

Community Needs Assessment: Remington, Baltimore MD

Prepared for
Greater Remington Improvement Association
2023



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Remington Needs Assessment: Executive Summary

Background on Assessment and Organization

This assessment was conducted for the Greater Remington Improvement Association (GRIA) and funded through a community development block grant (CDBG) from the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development with additional funding from the Goldseker Foundation.

The Greater Remington Improvement Association (GRIA) is a resident-led community association established in 2009 to discuss community issues and develop neighborhood improvement initiatives. Its organizational structure includes a community-elected board of directors and two standing committees for community programming and land use advocacy.

Assessment Process

Research commenced in early 2020 with timeline adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To assess the community's strengths and challenges, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data was gathered. Formal and informal interviews with residents and stakeholders were conducted. Notes were taken during public and internal GRIA meetings, as well as meetings with community partners and advocacy groups. Public records from city, state, and federal data portals, as well as records of constituent service requests through email, social media, and 311, were also utilized.

Data analysis involved synthesizing quantitative measures of economic and health vulnerabilities with qualitative insights from interviews. Demographic and housing data were obtained from the U.S. Census surveys and Baltimore Open Data portal, and parcel-level data from the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development and Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation.

Community Profile

Remington is a small neighborhood in central Baltimore City. The physical and cultural characteristics of Remington have undergone significant changes since 2000, including population growth, property upgrades, and resident turnover. Local developer Seawall has played a major role in rehabilitating residential and commercial properties in the area.

The neighborhood features a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses that have evolved over time. Today, Remington accommodates a mix of independently-owned shops, larger commercial establishments, manufacturing companies, and mixed-use developments. Residential properties make up the majority of land use.

Data Profile

Demographics

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

- Displacement: 60% black population
- Hispanic population increased 5x

Age and Family Composition

- Increase: Young adults
- Decrease: Children and youth
- 67% of households are nonfamily

Language Spoken at Home

- 6.5% speak language other than English at home
 - ◆ 1/3 have limited English proficiency

Disabilities

- 13% of all households have disabled residents
 - ◆ Most likely to be black or Hispanic
- 13% of all youth have cognitive disabilities

Economic Indicators

Median Income and Distribution

- Median household income more than doubled
 - ◆ Now 20% more per year than city
- Increase of 3x households at highest income bracket
- Decrease of 13% of households at lowest bracket

Poverty Rate and Use of Financial Assistance

- 11% of households receive food assistance from SNAP
- SNAP participation rates incongruent with population
 - ◆ Many families in need are underserved

Employment, Education, and Livelihoods

- Dominated by white-collar occupations.
- High educational attainment for residents aged 18-44
- Unemployment rates higher than the city average for
 - ◆ Youth 16-19
 - ◆ Hispanic or Latino residents
 - ◆ Adults without a four-year college degree

Housing Indicators

Vacancy Rates

- Fluctuating between 10% and 15% since 2012
- Vacancy reduction mostly from rental properties
- Abandoned property rates remain relatively stagnant

Homeownership Rates

- Fluctuate between 47% and 56%
- Decrease from 2010 to 2020: 12%

Housing Affordability 2010 to 2020

- Home values increased 40%
- Rental prices increased 37%
- Rent Burden (percent of income going to rent)
 - ◆ >30 percent: 40% of households
 - ◆ >50 percent: 25% of households

Community Strengths and Assets

Central location

Easy access to various amenities, including higher education institutions, public parks, and healthcare services.

Local businesses

Diverse range of local businesses (e.g. restaurants, bars, skilled trades, and light industrial) provide job opportunities and services to residents.

Community partnerships

Strong partnerships with other civil society organizations facilitate access to resource programs aimed at reducing food insecurity and housing instability.

Social capital

The strong relationships between GRIA and other organizations have helped the association garner significant political influence and develop internal capacity for community programming.

Barriers and Gaps in Service

Housing and economic instability

Rental properties often suffer from deteriorating conditions; tenants may hesitate to report violations due to fears of eviction.

Legacy homeownership faces barriers due to difficulties in navigating administrative and legal processes for intergenerational wealth transfer.

Infrastructure and connectivity

Infrastructure challenges such as bridge closures, road hazards, and water infrastructure disrepair impact residents and discourage property ownership.

Inadequate traffic calming measures create hazardous walking and cycling conditions.

Key Findings

Population Change and Displacement

Remington has experienced a large displacement of black residents, college students, and families with school-age children, and significant increase in the Hispanic population creating a need for Spanish-speaking services.

Housing Affordability Concerns

Rising rents and mortgages have made Remington increasingly unaffordable for current residents. Abandoned properties and legal barriers to title transfer pose challenges to legacy homeowners and intergenerational families.

Economic Instability

Income changes in Remington have been inconsistent, and financial assistance enrollment has decreased while the need for assistance remains high. Legacy residents often have limited financial resources or opportunities to increase their income.

Reduced Accessibility to Resources

Accessibility to vital resources such as employment opportunities and cultural assets is limited in Remington. Infrastructure challenges and geographic constraints hinder access to these resources.

Recommendations

Preserve Affordable Housing

Expand the current home repair program addressing safety repairs for elderly and legacy homeowners.

Advocate for policy reform in property tax sales, tax assessments, and vacancy regulation.

Support the creation of a land bank.

Resident Stabilization

Employment matching program to pair job seekers with work opportunities.

Create a centralized information repository to improve access to resources and services.

Community Empowerment

Host resource information sessions to increase awareness of assistance programs and educate residents on health, financial, and legal topics.

Explore the establishment of a community center.

Advocate for community benefits agreements with developers.

1. Background on Assessment and Organizational Profile

This community needs assessment was conducted on behalf of the Greater Remington Improvement Association (GRIA), the neighborhood's elected community board. The association applied for and received a community development block grant (CDBG) through the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development to conduct the assessment. Research began in early 2020 and evolved to accommodate changes to data collection and GRIA funding capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional funding from the Goldseker Foundation supplemented the original CDBG grant funds.

The assessment utilizes quantitative and qualitative data to assess the community's current strengths and challenges and identify relevant programs and policies to address those challenges. The data collection methods included formal and informal interviews with residents and stakeholders, observations from meetings and field tours, and public data from local, state, and federal sources. The data were disaggregated, when possible, at the census block group level to provide more nuanced insights into the community's characteristics.

Drafts of the assessment were presented in 2022 and 2023 at GRIA board and general community meetings, and a survey was provided to community members for further comment. Feedback from community members assisted in final revisions to the document. As recommendations are implemented by the Greater Remington Improvement Association, further evaluation may warrant additional amendments to provide guidance as the community continues to change.

Organizational Profile

The Greater Remington Improvement Association (GRIA) was formed in 2009 to become an independent, resident-led association providing an open forum for the

discussion of Remington community issues and the development of neighborhood improvement initiatives. Membership is open to both renters and homeowners with a small annual fee to support activities; this fee is waived if it would present a financial hardship.

From its outset, GRIA has worked to connect residents to each other through community events such as family-friendly Halloween festivals, cleaning and greening activities, and a heavily-attended annual festival called Remfest. Over the years, GRIA has adopted an increasingly professional approach to community development and local political advocacy.

The organization consists of a community-elected board of directors with a working executive committee; the organizational structure has evolved to include two standing committees (Land Use and Community Affairs) for ongoing advocacy needs, as well as a number of ad hoc workgroups to plan annual events. Committees host monthly meetings open to all residents, who may also become voting members without joining the board. This policy allows for greater transparency in operations and engagement from all community members.

Recent programs include: Safe and Healthy Homes, providing grants to legacy and senior homeowners for critical safety repairs, Commercial Facade Improvement, providing matching funds to facilitate small business development, and the Community Kitchen, which aimed to reduce social displacement by legacy residents to newer food establishments through a meal voucher program in the newly renovated R House food hall.

GRIA's Board of Directors and organization members, who in their personal & professional lives are urban planners, urban farmers, community organizers, and business owners, bring those skills and talents to their committed volunteer work with GRIA and the Remington community.

2. Assessment Process

Timeline and Data Collection Plan

The needs assessment process launched in early 2020 with a twelve-month completion schedule, but the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic created funding delays and also necessitated methodology changes, as detailed below. Ultimately, the data were collected between the spring of 2020 and fall of 2022 through a variety of formal and informal interviews with neighborhood residents and stakeholders, observations from virtual meetings and walking surveys, internal organizational documents, and public records from city, state, and federal data portals.

These data were then compiled into an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to parse out the association's internal strengths and weaknesses and compare them to the opportunities and threats in the community itself—ie. the available resources and unmet needs. In the spring of 2023, a draft of the assessment was presented at a public community meeting and a feedback form was distributed in paper and online format. Final revisions were completed in summer of 2023 after incorporating feedback from the public comment period.

Staff, Board, Partners, Community Involvement, Community Outreach

Exploratory research was conducted through formal semi-structured interviews with current and former GRIA board members and several key community stakeholders such as the Church of the Guardian Angel, Seawall Development Corporation, Central Baltimore Partnership, and Johns Hopkins University. Respondents were asked about their experiences living or working in Remington, and their perceptions of the community's strengths and challenges.

Notes were taken from public and internal GRIA meetings (land use committee, board, general, and community affairs committee) and a variety of regularly-scheduled meetings with community partners and advocacy groups such as a resident-led code enforcement work group. Observations were also conducted at public hearings related to land use and

development in Remington to note the participation of residents and stakeholders.

Informal interviews of neighbors were conducted during community events or in the process of home repair applications. Additional data was collected from records of constituent service requests through email, social media, and 311 records.

Data Collection Methods

Demographic and housing data were collected from U.S. Census surveys and the Baltimore Open Data portal. Parcel-level data were collected from the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) for building permits and real property tax records. Informal interviews of neighbors were conducted during community events or in the process of home repair program applications; additional data were collected from records of constituent service requests through email, social media, and 311 records. Socioeconomic data, white papers from community development organizations, and investigative journalism articles helped frame out the various challenges faced in Remington, particularly with economic and housing stability.

Data Analysis Methods

The data collected are presented here as a case study of a neighborhood in transition. Quantitative measures of economic and health vulnerabilities are synthesized with qualitative insights from in-depth conversations with association board members, residents, business owners, city officials, and leadership from neighboring organizations.

Preliminary interviews provided an initial outline of topics vital to this assessment - namely, housing quality and affordability, pedestrian and bike safety and accessibility, and food security. Quantitative data provided new insights for ongoing interviews with residents over the assessment process. A SWOT analysis provided a framework for conceptualizing how the neighborhood's internal and external elements worked with (or against) each other, assisting in the selection of pertinent recommendations to the association.

During analysis of the primary and existing public data—particularly interviews with city officials, GRIA leadership, and neighboring CSOs—patterns of rhetoric emerged around the understanding of gentrification and best practices for mitigating displacement.

Perspectives tended to cluster around either a view that Remington had passed a point of no return with housing affordability, or a more idealistic and growth-focused view that affordability concerns were largely caused by lack of housing supply and were best resolved through construction of new housing (whether subsidized or market-rate). Interviewees consistently referenced Baltimore’s difficulties in retaining population and their personal frustrations with city politics or administrative hurdles. These patterns informed a subsequent data collection process which honed in on Baltimore’s history and political economy to place Remington’s changes within that larger context.

Aggregated data from the U.S. Census Decennial Survey provide a helpful, birds-eye view of the community’s current condition and general trends compared to other neighborhoods or larger geographic units. The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) has also been available after 2009 to provide more granular timelines of development, though margins of error tend to be larger for ACS data and are not available for all years studied.

Measures of median variables paint a picture of a community increasingly composed of middle class, self-sufficient young professionals. In some respects this picture is accurate, but more disaggregated data helps uncover what has changed along with what has not—for better or worse. When available, data have been analyzed by census block groups. Each of the three block groups representing Remington have distinctive characteristics which are products of the community’s original development timeline

Limitations of Study

The COVID-19 pandemic created numerous challenges for conducting research for the needs assessment, including agency financial constraints, public health concerns, and difficulty of outreach to particularly

vulnerable populations. The residents most vulnerable to neighborhood change are often low-income, seniors, those with disabilities, and people of color¹; many of these populations are also at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 infections.² Door-to-door surveys were thus not feasible to conduct in the study time frame; a digital survey was considered but rejected due to concerns of selection bias towards respondents with home internet access and technical skills with completing online questionnaires.

Financial and human resources originally allocated to assessment tools and programming were diverted to public health outreach and food security needs. Robust neighborhood-level data such as sale and rental realty records are not publicly available and often accessible only for a fee. Additional research funding would allow for more granular detail on residential turnover.

Lastly, while this study does provide an in-depth look at the neighborhood of Remington and may provide some insight into other similarly developing communities in Baltimore City, the data cannot be generalized to gentrifying neighborhoods in other cities. In fact, research into gentrification resistance strategies indicates that best practices should *not* be generalized and instead should firmly take local context into consideration.³

¹ See Lloyd, R. (2005).

² See Magesh, S., et al. (2021).

³ See Garboden, P. & Jang-Trettien, C. (2020); and Swanstrom, T., & Plöger, J. (2022).

3. Community Profile

Socio-political and Historical Context

Baltimore is a “legacy city” in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, part of the Rust Belt of America.⁴ Like many older U.S. cities, it has suffered economically from the effects of suburbanization and deindustrialization, exacerbated by racially discriminatory housing practices such as redlining which incentivized “white flight” among middle-class residents in the 1960s. The further decline of manufacturing over the 1970s and 80s led to massive layoffs and the eventual shutdown of major employers for city residents.⁵

Between 1950 and 2020, the city lost over 354,000 residents while the bordering Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties collectively gained over one million. The 2020 U.S. Decennial Census estimates almost 42,000 vacant properties exist in the city—approximately 14% of all housing units. Deurbanization cycles, felt nationwide, hit Baltimore harder than many other cities due to the jurisdictional separation in 1851 of Baltimore City from the surrounding Baltimore County.⁶ This status as an independent city sets it apart from the majority of other American cities which have been able to annex suburbs to capture that tax base.

Discriminatory housing and zoning practices have led to high levels of spatial inequality between neighborhoods. Figure 1 shows a 1937 residential security map which graded areas from A to D based on eligibility for mortgage financing; “redlined” Grade D areas were characterized as having an “undesirable population” not to be approved for traditional mortgage products, and yellow Grade D areas as trending in this direction.⁷

Zoning maps of Baltimore City in 1958, 2006, and 2017 (see Figure 2) illustrate how residential density and segregation of uses followed a similar spatial pattern. Mapping of sociodemographic patterns further show how these choices have perpetuated hypersegregation and distinct disparities in economic opportunity.

⁴ See Mallach & Brachman (2013).

⁵ See Cohen (2001).

⁶ See Crenson (2017).

⁷ HOLC, Division of Research & Statistics (1937).

Figure 1. Residential Security Map of 1937

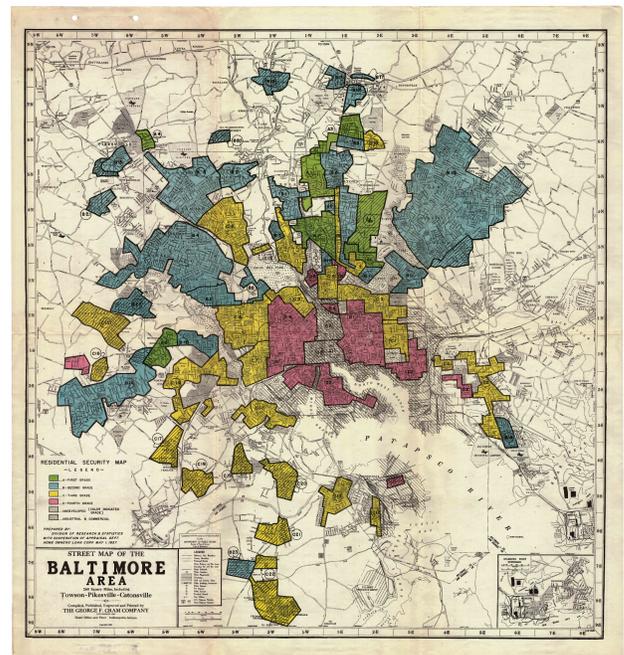
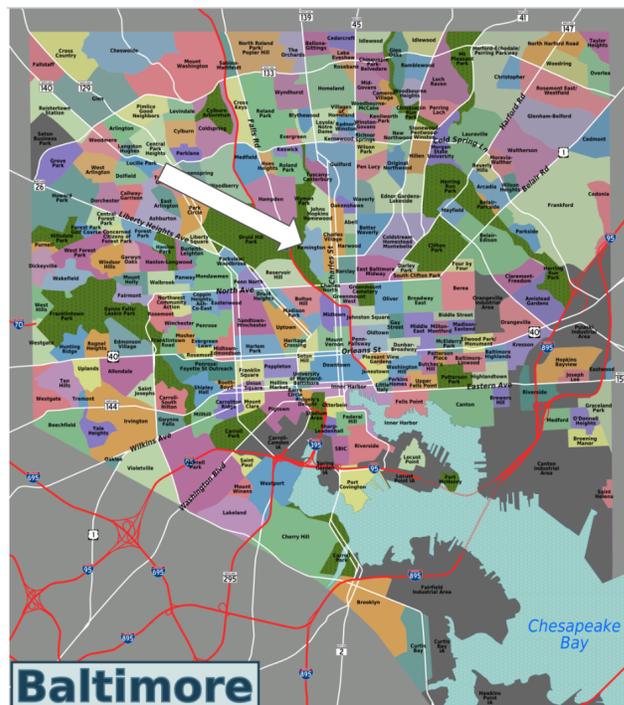


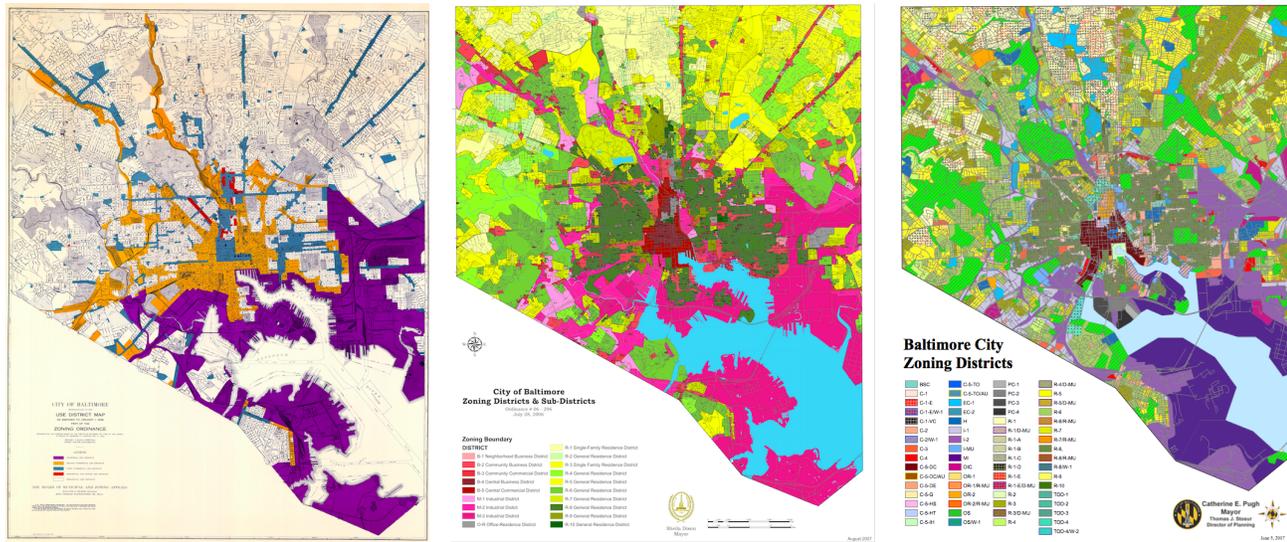
Figure 3 provides examples of the visual effect known as the “White L” and the “Black Butterfly” of Baltimore, wherein whiter neighborhoods form an L running north-south through the center of the city and then eastward along the waterfront borders. Note that despite Remington’s location within the “white L” (see Figure 4), it was a historically redlined community with a traditionally working class population.

Figure 4. Map of Baltimore Neighborhoods⁸



⁸ Map originally Peter Fitzgerald (2010) in OpenStreetMap.

Figure 2. Zoning Maps of Baltimore from 1958 to 2017



Note. Reprinted from City of Baltimore (1958, 2006, 2017).

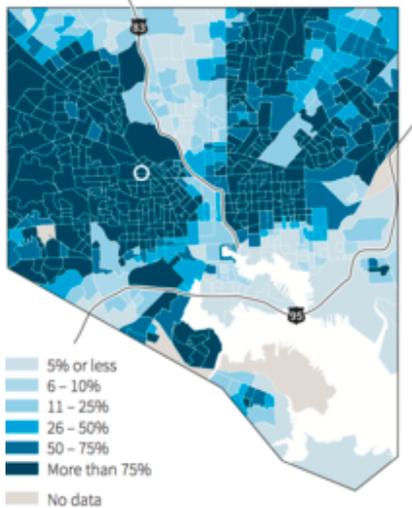
Figure 3. Maps of Race, Income, and Unemployment in Baltimore

Socioeconomics in Baltimore

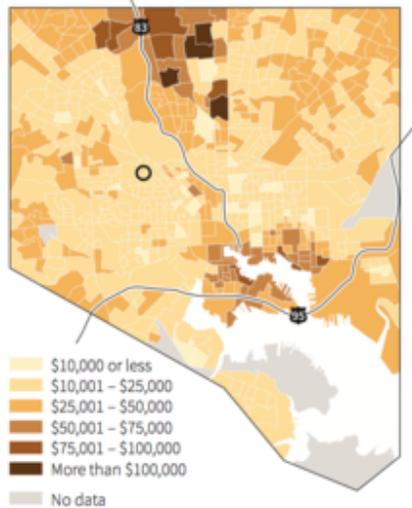
Following the funeral of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old black man who died after he was injured in police custody, disturbances broke out a few blocks from the site of the service. Demonstrations turned violent and spread through parts of Baltimore on Monday.

○ New Shiloh Baptist Church (location of Gray's funeral)

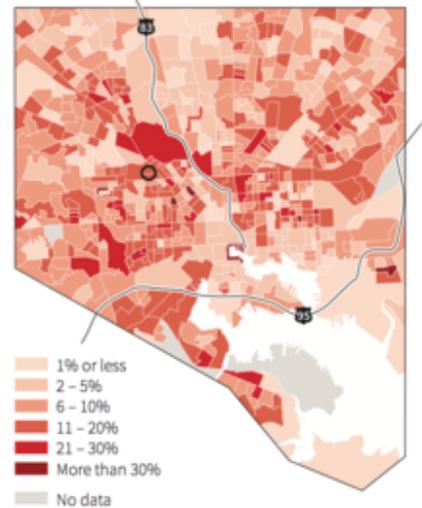
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION
As a percentage of total population



INCOME PER CAPITA IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS
In 2013 inflation-adjusted dollars



UNEMPLOYMENT
Unemployed population* as a percentage of total



Sources: 2013 American Community Survey estimates, U.S. Census Bureau; Open Baltimore, City of Baltimore; Reuters

CChan, 28/04/2015

*In civilian labor force, population aged 16 years and above

REUTERS

Note. Reprinted from Engel (2015).⁹

⁹ <https://www.businessinsider.com/these-maps-show-the-depth-of-baltimores-inequality-problem-2015-4>

Physical and Cultural Characteristics

The community has experienced significant growth since 2000, leading to significant property upgrades and resident turnover. While many of these upgrades have been undertaken by individual property owners, a single local developer (Seawall) has rehabilitated significant portions of the community's residential and commercial stock. Early Seawall projects between 2009 and 2015 incorporated subsidized housing models, but more recent development has focused on commercial development and market-rate housing production. Demographic changes and property value increases began accelerating since the completion in 2017 of their largest development to date: a three-block planned unit development (PUD) with a mix of adaptive reuse and new construction including both residential and commercial uses. Seawall is currently land-banking large parcels for additional development along the Sisson St and Howard St corridors.

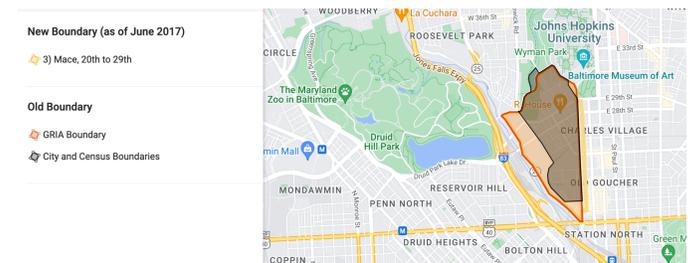
Physical and Cultural Boundaries

Remington is a small urban neighborhood located in Central Baltimore, Maryland, about 2.5 miles north of downtown Baltimore and the waterfront. The city's planning department defines neighborhood borders based on U.S. Census-designated areas, while acknowledging these borders may not exactly match resident perceptions¹⁰, as is the case for Remington. Government boundaries include the Jones Falls waterway and Druid Hill Park to the west, Wyman Park Drive and Johns Hopkins University to the north, Howard Street to the east, and W. 21st Street to the south. GRIA serves all residents in these boundaries.

In 2017, the GRIA general membership voted to extend the association's eastern boundary one block eastward to include properties which fit a generally shared mental map. This extension includes the eastern side of Howard Street to Mace Street, from 20th to 29th Street. Figure 5 below outlines GRIA's neighborhood boundaries in orange (prior boundaries), yellow (indicating the boundary expansion), and gray (census-established

boundaries). Statistical data throughout this report will, unless explicitly stated, incorporate government boundaries rather than community-defined boundaries, because the Howard St extension cannot be disaggregated from its associated census tract. As a result, census counts and sociodemographic profiles used for this research do not include the high-rise senior housing at 29th St and N Howard St (Wyman House) or the mid-rise workforce housing in Miller's Court at 26th St. and N Howard St, which largely serves public school teachers and emergency services workers. When feasible (such as when using interview data, qualitative observations, or parcel-level data), these multifamily units will be included in the analysis.

Figure 5. Remington Cultural and Political Boundaries¹¹



According to the U.S. Census, the neighborhood of Remington is composed of three census block groups within census tract 1207¹², as shown in Figure 6. To avoid confusion, this report will refer to these block groups as Upper Remington (block group 1), Central Remington (block group 2), and Lower Remington (block group 3). These block groups largely match with resident perceptions of differences in population, housing stock, and culture.

However, block group 3 includes 196 properties situated one block north of the CSX freight rail line bisecting the community; these properties and households are geographically clustered together in the community's shared mental map of Central Remington. Therefore, as with the community-defined neighborhood extension, qualitative observations and parcel-level data utilized the community's defined boundaries.

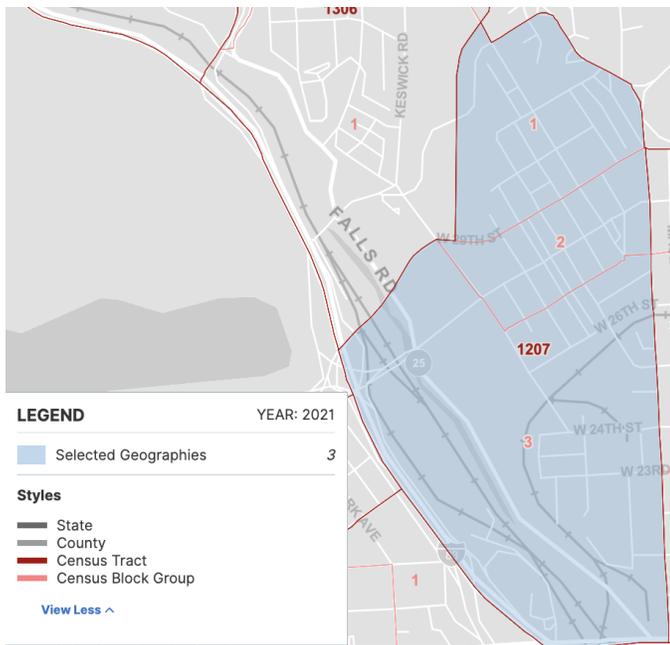
¹¹ <https://griaonline.org/about-us/mission-statement>

¹² Full U.S. Census profile:

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=1400000US24510120700>

¹⁰ From the Baltimore City Planning Department website: <https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/maps-data/online-community-association-directory>

Figure 6. Block Groups within Census Tract 1207



Note. Sourced from U.S. Census Bureau Maps.

Remington is located within walking distance of several transportation and cultural resources, as shown in Figure 6. To the west, residents can access Druid Hill Park and the neighboring community of Reservoir Hill. To the east lies Charles Village and Old Goucher. Johns Hopkins University, Wyman Park, and the Hampden neighborhood are located to the north, while Penn Station with Light Rail and Amtrak service can be found to the south. Interstate 83 runs along Remington's western edge, with on- and off-ramps at 29th and 28th Streets, respectively. While this major transportation artery enhances both intercity and intracity connectivity, it also presents traffic safety challenges for residents, which will be discussed further in this report.

Land Use and Housing Stock

Remington is a neighborhood that boasts a diverse mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses reflecting the changing needs and uses since the late 1700s.¹³ It was originally a working-class grist mill and quarry town where small residential homes were built for mill workers and their families. By the mid-1800s, the neighborhood also housed multiple canning factories

¹³ 2017 Remington Neighborhood Plan: <https://griaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/Remington-plan-draft-7.pdf>

and some of the grist mills had been converted to manufacture cotton duck cloth. Additional residents moved in when one of the country's first electrified streetcar lines was installed directly through the neighborhood along the former Huntingdon Ave horsecar line.

During the urban deindustrialization of the early 20th century, the cotton duck and remaining grist mills began to close. Automobile dealerships then opened along the Howard St corridor, and the Jones Falls Expressway was built to replace the streetcar line decommissioned in the 1950s. Today, automobile sale and repair businesses still operate along with small manufacturing companies such as the Baltimore Glass Company, coexisting with numerous small, independently-owned shops. Larger commercial properties are mostly located along the Sisson Street corridor and the Howard Street corridor between 21st and 25th Streets.

Residential properties currently make up 89% of land use. Non-residential properties include traditional commercial establishments (e.g. restaurants, retail stores, and offices), heavy industrial businesses (e.g. freight train and utilities infrastructure), mixed-use developments (e.g. the Remington Row development with offices, retail, and apartments), and tax-exempt uses such as churches, schools, and parks.¹⁴

Remington's Census boundaries contain 1,102 residential properties, with the majority being single-family dwellings. Over 80% of the properties are single-family and mostly rowhomes, and five commercial properties housing a residential owner-occupied unit on the second floor. The remaining properties are mostly divided between mid-rise apartments, 2-4 unit rowhomes, and one 8-unit walkup apartment building.

¹⁴ From Baltimore City Open Data Portal, Retrieved 8/14/2022 <https://data.baltimorecity.gov/datasets>,

4. Data Profile

Demographics

Population

Since 2000, Remington's population has grown by approximately 8% per decade. According to the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census, the community is home to 2,678 residents, up from 2,308 in 2000. The development of two mid-rise apartment buildings, Cresmont Lofts in 2004 (26 four-bedroom units)¹⁵ and Remington Row in 2016 (108 one- and two-bedroom units)¹⁶, is responsible for approximately 70% of this growth.

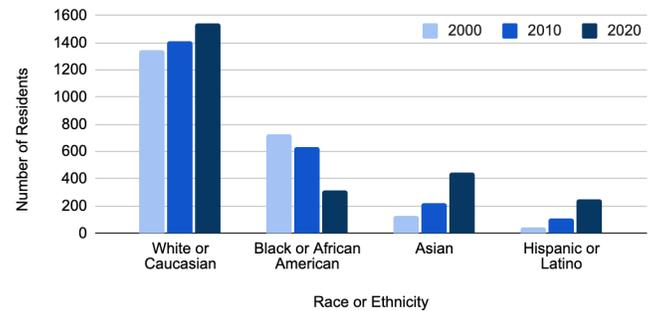
Racial and Ethnic Diversity

The population of Remington is racially diverse, although disproportionately to Baltimore as a whole. In 2000, the population was predominantly white (58%) and black (31%) compared to 31% white and 64% black citywide.¹⁷ By 2020, both white and black populations had decreased by about 20% in Baltimore as numbers increased for other racial (and multiracial) populations.

In Remington, however, the white population stayed constant while the remaining population became more distributed, mostly from a decrease in black and increase in Asian residents (refer to Figure 7). Almost 60% of black residents relocated in the last twenty years; while more detailed data are not available, the disparity between neighborhood and city changes suggests that many moved to other neighborhoods within the city rather than exiting altogether.

Ethnic diversity has also changed drastically, and disproportionately. The Hispanic population has tripled citywide but increased by more than fivefold in Remington. These changes (both in race and ethnicity) were in motion well before recent investment into the community but seem to have accelerated greatly in the last decade—in particular, Remington lost just 12% of black population from 2000 to 2010, but another 50% in the following ten years.

Figure 7. Remington Population by Race and Ethnicity from 2000 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census Decennial Surveys.

Age of Population

According to data from the U.S. Census, Remington has a higher proportion of working-age adults compared to Baltimore City as a whole, but a lower proportion of families with children. About 14% of Baltimore City residents are aged 65 or older, while only 8% of Remington residents are in this age group. The average age of Remington residents is 33.4, which is lower than the city average of 35.5, and there are 6% fewer seniors in Remington compared to the city as a whole. However, only about 10% of Remington's population is under the age of 18, which is half the proportion citywide.

The changes in age of population in Remington are clearly driven by a significant decrease in youth and increase in younger working adults (see Figure 8).¹⁸ Older age brackets have remained stable and the proportion of young adults has nearly doubled, but those gains begin to drop off by age 35 and continue decreasing through early middle age until age 54.

Despite the enormous increase in young adults, the population of children and youth through college ages has declined significantly - most notably for children in elementary and middle school age brackets. The proportion of very young children has also dropped but to a lesser degree. The decrease in college age students stands out due to the neighborhood's proximity to multiple universities, suggesting this age group is more vulnerable to rent increases.

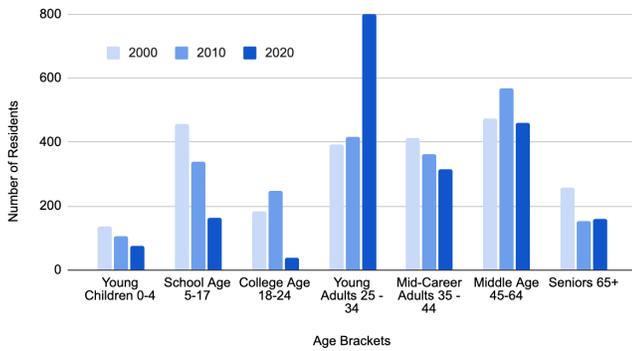
¹⁵ <https://www.hhcresmont.com/>

¹⁶ <https://www.rentcafe.com/apartments/md/baltimore/remington-row/default.aspx>

¹⁷ U.S. Decennial Census, 2000 and 2020.

¹⁸ Age brackets: Young Children 0-4, School Age 5-17, College Age 18-24, Young Adults 25 - 34, Mid-Career Adults 35 - 44, Middle Age 45-64, and Seniors 65 and over.

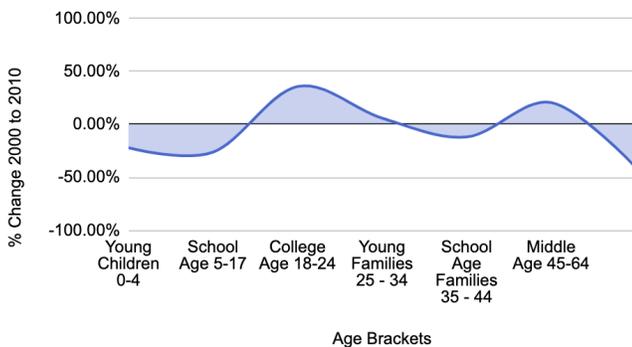
Figure 8. Remington Population Changes by Age from 2000 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census Decennial Surveys.

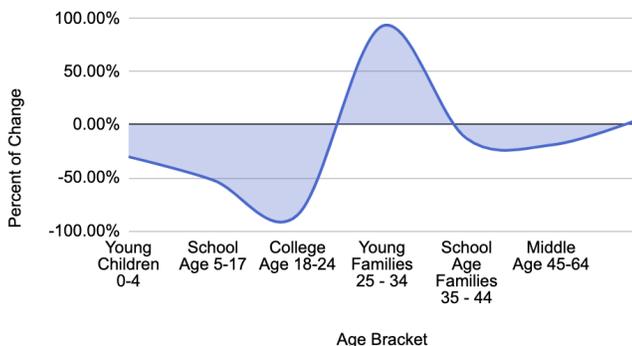
These trends fit a common urban narrative in which residents may move in to begin their careers, stay during the early stages of starting a family, but move outside the city for school districting purposes. This was not the case from 2000 to 2010, which had a more mild cycle of aging and regeneration of population. See Figures 9 and 10 to compare these two decades.

Figure 9. Percent Change in Population by Age Bracket from 2000 to 2010



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 10. Percent Change in Population by Age Bracket from 2010 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Family Composition¹⁹

Household sizes, generally speaking, are on par with the city, with an average size of 2.13 vs 2.45 citywide. A quarter of all households have consistently been composed of married couples, yet less than a third of those couples have children in 2020 compared to 42% in 2010. This change may be the result of lower birth rates countrywide,²⁰ but the number of Remington households with children is significantly smaller at 12% than the city's average of about 20%. The data suggests that Remington is becoming either particularly attractive for young childless couples or less affordable for families.

Around 67% of households in Remington are nonfamily households, which is higher than the citywide average of 51%. It's worth noting that the number of nonfamily households has been increasing in both Remington and Baltimore City over the last decade.

Language spoken at home

In 2020, 6.5% of Remington residents spoke a language other than English at home, a percentage that has remained steady over the past decade. Within that population the number of households with limited English proficiency has risen sharply, from 17% in 2011 to 33.3% in 2020. The majority of those households speak Spanish.²¹ For children, exposure to multiple languages may present developmental benefits (Lieberman, et al, 2017). However, this language barrier presents a challenge for adults to access job opportunities and community resources (World Bank, 2013). Some efforts are being made to address this issue; for example, Father Stephen Holt of Church of the Guardian Angel has begun offering sermons and community resource clinics in Spanish.²²

Disabilities²³

Remington has a slightly smaller but still significant proportion of disabled residents (13.1%) than citywide (15.5%). Disabled residents in this community are significantly more likely to be black or Hispanic—35% of

¹⁹ From U.S. Census, 2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

²⁰ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr012-508.pdf>

²¹ From U.S. Census, 2010-2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

²² Interview, August 2022.

²³ From U.S. Census, 2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

black residents and 28% of Hispanic or Latino residents have some type of disability versus 9.5% of white residents. Almost half of residents 75 or older have a disability, along with between 11 and 16% of individuals from the ages of five to 64. These disabilities may include difficulties with hearing, vision, cognitive ability, ambulation, self-care, and independent living. Notably, 12.8% of youth under the age of 18 have a cognitive disability, presenting concerns for childcare, special needs education access, and also independent living prospects as these children grow into adults.²⁴

Economic Indicators

Median Income

Median household incomes have risen about 74% citywide over the last two decades; Remington roughly matched these gains until 2010, when incomes began surpassing the city's (see Figures 11 and 12). In fact, Remington residents made slightly less in both 2000 and 2010 than the average city resident. By 2020, household median income had more than doubled in Remington, where residents earn almost 20% more per year (\$61,653 to the city median of \$52,164.00).²⁵

These gains have been relatively modest for a gentrifying neighborhood, especially compared to the area median incomes (AMI) for the entire metropolitan statistical area (MSA) of Baltimore-Columbia-Towson. While Baltimore incomes have remained around 50 percent of AMI, Remington has nudged from 47 percent in 2000 to just over 60 percent of metro area AMI.

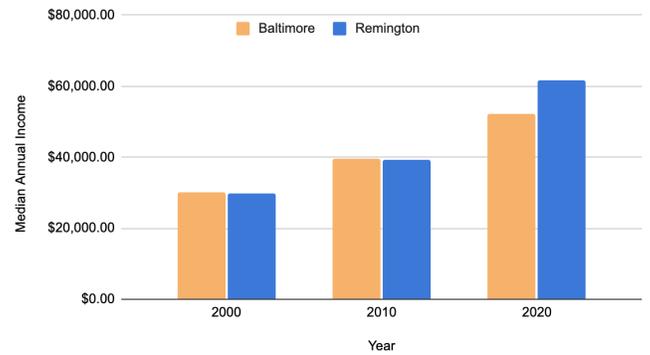
These trends, while modest, are more volatile at the neighborhood level. In Baltimore, the median income has increased by 1-5% annually, while Remington incomes have swung wildly—at its most extreme, the neighborhood saw a 16% increase in 2012 followed by a 9.55% decrease in 2013²⁶. Between 2013 to 2020, incomes rose 33% overall but year over year, changes have continued to fluctuate.

²⁴ From the U.S. Census, 2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

²⁵ From the U.S. Census, 2000 Decennial Survey and 2010-2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

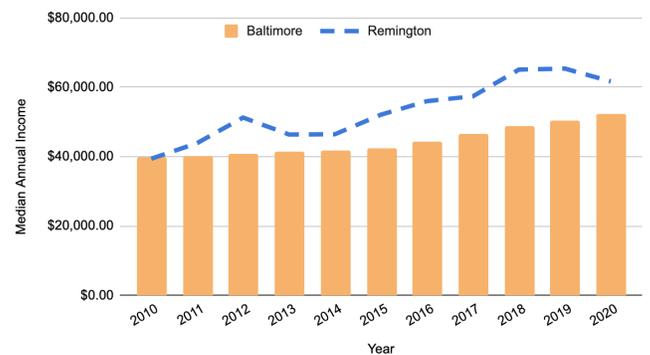
²⁶ From the U.S. Census, 2013-2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

Figure 11. Median Household Income in 2000, 2010, and 2020 in Remington



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 12. Median Household Income from 2010 to 2020 in Remington



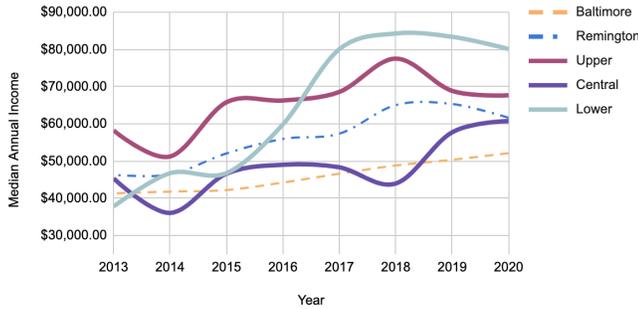
Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Income changes have been even more volatile at the block group level (see Figure 13). Lower Remington more than doubled in median income in seven years; in 2018 alone, the population's income increased by 34%, launching it from the poorest subsection to the wealthiest. Meanwhile, Upper Remington has seen below-average increases in median income at 16% over seven years, though the median in this section has consistently floated well above city median. Upper Remington also has the largest number of low-income households despite median income still being higher than other block groups.

Central Remington's seven-year change is on par with the entire neighborhood median, but year over year this block group has hovered around the city median, sometimes above and sometimes below it. Annual changes have swung from +31% to -20%. This block group has the lowest homeownership rates in the

neighborhood, and these income fluctuations likely represent frequent turnover of rental properties.

Figure 13. Median Income in Remington by Block Group

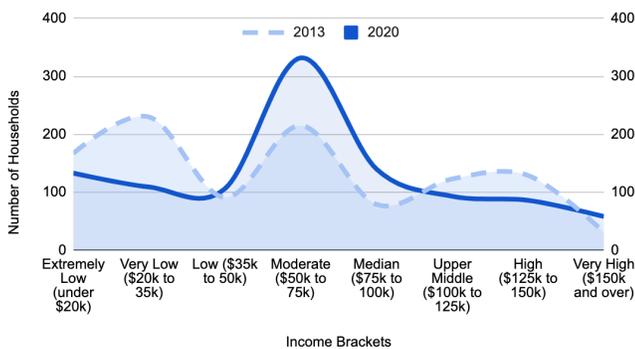


Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Income Distribution

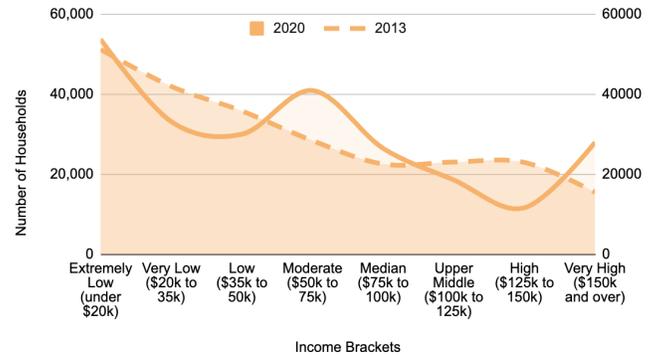
Income distribution has changed significantly in the last seven years, with fewer low-income households shifting toward median and high-income households. The number of households at the highest income bracket has more than tripled, yet the number of households at the very bottom, earning less than \$10k per year, has decreased only by 13% since 2013. These fluctuations are representative of a community with a rapidly changing population. Figures 14 and 15 provide a full picture of those income group changes in comparison to Baltimore as a whole.²⁷

Figure 14. Distribution of Household Income Brackets in Remington from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 15. Distribution of Household Income Brackets in Baltimore from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

As would be expected from a developing community, income distributions have begun to skew toward median and high income households. However, these changes have not occurred in a linear fashion. Figures 14 and 15 show how these income groups have shifted wildly over the seven-year period.

The community has seen a bottoming out of households making under 40 percent of area median income²⁸, replaced by median income and very high income households. Extremely low income (20 percent AMI) households decreased by 20% and very low income (40 percent AMI) households more than halved in number, while the number of households making median income increased nearly 170% and the highest earning households (200 percent AMI or over \$125 thousand annually) more than tripled. Notably, there remain over one hundred households earning less than \$10k per year, decreasing only by 13% since 2013.

In 2013, 30% of households earned less than \$30,000 annually per household; 22% of households fell into a Very Low Income (40 percent AMI) category, and over 16% into the Extremely Low Income (20 percent AMI) category. By 2020, only 8% of households were still Very Low Income and 13% were Extremely Low Income. By contrast, incomes at the highest end of the spectrum (200 percent of AMI) increased from just over 3% of the population to more than one in every eight households.

²⁷ Census income data have been fitted to HUD-established area median income (AMI) for a two-person household in Baltimore City in that given year. In some cases, Census data required rounding up or down of binned data.

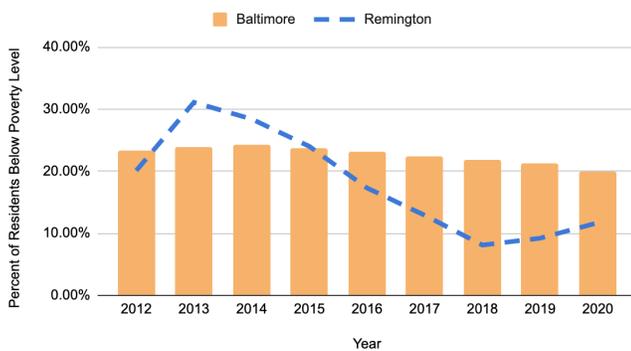
²⁸ 40 percent AMI corresponds to roughly \$30,000 in 2013 and \$35,000 in 2020.

A surprisingly large drop in the number of high income households (making \$100k to \$125k annually) was compensated by the tripling in number of very high income (\$125k+) households. The largest gains were seen in numbers of the Upper Middle Income and Very High Income earners—this group increased by 43 and 66%, respectively. The nonlinear pattern along with demographic shift and heightened sale and construction activity suggests a massive disruption in which middle income earners have left and been replaced with an entirely new set of high income households.

Poverty Rate

The poverty rate has improved in relation to the city overall, though rates have fluctuated heavily through the last decade, with an all-time high in 2013 of 31%, and a low of about 8% in 2018. Since 2018, poverty rates have been trending back upward. See Figure 16 for details. The inconsistent trends in both income and poverty rate, particularly in contrast to the city as a whole, suggest a great deal of instability and may also be explained by high levels of residential turnover.

Figure 16. Remington Poverty Rates from 2012 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Despite overall increases in income and decreases in poverty rate, there is still significant economic diversity within the community. For example, disaggregation into census blocks shows how the median income changes are largely driven by change in Lower Remington, where median incomes have more than doubled since 2013.²⁹ The neighborhood has a mix of longtime residents and newcomers, with some families having lived in the area

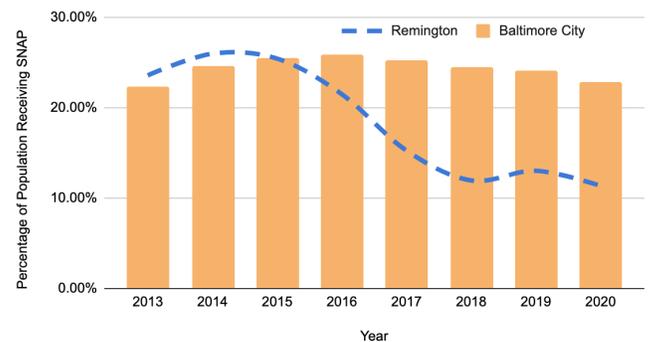
²⁹ Data at the census block group level is not available for this statistic prior to 2013.

for generations and others moving in due to recent gentrification and development. Residential turnover in Remington corresponds with changes to occupation types and education levels, which may explain the disparities between median income and poverty rates, along with unemployment rates, to be discussed below.

Financial Assistance

In 2013, about 25% of Remington residents received food assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), with two-thirds of households having children under 18, 30% with a resident over age 60, and two-thirds having a disabled household member (indicating many of those children also had a disability)³⁰. By 2020, the percentage of households receiving SNAP benefits had dropped to 11%, with only 14% having children and two-thirds still having a household member over 60 or with a disability. See Figure 17 for the overall trend in SNAP participation, which was once on par with the population citywide and has since more than halved. Figure 18 provides details on the characteristics of these households.

Figure 17. Percentage of Population Receiving SNAP Assistance in Remington from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

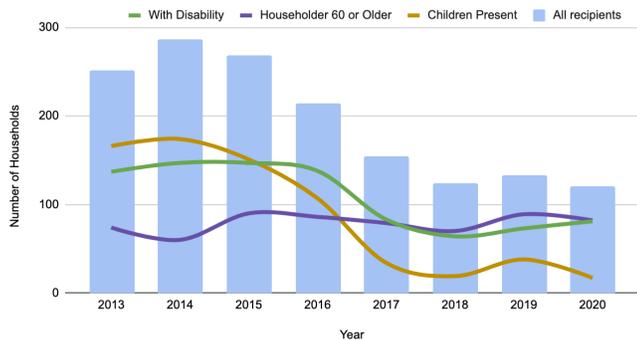
The vast majority of this decline happened in Lower Remington, where incomes have most shifted upward. While the neighborhood has seen a 20% decline in children under the age of 18³¹, the decline in food stamp recipients with children has plummeted by almost 90%. These trends suggest that while some low-income families may have aged out or been displaced, a significant portion of them are simply not receiving

³⁰ From the U.S. Census, 2013 and 2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

³¹ From the U.S. Census, 2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

needed assistance. The food pantry organizers at Church of the Guardian Angel have noted a sharp increase in families with young children at the weekly pantry event. According to their records, the majority of these households are recent Central American immigrants ineligible for public assistance programs.³²

Figure 18. Characteristics of Food Stamp Recipients in Remington from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Employment and Livelihoods

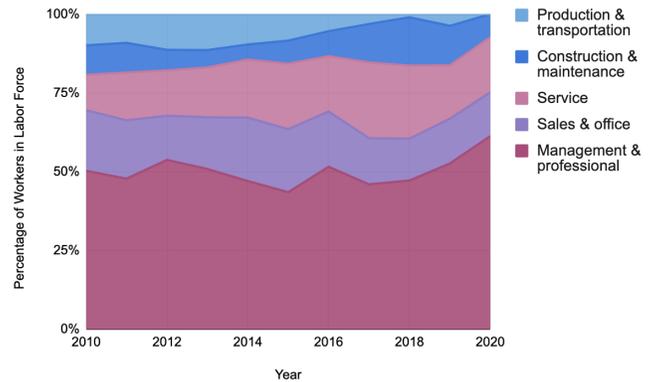
Remington's labor force is dominated by white-collar occupations, with over 60% employed in management, business, science, and arts fields. Sales and office occupations comprise 14% of the workforce, while the service industry employs 17.5%. Natural resources, construction, and maintenance jobs account for about 7% of the labor force. In 2010, 10% of the workforce was engaged in production, transportation, and material moving. Over the past decade, this working-class sector has significantly decreased, shifting towards more white-collar jobs in management, business, science, and arts fields (see Figure 19).

Remington has a strong entrepreneurial sector, with a diverse mix of businesses ranging from small independent shops to larger commercial properties. Industrial uses mostly consist of automobile repair businesses and manufacturing companies such as Baltimore Glass Company. There are also over twenty restaurants and bars, including nine food stalls at the R. House food hall. Additionally, there are several personal service businesses such as hair salons, a barber shop, an acupuncture studio, a dry cleaner, and a laundromat.

³² Ongoing interviews with representatives from Church of the Guardian Angel from 2020 to 2022.

The community also has numerous skilled trade or light industrial businesses including construction, printing, and upholstery, providing a variety of services and job opportunities for residents. A number of these small business owners also reside in the neighborhood.

Figure 19. Economic Sectors of Remington's Labor Force from 2010 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Education Levels

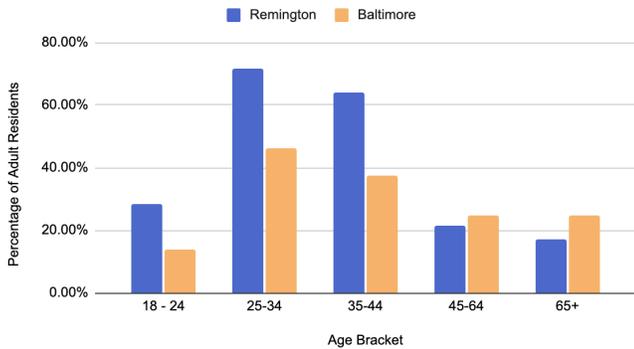
Remington has high educational attainment compared to Baltimore City. Over half of Remington's residents over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree, while only about a third of city residents do. High school graduation rates are also slightly higher (by about 6%) in Remington. However, a deeper analysis of education levels across age brackets reveals that this trend is recent. While residents aged 18-44 are more likely to have a college degree than the average city resident, those aged 45 and up are less likely (see Figure 20). This too suggests a shift in the community from a working-class to a white-collar demographic.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Remington is higher than the citywide average, particularly for certain demographics. Those aged 35-44 and 55-59, as well as Hispanic or Latino residents, are at higher risk of unemployment. In fact, the 2021 Census ACS estimates suggest that over 55% of Hispanic residents were unemployed. Youth aged 16-19 also face a high unemployment rate of over 40%, twice the citywide rate. Additionally, those over 25 without a college degree, including those with associate degrees, are two to three times more likely to be unemployed compared to the rest of the city. This

highlights the need to support residents in pursuing higher education or matching them with jobs that suit their skills and interests.

Figure 20. Remington Residents with a Bachelor Degree by Age Bracket in 2020



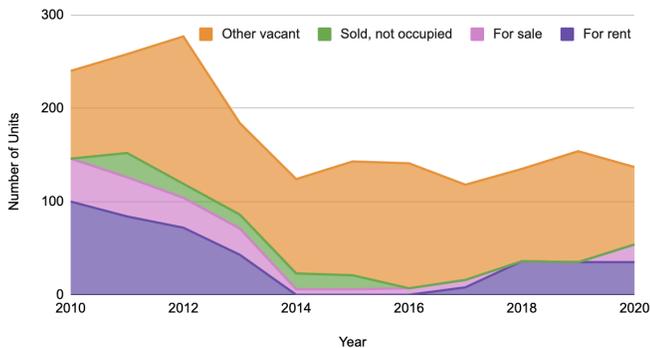
Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Housing Indicators

Vacancy Rates and Redevelopment

In 2000, the vacancy rate for housing units in Remington was almost 16%. This increased to almost 22% in 2012, likely due to the 2008 housing crisis and subsequent recession. Since then, vacancy rates have fluctuated between 10% and 15%; reductions have largely been in rental and sale vacancy, while off-market vacancy rates remain stagnant (see Figure 21). This suggests that a significant proportion of housing in Remington remains undesirable or uninhabitable.

Figure 21. Vacant Housing Units in Remington from 2010 to 2020 by Type

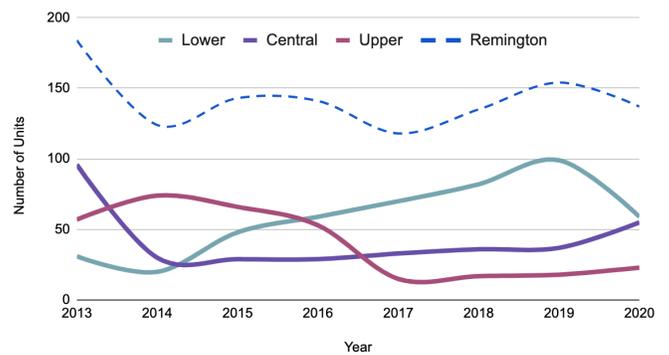


Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Vacancy has changed sporadically at the block group level (see Figure 22). From 2013 to 2016, Upper

Remington experienced relatively high levels of vacancy, with off-market units accounting for more than half of all vacant units in 2014. Vacancy rates then flipped in 2017, when Upper Remington’s vacancy rate dropped to below 5% while Lower Remington saw precisely the opposite trend. In 2019, Lower Remington had a staggering 25% vacancy rate, with one-third of those units actively seeking rental tenants while the other two-thirds were not on the market.

Figure 22. Vacant Housing Units in Remington from 2013 to 2020 by Block Group



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

In contrast to Lower Remington, Central Remington has experienced some level of recovery in recent years. In 2013, a quarter of all units were vacant, but most of those were actively on the market and have been occupied from 2014 onward. The high rental vacancy rates may have resulted from Seawall Development’s “30 x 13” project; between 2012 and 2013, the company renovated a significant number of properties on Remington Ave, Lorraine Ave, and 27th St.

Although most of these properties were intended to be sold to first-time homebuyers, some were turned into rentals, and several units were under a rent-to-own agreement while the future homeowner gathered funding for down payments and closing costs.³³ Rental vacancies in Central Remington disappeared completely in 2014, as well as in other block groups, but began reappearing in 2018 and have shown no signs of subsiding.

³³ From the Baltimore Sun (2012) and interviews with Seawall. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/ph-ms-seawall-0920-201209-18-story.html>.

Apart from rental vacancies, Central Remington has only seen minor changes in the last decade. Rates of off-market vacancies have steadily but slowly decreased from around 9% in 2013 to approximately 6.4% by 2020. However, there are significant inconsistencies in housing quality within blocks, with recently renovated homes interspersed among a landscape of vacant and deteriorating properties.

Homeownership Rates

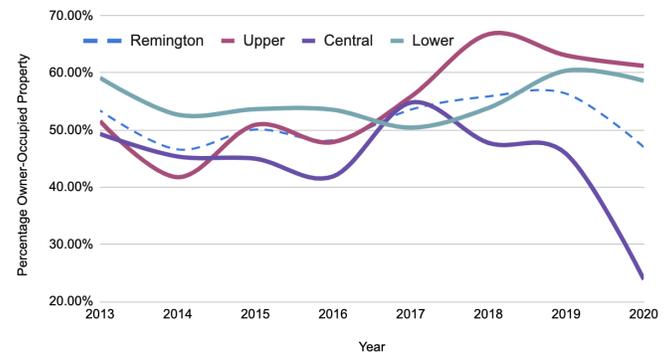
The ratio of owner-occupied to rental properties is often used to measure neighborhood stability. This approach is not perfect, as some long-term tenants may live in rental properties; however, it does provide some insight into the vulnerability of renters to displacement in the face of increased demand for housing.

Over the last two decades, roughly half of Remington's residents have been renters. Homeownership rates in the neighborhood have varied between 47 and 56%, with an overall decrease of 12% from 2010 to 2020. However, there have been significant fluctuations in ownership rates between block groups.³⁴ Lower Remington has maintained a 59% homeownership rate over ten years, while Upper Remington has seen a nearly 20% increase.

The decrease in homeownership rates has been concentrated in Central Remington, where ownership has dropped by more than half over the past ten years. Currently, only one quarter of residents in this block group own their homes. The development of Remington Row, which includes 108 apartment units, may have contributed to this shift in ownership rates. However, it is worth noting that the building began leasing in 2017, while homeownership rates remained stable until 2020. For more information on these changes, refer to Figure 23. Given the significant changes in the neighborhood's housing market, further study and monitoring of tenure shifts in Remington is warranted.

³⁴ Data from the U.S. Census, which does not incorporate GRIA-established neighborhood boundaries including two mid-rise apartment buildings. The inclusion of these units would further push down homeownership rates.

Figure 23. Homeownership Rates in Remington from 2013 to 2020

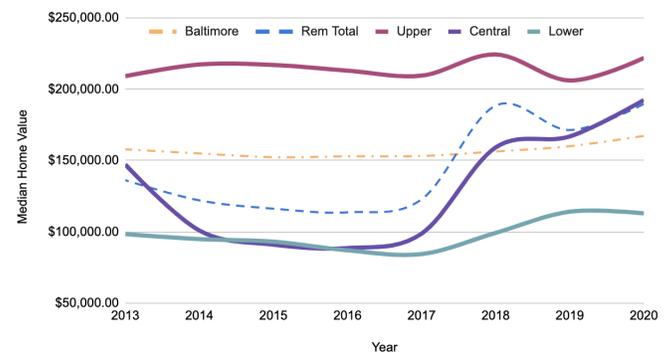


Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Housing Affordability

Overall Value Increases. In 2010, prior to the last decade of development, home values in Remington lagged over \$16,000 behind Baltimore's overall median of \$160,400. The neighborhood took an even greater hit after the 2008 housing crisis, with home values dropping over five% in three years compared to 1.56% citywide. However, since 2013, city property values have risen by just 6% while Remington's housing market has grown by nearly 40% (see Figure 24).

Figure 24. Median Home Values in Remington from 2013 to 2020

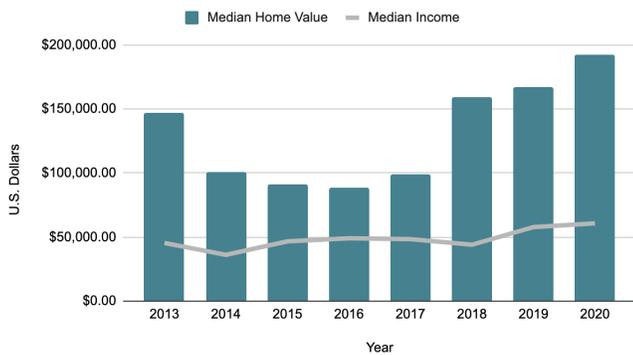


Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Upper Remington has experienced minimal growth in housing prices, with an increase of only 6%, though they remain consistently higher than other block groups. In contrast, Lower Remington has seen about 15% growth, though home values remain at the bottom of the neighborhood market. Central Remington has undergone significant value shifts, with homes in this

block group losing value until 2014, but recovering significantly by 2019, with home values almost doubling from just two years earlier. However, these trends are inconsistent with income patterns in this block group (see Figure 25). and raise concerns about continued displacement risk in Central Remington. A similar pattern of inconsistency is emerging in Lower Remington, indicating that this block group may also be at risk in the next several years.

Figure 25. Median Incomes and Home Values in Central Remington from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Property Taxes. Over time, property taxes paid have begun to equalize between owners with a mortgage and those without. For mortgage holders, incomes have risen in tandem with tax increases; the same is not true for those without a mortgage.³⁵ About 46% of the latter homeowners are 65 and older and likely to be on fixed incomes. In 2010, all seniors were mortgage free, but just ten years later, about two in every five mortgage holders are 65 or older.³⁶

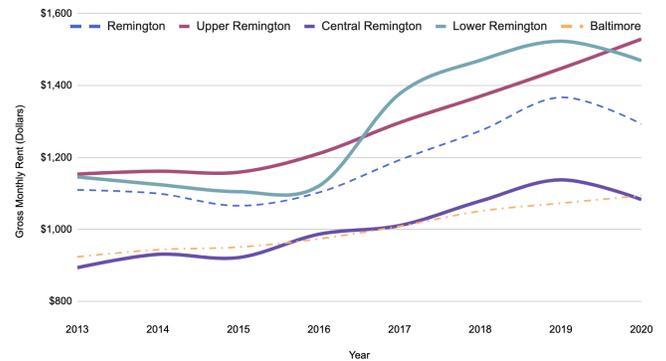
Rental Prices. Over the last decade, renters in Remington have consistently paid higher median gross rent than city average, but the discrepancy is widening. In 2020, the median gross rent (including utilities) for all Baltimore households was \$1,094 per month, compared to Remington's median of \$1,293. In 2010, Remington renters paid a median of \$944 to Baltimore's \$859. In total, rents have increased about 37% in one decade compared to 26% citywide, though the trend is nonlinear. As shown in Figure 26, the neighborhood

³⁵ From the U.S. Census, 2010-2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

³⁶ Ibid.

experienced dips in 2015 and 2020, but significant annual increases of 3-8% in the intervening years. In contrast, Baltimore rents have steadily increased at a rate between 1 and 4% per year.

Figure 26. Remington Median Rents from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Rent trends in Remington vary widely by block group. Upper Remington has seen the steepest increase in rent, with a 33.5% change from 2013 to 2020, with consistent and linear growth since 2015. Lower Remington has also seen significant growth, increasing by about 28% in the same time period, but with wide fluctuations in between. In 2020, median rents in Lower Remington decreased by almost 5%, yet increased by an astronomical 23% from 2016 to 2017.³⁷

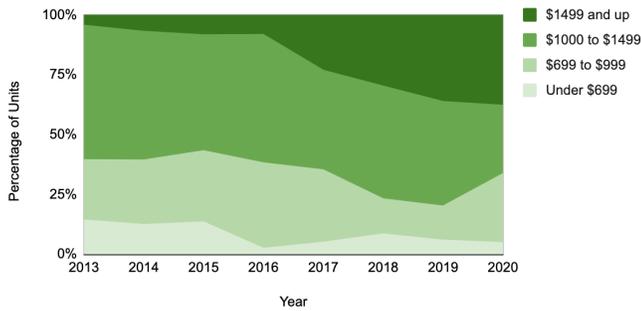
Rental vacancies in both block groups followed similar patterns, increasing as rental prices rose, suggesting displacement of former residents and a housing market where speculation may have overestimated demand. Central Remington's rental market is remarkably similar to that of the city as a whole. Rents have risen to a slightly greater degree (21% since 2010 versus 18% citywide) but have roughly followed the same trendline.

Splitting gross rents into brackets provides more granular information, as seen in Figure 27. After 2016, gross rents increased drastically, particularly for units over \$1,500 per month—likely due to Remington Row, where apartments were first available for lease in 2017. Over the following three years, however, an increasing percentage of previously-existing units throughout the

³⁷ Remington's overall fluctuations appear to be a result of this block group's instability.

neighborhood have increased rents commensurate with new construction.

Figure 27. Breakdown of Gross Rents by Bracket in Remington from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Rent Burden. Housing is a major monthly expense for most households, and it is generally recommended that it should not exceed 30% of a household's income. However, this rule does not account for other factors like dependents or regional costs of living that affect total needs.³⁸ Despite its limitations, the 30% rule is the standard for determining rents in federally-funded housing programs and is useful for comparing rent burdens within Remington. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are considered "rent burdened," while those who spend over 50% are "severely rent burdened." This section examines the rent burden in Remington and how it has changed in each block group over the past decade.

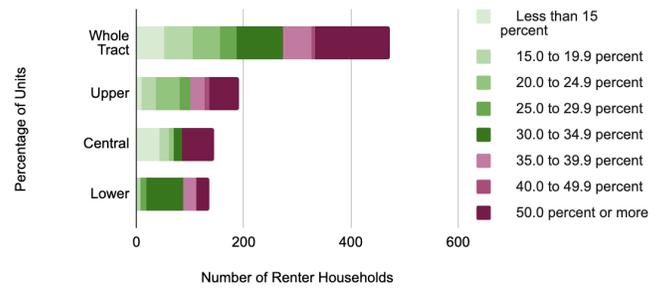
In 2010, almost 60% of Remington tenants were rent burdened, with nearly 30% severely burdened. While there has been some improvement by 2020, many households still faced significant financial strain. About 40% of renters were still paying 30% or more of their income towards rent, and almost a quarter were paying 50% or more. Rent burden varies across different areas of the neighborhood, as shown in Figures 28 and 29, which display the percentage of renter households in each block group by the percentage of income spent on housing in 2013 and 2020.³⁹ Interviews with food pantry workers reveal that rent burden has been a significant

³⁸ From PD&R Edge (n.d.): https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_092214.html

³⁹ Data was not available at block group level prior to 2013.

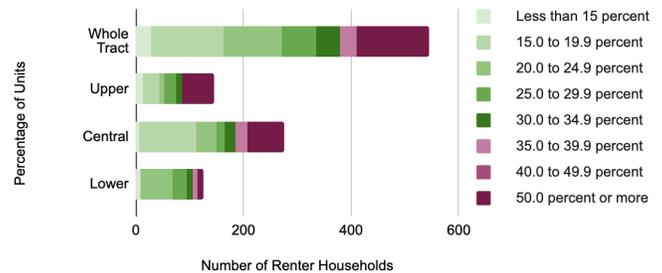
factor in the exodus of black residents from the area. While other low-income residents have moved in, many of them (particularly Hispanic families) have resorted to doubling up to keep rent affordable and support each other when work is scarce for one household member.

Figure 28. Gross Rents in Remington as a Percentage of Income in 2013



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 28. Gross Rents in Remington as a Percentage of Income in 2020



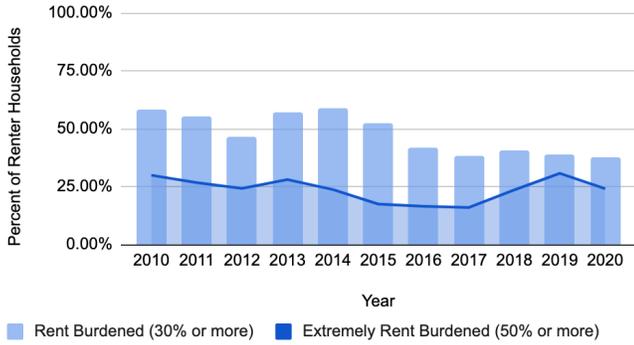
Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Note that proportions of rent-burdened households may differ significantly from the actual *number of households* experiencing rent burden, due to shifts in housing tenure or new rental construction. Figures 29 through 30 illustrate this paradox for both general and severe rent burden for the neighborhood and each block group.

In Remington overall, both rent burden proportions and amounts decreased, largely weighted by changes in Lower Remington, where rent burden dropped from 81% of renters in 2013 to just 24% by 2020, and amount of burden shifted commensurately. Upper Remington, however, experienced a 23% decrease in the number of rent-burdened households but a slightly increased percentage of rent burden among all rental units due to increased homeownership and fewer rental units

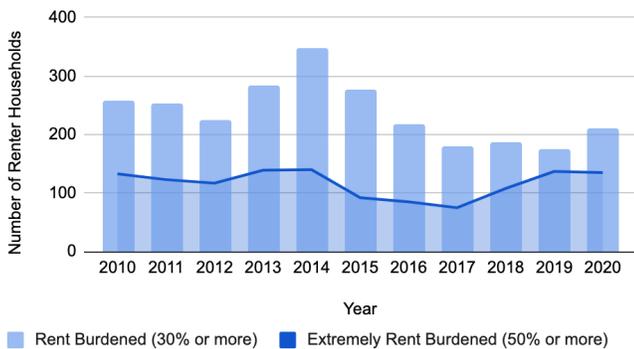
available. Central Remington experienced the opposite effect; only 38% of tenants were rent-burdened in 2020 but the number of households experiencing that burden increased by almost 43%. This increase may be due to the introduction of Remington Row apartments into the rental market.

Figure 29. Proportion of Rent Burden in Remington from 2010 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

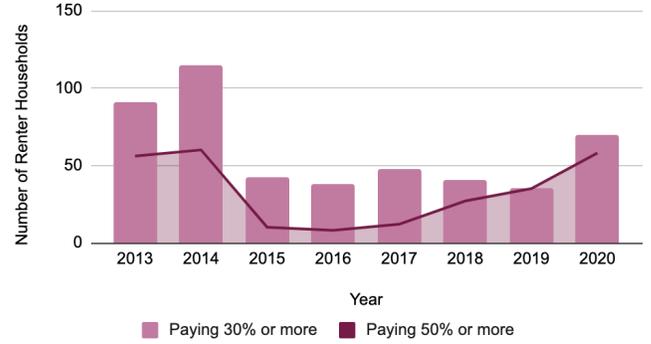
Figure 30. Rent Burdened Remington Households from 2010 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

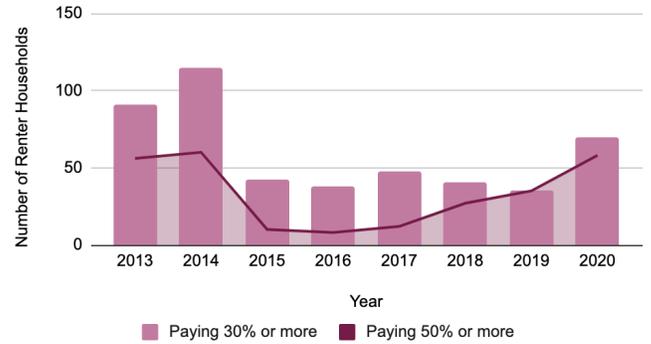
The amount of severe rent burden has not improved outside of Lower Remington, which already experienced the lowest amounts of severe burden from the outset. Central Remington had about an 11% increase in severe burden while Upper Remington, after a sudden drop in 2015, has crept back to 2013 levels. Most of these households are in the lowest income brackets of the neighborhood, presenting ongoing challenges for both housing affordability and general economic security. See Figures 31 through 36 for visuals of rent burden in each block group.

Figure 31. Proportion of Rent Burden in Upper Remington from 2013 to 2020



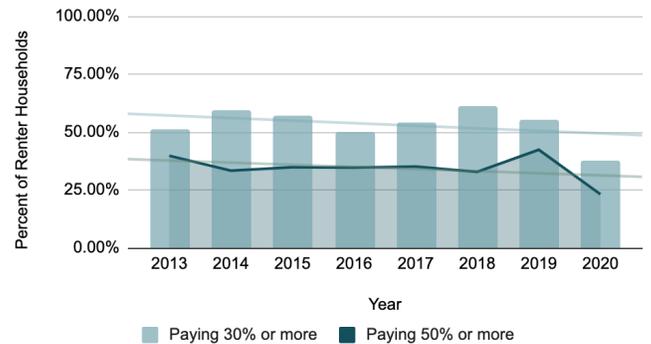
Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 32. Rent Burdened Upper Remington Households from 2013 to 2020



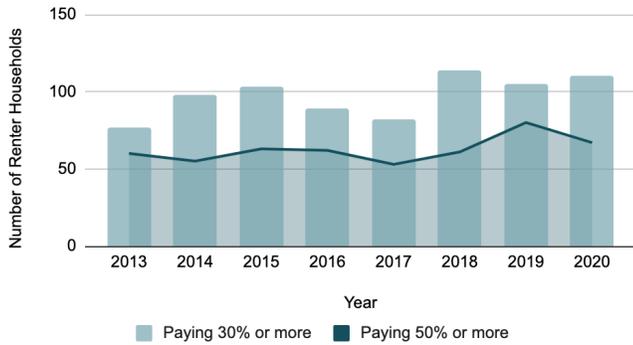
Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 33. Proportion of Rent Burden in Central Remington from 2013 to 2020



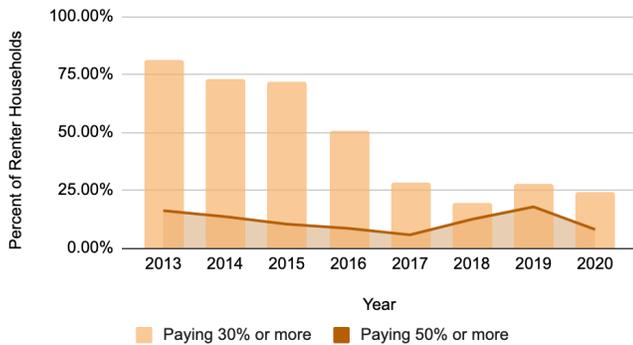
Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 34. Rent Burdened Central Remington Households from 2013 to 2020



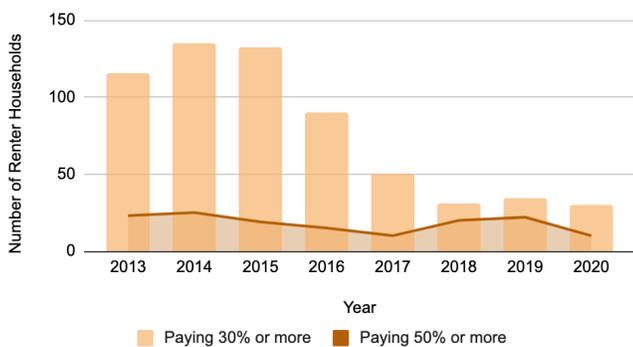
Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 35. Proportion of Rent Burden in Lower Remington from 2013 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Figure 36. Rent Burdened Lower Remington Households from 2013 to 2020

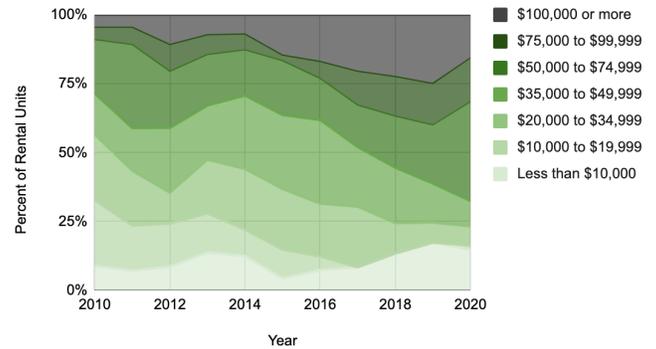


Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Rent burden has become distributed throughout a wider spectrum of income brackets. Based on census data from 2010 to 2020, households earning under \$35,000 (about 40% AMI) have consistently experienced rent burden, with little improvement over time. In 2010, more than half of all Remington renters belonged to this

category; most of them earned less than \$20,000 per year (about 20 percent of AMI). The proportion of renters under 40 percent of AMI decreased to 23% in 2020, but the number of very low-income households earning under \$10,000 per year has increased to from 9% to about 15% of all rental households. Figure 27 illustrates the trends by income bracket.

Figure 37. Rental Population in Remington by Household Income Brackets from 2010 to 2020



Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

The population of households earning between \$20,000 and \$35,000 has significantly declined since 2010, but those who remain are almost universally paying more than half of their income towards rent. Previously, most of these households paid 30-40% of their income to rent. It should be noted that subsidized housing programs are necessary to provide support for households under 40 percent of AMI, as the market alone cannot serve them.⁴⁰ See Tables 1 and 2 for more detail on these trends on rent burden and severe rent burden, respectively.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Most market-based affordable housing is targeted at renters earning 60 to 80 percent of AMI; the housing tax credit known as LIHTC typically only requires 20% of units to be affordable at 50 percent AMI, or 40% of units at 60% AMI. <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/HousingDevelopment/Pages/lihtc/default.aspx>

⁴¹ Data from U.S. Census, ACS 5-year surveys. Data on severe rent burden was not captured prior to 2014.

Table 1. Percent of Renter Households Rent Burdened by Income Bracket from 2010 to 2020

Income Bracket	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Less than \$20,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	100%	91%	86.8%	91.3%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	0%	10.1%	33.3%	38.7%	43.6%	47%	43.5%	37.9%	79.3%	72.6%	76%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	32.5%	45.2%	26.8%	36.8%	38.7%	30.6%	0%	15%	13.6%	22.6%	23%
\$75,000 or more	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Table 2. Percent of Renter Households Severely Rent Burdened by Income Bracket from 2014 to 2020

Income Bracket	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Less than \$20,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	13%	16.4%	26.9%	28.9%	62.5%	100%	76.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	0%	0%	0%	10.5%	23%	46.8%	34%
\$50,000 or more	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. Data from U.S. Census ACS 5-year surveys.

Households earning over \$35,000 in 2010 were almost entirely paying an affordable percentage of their income towards rent, but have since become increasingly rent burdened. From 2011 to 2017, 30 to 40% of households earning between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (about 60% AMI) became rent burdened, which has since increased to three-quarters of this bracket. Many of these households are now severely rent burdened, with between a quarter and half of them paying over 50% of their income towards rent.

While households earning over \$75,000 per year are largely paying less than a quarter of their income to

rent, the moderate-income bracket from \$50,000 to \$75,000 is increasingly feeling the squeeze. These households had a wide spread of rent burden in the early 2010s, ranging from under 20% to 35%, but have since concentrated around the borders of 25% to 35% of income, with some households paying up to 40% of their income to rent. This trend may reflect both the increasing cost of rent and a diminishing difference in buying power between \$50,000 and \$75,000 of income. Although only about 23% of moderate-income renters are considered rent burdened, this population has become the largest segment of the rental market.

Community Strengths and Assets

With its central location, Remington offers easy access to a range of amenities including higher education institutions, public parks, and healthcare services. The community features a variety of local businesses, ranging from restaurants and bars to skilled trade and light industrial companies, providing job opportunities and valuable services to residents. Due to the strong presence of other civil society organizations (e.g. Church of the Guardian Angel and St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center), residents also have access to a number of resource programs aimed at reducing food insecurity or housing instability.

GRIA has formed strong partnerships with these organizations. These resources have increased their capacity through grant funding, in-kind donations of meeting space, financial support for community programming, volunteer networks, and trust-building with already-established clients of vulnerable populations. While GRIA also partners occasionally with a variety of other organizations, the ones listed in Table 3 are among the most active partnerships.

Through these partnerships, bolstered by high social capital amongst the board members themselves,⁴² the association has garnered significant political willpower while building internal capacity to develop their own community programming. A selection of their programs and projects is outlined in Table 4, and additional strengths and assets are described below in greater detail in Tables 3 through 6.

Table 3. Nearby Natural Resources and Institutions

Resource	Description
Druid Hill Park	745 acres of green space and recreational facilities
Sisson Street Park	Public park & community garden
Remington Village Green	Community garden
Wyman Park Dell	13-acre park space with small recreational facilities & space for free outdoor movies & concerts.
Baltimore Museum of Art	Publicly-endowed classical art museum with free admission.
Church of the Guardian Angel (CGA)	Faith-based organization. Community-focused, service-oriented Episcopal church.
Greater Faith Baptist Church	Faith-based organization. Congregational Baptist church.
Johns Hopkins University	Higher education institution and top 5 city employer.
University of Baltimore	Higher education institution and top 5 city employer.
Maryland Institute College of Art	Higher education institution and top 5 city employer.
Union Memorial Hospital	Medical institution with emergency & specialist services.
Johns Hopkins Community Physicians	Medical institution with primary & specialist services.

⁴² A number of current and former GRIA board members have significant professional experience in community organizing, environmental planning, transportation policy, historic preservation, and statistical analysis.

Table 4. Nearby Resource Programs

Organization	Description
Church of the Guardian Angel Food Pantry	Weekly distribution of fresh and shelf-stable foods. Does not require means testing.
Bmore Community Food	Weekly food distribution program in Lower Remington, established in early 2020.
St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center	Housing programs include home sharing for seniors and subsidies for rentals and home purchases.
Mission Fit	Nonprofit youth gym
Guardian Baltimore	Nonprofit youth martial arts gym
The Community School	Subsidized alternative high school

Table 5. Active or Recent Partnerships

Organization	Nature of Relationship
Church of the Guardian Angel (faith-based NPO)	Meeting space provision; outreach facilitation to low-income residents; outreach partner for Community Kitchen (free hot meal program)
Central Baltimore Partnership (umbrella NPO)	Grant funding Administrative support for home repair program
Repair the World (NPO service provision)	Community cleanup supply provisions and volunteer coordination
Say YES! (local government program)	Grant funding for youth environmental stewardship program
Rendezvous in Remington (small business coalition)	Monthly sponsorship for community cleanup supplies and refreshments for volunteers

Table 6. Political Willpower and Internal Capacity

Project	Description
Cornerstore Rezoning Ordinance	Political advocacy and community organizing for a comprehensive rezoning bill
Sisson Street Park	Participatory design and advocacy for vacant lot conversion to public green space
Safe and Healthy Homes Program	Home repair program for seniors and legacy homeowners
Commercial Facade Improvement Program	Small business preservation and development program to assist with conversion of vacant corner store properties
Remington Neighborhood Plan	Participatory planning and community organizing to develop a master plan officially adopted by Baltimore Dept of Planning in 2018
28t St Road Diet Grant	Fundraised \$50,000 in federal grant monies for a pilot traffic calming project

Gaps In Services and Barriers

Remington residents face challenges related to housing stability and economic opportunity. Rental properties often suffer from deteriorating conditions, while tenants hesitate to report violations due to fears of eviction. Difficulties navigating the legal system presents barriers for intergenerational wealth transfer with legacy homeowners. Infrastructure issues (e.g. bridge closures, road hazards, and water infrastructure disrepair) impact residents and discourage property ownership.

Traffic safety concerns arise from aggressive driving behaviors and inadequate traffic calming measures. The neighborhood faces physical accessibility challenges, including limited walkability, unpermitted road work, and unsafe routes to adjacent neighborhoods and resources. Tying these together are cross-cutting,

systemic barriers which are specific to Baltimore City's sociopolitical context.

Some of these barriers are virtually immovable, while others may require significant organizing and advocacy efforts to resolve. The more entrenched the barrier, the more vital it is for community organizations to collaborate on program and policy solutions with relevant stakeholders and advocacy groups.⁴³ See Tables 7 through 10 for details on barriers associated with homeowner and renter preservation, economic stability, and municipal constraints.

Housing and Economic Instability

With a rapidly changing housing market, both homeowners and renters face both direct and social displacement pressures. Housing affordability for both renters and homeowners is tied to the overall housing market, but also to measures of housing quality, such as those outlined below. There are also tenure-specific risk factors, which are addressed below and include barriers presented by administrative and legal processes specific to Baltimore. The flip side of the housing affordability coin is economic stability; if prices cannot be lowered, incomes must rise. Therefore, attention is also paid to the key barriers to improving economic outcomes for low income residents.

Rental Housing Quality. For residents still able to maintain affordable rents, there are concerns about the quality and safety of their housing. The central Remington area, where rents have remained relatively stable, has a high concentration of rental properties and visibly deteriorating homes. Unfortunately, tenants often hesitate to report safety and health violations due to fears of eviction or rent increases. In some cases, tenants have privately acknowledged living for years without working heating systems, functioning cooking appliances, or proper flooring.

Additionally, some properties function as single-room occupancy (SRO) units, with landlords renting out individual rooms rather than entire properties. Landlords may attempt to lease as many rooms as possible, including spaces not legally designated for

residential use, such as unfinished basements or "middle bedrooms" that lack proper emergency egress.

To provide a clear picture of the conditions some residents face in Remington, a detailed account from a Central Remington resident highlights the severity of the situation. Despite being registered and inspected by the DHCD as of March 2022, the property lacks basic amenities such as a functioning heating system, an oven or stovetop, and any flooring substrate above plywood subflooring. The property has also experienced frequent bedbug infestations, which have forced tenants to replace furniture and wardrobes on multiple occasions. The home has not undergone significant renovations since the last purchase in 2010 for \$10,000.⁴⁴ This individual reported paying a monthly rent of \$500 to live in a home with three to four other tenants, yielding a monthly rent amount of \$2,000-2,500 for the landlord.

Intergenerational Homeowner Preservation. In 2017, GRIA formed a Housing Health and Safety Committee to fundraise and administer critical home repairs for legacy and senior homeowners. While this committee is not currently active, their home repair program was adopted by Central Baltimore Partnership and expanded to the catchment area of this umbrella CSO. The program has facilitated safety upgrades for over three dozen properties, assisting mostly with repairs or replacements with roofs, windows, and heating systems, in addition to accessibility upgrades such as installation of shower grab bars for fall prevention. Eligibility criteria for this program has varied by the source of grant funding but typically includes seniors over the age of 65 and under 80 percent of metropolitan AMI, and legacy homeowners under 60 percent of metropolitan AMI.

Legacy homeownership requires ten years of owner-occupied residency in one property, and proof of deed is required on applications. While this criteria does help target the long-time residents most vulnerable to displacement, follow-ups with applicants have shown that a specific subset of legacy residents are left out: intergenerational families. Two significant hurdles were identified through these application follow-ups. One,

⁴⁴ Land records from SDAT Real Property records. <https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/>

⁴³ See Mesch & Schwirian (1996).

that the process of title transfer to add or inherit properties creates a new deed and land record, resetting the clock for legacy ownership criteria. Two, that many of these families found themselves stuck with a “tangled title.” Property titles become tangled when a property is caught in the probate process after the death of the property owner. Probate may be delayed due to the absence of a will, but also due to financial constraints associated with estate administration such as probate fees and security bonds.

Some families reported being in this estate limbo for years; in addition to the emotional stress this caused them, the lack of clear title prevented them from successfully applying for homeowner tax credits or home repair programs; while many of them wished to continue living in the properties, the costs of upkeep without such programs were often burdensome. Unfortunately, tangled titles also prevent the sale of the property, and thus in some cases have led to abandonment of the property altogether. Members of local legal aid organizations indicated in interviews that while organizations often hold clinics to teach residents how to plan their estates, no known programs existed which provided the financial assistance needed for the final administration and distribution of property assets.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

Remington is grappling with various infrastructure challenges that have impacted residents and businesses. The Sisson Street bridge, an important connector between Lower and Central Remington, was closed in early 2022 due to unsafe conditions. This bridge closure has particularly affected residents without cars. Residents have also reported road issues such as buckling on 26th St and improperly installed bicycle grates causing hazards for cyclists. BGE power outages have caused disruptions to residents and businesses, exacerbated by a lack of communication and updates for affected customers.

In addition to these issues, sewer and water infrastructure in the area is in disrepair, resulting in property damage for residents. Many residents have reported broken water lines and have written to GRIA, requesting liaison help between citizens and city

agencies responsible for fixing broken lines. For example, one resident noted that a city water valve leak is causing rainwater to flow under his house and damage the foundation, also compromising structural integrity of neighboring properties. In another instance, a resident was fined by the city for damage to the sidewalk caused by a city contractor prior to purchasing the property. The lack of attention to these issues by city agencies creates financial and emotional distress to residents, disincentivizing property ownership.

Traffic safety

Traffic safety in Remington is a critical concern for the community, but a challenging issue to quantify. Currently, the neighborhood has one speed camera located on W 28th St, which is situated just past an off-ramp from Interstate 83. However, many other areas of Remington lack basic traffic calming measures, with frequent reports of abandoned cars and crumbling road infrastructure exacerbating the situation. During the study period, a number of serious incidents occurred causing harm both to pedestrians and properties.

Residents have expressed concerns about other aggressive driving behaviors in Remington. For example, Huntingdon Ave's wide lanes provide an environment conducive to speeding and drag racing. Despite flex posts being installed at the intersections of W 28th and W 29th Streets, the stretch of road between W 25th St and W 27th St lacks any barriers or impediments. In 2020, the city installed pedestrian yield signs at the intersection of Huntingdon Ave and W 26th St— a major pathway to and from Margaret Brent Elementary School—but they were repeatedly run over and destroyed. The city's efforts to replace the signs were eventually abandoned.

The only safety measure currently in place at this intersection is a faded crosswalk. Many young school-age children in the neighborhood live on the 2600 blocks of Hampden Ave and Miles Ave, and while crossing guards are stationed at intersections along 26th St in Charles Village, none are stationed in Remington.

Despite reported incidents and concerns expressed by Remington residents to the community association,

implementation has proven challenging. GRIA has submitted numerous requests for traffic calming measures and requested support from elected officials, but the lack of response or progress from city agencies is often perceived as apathy from neighborhood leaders. As one resident pointed out, "it will take a kid getting hit by a car for the *neighborhood* to do something" [emphasis mine].⁴⁵

Physical Accessibility

Remington faces several challenges with physical accessibility. One of the largest issues is the walkability to schools, parks, and social service resources. The closure of the Sisson Street bridge in early 2022 has made it even more challenging for residents to access these resources. Additionally, delays in a planned road diet on 28th St (as an extension to the Big Jump shared-use path) have resulted in a lack of bike and pedestrian safety in the neighborhood. Inaccessibility to adjacent neighborhoods and resources like Druid Hill Park has also been a concern for residents. The City of Baltimore Department of Transportation (2022) found that adjacent residents “are afraid to walk, use a wheelchair or bike from their communities to Druid Hill Park because the roadway is unsafe for these modes of transportation” (p. ES-2).

Moreover, miscommunications and a lack of accountability for city contractors has led to unpermitted road work resulting in unfinished work, blocked access to streets or alleyways, moving cars without notice, road closures with safety redirection for vehicle or pedestrian traffic, damaged property, and improper adherence to Complete Streets and ADA guidelines. These issues have created hazards and barriers for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles, making it difficult for them to navigate the neighborhood safely.

Table 7. Barriers to Homeowner Preservation

Barrier	Description
Aging housing stock	90% of housing stock is over a hundred years old, requiring significant upgrading of electrical, plumbing, and structural systems. Additional burden of retrofitting multi-story rowhomes for disabled or elderly access, and lead paint abatement. ⁴⁶
Property tax burden	Older and low-income homeowners are particularly vulnerable to rising property assessments due to prevalence of fixed incomes and lack of flexible payment plans.
Tangled title transfers	Properties may become “tangled” in probate due to inability to pay estate bond fees or other legal fees involved in estate planning or administration. Eligibility is compromised for tax credits, utility assistance, and home repair programs.
Incomplete or incorrect real property records	Improperly filed real property records (e.g. wrong date of purchase or occupancy status) compromise eligibility for property assistance programs and create challenges to identifying target populations for outreach.

⁴⁶ The neighborhood's designation on the National Register of Historic Places[#] allows for historic tax credits on structural repairs, but aging stock poses significant challenges for home maintenance. Common safety repairs completed or requested through the Safe and Healthy Homes program include roofs, windows, heating systems, electrical upgrades, and structural repairs. Negligent owners of adjoining properties and vacant properties further exacerbate these challenges.

⁴⁵ Email correspondence, December 2021.

Table 8. Barriers to Renter Preservation and Protection

Barrier	Description
Rising rents	The rising costs of property ownership drive up rental prices, leaving financially vulnerable renters in a precarious situation.
Deferred maintenance	Landlords may refuse to perform critical maintenance or provide basic amenities to maximize profits; tenants may be reluctant to self-advocate for fear of eviction or increased rents.
Lead paint enforcement gaps	Despite a 2018 council bill mandating rental inspections for all non-owner-occupied properties, the lead paint health crisis is rampant throughout Baltimore. ⁴⁷

Table 9. Barriers to Economic Stability

Barrier	Description
Reduction in blue collar industry jobs	Unemployment rates among non-college-educated residents have risen in direct relationship to reductions in jobs in construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving.
Lower educational attainment in older workforce	Lack of college degree is associated with high levels of unemployment in Remington.
Under-resourced education system	Funding mechanism through county property tax leaves city schools under-resourced. High presence of youth with cognitive disabilities requiring additional support.

⁴⁷A recent study found just three active code violations in Remington, despite estimating that 27-37% of properties contain lead paint hazards. See Scrivener (2022).

Language barriers Restriction of access to resources and job opportunities for an increasing number of families without English fluency.

Table 10. Cross-cutting Barriers

Barrier	Description
City budget constraints	Reliance on property and income taxes with current tax base strains resources for improved administrative services or amenity provision.
Jurisdictional separation from Baltimore County	Status as an independent city has created an adversarial relationship with bordering counties, leading to a lack of regional cooperation.
Ineffective code enforcement regulations	Vacancy numbers undercounted due to lack of comprehensive definitions. Code enforcement violations not strict enough to motivate absentee landlords.
Aging Physical Infrastructure	Public sidewalks not consistently designed for wheelchair access, and lack of oversight with city's third party contractors has led to noncompliance with ADA standards with street-level utility design. ⁴⁸

⁴⁸Data from numerous email exchanges between GRIA and Baltimore City Department of Transportation between March 2020 and August 2022.

5. Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

As shown from the data presented in Chapter 5, there are many pressing issues surrounding Remington. A few thematic patterns emerged from the quantitative data and were also consistently highlighted as top concerns during interviews with residents and community partner organizations. These key findings, described in more detail below, include: rapid population change and displacement; housing affordability concerns; economic instability; and reduced accessibility to vital resources. These concerns are particularly relevant for long-term residents in Remington but are increasingly affecting a broader range of the population.

Population Change and Displacement

Remington's population is growing, driven largely by moderate to high-income and highly educated residents. However, traditionally vulnerable populations still require assistance programs. The neighborhood has seen a displacement of almost 60% of black residents since 2000, while the Hispanic population has increased fivefold. Spanish-speaking services are necessary to meet the needs of families with low English fluency. The neighborhood is also struggling to retain college students and families with school-age children who once called the community home.

Housing Affordability Concerns

Housing stability is a large concern for any rapidly developing community; in Remington, specific issues include base rent and mortgage affordability, tangled property titles, tax foreclosure, and home deterioration. Rising mortgages and rents have made Remington increasingly unaffordable for current residents, including middle-class renters. Large property value increases are incongruent with income changes, suggesting an unsustainable degree of property speculation that places many residents at risk of displacement or economic strain.

Despite the tightening housing market, abandoned property rates remain stagnant due to ineffective city receivership processes. Legacy homeowners and

intergenerational families are particularly at risk of displacement due to increasing costs of ownership and legal barriers to title transfer. Currently available property tax credit programs are not sufficient for older residents whose incomes are not rising to meet tax increases. Displacement prevention efforts must also consider renters, who make up half of all residents. Renters and homeowners experience challenges unique to their tenure situations, but both groups face housing stability, affordability, and quality issues.

Economic Instability

Remington has experienced large but inconsistent income changes, suggesting a rapidly changing population with multiple turnover cycles in a short time period. Financial assistance enrollment has halved over a ten-year period, but food pantry recipients have almost doubled, indicating that the need for assistance has not significantly decreased, but government programs are increasingly failing to meet the needs of residents. Many legacy residents have limited financial resources or opportunities to bring in more income.

Reduced Accessibility to Resources

Accessibility is a major concern in Remington. Although there is increased car access compared to the city average, residents are twice as likely to walk or take alternate modes of transportation to work, making walkability, bike paths, and reliable nearby transit critical for employment opportunities. Though the area is rich in cultural and natural resources, infrastructure challenges limit access to these important assets. There is a lack of safe and ADA-compliant travel pathways for residents traveling by foot, bicycle, and mobility devices. Many residents are isolated by geographic constraints coupled with city infrastructure challenges such as bridge closures and delayed traffic calming projects.

Priority Needs and Recommendations

To address the community's key vulnerabilities, a series of program and policy recommendations have been selected and grouped into three high-priority needs:

1. Affordable housing preservation
2. Resident stabilization
3. Community empowerment

Affordable housing preservation includes strategies to keep existing residents in their homes and to retain affordability for existing but abandoned housing stock. Resident stabilization includes strategies focused on improving financial stability for individual residents or households through job opportunities or access to existing resources. Community empowerment includes strategies to maintain or grow a sense of place and connectedness between residents.

Within this typology, recommendations fall into two subcategories of programs and policies. Programmatic recommendations include solutions the community can

undertake with grant funding and administrative support, whether through paid or volunteer hours. Policy recommendations are provided to guide community leaders towards advocacy priorities to champion at the local or state legislative levels.

See Tables 11 and 12 for summaries of recommendations and Table 13 for a proposed timeline of implementation, followed by additional details on each recommendation. These priorities were assigned based on availability of existing infrastructure (e.g. a home repair program which is already functioning, if not fully meeting resident needs) and a realistic timeline for implementation.

Table 11. Program Recommendations

Priority Need	Recommendation	Potential Collaborators
Affordable Housing Preservation	Home repair program expansion	Umbrella CSOs (e.g. Central Baltimore Partnership)
Resident Stabilization	Employment matching	Local businesses, city workforce development agency
Community Empowerment	Resource information sessions	Nonprofit service agencies
	Community Center	Church of the Guardian Angel

Table 12. Policy Recommendations

Priority Need	Recommendation	Potential Collaborators
Affordable Housing Preservation	Property tax sale reform	Housing advocacy groups
	Property tax assessment reform	Housing advocacy groups
	Land bank creation	Housing advocacy groups, city council bill sponsors
	Vacancy regulation reform	Code enforcement advocacy groups, city council
Resident Stabilization	Centralized information repository	City council, utility providers (BGE, DPW)
Community Empowerment	Community benefits agreements (CBAs)	Housing advocacy groups, city council

Table 13. Proposed Time Frame for Policy/Program Implementation

Implementation Time	Recommendation
Short-term (1 - 12 months)	Resource information sessions Community benefits agreements Land bank creation Property tax sale reform
Medium-term (1 to 3 years)	Employment matching Centralized information repository Vacancy regulation reform Property tax assessment reform
Long-term (3+ years)	Community center Home repair program expansion

Affordable Housing Preservation

Home Repair Program Expansion. In 2017, GRIA launched its Safe and Healthy Homes program, which utilized multiple streams of grant funding to complete critical safety repairs for elderly and legacy homeowners. This program has now been expanded into a larger Central Baltimore catchment area and is administered by St. Ambrose. To date, the program has assisted dozens of residents, and there is a continued need for it as aging housing stock presents ongoing challenges to home safety and comfort for those with limited means. However, some residents struggle to qualify for the program under current eligibility guidelines, particularly those living in inherited properties or those currently in title transfer limbo.

Limited funding sources and eligible repair lists have also prevented some residents from retrofitting their homes for wheelchair or scooter access or making more comprehensive quality of life improvements. The challenges of current home repair programs can be mitigated through a combination of innovative grant funding for supplemental programs and advocacy on behalf of residents to improve eligibility guidelines and standards for existing programs.

Property Tax Sale Reform. Current property tax payment options in Baltimore only allow homeowners to pay in annual or semi-annual installments, which can be burdensome for those on limited incomes. Additionally, some residents may become ineligible for

financial assistance programs requiring asset limits or means testing, as they must accumulate funds to pay this large expense. A monthly payment plan would offer an easier method for low- and fixed-income residents to budget for their annual tax fee without impacting eligibility requirements for assistance programs.

Tax Assessment Reform. Multiple tax credit programs are currently available to prevent significant tax increases for existing homeowners in rapidly developing neighborhoods. However, some residents have not been able to secure these credits in a timely manner.. Although no relevant bills have been proposed in the 2023 legislative session, legacy families, particularly intergenerational families, could benefit from collaboration with city council members and housing advocacy organizations to reform current assessment appeal processes. This could make it easier for legacy residents to retroactively roll their assessment credit back to the time of their original purchase.

Land Bank Creation. A newly introduced piece of legislation in the 2023 legislative session would facilitate the acquisition of vacant properties into a land bank. This program would limit speculative auctions to allow community groups and individual residents to purchase these properties at an affordable price.

Vacancy Regulation Reform. Vacancy rates in local statistics are often measured by the number of vacant building notices (VBNs) in a given area, but VBNs do not

represent the full extent of vacancy. The threshold for receiving a VBN is high, requiring visibly uninhabitable housing conditions with several uncorrected code violations. A code enforcement advocacy group, led by Peter Duvall of Community Development Services, meets quarterly to discuss vacant and nuisance properties in Remington and surrounding neighborhoods. Some properties have remained on this list for years without being taken over by the city due to problems connecting state and city systems and citation fees that are too low to trigger tax sales or encourage delinquent owners to make repairs.

Improving regulations while establishing a Land Bank, as currently proposed by city council, could help Remington address vacancy and make use of existing housing stock to provide and preserve affordable housing. Incorporating utility and water usage statistics is one proposed regulatory improvement for Baltimore City to detect vacant properties and address vacancy more effectively.

Resident Stabilization

Employment Matching. Address unemployment rates by pairing job seekers with work opportunities, tailoring programs to at-risk populations such as youth, Hispanics, and those without college degrees. Develop partnerships with the Mayor's Office of Employment Development and businesses to facilitate job pairing, skill building, and local hiring incentives.

Centralized Information Repository. Many resources are available to help neighbors facing financial, health, or other life challenges, but finding these resources can be challenging. Currently, information is offered piecemeal through various government or nonprofit websites, and there may not be an online presence for some resources. A more comprehensive community resource guide could help reduce the burden on citizens to locate needed help.

An existing program in New York City distributes a hard-copy resource guide to social work offices and maintains an online version. A 2018 study found this guide to be well-utilized but recommended a more equitable distribution method (Bedell et al, 2019). As a

potential improvement, resource materials could be distributed via USPS to households on a monthly or quarterly basis. This method could be facilitated by collaborating with DPW or BGE to include the materials with utility bills, reducing cost and administrative burden since there is already infrastructure in place. However, this method may not capture renters who have their bills paid directly by property owners, so additional outreach methods may be necessary.

Community Empowerment

Resource Information Sessions. Some vulnerable residents have reported a lack of awareness regarding resources for financial assistance or education on health, financial, or legal topics, while others report difficulties in the application process for these programs. To bridge the gaps in knowledge or access, organize resource clinics held in collaboration with trusted community partners and resource agencies. Potential topics for these clinics include tenant advocacy, homeowner and homestead tax credit, estate planning, utility assistance, and job training.

To accommodate the growing Spanish-speaking population, translation services should be provided at information sessions and for outreach materials. The Church of the Guardian would be an appropriate key partner due to their existing relationships with vulnerable populations and continued provisions to over 100 low-income families with their weekly food pantry.

Community Center. A public community center has been absent from Remington for several decades. Although there is plenty of open green space in and around the area, there is no indoor facility dedicated to programming for youth, adults, and seniors. Kromer Hall, a property owned by the Church of the Guardian Angel, provides limited programming such as weekly food pantry pickups, a low-cost thrift store open two days a month, and occasional giveaways for hot meals and school supplies throughout the year. Kromer Hall previously hosted weekly meals and afterschool programs before the COVID-19 pandemic. The building includes a gymnasium and a commercial kitchen, providing opportunities for programming for multiple

age groups. However, significant capital improvements would be necessary to fully utilize its potential.

Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs). The political willpower generated over GRIA's history has placed the organization in a position of power to negotiate with developers for terms and conditions favorable to the community's long-term needs. GRIA's Land Use Committee (LUC), according to the organization's website, "discusses development, zoning, and transportation issues in the neighborhood, and votes to provide letters of support for required variances, permits, and other land use needs for new businesses, development, and streetscapes. The voting body of the Land Use Committee is composed of neighborhood stakeholders including GRIA board members, Remington residents, business owners, faith institutions, and developers."⁴⁹

Regular attendance of the LUC meetings indicates that developers frequently request letters of support for zoning variances, easements, height allowances, etc. It would greatly benefit Remington if this committee developed more stringent criteria for approving requests and creating legally enforceable contracts such as CBAs to ensure compliance.

Future Research

Housing stability is a major concern for any rapidly developing community, and Remington is no exception. The neighborhood faces several specific challenges, including affordability of base rent and mortgage, tangled property titles, tax foreclosure, and home deterioration. However, obtaining precise data on those who have already been priced out is difficult without ongoing research or more longitudinal data. A number of other topics of concern arose during the collection and analysis of this study data which went beyond the scope of the original research. These topics are included below as potential areas of further research for GRIA or other communities in similar circumstances.

Lead paint registrations and violations. Lead poisoning is a widespread and significant environmental hazard in Baltimore City, with a particularly high risk for children

living in poorly maintained properties with peeling lead paint. Given the age of housing stock in Remington, it is likely that lead paint is present in most homes. To better understand the community's risk factors, it is recommended that further research is conducted on lead inspection policies in collaboration with local officials. This research should also include the collection and cross-referencing of lead inspection certificates and citations for paint peeling to properly identify target homes for advocacy programs aimed at reducing harm from lead poisoning.

Multigenerational Property Preservation Strategies. To prevent displacement and promote intergenerational wealth-building, legacy home preservation programs should be made inclusive of intergenerational property transfers. Current programs often exclude these types of transfers, leaving long-time residents vulnerable to home deterioration and tax sale. Additional research is needed to explore existing programs or land record designations in other cities that address the policy and administrative gaps harming long-term residents in this community.

Robust Housing Market Data. Census data on property values is based on self-reported estimates, which may not be the most reliable source of data. Additionally, city land transfer records only capture the three most recent transfers and are often incomplete. To obtain a more accurate picture of changes and enable comprehensive market analyses, datasets from real estate sites may be more appropriate. However, such datasets are often expensive to obtain. Despite the cost, it may be worthwhile to invest in these resources to properly assess market conditions and the rate of housing turnover in Remington. This will enable more informed decision-making and better allocation of resources towards housing initiatives.

Rent burden. Rent increases have been a concern in Remington for some time, but have accelerated significantly over the past decade. Further research and comprehensive surveying is necessary to develop resiliency strategies targeted at groups most vulnerable to displacement, particularly black residents as this demographic has been most affected to date. The

⁴⁹ <https://griaonline.org/committees/landuse/>

substantial decrease in college-age students is also noteworthy given the neighborhood's proximity to multiple universities. Neighborhood stability depends on the ability both to grow and age in place, which is critical not only for seniors but also for children and youth at critical transition periods, such as entry into grade schools, college, or the workforce.

Accessibility to resources. Remington's central location makes it an attractive neighborhood to reside in. However, for some residents, particularly those without cars, accessing nearby resources can still be challenging. Conducting comprehensive asset mapping, including travel times by foot, bicycle, or public transit, would be beneficial for the community. This type of inventory could inform developers of commercial opportunities and city planners of gaps in services, especially as the neighborhood anticipates additional waves of development. A map-based resource directory could also serve as a valuable tool for community members and social service providers, helping to improve access to necessary resources and enhance community connectivity.

Ongoing Data Scrapes. Measurements of community health are often limited by point-in-time calculations. For instance, census data provides a snapshot of a neighborhood but does not allow for a comprehensive view of its changing dynamics. More robust data would require ongoing data scrapes. Municipal water and property tax bills are accessible through the Baltimore City billing system and can provide insights into housing costs over time.

Tracking water bills, in particular, could offer two key benefits. First, it could help target assistance to families struggling to pay bills. Second, it could help collect evidence of long-term vacancy by flagging bills only incurring minimum service fee charges. This information could help identify candidates for city receivership and contribute to efforts to address the issue of vacant properties in the neighborhood. Tracking property tax bills could also help identify homeowners in need of assistance with homestead tax credit applications.

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