



# Urban Land Institute

## Baltimore

ULI Baltimore

## Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Manual

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# I. The Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

Technical Assistance Panels known as TAPs are part of ULI's Advisory Services Program. ULI advisory services panels provide strategic advice to sponsors on complex land use and real estate development issues. The program links public agencies and nonprofit organizations to the knowledge and experience of ULI and its membership. ULI was established in 1947. The TAPs are a fee-based program. ULI has completed over 800 panels, across the United States, and 12 countries over 4 continents. The Advisory Services program has been successful due its comprehensive, pragmatic approach to solving land use challenges.

Each panel follows a proven process that begins with a conversation between ULI staff and the sponsor to frame the assignment. ULI then assembles an interdisciplinary panel of volunteers who spend time on-site exploring the project, interviewing stakeholders, and making recommendations. Panels approach the assignment from all perspectives, including market potential, land use and design, financing and development strategies, and organizing and implementation.

## **Purpose**

ULI Baltimore began holding TAPs in 2008 as a way to bring together the public and private sector and to provide an outlet for our members to give back to the community. While initially TAPs were offered to private sector sponsors, it was soon realized that our members found it more rewarding to volunteer their time to aid an agency or a nonprofit organization (as opposed to a peer) and as a result were more willing to give their time and experience to the projects. We now only offer the service to public agencies and nonprofit organizations and have developed positive relationships as a result.

## **District TAP Policy**

ULI Baltimore encourages Sponsors to seek solutions through the private market. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) can be an effective tool to solicit input to answer questions relevant to TAP issues. The ULI Baltimore District will not compete against private interests that offer solutions similar to TAP outcomes. Often the ULI Baltimore District TAP selection process includes a needs analysis which inquires whether RFP options were investigated.

## **Format**

TAP formats vary based on the specifics of the project and available funding. TAPs are typically held over the course of two-days in the sponsoring agency / organization's community. The first day typically begins at 8:00am with a introduction and tour of the study area either by bus an on foot, and is followed by a briefing by the sponsor and others, and then transitions into roundtable discussions where the sponsor invites vested stakeholders in the community to participate in an informal roundtable conversation with the panel. After the public engagement roundtable discussions, the panel attends a private working dinner where the chair directs a conversation, debriefing on the day and getting the panel's initial impressions.

The second day is spent behind closed doors, and the panel spends the entire day in general discussion and break-out sessions responding to the sponsor's issues and questions. At the end of the day a presentation is made to the sponsor and invited guests where the panel provides a summary of the recommendations. A PowerPoint presentation of the findings is given to the sponsor at the end of the second day, and within six to eight weeks a final written report is delivered.

## **Participants**

Each panel is comprised of eight to ten senior level ULI members who are respected in their field. This is a privilege of membership and nonmembers should be engaged only if the right expertise is not available within the membership. Typical panels include a chair, two developers, a market analyst, two to three people to make up a planning and design team, a member of the public sector or a nonprofit organization, a member of the Young Leaders Group, and someone with relevant niche experience depending upon the assignment (e.g. traffic engineer.) Members volunteer their time to participate in the panel.

## **Product**

Upon Completion of the TAP, the sponsor is left with a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the panel's recommendations. The PowerPoint is completed onsite during the last hour of the panel and includes renderings that were drawn on site. Sponsors are given the PowerPoint so that they have the recommendations in hand and something to share with the community over the course of the six to eight weeks that it takes to complete the written report.

The written report is drafted by ULI Baltimore district and commented on by both panel members and the sponsor. It can take up to eight weeks to complete the written report because of all the parties that need to sign off on the draft prior to it going to print. The TAP reports are a product of the Urban Land Institute, and only ULI shall control the content of the report. Prior to production of the report a Draft is typically shared with the client to review. The ULI District and the sponsor shall cooperatively review the contents of the report. However, ULI has final say in the content and format of the ULI TAP Report. Once complete, the report is saved as pdf and provided to the sponsor in electronic format.

# **II. The Committee**

## **Committee Makeup**

The committee, lead by a chair should consist of approximately ten to twelve panelists, including at least one member of the Young Leaders Group. Members of the committee are determined based on their interest in the TAP program, but also their ability to help market the program. The typical committee is multi-disciplinary and includes developers, architects, planners and those who provide other professional services.

## **The Role of the Committee**

While any qualified ULI member can serve on a TAP, the committee has the responsibility of managing the quality of the program, sourcing panels, and serving on panels as a committee liaison.

Quality Management. Each committee member should fully understand the program, its goals and objectives, as well as its marketing plan and materials. Every effort should be made by the staff and committee members to ensure that the district council is presenting the best program possible.

Sourcing Panels. Committee members are chosen in part based upon the connections they have with local public agencies and nonprofit organizations. Committee members should make every effort to schedule meetings with these potential sponsors to explain the program and continually look for ways to suggest how a TAP can aid a particular agency or project.

Committee Liaison. Each TAP should include a member of the TAP subcommittee. Currently, the TAP subcommittee is a subset of the Baltimore District Council Regionalism Committee. The liaison keeps the committee members engaged in the program and helps ensure a consistent experience and product. Committee liaisons should participate in all meetings held in the anticipation of the panel.

### **Committee Meetings**

The ULI Baltimore District Committee meetings are held at the offices of a committee member. These meetings occur as needed so that all needed TAP Panel members have the TAP schedule on their calendar. Typically, District staff prepares the agenda with the help of the TAP chair.

Typical TAP Committee meetings review recent panels and lessons learned from the experiences; upcoming and prospective panels; followed by discussions of tasks, roles and schedule to prepare for the TAP. Marketing of TAPs and additional business generally follows. Minutes are produced afterwards and circulated via email.

## **III. Working with the Sponsor**

ULI staff, the committee liaison, and/or the panel chair should attend all substantive meetings with the sponsor. ULI staff alone should take care of all logistics with the sponsor in preparation for the TAP.

### **Initial Meeting**

Whether you receive a formal application from a potential sponsor or a phone call asking to learn more about the program, it is important to schedule an initial meeting to vet the potential sponsor and explain the program. This can be done by the staff member alone, but preferably the chair of the committee or a committee liaison should attend.

### **The Planning Meeting**

Once the sponsor has agreed to pursue a TAP, and ULI believes that the general scope and sponsor can both fit within the program's format, a second meeting should be scheduled to finalize the assignment. The chair of the panel should be chosen prior to this meeting and should definitely attend along with the committee liaison.

At this meeting the following should be accomplished:

1. Set date for the TAP (a minimum of six to eight weeks out)
2. Define / refine scope of panel including issues and questions to be addressed
3. Review draft agenda for the TAP (see Appendix)
4. Review responsibilities of the Sponsor and of ULI (see Page 7)

Background Statement. The sponsor should be charged when leaving the meeting to draft a background statement set of questions if they have not done so already. The background statement is a one to two page summary of the background and history of the study area, the role of the sponsor, the issues that need to be addressed, and the goals of the sponsoring organization as they relate to the study area.

Scope. In the planning meetings it is important to manage the expectations of the sponsor to develop a work plan that can be accomplished within a day and a half. It is important to provide sample reports to the sponsor so that they have an idea of the depth of coverage of a TAP. Some sponsors expect a full blown

market analysis and development strategy when in reality they are given a brief analysis of what can and cannot be supported with additional study generally needed. Depending upon the sophistication of the sponsor, or the targeted nature of the assignment, the sponsor may come to the table with a predetermined set of issues / questions. It is actually helpful that prior to the planning meeting you request that the sponsor draft a set off issues / questions from which you can work together on to refine the scope.

By reviewing past panel information one can get a fairly good idea of what is manageable in the course of the TAP. There will be new issues that arise on the day of the panel so it is important not to commit to focusing on too much at the onset.

If the scope seems to be beyond what can be accomplished during the course of a TAP, it is important to make sure that the sponsor knows that there is an option to conduct a national Advisory Services Panel that will be able to cover more ground.

Questions. The TAP questions should range anywhere from five to ten questions that are in line with the type of expertise that ULI members can offer – questions should not delve into social issues but should rather focus on real estate and land use. A good format to follow is to have the questions fall under the categories of:

- Market Potential
- Development Strategies
- Planning & Design
- Implementation

Questions should be written to elicit discussion from the members rather than a yes/no answer. Depending upon the sophistication of the sponsor, it may be necessary for ULI staff to help draft the questions based upon the agreed upon scope – and staff's knowledge of what the panel can/should accomplish. Questions can then be sent to the sponsor for review.

### **Agreement**

After the second meeting a contract should be drawn and signed both by ULI and the Sponsor. ULI Baltimore's agreement has been very simple (see Appendix) but has worked. The important thing is to make sure that the date, responsibilities, end product, fee, and payment structure are set forth in the agreement. Some agencies require ULI to sign their standard governmental contracts including the TAP agreement as an addendum. Please be sure to review any agreements prior to signing. One thing to note is that the final report is still property of ULI and may be used at our discretion – unless agreed upon otherwise.

### **Payment**

Payment is made to the ULI Baltimore. Typically, some portion of TAP costs are paid 2-3 weeks in advance of the TAP to cover ULI costs. Fees are typically paid in full prior to Day One of the TAP. If agreed in advance, ULI Baltimore may wait to invoice the sponsor for the entire remainder of TAP costs at the time the final report is completed.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is important to outline the roles and responsibilities of ULI and the sponsor up front at the initial meetings and also to include responsibilities in writing in the agreement. ULI Baltimore has divided roles and responsibilities in the following way:

## **ULI BALTIMORE**

### **I. Pre-Panel (4-8 weeks)**

- Work with sponsor to define expectations, shape questions, prepare for panel
- Develop agenda for TAP
- Work with sponsor to identify expertise needed to complete assignment
- Confirm panelists and communicate roles and responsibilities

### **II. On-Site (2 days)**

- Work with sponsor to ensure tour and on-site logistics are complete
- Staff TAP with help of moderator and sponsor
- Write notes on panel deliberations and help prepare presentation to sponsor

### **III. Post Panel (6-8 weeks)**

- Write panel report, obtaining input from panel and sponsor
- Issue final report within 8 weeks of completion of the TAP.

### **IV. Sponsor Follow up (6-12 months)**

- Sponsor follow up working session with sponsor, ULI staff and TAP Chair
- Sponsor follow up presentation coordination

## **SPONSOR**

### **I. Pre-Panel (4-8 weeks)**

- Reserve meeting space for the panel and space for public engagement. Public space should be large enough to accommodate fifteen people at one table as well provide space for break out sessions. Public space should accommodate a projector screen and audio-visual equipment. All meeting rooms should be wifi-enabled (with access for TAP Panelists).
- Compile briefing materials and mail one copy to each panel member and two copies to ULI Baltimore at least 14 days prior to the panel. Please see Briefing Book Guidelines for further information. This is the most essential piece to the success of the panel and the most time intensive responsibility of the sponsor.
- Coordinate sponsor briefing and roundtable discussions. This includes identifying and inviting presenters and participants, as well as identifying space for the roundtables to take place. Sponsor may also choose to provide drinks and hors d'oeuvres.
- Plan a bus / walking tour of the study area. Identify members of the sponsor team who will act as the tour guide. If needed, provide transportation to accommodate 15 to 25 people from ULI Baltimore as well as tour guides and others from Sponsor team.
- Coordinate who will attend final presentation. This includes identifying and inviting attendees for the 5:00 pm presentation on Day 2.

### **II. On-Site (2 days)**

- Provide breakfast and lunch for the panel on both days..
  - Provide staff person to be on call throughout the panel
  - Provide aerial maps of the study area and have the flexibility to produce aerials of specific nodes at the panel's request.
  - Typically, TAP public engagement includes snacks and beverages.
- III. **Post-Panel (6-8 weeks)**
- Review draft report prior to publication.
  - Working session with ULI to obtain feedback, share sponsor recommendations, and identify ULI support expectations and prepare implementation plan
- IV. **Sponsor Follow up Presentation (6-12 months)**
- Sponsor led presentation on implementation, follow ups, successes/failures and confirmation of ULI support needs

## IV. Planning for and Facilitating the TAP

### Panel Recruitment

Each panel should have eight to ten panel members and no more than twelve should serve on any panel. Too small of a group and you will not have all points covered, too large of a group and it is too difficult to manage and members will walk away not feeling as though they made a meaningful contribution. In addition to a chair and a young leader, the panel should be comprised of at least one developer, a market analyst, an urban designer, and a member of the public sector or a nonprofit organization. After that the makeup will depend upon the nature of the assignment. Work with the chair and committee liaison to determine the appropriate mix of expertise.

Panelists should be invited to participate on the panel ideally six weeks in advance of the TAP. Invitations are generally sent via email with a formal note explaining the program and the TAP with the agenda, background statement and questions attached. Follow-up phone calls should be made within a few days of the invitation. The chair and committee liaison can also play a role in inviting the member if they have a personal relationship.

Once a panel member has accepted, an email is sent thanking them for agreeing to participate, requesting their bio, and informing them of when they will receive briefing materials and a logistics packet.

### Logistics

While it is the responsibility of the sponsor to secure meeting space, as well as food and beverage while the panel is on site, it is the role of staff to make sure that it is taken care of. It may be necessary for staff to visit the prospective meeting space in advance of the panel to help the sponsor make appropriate arrangements.

Meeting space should be secured as follows:

Pre-Meeting This meeting should be scheduled prior to the first day of the Tap. Key team members from the sponsor, ULI staff and TAP Chair should be present. Goal is to confirm plan and ensure all information and logistics are ready.



Site Tour Transportation. While the study area may be walkable, it is important for the panel to tour the immediate surrounding area as well as nearby projects of influence to get an idea of the context within which they are working. A bus that can accommodate the panel and ULI staff as well as the sponsor team should be secured. While not always feasible, if microphone capability is available take advantage of it because it can be difficult to hear tour guides on the bus. A walking tour is fine if the panel can accomplish everything by foot, but will likely only be appropriate for small communities.

Meeting Space - Day 1. Public engagement space to accommodate the panel and stakeholders for the briefing and the roundtable discussions will be needed for Day 1.

**Meeting Space - Day 2. The space will be needed to accommodate the panel at one large table / set of tables for general discussions. Breakout space within the room or nearby is also necessary. Space must also be secured for the final presentation. This may be the same room that the panel used to meet for the day or a nearby space. Verify in advance whether the room has internet access for the panel's use.**

Tour Guide. It is important for the sponsor to predetermine a tour route and tour guides in advance of the panel. The sponsor should time the tour in advance taking into consideration time for Q&A so that the panel remains on schedule.

Meals. Meal costs are typically included in the TAP fees. ULI will work with the sponsor to find nearby venues or caterers. Breakfast is typically a light continental offering. Lunch is typically a prepared box lunch or sandwich tray. A light snack at mid-day and cases of water on hand as well. ULI Baltimore organizes the dinner on Day 1. This should be held in a nice restaurant with a private room if possible. Panel members have whatever they want to eat and drink; as this is one of the ways to thank the panel for volunteering their time and expertise.

### **Role of Staff**

The role of ULI Baltimore staff in the TAP is to help facilitate the panel process and make sure that an end product is produced.

Logistics Packet. Before the panel even arrives on site, they should have received a logistics packet from ULI staff. Packets should be mailed in a ULI Baltimore folder at least one week prior to the panel. The sponsor should also receive this information. Logistics packets should include the following:

- Memo on Letterhead thanking the panel, stating the date, time and location of the panel and identifying materials in the packet
- Agenda
- Maps / Directions
- Background State and Questions
- Panelist Contact Information
- Panelist Bios
- Stakeholder List – who the panel will meet with during the course of the panel
- Sample TAP Report – make copies from a previous report.
- Any additional information (e.g. recent news articles)

Introductions. The first role of staff is to make sure that everyone arrives on time for the panel and to be the point person for when panel members arrive. The staff, along with the chair and committee liaison, are typically the only people who know the sponsor so it is important to initiate introductions so that everyone gets to know each other.

Bus Tour and Sponsor Briefing. Throughout the tour and the briefing it is the role of staff to take detailed notes and photographs, which will be helpful in writing the report. Photos of the study area as well as the interaction of panel members should be captured.

Roundtable Discussions. At either the beginning of the roundtable discussions, the sponsor briefing, or both, depending upon the group, ULI staff provides a short introduction to all present on who ULI is, what the TAP process is, and what the panel plans to accomplish. It is important that the panel introduces themselves again if necessary. A chair may also play this role if comfortable.

The roundtable discussions are very casual and can at times seem disorganized. For between an hour and one and one-half hours the panel should split up and meet with the various stakeholders in the format of roundtable discussions to get to know who the stakeholders are, what their role is in the project / study area, and learn what they see as the prime issues and opportunities for the area. Staff should help organize the table formations on site and facilitate a switch half-way through if necessary.

At end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, a public engagement session typically occurs, wherein the larger set of vested stakeholders are invited to participate. During public engagement roundtables, ULI Baltimore has always had the stakeholders stay put and panel members shift among groups. Staff should not participate in the roundtables as a panel member, but should feel free to sit in on any number of table discussions to understand the direction of the conversation.

Day 2 Deliberations. On the second day, ULI staff should arrive early to make sure that the room is set for the panel. Art / drawing supplies should be brought from the office for the planning and design team as well as notepaper, pens, and any relevant information. ULI staff should also bring large notepads for group note taking.

During the panel discussions it will be important for the staff to keep the progress going by keeping an eye on the clock. Staff should be the key note taker, using an easel and large notepad.

While the role of ULI staff is not to act as a panel member and provide too many of their own ideas and viewpoints, staff should feel free to help facilitate the discussion by asking probing questions for the panel to respond to. During breakout sessions, staff should use the Young Leaders Group panel member to share the note taking responsibilities.

Staff is also responsible for putting together the final PowerPoint. While a shell should be prepared in advance of the panel that includes background information on ULI, the TAP program and the specific panel, key recommendations will have to be input into the document prior to the presentation. Renderings that are drawn on site should also be photographed, uploaded into the computer and input into the PowerPoint presentation. ULI staff should make sure that a camera and transfer cord as well as an LCD projector are brought to each panel. The sponsor should provide the screen or a large white wall to view the PowerPoint.

Final Presentation. The chair will lead the final presentation along with some or all of the panel members. ULI staff typically provides the introduction (similar to Day 1) to inform attendees of who ULI is, what the TAP program is all about and why ULI spent time on the TAP. A copy of the final presentation should be given the sponsor on a USB drive prior to leaving for the evening. Email the PowerPoint the following day is also acceptable.

After the TAP. An email to the entire panel should be sent the day following the TAP thanking all panel members for their time and explaining that they will see a draft of the report in the weeks to come. A similar email should be sent to sponsor outlining the next steps.

## V. Responsibilities of Panel Members

1. To be objective – Panelists must not have a conflict of interest in the study area. Prospective panelists should be vetted with the sponsor first.
2. Relevant Expertise – make sure they can contribute
3. Provide bio prior to panel – staff needs to have this in advance for report writing.
4. Read briefing materials prior to arrival on site – impress this upon them
5. Bring relevant project information or data if able – if market analysts can pull data from Claritas or if designers have images from previous projects
6. Attend the entire Panel – No meetings, no coming late
7. Respect the Process
8. Participate Fully
9. Review draft report in a timely manner
10. Do not solicit the sponsor for follow-up work after the panel – this is not a marketing opportunity, but rather an opportunity to give back.
11. The sponsor may solicit panelists – ULI Baltimore has never had a problem with panel members charging for follow-up work / advice so long as the sponsor comes to the panel member and not the other way around.
12. No obligation to provide further volunteer advice to the sponsor – Panelists should not feel as though they should give any additional time to the sponsor

## VI. Responsibilities of the Chair

1. Attend preliminary meetings with the sponsor to discuss the scope and questions for the panel.
2. Work with staff and chairs of committee to help determine list of prospective panelists.
3. Provide introductions on Day 1 of the Panel to the sponsor and gathered stakeholders.
4. Moderate discussion at dinner / begin to bring panel together as a team / set agenda for Day 2.
5. Moderate discussions on Day 2.
6. Keep panel focused and on track throughout the course of the panel.
7. Ensure that all panelists have ample opportunity to share their viewpoints and provide recommendations. Do not let any one panelist overpower the conversation.
8. Make sure that all questions have been addressed.
9. Introduce the panel at the final presentation and present findings if needed.
10. Review draft report and provide comments.
11. Be available for a follow-up presentation to the sponsor or elected officials if requested.

## VII. TAP Reports

While each District Council produces a different end product, ULI Baltimore has taken the approach to prepare an abbreviated version of the reports delivered after a national advisory services panel. Typical reports are approximately 30 pages in length and include text, renderings completed on site, photographs taken of the study area, and the panel members' bios. TAP reports are the product of the Urban Land Institute, not the Sponsor.

### Timing

The final report should be completed within six to eight weeks of the panel.

Draft Report – Within Three Weeks. A draft report should be completed by staff and emailed to the panel within three weeks of the TAP to ensure that all panel members still clearly remember the recommendations that were given during the two day process. The report does not have to be in final format, nor does it need to include all photos, but renderings completed on site and referenced in the text should be included or attached separately so that panel members may refer to them during their review.

Panel Review – Weeks Four to Five. When sending the report, please tell the panel to review the report for substantive changes. The panelists should have the liberty to add, change or delete sections to present the most accurate explanation of the recommendations. This is also an opportunity for the report writer to ask for clarification on recommendations that were not fully explained during the panel.

Given the fact that the report will be amended to reflect the panelists' changes, it is not efficient to do a thorough edit prior to sending it on to the panel. Please remind the panelists of this so that they do not spend additional time on grammatical edits.

Panelists should be reminded that the report represents the panel's opinion and therefore additional recommendations that were not vetted during the TAP should not be added at this time.

While all panelists should provide comments on the report, it is unlikely that you will get substantive feedback from everyone. It is most important to make sure that the chair has provided feedback. One week is generally given to review the report, but it often takes longer than that to receive all comments.

Sponsor Review Weeks Five - Six. After the panel has signed off on the draft report and all changes have been incorporated, send the draft report on to the sponsor. Similar to the panelist instructions, remind the sponsor that the report has not been edited, but will be thoroughly reviewed prior to print.

The sponsor should take the time to review the draft to make sure that 1) all names / titles / towns / streets / etc. are correct; 2) they clearly understand the recommendations the way they were written in the report; and 3) there are no inaccuracies.

To make it easier to finalize the report, request that regardless of how many people review the report that all comments are integrated into one draft – preferably through Microsoft Word's Track Changes program – prior to sending it back. One week is generally given for this review, but it may take longer. At this point, the push to get the final report completed is driven by the response time of the sponsor.

Final Report – Weeks Six to Eight. Once comments are received from the sponsor and integrated into the report, the report is ready for a final edit. While staff should do a thorough review of the final report, it is always a good idea to have the report edited by a third party. Whether an editor is hired or a colleague reviews the report is up to the district council.

Once the report is edited, it should be formatted to include renderings and photos. Please see ULI's style guide for additional instructions on fonts, colors and format. ULI may have to review the report prior to sending it to print.

### **Format**

ULI Baltimore follows the model of the national advisory services panel reports and in addition to the front matter, divides the report into the following sections:

- Acknowledgements
- Panel and Project Staff
- Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment
- Executive Summary
- Market Potential
- Development Strategies
- Planning and Design
- Implementation
- Conclusion
- Appendix
- Panel Bios

For additional information on formatting the reports, please review past reports, which are available on ULI Baltimore's website: [Baltimore.uli.org](http://Baltimore.uli.org).

### **Writing the Report**

The PowerPoint presentation developed during the TAP and presented to the sponsor on Day 2 is often a good template for writing the final report. Dropping the text of the slides into the report can be an easy way to help develop the outline for the report.

While it is the staff's responsibility to write the report, do not hesitate to have panelists fill in "holes" during their review. The sponsor may also have to help with the Acknowledgements to ensure that all those who participated are recognized appropriately. ULI Baltimore has hired an editor for a number of past reports with mixed results. If there is a ULI-trained editor that we can contract with, it would be a good idea.

### **Printing the Report**

ULI Baltimore will direct the printing and production of the TAP reports. Printing is included in the cost of the TAP. If the Sponsor requests additional copies, such costs are specific to that TAP Report. Typically, One reproducible digital copy and 30 hard copies are produced. Ten copies are delivered to the sponsor, a copy is sent to each panel member, and the remaining copies are kept on file to use for marketing. An electronic version of the final report is also sent to sponsor in a pdf file. A pdf version of the report is also posted to the website. Some additional printing associated with promotion or background information may be in addition to ULI TAP costs and responsibilities.

### **Website**

Final reports should be posted to websites (Baltimore.uli.org and Sponsor) and sent electronically to the sponsor.

### **Sending Reports to the Panelists**

After each panel, panelists are e-mailed a copy of the final report, a thank you note and a "token of our appreciation". ULI Baltimore will coordinate Thank You token production and costs.

## **VIII. Marketing and Communications**

### **Marketing Materials**

Each prospective TAP sponsors should receive a packet of information that includes the following:

1. TAP Program Brochure
2. TAP Guidelines
3. Sample Agenda
4. Roles & Responsibilities
5. Sample Briefing Book Guidelines
6. Application
7. Listing of TAPs completed by ULI Baltimore
8. Sample Report

All materials can be downloaded off of ULI Baltimore's website: Baltimore.uli.org.

### **Website**

The TAP section on the website should include all marketing materials and should have all of ULI Baltimore's TAP reports available for download. Baltimore.uli.org.

### **Newsletters**

ULI Baltimore's newsletters should include summaries of recent TAPs. ULI staff has traditionally written these articles.

### **Word of Mouth**

ULI Baltimore's most successful way of getting new TAPs is by word of mouth. Whether it through a past panelist or a committee member, ULI staff is generally contacted based on a referral.

## **IX. TAP Expenses**

### *All costs are approximate*

TAP Costs are determined by ULI. TAP costs can be highly variable based on the unique requirements of each TAP activity. A \$20,000 set fee is established for a typical TAP that last (up to 2 days). TAPs that are larger, more complex, and/or require more time, will require added fees. All fees will be agreed by the Sponsor and ULI Baltimore in advance to TAP planning.

Fees are typically paid in full prior to Day One of the TAP. The ULI Baltimore District has the discretion to determine whether to accept a Pro-Bono TAP.

**TYPICAL 2-DAY, SINGLE-PROPERTY TAP COST BREAKDOWN**

|  |  |                             |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Staff Time – Up to 80 hours                  |  | \$ 3,000 - \$ 5,500         |
| • Meeting, planning for and staffing the TAP |  |                             |
| • Writing, reviewing, formatting the report  |  |                             |
| Food   |  |                             |
| + Panel Dinner (varies) (one)                |  | \$ 2,200                    |
| + Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks (two)          |  | \$ 1,500                    |
| Technical TAP Report Writer                  |  | \$ 2,500                    |
| Printing                                     |  | \$ 500                      |
| Thank you gifts                              |  | \$ 500                      |
| Travel & Lodging (Optional)                  |  | \$ 600                      |
| Facility Costs (Venue Costs)                 |  | \$ 1,000                    |
| Bus Rental Costs (Tour, 1-day)               |  | \$ 600                      |
| Miscellaneous Expenses                       |  | \$ 500                      |
| Graphic Layout & Design of Final TAP Report  |  | \$ 1,200                    |
| <b>Direct TAP Costs Subtotal</b>             |  | <b>\$14,100 to \$16,600</b> |

**ULI District Fee/Honoraria (10%-20% of expenses, typical) \$ 1,400 to \$ 3,300**

**OVERALL ULI BALTIMORE DISTRICT TAP SPONSOR COSTS**  
**\$ 15,500 to \$20,000**

## Appendix A – Timeline

- Initial meeting between sponsor & ULI
- Execution of contract
- Planning meeting with
  - a. TAP Chair
  - b. Sponsor Lead
  - c. ULI Staff
  
- Sponsor identifies tap questions
- Identify panelist by ULI Regionalism Committee
- Briefing booklet sent to panelist & first payment to ULI
- TAP event & second payment to ULI
- TAP Report
- TAP follow up meeting approximately 1 month after
  - Feedback is given
  - Recommendations on action plan
  - How can ULI help
- Sponsor presents follow up at 6-12 months



## Appendix B – Sample Agreement

The Baltimore District Council of the Urban Land Institute would like to thank the [SPONSOR] for agreeing to sponsor a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) on [estimated TAP DATES] to PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Example: evaluate development opportunities for key parcels of land near the XXX Metro Station). Following is the scope of work, deliverables and associated costs for the one and one-half day TAP. Should the contents of this letter be consistent with your expectations, please return a signed copy to ULI Baltimore at your earliest convenience.

### SCOPE OF WORK

#### ULI BALTIMORE

##### V. Pre-Panel (4-8 weeks)

- Work with the sponsors to define expectations, shape questions, and prepare for panel
- Work with the sponsors to develop the agenda for the TAP
- Work with sponsors to identify expertise needed to complete assignment
- Confirm panelists and communicate roles and responsibilities

##### VI. On-Site (2- days)

- Work with sponsor to ensure tour and on-site logistics are complete
- Staff TAP with help of chair and sponsors
- Take notes on panel deliberations and help prepare presentation to sponsors

##### VII. Post Panel (6-8 weeks)

- Write ULI TAP panel report, obtaining input from panel and sponsors
- Issue final ULI TAP report within 8 weeks of completion of the TAP

#### [SPONSOR NAME]

- Reserve meeting space for the panel. Room should be large enough to accommodate fifteen people at one table as well provide space for break out sessions.
- Reserve meeting space for the sponsor briefing and final presentation. Size of room depends upon how many people are invited to each session.
- Provide transportation for site tour to accommodate 15 people from ULI Baltimore as well as tour guides and others from Sponsor team.
- Compile briefing materials and mail one copy to each panel member and two copies to ULI Baltimore at least two weeks prior to the panel.
- Provide aerial maps of the study area and have the flexibility to produce additional at the panel's request.
- Lead the coordination of the sponsor briefing. This includes identifying, inviting and confirming key participants, as well as preparing them for nature of the event.
- Review draft report for accuracy prior to publication.

**DELIVERABLES:**

- Within eight weeks after the TAP has been completed, a written report, summarizing the panels' comments and recommendations, will be provided to each sponsor in electronic format (pdf file) and 10 hard copies.
- Within 6-12 months, sponsor will present as a follow up to the TAP, their status regarding the implementation plan.

**FEE FOR SERVICES:**

- ULI Baltimore charges a \$20,000 Lump Sum fee to cover ULI Baltimore District costs and materials required for Technical Assistance Panels. Panel members volunteer their time and services at no cost. The [SPONSOR NAME] is required to cover all logistical costs (promotions, added copying, meeting room, supplies, etc.) and the costs associated with assembling relevant information about the assignment and issues under consideration.
- Payment for the panel is due as follows:
  - 25% Within three weeks prior to the agreed upon Date of the TAP event.
  - 75% Due the day before the TAP event.

**ALTERNATE PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

- 25% Within three weeks prior to the agreed upon Date of the TAP event.
- 50% Due the day before the TAP event.
- 25% Payable upon receipt of the final report. An invoice for payment will be submitted with the final report.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[NAME] Date  
ULI Baltimore District Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
[SPONSOR POC NAME] Date  
[SPONSOR]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[ULI TAP MANAGER NAME] Date  
Chair, ULI Baltimore, [TAP NAME]

## Appendix C – Sample Questions

Considering the challenges and resources of the valley, we are asking ULI to help us answer the following questions:

- What specific elements impact the short and long term development of the park and surrounding communities?
- Can an organization be created to administer valley resources? What forms can an organization take? How can community input be ensured?
- What should the boundaries of the cultural and environmental impact area be?
- How can the diverse elements of the park be made sustainable? What short and long term strategy would be necessary considering economically, environmentally, and culturally elements?
- What specific design elements would enable the strategies outlined above?
- What financial resources may be available to implement the strategies?
- What should be done to more closely connect the river communities to the valley?

# Appendix D – Sample Briefing Document

## Greenmount Avenue Technical Assistance Panel

1. Sponsor -The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)
2. Date - Wednesday July 29<sup>th</sup> and Thursday July 30<sup>th</sup>
3. Location - City Arts Building (address?)
4. Geographic Area of TAP- Eager Street to the South to 29<sup>th</sup> Street to the North
5. Panelists:
  - a. Chair - Brad Rogers (Advanced Placemaking)
  - b. Developer- Tony Rodgers (Anston Capital)
  - c. Economist/Demographer –
    - i. Joe Cronyn (Valbridge)
    - ii. Michele Whelley (M.L. Whelley Consulting)
  - d. Traffic Consultant –
    - i. Liz Gordon (Kittelson & Associates, Inc.)
    - ii. Ken Schmid (Traffic Concepts)
  - e. Design & Sustainability –
    - i. Troy Marrocco (BCT Architects)
    - ii. Karin Holland (Haley Aldrich)
    - iii. Davin Hong (Living Design Lab)
    - iv. Brittany Sink (MRA) and Young Leader
    - v. Steven Lafferty (State Delegate)
  - f. Construction - Domenick Dunnigan (Southway Builders)
  - g. Writer - Susan Hemphill
6. Schedule
  - a. Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup>
    - i. 8-9AM – gather, introductions, breakfast, review materials
    - ii. 9-12PM – tour corridor via bus and walking
    - iii. 12-1PM – Lunch at City Arts
    - iv. 1-4PM – Interview/Meeting with Stakeholders
    - v. 4:30PM – Open to the Public
    - vi. 5PM – Mayor Introduction of LINCS
    - vii. 5:30-7PM – Public Comment
  - b. Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup>
    - i. 8-12PM – Work session to answer questions
    - ii. 12-1PM – Working lunch
    - iii. 1-4:30PM – Continue Working on questions, prepare PPS for public presentation, dry run with panelists.
    - iv. 5-7PM – Public Presentation
7. Needs/To Do's:
  - a. Review Stakeholders List for completeness – All Panelists

- b. Email invite to Stakeholders – Greater Homewood
- c. Briefing Book - BDC - To Panelists by 7/17
- d. Base Maps – BDC/City Planning - Due 7/28
- e. Bus Transport on 7/29 – ULI, Lisa Norris
- f. Food and Beverage for 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (breakfast, lunch and snacks for PM sessions) – ULI, Lisa Norris
- g. Dinner on 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM (Nice place on Charles Street) – ULI, Lisa Norris
- h. Bum wad, markers, scales, easels, tablet notepads – ULI, Brittany Sink

Leon Pinkett.

DGS  
Housing  
DOT.

Plng.  
Greater Homewood.



April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Lisa Norris  
District Council Coordinator  
ULI Baltimore  
26 Alderman Court  
Timonium, MD 21093

Re: Greenmount Avenue Technical Assistance Panel

Dear Ms. Norris:

A consortium of stakeholders are interested in engaging a ULI Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) that will examine revitalization strategies for the Greenmount Avenue corridor from Eager Street to 29<sup>th</sup> Street. The stakeholders include the Baltimore Development Corporation, The Mayor's Office, The Baltimore City Department of Planning, The Baltimore City Department of Transportation, Baltimore Housing, and the Greater Homewood Community Corporation, in addition to local community organizations.

Greenmount Avenue is a commercial corridor that serves as major north-south commuter route between downtown Baltimore and Northern Baltimore. The TAP should focus on several key areas integral to the area's development.

- 1) **The Market: What is the current socio-economic demographics for the Greenmount Corridor, and what are the major businesses, residential compositions, and retail areas for opportunity?**
  - a) Business Summary
    - i) Retail/Commercial Inventory
    - ii) Housing /Multifamily Units
    - iii) Surplus Leakage Analysis
  
- 2) **Development Opportunities:**
  - a) What sites along the corridor represent the greatest opportunity for redevelopment? Where or how should revitalization efforts be focused or phased?

- b) What revitalization strategies can position the corridor for a turnaround and sustainable growth?
  - c) Which of the identified nodes have the strongest potential for redevelopment and ability to bring about substantial positive change?
  - d) What funding sources are available to finance projects along the corridor?
- 3) **Urban Design Standards: How can specific design guidelines positively influence and strengthen the surrounding corridor?**
- a) Study Urban Design massings including
    - i) 'bar' shaped buildings,
    - ii) 'L' shaped buildings,
    - iii) larger corner sites
  - b) Review zoning options.
- 4) **Transportation Improvements**
- a) Pedestrian and Vehicular safety around 24<sup>th</sup> street and MUND park
  - b) Speeding near Green Mount cemetery and between 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> St.
  - c) Challenges in the 26<sup>th</sup> street area with one-way patterns
  - d) Light Timing and Signalization

Please do not hesitate to contact Alex Hutchinson if you have any questions. Alex can be reached at 410-837-9305 or [AHutchinson@baltimoredevelopment.com](mailto:AHutchinson@baltimoredevelopment.com). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



William H. Cole,  
President & CEO



## Corridor Profile: The Greenmount Avenue Corridor

The Greenmount Avenue corridor from Eager Street north to 29th Street has continued to struggle even with improvements in some of the surrounding neighborhoods. The corridor is bookended by centers activity that could be leveraged to improve the corridor as a whole. On the north end is the Waverly Main Street area which is a thriving business district with strong community support, and could benefit from additional investment. The southern end of the corridor is included in the Station North Arts and Entertainment District and has started to see a wide variety of arts and housing related investments and activities.

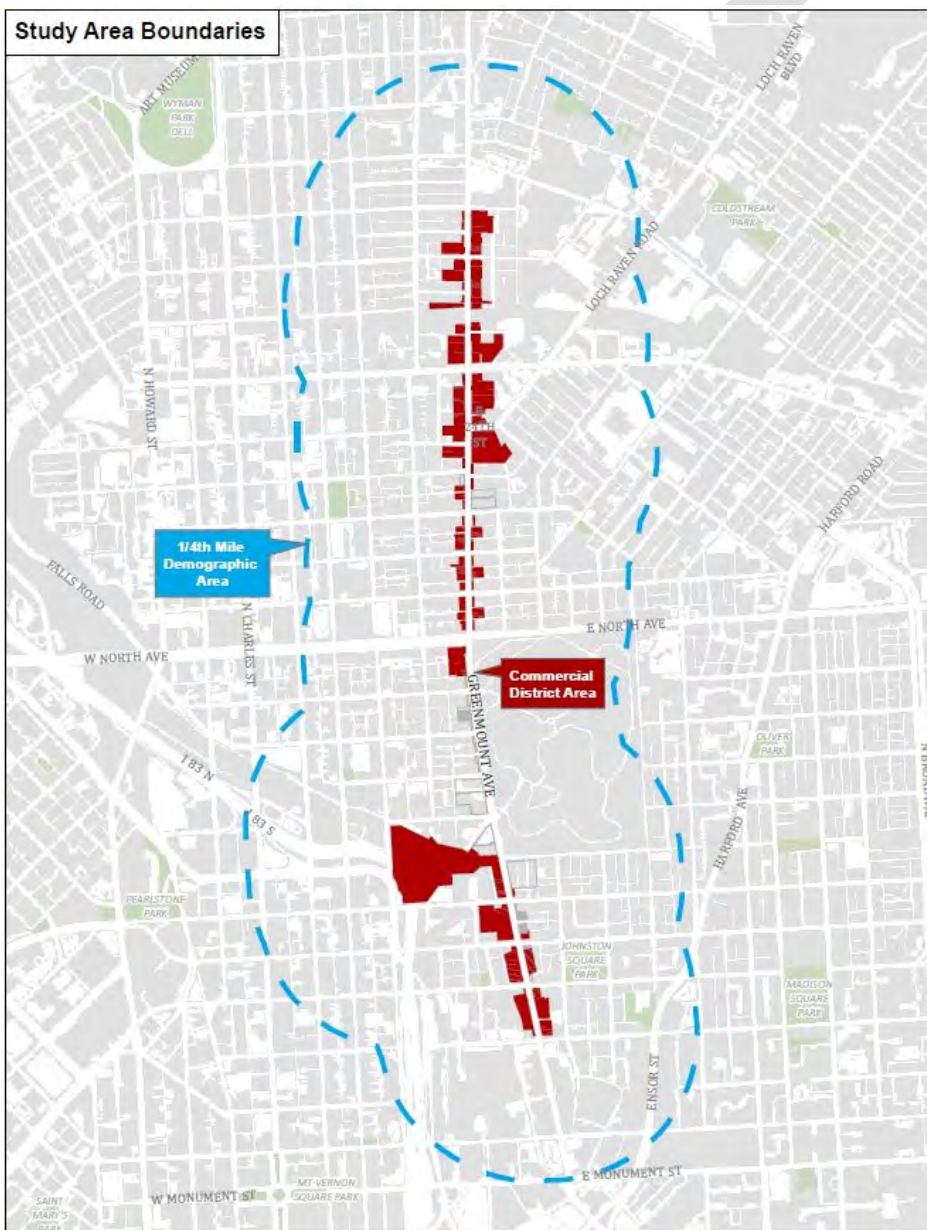


### Community Partner

Greater Homewood Community Corporation

### Issues Facing the Corridor

- Retail mix does not meet the needs of diverse residential population.
- Some of the surrounding neighborhoods are experiencing increased residential development.
- Speeding is an issue and pedestrian safety is a concern.
- Real and perceived public safety concerns.



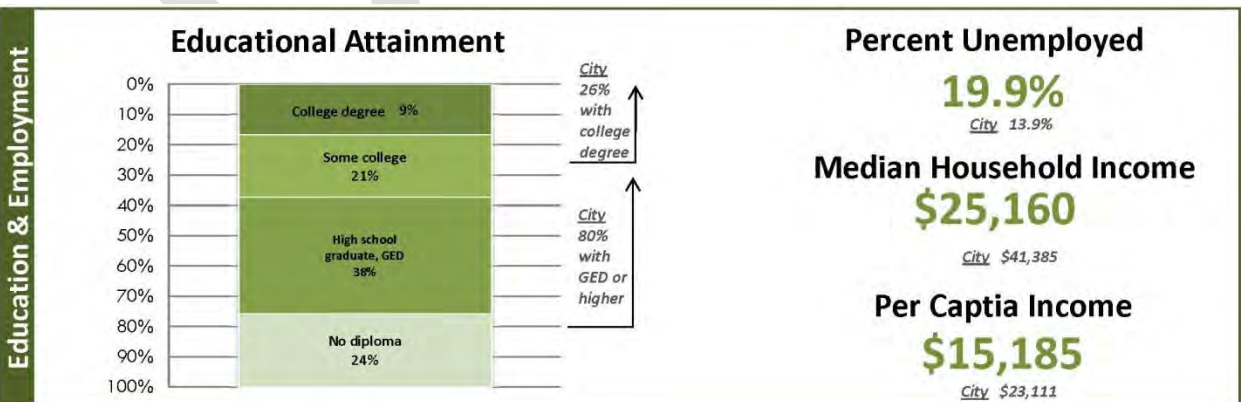
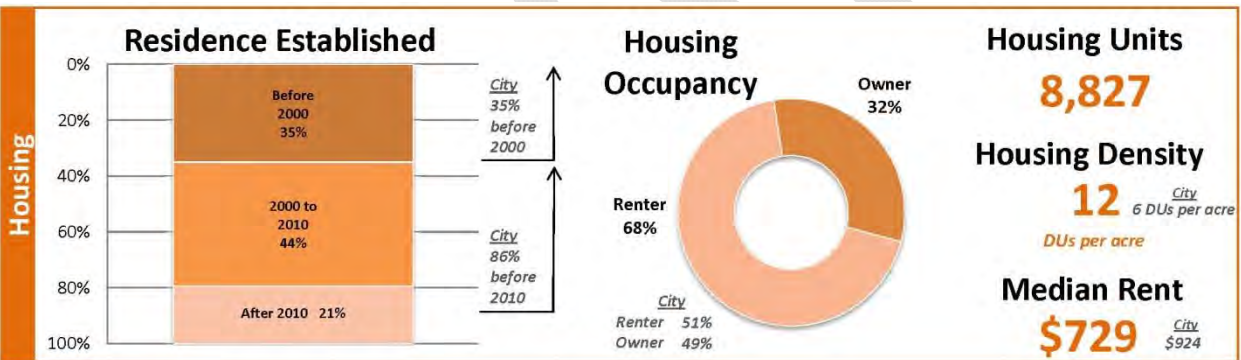
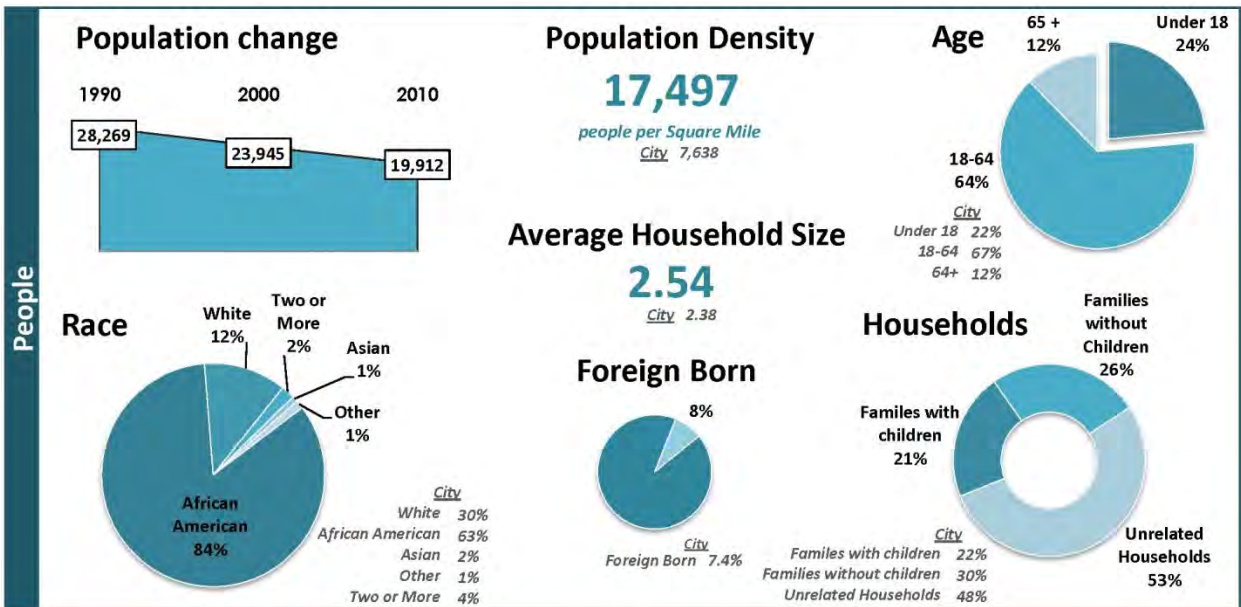
Greenmount Ave and E 25<sup>th</sup> St







# Demographic Indicators:



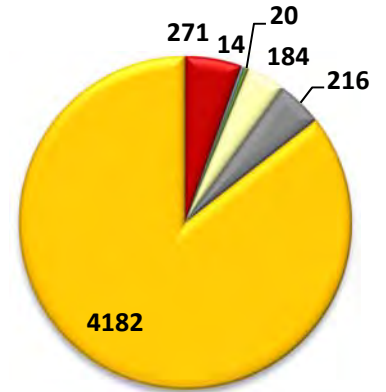


## Land Use and Zoning:

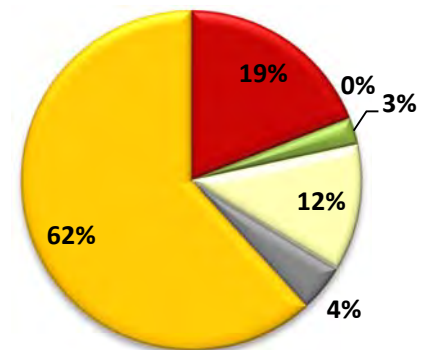


## Building Permits 2010-2014

### Permit Count



### Permit Costs



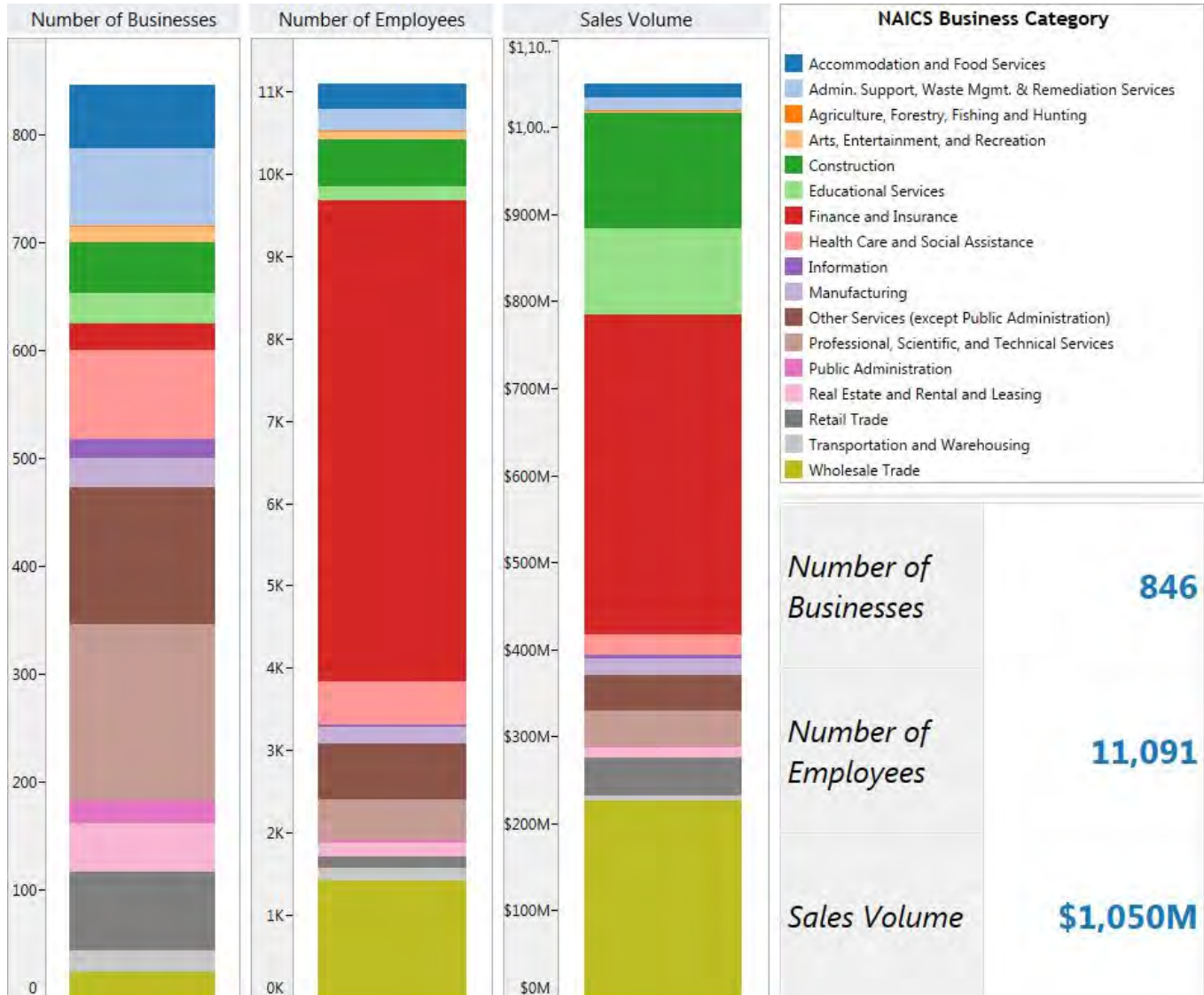
5-Year Permit Total:  
**4888**

5-Year Permit  
Investment:  
**\$ 126,500,200**

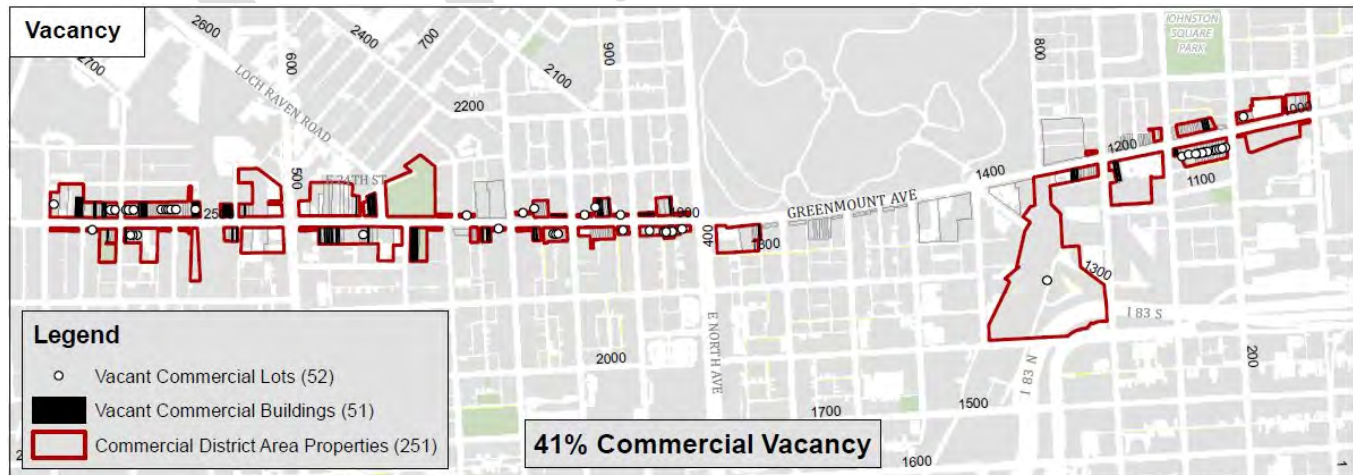


## Economic Vitality:

### Corridor Businesses



Source: The business data was collected from ESRI Business Analyst for 2013 and includes the Corridor's 1/4<sup>th</sup> mile demographic area.

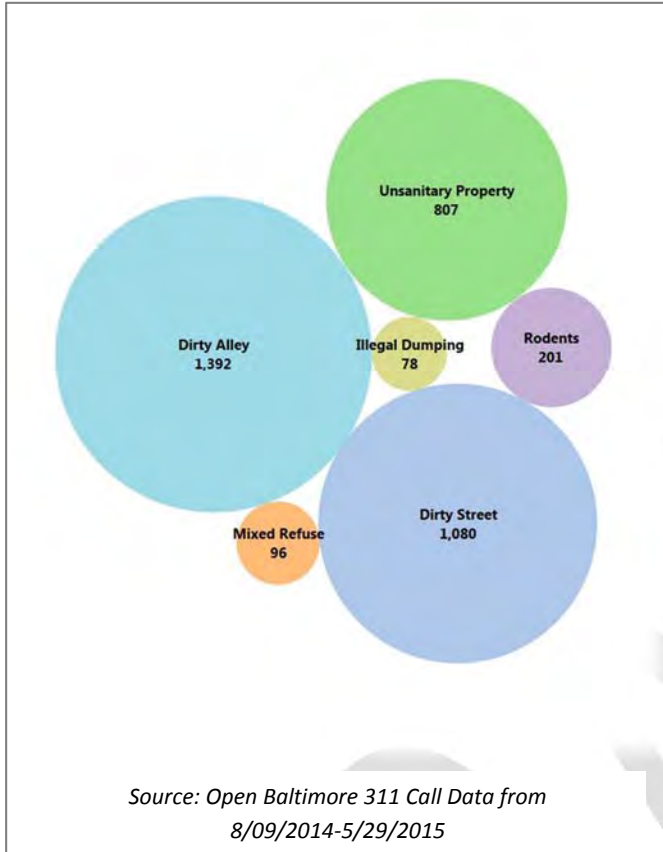


Source: The vacancy data is from the May 2015 Real Property parcel layer. Commercial District Area properties are defined as properties zoned commercial that are adjacent to the Greenmount Corridor.

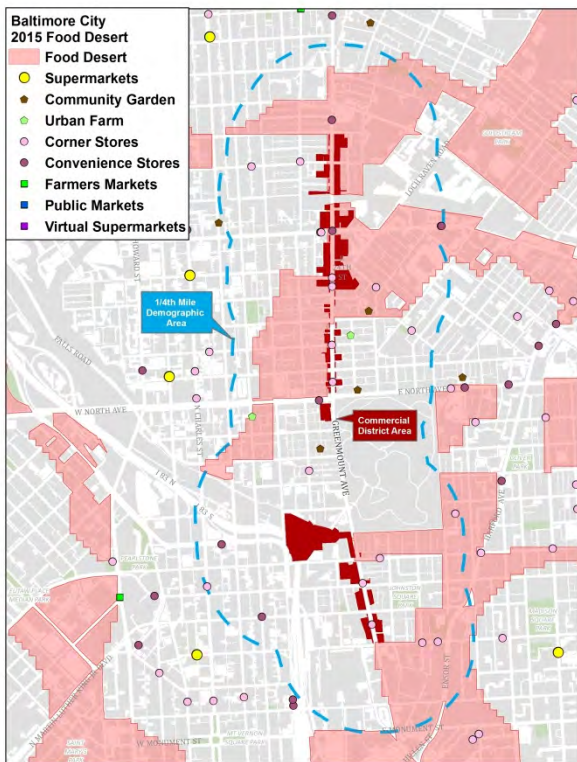
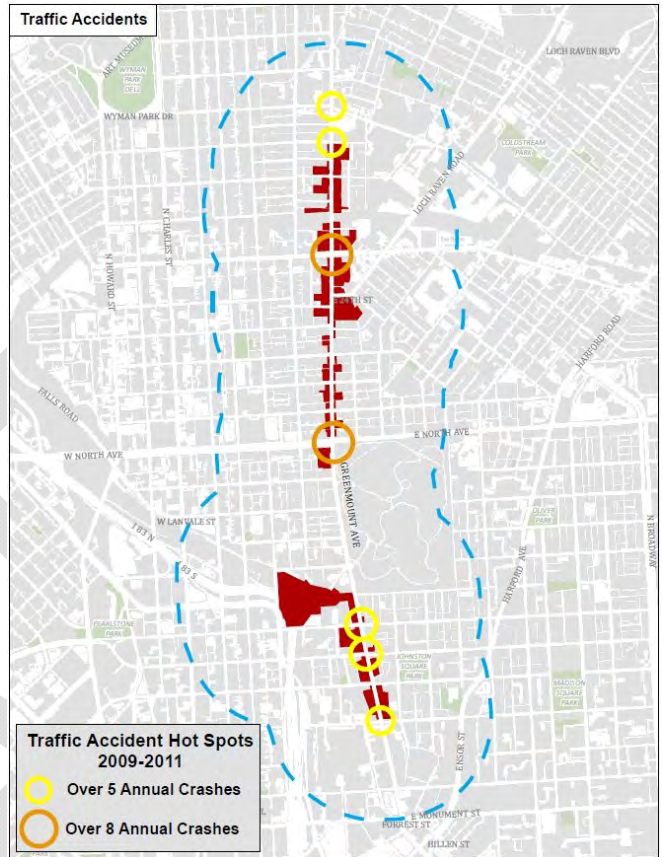


## Public Safety and Health:

### Public Sanitation Service Requests



### Traffic Accident Hot Spots



### Food Environment

Within the ¼ mile area surrounding the corridor there are:

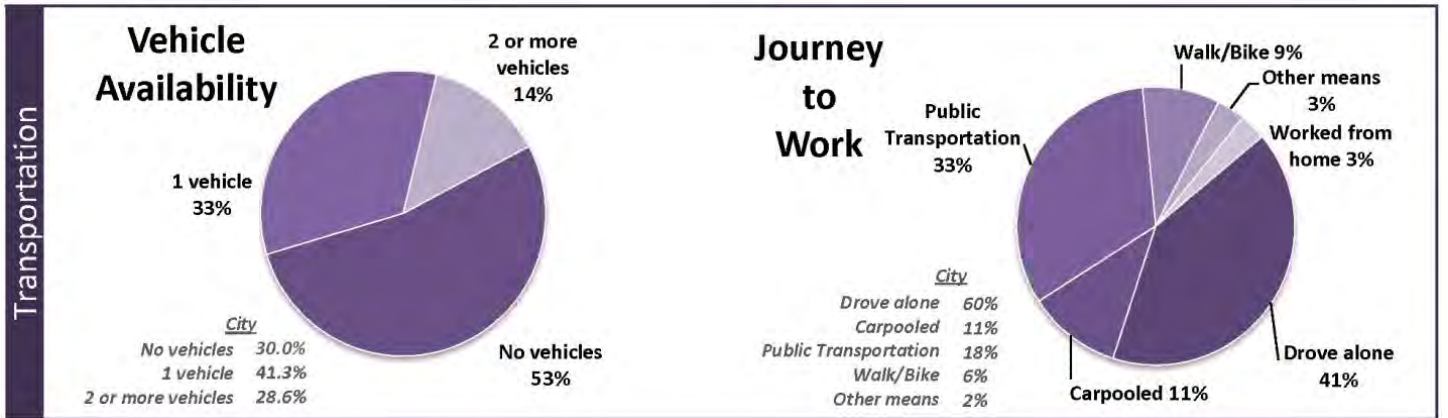
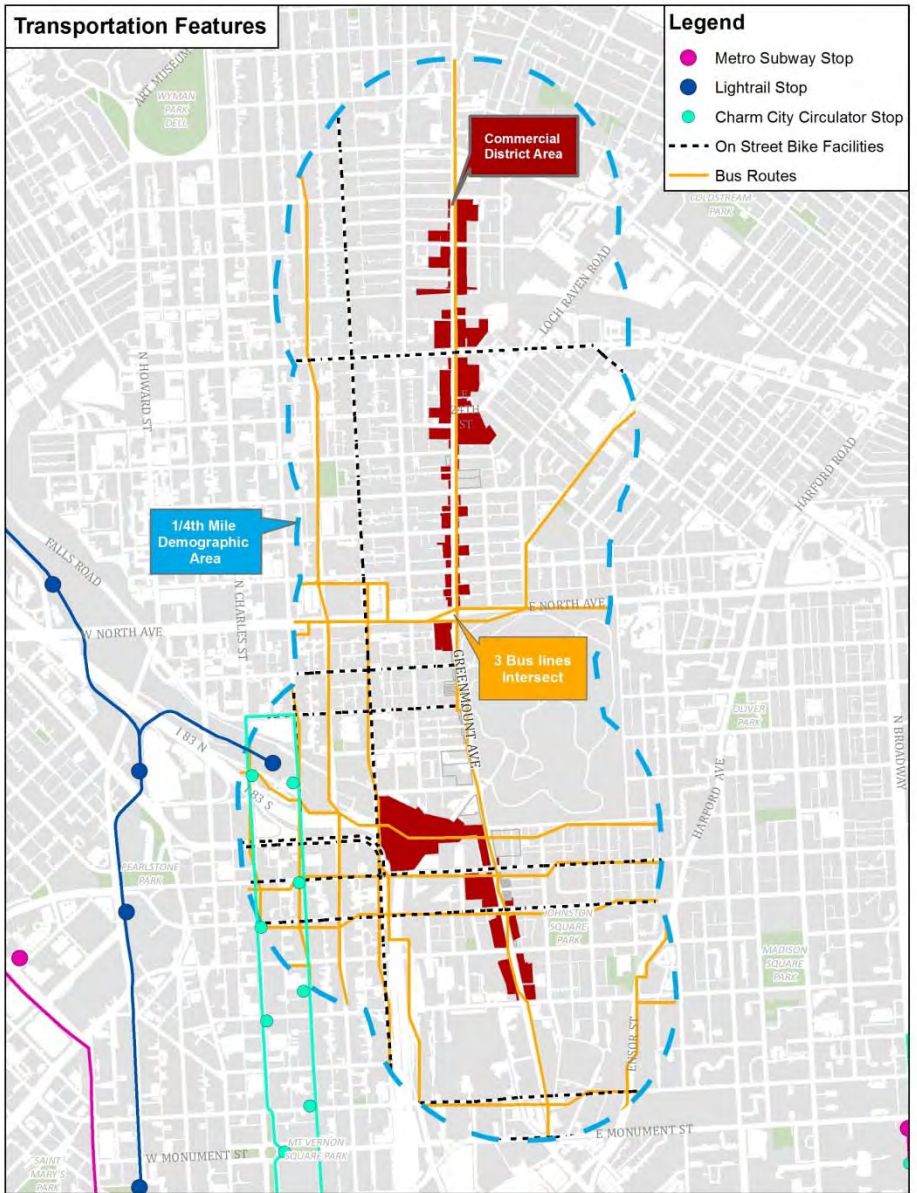
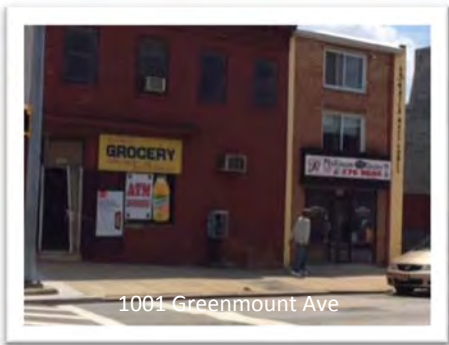
- 5,500 people (or 27% of the population) living in a Food Desert\*
- No supermarkets
- 3 community gardens
- 2 urban farms
- 18 corner stores
- 7 convenience stores
- No farmers markets
- No virtual supermarkets

\*A Food Desert is an area where:

- 1) The distance to a supermarket or supermarket alternative is more than ¼ mile,
- 2) The median household income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level,
- 3) Over 30% of households have no vehicle available, and
- 4) The average Healthy Food Availability Index score for all food stores is low.



# Transportation:



## Recommendations

1. Crosswalks are too far apart to be useful, increase the number of crosswalks across the corridor.
2. Have community partner's work with Rec and Parks to improve the Greenmount Recreation Center.
3. Perform a cost analysis for expanding the Greenmount Rec Center.
4. Address the outstanding 41% vacancy in commercially-zoned properties
5. Find a way to attract small businesses and entrepreneurs best suited to occupy the small floor plates of the vacant storefronts.
6. Improve the streetscape to better suit the character of the existing buildings without hindering bus and commuter traffic. The heavy traffic and speeding doesn't fit the built environment of a commercial district that was developed when high speed traffic was less extreme.
7. Improve the safety of the traffic accident hotspot intersections at Greenmount and North Ave and Greenmount and E 25th St.
8. Work to improve access to transit in the corridor to assist the majority of the population without vehicles.
9. Improve healthy food access in the areas of the corridor that are in a food desert.
10. Partner with the Greater Homewood Community Corporation to identify community concerns and issues.
11. Identify the most appropriate land uses for each area of the corridor.
12. Determine how new construction should relate to the street and adjoining neighborhoods.





## Toolkit:

The City of Baltimore has many potential programs and services that can be targeted at Greenmount Corridor:

- **Economic Development Tools**
  - Neighborhood Development (Baltimore Development Corporation)
    - *Façade Improvement Grant, Baltimore MICRO, and Enterprise Zone Tax Credits*
      - Various grants, loans, and tax credit programs will be targeted in Greenmount Corridor to support business operations and provide critical financing for expansion.
    - *Market Study Analysis*
      - Utilizing both in-house analyst and hired consultants, a market study will be performed for the commercial corridor. The assessment will provide government decision-makers, private investors, and community leaders with a realistic understanding of the potential for development of the different types of land uses that make up the corridor.
    - *Targeted Code Enforcement*
      - In order to maintain safe and attractive neighborhoods and business districts throughout the city, Baltimore Housing's Code Enforcement Division enforces the city's housing, zoning, building and related codes in target areas.
- **Planning**
  - Planning Department
    - *Design and Zoning*
      - The *Land Use Planning Division* directs the physical development of the City in coordination with comprehensive plans.
    - *Comprehensive Planning*
      - The Comprehensive Planning Division incorporates a variety of planning disciplines including land use, environmental planning, transportation planning, and community planning to ensure that the City is provided with realistic, implementable plans.
- **Transportation**
  - Department of Transportation
    - *Streetscape*
      - Roadway improvements that include but are not limited to tree plantings, lighting enhancements, sidewalk repair, roadway resurfacing, traffic calming, landscaped medians.
    - *Bike Baltimore*
      - Bike Baltimore is a mayoral initiative to institute infrastructure improvements, policy recommendations, educational goals and enforcement strategies designed to make Baltimore a bike friendly city.
    - *Tree Baltimore (Recreation and Parks)*
      - TreeBaltimore is a mayoral initiative led by the Baltimore City of Recreation and Parks in partnership with Blue Water Baltimore, the Parks & People Foundation, and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay that will be used to bolster street tree coverage.
- **Sanitation**
  - Department of Public Works
    - The Department of Public Works has the ability to target priority areas in the corridor with their Corner Can Initiative, Mechanical Streetsweeping, Community Service Workers, Community Pitch-In Program, and Graffiti Removal.

| Name                                      | Field                                    | Person of Contact    | Email  | Telephone Number |
|---|--|----------------------|--|------------------|
| Telesis                                   | Affordable Housing/Community Development | Catherine Stokes     | cstokes@telesiscorp.com  | 410.685.1494     |
| Jubilee Baltimore                         | Affordable Housing/Community Development | Charlie Duff         | charlieduff@jubileebaltimore.org                                   | 410.327.7373x101 |
| People's Homesteading Group               | Affordable Housing/Community Development | Michael Mazepink     | michael@phghouse.org   |                  |
| Greater Baltimore AHC                     | Affordable Housing/Community Development | Andrew Vincent       | vincent@ahcinc.org   |                  |
| Rebuild Johnston Square                   | Community Organization                   | Regina Hammond       | keine@aol.com  | 443 801 5772     |
| New Greenmount West Community Association | Community Organization                   | Lena Leone           | lenaleone@gmail.com  | 443.955.9129     |
| New Greenmount west Community Association |  | Lindsay Esposito     | lindsaygomes1@gmail.com  |                  |
| New Greenmount West Community Association |  | Kisha Webster        | iamkishalwebster@gmail.com   |                  |
| New Greenmount West Community Association |  | Dale Hargrave        | dalehargrave57@gmail.com   |                  |
| Greater Greenmount Community Association  | Community Organization                   | Linda Johnson        | fsp_l_maria@yahoo.com  | 410-294-6822     |
| Greater Greenmount Community Association  | Community Organization                   | Kathy Christian      | bg21218@yahoo.com  | 914-262-8554     |
| BMOG Coalition                            | Community Organization                   | Connie Ross          | crossedc@gmail.com   | 410-366-0785     |
| BMOG Coalition                            | Community Organization                   | Lottie Sneed         | lsneed@greaterhomewood.org   | 443-694-8740     |
| Harwood Community Association             | Community Organization                   | Queen Addison        | qnaddison225@gmail.com   | 443-469-8488     |
| Harwood Community Association             | Community Organization                   | Nick Sheridan        | curioussheridan@aol.com  | 443-841-5650     |
| Harwood Community Association             | Community Organization                   | Ryan Parnell         | ryanparnell1@gmail.com   | 240-418-9221     |
| Harwood Community Association             | Community Organization                   | Amanda Parnell       | amanda@harwoodbaltimore.com  | 443-481-7984     |
| Harwood Community Association             | Community Organization                   | Kirsch Jones         | kirsch.jones@gmail.com   | (856) 296-5845   |
| Harwood Community Association             | Community Organization                   | Hank                 |  |                  |
| Better Waverly                            | Community Organization                   | Sonja Merchant-Jones | smerchantj@aol.com   |                  |
| Better Waverly                            | Community Organization                   | Phil LaCombe         | placombe@gmail.com   |                  |
| Central Baltimore Partnership             | Key Stakeholder                          | Ashley Wallace       | awallace@centralbaltimore.org                                      | 715-292-0801     |
| JHU                                       | Key Stakeholder                          | Jennifer Mielke      | jmielke3@jhu.edu   | 443-564-7990     |
| Station North Arts and Entertainment      | Key Stakeholder                          | Ben Stone            | ben.stone@gmail.com  |                  |
| Waverly Main Street                       | Key Stakeholder                          | Emilie Drascher      | waverlymainstreet@gmail.com  |                  |
| Old Goucher Business Alliance             | Key Stakeholder                          | Kenny Abrams         | abramsins@comcast.net  | 410-727-0800     |
| Greater Homewood Community Corporation    | Key Stakeholder                          | Ira Kowler           | ikowler@greaterhomewood.org  |                  |
| Greater Homewood Community Corporation    | Key Stakeholder                          | Karen Stokes         | kstokes@greaterhomewood.org  |                  |
| Greater Homewood Community Corporation    | Key Stakeholder                          | Peter Duvall         | pduvall@greaterhomewood.org  |                  |
| TRF                                       | Local Developer                          |                      |  |                  |
| BARCO                                     | Local Developer                          |                      |  |                  |
| Terry Trimble                             | Local Developer                          |                      |  |                  |
| Mike Roc                                  | Local Developer                          |                      |  |                  |
| Mother Seton                              |  |                      |  |                  |
| Greenmount Recreation Cetner              |  |                      |  |                  |
| MTA                                       | Service Provider                         | Michael Walk         | <a href="mailto:mwalk@mta.maryland.gov">mwalk@mta.maryland.gov</a> |                  |
| St. Ann's Catholic Church                 | Local Stakeholder                        |                      |  |                  |

## Appendix E – Sample TAP Agenda (Prepared by District Council Staff)

### **Day One**

- 8:00 am** Welcome and Introductions – Light Breakfast- TAP Panel Venue near or within TAP study area
- 9:00 am** TAP Study Area Tour and surroundings
- 12:00 pm** Lunch
- 1:00 pm** Interview/Meeting with Stakeholders & Sponsor
- 5 - 6:30 pm** Public Engagement in Public Engagement Space (case-specific)
- 7:30 pm** Panel Debriefing Dinner – Venue case-specific

### **Day Two**

- 8:00 am** TAP Panel Work session/Q&A- Breakfast
- 10:30 am** Sponsor invited for interactive session. (Including discussion of TAP Follow-up schedule).
- 12:00 pm** Working Lunch – Sponsor typically does not attend.
- 1:00 pm** TAP Panel working on questions, prepare PowerPoint presentation for public TAP presentation, dry run with TAP panelists
- 5:00 pm** TAP Findings Public presentation – Public Engagement Space

## Appendix F – Sample Power Point Presentation Flow

- Title Page
- ULI Overview
- TAP Members (Sponsor Chair & Members)
- Background Info- Briefing booklet, overview of questions
- Day One Recap
  - Site Tour
  - Work Session
  - Stakeholder/Community Meeting
- Day Two Recap
  - Findings
  - Opportunities & Challenges
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations
  - Analysis
  - Guidance
- Q&A

# Appendix G – Sample Report

# ULI Baltimore Pennsylvania Avenue TAP

09/14/16

An Urban Land Institute  
Technical Assistance Panel  
October 19-20, 2015



Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor:

## Restoring THE Glory

Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel



**Urban Land Institute** Baltimore

ULI Baltimore

On behalf of the Baltimore Development Corporation

Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor:

# Restoring THE Glory

Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel

ULI PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE TAP



**Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi**

**“It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten”**

*- Ghanaian Proverb*

## Acknowledgments

**Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake**

**Assistant Deputy Mayor Leon Pinkett**

**The Baltimore Development Corporation**

**The Baltimore City Department of Planning**

**The Baltimore City Department of Transportation**

**Baltimore Housing**

### **TAP Panelists:**

#### **Chairperson**

Brad Rogers, Advanced Placemaking

#### **Panel Members**

Ernst Valery, EVI

Jerrel Duffy Jr., M&T Bank

Anita Morrison, Partners for Economic Solutions

Liz Gordon, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

Mark Keeley, Traffic Concepts

Davin Hong, Living Design Lab

Klaus Philipsen, ArchPlan, Inc.

Jennifer Goold, Neighborhood Design Center

Brittany Sink, MRA and Young Leader

#### **ULI Baltimore Chair:**

Sean Davis, MRA/GTA

#### **ULI Baltimore:**

Lisa Norris, ULI Baltimore

Danielle Dunlap, ULI Baltimore



# Restoring THE Glory

Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel

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| About ULI Baltimore's TAP Program      | 5  |
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# Restoring THE Glory

Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel



## About ULI Baltimore

ULI Baltimore is the local Baltimore metropolitan regional District Council for the Urban Land Institute and serves Central Maryland and other parts of the state through its outreach efforts; the organization is a 501(c)3. As a trusted source for timely and unbiased land use information, ULI Baltimore provides a critical link to the improvement of state and local land use policy and development practices.

ULI is a nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum,

ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

Founded in 1936, the institute now has more than 30,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines in private enterprise and public service. The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land to create and sustain thriving communities worldwide.

## About ULI Baltimore's TAP Program

The objective of ULI Baltimore's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Baltimore Region. Like ULI District Councils throughout the country, ULI Baltimore utilizes its broad membership base to administer one- or two-day panels, and offer objective and responsible advice to local stakeholders and decision makers on a diverse set of land use issues. These issues can range from site-specific projects to public policy strategies. The flexibility of the TAP program enables ULI Baltimore to present a customized approach for each TAP, one that allows panelists to study and address specific contextual issues.

The Baltimore Development Corporation and a consortium of stakeholders engaged ULI Baltimore to convene a Technical Assistance Panel with the overall goal of examining revitalization strategies for a portion of Pennsylvania Avenue, as well as where it intersects with North Avenue. The study area—Pennsylvania Avenue from Fulton Avenue to Martin Luther King Boulevard, and North Avenue from Monroe Street to McCulloh Street, includes 2.1 miles of roadway and many of the surrounding neighborhoods. This was the second of five commercial corridors that were the focus of the LINCS (Leveraging Investment in Neighborhood Corridors) program.

The two-day TAP convened on October 19, 2015 at the St. Peter Claver Church. The Panel spent the morning touring the study area; the afternoon was devoted to interviewing stakeholders,

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and the evening included an open public meeting for soliciting broader community input. On the second day the Panel re-convened to share what they had learned and formulate their recommendations. Stakeholders and the general public were invited to hear the Panel's presentation at the end of the day.

## What Do We Want?

When asked, residents of the neighborhoods in the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor are very clear about what they want for their communities. Indeed, they are hungry for precisely the same things that so many Baltimore neighborhoods cry out for:

- **BASIC SERVICES** that are delivered effectively and reliably. This is particularly true for the chronic problems of trash, lighting, and vermin.
- **PUBLIC SAFETY** that protects everyone from harm. Residents have resoundingly rejected the false choice between living in anarchy and living under a police state.
- **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** that serves community needs. This means better service, which is easier to use and cleaner to experience.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL** that improves community livability. This includes a sit-down restaurant, more options for groceries, and a greater variety of spending options.
- **YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES** that give children better access to educational, economic, and recreational resources.

But unlike most other neighborhoods, residents in the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor yearn for something special, something that is profoundly unique to this particular place:

**They yearn to reclaim their proud heritage of African-American entertainment, culture, and commerce.**

And they are absolutely right to demand this.

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Forged within the cruel crucible of segregation, the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor was a vibrant place.

## The Past is the Future

Pennsylvania Avenue was once the beating heart of Baltimore's African-American community. It was the city's premier cultural and entertainment district, featuring famed nightclubs, bars, and restaurants. At a time when black performers were not allowed in white venues, the Royal Theatre showcased an astonishing array of brilliant and now-legendary talents: Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Ray Charles, Sarah Vaughan, Mahalia Jackson, James Brown, and many others.

Forged within the cruel crucible of segregation, the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor was a vibrant place of commerce, community, and culture. And the adjacent neighborhoods were home to many of Baltimore's greatest figures, from Thurgood Marshall and Cab Calloway to Billie Holliday and Kweisi Mfume.

But as the 20th Century progressed, a series of interrelated forces worked to undermine the storied legacy of "The Avenue". The gradual collapse of de jure segregation freed Black families to move into neighborhoods from which they had once been excluded, pulling middle class consumers away from Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the economic disruptions of white flight and deindustrialization wreaked havoc on the city's economy as a whole, with particularly drastic consequences for black families.

This gradual erosion of economic strength was punctuated by the riots following the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Businesses along The Avenue were damaged, and the riots dramatically accelerated the economically destabilizing process of white flight. By the 1970s, Pennsylvania Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods were in decline.

The responses that followed, though noble and needed, did not succeed in reversing this downward trajectory. The housing-first strategy pioneered by Sandtown Habitat for Humanity resulted in the construction of hundreds of high-quality, affordable homes, but this virtuous and important work was unable to fundamentally stabilize the area housing market. Meanwhile, in some cases city efforts made matters worse – like the urban renewal projects that tore out chunks of the historic

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The history of Pennsylvania Avenue is the single greatest asset that the neighborhoods have at their disposal.

commercial district and replaced them with apartments, or the “Highway to Nowhere” that further destabilized the West Baltimore housing market.

While local citizens still urgently need decent affordable housing, the housing-first strategy has not resulted in fundamental economic change. We must therefore reconsider what other strategies present themselves, and which untapped assets can be harnessed for positive change.

*The legendary, dynamic, and shamefully overlooked history of Pennsylvania Avenue is the single greatest asset that the neighborhoods have at their disposal.* It is a unifying principle around which divided communities can organize. It is a brand under which new businesses can grow. It is an identity that can draw customers and tourists from outside the Corridor – not to mention from around the country.

**Though battered and neglected, the storied history of Pennsylvania Avenue is far from over. Indeed, it is the very pathway to the future. What might that future look like?**



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LETTER CARRIERS BAND N.A.L.C. BRANCH No. 27. ARMISTICE PARADE. NOVEMBER, 1924. MEMPHIS, TENN.

This commerce and culture was particularly heroic because it took place in a world of segregation.

## The Path Not (Yet) Taken: Beale Street

Pennsylvania Avenue is special, but it is not unique. And so it is useful to examine other places that share a similar history.

Today, Memphis' Beale Street is a beloved destination for cultural, historical, and culinary tourism. But it is easy to forget how similar it once was to today's Pennsylvania Avenue, which makes it critical to learn the many lessons that it has to teach us.

Starting in the late 19th Century, traveling musicians found a safe place to perform on Beale Street. Over time, this evolved into a thriving cultural district, filled with bars, clubs, and the elegant Orpheum Theater. Beale Street Baptist Church served as a major anchor for the black community, and would eventually play an important role in the civil rights movement. And always, music was playing. Indeed, many of the 20th Century's greatest artists – including Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Otis Redding, Elvis Presley and Isaac Hayes – got their start in Memphis, and many more would come to perform on Beale Street.

This tremendous outpouring of commerce and culture was particularly heroic because it took place in a world of segregation. That said, it is also true that the *intense concentration of business and performance on Beale Street was itself driven by segregation*. After all, segregation limited the number of places where blacks could safely own businesses, perform, or even spend their money. It forced the black community to geographically concentrate their efforts.

When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed at the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1964, Memphis exploded into riots and looting. Many black-owned businesses were damaged. Even worse, this event exacerbated a growing wave of white flight to the suburbs, which had already been triggered by the process of school desegregation. Over time, tens of thousands of white students left the public school system; the compact, majority-white city became a sprawling region with a majority-black core; and middle class investment evaporated, leaving the remaining Beale Street businesses in dire economic conditions.

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A municipal urban renewal campaign demolished large swaths of Beale.

By the 1970s, the bustling activity of Beale Street was replaced by vacancy and abandonment. In a misguided attempt to help, a municipal urban renewal campaign eventually demolished large swaths of Beale and the surrounding neighborhood.

Beale Street did not begin to turn around until the late 1970s, when the community formed an organization dedicated to bringing the entertainment district back to life, and empowered to acquire property and redevelop it. The Beale Street Development Corporation brought together a wide range of stakeholders and unified them around a shared vision. It then focused its efforts on two key blocks, building strength that eventually spread to adjacent areas.

In 1978, to compliment this effort, the city created the Beale Street Music Festival. Held outdoors at Tom Lee Park, the three-day festival today attracts some 100,000 people per night. It also kicks off the month-long “Memphis in May International Festival”, which includes an International Week and the World Championship Barbeque Cooking Contest, both of which end up driving tourists to Beale.

Slowly over time, the core of Beale Street began to turn around. And by the 1990s, it had become a symbol of Memphis’ overall economic development strategy: leveraging its cultural, musical, architectural, and culinary history to attract new investment in the future. In 2001, this core strategy was enshrined in a series of strict new design guidelines that made it much harder to build bland, ugly buildings which would interfere with their economic agenda. Downtown Memphis would rebuild itself by connecting its future directly to its past, and making itself a lively, vibrant center of southern culture.

At about the same time, the city partnered with the Smithsonian to create the Memphis Rock ‘n’ Soul Museum, originally housed on Beale Street itself. Then in 2004, the city opened up the FedEx Forum – a basketball arena for the new Memphis Grizzlies and the University of Memphis – right around the corner from Beale. The museum then moved into a new and expanded facility adjacent to the Forum. As a result, the businesses of Beale Street directly serve the visitors to these major regional attractions.

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Downtown Memphis would rebuild itself by connecting its future directly to its past.

Beale Street's story should sound familiar to anyone who knows the history of Pennsylvania Avenue. Both were concentrated centers of social and economic activity, built within the cruel system of segregation. Each became the cultural heart of the local African American community, and built proud legacies out of music, commerce, and the struggle for civil rights. Both were deeply wounded by the riots that followed the death of Martin Luther King Jr., and were slowly drained of economic life by the process of white flight. And both suffered from misguided urban renewal campaigns that tore out chunks of their historic fabric in the name of progress.

But, unlike in Baltimore, the people of Memphis:

- **FOUNDED** an organization capable of responding at the scale that the problem demanded, which included a range of stakeholders;
- **FOCUSED** on a well-defined geographic area within a much longer street, which still retained the historic character that had been lost elsewhere;
- **CULTIVATED** a community of businesses that rebuilt a viable new version of their lost entertainment district;
- **MARKETED** the district as a living symbol of their core city brand;
- **PROTECTED** the district with design standards that maintained its historic feel while encouraging new investment;
- **INVESTED** in major cultural events and cultural attractions that brought in local visitors and tourists; and
- **SUSTAINED** this effort for decades, keeping their eyes on the end goal even when it seemed very far away.

**The question for Pennsylvania Avenue is not whether we can do the same. The question is only: *are we going to?***



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## What Holds Us Back?

Baltimore can take the same steps that Memphis did, and Pennsylvania Avenue can be reborn like Beale Street. But to make that happen, the neighborhoods of the Corridor must first overcome a series of hurdles that stand in the way of this urgently-needed progress.

In addition to the problems that plague many city commercial districts – including, most importantly, crime – the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor has a series of specific challenges that have prevented concerned citizens from achieving the success they desperately want. These include:

- **LOCAL SPENDING POWER.** There are not enough local residents to support the cultural and entertainment businesses that Pennsylvania Avenue deserves. In order for these businesses to be economically viable, they must be capable of *supporting and serving* the local population, while also *attracting* outside visitors.
- **LACK OF RESOURCES.** The neighborhoods, business people, and organizations in the corridor do not currently have access to (or experience in raising) the funds needed to accomplish this vision. Only an organized strategy that balances *heroic vision* with *practical feasibility* will be able to attract sufficient outside resources.
- **LOCAL CAPACITY.** While local residents are obviously dedicated, hard working, and extremely talented, many lack the capacity – or, at least, the experience – to successfully accomplish this transformation. Getting the work done will mean *attracting partners who will support the local vision without taking over the process.*
- **DISTRUST OF OUTSIDE FORCES.** Given the many abuses suffered by these communities (segregation, discrimination, disinvestment, urban renewal, inadequate city services, opportunistic post-Uprising news crews, etc.) it is completely understandable that residents would be deeply suspicious of outsiders. This is entirely natural. *But it is also an impediment to securing the resources and partners necessary to accomplish their goals.* Residents will have to balance their natural protective instincts with a clear-eyed search for useful assistance.
- **DISTRUST OF ONE ANOTHER.** The neighborhoods of the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor are not just divided from the outside world – they are internally divided between one another. *The lack of trust between (and even within) neighborhoods is a distraction that they cannot afford. There is too much work to do.*

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## How Do We Get There?

Pennsylvania Avenue needs to follow a strategy similar to that of Beale Street. We must:

### **1. FOUND AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS EMPOWERED TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS.**

When we make this recommendation, we do not mean that the existing nonprofit, religious, and neighborhood organizations across the Corridor are in any way inadequate. Quite the contrary – they are all doing extraordinary work, against great odds.

Nor does this suggest that existing organizations should be replaced or supplanted. Far from it. In fact, we believe that the existing Pennsylvania Avenue Collaborative, which has not always operated with the sustained enthusiasm and widespread participation that it could, is an excellent start. We encourage the neighborhoods to build it up, turning it into an even stronger and more active umbrella organization, serving the needs of all residents.

Without a strong umbrella organization, it is almost impossible for a fragmented network of neighborhood-based organizations to solve Corridor-wide problems on their own. Without one, there is no single point of contact for communicating shared needs and expectations to City government – and no shared mechanism for holding the City accountable to those needs. There is no forum for developing a shared vision for the corridor, or for coordinating efforts to make that vision a reality. There is no process for seeking shared funding, or for attracting high-quality partners.

Without a serious and sustained effort at the Corridor level, everyone will be left to fend for themselves. And neighborhoods that should be partners will end up competing for the same limited resources.

This Collaborative (or whichever organization the community chooses) must represent not one neighborhood, but the entire Corridor. It must engage not one stakeholder, but all stakeholders. It must provide a collaborative environment in which trust can be encouraged and internal conflicts can be resolved. And it must find areas of agreement around which productive work can be organized.

The city can play a role in bringing together this Collaborative by strengthening and activating the Main Street Program for Pennsylvania Avenue. In particular, the City should assist in funding a full-time Main Street Manager -- someone who represents no single neighborhood, but advocates on behalf of the Avenue as a whole. Operating within the community, the Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street Program would jumpstart a strengthened partnership between the community, merchants and city agencies to address corridor-wide problems. While each member of the Collaborative would continue to represent their respective neighborhoods, the Main Street Program Manager will tie these forces together with a focus on revitalizing the commercial corridor.

One successful model of a multi-neighborhood collaborative organization in Baltimore is the York Road Partnership, where neighborhoods on both sides of York have been working

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together to fight crime, combat problem liquor licenses, and attract investment on terms that they can agree to. Other local examples include the Southwest Baltimore Partnership and the Central Baltimore Partnership, both of which unify diverse neighborhoods around common goals.

Of course, one big difference between these examples and Pennsylvania Avenue is the lack of a major anchor institution to help shepherd the partnerships forward. In this case, we recommend that the city help local citizens to convene their partnership, and support their efforts through an activated Main Street Program. At the same time, existing City staff should be prepared to support the partnership in accomplishing its initial goals, in order to maintain momentum.

The point is that it's being done elsewhere, and it can be done here. And this TAP process provides proof the different stakeholders working in the area can come together around a shared agenda.

## 2. FOCUS ON DEFINED GEOGRAPHIC AREAS.

While meaningful progress is possible on Pennsylvania Avenue, it is not realistic to simultaneously make progress everywhere. The Corridor is simply too long, and there is too much work to do. In order to move Pennsylvania Avenue forward, we will need to strategically focus our efforts.

This means identifying nodes along the Corridor where community efforts can be concentrated, in order to build strength. Areas of strength can then be built upon so that they grow over time, and eventually connect.

It also means identifying a purpose for each node, and crafting a specific strategy for each, because no two places are ever exactly alike.

We have identified the following nodes along Pennsylvania Avenue, each of which deserves careful consideration:

### A. THE AVENUE MARKET AND SHOPPING DISTRICT

The two blocks on either side of the Avenue Market contain the grandest commercial buildings in the Corridor, and have the potential to be a thriving entertainment district. In a sense, they are identical to the two core blocks of Beale Street, which managed by chance to survive the ravages of demolition and urban redevelopment. They are the historical seed from which a future can grow.

Moreover, the nexus of this commercial district, the market, and the metro stop ought to be capable of performing at a higher level than it currently does. Making this happen will require a series of short-term improvements that create the momentum necessary for long-term change.

**New Market Storefronts.** As it is currently designed, the Avenue Market is closed off from street life, providing a barrier that discourages shoppers to step inside. We recommend converting the blank walls on either side of the front door into storefront windows, so that the items for sale are more visible. But adding glass is just a start – these

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The blocks near the Market have the potential to be a thriving entertainment district.

storefronts could also have walk-up windows, so that passers-by could be served on the street. You could then add walk-up seating, with a durable bar top and affixed stools. All of this would activate the connection between the Market and the street.

These two stalls facing Pennsylvania will be crucial for reinventing the impression that the Market has with its potential customers. It will be extremely important to consider what precise offerings they will provide. Focus groups or a market study may be helpful in making this decision, but we would consider options like quick, to-go hot sandwiches. This could include breakfast sandwiches for people racing to the bus or metro. Similarly, the Market's excellent smoothie stand might benefit from increased visibility and the capacity to interact with people as they walk by.

It will also be important to find vendors who have the creativity and vision to operate their businesses differently than the way that many stalls are currently run, even if that means taking on somewhat more risk. Finding these vendors may require looking outside the Corridor, a fact that we will discuss at greater length below.

**Arabber Produce Market.** The Avenue Market has recently opened a new stall featuring fresh produce from Whole Foods. This is a wonderful step, but there is even more that can be done to activate the market, and serve the community's need for fresh produce. This can be done by tapping into (and, in a sense, supporting) a longstanding Baltimore tradition. By igniting the city's last Arabber to show up regularly every week, at a known time, the Market can provide a unique only-in-Baltimore experience. And if the Arabber tradition is able to attract more participants, then a group of them could even create their own unique farmer's market. This would be beneficial to the Arabbers (who would receive help in marketing their goods), their customers (who would know where to find them), the Market (which needs to attract visitors), *and to the Avenue's brand as a unique cultural destination where visitors can experience the best of African-American Baltimore.*

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**Market Music Series.** Local musicians of all ages are hungry for spaces where they can perform in front of an audience. A regular calendar of performances – including jazz, hip hop, and spoken word – would help to establish the Market as a center of culture and community. This, in turn, would remind people that it can also be a center of commerce.

There are already regular concerts at the Avenue Bakery, as well as elsewhere along the Avenue. These should be coordinated so that the Avenue becomes a place where musical culture is not just remembered, but routinely happens. We will discuss this idea further in later sections.

**Upgrade the Retail Corridor.** The current retail mix on the Avenue is, by and large, indistinguishable from what you would find in most other Baltimore neighborhoods. This is not to say that they are bad. However, they do not serve to elevate Pennsylvania Avenue above any other low-income retail corridor. Nor do they provide a convincing argument for why visitors should come to the Avenue.

In order to attract customers from outside the neighborhood, there has to be something that draws them in. Conversely, when people come looking for the “real” Pennsylvania Avenue experience, they need to find businesses that meet their expectations. We will further discuss what this looks like in a later section.

As you attract these new retailers, it will also be important to upgrade the storefront facades and signage, creating a sense of lively activity. The Baltimore Development Corporation has grant funds for façade improvements, and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development has programs like the Neighborhood BusinessWorks grant and loan program for more substantive improvements.

## B. UPTON TRIANGLE PARK

Upton Triangle Park has the potential to be a great source of value to the community, and the seed from which new investment can take place. Residents spoke enthusiastically about the community events that occasionally happen there. This park is a great asset that needs to be developed further.

Jubilee Arts forms a powerful anchor for the southeast corner of the park. But urban parks require more than just one anchor – they need strong edges on all sides. Which is to say, a successful park is about the relationship between the open space and the surrounding buildings. The surrounding buildings provide people who use the park on a daily basis, as well as watching eyes to increase safety. In this case, there is still too much vacancy to support year-round activity. At the same time, there is not enough activity to attract significant investment.

**Plan More Events.** It takes a lot of time and money to develop buildings around the park. But a regular calendar of cultural events can be started right away, for minimal expense. And the more regularly the park gets used, the more it will serve as a center for the community and a natural spot for new investment.

All manner of community events can be held there, so long as there is an organization working hard to keep the space full and occupied. Students at Jubilee Arts could hold



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Upton Triangle Park can be the seed from which new investment can take place.

outdoor performances there. There could be jazz concerts and other musical events, coordinated with similar programming at the Avenue Market and elsewhere. There can be parades, or marching band performances. In short, the park can be used much more than it currently is.

**Pop-Up Café.** While periodic or ad-hoc programming is important, it is equally important to create a regular rhythm of activity, so that people come to expect it. One option might be to establish a “Pop-Up Café” that arrived by truck and set out tables every Sunday as church lets out. Such a café could create a festive and culturally significant environment in which to gather and mingle before heading home.

In addition to establishing a regular pattern of predictable activity, a Pop-Up Café provides an economic opportunity for a local entrepreneur. It would give that person a chance to build momentum without having to invest in an actual building. But if the idea took off, then over time it could evolve into an actual bricks-and-mortar café located adjacent to (or even inside) the park.

**Arabber Produce Market (Again).** Just one or more Arabbers could show up at the Avenue Market on a regular weekly schedule, they could also build a weekly presence at the park. So long as the two events were spread out over the week, there is no reason why they would conflict with one another.

An Arabber could even arrive at Triangle Park every Sunday, coinciding with the Pop-Up Café and the end of church services. That way, each event supports the other. There could even be an open call for performers from the neighborhood, who could put out a hat and earn a few dollars by performing in public. Similarly, Jubilee Arts students could also be invited to perform (or take lessons) in the park at the same time.

**The Sphinx Club.** We are excited at the prospect of seeing the Sphinx Club reborn, and think this will be an excellent anchor for the Northern end of the park. The Sphinx could easily have a mutually beneficial relationship with a rebuilt Royal Theatre, and both could

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A reborn Sphinx Club will be an excellent anchor for the Northern end of the park.

become venues for the Maryland Film Festival and other broader cultural activities. We support this project, and think this site should be redeveloped in coordination with the Christ Temple Church site next door. It is absolutely critical to have a pioneer willing to invest in commercial activity along the park, to prove it can be viable.

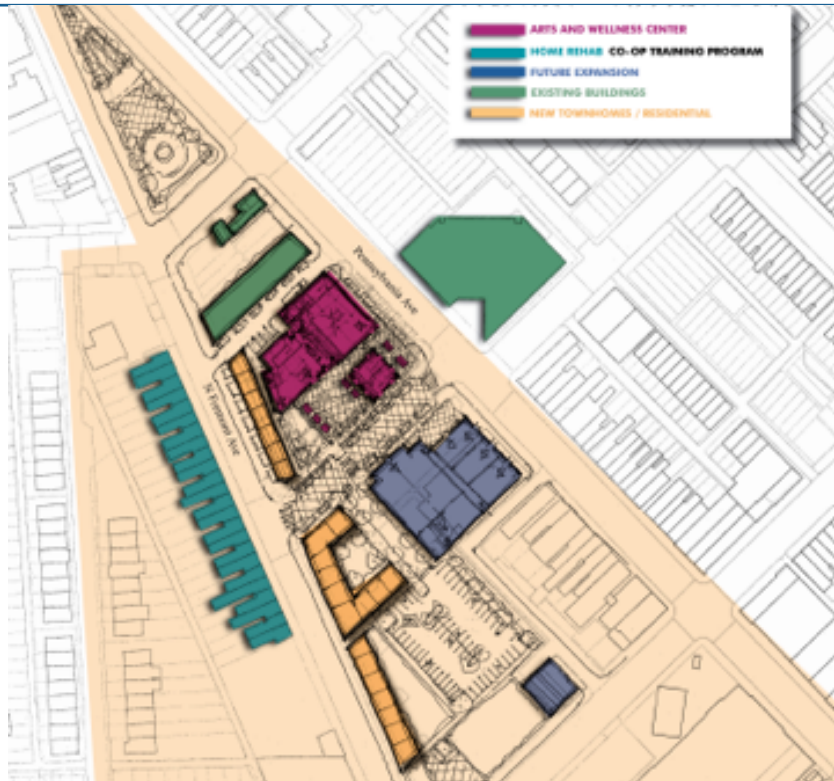
As the park grows more active and draws in more people on a regular basis, and as the Sphinx Club proves successful, it is possible to imagine the park supporting other retail, such as a restaurant. Again, this would have a symbiotic effect of activating the park with patrons, while also benefiting from events like the regular Sunday gatherings.

**The 1900 Block.** After the conclusion of the TAP process, we became aware of the effort to redevelop the vacant land between Jubilee Arts and Upton Boxing. Possible uses might include a bank, a construction company, job training, a business incubator, or other beneficial uses. However it turns out, this project would help to stitch together the other important uses along the block and anchor the southeast corner of the park.

**The Fan.** Once again, after the conclusion of the TAP process, we were also pleased to learn about the proposal by New Song Community Church and BCT Architects to develop a major new project on the vacant lots south of the park, known as The Fan. Serving as a new Town Center and Community Hub, The Fan will offer education, local foods, merchants, recreation, art, theater, music, and day care. Its mission will be to “create and support character-based programming and services that provide entrepreneurial, ownership, and employment opportunities. These efforts will leverage the skills, talents, and abilities of the residents of the neighboring communities so they might individually and corporately sustain strong relationships that bring hope, unity, social/cultural, and economic stability.” While the project is still in the conceptual stage, and is certain to change as time moves on, we applaud both the vision and the location, which anchors the south side of the park.

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While it will evolve over time, we applaud the vision and the location of “The Fan”.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

**Relocation of Modern Junk and Salvage.** In order to support the forward-looking projects being proposed for the south side of the park, it is time to consider the relocation of Modern Junk and Salvage. This business, while useful and profitable, produces odors, noise, and grime that is not consistent with a thriving and active park environment – much less new mixed use development. There are many vacant parcels or underused buildings in the corridor, and now would be a good time for the city to begin a conversation about planning for their relocation.

**C. THE ROYAL THEATRE SITE.**

Without a doubt, the Royal Theatre is the ultimate symbol of Pennsylvania Avenue’s storied past. Its demolition was a crime; its resurrection is a moral imperative. We strongly support the effort to bring back the Royal Theatre, and applaud those who have had the foresight and wisdom to make this a priority. They are correct that the Theatre should be the anchor of a broader approach to redevelopment, along with other business, cultural amenities, and activities for children. In sum, their vision is absolutely, positively, and unquestionably right.

That said, we are concerned that the current plans for a revived Royal are not in keeping with practical realities. And so, with great respect for the hard working people who have kept this dream alive, we humbly offer the following honest feedback.



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The Royal Theatre is the ultimate symbol of Pennsylvania Avenue.

For the foreseeable future, we do not believe there are enough customers to fill a several-thousand seat venue on a regular basis. After all, the original Royal Theatre only had 1,349 seats in its prime, and the Hippodrome relies on a circuit of touring Broadway musicals to fill its 2,300 seats. While we appreciate the vision, there is honestly no viable economic model for a new venue with more than twice the seating capacity of Harlem's Apollo Theater.

Nor are we certain that high-profile entertainers who currently visit Pier 6 or Ram's Head Live will trade in those successful venues for an unproven one with less visibility, even if it were in support of a noble cause. The cruel segregation which drove performers to the Chitlin' Circuit in the first place is (thankfully) a thing of the past, but this means that the Royal will have to compete for performers with a much larger set of other venues.

This is not to say that the Royal should be consigned to the dustbin of history. Far from it. But we strongly recommend a more gradual process, one that builds momentum, reestablishes a brand identity, and generates positive cash flow.

A more gradual process could look something like this:

**The Royal Concert Series.** It is worth remembering that the wildly-successful Beale Street Music Festival is held in a park every year, not in a theater. So we do not think that it is mandatory to wait for a new park to be constructed before starting music performance at Robert C. Marshall Park.

We suggest developing an inexpensive or temporary stage for recurring outdoor events at Marshall Park. This could be located at the vacant lot on Lafayette, just east of the Royal Theatre marquee. This spot, which faces the park, allows for large crowds to gather for events without interfering with recreational activities.

This stage could become the venue for a series of monthly concerts branded as the "Royal Concert Series". These concerts could cover a range of genres, and attract people from both inside and outside the neighborhood. They could even follow the successful

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model of the “First Thursday” events held in other Baltimore neighborhoods and cities across the country. Local vendors could set up tables and sell food, much as they already do for the concerts at the Avenue Bakery or Cylburn Auditorium.

While obviously not the same as a restored Royal Theatre, an outdoor concert series would give a chance to build momentum, establish a clientele, and prove the model. And it would require far less money to get started.

It is even possible that the smaller concerts we have suggested at the Avenue Market or Pennsylvania Triangle Park could also be branded under the umbrella of the Royal Concert Series, making each into a living advertisement for the site and the project.

These concerts could eventually evolve into a larger urban street festival, like SOWEBOFest or Artscape.

**Transitional Space.** After the concert series has proven itself a success, we recommend moving into a smaller permanent venue, branded with the Royal name. This could even be in one of the storefronts near the Avenue Market.

A smaller, cozy venue could be a great place to attract clientele, and would not require millions of dollars of fundraising. It would be a natural extension of the momentum built by the performing arts series, and it would contribute directly to the enlivening of the commercial district. In fact, the presence of a Royal in one of the existing commercial buildings might spark someone to open up a restaurant next door.

**The Rebuilt Theatre.** After building momentum and establishing a successful (if smaller) venue, we would be thrilled to see a fully-rebuilt Royal Theatre on its original site. However, to achieve this goal will require more than just a building. It will require a team of people with the experience to program and operate performing arts centers, and the drive to do so in a location that has been sorely overlooked for too long. While we believe such people certainly exist, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of building a team in addition to a physical structure.

One way to bring this about might be to attract an existing cultural or historical venue, such as an African-American history museum, to the Avenue. By building the Theater right next to the museum, the two could support one another, while the museum provided the operational capacity to program and operate the theater. This clustering would then encourage other businesses to open nearby.

## D. THE NORTH AVENUE INTERSECTION

This intersection is critical for three important reasons. First, it is a major gateway where the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor becomes visible to the rest of the City. Second, it is a principal connection point to bus, rail, and East/West automobile traffic. And finally, in the wake of the 2015 Uprising, this intersection represents an important historical landscape. Unfortunately, the intersection under-performs in all three categories.

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The North Avenue intersection is a critical gateway and historical landscape.

**Build a Stronger Gateway.** Although the library and the Arch Social Club are fantastic buildings, the intersection as a whole does not serve as an attractive and visible gateway, announcing that visitors have arrived at an important and beloved community. The new mural on the Arch Social Club building is an excellent start, but much more can be done to express pride, identity, and history.

In addition, the intersection lacks proper crosswalks, pedestrian improvements, plantings, and public art. We appreciate the designs in the West North Avenue Streetscape Conceptual Master Plan, and encourage the city to make them a reality. But at the same time, we feel that even more can be done to emphasize the importance of this intersection.

For example, the center of the intersection can be painted with a large mural expressing pride of place. While the mural would certainly have to be repainted every few years, this is an inexpensive way to attract attention and interest.

**Improve Transit.** Although residents have access to both bus and rail transit options (something that many neighborhoods would love), the overall conditions are extremely poor.

- **Bus Service.** Bus service is inadequate, and users are often crowded on the sidewalk under the hot sun or the driving rain, next to lanes of speeding traffic. There are not enough shelters for the ridership, and not sufficient attention given to the rider experience. We strongly hope that the new Baltimore Link strategy will provide an opportunity to provide stronger, more attractive, and more efficient bus service at this intersection.
- **Metro Service.** Similarly, the metro station is dirty and lacks adequate maintenance. It is a shame that such a valuable (and expensive) asset has been allowed to run down. The City Council members whose constituents use the station should put pressure on MTA to improve the quality of its maintenance and operations, which once again inadvertently communicate disdain and indifference to metro users.

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- **Transit-Oriented Development: Library.** In addition to these maintenance and operational failings, the intersection is not supported by adequate Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Which is to say that there are not enough jobs, residents, or activities at this intersection.

There are certainly barriers to creating more TOD. The rebuilt CVS on the Northeast corner is unlikely to be much more than a single-story pharmacy for the foreseeable future. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene facility on the Northwest corner is unlikely to move. And the storefronts on the Southwest corner are all individually owned, and so would be a challenge to redevelop. Each of these represent long-term options, but are not immediate opportunities.

That said, there is an immediate opportunity to make progress on the Southeast corner: by enhancing the already-wonderful library, and making it into an even larger and more valuable community anchor providing Transit-Oriented residential or office space.

The City of Milwaukee is no longer building its own libraries. Instead, it now partners with developers to house its libraries *within multi-story, mixed-use buildings*. For example, the Villard Square Branch houses a 12,770 sf library beneath three stories of apartments designed for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The Library's rent supports the cash flow of the larger project, which literally connects families in need with learning and support services.

On North Avenue, we could easily imagine an expanded regional library on the ground floor of an affordable apartment complex. In fact, we could imagine *a fully-integrated Library/Health Department complex* anchoring the ground floor, where the programs provided by each reinforce and connect with one another.

In short, *we must rethink the very concept of what a 21st Century library looks like*. This could mean combining library services with housing, office space, retail space, or other nontraditional components. For example, the Houston Public Library has partnered with the local Food Bank to provide 50,000 pounds of fresh food to families, along with a comprehensive program built around nutrition and fitness. The Denver Public Library provides a week-long technology summer camp where minority children work with professional mentors to learn web development, code their own websites, and tour local tech companies. And the Dayton Metro library created an entire special collection for local authors and artists, so that nearby residents could share their various talents with one another even if they were not formally published. The Urban Libraries Council tracks innovative programs from city libraries around the country, and Baltimore ought to be first among them.

- **Transit Oriented Development: Other Sites.** In addition to the Library site, there are several other privately-owned properties that could be redeveloped as TOD projects. In the medium term, we suggest working with the property owners to reimagine their properties as mixed-use sites with increased density. Depending upon market conditions at the time, it may even be possible to include some retail. None of



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these sites are perfect, and it is unfortunate that the CVS that faces the Penn North metro station was redeveloped as a single story building. But it would also be a shame to underdevelop other nearby properties – or worse, to let them languish within sight of a metro stop that could connect people to jobs.

It is also worth noting that the Ruppertsberger and Sons slaughterhouse operating in Penn North has presented a longstanding challenge for the surrounding residents. While we support local businesses, and wish to see them prosper in Baltimore, perhaps there might be a way to jointly relocate the slaughterhouse and Modern Junk and Salvage to a new location where they can grow their businesses without routinely coming into conflict with residents.

**Commemoration of the Uprising.** It goes without saying that the dramatic events of the 2015 Uprising were historic in scope, and that their consequences are still being felt. And, given the intense media scrutiny that landed (however briefly) on this intersection, the location is now familiar to people around the world who might otherwise have never known of it.

This creates an opportunity – and, perhaps, a corresponding obligation – to embody that history into the intersection itself, and frame the Uprising for future generations.

We would not presume to suggest what that message would be, or how it should be expressed. But there are many talented artists in West Baltimore who will certainly have ideas, and we encourage the city to seek funding to create a commemorative and interpretive work of public art.

We cannot allow the events of 2015 to recede from memory through inaction. Nor can we allow them to be defined exclusively by people from outside the community where they principally took place.

### 3. CULTIVATE THE RIGHT BUSINESSES.

At the early stages of the Avenue's transformation, *it is critical to shock the market with success.* The market is fickle, and so success is imperative. It must win by not failing.

In order to avoid early failures, the business district must be highly strategic. They must cultivate a series of carefully chosen businesses that can overcome the odds, shock the market, and set the stage for further growth.

Here is what they should look like:

- **They reflect the long-term vision for the Avenue, but respond to today's market realities.** A high-end restaurant might reflect community aspirations, but is certain to fail under current conditions. Likewise, a pawnshop might be very successful, but would not advance the higher vision for the Avenue. The community must thread this needle carefully, finding businesses that work today but also take the Avenue forward.
- **Their owners have the capacity to succeed.** While some local residents meet this description, it may also be necessary to find entrepreneurs from outside the neighborhood that will work collaboratively with the community on a shared vision. For

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example, it may be worth talking with the successful Caribbean-influenced groceries and eateries in Pimlico. In particular, it might be useful to seek out *former residents who have moved away*, but are now willing to bring their resources and experience back to the community (as took place at the Avenue Bakery).

- **They serve the community while also attracting customers from other neighborhoods.** Every successful Main Street in Baltimore makes money because it attracts customers from outside the neighborhood. This does not mean that they forget about their local residents; it simply means that local residents alone cannot keep upscale bars, restaurants, and music venues open. This is an economic reality. In order to succeed, they must draw from a much larger pool of customers. Local residents can then be beneficiaries of these establishments without the burden of having to support them alone.
- **They fill a strategic gap, offering what people in West Baltimore want, but can't get.** The success of the Avenue Bakery is the result of hard work and culinary talent. But it is also rooted in strategic opportunity: many African-American households are eager to buy high quality, affordable, and culturally relevant baked goods, and surprisingly few businesspeople have tried to fill that need. Any individual family may not have much to spend, but there are many of them, and almost no competition. The Avenue Bakery has a virtual monopoly in all of West Baltimore.

Pennsylvania Avenue can grow by plugging these strategic holes, and *becoming the place where African American households can get things they can't get elsewhere. Which is to say, by reclaiming the Avenue's historic role.*

Other options could include a breakfast restaurant; a moderately-priced sit-down dinner restaurant; and a barbeque restaurant (especially if it also did catering). Each of these could be occasionally paired with live performances, providing a Jazz Brunch, Dinner Cabaret, and Blues Barbeque.

We think that Baltimoreans with a cultural memory of going to Pennsylvania Avenue for dining and entertainment would be hungry to support these kinds of establishments, especially if their decorations included historic photographs and memorabilia.

We believe there are many ways to seek out the businesses that are needed here, and to support them so that they are successful. The community should start by visiting other places where this kind of work has taken place, and learn from their experience. They may also need to partner with successful developers who are willing to work within goals established by the community.

There may also be untapped resources available to help businesses thrive. These could include entrepreneurship training through Coppin, UB, MICA, or BCCC. It could also include a partnership with the Peabody Institute, which may be able to provide musical performers or suggest funding sources for cultural activities.

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## 4. MARKET THE DISTRICT.

Pennsylvania Avenue needs to develop a strong and resonant brand that boldly reclaims its historic role as the cultural heart of Baltimore's African American community. But this brand then needs to become visible – not just in brochures, but in advertising, on the web, and in social media. The brand must be actively marketed to customers across the city, supporting new businesses as they come in. The Pennsylvania Avenue Collaborative and/or Main Street Program should lead this effort, but as more cultural activities are brought online they can eventually be supported by the Baltimore Office of Promotion and Arts.

Meanwhile, *the brand must be reflected in the physical architecture of the Avenue.*

This means encouraging businesses to decorate with murals and photographs, and to install colorful neon signs rather than cheap plastic ones. It also means getting the city to invest in streetscaping that reflects local history and brand, so that visitors feel they have entered a special and distinctive location. Local artists could install music-themed art in key locations. Crosswalks could be re-painted to show musical scales instead of just stripes. Public infrastructure must begin to emphasize specialness and vitality.

Regardless of the details, Pennsylvania Avenue must feel like a place of heritage and vitality, and it must be communicated as such. Nothing must be allowed to undermine the brand – no ugly buildings, no unrelated investments, no contrary messages. There must be clarity.

## 5. PROTECT THE DISTRICT

One tragedy of Pennsylvania Avenue is that its once-great architecture has been ravaged by neglect and demolition. Efforts to save the Avenue by tearing it down may have been well-intentioned, but they were not long-term solutions. History is the one great asset we have to work with, and that history becomes more theoretical and less tangible with every lost building.

The Avenue must be protected with specific historic guidelines that protect historic buildings from demolition, and clear design guidelines that make sure new construction and renovation enhances the character of the district.

In particular, it will be critical to encourage façade improvements, high quality signs (including bright lights and neon), well-lit marquees, and other elements of a bold and inviting historic district. U Street in Washington, D.C. provides an excellent example of how quality design encourages street life and attracts customers.

These design guidelines for private property must be supported by high quality public infrastructure. As mentioned above, this means paying careful attention to streetscaping, lighting fixtures, and street furniture. Each element must contribute to a sense of history and celebratory purpose.

Design standards, when done correctly, can maintain the historic character of the area, attract visitors, and encourage new investment.

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Baltimore should move the African American Heritage Festival to Pennsylvania Avenue.

## 6. INVEST IN THE DISTRICT.

Beale Street didn't come to thrive on its own. It was supported by investments in a series of major cultural events that drove visitors to the area. These events elevated its brand, while supporting its businesses.

**The African American Heritage Festival.** Just as Memphis created the Beale Street Music Festival, *Baltimore should move the African American Heritage Festival to Pennsylvania Avenue.* This will not be an easy change, and it cannot happen overnight. But in the big picture, it is critical to physically reconnect this contemporary celebration of black culture with the living legacy and historical tradition of Pennsylvania Avenue.

While the logistics would obviously be different, there are actually wonderful opportunities from moving the Festival. The North Avenue intersection could be closed off and reclaimed as a temporary gathering spot for music and dancing – just as it was used for during the best and most positive moments of the 2015 Uprising. This location could become a central focus for intense activity, transforming each year into Baltimore's own version of Congo Square – the famous site of culture, performance, and community at the heart of New Orleans.

Bands and speakers could perform at the Arts Social Club, with crowds spilling out into the street. Literacy programs and voter registration could take place at the library. For a few brief days, the entire intersection could be transformed into something incredible.

Vendors could line the sides of Pennsylvania Avenue, selling goods and food. Artists from Jubilee Arts could fill Legends Park, along with marching bands and student performers from the local schools. The Park could also house a stage for professional music performers.



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The Avenue Market could also be transformed into a location filled with temporary food stalls, flanked on either side by Arabbers selling fresh fruit. Visitors wishing to travel easily between the Market to North Avenue could simply take the metro.

One stage for this event would obviously be at the Royal Theatre site, allowing huge crowds to gather at the park for entertainment as they learned about the history of the Avenue. For a few brief days each year, the Royal would be reborn.

The logistics of this move are not as hard to manage as they would first appear. Pennsylvania Avenue is accessible from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard from the South, North Avenue from the North, and by Metro for people arriving from Randallstown or East Baltimore. There are established bus routes. Parking could be accommodated in the nearby streets or at State Center.

In short, the idea seems crazy, until you realize that it is entirely possible. The black community of central Maryland could take action to celebrate its proud history while simultaneously reclaiming and supporting that very history. From that perspective, it seems far less crazy than holding the event in a parking lot.

## **7. SUSTAIN THIS EFFORT.**

This work will not happen overnight. But Beale Street proves that it can happen, as does U Street and many other similar examples across the country.

## The Steps Are Clear.

There must be an organization that can make decisions and take action. There must be a strong vision. There must be credible business and development partners who can accelerate this process and support the local community. There must be branding and marketing, supported by quality design, major events, and new institutions.

If the community takes these steps, then our panel of experts believes fully that Pennsylvania Avenue can rise again. Especially if they are supported by a city government that collaborates with the community and helps move their vision forward.

But even with all this in place, understand that it may take a generation to get Pennsylvania Avenue fully back on its feet. It will not happen overnight, and there will be setbacks. It will take a huge amount of work, carried out over the course of many years.

**We believe this noble goal is worthy of such sustained effort.**

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## Urban Land **Baltimore** Institute

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