VITAL SIGNS 17

Introduction

About Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance.....1
The Purpose of *Vital Signs*.....1
Measuring Neighborhood Connectedness.....2
What's New in *Vital Signs 17*?.....2
Informing Middle Market Strategies.....2
A Difficult Year for Crime.....3
How to Use Data.....3
Geography and Data.....4

Vital Signs Report:
Census Demographics
Housing and Community Development
Children and Family Health
Crime and Safety
Workforce and Economic Development
Education and Youth
Arts and Culture
Sustainability

BNIA
BALTIMORE NEIGHBORHOOD INDICATORS ALLIANCE
Jacob France Institute

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

BNIA
BALTIMORE NEIGHBORHOOD INDICATORS ALLIANCE
Jacob France Institute

1420 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Web: www.bniajfi.org
Email: bnia-jfi@ubalt.edu
Facebook: facebook.com/bniajfi
Twitter: @bniajfi

Staff who contributed to Vital Signs 17:

Seema Iyer, PhD, Associate Director, Jacob France Institute

Cheryl Knott, GIS Project Manager

Carlos Kaparti, Developer

Logan Shertz, Student Assistant

David Carpenter, Web Developer

Robbyn Lewis, Civic Data and Engagement Fellow

Dawn Hubbs, Publication Designer

TJ ODonnell, Creative Direction, Design

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance Jacob France Institute (BNIA-JFI) would like to thank the following:
University of Baltimore, Jacob France Institute, Merrick School of Business, and BNIA-JFI Steering Committee Members and organizations who generously provided Data Stories.

Vital Signs 17 **is made possible with the generous support from these sponsors:**

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

KAISER PERMANENTE® thrive

PNC BANK
Member of The PNC Financial Services Group

T. ROWE PRICE **FOUNDATION, INC.**

VITAL SIGNS 17

Introduction

About the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance

In 1998, the Annie E. Casey Foundation approached the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers (ABAG) to explore the interest in Baltimore for developing a neighborhood indicators initiative. The two-year long planning process that followed brought together several citywide nonprofit organizations, city government, neighborhoods, and foundations, and led to the creation of the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA)—which would be dedicated to developing and maintaining a community-based data system open and accessible to all neighborhoods. In 2000, BNIA became an early partner in the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership[1] (NNIP), which today is a network of organizations with similar missions in more than 36 cities across the United States. In 2006, BNIA moved to the University of Baltimore's Jacob France Institute in an effort to expand on the capabilities of BNIA and was renamed the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance – Jacob France Institute (BNIA-JFI).

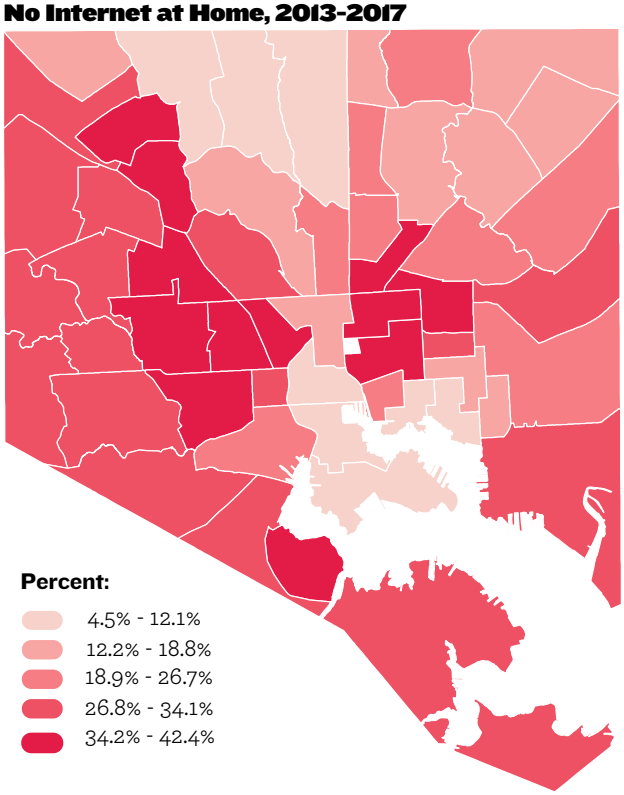
Since 2002, BNIA-JFI has been producing the *Vital Signs* report annually to provide outcome indicators that "take the pulse" of Baltimore neighborhoods progress towards a better quality of life in every neighborhood. The goal of this effort is for neighborhood residents, organizations, and other stakeholders to use data and the *Vital Signs* report to strategically and effectively foster new ways of thinking about improving our City, neighborhoods, and government over time. In 2012, Baltimore City Council passed a resolution that endorsed the use of *Vital Signs* in local policy-making to "reflect the diverse conditions of neighborhoods and provide the basis for a system of tracking progress toward a shared vision" for Baltimore.[2] Over the years, the *Vital Signs* report and the resulting knowledge that is mutually gained by analyzing community-based data have served to support decision-making in Baltimore City and for neighborhoods.[3]

The Purpose of Vital Signs

Neighborhoods, as a growing body of research shows,[4] have extremely durable properties based on the social, cultural, and physical realities that define places. Although people and individuals help shape neighborhoods, their actions occur within the structural construct of history, planning, and geography. To better understand the context in which programs and actions take place, tracking the "ecometrics" of neighborhoods is necessary to assess the situation in which interventions and solutions are trying to take hold. This is precisely the purpose of tracking key quality of life measures for neighborhoods that has been the mission of BNIA-JFI for more than a decade. The community-based indicators available in *Vital Signs* are bits of information that generate a picture of a place and provide insight for all stakeholders, both inside and outside a neighborhood, about the overall direction of the community.

1. For more information about the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership at the Urban Institute, visit www.neighborhoodindicators.org
2. Baltimore City Council Resolution 12-0059R "Vital Signs: Measuring Progress Towards a Better Quality of Life in Every Neighborhood" www.baltimorecitycouncil.com
3. Kathryn L.S. Pettit (2018) "Improving Public Decision-making: Local Governments and Data Intermediaries" https://www.urban.org/research/publication/collaborating-expand-city-capacity-baltimore
4. See, for example, Robert Sampson (2012) Great American City and Patrick Sharkey (2013) Stuck in Place.

Percent of Households with No Internet at Home, 2013-2017



Measuring Neighborhood Connectedness

All the data in *Vital Signs* contributes to a new and growing field of "urban science" that not only aims to use data to observe what's going on in cities, but also help predict[5] what will happen in the future. One of the major insights coming from this new field is that because cities function as unique, complex, and adaptive systems, they tend to realize strong and predictable "network effects"—the more and more people or participants in a network the more valuable (and potentially more costly) a neighborhood or city becomes.[6] While many of the existing Vital Signs indicators reflect the situation within neighborhoods, measuring how connected neighborhoods are in terms of digital, physical, social and financial infrastructure is required to truly understand the strengths and accruing network effects of communities. Neighborhood isolation across any of these domains results in the lack of resources to communities today and in the future, but lack of access to networks is often difficult to assess when looking only within neighborhoods. Vital Signs 17 introduces several new indicators aimed at measuring the connectedness of Baltimore's neighborhoods to a wide variety of networks including home-based internet, the public bus system and capital markets for small business

- **No Internet At Home** (Workforce and Economic Development): 24.6% of Baltimore households do not have access to the internet at home. The highest percentage of households with no internet was in Greenmount East (42.4%) and the lowest was in Greater Roland Park/ Poplar Hill (4.5%)

- **Total Dollar Amount Invested in Small Business** (In collaboration with the 21st Century Cities Initiative at Johns Hopkins University): $1.7mil per 50 small businesses invested in Baltimore. The greatest amount invested in small businesses per 50 businesses was in Harbor East/Little Italy ($14.1 million) and the least was in Madison/East End ($0.14 million)

- **Daily Bus Ridership** (Sustainability): 500.4 riders per 1000 residents board/alight buses daily in Baltimore. The highest average daily bus ridership was in Downtown/Seton Hill (10,379 per 1,000 residents) while the lowest average daily bus ridership was in Canton (62 per 1,000 residents).

What's New in *Vital Signs 17*?

Beyond the new indicators identified above, this edition of *Vital Signs* tracks over 100 indicators on the quality of life in Baltimore's neighborhoods. These indicators, when combined into each community's profile, generate a picture of what is happening in each neighborhood. From home prices to crime rates to clogged storm drains, the indicators in Vital Signs corroborate (or dispel) perceptions of residents, business and other stakeholders about the quality of life in Baltimore's neighborhoods. As communities continue to plan ahead over the next decade, these indicators can now be used as inputs into strategic planning processes as well as tracking and monitoring the effectiveness of neighborhood-based activities.

Informing Middle Market Strategies

Housing is the predominant land use in nearly all of Baltimore's neighborhoods, and serves as the basis for quality of life in nearly all other aspects of communities such as health, education, local economies and safety. Yet the policies and laws that impact the

5. Michael Anft (2017) "The New Urban Science: Big Data and Big Dollars are transforming the field. But where is the Big Idea?" The Chronicle of Higher Education https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-New-Urban-Science/240740

6. Marian Alberti (2017) "Grand Challenges in Urban Science" Frontiers in Built Environment https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fbuil.2017.00006/full

development of housing have historically been established in isolation across federal, state and local governments and policymakers. To overcome diverging impacts on neighborhoods, Baltimore has worked on several innovative initiatives to take more local control over housing practices and their impacts during the past several years. The Department of Housing and Community Development issued a framework for community development in 2019 that expands resources to all communities through new funding mechanisms such as the Community Catalysts Grants and the Neighborhood Impact Investment Fund. *Vital Signs 17* provides measures to track investment in all of Baltimore's neighborhoods including "middle market" neighborhoods that tend to see less capital investment or rehabilitation:

- Between 2016 and 2017, the percentage of residential properties with rehabilitation permits in excess of $5,000 in Baltimore increased from 3.2% to 4.4%. In 2017, the CSAs that had the highest percentage of residential properties with rehabilitation permits were Highlandtown (13.7%), South Baltimore (10.8%) and Medfield/Hampden/Woodberry/Remington (8.4%). The CSAs that had the lowest percentage of residential properties with rehabilitation permits were Cherry Hill (0 .9%), Brooklyn/Curtis Bay/Hawkins Point (1.1%), and Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park (1.4%).

A Difficult Year for Crime

The indicators presented in *Vital Signs 17* detail the overall crime and safety trends within the city and the variation across its communities. It is important to recognize the context for many of the statistics presented in this chapter; the individual narratives of Baltimore's communities vary and each area faces its own unique challenges or successes. The resiliency of each community is dependent on ability to adapt to changes in the community, new policies in policing, and collaboration around shared goals for safety and improved quality of life. Violent crime in the city remains a pressing problem:

- Between 2016 and 2017, the Part I crime rate in Baltimore City increased from 63.0 offenses per 1,000 residents to 67.0 offenses per 1,000 residents. The greatest increases in offenses per 1, 00 residents occurred in Madison/East End (+32.1), Edmondson Village (+19.0), and Brookyln/Curtis Bay (+18.1). In contrast to the citywide trend, the Part I crime rate decreased most significantly in Downtown/Seton Hill (-28.2), Washington Village/Pigtown (-14.5), and Harbor East/Little Italy (-14.2).

- Baltimore City experienced 342 homicides in 2017, an increase from the 318 reported in 2016. In 2017, 80%, or 275 of the total deaths were a result of a shooting. Two communities with the highest rates in 2017 doubled their gun homicide rates from 2016 to 2017: Greenmount East and Pimlico/Arlington/Hilltop.

How to Use Vital Signs Data

The indicators available in Vital Signs have been chosen based on national trends, academic research on community-based indicators, local planning processes, and ongoing community engagement to ensure that the overall set of indicators is relevant to Baltimore's communities.

- National best practices: Through the NNIP network, BNIA-JFI is connected to 36 other cities for learning and staying ahead of the curve regarding research and development of neighborhood based data-driven initiatives. BNIA-JFI is committed to transforming data for policy-relevance and enhancing access to the data through technical assistance and online functionality.[1]

- Local planning processes: Several local and regional plans over the past decade have included specific indicators to monitor the effectiveness of plan implementation, such as the City's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Sustainability Plan, and the regional Opportunity Collaborative Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. The Vital Signs indicators are intended to serve as a means of tracking and evaluating the relevant neighborhood impacts of these city and regional plans.

- Grant-writing resources: Community-based organizations and non-profits rely on Vital Signs data to help make a data-driven case for leveraging resources into their neighborhoods. Analysis of grant applications for programs such as Community Development Block Grant, Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers Common Grant, and Maryland Sustainable Communities Grant identified several indicators that organizations require for satisfying basic data requirements for community-based funding.

7. For more information on transforming data into useful information, see "What Counts: Harnessing Data for America's Communities" edited by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and the Urban Institute (2014).

Every attempt is made to ensure that the indicators in *Vital Signs* are both available from the public agency that might be supplying the data and consistent from one time period to the next. Continuous monitoring of quality of life for Baltimore's neighborhoods provides communities the chance to take immediate, hopefully preventative, measures to address issues that arise in their neighborhood.

The *Vital Signs* report and the compendium of data available longitudinally for Baltimore's neighborhoods is more than just a once-a-year presentation of information.[8] The release of *Vital Signs 17* marks the beginning or continuation of diverse, cross-sector conversations throughout Baltimore on how to transform these data into the means for improving the quality of life in every neighborhood. The indicators and data in Vital Signs are organized into eight sections each of which describes an issue or area that is central to quality of life in Baltimore City. The data within each of the following sections provide a picture of the conditions within Baltimore City's neighborhoods and their progress over time:

- Census Demographics;
- Housing and Community Development;
- Children and Family Health;
- Crime and Safety;
- Workforce and Economic Development;
- Education and Youth;
- Arts and Culture and
- Sustainability.

Data within each of these sections are divided into additional subsections that allow for indicators to be clustered together around specific topics, such as housing conditions or safe neighborhoods, educational attainment, or student performance.

Vital Signs is a compilation of a large amount of data throughout the sections for easy interpretation of the data. Each chapter in *Vital Signs* also includes a Rankings & Definitions section, which lists the five highest and lowest communities by their value for each indicator. With so much information in this report, it has been produced in a way that should serve as a reference guide to communities throughout the year.

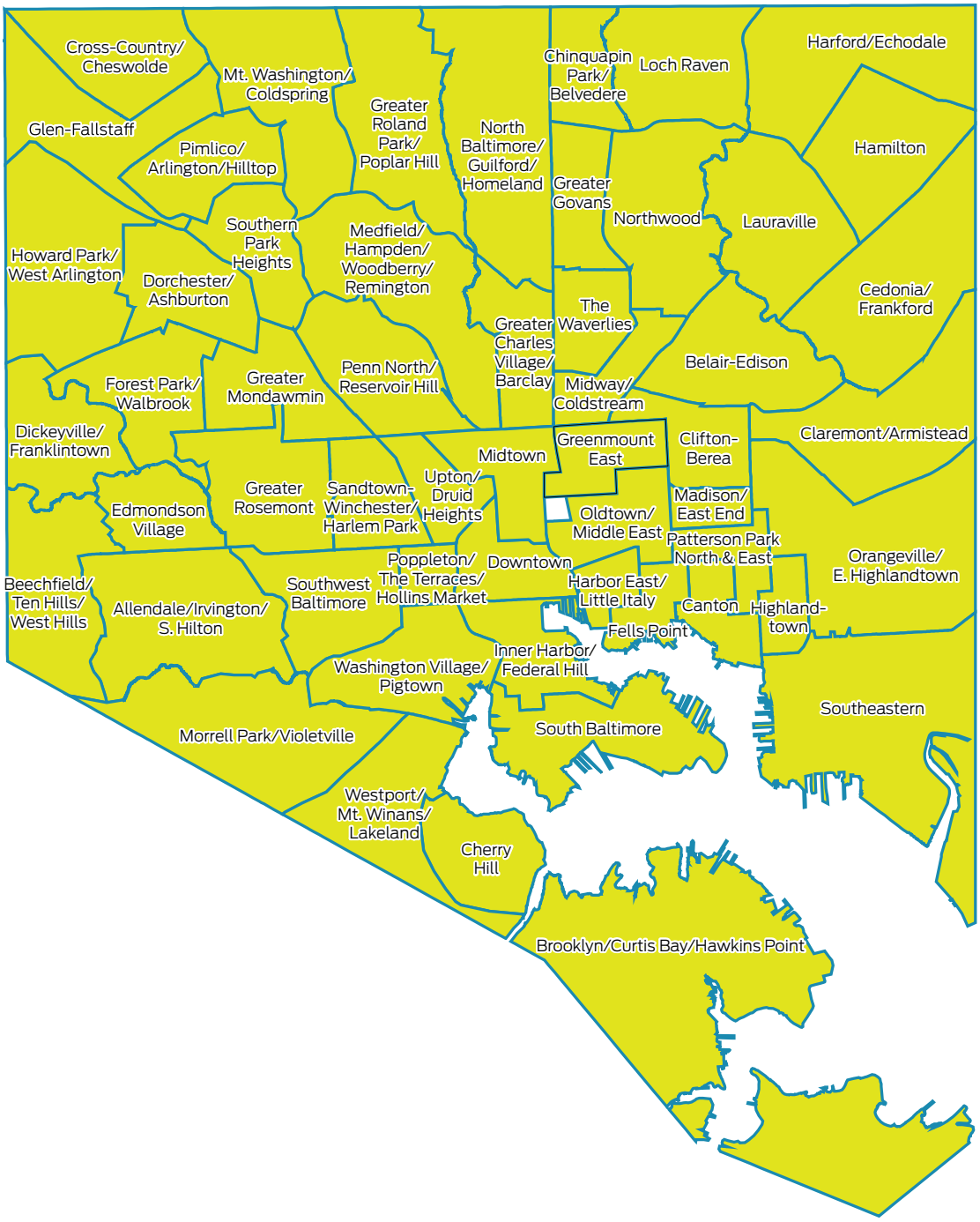
Vital Signs is also 'open data. [9] All of the indicators from previous *Vital Signs* are online [10] for everyone to see and download for use in a variety of innovative ways. Policy makers use the data to provide context and neighborhood interdependences across indicators. The data are used by neighborhood groups as well through Community Profiles for each of the City's 55 Communities which are available online for quick access to data specific to each neighborhood's needs.

Geography and Data

The geographic level at which data is provided is important to understand. Wherever possible, *Vital Signs* uses Community Statistical Areas (CSAs) as the geographic level for which data is provided. CSAs are clusters of Census Tracts that correspond to Baltimore's neighborhoods boundaries and are consistent statistical boundaries for which data can be acquired. Neighborhood lines often do not fall along CSA boundaries, but CSAs are representations of the conditions occurring within those particular neighborhoods. The CSAs were originally created in 2002 and were revised for *Vital Signs* 10 using new 2010 Census Tract boundaries.

8. See how "data intermediaries" around the country help communities access and use neighborhood data in "Strengthening Communities with Neighborhood Data" by G. Thomas Kingsley, Claudia J. Coulton, and Kathryn L.S. Pettit (2014). Urban Institute.
9. See Eric Burnstein and Seema Iyer (2014) "NNIP and Open Data in Baltimore" http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/activities/projects/nnip-and-open-data
10. Visit www.bniajfi.org to access the Vital Signs open data portal, interactive graphics, and report archives online

Community Statistical Areas (CSAs)



VITAL SIGNS 17