



## **BELAIR-EDISON NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.**

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2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc. spends a lot of time on individual blocks throughout the neighborhood. Our community organizer takes her cues from residents like Clay Fleming. Concerned about trash, he organized a block meeting and asked BENI to be there to help promote recycling. More than 35 residents showed up, and we sold out of recycling bins.

“... I began to realize the need for stronger leadership... I see trash on the block as indicator ..., and as we continued to meet throughout the summer, I believe that my neighbors began to understand... They began to feel part of this higher standard, and expect more.”

-- Clay Fleming  
4200 Block of Shamrock

In 2009, Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc.'s organizing work shadowed the city's Cleaner, Greener, Healthier and Safer Initiatives, scaling each initiative down to the block level to help build a better Belair-Edison. On the block level, we work with residents to educate and empower them to become effective leaders, solving and resolving their every day concerns.

#### **Cleaner:**

- BENI facilitated the deep-cleaning of over 30 blocks this year; front, back, alleys, and yards. Once they know how it's done, residents will often continue regular clean-ups without our help.
- We identified over 50 "recycling ambassadors" and provided them with tools to teach their neighbors about recycling, eventually reaching hundreds of residents.
- We received an appreciation award from Cleaner Greener Baltimore and were awarded 2 grants from the Baltimore Community Foundation to further our recycling initiative.

#### **Greener:**

- BENI helped to create Belair-Edison's first Community Garden. With some help from neighbors and various city agencies, the "garden father" transformed a vacant lot into a food-producing garden.
- We planted 42 free trees in the neighborhood this year.
- We connected over 150 BE residents with Civic Works Project Light Bulb to exchange their old light bulbs with energy efficient CFLs and install some water saving faucets and showerheads.

#### **Healthier:**

- BENI became a partner of Real Food Farm in Clifton Park to bring local organic affordable produce into the neighborhood.
- Over the summer, we facilitated an "earn-and-learn" bike program providing used bicycles to neighborhood children who earned their bikes through community stewardship. Velocipede, a local non-profit, came to teach the kids how to fix their bikes, making biking more sustainable for them.

#### **Safer:**

- Throughout the spring and summer, we rallied residents to participate in weekly "Good Neighbor Walks" with the BCPD.
- We held 25 block meetings with residents, a venue to share information and connect with one another.
- We helped the 4200 block of Nicholas apply for a Healthy Neighborhood Block Improvement Grant and were able to install porch lights with dusk to dawn sensors on the entire block.



As one of Baltimore's Main Street communities, Belair-Edison has been helping provide resources to the small businesses along our Main Street corridor since 2000. Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc. has helped to connect our business owners to matching funds for improvements, free architectural advice, and free promotions - little acts that have a big impact.

In 2009, BENI provided grant funding through our Main Street program that helped Duka-n-Beauty complete three façade improvement projects, including the installation of a new sign.

"I am so grateful. The sign we put up with BENI's help helped put us on the map. Now, customers can find us."

*-- Ruth Karanja, Owner  
Duka-n-Beauty, 3406 Belair Road*

## **Main Street Accomplishments in 2009**

- Decorated the 20 pedestrian light poles on the Main Street with wreaths, ribbons for the holidays, and holiday banners for Baltimore Main Streets Miracle on Main Street event
- Provided free advertising to 9 Main Street businesses in the Belair-Edison Neighborhood News newspaper
- Created digital advertisements for 6 businesses so that they could take advantage of free digital billboard advertisements
- Awarded a grant from the Maryland Downtown Development Association to redesign the streetscape on the Main Street
- Awarded a grant through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for foot patrol officers on the Main Street in 2010
- Assisted the Department of Transportation with installing new bicycle racks throughout the Main Street

## **Total Building Investments (Public and Private) in 2009**

Total - \$105,972.81 in Main Street building renovations

## **Main Street Funding for Commercial Building Improvements in 2009**

Family Therapy Services - \$11,867.50

Duka-n-Beauty - \$207.50

La'Son Bar and Grille - \$4,250

Duka-n-Beauty - \$348.91

Total - \$16,673.91 in grants provided to local businesses for building improvements

## **Architectural Services**

4 businesses were provided with free architectural service by the Main Street architect.

## **Sales Data**

Only 5 commercial properties on the Main Street were sold in 2009. Lower turnover provides greater stability. The average sales price was \$82.94 per square foot.

## **Rental Data**

The average rent was \$10.20 per square foot per year.

87% of commercial space on Main Street was occupied as of December 2009.

## **311**

326 requests were made to 311 for the Main Street regarding illegal dumping, removal of graffiti, tree pits upkeep, and other maintenance items.

## **Volunteer Hours**

64 hours were volunteered for Main Street activities by residents and business owners.

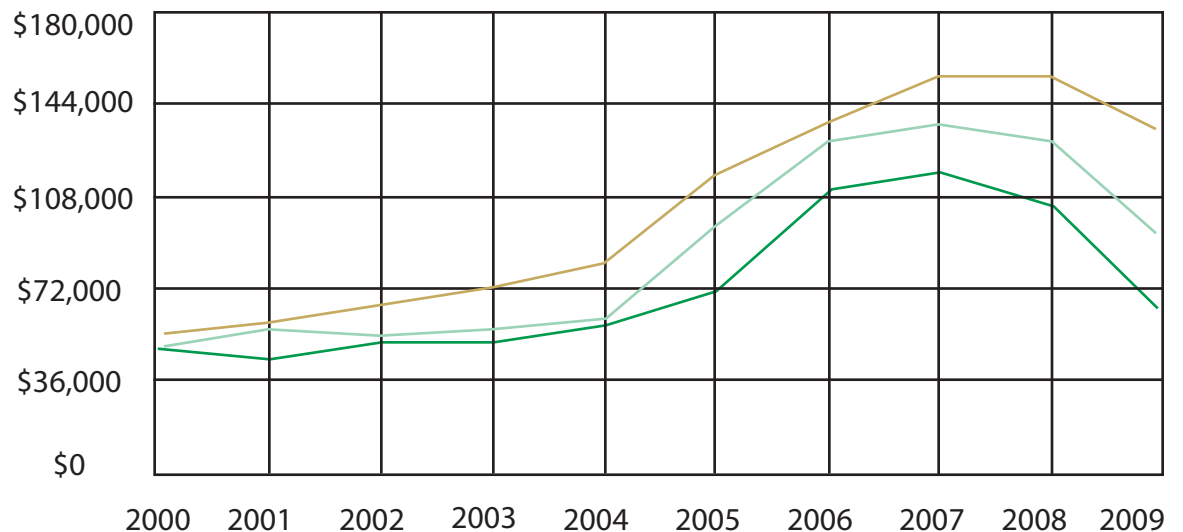
There are no two ways around it - the economic crisis that began at the end of 2008 has wreaked havoc on Belair-Edison's real estate market. Just lookin at the data, median sales price in Belair-Edison dropped 33% since 2008. A majority of the transactions in the neighborhood in 2009 were investor and/or foreclosure-related. While those transactions have driven our market down significantly; they don't tell the whole story.

The market was much slower in 2009. According to the MLS, there were a total of 147 sales transactions in Belair-Edison in 2009 compared to 178 in 2008. Our market peaked with 442 transactions in 2005. On target blocks, there were 36 sales, down from 57 in 2008.

In 2005, the neighborhood's median days on the market reached a low of 14 days but has been increasing ever since. In 2009, houses were sitting for a median 56 days, down slightly from 59 in 2008. Baltimore City averaged 119 days on market in 2009.

What is still evident is that targeting strength works. Belair-Edison Target Blocks remain the strongest segment of our market, driving both sales prices and avoiding much of the investor activity that took place in 2009.

**Median Sales Price Since 2000**



| Year | Belair-Edison | % Change | Target Blocks | % Change | Baltimore City | % Change |
|------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| 2000 | \$58,000      |          | \$59,900      |          | \$65,000       |          |
| 2001 | \$57,580      | -1%      | \$65,000      | 9%       | \$69,000       | 6%       |
| 2002 | \$59,930      | 4%       | \$61,000      | -6%      | \$74,100       | 7%       |
| 2003 | \$59,900      | 0%       | \$63,750      | 5%       | \$81,000       | 9%       |
| 2004 | \$65,000      | 9%       | \$68,000      | 7%       | \$90,000       | 11%      |
| 2005 | \$80,000      | 23%      | \$100,000     | 47%      | \$120,000      | 33%      |
| 2006 | \$115,000     | 44%      | \$130,000     | 30%      | \$140,400      | 17%      |
| 2007 | \$120,000     | 4%       | \$139,000     | 7%       | \$153,000      | 9%       |
| 2008 | \$108,000     | -10%     | \$130,000     | -6%      | \$152,700      | 0%       |
| 2009 | \$72,000      | -33%     | \$99,950      | -23%     | \$135,000      | -12%     |

It makes sense to divide the sales into two categories -- one for foreclosure activity (foreclosure-related) and another for the regular market where most transactions involve owner-occupants paying reasonable prices for well-maintained homes (non-foreclosure-related). If you break down the sales in this manner, we have one real estate market that is clearly in need of intervention and another that is still relatively healthy.

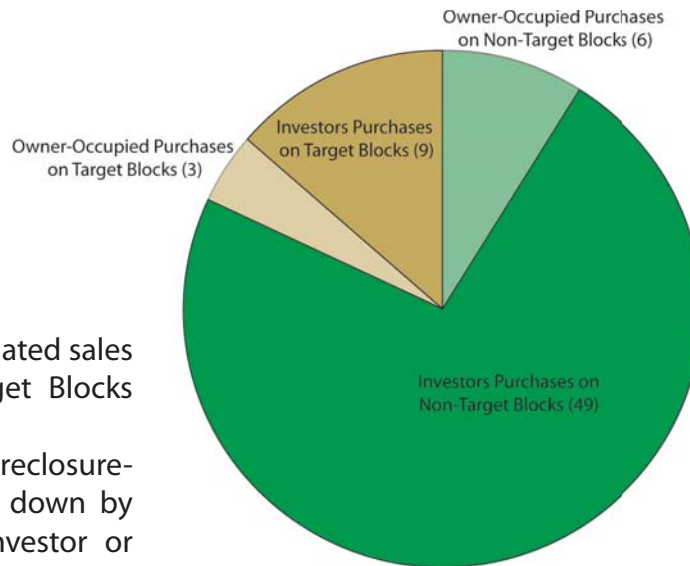
The following breakdown should help explain the impact of foreclosures on Belair-Edison's market.

### 2009 Foreclosure-Related Transactions

Of Belair-Edison's 147 sales, 67 were most likely foreclosure-related (including auctions and short sales); that's 46% of all transactions in 2009. The median sales price for these transactions was just \$50,000.

Most of these foreclosure-related sales were concentrated on non-Target Blocks and were purchased by investors.

In the graph to the right, foreclosure-related sales have been broken down by area and type of purchaser (investor or owner occupant).

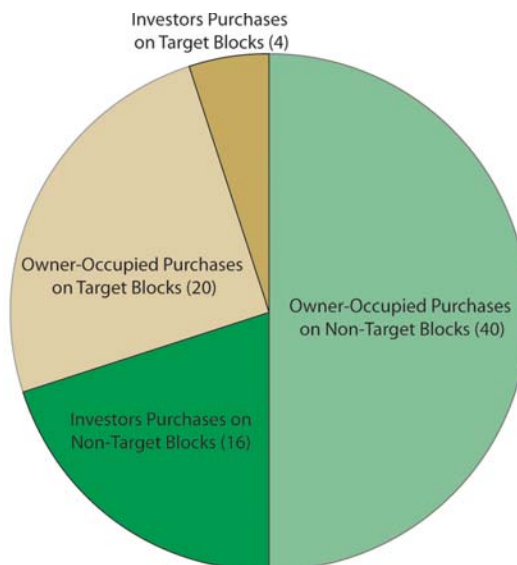


### 2009 Non-Foreclosure-Related Transactions

There were 80 transactions unrelated to foreclosure. As suspected, a higher percentage of these sales occurred on Target Blocks.

The median sales price for this segment of the market was \$112,250, which would indicate values are holding steady between 2008 and 2009.

Investors were a much smaller percentage of this non-foreclosure market. 20 of these sales were investor-related, but 60 of the homes were probably sold to owner-occupants. This means homeowners are still making meaningful investments in our community.





When Mr. Greene started working with Jennifer James in August of 2008, things did not look good. He had recently retired and was not receiving social security. With Jennifer's help, he worked every angle - cutting back on monthly spending, taking in a renter, fighting to get his social security benefits.

Finally, by April of 2009, he finally had a surplus in income. He and Jennifer filled out the HAMP application (Obama's plan), and he was finally approved in June. Mr. Greene was so thankful that he baked Jennifer a birthday cake!

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Ms. Davis was one of Roy Miller's first clients, when he started working with BENI back in 2004. She has been working with him ever since, preparing to buy a home.

She would check in with him periodically, update her file, and amend the action plan. In the fall of 2009, she finally started working with a realtor. In March of 2010, Roy got an elated call from Ms. Davis. She had finally bought a home!



As the real estate data indicates, 2009 was a hard year for homeowners. Foreclosure rates skyrocketed across the country. Baltimore City and Belair-Edison saw a dramatic increase in the number of foreclosure filings last year. Luckily, Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc. was prepared.

In September, we hired a Foreclosure Prevention Specialist to help deal with the increased volume of calls and to help us assist more homeowners in trouble. One goal in hiring someone who would deal exclusively with default and delinquency clients was that we could do more targeted outreach in Belair-Edison, using our block-level organizing model to help educate residents and get them to take action sooner rather than later.

BENI also wanted our other counselors to have more time to see pre-purchase clients and other post-purchase clients. Some post-purchase clients began working with us before they bought their home. After purchasing a home, they often come back for refinance or budget review. Others are looking into the Healthy Neighborhoods Loan Program to finance home improvements. And, some just want someone to review a potential refinance to make sure they are getting the best deal.

### Total Number of Clients Seen in 2009



### Total Number of Belair-Edison Residents Seen in 2009



Even before the sub-prime meltdown, Belair-Edison was particularly hard hit by foreclosures. In 2005, BENI began to proactively address our community's foreclosure problem. We hired a new housing counselor and started offering post-purchase counseling.

That same year, BENI partnered with the Community Law Center to create an early intervention outreach model. We started to reach out to new homeowners with high-risk loans before they got into trouble.

We also stepped up outreach within our neighborhood to let residents know that help was available. Our message was simple: "Call us if you think you are going to miss a mortgage payment."

As a result, we saw the number of auction notices in the community drop and level off. Until the economic crisis reared its ugly head, that is. What we learned in 2009 will help us shape new intervention strategies in 2010.

| Year | # of Auction Notices |
|------|----------------------|
| 2000 | 199                  |
| 2001 | 299                  |
| 2002 | 286                  |
| 2003 | 265                  |
| 2004 | 245                  |
| 2005 | 157                  |
| 2006 | 144                  |
| 2007 | 181                  |
| 2008 | 176                  |
| 2009 | 296                  |

BELAIR-EDISON NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.  
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Lisa M. Carter  
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Chad Hayes  
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Jennifer James  
Homeownership Coordinator

Florence Kreidler  
Executive Assistant

Roy Miller  
Senior Homeownership Coordinator

Mary Warlow  
Director of Programs and Marketing

Leanna Wetmore  
Community Organizer

Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)3 that works to foster an environment in which residents, business owners, and stakeholders feel confident to invest their time energy and money.

We would like to thank all of the funders who helped support our mission and our program activities in 2009:

Abell Foundation  
 Baltimore City CDBG  
 Baltimore Community Foundation  
 Baltimore Main Streets  
 Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative  
 Bank of America Charitable Foundation  
 Citi Foundation  
 Goldseker Foundation  
 Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc.  
 Initiative for a Cleaner, Greener Baltimore

Lockhart Vaughan Foundation  
 M&T Charitable Foundation  
 MD Department of Housing and Community  
 Development (HOPE)  
 PNC Financial  
 SEEDCO  
 Wachovia  
 Westview Savings Fund  
 And Other Contributors

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of June 30, 2009 and 2008\*

| ASSETS                                  | 2009           | 2008           |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Cash                                    | \$326,884      | \$284,305      |
| Grants Receivable                       | 135,000        | 34,317         |
| Contributions Receivable                | 63,315         | 20,000         |
| Accounts Receivable                     | 140            | 1,960          |
| Property and Equipment                  | 89,994         | 84,588         |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                     | <b>615,333</b> | <b>425,170</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>     |                |                |
| Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses   | \$33,939       | \$21,573       |
| Refundable Advances                     | 10,775         | 25,655         |
| Mortgage Note Payable                   | 14,388         | 15,386         |
| Net Assets                              | 556,231        | 362,556        |
| <b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b> | <b>615,333</b> | <b>425,170</b> |

\*As reported in BENI's 2009 audit by Michael D. Sisk & Company, PC.



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