

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council

Strategic Plan

2008-2012



October 6, 2008

Developed by the Staff and Board of Reservoir Hill Improvement Council
Facilitated by
Strategic Management Consulting

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Executive Summary

The Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) engaged Baltimore based *Strategic Management Consulting* to design and facilitate this strategic planning and implementation process to help RHIC determine its strategic direction in the next five years and the impact it will have on Reservoir Hill. We have intentionally drawn a very big picture of the work to be undertaken on behalf of the neighborhood, we realize that based on available resources and input from various stakeholders we will have to prioritize our efforts.

Please note that this **Strategic Plan is an organizational plan** –documenting the current and future work of RHIC only, and laying out broad goals. **It is not a Community Plan.** A full length Community Plan is slated for 2009. That community planning process will help bring the community together, understand the priorities of the community and help RHIC target its work.

In this Strategic Plan RHIC will enhance its successful programs, including:

- (1) Market building activities in partnership with Healthy Neighborhoods Inc that capture a larger share of potential homeowners to the area.
- (2) A comprehensive greening strategy that includes block projects, and other small community development efforts designed to enhance the curb appeal of Reservoir Hill and build social cohesion amongst neighbors.
- (3) Capacity building of Block Clubs to increase their effectiveness in the community, and supporting block clubs in their advocacy, activities, and other efforts
- (4) Informing existing homeowners and potential homeowners of pre-purchase and post purchase housing resources .
- (5) Comprehensive housing counseling for current and potential residents to inform them of the loan products, buyer assistance programs and related information
- (6) Improving public safety, sanitation and other quality of life issues.

RHIC will add the following new items to its strategic direction:

- (1) A comprehensive marketing strategy that emphasizes Reservoir Hill's strengths by marketing our community as a community of choice for market rate homeownership and rental. RHIC will design and implement an effectual marketing strategy that will be a catalyst for home sales.
- (2) A comprehensive sanitation strategy including targeted code enforcement, resident orientation and public awareness drive.
- (3) An aggressive Vacant House campaign aimed at retuning blighted and vacant houses to productive uses through advocacy and policy development.
- (4) An aggressive and targeted public safety strategy designed to address ongoing challenges and build confidence in the neighborhood.
- (5) A Board restructured to better reflect the expertise and full representation of the community.
- (6) Facilitating the development of affordable quality workforce housing by engaging a development partner.
- (7) Ensure all developments have at least 20% affordability should a development require financing from the City or state (as per the Inclusionary Housing legislation)

In general, RHIC is attempting to balance the work we do by ensuring there are both significant market rate homeownership opportunities as well as sufficient workforce housing opportunities. The strategies employed to achieve these goals are similar – heightened code enforcement, improving curb appeal of our streetscapes, promoting HNI loans and neighborhood strengthening products are used, marketing the community to those seeking market rate housing, and identifying the path to homeownership for those of all income levels.

This direction is based on the following:

- (1) The longstanding RHIC goal of fostering and maintaining Reservoir Hill as a healthy a mixed income community, with a balance of homeowners, renters, and availability of housing for a wide range of incomes.
- (2) Thanks to Healthy Neighborhoods and other market building initiatives, house prices have risen almost 200%, from a median sales price of \$86,450 in 2001 to a median sale price of \$235,000 in the first quarter

of 2008. RHIC's focus in bringing neighbors in to revitalize the community was working prior to the market downturn.

- (3) Since the down-turn in the market, houses – both market rate and affordable – are not selling as fast (or at all), thus creating situations where there are more vacant rehabbed homes and homes that have been sitting vacant and in need of rehab for extended periods.
- (4) The condo market has taken a significant downturn throughout the city. There are 87 condo units are currently vacant or unfinished in Reservoir Hill this creates a significant challenge for the Reservoir Hill real estate market. According to the recent Copes/Colvin report, commissioned by Healthy Neighborhoods, rental is an option as a stop-gap measure. RHIC will assist with changing community perceptions and acceptance of market rate rental housing as housing choice.
- (5) Consensus among stakeholders interviewed during this planning process was the need to get vacant houses occupied. There are roughly 176 vacant homes in Reservoir Hill, and it will likely take market rate strategies to rehab and occupy them with new home owners.

In terms of the research on housing trends, it is obvious RHIC changed the nature of the neighborhood with its market building and community organizing initiatives and acceptance into the Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative in 2001. Hundreds of vacant dilapidated houses were rehabilitated after embarking on a highly publicized Reservoir Hill Revitalization initiative championed by former Mayor Martin O'Malley. The Healthy Neighborhood community building strategies of building from strength was instrumental to our efforts of building confidence and support for our neighborhood. Further, Healthy Neighborhood's willingness to expand from the original target blocks is beginning to show, such as with the Healthy Neighborhoods loans on Linden Avenue.

At the height of the market, between 2002 and 2007, house prices exceeded the means of many existing residents along with the incomes of potential homeowners living outside the community. RHIC began to sense the increasing need to ensure that more homeownership options be made available all income categories especially those ideally suited for workforce housing.

Since that time, the market has stagnated. Homes are not selling, or at least not selling at anywhere near the same rate as earlier, and the condominium market, once a boom, is now a bust, resulting in 87 vacant condo units within the neighborhood, slow housing sales, and culminating in diminished confidence in the Reservoir Hill real estate market.

There are 1014 subsidized rental units in Reservoir Hill (Community Law Center, Low-Income Restricted Housing Study), 301 units for elderly/disabled residents and 713 units designated for families. Maintaining these affordable units as well managed rental units, along with creating homeownership opportunities for middle class families, are important to helping RHIC achieve its goal of being a mixed income community.

Discussions by RHIC and Healthy Neighborhoods resulted in a HNI commissioned study of HNI target blocks by independent consultants Joann Copes and Julian Colvin. The 2008 study examined the effects of Reservoir Hill's market downturn on stakeholder investments throughout the community and especially in the aforementioned target blocks. Several recommendations appear in the Cope/Colvin report that are included in this Strategic Plan. These include:

- A more active role for RHIC in the areas of sanitation and public safety to heighten the confidence levels of current and potential residents
- Convening of a work group by RHIC designed to plan and implement strategies in targeted areas that need aggressive intervention to bolster or improve the public's perception of the Reservoir Hill's housing market.
- Aggressive code enforcement, nuisance abatement, receivership and related strategies to get rid of the 176 vacant houses in Reservoir Hill.
- Creative marketing of the neighborhood to market rate homebuyers and renters.

The RHIC Board of Directors and staff understand that aggressive intervention is needed in order stimulate the market and restore confidence in the neighborhood, while at the same time ensuring there is no displacement, there are quality affordable and workforce housing options, and that all incomes are welcome in Reservoir Hill.

Major decisions and answers to the strategic questions during this process:

- The members of the Board are committed to a mixed income community as stated in its new Vision statement
- RHIC changed its mission statement to reflect a more “active” RHIC
- RHIC needs new office space.
- RHIC decided to develop partnerships with a development entity, to stimulate development of workforce homeownership opportunities.
- RHIC will enhance all existing programs and escalate others, including:
 - A. A more enhanced Vacant Housing campaign, including aggressive code enforcement, use of receivership, nuisance abatement and other initiatives if they arise.
 - B. Aggressive action on removing blight, drugs, and enhancing public safety so that current and future residents are more comfortable and confident in the area
 - C. Supporting the block groups in their separate advocacy with a strong RHIC presence
 - D. A comprehensive greening plan, including block projects utilizing the Healthy Neighborhoods block project funds and others such as Parks and People Foundation.
 - E. Marketing the community for market rate homeownership and rental
 - F. Building capacity of community leadership so that all sectors of Reservoir Hill have a voice.
 - G. Working to ensure that the institutions of Reservoir Hill, such as the school and recreation center, receive broad support, are able to well serve Reservoir Hill families, and are seen as a community asset..
- RHIC will develop a comprehensive marketing plan that includes working with realtors (working with African American and non African American realtors), conducting housing and garden tours, developing print and electronic media campaigns to promote and market the neighborhood, working together with HNI’s contiguous Westside groups to promote and foster increased homeownership (Druid Heights/ Upton, Coppin Heights CDC, and others), targeting specific groups to move in (middle class African Americans, Jewish community, Gay, and others who would likely move into a transitional neighborhood), and more.
- Regarding community leadership development, RHIC will begin a Tenants Congress, and work to build capacity of block groups as needed in order to ensure all have an equal voice in Reservoir Hill.
- RHIC will change its board composition to a hybrid board with members appointed by the board and elected members from umbrella members to enhance board stability and increase the capacity of the board to address increasingly more complicated community development issues. By adding much needed diversity to realize the organization’s mission and vision. Appointed members will be selected based on their skills, expertise, or connections to opportunities that are not currently on the board.
- RHIC will take the lead on issues that are important to all residents of the community, especially regarding sanitation, public safety, and negotiating with local, state, and federal governmental agencies and officials regarding housing issues (HNI, recent federal law bringing in dollars for low to moderate income homeownership, scope projects, and more)
- RHIC revised its role in Reservoir Hill relative to the block groups and member organizations.
 - A. Member organizations are encouraged to do their own initiatives, and if they ask for support from RHIC, we will give it. This support could include, but is not limited to: tools for the greening projects, liaison with the city for permits, access to HNI resources, PR, connections with the other members groups, etc.
 - B. Member organizations will continue to hold their own meetings, and RHIC will continue to facilitate the monthly community meeting that assemble groups and individuals from the community together to provide community resource information and networking opportunities.
 - C. Member organizations vote at the Annual meeting for elected RHIC Board members.

- D. RHIC staff (the organizer) helps to build capacity of any block groups that currently do not meet the standards of organizations (once determined).
- E. RHIC is a partner with the block groups in advocacy. RHIC provides:
 - Assistance with understanding an issue - complex zoning issues, etc.
 - Collateral contact with City agencies and providing information and referral regarding City agencies to the block group leadership.
 - Analysis of the issues, and options for action (if requested by the group)
 - Support for the Block groups position (formal vote by the Board may be required - and good communication between the staff and Board is needed, especially if it's a controversial issue, so that if things arise, the staff and Board are on the same page - staff should contact Exec Board - this recommendation as an operational practice should be discussed and approved by the Board.)
 - Attending hearings and meetings on behalf of the community and provide representation upon request
 - Working with Member Organizations to develop broad support for initiatives that may affect distinct sectors of the community, such as improved funding and services for the recreation center.
- RHIC will form a Governance Committee consisting of members of the board to oversee the conduct of the Board, ensure compliance with conflict of interest and Duty of Care policy. The Governance committee will also conduct bylaws review, and help recruit board members.

Part I. Introduction

About the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) (modified From the RHIC website)

RHIC is a non-profit organization in Baltimore, Maryland. RHIC has a staff of 5 and a budget of more than \$350,000.

RHIC is an umbrella of approximately 23 block groups and organizations that serve or are a part of the Reservoir Hill Community. The majority of the Board is currently elected, in addition to the elected members there are two permanent charter member seats. The elections are held each year, with about 1/3 of the board turning over each year, and board members serve 3-year terms.

The overall goal of RHIC is to revitalize the physical and human infrastructure of Reservoir Hill without resulting in significant displacement of current residents, including rehabilitation of deteriorating buildings, poor sanitation, crime, education, low homeownership, and unemployment; and making the organized, informed voice of residents influential and effective.

RHIC believes that re-development of our community requires a multi-faceted approach that prevents the alienation of poor and working class communities by connecting such communities to community planning, the broader region, economic improvements, full engagement in democratic processes, and bringing in more middle class families to create a true mixed income community

RHIC's application of this strategy takes five main approaches:

1. Train community leadership, and provide organization and leadership in community planning.
2. Attract an influx of new residents with sufficient resources to rehab deteriorated properties.
3. Integrate new arrivals with current residents so we can alleviate some of the challenges faced by other neighborhoods when more middle and upper income residents move in.
4. Advocate for policies and programs that ensure that revitalization benefits all residents of Reservoir Hill, including quality housing, improvements in services, improvements in public education, and increased representation and leadership.
5. Link Reservoir Hill issues and needs to city and regional campaigns.
6. Ensure the quality of life of all residents in Reservoir Hill improves

RHIC's programs include:

Housing and Community Development:

- A campaign to reduce the number of vacant houses.
- Advocacy for policies and projects that ensure affordable, workforce and market rate housing
- Monitoring the implementation of development projects.
- Providing housing, financial literacy, and wealth building counseling to residents interested in such services.
- Marketing of the neighborhood to potential residents.

Neighborhood Organizing & Leadership Development:

- Greening Reservoir Hill to rehab parks and open space, encourage creation of private gardens and green projects, and advocate for green policies.
- The Better Schools Initiative, which works to increase school funding, facilitate school improvements, and foster the growth of the Parent-Teacher-Community Organization at the neighborhood school.
- The Tenant Organizing Initiative to increase the organization of tenants, improve the condition of rental properties, and pass legislation addressing evictions.
- Leadership capacity building for current block clubs and organization so they can lead themselves

Regional Policy & Organizing:

RHIC works to create working relations between community associations and related organizations. These include issue alliances, an alliance of Westside organizations, and a city-wide coalition.

Successful implementation of the plan will result in:

- An RHIC with a strong sense of its role in Reservoir Hill
- An RHIC that takes the lead and is a strong presence in Reservoir Hill on issues important to the community, primarily related to filling the vacant homes, public safety and sanitation
- An RHIC whose board members, staff, and stakeholders trust each other to enhance Reservoir Hill, and have a unified message regarding the work of RHIC
- An RHIC that markets and promotes the Reservoir Hill real estate market so that more homeowners live in Reservoir Hill and there is renewed confidence in the Reservoir Hill real estate market.
- An RHIC that has a strong Board whose members know their expectations and roles, are motivated, excited, and committed to supporting the RHIC mission financially and otherwise
- An RHIC that continues to be financially sustainable, with a diversified funding base.

Goal of this Plan and Commitment to Implementation

The goal of this Plan is to ensure RHIC has a strategic direction set forth and begins moving in that direction. RHIC is committed to implementation, and began to implement this plan during the process by putting in place the following mechanisms:

- RHIC began restructuring the board composition and changing its bylaws to reflect the new composition.
- RHIC began working on several strategies aimed to market RHIC within the community and garner input from neighbors.
- RHIC improved its fiscal accountability, including budgeting, reporting, and oversight policies
- In addition, the RHIC Board acknowledges that this plan is, and is intended to remain, a living document which embodies the strategic vision of the RHIC Board. To that end, the RHIC Board is committed to formally reviewing the contents of this plan on a regular basis and making such changes or amendments as may be necessary from time to time to keep this plan relevant and appropriate given the ever changing factual circumstances facing RHIC.

Part II. Strategic Identity

The History of Reservoir Hill Improvement Council

(from the RHIC website)

The Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, Incorporated is a 501 (c) (3) corporation with an office located at 2001 Park Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21217.

The origin of the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council dates from the late 1970s, when the City of Baltimore established a number of Mayor's Stations in city neighborhoods to make the resources of city agencies accessible to citizens. Communities were encouraged to develop Advisory Boards to offer city officials input in the needs of the community and to evaluate services offered through the Mayor's Stations. The Reservoir Hill Multipurpose Center Advisory Board, Inc. was created in 1983 to serve in this capacity at the Mayor's Station located at 2001 Park Avenue.

A decade later, the needs, issues, and concerns of the community had changed. The officers of the Advisory Board (known as the Executive Board), with the consensus of the entire voting board, restructured the organization to reflect the changes. In 1993, RHIC was created as an umbrella organization of block clubs, neighborhood associations, institutions and other groups within the neighborhood, with the goal of defining and solving problems common to the whole community of Reservoir Hill. Representatives of block clubs, neighborhood associations and neighborhood institutions comprise the RHIC voting membership. Meetings are open to all individuals in the community.

RHIC had conducted a community planning process in 2002, resulting in a document called "Strengthening the Bonds." With the support of key funding organizations including the Baltimore Housing and Community Development, Baltimore Community Foundation, Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative, Goldseker Foundation and Healthy Neighborhoods Inc. staff was hired to implement that plan. Part of that plan has been implemented, and other parts have not.

The focus of RHIC is advocacy, networking and providing access to resources, while patiently pulling together diverse (and traditionally, mutually suspicious) groups to work together for neighborhood interests. This focus is reflected in the initial statement of the organization's philosophy:

The Council is guided by the philosophy that organized people and economic development leads to community empowerment. Empowerment is not created in a vacuum; but rather is achieved as a result of networking and by combining talents and resources.

RHIC has succeeded gradually in building a high level of cooperation and trust in the neighborhood across racial, religious, and socio-economic lines. This provided the leadership with a base of support from which to take a more aggressive role in the residents most critical issues: economic revitalization, attractive and affordable housing options, crime and safety, drugs, and sanitation. RHIC has launched several initiatives and has seen incremental successes in each of these areas by working in collaboration with a number of partners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Vision Statement

During the process, the Board of RHIC determined its Vision statement:

In 5-10 years, Reservoir Hill will be a vibrant, cleaner, greener, safer, environmentally sensitive, culturally diverse, family and neighbor oriented Community where all residents, regardless of income, age, race or homeownership status, are united in the continued pursuit of building and maintaining a sustainable urban community that promotes a true sense of ownership for all, ensuring Reservoir Hill is a nicer place to live for all residents.

Reservoir Hill will have a vibrant commercial and service center for residents and non-residents and provide diverse housing opportunities for people of all income levels, a reduction of vacants leading to fully-occupied housing, and additional community activities that will bloom leaders in the community and bring residents out of their houses, onto the streets to interact with their neighbors

Revised Mission Statement

Given the role that RHIC plays and wants to continue to play to ensure the vision articulated above takes place, the mission statement of RHIC was changed to read:

RHIC unites, empowers, and mobilizes residents and organizations as a vehicle by which to define and take action on issues common to the Reservoir Hill Community.

This new mission statement reflects the fact that the board wants RHIC to take a more active role in making the Vision happen.

Primary Customer

The primary customers of RHIC are:

- Residents of Reservoir Hill
- Member Organizations

Supporting Customers

Supporting Customers of RHIC are:

- Funders who see the value in investing in the work of RHIC
- People who refer others to RHIC
- The block groups and member organizations
- Partner groups such as Healthy Neighborhood Inc., Beth Am, CPHA, the City, and several other stakeholders.
- Property Owners and Developers

Part III. Strategic Direction of RHIC

Within the next three-five years we will see...

RHIC is active in initiating strategies and coordinating resources to address the issues common to the Reservoir Hill community.

RHIC takes the lead on building and executing comprehensive public safety and sanitation campaigns, working with experts and with residents to target issues and create solutions. Strategies for public safety include targeted enforcement, drug nuisance abatement, peace patrols and more. Strategies for sanitation include targeted code enforcement, education and more. Working groups are created around these initiatives.

RHIC takes the lead in filling the vacant houses in the area. Strategies include comprehensive marketing of the neighborhood and targeted areas, and working with partners on aggressive market rate initiatives, such as the ongoing Healthy Neighborhoods work.

RHIC works to bring in more middle income residents to Reservoir Hill to create a true mixed income community.

RHIC preserves the substantial amount of affordable rental that already exists in the neighborhood and works to create new homeownership opportunities for moderate-income households where housing stock and financial opportunities exist.

RHIC ensures that assets are built to sustain the community, such as development along the Whitlelock Corridor.

RHIC engages a CDC partner that RHIC can hold accountable to facilitate the development of housing marketed to households earning less than eighty percent of area median income (AMI).

RHIC has new office space.

RHIC is a strong organization with a strong and diverse Board of Directors made up of elected residents and experts appointed by the Board. The Board members are dedicated to the mission and to this strategic direction. Members of the board hold each other accountable for accomplishing the goals of the organization, and play a larger role in fundraising and oversight. The RHIC board is rejuvenated through strategic recruiting to bring people who have connections with resources and have expertise on organizational development, governance and programs.

Part IV. Goals & Objectives of RHIC

We will know we are moving toward achieving the Vision we have for Baltimore and achieving our Mission when the following results, goals and objectives are achieved. This comprehensive Strategic Plan will move us in the right direction.

Component 1: RHIC, its role, and communications

RESULT: *Within the next year we will see...*

RHIC staff and board utilize a uniform message about the work of RHIC. RHIC's role in Reservoir Hill is solid, and well known throughout the community. Board members and staff seek input for various issues in the community in various ways.

Goal 1: Solidify the Role of RHIC in Reservoir Hill, and a uniform message about the work of RHIC

Objectives:

- A. Place in writing the role of RHIC and what RHIC offers to block clubs, member organizations, regarding information, resources and advocacy
- B. Review RHIC "messages" and continually develop a unified message about the work of RHIC and ensure this message is used by all board and staff members
- C. Include description of roles and any new messages in the Board manual, on the website, newsletter and develop brochures as needed

Goal 2: RHIC staff and Board participate in disseminating the aforementioned message about RHIC and its role and activities in Reservoir Hill to community stakeholders

Objectives:

- A. Develop semi annual "Walk arounds"
- B. Develop blog on the website so RHIC can send out information, and get feedback
- C. Ensure copies RHIC materials are available at all community events
- D. Continue Email notifications, newsletter, and utilize more flyers
- E. Design community meetings to be informative about what RHIC is doing, and other valuable information to support community development issues
- F. Obtain new office space to ensure RHIC is accessible has greater visibility and open to the community.

Goal 3: Improve and add to the methods of garnering input from Community about issues, RHIC, and more in order to ensure all views are taken into consideration

- A. Add blog or interactive feature on the website
- B. Develop ways input is collected via the "walk arounds"
- C. Implement board members visiting other Block Groups and member organizations
- D. Design process for listening, and information distribution input for groups that do not meet as frequently as block groups, and individuals without electronic access.
- E. Utilize focus group concept to garner input from community deliberately

Component 2: Neighborhood Organizing and Leadership Development

RESULT: *Within the next three-five years we will see...*

Safe Streets: Reservoir Hill has safe streets and neighbors feel safe walking in the community. RHIC takes the lead in community safety, ensuring good relations between the police and the community, and advocates to make sure the community is safe.

Community Leadership Development: RHIC continues its commitment to educating residents on various topics, building individuals' leadership capacity, and building block club or groups capacity to implement their own community building initiatives and serve their own neighbors. RHIC's emphasis is on ensuring those that traditionally do not have a voice in community gain a voice in community planning and decision-making.

Education Organizing: RHIC believes that a healthy community has healthy schools. RHIC continues its work to improve the quality of education for the students in Reservoir Hill. The majority of these students attend Baltimore City public schools. RHIC markets the strengths of the schools and organizations in the community.

Goal 1: Take the lead in ensuring public safety in Reservoir Hill, including planning and implementing a comprehensive safety plan, working with citizen action, and improve pedestrian lighting

Objectives:

- A. Help create a comprehensive safety plan and implementing it with the help of a working group that includes nuisance abatement, targeted enforcement, improved pedestrian lighting, and more foot patrols.
- B. Participate in and encourage volunteers to be part of the Peace Patrol
- C. Continue to advocate for increased community use of 911 and 311 systems.
- D. Improve coordination with police to have common measures and understanding of success
- E. Devise a plan for locations of pedestrian lighting and work with the City and others to achieve this lighting.

Goal 2: Enhance the capacity of leaders, organizations and individuals in Reservoir Hill through quarterly educational programs, a Tenant Congress, and enhancing partnerships with faith based organizations.

Objectives:

- A. Clearly define the standards for block clubs, and develop strategy to bring them to standard by 2010
- B. Clearly define role of Advocates Circle and ensure a process for recommendations to the RHIC board as needed
- C. Continue tenant organizing, multi unit property owner outreach, improving tenant organizations, including those tenants at the Madison Park North apartments, Renaissance Plaza properties; the Emersonian, the Esplanade and Temple Gardens, the Chateau, Pennrose and the Riviera
- D. Encourage tenants to become active in the block groups.
- E. Implement Tenants Congress; develop multi- unit property owner council
- F. Conduct educational workshop on Community organizing and working with city
- G. Conduct other workshops quarterly on a variety of topics (greening, rehab, etc)
- H. Meet with congregations, pastors, and others to understand RHIC and roles and propose items for the faith based community, including helping with advocacy, support current residents, and more

Goal 3. Work to improve all schools that serve Reservoir Hill kids, especially John Eager Howard and its Recreation Center, by encouraging volunteers and advocating for system wide reforms.

Objectives:

- A. Continue advocating for improvements for John Eager Howard School
- B. Establish partnerships with educational institutions in the immediate area

- C. Encourage volunteers to help in the neighborhood school, restart parent teacher advocacy group
- D. Continue regional advocacy for increased resources and improvements in the entire school system
- E. Develop a Recreation Center Advisory Board to support John Eager Howard Recreation Center
- F. Partner with community institutions such as the Madison Ave Outreach Center to improve school safety, parent involvement, and academic achievement.

Component 3: Greening Reservoir Hill

RESULT: *Within the next three-five years we will see...*

Reservoir Hill is a clean and environmentally aware community. RHIC takes the lead on sanitation issues through targeted enforcement, connecting with the City on recycling, self help and other new initiatives, and education.

RHIC increased, enhanced, and connected the greenspace in Reservoir Hill and surrounding area. Reservoir Hill has a litany of open spaces and green spaces that are all well-kept, a testament to the commitment to enhance the green spaces in Reservoir Hill by organizing residents and providing opportunities for greening work. A Green Master Plan guided the work. In addition, RHIC worked to help neighbors understand and convert their living to green living with tips on rehabbing, recycling activities and more. RHIC's Greening work fosters greater community cohesion and identity by bringing residents from all areas of the community together.

Goal 1: Take the lead on a comprehensive Sanitation plan and initiative to ensure Reservoir Hill is cleaner.

Objectives:

- A. Take the lead on initiating and implementing a comprehensive plan that includes targeted enforcement, education and connections with City initiatives
- B. Increase enforcement of trash rules for residents and landlords
- C. Consider clean block contests and other incentives
- D. Educate the community on trash rules, and the sanitation initiative

Goal 2: Foster a neighborhood of gardens and tree-lined streets.

Objectives:

- A. Complete Green Master Plan and design implementation work and proposed schedule
- B. Increase Reservoir Hill's tree canopy
- C. Increase community gardens and green spaces
- D. Conduct workshops on gardening and trees

Goal 3: Foster linkages with surrounding neighborhoods and parks

Objectives:

- A. Continue to build linkages with Friends of Druid Hill Park to foster increased usage and community ownership
- B. Explore linkages with the Jones Falls Trail and other trails into Druid Hill Park
- C. Market Reservoir Hill using Druid Hill Park as the neighborhood's Park
- D. Ensure use of Reservoir Hill's interior parks more frequently to deter crime and grime

Goal 4: Increase environmental awareness and action through community education, workshops and working with youth

Objectives:

- A. Conduct workshops and trainings to increase the environmental awareness and understanding of community members.
- B. Encourage use of energy efficient lighting
- C. Increase recycling through youth program
- D. Make community aware of environmental actions, legislation, and other areas for advocacy

Goal 5: Encourage the use of green technologies and techniques in rehab and maintenance of properties.

Objectives:

- A. Conduct workshops on green technologies with rehabbers and residents who do home improvement
- B. Showcase examples of green rehab, and the cost/benefit

Component 4: Housing and Community Development

RESULT: *Within the next three-five years we will see...*

RHIC is committed to a mixed income community, ensuring there are quality housing opportunities for all income groups. RHIC takes action on filling the vacant properties, building markets, improving the quality of properties, and partnering with the City, Healthy Neighborhoods, and other stakeholders to promote and market Reservoir hill market rate homeownership and rental. The Whitelock Corridor and Druid Park Drive properties are in the process of being developed. RHIC partners with a community development corporation (CDC) entity in order preserve existing affordable rental housing and to create workforce homeownership opportunities. RHIC develops and executes a comprehensive strategy to market the community and restore confidence in the Reservoir Hill real estate market to ensure new residents come to live Reservoir Hill.

Goal 1: Aggressively intervene in the housing market downturn through extensive relationships with the City, HNI, and other partners.

Objectives:

- A. Convene a working group with City, HNI, community residents and others designed specifically to address the housing downturn and work together on marketing and community development strategies
- B. Utilize the funding from the federal government for targeted investment for workforce housing and to reduce the existing number of vacant housing units.
- C. Craft specific code enforcement, receivership, marketing and development strategies on specific blocks to help leverage private investment.
- D. Craft a marketing plan for the entire community (see goal 2)

Goal 2: Build and execute a comprehensive marketing strategy to lure new residents to the community using HNI and other strategies

Objectives:

- A. Create and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes working with realtors, tours, print and media campaigns to target specific populations and promote Reservoir Hill as a safe, stable, mixed income community of choice.

- B. Re-start quarterly realtor breakfasts and meet regularly with realtors and other community development professionals to market and promote the community and to gain their input and feedback on community planning and development issues.
- C. Utilize HNI strategies and products as avenues for marketing – close at least 5 HNI loans per year
- D. Assist neighborhood groups block clubs to develop and market community building activities in their areas

Goal 3: Continue to improve the “social fabric” for current residents by ensuring at least eight (8) block projects a year using HNI funds

Objectives:

- A. Conduct Block projects (greening or otherwise) based on availability of HNI block grant funds to bring neighbors together.
- B. Ensure surrounding areas are also invited to participate in some way

Goal 4: Ensure at least 100 of the vacant properties are rehabbed and filled by 2012 through a more aggressive Vacant Housing campaign

Objectives:

- A. Increase aggressive code enforcement activities, nuisance abatement, receivership to convey title to vacants to responsible owners
- B. Explore ways to ensure acquisition and bundling of smaller units (under 3,000 sq ft) properties for moderate income homeownership
- C. Attract developers/homeowners with resources to rehab and own the larger homes
- D. Consider partnerships with development entities to ensure vacants are developed and occupied.
- E. Target key corridors where significant private investment has already occurred to address remaining vacants

Goal 5: Ensure large parcel developments (Whitelock and Druid Park Drive) are planned, and mostly completed

Objectives:

- A. Continue with Whitelock planning and design
- B. Work with the City to ensure Whitelock plan is implemented
- C. Advocate to the City to lift equity rider on Druid Park Lake Drive properties

Goal 6: Increase housing counseling to 50 potential homeowners per year

Objectives:

- A. Market the services through outreach and continue workshops for potential home buyers
- B. Address issues of affordability, financial literacy, pre and post homeownership counseling

Goal 7: Ensure compliance with Inclusionary Housing ordinance in larger developments, and advocate for quality affordable housing

Objectives:

- A. Advocate for quality and at least 20% affordability in new developments in accordance with Inclusionary Housing ordinance.
- B. Work with property owners and managers to improve senior housing
- C. Ensure existing affordable rental units are well managed

- D. Preserve the existing affordable rental units to ensure the neighborhood retains a range of housing options

Goal 8: Partner with a development entity in order to hold it accountable for development in the “non-market rate” market, and work to create 50 workforce homeownership units in 5 years

Objectives:

- A. Partner with a development entity to help develop non-market rate homeownership opportunities, and build decision making criteria for partnerships
- B. Ensure development entity works on senior housing, smaller units, and the like
- C. Explore alternative options for development partnership if Reservoir Hill Hope partnership does not achieve realization.

Goal 9: Conduct a comprehensive Community Plan

Objectives:

- A. Facilitate a process for the creation of a community development plan that outlines key development initiatives and priorities
- C. Integrate planning process to amend the current Urban Renewal Plan
- D. Create the process and timetable for implementation of the Urban Renewal Plan amendments and community plan

Component 5: Strong and Sustainable Board and Organization

RESULT: *Within the next year we will see...*

RHIC has a strong Board of Directors whose appointed members are strategically recruited to ensure a balance of expertise and community representation to guide the organization in its mission pursuit. RHIC revised its bylaws, reviewed its policies, and created a new Board manual. New Board members receive RHIC orientation in both a creative and strategic way, so that they fully appreciate the Reservoir Hill community and the directors that move RHIC forward.

Goal 1: Recruit board members strategically to build a strong Board of Directors that come from diverse backgrounds to ensure success of RHIC, and improve orientation.

- A. Change recruitment process from an elected process to a hybrid with some elected and some appointed.
- B. Revise Bylaws to reflect changes in Board Composition
- C. Ensure RHIC Board consists of at least 17 members with diverse backgrounds, connected to media and financial resources and have necessary experience to further the mission and vision.
- D. Create new Board Manual complete with bylaws, policies, staff directory, programs directory, board job description and more
- E. Conduct Board orientation to ensure board members are well oriented and educated about the vision, mission and programs of the organization – and know their role in the organization and fulfill that obligation.
- F. Provide periodic on-going training of the Board regarding Parliamentary procedure, basic board roles and responsibilities, topics of interest for programs, financials, etc.
- G. Revise the personnel policy

Goal 2: Complete and adhere to committee structure

Objectives:

- A. Review, define, and confirm Board committees (standing and Ad hoc) to ensure a strong and effective organization – ensuring well defined executive, finance and ad hoc program and board operations functions
- B. Explore developing an “Honorary Board”

Goal 3: Solidify the role of board members and staff.

Objectives:

- A. Clearly define roles of staff, executive director
- B. Confirm and hold each other accountable for the role of board and staff as related to oversight and decision making
- C. Conduct an annual meeting with staff and board to review strategic plan, annual work plans, and conduct team building activities
- D. Staff continue to report to Board through written reports and presentations

Part V: Overall Strategic Plan Timetable

Below is a summary of the overall focus of RHIC each year of implementation of the plan – *used as a guide*

Year	Summary of Activity
July – Dec 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin planning for blog, etc parts of the website • Determine new Board Composition and recruit board members as needed • Revise By laws, have new Board manual • Implement process for Board members to visit other block groups • Build strategy on Vacants Campaign • Convene Housing work group to target areas in need of market intervention. • Complete Comprehensive safety plan • Complete compressive sanitation plan • Continue Quarterly workshops on organizing, greening, green technologies • Continue to send action alerts as needed • Complete Green Master Plan and begin Implementation • Build comprehensive neighborhood marketing strategy • Determine CDC partners, and the work with RHIC as projects arise.
Jan-July 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase persons receiving housing counseling to 50 per year • Conduct board, staff “walk arounds” • Complete Whitelock Corridor planning • Implement fundraising strategies, history project. • Continue implementing the safety and sanitation initiative • Continue work on targeted housing/marketing strategies • Do Street Tree survey • Originate 5 new HNI loans
July-Dec 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for tenants congress • Ensure Whitelock Development moves in timely manner • Begin Large Community Planning process • Implement marketing strategy • Continue code enforcement and Vacants campaign • Continue implementing the safety and sanitation initiative • Organize at least one tenant association
Jan-Dec 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Tenant’s Congress • Complete Community planning process and begin implementation • Work to amend Urban Renewal Plan • Continue implementing the safety and sanitation initiative • Implement faith based groups organizing • Continue marketing campaign • Ensure all block clubs are up to the organizational standards, to ensure all have a voice.
Jan-July 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue walk arounds, • Continue fundraising strategies • Continue implementing the safety and sanitation initiative • Continue work on Vacants • Continue housing advocacy work • RHIC move into new office space
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue implementing fundraising, safety and sanitation strategies • Continue marketing strategy
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure completion of 50 workforce homeownership units in 5 years campaign • Have at least ½ of all vacants filled

