



Explore the Core' campaign aims to draw new residents to Central Baltimore



Eugene Williams, far right, returns the microphone after telling listeners about living in Baltimore's Barclay neighborhood. (Jessica Anderson/Baltimore Sun Photo)
['Explore the Core' campaign aims to draw 3,000 new residents to Central Baltimore neighborhoods](#)



Jessica Anderson Contact Reporter The Baltimore Sun

Eugene Williams has fond memories of growing up in Barclay, before the neighborhood changed, leaving vacant houses and drug dealers on the street corners.

But since moving back to the neighborhood two years ago, Williams, 66, said he's seen vast improvements, with new developments popping up, homes being rehabbed and younger residents moving in.

"It's a pleasure to see they're trying to do something to try to build it back up," Williams said. On his way home from grocery shopping Saturday, he stopped to check out "Explore the Core!" a promotional event sponsored by the Central Baltimore Partnership and the Johns Hopkins University to entice new residents to buy or rent homes in central Baltimore neighborhoods.

A bus left the 32nd Street farmers' market in Waverly for stops in Barclay, Remington and Charles Village to launch the marketing campaign. Riders included a balloon artist and a drummer who entertained at each site.

In a grassy park in the 2200 block of Calvert St., volunteers spoke about new developments in the area. Passers-by stopped to listen, including Williams.

Andy Frank, a special adviser to the president of Johns Hopkins, said the marketing campaign is part of a 2011 economic development plan to add 3,000 new households to 10 central city neighborhoods and to improve quality of life in the neighborhoods. They include Waverly, Charles North, Greenmount West, Harwood, Oakenshawe, Old Goucher and Wyman Park.

Frank said the campaign aims to highlight attractions, including new shops, restaurants, and developments like Remington Row, which features shops as well as apartments.

"There's so much momentum happening here," said Ellen Janes, executive director of the Central Baltimore Partnership, outside Parts & Labor Restaurant and Butchery at North Howard and 26th streets. The restaurant

opened in an old tire shop, across from Charmington's coffeehouse, where President Barack Obama ordered sandwiches for lunch in 2015.

Janes said the partnership hopes to attract young people moving to Baltimore, as well as new businesses.

The 10 neighborhoods "are really different," she said, from the high-rises in Charles North to the rowhouses in Remington and elsewhere.

A promotional video was shown at the [Charles Theatre](#) last week as part of the campaign, Frank said. In it, several homeowners and local business owners talk about the affordability and diversity of the area. The video shows "painted lady" rowhouses in Charles Village, marathoners running through North Baltimore neighborhoods, the Waverly farmers' market and many wall murals.

"One of the challenges is competing against waterfront neighborhoods," which have a natural draw, Frank said. But in addition to a blossoming arts scene and new restaurants, the central Baltimore neighborhoods also offer proximity to Penn Station for commuters, and to anchor institutions such as the Hopkins Homewood campus and the University of Baltimore to the south, he said.

Drummer Justin Smith, who performs as "Kidd Smith," was recruited from his regular spot near the farmers' market to play drums along the bus tour. The 24-year-old musician and graphic artist, who lives off 33rd Street in Waverly, said the neighborhood has improved some but he expressed concern about crime.

His friend Chanel Green, who also lives in Waverly, said she liked that the event was promoting the area. She hoped it would "get more people interested in the community," which she said could make it stronger and more stable in the future.

jkanderson@baltsun.com