

# MEGAN OLIVER, AICP, WELL AP

## SOCIAL DESIGNER *with Gusto*

Portfolio | Spring 2026

**Right and left brain.**

**Both analytical and creative.**

**With my background in both design and planning, my work juxtaposes qualitative against quantitative. Rather than contrast the two, however, I seek to unify.**

Connection. It's the theme of the century. Yet, how can our connections be more meaningful?

As an urban planner and designer, I seek to understand how things interact. I explore the ways in which we engage with one another and with the landscapes around us. With a holistic and human-centered approach, my expertise includes social design, community engagement, sustainability planning, and strategic and master planning.




CERTIFIED PLANNER NUMBER: 028601




CREDENTIAL ID: WELL-AP-0000128188

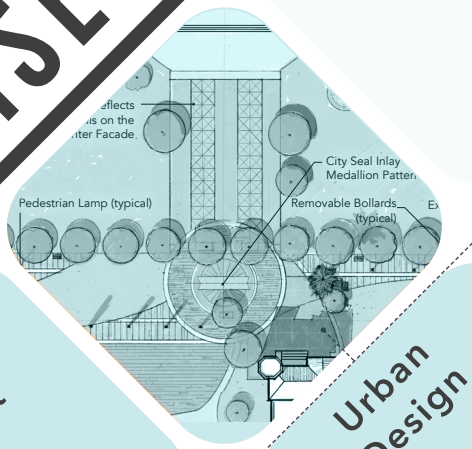
# EXPERTISE

Master Planning



Facilitation & Civic Engagement




Urban Design

Fine Art



Graphic Design



Information Visualization




Placemaking



Transportation & Streetscapes




Photo Rendering



MICA

Graduated, BFA

*Environmental Design*

Seth Harry & Associates

*Architecture Firm*

Baltimore Office of Sustainability

People • Planet • Prosperity

MAHAN RYKIEL ASSOCIATES INC

*Landscape Architecture & Planning Firm*

2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018

DO Consulting

*Architecture Firm*

TND Planning Group

*Planning Consultant*

AICP

Earned AICP Certification

Baltimore County Maryland

*Department of Planning*

baltimore bgw greenworks

*Non-Profit*

SA+P MORGAN

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING

*Graduate Research Assistant*

Graduated, MCRP

*City & Regional Planning*

RK&K
Engineering Firm

Department of Planning

2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026

17+ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

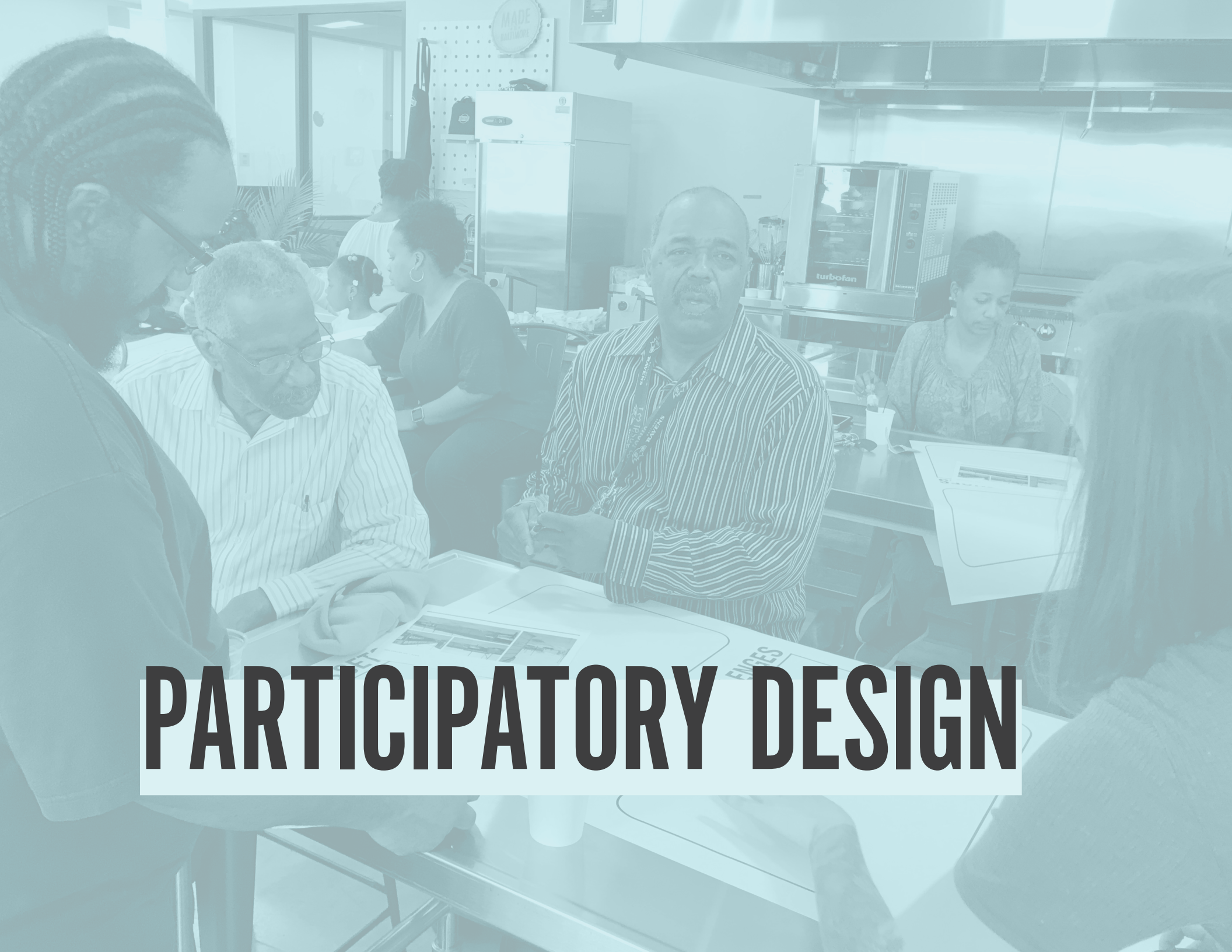
hello HAPPY
DESIGN THROUGH DIALOGUE

WELL AP
Earned WELL AP

enviro|collab
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

CCO THE CENTRE FOR CONSCIOUS DESIGN

USDN urban sustainability directors network




# PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

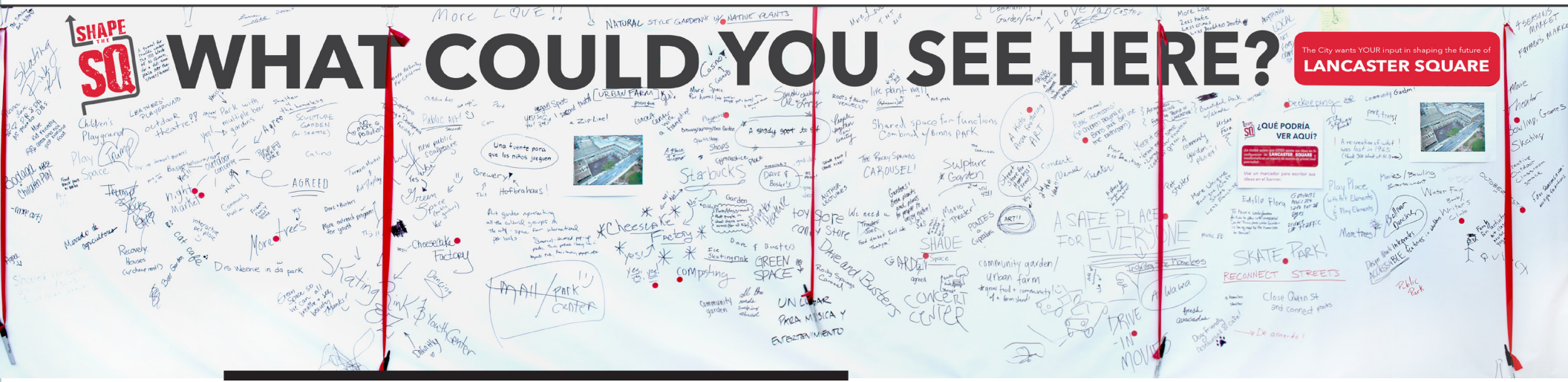
Public participation isn't just a requirement to be crossed off the list. It's a vital process that exponentially improves the final product–regardless of the project type.

I approach community engagement with a "what if?" attitude. There are surely tested and proven methods for collecting input; but there are also fresh tactics that inspire and energize people around a project. I look for those opportunities with every project.

Public participation could be the same meeting formula that's been used in the industry for decades, but **what if public engagement was something more?**

**MAHAN RYKIEL ASSOCIATES PARK(ING) DAY 2016**




**LANCASTER SQUARE ENGAGEMENT AT CELEBRATE LANCASTER**

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

MIT & MSU partnership

MIT x MSU

# MIT & MSU collaboration

## BALTIMORE/MSU VISIT
MARCH 31ST - APRIL 3RD

What is the most pressing challenge facing cities & communities today?

How should planning address issues of race, equity, & inclusion?

What's happening in cities and in the planning world that's address issues of race, equity, & inclusion?

MIT & MSU
Baltimore / MSU Visit



## CHANGING PLANNING'S PRACTICUM

In 2022, I served as the Morgan State University lead in developing a first-of-its-kind cross-institutional course of study exploring urban development where the themes of placemaking, place-keeping, justice, and the 'right to the city' intersect.

*Project of Morgan State University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

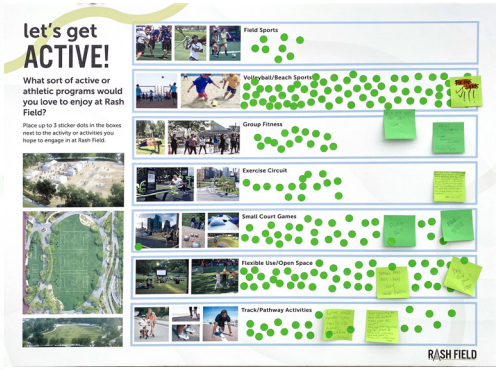






let's get
ACTIVE!
What sort of active or athletic programs would you love to enjoy at Rash Field?
Place up to 3 sticker dots in the boxes next to the activity or activities you hope to engage in at Rash Field.
Field Sports
Volleyball/Beach Sports
Group Fitness
Exercise Circuit
Small Court Games
Flexible Use/Open Space
Track/Pathway Activities
RASH FIELD?
RASH FIELD







## RASH FIELD

Phase II of the Rash Field Park redesign kicked off with an ice cream social on a hot July evening. The event was an opportunity to collect input about potential improvements during for this second phase of the recently redesigned park in Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*





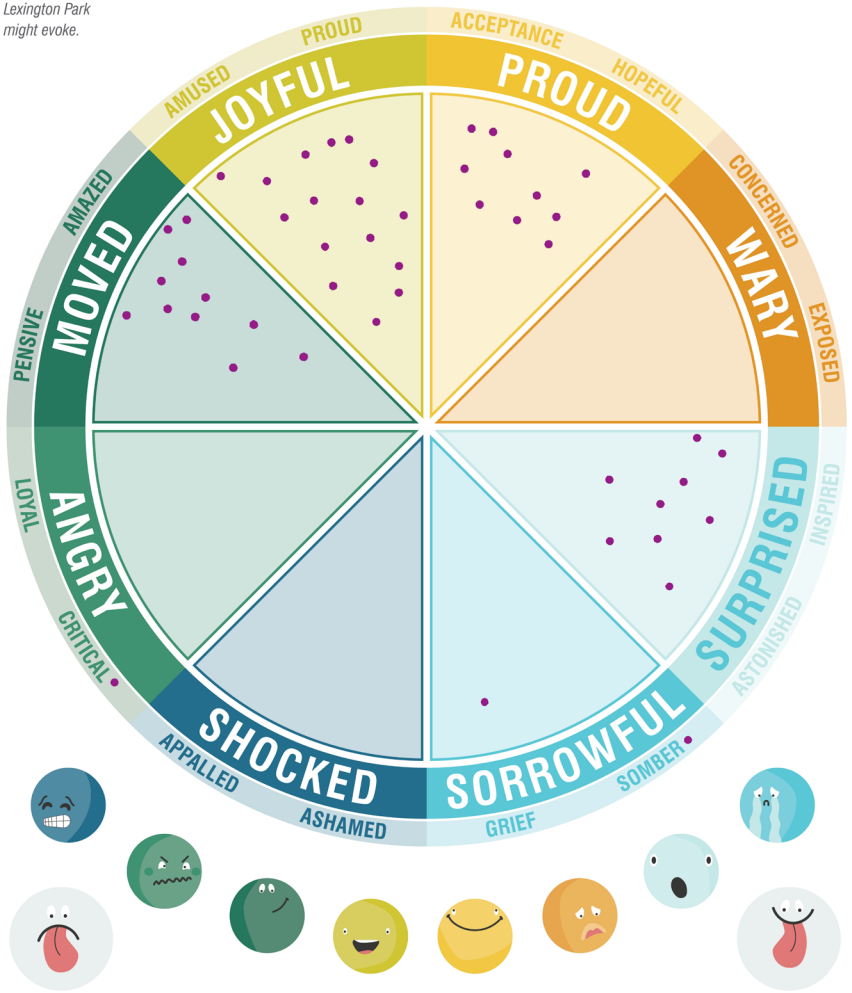
# ART & EMOTIONS

LEXINGTON PARK ART PARK
Workshop | July 19, 2023

## How should art in public spaces make you feel?

Art can evoke strong feelings—and sometimes many feelings at once—depending on the subject, its context, the artist's message, and your personal relationship with these things. Art may even stir "negative" emotions; yet, when done well, the artwork enables us to process these complex and occasionally difficult emotions, narratives, or histories in a constructive way.

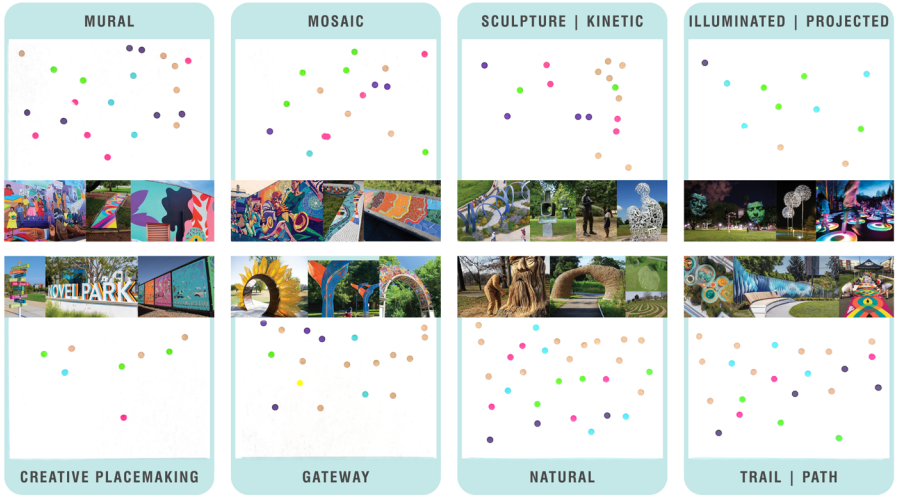
*Place a sticker dot in the wedges below to indicate which feeling(s) future art in Lexington Park might evoke.*




Small businesses
COMMUNITY SUPPORT
UCAC
Acceptance
History/Culture
Fun
TULAGI PLACE
LOCAL ECOSYSTEM
Navy/PAX
MELTING POT
Water
STUFFED HAM
Arts District
NATIVE RELATIONSHIP TO LAND
Battery Playscape (NYC)
Home

# ART MEDIUMS *IN THE* ARTBORETUM

There are many possible ways to express and celebrate Lexington Park through Art. Place a sticker in the box(es) of the types of art forms or artistic elements you could see in Lexington Park!



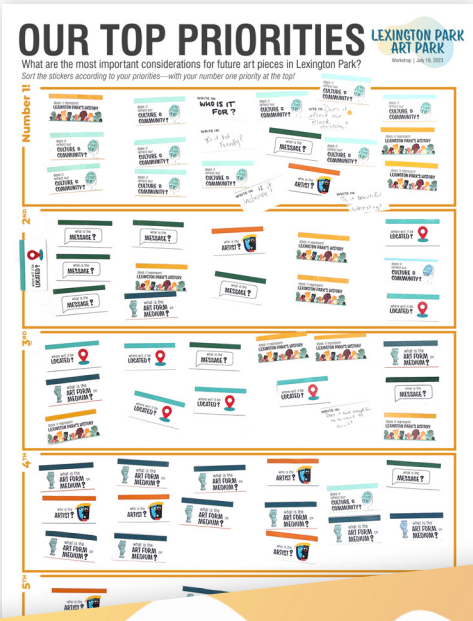

Lexington Art Park Workshop
July 19, 2023

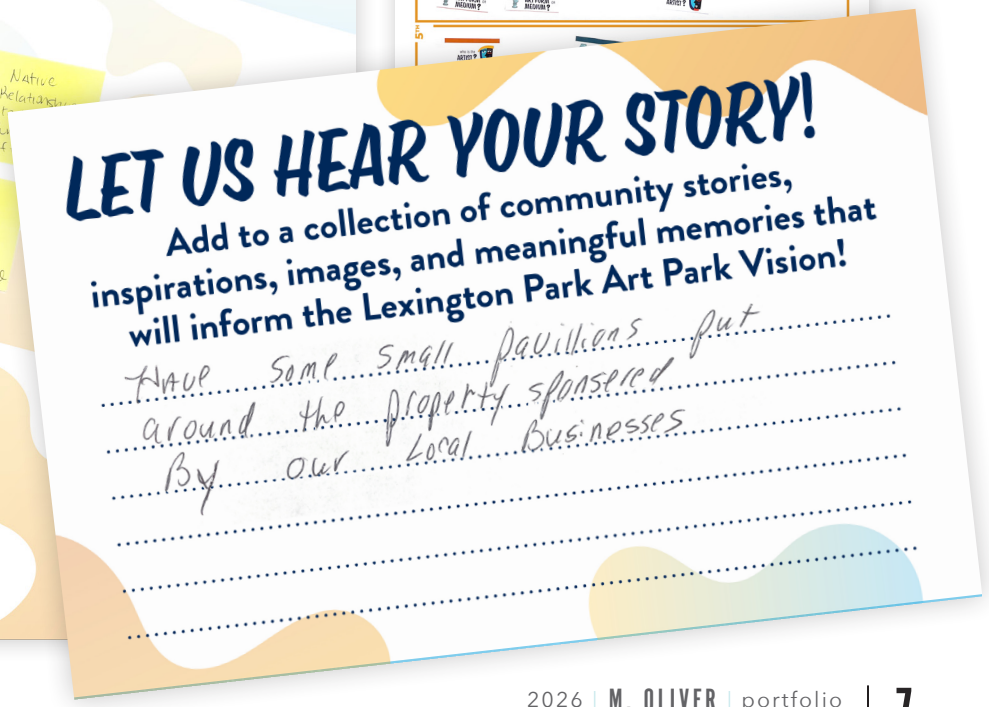
## ART IN LEXINGTON PARK

How should public art make you feel? Through a series of engagement exercises, residents of Lexington Park were able to think more deeply about the role of art in their community.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*



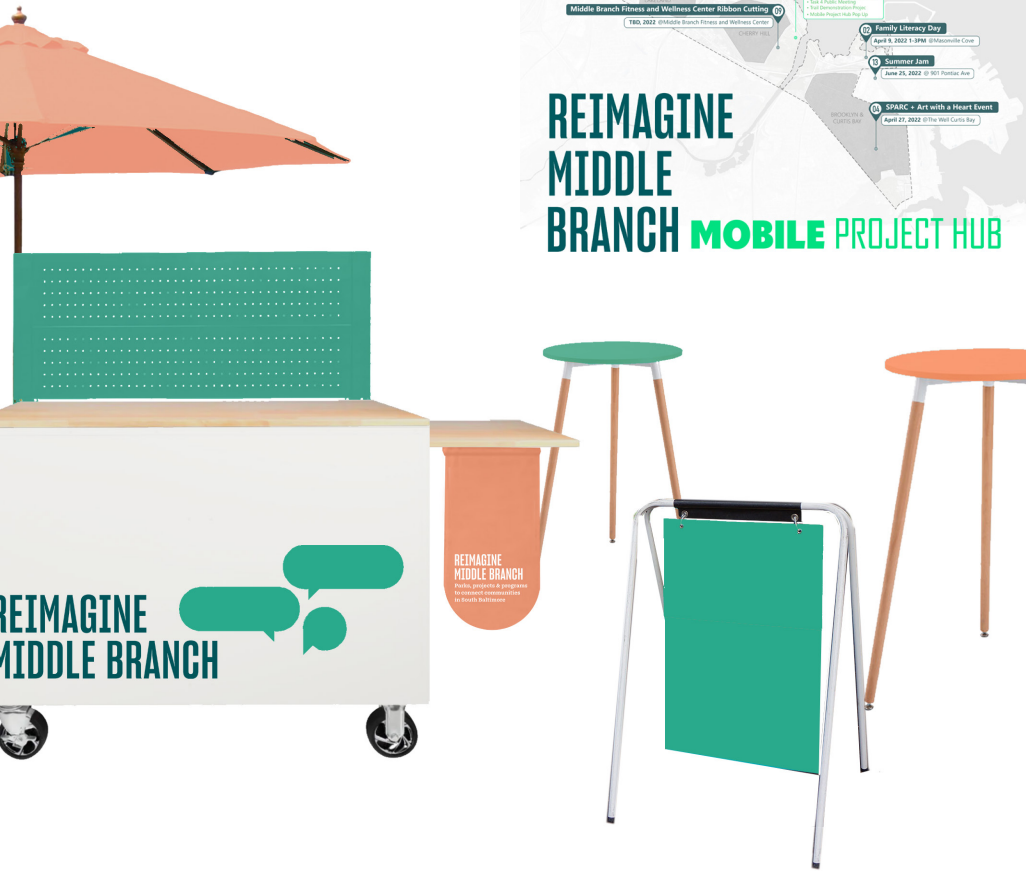



# REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH MOBILE PROJECT HUB







REIMAGINE
MIDDLE BRANCH
REIMAGINE
MIDDLE BRANCH


Project Clean Stream
Kinetic Sculpture Race
Cyclovia Event
BMI Farmers Market
National Library Week Celebration
Volo Kids Spring Sports Programs
GROW Center Pop Up & Shred Event
BCRP Canoe/Kayak Program & BCR Learn-to-Row Day
Pop Up Event
Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center Ribbon Cutting
Family Literacy Day
Summer Jam
SPARC + Art with a Heart Event
REIMAGINE
MIDDLE BRANCH
MOBILE PROJECT HUB


REIMAGINE
MIDDLE BRANCH


REIMAGINE
MIDDLE BRANCH

(Remote)

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE

Spring 2020



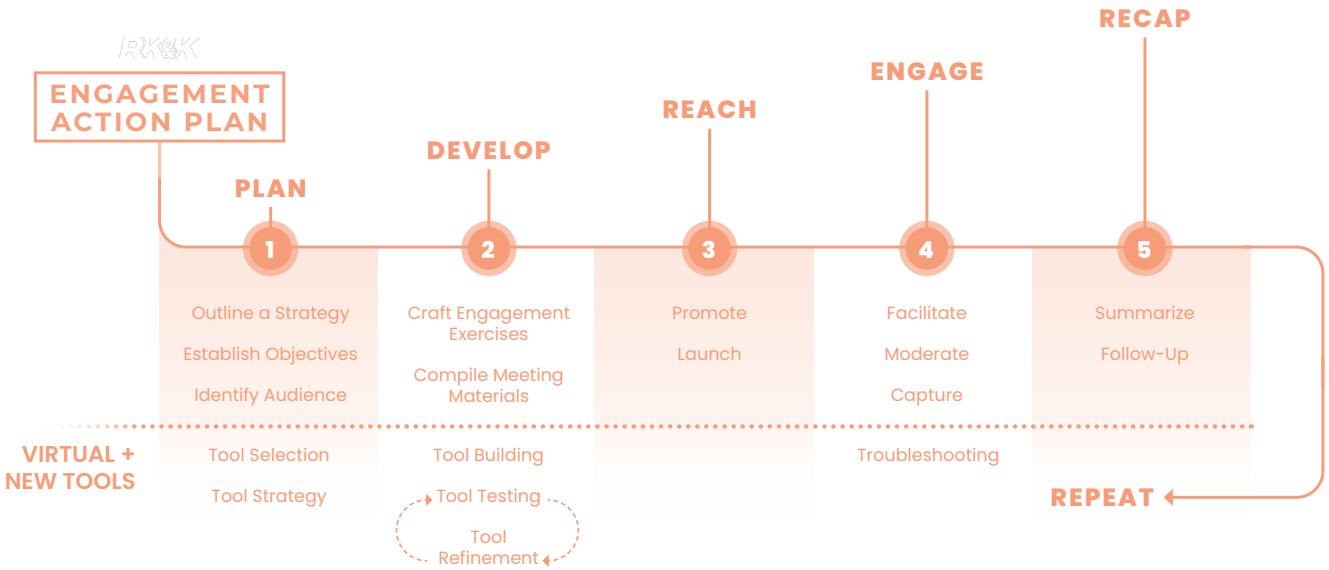
## ADAPTING ENGAGEMENT

Our circumstances are constantly evolving. So, too, must our planning methods evolve. Adapting to the #StayatHome orders of the Covid-19 pandemic, as director of a public engagement task force, I sought to understand how projects might continue without compromising the integrity of the public participation process. The result was a 70+ page guidebook for conducting effective virtual and remote public meetings.

**PRESENTATION ON RESEARCH OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN TIMES OF COVID**

*Project of RK&K*

## TYPICAL ACTION PLAN ...Using New Tools

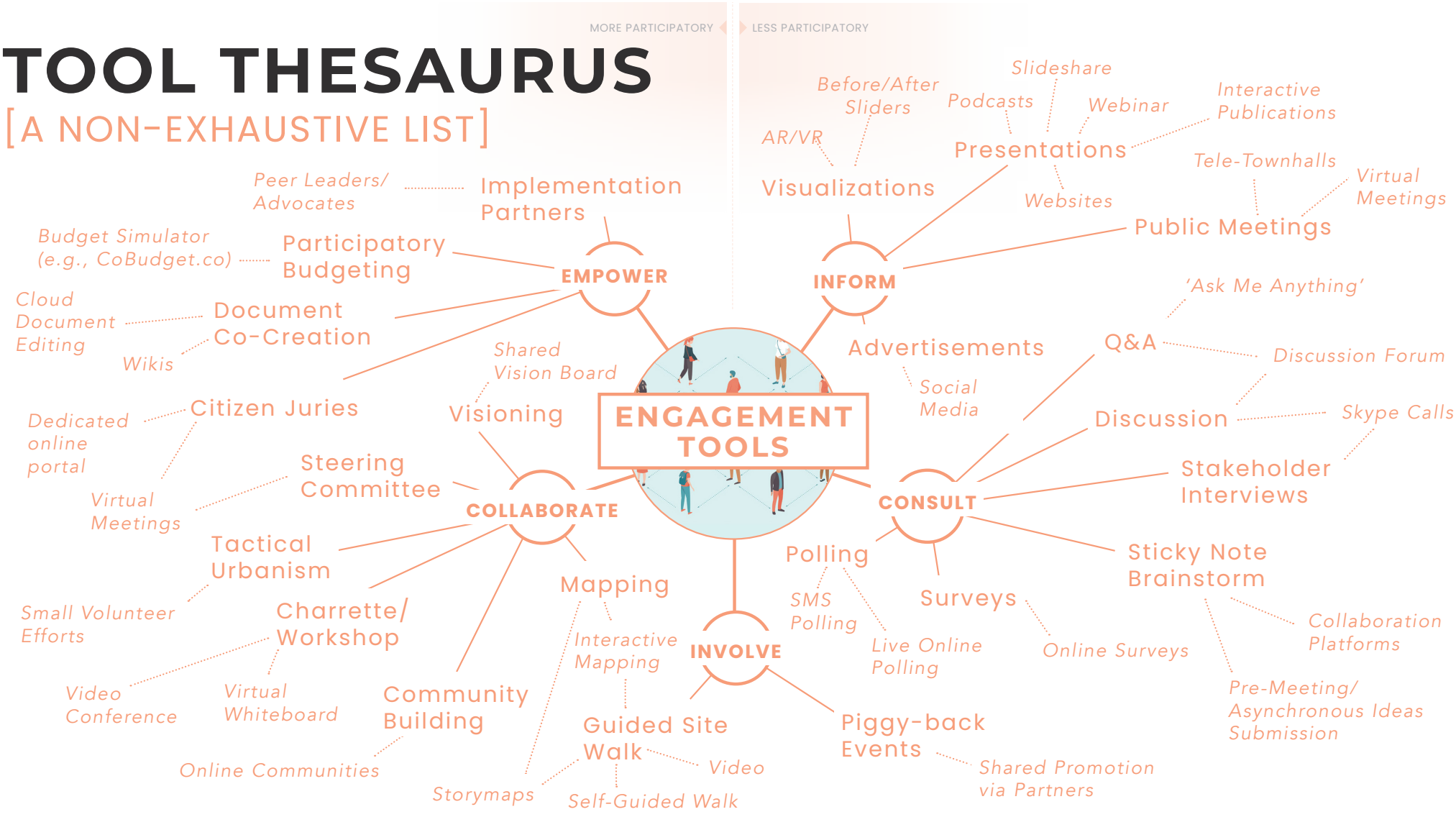


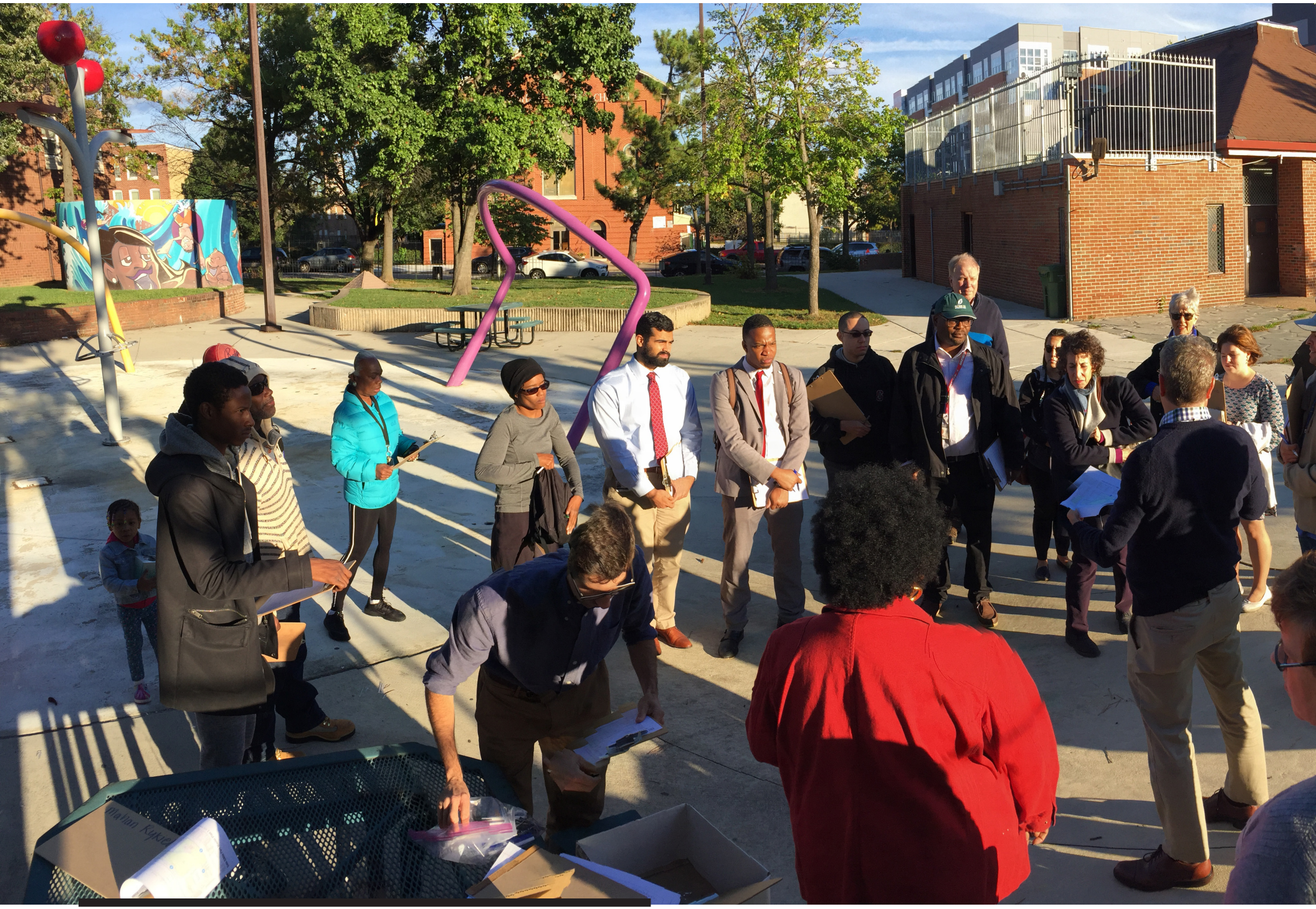

RK&K

28

# TOOL THESAURUS

## [A NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST]





**SOLO GIBBS PARK MASTER PLAN SITE TOUR**
*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*



> **I and my associates would like to thank you and your colleagues for sincerely and genuinely caring about our views and concerns of our community.** We felt like, for years, no one cared about us, our views, concerns, and how we do not want our community over developed. At our surprise, your group proved us wrong. You are a group of sympathetic people . . . we thank you and because of you, we can breathe again.

TARYN OJEKWE

Solo Gibbs Recreation Committee, South Baltimore Partnership, & long-time Sharp Leadenhall resident




## CHESAPEAKE BEACH, MD

"Piggyback" events leverage the popularity and attendance of pre-planned, community wide programs, such as annual festivals. For the Chesapeake Beach Connectivity Study, the community had their first opportunity to engage with the project and provide input and share their ideas by drawing on maps.






**KIDS ARE ENGAGED AT THE TASTE OF CHESAPEAKE BEACH EVENT**

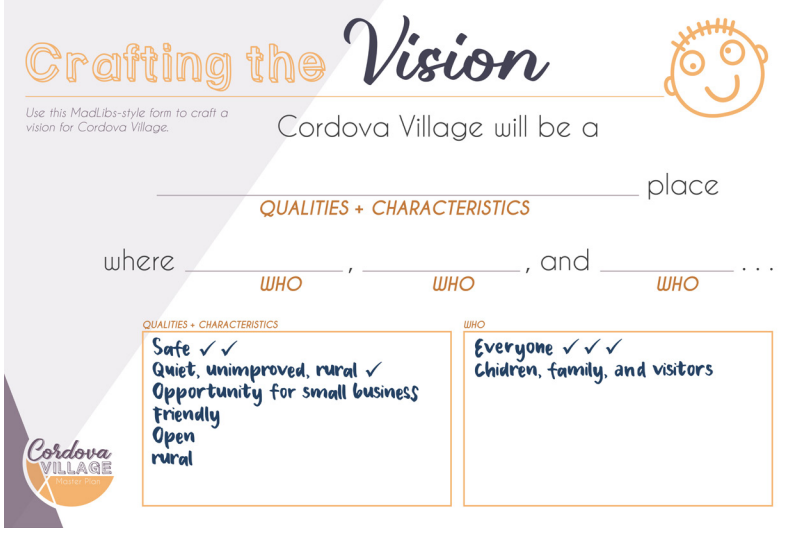
*Project of RK&K*

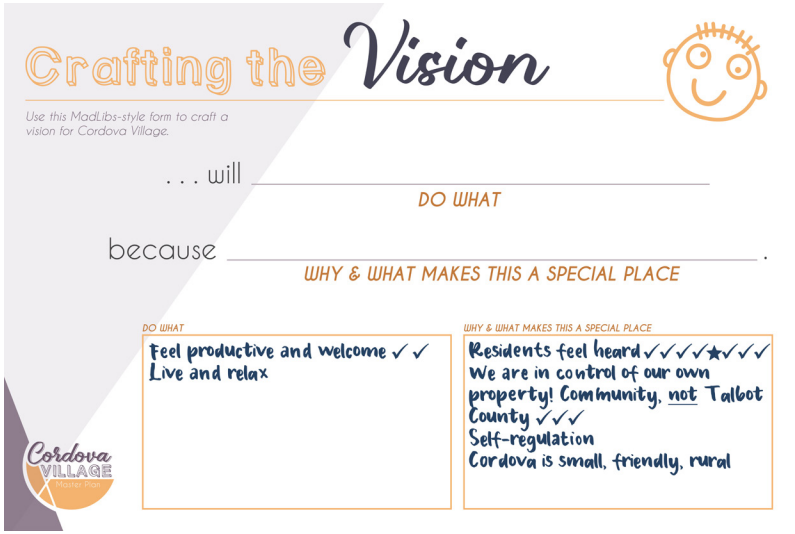


## CORDOVA VILLAGE, MD

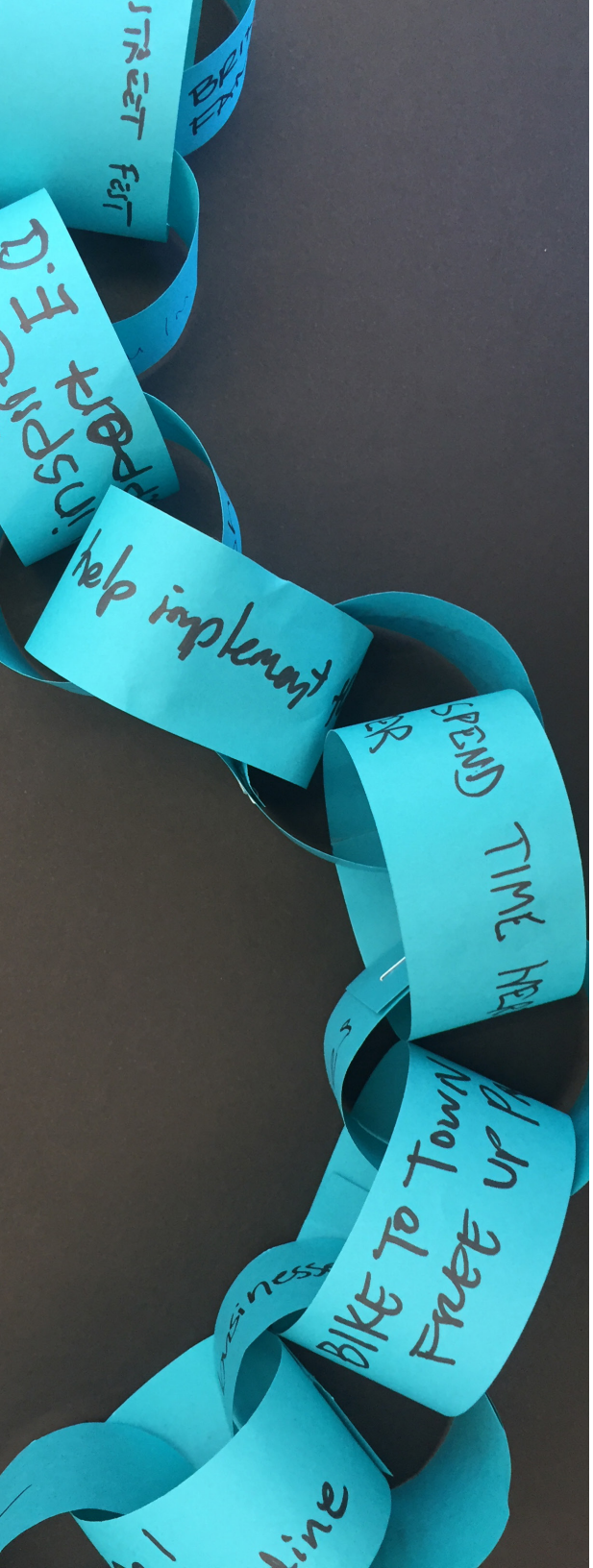
Effective public participation is inclusive, accessible, and, most importantly, *engaging*. The "gamification" of public participation is one way to create playful experiences that yield meaningful input.

The Cordova Village Master Plan Community Day created a full day of opportunities for residents to participate in the planning process. Input exercises invited participants to mark up maps, create an ideal streetscape using cutout street furniture and lane markings, or fill out a "mad-libs" style vision statement.

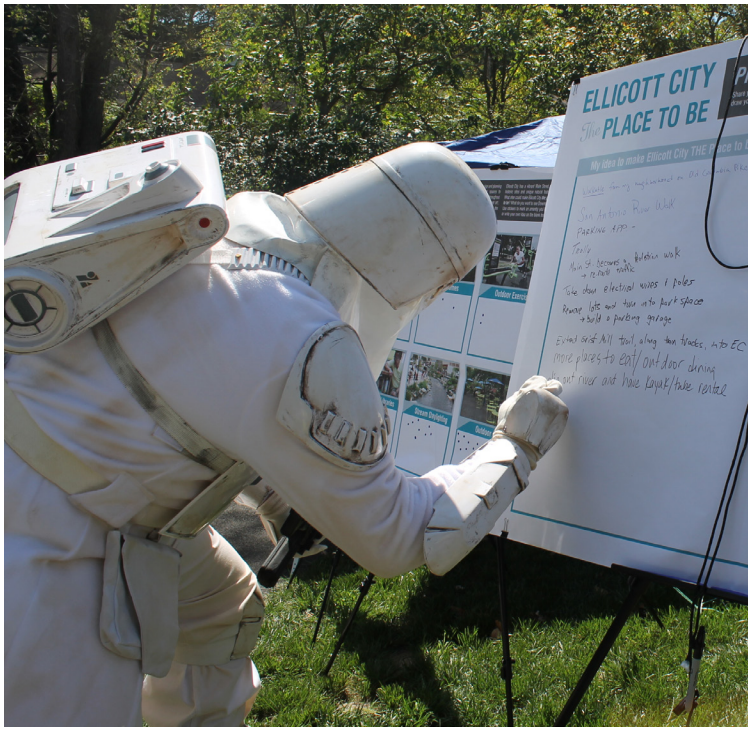







> **Thank you for hearing us.** This is the first time we've been invited as a group to express our experiences. So thank you.
>
> BETH WOODRUFF
>
> A community member attending the West End Residents Meeting

## ELLICOTT CITY, MD

Ellicott City, in Howard County, Maryland, experienced two significant floods in as many years. In the early stages of a master planning process intending to improve the community's resiliency, the project team planned a piggyback event to leverage the massive draw of the annual Main Street Music Festival as an opportunity to reach community members and visitors alike.

Public participation at the event well exceeded expectations. Of particular note, Stormtrooper engagement reached record levels.






## PIGTOWN MAIN STREET | BALTIMORE, MD

Focus Groups afford excellent, targeted discussions. For the *Pigtown Main Street Strategic Plan*, talking with the local merchants provided context regarding business growth and ongoing initiatives. This intel was critical to identifying lasting and effective strategies for enhancing Main Street.










## LANCASTER SQUARE, PA

When the developer of Lancaster Square wanted to improve open space while also serving the community, this engagement exercise used at the local Celebrate Lancaster event provided the right tool to solicit open and honest input.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*









"I attended the Shape It! #1 public input session last evening. The team did an excellent job presenting the project and leading the process, and I appreciated the opportunity to provide input."

MARK HUBER

Senior County-wide Planner of the Lancaster County Planning Commission praised our work for the Lancaster Square Shape It Workshops



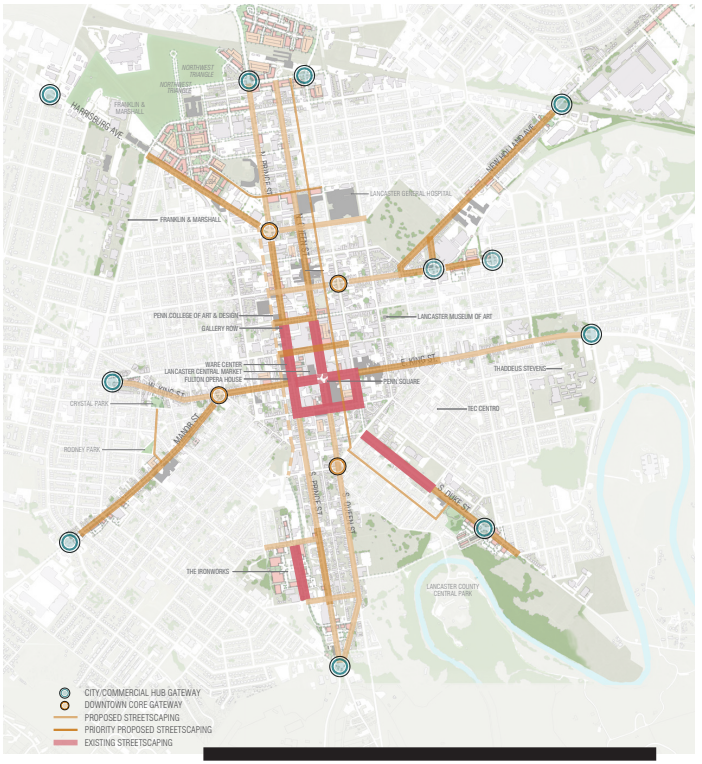
# URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

**They say a picture is worth a thousand words. When it comes to conveying planning concepts, I'd actually say that a picture's value is immeasurable.**

Some people are verbal learners, and can comprehend a concept by its description. In my planning, however, I've gathered that, more often than not, people will benefit from a visual representation of ideas. Whether it's to help a community understand the big picture with an illustrative plan, or envision a future scenario more easily with the aid of a photo visualization, graphics will always help communicate ideas.




**CC JACKSON PARK MASTER PLAN**



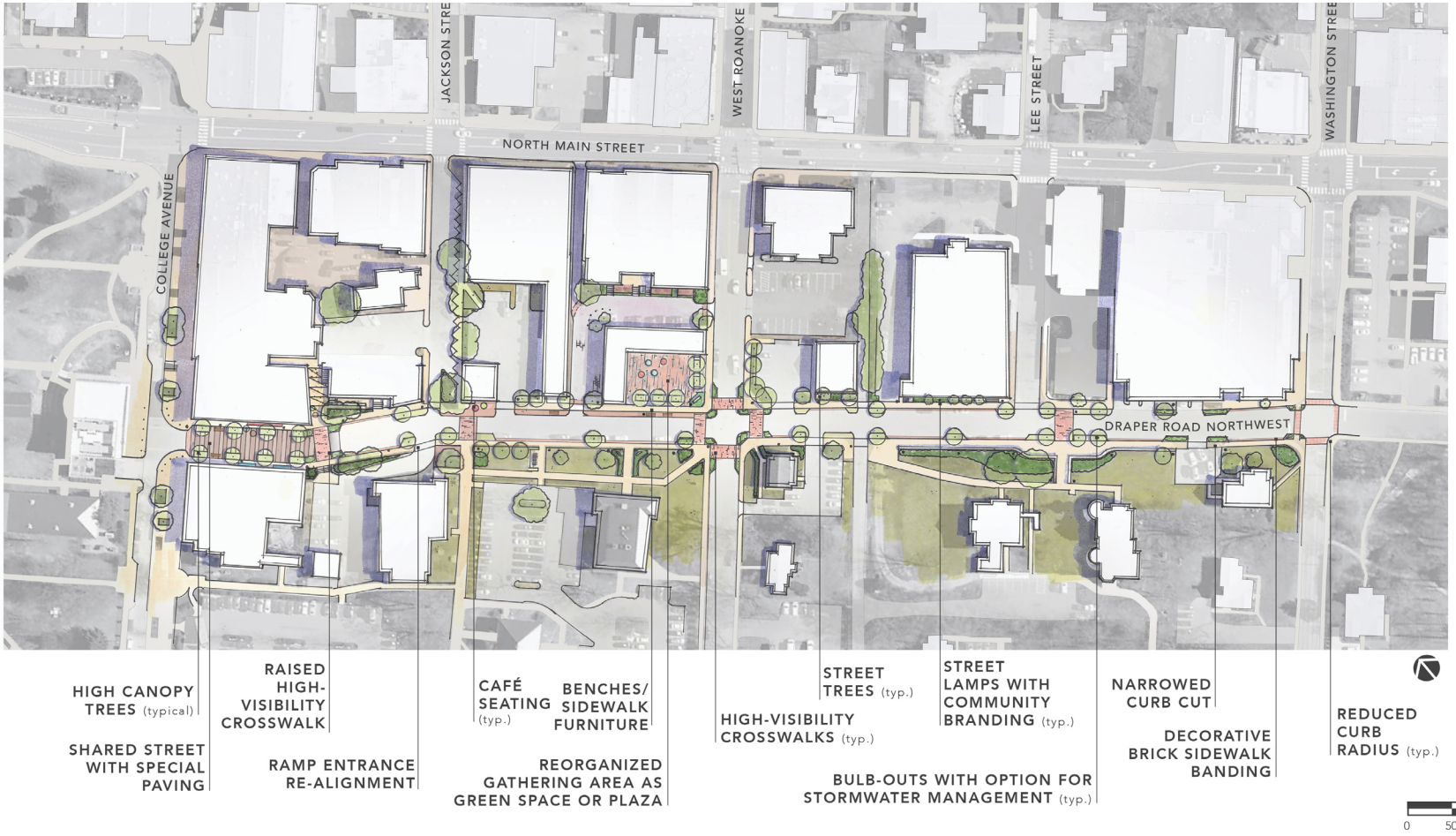

**LANCASTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

*Above and Left, Projects of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

# WINNING DESIGN

This Draper Road illustrative–which demonstrates preliminary ideas for how an improved streetscape might promote walkability and support downtown businesses–was used to win a streetscape project in Blacksburg, VA.

*Proposal with RK&K*





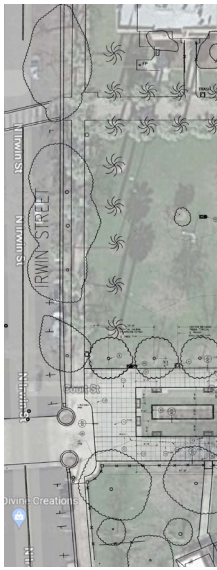

## PICTURING THE POTENTIAL

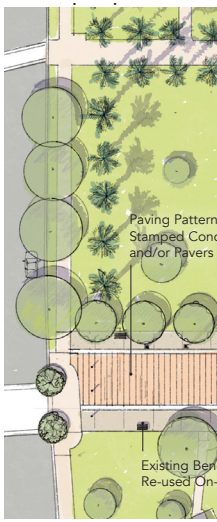
To further illustrate the concept for Draper Road, this photo visualization was created. It showcases the efficient re-use of space on this Downtown Blacksburg side street and the introduction of stormwater management, outdoor cafe seating, façade improvements, and public art.

*Proposal with RK&K*




COURT STREET PROMENADE
DISCOVER
DOWNTOWN
HANFORD
N. Douty Street
Court Street


IRWIN STREET
N Irwin St

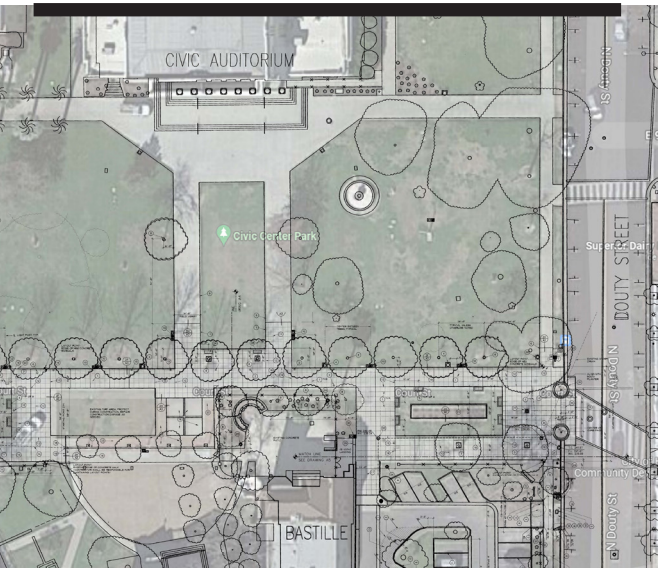

Paving Pattern
Stamped Conc
and/or Pavers
Existing Ben
Re-used On-

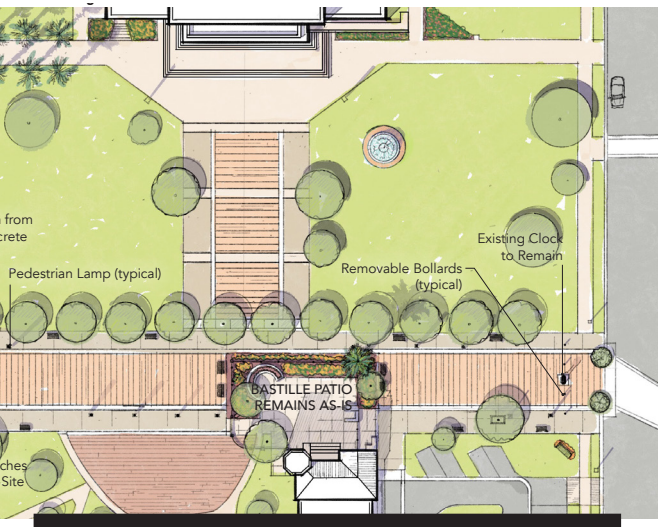
# HANFORD CIVIC CENTER PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Context-sensitive plaza improvements, including hardscape, placemaking, and site furnishings) are proposed for the historic Civic Center Park in Hanford, CA.

*Project of Hello Happy Design*

EXISTING CONDITIONS




ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

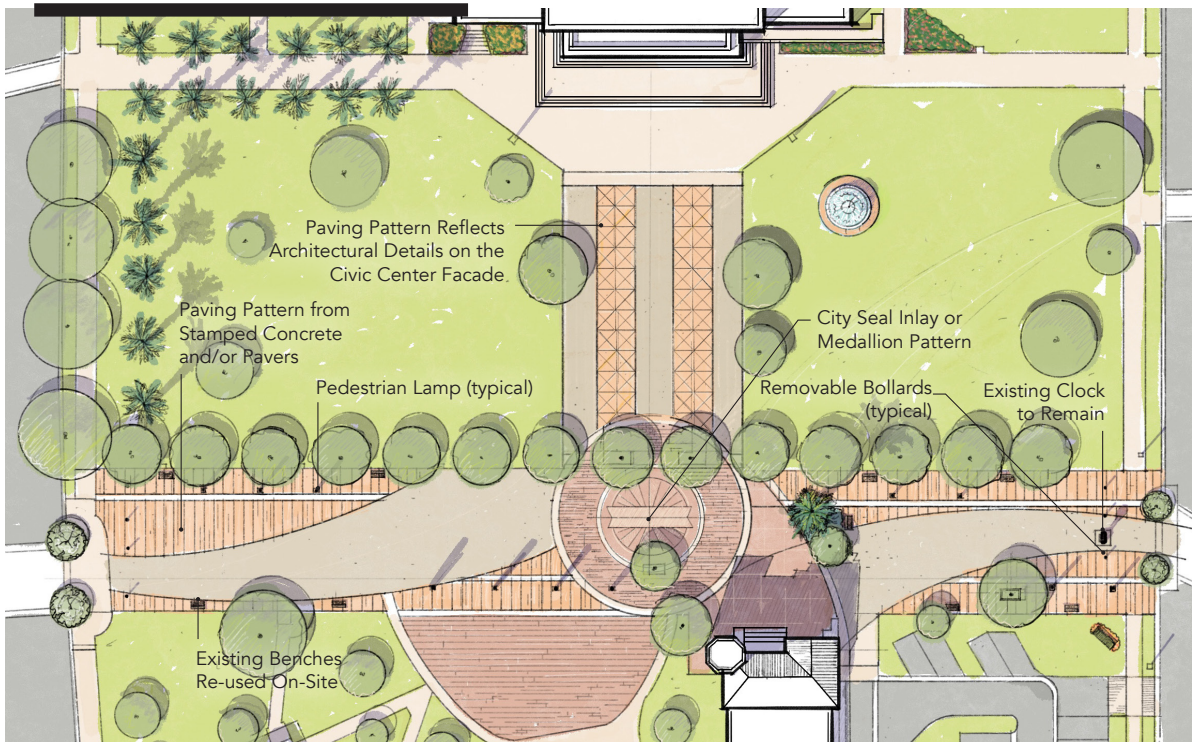


PHOTO VISUALIZATION







EXISTING CONDITIONS

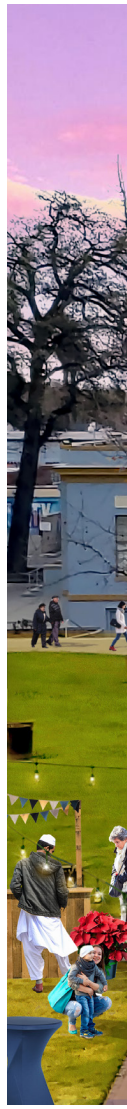





PHOTO VISUALIZATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS





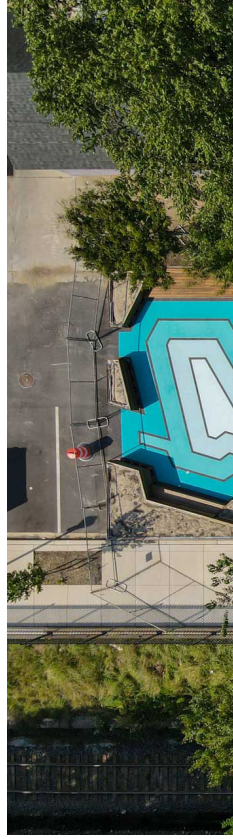
## FUN FOR THE HOLIDAYS

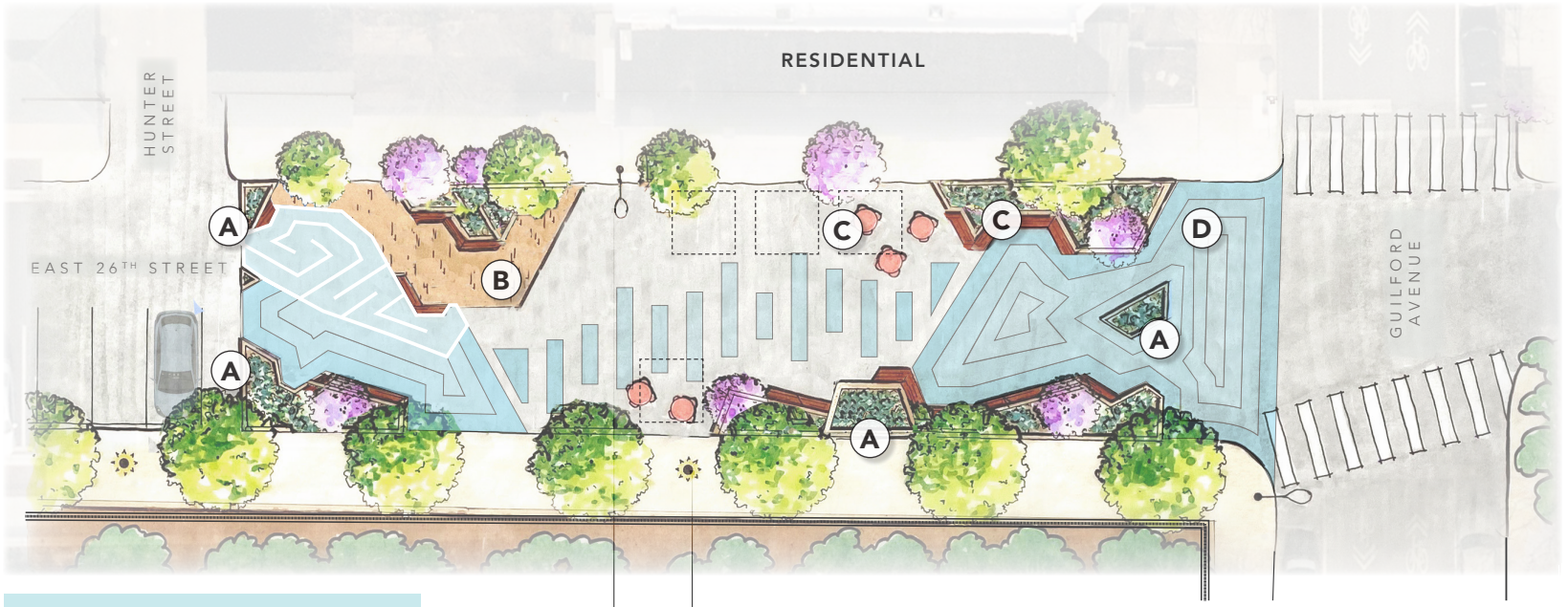
Civic Center Park in Hanford, CA, is transformed into a winter wonderland with a temporary ice rink and an outdoor winter lounge.

*Project of Hello Happy Design*










EXISTING LAMP POST (typical)

NEW LAMP POST (typical)

- (A) Landscaped Planters (932 SF)
- (B) Sidewalk-Level Wooden Deck (700 SF)
- (C) Benches, Tables, and Seating Areas (104 LF)
- (D) Street Art/Surface Mural



## GETTING TACTICAL

After renovations to a failing retaining wall above the CSX rail line, this portion of 26TH Street, just west of Guilford Avenue, remained closed. Concepts illustrate how tactical improvements can transform the space from a blank, asphalt canvas into a community park space.

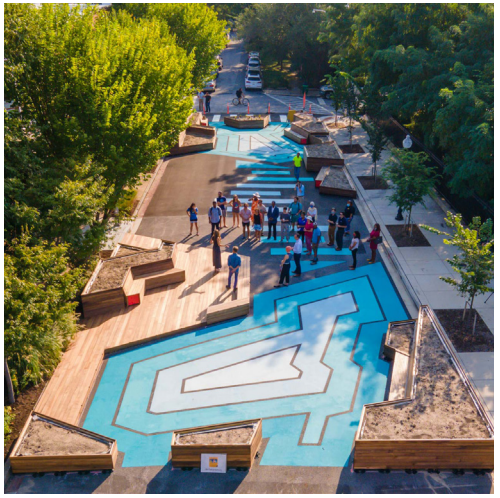
*Project of RK&K*













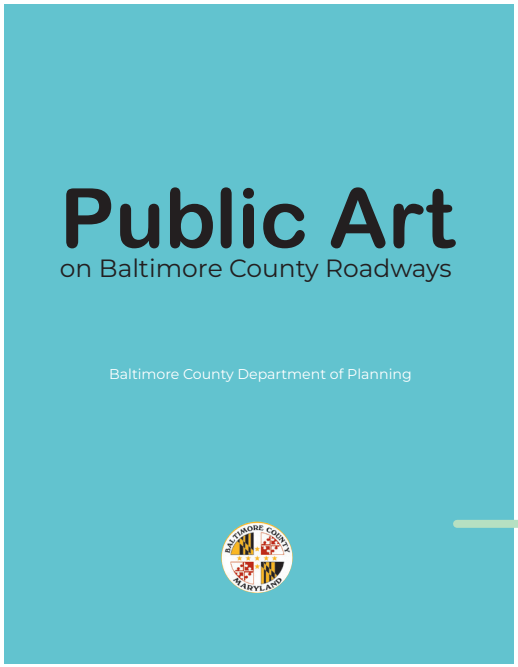
*Three images at left by Graham Projects*

## FROM DREAM TO DEMONSTRATION

Asphalt art was not legal in Baltimore County...until I came along. In 2025, I pitched the idea of a new policy to enable community-driven asphalt art projects to the County Executive and she was enthusiastically on board. After drafting and ultimately adopting the new *Public Art on Baltimore County Roadways* policy, I had the chance to take it for a test drive with a new grant-funded project.

My team was one of just three communities selected for the 2025 Smart Growth America Community Connectors program, which helps to repair damage from divisive infrastructure. In partnership with the Northeast Towson Improvement Association, we developed a demonstration Complete Streets project to slow traffic and boost feelings of belonging among residents. Installed in April 2026, the project reclaims pavement from cars and returns it to use for the residents of Historic East Towson, Baltimore County's oldest Black community.

*Project of Baltimore County Department of Planning*





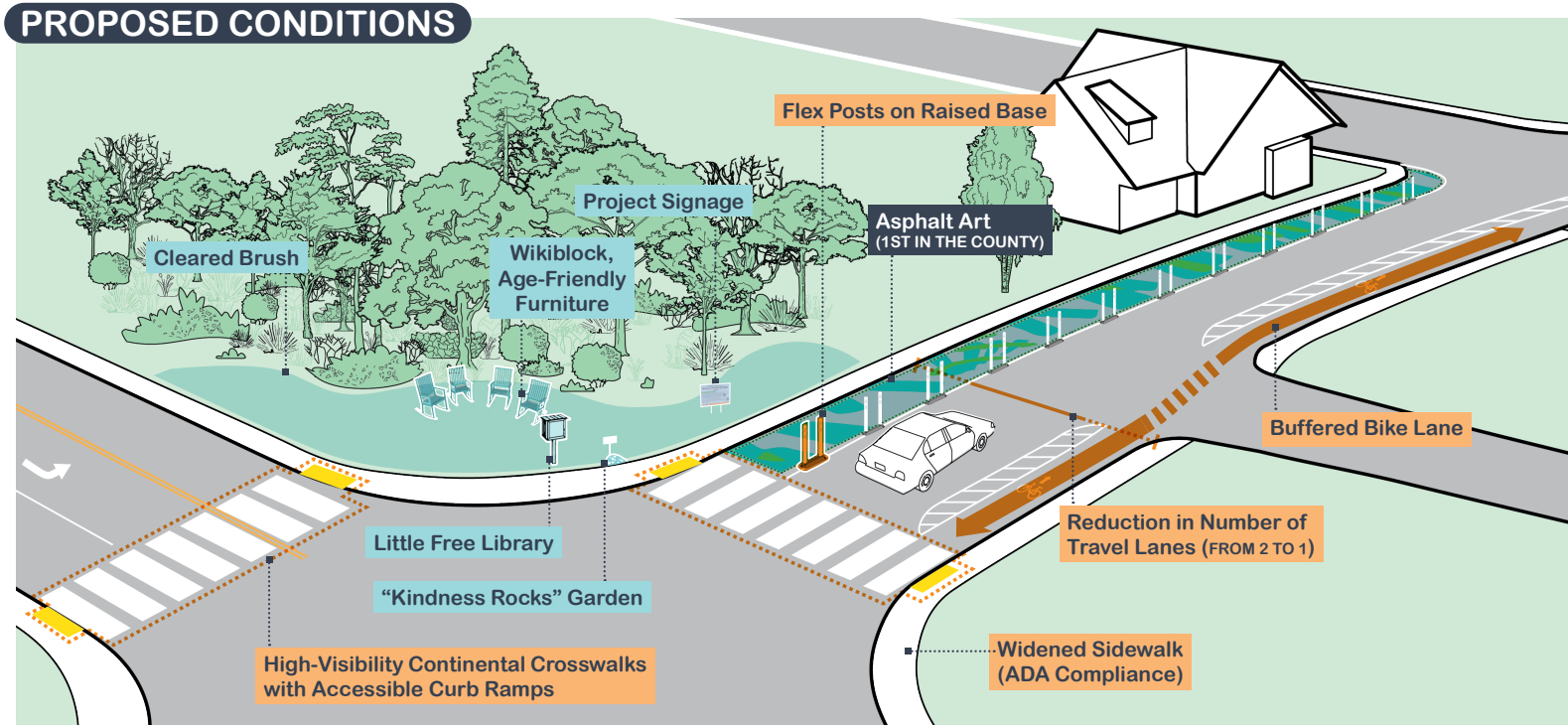




# PROJECT DESIGN

TRAFFIC CALMING | ASPHALT ART | GATHERING & BELONGING

## PROPOSED CONDITIONS




## LINE DATA COLLECTION

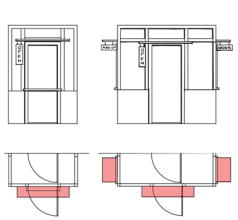


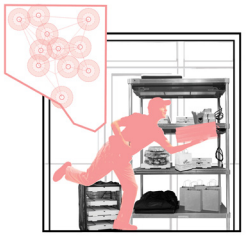
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AVERAGE COUNT/HOUR | | 17 |
| PERCEIVED BIPOC | | 54% |
| PERCEIVED GENDER | F | 44% |
| | M | 54% |
| | Non-Binary/ Unsure/ Other | 1% |
| PERCEIVED AGE | Child (0-12 years) | 4% |
| | Teen | 16% |
| | Adult | 66% |
| | Older Adult (65+) | 13% |
| NUMBER OF PEOPLE | Single Person | 75% |
| | Pair (2) | 12% |
| | Group (3+) | 13% |
| MODE OF TRAVEL | Walking | 79% |
| | Running | 10% |
| | Mobility Aid | 0% |
| | Cycling | 7% |
| | Carried | 0% |
| | Other wheels | 3% |

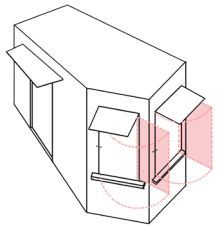


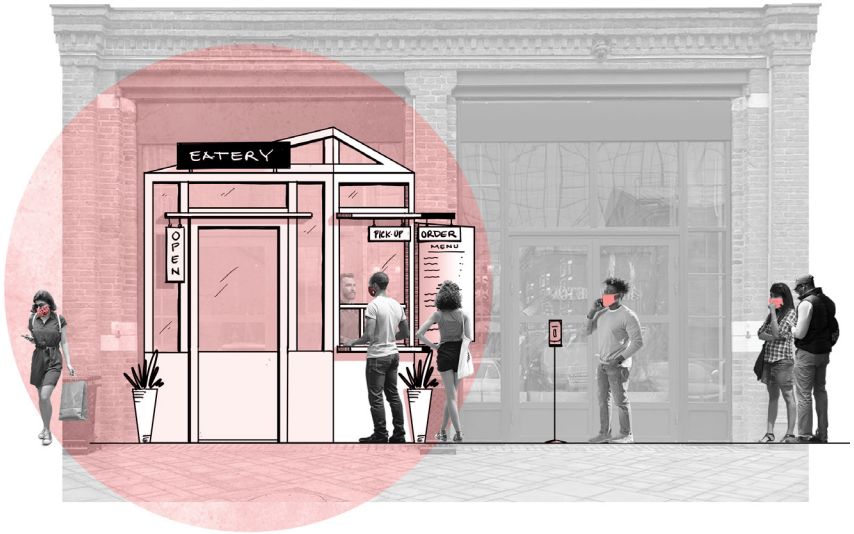


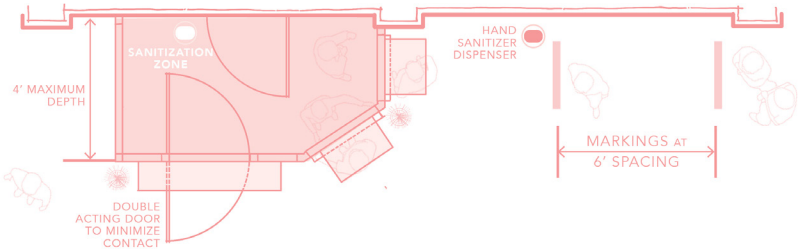




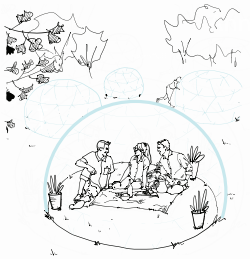


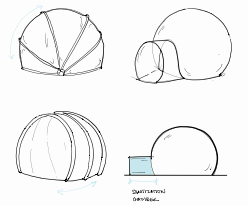


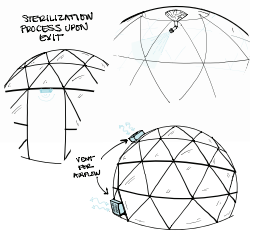


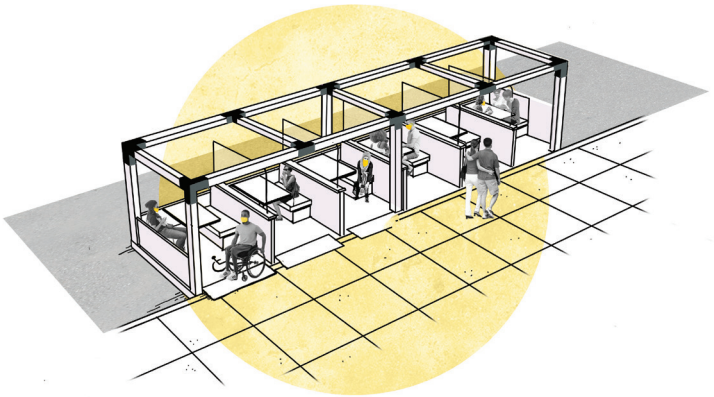



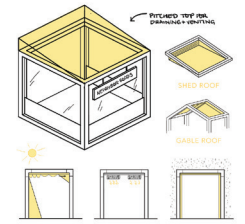


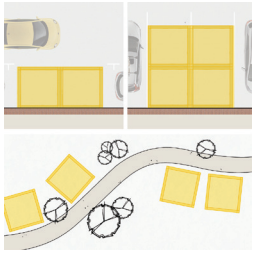



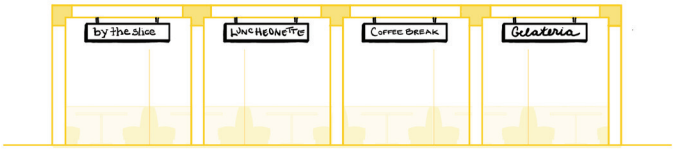














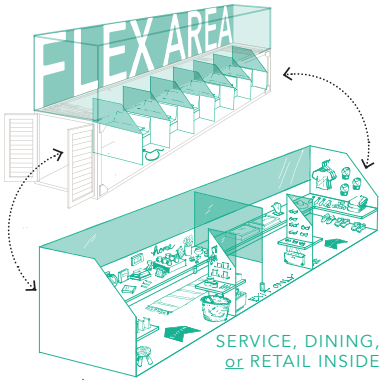


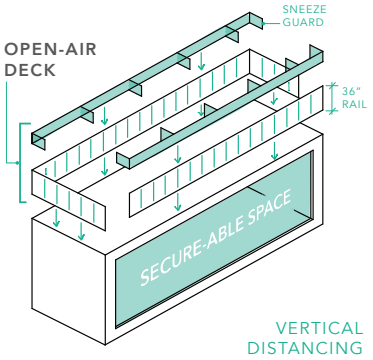
## DESIGN FOR DISTANCING

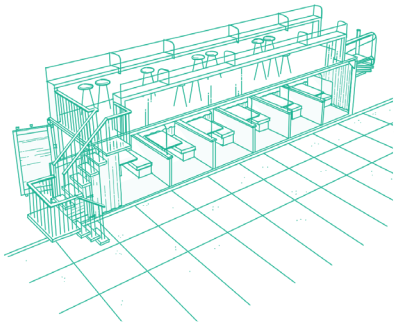
Amid a global pandemic, how can we safely reopen small and local businesses? These concepts explore ideas—some more whimsical than others—for adaptable, modular, and replicable strategies for creating safe dining, shopping, and gathering experiences.

*Independent Proposal of Hello Happy Design*


COFFEE BREAK
LUNCHEONETTE


FLEX AREA
SERVICE, DINING,
or RETAIL INSIDE

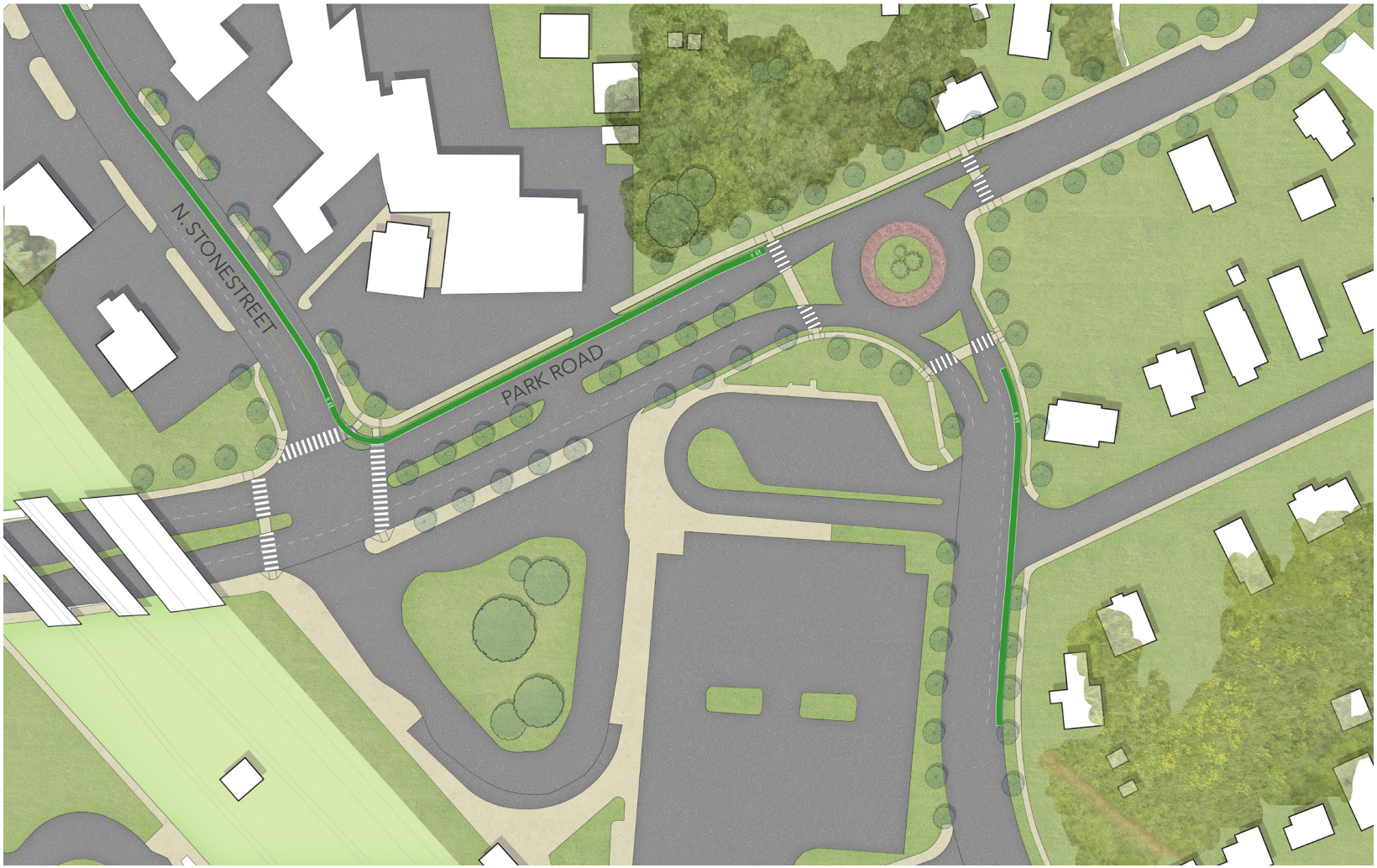

OPEN-AIR
DECK
SNEEZE
GUARD
36"
RAIL
SECURE-ABLE SPACE
VERTICAL
DISTANCING



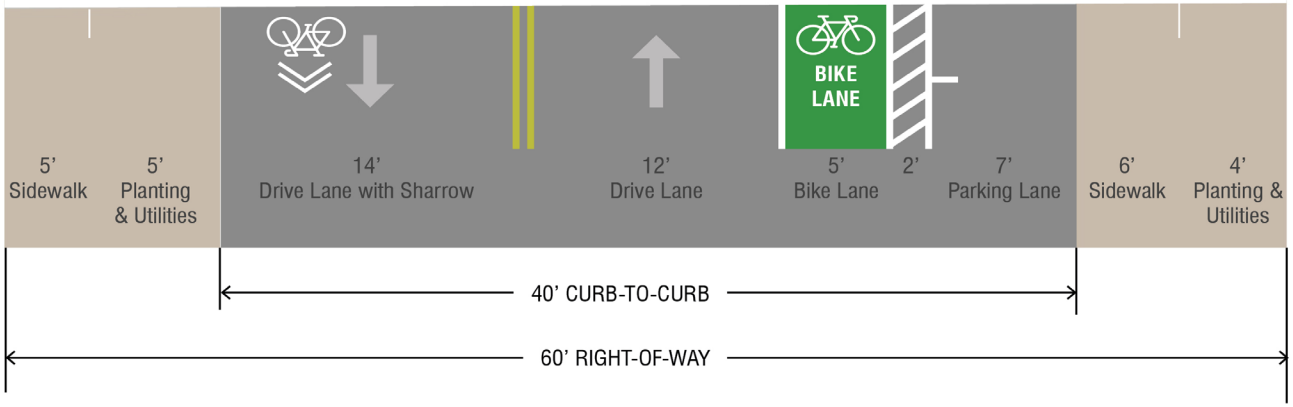
# ROCKVILLE, MD

Planned intersection and roadway improvements for the Stonestreet Corridor Study.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*



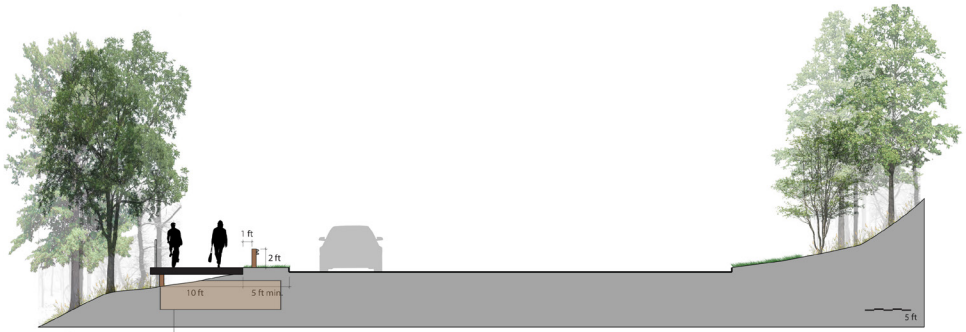


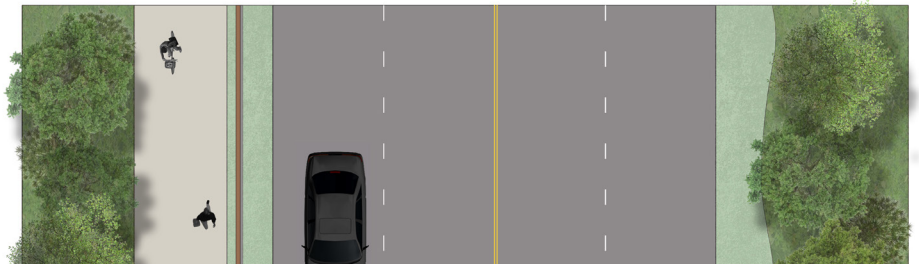

## ROCKVILLE, MD

For North Stonestreet in Rockville, MD, a roadway reconfiguration can add bike facilities.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*




Potential location for underground utilities





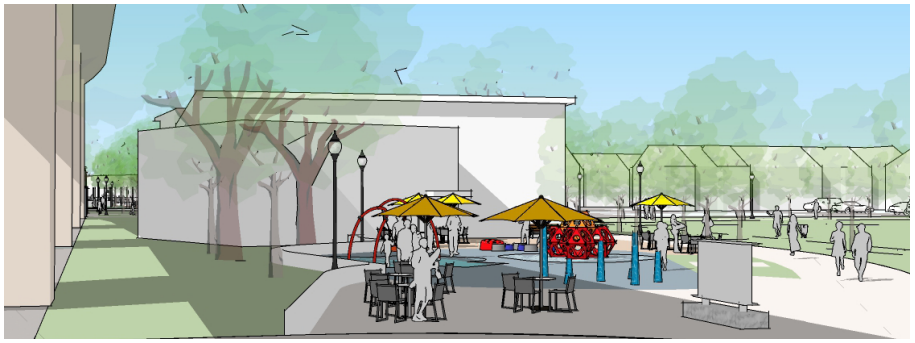
## TOWSON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Connectivity and tree canopy were important considerations when updating the Towson University Master Plan.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*









## SOLO GIBBS PARK

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

The boundary of park just west of Federal Hill in Baltimore Maryland will soon grow a few acres, affording the opportunity to expand the park's recreation and green spaces.

# SOCIAL COFFEEHOUSE

Social Coffeehouse in Leonardtown, MD, gets a makeover with new facade concepts.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

EXISTING CONDITIONS




PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS




ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT






EXISTING CONDITIONS




EXISTING CONDITIONS




PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS




PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS




## LEONARDTOWN FACADES

In downtown Leonardtown, MD, multiple businesses explore facade enhancements.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

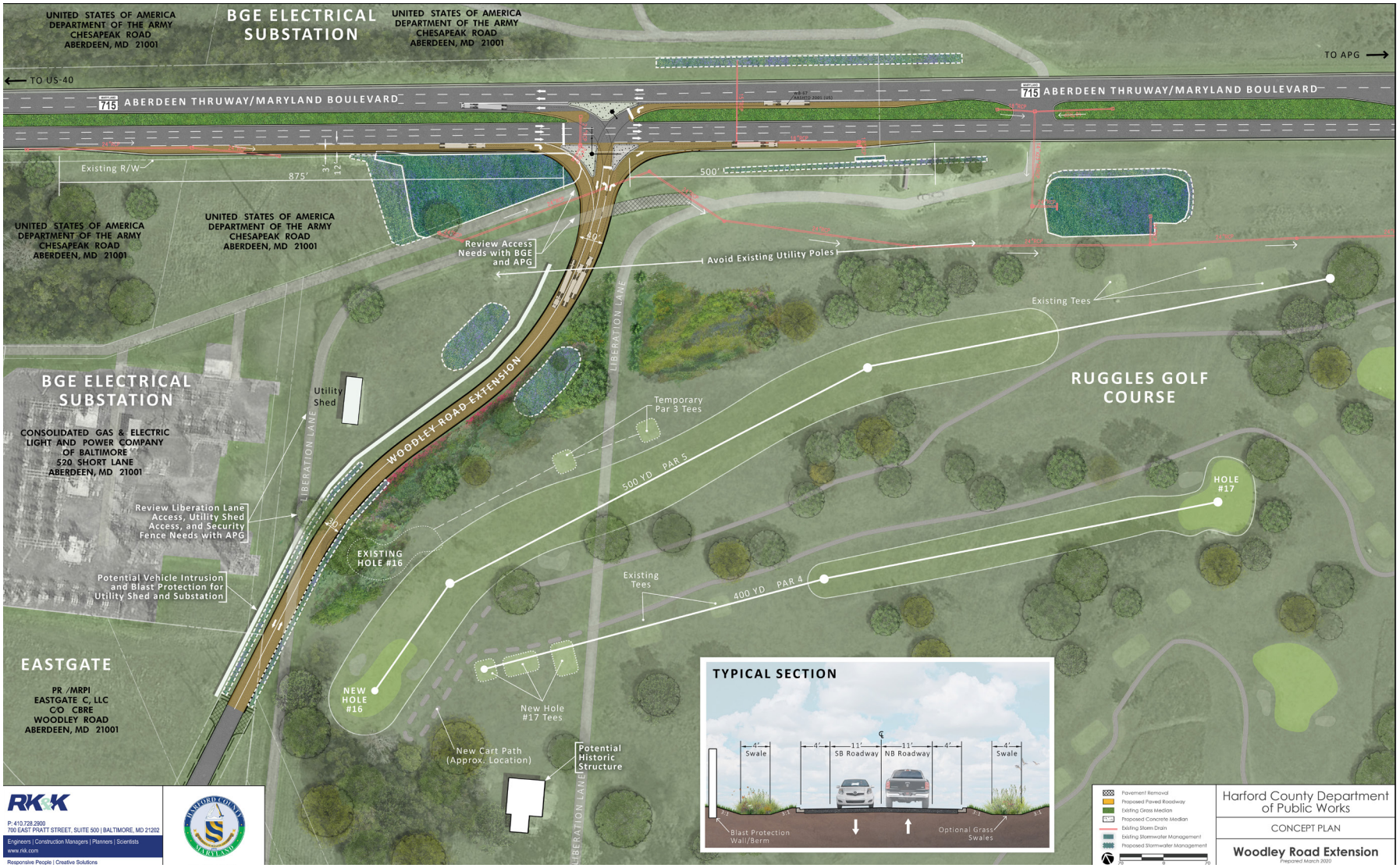
# SOCIAL COFFEEHOUSE 2.0

Three years after the initial facade improvement project, Social Coffeehouse expanded to a premiere location on Leonardtown's Square.

*Project of Hello Happy Design*







UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHESAPEAK ROAD
ABERDEEN, MD 21001
BGE ELECTRICAL SUBSTATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHESAPEAK ROAD
ABERDEEN, MD 21001
TO APG
TO US-40
715 ABERDEEN THRUWAY/MARYLAND BOULEVARD
715 ABERDEEN THRUWAY/MARYLAND BOULEVARD
Existing R/W
875'
500'
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHESAPEAK ROAD
ABERDEEN, MD 21001
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHESAPEAK ROAD
ABERDEEN, MD 21001
Review Access Needs with BGE and APG
Avoid Existing Utility Poles
Existing Tees
BGE ELECTRICAL SUBSTATION
CONSOLIDATED GAS & ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY OF BALTIMORE
520 SHORT LANE
ABERDEEN, MD 21001
Utility Shed
LIBERATION LANE
WOODLEY ROAD EXTENSION
LIBERATION LANE
Temporary Par 3 Tees
RUGGLES GOLF COURSE
500 YD PAR 5
HOLE #17
Review Liberation Lane Access, Utility Shed Access, and Security Fence Needs with APG
EXISTING HOLE #16
Potential Vehicle Intrusion and Blast Protection for Utility Shed and Substation
Existing Tees
400 YD PAR 4
EASTGATE
PR /MRPI
EASTGATE C, LLC
C/O CBRE
WOODLEY ROAD
ABERDEEN, MD 21001
NEW HOLE #16
New Hole #17 Tees
New Cart Path (Approx. Location)
Potential Historic Structure
LIBERATION LANE
TYPICAL SECTION
4' Swale
4'
11' SB Roadway
11' NB Roadway
4'
4' Swale
Blast Protection Wall/Berm
Optional Grass Swales
Pavement Removal
Proposed Paved Roadway
Existing Grass Median
Proposed Concrete Median
Existing Storm Drain
Existing Stormwater Management
Proposed Stormwater Management
RK&K
P: 410.728.2900
700 EAST PRATT STREET, SUITE 500 | BALTIMORE, MD 21202
Engineers | Construction Managers | Planners | Scientists
www.rkk.com
Responsive People | Creative Solutions
Harford County Department of Public Works
CONCEPT PLAN
Woodley Road Extension
Prepared March 2020




## WAVERLY MAIN STREET

For Waverly Main Street, this previously unassuming building will see more celebration as the business inside, SquashWise, extends their branding outdoors.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*



## SMALL INTERVENTIONS, BIG IMPACTS

Simple improvements–such as façade renovations, bus bulb-outs, outdoor seating, public art, street trees, and repainted crosswalks–can make a significant difference in the overall quality of a streetscape.

*Proposal with RK&K*

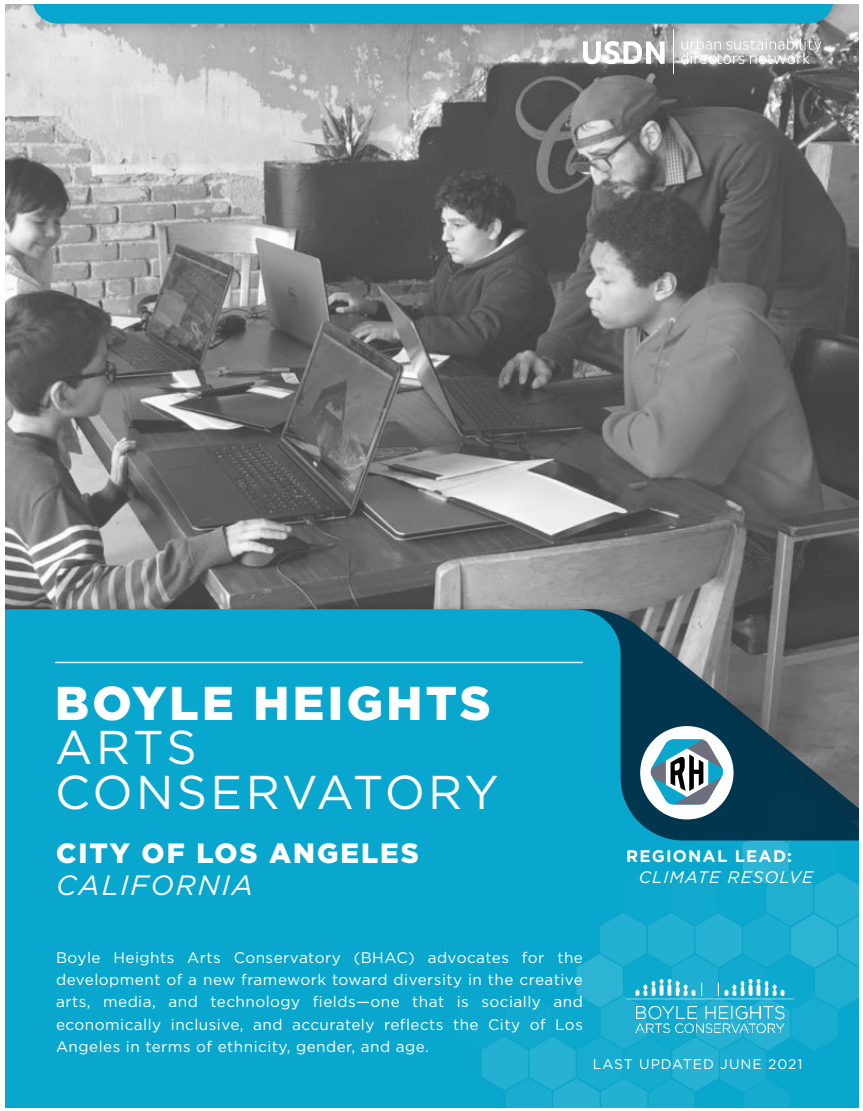


## PROMOTING RESILIENCY

The Urban Sustainability Director's Network (USDN) gave a spotlight to several of their community resilience hub partners to encourage similar programs in communities throughout the united states.

Concurrent with this effort, I worked on a Resilience Hub logo.
*Project of Hello Happy Design*



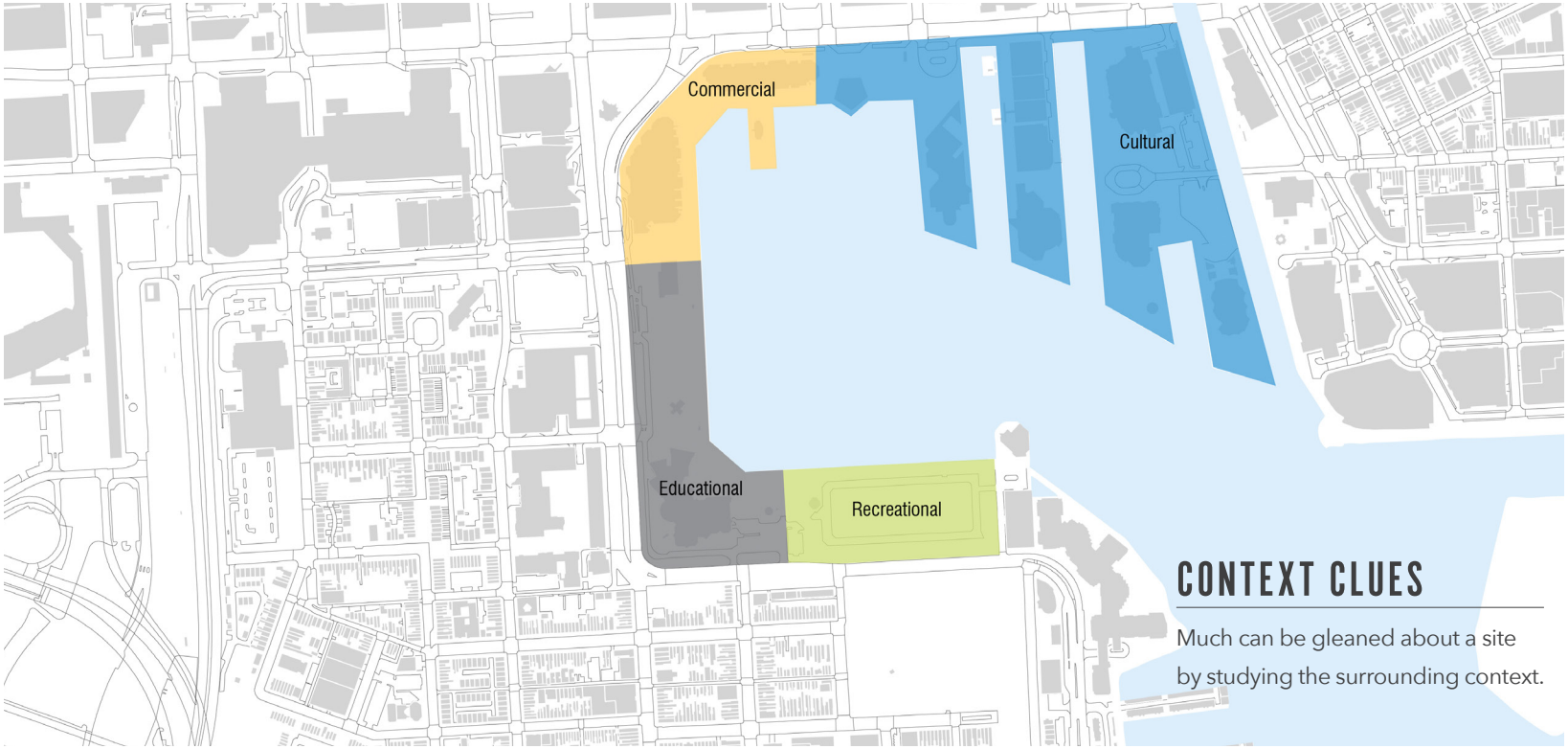






## POST-DISASTER RESOURCES

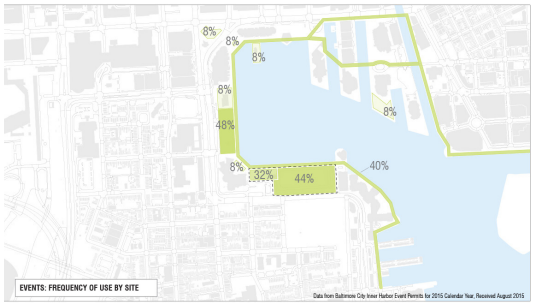
As part of an advertisement, Resolute Underwriters hope to illustrate how they can be a community support after disaster strikes.

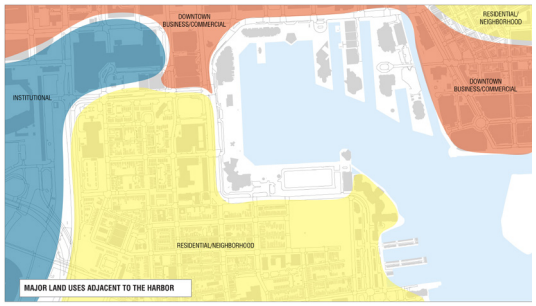
*Project of Hello Happy Design*

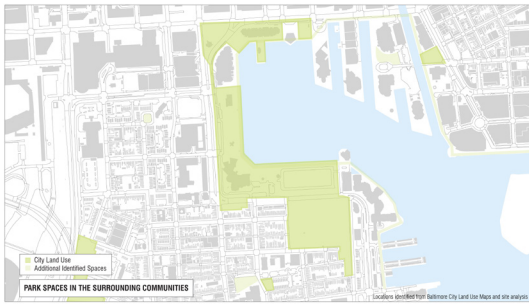



## CONTEXT CLUES

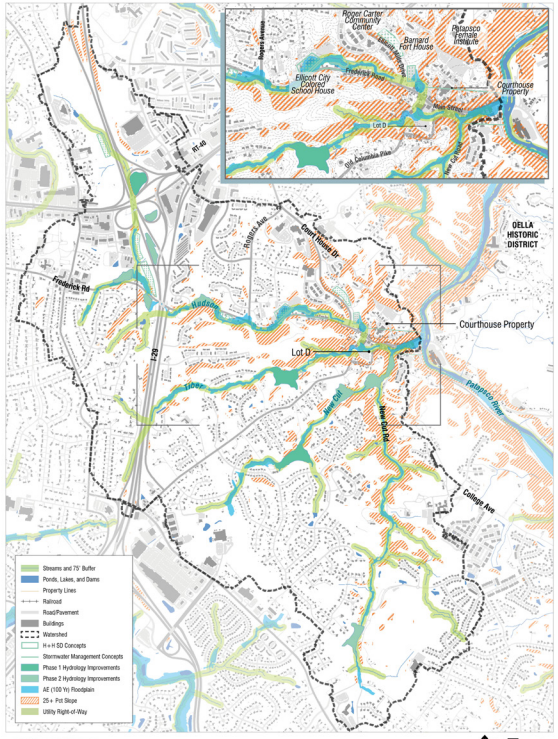
Much can be gleaned about a site by studying the surrounding context.



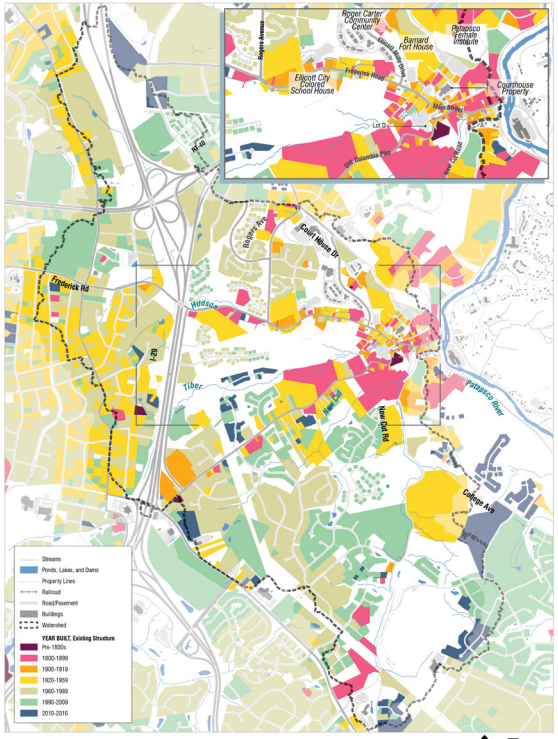



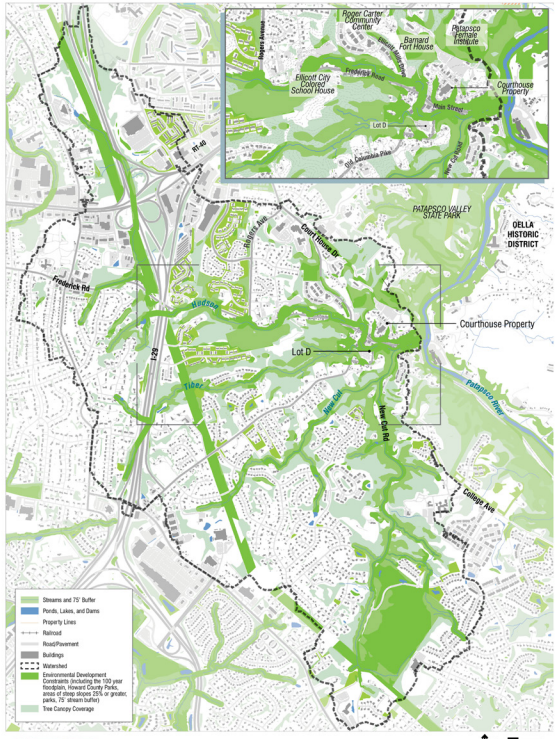

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*



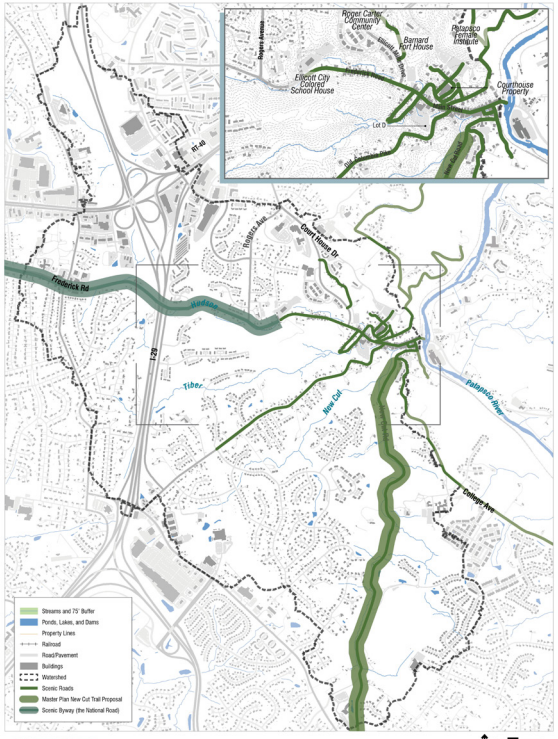

**WATERSHED DIAGRAM**
HYDROLOGY + STEEP SLOPES



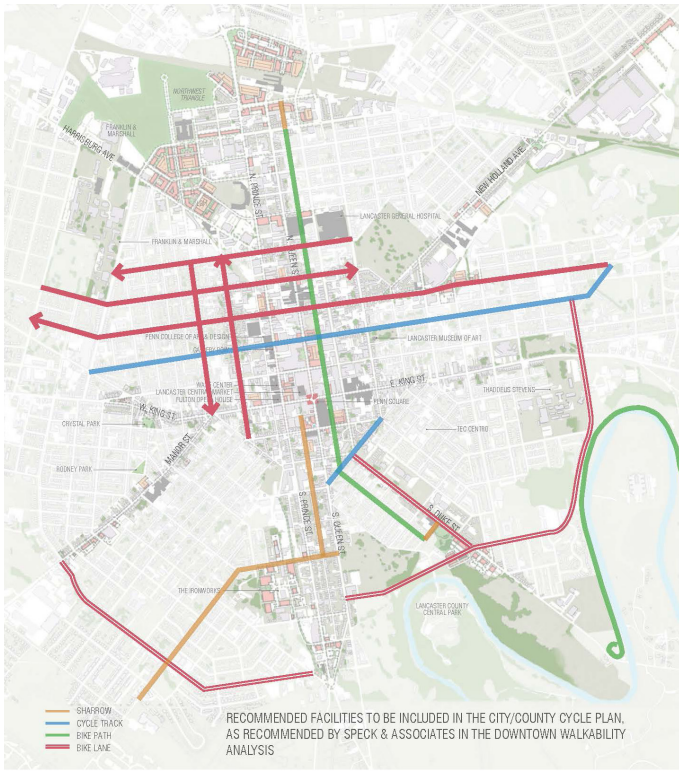

**WATERSHED DIAGRAM**
YEAR BUILT




**WATERSHED DIAGRAM**
GREEN NETWORK + WITH TREE CANOPY




**WATERSHED DIAGRAM**
SCENIC ROADWAYS




# GETTING ORIENTED

Recognizing that not everyone can read a map, cartographic and plan graphics are created with clarity and interest in mind.

*Projects of Mahan Rykiel Associates*




# EXTENSION OF SUCCESS

Following the successful adoption of the Upper Stony Run Strategic Plan (the premier Community Supported Plan in Baltimore City), planning efforts extend southward to the Lower Stony Run. The Lower Stony Run Strategic Plan identified opportunities for improvements within the Stony Run Park system, throughout the broader watershed, and citywide.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*










W 34TH STREET
W 33RD STREET
W 31ST STREET
S1
S2
S3
S4
S5
S6
S7
S8


LINKWOOD ROAD WALK-ING PATH (CIP)
N7
CRAYCOMBE GATEWAY (CIP)
N8
SAN MARTIN DRIVE ACCESS (CIP)
N9
G7
SIGNAGE THROUGHOUT THE LOWER STONY RUN
SOUTHERN CONNECTION-LINK TO JONES FALLS TRAIL (CIP)
S2
SOUTHERN CONNECTION-MAINTENANCE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS (CIP)
S1
South Linkwood Park
Wyman Park Gateway
Intramural
The Plateau
37th Street Park
HAMPDEN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT "THE AVENUE"
WYMAN PARK
Wyman Park Neighborhood Park
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
The Triangle
Hampden Neighborhood Park
Stony Run Walking Path
The Glade
Wyman Park Ballfields
Greenmount Cemetery
Jones Falls Trail
DRUID HILL PARK
REMINGTON COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
CHARLES VILLAGE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
WYMAN PARK DELL

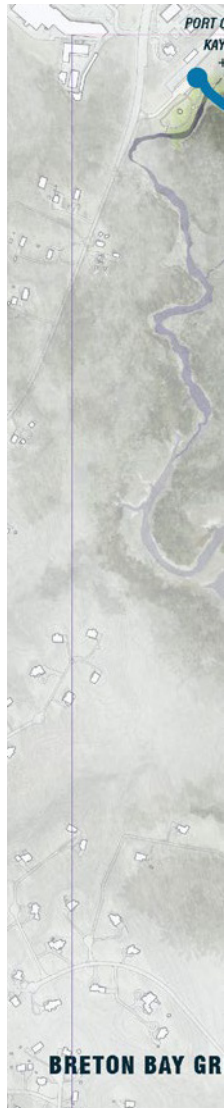

Stony Run | Linkwood Park WELCOME
Stony Run | Wyman Park WELCOME
Area appropriate for larger scale events
Intramural Field
The Plateau
Stone Pedersen Trail
37th Street Park
Stream Restoration/ Wetlands
Mill History Ruins
Wyman Park Neighborhood Park
Railroad History and Mill History Ruins
Hampden Neighborhood Park
The Glade
Huntington Avenue Viaduct
Buried Streams
Remington Neighborhood Park
Greenmount Cemetery
Jones Falls Trail
DRUID HILL PARK
REMINGTON COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
CHARLES VILLAGE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
WYMAN PARK DELL
UPPER STONY RUN
LOWER STONY RUN
NORTHERN SEGMENT
CENTRAL SEGMENT
SOUTHERN SEGMENT

# SO NICE, WE PLANNED IT THRICE

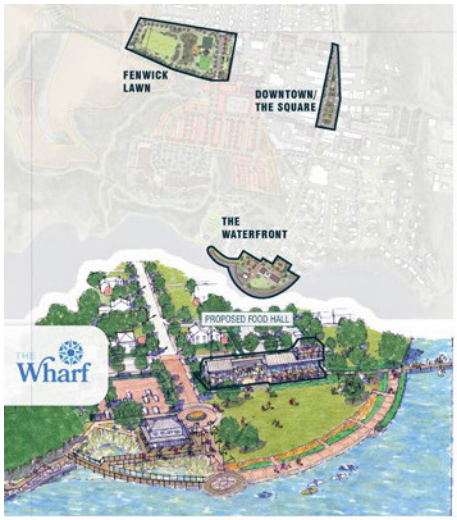
Our team was first contracted to work on the Leonardtown Strategic Plan in 2018. Two subsequent plans have been created to continue outlining a path forward for this town in Southern Maryland.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*



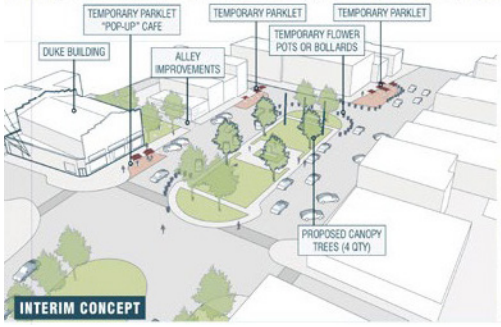

OF LEONARDTOWN
AK LAUNCH
WINERY
POINT LOOKOUT ROAD
BRETON BAY GREENWAY
PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD
PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD
PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD
PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD
LEONARDTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ROUTE 5
WASHINGTON STREET
MCINTOSH RUN
FENWICK LAWN
THE SQUARE
HOTEL
AMPHITHEATER
BRETON BAY
THE WATERFRONT
EENWAY & KEY CONNECTIONS

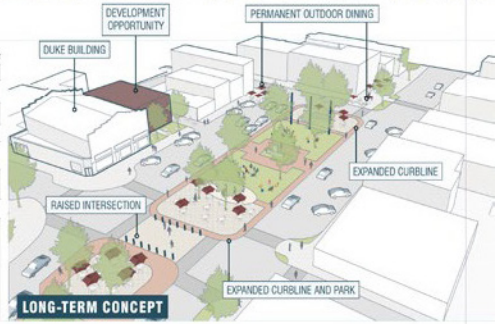

FENWICK LAWN
DOWNTOWN/ THE SQUARE
THE WATERFRONT
PROPOSED FOOD HALL
The Wharf


PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD
EXISTING UNDER-SERVED
EXISTING ANCHOR RETAIL BUSINESS
OPEN SPACE/TRAIL CONNECTION TO WATERFRONT
PROPOSED MIXED-USE TRANSITION TO DOWNTOWN
INITIAL PHASE
Fenwick Lawn


VANTAGE POINT OF MODEL VIEW
INTERIM CONCEPT


VANTAGE POINT OF MODEL VIEW
LONG-TERM CONCEPT


TEMPORARY PARKLET "POP-UP" CAFE
TEMPORARY PARKLET
TEMPORARY PARKLET
TEMPORARY FLOWER POTS OR BOLLARDS
DUKE BUILDING
ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS
PROPOSED CANOPY TREES (4 QTY)
INTERIM CONCEPT


DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY
PERMANENT OUTDOOR DINING
DUKE BUILDING
EXPANDED CURBLINE
RAISED INTERSECTION
EXPANDED CURBLINE AND PARK
LONG-TERM CONCEPT









## MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

In the Pigtown community of Baltimore, MD, SketchUp models are used as a quick tool to illustrate potential improvements.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*







Highway 378 / 9TH Avenue Gateway

**Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan**
*Conway, SC*
Arnett Muldrow Associates | Mahan Rykiel Associates | Community Design Solutions



## COMPUTER MIMICS HAND

Using Adobe Photoshop, these Conway, SC, illustratives were created to mimic the quality of a hand-rendering.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*




# INCORPORATING GREENERY INTO A PARKING UPDATE

When St. Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem, PA, updated their parking plan, it was approached with a mind for introducing additional tree coverage.

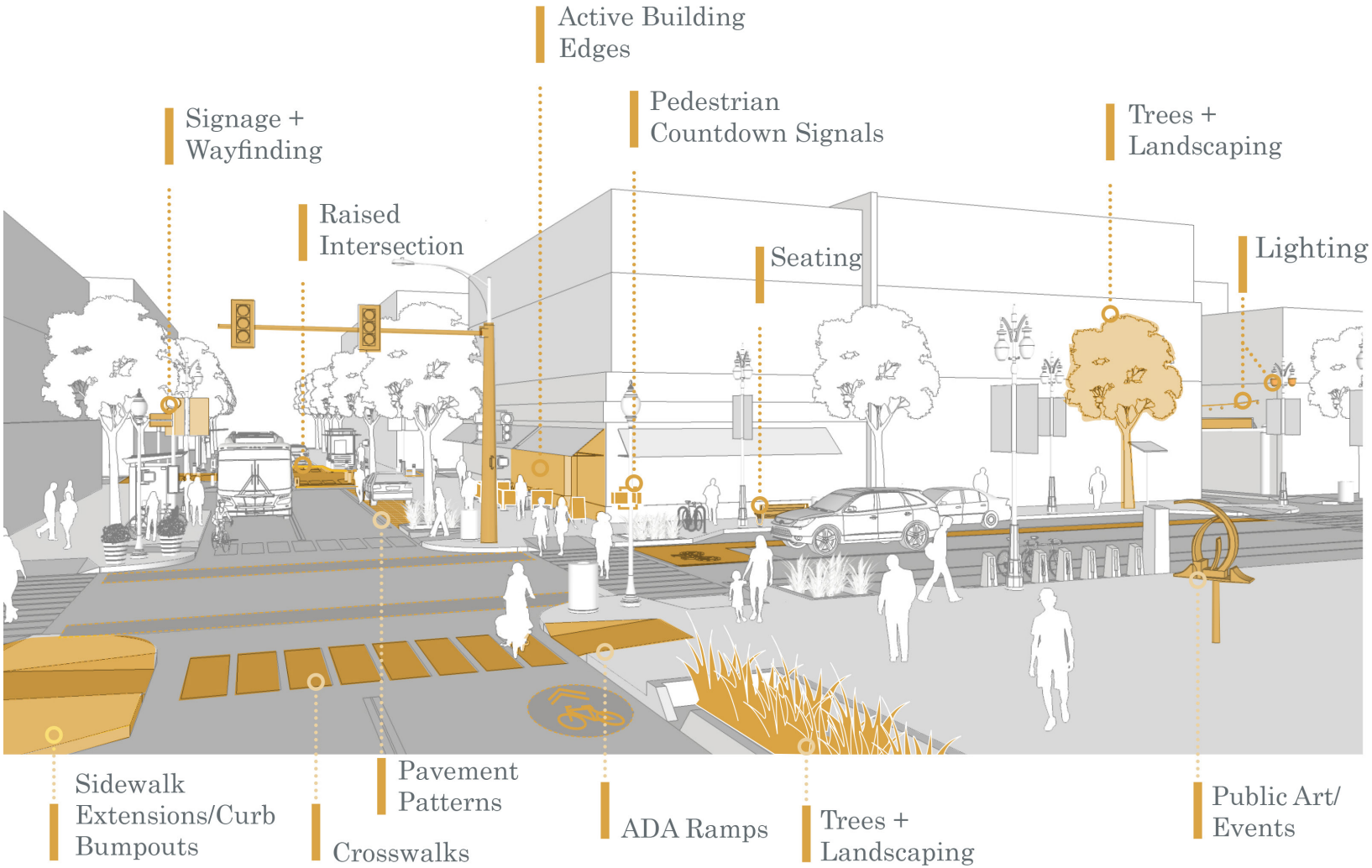
*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

## STREETSCAPING

In Frederick, Maryland, one intersection sees a range of improvements that enhance the overall streetscape.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*





# A Walk Along the Trail

Mapping the Experience

RED= POST-MTG COMMENTS

WHY DID YOU COME HERE?

EXERCISE
A TO B- CONNECTION
FAMILY ACTIVITY - LEISURE
HEALTH / WELLNESS
EXPLORATION / DISCOVERY
ENTERTAINMENT / MEET
(USUALLY WOULD AVOID USE MORE DIRECT ROUTE)
TOURISM
DOG WALKING

DESIRE TO SEE SPACE ACTIVATED; SERVE COMMUNITY

AC DISTRICT TO MUSEUM OF ART + ANCHORS I PARK #1 PARK

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DISTRICT?

RESTAURANTS
SURROUNDED BY "SHADY / CHALLENGED AREAS
ARCHITECTURE + HISTORY
MARYLAND THEATRE
FAMILY - DISCOVERY STATION
PROGRAMMING / EVENTS
LIBRARY
UNDERAPPRECIATED
PHYSICALLY DISCONNECTED FROM CITY
URBAN EXPERIENCE POTENTIAL

HAS MUCH TO OFFER - BUT UNDERAPPRECIATED AND DISCONNECTED

WHAT MAKES THIS DISTRICT SPECIAL? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER DISTRICTS?

"DEMONSTRATION BLOCK"
CATALYST AREA
HISTORY
MUSEUM - UNDERVALUED; FREE
PARK - AMENITIES, OPEN SPACE, ENTERTAINMENT
MUSIC - BARS, BANDSHELL
ART SCHOOL

UNIQUE OFFERING FOR CITY; CATALYST AREA FOR IMPROV COMMUNITY

BLDGS.
PHYSICAL DISTRESS + UNCLEANLINESS; CHAOTIC / DISRUPTED PATHS; CONCRETE / HARDSCAPE

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE LESS OF ALONG THE TRAIL?

TRASH
BROKEN BUILDINGS
CARS
LESS DISRUPTION (PHYSICAL/VISUAL)
HARDSCAPES - PAVING
90° TURNS

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SPACES ALONG THE PROPOSED TRAIL ROUTE?

SHABBY - NEED UPGRADE
INFILL OPTIONS - OPPORTUNITIES
POTENTIAL IN ALLEYS; SM. OPPORTUNITIES
EXPLORING NEW AREAS - UNEXPECTED
VIEWSHEDS - STEEPLE
OPEN SPACES - NOT CONFINED
- ACCESSIBLE; COMFORTABLE
SECURITY RISK
APPRECIATE LANDSCAPE
BROKEN PATH / INTERRUPTED

SEE POTENTIAL; AN UNEXPECTED SUPRISE - NICE AS POSS. OASIS; EX. CHALLENGES (SAFETY + ROUTE INTERRUPTIONS)

WHAT FEATURES WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO SPEND PART OF YOUR DAY ALONG THE TRAIL?

ESCAPE FROM CARS
GREENSPACES / LANDSCAPING
FAMILY ORIENTED - GATHERING SPACES
- UNIQUE EVENT SPACE
PUBLIC ART → WAYFINDING / ART
MOVIES PROJECTED
WATER FEATURE - INTERACTIVE, KIDS
INTERACTIVE ART, PLAY SPACES → INTERGENERATIONAL
TRASH CAN'S
DOG RUN; WATER
- LIGHTING
WATER FOUNTAINS (DPI)
GARDEN / URBAN AG
UNIFYING FEATURE - IMAGE
WAYFINDING

REC / FLEX SPACE

> IN GENERAL: ESCAPE FROM URBAN
> ACTIVITY SPACES + PROGRAMMING
> FEELING OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT
> COHESIVE FEEL / SENSE OF PLC

"EDUCATION WALK"
CONSTANT REGENERATION, VARIABILITY; SENSE OF PLACE / BRANDING; ACTIVITIES + PROGRAMMING - NATIONAL, "GAMES"; STRENGTH OF ANCHORS / ADJACENT USES

WHAT WOULD MAKE THE TRAIL A DESTINATION?

TITLE - ANCHORS (for orientation)
LANDSCAPING - MEMORIES
INTERCHANGEABLE / VISITING ARTISTS
VARIABILITY / SEASONAL THEMES
TROLLEY (CITY BASED ON TRAINS)
DISTANCE SIGNS (FITNESS)
SOCIAL MEDIA / GAMES (GEOCACHE)
EVENT SPACE
PROGRESSIVE LEARNING

SCAVENGER HUNT
GEOCACHING
"VOLKS MARCHING" (PREVIOUS HIGHLIGHTED)

HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE THE TRAIL ONCE IT IS COMPLETE?

WALK @ LUNCH (PLEASANT, SAFE)
EXERCISE
SOCIALIZING
LANDMARK
ERRANDS - BIKE ROUTE COMMUTE
VISITORS / TOURISM - ASSET TO TOUT
PED + BIKE - SKATEBOARD
- WHO USES
- SPACE FOR THESE USES
PAVILION - VENUE

LOCAL USE; RECREATION; TOURIST ATTRACTION; COMMUTER PATH; EVENT SPACES

IF THE TRAIL DOES JUST ONE THING, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

BEAUTIFY
IMPROVE IMAGE
UNIFY COMMUNITY
WALKABILITY
CHANGE PERCEPTIONS
BRING VISITORS
IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH
CONNECT MUSEUM + A&E DISTRICT

IMPROVE IMAGE OF AREA; STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY; IMPROVE HEALTH; SUPPORT ANCHORS + BUSINESSES ...
i.e. SERVE RESIDENTS 1ST - SOME TOURISM / VISITOR COMPONENTS

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS
ARTISTS / VENDORS / MUSICIANS

NOTES FROM END-PREFERRED SITES

ROUTES
VIRGINIA ALIGNMENT - 9PDL
OTHERS - NOT SURE

HOUSING PARK
8 / 10 PROPOSED
6

NORTH
UNDERUSED
STRAIGHT
17

PLUM
2

* LOOP ALT. RTES
MET HOUSE HAS PARKING LOT

ALLEY FLYOVER



# Design Sliders

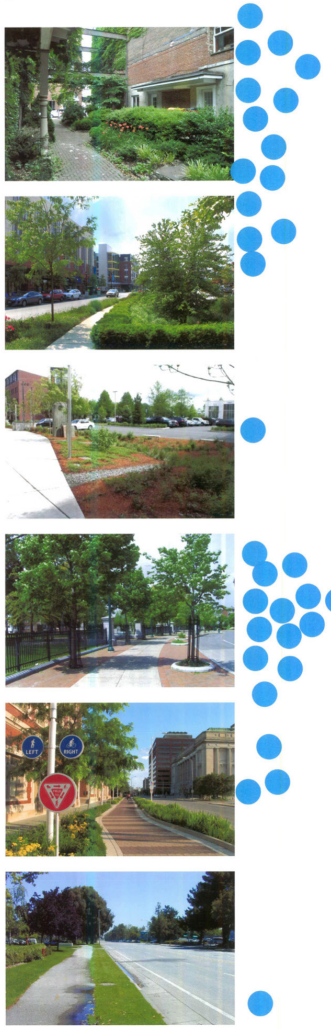
WHERE DO YOU LAND?

DENSE — OPEN

| PLANTING |

ACTIVE — PASSIVE

| PLAY SPACES |









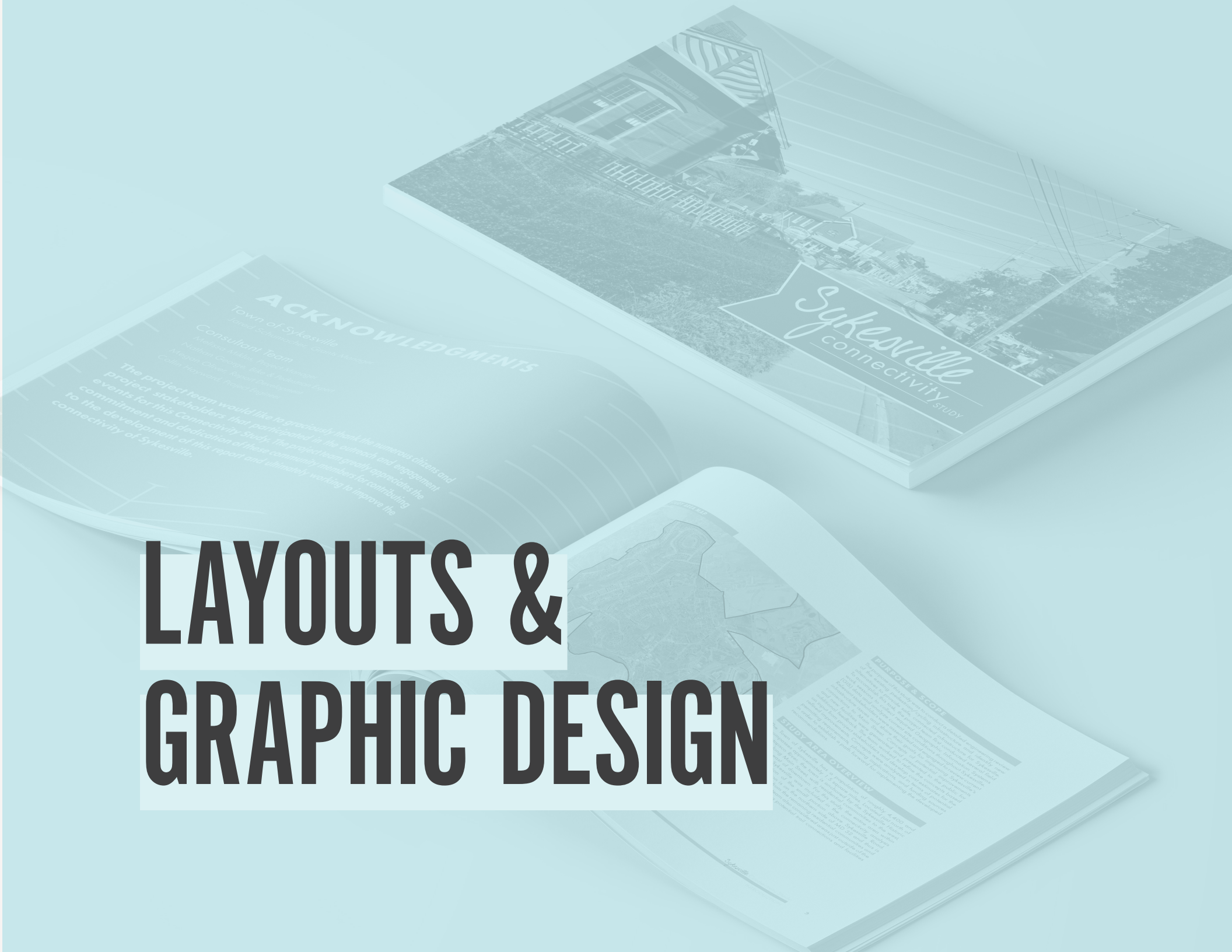





## A&E TRAIL

In Hagerstown, MD, the new Cultural Trail connects two of the City's most prominent arts destinations.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*




# LAYOUTS & GRAPHIC DESIGN




**CC JACKSON RECREATION CENTER & PARK**
*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

My work earns merit not just by concept or theory alone, but also from the way I convey my ideas.

To stir civic excitement about a project requires first capturing their attention. Emphasizing a community's vested, personal interest in a project is one way to encourage participation, but the allure of great design can't help but appeal in a way that ideas alone cannot.

**At every opportunity, I infuse sophisticated and striking design into planning reports, marketing materials (like the CC Jackson community workshop flyer above), and engagement exercises.**




# CONNECTING NEIGHBORHOODS

There are many community resources throughout the neighborhoods surrounding Eastover and Forest Heights, but the connections between these resources are lacking. The Eastover Forest Heights Trail Improvement Plan identifies recommendations for the Oxon Hill trail as well as for network improvements throughout the community.

*Project of RK&K*



# A TOOLBOX FOR INNOVATIVE TREATMENTS

Recognizing that not every transportation intervention is appropriate in every context, the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) wanted to craft a context-driven guidebook. By identifying six context zones, MDOT SHA can better determine the type of safety countermeasure that will be most effective on a given streetscape. The simple guidebook design takes into account that there will be varying degrees of familiarity with the subject among readers. So concepts were clearly defined and outlined.

*Project of RK&K*



> “I would like to start by thanking you so much for all that you taught me last year. **Your introduction to GIS, and the Adobe Suite has put me in such a good position**.”
>
> MELANIE HOTHAM
>
> A student in Morgan State University’s Landscape Architecture Program expresses gratitude for my teachings during a semester design studio.

# Open Up Baltimore: Computer Graphics

January 26, 2016



*Volunteer Project with Mahan Rykiel Associates*

# STUDIO OPEN UP BALTIMORE

Spring 2017 | Mondays + Thursdays | 3 Credits

The **Open Up Baltimore** design-build studio will investigate the historical and cultural dimensions that have given rise to the 21st century Baltimore metropolitan region — thinking systematically and strategically about how and where to locate, design, and install an impactful **pop-up engagement project**.

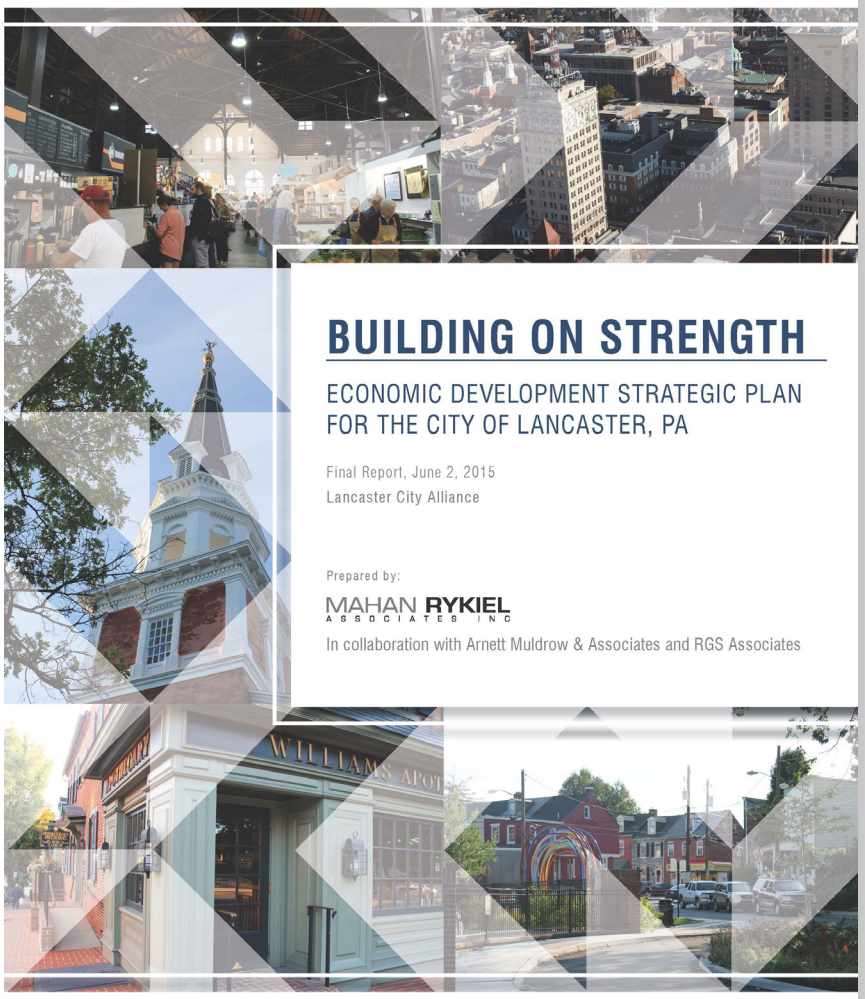
Students will develop assessment metrics and identify how their project might evolve and lead to more permanent urban change that **supports a more just and equitable Baltimore**.



A Partnership Among:

MAHAN RYKIEL
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN DESIGN & PLANNING

Morgan State University
School of Architecture + Planning




**THE COMPREHENSIVE BUILDING ON STRENGTH PLAN**

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

# STRENGTH BREEDS PRESTIGE

Lancaster, PA, was already on the upswing when I began facilitating a recent planning effort. By identifying comprehensive strategies and a clear implementation framework, I've helped the City move forward with our concepts, earning the plan (and the City) great recognition and four awards from the local American Society of Landscape Architects an the American Planning Association chapters.






## MAIN STREET 101

A presentation to the Maryland Main Streets Basic Training in 2018 talked about design, one of the four point of Main Street America's Approach.

*While I presented as an individual, the content of my presentation was created collaboratively with Tom McGilloway of Mahan Rykiel Associates.*

# PRESENTING IDENTITY

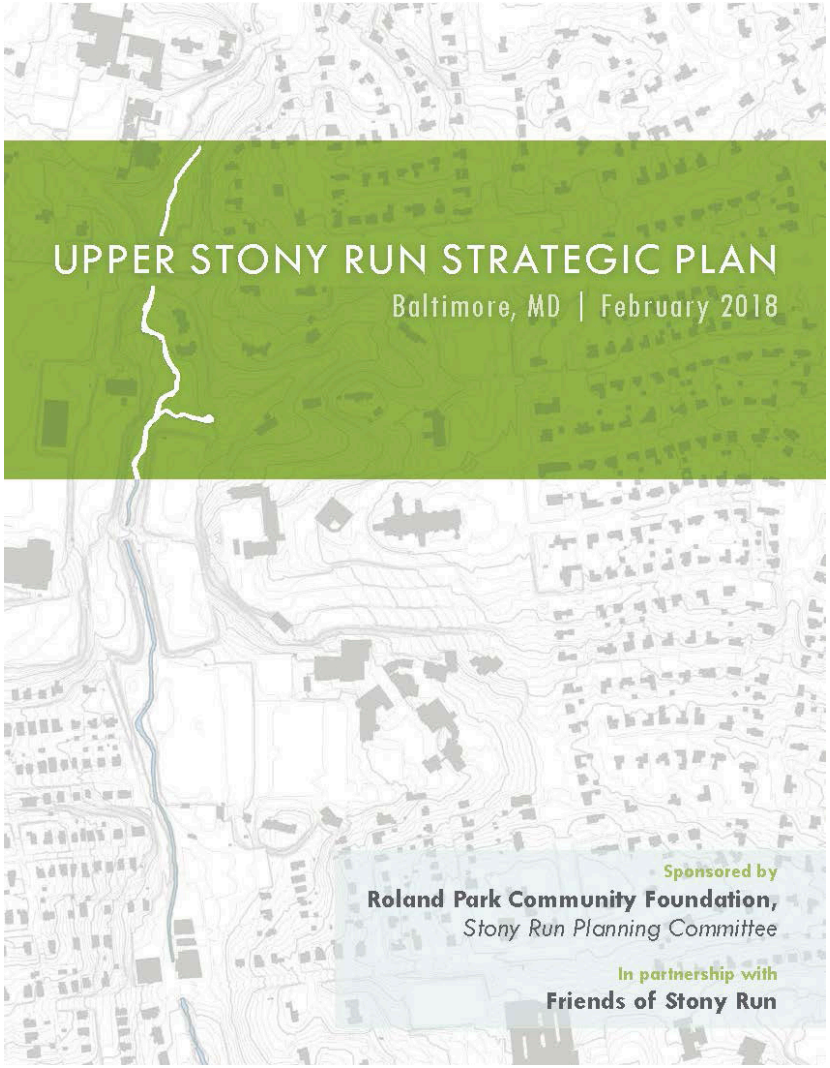
Each project embodies a brand that's specific to the character of that site or community. The brand is incorporated in all materials, including meeting presentations.



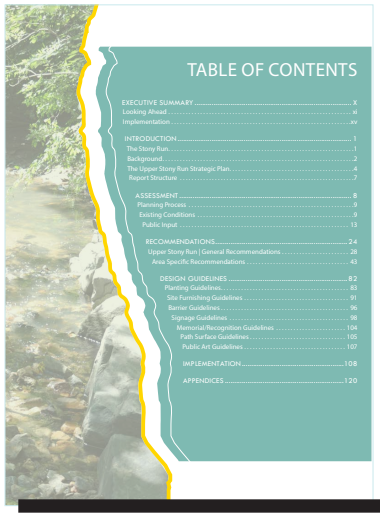

**SLIDESHOW SNIPPETS OF THE VISION PLAN KICK-OFF**

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

# STONY RUN STRATEGIC PLAN




> **In terms of a precedent, this is an absolutely stunningly produced plan that is just gorgeous...** And that certainly sets a high example--for not only other communities to shoot for but the City to shoot for, frankly.
>
> TOM STOSUR
>
> Director of the Baltimore City Department of Planning, in reference to the Stony Run Strategic Plan, the City's first Community Managed Plan, published in 2016.



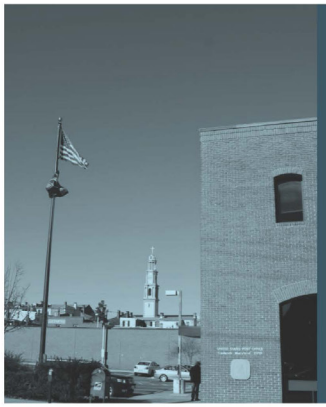




**THE FIRST COMMUNITY-SPONSORED, CITY-APPROVED PLAN IN BALTIMORE CITY**

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*

# DOWNTOWN FREDERICK POST OFFICE
## SITE DESIGN WORKSHOP



### Summary Report

A Community Site Design Workshop for the United States Post Office site in Downtown Frederick

September 20th and 21st 2016

MAHAN RYKIEL ASSOCIATES INC
+ Hybrid Development Group LLC.

## PREEMPTIVE PLANNING

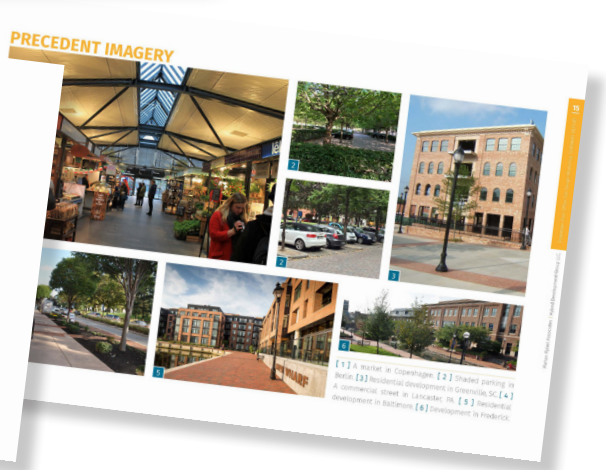
When the Downtown Frederick Partnership realized that the inevitable relocation of the Post Office would leave a large parcel ripe for redevelopment near the heart of Downtown Frederick, I stepped in to help the community envision the potential for the site in the future.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*












MS. MILDRED MOON

*Em id unt. Offic tum earum andendis sequitu iuliamporo, omnimus adi qui imin rehenienis as pos reicipid et pos magnis magnat, corro*

Putting an end to displacement, members of the community began to speak out against such development projects and successfully halted a proposed new highway which would have demolished buildings throughout South Baltimore. For her role in preventing further demolition, and her efforts to secure funding for housing, resident Mildred Rae Moon (1941-1992) was memorialized with a dedication of the Hamburg Street Bridge. This bridge reconnects the east and west sides of Sharp-Leadenhall, previously divided by I-395 (Department of Planning, 2003; Collins & Durington, 2016).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the namesake of Solo Gibbs Park joined Mildred Moon to save Sharp-Leadenhall from demolition once again. Opened in 1979, the park lies on the site of residences which had been demolished to make way for the I-395 overpass. The park was named for Mr. Gibbs for his efforts to organize youth recreational opportunities (Collins & Durington, 2016).

With recent revitalization of Federal Hill and the introduction of the stadiums, redevelopment pressures are once again being felt in Sharp-Leadenhall. This time, there have been efforts to plan accordingly and in ways that benefit the community. In 2003, the Department of Planning published a master plan for the Sharp-Leadenhall community. At the same time as private development has shown interest in property in the area, the 21st Century School Buildings Plan—a collaborative effort between the Baltimore City Public Schools, the Maryland Stadium Authority, the City of Baltimore, and Maryland's Interagency Committee on School Construction—announced plans to consider the future of the Sharp-Leadenhall Elementary School, which sits adjacent to Solo Gibbs Park.



# AS BOLD AS THE COMMUNITY

The Solo Gibbs community is vibrant and bold—deserving of a Park Master Plan report design to match. *Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*












1869 BALTIMORE

*This* **E. Sachse, & Co.'s Bird's Eye View of the City of Baltimore, 1869** *illustration shows how blocks surrounding the present-day Solo Gibbs Park appeared in 1869.*

missing or mis-represented. In addition, as series of diagrams and images highlighting the design team's assessment of the park's existing conditions was presented.

**January 2018 – SHARPkids Meeting:** Held group discussions to understand what youth "loved" about the park verses "what could use some love" as well as broader opportunities/challenges of the park.

**January 2018 – Steering Committee Meeting #3:** Presented concept framework plans identifying the location of potential park uses. Identified clarifications/refinements needed for the public meeting.

**February 2018 – Public Meeting #2:** Reviewed stakeholder and community input to date and presented the assessment of existing conditions. Presented the concept framework plans and intensified ways in which the concepts plans may be combined into a preferred plan for further development.

**March 2018 – Sharp Leadenhall Improvement Association Meeting:** Reviewed the project, stakeholder input to date, and framework plans. Held a broader discussion to understand community desires for the project.

**March 2018 – South Baltimore Partnership Meeting:** Reviewed the project, stakeholder input to date, and framework plans. Held a broader discussion to understand community desires for the project.

**May 2018 – Public Meeting #3:** Presented the concept framework plans and intensified ways in which the concepts plans may be combined into a preferred plan for further development. Held a dot exercise to understand which components of the framework plans participants thought were most/least successful.

**June 2018 – Steering Committee Meeting #4:** Reviewed the refined concept plan that had been distilled from earlier concepts and a potential fall-back approach that could be pursued if the school site could not be incorporated into the park.

**September 2018 – Steering Committee Meeting #5:** Presented an updated concept plan that explored the creation of a newly constructed recreation center and development at the school site following the direction given by the city.

**September 2018 – Otterbein Community Meeting:** Provided a summary of stakeholder input to date and presented the current concept plan.

**October 2018 – Public Meeting #4: Reviewed** the draft plan updates following the previous meeting and discussed how the plan can be refined into a final master plan.

> **I and my associates would like to thank you and your colleagues for sincerely and genuinely caring about our views and concerns of our community.** We felt like, for years, no one cared about us, our views, concerns, and how we do not want our community over developed. At our surprise, your group proved us wrong. You are a group of sympathetic people . . . we thank you and because of you, we can breathe again.

TARYN OJEKWE
*Solo Gibbs Recreation Committee, South Baltimore Partnership, & long-time Sharp Leadenhall resident*



MAHAN RYKIEL ASSOCIATES, INC

BALTIMORE CITY RECREATION & PARKS

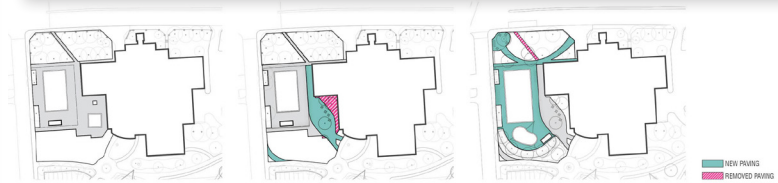
# CC JACKSON PARK MASTER PLAN



## INTRODUCTION

Initially dedicated to the community in 1977, C.C. Jackson Park and Recreation Center have grown from a primarily indoor-focused recreation facility to what is today a 7-acre park space featuring a basketball court, playground, walking path, and the Ripken field for youth baseball.

Yet more is planned, still. The most recent improvements were only part one of a longer-term vision for the park. Since Phase I improvements were completed in 2012, new projects in the Central Park Heights community have come online—including a housing project and a new branch of the Enoch Pratt




Existing Pool Area | Phase II Paving Improvements | Final Pool and Garrison Gateway



FIGURE 1 1994 Aerial of CC Jackson Park

16 | CC Jackson Park Master Plan | 2019



FIGURE 2 2017 Aerial of CC Jackson Park

CC Jackson Park Master Plan | 2019 | 17



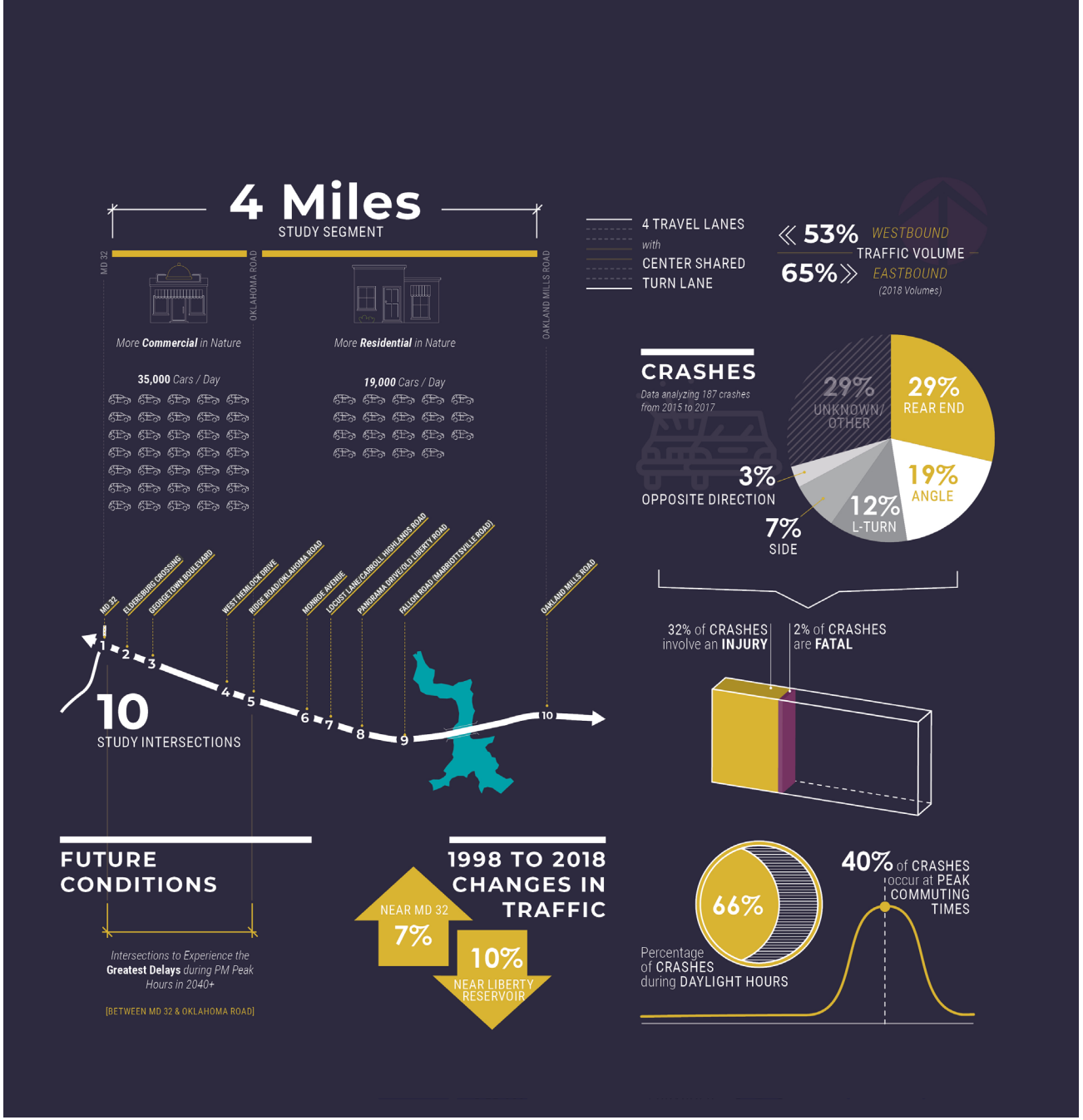
FIGURE 3 Opportunities for the Future of CC Jackson Park

18 | CC Jackson Park Master Plan | 2019

## TO SEE AND BE SEEN

CC Jackson Park has long been invisible—obscured from the view along Park Heights Avenue by buildings and overgrown tree canopies. With a park expansion underway, and with a bright planning report, CC Jackson Park now can't be missed.

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*




## CONCISE TAKEAWAYS

Extensive analysis went into crafting the Maryland 26 Corridor Study in Maryland. In order to translate the results of that effort into an easily digestible format, a series of infographics summarized the key takeaways.

*Project of RK&K*




# Maryland 26

**Project Personality**

**Montserrat** Aa

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Axia Aa

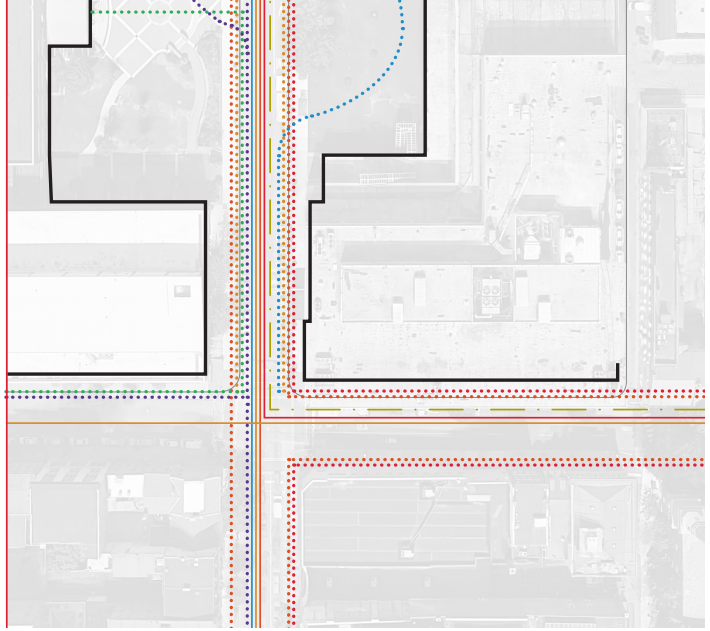
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

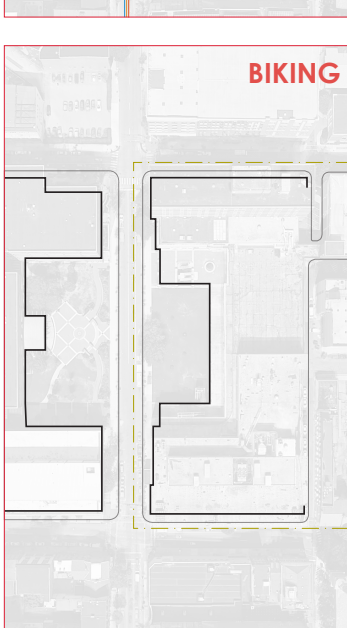


Primary Color
116 | 50 | 98

Accent Colors
45 | 42 | 63
216 | 179 | 49

Secondary Palette
116 | 177 | 170
89 | 9 | 38
118 | 145 | 64
89 | 9 | 38

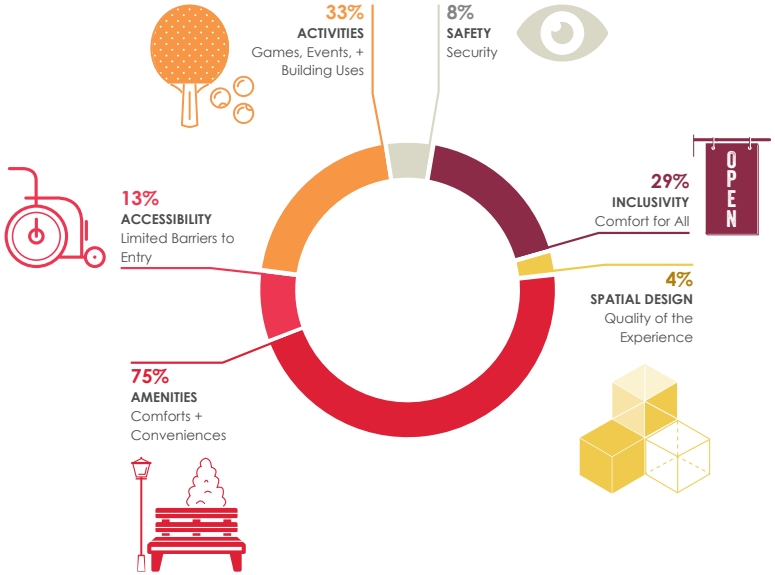


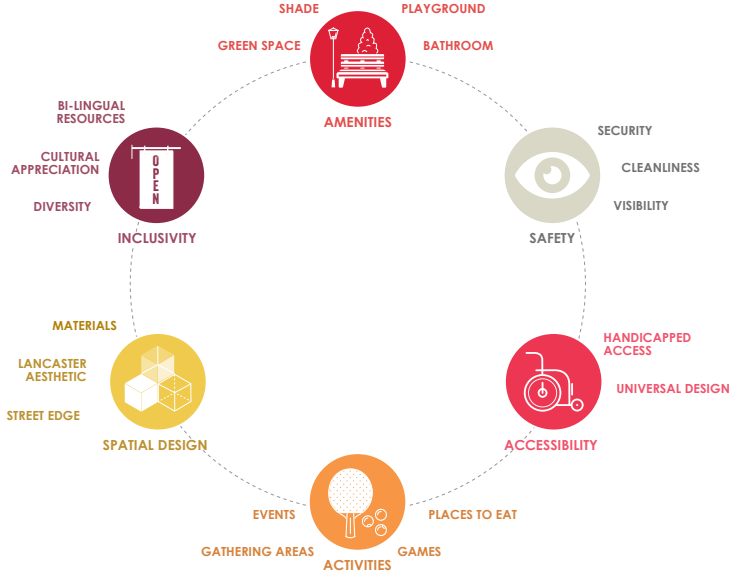



There's currently **LIMITED CIRCULATION** within Lancaster Square.

The square benefits from **DAILY VISIBILITY FROM PASSERSBY**, but at present, it is just a pass-through space.

**MORE IS NEEDED TO MAKE IT A DESTINATION.**

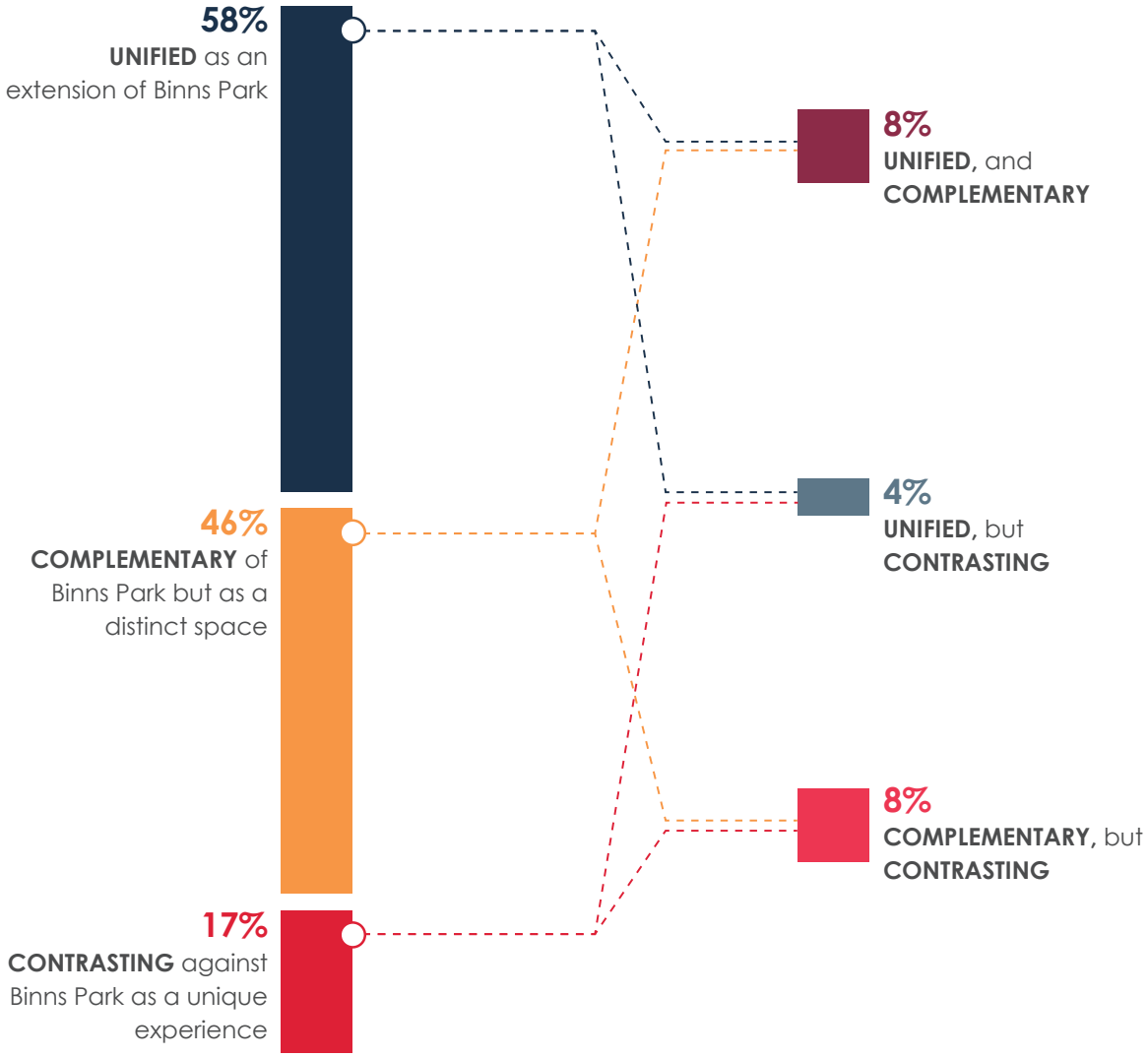


# PARK RELATIONSHIPS

Two separate public spaces mirror each other across Queen Street in Lancaster, PA. But how should they relate to one another?

*Project of Mahan Rykiel Associates*



## BRANDING PROJECT & PLACE

A strong visual brand not only helps to create a recognizable identity, but it also stirs interest. Branding of places is a fantastic tool to reinforce a local identity and create a sense of place. A familiar project brand, similarly, helps ensure that an effort is instantly recognized.

*Project brands created while at various firms*

Cordova VILLAGE Master Plan

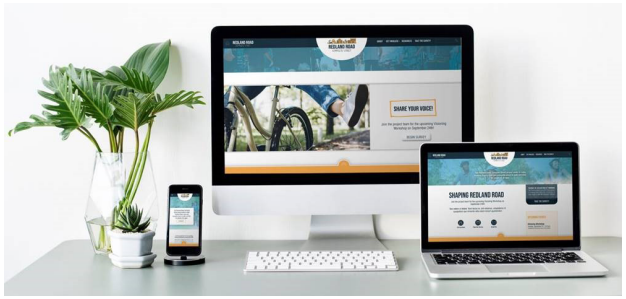
Cordova VILLAGE Master Plan

Cordova VILLAGE Master Plan

CONNECTING Chesapeake Beach



CONNECTING Chesapeake Beach






REDLAND ROAD
COMPLETE STREET

K street
TRANSITWAY

OPEN UP
BALTIMORE

OPEN UP
BALTIMORE

PEOPLE SAFE

# WRITING SAMPLES

*This is an excerpt from a research piece from 2012 discussing five constituencies identified along Howard Street in Baltimore City. The main focus of this research was on street artists as catalysts for change.*

City streets are inherently public spaces. As the connections between all that the city has to offer, streets evolve into realms of social interaction. It doesn't matter if you drive, walk, or take the bus – **the streets belong to everyone**. Who, then, ought we seek out when a street's ability to function needs to be addressed? The list of constituents along the one mile stretch of Howard Street that cuts through downtown Baltimore could be never-ending. Members from all of these groups should have considerable interest in Howard Street, yet few are as active as they could be. This is especially true on the blocks between Mulberry and Monument Streets. On the surface, it seems as if no one is doing anything. But if you pull back the curtains, you'll discover a plethora of operators. Busy at work on Howard Street we see the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) Light Rail, Tree Baltimore and other environmental agencies, Baltimore's planning initiatives and the Baltimore Development Corporation, the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, and a creative group of artists. These five groups, each with their own objectives, carry the future of Howard Street.




The image next to the Mayfair looks recalcitrant, much like the man it portrays.  It was created by the internationally recognized street artist, Gaia, and is one of many portraits from the artist's Legacy Series. Gaia has been creating art in Baltimore's streets since he began attending the nearby Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). He has expressed that the intent behind these pieces was to "reinscribe[sic] the figures who have shaped our landscape back onto the surface of their legacy, the infrastructure and polices that we have inherited and must navigate"(Gaia, Legacy Series, Baltimore n.d.). Affixed to the facade of a forgotten building, the rendering of Weinberg looks out onto a parking lot of the opposite block. That entire square block was once one of Weinberg's holdings, and the fact that it's now a parking lot serves as testament to what little Weinberg had done for Baltimore's revitalization. Gaia's artwork is a reminder of this disastrous tale.

*My piece entitled* Pandemic-Proof Community Service: Leveraging the power of volunteering is vital to boosting local resilience, *was published in Planning Magazine in Winter 2021.*




Volunteering strengthens community capacity, helps raise funds, and generates project momentum and buy-in. It can also boost moods and morale while instilling hope in the face of challenges. But for much of the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a complicated barrier to volunteering – all while creating an even greater need for community support.

When planners volunteer, they demonstrate commitment, build community rapport, are exposed to new ideas, and help tackle the small-but-mighty actions that support their long-term goals. More importantly, by working with volunteers, planners can swiftly devise and execute creative solutions in response to complex and unfamiliar challenges.

In Baltimore, two organizations were able to safely continue their volunteer efforts throughout the pandemic. Design nonprofit Neighborhood Design Center invited volunteers to help install tactical urbanism interventions across the city as part of their "Design for Distancing" competition, while the urban service corps Civic Works dispatched 150 volunteers across the city to blaze a walking path, sort books for kids, and paint picnic tables, among other efforts.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, the Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation took a different approach by encouraging individuals interested in donating their time to volunteer on their own.

Together, these organizations and efforts offer some best practices for hosting safe, comfortable volunteer opportunities, even while physically distanced.

1. RESPECT THE CURRENT SITUATION

People are actively and cautiously choosing how to spend their time right now, so any volunteer event needs to acknowledge and address very legitimate concerns regarding the pandemic.

2. COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS

Set the tone by demonstrating that you're taking appropriate precautions – and do so early, clearly, and often.

3. MAKE IT MEANINGFUL

Entice participants by emphasizing the significance of volunteer efforts and connecting current initiatives to longer-term objectives. Outcomes matter more than actions right now, so focus on mission-driven, impactful tasks. At the end, celebrate volunteers and their contributions by showcasing their collective achievements. Civic Works follows up each event by sharing the impressive numbers measuring volunteer impact.

4. CONTROL THE EXPERIENCE

Check temperatures as volunteers arrive and collect their information for contact tracing. Require masks and limit the size of groups by creating time slots, dispersing volunteer sites, capping the number of volunteers, and requiring registration in advance. Encourage remote check-in the day before. When Civic Works couldn't gather volunteers in person, they sent mandatory waivers via email the week beforehand, along with an inspiring volunteer orientation video to stir excitement.

5. DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Consider opportunities for individuals. This past summer, Fairmount Park Conservancy launched a solo volunteer program that would support their larger organizational goals of cleaning parks. They provided participants with free clean-up kits, including instructions, supplies, and safety tips.

6. ENFORCE SAFETY PROCEDURES

Ensure that your policies and safety standards comply with regulations. Having a specific enforcement plan will make it easier to ensure compliance. Remember, it's okay to dismiss volunteers who won't respect the rules.

7. CRAFT A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

Perhaps meeting in person isn't feasible for some or all of your participants. If so, consider offering virtual opportunities, or take a hybrid approach. Tie virtual experiences into tangible planning objectives. Keep volunteers engaged and connected to their impact, which can be more difficult to observe remotely.

8. BE ADAPTABLE

There is no one-size-suits-all solution. Any strategy should be flexible enough to adapt as needed. Your strategy should vary depending on the community where you're working.

Think of this as an opportunity to evolve. Sometimes, unexpected constraints that demand creative solutions can lead to wonderful innovations and operational improvements. Keep an open mind, try new tactics, and recreate what works well.

*In 2013, I published* Deep Ecological Urbanism: Ecology, Efficiency, & Ethics in Urban Design. *The concept was developed during a semester long-independent study, and would become the focus of my professional capstone project while at Morgan State University.*

## CHARACTERISTICS OF DEEP ECOLOGICAL URBANISM

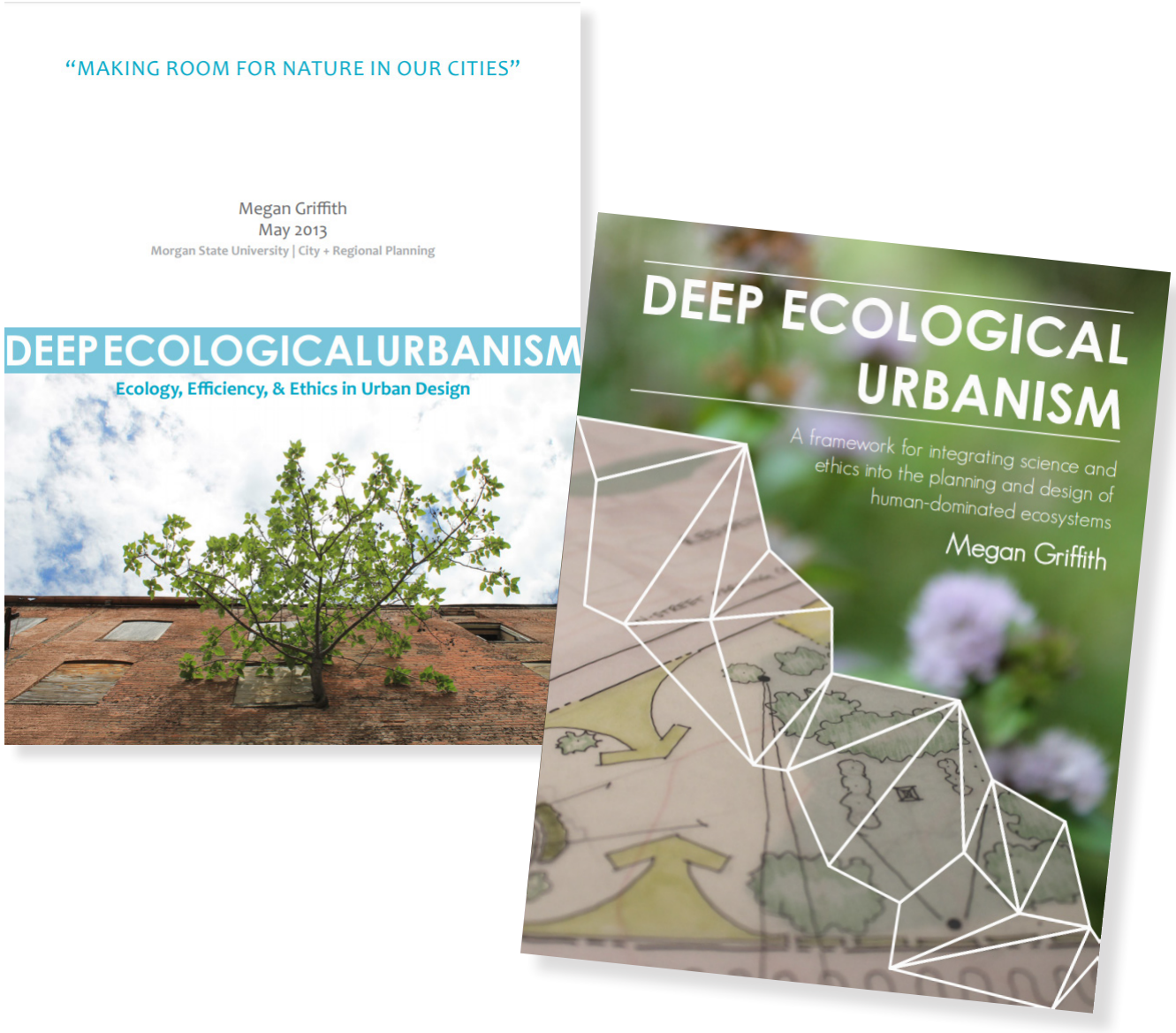
Deep Ecological Urbanism, combining and intensifying the efforts of other valuable green movements and disciplines, presents a viable alternative to conventional urban planning. The characteristics of a Deep Ecological City, you'll find, are expressive of a harmonious community which is attractive to all members of society. Yet the concept is not overly fanciful; it does not paint the picture of an unrealistic "ecotopia." Rather, it is intent on proposing a realistic model for development and design. Certainly, some descriptions may sound reminiscent of a utopian city, but we must not forget that the strategies, tools, and techniques discussed here are within our reach. Deep Ecological Urbanism is a dark green substitute for the less-than-green – or "greenwashed" – marketing efforts that society is bombarded with day to day. A holistic, diverse, place-based, compact, efficient, self-sufficient, and overall healthy environment, Deep Ecological Urbanism is not just a better way to plan cities, but it should be the only way to plan cities.

### Holistic

Campbell (1996) discussed the many romanticized views of an ecofuture, as well as the "ecotopian" belief that ancient cultures had lived harmoniously with nature, or that their ways were not so destructive. Some cultures, like the Kogi people mentioned above, have indeed been able to live harmoniously with nature; but as was illustrated with the example of the Romans, harmony has generally been an exception, and not the rule. Campbell emphasized the importance of all three legs of sustainability, urging for collaboration among them.

A city that is greater than the sum of its parts must think more comprehensively about a collective effort. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of a Deep Ecological city is that it is a holistic system. Like naturopathic medicine, Deep Ecological Urbanism considers the health of the entire city before addressing individual symptoms. An urban-natural balance may never be achievable, but a cyclical approach ensures harmony. Recognizing this, the Deep Ecological city operates like a system or, more appropriately, like an ecosystem.

Rather than a piecemeal approach, the holistic, systems-based method provides a more efficient technique for addressing the most critical environmental problems. This principle correlates directly with all other characteristics of a Deep Ecological City, for it is the foundation of the Deep Eco approach. As Rogers explained, "building a sustainable city requires a holistic discipline of planning that considers all the factors which make up the physical, social and economic needs of a community and relates them to the greater environment" (1998: 53). In her 1985 book, Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design, author Anne Whiston Spirn recommended, "each building, person, and project should be perceived as a part of the whole" (p. 243)



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