

ULI BALTIMORE:

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION (DEI)
COMMITTEE
REGIONALISM COMMITTEE



Baltimore

SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

THE EQUITABLE NETWORK

ULI DISTRICT COUNCIL
CURTIS INFRASTRUCTURE
INITIATIVE GRANT

STATEMENT OF INTEREST



Patterson Park



Hello!

*We have prepared a brief summary and narrative to thoroughly express our project concept, scope, and **PASSION.***

The formal Statement of Interest (SOI) is located at the end of this document.

Thank You

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Like many Post-Industrial cities throughout the United States, Baltimore is commonly described with the allegory of “A Tale of Two Cities.” Market-rate housing and retail continue to grow and thrive in water-adjacent, downtown communities and developed corridors along Charles & St. Paul Street corridors. In contrast, many communities between the prosperous downtown waterfront, and Baltimore County continue to struggle and fall into further decay.

Over the years, slow progress has been made to provide equitable access to city-wide amenities and services. Racial discrimination by way of “Red-lining” and “Land-devaluation” has also wreaked havoc in many communities throughout West, East, and South Baltimore. The roots of disparity have grown so deep that some communities are nothing but block after block of vacant land and abandoned properties, both of which carry their own level of devastating effects.

In the last decade, the real estate industry has finally acknowledged **Baltimore will never thrive if we do not address and remedy the disparity and inequity in many of our City communities.**

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

The other tale of this city, touted on marketing banners and targeted tourism adverts, is that Baltimore is a “vibrant up-and-coming city.” It is a place to learn with world-class schools, a place to work with creative and tech-based companies on the rise, and multiple “walkable neighborhoods” where anyone would want to live. All this is true and even amplified by efforts to connect the separated but stable neighborhoods via designated bike paths, wide sidewalks, water adjacent promenades, parks, and trails. All these transitory paths and destinations culminate into Baltimore’s 2017 Green Network which seeks to protect and connect the city’s ecological resources in order to improve the quality of life of city residents.

Sounds great, right? Well, it is, but unfortunately, as it stands today, the network pretty much falls apart once you enter the middle. Specifically, in the area colloquially known as “The Black Butterfly.” The term was coined by Morgan State University associate professor, Dr. Lawrence Brown, referring to the shape of segregated black communities fanning across the city’s eastern and western halves. The green ring around the city, made up of Baltimore’s large natural and planned park systems, and the water-adjacent mixed-use communities pathways, trails, and connectors are strong, but the network loses its punch once you enter the wings of the butterfly.

THIS IS DUE TO MULTIPLE FACTORS...







ONE
TWO

The historical layout of the city placed its parks outside of the core. Downtown was relegated to dense residential blocks, the center for office and institutional, and the waterfront for manufacturing or port trade-based industry.

In 1950 Baltimore was America's sixth most populous city, with almost a million residents. But once the waterfront industries dwindled and eventually died, so did the city's economic engine. Without the city's financial backbone plus the catalyst of the unrest during the Civil Rights Movement, Baltimore's population went through two significant fluctuations. The 'White Flight' of the 1960s took place over a decade, where at least 12% of Baltimore's white population left for Baltimore County—quickly followed by 'Black Flight' over the next decade. Much of the stable African-American middle-class fled their intentionally red-lined minority communities for greener pastures in the county. These two migrations reduced a city of a million to 600,000.¹ **A city built for over a million people with 35% of its population potential vacated.**

THREE

Over time, abandoned industrial buildings and lots became dilapidated and an eye sore; and, the waterfront, the city's most precious amenity, became the focus of investment. The coveted waterfront land was converted to retail, hospitality and entertainment uses and more recently to high-end residential. So now we have two types of compression; A densification of successful retail, office, and residential along the water's edge and up the city's spine (along Charles Street and Light-St./Paul Street), and the compression of vacancy and poverty in the west and east wings of the city.

FOUR

Now compound all that by almost 40 years of the same condition and the typical model of only investing where it's currently working, instead of equitably and properly investing heavily in our worst areas to collectively raise the quality of life in Baltimore.

THATS WHY WE ARE WHERE WE ARE TODAY.



Druid Hill Park Entrance, 1873



Old Town Mall before the major impacts of 'Black Flight', 1976



Inner Harbor, Harbor East, and Future Harbor Point

¹<https://apnews.com/article/us-news-race-and-ethnicity-baltimore-neighborhoods-ap-top-news-c852e9751cd744b7a27fa9333c14d1a0>



SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

The goal of the Green Network is a worthy one, but it fails to connect certain communities within its ring to the overall Network. We intend to use Baltimore's 'Green Network' and overlay mapping of vacant properties and lots to identify opportunities to connect these disinvested communities within the Black Butterfly. The goal will be to create holistic, walkable environments inside existing communities that also connect to adjacent communities and encourage cross-pollination of people from neighborhood to neighborhood.

WE WANT TO CREATE THE EQUITABLE NETWORK.

This is not the 'Highline' concept or any of those that have followed for two reasons. First, some those concepts ignore what surrounded it before, no matter if it was a dead zone or if it had thriving living communities along its route. Secondly, the Highline and its copycats have typically been developed to connect satellite redevelopment projects to more 'vested development areas.'

Those beautiful yet somewhat inequitable projects depend on the "build it, and they will come" philosophy. An existing community that may not currently produce the capital-output that the project will demand is ignored (and typically replaced). **We want to encourage community building and foster neighborhood pride that gives ownership and accountability back to those who already**

live there. The goal is to improve a community's view of itself, not replace those people with outsiders.

Is It Possible?

Yes! For example, find a one-way street, then consider the city blocks where only 30%-50% of the homes or businesses are occupied. Shrink the drive lane because few vehicles need to traverse it. Now widen the sidewalks a bit and move the drive lane closer to one side of the street and place a linear park on the other side. **There are prime locations for intervention and Baltimore is ripe with them.**

BUT HOW DO WE DECIDE?

First we will identify the focus areas and routes or pathways. Then we will develop a 'string of pearls' consisting of connector nodes along the routes. These nodes will offer opportunities to cultivate sustainable exchanges and allow for pedestrian, bicycle or scooter travel on a micro and macro level. To that end, each connector node, or pearl, along the routes will need the following community stakeholders to champion and equitably develop context-based plans and designs that resonate with residents.

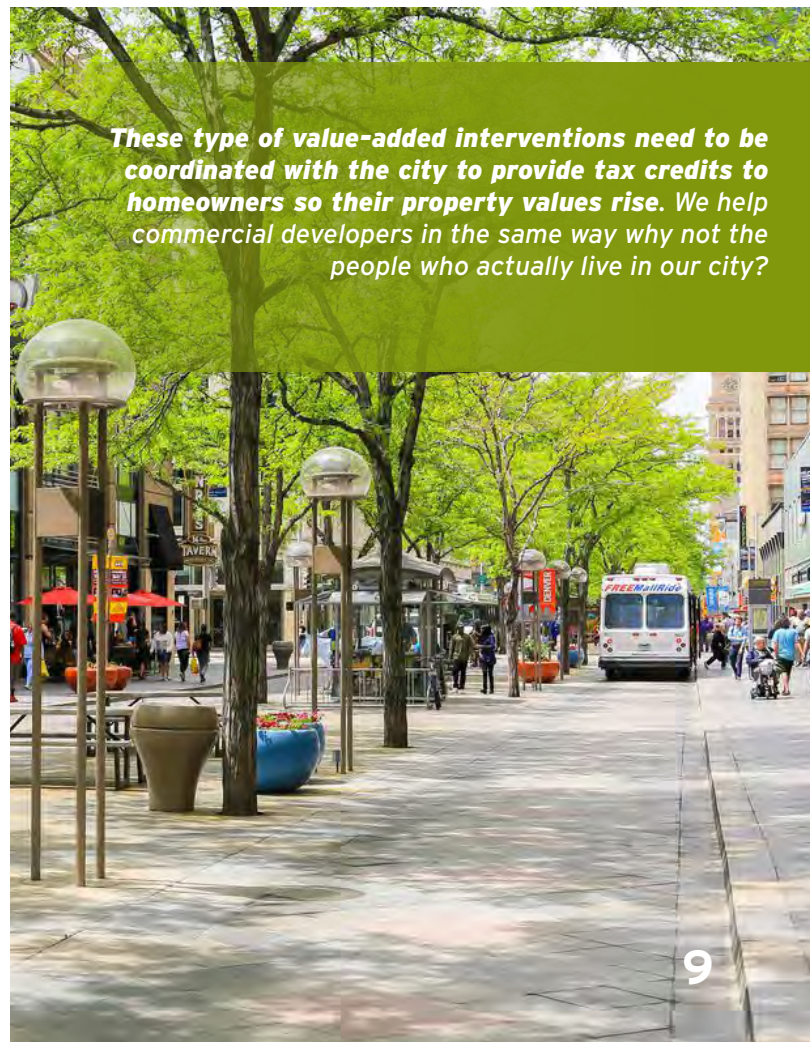
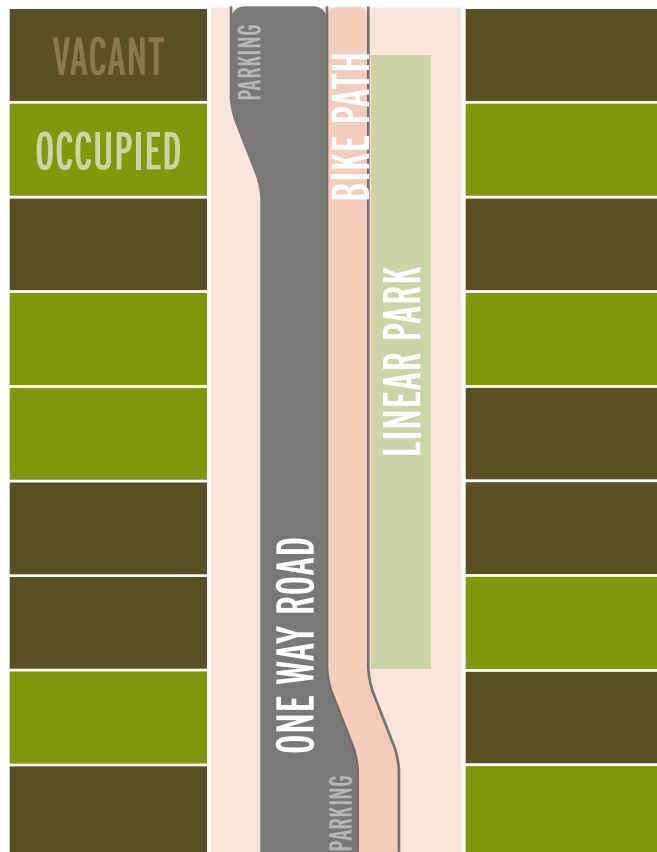
Ultimately the communities will take ownership and these efforts will assist in revitalizing and rebuilding these disinvested communities, and connect them, and tie them into the Green Network.

1. **At least one local community lead organization (church, community center, etc.)**
2. **A community development organization (regional/district e.g. East Baltimore Development Corp.)**
3. **Specific Residents Associations (per the routes/nodes)**
4. **Potential anchor activator/programmer: this group may also be either #1 or #2 as well or an separate partner (Urban farmers, community theater/movie night, farmers/flea market etc.)**
5. **A non-profit stimulator (e.g. NDC, Build)**
6. **Develop a community resident focus group of at least 5 residents that live within 6 min walking distance to the connector node site.**
7. **City District Councilman**
8. **District Police Chief or Police representative**

This diagram below is for example only, each node would be studied individually by each stakeholder group, and therefore may produce completely different results.



16th Street Pedestrian Mall in Denver, Colorado. This idea works for retail environments why not use it to improve and revitalize residential environments?



These type of value-added interventions need to be coordinated with the city to provide tax credits to homeowners so their property values rise. We help commercial developers in the same way why not the people who actually live in our city?

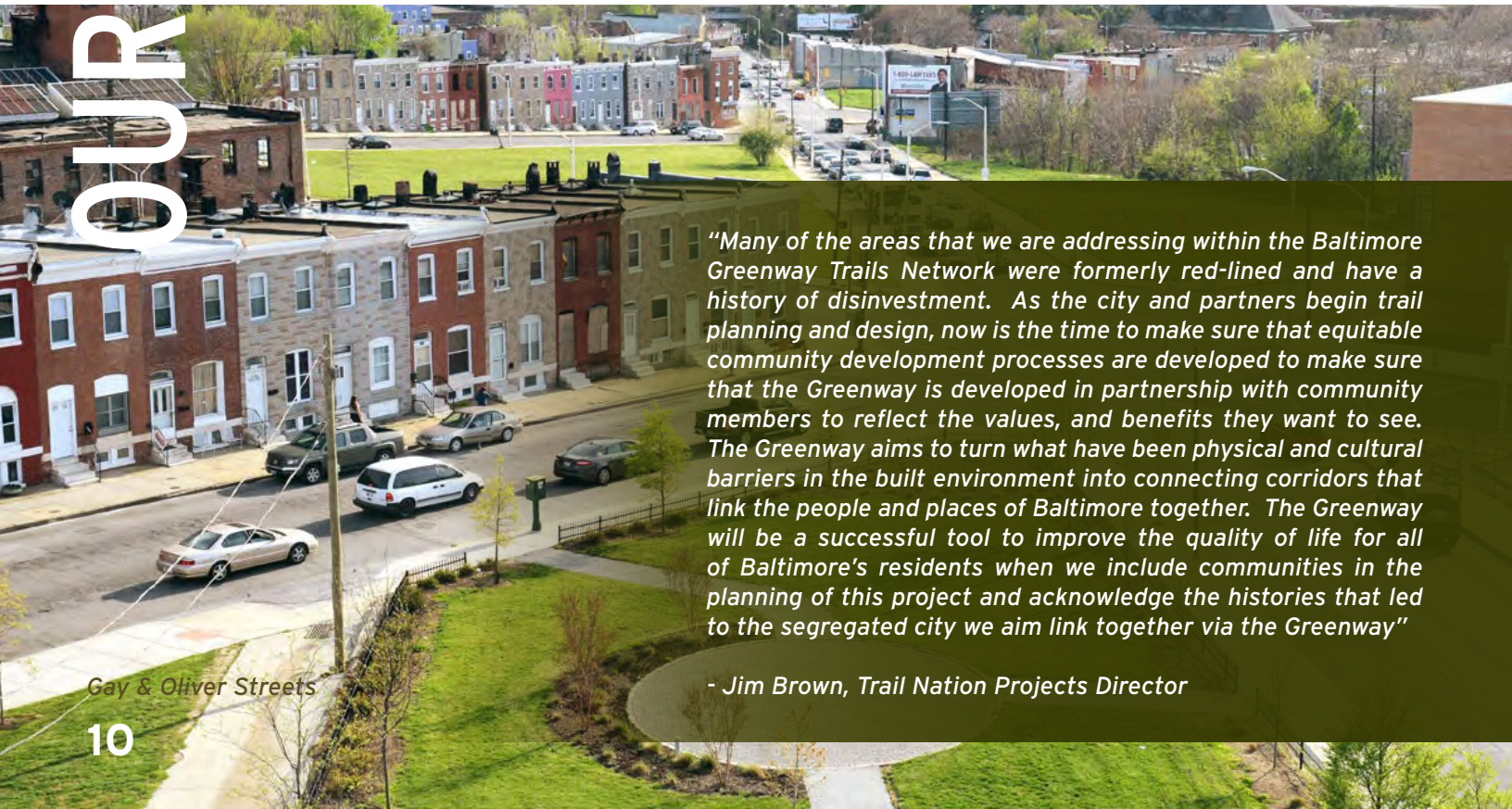
PROJECT SCOPE

PROJECT OUTCOMES & ACTION ITEMS

The end results of our project would be the following:

1. **During phase 1, identify and confirm all partners and their positions within the project scope.**
2. **The development of primary focus routes and locations of key connector nodes along black butterfly routes.**
 - During phase 2 our team would conduct our research to identify the most: needed, accessible, functional, and useful routes.
 - Then using the vacant property/lot mapping provided by our partners identify key locations that correlate with our selected routes to select node locations.
 - This of course takes the following into consideration:
 - The existing Green Network (lack thereof and potential connection points to existing network);
 - Vacant Properties or Lots;
 - Traffic Patterns;
3. **Guidelines/prototype procedures for producing the node connectors for community input, design, and acceptance.**
 - We will develop the process for how this project can be implemented across the city.
 - Layout who needs to be involved and when.
 - Potentially the process could become a part of Baltimore City Planning Academy or adapted by Baltimore City Planning Dept. to create a new Community Planning program.
4. **Design guidelines for route revitalization vehicular/bicycle/pedestrian.**
 - Develop a set of guidelines and suggestions for node activation and design.
 - These guidelines would help us in our own case study as well as be passed on to whomever will Shepard the program in the future.
5. **Produce three to four case study routes designs with at least one style of connector node concept for each route, using the method described in Step 3.**

OUR

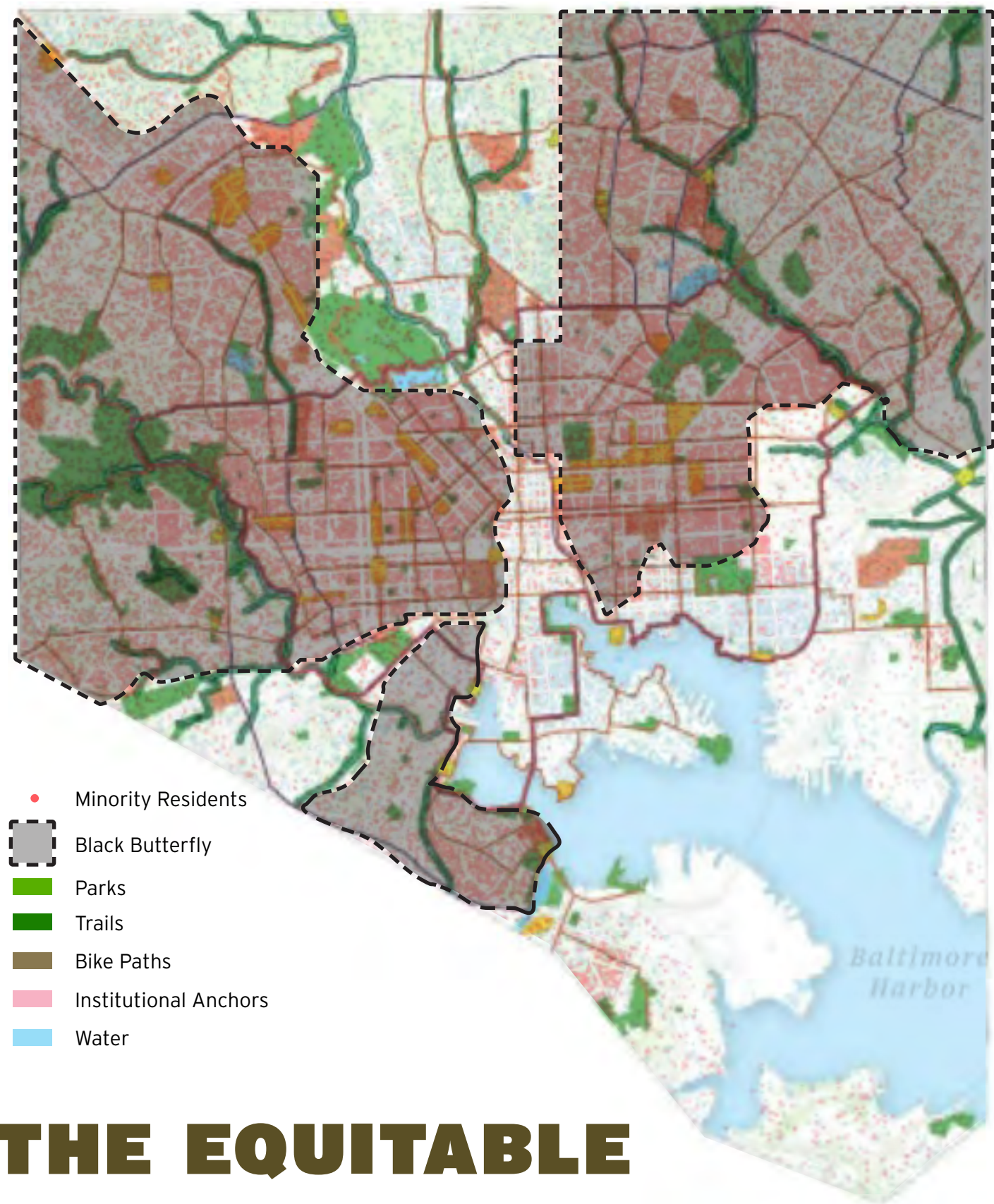


"Many of the areas that we are addressing within the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network were formerly red-lined and have a history of disinvestment. As the city and partners begin trail planning and design, now is the time to make sure that equitable community development processes are developed to make sure that the Greenway is developed in partnership with community members to reflect the values, and benefits they want to see. The Greenway aims to turn what have been physical and cultural barriers in the built environment into connecting corridors that link the people and places of Baltimore together. The Greenway will be a successful tool to improve the quality of life for all of Baltimore's residents when we include communities in the planning of this project and acknowledge the histories that led to the segregated city we aim link together via the Greenway"

- Jim Brown, Trail Nation Projects Director

Gay & Oliver Streets

Green Network with Racial/Ethnic Overlay



THE EQUITABLE NETWORK

OUR COMMITTEE

THE TEAM

Describe your expected leadership and committee for your proposed project. Please list expected committee co-chairs and members by name, title, and organization

Name	Role	Company	Bio/Remark
Brennan Murray , <i>Director Branding + Graphics, Community Engagement</i>	Co-Chair	BCT Design Group , <i>Planners/Architects/Designers</i>	Brennan has a wide range of experience in mixed-use developments, his approach to design thinking reflects an extensive knowledge of marketable placemaking solutions within mixed-use environments. Brennan's focus combines a sharp graphic design eye with a focus on community engagement and collaboration. Brennan currently serves as Co-Chair of the ULI Baltimore DEI Committee and serves on Programs Committee.
Kristina Williams , <i>Executive Director</i>	Co-Chair	Charles Village Community Benefits District Management Authority (CVCBDM) , <i>NPO</i>	Kristina uses best practice strategies to support the programs that promote the Charles Village district as a safe and clean community. Kristina currently serves on the MD Center on Economic Policy (MDCEP), and serves as Co-Chair of the ULI Baltimore DEI Committee and is apart of the Programs Committee. Preceding her role as Executive Director of CVCBDM Kristina served as the Economic Development Officer for the Baltimore Development Corporation.
Jim Brown , <i>Director, TrailNation Projects at Rails-To-Trails Conservancy</i> Ethan Abbott , <i>Baltimore Greenway Trails Coalition Project Manager</i>	Advisory/Research/Design/Community Engagement	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy , <i>NPO</i>	Jim serves as Director of TrailNation™ Projects at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy – helping manage the development of trail networks across the country. Prior to that he served as project manager for the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network. Ethan has always had a strong connection to nature. He studied Geography and Environmental Planning at Towson University, where his passion developed even more. Prior to joining the RTC crew in 2020, Ethan served as a recreation programmer for the Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks.
Kristian Spannhake , <i>Senior Project Director</i>	Advisory/Research/Community Engagement	Brightview Senior Living Development , <i>Developer</i>	Kristian supports the implementation and utilization of environmentally responsible building practices to provide a foundation for sustainable, environmentally responsible growth. Pursuing my passion for the revaluation of urban core communities and urban redevelopment through such practices as urban infill, adaptive reuse, mixed use, and transit oriented development. Kristian serves as ULI Balt. Chair for Mission Advancement and serves on both the ULI Americas YLG/NEXT Executive Committee and ULI Baltimore DEI Committee.
Scott Rykiel , <i>Vice President</i> Matt Renaud , <i>Design Director, Principal</i> Isaac Hametz , <i>Research Director, Principal</i>	Advisory/Research/Design/Community Engagement	Mahan Rykiel Associates , <i>Planners/Landscape Architects/Designers</i>	Scott has over 33 years of experience as a landscape architect with a wide variety of domestic and international projects including hospitality venues, embassies, mixed use developments, high end housing and private gardens. With a background in horticulture and deep knowledge of plant material his design work also has a special focus on detail Matt's diverse experience has made him a team leader who specializes in generating "big picture" ideas and visions for projects of varying scales and complexity. Matt is a licensed landscape architect with more than 17 years of diverse experience as a designer and project manager. Isaac collaborates with clients and strategic partners to study, imagine, and shape landscapes that enrich the human condition and support vibrant natural systems. His work emphasizes ecological integrity, economic uplift, and cultural identity.
Bryce Turner , <i>President/CEO</i> Ann Tyler , <i>Director, Business Development - U.S</i> Dan Dunston , <i>Associate, Designer/</i>	Advisory/Research/Design/Community Engagement	BCT Design Group , <i>Planners/Architects/Designers</i>	Bryce , President of BCT Design Group, is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, is registered as an architect in twenty U.S. states and has led design projects globally. From 2002-2007 Bryce served as Chair of the ULI's Baltimore District Council and is currently a member of ULI Washington's Advisory Committee and the National ULI Redevelopment and Reuse Council. Ann is Director of Business Development (Domestic) at BCT Design Group. Ann serves as Chair of ULI Baltimore's Programs Committee, she also sits on the Washington, DC, ULI's Trends Conference Planning Committee, and serves on the Board of the Maryland Zoo. Dan has global experience in land planning and landscape architecture for commercial and residential projects. A skilled project designer and planner, Mr. Dunston's responsibilities have included a wide range of landscape master plans, large and small-scale planing projects.
Briony Hynson , <i>Deputy Director</i>	Advisory/Research/Design/Community Engagement	Neighborhood Design Center , <i>NPO</i>	Briony leads development, design leadership and engagement initiatives at NDC. Briony started in her role at NDC in 2013, after completion of the Robert W. Deutsch Social Design Fellowship at Maryland Institute College of Art. The lynchpin of her work is understanding community and the shared built environment to leverage positive social change.
Amber Wendland , <i>Senior Associate / Senior Planner</i>	Advisory/Research/Design/Community Engagement	Ayers Saint Gross , <i>Planners/Architects/Designers</i>	Amber has focused on improving Baltimore and its communities, including the East Baltimore Revitalization Plan. "At its heart, planning is about providing a roadmap—a series of options to fulfill the needs and desires of the community and a path to move forward." Amber serves on the Neighborhood Design Center Board of Directors.
Davin Hong , <i>Principal / Director of Innovation</i>	Advisory/Research/Design/Community Engagement	Waldon Studio Architects , <i>Planners/Architects/Designers</i>	Davin is the Director of Innovation at Waldon Studio Architects. He is an experienced architect, planner and urban designer and is recognized as a thought leader, promoting innovative design solutions to address issues of equity, economy and environment. Fundamental to his design philosophy is a belief that good design can create better communities and social interactions.



BALTIMORE BACK ON TRACK

We understand success does not look the same in every neighborhood and are ready to do the work to use the proper methods to produce the appropriate outcomes.

But quality-of-life factors such as good health and well-being, clean air, green infrastructure, and equitable access should not be privileges, they are basic rights when inhabiting a city. This project aims to rectify those disparities and give our disenfranchised communities a fighting chance at doing so. To that end we would suggest the following upon our project completion:

Hope For Future of this Program:

The Office of Sustainability with the assistance of non-profits shall present an annual update to the public and the Planning Department to monitor and measure the health of the "Black Butterfly Routes" and the effectiveness of our development process and pilot program.

If there are any question regarding our proposal please reach out to Brennan Murray, Kristina Williams, and Ethan Abbott. We greatly appreciate the Curtis Infrastructure Initiative's interest in our proposal and thank you for the opportunity.

Brennan Murray
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Kristina Williams
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Ethan Abbott
ethan@railstotrails.org



Baltimore

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SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

An aerial photograph of a stone tower with a crenellated top, situated on a paved area. To the right, a green-painted bike lane runs along a grassy area. Several people are riding bicycles on the path. The background shows a body of water and trees.

THE EQUITABLE NETWORK RESTORING PEOPLE & PLACES