

Infinite Freedom for New Baltimore

for Spontaneous Interventions / Kelly Loudenberg film piece
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Once home to nearly a million people, Baltimore has lost over 300,000 residents due to decades of suburbanization, disinvestment and post-industrial globalization of manufacturing jobs. Of those who remain, one in four live in poverty. While the city's once derelict Inner Harbor has been transformed into an iconic tourist and shopping destination, elsewhere vast swaths of Baltimore's urban fabric lay shredded with over 16,000 abandoned homes and 14,000 vacant lots. Despite its many challenges Baltimore is imbedded with hope for the future. The city's vacant land and pedestrian urbanism are assets as we move towards the following vision for Infinite Freedom within a New Baltimore:

1) Create Voluntary Neighborhood Associations for each self-identified district. Merge the city and county governments plus all these neighborhood groups into a grassroots federation that makes consensus based decisions through the ***New Baltimore Spokes Council***.

2) Ban all personal cars: Each Voluntary Neighborhood Association will maintain a small fleet of shared vehicles for residents to checkout when needed. Nearly all personal intercity travel consists of walking, cycling and/or riding an expanded mass transit system.

3) Adopt The Bill of Pedestrian Rights: This bill defines public space as any open area physically accessible to most people within a given community. It also defines "**New Public Sites**" as invisible public spaces that have not yet been activated to their fullest civic and creative potential, such as vacant land, parking lots and other marginal zones. The Bill of Pedestrian Rights ensures all urbanites access to New Public Sites and entitles us to freely start projects therein.

4) Embrace Suburban Remediation: The Beltway becomes the ***Charm City Greebelt***, beyond which ***Roving Scavengerscaping Crews*** deconstruct the derelict suburbs, reclaim materials, and remediate the land for future agricultural use. All public subsidies outside of the beltway are cut so that only residents prepared to live off the land can stay. Suburbanites are offered incentives to move inside the city such as trading the value of their former home for land-grants within distressed neighborhoods.

5) Cultivate Urban Agriculture: Vacant urban property and remediated suburban land will be repurposed for growing food. ***Collective Neighborhood Farms*** will independently operate these growing networks of agricultural sites.

6) Promote Social Infill: Combining the fields of architecture, construction and community organizing, **Social Construction Studios** will develop New Public Sites with experimental projects, needed housing and future workplaces.

7) Exalt Drifting Play: Convert all highways to linear districts of recreation, entertainment and sustainable commuting leading to and from the rebuilt **Inner Harbor of Infinite Freedom** where festivals and democracy take place year round. Daily commuters, roving parades, urban recreationalists and adventurous tourists will feed into the downtown zone through freeways turned **Free-ways**. These highways repurposed for humanity will hosts a parallax of performance, including nature paths, protected bike lanes and extensive light-rail.

The existing corporate spectacle surrounding the historic waterfront will be replaced with a constantly changing array of direct-action celebrations, demonstrations, concerts, carnivals and occupations. A translucent amphitheater made from the glass of a million windshields will float in the harbor and host outdoor theatrical performances, including the New Baltimore Spokes Council meetings. Jumbotrons will broadcast the playful proceedings to overflow waterfront participants. The network of drifting play created by the free-ways and Inner Harbor of Infinite Freedom will attract urbanites and tourists alike as they travel to and from downtown New Baltimore and participate in a spectacularly local practice of performance and democracy.