

Strategic Visioning Session Recap

PSO Neighborhood | Urban Strategies, Inc.



At Harlem Children's Zone



Attendees

The Strategic Visioning session convened **20+ participants** for a conversation about their vision for the Perkins Somerset Oldtown neighborhood, including:

- **4** community residents
- **2** public sector partners
- **13** nonprofit partners



Attendee	Organization
Aaron Trunzo	City Springs / Elev8 Baltimore
Barrington Branch	Baltimore City Dept. of Social Services
Alicia Jones	Restorative Response Baltimore
Denise Street	Housing R.A.R.
Meg Ward	Living Classrooms
Denise Street	Living Classrooms
Wesley Jameson	MissionFit Inc.
Tiffany Sneed-Rose	Family League of Baltimore
Thairh Brown	Community resident
Jennie Brun	Community resident
Cassandra James	Community resident
Lemerce McCain	Community resident
Jacob Milton	MOCFS
Dayonda Davis	USI

Our Strategic Visioning workshop helped us co-create a draft North Star and preliminary strategic priorities



Draft North Star

By 2036, the PSO neighborhood will be a place where every child has access to **a) a great school where they feel like they belong, b) updated technology, c) and the support they need to succeed**. Young people are **proud to grow up here and come back**, families earn more, and get the job training they need to get ahead. Residents of all ages in PSO are connected to the **services and resources that make this a safe, healthy, and welcoming community** for everyone.

ENOUGH Result Areas	Preliminary Strategic Priorities
High-Quality Childcare and Education	Empower students and parents through incentivized family engagement and robust wrap-around services to drive daily attendance to 95% and cap chronic absenteeism at 20%
Economically Secure Families	Nourish the neighborhood by broadening access to fresh produce and healthy foods for 100% of residents , utilizing local farmers markets and buddy system grocery pick-up to directly reach residents
Healthy Families	Drive economic mobility by establishing a community career center that provides expert instruction, industry-relevant training, and direct pathways to living wage employment
Safe and Thriving Communities	Cultivate healthy futures by expanding summer and year-round youth initiatives at City Springs, local libraries, and parks to foster student interest in health and sustainability through connections to healthcare, homesteading, and local green spaces

USI and partners made progress in the session toward the FY27 ENOUGH application—and toward longer-term NAP development



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Progress on FY27 ENOUGH application

- **Built QB capacity** by serving as connector across neighborhood partners and building shared perspectives on community data
- **Strengthened relationships with ENOUGH partners**
 - Generated momentum for partners to lead future initiatives by **identifying strengths (and challenges)** across the group
 - Laid **groundwork for successful shared governance** structure
- Demonstrated **clear roles and leadership opportunities for community members** to participate in plan design and decision-making



Progress on Neighborhood Action Plan

- **Developed a draft North Star** in collaboration with neighborhood partners and residents
- **Generated and prioritized preliminary strategic priorities** for all four ENOUGH Result Areas, grounded in a shared view of community needs and assets
- Brainstormed initial ideas for **new programs and services (and existing ones that can be expanded)** to align with top priorities

Reference and notes

See all photos from the session [here](#)

Reference: Objectives and agenda for the session

Objectives

- Understand what would it take to truly reduce childhood poverty in the PSO footprint
- Reach a shared understanding of PSO's **top needs**—and our partnership's **vision for the future**
- Brainstorm **strategic priorities for our neighborhood** based on these needs and vision

Agenda

Timing	Session	Focus areas
9:30 – 10:20	Welcome and Context	Introductions, norms, overview of PSO / ENOUGH, and session goals
10:20 – 10:50	North Star	Define our collective goal for our partnership's work in the neighborhood
10:50 – 12:15	Top needs and strategic priorities	Data walk, breakout group discussions, and share outs
<i>30-min lunch</i>		
12:45 – 1:00	Voting exercise	As a group, identify top priorities for community needs
1:00 – 2:00	Capacity and assets for implementation	Capacity within our partnership to achieve our strategic priorities
2:00 – 2:30	Decision-making	Proposed decision-making framework and governance structure
2:30 – 3:00	Closing	Follow-up expectations and next steps

Notes: Points of Pride in PSO

- The way people take care of each other
- New Development & Green Space
- Significant growth & investment
- Community school partnerships
- New school
- PSO Youth Council
- New attractive housing
- I am proud that there are programs and opportunities to help the PSO residents, constantly improving
- I'm proud of the community's resilience to continue to adapt to the new rules and regulations. Especially because it's really hard to be flexible
- Understanding with so many changes and challenges that specifically attack our community
- Robert Poole connecting with residents, getting to know them on a more personal level.
- The community, most residents I've spoken to are understanding and help each other out when someone is lost or needs help
- The playground
- The businesses that are opening up
- Intentionality within our community
- NEW Home

[Link to Points of Pride Notes - Here](#)

Notes: North Star input (1/2)

What do you wish to see in your neighborhood?

- Technology, especially for kids and education
- Safe haven for economic growth, community engagement, and quality of life through public and private services
- Increased median incomes, especially in single parent households thru workforce development
- All kids ages 0–5 have access to quality childcare and/or home visit programs
- Teaching healthy lifestyles and workforce development through schools
- City Springs school will improve graduation rates and reduce chronic absenteeism through new, functional space; holistic services for kids + families
- The beauty and the pride of not just the neighborhood but the families and kids that came from it, because of the opportunities that are being put in place for them
- By 2036, City Springs will have an average daily attendance rate of 95%+ and a chronic absenteeism rate of less than 10% by providing an engaging school environment with an abundance of academic and enrichment opportunities and afterschool programs
- Over the next decade the PSO community will be better equipped to advocate for innovative change that is relevant to their needs by passing down the current lessons/outcomes of the ENOUGH work to create a continuum of creative solutions and answered inquiries
- Better childcare/educational resources and development programs
- More unity
- Safer communities

Notes: North Star input (2/2)

What do you wish to see in your neighborhood?

- Community gardens
- Access to high speed programs
- Art programs
- Focus youth
- By 2036 the neighborhood will be thriving with healthy innovative families by implementing these goals within the school agenda
- By 2036, neighborhood commitment and reliable programs
- By 2036 the neighborhood will be safe and engaging for the children in the PSO footprint by holding more engaging activities
- By 2036 PSO will be a place that young people are proud to live and want to return to by engaging young people all day with positive role models and community
- By 2036 the neighborhood would make others feel welcome, comfortable
- The neighborhood will be known as an area in which families are able to pay their rent and bills and connect with their neighbors.
- The community will feel more stable and connected to pursue their passions.
- By 2036, the neighborhood will have more resources to eliminate ISS & have an IEP for every student to meet their needs
- Safe Haven for economic growth, technology, community engagement, and enhancement of quality of life
- Private and public sectors
- [Link to North Star Inputs - Here](#)

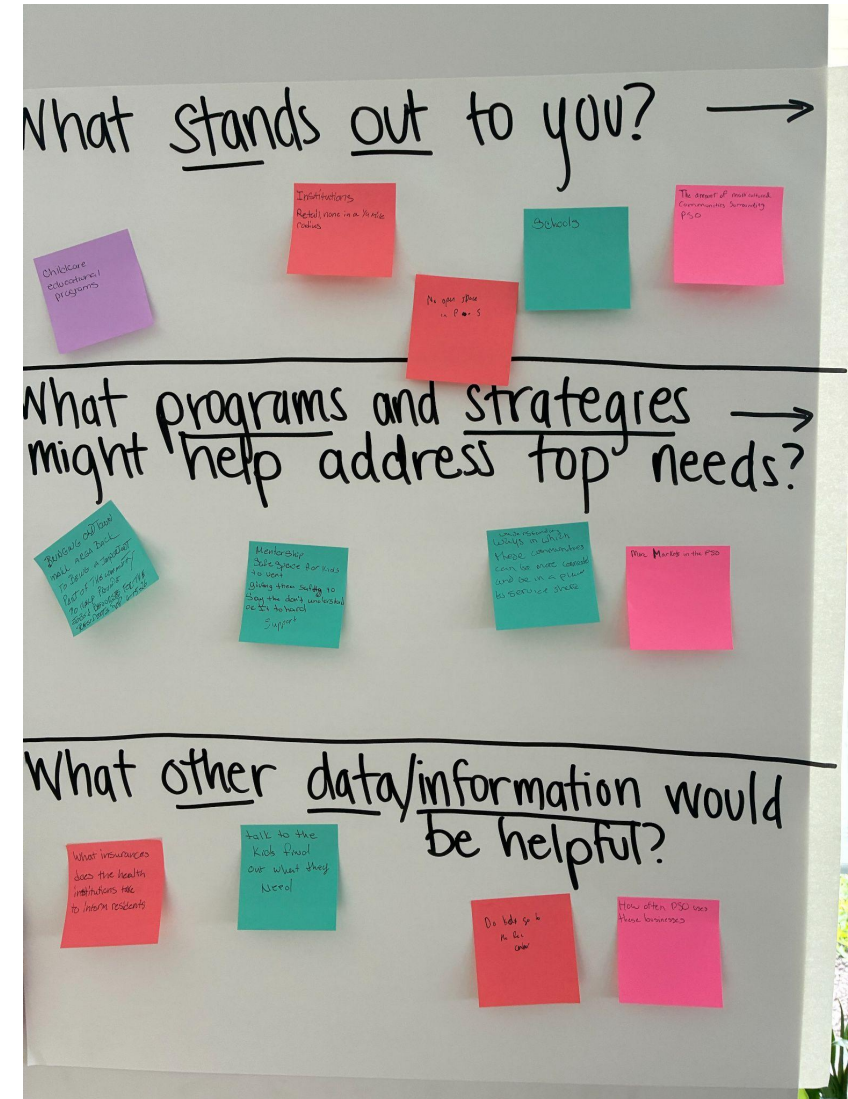
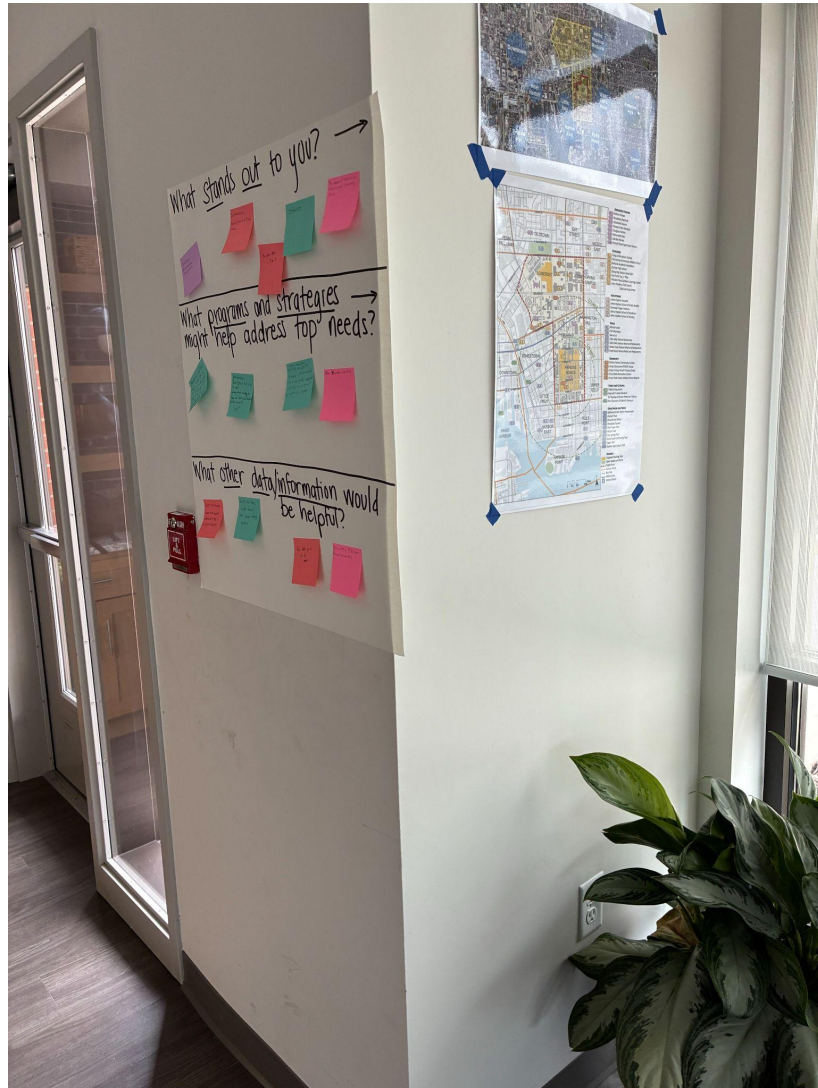
Notes: Strategic priority brainstorm and prioritization exercise



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ENOUGH Result Areas	Preliminary Strategic Priorities	Votes received
High-Quality Childcare and Education	Increase daily attendance to 95%+ and decrease chronic absenteeism to 20% or less through high-quality afterschool programs and family engagement + incentives	7
	Strengthen the elementary-middle-high school pipeline through increased communication and awareness of high school options	6
Economically Secure Families	Create access to job training, opportunities, and living wages through a community job center with quality instructors & relevant curriculum	18
Healthy Families	Expand access to healthy food and fresh produce	9
	Create more community hubs to increase family dynamics	1
	Student exposure to homesteading, healthcare jobs, and green spaces in footprint	6
	Less screen time for kids and more opportunities to connect	3
Safe and Thriving Communities	Establish neighborhood watch program w/ diff types of residents	5
	Establish/expand Neighborhood Association	4
	Summer or all-year youth programs at City Springs, libraries, and parks	6
	Fresh food supplied to residents through farmers markets + buddy pick-up	8
	Job trainings offered by Baltimore orgs who offer living wages	3

Data walk: Neighborhood map (station 1/5)



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Data walk: Assets and challenges (station 4/5)

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We have also identified several challenges facing our community

Key challenges	How this challenge impacts our community
Insufficient supply of affordable, high-quality early childcare	→ Limits school readiness, parental employment, and long-term child development
Limited access to primary care and reliance on emergency rooms	→ Lead to poorer health outcomes and preventable healthcare crises
Chronic physical and mental health conditions, including substance use disorder	→ Reduce general wellbeing, stability, and residents' ability to thrive; contributes to high rates of crime
Safety challenges driven by high rates of crime and environmental conditions	→ Contributes to low perceptions of safety and chronic disinvestment
Limited grocery stores and access to fresh, affordable, and nutritious foods	→ Contributes to poor health outcomes and food insecurity
Resource strain on community organizations	→ Limits service capacity, effectiveness, and long-term community impact, despite local energy and dedication
Psychological stress, social isolation, chronic economic strain, and reduced institutional trust	→ Undermine wellbeing, social cohesion, and engagement with opportunities

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We have identified several assets that represent our community's greatest strengths

Key assets	How this asset enables impact in our community
Head Start and Pre-K programs	→ Support early childhood learning and Kindergarten readiness
Afterschool programs, tutoring, college readiness supports, and extracurriculars (through schools and programs like Living Classrooms)	→ Provide developmental supports, opportunities, and pathways that channel youth energy and creativity and improve youth outcomes
Johns Hopkins	→ The Hospital, Children's Center, and Community Physicians provide critical health access points, and Johns Hopkins is by far the largest local employer
Recreational and community spaces, including the Chick Webb Recreation Center, parks, and places of worship	→ Foster connection, belonging, recreation and health, and community resilience
Housing Authority of Baltimore	→ Affordable housing stability and access to resident support services
Community identity, resilience, leadership, creativity, and power	→ Drive collective action, local solutions, and sustained community change

What stands out to you?

Handwritten notes on sticky paper:

- A lot of health and safety
- Lack of early childhood support & variety of access - high cost primary care, pediatric, etc.
- Resource strain - health care, mental health, etc.
- Healthcare access for all - mental health, substance use, etc.
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What programs and strategies might help address top needs?

Handwritten notes on sticky paper:

- Support mental health services - through schools, community centers, etc.
- Collaboration of local agencies to help the community - through schools, community centers, etc.
- Limited resources to primary care and emergency rooms
- Limited specialty services and access to them
- Healthcare access for all - mental health, substance use, etc.
- Healthcare access for all - mental health, substance use, etc.
- Healthcare access for all - mental health, substance use, etc.

What other data/information would be helpful?

Handwritten notes on sticky paper:

- Do we have data on community health and safety?
- Healthcare access for all - mental health, substance use, etc.
- Healthcare access for all - mental health, substance use, etc.
- Healthcare access for all - mental health, substance use, etc.

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What stands out to you?

body

Security is a key need to secure community engagement

Security

Interagency efforts for children's security in the urban environment

Shooting, rape, and other crimes I would like to see more strongly than others

The ask for activities & the ask for information

What programs and strategies might help address top needs?

After School Programs (mentoring)

Open House in City Parks Plan

gracey fresh food

Adult Resource Voucher Program (for services to the community)

Checklist a program that allows for case management for people with disabilities and the vocational and disability needs of others

More security School Safety Cameras

Small scale mental security center and resident engagement already launched

Small security center (community center or church) would be good

Building upon programs would help address the many different things. Security for the least vulnerable

On-site police station for street level

Mediators are people who bring help people connect together for justice. Safety, not danger to continue to do this

What other data/information would be helpful?

Mapping out where school programs and stays at/ stay on law

Walking over what the people would do there

more connection to city resources to buy property - buy one block

What resources are available to address engagement

Security team and a separate future team

What programs are residents aware of & how far to participate?

Homebuyers Program Financial Literacy