, low crime
park	cost	proximity to 95, 695	proximity to restaurants	homeowners in the neighborhood
tree-lined streets	cost	walkability	proximity to Inner Harbor	familiarity between neighbors
neighborhood beauty	house for the money	proximity to transportation	proximity to Hollins market	near park for starting family
	roof deck	train, regular bus, zip cars	fun areas	
	architecture	transportation	proximity to bars	
	row houses	low-hassle (Lauraville)	proximity to restaurants	
	unique row-home design	available apartments		
	unique houses	parking		
	neighborhood cost	close to Morgan State		
	easy to find apartment	lower saturation of college students		
		moved next to good school for property value		

**What made you decide on the neighborhood you ultimately chose?**

One participant said the appeal of city living was the deciding factor. Another participant cited the location in relation to surrounding neighborhoods.

Having a neighborhood association to join was important to one participant.

**What other areas captured your attention?**

Two participants indicated specific neighborhoods that they had looked at - one stating that he had looked near Washington Village, and the other mentioning having looked at Reservoir Hill.

The rest of the participants spoke about characteristics that they looked for, not specific locations. Participants were looking for family-friendly places with plenty of things to do nearby. One participant

stated that he was seeking a transitional neighborhood from an investment standpoint. Other participants were looking for low crime, green spaces, and active community associations.

One participant was affiliated with Morgan State University and knew that her family wanted to live near the university.

Outdoor space was very important to two participants, while three others looked primarily for houses with certain characteristics like move-in-readiness or high ceilings, etc.

One participant focused on the “Main Streets” of different communities.

Figure 2: What other areas captured your attention?



Table 2: What other areas captured your attention?

Attributes of houses	Detached houses
	Green space
	Move-in ready
	Historical home
Attributes of neighborhoods	Family friendly
	Active community associations
	Transitional neighborhood
	Dynamic energy
	Evidence of neighborhood transformation
	Things to do
	Proximity to activities
Up and coming neighborhood	

	Low crime
	Parks being maintained
Specific neighborhoods	Reservoir Hill
	Washington Village
	Washington Village
	Morgan State

**What attractions are meeting your expectations?**

Of the attributes that participants identified that had attracted them to their current neighborhoods, participants were instructed to identify whether those attributes were living up to their expectations.

Several participants said that the cost of their respective neighborhoods was meeting their expectations. One person noted that the added taxes and cost of a security system were more than anticipated.

Participants all stated that the walkability and proximity to things going on were meeting their expectations.

On the whole, they were pleased with the variety of options for recreational activities, the diversity, and the “city living” aspect, which they further defined as a variety of dining and shopping options, events such as Artscape, and access to the Inner Harbor and Harbor East.

Figure 3: What attractions are meeting your expectations?



**Table 3: What attractions are meeting your expectations?**

Cost	Met expectations of being not-too-expensive
Attractions	Inner Harbor
	Harbor East
	Artscape
	Stuff happening
Closeness	Walkability
	Proximity
	Proximity
	Walkability
	City living
	Walkability
	City living
Variety	Diversity
	variety of restaurants
	variety of shops
	variety of options

**What would you change about where you currently live?**

Some answers to the question of what participants would change about where they currently live focused on amenities that they did not have access to, including a dog park and a gym.

One participant complained that there were too many apartments and not enough houses. When a house was bought and renovated, it was usually split into apartments.

Another participant wished she had a more lively main street, while another wished her home was not so close to a major thoroughfare.

Participants mentioned that they would like to have increased telecommunication options.

More frequent trash pickup was also on one participant’s wish list.

One participant mentioned that she did not have enough access to transportation, while another participant was concerned with what he saw as a lack of reliability of the existing transportation.

Many of the things participants would change revolved around the hygiene of the community. There were several mentions of litter, maintenance, and vacant houses.

The discussion about vacant houses turned to much deeper issues including crime, opportunity for education, and the role of elected officials.

The accountability of fellow citizens was one issue that most of the participants agreed needed to change. It was said that neighborhood associations were trying to take care of things, but that fellow citizens outside the associations were not doing their part.

**Table 4: What would you change about where you currently live?**

Amenities	Increased trash pickup
	Increased telecom options
	Convenient transportation
	Reliable transportation
	Gym
	Dog park
People issues	Litter
	Law enforcement
	Accountability of fellow citizens
	Crime
	Education
Aesthetic issues	Less vacant homes
	Clean-up of neighborhood
	Maintenance of vacant homes
	No more houses broken up into apartments
Organizational	More involvement in neighborhood associations
	Better police presence
	Better main street

**How long do you see yourself staying in your current home/neighborhood?**

A few participants had no plans to move in the near future.

One participant, who is a graduate student, plans to move in the next 2-3 years.

One participant might move depending on her career path, another participant said he would stay for 5 years, and one participant was unsure.

### What did you like/not like about your previous home/neighborhood?

When asked where they had moved from and what they liked and disliked about their previous homes, participants answered:

**Table 5: What did you like/not like about your previous home/neighborhood?**

Neighborhood	Pros	Cons
Northern Baltimore County	space	far from amenities
Ellicott City	high-end grocery	high rent
Govans	community market	parking, age demographic too old
Towson	mall	rent
Frostburg	Leakin Park	parking
Mt. Vernon		parking
Pigtown		high rent
Waverly		high rent

### What local institutions were you involved in where you previously lived?

Four participants answered this question. Three participants had been involved with their previous community associations; but only one of them remarked about what that involvement consisted of. She had been involved with a community initiative through Morgan State, where her husband also teaches.

One participant mentioned that he was not previously involved with his community association, but that he is now part of a bar tour during which he opens his home to a large number of people.

### What else would you like to discuss?

Participants had a chance to bring up anything that hadn't been talked about up until this point. The participants agreed that the city's bad reputation is primarily due to ignorance. Despite this bad reputation, participants emphasized that they enjoyed city living. They mentioned that they liked to be surrounded by people and greeting neighbors.

Many mentioned that they did not enjoy the isolation of detached single family homes in the county. One participant mentioned that Baltimore is "DC's redheaded sister". She also mentioned that the city was "more digestible" than a bigger city. Participants wanted to see more pride of ownership among their neighbors.

The moderator stepped out to ask the representatives from BNIA, Grow Baltimore, and the Mayor's Office if there were any follow-up questions that they would like posed. While he was gone, participants had an independent conversation about Baltimore, stating that they liked that the city is not pretentious.

Although they mentioned that the city has an “underbelly” or “dark side”, they also declared that they thought gentrification efforts were working.

**Clarification: What demographics are you looking for in a community?**

Observers asked for clarification regarding the demographics that participants looked for in a community. Participants stated that they were looking for racial diversity, income diversity, and a younger age group.

## PREVIOUS BALTIMORE CITY RESIDENTS – “CITY MOVERS”

The previous Baltimore City residents attended a single focus group on December 15, 2014. After the participants were given an overview of the agenda and some focus group etiquette, they were led through an ice-breaker by the moderator, and then led through the questions in the moderator’s guide (see Appendix B).

### Participant Demographics

The focus group of previous city residents, or “City Movers” was made up of eight individuals, all of whom were women. Since all participants met the inclusion criteria, they had all moved from Baltimore City to a nearby county within the last five years. In fact all eight participants lived in one of two counties - five had moved to Baltimore County and two to Howard County.

All respondents were in either the 18 - 24 year old age group or the 55 and older age group. Three participants indicated that they children who were either 0 – 5 years old or 11 – 14 years old. Racially, most participants identified as White (6), while one identified as Black, and one as Asian. Since the invitation postcards were mailed using addresses of property owners, all of the participants were homeowners.

Two of the participants had previously lived in the same neighborhood, Greater Roland Park / Poplar Hill. The neighborhoods that all of the participants had moved from were:

- 1 Beechfield/Ten Hills/West Hills
- 1 Canton
- 1 Harford/Echodale
- 1 Hamilton
- 1 Highlandtown
- 2 Greater Roland Park/Poplar Hill
- 1 North Baltimore/Guilford/Homeland

### City Mover Results

#### **What made you decide to live where you live?**

Aesthetics of their neighborhoods were important to most participants. One said she was looking for a quiet neighborhood. Other participants nodded in agreement and added “green spaces,” “grass and trees,” “cleaner streets,” and “private space”.

One participant mentioned that there were no noticeable rats in her current neighborhood.

Financially, participants were attracted to lower taxes, getting more house for their money, and a community that was “affordable”.

Public schools were mentioned several times.

For one participant, who dealt with health issues, the accessibility of the residence itself was important.

Location was another topic that came up repeatedly. Participants were attracted to neighborhoods that were convenient to main thoroughfares, where it was easy to get where one needed to go, with accessible transportation an attractive quality of the neighborhoods.

The planned nature of the Columbia area was attractive to one participant, having amenities close by.

A family orientation of the neighborhoods was a big consideration, mentioned by five participants. Specifically, participants were attracted to lower crime, a sense of community, racial diversity, kids' activities, swimming pools, and parks.

Figure 4: What made you decide to live where you live?

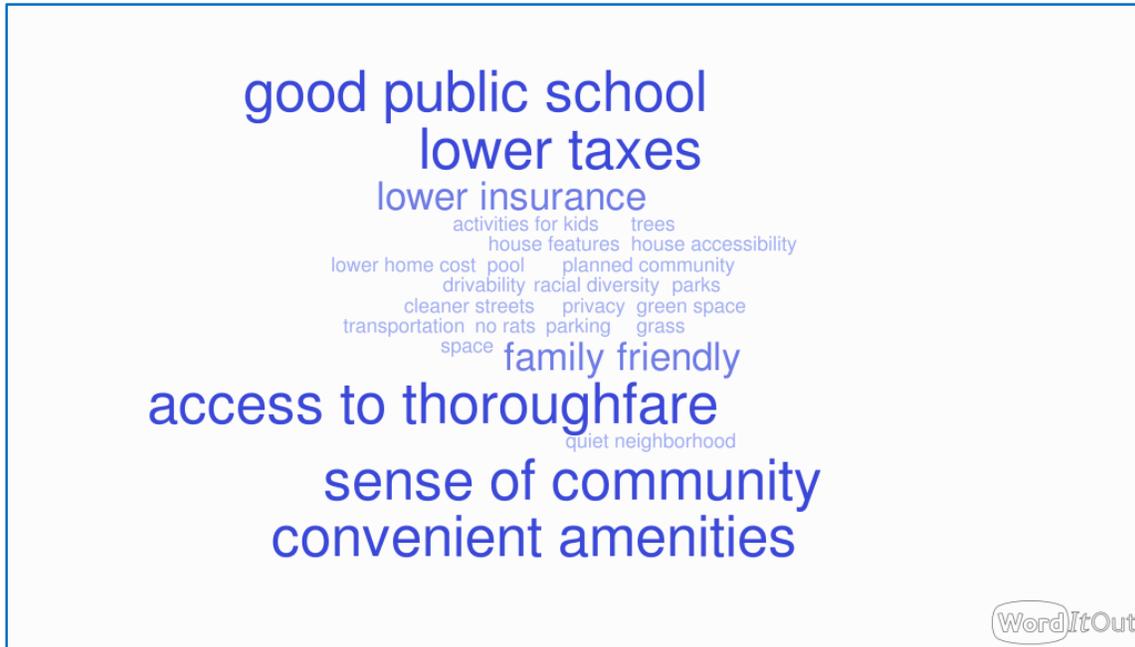


Table 6: What made you decide to live where you live?

Green Space/Parks	Housing	Associated Costs	Schools	People-focused Community Attributes	Amenities
green space	more house for money	lower taxes	good public school	racial diversity	pool
parks	house features	lower taxes	good public school	family friendly	convenient amenities
grass	accessibility of house	lower taxes	good public school	sense of community	parking
trees		lower insurance		sense of community	access to thoroughfare
		lower insurance		sense of community	access to thoroughfare
				family friendly	convenient amenities
					convenient amenities

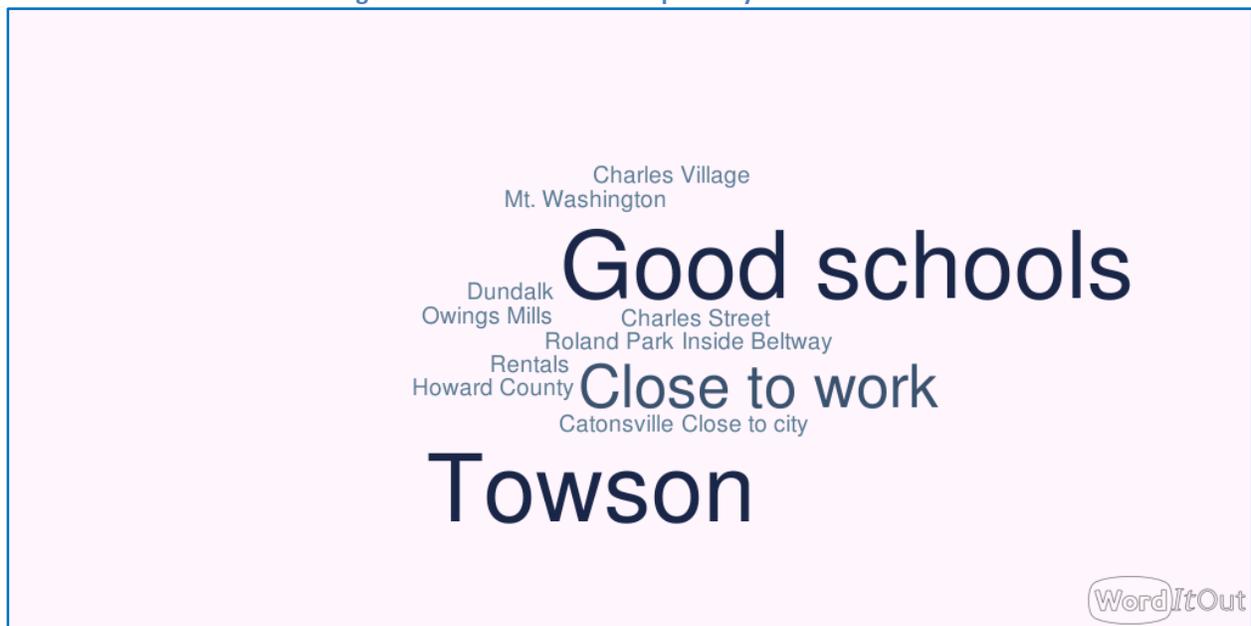
				access to thoroughfare
				planned community
				activities for kids
				quiet neighborhood
				cleaner streets
				no rats
				privacy
				space
				transportation
				drivability

**What other areas captured your attention?**

Participants mentioned that they had been interested in areas from Dundalk to Catonsville. Specific neighborhoods mentioned were Owings Mills, Howard County, Roland Park, Mt. Washington, Charles Village, and Towson (mentioned three separate times).

The main attributes that participants focused on when looking at communities was proximity to work, (mentioned twice) and proximity to Baltimore City. Three participants said that schools were a deciding factor.

Figure 5: What other areas captured your attention?



**Table 7: What other areas captured your attention?**

Attributes of Neighborhoods	Good schools
	Good schools
	Good schools
	Close to work
	Close to work
	Close to city
	Inside the Beltway
	Wanted to buy, not rent
	Inexpensive area
Specific Neighborhoods	Owings Mills
	Catonsville
	Howard County
	Roland Park
	Mt. Washington
	Towson
	Charles Village
	Charles Street
	Dundalk

**What community associations are you currently involved with?**

Two participants were involved in home owners associations; one said she was involved in a community watch while living in Baltimore City, but that she was not a part of any organization now in Towson. Other participants were involved in churches and kids’ activities, such as an elementary school, swim club, and violin lessons.

**What attractions are meeting your expectations?**

There was agreement from three participants who all answered that the low taxes and good public schools were meeting their expectations.

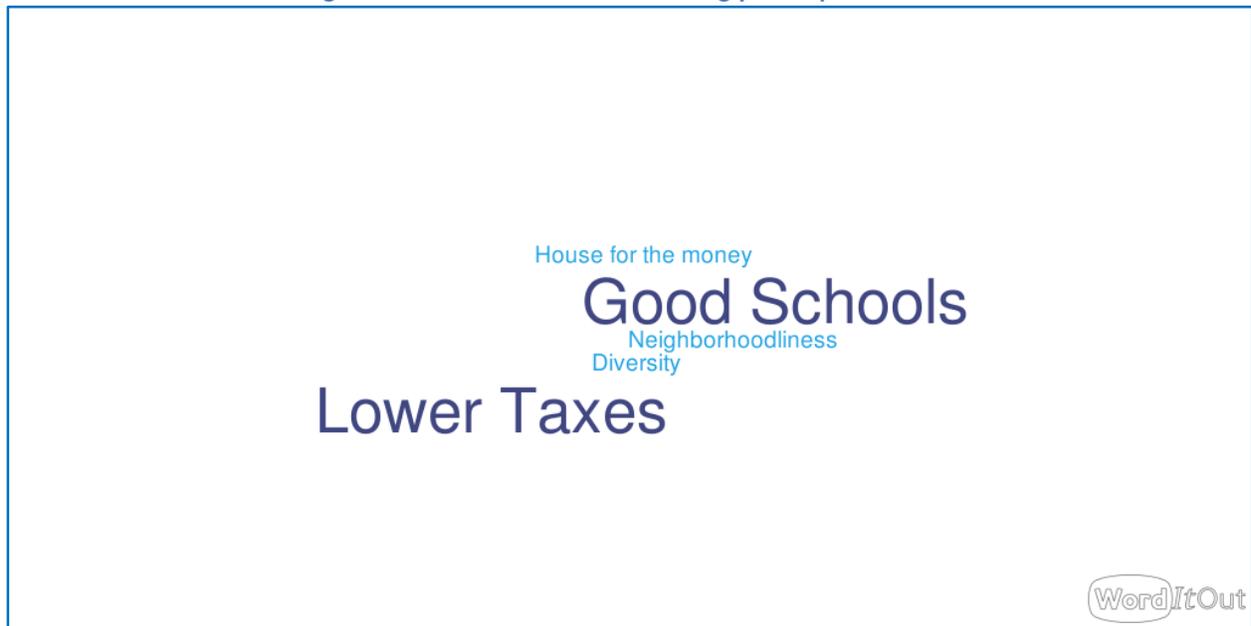
One participant noted that she was pleased with the diversity to which she was originally attracted.

One participant mentioned that she was still pleased with the size of the house she was able to get for the money she paid

One participant mentioned the sense of community that she had been attracted to was meeting her expectations.

Many participants observed that certain expectations that they had had were NOT being met: access to transportation, ample parking, and lower car insurance.

Figure 6: What attractions are meeting your expectations?



**What would you change about where you currently live?**

Participants responded with a range of answers. Two participants were missing the racial and economic diversity of their previous homes/neighborhoods. Participants wished they had more parking and easier access to transportation. One participant was dissatisfied with the trash pickup, stating that it came too early and woke her up. One participant noted that there was no community meeting place, which she would like to have.

### **How long do you see yourself staying in your current home/neighborhood?**

One participant said that she would stay less than 10 more years and probably transition into an assisted living facility.

One participant said that her family was staying in their current home between 10 and 20 years.

Another participant said that she would only stay between 3 and 5 years.

All other participants had no plans of moving.

### **What would make you either stay or leave your current home/neighborhood?**

Health considerations could make a move inevitable for one participant, while others cited career changes, and the opportunity to move into a bigger house with a bigger yard as reasons they might leave.

### **What would you be looking for in deciding where to live next?**

One participant wanted to move further away from Baltimore City to a less populated area.

One participant wanted to move to an area with educational demographics more similar to her own.

Another participant was looking to move “somewhere warmer with good healthcare”.

One participant’s health concerns would probably push her into a single level home, while another said she would be looking for a bigger house.

### **What did you like/not like about your previous home/neighborhood?**

This question triggered various responses, some anecdotes, and more conversation than previous questions. Participants mostly agreed that they missed the walkability of their former homes/neighborhoods. Being able to walk to a variety of restaurants was a positive experience that participants enjoyed. One participant enjoyed the accessibility to downtown, one mentioned missing Lake Montebello, and another cited excellent response times from the fire department at her previous residence.

Two participants liked that they used to live in old houses.

One participant stated that she felt, while living in the city, that her neighbors had a sense of pride about living in the city. They seemed to believe in trying to improve the city. Shoveling snow off of just six feet of sidewalk was something that participants agreed they all liked.

Participants had a longer list of things that they did not like about their prior homes. Many of the complaints centered on the fact that there was no way to easily get around in the city. More specifically, there was agreement that there is no major thoroughfare from the East side of the city to the West side, making it difficult to get where they wanted to go from their homes (or that they agreed that this was a challenge, even if it didn’t relate to where they used to live).

Traffic light timing (too long) and traffic congestion made travel in the city frustrating.

Another source of negative feelings pertained to crime in participants’ former neighborhoods. Baltimore’s “drug problem” was mentioned repeatedly. One participant told the group that she had to chase someone who was using drugs off of her property. Another participant had a bad experience with law enforcement

when her home was broken into and the response time was much too long in her opinion. There seemed to be other aspects of her case that were not handled to her satisfaction.

One participant mentioned the closeness of the neighbors in her previous neighborhood caused inconvenience, with people loitering on one porch spilling over to the next, and repairs on one home leaving debris on the adjacent homes.

One participant stated that she thought the revitalization effort in Hamilton had failed.

The jury duty process was also mentioned as something that participants did not like about living in the city. This sparked a short side conversation about city-run organizations being inefficient and unpleasant to deal with.

### **What could Baltimore City – or another organization – have done to keep you living in Baltimore City?**

One participant said that if the revitalization effort had succeeded, her family would've considered staying, with the caveat that her child would have gone to private school. Several participants said that they had houses that were too big. One participant said that if the schools had been better, she would have stayed. One participant said that nothing could have kept her there.

Approaching that question from a different angle, the moderator asked "What would you have liked to see done in Baltimore City that might have helped you make the decision to stay there?" One participant said that did not want to leave the city, she just could not afford the taxes and the car insurance there. Another participant said that if the type of house she wanted had been available in the city, she would have stayed. A better attitude and response time by police may have swayed one participant, and others jumped in to say that an improvement in public safety may have increased their desire to stay in the city. Another participant reiterated that nothing could have made her stay.

Participants were asked to suggest changes that could be made to attract more people to the city. They all agreed that the summer festivals and the "art movement" were good attractions and brought a lot of people into the city. More transportation was another suggestion with which most participants agreed. One participant said that there would be negative consequences (she didn't specify what type of consequences) if the city were to start charging people to ride the circulator. Another participant said that the circulator was great, and the city needs one that runs East-West.

### **Clarification: What research had you done regarding schools in your previous and current communities?**

At this point, the moderator had finished asking initial questions, and went to get requests for clarification from observers. Observers wanted to know what research participants had done regarding schools in their previous and current communities. Participants said that they had looked into graduation rates, test scores, and racial and economic demographics within elementary and high schools. One participant said that school data was easier to find in the county than it was in the city. One participant said that she had found what she presumed was a heroin needle in the playground near the school her son was slated to attend.

**Whom to Contact about this study:**

Principal Investigator: David Epstein

Department: Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, Jacob France Institute

Telephone number: 410-837-6651

**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

**Grow Baltimore Research Study**

**I. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:**

I am being asked to participate in a research study intended to better understand why people who have recently moved choose to move into or out of the City of Baltimore. I am being asked to volunteer because I have recently moved into or out of the City of Baltimore. My involvement in this study will begin when I agree to participate and will continue until December 31, 2014. About 16-20 persons will be invited to participate.

**II. PROCEDURES:**

As a participant in this study, I will be asked to participate in a focus group. My participation in this study will be video recorded, observed and note taking will occur. No personal identifying information will be written with responses to the questions.

**III. RISKS AND BENEFITS:**

My participation in this study does not involve any significant risks and I have been informed that my participation in this research will not benefit me personally, but will help craft some policy recommendations to assist in Mayor Rawlings-Blake's goal to increase the City's population by 10,000 families.

**IV. CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Any information learned and collected from this study in which I might be identified will remain confidential and will be disclosed ONLY if I give permission. Some video clips from the recording will be reviewed by research team members and members of the Mayor's Grow Baltimore task force but in such a fashion that my personal identity will be protected. If information learned from this study is published, I will not be identified by name. By signing this form, however, I allow the research study investigator to make my records available to the University of Baltimore Institutional Review Board (IRB) and regulatory agencies as required to do so by law.

Consenting to participate in this research also indicates my agreement that all information collected from me individually may be used by current and future researchers. Such use will include sharing anonymous information with other researchers for checking the accuracy of study findings and for future approved research that has the potential for improving knowledge.

**V. SPONSOR OF THE RESEARCH:**

The Goldseker Foundation is funding this research study.

**VI. COMPENSATION/COSTS:**

My participation in this study will involve no cost to me. I will be (paid \$75 for my participation and receive reimbursement for the cost of parking

**VII. CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS:**

The principal investigator has offered to and has answered any and all questions regarding my participation in this research study. If I have any further questions, I can contact David Epstein at [depstein@ubalt.edu](mailto:depstein@ubalt.edu) or 410-837-6651.

For questions about rights as a participant in this research study, contact the UB IRB Coordinator: 410-837-6199, [mlennon@ubalt.edu](mailto:mlennon@ubalt.edu).

**VIII. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

I have been informed that my participation in this research study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time.

*I will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.*

**IX. SIGNATURE FOR CONSENT**

The above-named investigator has answered my questions and I agree to be a research participant in this study. By signing this consent form, I am acknowledging that I am at least 18 years of age.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

(consent form template) – 10/17/11

## Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance / Jacob France Institute

### Baltimore City Residents / County Residents

Topic: Why do people who have recently moved chose to move into [or out of] Baltimore City?

Welcome: Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a researcher at the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore, and the moderator for this evening's focus group. Our purpose this evening is for you to talk about your recent move (within the last 5 years) and why you chose to move and why you chose to live where you are currently living.

I will be moderating the discussion that you will be having with each other this evening. There are no WRONG answers in your discussion. There may be differences of opinion or experiences that are different, but your opinion is the important part. My job is to keep things going and to make sure we are covering the topics that I have been asked to cover.

Agenda: This will be a group discussion, so please feel free to share your opinions on the topics that we discuss. We will discuss aspects of why you chose to live where you currently do; what other places you may have thought about living; and a little about the place that you lived prior to your last move.

When we are near the end of our discussion, I will leave for a moment to check with some folks who will be observing the discussion to see if there is anything that I have missed, or something that came up that they would like me to clarify with you.

After the group concludes, you may see one of the graduate students downstairs to receive your stipend and parking voucher.

Roles/Norms: Has anyone participated in a focus group in the past? Okay, for clarity, I want to make sure we all understand the same thing about how the focus group works. The Focus Group is designed to help the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA), at the Jacob France Institute here at UB, and through them, the Mayor's Office for the City of Baltimore, understand why people choose to move into or stay in Baltimore City.

I'm here to make sure your discussion is collaborative, hits on the topics that they are interested in addressing, and that you can effectively relate your thoughts and opinions. I'm not here to quiz you, or tell you what to think, but to help you have a conversation with each other.

Thank you all for coming out on this windy/chilly December evening to share your thoughts!

Recording: As I mentioned, there will be some other researchers observing the session remotely. In addition the session is being recorded. This is not to try and make sure we know who said what, but rather to ensure that when I write a report, I can accurately describe what was said and the types of examples that you use. Then I don't have to rely on just my memory of the events.

## Guidelines:

1. Please talk one-at-a-time
2. Please talk in a voice at least as loud as mine
3. Please avoid side conversations – contribute to the group
4. Please strive for “Equal Time” to make sure that no one person talks too much or too little
5. There are NO WRONG answers. Please allow for others to have different opinions and points of view.
6. Please say what you think and feel. Even if you don’t agree with someone else.
7. To keep things moving, try to only have one person up or out of the room at a time.

FOOD and RESTROOMS

Introduction: To get started, let’s all introduce ourselves – Say who you are (first names only please); tell us who is in your family (whatever your family means to you, 1, 2, 4, legged friends, children, spouse, etc.). And finally, how long you have lived in Baltimore (where else have you lived).

## Issue A – Current Residence

1. (LIST OF ATTRACTIONS) Thinking about where you live now, what are some reasons you chose to live where you do (Neighborhood or House/Residence)?
  - a. Were there certain HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS that played a role in where you live?
  - b. Were there certain NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES that played a role in where you live?
  - c. Were there certain SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS that played a role in where you live?
  - d. Were there certain DESTINATIONS OR PEOPLE that you wanted to be near?
2. When you moved, what other neighborhoods or places to live were you choosing from?
  - a. How did you narrow your options?
  - b. What factors made the decision final or tipped the scales for you?
3. What local institutions are you involved in?

Is this new, since moving?
4. (FROM LIST OF ATTRACTIONS) – Which of these are meeting your expectations?
5. Pick up a piece of paper or writing pad: Think about, what would you change about where you currently live?
6. How long do you see yourself staying in your current home/neighborhood?
  - a. What are some reasons you might move?
  - b. What type of home / neighborhood would you be looking for?

## Issue B – PRIOR Residence

7. Thinking about where you most recently **MOVED FROM:**
  - a. What did you like about your old home/neighborhood?
  - b. What did you not like about your old home/neighborhood?

8. What local institutions were you involved in where you previously lived? Schools, community assn., faith-based institutions...

**FOR COUNTY GROUP ONLY – What Could Have Changed Your Mind?**

9. What could Baltimore City – or another organization – have done to keep you living in the City?
  - a. City of Baltimore
  - b. Neighborhood Organization
  - c. Other Group within the city