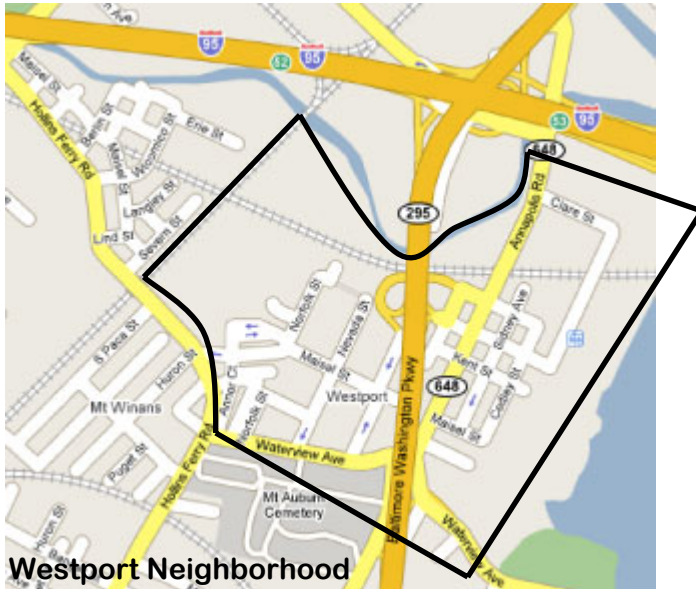


# westport community partnerships newsletter

april 2008



Westport Neighborhood

## HELLO WESTPORT!

The upcoming Westport Waterfront Development Project will transform the last large parcel of waterfront remaining to be developed in Baltimore City. Given such a fantastic urban development opportunity, the Turner Development Group and the City of Baltimore are making significant investments in this project, including an unprecedented level of support for the surrounding community. Turner Development Group has engaged Bonnie Crockett as a full-time Director of Westport Community Partnerships to help the neighborhood of Westport take advantage of the opportunities the new development presents.

Turner Development is investing private funds for community programs and there is potential for significant public funding as well, presenting a unique opportunity for the neighbors of Westport to improve the neighborhood as the waterfront is developed.

Bonnie Crockett will work with the community and its leaders and Turner Development Group, as well as various nonprofit organizations, city and state agencies, and other stakeholders, to help build strong and productive relationships and help make Westport a cleaner, greener and safer place to live, work and raise a family.

## BIG COMMUNITY MEETING

Over 50 people filled the Westport Academy cafeteria on March 18th to talk about their vision of Westport at its best. Forty-one ideas were suggested, and everyone present voted for their top five priorities. Here are the results:

• Bring businesses back to Annapolis Road	3	} 44
Library	12	
Post Office	11	
Pharmacy	8	
Laundromat	7	
Bank	3	
• Multi-Purpose Community Center	15	
• Home improvement grants	11	
• Improved relationship with police	11	
• Recreation Center for the kids	11	
• Small business education	11	
• Improved playgrounds	10	
• After school programs	9	
• Surveillance cameras, not blue lights	9	
• Trees	8	
• Block parties and festivals	7	
• Corner trash cans (stationary)	7	
• Senior programs	6	
• Streetlights	6	
• Dog park	5	
• Movies after dark	5	
• Mentoring for young men	4	
• Neighborhood Watch	4	
• Speed radar on Annapolis Road	4	
• Street names chosen from student entries	4	
• Teen pregnancy counseling	4	
• Mt. Auburn Cemetery clean-up	3	
• Programs for helping kids and parents	3	
• Banners	2	
• Bus Shelters	2	
• Bus Stop @ Manokin/Rescoe	2	
• Mentoring for young women	2	
• Blue light cameras	1	
• Food Pantry	1	
• Improve school field	1	
• Speakers at meetings	1	
• Stop Sign @ Wenburn and Cedley	1	
• Improve Cummings Field	0	
• Shuttle buses	0	
• Slogan	0	
• Speed bumps: Cedley, Sidney, Maisel	0	

Based on the community's priorities and practicalities, Bonnie Crockett and the Westport community partners will start the wheels turning to make the community's vision of Westport a reality. Some things may be accomplished quickly and with little cost, and other changes may take years and multiple grant applications, but the time to start is now. See the articles in this newsletter about an upcoming matching façade grant program, Parks & People cleaning and greening effort, and more.

## JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS FOR A SPRING CLEAN-UP, SAT., APRIL 19TH

On Saturday, April 19th, all of the community associations in Westport are coming together to lead the neighbors in a high energy Spring Clean-Up. Cleaning up the trash improves a neighborhood more than any other single effort. Sweeping the sidewalks and alleys surrounding your own home would be a big help in and of itself. If you sweep all the way down to the corner of your block, even better. Join your friends and neighbors for coffee and donuts, and pitch in to make a real difference in Westport. More detailed information will be coming soon, but mark April 19th on your calendars now!

## MIDDLE BRANCH SHORELINE CLEANUP MAY 3RD CELEBRATES EARTH DAY

The City of Baltimore and Volunteer Central invite everyone to celebrate National Volunteer Week and Earth Day! Roll up your sleeves and join the crowd of volunteers gardening, watering, picking up trash and cleaning up the shoreline along the Middle Branch. Learn about the environment and best practices for “green living.” Mayor Sheila Dixon will kick-off the event at 8:30am at the Middle Branch Park Rowing Club, 3301 Waterview Avenue. Registration and breakfast start at 8:00am, followed by shoreline cleanup, lunch and a “green at home” educational program. Bring your coworkers, friends and families, (children must be 5+). This event also counts toward community service hours for school. Reusable tote bags for every participant! Registration is required. Call 410-366-6030 or visit [www.volunteercentral.net](http://www.volunteercentral.net).



## SPORTING OPPORTUNITY FOR TEENS

Need a new sport? Want to meet new people? Love the water? Then rowing is the sport for you! The Baltimore Rowing Club Juniors Program is starting its new season and looking for energetic, competitive, male and female students between the ages of 12 and 18. Crew is the ultimate team sport that anyone can learn. Turner Development Group in conjunction with Honeywell is sponsoring a scholarship program for qualifying teens. For info, contact Aly Covino 443-802-1215 or Andrew Swiatowicz [acswee@gmail.com](mailto:acswee@gmail.com) or 518-229-3652.

## TAX INFO TO KNOW

**HOMESTEAD TAX CREDITS.** A new law in 2007 requires homeowners to submit a one-time application in order to continue their eligibility for the homestead tax credit. In Baltimore City, the homestead tax credit limits the amount that your home’s taxable assessed value can increase in a tax year to 4%. (It applies only to your principal residence, not to second homes or rental properties.) If you are a homeowner, it is important to complete and submit the form so you can limit your property tax increases. You may apply online at [www.dat.state.md.us](http://www.dat.state.md.us), or by using the application form. For more information or a form, contact the Homestead Tax Credit Division at 410-767-2165 or toll free at 1-866-650-8783.

**ECONOMIC STIMULUS PAYMENTS.** Starting in May, economic stimulus payments of up to \$600 for individuals (\$1,200 for married couples) will be issued by the IRS based on 2007 tax returns. Parents will also get \$300 for each eligible child. To receive the payments, you MUST file a 2007 tax return. This payment will be in addition to any refunds. If you have or will file a tax return for 2007, you don’t need to do anything else. **If you do not normally file a tax return because your income is too low, but you have at least \$3,000 income, you may still be eligible for a minimum payment of \$300 for individuals** (\$600 for married couples). The \$3,000 must be earned from wages or self-employment. Or it must be from certain benefits such as Social Security retirement, Railroad Retirement or Veterans Affairs payments to disabled veterans or veterans' survivors. You must have valid Social Security numbers for yourself and your children. And you cannot be a dependent on somebody else’s tax return. You must file a Form 1040A with just a little information to receive the payment. You may file and receive help online at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). The IRS will begin sending taxpayers their stimulus payments in early May after the current tax season ends. These payments will *not* be taxable and will *not* affect any federal benefits you may be receiving. For more information, call go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call 1-800-829-1040 .

## WESTPORT COMMUNITY SLOGAN SUGGESTIONS

Are you the creative type? Do you have an idea for an uplifting community slogan? Neighbor Debbie Eanes says, “Westport is ready to come out of its cocoon and finally be a butterfly.” Her husband Mike Eanes says, “Together we can make things happen.” What do you say? How would you cheer on Westport in its efforts to be a cleaner, greener and safer place to live, work and raise a family?

## PARKS & PEOPLE GREENING WESTPORT!

Turner Development Group recognizes the long-term importance of “green” development. Not only will the Westport Waterfront Project be eco-friendly, Turner Development is also funding a substantial clean and green project in the neighborhood of Westport through the well-known Parks & People Foundation.

Since 1984, Parks & People Foundation has worked to improve the quality of life in Baltimore’s neighborhoods. Their staff, volunteers and partners in the community have developed innovative solutions to issues facing the city including the restoration of neighborhoods and their natural resources as well as the academic enrichment and motivation of their children. Parks & People Foundation assists communities in planting trees and creating parks and gardens; it awards grants to community groups for their greening projects; and it helps train and mobilize community organizations and residents to become park “friends” and help care for and maintain city parks.



A city street before street trees were planted.



And after, as Parks & People, along with volunteers, plant trees along the sidewalk.



Parks & People engages and empowers people to care for the marvelous natural resources available here in Baltimore City in a way that leads to the revitalization of neighborhoods - environmentally, socially and economically. Parks & People will be working with Westport Community Partnerships, Westport Improvement Association, Westport Community Council, Westport Academy, and interested neighbors, to make Westport cleaner and greener – improving playgrounds, cleaning vacant lots, planting trees along the sidewalks, and more. There will be volunteer opportunities, and some paid job opportunities, as the cleaning and greening of Westport gets underway. For more information about how you can be a part of it, contact Bonnie Crockett at 443-717-3627, email [bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org](mailto:bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org).

*For a hundred years I breathe and live,  
the flower of beauty the bread of kindness.  
I am your friendly shade in the noonday  
heat of summer, and I stand penciled  
against the winter twilight, a silhouette  
for dreams. At dawning in the spring I am  
filled with song, the host to a thousand  
birds, and I decorate the autumn with  
pageantry and color.*

*Then comes the woodsman with his axe.  
And still I serve.*

*I am the timber that builds your boats, the  
rafters of your cathedrals, the choir stalls  
of your church enriched by the magic of the  
carver’s fingers. I am the beam that holds  
your house; the door of your homestead,  
and the lintel too. I am the handle of your  
hoe, the wood of your cradle, the bed on  
which you lie; the board of your table and  
the board for your bread.*

*When I am living, harm me not.  
When I am dead, respect me  
and use me kindly.*

*Testimony of the Tree, Anonymous*

### DID YOU KNOW? TREES...

- Reduce air pollution and improve air quality
- Reduce erosion, runoff and flooding
- Remove water pollutants and improve water quality
- Reduce energy costs
- Protect against harsh weather conditions
- Increase property values
- Reduce crime
- Absorb sound
- Provide shade and cooling
- Reduce stress and improve residents' health
- Transform unused spaces
- Increase community pride

## MATCHING FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM

Turner Development Group is excited about the unique potential for making a difference– in the neighborhood, in Middle Branch Harbor and in the City of Baltimore – that the Westport Waterfront Development Project represents. This is a team that truly believes “everyone does better when everyone does better.” As part of the commitment to invest in Westport Community Partnerships, Turner Development Group is establishing a \$50,000 fund to be used for matching façade improvement grants for residential and commercial properties located in the neighborhood of Westport.

Property owners or tenants (with property owner’s approval) will be able to submit applications for a matching grant of up to \$2,000 to improve their property’s façade– new porch, new stairs, new door, new windows, paint, a new porch roof, a new sign (for businesses), etc. Upon approval of the application and completion of the work, grants will be awarded for 50% of the project cost up to \$2,000. (E.g., if the façade improvement costs \$4,000, the grant award will be \$2,000; if the façade improvement costs \$1,000, the grant award will be \$500, etc.)

A volunteer Design Committee will be formed to narrow down the rules of the application and funding program and an announcement will be made when the grant application becomes available. The first meeting of the Design Committee will be held in the next few weeks. If you are interested in participating, contact Bonnie Crockett at [bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org](mailto:bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org), or 443-717-3627.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

*~Margaret Mead*

## STREET NAMING CONTEST FOR KIDS

The Westport Waterfront development project will be adding four new streets to the streetscape of Westport. Naming new streets is a creative challenge that Turner Development Group would like to turn over to the students of Westport Academy – the open-minded youth and the future of Westport.

Four winning street names will be chosen. The winning names will be selected based on originality, creativity and reflection of the neighborhood spirit of Westport.



## JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON

The most important element of the Westport Community Partnerships effort is the community! The more people participating in some way, the more effective everyone’s efforts will be, and the more *you* will have a say the future of your own neighborhood. It can be sweeping out an alley, writing an article for the newsletter, watering the tree planted in the sidewalk in front of your house, baking a cake for a Block Party bake sale, or helping to decide design guidelines for the matching façade improvement grant program. ‘Add your light to the sum of light.’

Over the next few months, we will organize our ideas and projects into committees, starting with the following:

**TRASH CLEAN-UP & MAINTENANCE.** Help the Westport community as they come together to participate in the Mayor’s Spring Clean-Up Day on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, and to work on other clean-up projects throughout the year.

**GREENING & BEAUTIFICATION.** Parks & People Foundation will be starting some beautification projects this Spring that will require volunteer support and will offer some paid work opportunities.

**DESIGN REVIEW & PLANNING.** This committee will help organize and administer the Matching Façade Improvement Grant program..

**NEWSLETTER.** There will be an opportunity to earn money distributing newsletters every other month.

**VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION.** With all of the opportunities coming up for neighborhood volunteers, there is always a need for help reaching out, especially if you are a neighbor who knows how to get in touch with Westport’s seniors or teenagers.

A lot of folks signed up to learn more about these committees at the Big Community Meeting in March. We will contact all of those who signed up when we schedule the first meeting. If you have not already signed up and you would like to take part in any or many of these projects, contact Bonnie Crockett at [bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org](mailto:bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org) or call 443-717-3627.

(Submissions cannot be current street names in use anywhere else in the city.) Four names with a related theme, such as an environmental theme, waterfront theme, historic theme, or other Westport theme are encouraged, but all good ideas will be carefully considered. Students can submit one name or several names.

Each student who suggests a winning name will win a \$150 gift card. Suggest all four winning names and win \$600 in gift cards! Contest ends May 1st. More contest information will be available at Westport Academy or call Bonnie Crockett at 443-717-3627 or send an email to [bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org](mailto:bcrockett@westportpartnerships.org).