HERITAGE CROSSING AT 5
Successes and Challenges in a HOPE VI Development

University of Maryland, Urban Studies and Planning Program, Spring Studio 2008.
“The biggest hole in the planning process in America today is right at the beginning of it. We aren’t coming up with right answers because we aren’t asking the right questions at the outset. Planning deals with highways, land uses, public buildings, densities, open spaces, but it almost never deals with people. So seldom as to be never, in my experience, do you find in a planning study or report any serious discussion of the problems that people face in an urban society or how to plan effectively for the future growth of American communities unless we start at the beginning – and that beginning is people.... An inspired and concerned society will dignify man; will find ways to develop his talents; will put the fruits of his labor and intellect to effective use; will struggle for brotherhood and for the elimination of bigotry and intolerance.”


Introduction

This report was prepared by University of Maryland community planning graduate students in a studio focused on Heritage Crossing, a HOPE VI mixed-income development in Baltimore. The purpose of the studio was to examine how well a completed HOPE VI community satisfies the aims of this innovative federal housing policy, and how it functions as a community in general. Finally, the studio sought to determine whether there were any valuable lessons learned that could be applied to other HOPE VI developments.

The Community Planning Studio
Spring 2008

Instructor: Sidney Brower (email: sbrower@umd.edu  Phone: 301-405-8000)

Authors:
Lisa Akchin
Robert Choflet
James Elliott
Shuo Huang

Maria Rivera
Nichole Stewart
Eunsoo Yang
Acknowledgements

The authors thank the residents of Heritage Crossing who kindly invited us into their homes and took the time to answer our questions. We would also like to acknowledge the following individuals for information and assistance contributing to this report:

Janet Allen                  President, Heritage Crossing Resident Association (HCRA)
Susan Atkinson               Secretary, HCRA
Al Barry                     Principal, AB Associates
Joseph Buster                Treasurer, HCRA
Pete Clarke                  Regional Manager, Edgewood Management
Dick Cook                    Professor, University of Maryland School of Social Work
Michelle Cruise              Director of Asset Management, Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC)
                            Board Member, HCRA
Chickie Grayson              President and CEO, Enterprise Homes
Antoinette Hill              Vice President, HCRA
Mary Holmes                  President of the Tenants Council
                            Board Member, HCRA
Donna Johnson                Townes at the Terraces Manager
Andrea Limauro              Western District Planner
Estelle Peters              Department of Housing and Community Development
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Charlene Pindell</td>
<td>American Community Management</td>
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<td>Mary Porter</td>
<td>Department of Recreation and Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Smith</td>
<td>Department of Housing and Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Stumpfoll</td>
<td>Architect, Mark Thomas Architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlene Summerfield</td>
<td>Edgewood Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylla Williams</td>
<td>Associate Director of Resident Services, HABC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ron Wilson</td>
<td>Director of Housing Initiatives, Enterprise Homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Woodall</td>
<td>Job Development Specialist, HABC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey Zeiger</td>
<td>Senior Vice President, Enterprise Homes</td>
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# Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary ................................................................. vii

II. Background .............................................................................. 1

   HOPE VI: a Mixed-Income Housing Program................................. 1

   HOPE VI in Baltimore ................................................................. 2

   Heritage Crossing Development Objectives.................................. 4

   Methodology ............................................................................... 9

III. Heritage Crossing as a Community Today ................................. 12

    Surrounding Area ...................................................................... 14

    Safety ...................................................................................... 16

    Recreational and Community Space ........................................... 19

    Management ............................................................................ 24

    Community Organization and Participation ............................... 27
IV. Heritage Crossing and HOPE VI Aims ......................................................... 30

V. Recommendations for the Community ...................................................... 32

Focus on Common Interests ................................................................. 32
Increase Participation ........................................................................... 36
Bring People Together ............................................................................ 38

VI. Recommendations for Government .................................................... 39

Recommendations for the City and HABC .............................................. 39
Recommendations for HUD ...................................................................... 41

The full report and related documents available online at:
http://www.arch.umd.edu/student_work/planning/index.cfm/Studio_Reports

Related documents include:
- Interview questionnaires
- Housing Authority of Baltimore City, “Development Proposal.”
- “Declaration of Covenants Rental Lease Agreement.”
- The Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies, “Neighborhood Effects of HOPE VI: Evidence from Baltimore” (Fall, 2002), https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/885/Hope%20IV.pdf?sequence=1
- Urban Institute, “A Decade of HOPE VI: Research Findings and Policy Challenges” (May, 2004), http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411002_HOPEVI.pdf
I. Executive Summary

THE HOPE VI program represents a conscious effort to create economic opportunities for individuals and communities through planned redevelopment of failed public housing sites. The objectives for HOPE VI nationally and in Baltimore include improving the living environment and opportunities for public housing residents, decreasing the concentration of poverty, stimulating revitalization in declining urban neighborhoods, and building sustainable communities.

The Heritage Crossing HOPE VI development was completed in 2003 on the 15.5-acre site of Baltimore's former Murphy Homes. The 781 housing units there were replaced by a mixed income development of 75 homes for public housing residents and 185 privately owned homes.

A large majority of residents interviewed as part of this study agree that Heritage Crossing is a good place for them to live (76 percent) and say they feel at home there (81 percent). When asked whether members of the community get along, 75 percent indicated they feel people do get along and 62.5 percent agreed that residents with diverse backgrounds “want the same things.”

At the same time, many also point to significant gaps that remain between the vision for the community during the planning process and the reality today.

- The positive spillover effects envisioned for the surrounding area have not yet materialized. Residents surveyed expressed frustration with the slow pace of redevelopment in adjoining blocks dominated by vacant, boarded-up houses.

- Most neighborhood residents rate safety highly as a concern. Residents interviewed particularly express concern about drug dealing at the edge of the community and undesirable pedestrian traffic passing through the community and residents’ back yards.

- While attractive open space is plentiful in the community, it is underused and does not meet specific needs some residents feel for recreation space for youth.
• The management structure is complex and ineffective in resolving concerns about the maintenance of public and private spaces. Residents are dissatisfied with management’s level of communication with the community.

• Participation in the Heritage Crossing Resident Association (HCRA) is low, limiting the neighborhood’s ability to gain ground on common problems residents face.

Heritage Crossing is a young community in both its physical and social infrastructure. While it is too early to know whether it will prove to be a sustainable mixed-income community, it is not too soon to monitor and address the factors that will be important to retaining and attracting homeownership investment in the community.
II. Background

HOPE VI: a Mixed-Income Housing Program

Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) VI is a federal housing program started in the early 1990s with the goal of improving the living environment of people residing in “severely distressed” high rise public housing sites. The program is the brainchild of an independent National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing created in 1989 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Established in 1992, HOPE VI provides federal grants through HUD to local public housing authorities. HUD’s stated objectives for the program are:

- Improve the living environment for residents of severely distressed public housing through the demolition, rehabilitation, reconfiguration, or replacement of obsolete projects;
- Provide housing that will avoid or decrease the concentration of very low-income families;
- Revitalize sites on which such public housing projects are located and contribute to the
• Build sustainable communities.

Informed by the principles of New Urbanist design, HOPE VI aims to change the physical and social dynamics of public housing by reshaping its physical form, integrating public housing residents into mixed-income communities including market-rate renters and/or homeowners, and connecting these communities into the larger neighborhoods that surround them in an effort revitalize distressed areas of a city. The approach also includes such social supports as job development, health, and childcare services for public housing residents. By fostering mixed-income communities HOPE VI seeks to decrease the social isolation of poor residents. The program reflects the influence of social scientists such as William Julius Wilson, who argued in his book *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) that the exodus of middle- and working-class families from inner city neighborhoods left the poor without important social networks and links to legitimate economic opportunities. Moreover, the program seeks to create a market demand where there was little or none and thus leverage additional private investments by building partnerships with other agencies, local governments, nonprofits, and private businesses. Congress initially authorized $300 million for the program in 1993, and has since authorized some $5.8 billion. In addition, The Urban Institute notes, “The billions of federal dollars allocated for HOPE VI have leveraged billions more in other public, private, and philanthropic investments.”

**HOPE VI in Baltimore**

The push to reform public housing began in Baltimore in 1995, led by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Citing “nearly a century of segregationist policy in Baltimore’s public housing,” six Baltimore families filed suit against HUD in an effort to discontinue its segregationist policies. While the lawsuit, *Thompson v. HUD*, is still being negotiated, a partial consent decree on the part of the City has enabled 3,000 new housing opportunities for public housing families. These new opportunities included redevelopment of public housing sites and an expansion of the Housing Choice voucher program, which has enabled hundreds of Baltimore families to move out of
public housing sites and into other kinds of housing arrangements throughout the City.

Through use of the HOPE VI funds, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) has been able to redevelop five public housing sites. While each has been redeveloped differently, the general approach has been similar: existing public housing is dismantled and physical and social spaces are redesigned in order to attract families earning a broad range of incomes. The five Baltimore sites redeveloped with HOPE VI funds are Pleasant View Gardens (formerly Lafayette Towers), The Townes at the Terraces (formerly Lexington Terrace), Heritage Crossing (formerly Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens), Broadway Overlook (formerly Broadway Homes), and Albemarle Square (formerly Flag House Courts).  

**Pleasant View Gardens**

Pleasant View Gardens was the first public housing site to receive a HOPE VI grant to fund its redevelopment. In 1994, HABC received $31 million in HOPE VI funds to transform the public housing site into a mixed-income community. Pleasant View Gardens, completed in 1994, is located east of downtown, bordered by Fayette Street to the south. The development has 311 public rental units and 27 market rate homes, as well as a day care center, a recreation center, and outdoor recreational spaces. According to a Johns Hopkins University study, unemployment rates for residents in Pleasant View Gardens have decreased while the level of education for residents has increased since the completion of the HOPE VI development.  

**The Townes at the Terraces**

The second Baltimore public housing site to receive HOPE VI funds toward redevelopment was Lexington Terrace. In 1995 HUD awarded Baltimore $23 million for this redevelopment. Completed in 2001, The Townes at the Terraces is located in West Baltimore. Its 250 public rental units are interspersed with 41 market-rate rentals and 100 homes for sale. Since the replacement of Lexington Terrace, income levels of residents have increased, as have those of the surrounding neighborhood, while unemployment rates have decreased.
**Heritage Crossing**

Heritage Crossing was completed in 2003. It was built on the 15.5-acre site of Baltimore's former Murphy Homes, a public housing development made up of four 14-story buildings, 14 two-story buildings, and an elementary school. The 781 housing units there were replaced by a mixed-income development containing 75 homes for public housing residents and 185 privately owned homes. According to HABC, 40 percent of the new homeowners are families new to Baltimore, including 25 percent from the Washington, DC metro area. The redevelopment project utilized $31 million of federal HOPE VI funds.

**Broadway Overlook**

$21.4 million of HOPE VI funds went to transform the Broadway Homes into the mixed-income Broadway Overlook development. Completed in 2005, the site is located in the East Baltimore Washington Hill neighborhood. The development includes 89 public housing units and 77 market-rate rental and homeownership units. The development also includes a community center.

**Albemarle Square**

In 1998, HABC was awarded $21.5 million in HOPE VI grants to construct Albemarle Square. Located in southeast Baltimore, on the site of the former Flag House Courts high rises, the development lies east of the Inner Harbor and west of Baltimore's Little Italy neighborhood. There are 182 public housing units alongside 144 market-rate homes, with an additional 10 rent-to-own homes available to the public housing residents. The average sale price of the market-rate units was $330,000.

**Heritage Crossing Development Objectives**

Each HOPE VI community developed in Baltimore differs in physical design, mix of residents, and housing options. Compared to the earlier HOPE VI developments Pleasant View Gardens and The Townes at the Terraces, Heritage Crossing has a larger proportion of homeowners (185) to public housing renters (75), and its physical design better integrates these groups. Rental units are designed to blend in with owned homes, and both are intermingled throughout the development. Heritage Crossing is located near the
intersection of US 40 and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, two miles west of Baltimore’s central business district (CBD) at the eastern edge of West Baltimore. This location offers easy access to large employment and service centers such as the University of Maryland Medical Center, Baltimore VA Medical Center, University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), State Center, Bon Secours Hospital, Maryland General Hospital, University of Baltimore, and Lexington Market. The area is served by six bus lines—routes 7, 15, 21, 23, 40, and 150—and is about a 20-minute walk from nearby light rail and subway stations.

HABC and its selected development team Enterprise/A&R considered the new neighborhood’s location advantageous for a variety of reasons. The Murphy/Julian Revitalization Plan (1997) submitted to HUD by the Housing Authority projected that the development’s proximity to the Central Business District, coupled with the proposed home design and income mix, would attract prospective homebuyers. HABC and Enterprise also valued Heritage Crossing’s location for its potential to reinforce, and be reinforced
by, two nearby projects in which each had a stake—the Townes at the Terraces and the Sandtown-Winchester Homeownership Zone. The Townes at the Terraces, Baltimore’s second Hope VI development and the first in West Baltimore, lies just south of Heritage Crossing across US 40. The Sandtown-Winchester Homeownership Zone is located eight blocks north of Heritage Crossing. Altogether, 263 homes for subsidized home ownership will be built on sites scattered throughout the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of West Baltimore. B.U.I.L.D./Enterprise Nehemiah Development, Inc., a joint venture of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (B.U.I.L.D) and Enterprise Homes, is the developer.

Finally, HABC and Enterprise saw Heritage Crossing as an opportunity to speed redevelopment in the adjacent neighborhoods of Upton and Harlem Park. These neighborhoods had suffered substantial population declines in the 1990s amid sporadic revitalization efforts. The Murphy Homes and Emerson Julian Gardens projects were perceived as discouraging investment in these areas because of their overwhelming physical scale and the degree to which
they concentrated poverty in a single area. The *Revitalization Plan* suggested that Heritage Crossing would reverse this dynamic by creating a mixed-income community that was physically integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods. “By demonstrating to other developers that it is feasible to redevelop obsolete and concentrated very low income housing into more livable mixed income housing, HABC intends to spur further area development geared to attractive, affordable housing,” The *Revitalization Plan* notes and Planning documents for Heritage Crossing link physical change with social change. The *Revitalization Plan* proposes that, “As the towers and ruined buildings fall, socio-economic opportunities will rise. Murphy/Julian’s transformation is about more than bricks and mortar. It is about using the building materials of education, employment, and supportive services to help people discover their options and make the most of them.”

The development proposal prepared for HUD envisioned Heritage Crossing as a place where:
• Anyone would want to live – a place that families of all incomes can call home;
• Families feel safe, where residents are secure from crime and the fear of crime;
• Trees, shrubbery, backyards, and parks create a comfortable place to live and raise children;
• Families can own a home and have a financial stake in their community;
• Homes are of exceptional quality, reflecting imagination, marketability, and physical and visual integration with the surrounding communities;
• A redrawn street grid links Murphy/Julian to neighboring communities and owners will become a part of a greater rejuvenation of the West Baltimore and downtown Baltimore.

In the Revitalization Plan, the Housing Authority assumed the role of providing family employment and self-sufficiency services. Its objectives for this area were:

• Tapping an experienced organization to provide centralized, coordinated management for all programs and services;
• Coordinating with existing programs and organizations to build community assets and weave (public housing) residents into a wider social structure;
• Emphasizing an evolving mix of innovative and proven programs and services that use the latest technology and methods;
• Securing specific job and/or training commitments from area employers with a linkage to the West Baltimore empowerment zone;
• Promoting resident participation and responsibility in achieving self-sufficiency;
• Creating a thriving blend of mixed-income tenants and residents to improve links between people pursuing self-sufficiency and peers who have achieved it.

The vision and design for the new community were outlined in a three-day design charette involving the
development team, public housing residents, and people from the surrounding Upton and Harlem Park neighborhoods (*Enterprise development team interview*). The history of the community and principles of New Urbanist design were reviewed. Older Baltimore townhome communities in suburban settings, such as Rodgers Forge and Oakenshawe, were mined as examples of sustainable communities that continue to attract first-time homebuyers as more-established residents move out.

The *Revitalization Plan* notes a number of design objectives that flowed from the charette discussions:

- Create a new front door for West Baltimore neighborhoods to act as a billboard to attract people with a wide range of incomes.
- Build a neighborhood of houses with front and back yards.
- Create well-landscaped streets and public spaces that provide marketable addresses.
- Create safe neighborhood streets lined with front porches and houses with large windows to provide “eyes on the street.”
- Bolster safety through new street patterns that break up super blocks and provide greater visual and vehicular access.
- Make no architectural distinction between homeownership and rental units.
- Connect the new development to the surrounding neighborhood streets so it becomes an integral part of the community.
- Create new public spaces that provide a dignified setting for the neighborhood.

**Methodology**

**Document Review**

To gain a general understanding of HOPE VI, the planning studio reviewed a series of reports on the HOPE VI program in Baltimore and nationwide, including the program’s history, structure, financing, oversight, as well as its effects on public housing and distressed neighborhoods. We also reviewed documents related to the development of Heritage Crossing, including the *Revitalization Plan* submitted by HABC to HUD, the city’s master plan, the Upton master plan, the developer Enterprise Home’s market feasibility
analysis and development proposal, as well as the Heritage Crossing contract of sale and lease agreement documents.

**Site Inspection**

The purpose of such inspection was to gather information about the neighborhood’s physical condition, its amenities, and surrounding context.

**In-depth Interviews**

We gained insight into the process of Heritage Crossing’s development and its current situation through in-depth interviews with people from HABC, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Recreation and Parks, Enterprise Homes, Edgewood Management, American Community Management, and board members from the Heritage Crossing Resident Association (HCRA) and Tenants Council.

**Resident Survey**

We administered surveys to both homeowners and public housing renters to assess the similarities and differences in their perceptions of and experiences in
the neighborhood. We developed a questionnaire covering nine themes: defining community, residential history and characteristics, expectations and perceptions about Heritage Crossing, neighborhood characteristics (amenities, design, accessibility, and safety), neighborhood interaction, and effects of a mixed-income community, civic engagement, management, and the respondent demographics. The questionnaire was answered through face-to-face interviews with residents in their homes over a two-month period. Three teams of students attempted to go to each address on the site at least two times, at different hours, to capture as many respondents as possible. We completed 37 surveys, 27 of them representing 15 percent of all homeowners and 10 of them representing 13 percent of all public housing residents.

**Formal Discussion**

On April 3, 2008, we organized a discussion group meeting where we presented the preliminary survey results to residents, several HCRA board members and a representative of HABC. We were able to obtain feedback about our provisional results and supplemental information from this meeting.
III. Heritage Crossing as a Community Today

Many of the physical design objectives for Heritage Crossing have been realized. Interviews with homeowners indicate that the community’s location was a strong draw for them. Both homeowners and public housing residents surveyed say the design and appearance of the neighborhood are among the best things about Heritage Crossing. Perkins Park and its historic gazebo provide a focal point for the community and announce its presence to those passing by on the well-traveled Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. There is attractive green space in the park, buffer areas, and front and back yards. The development offers many New Urbanist and defensible space features, including pedestrian-scale blocks, sidewalks, front porches, large front windows, and parking clustered behind houses. New streets connect with the existing street grid and surrounding neighborhoods.
The architecture in the interior of the neighborhood offers a more suburban-style look, using a mix of siding and brick exteriors, and gabled roofs. Homes facing the adjoining blocks are designed more like urban row houses to match the existing housing stock. An outside eye cannot distinguish the residences of homeowners and public housing tenants, though 75 percent of residents surveyed said they knew which homes are owned and which are public housing, primarily through minor differences in architectural detail.

Heritage Crossing is indeed a place that families of a variety of income levels call home. The development process produced a mixed-income community that is home to public housing residents with an average income of $14,215 (HABC-reported data) and homeowners with incomes ranging from $27,985 to $76,420 (Enterprise-reported data). The average home purchase price reported by Enterprise/A&R is $87,539. In 2007, a $140,000 sales price was achieved (Live Baltimore data). Average family size for homeowners (1.8) (Enterprise-reported data) is smaller than that of renters, who have on average three children per household (HABC-reported data). All public housing residents living in Heritage Crossing are required to work, have a stable source of income, or volunteer (Woodall interview). At the time of home purchase, 55 percent of buyers were employed in the private sector, with the remainder employed in the public sector or retired (Enterprise-reported data).

The Housing Authority owns and manages a 12,000 square-foot day care and community center facility at the western edge of Heritage Crossing. Between 2003 and 2006, a Housing Authority social services staff member was on site daily to assist public housing residents with job training, employment, financial challenges, and service coordination for crisis situations and other needs. Since 2006, the staff member is present just one day each week and available by phone at other times (Woodall interview). Public housing residents in Heritage Crossing also have access to all programs offered by the Housing Authority Office of Resident Services, including GED preparation; training for construction, health, and customer service jobs; and computer and financial literacy programs (Williams correspondence).
A large majority of residents agree that Heritage Crossing is a good place for them to live (76 percent) and say they feel at home there (81 percent).

When asked whether members of the community get along, 75 percent indicated they feel people do get along and 62.5 percent agreed residents with diverse backgrounds “want the same things.”

At the same time, many also point to significant gaps that remain between the vision for the community and the reality today. These concerns include the surrounding neighborhood, safety, recreational and community space, management, and community participation and organization.

**Surrounding Area**

Heritage Crossing homeowners say that when they purchased their homes, they were presented with a vision of a well-designed, mixed-income neighborhood within a larger, revitalizing community. The Townes at the Terraces HOPE VI development to the west and the Sandtown-Winchester redevelopment north of Heritage Crossing represented early steps. The “once grand homes” of the surrounding Upton and Harlem Park
neighborhoods may have been “deteriorating or vacant,” but Heritage Crossing promised to be a “catalyst for change.” Homebuyers entered the community expecting that the disrepair that they saw in the surrounding neighborhoods was temporary.

“It’s a shame they didn’t redo the whole area. The young people in the surrounding neighborhood are jealous and envious of this place.”

One homeowner was given a timetable, that “within five years the surrounding area would be rehabbed.” Another reported being told the “surrounding area was going to be redeveloped within two years.” A group interview with members of the Enterprise management team corroborates that this was the prevailing perception.  

HOPE VI developments are intended to have a “spillover effect” into their surrounding neighborhoods. This spillover, it is hoped, includes expanded capital investment by other developers and expanded social investment in the community on the part of new homeowners. However, residents voice concerns that the reverse is happening. When asked how the surrounding neighborhoods affect the value of their homes, a large majority of Heritage Crossing homeowners responded, “negatively.”

The most immediate concern of Heritage Crossing residents involves the Edmondson Triangle, a section of 76 mostly abandoned row homes in the Upton neighborhood bordering the northern edge of Heritage Crossing. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for rehabilitation of this area in July of 2004. While Apex Development, a New York firm, now owns the rights to redevelop the site, nothing has changed in the four years that it has controlled the properties.

There are several significant projects being planned in the vicinity of Heritage Crossing that may prove to be catalysts for revitalization. These include the Red Line, a proposed 10.5-mile transit corridor that would connect the West Baltimore MARC station with downtown Baltimore, the Inner Harbor, and Fells Point, and two major transit-oriented development (TOD) projects planned for State Center and the West Baltimore MARC station.
State Center, the largest concentration of state offices in Maryland, would be transformed into a new main street with 1.5 million square feet of office space, at least 1,000 new housing units, abundant retail, a bike depot, and walking paths. In all, $1.6 billion is expected to be invested in the State Center TOD project, which is slated for completion in 2012. The West Baltimore MARC TOD project is not as far along in the development process as State Center. However, community-based planning was launched in 2006. The completed West Baltimore MARC TOD development would bring significant new retail and housing opportunities to West Baltimore and would link the future Red Line to the MARC rail system.

Finally, construction of the UMB BioPark continues. The BioPark is a university-associated research park located across US 40 in Poppleton. It marks the first expansion of the UMB campus west of Martin Luther King Boulevard. The project has created 200 jobs, generated $128 million in capital investment, and resulted in the construction of two new research buildings since 2003. At build-out, the BioPark will consist of ten research buildings totaling 1.2 million square feet. It is expected to attract $500 million in capital investment and employ approximately 2,500 people.14

**Safety**

It is the perception among residents that the blighted surrounding community is a source of chronic crime and quality of life violations within Heritage Crossing itself. In numerous interviews, both homeowners and public housing residents identified “people passing by,” “intruders,” or “outsiders” as problems in the community. Many perceive these outside groups as responsible for much of the petty crime in the neighborhood. People reported thefts of items from barbeque sets and outdoor light fixtures to pairs of shoes left on front stoops. Interviewers observed many pieces of lawn furniture chained and locked to homes and to front porches. Residents also spoke of vandalism, cars being broken into, and deliberate attacks on property.

The presence of corner stores on the southwest border of Heritage Crossing and Harlem Park remains a source of tension between Heritage Crossing residents and the
surrounding community. The perception on the part of many surveyed is that the corner stores draw people from outside the neighborhood into the neighborhood as they cut through Heritage Crossing to get to the stores. The corner stores are also perceived to be the site of illegal activities, including drug dealing. Some residents feel that Baltimore Police Department surveillance cameras installed on telephone poles outside the stores have pushed some of the more serious crime into sections of Heritage Crossing. Informal observation on the part of two groups of interviewers corroborates this claim.

"For as nice as it is, this community is almost like a thoroughfare, so if I'm going from Pennsylvania Avenue toward Fremont I have to come through... that's where...last summer there were a couple of robberies... and that's how. There were folks who didn't live here transiting through."

The website Realtor.com indicates that Heritage Crossing has the lowest crime index among West Baltimore neighborhoods. But according to police records for 2003 and 2007, residents there experience more criminal activity than those living in
Oakenshawe—an established North Baltimore community that served as a model for the new neighborhood during the planning process.

Figures from the Baltimore City Police Department indicate that in 2003, the year Heritage Crossing was built, the total crime rate per 100 for Heritage Crossing was slightly higher (9.7) than that of Oakenshawe (9.2). In 2007, the crime rate decreased for Oakenshawe due to a fall in property crimes and remained the same for Heritage Crossing. While violent crime did drop in Heritage Crossing, there was a slight rise in property crime and thus there was no change in the total crime rate. Violent crime was considerably lower in Oakenshawe for both years.¹⁵

Such crime, coupled with the perception that the perpetrators come from outside the neighborhood, has led some residents to advocate for individual yard fences, walls between homes, and in a few cases, the desire to turn Heritage Crossing into a gated community.

About half of the residents interviewed also reported experiencing problems with illegal activity at least
sometimes with neighbors. A few reported break-ins and drug use and/or drug dealing associated with people living in the community.

When asked how concerned they were about crime in Heritage Crossing on a scale of 1 to 5, on average both homeowners and public housing residents rated their concern at 4 – with 1 meaning not concerned at all and 5 meaning very concerned. About a fifth mentioned crime as one of the worst things about living in Heritage Crossing.

While a large majority of residents feel safe walking in the neighborhood during the day—90 percent of public housing residents and 83 percent of owners—only half and 42 percent respectively feel safe doing so at night. One third of the public housing residents and a little over half of the owners reported feeling safer where they lived before. In the community’s first two years, a safety committee organized a ‘Citizens on Patrol’ block walking group, which has since disbanded.

**Recreational and Community Space**

Through interviews with residents, the study team identified three separate but related issues associated with recreational and community space at Heritage Crossing: the use of Perkins Park, the lack of places for children to play and activities to keep them occupied, and the use of the Heritage Crossing Community Center. These issues are connected by the fact that Perkins Park and the Heritage Crossing Community Center are the neighborhood’s primary community spaces and, thus, possible venues for children’s activities. However, they are separate in the sense that concerns expressed about the park and community center go beyond children’s play to encompass the use of these facilities by the entire community.

Perkins Park is a small, 1.4 acre elliptical park at the heart of Heritage Crossing that features a Victorian-era gazebo. It was originally named Perkins Spring Square, after Perkins Spring, which bubbled up within the boundaries of the park.

Heritage Crossing’s design team envisioned Perkins Park as the center of the new community, a symbolic
“front door” that would advertise the community’s revitalization and attract new residents with a wide range of incomes. In keeping with this symbolic purpose, the park was designed for passive recreational activities such as walking and reading and included paths, benches, and shade trees but not ball fields or playgrounds. In order to protect the grass, access was channeled along the paths by a fence surrounding much of its circumference.

Interviews with Heritage Crossing residents suggest that the design team succeeded in creating a highly valued community amenity, as many residents indicated that Perkins Park was either one of the best things about Heritage Crossing or one of the things they liked most about its appearance. Residents reported using the park for a variety of purposes, including for walking dogs, cookouts and community service events. Some Heritage Crossing residents see the park as a community resource that is not being used to its full potential. This is particularly true for a number of former Murphy Homes residents, who remember Perkins Park as a place that was used far more extensively and with no significant negative side effects.
effects. These same residents also once had access to a community playground, something that is not available to them presently.

The lack of activities and play space for children was an overriding concern for many of the residents interviewed.

“They should have something for the kids, because kids have nothing to do.”

Although 12 percent of Heritage Crossing’s land is open space, none of it has been specifically designed or set aside for children’s play. The options for indoor play are also limited. The Dr. Emerson Julian Child Care Center offers day care, but only to children of a certain age, during certain hours, and with parents who are willing and able to pay the sliding scale fee. The Heritage Crossing Community Center next door at 620 N. Fremont Avenue does not, at present, have any rooms dedicated to children’s play and provides no regular children’s programming.

As a result, children sometimes play in places where they should not. Residents complained, for example, that children with nothing to do sit on cars, break branches off trees, and run across private property, destroying grass. One resident even had kids come up to him and ask if he was moving out and whether he might leave the door open so they could play inside.

The study team asked residents how they thought Perkins Park should be used and gave three possible options—“for sports and recreation,” “play area for children,” and “leisure or meeting area with friends.” Seventy-eight percent of residents interviewed approved of using Perkins Park as a play area for children, and 86 percent supported using the park for leisure or a meeting area with friends. Residents were more evenly split on whether the park should be used for sports and recreation. However, a slim majority (51 percent) felt that this was an inappropriate use of the park.

The level of support for using the park for children’s play is intriguing, since the park is not currently fitted with facilities intended for this purpose, such as playground equipment. It is unclear whether those who supported using the park for children’s play would also advocate installing such facilities, although one resident did mention a need for swings and slides. It is equally
possible that residents want to see the park kept more or less “as is” but feel that children ought to be allowed to use it.

Residents also suggested a number of ways to accommodate this need for children’s activities. For example, one resident recommended using the Community Center as a place to tutor kids after school. Other suggestions for children’s activities included computer classes, art classes, face painting, field trips, and camping trips.

The Heritage Crossing Community Center provides 12,000 square feet of community space, including the 8,500-square foot Dr. Emerson Julian Emerson Child Care Center. HABC and the property management company serving the public housing residents have offices on the ground floor. The HABC office offers counseling on a variety of issues, including job development. A large community room, kitchenette, and computer lab occupy the second floor. Heritage Crossing residents can reserve the community room and kitchenette at no charge, while outsiders must pay a fee. The second floor computer lab is not yet operational; however, HABC is currently working to establish
internet connectivity and hopes to begin providing computer services to residents by the end of 2008. The third floor is unfinished and there are no plans to renovate it.

The study team asked residents whether they had ever used the Community Center and, if so, for what purpose and how often. The majority of residents (53 percent) answered that they had not used the Community Center.

Most who reported using the community center did so just once a year. The most common reason cited for using the Community Center was to attend meetings of the Heritage Crossing Resident Association (HCRA) or the public housing residents’ Tenants Council.

Among residents who had never used the Community Center, at least one indicated not being aware that the Community Center existed. Others said they did not know how to access the Community Center or thought it was reserved exclusively for renters. The latter was a relatively common misperception among homeowners, even though homeowners, as a group, were slightly more likely to have used the Community Center at some point than renters.

It is a misperception grounded partially in fact, since HABC owns the facility and the job development and counseling services it provides through its ground floor office are not available to homeowners. In addition, the HCRA does not currently have a key to the building. Those wishing to use it at night or on weekends must make arrangements through the president of the Heritage Crossing Tenants Council to obtain the key.

Nevertheless, the Community Center is officially open to all Heritage Crossing residents. As with the park, many residents feel that the facility is not being used to its full potential. However, unlike the park, residents appeared to be less conflicted about the implications of using the facility more extensively. As a result, discussions over use of the Community Center may offer a greater opportunity for developing community consensus and addressing issues such as the lack of activities and play space for children.
Management

The desire of the planners to create a seamless, mixed-income community in Heritage Crossing is complicated by the varying interests of multiple stakeholders, including not only the residents but also HABC, which owns the common areas, and Enterprise, which owns the public housing properties and manages them through a contract with HABC and HUD. The dynamics of a community, in which institutions often play as prominent a role as the residents themselves, reveal some gaps in the fabric of Heritage Crossing.

According to the Revitalization Plan, the Heritage Crossing Resident Association was created to be a “formal link between the owners, management, and residents, and the vehicle representing the collective interests of the owners in decisions affecting any physical changes to the structures and the maintenance of the common areas.”

The Revitalization Plan envisioned a homeowners and tenants association that would serve as a forum for community participation and leadership. The HCRA is governed by a board including five homeowners, two public housing residents, and representatives of Enterprise and HABC. A Tenants Council also represents Heritage Crossing public housing residents within the Housing Authority’s established community participation process, and the president of this group sits on the HCRA Board.

The HCRA is the legal entity with leasehold ownership and responsibility for management of the common areas of the planned development. The Board of Directors is governed by the Association’s bylaws and is responsible for enforcing covenants that regulate the appearance and upkeep of properties.

Initially, Enterprise/A&R contracted with a single private management agent (a subsidiary of co-developer A&R) to perform both site management and property management services for Heritage Crossing. This arrangement lasted for less than two years. Today, those duties are divided between a site management company and a rental property management company.

The HCRA Board hired the current site management company, American Community Management (ACM), in early 2007. ACM is responsible for collecting
residents’ association fees, sending out notices and newsletters to all Heritage Crossing residents, and paying the invoices of the service providers who maintain Heritage Crossing’s common areas.

Enterprise selected Edgewood Management in the fall of 2007 as the rental property manager to manage and operate the public housing units. Edgewood’s duties include rent collection, site staffing, resident selection, and maintenance of the rental properties, including lawn maintenance and snow removal. Edgewood also has an agreement with HABC to enforce various public housing regulations concerning renters.

When asked “How satisfied are you with management?” on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “not satisfied at all” and 5 meaning “very satisfied,” the rating by all Heritage Crossing residents was 2.8. The average owners’ rating was 2.4 and the rating for renters was 3.8. Twenty-two percent of renters and 79 percent of homeowners indicated there is a need for improvement in management.

Resident suggestions for improvement included changes in how the community is maintained and in
how the Board and management operate, make decisions, and communicate with residents. Residents also indicated a need for improvement in compliance with the community covenants, management effectiveness, and clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the management entities.

Concerns about noncompliance with the guidelines in the declaration of covenants often focus on such quality of life issues as improper trash disposal and poor lawn maintenance. When asked “How often do you have problems with neighbors not putting the trash out properly?” 62 percent of residents surveyed said they had this problem sometimes or very often. Forty-six percent said they had a problem with neighbors not cutting their grass, and 54 percent had experienced problems with neighbors not keeping their own yard clean. Thirty-four percent of residents cite improper trash disposal and poor lawn maintenance as what they like least about the appearance of the neighborhood.

Although both homeowner and rental noncompliant properties were observed by the study team, compliance concerns were frequently perceived by homeowners to be associated with public housing rental homes.

Groundskeepers, members of the HCRA Board, and other community residents send complaints about noncompliant properties to Heritage Crossing’s site management company, American Community Management, which addresses homeowner violations or sends information about renter violations to Edgewood Management, the tenant, and to Enterprise. Edgewood receives approximately 30 violations of covenants, conditions, and restrictions over the course of two months. Most of those complaints are about improper trash disposal.16

The fragmented management structure fosters some uncertainty about how to address problems in the community and doubts about management’s effectiveness. All renters said they resolved issues by talking to the rental property management company or talking to a neighbor directly. Seventy-one percent said this was effective. Eighty-five percent of renters said they did not know how to address problems with homeowners.

Seventy percent of homeowners indicated that for problems with other homeowners, they talk to the neighbor or go to someone on the HCRA Board.
Fifty-seven percent indicated that this process was effective. Thirty-six percent of homeowners said that they did not know what the process was to handle problems with renters, and 16 percent think the process is effective.

Resident suggestions for management were about improved communication, with residents pointing to a need for newsletters, notice about events, and a greater opportunity for open communication in meetings.

Two prominent issues that reflect the ambiguity about the roles and responsibilities of all the entities within the management structure are the maintenance of the common areas and homeowner lawn maintenance.

While HABC owns all the common areas in Heritage Crossing, the HCRA is responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the common areas, including Perkins Park. A significant portion of the HCRA’s budget, made up of resident association fees, goes toward maintaining the park. Over the past five years, damaged fences around the park have been replaced numerous times.

Such expenses contribute to homeowners’ assertions that they don’t understand how their resident association fees are being allocated. The fact that the HCRA does not provide lawn maintenance and snow removal services for homeowners intensifies this sentiment.

While the management structure has adapted over time to the complexities of a planned, mixed-tenure community, there appears to be a desire for all the management entities to cooperate and form a management structure that best suits the needs of the community.

**Community Organization and Participation**

The Heritage Crossing Resident Association Board of Directors structure creates the opportunity for engagement of both homeowners and public housing residents in the community. In reality, participation in community life by both groups is weak. The survey results suggest that renters see themselves as more involved than homeowners see themselves. When asked about how involved others are in community meetings and events, homeowners surveyed rated such involvement 2.35 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not involved and 5 being very involved. When asked about
their own personal involvement, their rating was 2. Public housing residents interviewed rated the involvement of others at 3.89 and their own personal involvement at 3.33.

“A small group is gung-ho, and everyone else is just chillin’.”

When presented with the statement “I have no influence over what happens in this community,” 43 percent agreed. This figure was slightly higher among homeowners interviewed (44 percent) than among renters (40 percent). Clearly, a large segment of those interviewed do not feel the ability to effect change. In addition, half of the renters interviewed said that homeowners have more influence over what happens in the community.

Leadership training offered to the first board of directors included discussion of common interests and establishment of architectural review, safety, and social committees. Of these committees, only the architectural review committee is still active.

In addition to monthly board meetings and an annual meeting focusing on community business, the HCRA recently sponsored a visioning session for board members, a neighborhood beautification project, and occasional holiday parties (Allen interview). The Board is active in seeking the partnership of City agencies in solving challenges such as extraordinarily high water bills and neighborhood safety, and occasionally meets with such adjoining neighborhood groups as the Pennsylvania Avenue Redevelopment Collaborative and the Upton Planning Council.

A number of factors appear to be barriers to more active participation in the community:

**Time:** Except for senior citizens, most people in the community work and a number commute to jobs in the Washington area.

**Experience:** Most residents of Heritage Crossing are first-time homeowners or public housing residents who do not have prior experience working within neighborhood or community associations. Among residents surveyed, few were involved in organizations of any kind.
History: Many homeowners in Heritage Crossing are new to Baltimore and lack a shared history and ties to West Baltimore.

Awareness: Several residents interviewed said they receive little communication about community meetings and events and are not aware of what is happening.

Frustration: Several residents interviewed spoke of negative experiences at Board of Directors’ meetings in the past, noting that they did not feel board members paid attention to their concerns.

Capacity: A few residents interviewed said that some of the issues the community faces, such as abandoned buildings on adjoining blocks, are bigger than the Heritage Crossing community, and that the community needs more help with the issues it faces.

Heritage Crossing residents appear to be highly capable individuals who value city living and have public sector and business connections that can be assets for the neighborhood. However, most are focused on building their careers and supporting their families, not on community life. Engaging the attention and energy of this community is a challenge that will require innovation and persistence.
IV. Heritage Crossing and HOPE VI Aims

THE HOPE VI program represents a conscious effort to create economic opportunities for individuals and communities through planned redevelopment of failed public housing sites. The objectives for HOPE VI nationally and in Baltimore include improving the living environment and opportunities for public housing residents, decreasing the concentration of poverty, stimulating revitalization in declining urban neighborhoods, and building sustainable communities.

The initiative is a new model involving broad objectives, partnerships, and populations. Social services and markets, public agencies and private developers, low-income and upwardly mobile individuals all interact in the HOPE VI arena. This creates many vantage points from which to assess the success of the HOPE VI investment in creating Heritage Crossing.

Interviews with public housing residents living in Heritage Crossing suggest a high degree of satisfaction with the living environment in the community. When asked if they feel “Heritage Crossing is a good place for me to live,” 100 percent of public housing residents interviewed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Nine out of ten agreed or strongly agreed that, “I feel at Home in Heritage Crossing.” Many also commented on the quality of the homes and the attractiveness of the park.

When asked if they and their children feel safe walking in the neighborhood during the day, 90 percent said yes. That figure dropped to 50 percent when residents were asked about nighttime hours. Five residents said they feel safer in Heritage Crossing than in their former living situations. Three said they did not feel safer, one felt somewhat safer, and another felt safety was about the same.

While public housing residents seem satisfied with their individual living circumstances, many spoke about recreation facilities and programs for youth as an unmet need. Several noted that there were more recreation
options for youth at Murphy Homes than in Heritage Crossing.

Interviews with HABC staff indicate that public housing residents in Heritage Crossing are meeting requirements to work, volunteer, or have a source of income. There is no readily available data on progress in job skills or earnings for the public housing residents since they moved to Heritage Crossing.

The HOPE VI objective to deconcentrate poverty through attracting families with a mix of income levels has clearly been met within the boundaries of the Heritage Crossing community. Among HOPE VI developments in Baltimore, Heritage Crossing has the lowest proportion of low-income families, with 75 public housing residences and 185 owned homes. The average income for public housing residents is $14,215 (HABC-reported data). The income for homeowners at the time of sale ranged from $27,985 to $76,420 (Enterprise-reported data).

As a redevelopment project, the Murphy Homes/Julian Gardens site itself represents a dramatic transformation – from a distressed public housing tower to an attractive neighborhood with a suburban feel that has attracted middle-class taxpayers to the City. The new community designed and created by Enterprise/A&R with HOPE VI funds proved to be a strong draw for aspiring homeowners. Unfortunately, the effects of this revitalization have not extended beyond the boundaries of Heritage Crossing. This failure to support and stimulate investment in the surrounding community is both a missed opportunity and a threat to the future of Heritage Crossing. The stagnant, blighted blocks surrounding the neighborhood are a source of concern and frustration for homeowners and public housing residents alike. Homeowners have financial incentives to remain in their homes for ten years. When asked if they plan to “stay in Heritage Crossing for a long time,” a majority of homeowners either “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed.” When asked how long they expect to stay in their present home, a majority of homeowners said they expect to leave the neighborhood in the next five years.

Heritage Crossing is a young community in both its physical and social infrastructure. While it is too early to know whether it will prove to be a sustainable
community, it is not too soon to assess the factors that will be important to attract new homeownership investment to the community when the first generation is ready to move on. Like most planning and development, the HOPE VI development of Heritage Crossing was dominated by physical change and investment. The planners aimed to design, build, and manage to a middle class standard in the hopes of creating a good home for people of diverse incomes and improved opportunities for public housing residents through exposure to middle class neighbors. There is clearly a high degree of satisfaction among all residents with the built environment of the neighborhood, but the social infrastructure is less well developed. Residents have frustrations with management of the community and lack of progress in the surrounding neighborhood but, surprisingly, are not inclined to personally act to make changes. Attractive, well-located real estate may be all it takes for most neighborhoods to thrive and attract the next wave of homebuyers. As a HOPE VI development adjoining an area of clear disinvestment, however, Heritage Crossing needs more than physical assets to be sustainable over time.

V. Recommendations for the Community

Focus on Common Interests

The important unfinished business of Heritage Crossing is development of social capital – formal and informal connections between residents that allow them to identify and work toward common interests. Interviews with residents identified a number of concerns and interests that could be addressed through collective participation and action of residents.

Management concerns. A lack of transparency about the roles and responsibilities of the management entities affects satisfaction with management. The methods for resolving issues in the community are not clear and residents indicate a need for better communication.

- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and processes.
  To reconcile the uncertainty about management responsibilities, all management entities should renegotiate the management structure so that it
conforms to the needs of the community. One option includes returning to a structure with a single management company. Improvements in the two management company structure could be made with greater coordination of efforts to improve and fund maintenance of the common areas. In addition, all management entities should be consulted about any changes in site and rental property management.

- **Provide and elicit feedback.** Communication should be a two-way street. The HCRA Board should provide more frequent updates on the status or resolution of issues to keep community members informed and to stimulate greater community involvement. In addition, there should be a formal mechanism by which residents can evaluate management’s effectiveness and make suggestions for improvement.

- **Clarify governing documents.** In order for the HCRA Board to effectively govern the community, it needs to have the authority to do so. This includes strengthening the Board’s ability to enforce covenants through fines or other means. The Board should pursue free legal assistance in amending the bylaws and covenants, perhaps through the University of Baltimore Law School’s Community Development Clinic.

**Safety concerns.** Although criminal activity in Heritage Crossing is low in comparison to surrounding areas, it is not as safe as other parts of the City and residents say they do not feel safe. They express particular concern about the blighted neighborhoods surrounding the community and undesirable outsiders passing through. These issues could be affected by the community in a number of ways:

- **Define private space.** The Architectural Review Committee can work with residents on physical improvements that distinguish between public and private spaces. For example, hedges or fences can signal boundaries and discourage strangers from cutting through the yards.

- **Return eyes to the street.** The Safety Committee can be reactivated to bring back the
Citizens on Patrol effort, perhaps incorporating concerned citizens from the Harlem Park and Upton communities. Participation might be encouraged by discounting management fees for families involved at least once per week.

- **Press for revitalization of the Edmondson Triangle.** Bring HABC, City Planning, City Council, and Mayor’s office representatives to walk the community and adjoining blocks and discuss priorities for redevelopment and next steps.

- **Participate in West Baltimore development.** Increase the Heritage Crossing presence and voice in the civic life of West Baltimore and work with the Harlem Park and Upton communities on quality of life issues of common concern. Invite community leaders from other city neighborhoods to talk about how they have organized and activated their communities to enhance and protect quality of life.

- **Network with other HOPE VI community leaders.** Reach out to leaders in Baltimore’s other HOPE VI communities to identify issues of common concern and join forces to seek changes requiring the cooperation of HABC, other City officials, and offices.

**Interest in improved services and amenities within Heritage Crossing.** The desire for more recreation facilities and programs in the community was voiced by many residents. While residents uniformly speak of the attractiveness of green space in the community, some feel the space is rarely used and not a good match for the recreation needs of youth. Focusing on the recreation interests and needs of young residents would be a cause of interest to many and an opportunity to get more people and partners involved.

- **Explore converting part of Perkins Park into a family-oriented play space.** The park is large enough to accommodate playground equipment for young children and seating for parents. A network of parents could be organized to establish playground rules and supervise children.
• **Explore turning vacant parcels into play space.** Vacant parcels currently owned by HABC at the intersection of Argyle and Hoffman are large enough to accommodate a playground or basketball courts for older children. Since HABC has a vested interest in the success of Heritage Crossing, it may be willing to provide these parcels to the community on favorable terms or assist with construction. Another resource is Civic Works, a non-profit in Baltimore that helps community organizations turn vacant lots into community gardens.

• **Seek partnerships for children’s programming and activities.** The capacity of the community to provide educational and entertainment opportunities for youth can be enlarged through partnerships with City agencies, nonprofit groups, and churches. Outdoor programming could be presented in Perkins Park and the Community Center could be used for indoor activities.

• **Interest in improved services and amenities near Heritage Crossing.** Many residents currently travel from the neighborhood by car to schools, shops, recreation, and entertainment. A number expressed interest in having such services and amenities closer to home.

  • **Seek recreation partnerships.** Identify recreation facilities and programs in adjoining communities that might serve some of the unmet recreation needs of Heritage Crossing. There is a Police Athletic League facility at a nearby school and the recreation center in the nearby Poe Homes public housing development.

  • **Press for improved school opportunities.** Assess opportunities to improve current neighborhood schools or establish a new charter school through community involvement with the Baltimore City Public School System.

  • **Capitalize on new development.** Make sure planned new development is an asset to
Heritage Crossing by actively participating in the planning processes for the Red Line, State Office, and West Baltimore MARC developments. Work with other mixed-income and market-rate developments lining Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to create an identity for the corridor distinct from stereotypical perceptions of West Baltimore.

**Increase Participation**

**Expand opportunities for community participation.**

Interviews with homeowners about their decision to buy in Heritage Crossing indicate that people were motivated by the physical appeal and location of the neighborhood and bought houses, not community. Participation in the Heritage Crossing Resident Association is low and a small group of active leaders struggles to effect change. Given the challenges the community faces, it will be important to build community participation beyond this small group.

- **Board “Office Hours” in Perkins Park.**

  Since people rarely come to meetings, “meetings” can come to them. These informal interactions, perhaps on a Saturday afternoon, offer an opportunity for residents to share concerns and ask questions and for Board members to learn about residents’ interests. These encounters can also provide an opportunity for Board members to ask residents to get involved with committees or help with community projects and events.

- **Bring others into the vision.** The vision statements drafted by members of the Board provide a wonderful opportunity to involve others in discussing priorities for the neighborhood’s future. At a special meeting where this is the only agenda item, the various vision statements developed by Board members could be posted on the wall of the community room for residents to tour and discuss common interests.

- **Build community participation.** Seek resources to support a community organizer position to increase the number of residents who actively participate in the life of the community through reactivated committees.
and special projects. Connect with organizations such as Citizens Planning and Housing Association, the Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative, and the University of Maryland School of Social Work to explore opportunities for community capacity-building.

- **Block captains.** Residents interviewed generally know their neighbors and have positive feelings about them. The Board can capitalize on these relationships by recruiting volunteer block captains to publicize and encourage participation in community-wide meetings, projects, and events. Block captains can also organize an annual block party and invite members of the board to meet their neighbors in an informal setting.

- **Establish a Heritage Crossing Parents Network.** A supportive community network might reduce some of the stress parents feel about juggling family and work responsibilities. Such a network might serve as the foundation for cooperative childcare arrangements and plan group activities for children. In addition, the network could be tasked with identifying the needs of neighborhood children and recommending actions the community might take on their behalf.

- **Meeting times.** Alternative board meeting times should be explored as a means of connecting with people who work late or have long commutes.

- **Monthly newsletter.** The Spring 2008 newsletter is very attractive and provides an abundance of information. A monthly newsletter that is shorter in length would get the activities of the HCRA in front of residents more frequently and serve the need many busy people have to get their information in short bursts.

- **Communicate more than once.** Most people need to receive information three times before it penetrates their awareness. Multiple mailings and multiple communications
channels (letters, flyers delivered to doors, signage, emails, block captain calls, a sign in Perkins Park) will boost awareness and participation in meetings and events.

**Bring People Together**

- **Use common spaces to create community.** The most frequently mentioned community event by residents is the annual meeting of the HCRA. Many residents interviewed expressed a desire for more opportunities to interact informally with neighbors. Creating social and community events might also provide a path to engagement in the community for people who do not enjoy going to meetings.

- **Make Perkins Park more inviting.** Add a few tables through the park and seating under the gazebo to invite residents to sit and socialize in the park.

- **Use Perkins Park as a town square.** Residents in Heritage Crossing work hard and may be more likely to participate in neighborhood events that ask nothing more of them than to have a good time. Perkins Park has the potential to be a town square – a gathering place for entertainment that might range from outdoor movies and choral concerts to dance contests and fashion shows.

  - **Start a Saturday farmers’ market.** A number of residents travel far from the neighborhood for quality produce. During the summer months, local farmers or Arabbers could be invited to sell their wares in Perkins Park on a Saturday morning, providing neighbors with convenient shopping and opportunities to socialize.

  - **Establish an exercise group.** Establish a biking, running, or walking club that gathers in Perkins Park to warm up before taking off on a collective fitness experience.

  - **Facilitate access to Community Center.** The Housing Authority should work with the Board of Directors to improve business practices related to access to the facility for community meetings and events.
Offer enrichment programming. Through partnerships with city agencies, colleges, and nonprofit groups, the Community Center could be a location for one-time or weekly classes on topics that would enrich the lives of individuals and the community as a whole, from gardening and investing to local history and ballroom dancing.

Create a neighborhood coffeehouse. If management offices were moved to the now-vacant, third-floor space, the first-floor storefront could be converted to a neighborhood coffeehouse that would provide an amenity and gathering place for neighbors as well as job opportunities for adults and youth living in the community.

VI. Recommendations for Government

Research in the Heritage Crossing community suggests that there is insufficient stewardship of the HOPE VI ideal at the local level by the City and HABC and at the federal level by HUD. The Housing Authority is principally concerned with public housing residents and spaces, not the overall functioning or future sustainability of the community. The promise of revitalization in surrounding areas has not been realized. Inexperienced homeowners are assumed to be ready to act on their own and the community’s interests in highly challenging circumstances. The management systems established due to the public-private nature of the development appear to generate dissatisfaction and conflict rather than community.

Recommendations for the City and HABC

City stewardship of Heritage Crossing should be more holistic. For the HOPE VI initiative to fulfill its
purpose in an enduring way, the successful physical transformation in Heritage Crossing must be supplemented by services and resources that strengthen the entire community. Though they live in a community with minimal architectural distinction between owned and public housing residences, residents experience varying rules, management systems, and services based on their status. The City and Housing Authority can take several steps to insure that Heritage Crossing continues to be an attractive and healthy community for people from a range of backgrounds.

- **Collaborate with the Heritage Crossing Resident Association to establish and maintain recreation space that meets the needs of the community.** Resolving conflicts over responsibilities and resources for maintaining and improving public spaces will allow positive momentum on an issue that is important to the quality of life of many residents.

- **Facilitate use of the Community Center by all residents of the community.** Current arrangements for after hours access to the building are a barrier to use of the building. If residents are to become more involved in the organizational and social life of the community, this impediment must be removed.

- **Pursue redevelopment of the Edmondson Triangle with more urgency.** Just as Murphy Homes left people feeling helpless and hopeless, the blighted blocks and possible drug trade adjacent to Heritage Crossing make homeowners feel abandoned and pessimistic about the community’s future. Revitalization of these blocks was part of the vision for the project and deserves tenacious attention.

- **Explore opportunities to improve school options for the community.** A quality school is a magnet for attracting families to communities and also serves as an informal community center where neighbors get to know one another and build relationships. With the many innovations occurring in the Baltimore City Public School System today, it may be
timely to consider establishing such an innovative school near Heritage Crossing.

**Recommendations for HUD**

**HUD should emphasize social outcomes as well as physical development.** Research in Heritage Crossing suggests that HOPE VI communities without strong social fabric remain vulnerable to many of the destabilizing forces faced by urban neighborhoods. Local housing agencies should be held accountable for building effective mixed-income communities, not just homes.

- **Streamline management relationships.** The complexities of public-private real estate development and management should not be left to be sorted out by homeowners. Responsibilities should be clear and clearly explained to each successive generation of community leadership.

- **Require physical design elements that allow community to occur.** Adequate recreation space and community centers and resources such as neighborhood schools are vital to encouraging the relationships and healthy civic life envisioned by HOPE VI.

- **Make rules about community standards consistent for public housing residents and homeowners.** A consistent set of rules, enforced with transparency, will minimize concerns about fairness and preferential treatment that can create tensions in mixed-income communities.

- **Use the information-gathering capacity of HUD to support analysis of the effects of HOPE VI.** As the early HOPE VI communities mature, there is much to be learned from rigorous cross-site analysis of the impact of these developments on the lives of public housing residents and the vitality of cities. HUD and housing agencies should make relevant data easily accessible to researchers seeking to learn from the HOPE VI experiment.

For the HOPE VI initiative to fulfill its purpose, physical planning, however well executed, is not sufficient if social considerations are not addressed.
in the design and ongoing management of communities. The Heritage Crossing community would benefit from more attention to the social development and maintenance of the community as it matures.
References


3 Ibid.

4 Housing Authority of Baltimore City, “Baltimore Housing: Planning and Development.” (http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/ps_plam_dev.asp)

5 The Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies, “Neighborhood Effects of HOPE VI: Evidence from Baltimore.” (Fall, 2002)

6 Ibid.


8 Interview with Chickie Grayson, Ron Wilson and Harvey Zeiger, March 25, 2008.

9 Interview with Jane Woodall. March 26, 2008.

10 Email from Kylla Williams. April 11, 2008.


12 Interview with Chicke Grayson, Ron Wilson and Harvey Zeiger, March 25, 2008.


15 Heritage Crossing crime rates were calculated using population estimates derived from demographic information obtained through Enterprise (2003) and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City. 185 homeowners X 2 (rounded off from 1.8 average family size) + 75 public housing residents x 4 (3 children on average per household plus at least one adult) = 670. For Oakenshawe, I used the population figures from the 2000 Census (1,080): (http://www.ubalt.edu/bnia/mapping/CensusProfiles/Oakenshawe%20Demographic%20Profile.pdf) Since Heritage Crossing was built in 2003, it did not make sense to use Census 2000 figures. The Baltimore City Police Department released only crime incidents for 2003 and 2007. For neighborhoods with differing populations, a rate is necessary for comparison purposes.
The crime rate was calculated as follows: (number of incidents per year X 100)/population estimate.

16 Interview with Pete Clarke. March 4, 2008.

17 Interview with HCRA President Janet Allen. February 20, 2008.