



Chapter 4

ACTIVATED AND INCLUSIVE PARKS

South Baltimore is home to nearly 600 acres of parks and open spaces, both on the water and in neighborhoods. Diverse in scale and character, these parks are a significant asset to the communities. Programming and facilities in parks today are well-used by residents. Yet, in many cases, facilities are at or over capacity and cannot meet present demand of nearby communities. For example, there is only one event venue (the Middle Branch Boathouse) available for public use along the entire 11 miles of waterfront. Moreover, allocating resources for repairs and capital reinvestment in parks is a perennial challenge for Baltimore City, so that many community parks feel only minimally maintained.

The Plan creates an active and inclusive “park-shed” by supporting current programming with expanded and enhanced facilities, adding new features and amenities to attract more people and activity, connecting new and existing parks with a system of trails and Complete Streets that links neighborhoods and the water, and innovating on new systems for resource-development and operations.

The recommendations for programming and activating parks are directly informed by public input received during the planning process, which yielded particularly broad support for the following:

- Large-scale anchors for festivals, gatherings, and events.
- Small-scale structures for parties, cookouts, and family reunions.
- Piers for water-based recreation including boating and fishing.
- Cultural programming honoring the Black heritage of South Baltimore neighborhoods.

It is crucial to remember that this is not a shoreline plan. Rather, the concept of park-shed is a strategy for connecting neighborhoods and parks to one another and to the waterfront. Reimagine Middle Branch envisions these parks operating as a system of connected spaces and coordinated programming, so that residents of any neighborhood can reach and take advantage of facilities and activities throughout the network. All of the parks in the study area are important, and all deserve a high standard of care.



South Baltimore Parks and Open Spaces Today

South Baltimore is home to more than 30 parks, ranging from large regional-scale destinations to neighborhood parks and small community spaces. Some of the larger parks and the facilities they offer include:

- **Middle Branch Park**, with boating, trails, and a large event lawn.
- **Reedbird Park**, featuring the new Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center.
- **Lakeland Park**, with sports fields, a picnic pavilion and outdoor exercise area.
- **Riverside Park**, with a large public pool, a picnic pavilion, and playground.
- **Carroll Park**, with baseball fields, basketball courts, a historic mansion, a soon-to-reopen recreation center, a skate park, and nine-hole golf course.
- **Farring-Baybrook Park**, with an indoor sports pavilion and recreation center.

In addition to parks, there are other important open spaces, such as Mt. Auburn Cemetery. Although access is by necessity limited, this historic Black community landmark is an important element of the area’s cultural identity and open space network. Similarly,

Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center, the nation’s first federally designated urban wildlife refuge, is a not a park but functions as a unique open space where city residents and school groups can engage with nature.

As illustrated by the map at right, other large green spaces present opportunities for expanding the network of useful open space. These include the river valley along the Gwynns Falls, between the Middle Branch and Carroll Park, as well as the former landfill site along the main stem of the Patapsco, between Reedbird Park and the Baltimore County line.

It is crucial to remember that **this is not a shoreline plan**. Rather, the concept of park-shed is a strategy for connecting neighborhoods and parks to one another and to the waterfront. Reimagine Middle Branch envisions these parks operating as a system of connected spaces and coordinated programming, so that residents of any neighborhood can reach and take advantage of facilities and activities throughout the network. All of the parks in the study area are important, and all deserve a high standard of care.

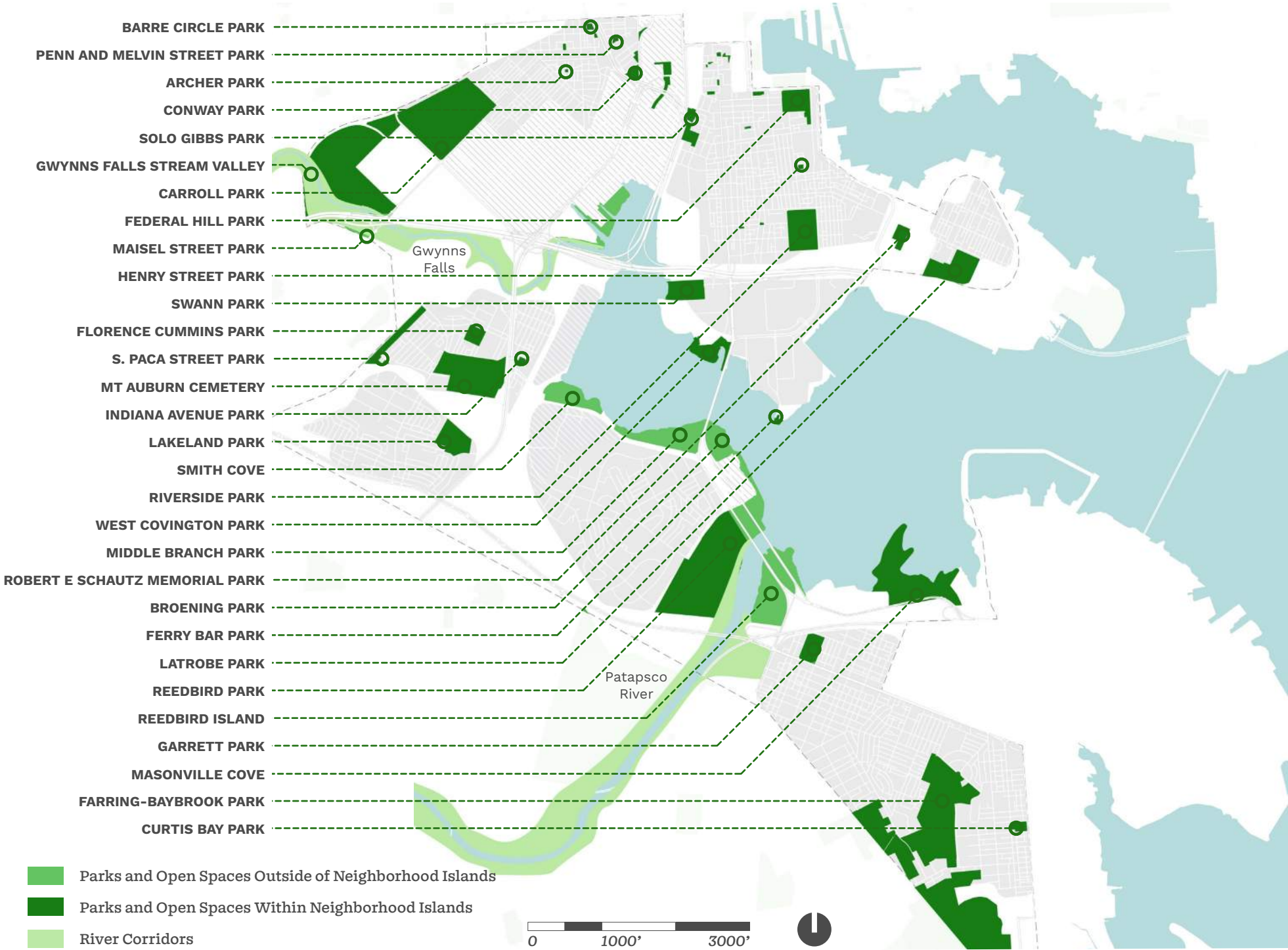
Middle Branch Park



Carroll Park



Masonville Cove



A Ring of Waterfront Parks and Open Spaces

Nowhere else in Baltimore is there the opportunity to create such significant and expansive network of public parks, trails, and open spaces along the water. This ring of waterfront open spaces represents a truly unique asset for the communities of South Baltimore and the city as a whole. **The Plan seeks to connect existing waterfront parks with proposed new parks, new developments, and natural areas, unifying these parks and open spaces into an accessible and active waterfront for all.**

To locate programs and activities around the Middle Branch, the Plan takes cues from the shape of Middle Branch’s shoreline, which includes quiet and protected coves, expansive straights, and high points with panoramic views.

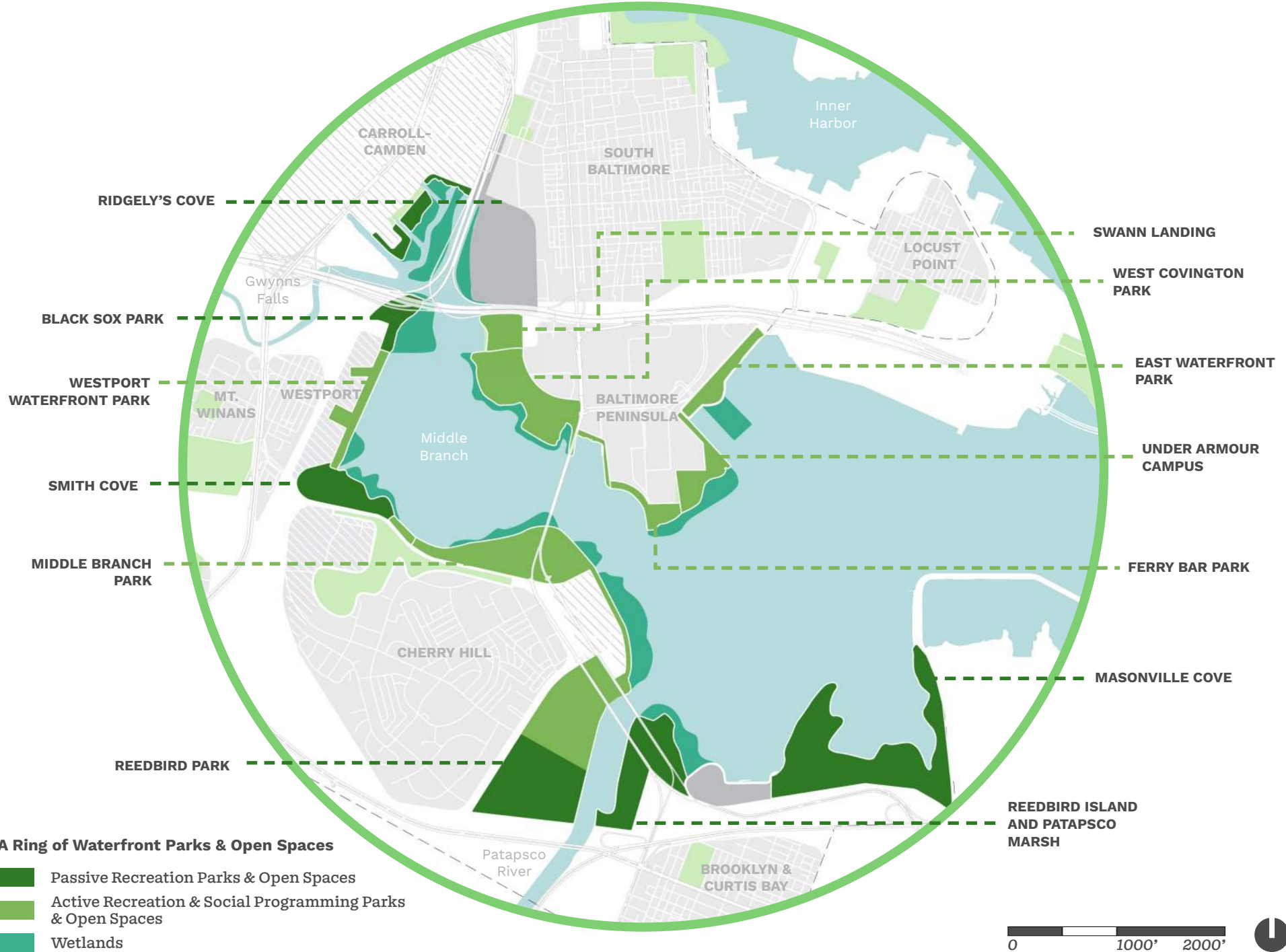
The Plan looks to complement these varied types of environments with uses and activities identified by the community.

Social programming and active recreation in the parks at points and along the straights:

- **Westport Waterfront Park:** An active promenade with a marketplace, picnic lawn, and urban plaza
- **Middle Branch Park:** The eventful heart of the Middle Branch with a new boathouse, event spaces, and playground
- **Reedbird Park:** Active recreation centered around the Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center
- **West Covington Park:** Events, active recreation and picnicking
- **Ferry Bar Park and Under Armour:** Trails and overlooks; and
- **East Waterfront Park:** A waterfront promenade

Passive recreation, water-based activities, and natural wildlife areas in the coves:

- **Ridgely’s Cove and Swann Landing:** A maritime ecological park with trails, boardwalks, and boating
- **Smith Cove:** An ecologically rich woodland park with family-oriented activities and outdoor classrooms
- **Reedbird Island and the Patapsco Marsh:** Nature areas with trails and water access
- **Masonville Cove:** First of its kind urban wildlife refuge with environmental education center



Waterfront Uses

Early in the planning process, the public was surveyed about the preferred activities and uses in Middle Branch parks. Responses signaled a strong desire for events, festivals, and social gatherings, as well as water-based activities like fishing and boating. In addition to these activities, there was support for walking, running, and biking trails as well as family-centered uses like children’s play.

Even more importantly, whenever the community has been presented with the opportunity to enjoy the shoreline or get out on the water (such as through the Cherry Hill Arts and Music Waterfront Festival, or the Splash! event) they have turned out in the hundreds or thousands. This demonstrates that the limiting factor is not community interest, but simply access and opportunity.

There is also an opportunity for programming around water-safety and swimming. Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP), Baltimore Community Rowing, and other groups can partner on instruction programs that foster greater comfort for youth and adults being on or near the water. This will enable more people to take advantage of the recreational resources and feel safe at the water’s edge.

Family gatherings



Canoeing



Boating education



Playgrounds



Festivals



Rowing and water sports



Food concessions



Kayaking and boat rentals



Environmental education



Performances and events



Waterfront Park Features and Amenities

Community feedback led to the development of a collection of waterfront features and amenities, ranging in scale and type of use, across the Middle Branch waterfront parks. Joining Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center, the Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center, and the Middle Branch Boathouse, **the Plan recommends a collection of new waterfront anchors, which provide major amenities and create destinations in waterfront parks.** These include:

- **Middle Branch Park Event Lawn and Stage**, a flexible space that can host performances ranging from a small 100-person community concert to a large multi-day festival attended by thousands. Final designs for the Event Stage will be developed with input from the organizers of the annual festival, to ensure it meets existing programmatic needs.
- **Middle Branch Park Event Pavilion**, a covered outdoor space for gatherings, parties and events.
- **Middle Branch Park Food Concession**, an adaptive reuse of the existing

boathouse, with a single vendor or multiple vendors using a shared kitchen.

- **New Middle Branch Boathouse**, shared by Baltimore Recreation and Parks and Baltimore Community Rowing.
- **Swann Landing Boat Launch**, renting canoes and kayaks for use in Ridgely’s Cove.
- **Playgrounds** in Smith Cove and Middle Branch Park.
- A **Skate Park** along the Gwynns Falls Trail.
- **Water Trail and an Interpretive Boardwalk Trail** in Ridgely’s Cove.

Smith Cove playground



In addition to these large anchors, parks around the water are activated by small shelters, kiosks, and piers. Whenever possible, kiosks and rental facilities should generate local economic development, and should include free or low-cost options for local residents.

As illustrated by the map at right, smaller and larger facilities are distributed along the waterfront. These waterfront amenities will complement the interior neighborhood parks currently being improved across the study area, including Florence Cummins Park, Solo Gibbs Park, and the Carroll Park Recreation Center.



Middle Branch Park Event Lawn and Stage

The Plan recommends that the lawn, already a prominent feature in Middle Branch Park, be re-shaped and reoriented for views across the water and sightlines to downtown. The lawn is large and flexible, encouraging a range of programming, yet its edges are better defined with groves of shade trees and native-habitat plantings. At the base of the lawn is a new performance stage, outfitted with power and utility connections for performers and events. The details of this stage will need to be designed with the active participation of the Cherry Hill community, in order to ensure that it meets the needs of the Cherry Hill Arts and Music Waterfront Festival and other events.

- Programming recommendations include:
- 1-3 large annual festivals, building on the success of the Cherry Hill.
 - The Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival, which is hosted in Middle Branch Park annually over the July 4 holiday weekend.
 - Seasonal arts and performance series, such as summer movie nights.
 - Small community concerts and performances.

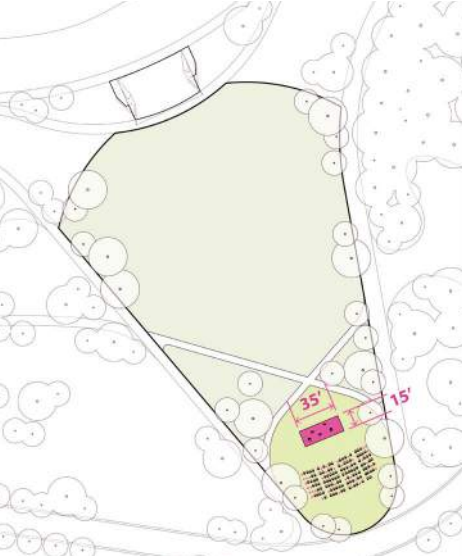
Event lawn during typical use



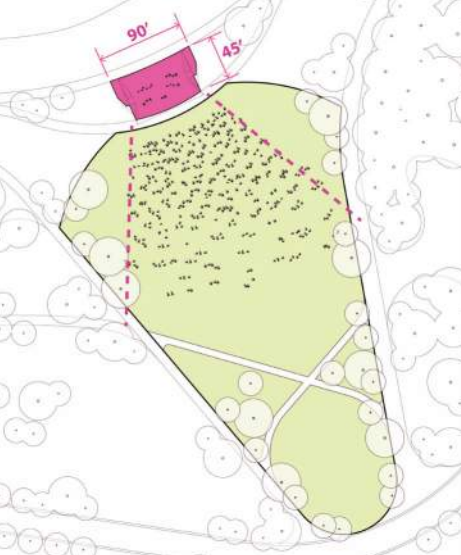
Typical use



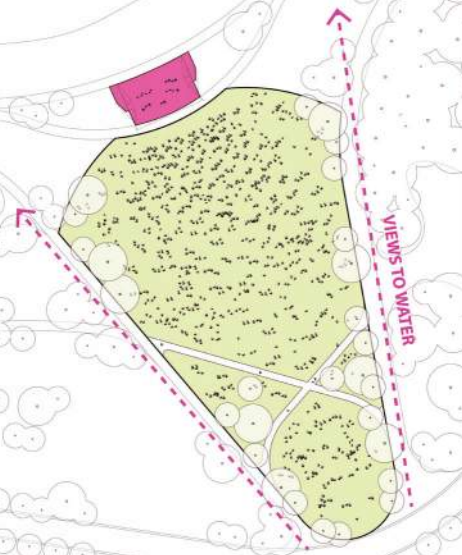
Small community event: 100 - 200 people



Stage performance: 200 - 500 people



Large-scale event: 1000 - 5000 people



Middle Branch Park Event Pavilion

The Plan recommends the addition of a covered, open-air event pavilion be situated near the event lawn. Easily subdivided, the pavilion can host one large or several small events at a time. It will include utilities and nearby BBQ grills for cookouts.

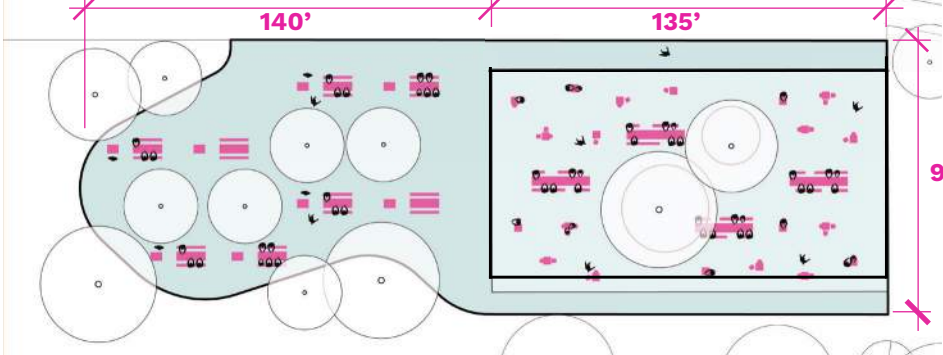
The design of the pavilion is intended to demonstrate how park infrastructure can be built with an economy of means and materials yet provide flexibility for a wide range of functions.

- Programming uses include:
- Organized community events.
 - Spaces to be reserved for family reunions and other gatherings.
 - Bookings for private rentals.
 - Passive recreation for individuals or small groups enjoying the shade.

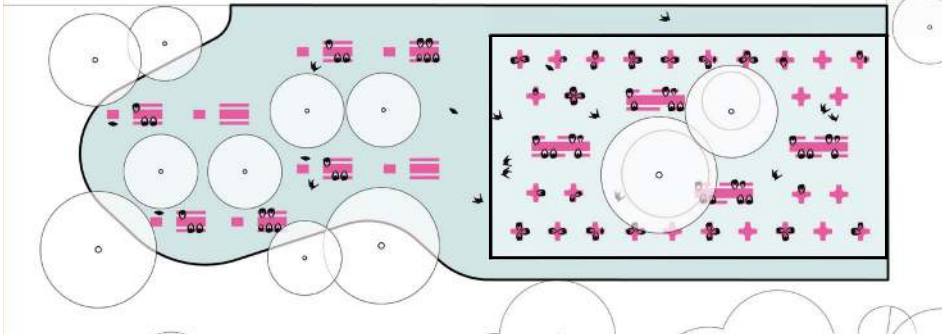
Event pavilion and picnic area during typical use



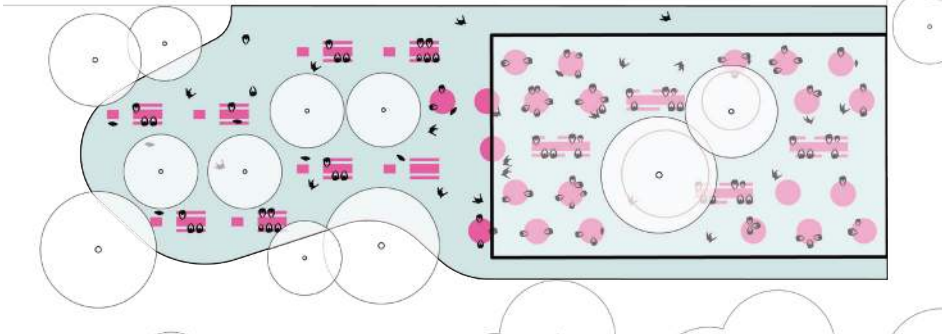
Typical use: 150 people | 12 large tables | 20 movable tables



Private event: 200 people | 12 large tables | 28 small tables



Large public event: 400 people | 34 large tables



Middle Branch Park Food Concession

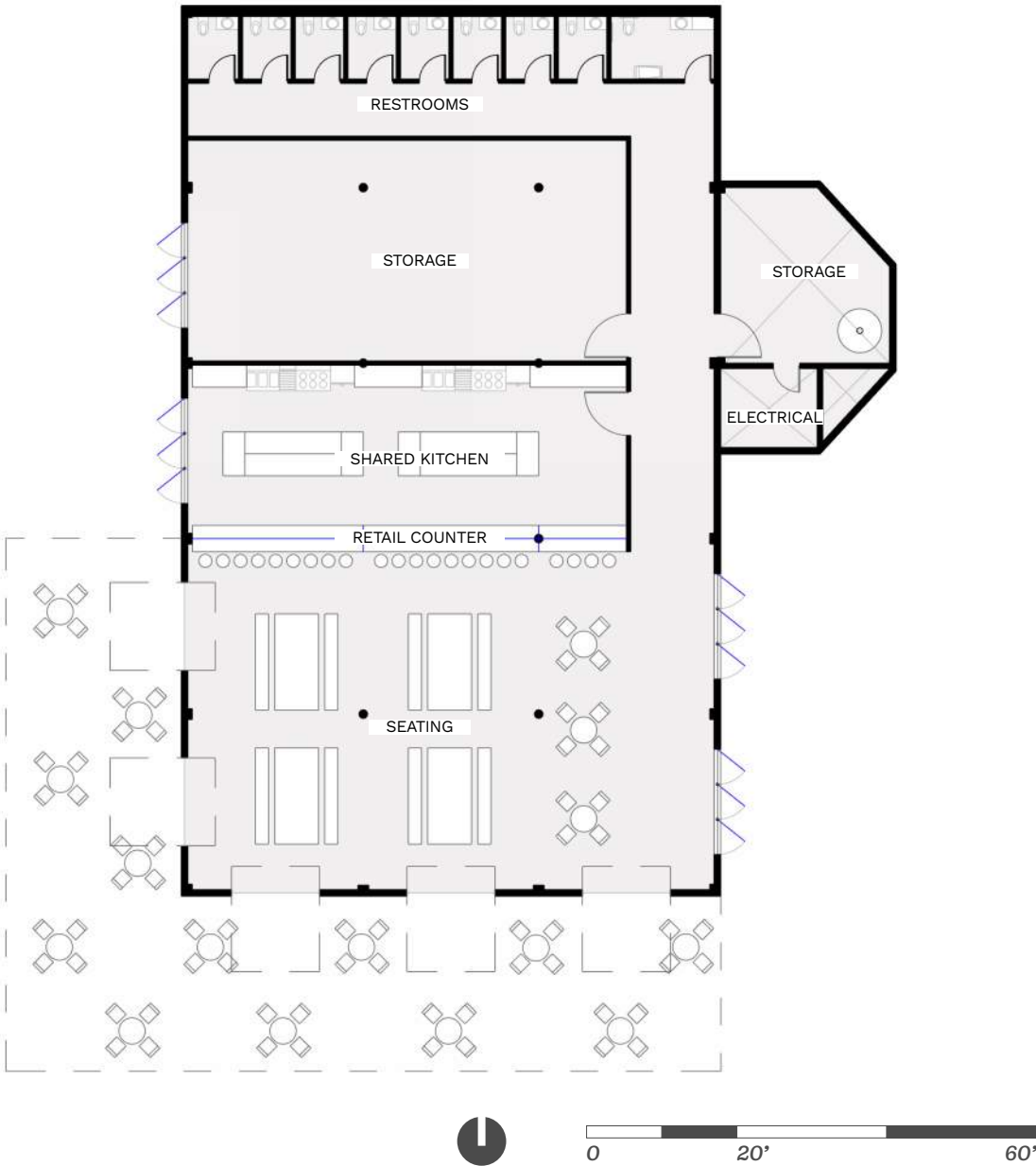
West of the event pavilion, **the Plan recommends transforming the existing boathouse into a concession and event space.**

Envisioned as a mini-food hall featuring local businesses and vendors, the ground floor includes retail counters, a shared kitchen, and communal indoor-outdoor dining space. The second floor remains a community event space, as it is incredibly popular and well-used by the community today. The design is flexible and allows for alternative programming and uses, including:

- Larger event space with catering kitchen
- Single tenant restaurant
- A pop-up model with temporary and seasonal opportunities for multiple vendors

While this is not mandatory, adding a license to sell alcohol (under carefully managed circumstances) could also be a revenue generating opportunity. Many high-quality parks around the country, such as Bryant Park in New York City or Lincoln Park in Chicago, include limited alcohol sales as a way to activate space and diversify revenue streams. This can be done while maintaining a peaceful environment that is safe and appropriate for children.

Food concession floor plan



Renovated boathouse with food concessions



The New Boathouse

Non-motorized boating – canoeing, kayaking, and rowing – are already popular in Middle Branch Park today, with these programs overflowing the space available in the existing boathouse. **The Plan envisions a new, expanded boathouse built on land to the east of the building** (where canoes, kayaks and rowing sculls are currently stored outside in shipping containers). The new facility accommodates future growth in Baltimore City’s Department of Recreation and Parks’ boating programs and for Baltimore Community Rowing, the non-profit organization that manages the rowing programs in the Middle Branch.

The new boathouse includes expanded boat storage, workout space, a community room, offices, and new docks. Next to the boathouse, a sandy beach offers easy water access for kayaks and canoes. Until water quality conditions improve, swimming will not be allowed here or anywhere in the Middle Branch.

The rendering on this page and the plans on the following pages provide only a concept-level design of this new arrangement. Final designs will need to be developed in close coordination with City Recreation and Parks personnel, Baltimore Community Rowing, community residents and other stakeholders.

Kayaking at Splash! Event



Baltimore Community Rowing (BCR)

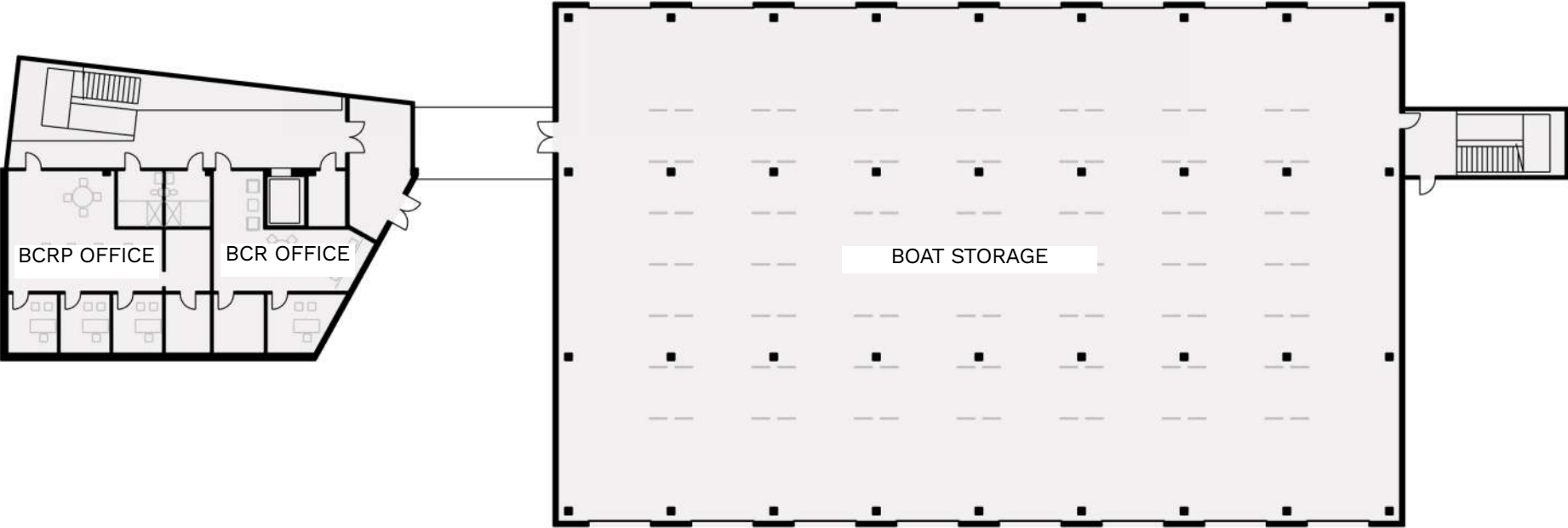


New boathouse & sandy kayak/canoe beach

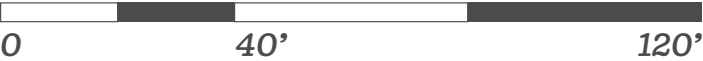
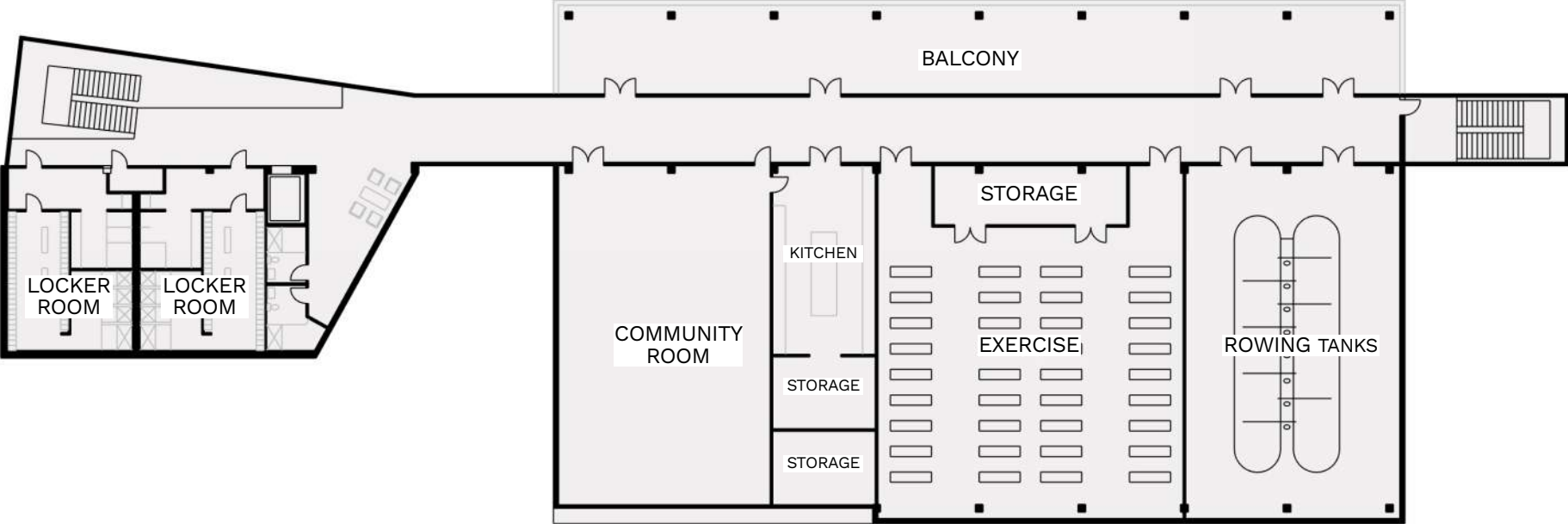


The New Boathouse: Floor Plans

Ground floor plan



Second floor plan

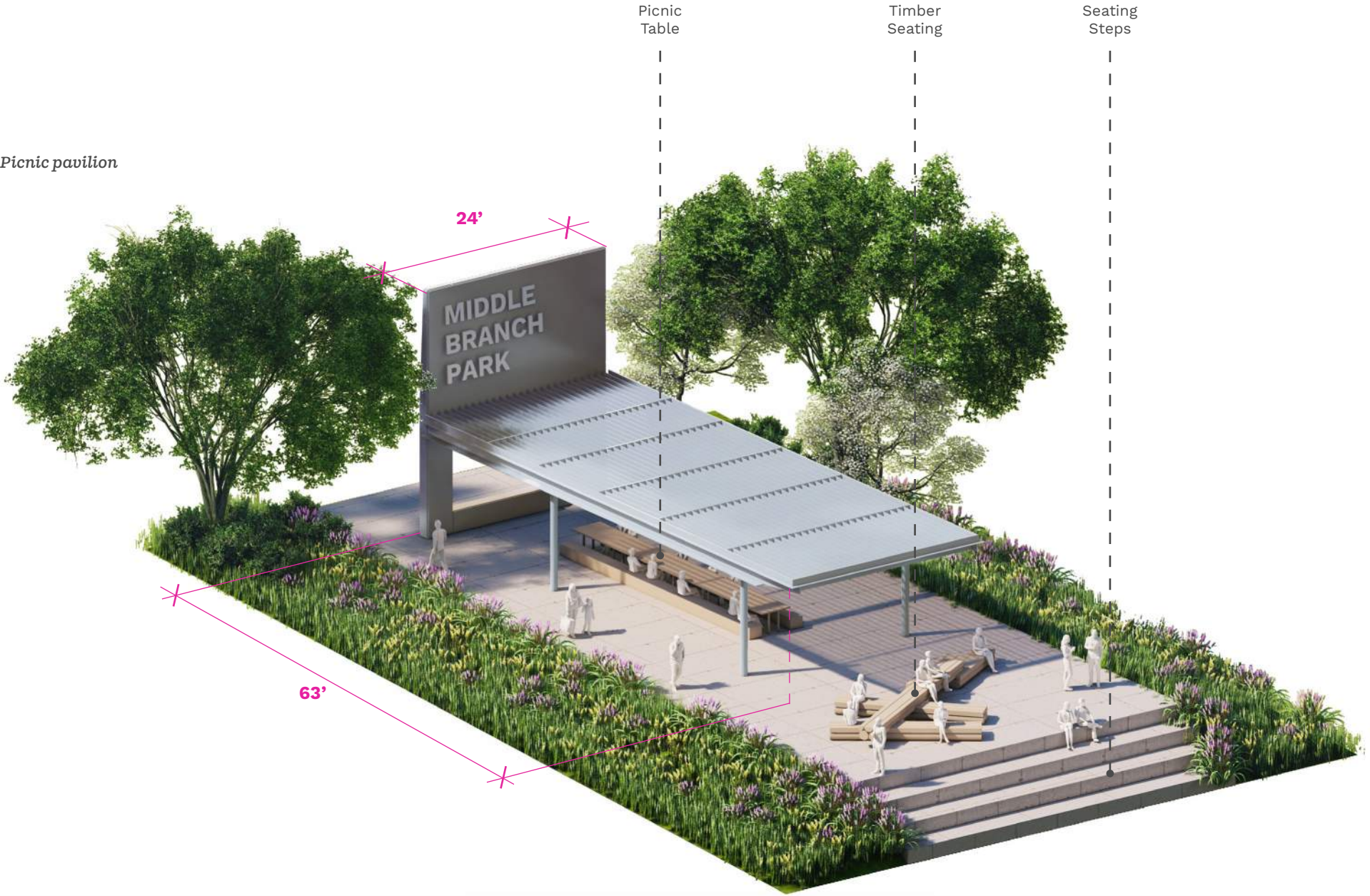
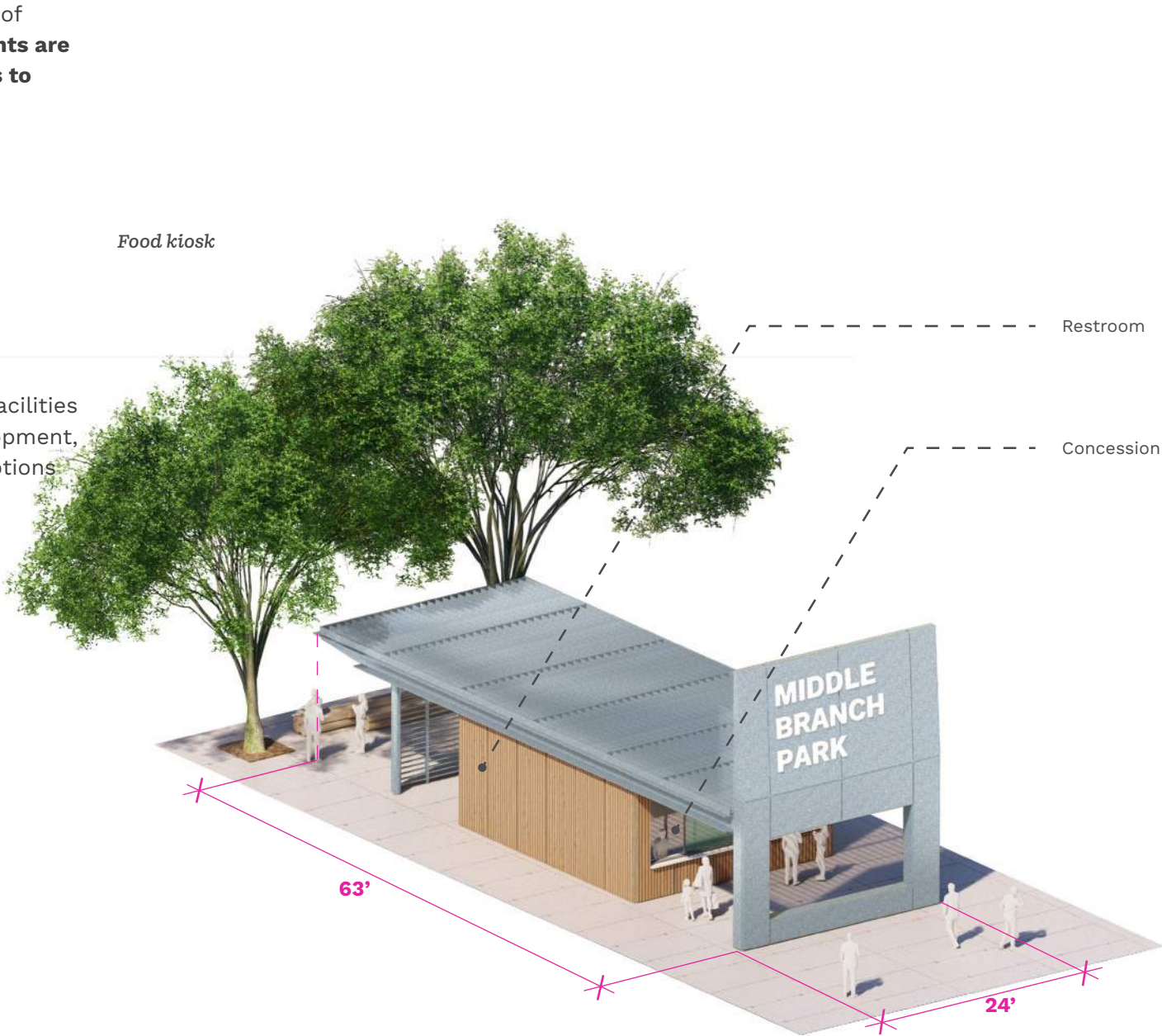


Small Structures

In addition to large anchors, a number of **small structures and furnishing elements are scattered throughout waterfront parks to support day-to-day use**, including:

- Picnic Shelters in Smith Cove and Middle Branch Park
- Outdoor Classrooms
- Bathrooms and Comfort Stations
- Benches, Wayfinding, and Lighting

Whenever possible, kiosks and rental facilities should generate local economic development, and should include free or low-cost options for local residents.



Waterfront Park Furnishing

The furnishing (seating, tables, exercise stations), wayfinding signage, and site lighting are inspired by the wood pier and pile structures one typically sees around the Chesapeake’s creeks and inlets. These objects would be part of a palette of planting, paving and other site-design features that will visually unify the network of waterfront parks. Furnishings can be constructed from or enhanced with reclaimed materials where possible, and the fabrication of these items would be appropriate for a community-based, social venture “green” enterprise based in South Baltimore.

Piles used for wetland restoration



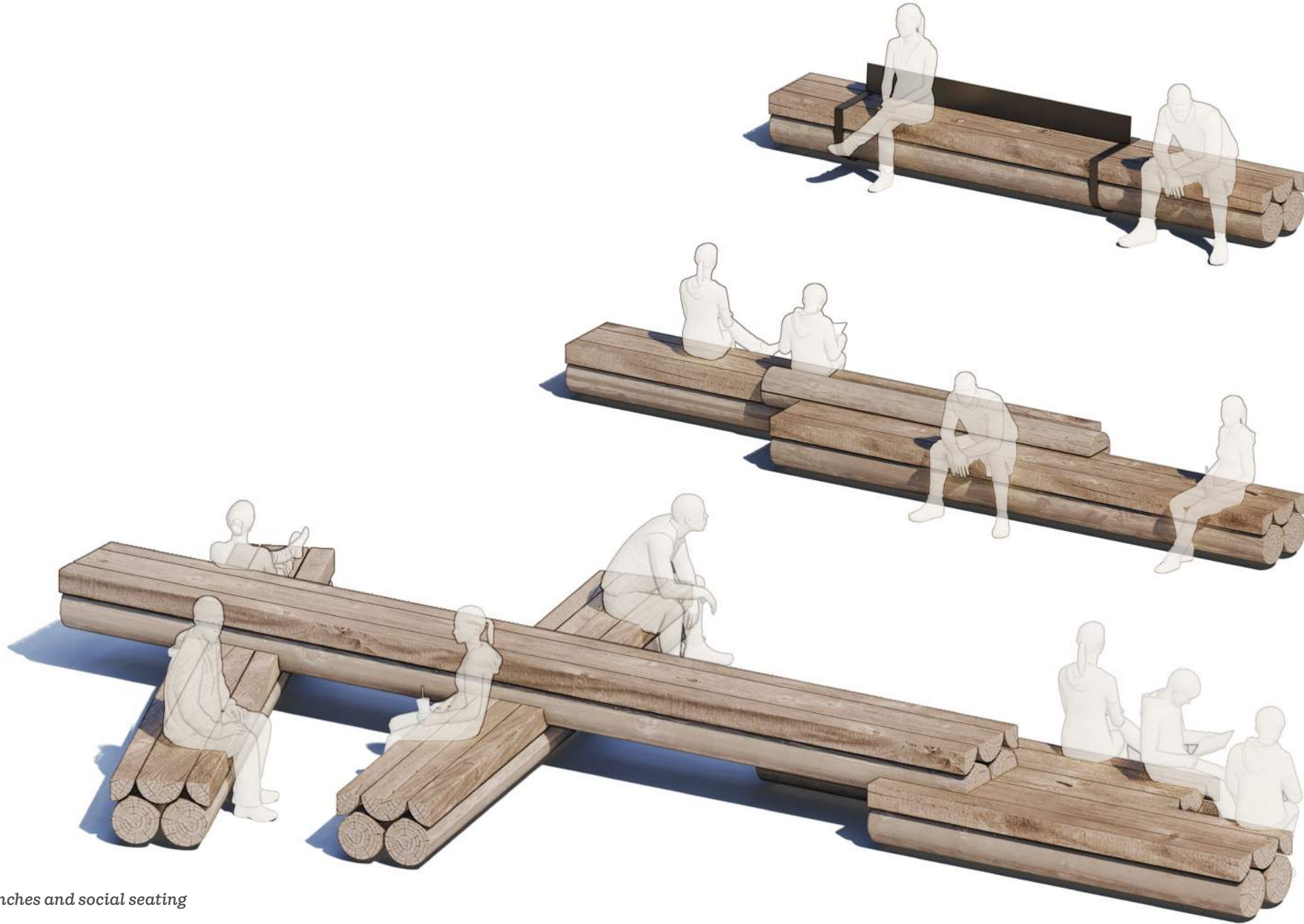
Wayfinding and signage



Lighting

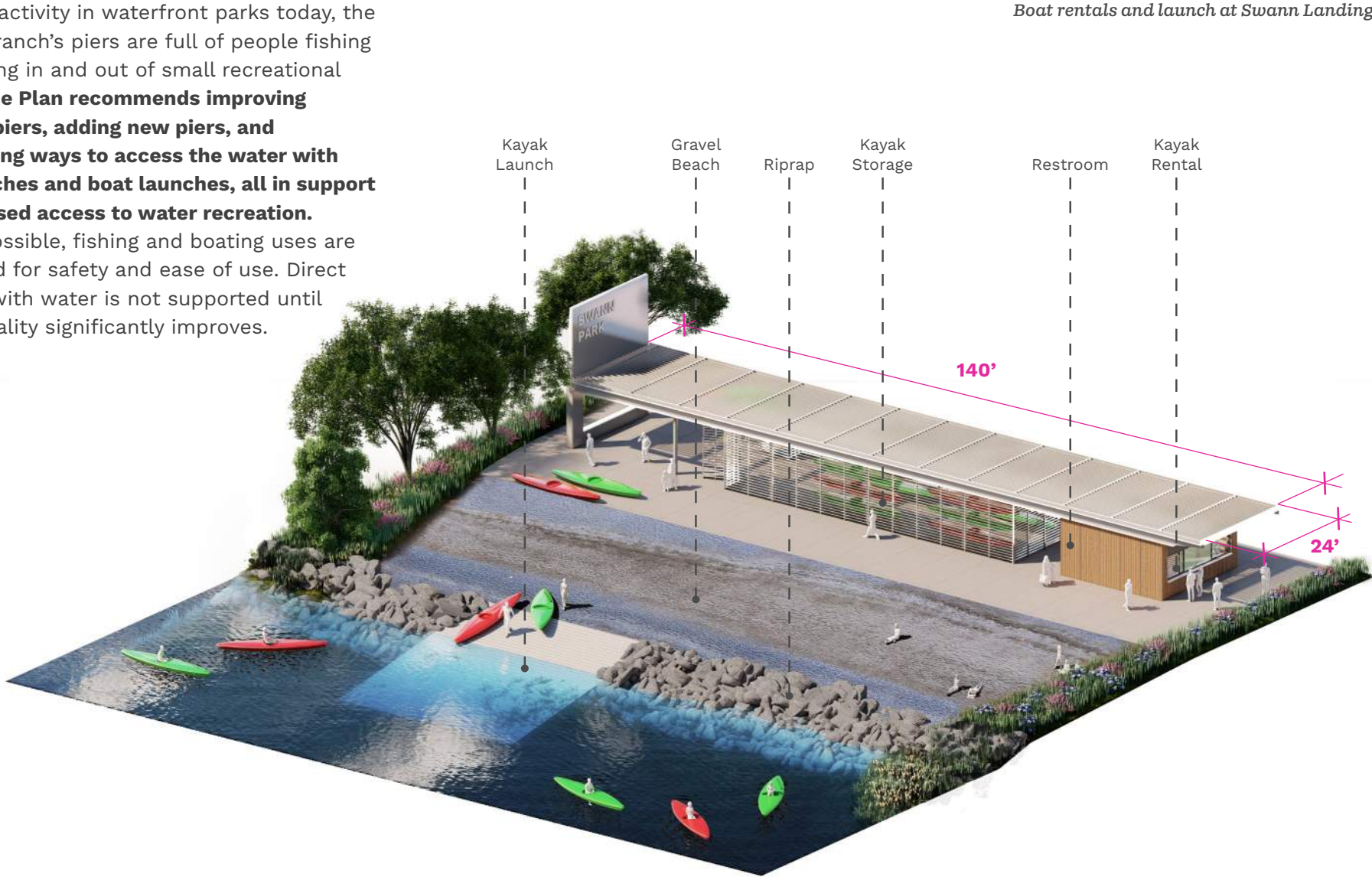


Benches and social seating

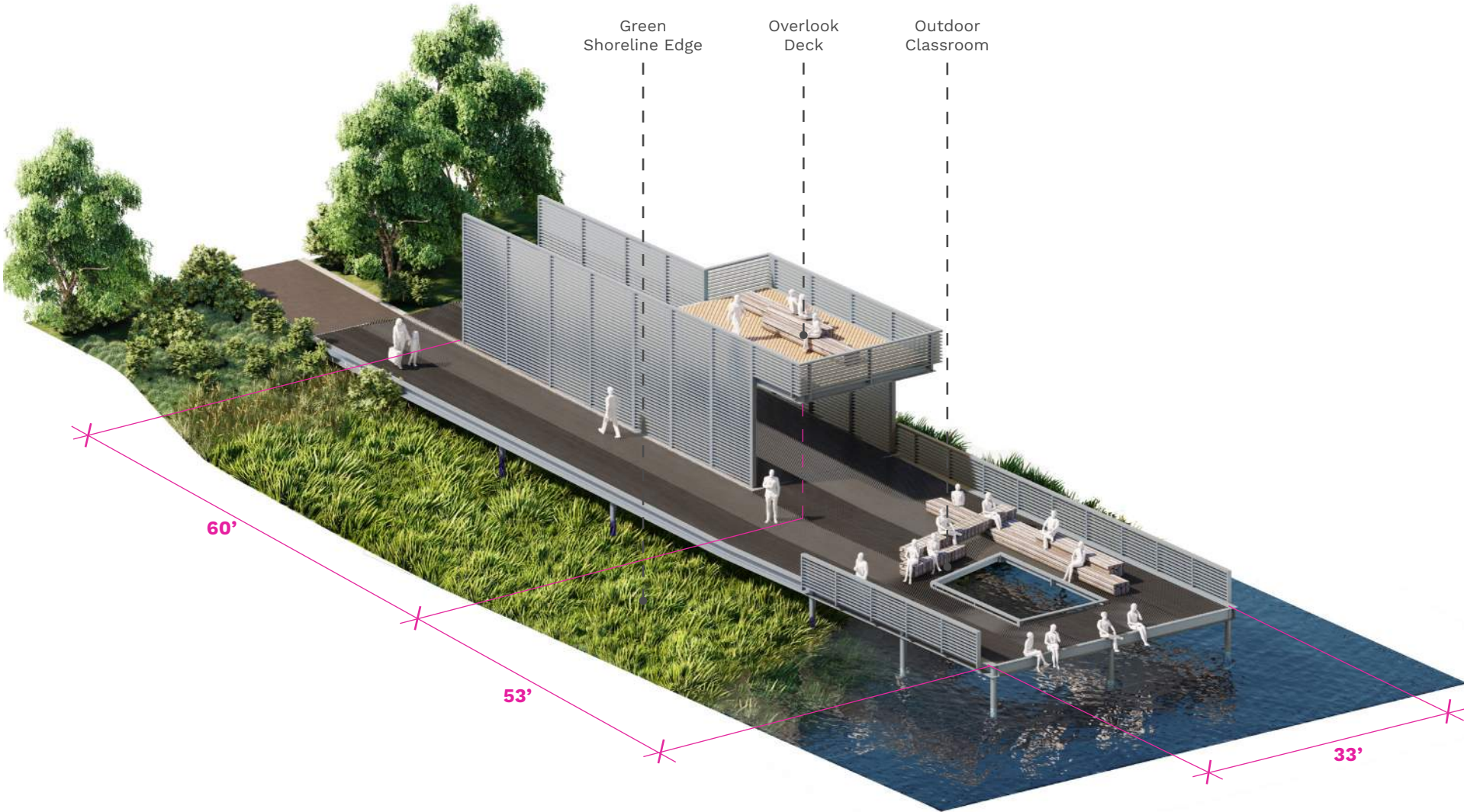


Piers and Water Access

A hub of activity in waterfront parks today, the Middle Branch’s piers are full of people fishing and getting in and out of small recreational boats. **The Plan recommends improving existing piers, adding new piers, and diversifying ways to access the water with new beaches and boat launches, all in support of increased access to water recreation.** Where possible, fishing and boating uses are separated for safety and ease of use. Direct contact with water is not supported until water quality significantly improves.



Overlook & outdoor classroom in Smith Cove



Seasonal Programming

Waterfront parks include a number of existing spaces conducive to temporary and seasonal food and beverage pop-ups. In particular, spaces beneath the bridges and underpasses would make charismatic destinations for these temporary activations, including:

- The I-395 Underpass at Sharp and Stockholm Streets.
- The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge landings in Middle Branch Park and Baltimore Peninsula.

The Plan recommends curating and producing a steady and reliable series of culturally relevant programming opportunities throughout the year. The South Baltimore Gateway Partnership already funds a large number of such activities, including youth sports, arts programs, outdoor concerts and movies, and environmental education. It is critical that these programs continue, and that funding is found to extend them into other parts of the study area. In addition, it is important to build programming around Black history in order to develop the proposed African American Heritage Trail, while programming in water-safety and swimming can help residents feel more comfortable being on or near the water.

I-395 Underpass at Sharp and Stockholm Streets



Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge at Baltimore Peninsula



Precedent: The Garden at Cherry Street Pier, Philadelphia



Precedent: Pop Up Beer Garden at the High Line, NYC



Splash! A Community Waterfront Event

In September of 2021, the Planning team hosted Splash! A Community Waterfront Event in Middle Branch Park. The purpose of the event was to build community comfort and sense of belonging on and around the water. Over 250 people attended the event, participating in kayaking, canoeing, rowing, and fishing across 8 activity stations.

Along with welcoming the community to the water, Splash! invited organizations working in the realm of public parks, open space, sustainability, resiliency, and water resources, to attend and participate. Community partners included:

- MedStar Harbor Hospital
- Baltimore City Recreation and Parks
- Baltimore Aquatics
- Baltimore Community Rowing
- Fish Finders
- Youth Resiliency Institute
- Blue Water Baltimore
- Baltimore Office of Sustainability
- NPS and Chesapeake Conservancy
- MES/Masonville Cove/MPA

The Plan recommends growing Splash! from a one-time event into a recurring program. Building on the success of the initial effort, Splash! could evolve into a sustained initiative that helps to activate Middle Branch Park, connects people to recreational opportunities, and develops strong relationships with local partners and stakeholders.

As mentioned above, whenever the community has been presented with the opportunity to enjoy the shoreline or get out on the water, they have turned out in the hundreds, or even thousands in the case of Fourth of July. This demonstrates that the limiting factor is not community interest, but simply access and opportunity.

Splash! Event



Splash! Event



Splash! Event



Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

Overlook & outdoor classroom in Smith Cove



The study area contains an array of waterfront and inland open spaces. Many of these are parks, but others are non-park green spaces that improve local quality of life and tell the story of the South Baltimore’s history and ecology. This collection of open spaces is envisioned to grow in number and in the quality of their physical environments and the programming they offer in the coming years.

Event pavilion and picnic area



In order to properly take advantage of these resources, it is important to stitch them together into a unified, connected park-shed. Along with connecting the parks and open spaces with a network of trails and Complete Streets (as detailed in chapter 3) two major sets of actions are required.

First, improving the existing set of waterfront and inland parks, following an organized hierarchy of uses (active/passive, regional/ local) that is appropriate for each site. The Plan presents concept designs for many of these waterfront improvements, based upon conversations with community members and stakeholders. Several of the inland park improvements are already underway.

Second, activating these public spaces with seasonal and regular activities. Funding from South Baltimore Gateway Partnership has already been instrumental in activating public space in its district. Input garnered through the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan’s engagement efforts echoed support for this type of funding and activities like these that connect with community residents. Lastly, tackling deferred maintenance at existing facilities, such as the boat house and piers, or Carroll Park Rec Center, is crucial to garnering buy-in for longer-term projects.

Activated and Inclusive Parks: Summary of Recommendations	
3.1	Coordinate planning and implementation of capital projects and programming across the park-shed; this includes addressing short-term maintenance needs in order to maximize benefits from existing facilities while planning for long-term projects.
3.2	Connect existing waterfront parks with proposed parks, developments, and natural areas; unify parks and open spaces within an accessible, activated public space network.
3.3	Create new waterfront anchors, which provide major amenities and create destinations in waterfront parks.
3.4	Reshape and reorient the Middle Branch Park lawn with views across the water, sightlines to downtown, and a performance stage for festivals and other events.
3.5	Create a covered, open-air event pavilion to be situated near the event lawn in Middle Branch Park.
3.6	Build a new, expanded boathouse that accommodates future growth in BCRP’s boating programs and Baltimore Community Rowing; continue to address and improve facilities’ needs in existing boathouse and piers and removing submerged debris during planning stage.
3.7	Transform the existing boathouse into a concession and event space.
3.8	Improve existing piers, add new piers, and diversify ways to access the water with new beaches and boat launches, all in support of increased access to water-based recreation and educational programming.
3.9	Curate and produce a reliable series of year-round, culturally relevant programming, including arts events, water-safety, swimming, and other youth and adult sports and wellness programs.
3.10	Develop Splash!, a waterfront event produced for engagement during the planning process, from a one-time event into an annually recurring program.
3.11	Establish a new waterfront park along the Westport waterfront, along with a memorial for the Baltimore Black Sox and other South Baltimore sports legends.



Volume 1: Design Vision

Chapter 5

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Nineteen neighborhoods surround the Middle Branch, each distinct in character, demographics, and land use. Ranging from residential enclaves to industrial centers, an entertainment district, and the city's largest development project, South Baltimore has an incredibly diverse and varied urban fabric. South Baltimore neighborhoods are incredibly strong and cohesive, led by long-standing and informed community advocates. These communities are also collaborating with one another through relationships fostered by SB7 and the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership.

There is a wide range of needs and opportunities across the neighborhoods, and no one development strategy will be effective or appropriate across the entirety of the study area. With this in mind, the Plan sets forth a

community-centered approach to development that leverages existing opportunities, supports burgeoning initiatives across South Baltimore, guides future development, and further advances initiatives that have been proposed in previous plans.

Mindful that large investments in public space can lead to increased property values and gentrification, the Plan integrates strategies for preventing the displacement of communities residing and working around the Middle Branch today.

The Plan presents an opportunity to think beyond just the physical transformation of place: it is fundamentally about equity and justice, resilience and health. To that end, the Plan includes a series of programs and initiatives targeting education, jobs, and workforce training.

Introduction

The Reimagine Middle Branch (RMB) Plan is founded upon Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles. These were initially prescribed in the original Project Brief and have since been embedded across this Plan. There is therefore no hard and fast line between “equity projects” and “non-equity projects.” Everything in the Plan is intended to further a JEDI agenda.

That said, JEDI principles are particularly critical in three key areas of the Plan:

- 1. **Equity Initiatives** that apply broadly across South Baltimore
- 2. Site-specific **Equitable Economic Development Projects** undertaken either by stakeholders or the core RMB team
- 3. **Public Realm Guidelines** for future development

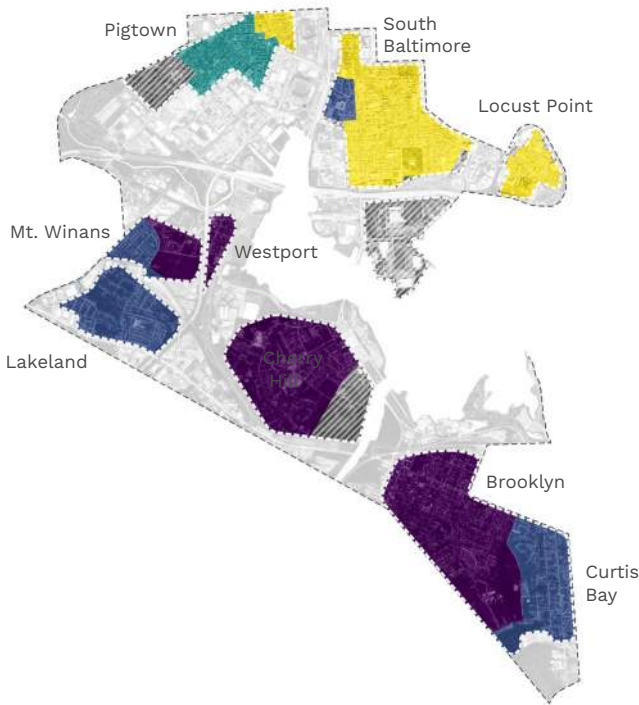
This chapter describes how these three elements will be implemented under the Plan. Before doing so, however, it is worth noting two key factors that undergird this analysis.

Distribution of Investments – The demographic makeup of these neighborhoods

varies widely, as do the existing assets, current development plans, and future opportunities. In considering an equitable distribution of investment across South Baltimore, the Plan has prioritized neighborhoods mapped as medium-to-high priority in the illustrations on these pages: areas with low median incomes, high percentage of rental-occupied housing, and low employment rates (shown in darker colors on the maps).

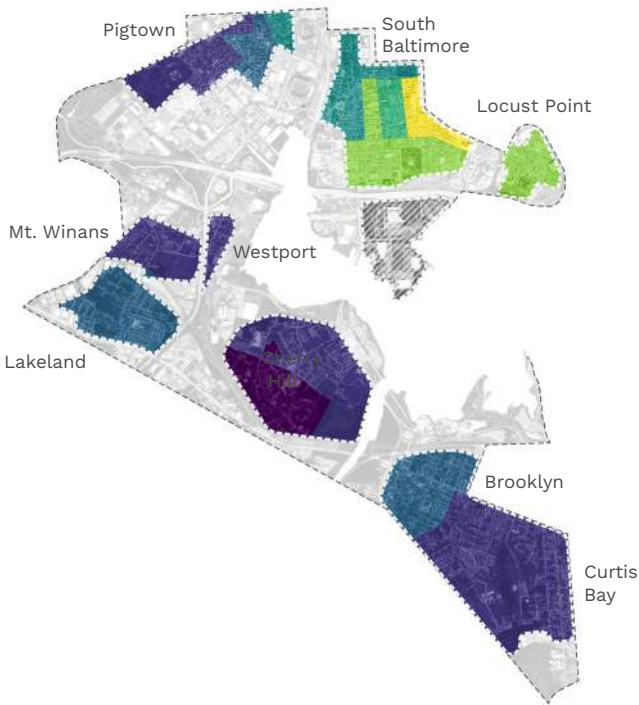
Planning around Northeast SCMAGLEV – It is widely known that a private company has proposed to build a high-speed superconducting magnetic levitation (SCMAGLEV) rail line between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, with a proposed station in Cherry Hill. At the time this Plan was written, it was not clear whether this proposal was likely to move forward. This Plan does not take a position on whether SCMAGLEV should happen, but instead seeks to develop robust strategies for improving Middle Branch neighborhoods irrespective of the final outcome. It goes without saying that, if the SCMAGLEV project does move forward, it should do so in a manner that aligns with the principles and projects detailed in this Plan.

% Population Ages 0-14



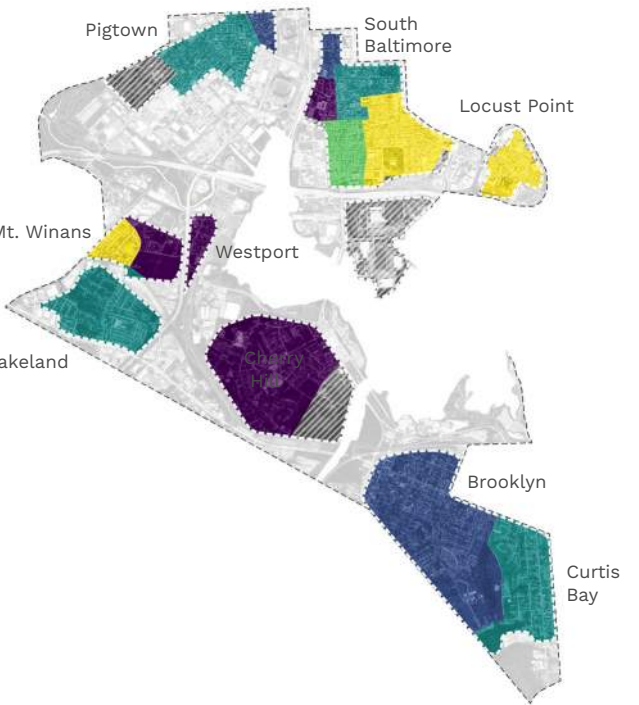
- 25 - 30%
- 20 - 25%
- 15 - 20%
- 10 - 15%
- 5 - 10%

Median Household Income



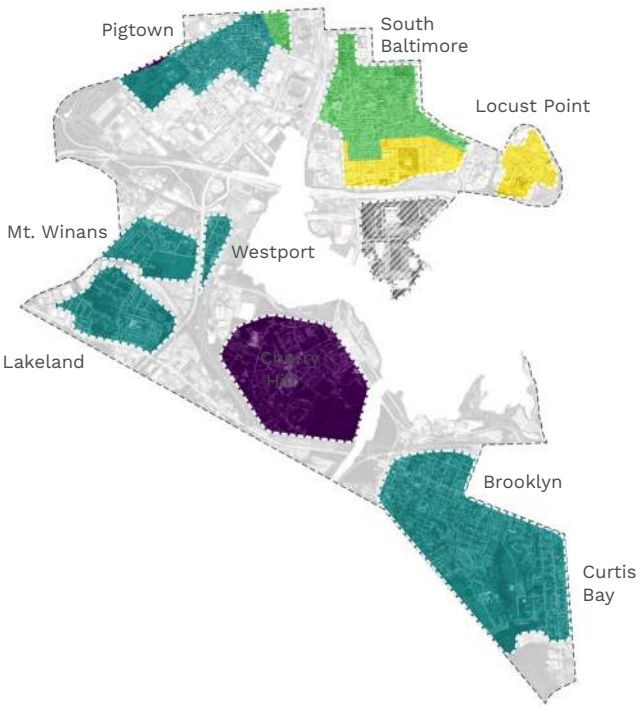
- + \$120K
- \$ 100 - 120K
- \$ 80 - 100K
- \$ 60 - 80K
- \$ 40 - 60K
- \$ 20 - 40K
- \$ 0 - 20K
- +70%

% Rented Homes



- +70%
- 60 - 70%
- 50 - 60%
- 40 - 50%
- 30 - 40%

% Population Without a Vehicle



- 45 - 55%
- 35 - 45%
- 25 - 35%
- 15 - 25%
- 5 - 15%

Equity Initiatives for Youth

Equity in practice is a cornerstone principle of the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan and, as such, has informed the process of generating the Plan itself. For that reason, the project sponsors and consultants team created two programs for involving youth and young professionals in the Plan’s creation – a Community Design Lab for area high school students and a professional fellowship program for graduate students in Morgan State University’s School of Architecture and Planning.

The goal of both programs was to increase awareness of and access to design and planning professions for people of color. Practitioners in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and planner are predominately white, and a majority of these professionals do not belong to the communities that they plan and design for. These programs were intended to increase opportunities for young professionals of color in the planning and design fields, and to spur youth to explore these fields as they consider their future education and career choices.

Community Design Lab

The Community Design Lab is a project-based, career-discovery program that was curated by the Urban Studio, a non-profit environmental design collective based in Washington, DC. The program was intended to cultivate

environmental stewardship and youth agency, which fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment to create sustainable change in communities.

A cohort of six local high school students was selected for their shared connections to the Middle Branch, whether as South Baltimore Residents, attending one of the high schools, or participating in Baltimore Community Rowing. In spring 2022 students met weekly for one-hour “design immersion” sessions at Digital Harbor High School. This after-school course explored the context of the Middle

Members of the Community Design Lab cohort



Branch and principles of urban planning and environmental design, while supporting the students on individual site-based projects. Students earned stipends of \$500 stipend for participating.

In the summer of 2022, eight students received mentoring, leadership training, and time to develop their projects in the “design incubator” phase—a five-week, 25-hour per week program of instruction, career discovery activities, project work, and group reflection. Students received \$1,500 through Baltimore City’s Youthworks program.

Community Design Lab field trip



MSU Graduate Fellowship Program

Part internship and part individual study, the Reimagine Middle Branch fellowship program offered graduate students from Morgan State University’s School of Architecture and Planning a paid opportunity to blend professional practice with self-directed research and design work. During the summer of 2021, the Fellows were hosted by members of the consultant team, who provided guidance on projects and mentorship. Fellows were selected through an application process that prioritized students of color.

Several of the individual research projects became integral to the Plan’s development. These ranged from surveying historic sites around the Middle Branch to developing program assessment tools for the Community Design Lab. Beyond the 10-week fellowship, participants have continued to remain engaged in the Planning process, with some being hired for full-time with consultant team members.

Going forward, the Plan recommends expanding and further developing both of these career-development programs into sustained annual Initiatives.

In addition, the Plan champions sustaining and expanding existing initiatives that have either supported South Baltimore youth directly or funded the providers whose

Morgan State University Fellowship Program



mission it is to serve youth with opportunities for enrichment, youth empowerment and career development.

SBGP Youth Enrichment Grants

SBGP has provided millions of dollars in grants and contracts for youth enrichment and education, including programs run by Raised in Cherry Hill (RICH), Youth Resiliency Institute (YRI), Cherry Hill Eagles, Westport Patriots, Boys and Girls Club of Westport, the Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative (EJJI), Living Classrooms Foundation, and many others. The Plan recommends that this type of funding be continued, and that programs receive support to flourish across South Baltimore.

YouthWorks



City of Baltimore YouthWorks Grants

Since 2015, the City has provided nearly \$4 million in casino local impact grant funds for summer YouthWorks jobs reserved for South Baltimore youth and prioritizing work with community-serving non-profits organizations and institutions. Recently, the Reimagine Middle Branch partners have worked to connect youth with summer employment opportunities related to the Plan and its goals. The Plan recommends that this funding also continue, and that it be leveraged to continue engaging young people in the work of improving the Middle Branch’s ecology, parkshed, and communities.

Equity Initiatives for Communities

A broad goal of Reimagine Middle Branch is to expand economic opportunities for individuals and access to capital for equitable development projects in South Baltimore. **The Plan recommends implementing economic development and anti-displacement strategies that build upon existing initiatives and expand resources for local community development in South Baltimore.** These include:

South Baltimore Employment Connection Center

Baltimore City casino local impact grants have supported this one-stop center, a program of the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED), for employers and jobseekers, located in the Carroll-Camden Industrial Area. The Plan recommends continuing to fund a full-time employment center for the Middle Branch area, and to foster collaborations between this program and community stakeholders on expanding career development programs.

Commercial Corridor Funding

Each year, SBGP provides approximately \$200,000 in baseline funding to the two designated Baltimore City Main Street programs within South Baltimore—Pigtown Main Street and Federal Hill Main Street. These funds support cleaning and greening initiatives, as well as marketing, planning,

business attraction, and corridor activation. The Plan recommends continuing this important support, while also evaluating opportunities to support other commercial corridors that are currently without Main Street programs.

Pigtown Main Street



CDC Operating Support Grants

SBGP has provided \$900,000 over three years as operating support for three local Community Development Corporations (CDCs) working around the Middle Branch. This crucial support has enabled these organizations to grow and expand their

operations and take on more ambitious programming to serve the needs in their communities. Although this program has come to a successful conclusion, the Plan recommends that SBGP consider bringing it back in the future.

Community Development Fund

SBGP and the City have taken strides in 2022 to establish a pool of readily available capital for the various stages of development projects—pre-development costs such as feasibility studies, architectural services, and property acquisition, plus demolition and construction. The new South Baltimore Community Development Fund is a tool to support the City’s coordinated effort to address high vacancy rates in three ways: by supporting renovation of vacant housing, assisting lower-income homeowners to maintain and stay in their houses, and increasing capacity for code enforcement. As part of a comprehensive and sustainable approach to stabilizing neighborhoods, this program prioritizes the following:

- Retention of existing, legacy homeowners with small capital grants or loans to qualifying residents for housing upgrades
- Directly supporting projects sponsored by local CDC’s
- Expanding the capacity of Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community

Development’s (DHCD) for both code compliance and legal services

- Catalyzing investments in larger, mixed-use or multi-family housing developments with crucial pre-development or gap funding

Funding will be provided on a rolling basis to support projects as opportunities present themselves.

Support for Disadvantaged Businesses

Both SBGP and the City of Baltimore are already required by law to comply with the City’s rules for including certified minority business enterprise (MBE’s) and woman-owned business enterprises (WBE’s) in procurement and contracting. However, many small businesses who may be eligible for these opportunities are not certified to

participate, and even certified businesses lack access to the capital they need to grow.

The Plan recommends supporting and expanding upon programs that assist “disadvantaged businesses” (DBE’s, which include M/WBE’s) from South Baltimore to become certified for City, state and federal contracting opportunities. Also needed is continued and expanding bridge-building to connect local businesses with technical assistance and working capital. One example is Conscious Ventures Partners, a business accelerator based in Baltimore Peninsula, which focuses on minority- and woman-owned businesses in Baltimore, specifically supporting “companies that are using technology to break down barriers to access and create a more equitable society, including in the healthcare, food, technology, media, mobility, and education industries.”

Impact Village in Baltimore Peninsula, home to Conscious Ventures Partners



African American Heritage District

South Baltimore holds incredibly rich layers of Black history. **The Plan honors and celebrates Black culture through the creation of a heritage district** highlighting historically significant sites centered around the Middle Branch. It is important that the district both honor history through creative interpretation and storytelling and celebrate culture through art, performance, and creative expression. The district looks to the past while also projecting into the future by:

- Partnering with the developing Mount Clare Museum House, a new black-led historical and research center in Carroll Park.
- Establishing a new Black Sox Park on the Westport waterfront, to include a memorial commemorating the great legends of South Baltimore sports history.
- Acknowledging the unique significance of Cherry Hill as a suburban-style planned community developed for Black people – begun under a federal program that sponsored segregated housing for wartime workers during World War II.
- Locating creative historical

markers that reveal and interpret history in engaging ways.

- Curating arts and culture programming.

The Plan surveyed sites with historic significance across the Middle Branch, illustrated by the map at right, and studied each to understand where there are opportunities for interpretation and investment.

Cherry Hill homes



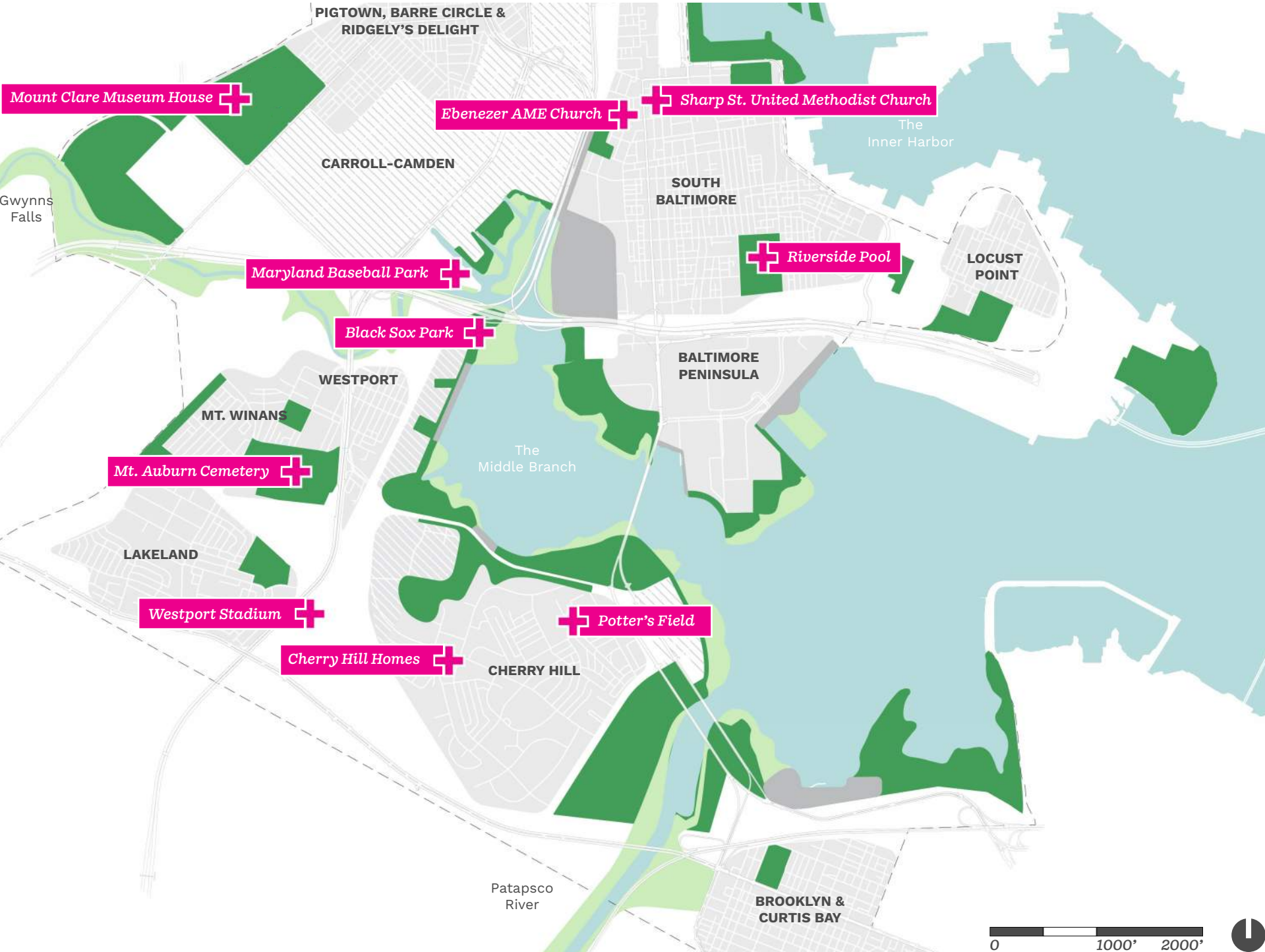
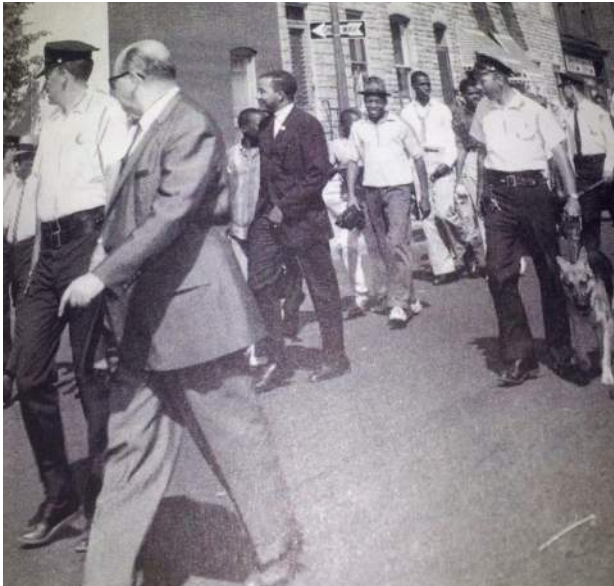
Westport Stadium



Baltimore Black Sox



Civil rights demonstrations



Cultural Placemaking

Ultimately, the African American Heritage District envisioned for this area will honor and celebrate Black culture and history through storytelling, public art, interpretive elements, performances, exhibitions, and creative residencies. This creates new opportunities to develop heritage tourism and attract new capital investment at significant sites.

For example, within Mount Auburn Cemetery this study identified two potential locations for interpretation, if a program of curated visitor experience were developed there. One is a grove a of mature trees at the southwest corner, and the other is the cemetery’s highpoint, which affords clear views to the water and downtown. Projects like these would be developed in partnership with the stewards of these locations and with guidance from local residents.

Case Study: Art on the Atlanta Beltline

Art on the Atlanta Beltline is a public arts and culture initiative, established in partnership with the Atlanta Beltline, with a mission to make art accessible to all. The program began prior to the completion of the Beltline, with the aim of encouraging

community members to explore the site in its interim state, and grew into a broader program following the completion of a Strategic Art Plan several years later. All events are free and open to the public, and come in a range of creative formats.

Murals



Performances



Creative Residencies



Permanent Commissions



Mount Auburn Cemetery site opportunities



Mount Auburn Cemetery



Development Projects

In addition to area-wide equity initiatives, the Plan recommends helping to catalyze site-specific development projects and opportunities. Some highlights below show these kinds of projects reinforce the vision of Reimagine Middle Branch.

- **Patapsco Pointe** – the former Patapsco Elementary School in Cherry Hill is being developed for mixed-income housing by Cherry Hill Development Corporation.
- **New Era Academy** – also in Cherry Hill, this high school will be made available for development. Cherry Hill Strong seeks to build new housing and a small high school at this site, following the best practices of the Purpose Built Communities model.
- **Pigtown Homeownership Zone** –this area of rowhouses has a higher rate of vacancy and abandonment than other parts of Pigtown. Through a collaboration of Southwest Partnership, SBGP, and the City, houses are targeted for acquisition and rehab to create affordable home ownership opportunities.
- **Net-Zero Homes in Curtis Bay** – South Baltimore Community Land Trust has acquired land and is raising funds to build “net-zero” houses that will produce their own energy and anchor the neighborhood.

- **Redevelopment and Reuse of Vacant Housing Authority Land** – Developments owned by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) in South Baltimore– Cherry Hill Homes, including Fisher’s Cove, Westport Homes, and Brooklyn Homes—contain vacant land where deteriorated buildings were demolished. The Plan recommends that HABC, the tenants’ councils, and communities collaborate on interim and long-term reuse plans for these parcels.
- **2800 Harmon Avenue** – This city-owned, former school parcel has been optioned to Harbor West Collaborative. The community envisions a mix of community use, housing and permanent open space.

The Plan also recommends examples of four projects – **marina, plant nursery, marketplace,** and **tournament center** – in or near the Middle Branch’s waterfront parks. Projects like these will help draw people and activities to the waterfront, while generating revenue to support operations and maintenance. They also create opportunities for jobs, education and entrepreneurship to benefit communities.

In the following chapter (Chapter 6 – A Walk Around the Middle Branch) the Plan illustrates development scenarios such as these and others to spark conversation, acknowledging

all have owners who will ultimately make their own choices. For example, the Plan echoes the Cherry Hill Transformation Plan and current zoning transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning at Cherry Hill Light Rail station, but it does not call for removing existing businesses.

Vacant or under-built parcels owned by MedStar Harbor Hospital west of Hanover Street, as well as the City-owned parking lots north and south of the hospital, offer opportunities for development. However, these scenarios must be coordinated with the owners’ long-term goals, the daily needs of operating the hospital, and residents’ concerns about new development “walling-off” of the community from the waterfront. Similarly, redevelopment of the Wheelabrator Incinerator assumes a host of policy decisions and planning that are being considered at the regional level.

All of the projects presented in the Plan assume coordination with community representatives to prevent undue burdens on existing residents. For example, new development within the Hanover/Potee Street corridor or along the Westport Waterfront must preserve views and facilitate connections between existing residential areas and the water.

Middle Branch Marina

Two local non-profit organizations, the Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative (EJJI) and Minorities in Aquaculture (MIA), in partnership with University of Maryland College of Environmental Sciences (UMCES) Institute for Marine Ecology and Technology (IMET), recently began leasing space at the Middle Branch Marina. Their plans include hosting environmental education and career development programs and studying the feasibility of bringing commercial aquaculture to the Middle Branch.

Although the marina is private property, and the ultimate choice will be the owner’s, **the Plan supports this programming and recommends further improvements to the marina to allow the expansion and further development of their endeavors.** Ultimately, the Plan envisions a publicly accessible and multi-purpose marina accommodating education, scientific research, recreational fishing, and commercial aquaculture alongside rental slips and the live-aboard community.

From a permitting perspective, partial demolition of deteriorated docks will allow for adding new “overwater coverage” (or structures shading the surface of the water) elsewhere.

--- Future Uses

a

EJJI

b

Private

c

Demolish

1

Outdoor Classroom

2

Boardwalk

3

Oyster Shack

4

Offices

5

Aquaculture

6

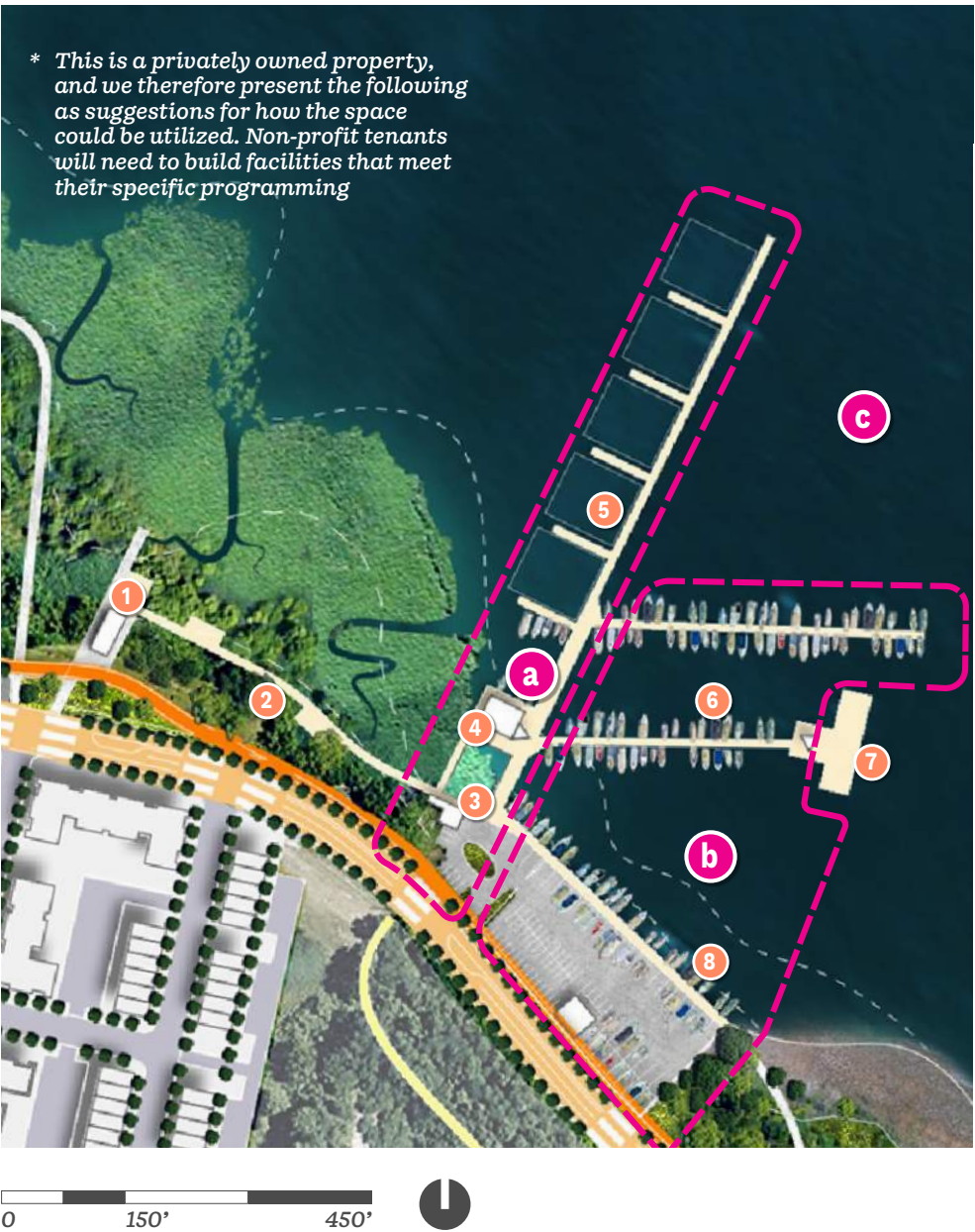
Day Docks

7

Fishing Pier

8

Live Aboard



Native Plant Nursery

The Plan recommends establishing a Native Plant Nursery, managed and staffed by South Baltimore residents, to supply provides opportunities to supply park improvement projects and Middle Branch communities with locally grown plants and locally made building materials. As the business grows and matures, it could potentially include an organic recycling and composting center as well. The nursery could house job training and workforce development programs in the green building and landscaping trades.,

Potential project partners for the nursery include Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, Blue Water Baltimore, and Tree Baltimore.

A case study of a similar nursery and center in Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park offers insights on scale, production, operations, and workforce development opportunities.

Case Study: Greenland Nursery - Philadelphia

Site Facilities

- Greenhouse, Cold Frames, Hoop House, Outdoor Container Growing Areas

Production

- Producing 75 species of trees & shrubs per year
- Trees take 2-5 years to get to a finished size
- Finished size: 2-7 gallon pots, 3-6 feet tall

Greenland Nursery, Philadelphia



Site Facilities - Plan View



RMB Project Needs

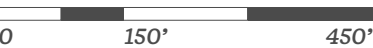
- 3,500 Street Trees
- 375,000 Wetland Plant Plugs
- 1,500 Canopy Trees
- 12,000 Native Shrubs
- 500,000 Understory Gallon Pots

Capacity

- 1,000 Trees
- 6,000 Understory plants
- 100,000 Wetland Plugs (In Greenhouse)

Proposed Nursery Facilities

- 1 Visitor Parking
- 2 Office + Classroom Building
- 3 Greenhouses
- 4 Truck Parking
- 5 Growing Area



Waterfront Marketplace

The existing Middle Branch Boathouse is already bursting at the seams, and growing demand for waterfront activities calls for planning for a new boathouse facility. This creates a chance to repurpose the existing boathouse in a manner that activates the waterfront and generates revenue through hospitality and leasing.

The Plan recommends establishing a waterfront marketplace that will offer the opportunity to activate the waterfront by drawing local residents and visitors to purchase culturally authentic goods, art, and foods from an assortment of vendors. The marketplace should ensure a certain percentage of vending kiosks are reserved for neighborhood-based businesses and provide rental discounts, as well as connect vendors to other business development resources. The marketplace could start informally with vending opportunities such as kiosks and seasonal markets and grow into a more formal marketplace over time. The City could also consider the possibility of a carefully managed alcohol license, to activate the space and generate revenue while maintaining a clean and family-friendly environment.

Food trucks, in particular, offer an immediate opportunity for economic development and activation of waterfront open spaces, without any additional investments in infrastructure or public realm improvements. **The Plan recommends initiating a seasonal food truck**

program in Middle Branch Park to activate the park, offer local businesses development opportunities, and set the stage for future development of the Waterfront Marketplace.

The future One Westport development is another location where a marketplace could thrive, creating an active destination on the water that leverages new residential development to support local businesses and entrepreneurs. **The Plan recommends incorporating commercial opportunities for local vendors into the future Westport Waterfront Park’s programming and public realm design.**

Potential partners include the Black Yield Institute, the Youth Resiliency Institute, and the Baltimore Farmers’ Market.



A case study of a similar market in Tulsa, called Mother Road Market, offers insights on local vendors and business incubation in relation to market development. Mother Road Market features 17 food businesses and five retail businesses currently renting permanent spaces, as well as three pop-up spaces. If anyone moves out, there’s 150 and counting alumni from the Kitchen 66 Launch Program who can step right into their spot. Fifty of those alumni also actively rent the shared commercial kitchen at Mother Road Market. A majority of Kitchen 66 alumni are women, and the spring 2021 cohort of 9 were all women or people of color.

Mother Road Market - Tulsa, Oklahoma

About
Mother Road Market is a nonprofit organization providing a vibrant and financial-risk-free space supporting local food & drink, retail entrepreneurs and community gathering.

Space

- About 26,000 sqft
- Food Vendors, Shops, Event Patio, and Demonstration Kitchen/Classroom



Tournament Center

Building from the recently completed Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center in Reedbird Park, **the Plan recommends building a new tournament center with more multi-purpose fields to expand the park’s active recreation facilities, and provide the opportunity to host major athletic events and tournaments.** Large tournaments also have the potential to generate a significant amount of revenue for the to support operations, maintenance and programming of park facilities.

Legend

- Cherry Hill Fitness & Wellness Center
- Tournament Center Addition

- 1 Relocated DPW Site
- 2 Public Parking Lot
- 3 Cherry Hill Fitness & Wellness Center
- 4 Additional Fields
- 5 Connection to Patapsco Regional Greenway



MedStar Harbor Hospital Parking Lot – North

North and South of MedStar Harbor Hospital in Cherry Hill sit two large surface parking lots. The land is owned by the city and leased to the hospital. As with the incinerator site, the Plan suggests multiple scenarios as a way to stimulate dialogue between the City, MedStar, and the community. Obviously, any future development would need the support of all parties and would need to be designed so as not to interfere with critical hospital operations.

The south lot will remain parking, to service the hospital, community and the Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center. At the north lot, a visible and well-connected site near the base of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge, the Plan suggests two alternatives – a civic use, such as library or other community facility, or a low-scale commercial development to support the community and the hospital and bring more activity to the waterfront. Development here

should be low density with limited heights to maintain views to the water and preserve a sense of openness around the park.

Since the parking lot is currently leased by the hospital and serves the park as well, implementation of these recommendations would require MedStar’s approval and careful coordination to prevent any interference with hospital operations or functions in the park.

Site for development opportunity



Option A: Mixed-use development with planted parking lot



Option B: Civic building with park space and planted parking lot



Wheelabrator Incinerator

There has been ongoing public dialogue about whether it is feasible to eventually remove the Wheelabrator Incinerator and repurpose the site. While this involves a complex set of issues, this conversation is one the City and community members are actively engaged in. This is the time to be thinking about the future of the facility, the site, and waste management in Baltimore ahead of 2031 when the current operating lease expires.

The Wheelabrator Incinerator, highly visible from many points around South Baltimore, sits at the confluence of the Gwynns Falls

and Middle Branch. While an integral part of the regional solid waste strategy, it is also a source of air pollution, creating an environmental and public health burden on surrounding communities. The site is also historically significant, once home to the Maryland Baseball Stadium and Baltimore Giants Negro League baseball team. As such, it is critical to consider alternative uses for the site.

The Plan suggests multiple scenarios as a way to support a collaborative dialogue between the City, the facility’s operator, and

community members about the future of the site. **The four alternatives shown here all combine new development with significant waterfront green space and trail connections to surrounding Middle Branch parks.** The Plan acknowledges that alternate uses for this site will require cautious and informed decisions about the regional solid waste strategy, which cannot be taken lightly. Additionally, these scenarios also show opportunities on what is currently the Greyhound bus terminal to the north, which was originally intended as a temporary facility.

Existing incinerator site



Option A: Baseball field



Option B: Ecological research center



Option C: Mixed-use development



Public Realm Guidelines for Future Development

While much of the Middle Branch waterfront is public, there are several large privately-owned parcels, many of which are currently under development. The Plan recommends the following public realm guidelines to ensure private developments reflect the spirit of the four equity frameworks. These include:

- 1. **Urban Connectivity:** Developments should physically connect to their immediate surroundings by extending the existing street grid into and through the development site and maintaining view corridors through the site to the water.
- 2. **Prioritize Transit:** Developments should create easily navigable, direct, and generous public realm connections between transit stops and the waterfront.
- 3. **Shoreline Continuity:** Developments should connect to and continue Middle Branch recreational trails (as detailed in Chapter 4 of this report) and restore the shoreline (per guidelines included in Chapter 3) along the full length of available shoreline frontage.
- 4. **Orientation to the Water:** Development should orient buildings to the water and find opportunities for retail,

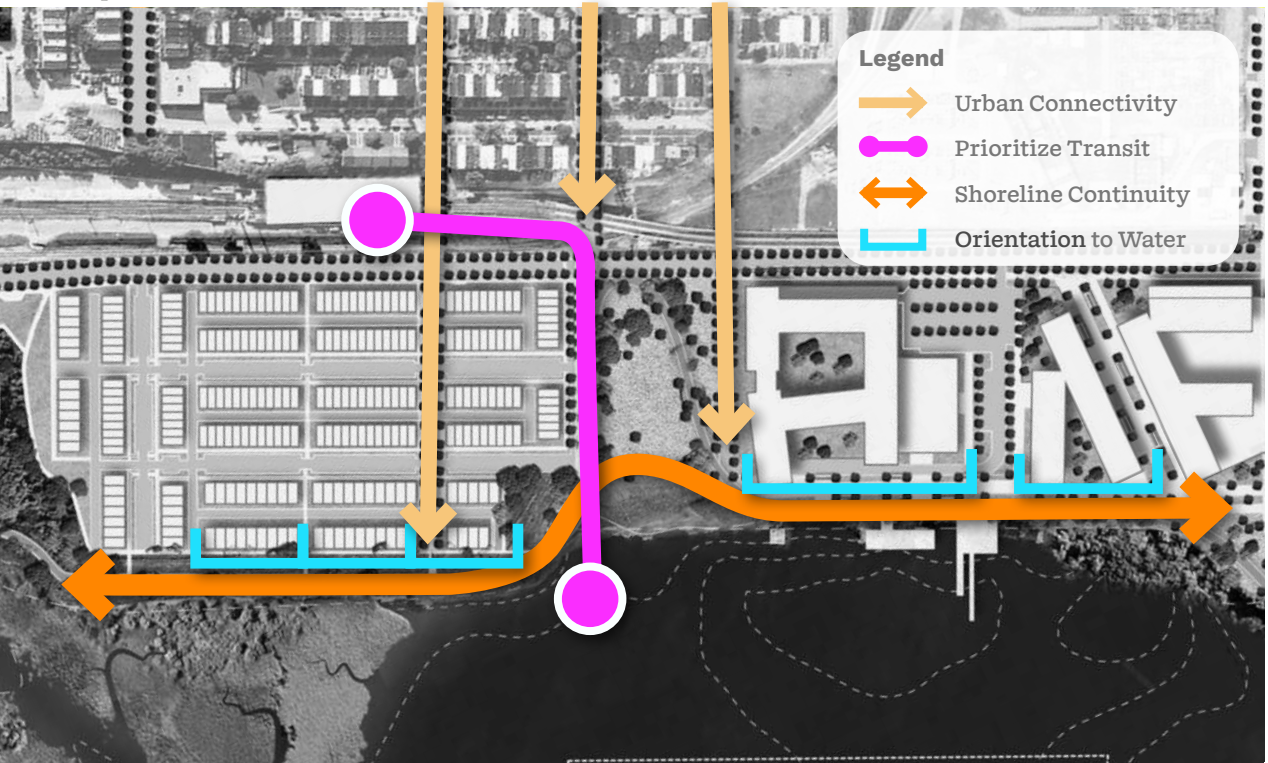
commercial, and other active uses along frontages facing the water or adjacent waterfront parks.

In some cases, such as the Baltimore Peninsula (Port Covington) Master Plan, these principles have already been put into practice for the past several years. However, it is worth

looking at specific examples of how they can be applied in the future.

These guidelines are therefore illustrated in relation to two Middle Branch development sites: the One Westport development, which is currently underway on the Middle Branch, and

One Westport Waterfront

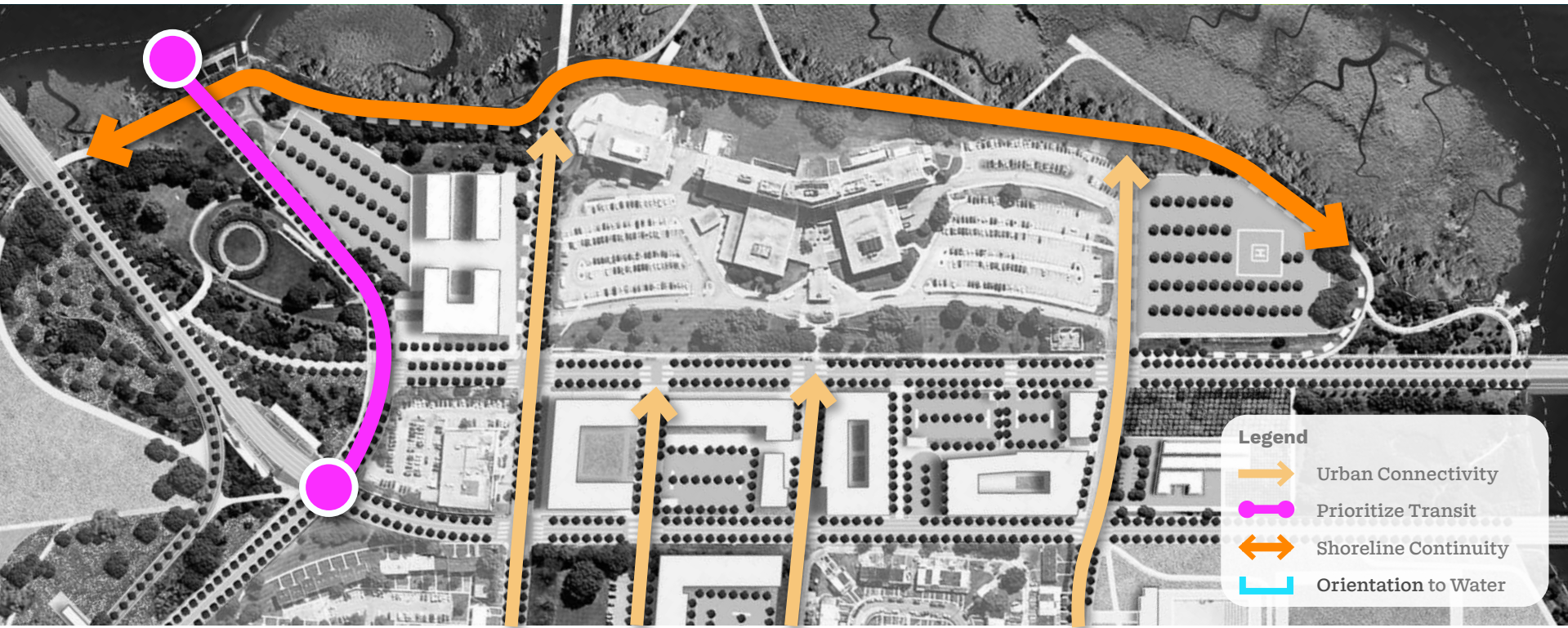


the Hanover-Potee Corridor, which has been an ongoing topic of conversation. Obviously, both of these locations are privately owned, and any future development would need to be led by the property owners in partnership with the community.

The Hanover-Potee Corridor Plan is in keeping with the Cherry Hill Transformation Plan but does not call for the relocation of any current uses. It also assumes that building heights will not block existing community views of the water and will not create a new

barrier between the neighborhood and the waterfront. Any development on hospital property, or the adjacent parking lots, would require extensive coordination with MedStar to ensure no disruption of hospital services.

Hanover-Potee Corridor



Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

Food Concession featuring Local Vendors in Middle Branch Park



Avoiding gentrification and displacement requires thoughtful planning. It means spending resources to benefit low-income communities and establishing systems that empower those communities. More specifically, equitable economic development around the Middle Branch requires three core elements.

Cherry Hill Fitness and Wellness Center

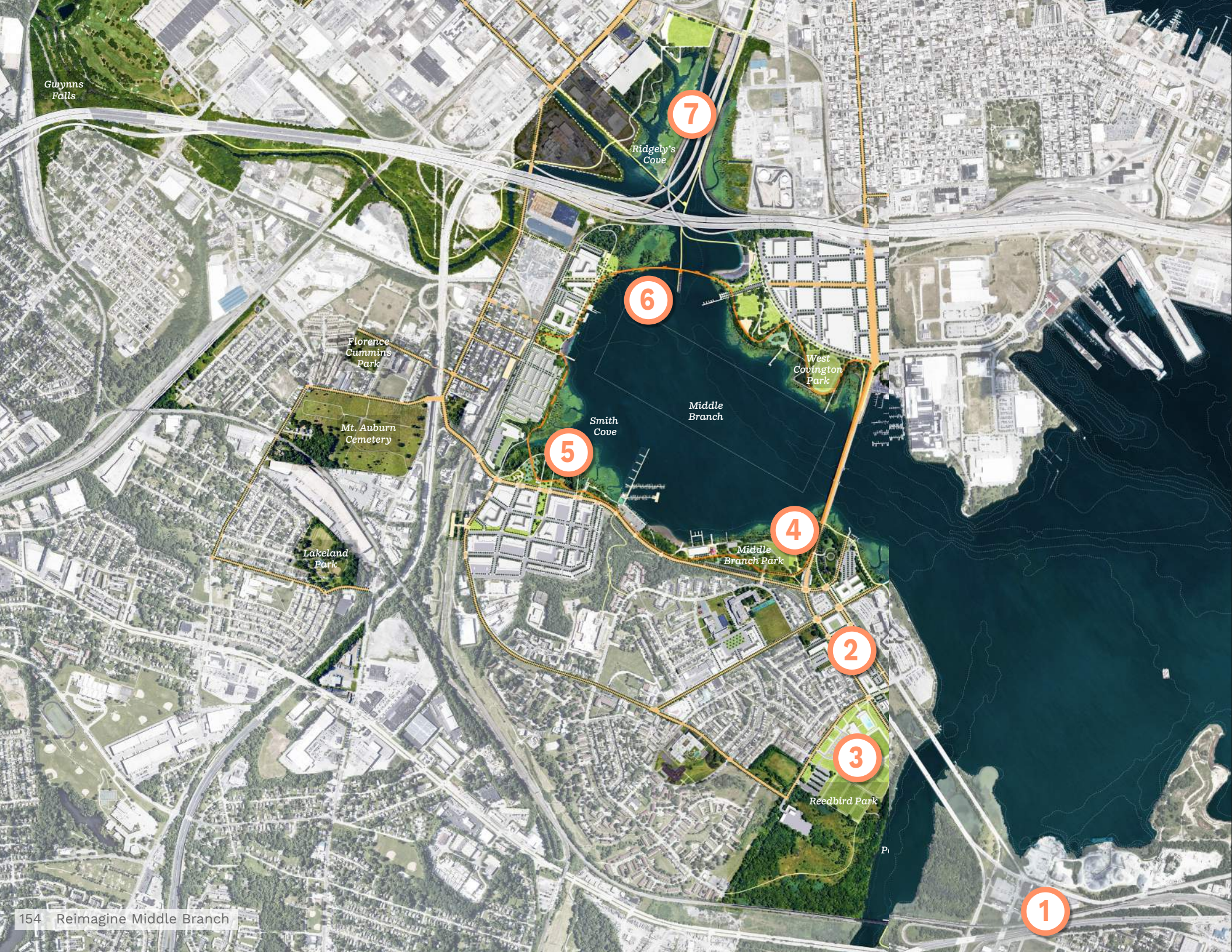


First, it requires **equity initiatives** that apply broadly across South Baltimore, such as subsidies for local CDCs and Main Street commercial corridors. The City and SBGP have already been using casino grant funds to support such efforts, which places South Baltimore in a position to build upon a foundation of success.

Second, it calls for site-specific **equitable economic development projects**. Ranging from a native plant nursery to affordable housing rehabs, these require teamwork and collaboration. **Public realm guidelines** for future development will ensure that privately developed projects do not inadvertently exclude or alienate the existing community.

Lastly, this requires **pipelines or ladders of opportunity**. This includes linking job seekers and nearby employers in healthcare and port-related industrial sectors – and building skills-based training programs that help employers bring on new workers. It takes supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses with permitting, access to capital and M/W/DBE certifications, and requires providing the education and empowerment that youth require to pursue opportunities.

Equitable Development: Summary of Recommendations	
4.1	Continue funding established equity initiatives including YouthWorks grants, South Baltimore Employment Connection Center, Commercial Corridor (“Main Streets”) support, and the South Baltimore Community Development Fund.
4.2	Create “pipelines” or “ladders” of opportunity for residents to access nearby jobs in South Baltimore, such as in healthcare and Port-related industrial sectors.
4.3	Expand two educational pilot programs, the Morgan State University Fellowship and the Community Design Lab, into sustained annual initiatives.
4.4	Support disadvantaged businesses around the Middle Branch, helping them to become M/W/DBE certified and connecting them with funding opportunities.
4.5	Utilize South Baltimore Community Development Fund, a new mechanism tailored to leveraging equitable investments in housing, businesses and community assets.
4.6	Honor and celebrate African American culture through creation of a heritage district.
4.7	Support & catalyze site-specific developments by fostering collaboration among communities, property owners, financing entities, local government, anchor tenants, and user groups.
4.8	Plan anchor projects in or adjacent to parks to activate the waterfront, support O&M costs, and create employment, education and business opportunities for residents.
4.9	Support environmental education and aquaculture programs of local non-profits Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative and Minorities in Aquaculture operating at Middle Branch Marina.
4.10	Establish a native plant nursery, managed and staffed by South Baltimore residents, to supply park improvement projects and Middle Branch communities with locally grown plants and locally made building materials.
4.11	Start seasonal food truck program, supporting local business growth and laying groundwork for year-round Waterfront Marketplace selling culturally authentic food, products and art.
4.12	Add additional multi-purpose fields to Reedbird Park to enable hosting regional athletic events and tournaments.



A WALK AROUND THE MIDDLE BRANCH

The four equity frameworks come together to create the long-term design vision that integrates new investments in parks, programs, transportation networks, and future development with existing assets and ongoing development projects being led by others. This unified vision is illustrated in a “walk around” the Middle Branch, detailing these plans neighborhood by neighborhood.

The maps on the following pages highlight developments in each sub-area that are Reimagine Middle Branch or “RMB” Projects being led by the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership and the City along with myriad partners; “Stakeholder Projects” being led by

other organizations and property owners; and “Existing Assets” being leveraged to create new synergies.

Beginning along the southern shore, the walk moves north, highlighting the following areas:

1. Brooklyn and Curtis Bay
2. Reedbird Park and Cherry Hill Homes
3. Hanover-Potee Corridor
4. Middle Branch Park
5. Middle Branch Marina and Smith Cove
6. Westport, Baltimore Peninsula, and East-West Pedestrian Bridge
7. Ridgely's Cove



Brooklyn and Curtis Bay

Where Industry Meets Nature

The walk begins in Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, where roads and infrastructure serving the Port of Baltimore and related industries dominate the landscape, and access to the water and to the rest of South Baltimore is limited. The vision for the Brooklyn Waterfront centers on restoring the shoreline and improving access for residents, while maintaining freight access for Port facilities to the east.

The restoration of the Middle Branch’s green shoreline began over a decade ago at **Masonville Cove**, an environmental education center and the nation’s first **Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership**. In 2007, the **Maryland Port Administration (MPA)** oversaw restoration of this area, which now serves as a model for strategic partnerships, environmental stewardship, and community-centered programming. Today Masonville Cove is a valued community and environmental asset. While the Plan seeks to connect Masonville Cove to the larger network of open spaces, this facility will continue to be managed by its unique operating partnership.

West of Masonville Cove, the Patapsco Marsh project is underway to construct new wetlands and living shorelines at the mouth of the Patapsco River (South Branch)-- part of Phase 1 of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (MBRI). The proposed trail network connects Masonville Cove to the Patapsco Marsh and extends to Reedbird Island, a natural area that is inaccessible today. Similar in character to Masonville Cove, these parks constitute a significant natural and recreational resource with several miles of trails and multiple water access points.

RMB Projects

Stakeholder Projects

Existing Assets

1

Hanover-Potee Corridor Improvements

2

Patapsco Marsh (MBRI Phase 1)

3

Reedbird Island Boat Launch & Woodland Trail

4

Brooklyn Transit Hub at MTA Park & Ride

5

Brooklyn “Main Street” Initiative

6

Garrett Park Improvements

7

MPA’s Proposed Masonville Cove Connector

8

Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center

9

Patapsco Avenue Streetscape Project

10

Farring-Baybrook Recreation Center

11

William J. Myers Pavilion

Neighborhood Connectors

Complete Street

Baybrook Connector



RMB Projects

Stakeholder Projects

Existing Assets

1

Hanover-Potee Corridor Improvements

2

Patapsco Marsh (MBRI Phase 1)

3

Reedbird Island Boat Launch & Woodland Trail

4

Brooklyn Transit Hub at MTA Park & Ride

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William J. Myers Pavilion

Neighborhood Connectors

Complete Street

Baybrook Connector

* Changes to roads are conceptual, designed to inspire conversation. In practice these will require traffic studies to balance the needs of all users, including trucks.

Farring-Baybrook Park south in Curtis Bay

156 Reimagine Middle Branch

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Brooklyn and Curtis Bay

New multi-modal lanes on the “Little Hanover Street Bridge” represent the completion of the Baybrook Connector Trail. This project, sponsored by the Greater Baybrook Alliance and MedStar Harbor Hospital, creates a protected route following the East Coast Greenway from the BWI Trail in Anne Arundel County, through Brooklyn, to Reedbird Park and the Middle Branch Shoreline Trail in Cherry Hill.

A transformed intersection at Frankfurst Avenue and the Route 2 corridor will facilitate a southbound turn onto Potee Street, enabling freight-truck traffic that supports industrial uses and the Masonville and Fairfield port facilities to reach I-95 via Patapsco Avenue and South Caton Avenue (Exit 50).

Complete Streets treatments on Hanover Street, East Patapsco Avenue, West Bay Avenue, Virginia Avenue / 6th Street, Church Street, and Pennington Avenue create safe and welcoming routes to the waterfront and within neighborhoods.

These corridors connect the trails and restored habitat areas of Brooklyn’s waterfront to its “Main Streets,” Garrett Park, and Brooklyn Homes, as well as to Farring-Baybrook Park and Rec Center, William J. Myers Pavilion, Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School and Benjamin Franklin HS in Curtis Bay.

Masonville Cove Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership



Hanover-Potee Corridor looking south towards Brooklyn & Curtis Bay



** Changes to roads are conceptual, designed to inspire conversation. In practice these will require traffic studies to balance the needs of all users, including trucks.*

Reedbird Park and Cherry Hill Homes

Middle Branch’s Destination for Sports & Recreation

At the water’s edge, a trail fronts another wetland area constructed in Phase 1 of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (MBRI), extending from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge to the Patapsco River (South Branch). This marsh will provide critical flood protection to MedStar Harbor Hospital and adjacent roadways. The trail connects Middle Branch Park to the newly completed Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center (2022) and is envisioned to connect to the Patapsco Regional Greenway and Southwest Area Park in Baltimore County.

This zone is proposed for two place-based equitable development projects: a **Native Plant Nursery** and a **Tournament Center**. The nursery will employ local residents to grow plant material for wetlands, parks, and streetscape projects. The Tournament Center will host local and regional sports events and generate revenue for maintenance, operations, and programming of park facilities. Long-term plans envision expansion by collaborating with the City on relocating the Solid Waste Drop-off Center.

Vacant land at Cherry Hill Homes, a development of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC), offers opportunities for collaboration on interim uses, such as expanding the nursery’s production area, and new mixed-income permanent housing. The adjacent Patapsco Point development proposes housing on a former elementary school site.

- RMB Projects
- Stakeholder Projects
- Existing Assets
- 1

 Patapsco Point Mixed-Income Housing Development
- 2

 Cherry Hill Homes (HABC) Land for New Housing and/or Interim Uses
- 3

 Relocated City (DPW) Solid Waste Residential Drop-Off Center
- 4

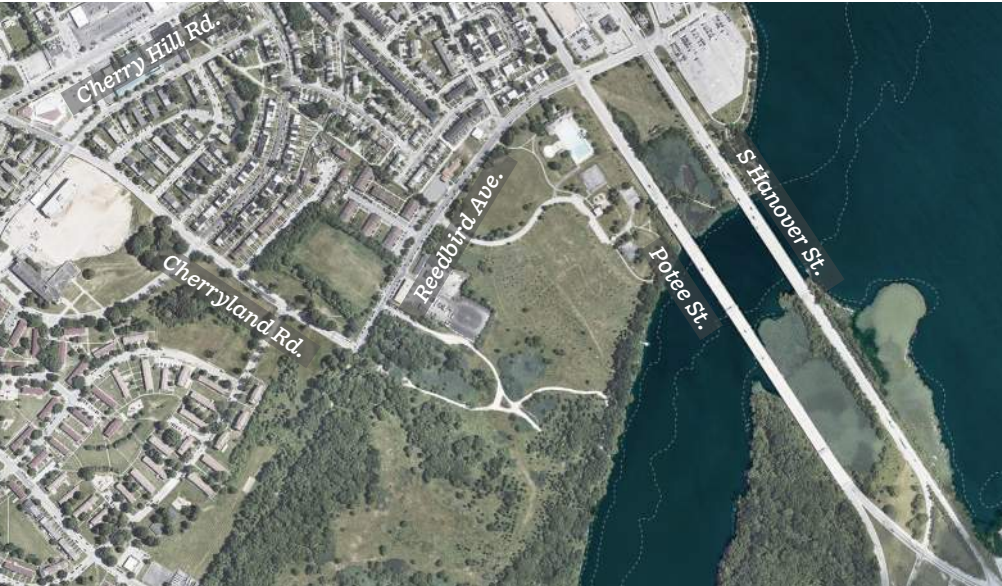
 Tournament Center
- 5

 Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center
- 6

 BGE Field
- 7

 Native Plant Nursery

- Neighborhood Connectors
- Complete Street
- Baybrook Connector



Hanover-Potee Corridor

Connecting Cherry Hill to the Water

In Cherry Hill, the Plan envisions the Hanover-Potee Corridor as a lively, urban, and walkable extension of the Cherry Hill neighborhood, creating connections and continuity that link the neighborhood to MedStar Harbor Hospital and the waterfront.

The layout builds on recommendations of the 2020 Cherry Hill Transformation Plan and includes new equitable mixed-use development on vacant land between Hanover and Potee Streets and south of Potee. Echoing the Transformation Plan, a combination of mixed-income housing, healthcare, and a grocery store is recommended. The buildings’ bulk and form are envisioned as low to mid-rise and mixed-use: at most three to four stories of residential over a base of commercial-retail or professional services. Building heights are limited to preserve existing views to the water from Cherry Hill and to avoid creating a new wall between the neighborhood and the waterfront. Sidewalks and new local streets integrate with the existing block pattern to maximize connectivity and preserve view corridors.

The Plan seeks to strengthen and complement the mixed-use development with redesigned Hanover and Potee Street corridors that reduce driver speeds and improve safety for pedestrians and bikes. With careful design and integrated traffic analysis, this vision is possible while still accommodating truck traffic. Additional details regarding recommendations for the Hanover-Potee Corridor can be found in Chapter 3 of the Design Vision (Volume 1) and in the Resource Guides (Volume 4).

RMB Projects

Stakeholder Projects

Existing Assets

1

Multi-Modal Improvements to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge

2

Broening Park Boat Launch & Fishing Pier

3

Greening and Civic Use on City Parking Lots

4

Water Transit Stop

5

Harbor Hospital Marsh (MBRI), Boardwalks, and Outdoor Classroom

6

Potential Redevelopment Site at Southern District BPD Station

7

Hanover-Potee Corridor Mixed-Use Development

8

Mixed-Income Development & Small HS at New Era/Carter G. Woodson BCPS Site

9

Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center

10

BGE Field

11

Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The Loop Trail

Neighborhood Connectors

Complete Street

Baybrook Connector



Hanover-Potee Corridor

The two City-owned surface parking lots north and south of MedStar Harbor Hospital offer opportunities for benefits sought by the community. Rather than a single recommendation, the Plan suggests multiple scenarios: “greening” of the lots for new pedestrian connections to the waterfront and for stormwater management; providing overflow parking for facilities at Reedbird Park; and new low-rise development on the northern lot for civic or commercial uses complementing the park.

The Baltimore Police Department’s Southern District headquarters can be considered for redevelopment in the longer term. BPD and other public safety functions can be integrated with other uses, creating an attractive gateway from the bridge and Waterview Avenue.

New wetlands wrapping the end of Middle Branch Park and Harbor Hospital will be constructed in Phase 1 of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (MBRI) between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge and “Little Hanover Street Bridge.” Visitors will experience this “Harbor Hospital Marsh” via boardwalks and an outdoor classroom along the shoreline trail.

Outdoor Classroom at Harbor Hospital Marsh



Cherry Hill Fitness & Wellness Center



BGE Field



Hanover-Potee Corridor looking north towards Cherry Hill



** Changes to roads are conceptual, designed to inspire conversation. In practice these will require traffic studies to balance the needs of all users, including trucks.*

Middle Branch Park

The Event-filled Heart of the Middle Branch

West of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge, Middle Branch Park is the recreational and social heart of the Middle Branch, with piers for boating and fishing, a large open lawn, and a public boathouse. In response to feedback from the community, the Plan builds on and expands what is already great about the park by adding and improving spaces for events and festivals, parties and family gatherings, fishing, and boating. New features include:

- A sandy beach offering easy water access for kayaks and canoes. Until water quality conditions improve, swimming will not be allowed here or anywhere else in the Middle Branch.
- A new boathouse and rowing piers to accommodate and encourage growth of boating programs facilitated by Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks and Baltimore Community Rowing.
- Converting the existing boathouse into a food concession featuring local vendors, while preserving space for community events.
- A hilltop playground that will be a destination play space surrounded by native meadow plantings, taking advantage of the park’s hilly landscape to feature slides, climbing courses, and lookouts.
- A new event pavilion offering a gathering space for the community.
- A reconfigured event lawn orienting views across the water and sightlines to downtown and offering spaces for both large and small events. A stage at the base of the lawn will host live performances and movies.

RMB Projects

Stakeholder Projects

Existing Assets

1

Sandy Beach for Canoe/Kayak Programming

2

New Boathouse & Rowing Piers

3

Existing Boathouse Retrofit

4

Event Pavilion & Picnic Area

5

Playground

6

Expanded Parking Area

7

Pavilion/Overlook

8

New Crossing at Waterview & Seamon Avenues

9

Event Lawn & Stage

10

New Crossing at Hanover Street

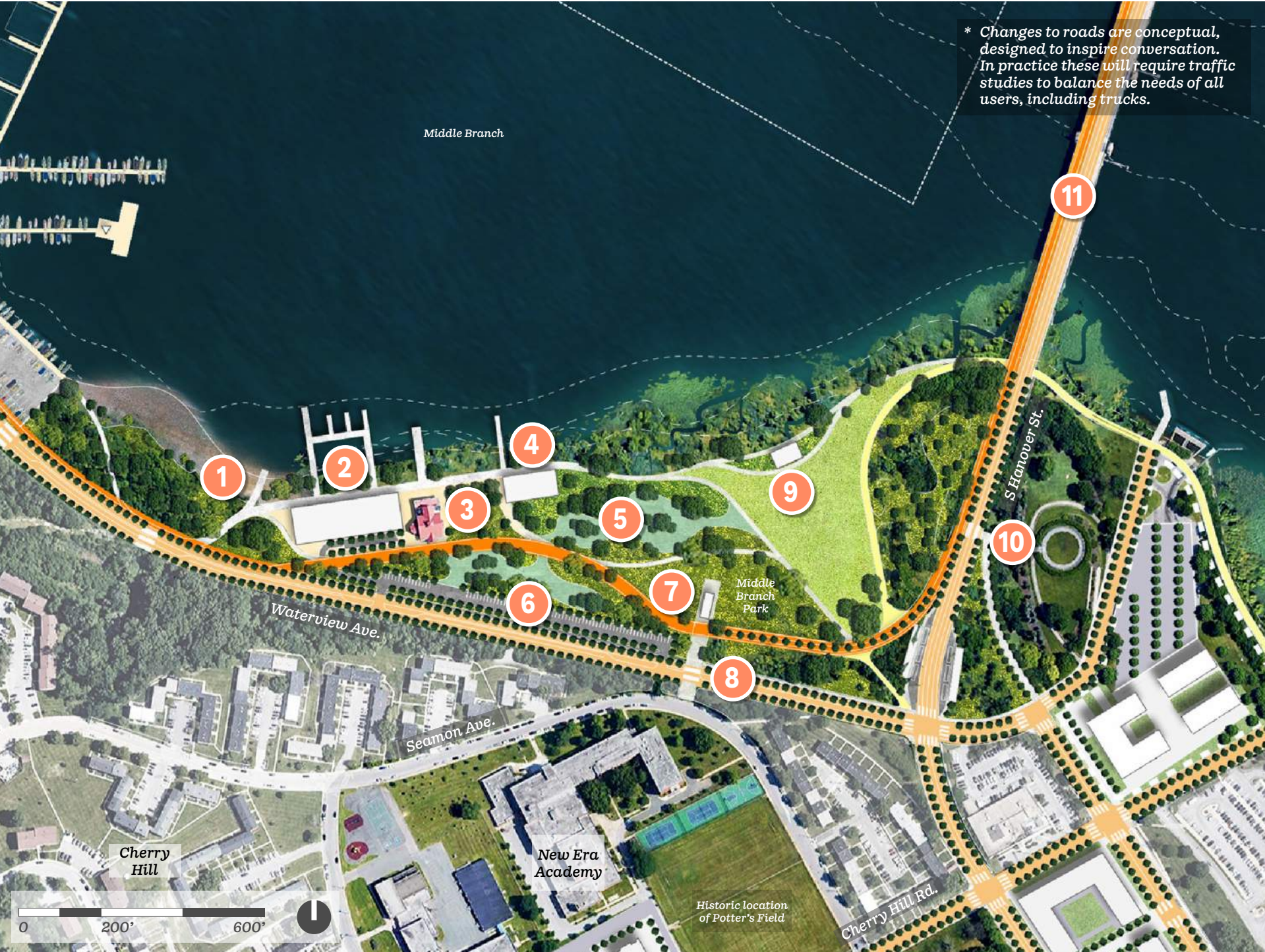
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Multi-Modal Improvements to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge

The Loop Trail

Neighborhood Connectors

Complete Street



Middle Branch Park

Details regarding Middle Branch Park programming are illustrated in the bird’s-eye view at right and in renderings on the following pages. Additional details can be found in Chapter 4 of the Design Vision (Volume 1).

Middle Branch Park is difficult to access on foot today, separated from neighboring Cherry Hill by high-speed traffic on Waterview Avenues. The Plan includes new sidewalks and bike lanes as well as a new intersection at Waterview and Seamon Avenue. This intersection, along with new trails and paths, creates a new “front door” to the park, reorienting and prioritizing access for the Cherry Hill community. Additional details regarding access to and connectivity with Middle Branch Park can be found in Chapter 3 of the Design Vision (Volume 1).



Middle Branch Park

** Changes to roads are conceptual, designed to inspire conversation. In practice these will require traffic studies to balance the needs of all users, including trucks.*

New park entrance at intersection of Seamon and Waterview Avenues



Loop Trail in Middle Branch Park



Middle Branch Park

Hilltop playground



Event pavilion & picnic area



Event lawn & stage



Retrofitted existing boathouse



New boathouse & sandy kayak/canoe beach



Middle Branch Marina and Smith Cove

Ecology, Exploration, and Entrepreneurship on the Water

The vision for Smith Cove combines native woodland and restored marsh with family-oriented activities. Plans include boardwalk trails intersecting the Loop Trail and connecting new features west of the boathouse and beach: a renovated Middle Branch Marina, outdoor classroom, “woodland playground,” lawn space, pavilions, and fishing pier. A bridge over Smith Creek connects to Westport’s waterfront, and new pedestrian crosswalks connect across Waterview Avenue.

The privately-owned Middle Branch Marina is envisioned to be renovated and reconfigured, welcoming new public-facing programs and uses. The Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative (EJJI) has partnered with Minorities in Aquaculture (MIA) and the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET) to lease space at the marina, where they will launch environmental education, research, workforce training, and career development programs. This collaboration brings potential for a robust water-quality monitoring program and, over time, to explore commercial aquaculture in the Middle Branch. The marina will continue to rent boat slips and support an established live-aboard community.

South of Smith Cove and adjacent to the Cherry Hill Light Rail station is an industrial/commercial area that was rezoned in 2016 for mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD). The Plan supports this vision, which was echoed in the Cherry Hill Transformation Plan. However, it does not call for removing existing businesses or property owners. In this updated design concept, new development flanks a central, green spine that connects the Light Rail to the waterfront park.

- RMB Projects

Stakeholder Projects

Existing Assets
- 1

Trail Connection to Westport

2

Woodland Playground

3

Picnic Pavilion & Fishing Pier

4

Smith Cove Boardwalk Trail

5

Outdoor Classroom

6

Renovated Public-Private Marina with EJJI & MIA Programming

7

Cherry Hill Light Rail Station

8

Cherry Hill Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zone

9

Cherry Hill Connector Trail

- The Loop Trail
- Neighborhood Connectors
- Complete Street



* We support the intent of the TOD zoning near Cherry Hill Light Rail, and have shown how future TOD development can fit neatly into this plan. However, we are not calling for the removal of existing users or landowners.

Middle Branch Marina and Smith Cove

If the proposed Superconducting MAGLEV (SCMAGLEV) project comes to pass with a station in Cherry Hill, care should be taken not to simply replace the designated TOD zone with structured parking. Instead, parking structures should include active ground floor retail, be wrapped in mixed-income apartments, and provide for future development above. Parking can anchor the planned TOD zone but is not a substitute for it.

To ensure the future development here and at all other development sites reflects the Plan’s equity frameworks, the following public realm design principles are recommended:

- **Urban Connectivity:** Developments should physically connect to their immediate surroundings by extending the existing street grid into and through the development, preserving view corridors to the water, and creating clear and easily navigable routes to transit stops.
- **Shoreline Continuity:** Developments should connect to and continue Middle Branch recreational trails (as detailed in Chapter 4) and restore the shoreline (per guidelines included in Chapter 3) along the full length of shoreline frontage.

- **Orientation to the Water:** Development should orient building frontages to the water and prioritize retail, commercial, and other active uses along frontages facing the water or adjacent waterfront parks.

These principles are expanded upon further as guidelines for future development in Chapter 5 of the Design Vision (Vol. 1).

Smith Cove woodland playground



Water monitoring station at Middle Branch Marina



Smith Cove pavilion and fishing pier



Westport, Baltimore Peninsula, and East-West Pedestrian Bridge

Connecting Neighborhoods Across the Middle Branch

The shoreline continues northward to the new ONE Westport development and across the water in Baltimore Peninsula (Port Covington). Both projects combine residential, commercial office, and retail uses with waterfront parks and trails. Westport Waterfront Park is a passive green space linking Kloman Street to a shoreline trail and conservation zone. West Covington Park will house sports fields, piers, and an event venue. Both envision water transit stops. Public realm design principles from the previous pages and in Chapter 5 of the Design Vision (Volume 1) apply here as well.

A new East-West Pedestrian Bridge, over 1600 feet in length, closes the Loop Trail between these key developments and provides broad views and potential access to the historic swing truss, an icon of the area’s industrial past. North of the bridge are a new Black Sox Park, honoring the Negro League baseball team that practiced here, and Swann Landing, envisioned for a second canoe/kayak rental program and boat launch.

Westport’s waterfront improvements can happen irrespective of whether the proposed SCMAGLEV project is constructed. However, SCMAGLEV would create another barrier between the neighborhood and its waterfront. Thus, if SCMAGLEV does proceed, it is even more important to ensure high quality physical connections from the neighborhood to the water via complete streets corridors at Wenburn and Kent Streets and the Gwynns Falls Trail connection at Clare Street.

RMB Projects

Stakeholder Projects

Existing Assets

1

Gwynns Falls Footbridge

2

Black Sox Park

3

ONE Westport Development

4

Westport Waterfront Park

5

Westport Light Rail Station

6

East-West Pedestrian Bridge

7

Swann Landing Boat Launch & Canoe/Kayak Rental

8

West Covington Park

9

Baltimore Peninsula / Port Covington Development

10

Water Transit Stop

11

Complete Streets Corridors: Wenburn St., Manokin St., Annapolis Rd.

The Loop Trail

Neighborhood Connectors

Complete Street

Water Transit Route



Westport, Baltimore Peninsula, and East-West Pedestrian Bridge

East-West Pedestrian Bridge connecting Baltimore Peninsula and Westport



Swann Landing



Westport, Baltimore Peninsula, and East-West Pedestrian Bridge

Black Sox Park - early study with small baseball field



Black Sox Park - early study with wooded path



Swann Landing Boat Launch & Canoe/Kayak Rental



Ridgely's Cove

An Urban Maritime Park

North of the East-West Bridge, at the mouth of the Gwynns Falls and beneath the massive I-95 interchange is Ridgely's Cove. This large, shallow water body is surrounded by low-lying infrastructure – BGE's Spring Garden facility and the Wheelabrator Incinerator – and the Carroll-Camden Industrial Area. All of these areas are vulnerable to increased flooding and storm surge caused by climate change. The vision for Ridgely's Cove centers on constructing extensive wetlands and planted berms that can absorb incoming wave energy and protect these vital assets from coastal flooding.

Along with increased resilience, constructing wetlands here offers extraordinary ecological and recreational opportunities. Ridgely's Cove will become an urban maritime park – a unique natural resource area surrounded by the city. Whereas the features and activity in Middle Branch Park are located at the shore and in upland areas, activities and amenities in Ridgely's Cove are situated over and in the water. Tidal creeks or "guts" through the marsh will offer water trails for canoes and kayaks, while boardwalks over the water and suspended from the spans of I-395 would connect Swann Landing at Baltimore Peninsula (Port Covington) to the Gwynns Falls Trail at Stockholm and Sharp Streets, around Topgolf, and across Ridgely's Cove.

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11
- RMB Projects
- Stakeholder Projects
- Existing Assets

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11

Bush Street Cycle Track

Future Development Opportunities at Incinerator & Bus Station Sites

Gwynns Falls Trail

Ridgely's Cove Wetlands Park

Overwater Boardwalk Trail Network

Topgolf Baltimore

The Walk at Warner Street

Paramount Theater

BGE Resiliency Berm and Wetland

Swann Landing Boat Launch & Canoe/Kayak Rental

Black Sox Park

The Loop Trail

Neighborhood Connectors

Complete Street



Ridgely’s Cove

Two sites important to the area’s Black sports history are located near Ridgely’s Cove and the Gwynns Falls. The field where Negro League baseball team the Baltimore Black Sox practiced was under and just south of where I-95 is today. And the Maryland Baseball Stadium hosted Negro League games where the City’s trash incinerator has stood for nearly 40 years. These sites burden nearby communities with air and water pollution. Hence, it is envisioned they be redeveloped with uses that benefit communities and reflect this unseen heritage.

Scenarios for the incinerator are shown at right and described in Chapter 5 of the Design Vision (Volume 1). North of the incinerator, the Downtown Bus Station also presents opportunities for more intensive development that can integrate intercity buses with other uses.

North and west of Ridgely’s Cove, upgrades to the Gwynns Falls Trail, Stadium Walk, and Complete Streets will increase connectivity to the Middle Branch from Solo Gibbs Park in Sharp-Leadenhall and for residents of Otterbein, Federal Hill, Pigtown, Ridgely’s Delight and Barre Circle. This network comes together at The Walk @ Warner Street, an entertainment zone anchored by Horseshoe Casino, Topgolf, and the Paramount Theater (opening 2023).

Incinerator Site Scenario A: Baseball field



Incinerator Site Scenario B: Ecological research center

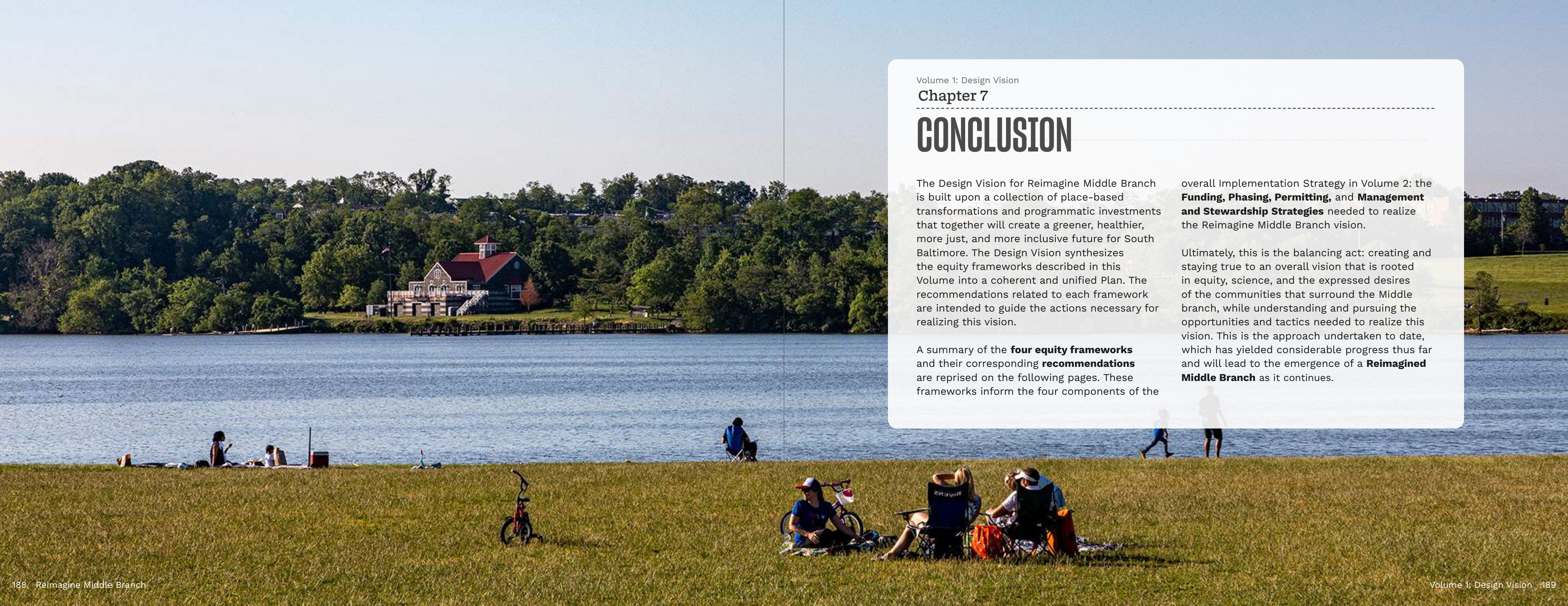


Concept for Underpass Park below I-395



Ridgely’s Cove boardwalks





CONCLUSION

The Design Vision for Reimagine Middle Branch is built upon a collection of place-based transformations and programmatic investments that together will create a greener, healthier, more just, and more inclusive future for South Baltimore. The Design Vision synthesizes the equity frameworks described in this Volume into a coherent and unified Plan. The recommendations related to each framework are intended to guide the actions necessary for realizing this vision.

A summary of the **four equity frameworks** and their corresponding **recommendations** are reprised on the following pages. These frameworks inform the four components of the

overall Implementation Strategy in Volume 2: the **Funding, Phasing, Permitting, and Management and Stewardship Strategies** needed to realize the Reimagine Middle Branch vision.

Ultimately, this is the balancing act: creating and staying true to an overall vision that is rooted in equity, science, and the expressed desires of the communities that surround the Middle branch, while understanding and pursuing the opportunities and tactics needed to realize this vision. This is the approach undertaken to date, which has yielded considerable progress thus far and will lead to the emergence of a **Reimagined Middle Branch** as it continues.

Summary of Equity Frameworks

1. Restore and Protect the Shoreline

reflects the value residents place on views, ecology, and the interface between land, water and community. Strategies rooted in the Middle Branch’s history and potential as a unique natural and recreational resource include:

- “Living shorelines” that add beauty and habitat and resist erosion.
- “Green infrastructure” techniques that divert run-off and trash from entering the water.
- Supporting and expanding environmental education and “citizen science” programs.
- Incorporating safe reuse of dredge material to build marshes and other new landscapes.



Restore and Protect the Shoreline Recommendations	
1.1	Work with the Maryland Port Administration to utilize tested, underwater material dredged from the Port’s shipping channel to create living shorelines through “beneficial use and innovative reuse of dredged material.”
1.2	Phase placement of dredge material, planned in coordination with the overall project timeline and availability of material from the Port.
1.3	Utilize a range of strategies to create living shoreline zones that respond to site conditions and uses, such as marsh, sandy beach, and rocky edges.
1.4	Implement air and water quality testing and improvements in concert with the living shoreline, including green infrastructure for stormwater management facilities, trash collectors, and upland forest buffers.
1.5	Expand upland habitat areas around the Middle Branch by converting spaces within parks from large expanses of turf grass to a mix of forest and meadow plantings that frame lawns for views and gatherings.
1.6	Develop multiple messaging platforms that share information about Middle Branch’s air and water quality and can reach diverse audiences, public awareness and inspire community engagement and stewardship.
1.7	Encourage the regional scientific community to use Middle Branch as a case study for education and research. Early restoration sites present opportunities to conduct long-term evaluations and develop best practices.

2. Transform Barriers into Connections

advances the priority for “increased connectivity” where highways, railroads and arterials separate communities from one another and block access to water. Strategies that address this goal while balancing the need for efficient movement of vehicles for port-based businesses and other industries include:

- A Shoreline Trail with a central 3-mile “Loop Trail” around the water.
- A new East-West Pedestrian Bridge between Westport and Baltimore Peninsula.
- Complete Streets corridors that connect neighborhoods and parks to the water, transit, and goods and services.
- Improving truck freight routes from Frankfurst Ave. to Route 2 and I-95.



Transform Barriers into Connections Recommendations	
2.1	Conduct a comprehensive engineering study to evaluate Hanover-Potee/Rte. 2 corridor, including structural capacity of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge, rationalizing through-traffic and improving access for pedestrians, bikes and local traffic.
2.2	Improve multi-modal access on Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge by limiting vehicle traffic to 4 lanes and grouping protected bicycle and pedestrian paths on west side of bridge.
2.3	Create a 3-mile “Loop Trail” as a separated-use facility with generous lanes for both bikes and pedestrians, which encircles the Middle Branch and creates high-quality connectivity and recreation opportunities.
2.4	Construct a new East-West Pedestrian Bridge south of I-95 that closes the “Loop” and connects Westport with Baltimore Peninsula (Port Covington).
2.5	Create a continuous Shoreline Trail for public access along 11 miles of shoreline from Port Covington and Locust Point to Brooklyn and Masonville Cove.
2.6	Create Neighborhood Connector trails linking the Middle Branch Loop Trail and Shoreline Trail to neighborhood parks and regional trails.
2.7	Implement Complete Streets improvements to increase connectivity within neighborhoods and to the waterfront; implement “quick-build” projects to test routes while long-term capital projects are in planning and design phase.
2.8	Collaborate with MTA & DOT (Charm City Circulator) to improve transit to goods and services, local employers such as Port and industrial firms nearby, and regionally, including water transit.
2.9	Enhance truck freight access between Port and highways with southbound turn from Frankfurst Avenue onto Potee Street, to reach I-95 via Patapsco Avenue and South Caton Avenue.
2.10	Maintain through-truck and local truck routes, balancing modes according to City’s Complete Streets Manual and SHA standards; engage industry, Port/MDOT and City DOT in updating City’s Truck Route Map, acknowledging business trends and last-mile distribution needs.

Summary of Equity Frameworks

3. Activated and Inclusive Parks

envisions a “park-shed” of high-quality, well-maintained facilities in neighborhoods, connected via safe, inviting pathways to a network of waterfront parks, trails and overlooks around the Middle Branch. Strategies that address this goal while creating equitable access and programming that reflects input from local communities include:

- Coordinating capital projects and programming across the park-shed.
- Linking shoreline parks and open spaces, and creating connections to neighborhood parks.
- Creating waterfront anchors that draw diverse uses and support operating costs.
- Expanding canoe/kayak and rowing programs with new boat houses, piers and landings.



Activated and Inclusive Parks Recommendations	
3.1	Coordinate planning and implementation of capital projects and programming across the park-shed; this includes addressing short-term maintenance needs in order to maximize benefits from existing facilities while planning for long-term projects.
3.2	Connect existing waterfront parks with proposed parks, developments, and natural areas; unify parks and open spaces within an accessible, activated public space network.
3.3	Create new waterfront anchors, which provide major amenities and create destinations in waterfront parks.
3.4	Reshape and reorient the Middle Branch Park lawn with views across the water, sightlines to downtown, and a performance stage for festivals and other events.
3.5	Create a covered, open-air event pavilion to be situated near the event lawn in Middle Branch Park.
3.6	Build a new, expanded boathouse that accommodates future growth in BCRP’s boating programs and Baltimore Community Rowing; continue to address and improve facilities’ needs in existing boathouse and piers and removing submerged debris during planning stage.
3.7	Transform the existing boathouse into a concession and event space.
3.8	Improve existing piers, add new piers, and diversify ways to access the water with new beaches and boat launches, all in support of increased access to water-based recreation and educational programming.
3.9	Curate and produce a reliable series of year-round, culturally relevant programming, including arts events, water-safety, swimming, and other youth and adult sports and wellness programs.
3.10	Develop Splash!, a waterfront event produced for engagement during the planning process, from a one-time event into an annually recurring program.
3.11	Establish a new waterfront park along the Westport waterfront, along with a memorial for the Baltimore Black Sox and other South Baltimore sports legends.

4. Equitable Development

is the framework for ensuring that current residents and future generations of South Baltimore participate in and benefit from “reimagining,” restoring and revitalizing the Middle Branch. Strategies that leverage this vision to support the growth of existing communities include:

- Sustaining and expanding investments in youth, workforce development, small businesses, and CDC capacity-building.
- Assembling capital for equitable investment in housing and mixed-use development.
- Establishing an African American Heritage District rooted in historical commemoration AND current cultural expression.
- Support for “green” social venture enterprises and new business start-ups.



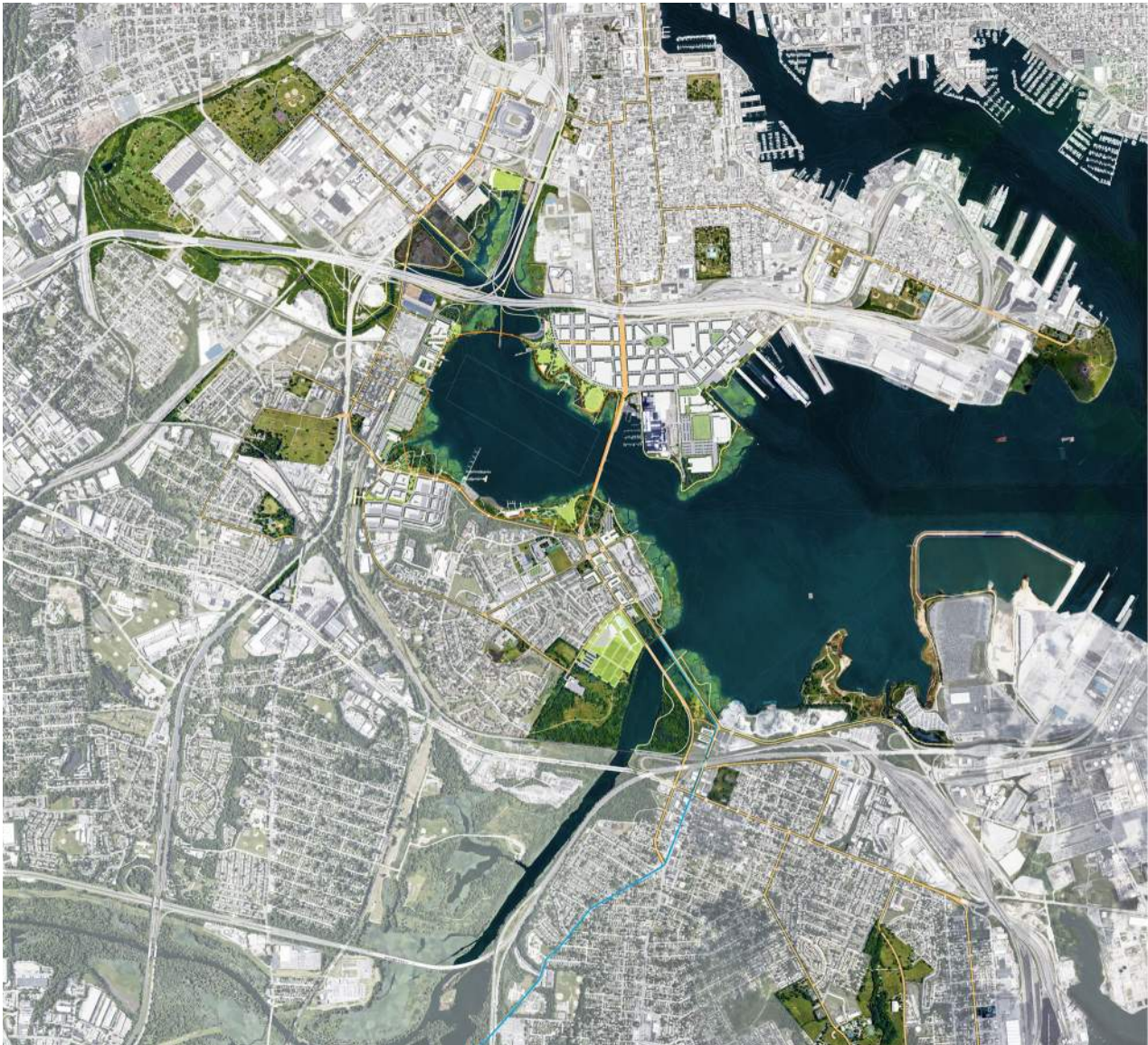
Equitable Development Recommendations	
4.1	Continue funding established equity initiatives including YouthWorks grants, South Baltimore Employment Connection Center, Commercial Corridor (“Main Streets”) support, and the South Baltimore Community Development Fund.
4.2	Create “pipelines” or “ladders” of opportunity for residents to access nearby jobs in South Baltimore, such as in healthcare and Port-related industrial sectors.
4.3	Expand two educational pilot programs, the Morgan State University Fellowship and the Community Design Lab, into sustained annual initiatives.
4.4	Support disadvantaged businesses around the Middle Branch, helping them to become M/W/DBE certified and connecting them with funding opportunities.
4.5	Utilize South Baltimore Community Development Fund, a new mechanism tailored to leveraging equitable investments in housing, businesses and community assets.
4.6	Honor and celebrate African American culture through creation of a heritage district.
4.7	Support & catalyze site-specific developments by fostering collaboration among communities, property owners, financing entities, local government, anchor tenants, and user groups.
4.8	Plan anchor projects in or adjacent to parks to activate the waterfront, support O&M costs, and create employment, education and business opportunities for residents.
4.9	Support environmental education and aquaculture programs of local non-profits Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative and Minorities in Aquaculture operating at Middle Branch Marina.
4.10	Establish a native plant nursery, managed and staffed by South Baltimore residents, to supply park improvement projects and Middle Branch communities with locally grown plants and locally made building materials.
4.11	Start seasonal food truck program, supporting local business growth and laying groundwork for year-round Waterfront Marketplace selling culturally authentic food, products and art.
4.12	Add additional multi-purpose fields to Reedbird Park to enable hosting regional athletic events and tournaments.

A Reimagined Middle Branch

The Middle Branch will be Baltimore’s next great waterfront, with 11 miles of world class parks, trails, programs, and economic development.

This transformation is well underway. More than \$120 million in Federal, State, Local, Casino, and Philanthropic funds have already been raised, and a number of the projects listed in this Plan are already underway or completed. Maintenance and programming enhancements have already improved the activity and attractiveness of open space. Equity initiatives have brought millions of dollars to low-income neighborhoods. And the market is responding in kind, with hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment now taking place. This Plan is not just possible – it is already happening.

Expect activity to increase after this Plan is released. In the near future, communities will notice ongoing engagement, activation projects, and invitations to help design the next generation of capital improvements. As time goes on, they can also expect to participate in a long-term management structure for this effort, collaborate on equitable economic development projects, and cut the ribbons on the capital projects they helped design.



For more information, see the Reimagine Middle Branch Implementation Strategy. The Implementation Strategy (Volume Two of this report) includes detailed budgetary, fundraising, phasing, and organizational strategies for aggressively moving this work forward.

Baltimore deserves no less. The neighborhoods of South Baltimore require positive change, and they should demand it from this project. Reimagine Middle Branch is not too ambitious – it is exactly ambitious enough.

Join us.



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REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

The background of the image is an abstract, fluid pattern of various shades of teal and blue. The colors blend together in a way that creates a sense of movement, resembling ripples on water or the folds of fabric. The overall effect is a textured, organic feel.

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH