

Responses to Measuring Human Development Disparities in Baltimore City Webinar

Q Is Red Lining still done and is it legal?

A Per the [Fair Housing Act of 1968](#), it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, or family status for the sale, rental, or financing of housing.

Q Since there is not legislation specifically focused on preventing landlords from rejecting housing vouchers, would you say that this is currently the strongest force working against individuals receiving vouchers' ability to break the red-lined zones?

A A number of factors go into the housing trends and persistent problems that we see in Baltimore. A lack of legislation on this issue means that few avenues exist for low-income residents to move from areas with fewer opportunities. However, legislation solely on this issue would only allow residents to move, but would not help lift more disadvantaged areas of the city up. Access to education, support services, and employment, among other things, would improve neighborhoods that have been historically disadvantaged. Unfortunately, while housing vouchers are a fantastic tool for providing stability and shelter, they are only one part of any eventual solution.

Q The slide mentioned that Baltimore ranks last in HDI. Is this state-wide or nation-wide?

A Of the largest 100 metro areas in the U.S., Baltimore ranks last in terms of economic mobility, meaning that a child born in poverty in Baltimore City is most likely to remain in poverty than in any other major city ([Table 1, Page 3](#)). In terms of HDI, the overall value for Baltimore City (0.821) is comparable to Bahrain. The neighborhood with the highest HDI is Greater Roland Park/ Poplar Hill, with an HDI of .979, exceeding Norway (0.949). The neighborhood with the lowest HDI is Upton/Druid Heights, with an HDI equal to that of Tunisia (0.725).

Q What do the white areas in the historic red-line map represent? (the 1930's one)

A The areas in white were undeveloped or were industrial/commercial use (not residential) at the time. The areas in green were deemed "best" for lending. For a closer look at the map, as well as copies of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) reports for each neighborhood, please visit [this site](#).

Q Are your results being published?

A [The full report is available here.](#)

Q Do you think some people in these less disadvantaged areas live there because that is what they know, they are comfortable and their support system is there?

A While people can prefer to live near their families and support systems, the variance we see in areas that are half a mile apart can be stark (consider Penn-North or Upton and the Bolton Hill area of Midtown). Given what we know about the history of redlining and other discriminatory practices in Baltimore City, there is more going on than personal preference. For a closer look at the data RESI referenced, please see [this interactive mapping tool](#) from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Note that you can see both where Section 8 housing recipients live as well as where units that would meet HUD standards are located.

Q The disparity in north Baltimore between red and green is quite stark. Is the line that runs north/south and separates the two colors representative of Greenmount/York Road?

A It is. Neighborhood boundaries for this analysis are based on [Community Statistical Areas/Census tracts](#).

Q Is it possible to calculate the HDI for these neighborhoods in the past (say in the 1930s, 70s, etc.) and compare decline or improvement?

A This is a research extension that RESI would like to pursue in the future, assuming that data are available and accessible. However, please note that the UN began calculating HDI in 1990, so we would not necessarily be able to consider historical values in a global context.

Q Are there any creative options for transportation that can be implemented without waiting for the "red line" metro line or something similar to be agreed to and built?

A According to a [2018 report released by the Maryland Department of Transportation \(MDOT\)](#), it is highly unlikely that MDOT would be "able to restore the original State portion of funding needed for constructing any major east-west transit project." The report does list several alternatives, including a reduced scope project. This limits Baltimore's public transit options to a reliance on busses. In theory, there are many cost effective options for increasing bus ridership including:

- Transition from a "hub and spoke" model to a "grid" model. In a hub and spoke model, all routes tend to connect to a central point (like downtown), instead of a grid-like pattern over city streets. A grid pattern tends to be more expensive to implement, but is more efficient at connecting riders with destinations, especially if a city has several key employment centers.
- Increase use of bus rapid transit (BRT). BRT relies on dedicated bus lanes in a city to move riders through busy downtown areas faster and more reliably.

After Governor Hogan canceled the Red Line project, the BaltimoreLink redesign attempted to increase ridership in the city. While it did make use of BRT, the new bus system still maintains a hub and spoke design and [ridership numbers from the Maryland Transit Authority](#) have not shown an increase since the June 2017 redesign. In the absence of additional funds for light rail options, continuing to focus on improving the bus system in the city is likely one of the best options.

Q Would it be possible for you to send the information of the different organizations working to combat the disparities? Thank you!

A The logos below show the organizations/programs we mentioned in the webinar. There are many more that also do great work throughout the city.



- [Baltimarket](#)
- [Behavioral Health System Baltimore](#)
- [B'more for Healthy Babies](#)
- [Mayor's Scholars Program](#)
- [Maryland CASA](#) (webinar attendee); contact@marylandcasa.org
- [U-TURNS](#) (part of Behavioral Health System Baltimore)