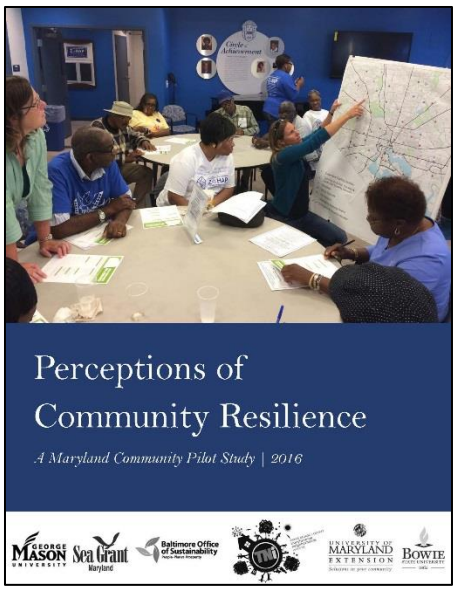
Perceptions of Community Resilience

Report Key Findings



This study represents a partnership with many individuals and organizations—including the City of Baltimore's Office of Sustainability and Prince George's County Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative—to increase engagement with residents on building resilience in predominantly African American neighborhoods in two areas of the state that are at high risk from climate-related environmental changes and have historically been underserved. The research was conducted as a door-to-door survey in spring 2016 in four neighborhoods of the state—Oliver-Broadway East, Sandtown-Winchester, and Westport in Baltimore, and Glassmanor-Oxon Hill in Prince George's County. Comparison data is taken from a spring 2016 representative mail survey of Maryland residents. *See the full report at climatechangecommunication.org.*

Baltimore and Prince George's community residents point to climate change risks. They are more likely to report experiencing health and environmental harms than Marylanders as a whole.

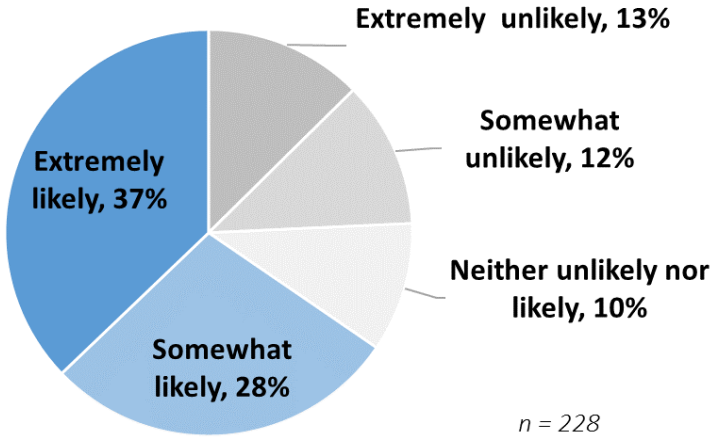
- The four Baltimore and Prince George's County communities have the same levels of risk perception for climate change—and related effects such as sea level rise, extreme heat, storms, and flooding—as do the residents of the rest of the state.
- The majority of survey respondents in the Baltimore (**57%**) and Prince George's County (**61%**) neighborhoods identify climate change as likely to cause significant harm in their communities in the next several years.
- Baltimore and Prince George's County neighborhood residents are more likely than Marylanders generally to say they have experienced water damage caused by heavy rains or flooding (38% Baltimore vs. 15% state) and sewage overflows after rains or storms (**22%** Baltimore/**19%** Glassmanor-Oxon Hill vs. **6%** state). They are also more likely to say they have experienced health harms from storms and flooding than the state at large.
- Glassmanor-Oxon Hill respondents are more likely to say that their health has suffered from pollen than those in Baltimore and Maryland as a whole.
- Chronic medical conditions are more pervasive in the three neighborhoods of Baltimore than they are in the state, particularly for asthma (**23%** vs. **12%**).

Residents report lower levels of social capital—including community communication—available to address problems. They want information on energy and climate, and governments to take action, including creation of local "resilience hubs."

- Both the Baltimore and Prince George's County neighborhoods rank their communities as lower in social capital in terms of both their ability to obtain resources and communicate internally.

- Approximately two-thirds of the Baltimore (**65%**) and Glassmanor-Oxon Hill (**67%**) neighborhoods say they support local and state governments taking action to protect their communities from climate change.
- Almost two-thirds of Baltimore respondents (**65%**) say that they would be somewhat or extremely likely to use a community building that provides shelter, food, water, and other resources during emergency events. The same percentage in Glassmanor-Oxon Hill (**65%**) say that they would be somewhat or extremely likely to use a centrally located services hub in their community.
- Baltimore and Prince George's County neighborhood residents are more likely to ask for information on six energy and climate protection topics than people in the state as a whole. Almost a third of Baltimore and Prince George's County respondents requested information on energy bill assistance (**31%**)—the topic most requested.

Most in Baltimore's three neighborhoods say they would use the services provided by a resilience hub. *(If a neighborhood community building provided [daytime] shelter, food, water and other resources during emergency events, how likely would you be to use such a facility?)*

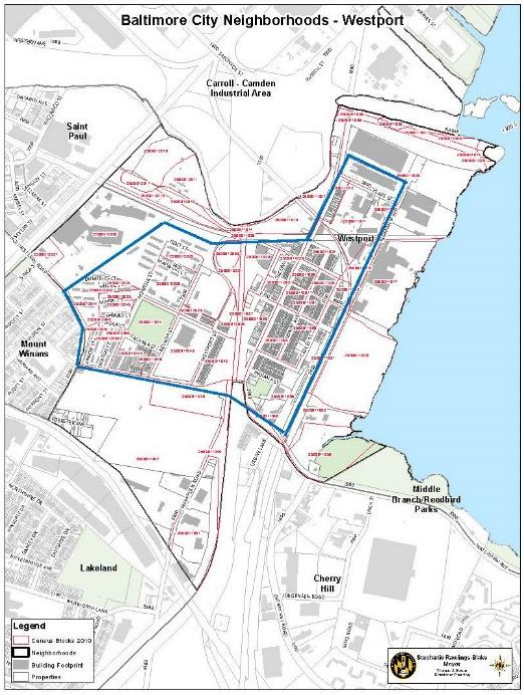


Recommendations include:

- Residents of all four neighborhoods called for more community centers as one of the most important issues. Projects like the resiliency hub pilot in Baltimore and social services hub in Glassmanor-Oxon Hill meet that call, and could potentially bolster both the physical resources and social fabric of the neighborhoods.
- The four neighborhoods are not ambivalent about the role of climate change in their communities, nor the role of government in tackling the problem—they are concerned and supportive of action. This message should be conveyed to their elected local, state, and federal representatives.
- Some highly salient community issues, like trash, tie directly to climate preparedness efforts; others may relate more peripherally. Solutions should thus address not only some of the most critical problems, but simultaneous interests in building resilience to climate impacts and general community development. For example, trash clogs storm drain systems, resulting in flooding during heavy precipitation events, but it also affects community pride and has health implications.
- The neighborhoods described here—especially Baltimore—are already suffering disproportionately from environmental and health risks, and recognize these risks at the same rates as other Marylanders. Additional risk information may be counter-productive.

Sample sizes for comparison groups: # people=907, state; # people=228, Baltimore neighborhoods (Oliver-Broadway East, 73; Sandtown-Winchester, 71; Westport, 84); # people=111, Glassmanor-Oxon Hill, Prince George's County. The error margin for the combined Baltimore sample is +/- 6 pct. points and for Glassmanor-Oxon Hill is +/- 9 pct. points.

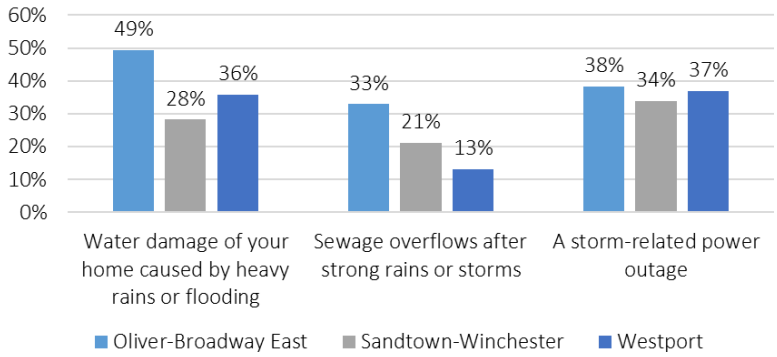
Specific Survey Findings for Westport



The area surveyed extends within the blue boundary zone: Clare St. to Waterman Ave.; Hollins Ferry Rd. to Kloman St.

- The most important community issues include vacant housing, trash, cleanliness, transportation, playgrounds, drugs, guns/violence, trucks, and rats.
- Polluted drinking water (**60%**), air pollution (**58%**), exposure to chemicals (**55%**), second-hand smoke (**54%**), and pollution of local water bodies (**52%**) are all considered to be a major personal health risk by more than half of respondents.
- Almost two-thirds (**64%**) ay climate change is likely to cause significant harm to their community in the next several years.
- More than a third—**37%**—of residents say they have experienced a storm-related power outage in the last 12 months, and roughly the same number (**36%**) say they have had water damage of their home due to heavy rains or flooding.
- **Three in 10** say that they have insufficient financial resources to pay bills if unable to work for 1-2 weeks.
- **Four in 10** say that their health has been moderately or severely harmed by poor outdoor air quality from air pollution (**39%**) and pollen (**42%**) in the last 12 months. More than a quarter say the same for extreme heat (**29%**) and poor indoor air quality from mold (**29%**). Mold is cited more frequently by Westport respondents than those in Oliver-Broadway East or Sandtown-Winchester.
- More than a quarter of Westport respondents report chronic medical conditions such as asthma (**27%**), hypertension (**27%**), and arthritis (**27%**).
- Most disagree that the community has the resources to take care of problems (**57%**), that people trust public officials (**62%**), or that they get information from their community to help with home and work life (**52%**).
- Six in 10 (**62%**) say they would be likely to use a local resilience hub during an emergency.
- A majority (**63%**) support local and state government actions to protect their community from climate change.

Baltimore neighborhoods experience threats from heavy storms and rains. *(In the last 12 months, have you experienced one or more of the following?)*



What is a "resiliency hub"?

A resiliency hub consists of a building or set of buildings and neighboring outdoor space that will provide temporary shelter, backup electricity, access to fresh water, and access to resources such as food, ice, charging stations, etc. in the event of an emergency.

Ideally, the hubs will also include additional elements such as a place to grow fresh and local food, increased tree canopy for shade and cooling, accessibility to fresh and clean water, and resources for sheltering in place or evacuation as needed.

Other key components include ensuring that all members of the surrounding communities are educated about natural hazards and other man-made hazards that potentially threaten their community; engaging residents and businesses on steps they can take to respond before, during and after those events; connecting members of the community to the resources necessary to prepare for and withstand the impacts from any hazard event; and increasing energy and water efficiency of surrounding businesses and residences.

What is the status of Baltimore's resiliency hub pilot projects?

To date, three of the four resiliency hubs are underway. City planners have been working with residents and building managers to identify supplies and needs for each specific site. Multiple site visits have been conducted to look at the kitchens, roof tops, surrounding land and other criteria. Three of the sites should be online and functioning by the end of 2016.

Where can I call for help in an emergency?

- **Call 211** – a Maryland service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in over 180 languages – to find out about health and human service resources in your community, including shelter in place locations
- **Call 311** to report a non-emergency or to request city services
- **Call (888) 223-0033** to report suspicious activity
- **Call (877) 778-2222** to report a power outage to BGE
- **Call 911** to report a life-threatening emergency