

JOHN EAGER HOWARD COMMUNITY SUMMARY

The Baltimore City Planning Department is currently in the INSPIRE planning process for John Eager Howard Elementary School. This plan will ultimately determine recommendations and budgeting priorities for short and long-term improvements in the ¼ to ½ mile area surrounding John Eager Howard.

From August 2014 to early January 2015, planning staff worked with residents to better understand their neighborhood experiences, concerns, and needs. The following is a summary of what we heard from residents through a community workshop, an online survey, a parent survey, and walkability tours. Throughout this engagement phase, we were able to collect the feedback of over 150 residents and stakeholders.

1st INSPIRE WORKSHOP

On September 20, 2014 we held the first INSPIRE workshop for John Eager Howard at the John Eager Howard Recreation Center. Participants learned about the INSPIRE process and collaboratively examined the existing conditions of the area surrounding the school, specifically identifying **strengths**, **weaknesses**, and **opportunities**. Twenty-nine people participated in the workshop, including representatives from the school, neighborhood, and stakeholder organizations.

Key workshop findings:

COMMUNITY

Active groups/organizations/community associations

Community cohesion and good neighbors

Negative perceptions of the community (drugs, crime, sanitation)

Partner with nearby institutions (MICA/JEH/Library/Rec Center/ St Francis etc)

Use redevelopment of school to attract new residents and bring Reservoir Hill and Penn North closer

TRANSPORTATION

Access to good transportation

North Avenue and Druid Park Lake Drive are barriers at either end of neighborhood

Dangerous speeds on local streets and lack of school signage

Complete Streets needed and Streetscape re-design

CRIME/NUISANCES

Strong neighborhood services unit in Central Police District

Major drug activity

Trash/littering

Safety cameras needed

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Playgrounds, Druid Hill Park, Recreation Center

No central community open space

Partner with Friends of Druid Hill Park (programs for kids)

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT/HOUSING

Landromat, Mutual Homes, and corner stores

Vacancies

Lack of locally-owned businesses that support the community

Mixed-use development/commercial development

Large properties available for redevelopment

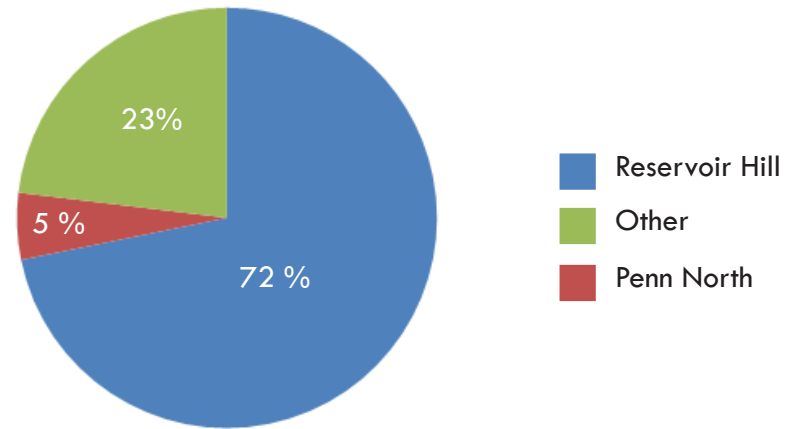


SURVEY RESPONSES

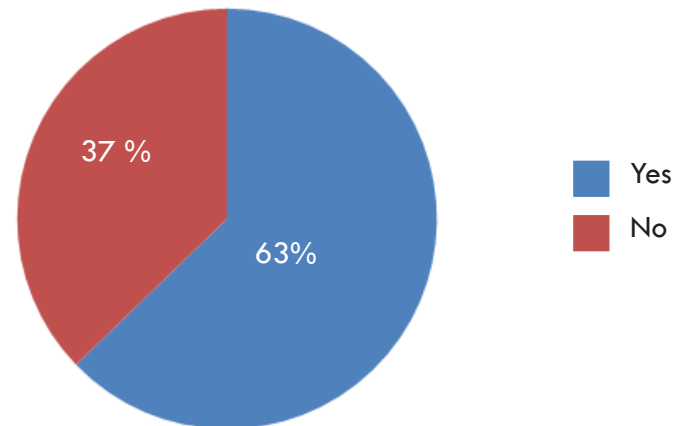
We administered two surveys that collectively received 99 responses from community members. One survey was administered to parents, family members, and teachers at pick-up and drop-off times in front of the school. The other survey was administered online for any interested community member to take and share with others.

WHO DID WE TALK TO?

Which neighborhood do you live in?



Do you have a child at John Eager Howard ES?



SAFETY

We asked survey takers how safe they felt at different times of the day. The majority felt “safe” or “very safe” during the morning, daytime, and evening. However, the majority felt “unsafe” or “very unsafe” at night.

	Morning (5-9am)	Day (9am-5pm)	Evening (5-8pm)	Night (8pm-5am)
Very Unsafe	5%	1%	6%	16%
Unsafe	20%	9%	23%	44%
Safe	62%	66%	59%	34%
Very Safe	13%	24%	12%	6%

Most
Mentioned

What streets do you feel unsafe on?

- North Avenue
- Linden Avenue
- Whitelock Street
- Lennox Street
- Callow Avenue
- Eutaw Place
- Penn Avenue
- Park Avenue
- Reservoir Street
- Brookfield Avenue
- Brooks Lane
- Madison Avenue

Least
Mentioned

Most
Mentioned

What would make you feel safer?

- More police presence
- Better/More lighting
- Less Drugs
- Neighborhood Unity
- Less Loitering
- Citizen Patrol/Community Watch
- Nothing
- Youth Development
- Park
- Remove Liquor Stores
- Fewer Vacants
- Cameras

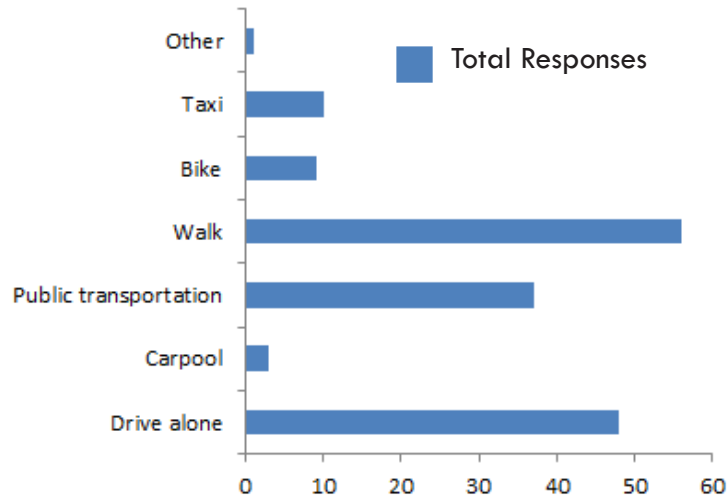
Least
Mentioned



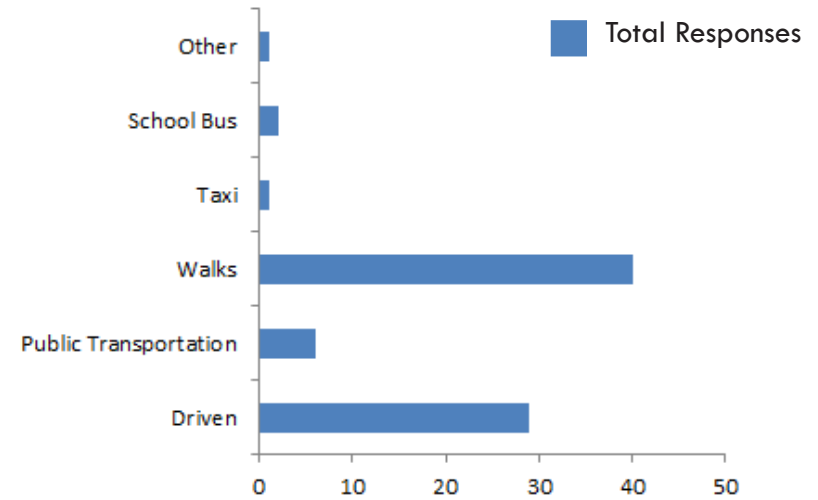
TRANSPORTATION

How do you get around?

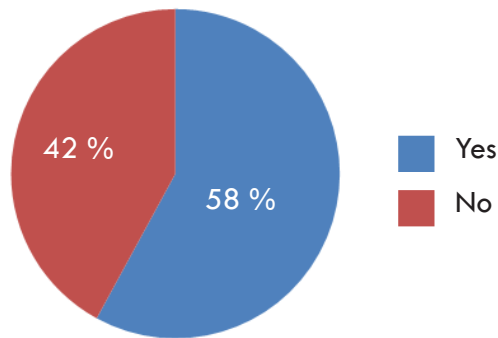
(For work, school, social activities, worship, etc)



How does your child usually get to school?



Does your household own a vehicle?



Fifteen of the respondents were asked to rate the safety of their experiences with crossing the street, car speed, and cars running red lights. The majority of respondents rated all three of these experiences as “unsafe” or “very unsafe”

The streets respondents felt most uncomfortable on were:

- North Avenue
- Linden Avenue
- Druid Park Lake Drive
- Druid Hill Avenue
- Brookfield Avenue
- Whitelock Street
- Park Avenue



WALKABILITY

On August 27 and September 3, 2014, Heather Martin, the Central District Planner, led two walking tours in the neighborhood. During the first, community members, institutional partners, the police community liaison, and core stakeholders walked from Westside Elementary in Penn North to John Eager Howard Elementary. The participants filled out a walking audit as they went, noting the locations of things like litter, broken sidewalks, vacant buildings, lack of crosswalks, and drivers not stopping at stop signs.

During the second tour, the principal and schools coordinator of John Eager Howard Elementary walked the immediate vicinity around the school, identifying issues they were aware of or had experienced. The following tables show the results of the walking audit performed on August 27.

Did you have room to walk?

Answers	Total #
Yes	0
<i>If no, what were the problems</i>	
Sidewalks or paths started and stopped	1
Sidewalks were broken or cracked	8
Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc	3
No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders	0
Too much traffic	3
Cars and trash on sidewalks	1

Was it easy to cross streets?

Answers	Total #
Yes	0
<i>If no, what were the problems</i>	
Road was too wide	6
Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross	0
Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals	5
Parked cars blocked our view of traffic	2
Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic	3
Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair	6



Did drivers behave well?

Answers	Total #
Yes	2
<i>If no, what were the problems</i>	
Backed out of driveways without looking	1
Did not yield to people crossing the street	1
Turned into people crossing the street	1
Drove too fast	5
Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights	1

Was your walk pleasant?

Answers	Total #
Yes	0
<i>If no, what were the problems</i>	
Needed more grass, flowers, or trees	7
Scary dogs	0
Scary people	1
Not well lighted	3
Dirty, lots of litter or trash	9
Dirty air due to automobile exhaust	2
Smelly	1

Was it easy to follow safety rules?

Could you and your child...

	Yes	No
Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?	3	5
Stopped and look felt, right and then left again before crossing streets?	7	0
Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?	4	3
Cross with the light?	6	2

How does your neighborhood stack up?

Add up your ratings and decide.

26-30 Celebrate!	You have a great neighborhood for walking	0
21-25	Celebrate a litte. Your neighborhood is pretty good.	0
16-20	Okay, but it needs work	4
11:15	It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.	2
5:10	It's a disaster for walking	1



QUALITY OF LIFE

The majority of respondents rated the neighborhood as a “fair” to “good” place to raise children.

What are the major challenges that you face in raising your children in the neighborhood?

- Violence/Gangs
- Drugs
- Safe places to play
- Lack of positive youth activities
- Lack of community involvement
- Trash
- People loitering
- Peer Pressure/Bullying

Most
Mentioned

↓

Least
Mentioned

Please list any other comments about your experience living in the neighborhood that you would like to share:

We love...

- Neighborhood
- School
- Community Garden
- Improvements to safety
- Playground on Linden
- Rec Center

We want...

- Better parks
- Healthier food options
- More family activities
- More community activities
- More commercial
- Less violence
- More jobs
- Fewer vacant houses
- Less trash

