



City of Westminster, Maryland

Tri-Street Neighborhood Area
Advisory Committee

Final Report

March 9, 2009

City of Westminster
P.O. Box 710
Westminster, MD 21158

I. Introduction

At its meeting of August 25, 2008, The Mayor and Common Council of Westminster established the Tri-Street Area Advisory Committee (“Tri-Street Committee”) to address neighborhood issues and concerns in the area of Pennsylvania Avenue, Union Street and West Main Street and create an action plan for improvement initiatives. The Tri-Street neighborhood that was the subject of the committee’s work is highlighted by map of the area, included as Attachment One. Councilman Greg Pecoraro was named chair and Councilwoman Suzanne Albert was named vice-chair of the Tri-Street Committee.

The following individuals were appointed as members of the Tri-Street Committee:

Karen Conkel	Anissa McGruder	Rebekah Orenstein	Sandy Oxx
Beth Gerl	Josie O’Neel	Gerald Sheeler	Dan Plunkert
Jackie Finch	Carol Groomes	Dean Camlin	Judy Artis
Thomas Smith	Lyndi McNulty	Jeff Alexander	Sharon Hooper
Nancy Palmer	Laurina Gee	Darcel Harris	Lori Graham

The following individuals were members of the City Resource Team:

Marge Wolf – City Administrator

Thomas Beyard – Director of Planning, Zoning & Development

Jeff Spaulding – Chief of Police

Melissa Hynes – Comprehensive Planner

Sandy Ebaugh – Community & Economic Development Specialist

The Tri-Street Committee convened five meetings from September, 2008 through February, 2009 at the Westminster Community Center, located at 25 Union Street. A summary of each meeting is included below:

- **September 17, 2008** – the first meeting included a walking tour of the neighborhood and a discussion of each member’s concerns and vision for the work of the Tri-Street Committee.
- **October 14, 2008** – the second meeting included a presentation of City Survey results, updates on City projects and focused on code enforcement issues.

- **November 11, 2008** – the third meeting included a presentation and discussion on public safety issues.
- **December 9, 2008** – the fourth meeting included a presentation and discussion on traffic safety issues.
- **February 11, 2009** – the fifth and final meeting included a review of discussion points and the development of a consensus on the major elements of action plan to be included in the Tri-Street Committee’s final report.

All meetings of the Tri-Street Committee were open to the media and the public and citizens were encouraged to contribute to the work of the committee.

II. Recommendations

The Tri-Street Committee at its meeting of February 11, 2009 considered various discussion points that were based on comments, ideas and concerns of the members of the committee. The Tri-Street Committee generally agreed on the elements of its final report that included 7 major goals and various recommended actions under each goal.

At the conclusion of its February 11, 2009 meeting, City staff organized the recommended actions into a format that identified a City staff contact and placed it on an implementation schedule. Each item is a priority to the Tri-Street Committee but must follow a feasible time schedule for implementation.

The following are definitions of the implementation schedule:

- **Short-Term:** Recommendations to be implemented within 9 to 12 months after adopting the Tri-Street Neighborhood Plan.
- **Mid-Term:** Recommendations to be implemented within 12 to 18 months after adopting the Tri-Street Neighborhood Plan.
- **Long-Term:** Recommendations to be implemented within 2 years after adopting the Tri-Street Neighborhood Plan
- **Ongoing:** Recommendations that City Staff contacts attend to on an ongoing basis

Goal 1: Build Economic Vitality

A. Establish a task force of representatives from the City, Carroll County Arts Council, McDaniel College, Tri-Street advisory committee, property owners and artisans to develop “an arts, culture and small business overlay zone” for the Tri-Street neighborhood. The task force should focus on the Carroll Arts Center as a critical anchor in the Tri-Street neighborhood and seek to generate public support for the efforts of the Carroll County Arts Council to enhance this important facility and its programs.

Implementation: Short-Term

City Staff Contact: Tom Beyard

B. Explore historic district zoning for the Tri-Street neighborhood as a means to help foster in the community a greater sense of pride in the appearance and character of the area as well as preserve the historic properties.

Implementation: Mid-Term

City Staff Contact: Tim Rogers *with support from* Dean Camlin

C. Work in cooperation with downtown business groups and others to address the issue of building vacancies of the Tri-Street neighborhood.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Stan Ruchlewicz

Goal 2: Provide Quality Housing

A. Establish a task force of City representatives, Carroll County Landlords Association, Tri-Street advisory committee representatives and property owners to investigate the development and implementation of a “Rental Licensing Program” to support and enhance efforts by code and law enforcement officials to improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

Implementation: Short-Term

City Staff Contact: Marge Wolf *with support from* Tom Beyard

B. Study Westminster’s current zoning policies concerning issues of unrelated persons living in a single housing unit. Cooperate with McDaniel College to make recommendation to college student housing.

Implementation: Short-Term

City Staff Contact: John Walsh

C. Integrate available police and code enforcement data with the City’s GIS capabilities in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement activities.

Implementation: Mid-Term

City Staff Contact: Tim Rogers

D. Continue the use and application of the disorderly house ordinance and when necessity dictates refine and improve its provisions to strengthen the law as well as promote “firm but fair,” timely and consistent code enforcement to address housing and quality of life issues.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Tom Beyard *with support from* Chief Spaulding and Trevor Hess

Goal 3: Improve Neighborhood Pride and Perception

A. Support the Tri-Street Community Association on issues and projects of mutual concern.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Sandy Ebaugh *with support from* Melissa Hynes

B. Investigate the development and implementation of a publicity campaign in conjunction with the local media to help change public perceptions about the Tri-Street neighborhood.

Implementation: Mid-Term

City Staff Contact: Kelley Martin

C. Focus implementation of the City’s “Paint-up, Fix-up Program” and the City-administered State Special Loans Program in the Tri-Street neighborhood. Connect with code enforcement to promote the use of the programs.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Sandy Ebaugh

Goal 4: Develop Working Relationship with McDaniel College

A. Work with leaders from McDaniel College to address issues and opportunities of mutual concern for the City, Tri-Street neighborhood and McDaniel administration, faculty and students. There is a strong view that this work will highlight the tremendous wealth of talent and resources at McDaniel College that can contribute in a positive way to the overall success of downtown Westminster and the Tri-Street neighborhood.

Implementation: Mid-Term

City Staff Contact: Melissa Hynes

B. Support the efforts of McDaniel College officials to implement their “good neighbor policy” that seeks to educate off-campus students regarding the impact of their behavior and actions on the Tri-Street neighborhood.

Implementation: Mid-Term

City Staff Contact: Melissa Hynes

C. Continue cooperative relations with McDaniel campus safety and support their efforts to work with the community and respond to incidents involving off-campus student housing.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Chief Spaulding

Goal 5: Promote Owner-Occupancy of Homes

A. Create incentives for the conversion of multi-family residential properties to single-family residential properties. Increasing owner occupancy in the Tri-Street neighborhood can encourage neighborhood stability by returning the area to its original character.

Implementation: Long-Term

City Staff Contact: Sandy Ebaugh

B. Support the Episcopal Housing Corporation’s project to create nine affordable housing units at 57-63 Union Street and encourage the creation of as much on-site parking as possible in project plans.

Implementation: Short-Term

City Staff Contact: Sandy Ebaugh

C. Work with the Tri-Street Community Association to inform neighborhood residents about existing homeownership assistance and housing counseling programs and educate them on the benefits of homeownership and how it helps stabilize and enhance the community.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Sandy Ebaugh

D. Work with non-profit housing organizations to plan and implement additional affordable housing projects in the Tri-Street neighborhood as opportunities arise.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Sandy Ebaugh

Goal 6: Enhance Public Safety

A. Support the Police Department’s initiative to create a “Community Liaison Officer” to serve as liaison between the Police Department and the Tri-Street Community Association. This individual will have a cell phone and email to facilitate effective and timely communication and problem resolution.

Implementation: Short-Term

City Staff Contact: Chief Spaulding

B. Support the Police Department and Tri-Street Community Association to consider the re-establishment of a “Neighborhood Watch Program” as a means to provide additional “eyes and ears” in the community. The efforts of the Police Department will only be enhanced by the active involvement of the community its work.

Implementation: Mid-Term

City Staff Contact: Chief Spaulding

C. Support the Police Department’s efforts to use automated tools such as GIS, hotspot analysis and call mapping to better respond to community needs.

Implementation: Ongoing

City Staff Contact: Tim Rogers *with support from* Chief Spaulding

Goal 7: Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Accessibility

A. Implement streetscape improvements funded with 2008 Community Legacy funds. Received 2009 Community Legacy additional funds allowing for the completion streetscape improvements based on 2005 Pennsylvania Avenue Streetscape Plan.

Implementation: Short-Term

City Staff Contact: Jeff Glass

B. Consider implementing the Carroll County recommendations regarding traffic calming options and signage improvements in the Tri-Street neighborhood as part of the Pennsylvania Avenue streetscape project.

Implementation: Short-Term

City Staff Contact: Jeff Glass

III. Summary

The Tri-Street Area Advisory Committee proudly submits these recommendations to The Mayor and Common Council of Westminster. The members of the Tri-Street Committee acknowledge that much progress has occurred in the neighborhood since 2002 when the original Lower Pennsylvania Avenue Committee was formed and completed its work. However, more work needs to be done and these recommendations propose actions and changes that will enhance the neighborhood and the quality of life for its residents. The members of the Tri-Street Committee acknowledge that the Tri-Street neighborhood has great potential and these recommendations will help insure that potential is realized.

Appendix: Implementation Chart

Recommended Action		Implementation	City Staff Contact
G1.A	Establish taskforce to study “Arts, Culture & Small Business Overlay Zone”	Short-Term	Tom Beyard
G1.B	Explore Historic Zoning in the Tri-Street Neighborhood	Mid-Term	Tim Rogers
G1.C	Address building vacancies in the Tri-Street Neighborhood	Ongoing	Stan Ruchlewicz
G2.A	Establish taskforce to study “Rental Licensing Program”	Short-Term	Marge Wolf
G2.B	Study current zoning policies for number of persons per housing unit	Short-Term	John Walsh
G2.C	Integrate Police and Code Enforcement data with GIS capabilities	Mid-Term	Tim Rogers
G2.D	Continue use of Disorderly House Ordinance and consistent Code Enforcement	Ongoing	Tom Beyard
G3.A	Support the Tri-Street Community Association on issues and projects	Ongoing	Sandy Ebaugh
G3.B	Investigate publicity campaign to help change public perceptions about the neighborhood	Mid-Term	Kelley Martin
G3.C	Focus implementation of the City’s “Paint-up, Fix-up Program” and Special Loans Program	Ongoing	Sandy Ebaugh
G4.A	Work with McDaniel College to address issues and opportunities of mutual concern	Mid-Term	Melissa Hynes
G4.B	Support McDaniel College officials to implement their “good neighbor policy”	Mid-Term	Melissa Hynes
G4.C	Continue cooperative relations with McDaniel campus safety and support their efforts	Ongoing	Chief Spaulding

Recommended Action		Implementation	City Staff Contact
G5.A	Create incentives for conversion of multi-family residential properties to single-family	Long-Term	Sandy Ebaugh
G5.B	Support the Episcopal Housing Corporation's project to create nine affordable housing units	Short-Term	Sandy Ebaugh
G5.C	Inform neighborhood homeownership assistance and housing counseling programs	Ongoing	Sandy Ebaugh
G5.D	Work with non-profit housing organizations implement future affordable housing projects	Ongoing	Sandy Ebaugh
G6.A	Create a "Community Liaison Officer" to serve as neighborhood liaison	Short-Term	Chief Spaulding
G6.B	Consider the re-establishment of a "Neighborhood Watch Program"	Mid-Term	Chief Spaulding
G6.C	Support the Police Department's efforts to use GIS, hotspot analysis and call mapping	Ongoing	Tim Rogers
G7.A	Implement 2005 Pennsylvania Avenue Streetscape plan with Community Legacy funds	Short-Term	Jeff Glass
G7.B	Consider Carroll County recommendations for traffic calming options and signage improvements	Short-Term	Jeff Glass