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Insiders' Guide

# A tight-knit city community

By Brad Schleicher | Sun reporter  
February 17, 2008

Tucked between Pratt Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Russell Street, the Ridgely's Delight neighborhood has provided shelter to residents of diverse backgrounds since the early 19th century.

With its name derived from a plantation owned by Charles Ridgely, Ridgely's Delight was originally inhabited by craftspeople but later became home to affluent professionals who used their resources to make the rowhouses more ornate.

Gradual urban decay affected the area in the 1970s, but today the neighborhood is once again an eclectic mix of income levels and backgrounds.

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According to Sharon Reuter, longtime resident and member of the Ridgely's Delight Association, the area is home to many age groups and has become a popular spot for first-time homeowners.

"It's a really tight-knit community," says Reuter. "Residents are getting more involved, especially in social events and with Citizens on Patrol."

**Housing stock //** "It's a great area for students and young

professionals to find affordable housing," says Kevin Willner of the Willner and Chrissomallis Group, ReMax Sails. "Its proximity to professional schools, the ballpark and the Inner Harbor make it an attractive area."

According to Ellen McKinzie of Weichert Realtors, most of the Federal-style rowhouses in the area range from two to four bedrooms and can run from \$200,000 to \$700,000.

**Rentals //** Property owner Michael Applefeld, who leases homes in the area, says the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom townhouse is about \$800 a month; three-bedroom places may run about \$1,100.

**Crime //** According to Baltimore City police officer Robert Hennlein, there has been very little violent crime in Ridgely's Delight over the past two years.

"Out of the 126 crimes committed in the neighborhood last year," says Hennlein, "only 11 were violent." The most prevalent crimes since 2006 have been theft from homes and automobiles, stolen automobiles and robberies. The Sun reported that a non-fatal shooting occurred in the 600 block of South Fremont Avenue in May 2007.

**Kids and schools //** Reuter says that more first-time parents are staying in the neighborhood after their children are born.

"Many times, people would move to areas like Bolton Hill which has a bigger child-based network," says Reuter. "Now more and more parents are sticking around."

Ridgely's Delight is served by George Washington Elementary School and Diggs-Johnson Middle School. While the elementary school has met Maryland state proficiency levels in both reading and mathematics, the middle school has not. The area was formerly served by Southwestern High School, but since its closing, students now attend the Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts, which has a graduation rate of above 85 percent.

**Shopping //** With the exception of Baltimore Chop, a bookstore and coffee shop, shopping is scarce in Ridgely's Delight. However, it is only a short walk or bike ride to shops in the Inner Harbor.

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**Transportation** // Most residents use cars as their main source of transportation. Residents are allowed permits to park on the streets that are prohibited to the general public, however parking is still an issue. There is also easy access to bus lines and the light rail.

**Dining In** // Grocery stores are a drawback. Ridgely's Mini Mart is the only neighborhood grocery store and it offers only basic necessities. According to Mark James, president of the Ridgely's Delight Association, a wider selection is available at Shopper's Food Warehouse in Federal Hill or the Super Fresh on North Charles Street.

**Dining Out** // Although many of the pubs in the neighborhood offer hearty pub fare, there are other options. Quigley's Half-Irish Pub will offer Irish and Peruvian fusion fare starting March 16 and Penn Street Tavern offers Caribbean cuisine.

**Nightlife** // Because of their proximity to Camden Yards and M&T Bank Stadium, area pubs and restaurants, such as Camden Pub, Pickles Pub and Quigley's Pub can be crowded and loud during baseball and football seasons. "The residents learn to accept that," says James. "Most like the energy that is felt when a sports season begins."

**Recreation** // In addition to the stadiums, Ridgely's Delight is home to a few attractions, including the Babe Ruth Birthplace and Orioles Museum.

On the south end of the neighborhood, Conway Park is the site of many neighborhood activities including Jazz in the Park and a city-sponsored National Night Out. A new playground was completed recently in the northern section of the neighborhood. The Baltimore Chop also has live entertainment.

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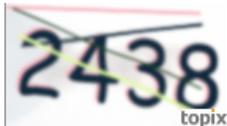
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