



Sojourner-Douglas College

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Community Update

Mobilizing For Sustainable Development

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Transforming Communities From the Bottom Up



Since its birth during the Civil Rights Movement, Sojourner-Douglas College has held fast to its original mission to help residents gain control over the forces which shape their lives. Now, in light of today's heightened interests in "transformation," S-DC intends to help define this notion as it relates to changing urban communities.

By mobilizing stakeholders around a common vision, identifying and assembling all the necessary technical and financial resources, and being the anchor to sustain the process over time, Sojourner-Douglas College is helping its neighbors write a new chapter on

effective grass roots development. With the College and the resources of numerous partners behind them, the residents can develop and implement their own vision of the future.

To transform a community authentically, a shift away from the traditional top-down paradigm is necessary. The conditions and circumstances facing urban communities today require new approaches and replacement of an economy that does not serve the best interests of working class people.

S-DC's new approach identifies five core values: a comprehensive planning process; a model that will eliminate poverty; new rules of engagement to prevent exploitation of the community's assets by outsiders; resident engagement from the very beginning and at all levels of the process; and a replacement economy based on self-determination.

Sojourner-Douglas College and its community partners have developed a framework grounded in self-help. The aim is to weave the fabric of community with threads of civic engagement, cooperative economics and connectivity among the residents.

Imagine a community in which land use policies benefit residents instead of outside investors. Elected officials are accountable to the people. Career options and livable wages are available for adult populations. Ex-offenders and young Black males can find meaningful jobs and self-employment opportunities.

Necessities such as food, housing, clothing and other commodities are produced by residents and the profits distributed and circulated many times within the community. Capital is available for home-ownership and small business development through a bank or credit union owned by the residents.

Such a community will result in systemic progress. Median incomes will rise, Black unemployment will drop, and Black homeownership will increase. Neighboring communities will purchase their goods and services because of their superior quality, further reinvigorating the local economy. This new paradigm will benefit the many, not just the few. It will create a new sense of pride amongst our children and a firm foundation for the next generation.

Please stay tuned...

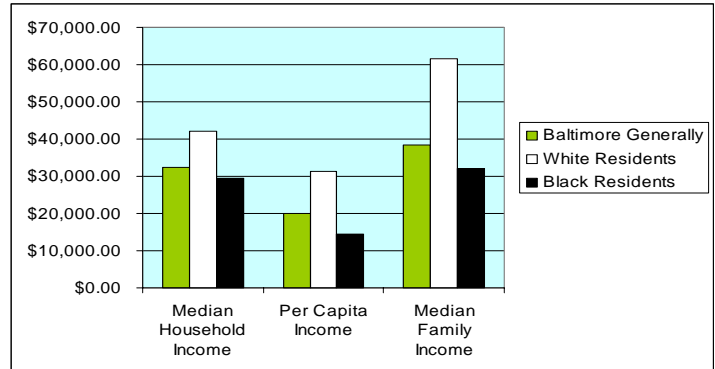
“Top-Down” Model: A Community Development Dilemma

What the Planning Does Not Take Into Account

The Planners say that they want to create in Oldtown

A “mixed use” and “mixed income” community that meets current housing market conditions where current residents, mostly Black and poor, will be joined by new, more upscale, mostly white residents, without addressing the issue of race and ethnicity.

Baltimore Income - American Community Survey 2003



What the Planners do not address are the existing racial realities of living in Baltimore, where

- There has persisted for decades extreme disparities in income and wealth based on race
- Existing housing patterns are racially segregated at a level considered “very high”
- Long established migration patterns of upwardly mobile residents in which financially able Black home buyers are more likely to look outside Baltimore City while the proportion of financially able buyers relocating to Baltimore City are overwhelmingly White

“The Baltimore area's rating was 67.9; ratings over 60 were considered “very high” in the study; it means that ‘over 60% of the members of one racial group would need to move to a different tract for the two groups to be equally distributed.’” *HOW RACIALLY SEGREGATED IS THE BALTIMORE METRO?*, A Working Paper by William P. Klady, Ph.D., GBCHRB Administrator, December 18, 2001, <http://www.gbchr.org/2racseg.htm>



If these existing conditions are not addressed by the Planners for Oldtown, the plans will work as they always have:

- to make Oldtown unsustainable as a “mixed income” community
- to drive poor Black residents away because of the economics, or/to drive upscale White residents away because the Black residents remain along with crime, blight, and declining property values
- a completely gentrified community
- another missed opportunity to transform the existing families
- **And a complete demographic flip in population from a White presence of 2.5% in 2000 to 75% - 90% in 2020**

A "Bottom-Up" Model Resolves the Dilemma



**Oldtown Mall:
Community
Market Place &
Business Hub
of Community
Economy**

- Training for specific number of community residents in the construction trades, e.g., plumbing, brick-laying, carpentry, electrical, roofing, etc. by SDC and its partners
- Reserved space for at least one community enterprise, e.g., a food coop or digital imaging business through a collaborative process
- Equity buy-in opportunity for community using funds raised by the community, matched by City, forming foundation for community-controlled financial institution, e.g., credit union, land trust, etc.
- Turnkey arrangement for mall vendors providing training of community residents in operation of business with opportunity for community buy-out for community residents to own all of mall businesses over time

**Somerset
Homes
Transformed;
*Affordable
Housing
Reinvented***



Transformed Housing moves Public Housing residents to housing choices, including Home Ownership, without their having to move from the community; over time Public Housing is reduced to a minimum of units.

- Design "new" Somerset for eventual home ownership – simple but improvable construction
- Reserve units for 45 families desiring to own a home AND help them secure the income to improve the home and establish a strong, functioning community within the re-developed Oldtown Mall area
- Connect 45 families at a time to the resources to transform their lives
- Arrange to periodically add an additional 45 families until Somerset Homes is completely transformed.

Creating the Economy to Sustain a Community from Major Poverty to No Poverty at All

- Community Economy Modeling Project
- Skill development programs for employment or business creation; such as
 - Nursing Program
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Black Farmers' Initiative
 - Engineering and Innovation
 - Green Curriculum
 - Information Technology
 - Business Management
 - Health Care Management
 - Emerging Growth Industries
 - Public Administration

**Human Development Catalyst
- SDC is the Organizing
Presence for a
Transformational
Community Process**

SDC Role as Change Broker for a Strong Working Community

- Caretaker of Community Vision
- Leadership Development
- Institution Building
- Coordinator for developing Community Assets



Putting in Place What Makes a Community Work : Finding Means to Connect People and for Them to Secure Their Own Interests

- Long-standing education programs within the community focused on the elevation of adults, especially among the Black population
- Community Organizing and Development, e.g., CDC, partnerships with EBCC, local churches, and public housing tenant councils
- Ways and means to equip residents to sustain their own needed services and supports
 - ◊ Leadership Institute
 - ◊ Addictions and substance abuse counseling and treatment services
 - ◊ Wellness Center
 - ◊ Social Work
 - ◊ Urban Planning and Community Development
 - ◊ Political Campaign Management
- History of Community engagement and advocacy

Movin' On Up . . . Not Out

By John H. Morris, Jr.
Sojourner-Douglass College

What have we lost in so many American cities where people who have lived and worked here for generations now find themselves defeated and desolate? More than 30 years ago, George and Louise Jefferson were "movin' on up to the East Side ... to that big deluxe apartment in the sky;" while here in 2008, many Baltimore families are being pushed out of the east side into other areas that are often just as unfriendly. What happened to America?

Perhaps the clue can be found in the proposals before Congress to allow the auto industry to transition to a 21st century economy by eliminating tens of thousands of industrial jobs. The point here is not to decry this plan for economic efficiency. Rather, it is to point out that our notion of economic efficiency and productivity - in any field - necessarily entails more work being done by fewer people and favors people with training and skills. Unfortunately, the generations of unemployed have neither.

Therein lays the conundrum in our quest for economic efficiency. How can we make America work for the growing number of unemployed, unskilled, and inexperienced Americans?

Over the last several decades, America stopped working for generations of families in our cities where poor people have come to congregate. These were the families whose members just a few generations ago, despite the lack of education, had opportunities to find and keep work on which to build a future. Today, we're dealing with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren that have the hardest time sustaining enough hope to even try.

How then do we reignite hope in those for whom it has been so long doused? How do we invigorate hope within an economy transitioning in a different direction?

One such model is the Oldtown Com-

munity Transformation (OTCT) in East Baltimore, where local activists and residents working with Sojourner-Douglass College, are organizing to remake their community into a place where people can come to flourish rather than just survive. The key for them is to build an economy where people can find the kind of work that reshapes their present and future conditions.

OTCT is creating in the Oldtown community a comprehensive micro-economic framework capable of engaging the existing residents in productive economic activity in order to spark dramatic increases in their income and help them move toward wealth creation. Connecting existing residents to economic activities will increase the quality of life in terms of housing, education, health, and other considerations and assure stability in the midst of a changing neighborhood.

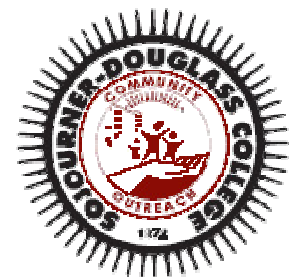
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As we consider investing billions we don't have to save industries that have done nothing to prevent the decay of Oldtowns here and elsewhere in America, let us remember those who are striving to make real again the remarkable promise that people can transform their own lives on hard work.

Imagine one day in the not-too-far-away future that some erstwhile George Jefferson will 'move on up' by remaining in a transformed Oldtown, where he really found his life's fortune. What could be more American than that?

Desired Outcomes/Critical Indicators for Oldtown Neighborhoods

- 80% - 200% increase in Black median income
- Black unemployment drops to a statistical insignificant percentage
- 60% increase in Black home ownership
- 500% increase in Black owned businesses
- Black households spend 25 - 50% of disposable income with Black businesses
- Marginal to non-existent displacement of current residents



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