

From Downtown to the Inner Harbor: Baltimore's Sustainable Revitalization

Part 2: The Inner Harbor Plan (1967 to 2005)

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Baltimore's effective revitalization efforts are internationally recognized in planning and urban design. After the successful Charles Center redevelopment plan in the late 1950s, Baltimore's efforts expanded to its Inner Harbor and waterfront. In this sequel to a two-part article that started in FOCUS 13, Vicente del Rio discusses these later efforts, and how Baltimore ensured a process for sustainable economic, social, and cultural revitalization.

"Designing a dream city is easy; rebuilding a living one takes imagination" (Jacobs, 1958, p. 242)

In FOCUS's last issue, I published the first of a two-part essay on Baltimore's revitalization efforts that started in the late fifties with the Charles Center Plan in the downtown.¹ I also discussed how Baltimore success with two plans reflected Godshalk's (2004) model of sustainability with livability at the apex. thus revitalization (see Figure 17 below, page 73).

The success of the 1950s Charles Center Plan encouraged the city leaders to move their attention to the Inner Harbor, only two blocks south. By establishing a new synergy between the city and its waterfront, the Inner Harbor Plan revealed untapped potential and generated strong social, economic, cultural, and recreational impacts. With the success of its Inner Harbor and its impacts in the downtown, Baltimore became a worldwide model for waterfront revitalization. Over the years, Baltimore's Inner Harbor has received numerous national and international awards, including the prestigious Heritage Award from the Urban Land Institute in 2009.² In this essay, I will discuss the plan's major elements, from its conception to around 2005, noting their role in transforming the Inner Harbor into a model of sustainable urban waterfront revitalization (see also the timeline in Figure 18).

¹ See *From Downtown to the Inner Harbor: Baltimore's Sustainable Revitalization Efforts*, FOCUS 13, 2016.

² Periodically, the ULI gives the Heritage Award to developments of excellence that demonstrated substantial contributions to their community's well-being for at least 25 years. Only nine developments have received the award in the past 40 years.

³ That same year, Wallace and Thomas Todd partnered with William Roberts and Ian McHarg (the famous landscape architect) to form WHRT (later Wallace Roberts & Todd), that became one of the most celebrated and active planning/design firms in the US.

The Inner Harbor Plan is Born

The city's natural choice for the new initiative rested in the authors of the Charles Center Plan; David Wallace and his team.³ The *Inner Harbor Project I Urban Renewal Plan* was adopted in 1967. Approximately one-third of the plan area had to be cleared of all existing structures for redevelopment and to restore public access to the water and recreation, particularly due to the lack of such spaces downtown (Figures 1 & 2). The plan initially included a 240-acre one-block deep area around the water's edge and predicted investments of \$260 million over thirty years (Figure 3). Later, plans for Inner Harbor West and East were approved.

The Inner Harbor Plan included five major components: a) high quality commercial and office buildings along the waterfront; b) multifamily housing in the eastern and western areas; c) a low mandatory build-to cornice line for buildings in the block immediately surrounding the waterfront and commercial uses at the street level; d) no tall building would be permitted on the waterfront except for a few iconic towers; and e) the waterfront would feature parks, public areas and a wide promenade (Brambilla & Longo, 1979; Millspaugh, 1980, 2003; Wallace, 2004).

Generally speaking, the area's development was coherent with the original master plan vision and principles despite several adaptations to community and market pressures over the years. Perhaps the major adaptations suffered by the plan were due to the unforeseen surge in the restaurant, recreation, and tourism industries, together with the worldwide renaissance of the idea of downtowns. Baltimore's Inner Harbor plan was a pioneer in its vision, components, and implementation process, having received more architecture and urban planning prizes than any other similar project in the United States.



Figures 1 & 2: The Inner Harbor in 1948 and in the late 1950s, after clearance and new bulkheads. (sources: www.ghostofbaltimore.org - Robert F. Kniesche, *Baltimore Sun*; and author's archives, source unknown)

Two major phases marked the plan development process, corresponding to the city's political and economic needs. During the first phase, the process was dedicated to convincing the residents and the business community that Baltimore was a city worth taking part in and that the needs for recreation and open space could be provided for in the waterfront. In 1964 voters approved the emission of \$66 million in city bonds for the Inner Harbor Plan that, together with \$47 million from federal urban renewal grants, paid for the acquisition of land and vacant warehouses, site clearance, and a new bulkhead along the waterline.

Given the growing success of the city ethnic fair and other public events in Charles Center's Hopkins Plaza, the city decided to move them to the much larger waterfront and capitalize on the ethnic diversity of its neighborhoods. A strong publicity campaign –as in no other American city until then– started

to attract crowds to events in the Inner Harbor, animating it and creating an awareness of its potential. This moment also represented an attempt by the city to start amending the deep social schisms that were still being felt from the racial riots and unrest of the late 1960s. Harvey (1991) observed that when the Baltimore's City Fair was moved from the Charles Center's Hopkins Plaza to the vacated spaces on the water's edge, it attracted nearly 2 million people, proving that large numbers could be drawn to the downtown.

Another important initial factor was the transformation of the Charles Center Development Corporation, the quasi-public corporation formed by the city to implement the Charles Center Plan. In 1964 it became the Charles Center–Inner Harbor Management, Inc. Corporation (CC-IHDC) to deal with plan implementation in both areas. It did so through a special contract



Figure 3: Major elements of the Inner Harbor Plan; 1980's version with existing and projected development. (original art on a City of Baltimore original map)

1. Federal Hill Historic District
2. Maryland Science Museum
3. Lutheran Church Housing
4. Otterbein Residential District
5. McCormick Spices Co.
6. Harborplace Pavilions
7. Hyatt Hotel
8. Convention Center
9. Footbridge to Charles Center
10. South limit of Charles Center
11. US Fidelity / Transamerica Life
12. World Trade Center
13. Aquarium
14. Power Plant
15. Inner Harbor East

supervised by the City: while the corporation managed the development process, the city paid for all operating costs, real estate purchases, and received the profits from all sales. According to Martin Millspaugh, CC-IHDC's president from its founding until 1985, all real estate transactions involving third parties had to be approved in public meetings (Millspaugh, 2003).

The CC-IHDC's dynamic performance was fundamental for plan implementation, such as: leasing land (clearing investors of a large starting cost), rents that were in proportion to profit (which made mortgages easier), flexible financing, and investments in the land's public infrastructure (Wrenn, 1983; Wallace, 2004). It should be noted that private developments always had to pay for land and never ceased to pay local taxes. Only more recently did the city start to offer direct loans to developers, offer tax incentives, and promote profit-sharing ventures demonstrating the need for flexibility and responsiveness to the market over the long term (Millspaugh, 2003).

Millspaugh (1980; 2003) discusses the enormous political, technical, and administrative obstacles inherent in the process of buying almost 1,000 buildings, relocating 700 businesses to other locations (including the wholesale market), cleaning up toxic sites, and dealing with twenty city/state/federal government agencies which held, in one way or another, jurisdiction over some aspect of the Inner Harbor. One of the most difficult battles involved making the State of Maryland's transportation authority drop a destructive highway project that would destroy historic districts, such as Federal Hill and Fells Point, and impose a 14-lane low-level bridge over the Inner Harbor. Wong (2012) recounts Baltimore's victorious war against this project and the importance of the SOM team commissioned by the city assess the project's impacts, combined with political pressure, advocacy planning, media campaigns, civic protests, and legal challenges.

In the early seventies, after obtaining initial financing, the CC-IH focused on attracting private investors and winning the confidence of Baltimoreans, generating what Millspaugh (1980) calls "critical mass". The first designated attraction in the Inner Harbor was the replica of the historic US frigate *Constellation* stationed in a pier and open to visitation in 1969. By 1973, the new boulevards bordering the Inner Harbor and the waterfront promenade and parks were ready, and the *Torsk*—the US submarine that sunk the last Japanese ship during World War II—was moored in the Inner Harbor and opened to the public. During the 1976 Bicentennial celebrations, eight tall ships from different countries sailed from New York and docked in the Inner Harbor, attracting thousands of visitors. To this day, tall ships from navies from around the world moor at the Inner Harbor for days at a time, always resulting in attracting large numbers of visitors. With a constant and diverse array of events, tour and event boats, water taxis, paddle boats for rent, and the open-

ing of almost 160 private marinas slips, the Inner Harbor had captivated the public, making Baltimore residents proud, and propelling a new positive city image nationally.

Since inauguration, the Inner Harbor is a lively and robust urban destination where the mix of commercial, touristic, leisure, and residential uses, the quality of public space and architecture, and the symbiosis with the water, produces a socially and economically sustainable place that attracts visitors, national and international tourists, residents, and the downtown working population. It is important to note that, even with the strong impetus for development and at least for the first two decades, the city tried to ensure that the Inner Harbor's urban design and architecture was respectful of the remaining historical structures and preserved a strong relation to the waterfront, since physical and visual access to the water and maritime activities were unique attractions. Fundamentally, this was achieved through one of the plan's major elements, the waterfront promenade: a pedestrian walkway along the water's edge connecting districts and attractions and featuring seating, attractive landscaping, lighting, and educational signage.

The original plan promoted the waterfront—its promenade, public and open spaces—as the magnet for a lively and attractive mix of commercial, recreational, educational, and cultural attractions as part of the Inner Harbor experience. To understand the location of the projects mentioned in the next sections, please see map in Figure 3 and a recent aerial photograph in Figure 16.

The Initial Move

After building the bulkheads, infrastructure, and the promenade, and promoting public events, it was fundamental to attract developers and investors to the Inner Harbor. This became the CC-IHDC's most important task, and new office buildings became a priority given the success of Charles Center and the

Figure 4: From left to right: *The Gallery* (background), Harborplace's north pavillion, and Maryland's World Trade Cennter. (source: Shutterstock)



need for more modern leaseable space in the downtown. The Inner Harbor's development potential as shown in the plan and the support of the local business coalitions and organizations were fundamental.

After the plan's approval, the first commercial building in the new Inner Harbor was the US Fidelity and Guarantee Corporation (now the Transamerica Life Insurance Company) in 1975 (see # 11, Figure 3). A brutalist-modernist 35-story tower located at the corner of the two boulevards that border the waterfront, it was soon followed by a 625-car parking structure, the first of many at the Inner Harbor. Subsequently, several office buildings were built in the 1970s, sharing desirable locations with views to the water, but following the plan's policy of staggering building heights along the boulevards to protect the Inner Harbor's viewshed and avoid excessive shadowing on the waterfront.

The Maryland's World Trade Center was finished in 1977 and became one of the Inner Harbor's iconic building: a 28-story modernist concrete tower with a pentagonal footprint, designed by I.M Pei for the State of Maryland's Port Authority (see # 12, Figure 3; Figure 4). With a lobby dedicated to public exhibits, the building extends over the waterfront promenade with two of its columns resting in the water and features a viewing deck and a restaurant on the top floor. Interestingly, the Transamerica and the WTC towers are very similar architecturally—in style, detailing, and bulk—generating a unified waterfront profile. In the 1980s several important companies and banks moved into new buildings on or near the waterfront. In 1982, the Federal Reserve Bank opened its local headquarters at the edge of the Charles Center and only two blocks away from the Inner Harbor.

Over the last decades, a greater number of ventures went beyond simple office space to include a richer mix of uses. The first such example on a large scale was The Gallery at Harborplace, completed in 1987 (Figure 4). Occupying an entire city-block just across the boulevard abutting the waterfront's north edge it includes an office tower, a 620-room hotel, a four-story mall with retail and restaurants, and underground parking for 1,150 vehicles; a pedestrian bridge connects the mall to the waterfront just across the street. Unfortunately, development sacrificed several historic landmarks such as the 1910 art-deco factory building of the McCormick Spice Company, which used to add an attractive aromatic atmosphere to the waterfront experience (see #5 in Figure 3). After a long battle lost by preservationists, the building was demolished in 1989 to be replaced by a sixty-story tower including 225 hotel rooms, 150 apartments, and 86,000 square feet of commercial space.

Food and Shopping: The Harborplace

As discussed above, the clearing of the Inner Harbor site, construction of new bulkheads, promenade and marinas, the

approval of the Inner Harbor Plan, and the public events agenda transformed the waterfront into Baltimore's most popular public space. The city needed to keep the momentum going and use it to attract private investments and commercial uses. The answer came in the late 1970s when local entrepreneur James Rouse proposed a project similar to the successful Faneuil Market Place which his company had recently developed in Boston combining the experience of eating and shopping in a historical context.

In the opposite direction of the shopping-center industry conventions of the time, with the Boston project, the Rouse Company had invented the concept of the festival marketplace: an open, attractive old-market-like design that could entertain middle-class buyers and make them feel comfortable, helping suburban residents rediscover the central city pleasures (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1991; Bloom, 2004). "A combination of good luck and good planning made the downtown malls into a near-perfect match for emerging public tastes in the 1970s—the time when the American public rediscovered food and history" (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1991, p. 200).

For Baltimore's Harborplace, the city signed a 75-year ground lease with the Rouse Company for \$105,000 per year plus 25% of profits (Bloom, 2004). Opened in 1980, the Harborplace pavilions are considered the most important project in revitalizing the Inner Harbor (see # 6, Figure 3 & Figure 5). Exceeding all expectations, they received more than 500,000 people on the opening day and more than 18 million in the first year (Levine, 1987; Kotler et al 1993; Wallace, 2004). Sales exceeded expectations by 60% and outperformed Boston's Faneuil Hall (Millspaugh, 2001; 2003).

Observing the Harborplace's importance, James Rouse noted that "more than 60% of (its) visitors... had no intention to buy or

Figure 5: Harborplace's two pavilions and the corner plaza. Note the footbridge over Light Street on the left, and part of World Trade Center building on the right. (source: Google Earth)



eat something, they were there just for the fun of being there, for the spectacle which was thousands of people sitting, standing or strolling along the waterfront” (James Rouse in Bloom, 2004, p. 173). The Harborplace “injected new life into Baltimore’s downtown... stimulated the construction of new hotels, a major convention center, and a new aquarium, turning Baltimore into an important tourist city” (Kotler, Haider & Hein, 1993, p. 125). Being part of the “larger whole” made sense to visitors.

Located in the L-shaped corner site closest to the downtown core, Harborplace was required to maintain the vista to the water and limit height to 40 feet (Figures 4 and 5). The solution came in the form of two elegant, terraced, old-market-like pavilions that totalled 200,000 square feet dedicated to retail and food. A public plaza with a small amphitheatre marks the corner space between the two pavilions providing an animated linkage to the water’s edge. At the time of its opening, Harborplace included a food market, twelve restaurants, 37 small eateries, 58 stores (20 of which were food-related), and 35 kiosks and retail carts. The building’s transparency and the seating from the restaurants and cafe spilling to the outside provided a lively and inviting ambience to the waterfront promenade (Figures 6 & 7). The Harborplace helped popularize the festival marketplace typology in the US, and its design qualities were heralded by famous urbanist William Whyte (1988, p. 94).

Pertaining to Baltimore’s ambitious Skywalk system⁴, a footbridge originating at the Charles Center led to the Hyatt Hotel and the Convention Center before crossing one of the Inner Harbor main boulevards and arriving at the second floor of the Harborplace’s west pavilion, where the food market and most eateries were located (see # 9 in Figure 3). In the 2000s, the north pavilion was connected by footbridge to The Gallery mixed-use complex. The footbridges increased accessibility from the surroundings and animated the second stories, increasing their commercial value.

How the Harborplace came to be is an interesting story. As the Inner Harbor site had been cleared of all structures and remained as open space for public use since the late 1950s, the Rouse Company’s initial proposal to the city was strongly opposed by Baltimoreans. A strong campaign was launched with James Rouse engaging personally in negotiations with community and minority groups who granted their support in exchange of commitments for jobs and opportunities for small local businesses (Frieden & Sagalyn 1991; Wallace, 2004). Harborplace was approved with specific social goals: at least 10% of contractors, 25% of construction workers, and 50% of retail jobs had to come from local minorities, there would be job support services for minorities and a special effort to find

and attract minority retailers. From 2,000 proposals submitted by merchants interested in the project, 140 were accepted, 91% of which were from the local community and 20% represented minorities. Of the 128 original stores, 22 were minority-owned.

In the beginning, the commitment to social responsibility proved to be good for business, generating an attractive mix of ethnic restaurants and retail that became one of Harborplace’s unforeseen success formulas. However, the Rouse Company’s inability and unwillingness to maintain the “small-scale capitalism” –particularly the increasing overhead costs and the complex demands of this type of business, the original mix disappeared over time: today most of the Harborplace’s stores and restaurants represent national chains and do not differ much from other shopping centers (Bloom 2004). Their appeal and sales capacity remain high but now focus on suburban residents and tourists visiting the Inner Harbor.



Figure 6: An amphitheatre between the Harborplace pavilions animates the link between the corner plaza and the water’s edge. (photo: V. del Rio)

Figure 7: The ambience of the waterfront promenade is supported by the pavilion’s uses and transparency (below). (photo: V. del Rio)



⁴ On the downtown Skywalk system and its fate, see Part 1 of this essay in FOCUS 13, 2016.



Figure 8: The National Aquarium soon after inauguration. (photo: V. del Rio)

Recreation and Culture

Attracting a collection of recreation and cultural venues was one of the Inner Harbor Master Plan's original goals. In 1969, Baltimore's Community College opened its new facilities only two blocks north of the waterfront. In 1976, the Maryland Science Center opened its doors helping to animate the Inner Harbor's south-west corner (see #2, Figure 3) with 100,000 square feet of exhibition space and a 150-seat planetarium —today it also holds a five-story IMAX theater.

Baltimore's most important of such venues is, by far, the National Aquarium, inaugurated in 1981. Inspired by Boston's New England Aquarium, Baltimore's National Aquarium turned out to be a spectacularly successful project and pivotal for the city's revitalization efforts (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1990). Its initial \$21 million price tag was covered by a voter-approved offer of city bonds combined with donations from corporations and individuals. The aquarium's unique and complex architecture is attractive from every angle, and its location on the Inner Harbor's most prominent pier makes it a highly visible landmark (see #13, Figure 3; Figure 8). The building's design responds to an educational route, leading visitors through bridges and split levels around a central atrium, into rooms and over tanks that recreate different Maryland habitats and contain more than 5,000 live specimens.

Baltimore's aquarium was so successful that even the most optimistic estimations for the whole first year of operation —400,000 to 600,000 visitors—proved modest: seven months after inaugurating it had already received more than 1 million people. In its first years, the aquarium was generating 3,000 jobs and \$88 million to the local economy (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989). In 1991, an annex was built on the next pier with a 1,200-seat amphitheater for aquatic shows.



Figure 9: Adaptive reuse of the historic Power Plant. (photo: V. del Rio)

Following the aquarium, a couple of piers to the east, a 1912 sewage pumping station became the Baltimore Public Works Museum, and the popular tent-like Pier 6 Concert Pavillion was installed. Originally built for 2,000 seated spectators plus 1,000 on the open lawns, in 1991 the pavilion was expanded and had its seating capacity doubled.

The story of Baltimore's old Pratt Street Power Plant is a great example of how the city managed to reconcile historic preservation, the Inner Harbor Plan's vision, and commercial needs. Located at the pier next to the National Aquarium and built between 1900 and 1909, this massive industrial complex of three contiguous red-brick buildings and three stacks had ceased operations in 1973. It remained vacant until 1985 when Six Flags adapted it into an amusement park that operated for only four years before going under and being replaced by a nightclub, another short-lived initiative. Finally, in 2001, a local developer successfully transformed the Power Plant into an entertainment complex with large tenants: Barnes & Nobles (where an atrium allows views up through inside the original stacks), an ESPN bar, and a Hard Rock Café (Figure 9). Beside it, on the same pier, a new six-story building offers loft office space over restaurants and a fitness center. Today, this pier is a strong commercial anchor to the east waterfront.

By 2005 Baltimore was hosting more than 35 festivals and events and had numerous attractions at or immediately around the Inner Harbor adding to its appeal and dynamism: a historical carousel, the Hippodrome Theater complex (including three restored historic buildings), the University of Maryland's marine biotechnology center, and at least new six museums: the Port Discovery (an interactive children's museum in the restored fish market), the baseball museum next to the stadium, a museum dedicated to the port's history, the African-American Museum

and, in 1995, the 1.1-acre campus of the American Visionary Art Museum, dedicated to new artists and experimental art.

In order to support the Inner Harbor uses, particularly to attend to tourists and shoppers, a trolley bus circulating on a dedicated lane and serving the downtown along the waterfront was started in 1985. The system was later expanded to other areas linking several amenities and offering sightseeing tours.

Staying and Living

Gradually, hotels and residential uses became two of the most important ingredients for the full implementation of the Inner Harbor Master Plan's goals. Evidently, the most difficult barrier to cross was Baltimore's downtown de-population and flight to the suburbs, the city's troubled recent history, and the perceived lack of major attractions there in the 1970s—all still fresh in people's minds, particularly non-Baltimoreans. Despite the success of Charles Center, there were not many quality hotels left in the city, and room capacity was low. Attracting new hotels was still considered an impossible leap of faith when the Inner Harbor Plan was traced. However, the Inner Harbor's success would unexpectedly make Baltimore a tourism attraction and, fueled by its proximity to Washington D.C., a destination for national conferences and conventions. Fed by the city's growing recreation and business industries, the hospitality industry would become one of the leaders in Baltimore's revitalization, helping to consolidate tourism, supporting economic growth, and generating jobs.

The history of how Hyatt was convinced to build Baltimore's first hotel in many years at the Inner Harbor is a great example of CC-IHDC's fundamental role in implementing the master plan. The city offered to pay for all public infrastructure costs and a lot at Inner Harbor's north-south boulevard, a major access to the downtown, in exchange for a lease based on profit-sharing (see #7 in Figure 3). Moreover, in 1977 the Hyatt group also received a loan (\$10 million from a federal UDAG grant and \$2 million from city funds) as a second mortgage that was not to be repaid until after all costs associated with the first mortgage, municipal taxes, hotel's operations, and the lease were served (Milspaugh, 2007; Pike, 2009).

Built in 1981, the Hyatt Inner Harbor is a 15-storey tower with mirrored facades and 488-rooms with great views to the Inner Harbor (Figure 10). It was connected by footbridges to Charles Center, to the convention center, and to Harborplace. It became "the chain's best-performing facility immediately upon its opening" (Wallace, 2004, pp. 138), and the CC-IH's loan was paid in full in only three years, rather than thirteen as originally expected. By the end of the 2000s, the city collected approximately \$3 million a year in taxes and fees from the hotel (Millspaugh, 2009).



Figure 10: Hyatt Regency Hotel, Inner Harbor. View from the pedestrian bridge looking back from Harborplace. (photo: V. del Rio)

Following Hyatt's success, within five years the Inner Harbor had the Intercontinental Harbor Court (200 rooms, 165 luxury apartments, and a parking garage for 900 cars), the Days Inn (250 rooms), Sheraton (350 rooms), Marriott (350 rooms), and the Renaissance Harborplace (622 rooms). In 2008, on a former public parking lot, the 757-room Hilton Baltimore opened with direct access to the convention center, only two blocks away from the Inner Harbor, the Orioles' Camden Yards baseball stadium, and a light-rail station. Today more than twenty hotels offer approximately 9,000 rooms within a mile from the Inner Harbor, many in restored historic buildings. By 2011 Baltimore's hospitality industry was doing very well, and its room occupancy rate was 3% higher than the national average.

However, attracting residential uses to the Inner Harbor was tougher. Besides overcoming the area's negative image, it was also a question of changing life styles which, at the time, did not favor living in the city. The original plan had envisaged upscale residential towers along the waterfront to boost the tax base, but developers were reticent to risk without the synergy of other uses (Warren & McCarthy, 2002).

The first step came in 1974 when the Christ Lutheran Church decided to build a 220-bed medical center, a nursing home, and a low-income 9-story 291-apartment building for the elderly, next to the church's historic building and just across the waterfront boulevard (see #3, Figure 3). But the turning point came in the late 1970s when the city launched a pioneering urban homesteading project in Otterbein, an area a few blocks west of the Inner Harbor (see #4, Figure 3). The majority of Otterbein's 120 red-brick town-houses with front-door marble

steps, typical of Baltimore's 19th century architecture, were vacant, in ruins, or had been condemned to give way to the aborted state highway project discussed earlier. Left with the ownership of these structures, the city decided to sell them through a lottery for the nominal price of one dollar for local applicants. The winners received the houses with liens that included two important requirements: owners had to renovate their properties to a minimal standard within six months, and they had to live there for at least three years.

Relying on low-interest city loans and design guidelines to preserve the area's historical character, the houses were rapidly restored (Figure 11). The process and the requirements in place helped populate and revitalize Otterbein, avoiding predatory speculative investments, particularly by out-of-towners. Local developers built new townhouses on the vacant lots and con-



Figure 11: Historic town houses in Otterbein soon after renovation in 1985. (photo: V. del Rio)



Figure 12: A new town house and an old church converted to residential use, 1985. (photo: V. del Rio)

Figure 13: Development along Inner Harbor's south-east showing the Harborview residential complex. The Inner Harbor is seen in the background. (photo courtesy of Design Collective)

verted a vacant historic church into residential lofts (Figure 12). In his book *The City – Rediscovering the Center*, William Whyte acknowledges Otterbein's success and called it a very attractive neighborhood, "a very Baltimore place and with front steps as white as any in the city" (Whyte, 1988: 326).

Depopulation was Baltimore's and its downtown's most difficult problem to solve. Census data shows that the city's total population declined from 949,708 in 1950 –when it was at its peak– to 620,961 in 2010. However, by the late 1980s, the regional housing market was diversifying and expanding, particularly for single people and young couples without children, students, and retirees who preferred to live closer to downtown and the Inner Harbor attractions.

In 2003, more than twenty new residential developments were under construction or planned for the Inner Harbor, and 7,400 new units were projected to be made available by 2012 (Millspaugh, 2003). Besides serving new residents willing to be close to the waterfront, many of these developments served students and staff from the nearby University of Maryland at Baltimore and Johns Hopkins educational and health services (Millspaugh, 2003). Development included new buildings and conversion of historical structures, in new and old neighborhoods. Reversing historical trends, the number of downtown residents, particularly on and immediately around the waterfront, grew by 130 percent between 2000 and 2010 when Baltimore was ranked as the eighth densest metropolitan core in the US with 5,485 families living downtown (Bernstein, 2011).

Perhaps the most impressive of the newer developments is Harborview, a 42-acre, 2,600-unit residential complex at the old Bethlehem Steel Shipyard Graving Dock in the Inner Harbor's south-east shore, outside the original plan area (Figure 13). Harborview includes the continuation of the waterfront promenade and a series of public open spaces, a 27-story residential tower, three six-story apartment buildings, townhouses on two piers, and a private marina with one hundred boat slips.



Although mostly for a limited clientele, the Inner Harbor's residential market became much stronger than the original plan predicted as people "rediscovered" central locations and the waterfront as desirable places to live. The sharp increase in the average household income in the area confirms a high degree of gentrification caused by a limited number of "back to the city" residents attracted by Baltimore's economic growth model, including from Washington and other cities, (Levine, 1987; Harvey, 1991 & 2009; Merrifield, 1992).

Convention Center

In the late 1970s, the city and the CC-IH decided for a high-quality convention center in the Inner Harbor's vicinity. Due to the proximity of Washington DC (one-hour drive) and Baltimore-Washington International Airport (twenty-minute drive), and served by Baltimore's Penn Station (5-minute drive), studies had shown that the downtown could capture a significant share of the convention market while generating business for the hotels that Baltimore needed. The convention center was built in 1979 through city-issued bonds just a block west from the Inner Harbor (see #9, Figure 3 & Figure 16). Featuring an award-winning modernist design, the state-of-the-art facility offered 425,000 square feet of exhibition and meeting space, and a public roof garden. It was connected by footbridges to Charles Center and to the Hyatt hotel and Harborplace's west pavilion. By the early 1980s, the convention center was booked for practically the entire year (Millsbaugh, 1982) and, in 1986, it was expanded with its capacity tripled.

The convention center was never meant to generate profit but to be a catalyst for tourism, feeding the local hospitality and retail markets. In the early 2000's, conventions and conferences accounted for more than 50% of the occupation rate in Inner Harbor hotels. Because of the increasing competition from newer and larger facilities in the region, in 2005 the city decided to expand it yet another time and add a city-owned 757-room hotel to the complex, the Hilton Baltimore. In the last few years, the city has been considering plans to replace the original 1979 structure with an even larger facility and another hotel. It is important to note that the convention center complex is now connected by light rail line to the airport and the suburbs, and is next to the Camden Yards Sports Complex, discussed below.

The Camden Yards Sports Complex

The Camden Yards Sports Complex proved to be a major catalyst for Baltimore's downtown and Inner Harbor, attracting thousands of sports fans and tourists. The story began with William Schaefer, four consecutive terms mayor (1971 to 1987) and a key player in Baltimore's revitalization, and his efforts to prevent the Orioles from leaving the city for new facilities in the suburbs. He fought for the construction of a state-of-the-



Figure 14: The Orioles Park and the B&O historic building show in the center, the renovated Camden Station with the train and light rail tracks on the left, and the parking lot where the M&T Bank football stadium was built in the background. (source: <https://populous.com/posts/celebrating-quarter-century-camden-yards/>)

art baseball stadium that could add to the synergy of the Inner Harbor. When elected state governor for two consecutive terms (1987 to 1995) he was successful in having the state legislature approve the construction of such stadium with lottery money, keeping it under the control of the state's sports authority.

The city hired the local firm RTKL for a specific plan for a 40-acre area three blocks west of the Inner Harbor to accommodate the stadium (Figures 14 & 16). Known as Camden Yards, the land was originally owned by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company and, besides underutilized rail yards, it included two historic buildings: a 1856 terminal station that still operated commuter trains to Washington, and a 1,116-foot long eight-story brick warehouse built by B&O in 1889 for the storage and distribution of merchandise but became mostly vacant by the 1970s.

Considered East Coast's longest brick building, this unique historical exemplar of railroad warehouse architecture inspired HOK (now Populous) in their solution for Orioles Park, inaugurated in 1992. The 48,000-seat major league baseball stadium was placed against the historic warehouse, renovated for Orioles facilities, box offices, retail, restaurants, and a private club in the upper floors from where spectators enjoy privileged views of the game (Figure 14). The warehouse inspired the new architecture and served as the diamond's backdrop, creating visual impact and a sense of enclosure.

Following the success of the Orioles Park and replacing an adjacent parking lot, a 71,000-seat multi-purpose football stadium opened in 1998. The M&T Bank stadium, home to the Baltimore Ravens as well as other sports and music events, is considered by fans one of the best NFL stadiums. Besides the two stadiums, Baltimore's Camden Yards Sports Complex include the Sports

Legends Museum, installed in the renovated Camden Station, and the nearby "Babe" Ruth Birthplace Museum.

The Camden Yards Sports Complex's accessibility is excellent. Located within a short walking distance from both the downtown and the Inner Harbor, it is served by ramps to/from a major state highway, by the commuter train services, and by the city's light rail system. Dedicated lots and nearby public parking structures accommodate around 30,000 vehicles, and circulation is eased by having football and baseball games off-hours and on different days of the week.

Light Rail to the Inner Harbor

During the first couple of decades after initiation of the Inner Harbor Plan and like most large US cities, Baltimore did not have an efficient public transportation system. A 1966 plan projected six transit lines radiating from the downtown but, by 1983, only one had been built, the Baltimore subway. During his first term as the state governor, in the late eighties, former Baltimore Mayor Donald Schaefer was able to push the construction of a light rail system, under the administration of the state's transit authority, facilitating access to the Inner Harbor and the Camden Yards Sports Complex.

The 22-miles of the project's first phase were built relatively fast, inexpensively, and without any federal funding using a single track system on existing streetcar and commuter rail rights-of-ways. Connecting the Maryland State Fair, Baltimore County, in the north, to Anne Arundel County in the south, through Camden Yards, the lightrail started operating in 1992, on time for Oriole Park's inaugural game. In the late 1990s the system was extended connecting the downtown and the Inner Harbor to residential suburbs, business parks, a shopping mall, the University of Baltimore, Baltimore's Convention Center, Penn Station, and the international airport. Many stations transfer to MTA bus routes and offer free parking. The two stations at the Camden Yards Sports Complex (Orioles Park and M&T Bank Stadium), at the Convention Center, and at Charles Center are particularly important for downtown workers, tourists, conference attendees and game-goers, decreasing the need for parking (see Figures 14 & 16). The lightrail ride from the Baltimore-Washington Airport to downtown takes approximately thirty minutes.

Baltimore's light rail system was built on a single-track system and used existing facilities to bring down costs, limiting its flexibility and leading to long headways (17 minutes), even at peak hours. In the mid-2000s federal funds were secured to convert the system to two parallel tracks, increasing its efficiency.

Notes on Implementation

The success of the Charles Center and the Inner Harbor plans

relied on several human actors and administrative factors that helped sustain implementation, as commented along this two-part article: vision and willing to excel, integrated efforts, the involvement of the private sector, committed and dedicated public officials. The orchestrated efforts between city, Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC), and Charles Center-Inner Harbor Development Corporation (CC-IHDC) were fundamental for keeping plan implementation on track. As a powerful regional organization of business and civic leaders and promoter of the downtown renaissance since the mid-1950s, the GBC guaranteed the commitment of the private sector. Through agile, private-sector-like administration, the CC-IHDC successfully attracted investors and made sure development in those areas was prioritized and implemented according to the master plans.

An important factor to guarantee private development quality, particularly in the initial years, was Baltimore's Design Advisory Panel. Originally formed in 1964 from a federal requirement to oversee redevelopment in downtown urban renewal areas, such as the Charles Center and the Inner Harbor, the panel was composed of six design experts appointed by the City. Later, the group was renamed Urban Design and Architecture Review Panel, and its responsibilities were extended to advise on significant development projects in the city and those requiring zoning changes or variances. Recommendations are issued for schematic and final projects and, although without power to veto projects, the panel's work was fundamental for the implementation process and the design quality in both Charles Center and the Inner Harbor, particularly in the first decades.

As is usual with the success of any plan, the Inner Harbor Plan had many champions over the years. James Rouse (Rouse Company's founder and very influential in the city's business community), and Martin Millspaugh (chief executive officer of the CC-IHDC for twenty years) were certainly two of them. But perhaps the most important player was William Schaefer, Baltimore city-council member for sixteen years, four-time mayor (1971-1987), two-term state governor (1987-1995), and two-term state comptroller (1999-2007). Schaefer was a driving force in transforming Baltimore into a model of urban renaissance and tourism, particularly the Inner Harbor, the center-piece of his administration. Personal and charismatic, he used to drive around the city at night looking for problems to solve, and knew how to inject Baltimoreans with a much-needed sense of pride in their city. Schaefer was excellent in getting things done and in attracting businesses. But he was also criticized for his authoritarian style, for installing the corporate model in city management, and for an economic development model that did not help the most in need. Job opportunities decreased, the quality of public schools declined, poor neighborhoods got distressed, and crimes and drugs were not subdued (Levine, 1987; Harvey 1991 & 2009).

However, when Schaefer left city hall and the following administration moved its focus away from the Inner Harbor, the pace of downtown revitalization declined and life did not get any better for the most needy. The lack of commitment together with the 1990s economic crisis led Baltimore to miss investments, residents, and merchants moving to the suburbs, and to experience a significant increase in crime rates. In 1991, all Baltimore's quasi-public agencies were merged into a single non-profit entity, the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), generating new problems for the Inner Harbor. Without CC-IHDC's direct agile administration and the city's special attention, the Inner Harbor became just another area dependent on the politics of different city departments, their budgets, and timing.

By the early 2000s successive city administrations worked towards stopping the downward spiral, focusing on attracting economic development and on increasing Baltimore's quality of life as a whole (Millspaugh, 2003; Harvey, 2003). However, although the Inner Harbor Plan was updated in 2003 and private investments and new attractions were expanding, public spaces by the waterfront were deteriorating. In 2005, business owners, local institutions (such as the Maryland Science Center and the National Aquarium), and the City formed an alliance and funded the Waterfront Partnership, a non-profit with the mission of maintaining the public spaces along the clean, safe, and vibrant. However, the organization depended on city grants and donations from the private sector, and its scope of operations was very narrow.

In 2007, cognizant of the need for integrated management of the water's edge, Baltimore's City Council created the Waterfront Management Authority that operates through public grants and private donations, a small surcharge on commercial properties, and rents from the use of waterfront spaces. This move led to beautification, expansions of the waterfront promenade, and better maintenance, safety, signage and tourist facilities, including an award-winning new visitor center at the west waterfront promenade, just south of Harborplace.

While the 2003 Inner Harbor Master Plan Framework confirmed the spirit of the 1965 plan, some of its recommendations and the lack of a stronger, comprehensive attention to the original vision by part of the city attracted much criticism, including from David Wallace, author of both the Charles Center and the Inner Harbor original plan (Wallace, 2004). The stronger competition with other cities also meant that Baltimore adopted a more aggressive approach to attract investment and developers, becoming more flexible in their demands. The city's new development-oriented approach in the Inner Harbor was reflected in naming the new master plan a "framework". From the mid-2000s, different from the Inner Harbor's heyday, projects along the waterfront result from a much tougher negotiation



Figure 15: Redevelopment along the waterfront beyond the original plan in Harbor East. (photo Judy Davis at Hoachlander Davis Photography; courtesy of Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Khun Architects)

between the city, the Baltimore Development Corporation, and developers. Although the pedestrian promenade, bike lanes, and small public spaces along the water's edge continue to be implemented (Figure 15), the new architectural solutions, set-backs, and easements along the waterfront reflect a more "piece-meal" (Lang, 2005) urban design process and the plan's original vision is in danger (see Figures 13 & 16).

The View from the Other Side

The positive impacts of the Inner Harbor redevelopment for the city's life, image, and economy have been immense: from its first phase as a recreation ground for Baltimoreans, to its second phase as a tourist destination, and its current phase as a festival place and an exclusive residential destination. "The Inner Harbor Master Plan of 1964 was substantially completed in twenty instead of thirty years as originally projected, and with three times the amount of development as thought possible" (Millspaugh, 2003: 40). By the early 2000s the numbers for the Inner Harbor were impressive: 192 acres (76.8 hectares) of dilapidated and abandoned waterfront property had been redeveloped, real estate had appreciated by 600%, the city was collecting \$60 million yearly from taxes, 15,000 direct and 50,000 indirect jobs had been created, and 20 million visitors and 6.5 million tourists were injecting \$4 billion per year—a tourism industry previously nonexistent (Millspaugh, 2001, 2003).

The real costs involved in redeveloping the Inner Harbor are impossible to calculate given the numerous components, variables, and actors over such a long period. In 1964, when the plan was traced it projected \$230 million in public and private investments, \$55 million of which was to acquire, demolish, and prepare land for development (Wrenn, 1983). Peter Hall (1988) noted that the project took \$180 million of federal

and \$58 million of city funds while only \$22 million from the private sector. Brenn and Rigby (1996) estimated that the cost of redeveloping the Inner Harbor's 94 acres totalled \$2.5 billion. According to Martin Millspaugh, CC-IHDC's executive director for twenty years, 75% of the total investment came from the private sector and that project management cost taxpayers less than 3% of the public funds invested (Millspaugh, 2001).

Baltimore's urban renaissance strategy and the Inner Harbor, particularly during the "Schaeffer era", has its critics. Levine (1987) noted that while the industrial base was eroding, the city's corporate-center redevelopment model and the new economy based on advanced services and tourism led to gentrification, an uneven pattern of growth, and the worsening of spatial dualities. For David Harvey (1991 & 2009), the corporate model worsened Baltimore's widespread social erosion. He denounced the public-partnership model and the quasi-public corporations as a "shadow" government, noting that, while private investors received heavy subsidies, the quality of social services and education were decreasing significantly, and most of the city remained untouched by the glory of the Inner Harbor.

Planner David Wallace, mastermind of the original Inner Harbor plan, also criticized the lack of investment in poorer neighborhoods, the lagging behind of the public schools, and the few economic opportunities for the neediest (Wallace, 2004).

Martin Millspaugh, long-term president of the CC-IHDC, rebutted this type of criticism by noting that it would be a mistake to believe that the Inner Harbor's revitalization could, on its own, solve all the city's problems (Millspaugh, 2003). Through the Inner Harbor renaissance, hospitality, tourism, and the convention industry became vital components of Baltimore's economy. By the end of the 2000s, the city had reverted much of the downward spiral (Millspaugh, 2003; Harvey, B., 2003). In 2017, Baltimore was ranked by Fortune magazine among the 20 best cities to find a job. In this same year, according to Baltimore Development Corporation reports, the city was involved with almost one hundred urban renewal, neighborhood, and specific plans, and 93 development projects, of which only four were located in the downtown -certainly an indicator that a significant amount of effort was directed to the city as a whole. One of these is a US\$1.8 billion project for East Baltimore, one of the city's most

Figure 16: Recent view of Inner Harbor and surrounding development (photo by permission Shutterstock)



- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Harborview residential complex | 6. Otterbein Homestead area | 11. Charles Center area | 16. Aquarium (I & II) |
| 2. American Visionary Art Museum complex | 7. Orioles Park | 12. Transamerica Life building | 17. Power Plant |
| 3. Federal Hill and historic district | 8. Camden Station | 13. Harborplace | 18. Pier Six Music Pavillion |
| 4. Maryland Science Museum | 9. Convention Center | 14. The Gallery mixed-use complex | 19. Interrupted state highway |
| 5. Lutheran Church complex | 10. Hyatt Regency | 15. World Trade center | 20. Harbor East |

distressed neighborhoods, that includes 2,200 new and rehabilitated homes, commercial spaces, a model school and childhood center, a food enterprise center, a science and technology park, and out-of-school, social, and health programs.

Lessons from Baltimore

Baltimore's efforts through the Charles Center and the Inner Harbor plans discussed in the two parts of this article suggest some lessons. In Charles Center, an office-oriented redevelopment, the plan and its implementation were similar to many other examples in central cities, only of a more contained and, certainly, less destructive approach (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989).⁵ On the other hand, the Inner Harbor Plan, although preceded by Boston's waterfront revitalization efforts, became an international model and inspired several cases discussed in the literature (Breen & Rigby 1993, 1996; Gordon, 1996; Marshall, 2001; Stevens, 2009). After Baltimore's Inner Harbor success, "waterfronts became associated with ways to recreate the image of a city, to recapture economic investment, and to attract people back to deserted downtowns" (Marshall, 2001, p. 5).

As noted by Gordon (1996), to a large degree Baltimore's success with both plans seems to depend on six fundamental factors: construction of a city image, integration with context, reuse of existing structures, public access, small actions, and incremental planning. Although both plans in Baltimore shared these factors, particularly the Inner Harbor, they also prove that sustainable revitalization is a continuous process that depends on planning processes that are flexible to some degree while still pursuing the original vision and goals. The implementation of such projects is far more complex and takes much longer than normal development practices and various political and economic cycles, meeting many unforeseeable problems.

Baltimore's path to reinvent itself from a city of decay in the 1950's to one praised for the quality of the sustainable revitalization of its Inner Harbor was a long one. Looking back to the late 1950's Charles Center Plan and the early 1960's Inner Harbor Plan, this essay discussed how advanced services, events, tourism, leisure, and shopping represented the most important stimulants of Baltimore's economic recovery. Rehabilitating investor's trust in the downtown and the symbiosis between city and water were fundamental in this process, and particularly reconstructing the Inner Harbor's image as a special place for recreation and, later, a place to live.

As with most successful plans, the fundamental factors in Baltimore were the long-term planning process and political commitment involved; the success of city leaders in attracting

investment; the overall quality of the urban and architectural design; and the synergetic mix of land uses and attractions. From Baltimore's experience, we can draw some lessons for a sustainable revitalization:

- A sustainable plan includes political commitment, timing sensitivity, marketing, management and monitoring processes that are strategic and sensitive to the market in short, medium and long-term. Plan implementation must be orchestrated by the city reflecting a consensual collaboration among stakeholders (governmental agencies of different levels, investors, developers, and community groups) in a transparent, well monitored, and democratic process.
- A quasi-public corporation may be an agile and effective way to manage the implementation process over a specific area but its actions must be transparent, fully integrated to the plan's vision and city policies and, always responsive to the community interest over the long term.
- Plan and process needs to attend to rebuilding a place's image and appeal, as well as stakeholders and investors confidence. Sustainability depends on the synergy between a critical mass of land-uses and attractions, and on catalytic developments (such as aquariums, stadiums, and shopping malls), particularly at the early stages. Although catalysts alone cannot guarantee the success of the revitalization as a whole, they have proved to be essential to jumpstart a process and its different phases.
- Sustainable revitalization depends on a careful mix of complementary lands uses in order to generate social, cultural, and economic dynamism. Retail and ground-floor uses, as well as temporary activities and public events, must feed and support active sidewalks and open spaces. The design of large facilities need to assimilate this notion and care for their impacts. Residential uses above ground level are fundamental, and preferably serving a large spectrum of socio-economic groups.
- Concentrating redevelopment priorities in a specific area, such as the waterfront, and using the corporate or recreational-tourism models, should not come at the expense of neighborhoods and local communities. The plan and the implementation process should take measures to avoid displacement and the negative impacts of gentrification, and make affordable housing part of the mix.
- Accessibility is a cornerstone of a sustainable revitalization process. The area needs to be well integrated and a living part of the rest of the city and region. Transit, pedestrian, and alternative mobility systems must be efficiently integrated. In Baltimore, efficient vehicular circulation integrated to the state highway system, several parking structures, subway and light rail, pedestrian promenades, water-taxis,

⁵ See Part 1 of this essay in FOCUS 13, 2017.

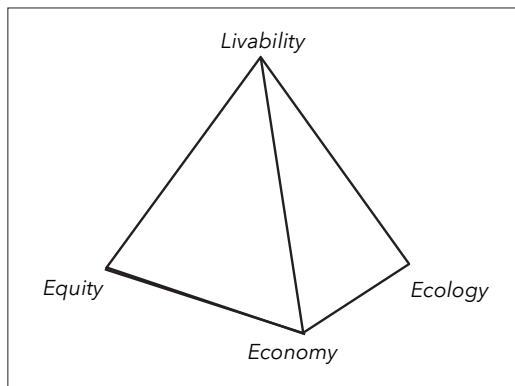


Figure 17: The sustainability pyramid (based on Godschalk, 2004).

and alternative forms of transport (skates and Segways, for example) are reasonably well integrated and continuous.

- In Baltimore, attention was placed in the city imaging, aesthetics, and view corridors. In recognizing the waterfront as the most important asset, its continuous visual experience was guaranteed through the pedestrian promenade by the water's edge and by a relative respect for viewsheds from surrounding development. The power of vision was also recognized through urban design and architecture of quality that help create a sense of place and belonging, and respect, to a large degree, local memory.

The two parts of this essay helped to demonstrate how Baltimore's revitalization process has been successful and sustainable over time, particularly in the Inner Harbor area. Godschalk's sustainability model represented by a pyramid with livability placed at the apex helps us consider Baltimore's successes from an interesting perspective (Godschalk, 2004) (Figure 17).

Baltimore was very successful in the Charles Center and the Inner Harbor areas, as discussed in this two-part essay, economically successful, ecologically correct, and very livable—at least for certain groups of the population. Charles Center works well mostly as an attractive downtown business district albeit with little housing. The Inner Harbor is a unique place with an attractive and dynamic mix of uses, most geared towards recreation and leisure but with an increasingly stronger residential component. Despite the unavoidable consequences of economic and political cycles, Baltimore needs to continue investing in the quality of downtown revitalization, with a special focus on the uniqueness and the synergy of its waterfront. However, in the long run a sustainable revitalization will always be dependent on how these processes reflect on the rest of the city and contribute to make Baltimore a livable city for all.

Figure 18: Basic timeline of development in the Inner Harbor showing the major projects and facts discussed in this article.

- ▲ 2007 Waterfront Management Authority formed
- 2005 Convention Center expands for 2nd time and adds hotel
- 2004 Modernization and expansion of Science Center
- 2001 Marriott at Inner Harbor East
- 1998 Successful repurposing of Powerplant
Raven's stadium
Light rail connect to B-W International Airport
- 1995 American Visionary Art Museum
- 1993 Harborview residential complex
- 1992 Orioles at Camden Yard
Light rail
- 1991 Aquarium opens annex
Baltimore Development Corporation formed
- 1987 The Gallery mixed-use complex
- 1986 Expansion of Convention Center
Fells Point waterfront plan
- 1985 Powerplant repurposed for first time
- 1983 Inner Harbor East Plan
Charles Center subway station
- 1981 National Aquarium
Hyatt Hotel
Pier Six Music Pavillion
- 1980 Harborplace festival marketplace pavillions
- 1979 Convention Center
- 1978 Otterbein Homesteading - historic district
- 1977 World Trade Center
- 1976 Maryland's Science Center
- 1976 Tall ships sail into the Inner Harbor for U.S. Bicentennial
- 1975 Transamerica Life building
Lutheran Church complex and apartments
- 1971 Inner Harbor West Plan
- 1970 First City Fair at the waterfront
- 1969 Baltimore Community College
- 1965 Charles Center-Inner Harbor Development Corp.
- 1964 Municipal bonds for implementation of
Inner Harbor Plan announced
- 1962 First new office building in Charles Center
- 1957 Charles Center Plan
- 1955 Clearing of part of Inner Harbor and new bulkheads

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