



Grow Baltimore

Brief #3: Why People Move to and from
Baltimore City

May 2015



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Introduction

This is the third research brief in a series about migration to and from Baltimore City which focuses on the factors that influence the decision to move.

In 2011, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake established the Grow Baltimore initiative and set a collective goal of increasing the city's population by 10,000 families by 2020. For Baltimore, like many other US cities on the eastern seaboard, such a goal is ambitious because it would reverse nearly 6 decades of population loss. However, since 2000, Baltimore has shown signs of being well-poised to grow so that the goal has the potential of being realized.

The Grow Baltimore Initiative aims to amplify the "pull" factors that both attract people to the city and retain the current population while also addressing and reducing the "push" factors that make the city less appealing. The purpose of this series of briefs is to help all stakeholders in Baltimore (public agencies, foundations, businesses, community organizations and residents) understand the trends that are already working to attract new residents to Baltimore and better identify the reasons why people are moving out.

Data Sources

In order to identify the reasons why people choose to move to or from Baltimore, this brief draws on multiple sources of information. This research particularly draws on the voices and opinions of actual residents and recent migrants to and from Baltimore City. Many readers will find their own stories of why they themselves chose to move to or out of Baltimore based on the findings in this brief.

Key Findings

Migration Theory & Overview

- There are 3 elements common to many theories of migration: Economic & Human Capital, Social Capital, and Amenities.
- People make migration decisions during key decision-points, such as after marriage, children, etc.

Migration in the U.S. Generally

- The most common reason people move is to acquire a better apartment or house (nearly 15% of moves); the percentage of movers seeking cheaper housing and housing closer to work increased slightly between 1999 and 2013.
- People who rent, are unemployed, have at least some college education, and/or are under 44 years old are more likely to move.
- People who are African-American, Hispanic, foreign-born or have at least one child are slightly less likely to move.

Migration to and from Other U.S. Cities

- Studies suggest that family formation poses a major migration decision-point for urban residents.
- Although new parents in DC were 10% more likely to leave the city within four years, parents who do stay beyond 4 years and/or have more than one child were more likely to stay for the long term.

Migration to and from Baltimore City

- 38% of residents anticipate moving out of Baltimore City within 3 years.
- 20% of Baltimore City public elementary school students who do not participate in the Free and Reduced Meal program transfer to other MD public schools each year.
- Key Pull factors to Baltimore City: unique, affordable housing, a strong sense of community and walkability to amenities and work.
- Key Push factors from Baltimore City: daily stressors such as litter, parking, property crime and vacant housing; high property taxes and insurance rates; poor performing public schools and lack of information about school choice; and few market-rate housing choices for new retirees.
- 5 key life moments for Baltimore migrants: entering college, changing jobs, household formation, child changing schools, and retirement.

This brief is organized around the following topics:

1. *Theories of Migration*

Question: **How do theories of migration categorize the factors that influence the decision to move?**

Sources: Literature review

2. *Reasons for Moving Nationally and in Other Cities*

Question: **Is the migration experience in Baltimore similar to national trends and/or other urban areas?**

Data Sources: National studies as well as findings from migration studies in other cities; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1999 and 2013

3. *Reasons for Moving to and from Baltimore City*

Question: **How likely are Baltimore residents to move and what are the reasons for moving?**

Data Sources: 2009-2013 Annual Baltimore City Citizen Survey, 2014 BNIA-JFI Grow Baltimore Web Survey

4. *Push and Pull Factors for Baltimore Migrants*

Question: **What are the specific push and pull factors for recent migrants?**

Data Sources: BNIA-JFI sponsored two focus groups with current and former Baltimore City residents.

Theories of Migration

Although the decision to move is based on individual or household choice, there are commonalities behind the reasons for moving which follow basic theoretical principles and form the major determinants for migration. The earliest theories of migration place heavy emphasis on economic influences where individuals migrate to areas with higher wages to stabilize household financial situations¹. Later theories place a higher emphasis on a more comprehensive set of reasons where people migrate to enjoy opportunities (higher pay, better climate, social acceptance) and to avoid hardships (unemployment, poor quality housing, crime)². Economist Richard Florida's *creative class theory*, for example, suggests that urban growth depends on attracting creative people who want talent

¹ For an overview of the subject, see Molloy, Raven et al., 2011, [Internal Migration in the United States](#), *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Volume 25, Number 3, specifically the section "Determinants of Internal Migration" on page 181. For a historic source, see Ravenstein, E. G., 1885, [The Laws of Migration](#), *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 48, No. 2.

² For example, Lee, Everett, 1966, [A Theory of Migration](#), *Demography*, Vol. 3, No. 1.

(human capital), tolerance (social capital), and technology (amenities)³. These three elements appear in many theories of migration:

- (1) Economic and human capital: investable resources and richness of skills in the local labor force.⁴
- (2) Social capital: interpersonal networks and common civic values⁵
- (3) Amenities: attributes that contribute to quality of life, such as good schools, clean parks, and quality housing.

These theories introduce the idea of positive and negative influences on migration. Positive influences are “pull” factors, also referred to as attraction or retention factors depending on context. Locations with an abundance of the elements important to the decision to move (real or perceived) will attract or pull potential migrants towards those places. Negative influences are “push” factors since they make individuals want to move out. Locations with low levels of economic, human and social capital (real or perceived) will “push” potential migrants out.

Figure 1: Elements Common to Multiple Theories of Migration

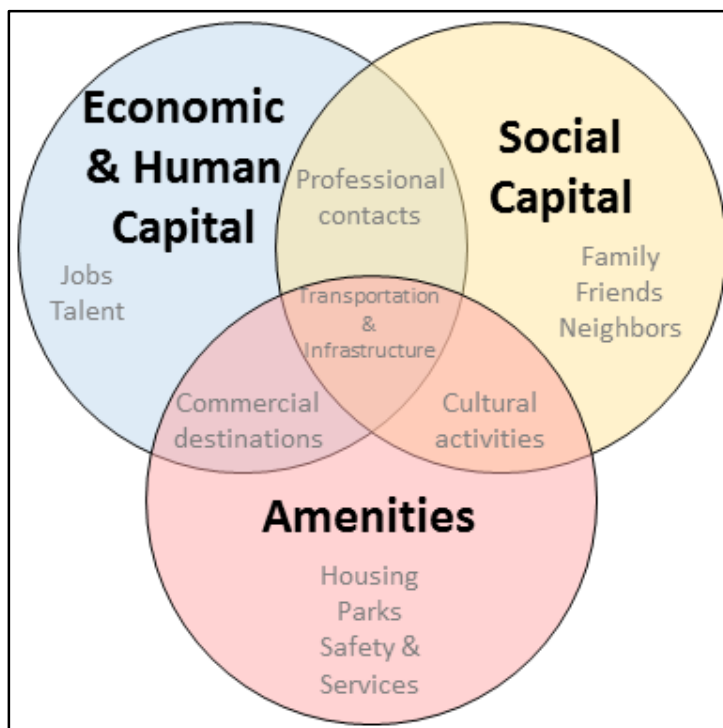


Figure 1 illustrates the elements common to theories of migration and identifies their key intersections. Many attraction and retention factors lie at the intersection of the major elements, such as jobs, housing, friends and family, cultural activities and transportation and infrastructure. As will be described in more detail below, data collected from current and previous Baltimore City residents provide further evidence that an abundance of the three common elements in Figure 1 pulls people to the city and lack of any of these elements pushes people out of the city. The next section, which examines the reasons that people move nationally and in specific other cities, is followed by a section focused on Baltimore City.

Reasons for Moving Nationally

To put the reasons behind why people move to or from Baltimore in context, national trends are first important to understand. Based on the results of a U.S. Census Bureau survey administered in 1999

³ Florida, Richard, 2003, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*, Basic Books.

⁴ Oxford English Dictionary entry for “human capital” (<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/89262>)

⁵ Oxford English Dictionary entry for “social capital” (<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/183739>)

and again in 2013, respondents across the country were asked to name their top reasons behind their most recent move. Nationally, wanting a better home remained the top reason in both years. However, respondents in 2013 were more concerned about the cost of housing and commute time to work than respondents were in 1999. Table 1 summarizes the results of the survey.

Table 1: Reasons for Moving in the US, 1999 and 2013

Reason	1999	2013
Wanted new or better home / apartment	20.8%	14.8%
Wanted cheaper housing	6.0%	8.3%
To be closer to work / easier commute	3.1%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1999 and 2013

These top reasons for moving only account for approximately 30% of all possible explanations of why people move in the US. Analysis of three decades of data (1980 to 2010)⁶ from the annual Current Population Survey (CPS) show that the following personal characteristics generally increase the likelihood of migration: renting, being unemployed, having at least some college education, and being less than 44 years old. Existing residents who are black, Hispanic, foreign-born or have at least one child are slightly less likely to migrate.

Reasons for Moving in Other Cities

National characteristics for the reasons for moving play out slightly differently among residents of and potential migrants to urban areas. Recent research on migration in Washington, DC⁷, shows that getting married or being in the highest income quintile increased the chance that a resident would stay in the city. New parents, on the other hand, were 10% more likely to leave the city within four years than non-parents. However, parents who stayed more than four years or who had more than one child were more likely to stay in the city than non-parents. The author of one study concluded that “family formation matters greatly in anchoring households to neighborhoods”⁸. Aside from personal characteristics, certain neighborhoods in DC attracted and retained families better than other neighborhoods.

Research focused on millennials in Philadelphia⁹ also revealed parenthood as a key migration decision-point, but paints a starker picture. More than half of respondents (56%) would not recommend the city as a place to raise children and half of the respondents did not expect to still be living in Philadelphia in

⁶ Molloy, Raven et al., 2011, “Internal Migration in the United States”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Volume 25, Number 3.

⁷ Moored, Ginger & Metcalf, Lori, January 15, 2015, [DC Parenthood: Who Stays and Who Leaves](#), Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Government of the District of Columbia.

Taylor, Yesim, January 28, 2015, [Who stays in the District? Who leaves? Preliminary findings from DC tax filers from 2004](#), Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Government of the District of Columbia.

⁸ Taylor, 2015 (ibid.)

⁹ The Pew Charitable Trusts, January 21, 2014, [Millennials in Philadelphia A Promising but Fragile Boom](#). The research focuses on individuals aged 20 to 34 years old.

ten years. Their anticipated moves out of the city were prompted by concerns over schools, public safety, and jobs.

Reasons for Moving to and from Baltimore City

The national and urban determinants of migration help place the experience in Baltimore into broader perspective. While some migration issues are similar to other cities in the US, there are some reasons that are unique to Baltimore. This section focuses the key sentiments and reasons for people moving to and from Baltimore City by drawing on three data sources: 1) the 2013 Baltimore City Citizen Survey (BCCS), 2) BNIA-JFI’s Grow Baltimore 2014 web survey and 3) focus groups conducted with current and former Baltimore City residents.

Resident Sentiments on Moving in Baltimore

Conducted annually between 2009 through 2013 by the University of Baltimore’s Schaefer Center for Public Policy, the Baltimore City Citizen Survey (BCCS) offers findings relevant to migration opinions for Baltimore residents. Consistently from 2009 through 2013, about one third (33% to 38%) of survey participants reported they were either likely or very likely to move out of the city in the next three years (See Table 2). Since the BCCS is administered to current residents, the reasons why a person might move is based on the combination of “push” factors out of the City and “pull” factors that make other locations more attractive. In 2013, respondents who expected to leave stated their top reasons were the crime rate (15%), pursuit of another job (13%) and high property taxes (10%).

Table 2: Likelihood of Moving Out of Baltimore in the next three years

Likelihood	Percent
Very likely or likely	38%
Not likely or not at all likely	60%

Source: Baltimore City Citizen Survey 2013

Table 3: Reasons for Leaving Baltimore

Reason to Leave	Percent
Crime rate is too high	15%
Pursue another job	13%
Taxes are too high	10%
Change	5%
Poor quality public schools	5%
Family	4%
Pursue an education	4%
Cost of living is too high	4%
Other	19%

Source: Baltimore City Citizen Survey 2013

Regardless of whether a move is imminent, residential perceptions on the quality of life in Baltimore may have indirect effects on the decision to move. Illegal drug use and violent crime were stated as the most serious quality of life issues in the city. When asked about improving life in Baltimore, a quarter (25%) of all respondents in 2013 chose reducing crime and improving safety as the most important issue. The second and third most important issues were to improve housing (13%) and lower taxes

(13%). Almost half of city residents (48%) felt the quality of city schools was fair or poor; and nearly four-fifths (73%) thought the availability of quality jobs was fair or poor.

Satisfaction with city services can also influence the decision to move. The most recent survey shows a significant decrease in satisfaction with Baltimore City services as a whole, from 48% of residents satisfied in 2011 to only 38% of residents satisfied in 2013. In particular, less than a quarter (24%) of respondents rated the city’s cleanliness as good or excellent.

Despite these potential push factors, there are strong reasons that continue to retain Baltimore residents. More than a third of survey respondents (36%) stay in the city to be close to friends and family and 8% stay because of a strong sense of community. Programs designed to increase the quantity and quality of social connections residents enjoy may increase the likelihood that those residents continue to live in the city.

Table 5: Single Most Important Issue for Improving Life in Baltimore City

Issue	Percent
Reduce crime / improve safety	25%
Improve housing	13%
Lower taxes	13%
Improve education	9%
Better employment opportunities	8%
Increase cleanliness	5%
Political leadership	4%

Source: Baltimore City Citizen Survey 2013

Table 4: Why Residents Stay in Baltimore

Reason	Percent
Proximity to family and/or friends	36%
Affordable housing prices	11%
Good city	10%
Neighborhoods/sense of community	8%
Strong job market	6%
Always lived in Baltimore	5%
Cannot move	3%
Other	7%

Source: Baltimore City Citizen Survey 2013

Explaining Migration to, from, and within Baltimore City

Although nearly one third of current Baltimore residents state that they are considering a move in the next 3 years according to the BCCS, not all of them will actually move. The survey also does not capture the opinions and reasons of residents who have already moved out of Baltimore. In order to collect information on movers’ priorities, perceptions and reasons for moving, an online web survey and focus groups were conducted to specifically get the opinions of recent Baltimore migrants.

From October 16, 2014 to November 15, 2014, BNIA-JFI conducted a web survey in both English and Spanish with targeted as well as “snowball” outreach¹⁰ to City and surrounding county residents, with particular emphasis on finding those who had moved in the last three years. Of the 834 responses to the survey, 571 were sufficiently complete to be included in the analysis. As Table 6 shows, the largest

¹⁰ The survey employed a “snowball” sampling technique. The survey was distributed via email and social media. On October 20th, the mayor’s office supported the recruitment effort by ‘tweeting’ the survey link. Every person who received the survey link was asked to circulate it widely. This approach successfully attracted responses outside of BNIA-JFI’s immediate network of contacts. While the technique allows for valid analysis of the responses themselves, it does not allow for statistical inferences about residents of the Baltimore area more generally.

number of survey respondents (26%) selected *quality of life* as the primary reason for their move. *Personal* reasons such as changes in marital status were the second most common reason for moving (18%).

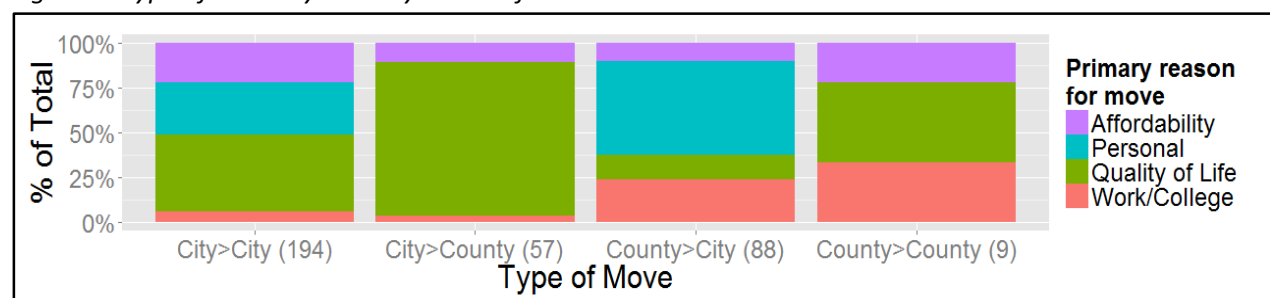
Table 6: Primary Reasons for Move According to Web Survey Respondents

Primary Chosen Reason for Move	Respondents	
	Count	Percent
<i>Quality of life</i> : bigger house or apartment, safer neighborhood, better schools	149	26.1
<i>Personal</i> : change in marital status, establish own household	102	17.9
<i>Affordability</i> : lower cost house/apartment	60	10.5
<i>Work or college</i> : going to school, looking for a job, easier commute	37	6.5
<i>No Response</i>	223	39.1
TOTAL	571	100.1

Source: BNIA-JFI 2014, Grow Baltimore Web Survey

The responses to the reason for move categories vary by the type of move (see Figure 2). Most of the respondents to the survey were people who lived in Baltimore and chose to move within Baltimore itself; this group stated *Affordability* more than other groups as a significant factor in the decision to stay in the city. For the 57 individuals moving from Baltimore City to a surrounding county, 49 (86%) ranked *Quality of Life* as the primary reason for moving. In contrast, for the 88 individuals moving into Baltimore from the surrounding counties only 12 (14%) ranked *Quality of Life* as the primary reason for moving. The majority (46, 52%) ranked *Personal* as the primary reason for moving. Comments in the survey show that at least some of the county to city movers who ranked *Personal* as the primary or secondary reason for their move were newlyweds or empty nesters. People moving for work or college tended to migrate from a surrounding county into Baltimore City or between surrounding counties.

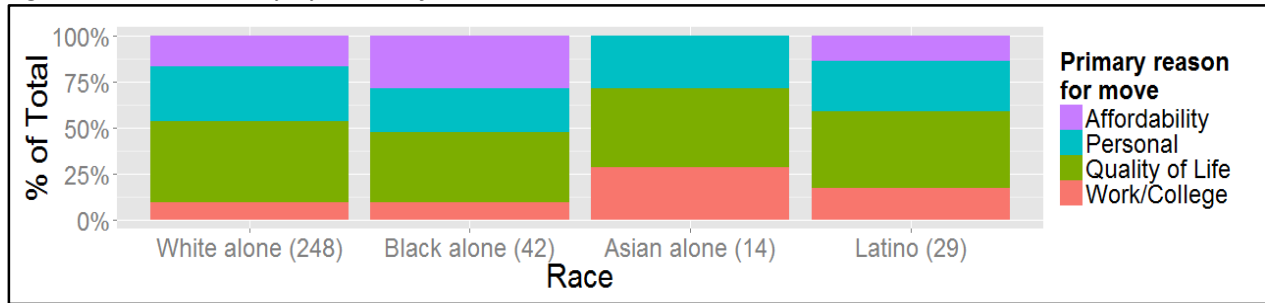
Figure 2: Type of Move by Primary Reason for Move



Source: BNIA-JFI 2014 Grow Baltimore Web Survey. Number of respondents in parentheses under each column.

Respondents of all races and ethnicities were roughly equally likely to move for *quality of life* or *personal* reasons. Black respondents were more likely to rank *affordability* as the primary reason for moving (31%) compared with white respondents (17%), Latino respondents of any race (13%), or Asian respondents (0%). Asian respondents were more likely (29%) to rank *work/college* as the primary reason for moving compared with Latino respondents of any race (17%), white respondents (10%), or black respondents (10%).

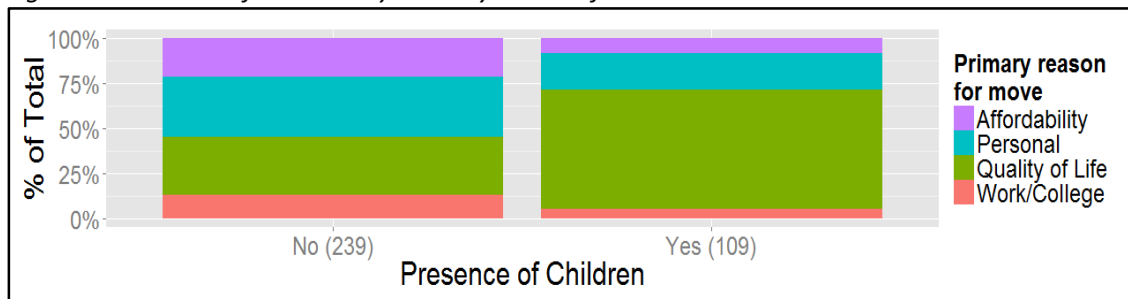
Figure 3: Race/Ethnicity by Reason for Move



Source: BNIA-JFI 2014 Grow Baltimore Web Survey. Number of respondents in parentheses under each column.

Regardless of where they moved, parents tended to move to improve household *quality of life* (see Figure 4). Two-thirds (66%) of the respondents with children moved for this reason compared with one-third (32%) of the respondents without children. Research shows that attracting and retaining families with children revolves around the full range of amenities including schools, safety, playgrounds, and activities programming¹¹. Interestingly, for respondents without children, quality of life played a less significant role in the decision to move. Non-parent households chose reasons in the other categories (affordability, personal and work/college) at a higher rate than parent households.

Figure 4: Presence of Children by Primary Reason for Move



Source: BNIA-JFI 2014, Grow Baltimore Web Survey. Number of respondents in parentheses under each column.

Push and Pull Factors for Baltimore Migrants

Given that the decision to move is the outcome of complex and interrelated personal situations, **two focus groups** were conducted to better understand how the decision-making process led to a move either into/within or out of Baltimore. The *city focus group* included people who moved between city neighborhoods or from surrounding counties into Baltimore. These individuals were recruited through the web survey where a quarter of survey respondents (245 individuals, 28% of the total) expressed willingness to participate in a focus group. The *county focus group* included people who moved from Baltimore City to one of the surrounding counties. These individuals were recruited by analyzing public property records to identify movers¹². A total of 20 individuals were chosen to participate in the two focus groups based on their availability and participant diversity in terms of gender, race, type of

¹¹ See Chaker, Anne Marie, August 5, 2014, “[Is ‘Play’ the Way to Stay](#)”, in the Wall Street Journal for several cases of cities investing in playgrounds in an effort to attract and retain families.

¹² See *Grow Baltimore Brief #2* for more details on how county movers were identified.

household (single, couple, with and without kids), and location of household (17 participants were able to attend).

The combination of survey and focus groups helped to identify the major factors that influence migration decisions and to provide additional details for each factor.

Pull factors

Both survey respondents and focus group participants shared elements of city life they found attractive. As expected, individuals who moved to or within Baltimore City expressed far more positive sentiment about the city than individuals who had moved out of the city. However, a few individuals who moved out expressed a degree of regret or admitted to missing aspects of their previous lives in the city. Table 6 (below) summarizes respondents’ open-ended explanations for why they moved and includes several concise representative quotes. The themes in the table were drawn from the most common responses and were not part of the original survey questions.

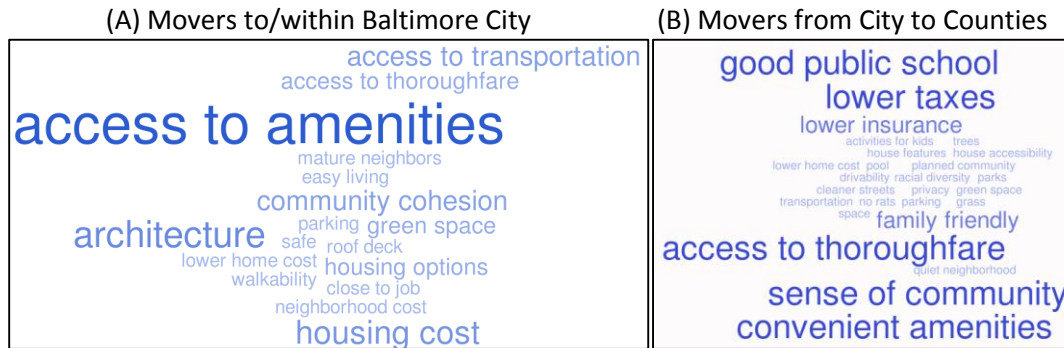
Table 7: The Most Common Baltimore City Pull Factors According to Survey Respondents

Common factor	Respondents who moved to or within Baltimore City	Respondents who moved out of Baltimore City
Affordable, quality housing	“Bought a house...which cost about the same as renting the small place”	(Not mentioned)
Transportation choices/walkability	Some neighborhoods offer walkability, bikeability, public transit, convenience to highways, and parking	
Entertainment options	Restaurants, bars, shopping, cultural & sports events, and green space all nearby	
Employment hub	More jobs and shorter commute	
Strong sense of community	“I love the people and neighborhood”, “friends here, family is close”, “social life, neighbors and community”	“We miss our Baltimore [City] neighborhood every day--our neighbors, walking our dog in the park... I sobbed on moving day...”
Family friendly	“Great house, great school”, “the charter school”, “a safer neighborhood...better schools...young families.”	(Not mentioned)

Source: BNIA-JFI 2014, Grow Baltimore Web Survey

To examine pull factors more specifically for recent movers, individuals from the focus groups were asked why they chose the location in which they currently live. Factors that they mentioned most frequently or discussed at length are in the *word clouds* in Figures 4A and 4B. People who moved to Baltimore City from the surrounding counties or moved within Baltimore City most often mentioned access to amenities (e.g. bars, restaurants, and entertainment), unique and affordable housing, and a range of transportation options. People who moved from the city to one of the surrounding counties were primarily seeking good public schools, lower taxes, and easier access to a thoroughfare. Some of these movers also enjoyed convenient amenities (e.g. parking and pools) and a sense of family-friendly community that they did not have while living in the city.

Figure 5 (A & B): Word Clouds of Why People Chose their Current Place of Residence



Source: BNIA-JFI & Schaefer Center 2014, Grow Baltimore City Focus Group

Push factors

Survey respondents shared elements of city life they found reduced quality of life and served as factors that compelled them to make the decision to move. Individuals who moved out of the city expressed far more negative sentiments about the city than individuals who had moved to or within the city. For residents who currently live or recently moved into Baltimore, some participants also echoed the comments as reasons they might eventually move out in the future.

Table 8: The Most Common Baltimore City Push Factors According to Survey Respondents

Common Factor	Respondents who moved to or within Baltimore City	Respondents who moved out of Baltimore City
Poor public schools	“The schools...are not good and we are not sure if we will stay based on this.”	“Single most important reason was quality of public schools”
Poor city services & crime	(Not mentioned)	“trash littered throughout streets and sidewalks, lack of city services” “It took me 2 months to even get the police to take a report.”
High cost (taxes, car insurance, water bill)	“I plan to move out of the city in the next few years. The taxes and the water bill are insane...”	“who can pay \$10K in taxes when you are about to retire!”
Parking problems	“[There is a] lack of parking in downtown/fells point area”	“walking 8-10 blocks is not unusual coming home after 9pm” “[We] had planned to stay in the city...but frustration with parking, trash and crime...”
Nuisance neighbors & landlords	(Not mentioned)	“our dog...attacked...twice by the same dog” “undesirable urban experiences everyday (constant panhandling, homeless camped out in front of our condo)” “Living on a quiet cul-de-sac...in Annapolis, has reduced our stress levels.”

Source: BNIA-JFI 2014, Grow Baltimore Web Survey

Both survey respondents and focus group participants also communicated that crime was a problem in the city. However, comments primarily focused on what might be referred to as the “daily stressors” that non-violent crime imposes on current residents. Respondents discussed the disruptive nature on routine activities caused by property crime and nuisance-related incidents. In a city that does experience high rates of violent crime, participants felt that the infractions that they reported did not receive adequate or timely attention and noted poor interactions with the police department. BNIA-JFI research suggests that violent crime or fear of violent crime *are not* causing migration to the counties surrounding Baltimore City. It may be helpful therefore for city leaders and policy makers to think of the customer service aspects of school administration, policing, and other public services.

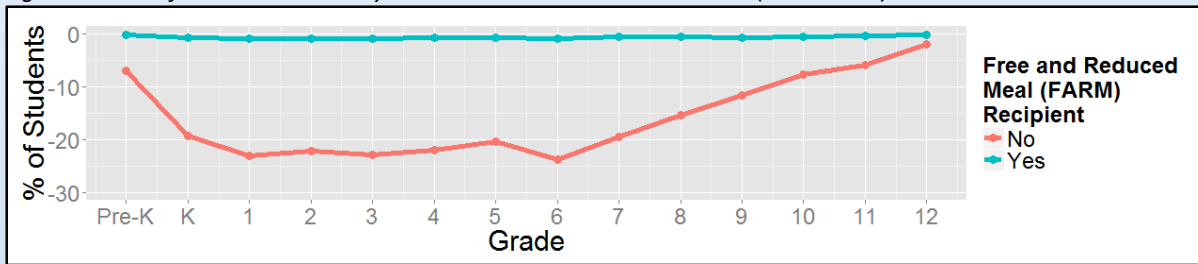
The results of this research show that parents with school age children do move to the counties surrounding primarily in search of better public schools. It is unclear from the survey how long or how well these parents investigated school options in the city before moving away. In the focus group of people who left the city for one of the nearby counties, two of the three parents reported trying repeatedly to get city school administrators to address concerns (see “Schools” insert below for more in-depth analysis on exiting from Baltimore public schools).

What’s School Got to do with Migration?

Given that public education plays an important role in the decision to move for households with school-aged children, it is important to know at what point households might be choosing to leave Baltimore because of experiences or perceptions about public schools. Using Baltimore City Public School (BCPS) attendance records between 2006 and 2012, exit codes assigned to students when they leave a school were analyzed to assess patterns by grade and by school. The codes include whether the student entered from or exited to a public or private school and whether the student entered from or exited to a school in the city or elsewhere in the state.

Because a student leaving the public school system does not by itself mean that the household moved, the analysis in this section focuses on the exit code “Other MD Public School” as a close proxy for a move outside Baltimore. Figure 6 displays aggregate student information by grade and by Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) status. The majority (71%) of all BCPS students are FARM recipients; however, there is a very small (near zero) percentage loss of FARMS recipient students to Maryland public schools outside Baltimore City. For the 29% of students who are non-FARMS recipients, the data suggest a steady exit to Maryland public schools outside Baltimore City at the rate of about 20%, peaking at 24% for sixth graders, which is the start of middle school. This finding confirms overall trends found in the *Grow Baltimore Brief #1*—loss of student-age children and loss of middle- and upper-income households from Baltimore City.

Figure A: Loss of BCPS Students City-Wide to Other MD Public Schools (2006-2012)

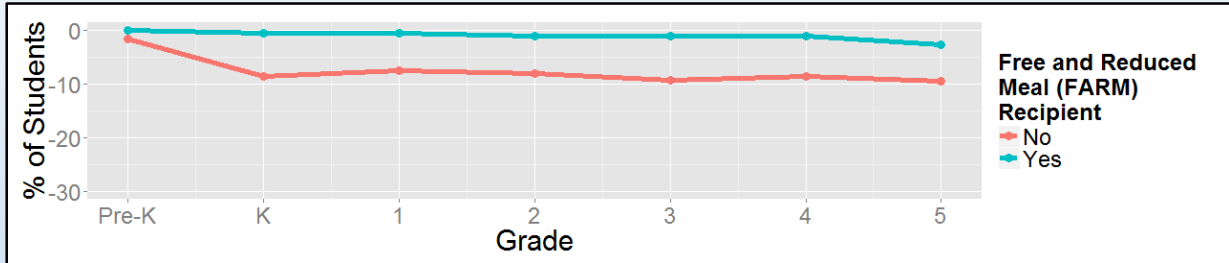


Source: Baltimore City Public Schools

Once a student starts middle school, exits to the counties drop continuously and sharply. This suggests that creating a clear path for all students from pre-kindergarten to high-school will keep families in the public school system and in the city.

Some schools are already effective at retaining students. For example, the rate of student exits from Medfield Heights Elementary to public schools elsewhere in Maryland is less than half (<10%) the city-wide average.

Figure B: Loss of BCPS Students from Medfield Heights Elementary to Other MD Public Schools 2006-2012



Source: Baltimore City Public Schools

Conclusion: Pulls, Pushes, and Life Moments

The decision to move for anyone is based on a complex set of economic, social and locational realities that determine migration choices. In general, better or more affordable housing and easier commute times are the key factors across all households nationally. In urban areas, like Baltimore, family formation and neighborhood amenities also play a role in influencing that decision.

The research in this brief shows that there are several factors *pulling* people to Baltimore City and helping to retain them as long term residents, such as **unique, affordable housing**, a strong **sense of community** and **walkability** to amenities and work. There are also factors *pushing* people away from the city such as the **daily stressors** of litter, lack of parking, property crime and vacant housing; high **property taxes** and insurance rates; poor performing **public schools** and lack of information about school choice; and few **market-rate housing choices for new retirees** hoping to downsize on a fixed income.

These push and pull factors weigh on a potential decision to move for current residents at crucial life-cycle moments based on individual or household milestones. Stakeholders designing attraction and retention programs may benefit from considering how these factors influence five key decision-points in a person's life:

- Entering college or post-secondary education
- Seeking first job or changing jobs
- Household formation (marriage, divorce, birth of child)
- Child changing schools (especially when entering middle school)
- Retirement

Meeting the Grow Baltimore goal will require leveraging the uniqueness of each community to increase Baltimore City's "pull" factors while mitigating its "push" factors. This series of BNIA-JFI briefs supports the effort by providing information that promotes the pull factors and recommended strategies to overcome the push factors designed and communicated around key life moments.



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