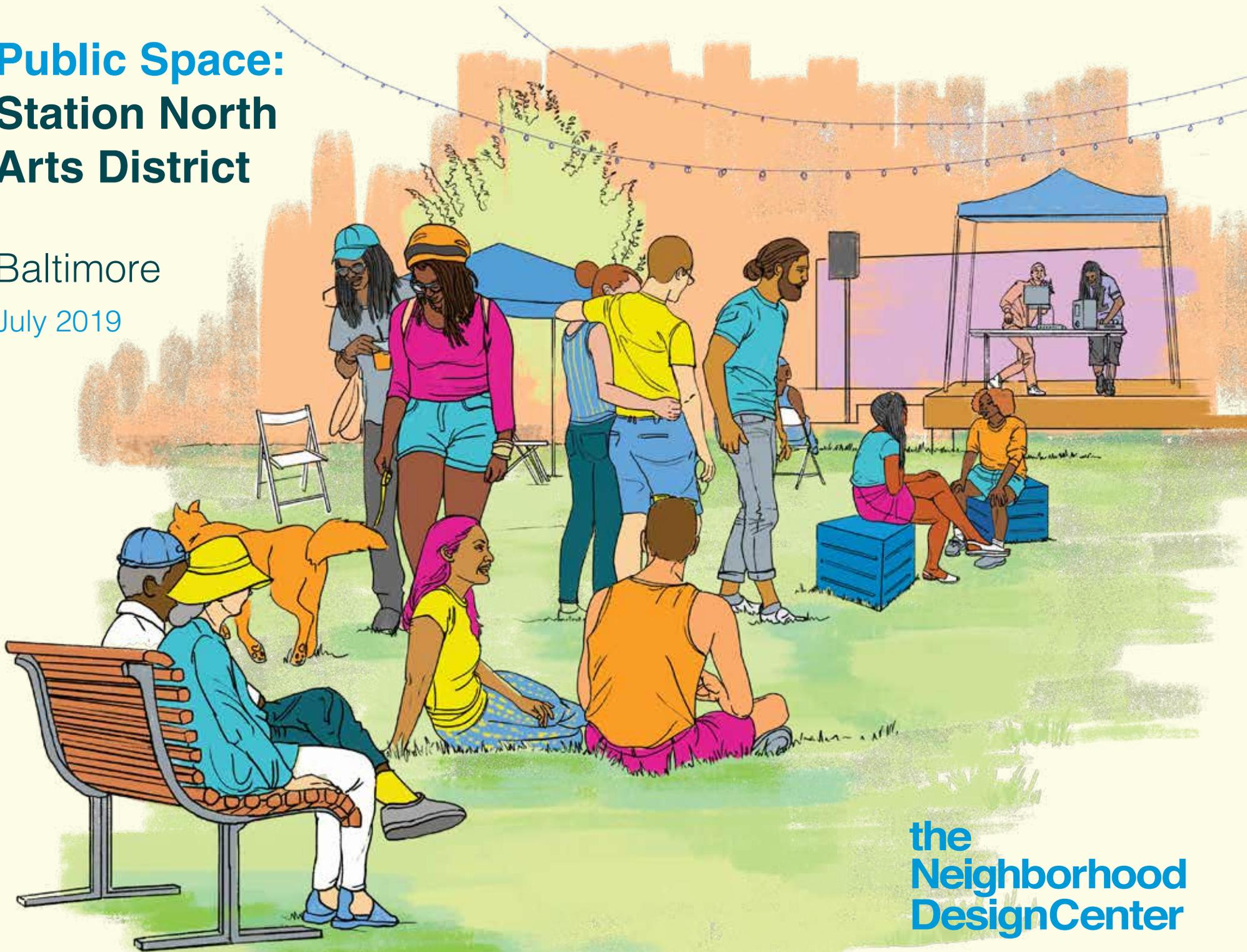


Public Space: Station North Arts District

Baltimore
July 2019



the
Neighborhood
DesignCenter



Table of Contents

4	Introduction
	Plan Purpose
	Goals
	How to Use this Plan
7	Methodology, Approach, and Key Findings
	The Approach
	Boundary and Zoning
	Site Analysis and Research
	Stakeholder Input
	Current Conditions Maps
44	Recommendations
	The Concept
	Big City Boulevard
	Premier Streets
	Neighborhood Streets
62	Infrastructure Recommendations
	Transportation
	Greening
	Programming, Identity, and Art
77	Implementation
	Public Spaces
	Design
	Identity
	Programming
	Maintenance
85	Acknowledgments



PLAN PURPOSE

Why Great Public Space?

Great public spaces can bring people to our streets and sidewalks to support the livability of our neighborhoods with investment from government, commercial and non-profit partners, and citizens across cultures. We can make our places so much more lively with street and sidewalk redesigns, temporary street closure, and parklets— valuing great city spaces and taking action to support public life.

The Station North Public Space Plan stands on the shoulders of pioneering work in a global public space movement. This public space movement has grown since Jane Jacobs first documented *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. William Whyte studied public space and documented that usage and liveliness were the keys to great spaces, noticing that small spaces were best for creating these conditions. The New York-based non profit, Projects for Public Spaces, came out of Whyte’s work. They have studied great spaces around the world and have clarified the character of great places: they are accessible, engag-

ing, comfortable, well cared-for, and encourage socialization. (Project for Public Spaces 2016). Gehl and Associates has added nuance to the field, detailing the ways in which we can encourage healthy interaction between people in public spaces - designing places with no walls, short distances, low speeds, one level, and orientation towards others. They have documented that it is critical to build places that encourage not just a high number of people out in public but places where people like to stay for a long time, because this is what really attracts more people (Gehl 2011).

Here in Baltimore, we can build upon the skills and knowledge of the public space movement to create healthy, joyful neighborhoods.

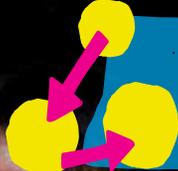
GOAL

Public Space Station North

A moment to catch your breath, a chance meeting, waving to your neighbor on the bike ride home, a spot to eat lunch outside, a long dinner with friends or your partner at a sidewalk cafe, talking as you stroll from dinner to a movie, a dog walk, shifting gears with your kids, sensory joy from a piece of art. Public spaces play an essential role in having a high quality of life - qualities with important health, social, and equity implications.



Our Places Should:



1. Invite people from one space to the next



2. Be well-used and lively



3. Draw the local Community and visitors



4. Support various uses, especially social opportunities

5. Be perceived positively by their users

Things we need in our public space:

People

Nature

Food

Walking

Connectivity

Peace & Quiet

Recreation

Kid-friendly places

Biking

Beauty

Liveliness

Art & Culture

How to Use This Plan

This plan creates a framework for building a high quality public realm in Station North. It establishes a shared vision of the qualities of that space, and guides stakeholder, business owner, and property owner in creation of spaces that work for people. .

The plan incorporates many of the design and programming principles outlined across the public space movement by leaders including, Jane Jacobs, William Whyte, and Jan Gehl.

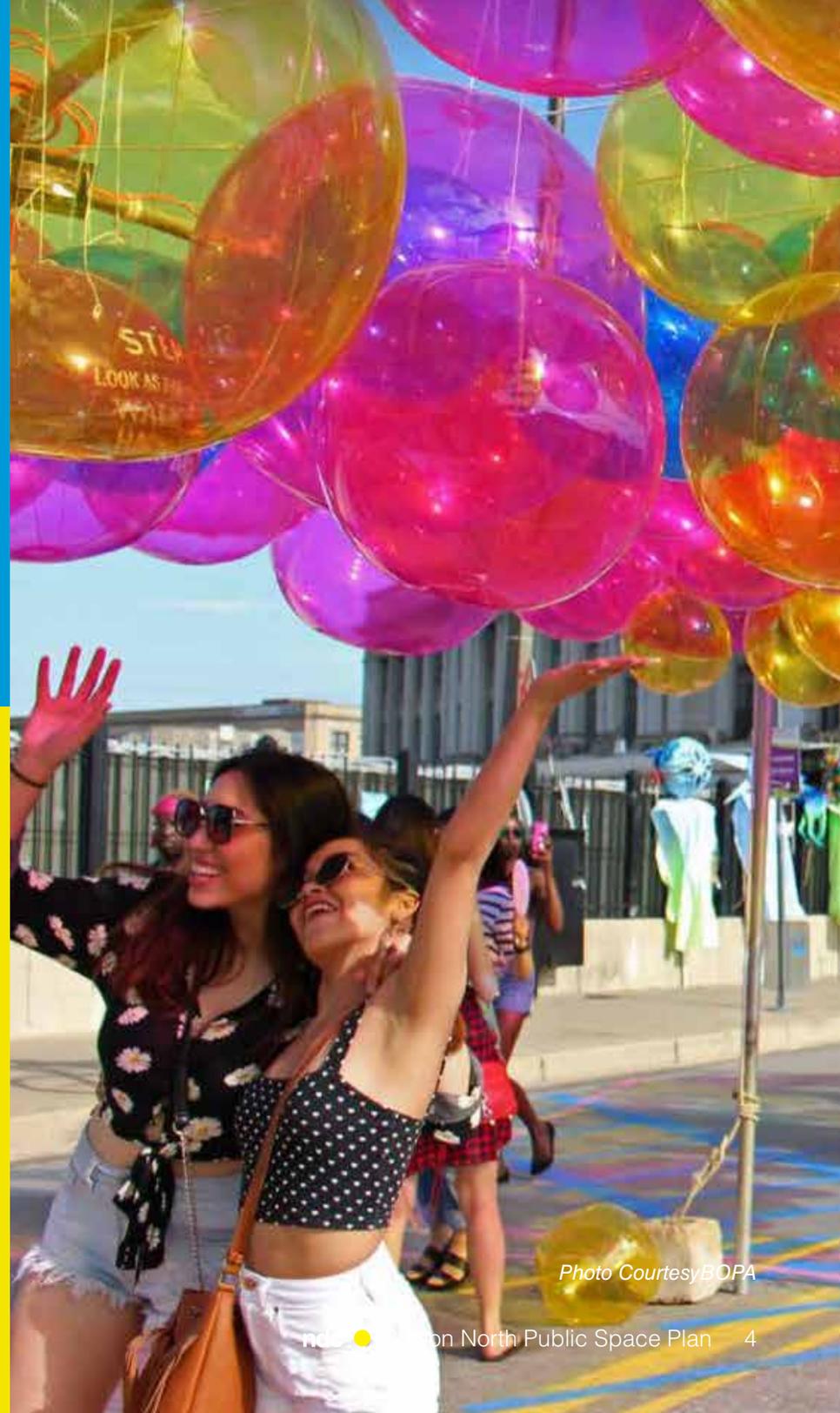
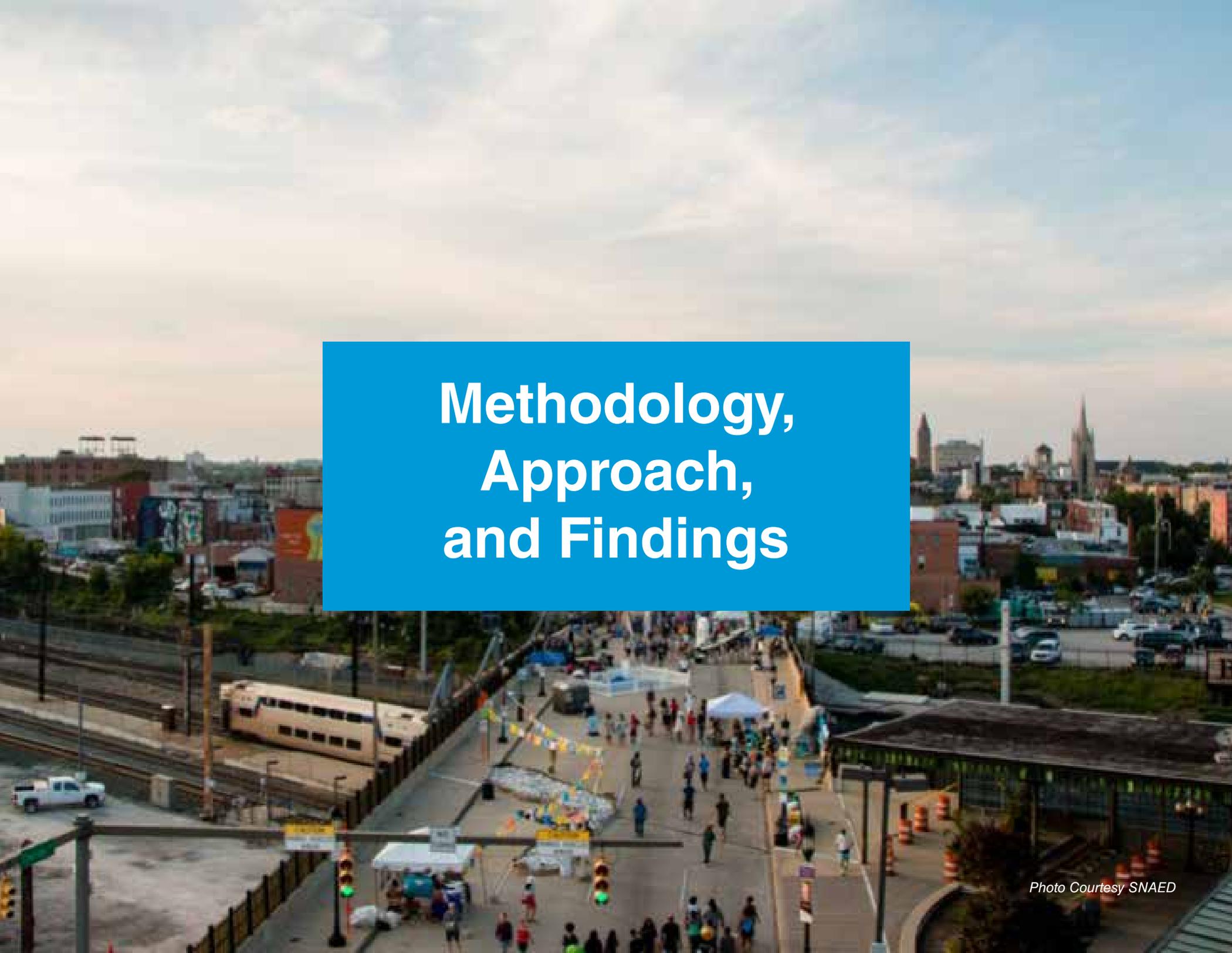


Photo Courtesy BOPA

An aerial photograph of a city street festival. The street is filled with people, tents, and colorful decorations. A train is visible on the left side of the street. In the background, there are various city buildings and a church with a tall steeple. The sky is overcast with soft light. A large blue rectangular box is centered over the image, containing white text.

Methodology, Approach, and Findings

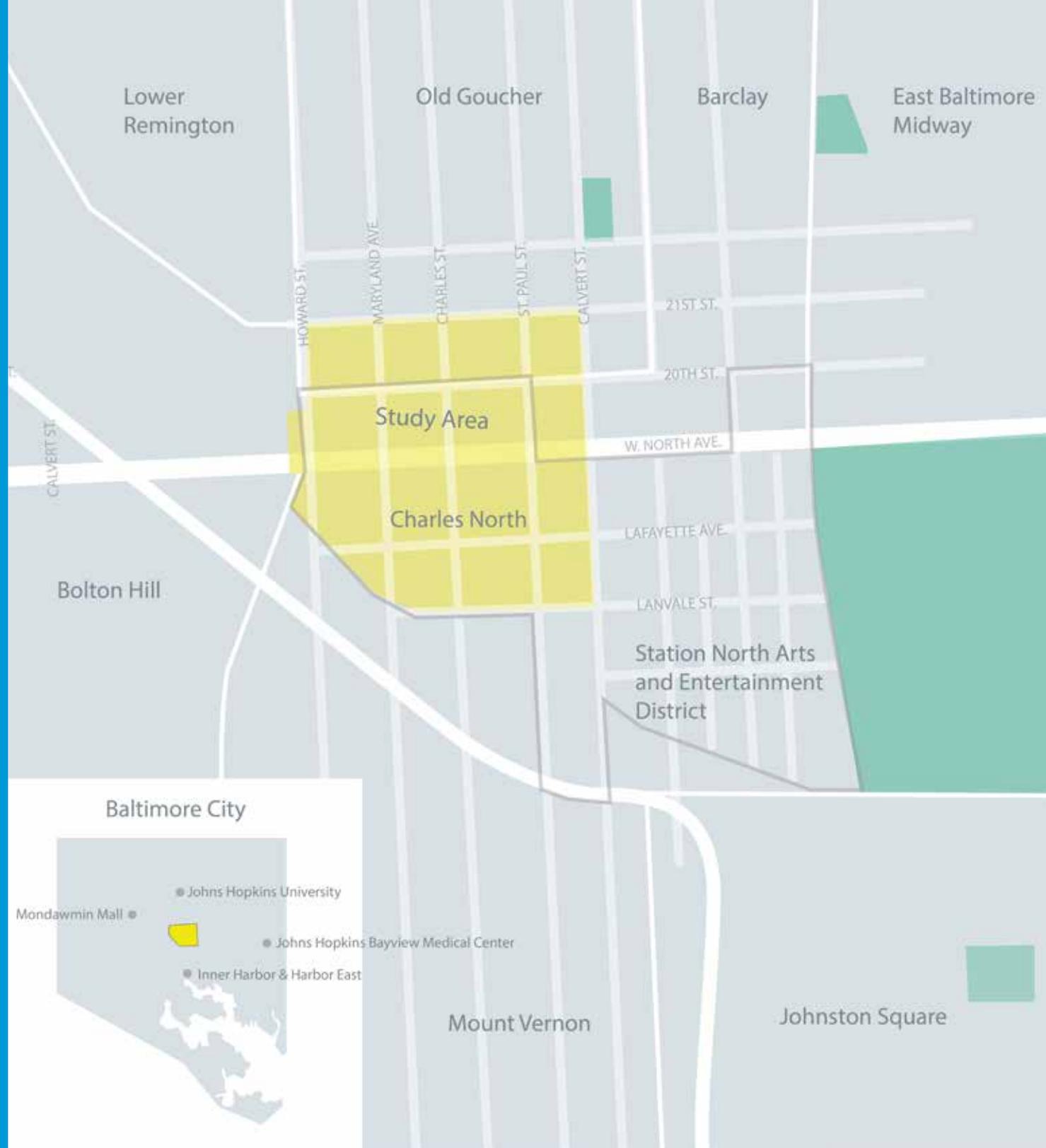
Photo Courtesy SNAED

The District

The boundary of the Station North Public Space Plan is Lanvale Street, Howard Street, St. Paul Street and 20th Street. This is the commercial core of the Station North Arts District. The stakeholders* decided to focus the plan on the commercial core of Station North where investment can support the greatest number, and widest variety of people. If successful, the plan can be extended to address additional blocks.

*Station North Public Space North Avenue Stakeholders Committee

Charlie Duff, Jubilee Baltimore
Marian Glebes, Baltimore Arts Realty Corp. (BARCO)
Dr. Sheri Parks, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)
Jack Danna, Central Baltimore Partnership (CBP)
Ellen Janes, CBP
Peter Duvall, Strong City Baltimore
Andy Frank, UHU
Elliot Weidow, Midtown Baltimore
Nan Rohrer, Midtown Baltimore
Amy Bonitz, BARCO
David Lapides, Charles North Community Association
Amelia Rambissoon, Station North Arts District (SNAED)
NDC Staff
Maura Dwyer, NDC



Methodology

This plan is an outgrowth of Gehl's Public Space, Public Life framework, documentation of the public space of Station North, and input from stakeholders.

A detailed examination of the public realm in Station North demonstrates that our community has many strengths, but does not yet have the infrastructure, programming, or maintenance to support a high quality experience for people.

We mapped the character of Station North and talked with stakeholders from the community anchors, members of our maintenance team, commercial owners, and people out in the neighborhood.



Site Analysis & Research

This plan arose from the North Avenue Stakeholders Committee of the Central Baltimore Partnership to examine the existing public space conditions in Station North, focused on public realm investment. The Neighborhood Design Center process started with participatory documentation of the character and elements in Station North's public space that resulted in a map that shows the relative quality of the streetscape on our blocks.

Experience



Amenities

Facade



Communal Space



Uniqueness

Open Space



Safety

Lighting



Traffic Volume



Accessibility



Getting Around

Streetscape



Bus Stops

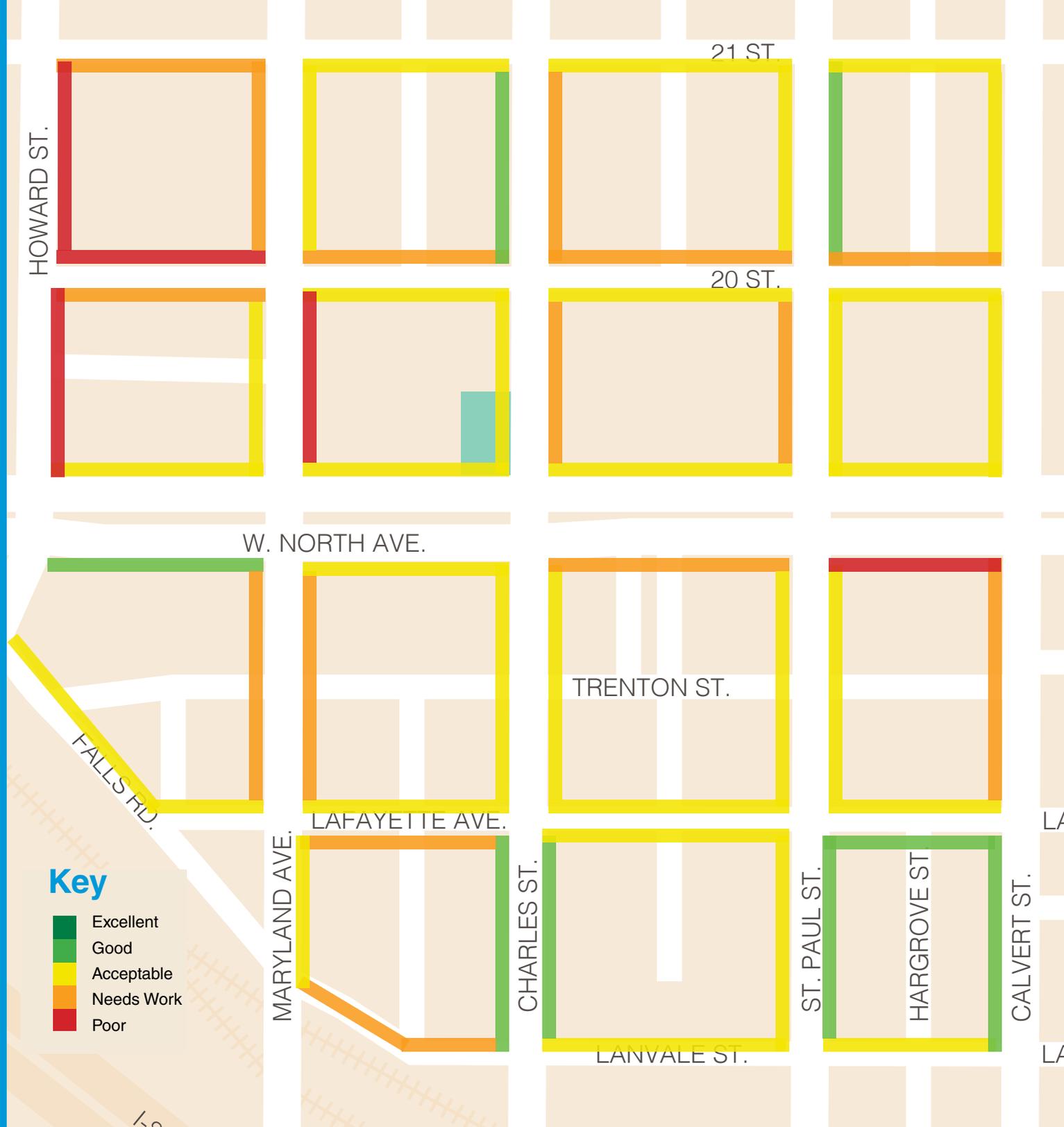


Block Audit

North Avenue Stakeholders Committee members completed a block by block audit of the experience of **public space** in the core of the Station North Arts District in February 2018.

The audits were completed by members of the Central Baltimore Partnership's North Avenue Stakeholders Committee on foot, using a rubric to rate and observe values such as safety, adequate lighting, sidewalk quality, and green space. NDC collated and interpreted the audits.

As seen in the accompanying map, the stakeholders found that experience of public space in Station North needs investment and care. From the data, the stakeholders developed recommendations for small and large-scale interventions that will improve access, quality, and value.





Stakeholder Input

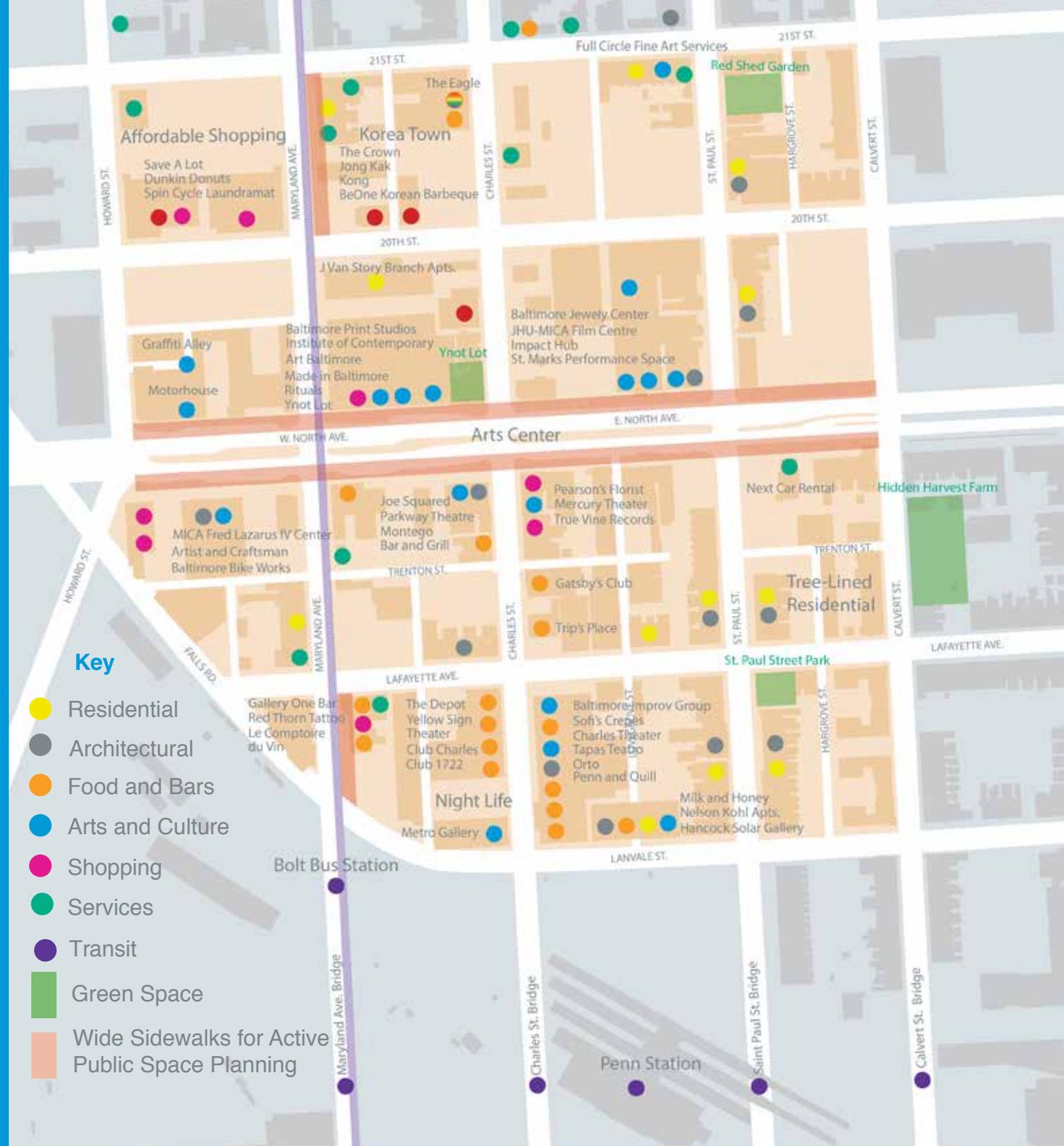
Following the block audits the Neighborhood Design Center hosted a series of stakeholder meetings to document the character, strengths and weaknesses in our public realm, determine the structure of this plan, identify the key actors for building out a high quality public, define the actions that each type of stakeholder should be focused on, and share the work that is already underway.

North Avenue Stakeholders Committee of Central Baltimore Partnership

Charlie Duff, Jubilee Baltimore
Marian Glebes, Baltimore Arts Realty Corp. (BARCO)
Dr. Sheri Parks, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)
Jack Danna, Central Baltimore Partnership (CBP)
Ellen Janes, CBP
Peter Duvall, Strong City Baltimore
Andy Frank, JHU
Elliot Weidow, Midtown Baltimore
Nan Rohrer, Midtown Baltimore
Amy Bonitz, BARCO
David Lapides, Charles North Community Association
Amelia Rambissoon, Station North Arts District (SNAED)
Briony Hynson, NDC
Maura Dwyer, NDC
Jennifer Goold, NDC
Ben Derlan, NDC

Asset Map

The Stakeholders Committee documented the assets that exist in Station North. Located in the central part of the city, conveniently located between or adjacent to landmark spaces including the Inner Harbor, Mt. Vernon Place, Penn Station, the Baltimore Museum of Art, Johns Hopkins University, Charles Street Scenic Byway, Walters Art Museum, Peabody Institute, Maryland Institute College of Art, University of Baltimore, and the Jones Falls Valley. It has excellent (for Baltimore) transit access: Amtrak, Bolt Bus, the Circulator Bus, the MTA Bus, the Hopkins Shuttle, with the Light Rail nearby. It is home to Baltimore's largest art house theaters - the Charles the SNF Parkway, and many shops, cafes, and nightspots.



Institutions & Architecture

Some of Baltimore's premier educational institutions have facilities within the study area; Johns Hopkins, MICA, and University of Baltimore. The district has outstanding architecture and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is also a state-designated Arts & Entertainment District, home to numerous active arts anchors and arts spaces. It is supported by a robust Community Development Corporation in Central Baltimore Partnership and an effective community association in the Charles North Community Association. Strong real estate developers, including Seawall and SAAE-VI, Jubilee, BARCO, and nearby the teams working on Penn Station.



Challenges

We also noted that Station North has challenges to achieving its public life goals.

There are not enough people living in Station North, so the streets are dominated by people there for single reasons - student, worker, commuter, theater-goer, diner, medical service client. This results in few people walking for enjoyment. Most of the people in Station North are adults. There is low range of age groups - too few children and elderly people and no facilities for children or the elderly.

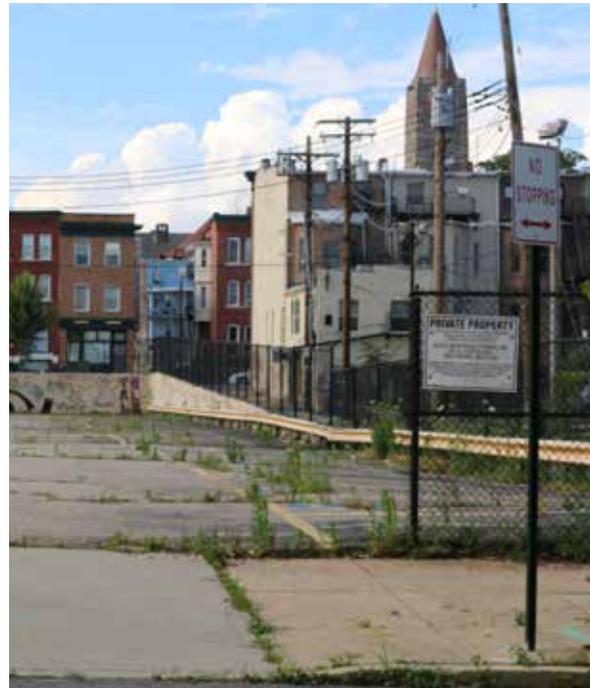
Parking lots and vacant land are all too prevalent in Station North. This doubly detracts from the neighborhood, reducing walkability and restricting neighborhood density at the same time. Much of this land is being held for future development with a view to maximizing profits.

Station North is currently a traffic dominated neighborhood. The pedestrian infrastructure is not consistent. There is low pedestrian priority with long waiting times at crossings and many unnecessary sidewalk

interruptions. Lighting is focussed on the street and does not create a welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Wayfinding is non-existing or inaccurate. There is a lack of public seating along pedestrian routes.

There are few active public spaces with little diversity in the activities. Events in the winter are limited. Outdoor cafe services is concentrated in a small area along North Charles Street, with few outdoor cafe seats compared with other destination neighborhoods. Many storefronts are empty or do not engage the sidewalk when occupied. Greening is not fully articulated.

The Stakeholder Group is determined that we need to create a high quality public space network in Station North. This network will ensure that our neighborhood is competitive amongst our peers on a local and national level. It will strengthen all of our brands and build on public-private partnerships and business networks to strengthen our culture. This network will support health and well-being for the people that spend time in our community.



Challenges include low quality alleys, vacant lots, unused and abandoned storefronts, and low quality infrastructure such as bus stops, street furniture, and pedestrian routes.

Previous Plans

Stakeholders shared the existing and planned frameworks that are guiding the architectural character of Station North.



Charles North Vision Plan (2008) commissioned by the Charles North Community Association, envisions a multi-phase development initiative to restore one of Baltimore's once great commercial corridors, formerly known as Baltimore's Koreatown, and turn it into a key residential, commercial, creative and entertainment destination point.

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B4WmjERw-buq7U3NIZGdDM2tqNms/edit>

North Central Historic District (2002) designated by the National

Register of Historic Places serves to protect and celebrate the area's rich history.

<https://chap.baltimorecity.gov/north-central>

Urban Renewal Plan (1982), Amended (2007) Filed with the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), this plan includes enhanced design guidelines for development of the Charles North neighborhood to support higher-quality urban design and preservation. In 2017 the URP has been revised to prepare Charles North for a Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) designation.

<http://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Charles%20North%20URP%20a7.pdf>

The Approach

In order to draw people to public space, they need **Protection**, **Comfort**, and **Enjoyment** (Gehl Institute). Assessing future designs against the Gehl's 12 Criteria for high quality urban spaces, presented below, will assure that we are creating places for people.

1



Protection

First, people must have protection from cars, noise, rain, sun, and wind. These are the baseline elements that support human presence in a public space.

2



Comfort

Second, people need the infrastructure for comfortable walking, standing, sitting, seeing, and talking to support staying in public space. Options for play and exercise are additional elements that extend stays and increase health and well-being.

3



Enjoyment

Finally, the best public spaces provide positive aesthetic and sensory experiences, work with local climate conditions to make staying a pleasure, and give people a human-scale setting so that they feel relaxed in the surroundings.

Learn more about Gehl Institute's 12 Urban Quality Criteria here:
<https://gehl.institute.org/tool/quality-criteria>.

Protection



Protection against traffic and accidents. Does everyone across age and ability experience traffic safety in the public space? Can one safely bike and walk without fear of being hit by a driver?

Protection against harm by others. Is the public space perceived to be safe both day and night? Are there people and activities at all hours of the day because the area has, for example, both residents and offices? Does the lighting provide safety at night as well as a good atmosphere?

Protection against unpleasant sensory experience. Are there loud noises, dust, smells, or other pollution? Does the public space function well when it's windy? Is there shelter from strong sun, rain, or minor



Comfort



Options for mobility. Is this space accessible? Are there physical elements that might limit or enhance personal mobility in the forms of walking, using of a wheelchair, or pushing a stroller? Is it obvious how to move through the space without having to take a detour?

Options for seeing. Are seating options placed so there are interesting things to look at?

Options to stand and linger. Does the place have features you can stay and lean on, like a facade that invites one to spend time next to it, a bus stop, a bench, a tree, or a small ledge or niche?





Options for sitting. Are there good primary seating options such as benches or chairs? Or is there only secondary seating such as a stair, seat wall, or the edge of a fountain? Are there adequate non-commercial seating options so that sitting does not require spending money?

Options for talking and listening/ hearing. Is it possible to have a conversation here? Is it evident that you have the option to sit together and have a conversation?

Options for play, exercise, and activities. Are there options to be active at multiple times of the day and year?



Enjoyment

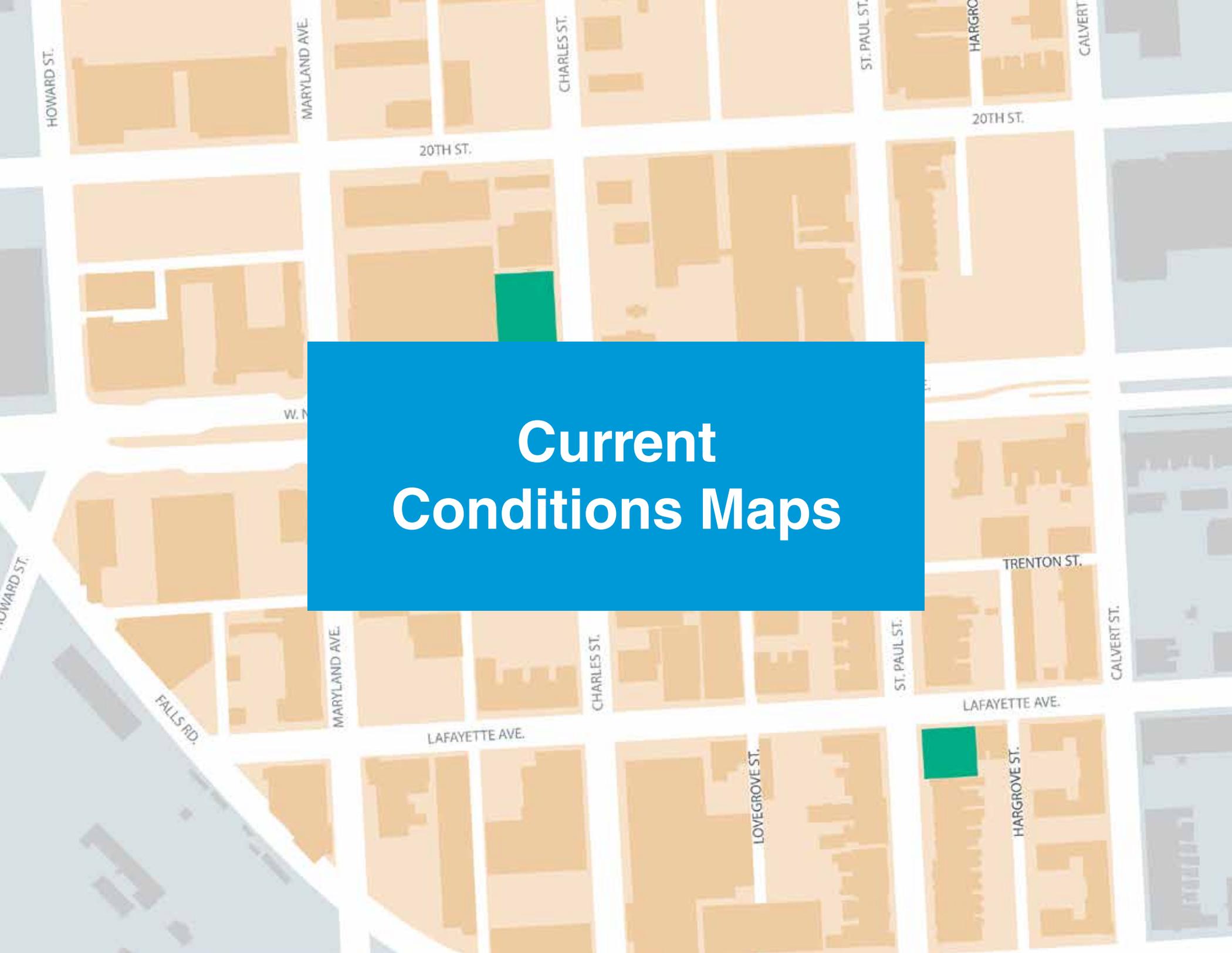


Scale. Is the public space and the building that surrounds it at a human scale? If people are at the edges of the space, can we still relate to them as people or are they lost in their surroundings?

Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate. Are local climatic aspects such as wind and sun taken into account? Are there varied conditions for spending time in public spaces at different times of year? With this in mind, where are the seating options placed? Are they located entirely in the shadows or the sun? And how are they oriented/ placed in relation to wind? Are they protected?

Experience of aesthetic qualities and positive sensory experiences. Is the public space beautiful? Is it evident that there is good design both in terms of how things are shaped, as well as their durability.





Current Conditions Maps

Our Baseline Data

The Neighborhood Design Center documented baseline conditions in the neighborhood and took a deeper dive, documenting the variety of elements that support and undermine the quality of our public realm. The larger map for each of the following categories shows the data collected, the smaller, inset map is a quality conclusion.

Data Maps

- 23 Zoning
- 24 Figure Ground
- 25 Walking Flow
- 26 Pedestrian Crossings
- 27 Public Transit
- 28 Curb Cuts
- 29 Noise Levels
- 30 Lighting
- 32 Alley Quality
- 33 Street Trees
- 34 Public Art
- 35 Street Furniture
- 36 Storefront Facades
- 37 Commercial
- 39 Parking
- 41 Green Space

Zoning Map

Business

B-2: Community Commercial. This area is designed for a variety of commercial activity for occasional shopping needs.

B-3: Community & Highway Commercial. This category is designed primarily for commercial activity of a highway oriented nature.

Office-Residential

O-R-2, O-R-3: Allows for a variety of general professional, business and governmental offices in addition to the uses allowed in residential zones. The density* increases with the number following the letter.

*Density is the number of housing units per block.

Residential

R-8, R-9, R-10: Generally allows for single-family, semi-detached housing, single family attached townhouses, and multi-family housing. The density* increases with the number following the letter.

Manufacturing

M-1-2: Light Manufacturing, designed to be a nuisance-free environment. It allows for a variety of clean industrial uses.

M-2-2: General Manufacturer. They allow for a wide variety of intense industrial uses.

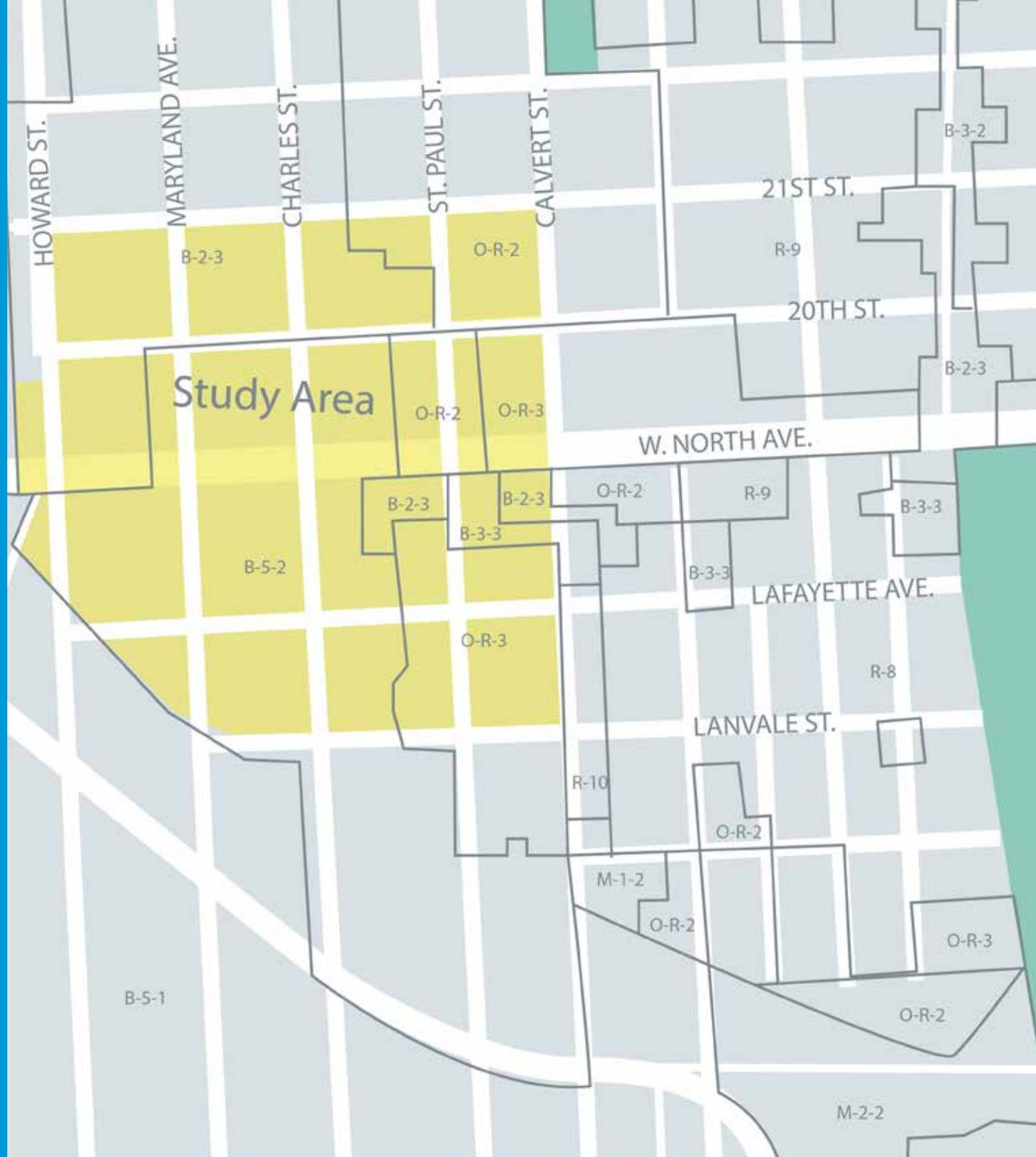


Figure Ground Map

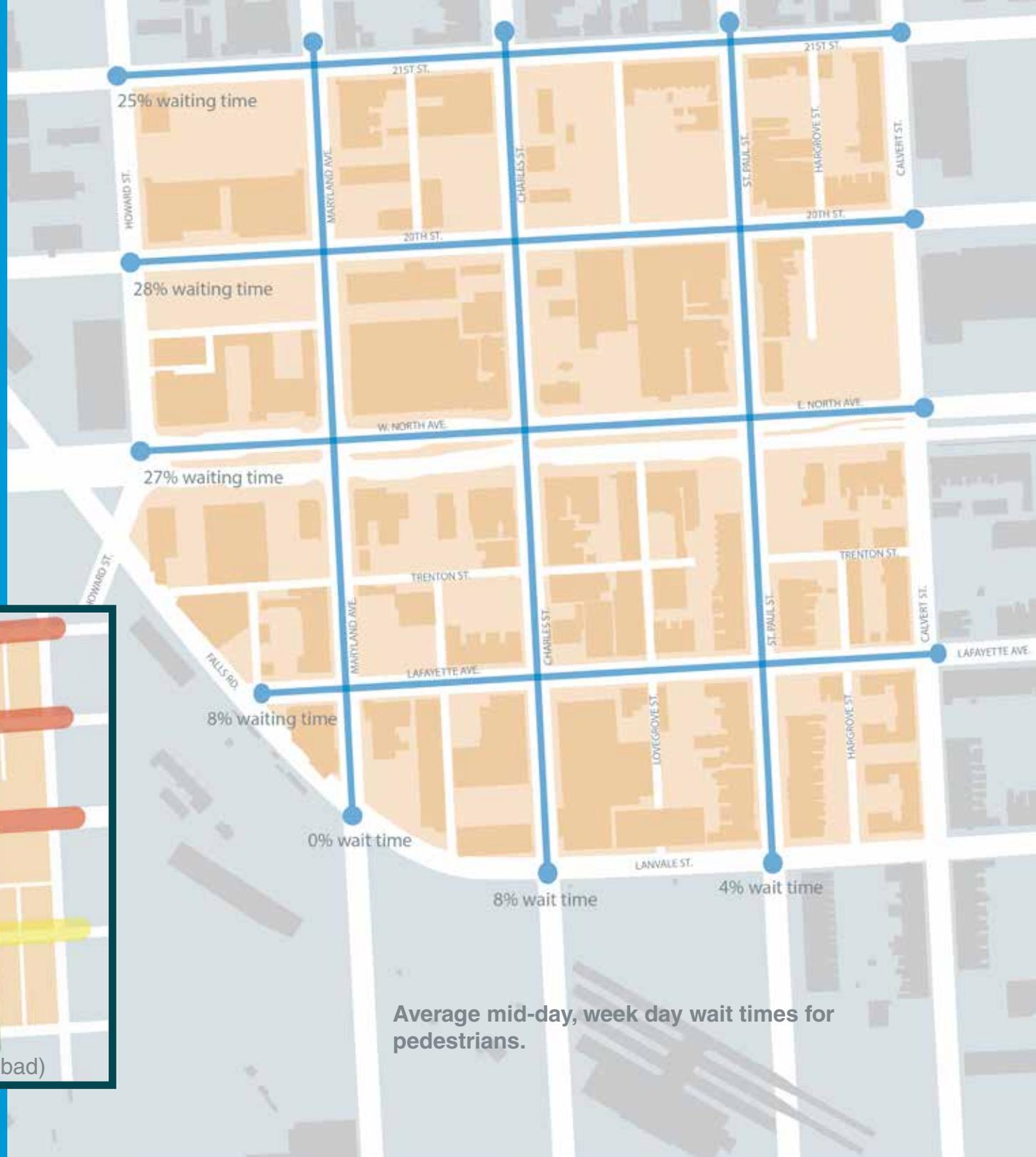
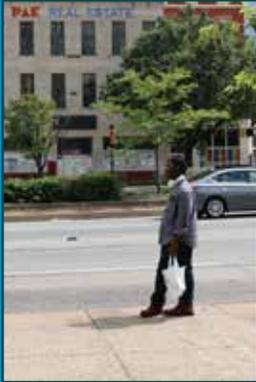
A high quality urban environment should primarily consist of buildings and public infrastructure like streets and sidewalks.

The remainders should serve those users as greenspace or spaces for performance or ritual. Much of the gray space on this map is surface parking.



Walking Flow

Minimizing wait times for pedestrians encourages walking. East-West routes have significant wait times.



Average mid-day, week day wait times for pedestrians.

Pedestrian Crossings

Providing continuous sidewalk paving across intersections emphasizes pedestrians in the roadway. Traffic symbols should count down pedestrian crossing times.



Walk Signal and Crosswalk



Walk Signal, Crosswalk, and non-functioning push-button



No Crossing Signal



Areas in need of safer cross walks that prioritize pedestrians

Public Transit

A well integrated and well connected public transport network is a necessary element to support those without a car now and encourage others to leave their car behind in the future.

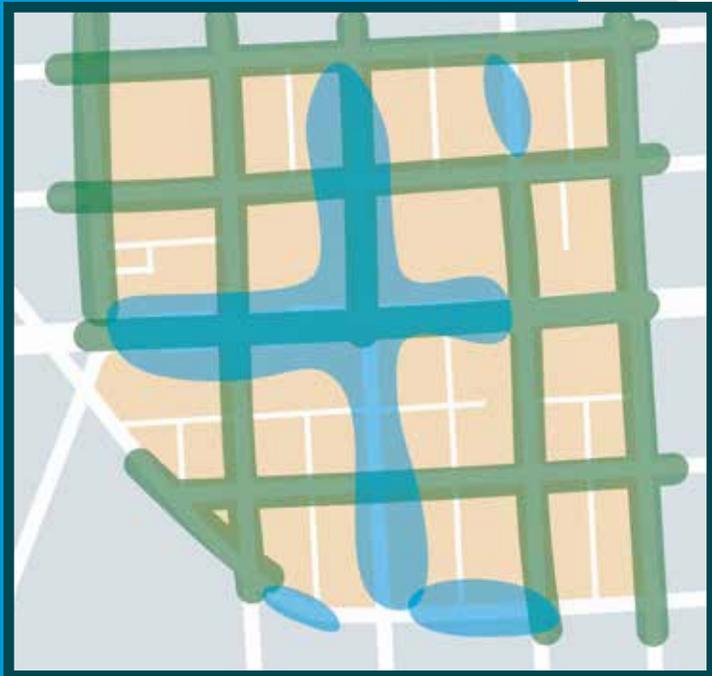


Light Poles

Lighting for the sidewalks and cycle lanes is necessary to supporting nightlife in the neighborhood.



Auto and Pedestrian Lighting



Lighting Distribution

Lighting for the sidewalks and cycle lanes is necessary to supporting nightlife in the neighborhood.

Lighting Summary



Alley Quality

Alleys can be high quality walking and creative spaces.



Street Trees

Trees reduce the heat island effect and cool the streets, they provide visual quality, human scale for the sidewalk, and increase both property values and the amount of money shoppers spend.



Public Art

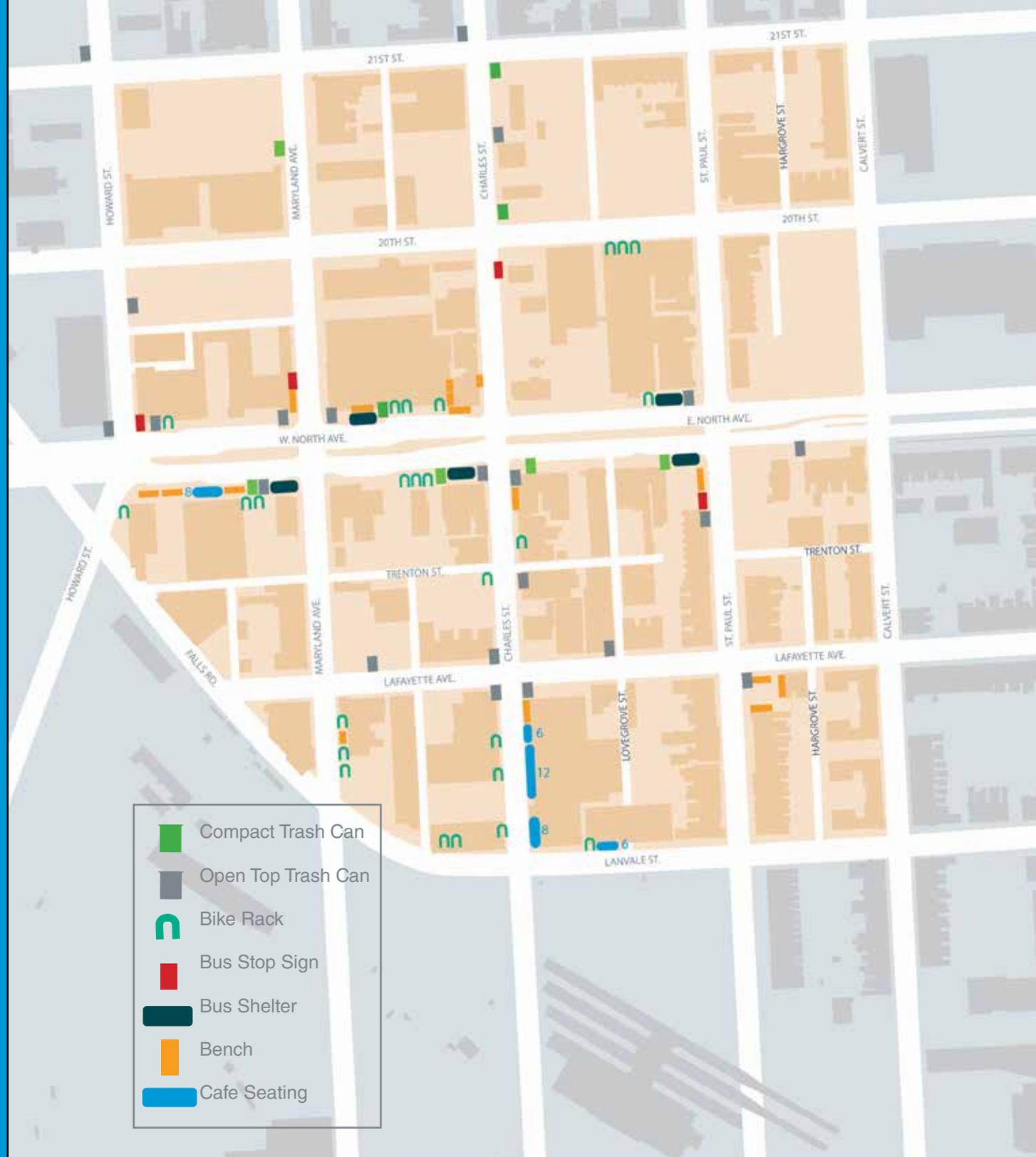
Creative activity is the Station North Arts District brand and should be its most memorable characteristic.



- Decorative Lighting
- Large Mural
- Small Mural
- ▲ Sculpture
- ▭ Billboard
- ⋯ Wheatpaste/ Graffiti
- Colorful Paint Theme
- ⋈ Sculptural Bike Rack

Street Furniture

Pedestrians need places to rest and socialize on the streets. Every block needs a public place to rest. Transit stops need benches. Cafes should be incentivized to provide sidewalk seating where the sidewalk is wide enough.



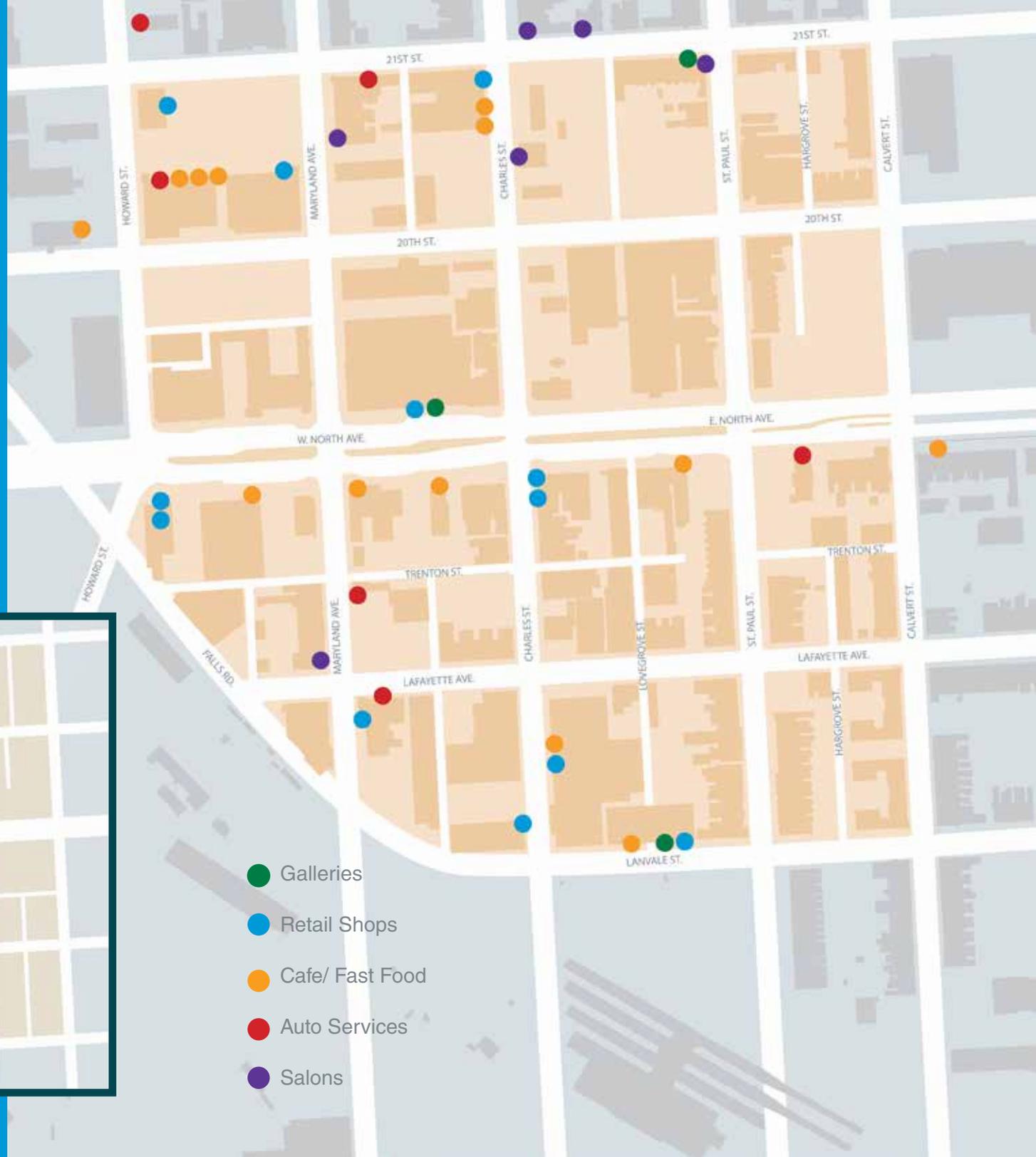
Storefront Facades

Attractive ground floor building facades are an important aspect of public space. Good street fronts have lots of details that are enticing to walk past and be around. Visible activities in the building contribute to pedestrian experiences and light pouring out at night is attractive and increases safety - both real and perceived.



Commercial (Daytime)

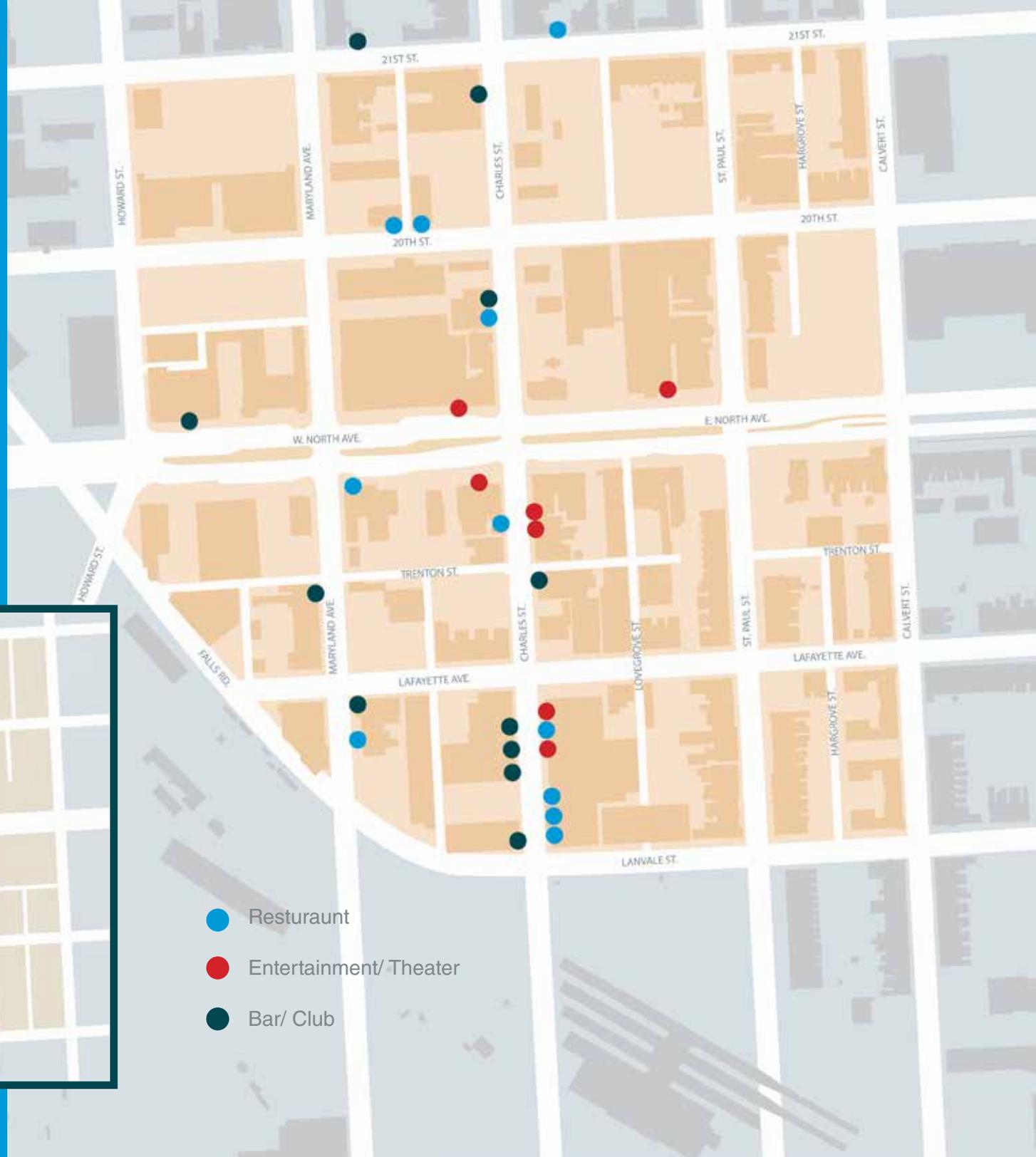
Successful public life is supported by a variety and concentration of destinations both day and night.



- Galleries
- Retail Shops
- Cafe/ Fast Food
- Auto Services
- Salons

Commercial (Nighttime)

Successful public life is supported by a variety and concentration of destinations both day and night.



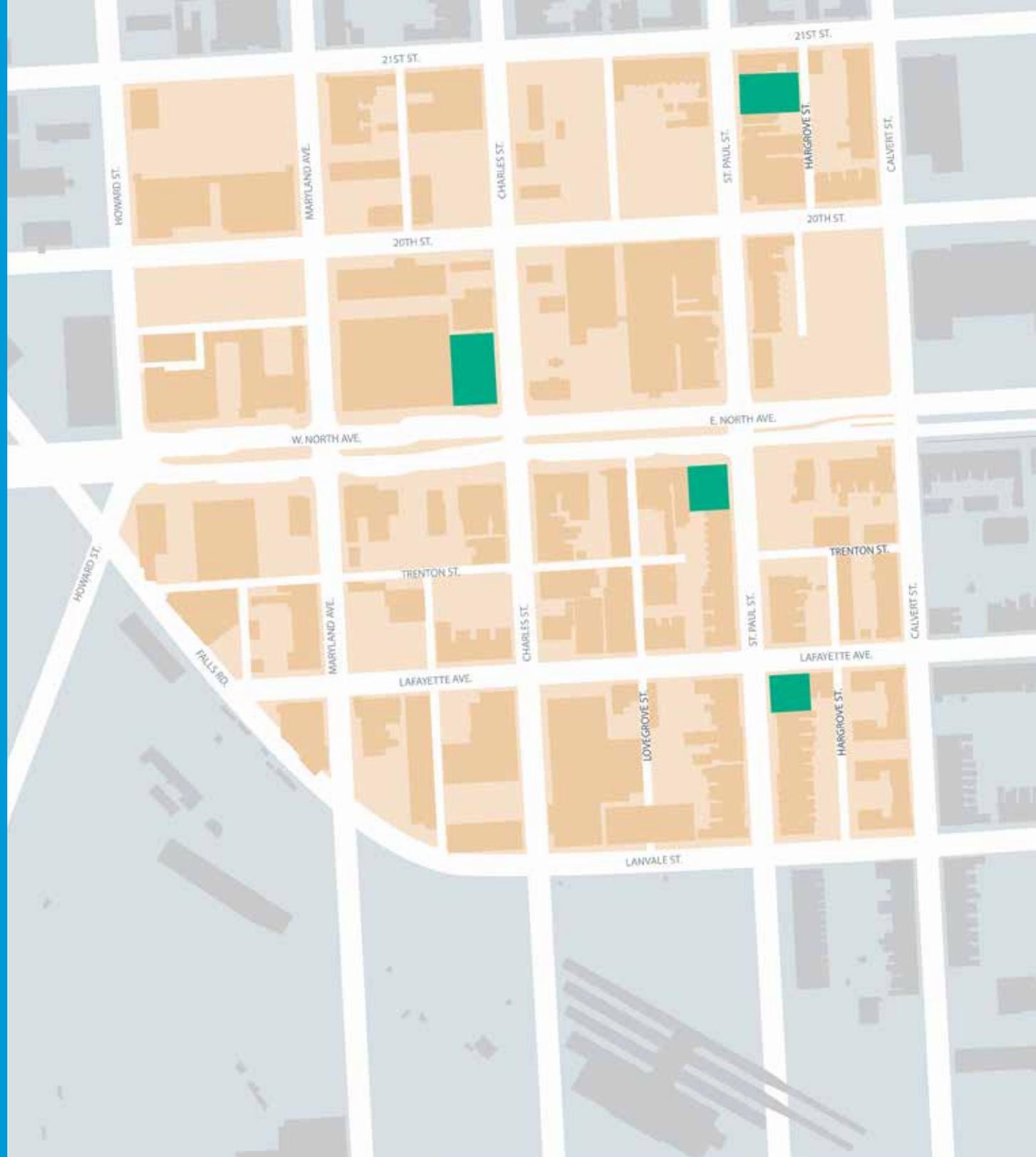
Off Street Parking

Surface parking doubly detracts from vitality in a city neighborhood; it reduces density, which leads to fewer people in the neighborhood, and also creates an unpleasant pedestrian experience.



Green Space

The study area has no formal city-owned parks. There are two urban farms and one performance space located on vacant lots, and one pocket park.



Constituent Feedback

The Neighborhood Design Center also gathered feedback from constituents who live and work within the boundaries to assess top priorities for improvement, document positive existing assets, and obstacles encountered in public space.

Business Owners

Small business owners expressed support for greening along North Avenue to create a buffer between loud traffic and pedestrians, more even sidewalks with safer crosswalks, and increased opportunities for creative engagement, such as string lighting from windows to street poles, bold signage, and colorful crosswalks.

Businesses interviewed: Milk and Honey, Made in Baltimore, Baltimore Print Studios, Pearson's Florist, Nancy Cafe, Joe Squared, Artist and Craftsman, Gerry Carryout, Red Thorn Tattoo, Sophie's Crepes.

Transit Users (four interviews)

Bus riders interviewed typically preferred more seating options, more shade via shelters or trees, less trash, bike racks, proximity to open businesses and buildings, and ample lighting. Waiting at bus stops without a shelter or functional seating, riders cited feeling exposed and unsafe, to the point of not wanting to use that bus stop at all due to how unwelcoming the environment feels. Cyclists appreciate the bike racks installed close to bus stops because it allows them to lock up their bike and relax while waiting for the bus. Unfortunately, they also expressed concern about using St. Paul's unprotected bike lane because the busy commuter route often brings bikes and buses in close proximity.



Vander Pearson, owner of Pearson's Florist since 1987, visualizes bold floral displays in front of his shop that would give him and other business owners the freedom to be creative with the changing seasons.

J. Van Story Residents (26 interviews)

Seniors at J. Van Story Branch Senior apartment identified their most common activities to be waiting for the bus and walking to nearby stores and services. The lack of shade renders waiting for the bus less comfortable, they observed trash accumulation, and cracked sidewalks, hindering their mobility when using wheelchairs and walkers. They prioritized suggestions to ameliorate these concerns/conditions including the increase of landscaping elements along major bus stop routes and lot areas adjacent to the apartment buildings where the senior residents gather. Other improvements emphasized were added public seating options, more consistent trash cans, and smoother sidewalks.

Charles North Residents (nine interviews)

Common activities for Charles North residents include commuting to and from work, with two responses for bicycle commutes. Additionally, 85% of the residents listed going out to restaurants, bars, and cafes in the neighborhood as a recurring pastime. However, residents reported feeling unsafe walking around due to the lack of good lighting. Broken glass, trash accumulation, and exposed dumpsters were also listed as giving rise to a feeling of desertion and unease. Specific areas with such attributes, according to the residents, include sidewalks along the bridges, Charles Street and Maryland Avenue above North Avenue, and 20th and 21st Street. Furthermore, traffic along North Avenue was consistently listed as a source of noise and congestion for pedestrians as well as bicyclists using the Maryland Avenue bike lane.

Regarding public space improvement in the neighborhood, responses included increased pedestrian-level lighting along sidewalks, greening, increased outdoor seating for businesses, and increased informal gathering spaces with a strong neighborhood identity as top priorities. Citing their active involvement in outdoor events such as Artscape, residents expressed encouragement for more special public events.

Maintenance Team (three interviews)

Similar to resident concerns, the Maintenance Team with Midtown Baltimore emphasized a need for more consistent trash cans, favoring the open-mouth design due to efficiency. They also noted the median bushes along North Avenue collect and obscure more trash than any other area in the district. Illegal dumping occurs along the alleys south of North Avenue, particularly Trenton St. behind businesses. Following is a list of recommendations:

- Place a trash can at each intersection, using the open-mouth metal trash cans.
- Require that small businesses maintain their dumpster and alley directly behind the property to avoid overflow and illegal dumping.
- Establish a system to clean and maintain public event space, such as the Y Not Lot, which collects heavy trash after weekend events.





Analysis and Recommendations

Recommendations

The Station North Public Space Plan recommends that we develop a hierarchy of connected public spaces and streetscapes that provide protection, comfort, and pleasure for people.

This can be implemented by building high quality base infrastructure and then layering over green, creative and business supporting features to leverage existing destinations, connect destinations, activate under programmed and underused spaces, and increase connectivity and activity.

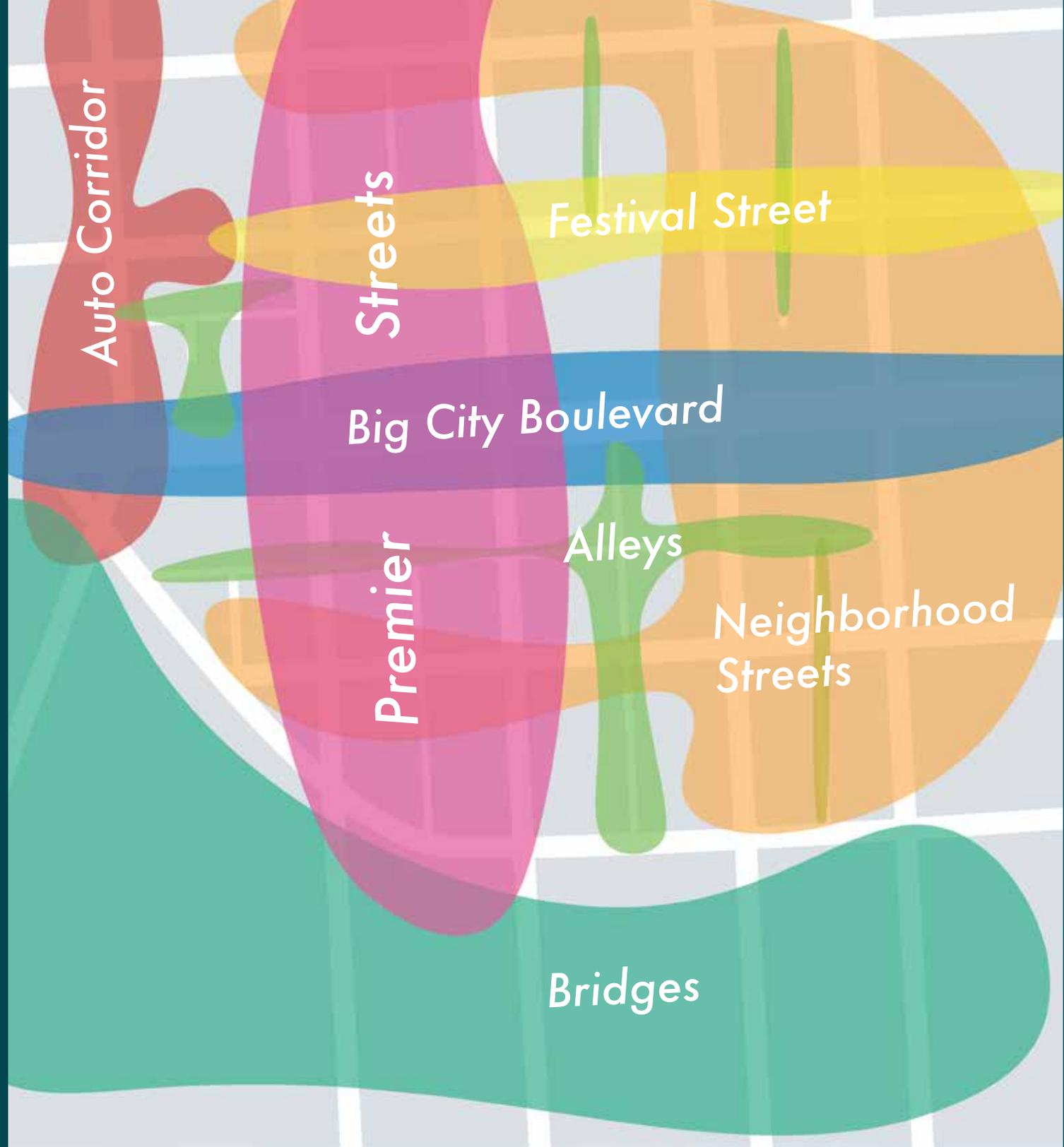
Hierarchy of Connected Public Space

The Station North Public Space Plan defines a hierarchy of streetscapes to create a network of user experiences in our community. As a commercial neighborhood at the very center of the city, investment will be necessary at multiple levels to create a high-functioning public realm: public, commercial, and individual investment. As an arts district, we also need creative expression across our public realm. The hierarchy creates a structure for guiding the type of investment we need and where it should be focussed, as well as what its' character should be.



Concept

This Public Space Plan defines a hierarchy of streetscapes to create a network of user experiences in our community.



Hierarchy Overview



Boulevard: North Avenue

North Avenue is the largest East-West street in Station North. A section of US-1, thousands of cars, trucks, and bus riders travel North Avenue each day.

Protection

Public, institutional, and key stakeholder investment for high functioning urban infrastructure (Completion of North Avenue Rising infrastructure and additional streetscaping through Central Baltimore) including high quality sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and green buffer along the roadway and at intersections. Transit stops with seating, shelters, and trashcans.

Comfort

Commercial and institutional investment for attractive consumer and pedestrian experience with storefronts, sidewalk markets, signage, and sidewalk seating.

Enjoyment

Permanent and temporary public art, lights, and programming via institutions, BOPA, MICA, Parkway, JHU, NEA, SNAE



Premier Streets: Charles Street and Maryland Avenue

Charles and Maryland Avenue are the main North-South commercial streets. These streets are home to many of the neighborhood's cultural and retail gems.

Protection

Public private partnership for high functioning urban infrastructure including high quality sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and green buffer along the roadway and at intersections.

Comfort



Developer and commercial investment for creative, commerce-oriented public space seating, plantings, signage, and shade.

Enjoyment

Artist commissioned window displays, greening, and movable street-furniture. Commerce supportive programming on vacant land and parking lots.

Neighborhood Streets: St. Paul, Lanvale, Lafayette, and 21st Streets

Our Neighborhood Streets are lined, primarily, by 19th century historic residential townhomes.

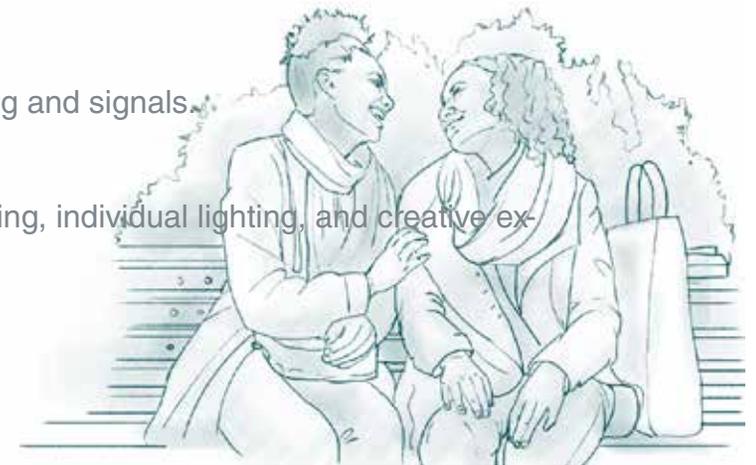


Protection

Public investment for bump outs, cross-walks, and pedestrian lighting and signals.

Comfort

Resident and small business investment for greening, movable seating, individual lighting, and creative expression.



Alleys: “Secret” art spaces and gardens

All District blocks are bisected by alleys



Protection

City and property owner investment in sound pavement.

Comfort

Resident and business investment in greening and lighting in the alleys

Enjoyment

Artist action in the alleys.

Festival Street: 20th Street



20th Street is now mostly lined by both vacant and functioning parking lots

Protection

Maximize pedestrian and bicycle usage and minimize travel lanes and lane widths.

Comfort

Build pop up public spaces on vacant land until redevelopment occurs.

Enjoyment

Create popup public space to host or support markets, performances, or festivals on 20th Street and adjacent vacant land until redevelopment occurs.

Historic Auto Corridor: Howard Street

Howard Street supports active, auto-oriented services.

Protection

Public investment to improve sidewalks, bus stops, street and pedestrian lighting, off peak parking, lane widths, and crosswalks to calm traffic and improve pedestrian experience.

Comfort

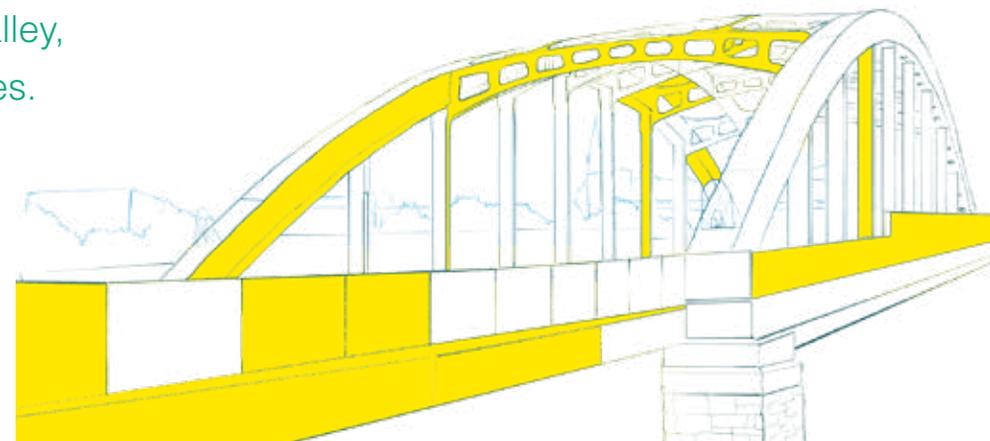
The block north and south of North Avenue should be an extension of the North Avenue Streetscape. Create a walkable suburban experience in the block between 20th and 21st Street.

Enjoyment

Business investment to create high quality pedestrian customer experience.

Bridges

The District is adjacent to the Jones Falls Valley, which is traversed by several notable bridges.



Big City Boulevard

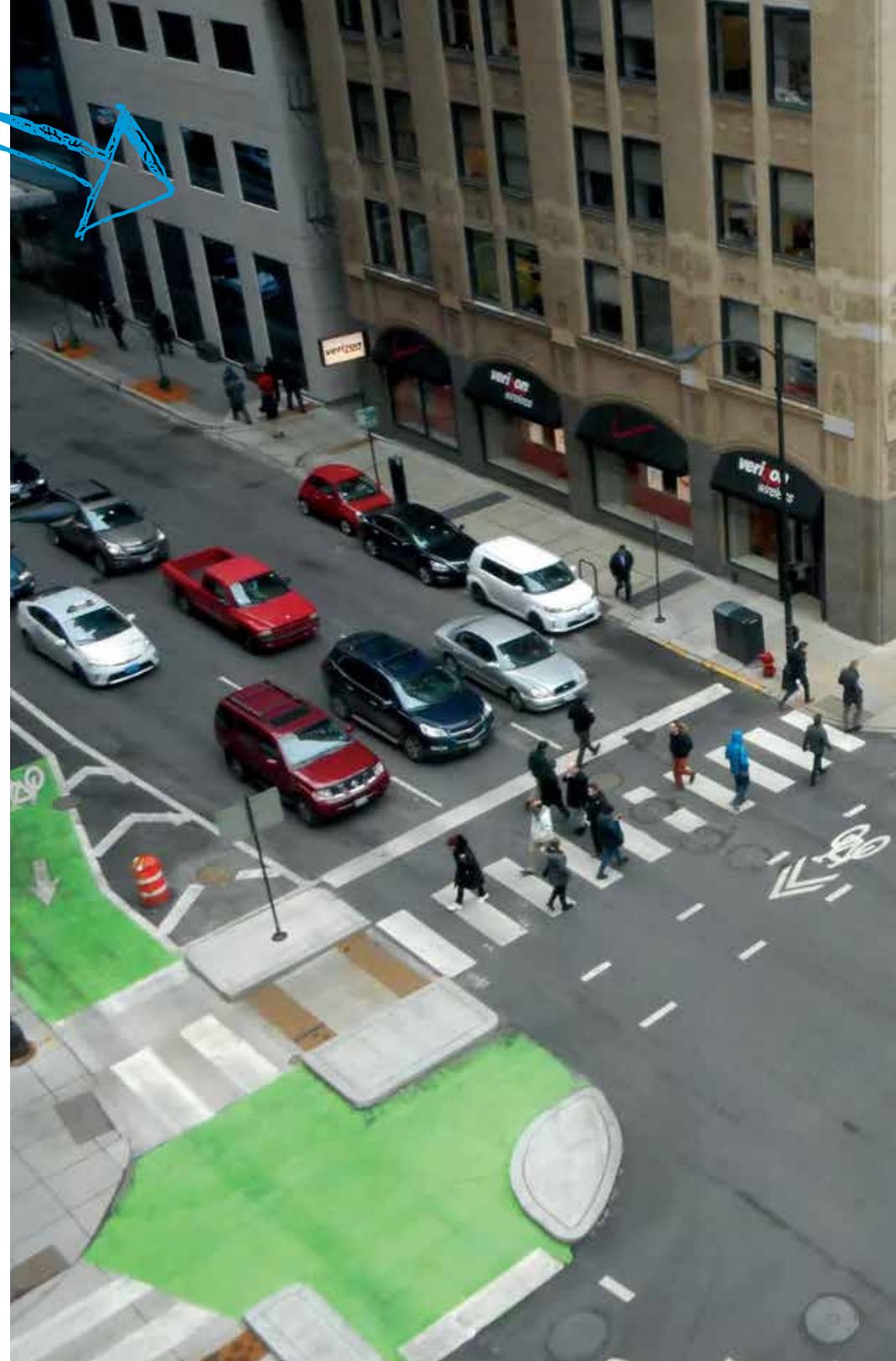
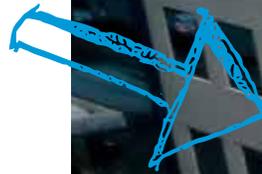
(North Avenue)

Assets

Thousands of people pass through the neighborhood on North Avenue every day in cars, trucks, and buses. Much of the most significant real estate investment to date is focused on North Avenue and the area's anchor institutions are located here. Commercial uses and anchors, including the Motor House, MICA, Johns Hopkins, Center for Neighborhoods, Impact Hub, and Parkway Theater are along North Avenue.

Challenges

Despite key real estate investments, vacancy rates in undeveloped building in Station North remain high along North Avenue as investors hold property for future development. The public infrastructure along North Avenue is also highly disinvested. North Avenue was historically a primary streetcar route and it suffers from both excessively wide street widths for high quality public space and wide, undefined sidewalks, creating poor conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Crossing distances are long, drivers are aggressive, pavement conditions are poor, and noise levels are high. Many of the pedestrians on the sidewalk are those with no other choice - transit users, people in the neighborhood for addiction services, students, and visitors hustling from their parked cars to their neighborhood destinations.



Actions

Increase Quality of City Infrastructure and Improve the Pedestrian, Transit, and Cycling Environment.

Protection

A good mobility experience is made of short wait times, high quality sidewalks, few stops, and complete accessibility.

- Accessibility for all should be a centerpiece of North Avenue's streetscape.
- Current signage is outdated and confusing. New signage – traffic, wayfinding, and branding – should be a key component of the infrastructure.

The vehicular traffic must be slowed because low traffic noise and emissions is necessary for vibrant street life.

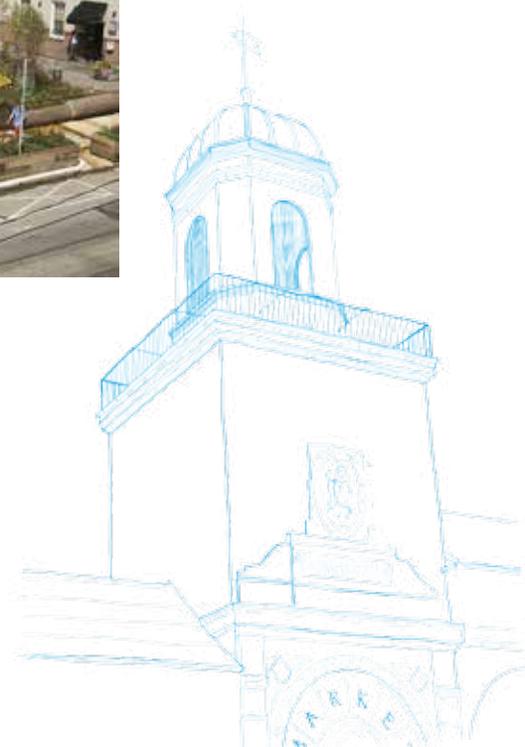
- Calm traffic so that North Avenue is a street where pedestrians, bicycles and public transport dominate the streetscape.
- Assure construction of dedicated bus lanes as the main element of the roadway through implementation of North Avenue Rising.

North Avenue's intersections limit pedestrian movement and restrict walking in Station North.

- The pedestrian route needs to take both the sidewalk and the crosswalk into account.
- The crossing distances are too long and don't equally prioritize pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle requirements.
- The crossing patterns are inconsistent and lead to aggressive interactions between pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.
- The pedestrian signals should be timed so that pedestrians have a reasonable time to cross and a minimum time to wait.

Comfort

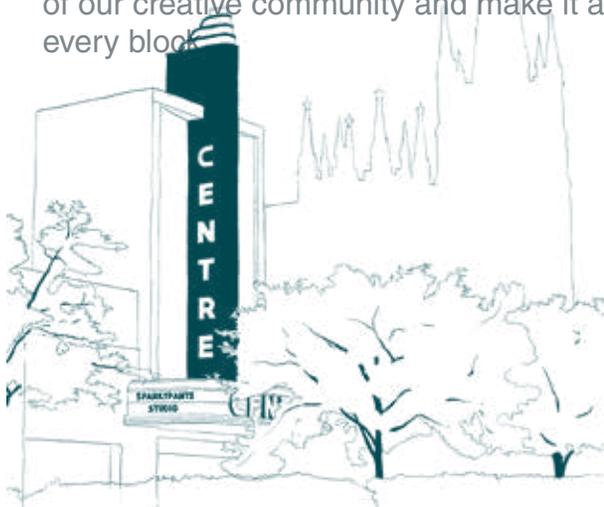
- Build the streetscape so that North Avenue is east-west the spine of pedestrian and public activity through Station North.



- Advocate for creative crosswalks are linked to high quality sidewalks and bike lanes to increase the pedestrian priority through the North Avenue Rising implementation.
- Foster reinvestment so that North Avenue is Station North's main drag with a wide variety of food, shopping, gallery, theater, and nightlife functions on offer.
- Invest in plantings in the median and on the sidewalk to keep things lush and cool.
- Advocate for high quality transit stops to support transit users in comfort through the North Avenue Rising construction.
- Advocate for a coordinated scheme of pedestrian lighting and street furniture to unify the space through the North Avenue Rising construction.

Enjoyment

- Invest in a branded, green, and locally creative identity and experience.
- Guide reinvestment so that North Avenue is a highly vital street with exciting ground floor frontages, views to attractive side streets, and cool small urban spaces.
- Create gateway features to mark the district's boundaries and provide a strong visual linkages with the rest of the city.
- Design and install branded features that you let you know you are in the arts district.
- Invest in, and create the City structures that allow, the work of our creative community and make it abundantly visible in every block.





Commercial Quality

Commercial streets must invite pedestrians. We need buildings that engage the street with articulated design, fenestration, and ability to sense a human presence. Ensure more active and transparent street frontages on for a friendly and inviting pedestrian environment at all times of the day.

Tactical Commerce

- Create commercial design guidelines for facades and signage and incentivize reaching those standards.
- Identify storefronts and adjacent street space that can host pop-ups, exhibits, performances, public art, or open spaces
- Use temporary ground floor activation to test strategies
- Maintain and enhance investment in small business and commercial activity that aligns with the Arts & Entertainment District's mission and values.
- Incentivize removal of storefront grates: Metal gates create dark and unpleasant streets with nothing to look at.
- Enforce development guidelines for successful integration between new developments and historic buildings.
- Develop a policy for minimum requirements regarding mixed use.
- Enforce development guidelines to ensure that ground floors of new buildings are designed to a human scale enhancing the pedestrian experience with detailed facades and open storefronts.

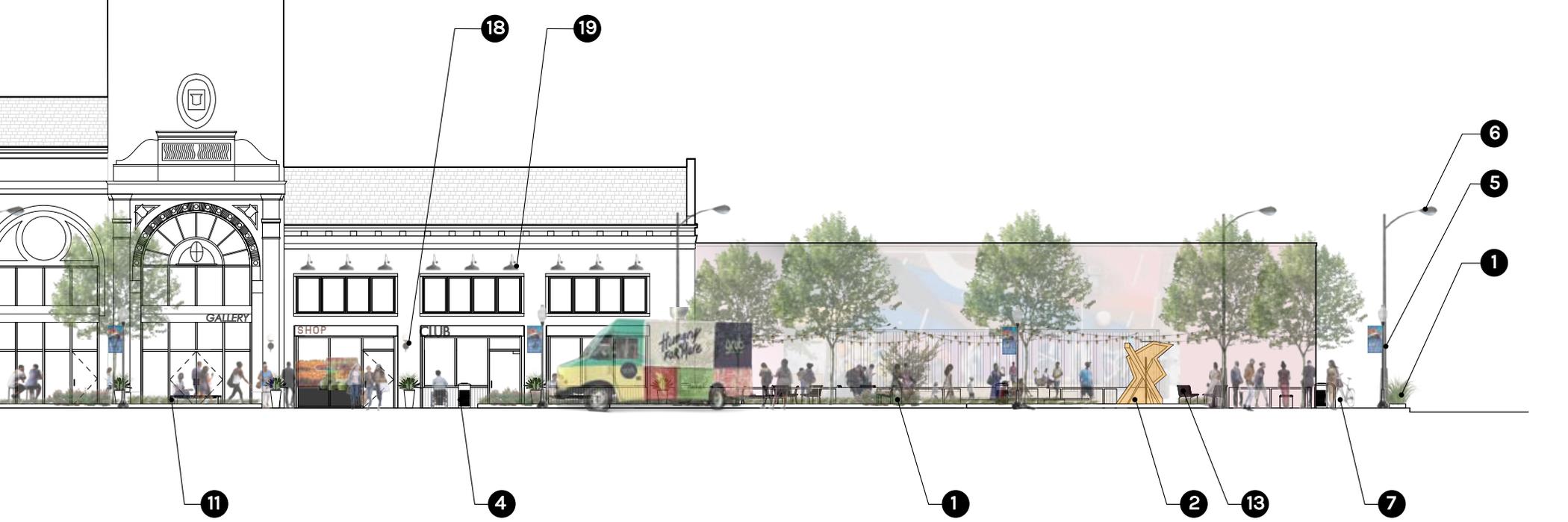
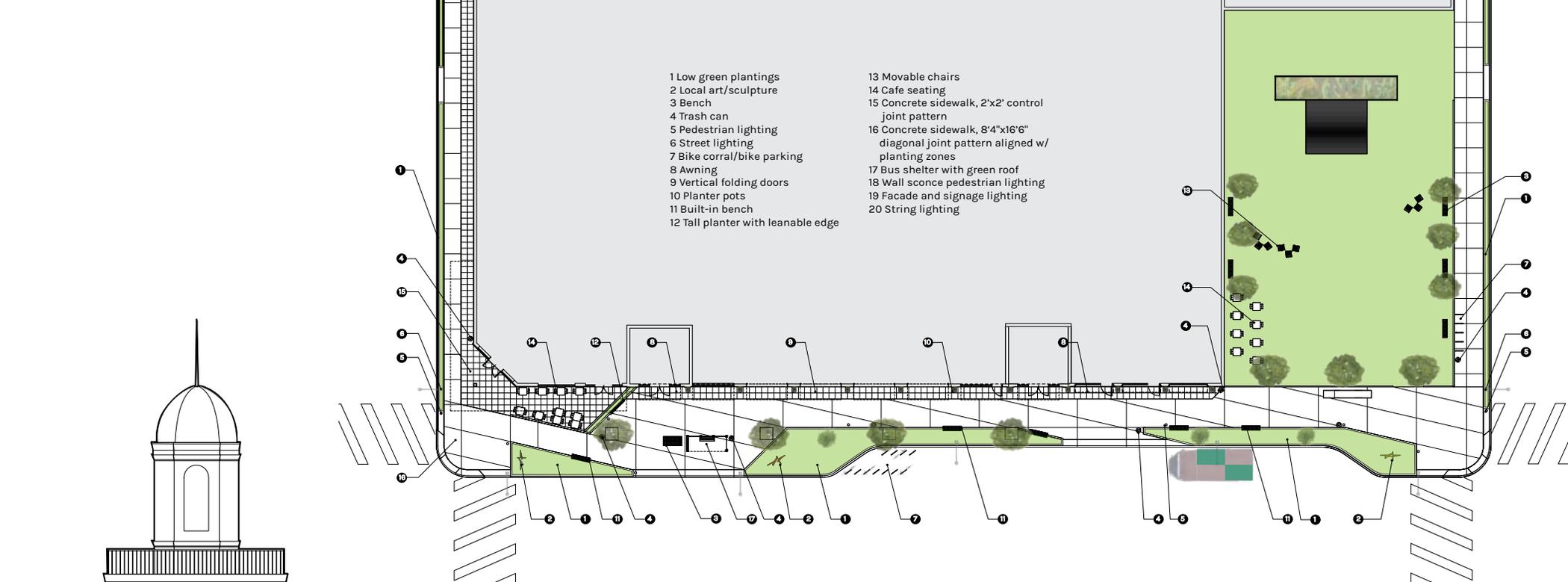
North Avenue Market

Public Space Improvements

This concept plan shows how one significant block in Station North can be transformed to support a robust public life and support business and creativity in the neighborhood.



- 1 Low green plantings
- 2 Local art/sculpture
- 3 Bench
- 4 Trash can
- 5 Pedestrian lighting
- 6 Street lighting
- 7 Bike corral/bike parking
- 8 Awning
- 9 Vertical folding doors
- 10 Planter pots
- 11 Built-in bench
- 12 Tall planter with leanable edge
- 13 Movable chairs
- 14 Cafe seating
- 15 Concrete sidewalk, 2'x2' control joint pattern
- 16 Concrete sidewalk, 8'4"x16'6" diagonal joint pattern aligned w/ planting zones
- 17 Bus shelter with green roof
- 18 Wall sconce pedestrian lighting
- 19 Facade and signage lighting
- 20 String lighting



Premier Streets

Charles Street and Maryland Avenue are the main north-south commercial streets in Station North.

Assets

Charles Street is Baltimore's most historic north-south Main Street, connecting from Federal Hill past the inner harbor, through Mt. Vernon to Penn Station and northward to Johns Hopkins University Homewood Campus, Loyola University and historic neighborhoods to the City line. It has beautiful architecture. It has good pedestrian scaled streets with sidewalks and scattered high quality restaurants, theaters, and shops.

Maryland Avenue includes a bicycle boulevard that is Baltimore's best and most used bike infrastructure. The sidewalks north of North Avenue are wide and could host many public space amenities including greening, public art, and outdoor seating. There are some fine restaurants and other good quality commerce along the way.

Challenges

Despite key real estate investments, vacancy rates remain high along Charles Street, and Maryland Avenue as investors hold property for future development. Parking lots, empty lots, and large vacant buildings create gaps that discourage walking through the neighborhood and between assets.



Actions

Protection

- Encourage redevelopment of vacant land and parking lots to create a continuous streetscape.
- Pedestrian lighting makes being out at night safer and more welcoming.
- In the evening, light shining out from shops, theaters, and restaurant windows increases real and perceived safety.
- Advocate for removal of minor privilege fees to encourage more cafe seating - more people on the sidewalk will result in more safety.



Comfort

Create a Fine Grained Pedestrian, Cycling, and Transit Network

- Greened buffers between the road and the walking path and attractive storefronts create a high quality experience.
- People need frequent places to rest and socialize if they are going to walk and cycle through the city.

Preserve and enhance the commercial character

- Protecting Station North's historic buildings and features should be a priority. This is a significant element of the neighborhood's special character and a meaningful context for new development.
- New construction should be mixed use, with open commercial facades on the ground floor. Parking should be integral or behind new buildings.

Let land use drive public space investment

- Increase the number of residences in Station North so that there are many people living in Station North.
- Land uses surrounding a public space largely affects the flow and volumes of people in the area and therefore public space usage.



- Invest first in spaces that have destination/amenity oriented uses nearby. Encourage investment in more places for people to live, work, and play for higher volumes of people and ensure that new development includes the public realm so that public spaces get built as new people join the area.
- Provide places to sit outside adjacent to food destinations and buildings with weekday workers.
- Provide green spaces and play spaces adjacent to residential places.
- Provide places to sit adjacent to transit.
- Provide plazas and parklets near places with large numbers of users like theaters, nightclubs, and transit stations.
- Eliminate unneeded curb cuts and under-utilized off-street parking and long term auto storage.



Enjoyment

- Invest in a branded, green, and locally creative identity and experience.
- Guide reinvestment so that North Avenue is a highly vital street with exciting ground floor frontages, views to attractive side streets, and cool small urban spaces.
- Create gateway features to mark the district's boundaries and provide a strong visual linkages with the rest of the city.
- Design and install branded features that you let you know you are the arts district.
- Invest in, and create the City structures that allow, the work of our creative community and make it abundantly visible in every block.



Neighborhood Streets

(St Paul, Lafayette, Lanvale, 21st)



Assets

St Paul Street is an attractive rowhouse street with little vacancy and well preserved architecture. Lafayette, Lanvale, and 21st Streets are all quiet east-west streets with low traffic volumes and have high potential as walking environments.

Challenges

One-way traffic on St. Paul Street and Charles Street causes high auto speeds and encourages commuter traffic through the neighborhood. A concentration of under-utilized parking lots are located along the east west streets, decreasing a sense of safety for pedestrians, while providing little enjoyment and increasing heat island in the neighborhoods.



Actions

Create visually rich walking routes. A person walks about 3 mph and needs 1 stimuli every 4 seconds or 8-10 entrances per block to view an environment as high quality. (Gehl)

Protection

Invite more walking between neighborhood amenities

- Convert one way streets to two-way wherever feasible.
- Add angled parking wherever feasible.
- Assure even paving.
- Activate underused space between the buildings, connecting to and from destinations and arrival points.
- Delineate pedestrian space with safe crossings and clearly marked wayfinding devices.



Comfort

Incentivize homeowners and landlords to invest in greening and places to sit in the sidewalk space to make friendly residential streets.

- Create places to sit.
- Respond to the microclimate by adding shade and greenery.



Enjoyment

Work with the City to create processes that give permission for expression.

- Host block activities along the pedestrian lines.
- Add short term and guerrilla art, craft, greening, and light.



An aerial photograph of a public square or park area. The scene is filled with people walking, some pushing strollers. There are several trees and green spaces. In the center, there are wooden structures that look like temporary displays or art installations. To the left, there are blue and yellow umbrellas, possibly for a food stand. The overall atmosphere is lively and community-oriented.

Infrastructure Recommendations

Transportation

Why does public and active transportation matter?

A high quality transportation network will support Station North as a human scale neighborhood. In order to accomplish this we must ensure that Station North has the city's most diverse and well integrated traffic system with calmed traffic and pedestrian and cycle priority. A robust public space network incorporates a transportation system that prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists and creates high quality spaces for active transportation. It provides excellent sensory experiences for those out in public and a sense of safety. It provides places to spend time in public, both programmed and spontaneous, on the sidewalk and in green spaces and plazas. These spaces are designed to support connectivity to the City at large, to surrounding neighborhoods, and to places within the neighborhood. It connects people living, working, and socializing in the neighborhood with opportunities to spend time out, adjacent to their primary location.

Currently, traffic volumes and speeds on North Avenue are a real impediment to creating a high quality pedestrian experience in this corridor. North Avenue Rising has the potential to improve this condition. If North Avenue Rising does not improve conditions, stakeholders may need to advocate for removing truck traffic from North Avenue, adding speed cameras, and further improving crossings for pedestrians with reduced crossing distances and enhanced crossing signals.

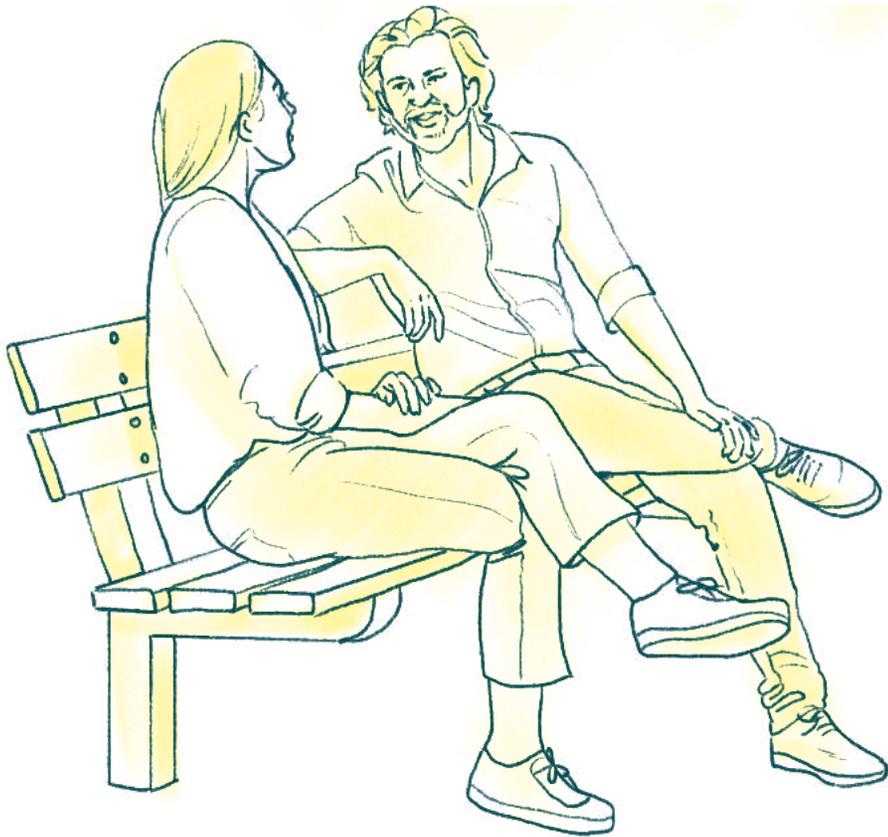


To overcome this, we should partner with the Mayor's Office and DOT to allow for prototyping opportunities for increased community action in the public realm including creative crosswalks and bumpouts, public art, shop and restaurant signage, and lighting.

Pedestrian Network

Station North's sidewalks are often empty day and night, and those present are people that have to be there for transportation, work or school, or medical services.

- Acknowledge and design for pedestrian behavior
- Shorten crossings at the intersections
- Install high visibility and creative crosswalks
- Reduce vehicle turning speeds with curb extensions
- Green the streets
- Install pedestrian signals and increase signal time
- Add street seating



Protection

- Decrease the interruptions to the pedestrian path by continuing the walkway through intersections with creative crosswalks and ADA ramps.
- Eliminate unnecessary curb cuts.
- Light the sidewalks, public spaces, public art, trees, and special buildings.



Comfort

- Build a high quality and attractive pedestrian network within the neighborhood that links to the surrounding city. Assure that walking from surrounding neighborhoods is a pleasure.
- Assure that the network prioritizes the free movement of pedestrians and those with mobility challenges.
- Add wayfinding elements and branded signs to make the city more legible.
- Make two special walking environments along Charles Street linking Penn Station to Johns Hopkins University through Station North and along North Avenue to MICA.



Enjoyment

- Build high quality visual experiences and activities along the way.
- Make sure it's lovely to be walking both day and night.
- Add a variety of seating options along the edge for socializing and people watching.
- Ensure that the buildings have a human scale with interesting, detailed, and open facades.
- Celebrate historic architecture with lighting.
- Celebrate culture with stories and art by and of our people.



Bicycle Network

Station North has significant existing bike infrastructure with the Maryland Avenue Cycle Track, the Guilford Avenue bike lane and bike facilities on Lanvale Street.

- Build protected bike lanes that designate space for cyclists and protect against dooring and vehicular traffic
- Extend bike lanes through intersections
- Engage women and children in cycling through schools, community organizations, and bike groups



Protection

- Maintain flex posts on Maryland Cycle Track.
- Partner with local cycling groups (Bikemore, BYKE, BBW) to create a strategy to increase safety from attacks on Guilford Avenue.
- Continue cycle tracks and bike paths through intersections.
- Install dedicated cycle lights to support safe crossings.
- Host an info campaign along Maryland Avenue for Motorist Awareness.

Comfort

- Complete recommendations of the Baltimore Bicycle Plan by adding a minor bike route on Calvert Street and implementing North Avenue Rising with Bus / Bike lanes through most of the area on North Avenue and 20th Street (pictured below).

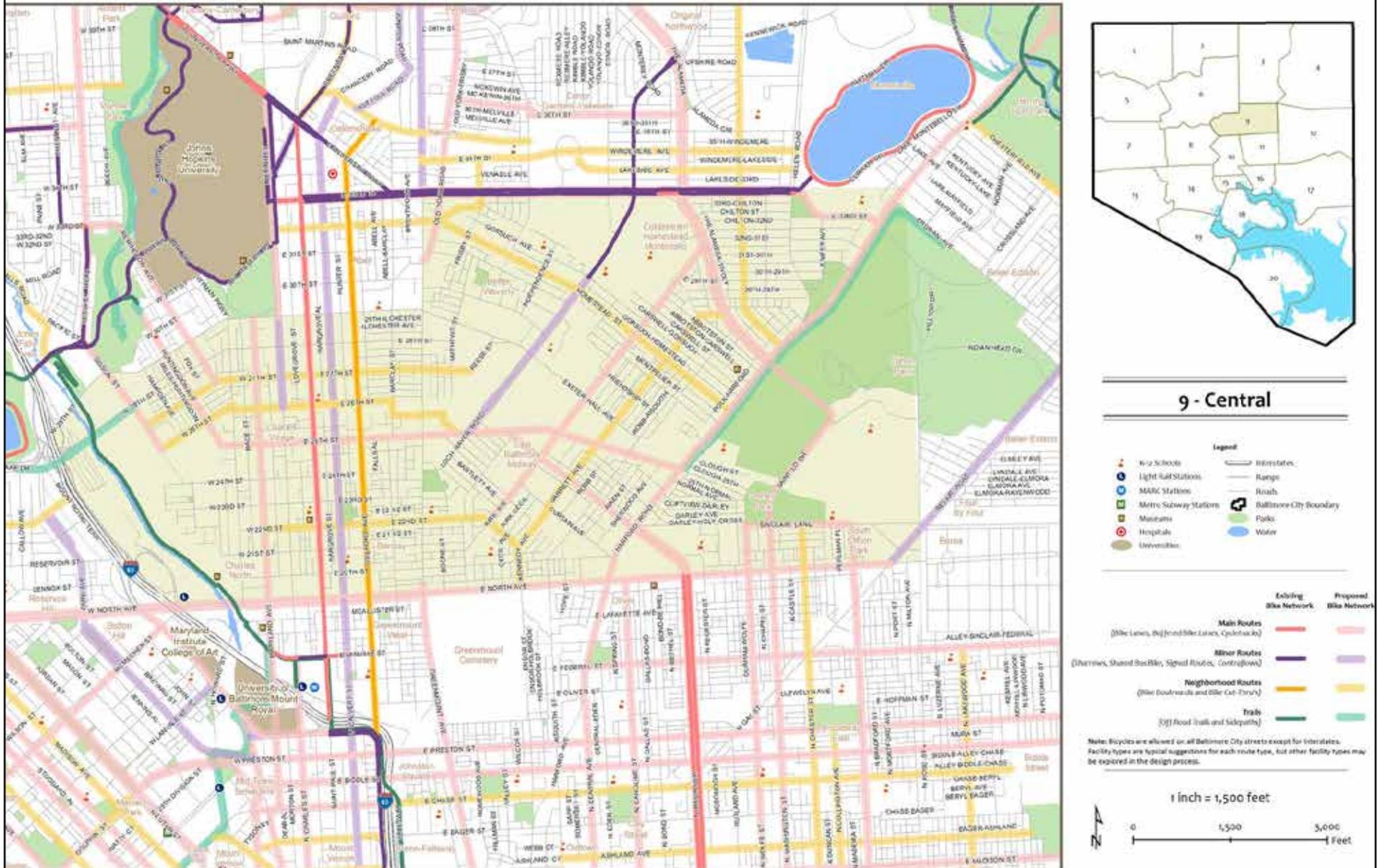


- Build high quality, convenient bike parking.
- Create three standard bike parking solutions and deploy them across the neighborhood:
 - Long bike rack on commercial blocks with wide sidewalks
 - Bike corral in a parking spot on commercial blocks with narrow sidewalks
 - Small bike rack for residential blocks and in front of scattered commercial sites

Enjoyment

- Program 4-6 second lead on bike signals
- Add Maryland Avenue lights timed for cycles
- Introduce Maryland Avenue “Cyclovias” - close the street on some Sundays to give the street to cyclists, pedestrians, and other mobility modes with learn to bike opportunities.

IV. PROPOSED BICYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITY TYPES



A map from the Baltimore Bicycle Master Plan.

Greening

There are no large parks in our area. Therefore, small parks are very important public spaces in Station North. Green spaces improve the quality of public life by giving staying opportunities. They give a feeling of repose and escape from the hustle. Even very small spaces create micro-climates and opportunities for socializing. Every gap in our streetscape is an opportunity for greening, from vacant lots, to the spaces between rowhouse stoops, to the spot next to entry doors. These spaces ensure that we counterbalance the absence of a big park in our neighborhood and give every resident the health benefits of nature in their daily life. The connection to the Jones Falls Valley as Falls Road terminates at Lanvale and Lafayette Streets should be leveraged, connecting visitors down to the valley and drawing the green and blue up onto connecting streets. Alleys, especially in the residential blocks, can be greened to provide more community space and cool the blocks in a neighborhood with very few formal green spaces.



Green Sidewalks

- Green the sidewalks and vacant land linking the commercial assets, transit, and public spaces. Baltimore Tree Trust, Tree Baltimore and Neighborhood Design Center partnered over the past year to plant trees across Central Baltimore with Spruce Up funding through Central Baltimore Partnership.
- Plant the tree pits and undertake block projects for planters. Encourage green block project applications for Spruce Up funding to fill the zones between stoops and tree pits with planters and garden beds.
- Add green stormwater management to the blocks along Maryland Avenue with wide sidewalks.



Green-Blue Connection to the Jones Falls

- Improve connections and quality of walking and biking experience at the connection between Station North and Falls Road to promote pedestrian and cyclist access and cross experience between the two areas.
- Celebrate the Jones Falls by upgrading the surrounding streets and connections.
- Improve links between the neighborhood and the water visually.
- Bring a water theme into the adjacent blocks to begin the connection.
- Support the activities of the Friends of the Jones Falls to bring recreation, art, venues, and stormwater features to the Valley.

Green Lots

Celebrate our small greenspaces and lavish them with maintenance and TLC. Work with property owners to convert more unused parking lots to temporary greenspaces until development occurs.



Green Alleys

(Throughout District)

Our alleys receive very little vehicle traffic, thus, they are perfect places for inserting rainwater catchment and vegetation. With greening (and lighting and murals and graffiti), our alleys can be great walking routes, good social spaces, and clean air environments. Station North's quiet alleys can be uplifted to support pedestrian movement through the neighborhood enhancing the neighborhood's mixed use character.

Assets

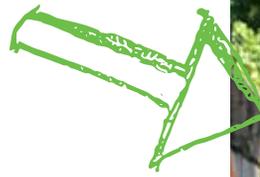
As demonstrated at Graffiti Alley, alleys can be remarkable intimate places for people that support exciting public life and vitality. Greening, lighting, and public art in our alleys can increase pedestrian, resident, and consumer experience in Station North while inviting a range of popular uses. These can be spaces of experimentation, surprise, and host art and design at a more intimate scale in our neighborhood.

Challenges

Baltimoreans have a perception that alleys are purely service spaces for garbage collection and driving into rear yards. They can attract trash and dumping and are not often well lit.

Actions

Station North would be a great neighborhood to pilot an alley program that supports lighting and art in the commercial blocks, and greening in the residential blocks.



Programming, Identity, and Art

Public Art and Architecture

The Arts District Status of Station North, and the creative people, places, and activities in the neighborhood are significant advantages. The variety of scales of our architecture and engineering in the neighborhood with the Jones Falls Valley, the bridges, and billboards on top of buildings, gives us an enormous opportunity for highlighting and embellishing our remarkable features.

Station North has the best murals in the city. This asset should be increased, lit, and complemented with green spaces and three dimensional art to create full dynamic contexts for the pieces and create a walking gallery experience for visitors and residents alike.

A strategy and hierarchy of experience is important for creating a network of public space. Artist-driven solutions should be created for specific sites where the places contribute to a sense that the public space of the neighborhood is greater than the sum of its parts. A general theme of celebrating light, surface, and volume plays well with the theaters, murals, bridges, and mix of historic buildings and open lots. Music, performance, and parades can enliven the setting.

Connect and Program Public Space

Station North can enhance most every aspect of the public realm with creative expression.

- District and Gateway Branding via public art.
- Station North is a premier arts district and has the city's best murals, street art, and film theaters.

- The arts and entertainment brand should be palpable in every block with extraordinary experiences and public art present every step of the way.
- Experiences should be permanent and temporary, change with the seasons, and create unique atmospheres in the day and night.
- Local and international artists are shown in Station North and care should be taken to balance visibility for our local talent and placing them in an international context that draws visitors from all over the world.
- Continue to support our high quality public art culture through creation of custom public art works.

Creatively Enhance Public Space



Arts District brand should be a designed component of the streetscape and public space, including artistic wayfinding and benches, trashcans, lighting fixtures, banners, trashcans, and planters that are proprietary to the district.

Safety

Enhance the baseline amenities for necessary activities - the activities that happen regardless of the quality of the public space: go to school, go to work, wait for the bus, shop etc. These supports for everyday activities improve our wellbeing and can each contribute to the character of the neighborhood. Good design can create extraordinary experiences while providing:

- Protection from the elements - bus shelters, benches, tree canopy, awnings.
- High quality sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks with adjacent bike parking and transit stops.
- Pedestrian lighting.
- Easy to use wayfinding signage - use branded elements to connect amenities within the neighborhood and wayfinding to let visitors know what is nearby.

Comfort

Create places for people in the public space in Station North so that people who are here have a reason to be out. Color, surprise, play, design can also enhance the amenities that give things for people to choose to do:

- Movable seating.
- Shady spots and sunny spots depending on the weather with umbrellas and shade structures.
- Open storefronts and cafe seating
- Pocket parks that support recreational, performance, and play spaces.
- Good access to the Jones Falls to support larger scale recreation, performance, and play

Enjoyment



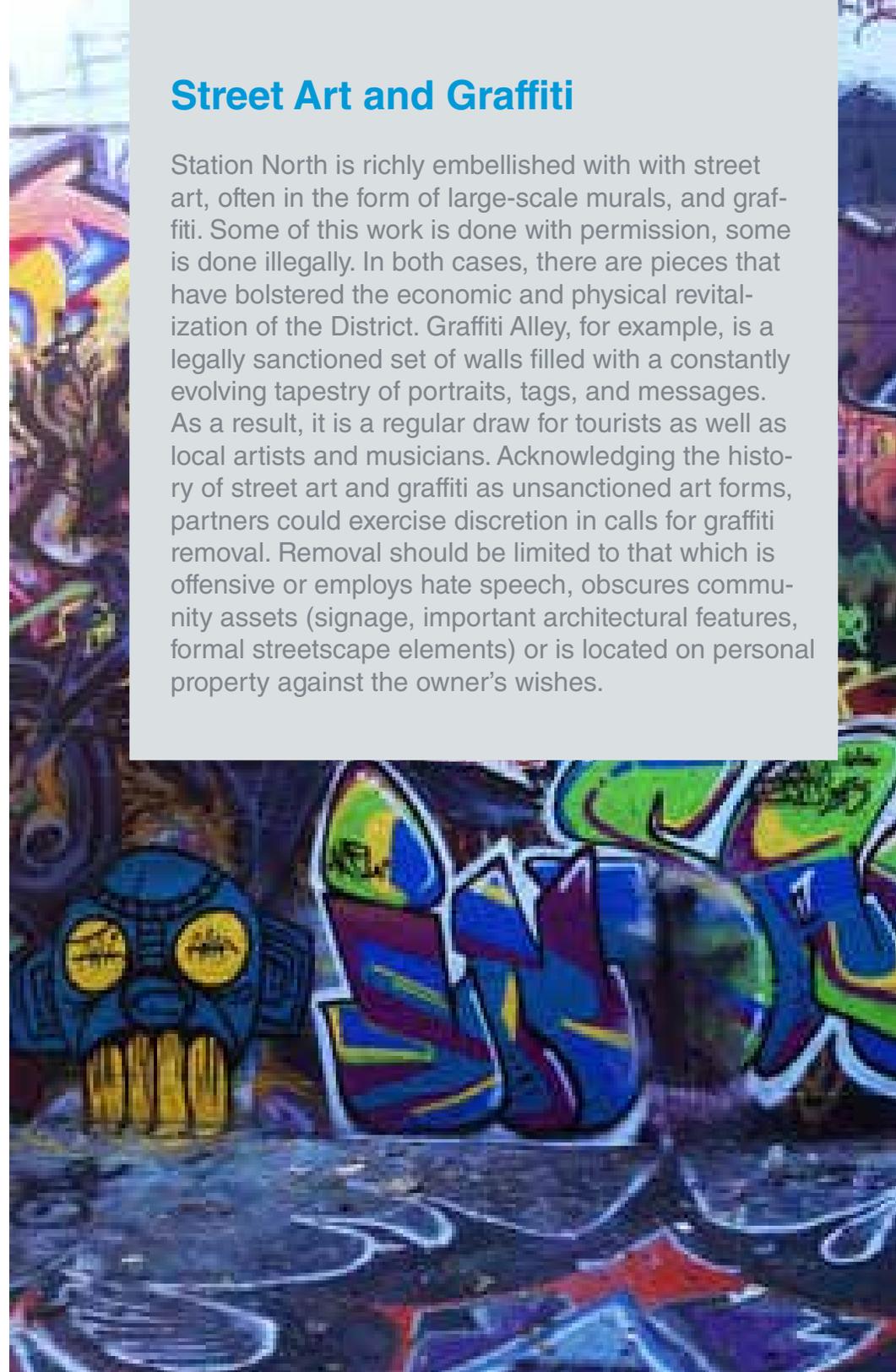
Layer over creative expression, identity, and overlapping programming so that there are options at all times that keep people engaged and create vivid experiences. Every event attracts a number of coincidental passers-by who are tempted to stay longer than planned because of the event. The public spaces needed for the planned activities are spaces that can also be designed for flexible and impromptu uses, such as:

- Markets
- Food festivals
- Bike parties
- Dance lessons
- Art exhibitions
- Film festivals
- Political demonstrations
- Fun runs
- Parades
- Maker events

Station North has public spaces with potential, but has a lack of public space identity.

Street Art and Graffiti

Station North is richly embellished with with street art, often in the form of large-scale murals, and graffiti. Some of this work is done with permission, some is done illegally. In both cases, there are pieces that have bolstered the economic and physical revitalization of the District. Graffiti Alley, for example, is a legally sanctioned set of walls filled with a constantly evolving tapestry of portraits, tags, and messages. As a result, it is a regular draw for tourists as well as local artists and musicians. Acknowledging the history of street art and graffiti as unsanctioned art forms, partners could exercise discretion in calls for graffiti removal. Removal should be limited to that which is offensive or employs hate speech, obscures community assets (signage, important architectural features, formal streetscape elements) or is located on personal property against the owner's wishes.



Actions

Develop streetscaping and open spaces that reinforce the neighborhood identity and enhance the experiences of our user groups throughout the year. A public space hierarchy with different kinds of public spaces to accommodate various activities and create a diverse and safe city alive 24 hours a day. Invite all ages and user groups and encourage more visitors.

- District creativity should be visible as retail, programming, and events in the public realm.
- Partner with neighboring amenities to create walkable events.
- Share the stories and work of artists living and working in Station North.
- Highlight the history of our architecture.
- Activate the edges of streets, sidewalks, and buildings, vacant lots, blank walls, and parking lots with art and greenery.
- Add small functions like kiosks, market stalls, and food trucks to corners, vacant lots, and parking spots at destinations.
- Add little experiences in the sidewalk with greening, lighting, signage, art, and shop, cafe, club, and restaurant windows.
- How can the cultural offerings in Station North become more visible and active in public space
- Create public spaces adjacent to art assets to invite people to linger in Station North.
- Develop lighting designs to emphasize landmarks and enhance public art and streetscapes.
- Add programs and activities to the public realm to invite a broader user group.
- Install artistic, playful elements that share the culture, history, and activities of Station North.
- Add outdoor elements related to existing programs and staying places at major destinations.
- Activate our existing greenspaces, vacant lots, and underutilized parking lots

- Add recreation, play, and entertainment in our vacant lots, sidewalks, and the Jones Falls.
- Add moveable seating to the YNOT Lot.
- Activate existing small and large public spaces by adding playful elements, seating, green, and pop up functions.
- Plan for pop up green, festival spaces, market, and recreation and green spaces on vacant lots.
- Invest to leverage existing indoor programs and functions for public space activity to enhance the area's identity as an Arts & Entertainment District.
- Use cultural programming as an activating, connecting layer.
- Activate spaces near cultural institutions with playful, interactive, and artistic elements that invite use every day and during events.

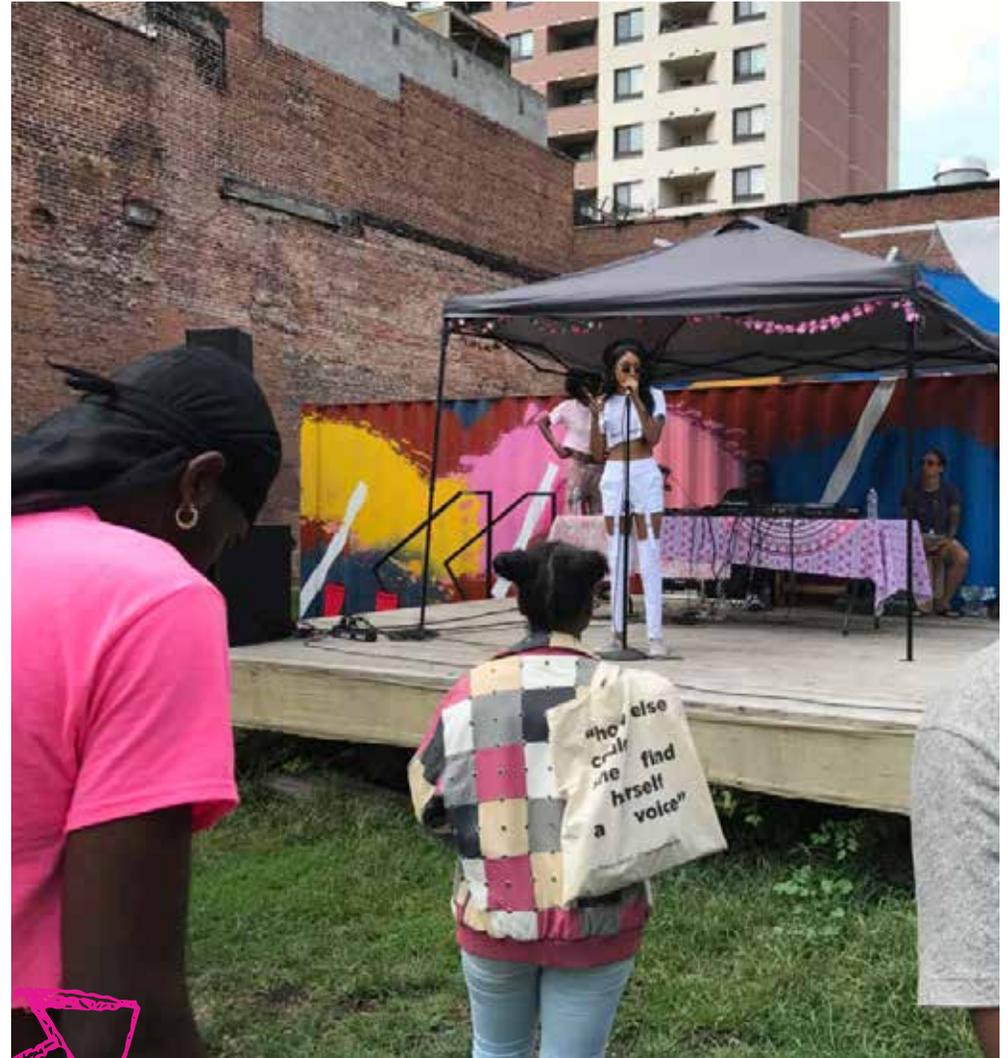


Healthy, Inclusive Public Space in Station North

This public space plan is intended to support people with a wide range of identities in our public space. Station North serves an incredible variety of people, including artists, office workers, patrons of the arts, seniors, members of the city's LGBTQ+ community, bus commuters, truck delivery people, those suffering from addiction, and tech workers. It is critical to understand that people with identities outside the dominant culture and race are often restricted or policed in public. Our spaces must intentionally welcome people and support health and inclusivity.

In 2017, the Gehl Institute granted the Neighborhood Design Center funding to study the impact of programming at the YNOT Lot. The findings of the study at that site have broad implications for supporting no cost programming and access to public space in the neighborhood.

The study found that the YNOT Lot counters a common gentrification narrative - it is a space that showcases the black. creative community. It is a space of solidarity more than space of social mixing. Events at the YNOT Lot have a positive social impact: People recognize each other more at the YNOT lot events. Events attract more women + gender diversity. Events at YNOT Lot are very "sticky" – they attract people to stay for a long time. These findings suggest that offering no cost programming in the public realm in Station North can go a long way to building inclusive culture and positive image in the neighborhood. Programming can also assure that those often excluded from public are supported and showcased.



Event Calendar

Annual events in the District



May

Maryland Film Festival
Station North Flea Market



June

GLCCB Pride Festival



March

Asia North Festival



July

Artscape
Baltimore Improv Festival

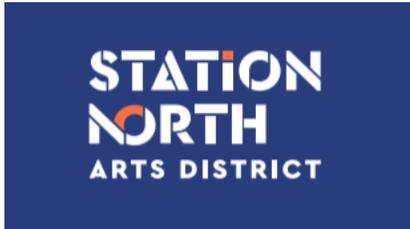


September

Baltimore Japan Arts Festival

Station North Branding

The Station North Arts District Inc. seeks to carryout three placemaking enhancements that will contribute towards the public realm with special attention towards streetscape and pedestrian experience.



The first would comprise of the design, installation, and maintenance of street pole banners in the district. The second enhancement would go towards streetscaping, but more specifically towards tree grates simultaneously with the enhancement of banner signage. The third enhancement would comprise of the physical refresh of YNOT Lot's anchor components.

Due to the concentration of activity within community and grassroots spaces, better visibility using signage will help visitors navigate all the attributes the district has to offer. The outcomes include increased usage of the YNOT Lot through events, and subsequently, increased visitor participation and programming initiated by community members. This, in turn, would flourish support for nearby restaurants, retailers and arts venues, accomplishing the goal of enhancing the vitality of the business district. Ultimately, heightened district identity and activity will distinguish the arts district as a special place to live, work and visit.

Signal Station North

The Neighborhood Design Center, along with the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts, Station North Arts District, Central Baltimore Partnership, Maryland Institute College of Art, and Flux Studios will partner with residents of central Baltimore and a team of local artists and designers on a comprehensive district lighting plan and public space engagement initiative. Drawing from North Avenue's neon-lined past and Baltimore's distinctive legacy of DIY culture and grassroots light activations—from the "crankie" hand-cranked paper movies, to lantern parades, to the Light City festival—the project will generate (1) a practical & artistic lighting plan for the arts district; (2) prototyping of practical, artistic, and DIY lighting; (3) DIY lighting workshops and interventions to illuminate neighborhoods across the city; and (4) a series of guides to share tools for lighting activation broadly. (July 2019-June 2020)





Implementation

Public Space Network

The Stakeholder Group is determined that we need to create a high quality public space network in Station North. This network will ensure that our neighborhood is competitive amongst our peers on a national level. It will strengthen all of our brands and build on public-private partnerships and business networks to strengthen our culture. This network will support health and well-being for the people that spend time in our community.

Qualities of our public space network

- Connects all the public spaces in an attractive and inviting way.
- Attracts a broad range of activities.
- Provides activities and spaces that invite a wide range of interests and all age groups.
- Attracts people who are already here to be out and invites others to our neighborhoods.
- Focuses on pedestrians and bicyclists because they are the people keeping the public spaces lively.
- Is as active as possible throughout day and night and across the seasons to improve perceptions of safety.



Photo Courtesy Gehl Institute

Hierarchy of Public Spaces

We can create a successful network through an inviting hierarchy of public spaces.

1

City Scale (Anchors + City)

Station North is a connector space between city-wide attractions. The Inner Harbor, Mount Vernon Place, Penn Station, the BMA and Johns Hopkins University are the focal points in the network, and the network through our community must ensure good connection between them.



2

Neighborhood Scale (Community Orgs+ Developers)

This type of public space is much more flexible than spaces at the city scale. Our neighborhood spaces should vary in activities and identity and be close to each other since they invite to different activities, but should contribute to a sense of connectedness, identity, and live-



3

Block Scale (Residents + Businesses)

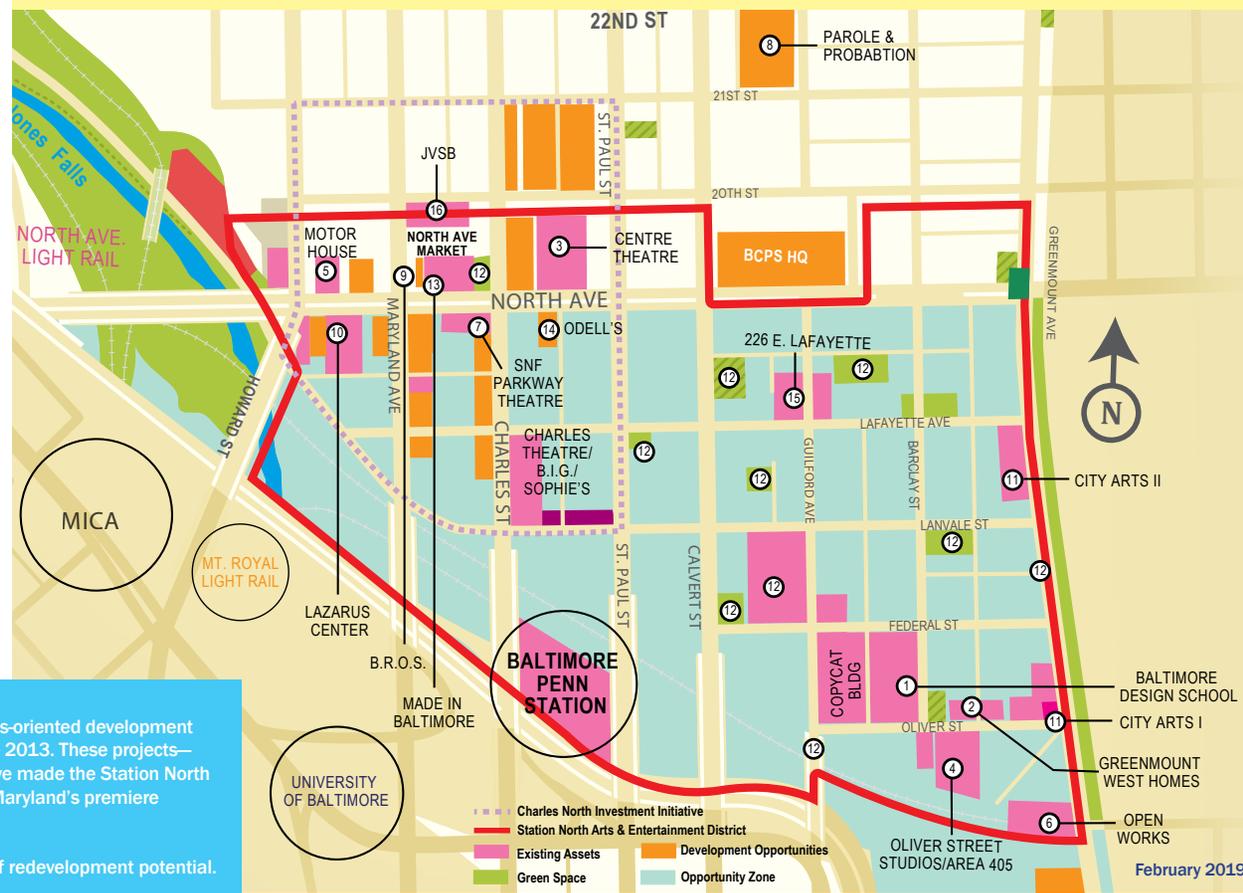
These are the places where people can either stop for a short rest or spend a whole afternoon. This can be a small corner, a side yard, a shop front, or a sidewalk section. We should have them in every block.



Leveraging Assets

We can start by leveraging what we've got.

- Map our bright spots and fill in the activity gaps.
- Conduct surveys to determine what's working and bring those experiences to more places.
- People like people, so we should amp up the places that are working.
- Make our streets places to stay - at bus stops and in front of key destinations.
- Calm traffic by extending curbs, converting one way streets, adding protected bike and bus lanes, greening the streets, and maximizing on street parking with off peak and angled parking.
- Take over under-used street space and vacant land for pedestrians, parklets, and programming.



ARTS INVESTMENTS & OPPORTUNITIES IN CENTRAL BALTIMORE

Central Baltimore leads the way in arts-oriented development with \$163M in total investment since 2013. These projects—most completed, some underway—have made the Station North Arts & Entertainment District one of Maryland's premiere cultural destinations.

Over 39 properties - 400,000-sq. ft. of redevelopment potential.

1. Baltimore Design School \$100,000 State Investment \$3M Historic Tax Credits \$26.5M Total Investment Completed 2013	5. Motor House \$1.6M State Investment \$900,000 Historic Tax Credits \$6M Total Investment Completed 2015	9. Baltimore Rock Opera Society \$150,000 State Investment (\$250,000 Pending) \$1,030,000 Est. Total Cost Completion TBD	13. Made in Baltimore Pop-Up Shop \$5,000 State Investment \$5,000 Total Investment Completed 2018
2. Station Arts Homes \$130,000 State Investment \$8M Total Investment Project Underway	6. Open Works \$1.8M State Investment \$11.5M Total Investment Completed 2016	10. MICA Fred Lazarus IV Center \$100,000 State Investment \$19M Total Investment Completed 2013	14. Odell's \$1M State Historic Tax Credits \$7M Estimated Total Cost Project Underway
3. Centre Theatre \$1.2M State Investment \$3M State Historic Tax Credits \$19M Total Investment Completed 2015	7. The SNF Parkway Theatre \$275,000 State Investment \$2M Historic Tax Credits \$17M Total Investment Completed 2017?	11. City Arts I & II Apartments \$126,296 State Investment \$26M Total Investment Completed 2017	15. 226 E. Lafayette Avenue \$120,000 State Investment \$1M Total Investment Project Underway
4. Oliver St. Studios/Area 405 \$250,000 State Investment \$362,000 Est. Total Reno Cost Completion TBD	8. Parole & Probation Estimated Total Cost TBD Completion TBD	12. Community Spruce-Up Projects \$204,191 Total Investment	16. J. Van Story Branch, Sr. Apts Health & Wellness Center \$250,000 State Investment \$40M Est. Total Investment Project Underway

Map of arts investments by Central Baltimore Partnership

February 2019

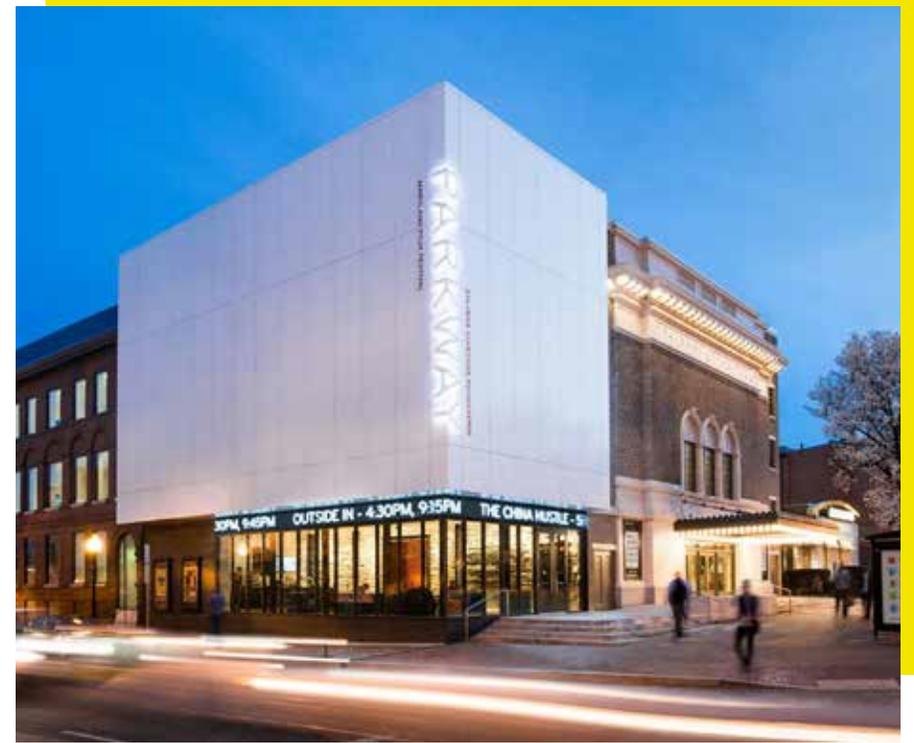
Implementation Plan

Building and enhancing a high quality public realm is an all-hands on deck activity.

This work will be done by city and state agencies, local anchor institutions, our community development corporation, the community association, nonprofit organizations, real estate developers, business and property owners, and artists and activists.

The base layer of infrastructure in Station North must be built and cared for by **Agencies** - the City of Baltimore Department of Transportation, Department of Public Works, the Forestry Department, and the State of Maryland Transit Authority. These are the elements that make our space safe and provide the canvas for further work.

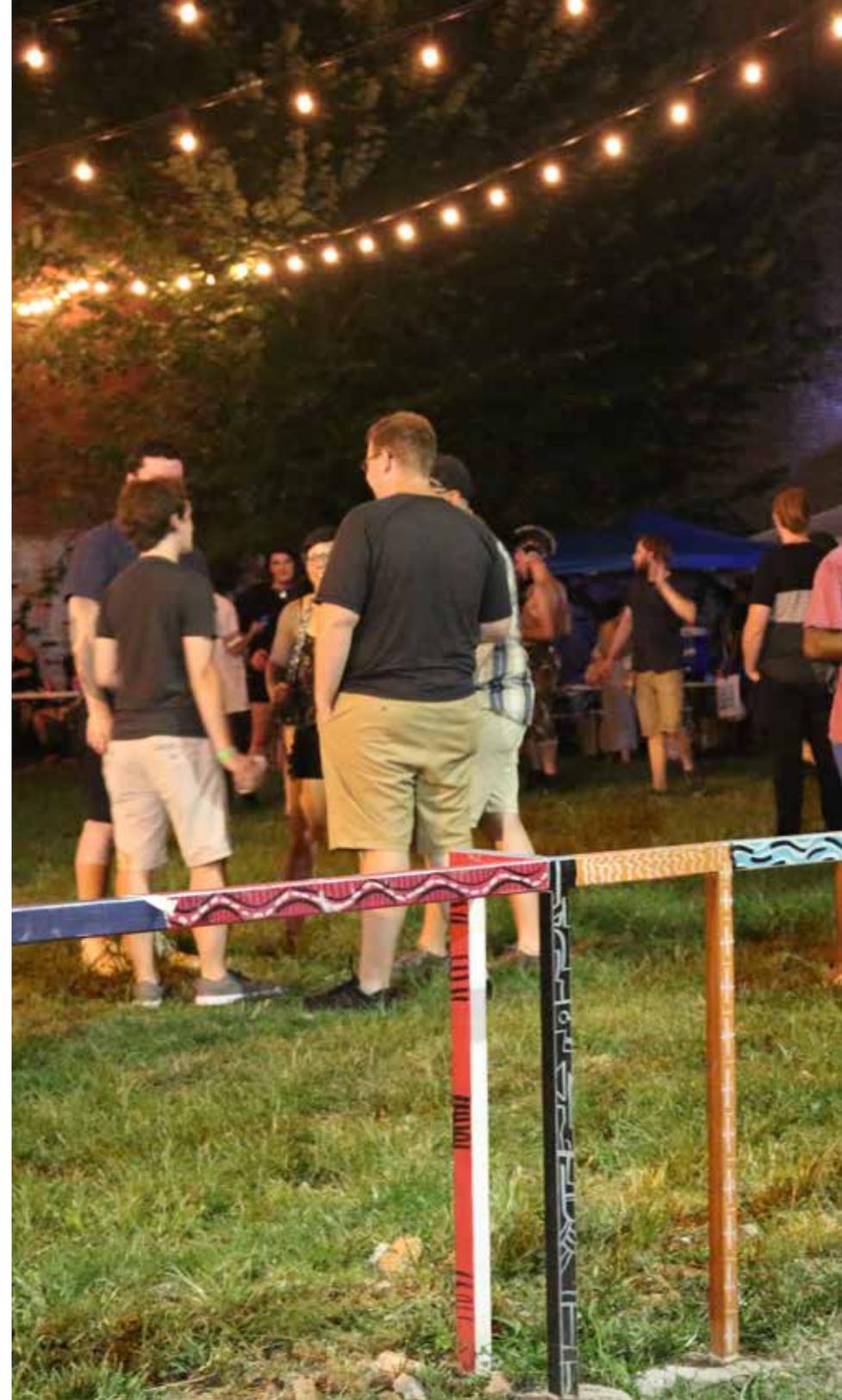
Nonprofits and property owners - the Central Baltimore Partnership, developers working in the neighborhood, the Station North Arts and Entertainment District, the Neighborhood Design Center and other nonprofits and property owners can all enhance the public realm as well. Public private partnerships or tax increment financing will be needed to create an extraordinary public realm where we feel protected and welcomed.



These powerful community members can also leverage the resources for mid-range projects that bring the bigger elements of enjoyment to our public realm including signage, street furniture, public art, and green infrastructure.

Business owners and residents should lead the charge on the smaller elements of enjoyment such as a greening, paint and color, property signage, low cost lighting, art, displays, and block-scale events.

Increasing density in the neighborhood will organically result in livelier streets and more support for local businesses, restaurants, and creative culture. Development led by property owners and the Central Baltimore Partnership will bring more people to the neighborhood to support a big segment of our goals.





Because this is the Station North Arts and Entertainment District, it should be clear to people when they are entering the district and there should be reminders in most every block. This design & identity should be visible in each one of our investments, as an opportunity to create delight, build our brand, show off our creativity, and fuel the local economy. Design is what creates a public realm that supports people as they use and engage city spaces. A place that supports sociability - to see and meet people - is designed to support those activities.

As an Arts & Entertainment district, experiences are central to our identity. Programming gives people a reason to come and stay in our neighborhoods. Activities increase participation of diverse people - more women, children, elders, people of color, low income people, and creative people when they are free or low cost. We have amazing creative work happening behind closed doors in Station North and finding the means to bring that work to the streets could transform our neighborhood. People respond positively to, and spend time and money in, well-maintained, creatively enhanced spaces. The Midtown Benefits District team assure that our neighborhood has great maintenance. We should find the means to invest in a full time team member until our population has grown to support one. We should also coordinate to request a higher level of City services and to hold them accountable in the quality of their work.



Acknowledgements

This Public Space Plan was made possible by generous funding from the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation. Created by the Neighborhood Design Center (Jennifer Goold, Benjamin Derlan, Maura Dwyer, Briony Hynson, Sulay Ranjit et al). Editorial direction from the North Avenue Stakeholders Committee: Charlie Duff (Jubilee Baltimore), Dr. Sheri Parks (Maryland Institute College of Art), Jack Danna (Central Baltimore Partnership), Elliot Weidow, Nan Rohrer (Midtown Baltimore), Amy Bonitz, Marian Glebes (Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation), David Lapidés (Charles North Community Association).

Many local stakeholders contributed their time and expertise to this plan including:

Small Businesses: Milk and Honey (Dana Valery, co-owner), Red Thorn Tattoo (Jay Ranno, owner), Artist and Craftsman, Made in Baltimore (Andy Cook, director), Pearson's Florist (Vander Pearson, owner), Sophie's Crepes, Joe Squared (Joe Edwardsen, owner), Nancy Cafe (Kevin Brown, owner).

Residents from J. Van Story Branch Senior Apartments: Alonzo Isaac, Brenda Cousar, Catherine Hartfridd, Keith Wimberly, Denise Kinslow, Charles Pointer, Betty Green, Larry Harris, Larry Carney, John W. Gregg, Monique J., Floyd Gross, Gary Samuels, Robin Smith, Augustus Braxton, Myrtle Gaines, Daphne Green, Sharon Bailey, Kim Ball, Roger Taylor, Terry Green, Essee Smith, Darlene Curtis, Philip Ampbell, Brenda Sifon, Lonnie Corington

Residents from Charles North Community Association: Mike Shector, Michael Edwards, Danna McCafrey, Aaron Kaufman, Patrick Jenny, Stephen Beck, Peter Dunall, Greg Pease, Kelly Baumington

Midtown Baltimore Maintenance Crew: Ed Williams, Gerald Fauntleroy, Troy Thompson, Elliot Weidow
Block Audit performed by: David Lapidés (CNCA), Jack Danna (CBP), Ben Derlan, Briony Hynson (NDC)

10

11

12