

# Downtown Baltimore

**BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

ULI ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL

JANUARY 24–27, 2022



# About the Urban Land Institute

**ULI Mission:** Shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide

- A multi-disciplinary membership organization with more than 45,000 members in private enterprise and public service
- What the Urban Land Institute does:
  - Conducts research
  - Provides a forum for sharing of **best practices**
  - Writes, edits, and publishes **reports** and **books**
  - Organizes and conducts **meetings**
  - Directs outreach programs
  - Conducts **Advisory Services** panels





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**Brandon M. Scott**  
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# ULI Panelists and Staff

Selected for their subject matter expertise to provide **objective, volunteer** recommendations



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## ULI Staff

Mary Beth Corrigan  
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# Assignment

- Identify an immediate strategy to capitalize on several initiatives in Baltimore's Downtown.
- Create a blueprint to position the urban core for a successful and competitive future.





# Panel Process

- Review briefing book and other materials
- Meet with Downtown Partnership of Baltimore (DPOB) and colleagues
- Tour Downtown Baltimore and surrounding areas
- Conduct interviews with stakeholders
- Analyze and debate issues
- Brainstorm strategies and recommendations
- Present findings and recommendations



The background of the slide is a high-angle, aerial photograph of a city, likely New York City. It shows a dense urban landscape with numerous skyscrapers, residential buildings, and commercial structures. A large body of water, possibly a harbor or river, is visible in the lower portion of the image, with several boats and a marina. The overall tone of the image is somewhat muted, with a dark overlay that makes the white text stand out.

# Overview of the Issues



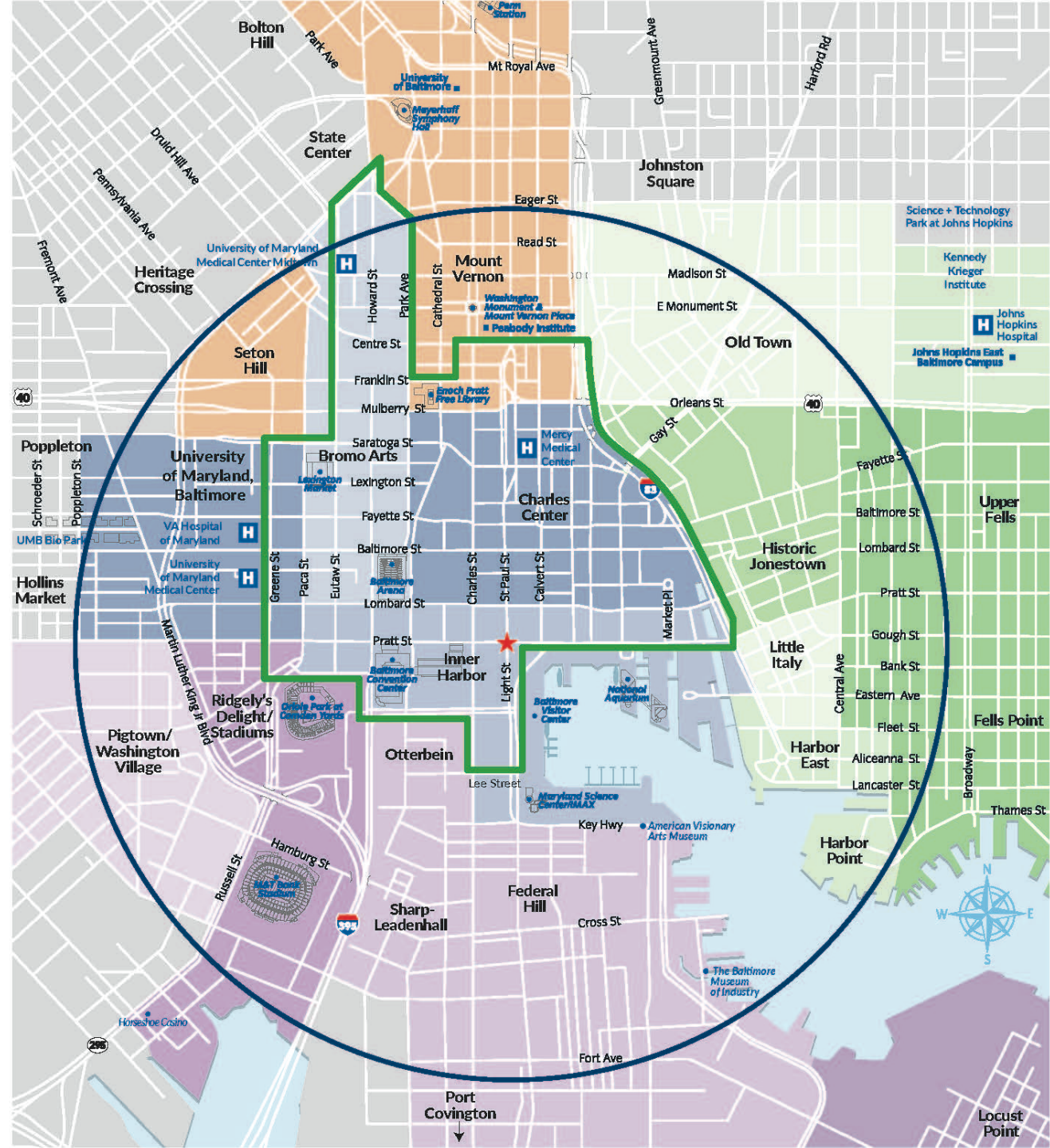
# Where You Are Today

- Many parts of Downtown Baltimore have seen a transformation in recent years.
- DPOB has excelled at delivering the primary services offered by the BID.
- Current Initiatives include (but are not limited to):
  - Double Down on Downtown Campaign
  - Incentive Task Force
  - BOOST Program
  - Clean & Safe
- COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the economic activity in Downtown Baltimore.
- Positive economic development will be needed to recover from the COVID-19 downturn and stimulate future growth.



# Downtown Baltimore

- A diverse, inclusive, and historic Downtown
- Anchored by world-renowned medical institutions
- Many civic and entertainment assets
- Strong entrepreneurial environment
- Fastest-growing neighborhood
- Well connected to adjacent neighborhoods and neighboring cities










# Physical Improvements



# Rich Offering of Assets



-  Civic/entertainment assets
-  Existing open space
-  Identity-enhancing streets





# Activate the Public Realm

## STRATEGY 1

- Stitch the fabric together with robust public-realm enhancements for a strong Downtown identity:
  - Key streetscape improvements
  - Activate existing public open spaces.

## STRATEGY 2

- Increase ground-floor activity to engage pedestrians.
- Maximize use of all vacant properties, including redevelopment of vacant upper floors.

## STRATEGY 3

- Address “nuisance crime” around Lexington Market to encourage investment and reinforce the anchors to the west.





# Prioritize Development

## STRATEGY 4

- Develop a Downtown strategic framework.

## STRATEGY 5

- Harbor Place
- Metro West
- BARD Community College
- Super Block

## STRATEGY 6

- Locate an Innovation & Entrepreneurial Center in partnership with anchor institutions to leverage the intellectual capital of the city.



# Targeted Outcomes

These mission-driven funding sources should target private real estate developments as well as projects in the public realm that address key priorities, such as:

- ✓ Increased residential and commercial investment within Downtown
- ✓ Blight elimination
- ✓ Redeveloped vacant and underused (e.g., surface parking lots) properties and parcels
- ✓ Job attraction and retention
- ✓ Minority- and woman-owned business development
- ✓ Civic-space restoration
- ✓ Historic preservation
- ✓ Affordable housing
- ✓ Homeownership
- ✓ Infrastructure improvements
- ✓ Innovation & Entrepreneurial Center in partnership with anchor institutions
- ✓ Stimulation of inclusive and equitable development practices





# Organizational Structure and Execution



# Who Leads and Why?

## Downtown Partnership of Baltimore

- Has credibility with the public and private sectors
- Has proven strong leadership during difficult times
- Is knowledgeable about what it takes to get this done
- Has committed and ongoing funding sources



# Need for Increased Capacity

- In order to further enhance capacities and increase efficiencies, a merger of the DPOB and the Waterfront Partnership business improvement districts should occur
- Expand the level of real estate and development expertise
- Establish a more robust programming schedule for public spaces
- Enhance the quality of management of both public and private assets

# Need for Enhanced Authority and Responsibility

- Develop and manage a strategic plan for Downtown.
- Broaden the board and governance committee.
- Serve as the developer/partner for critical real estate projects as needed.
  - Prioritize the acquisition and development of distressed properties.
  - Master-lease vacant street-level properties and attract local small businesses.



# How to Get There

- Merge the DPOB and the Waterfront Partnership business improvement districts.
- Set priorities:
  - State and city commitment to create and fund the areawide TIF district.
  - Secure corporate, civic, and philanthropic impact investors.
  - Secure approvals and take action to deliver results.
- **Leadership: Make Downtown a priority and be willing to do what it takes to get it done.**
- Establish community will and buy-in: businesses, residents, city and state leadership.

*“Baltimore’s future isn’t up to fate. It’s up to us. We have our challenges. . . . But we also have our assets, and the story is not over. We have the ability to create a happy ending.”*

—Shelonda Stokes, Downtown Partnership CEO



An aerial photograph of a city, likely New York City, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. A river, possibly the Hudson River, flows through the lower portion of the image, with several bridges crossing it. The overall tone is dark and moody, with a sepia or brownish tint.

# Q&A

## Thank you!

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