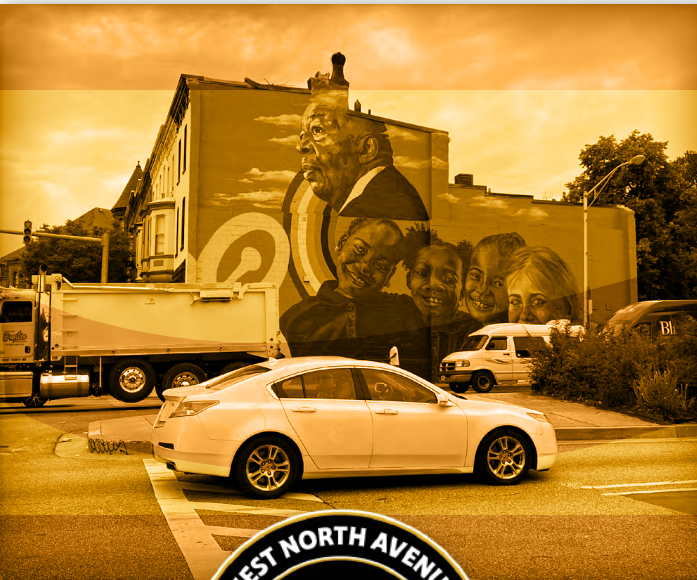


# West North Avenue Development Authority

## Comprehensive Revitalization Plan - Phase 1



January 2024

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## WNADA RACIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

Our work seeks to advance restorative justice and community development by promoting context-sensitive strategies that enhance housing, public space, mobility, and economic opportunity for West North Avenue. Our approach works to address disparities caused by persistent racial and economic discrimination, historic disinvestment and predatory practices which have led to adverse outcomes for West Baltimore's community, and particularly the Black community. We seek to mitigate the broken trust between residents and institutions due to past harm, and forge new, strong, interdependent ties among the people of West North Avenue.

Our work understands that diversity is not just about representation, but also about ensuring inclusion and delegated power in decision-making, and material redistribution. As such, it is vital that this plan advances equitable development opportunities throughout West Baltimore that empower local actors, leverage local knowledge, and prioritize the needs of residents in the community who have experienced harm. Robust participation in the planning and implementation processes will help heal old wounds by ensuring that plan outcomes are truly representative of local values and community character. This work prioritizes the most vulnerable members of the community by realizing the benefits of new development through inclusive and responsible growth, and avoiding the adverse effects of displacement, social tension, cultural dilution, and exacerbation of economic hardship.



## WNADA LEADERSHIP

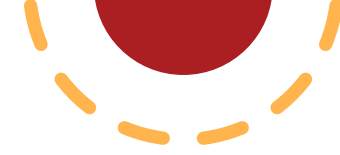


Figure 1 WNADA Board



Figure 2 WNADA Staff





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# *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) Comprehensive Revitalization Plan - Phase 1 represents the first holistic planning document ever created for the 12 resource-rich, but underinvested neighborhoods lining the West North Avenue corridor west of I-83. This cross-section of Baltimore contains some of the most undervalued, but high-potential communities in Baltimore City, represented by the deep care and devotion that residents and merchants have shown towards this area and the ever-growing presence of educational, cultural, and civic institutions. WNADA has been charged with a mission by the Maryland General Assembly to realize the long-missed potential of the West North Avenue Corridor.



Figure 3 Minister Glenn Isaac Smith addresses attendees during WNADA's first public meeting at Coppin State University's Talon Center on September 9, 2023.

Informing this planning document are a wide range of data and analyses, including:

- A synthesis of 12 neighborhood and smaller area plans tailored to improving individual communities.
- Several community meetings since 2022 WNADA board meetings, multi-neighborhood gatherings, and stakeholder meetings that brought out hundreds of participants to share their visions of community growth.
- A streamlined health impact assessment that speaks to how public health of the existing WNADA Corridor's population may be affected by future development.
- Technical analysis of existing conditions, as well as future opportunities and constraints, related to **economic, housing, transportation, and neighborhood development**.

Each of these components is included in the report below to paint a complete picture of the corridor's existing population, infrastructure, housing stock, institutions, and more. WNADA has carefully analyzed its communities' demographic, public health, safety, and equity conditions, with an ultimate goal of reversing decades of population decline and growing this area into a promising, economically competitive neighborhood for Baltimore City – one that will honor its rich cultural history, fill vacant business, homes, and low-activity blocks with a new sense of life and bustling purpose, and retain existing residents and merchants – the backbone of this corridor – while growing responsibly and attract unseen levels of population growth and capital investment.

This comprehensive planning effort is anchored by five key priorities: economic development, neighborhood/community, transportation, housing, and green space/environmental health. While the first four priorities are mandated by the Maryland Legislature, the fifth development component – green space and environmental health – was added by WNADA Executive Director Chad Williams. Each of these codified key priorities is a critical piece for creating a corridor-

wide plan that will holistically lift up this network of 16 distinct yet united communities. This mission of equitable development is central to WNADA's comprehensive planning work.

WNADA has woven each of the five mandated key priorities into this report. Given the many overlapping subject areas, and the need to streamline public engagement efforts to gather clear and consistent community feedback, WNADA – and this report – has centered its work around three Core Concept Areas: Economic Development, Community (encompassing neighborhood/community development, housing, and green space) and Transportation.

Among the overarching goals recommended in this report (detailed further in the report's Strategies section) are:

1. Provide a range of housing options that promote economic development, preserve historic character, and support existing population retention and future growth.
2. Improve West North Avenue economic competitiveness and growth through equitable business investments, job creation, and workforce stability for local residents.
3. Establish a balanced, safe, universally accessible transportation ecosystem that provides a quality experience for pedestrians, transit riders, and automobiles.
4. Increase access to community, green, and recreational spaces that are safe, health-promoting, and environmentally sustainable.

We hope that readers of this report will find a foundation for comprehensive planning that has long been ignored in this critical section of Baltimore City. Not until 2021, with the state's creation of the West North Avenue Development Authority, has there been a publicly financed and administratively supported body to match the care and devotion of existing community members. With a guiding hand from a comprehensive plan and the dedicated commitment of public agencies, institutional stakeholders, and families and merchants across the corridor, WNADA will work to realize the tremendous promise of its member communities.

Chad Williams  
Executive Director  
West North Avenue Development Authority



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## WEST NORTH AVENUE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY INTERSECTIONALITY STATEMENT

The connectivity among housing, economic development, transportation, and green space is crucial to the West North Avenue Development Authority's holistic revitalization approach. These components mutually influence and shape the quality of life, socioeconomic opportunities, and overall well-being of communities. The availability of multi-market and quality housing will attract more residents and businesses to the West North Avenue Corridor, fueling economic growth and development. To sustain such economic progress and growth, multi-modal transportation will be the key to connecting people to job opportunities, educational institutions,

healthcare services, and other essential amenities, which will further facilitate economic activity and ensure that communities are thriving. Additionally, green spaces such as parks and gardens contribute to community well-being by providing opportunities for recreation, improving air quality, and enhancing the overall livability of a community. By integrating each of these elements into our revitalization strategy, our approach fosters an inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant future for the residents of West Baltimore as we support economic development, promote environmental sustainability, and create places where people want to live, work, and enjoy their lives.

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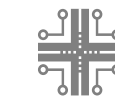
## WNADA KEY PRIORITIES



**Economic Development** Provides critical access to investment and quality of life services that create a strong foundation to revitalize the economic viability of a community.



**Neighborhood / Community** The terms neighborhood and community unify and bring people together from various walks of life for a common interest and can offer a sense of place, togetherness, and civic pride.



**Transportation** The official definition is the conveyance of travel from one place to the next, but it can mean so much more, creating safer, healthier communities and providing access to key destinations like jobs or core services that impact all aspects of an individual's lifecycle and can provide ladders to sustainable success.



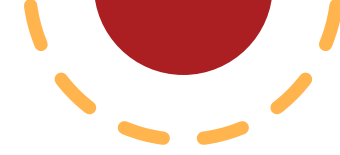
**Housing** This goes beyond just having a roof over someone's head. Housing addresses the core needs of an individual's overall well-being and can create the types of transformative growth that are at the cornerstone of a progressive community's long-term prosperity.



**Greenspace** can take on a lot of different roles from public health to environmental stewardship. Creating functional access to safe and welcoming spaces can help address negative health determinants throughout the community and improve quality of life.

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# INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

### Vision Statement

Realization of the WNADA Comprehensive Revitalization Plan - Phase 1 will establish a vibrant, safe, and inclusive community that supports connection, public health, cultural heritage, diversity, empowerment, stability, civic pride, and economic opportunity. The incremental implementation of this plan will address local challenges through a collaborative approach that prioritizes community development, economic progress, and an efficient, sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing approach to the built environment. A successful comprehensive plan will meet local needs in a holistic manner, addressing intersectional issues with revitalization strategies that serve the existing community and integrate newcomers seamlessly.

### Background

The West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) was established by legislative mandate in 2021 to support the development of a comprehensive vision of equitable revitalization in West Baltimore. The WNADA zone stretches from the 600 block of West North Avenue in Midtown through the 3200 block of West North Avenue near the northeast corner of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, encompassing 16 distinct neighborhoods, two universities, a key east-west transit corridor, multiple elementary schools, various mixed-use development projects, community centers, and more. Through a concerted planning effort occurring over various phases from summer of 2022 through spring of 2024, WNADA and stakeholder partners are assembling a community-informed comprehensive plan to unify these many assets and catalyze new growth. The WNADA Comprehensive Revitalization Plan - Phase 1 will produce a holistic, implementable vision

for economic development, high-quality housing construction, improved transportation infrastructure, and street-level vibrancy on a historically underserved corridor of historic West Baltimore with tremendous potential.

WNADA began with Senate Bill 783 and House Bill 1293, which were sponsored respectively by Senator Antonio Hayes and Delegate Marlon Amprey, passed through both houses of the Maryland General Assembly in spring of 2021, and signed into law on April 13, 2021. The creation of a new housing authority was deemed necessary for “(t)he revitalization of areas within the West North Avenue Corridor needing residential, commercial development or redevelopment is an essential government function, and is a public use which will confer a public benefit on citizens of Baltimore City by relieving conditions of unemployment, encouraging the increase of commerce and a balanced economy, assisting in the retention of businesses and residents and attracting new industries and commerce, promoting economic development and growth, and generally promoting the health, welfare and public safety of the resident in the City, and increasing property tax revenue for the State and City of Baltimore.”

The resulting law mandates the creation of the West North Avenue Housing Authority, which is tasked with the following:

- Create a forum for stakeholders to convene regularly.
- Serve as a clearinghouse and resource center for coordination and communication about development opportunities.
- Ensure an efficient expenditure of funds to stimulate development in this corridor.
- Providing advisory services to city and state agencies for this planning effort.
- Initiating and funding of development projects using WNADA resources.

Additionally, in furtherance of these requirements, WNADA shall support the development and approval of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan in the target area and the buffer zone to benefit:

- the residents;
- housing;
- neighborhoods;
- economic development; and
- transportation, including motor vehicles and pedestrians; and
- work in coordination with the residents of the target area and the buffer zone to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan.

Based on analysis of a dozen previously formed community plans, as well as past research and more recent community feedback, WNADA has grouped its key principles into three Core Concept Areas: Economic Development, Community and Transportation. In February 2022, WNADA staff selected six focus areas based on their engagement through a series of resident coordinating meetings. These focus areas are nodes that will bolster residential, retail, and commercial strength along North Avenue through equitable development, and were selected based on feedback from community discussions. The WNADA Comprehensive Revitalization Plan - Phase 1 will adopt a problem-solving approach that addresses issues such as population loss, economic instability, chronic disinvestment, and inadequate transportation infrastructure—to name a handful of examples—and sets tangible goals for redressing these shortcomings.

WNADA’s two-phase timeline for this process is split equally between the second half of 2023 and the first half of 2024. Phase I, from June–December 2023, included documenting the corridor identity; development planning, programming, and policies; and community and stakeholder engagement. Engagement has been particularly



Figure 4 West Baltimore community members participate in a Health Impact Assessment exercise during a WNADA public meeting on September 9, 2023.

vital and informative to this process, with activities encompassing two public meetings and four coordination meetings between stakeholders and related city and state agencies.

Phase II, occurring from January–June 2024, will include implementation planning and identification of funding sources for future development opportunities, and a second round of community and stakeholder engagement with additional pop-up events, design charettes, public meetings, and further interagency and stakeholder coordination meetings. The West North Avenue community is comprised of 16 distinct neighborhoods that have benefitted from the creation of 12 community-based plans. The community plans can be identified by three general planning scales including corridor, neighborhood and parcel level plans. All 12 plans have provided insight and local vision identifying key challenges impacting the community as well as growth opportunities related to economic viability, housing, transportation infrastructure, community cohesiveness and improved safety. The following identifies the 12 plans evaluated as part of the initial Phase I development and the plan’s associated scale level.








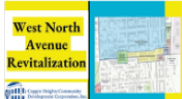
Corridor	Neighborhood	Parcel
 <b>1</b> East North Avenue Plan	 <b>5</b> Bolton Hill Community Association Strategic Plan	 <b>11</b> John Eager Howard Elementary School INSPIRE Plan
 <b>2</b> LINCS Pennsylvania Avenue and West North Avenue Implementation Strategy	 <b>6</b> Druid Heights Community Plan	 <b>12</b> Madison Park North
 <b>3</b> North Avenue Rising	 <b>7</b> Greater Rosemont and Mondawmin Area Master Plan	
 <b>4</b> West North Avenue Streetscape Master Plan	 <b>8</b> Penn North Area Master Plan	
	 <b>9</b> Resurrection Sandtown	
	 <b>10</b> West North Avenue Revitalization Plan	



Figure 5 Previous plans on or near the corridor



The Points of Interest map displays building uses, programs, and amenities that attract activity. These points of interest identify public schools, religious centers, recreation centers, libraries, and grocery stores. Together with transit routes, we have found clusters of points of interest near Bloomingdale Road (mainly religious institutions), Between Bentalou Street and North Monroe Street (mainly religious institutions), and near Penn North Station (transit, commerce, and community-based uses). Points of Interest mapping provides a picture of community activity and movement and provides context for next steps.

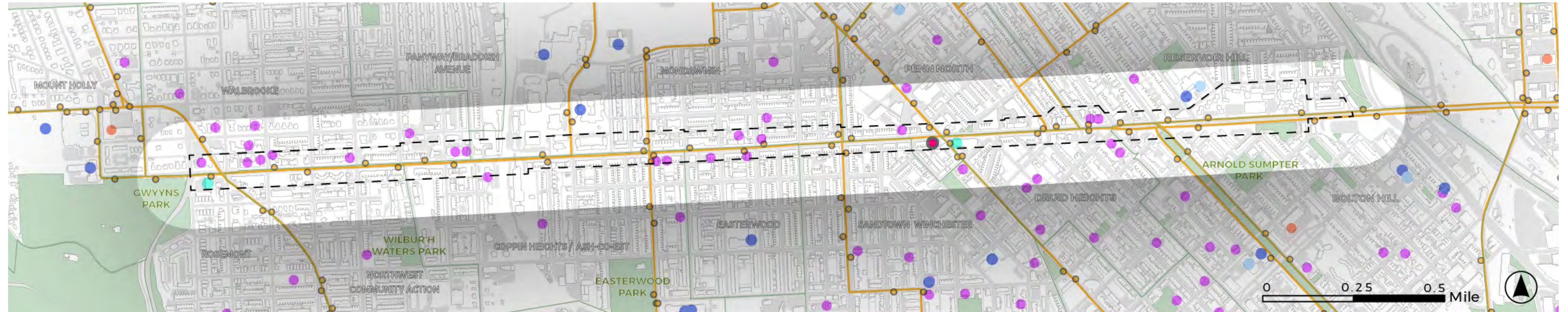
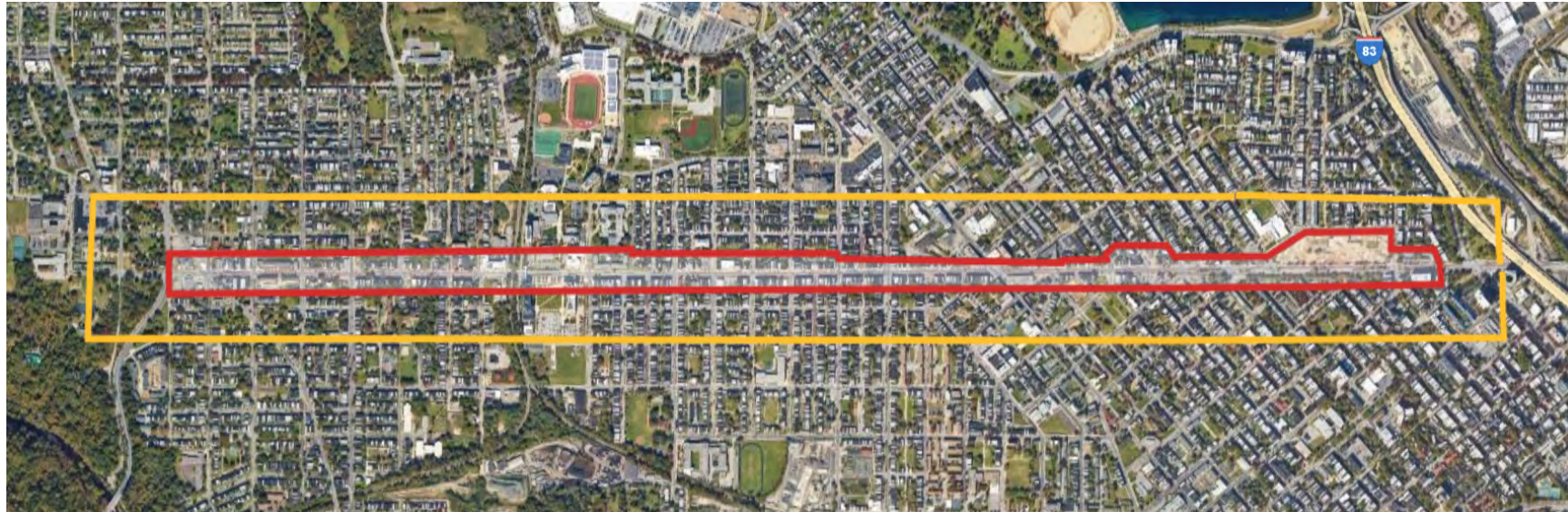


Figure 6 Points of interest

**Legend | Points of Interest**

- |                         |                 |                            |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Base Map</b>         | <b>Transit</b>  | <b>Community Amenities</b> |
| □ Building              | — Bus Route     | ● Public School            |
| ▬ Road                  | ● Bus Station   | ● Religious Center         |
| ■ Park                  | — Metro Line    | ● Recreation Center        |
| - - Study Area Boundary | ● Metro Station | ● Library                  |
| ○ 600' Buffer           |                 | ● Grocery Stores           |
| — Parcel Boundary       |                 |                            |
| — Neighborhood Boundary |                 |                            |





*Figure 7* WNADA Project Area, or "Target Area" and "Buffer Zone" as identified by the WNADA legislation.

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## Demographics

While certainly not the only, best, or most complete way to understand a community, US Census data can provide an important baseline for analysis. The maps below indicate some basic data about the neighborhoods connected to the West North Avenue corridor, such as the total number of people (43,181), the densest areas (Sandtown Winchester, Reservoir Hill) and outlines some of the corridor's challenges as well, such as high concentrations of unemployment on the south side and to the west of the corridor. Taken together with the rest of the background and analysis found throughout the report, these maps help illustrate the legacy of disinvestment, areas of strength, and potential opportunities.

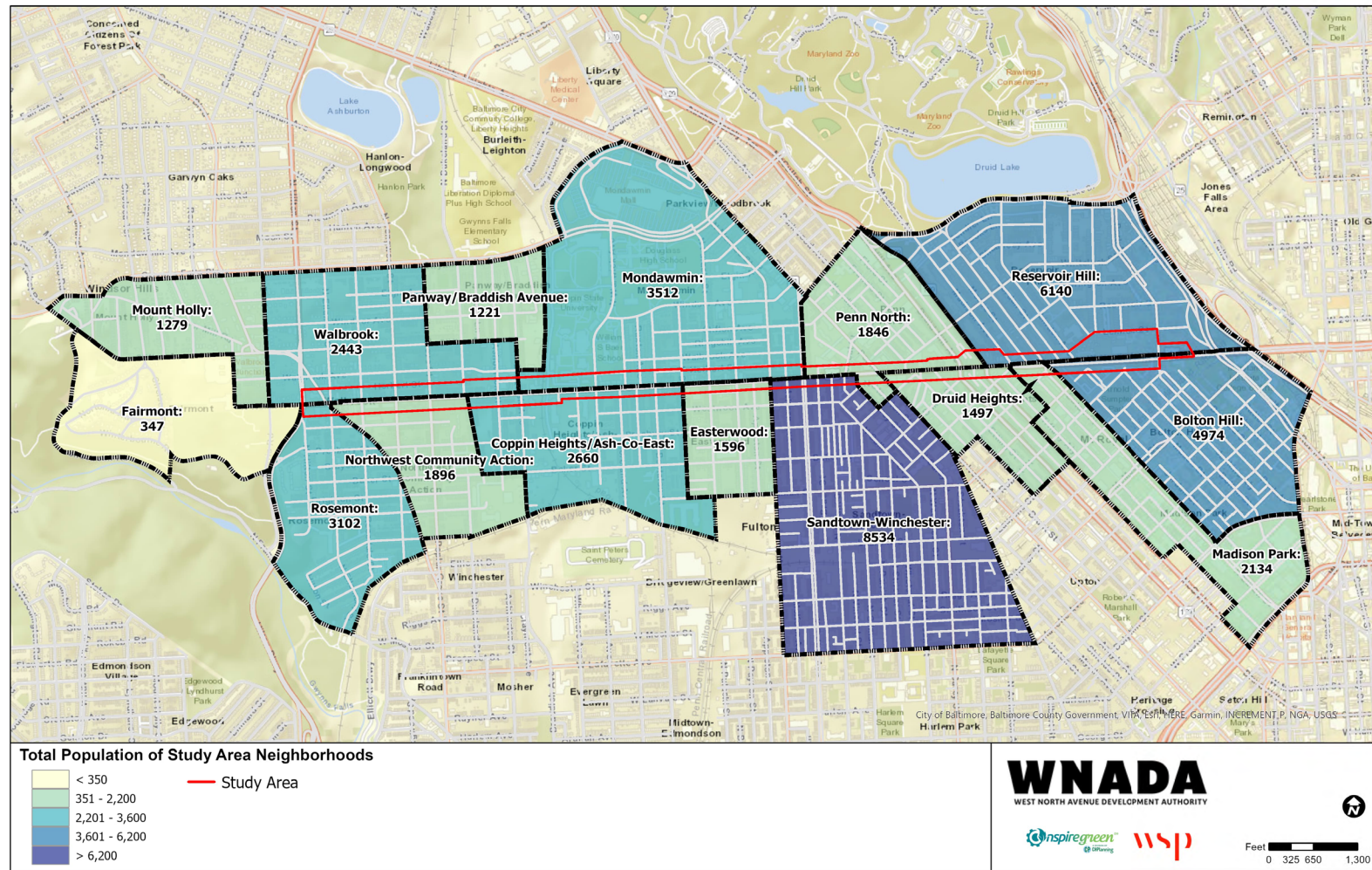


Figure 8 Total population of neighborhoods along the corridor

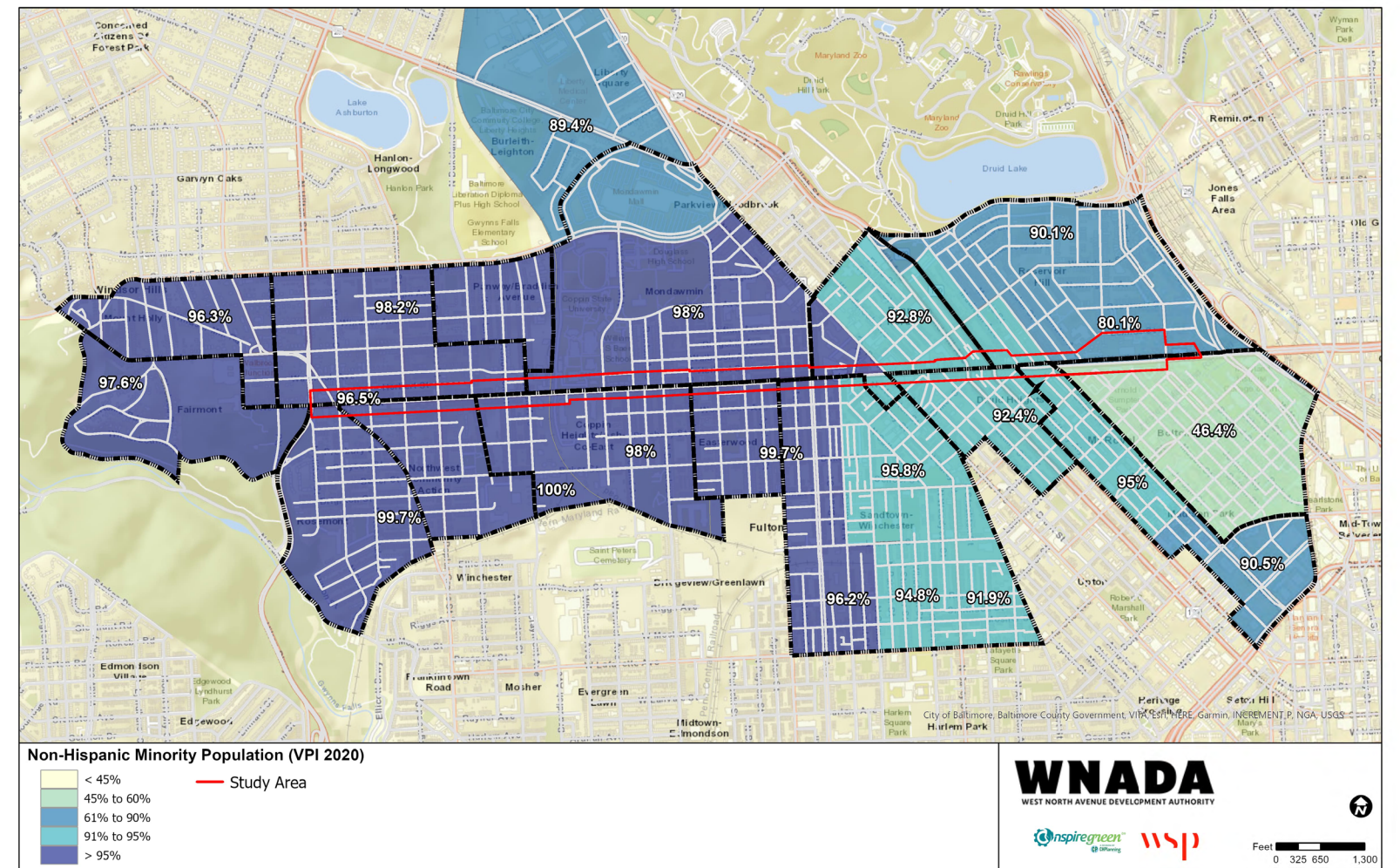


Figure 9 Minority population by percentage for neighborhoods along the corridor



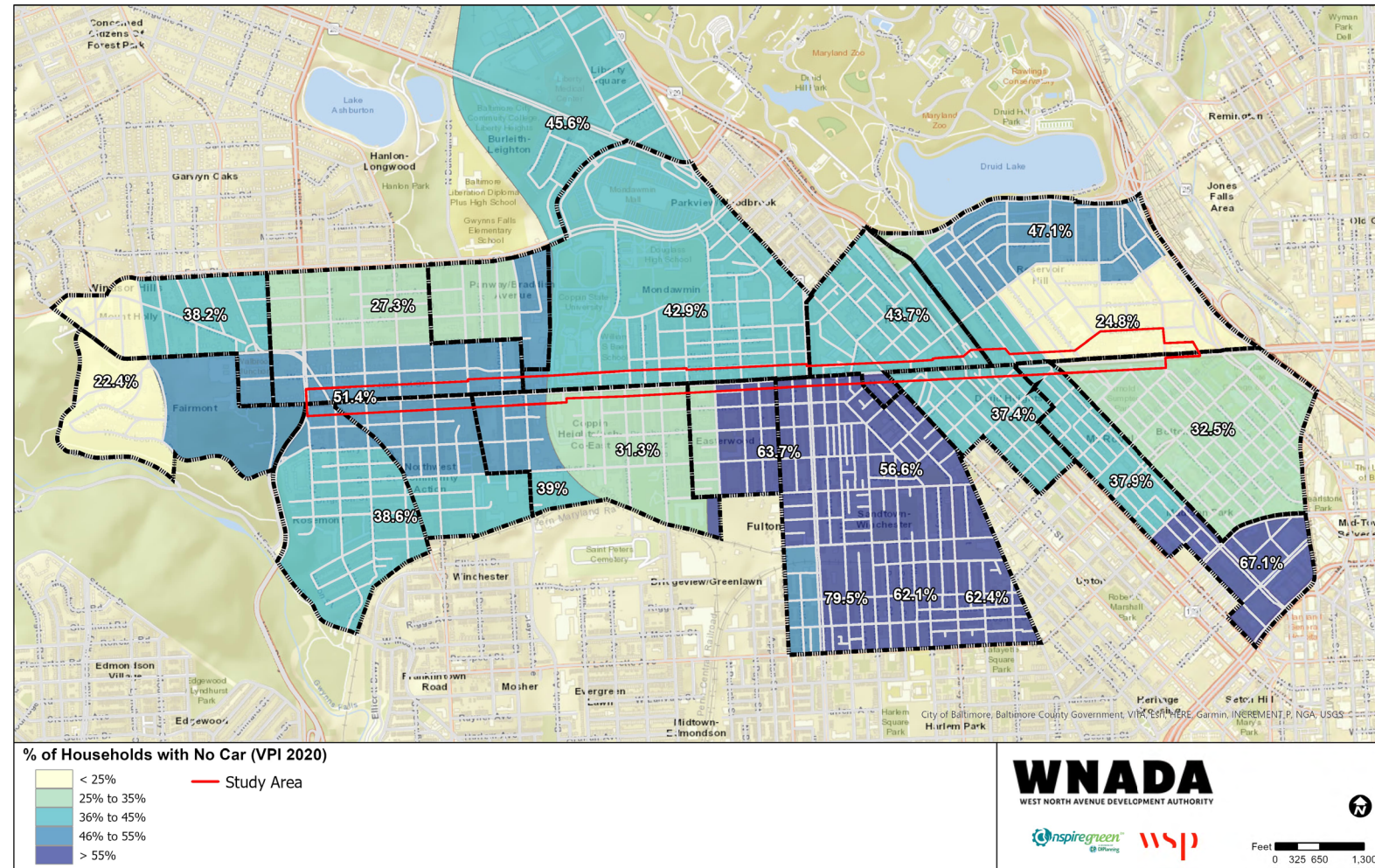


Figure 10 Percentage of carless households for neighborhoods along the corridor

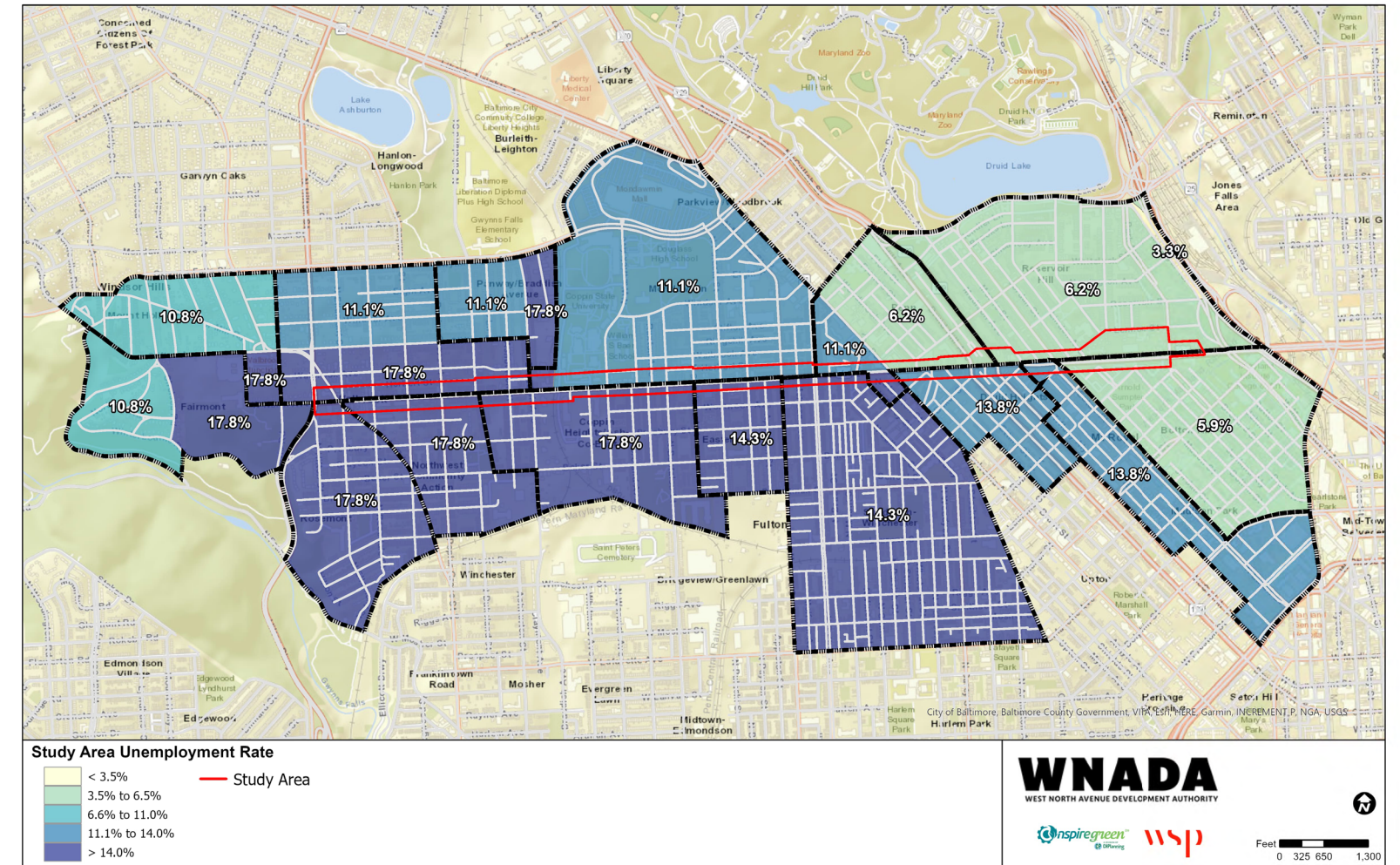


Figure 11 Unemployment rate for the neighborhoods along the corridor





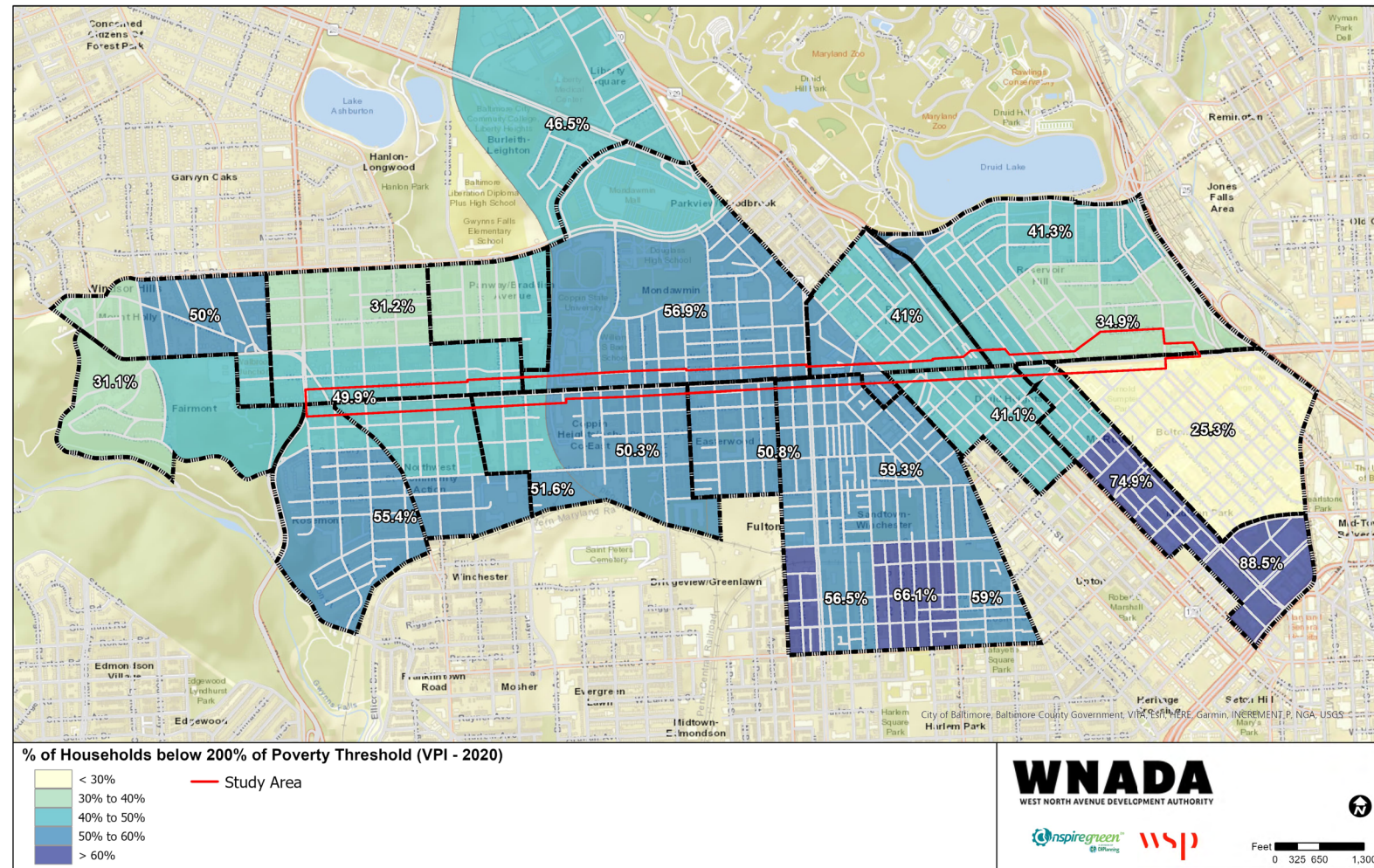


Figure 12 Percentage of households in poverty for neighborhoods along the corridor

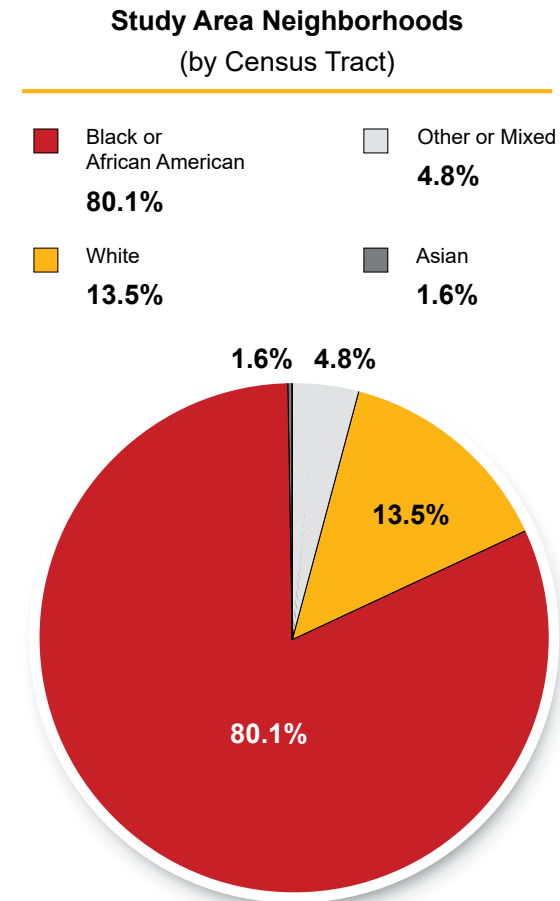


Figure 13 West North Avenue neighborhood racial makeup



## Approach

### CORE CONCEPT AREAS

WNADA's Comprehensive Revitalization Plan - Phase 1 sets goals, associated objectives and strategies with measurable progress milestones that align with the five WNADA legislative mandates of Economic Development, Neighborhood / Community, Housing, Transportation, and Green Space. For the purposes of this report, these five legislative mandates are grouped into three core concept areas of Economic Development, Community, and Transportation.



**Economic Development:** Encourage development of buildings with a mix of uses, engage stakeholders, and promote job creation to support growth, investment, and shared prosperity in the community.



**Community:** Provide a range of housing options that promote economic development, preserve historic character, and encourage population growth, while also making community spaces safe, accessible, welcoming, and resilient.



**Transportation:** Implement multimodal transportation infrastructure to improve safety and accessibility for all.

### WHAT IS EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Equitable development responds to the needs and desires of existing communities and aims to avoid displacement of current residents. Equitable development brings affordable housing, quality education, living-wage job opportunities, and clean and healthy environments connected by affordable and reliable multi-modal transportation options. Successful equitable development generates more positive quality-of-life outcomes compared to traditional market-driven development for the people who need it most. Equitable development is important because it prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable community members. When market drivers are the sole input for development, the resulting buildings and programs will only cater to a portion of the population that is likely to be wealthier and live or have moved in from outside the community, leading to cultural and institutional turnover that excludes and ultimately leaves behind longtime residents.

Pursuing equitable development is critical for the West North Avenue corridor and the people who live, work, and play here. Decades of underinvestment and neglect have left stretches of the corridor with dilapidated buildings and gaps of vacant homes and other structures across entire blocks, leading to disproportionately high rates of vacancy and abandonment. Historic disinvestment due to policies such as redlining has depressed the local economy, creating conditions that discourage market-rate development while attracting an abundance of affordable housing – an imbalanced situation for a neighborhood seeking holistic redevelopment. While historic trends are their own challenge, they also present an opportunity to reverse these trends and coordinate efforts among institutions and stakeholders by aligning behind a shared vision for equitable development along West North Avenue. The equitable development framework provides a foundation for pursuing economic development that undoes harmful legacies, preserves local identity, and supports community growth in a sustainable and equitable manner.

## Methodology

WNADA has worked through Phase I of the Comprehensive Revitalization Plan process during the second half of 2023, seeking to define the identity of the corridor, establish regular touchpoints with surrounding communities and stakeholders, and research historic and present conditions. Research methods and areas of focus (each detailed in individual report sections) have included:

- **Past and Present Context:** The team researched prior conditions and narratives related to economic development, community, and transportation along the corridor. The present-day context for each of these areas has been heavily shaped by discriminatory policymaking, car-centric transportation planning, and chronic disinvestment, as well as the positive influence of institutions such as Coppin State University, Maryland Institute College of Arts, and the promise of new entities such as the Black Arts District.
- **Community Engagement:** The team conducted multiple stakeholder and public meetings from late summer through the fall. These activities were located in areas along the corridor or close by, such as Coppin State University and Unity Hall. Other engagement activities have included convening multiple neighborhood associations during November to discuss the comprehensive planning approach, and gatherings of WNADA's board members and representatives from stakeholder public agencies.
- **Health Impact Assessment:** The team conducted a survey-based desktop or streamlined Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to gauge how economic development, community, and transportation conditions and future changes impact health conditions for people living and working along the WNADA corridor. Based on early feedback, the team further refined its HIA process to focus on specific determinants and develop key findings.

- **Existing Conditions Analysis:** The team used mapping and photos as visualization tools to display existing conditions along the WNADA corridor related to economic development, community, and transportation. This analysis produced visuals portraying a larger, corridor-wide base map as well as dividing the corridor into sub-areas to provide a more granular picture of specific neighborhoods and blocks surrounding key institutions. This analysis utilized geographic information systems (GIS) software and publicly available datasets to map the most recently available information.
- **Analysis of Opportunities and Constraints:** Based on its existing conditions analysis, community engagement findings, health impact assessment, and understanding of the corridor's history and present-day context, WNADA outlined specific opportunities and limitations in the three main focus areas of economic development (such as planned developments and ways to reduce barriers to entry for employment); community (such as affordable housing goals and placemaking); and transportation (such as identifying intersections in need of treatments and transit stops needing improvements). This analysis is supported by GIS mapping visualizations and photos of existing conditions.

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# PAST AND PRESENT

Photo: Shady Grove Baptist Church via Flickr by Baltimore Heritage.





**Figure 14** A resident participates in a mapping exercise during a WNADA community engagement meeting on September 9, 2023.



**Figure 15** Fleurs d'Ave

## PAST AND PRESENT

The history of this important east-west thoroughfare can be characterized as culturally rich, predominantly African American, and impressively resilient, despite generational segregationist policies and waves of disinvestment that have hampered the economic health and safety of the corridor.

### Economic Development

#### Past

West North Avenue has long featured a mixture of residential and commercial spaces. Throughout the 1930s, many white business owners in West Baltimore continued to adhere to Jim Crow laws that prohibited employment of African American workers. The “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign, a national movement that occurred concurrently across multiple major northern cities, became an important focal point during this period. Ultimately, efforts such as this and the later Civil Rights Movement in Baltimore pushed many businesses to begin hiring African Americans. Prior to the beginning of suburban flight and economic decline in West Baltimore, West North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue to the south became solidified as major hubs for Black commercial activity and entertainment.

From the outset, the high concentration of Black residents in a compact geographic area gave rise to community and cultural organizations that could collectively rally for social and economic change. One prime example was the Arch Social Club, a cultural group that formed in 1905 in West Baltimore’s Madison Park neighborhood. Now located in a historic property at Pennsylvania Avenue and West North Avenue – the organization’s home since 1972 – the Arch Social Club has long served as a place where community members can form important business partnerships and

organize social change across communities. The club has remained secular and has included members across a variety of incomes and disciplines, including entrepreneurs, laborers, lawyers, and clergy. Other prominent African American organizations such as the Elks and the Prince Hall Masons have also served as valuable catalysts of economic growth in West Baltimore.

Pennsylvania Avenue – known popularly as “The Avenue” – famously developed a reputation for its jazz scene and nightclubs during this era, with popular spots such as Club Tijuana, the Royal Theatre, the Red Fox, and dozens of others drawing nationally known artists Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Charlie Parker, to name just a few. Locals recounted celebrities patronizing the small businesses lining The Avenue and mingling with neighborhood residents and merchants, contributing to the allure and rich cultural legacy of this thoroughfare in West Baltimore.

Eventually, suburban flight and generational disinvestment left considerable vacancy along commercial stretches of West North Avenue from the 1970s onward. The expansion of Coppin State University and the construction of Mondawmin Mall in 1956 brought new momentum for commercial activity to the neighborhoods abutting North Avenue, but ongoing lack of investment continues to hamper growth in this part of the city.

A principal driver of economic opportunity for the last century has been Coppin State University, a historically Black public university that was originally founded as a high school for African Americans in 1900. Initially occupying 38 acres on the western side of West North Avenue, the school began by providing a one-year teaching program



**Figure 16** The Coppin State University campus.

to high school students. The school was renamed Coppin Teachers College after African American education pioneer Fannie Jackson Coppin when it began offering a four-year Bachelor of Science degree in 1938. In 1967, the college expanded its offerings to include programs outside of teaching education. Since its inception, Coppin State University has provided many West Baltimore residents with opportunities for higher education and economic mobility. Coppin State University also became the first higher education institution in Maryland to manage a public school when it began management of Rosemont Elementary School in 1998. The university has continued to expand in the last two decades, with new academic, student housing, and other buildings constructed as the campus continues to expand its footprint along the spine of West North Avenue.



## Present

Today, Coppin State University President Anthony L. Jenkins serves as the chair of WNADA and leads a coalition of state, municipal, and community partners in support of the development of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy for the West North Avenue corridor. WNADA is the chief effort pushing for economic development in this area, equipped with \$11.4 million in state funds already to support its visioning efforts and planning to disburse \$10 million to organizations planning redevelopment projects along the corridor that will benefit current and future residents. With Jenkins serving as chair of WNADA and the president of Coppin State University, this nexus of leadership has effectively positioned the college as the first HBCU in the nation helping to lead the revitalization of part of a major city.

The Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts & Entertainment District is another positive force feeding the economic development momentum of the West North Avenue Corridor. As the sole state-established Black arts and cultural district in Maryland, the Black Arts District – which has a northern terminus at Pennsylvania Avenue and West North Avenue, celebrates the dynamic Black cultural history of West Baltimore and is attracting artists, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to coalesce and build upon this area’s legacy of artistic innovation and excellence.

A major remaining commercial/retail center proximal to the corridor is the three-level Mondawmin Mall complex, which today includes 110 stores, a pharmacy, and social services catering to residents of surrounding communities. From 2008 to 2018, the mall also included a popular Target location. In spring of 2022, four years following

Target’s closure, Tim Regan, CEO of construction firm Whiting Turner, unveiled plans to convert the vacant Target property into a community-based collaboration center and construct new retail spaces for local entrepreneurs, as well a larger facility with increased tutoring and mentoring capacity, a small Whiting-Turner office, career development programming, a catering/events space, and a teaching kitchen. Despite historic conditions that disfavor a strong housing market in the corridor, a wave of recent developments highlight the economic promise of this area. Among the newer housing developments constructed along the corridor, which includes multifamily housing and new single-family townhomes, include:

- North Avenue Gateway I & II (mixed-use, student housing)
- Walbrook Mill Apartments (mixed use, affordable housing)
- Penn Square Apartments (affordable housing)
- Baker View Townhomes (affordable, homeownership)
- and the planned Reservoir Square Townhomes (homeownership)

Additional recent commercial/retail activity that has showed promise includes the Mill on North, an 8,000-square-foot food hall at the ground floor of the Walbrook Mill Apartments that opened in 2021, and the acquisition of the nearby Walbrook Junction Shopping Center by a Chicago real estate investor in April 2022 for \$6.2 million. The latter seeks to reprogram the shopping center for community ownership by selling equity shares to community members, a strategy that aims to create sustained economic engagement and encourage ownership and wealth creation among existing Black residents.

## Community

### Past

North Avenue has maintained a critical mass of Black residents since the decades following the Civil War, when an influx of migrants from rural areas flocked to Baltimore. A large population of African American residents settled in the homes – most of them in the classic Baltimore rowhouse vernacular– along West North Avenue and in nearby blocks, creating an early sense of community during a prolonged era of cultural segregation and institutionalized Jim Crow policies that enforced discrimination.

While cultural norms had segregated white and Black populations neighborhood to neighborhood, Baltimore became the first major city to impose segregation by legislative mandate in 1910 with the passage of city Ordinance 610, stating that no Black resident could move into a block where more than half of residents were white, and the same for white residents seeking to move to majority-Black blocks. The ordinance was first proposed after renowned Baltimore attorney William Ashbie Hawkins, a Black man, purchased a home on an all-white block of McCulloh Street in Madison Park, just south of West North Avenue, prompting outcry from white residents and segregationist politicians. Although the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the law as unconstitutional in 1917, Baltimore continued to enforce strict segregationist policies, including by issuing citations for “code violations” to any white resident in a predominantly white block who chose to sell property to a Black buyer. These discriminatory policies were bolstered by protective covenants adopted by neighborhood associations that forbid people from certain racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds from residing within their borders. These covenants were eventually outlawed in 1948 but had a lasting effect on the racial makeup of Baltimore City – including along West North Avenue – and many deeds today retain racist language from such covenants.

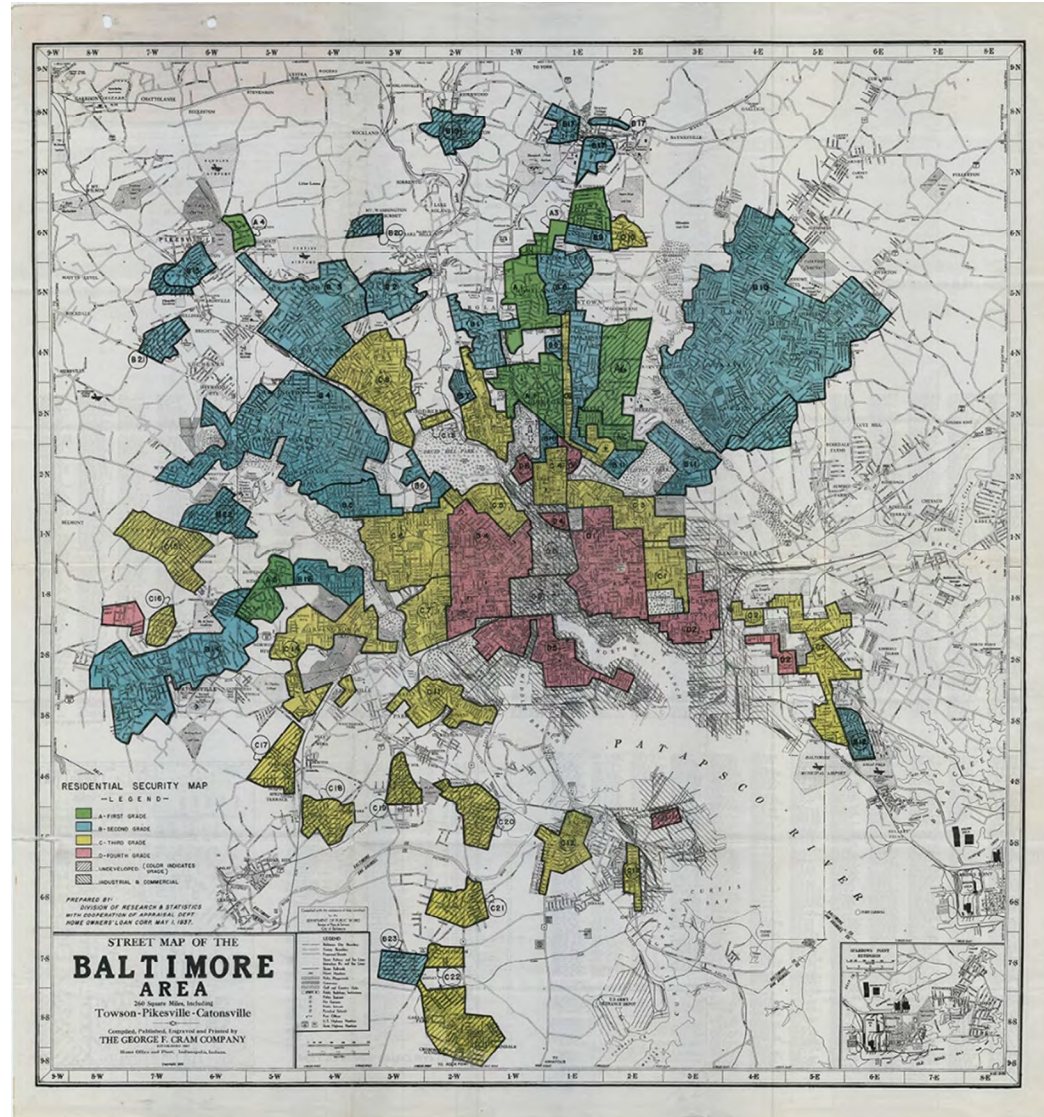


Figure 17 Newly constructed townhomes on Division Street in Upton, part of the Baker View Townhomes development.



Figure 18 Walbrook Mill apartments





**Figure 19** A map of Baltimore developed by the FHA's Home Owners Loan Corporation in 1937 shows certain areas deemed more eligible for federally insured loans than others. West Baltimore was one of several areas that were famously "red-lined." Credit: Johns Hopkins University Sheridan Libraries.

Federal housing policies advanced the racist agenda of segregationists in Baltimore and many other cities. Following the Great Depression, the Federal Housing Administration's Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) established a series of maps with color-coded, four-tier grading systems to determine if properties would be eligible for federally insured loans; those rated first grade were most likely to be eligible while those with lower grades were viewed as less viable for mortgage insurance. Under the published 1937 Residential Security Map of Baltimore, the primarily Black communities of Penn North, Druid Heights, Madison Park, Sandtown-Winchester, and Upton – all situated along or close to today's WNADA Corridor, were rated as fourth grade; still others, such as Reservoir Hill, Rosemont, Northwest Community Action, Coppin Heights, and Easterwood, were classified as third grade. This practice, known as red-lining, actively discouraged investment in existing properties, denying early Black families the same opportunities to grow generational wealth that were afforded to white families in higher-rated blocks of the city.

Even after Supreme Court decisions and new federal laws of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s that sought to undo the racist legacies of these earlier policies, neighborhoods along the WNADA Corridor continued to suffer. Suburban flight during these decades left many homes vacant and uncared for, allowing them to deteriorate over time.

Racially motivated policy decisions have also shaped the formation of green and recreational spaces in West Baltimore. Reservoir Hill and Penn North, both of which border West North Avenue, abut Druid Hill Park, America's third oldest major park. Situated on former Susquehannock tribal lands and, later, a plantation that utilized enslaved labor, Druid Hill was established as a public park in 1860 to the northeast of present-day West North Avenue, with a priority on facilitating access to green space from surrounding neighborhoods. The build-out of Baltimore's streetcar network brought new connections to the park from across the city. This sense of accessibility diminished during the middle of the 20th century, however, with the buildout of the Druid Hill Expressway along Auchentoroly Terrace and the expansion of Druid Park Lake Drive as a feeder for the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83), effectively cutting off easy park access from the neighborhoods to the west and south. In addition to reduced connections from surrounding, majority-Black neighborhoods during the mid-20th century, many of the community amenities – such as swimming pools and tennis courts – were segregated until 1955.

Coppin State University has contributed to additional green spaces along the corridor since it moved to its current location in Mondawmin and Coppin Heights in 1952. As the campus has continued to expand, the university has incorporated several common green spaces and sports facilities that provide open areas for community members and students to gather.

### Present

The corridor today benefits from the presence of community-serving entities such as the city-operated Parkview Recreation Center, which supports positive community activities and is due to be replaced within the next few years, and the Walbrook Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, which provides free access to books, information, and digital tools for nearby residents. The EMAGE Center is another key stakeholder working to drive economic development



**Figure 20** Porchfront-style rowhomes along West North Avenue.



**Figure 21** The Walbrook Mill mixed-use apartment building, completed in 2020, includes an 8,000-square-foot food hall on the ground floor.



in this corridor, offering programming to assist entrepreneurs in the formation and growth of their businesses, and also provides youth entrepreneurship education.

An influx of new housing options within the last decade has provided opportunities for much-needed population growth that can strengthen the community's collective presence. North Avenue Gateway I & II, a mixed-use development that includes a pharmacy, was completed in 2013 and provides high-quality, low-cost housing for Coppin State University students and other community members. At Walbrook Mill, Osprey Development Co. has fulfilled a commitment that principal developer James Riggs made following the Baltimore Uprising in 2015 to invest in historically underserved communities, including those along West North Avenue. With multi-income options, Walbrook Mill provides Coppin State University students and the surrounding communities with additional housing and food options, which are incorporated into the retail areas at the foot of the complex. Other recent and planned developments that include low-cost housing are The Penn Square Apartments, The Baker View Townhomes, and the Reservoir Square Townhomes.

Druid Hill Park remains a popular center for recreational and cultural activity as one of Baltimore's premier open spaces today. Baltimore City's Department of Public Works is presently completing the installation of two underground drinking water storage tanks at Druid Lake Reservoir, and once finished, the City of Baltimore plans to reimagine the reservoir and surrounding shoreline for expanded public use under the Druid Lake Vision Plan. Proposed new amenities for this process including boating and fishing access, a restored shoreline with ecological education opportunities, hospitality uses, and new walking trails and off-street paths, among other changes.

Druid Hill Park also hosts numerous cultural events, including the African American Music Festival (AFRAM), one of the East Coast's largest Black cultural gatherings with hundreds of thousands of

attendees annually. (The city estimated that the most recent festival, held in June 2023, attracted more than 300,000 visitors.) This two-day festival regularly features performances from nationally known musicians, as well as family-friendly activities, local cuisine, and more, gather over two days to enjoy national entertainment, local cuisine, and much more.

Baltimore City continues to explore new opportunities to add green space along the West North Avenue Corridor. In 2021, the city demolished 40 blighted properties surrounding Herbert Street Community Park, located near Coppin State University, and has also issued grants through its Department of Housing and Community Development for other new green spaces, such as Cab Calloway Legends Park in Druid Heights.

## Transportation

### Past

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the West North Avenue corridor boasted robust transit infrastructure as a necessary addition to the city's burgeoning street network. In 1885, Baltimore became home to America's first ever commercial electric streetcar. As the streetcar network expanded, West North Avenue was constructed as a horse and buggy roadway, with a rail line eventually incorporated into the median for streetcar travel. Transportation was a rare unifying factor in city life, as streetcars were racially integrated spaces even while segregation in housing and commercial spaces was enforced throughout the city.

The construction of new multi-lane roadways during the mid-20th century changed the transportation fabric of West Baltimore. In 1946, a bypass for historic US Route 1 was moved to North Avenue, connecting Belair Road in the east with Monroe Street in West Baltimore. This addition of the bypass route increased traffic considerably throughout the corridor, and as a result, much of

North Avenue was expanded into a divided highway in the 1950's. Streetcar service along North Avenue and throughout much of the city was discontinued by 1963.

Despite the car-centric transformation of the corridor, West North Avenue was later adapted to include multiple MTA bus connections, as well as stations served by MTA Light Rail (the North Avenue stop) and MTA Metro Subway (Penn-North), as well as other subway stations in the vicinity of the WNADA Corridor, such as Mondawmin and Upton.

### Present

Within the Maryland Statewide transit plan, the North Avenue Rising initiative is highlighted as a key step to revitalization of the West Baltimore community through a reassessment and renewal of Baltimore's transportation systems. The project is ongoing, with upwards of seven miles of dedicated bus lanes and several bus stop enhancements already in place. Other improvements include signal priority, enhanced bus stops with shelters, and other planned bicycle infrastructure changes. North Avenue Rising has also implemented streetscape enhancements at select intersections, roadway renovations, and station improvements improve safety and accessibility for all. The project has successfully used its federal grand award, but further funding will be required for North Avenue Rising to reach its full potential.

The corridor also continues to benefit from the presence of MTA Metro Subway stations at Upton and Penn North that provide fixed-guideway transit for local residents. The system is chronically beset by delays and station closures, though MTA is investing in its subway system with improvements at key hubs such as Mondawmin Station and has also begun to implement a replacement fleet of new railcars to provide more reliable service and an improved overall experience for riders.

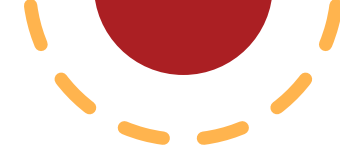


Figure 22 Dots placed on a visual preference board exercise at a WNADA public meeting on September 9, 2023.



Figure 23 Cars driving along West North Avenue, including in the red-painted dedicated bus lane.





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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Overview

In planning and executing its community engagement process as part of Phase I, WNADA intentionally sited public meetings, stakeholder gatherings, and other activities in places that would meet the existing population of the corridor close to where they live, work, and play. WNADA has utilized existing institutions such as Coppin State University and newer communal spaces, such as Unity Hall in Madison Park and the community gathering room at the Walbrook Mill Apartments, to convene interested parties during this process. The community engagement portion of Phase I began on August 26 with WNADA's first stakeholder meeting and concluded on December 2 with WNADA's second of two public meetings.

Overall, the community engagement portion of the comprehensive planning process has been geared toward reaching residents of the 16 communities that create the residential fabric for this corridor. The timeline for this process is included in the table below. Phase I community engagement activities are outlined in the subsequent pages.

Our approach to community engagement seeks to balance demonstrated best-practices for urban planning interventions with community aspirations, understanding that these two things may not always be in concert, and, in some cases, may even be in conflict. Additionally, we acknowledge that in communities that have faced historic discrimination, certain types of physical and policy changes can be viewed, by some, as a harbinger of gentrification, displacement, or a threat to their way of life, and they naturally seek to oppose it (even if it might benefit them).

There were many different types of perspectives shared during the Phase I community engagement process and we carefully listened to all of these voices. While there isn't always clear

consensus on certain issues, the dissenting voices help us figure out how to deal with the unintended consequences of implementing certain ideas and how to improve overall planning through an understanding of how, in the past, implementation of good ideas hurt the community. In the black community in particular, planning work must be restorative, seeking to heal old wounds and nurture trust in relationships between impacted communities and those making decisions on their behalf. This work seeks to honor the past by making sure when we hear, acknowledge, and preserve perspectives that seem counter urban planning best practices. We seek to understand the "why" and the "how" and apply those lessons learned to new strategies and objectives. We understand that projects on their own don't succeed without community support and that change is hard, so we must be patient, considerate, and contextual when trying to understand why something may not be a good fit for a specific community. Our job is to help West Baltimore achieve its vision for redevelopment, not impose what that vision is. Moreso,

#### WNADA Corridor Communities

Bolton Hill  
Coppin Heights  
Druid Heights  
Easterwood  
Fairmont  
Madison Park  
Mondawmin  
Mount Holly  
Northwest Community Action  
Panway  
Penn North  
Reservoir Hill  
Rosemont  
Sandtown/ Winchester  
Upton  
Walbrook

our job is also to help West Baltimore realize its potential beyond the obvious and toward the exceptional. We are very grateful for the residents' willingness to be vulnerable during this process and share their feelings in an open forum. We hope the results of this exercise honors them—not by promising to please everyone—but by reflecting back the same level of sensitivity and passion in the work.

### Public Meeting 1

Public Meeting 1 took place on September 9, 2023. Over 140 participants were in attendance. This section summarizes the three engagement activities conducted throughout the meeting: priority area mapping, a community visioning questionnaire, and a series of visual preference boards.

Table 1 Summary of public engagement activities

ACTIVITY	DATE	PARTICIPANTS
Resident Coordinating Meeting	July 12, 2022	50
Resident Coordinating Meeting	September 13, 2022	50
Resident Coordinating Meeting	November 15, 2022	50
Resident Coordinating Meeting	February 7, 2023	50
Resident Coordinating Meeting	August 26, 2023	50
Stakeholder Meeting at Walbrook Mill Community Room	August 26, 2023	20
Public Meeting at Coppin State University's Talon Center	September 9, 2023	140
Combined Neighborhood Meeting (Reservoir Hill, Bolton Hill, and Midtown)	November 11, 2023	7
WNADA Board of Directors Meeting	November 14, 2023	18
Combined Neighborhood Meeting (Greater Mondawmin, Druid Hill, Upton, Sandtown-Winchester, Coppin Heights)	November 18, 2023	13
Public Meeting at Unity Hall	December 2, 2023	150

### Priority Area Mapping

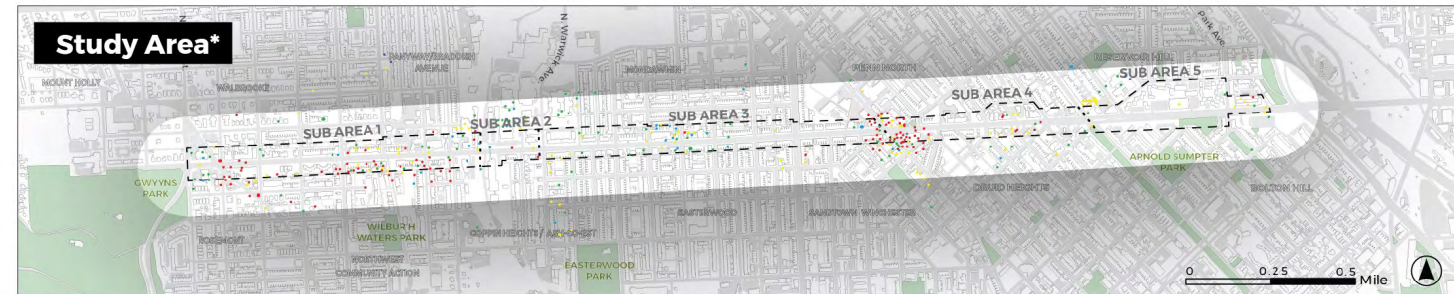
One of the most robust sources of feedback during these activities was a participatory mapping exercise in which public meeting attendees placed different colors of stickers dots in locations where they would want to prioritize or highlight community **destinations**, **preservation**, new **opportunities**, and key **challenges**. Key takeaways for each of these topics included:

- There is a diverse array of **destinations** in the project corridor where respondents regularly visit, with no distinct concentration of these locations in one or several areas.
- Preservation** was interpreted in three different buckets:
  - » Preservation of **space**, such as the Arch Social Club, Enoch Pratt Library branches, and the Black Arts and Entertainment District.
  - » Preservation of the **existing resident population**, such as by preventing property tax increases for legacy residents and promoting existing Black-owned businesses.
  - » Preservation of the **environment**, such as by reducing energy use through solar and other alternative forms of energy, with financial savings being returned to the community.



Figure 24 Residents attend a WNADA public meeting at Coppin State University's Talon Center on September 9, 2023.





\*see enlarged areas below for detail

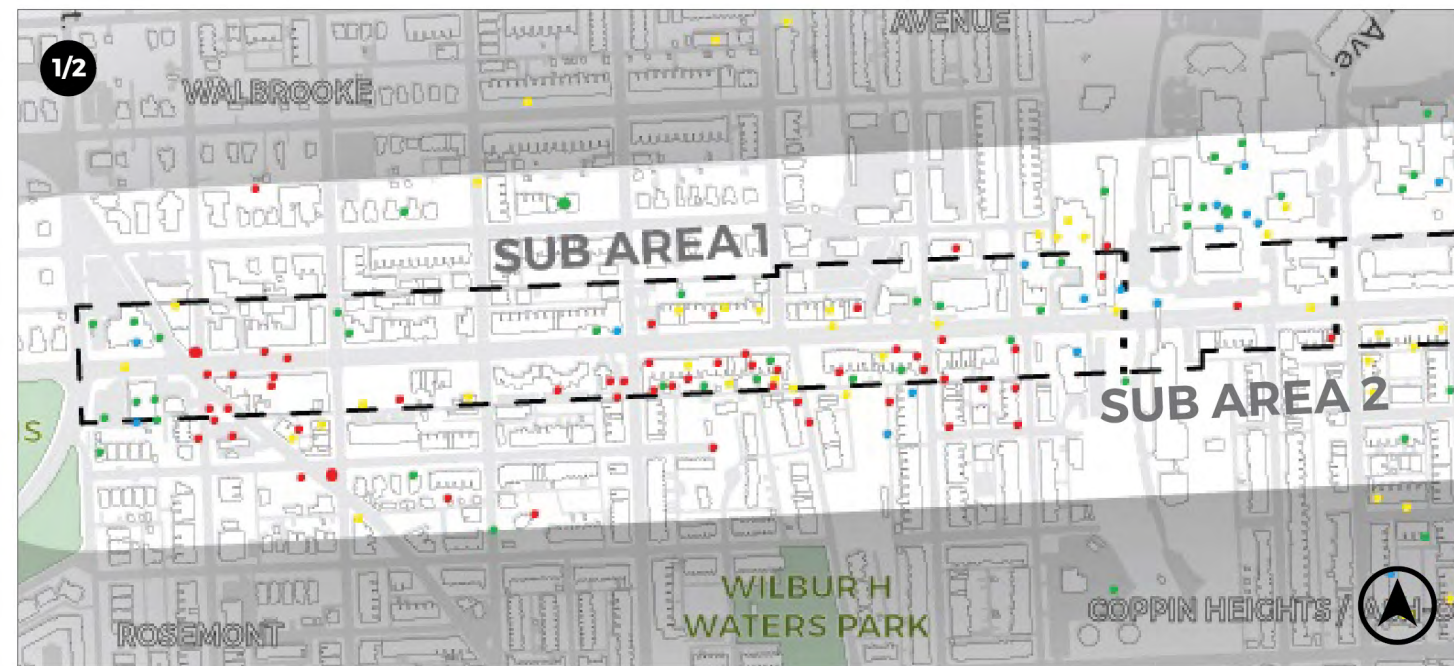


Figure 25 Public Meeting 1 priority area mapping exercise: sub areas 2 and 3

Key:

- Places I like to visit
- Places that should be preserved
- Opportunities
- Critical challenges

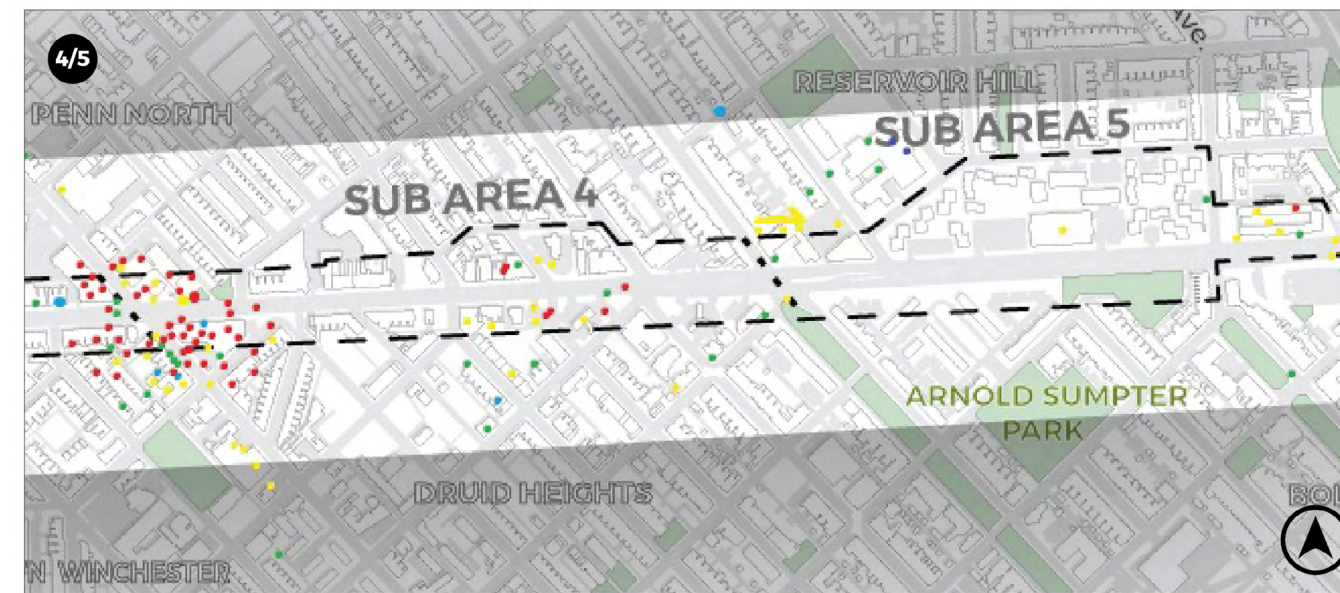
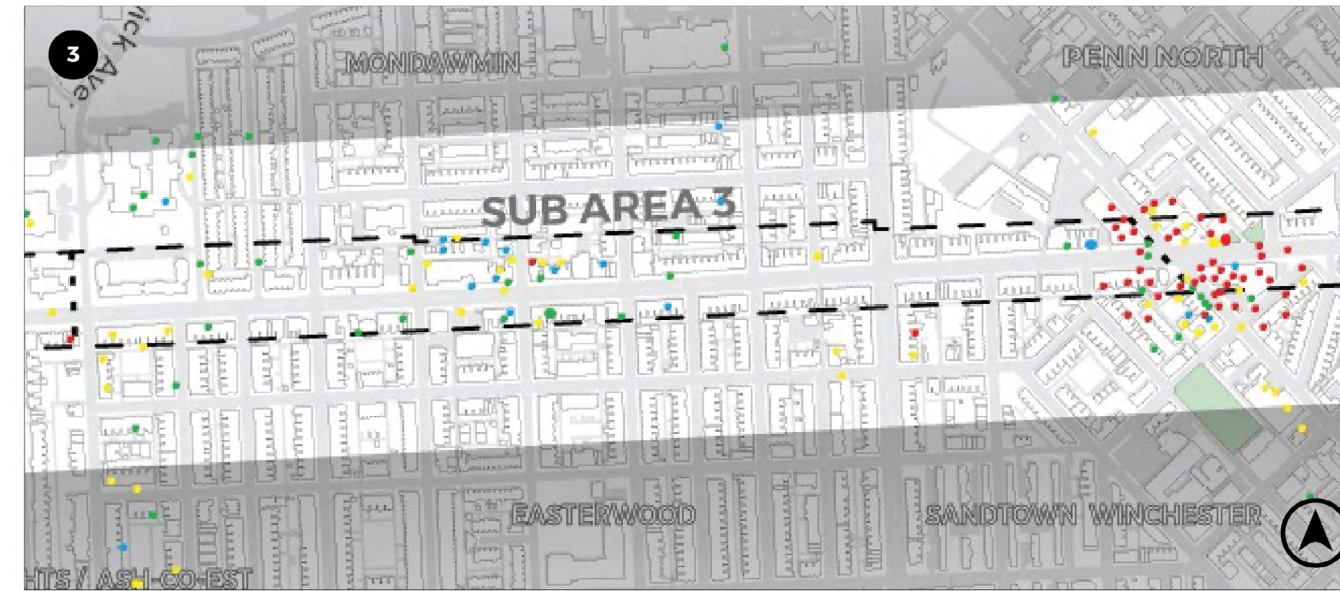


Figure 26 Public Meeting 1 priority area mapping exercise: sub areas 3, 4, and 5

Key:

- Places I like to visit
- Places that should be preserved
- Opportunities
- Critical challenges



The most commonly noted opportunities along the project corridor are included in Table 2.

**Table 2** Opportunities for improvement along WNADA corridor

OPPORTUNITY	EXAMPLES
Educational Facilities	Schools, library branches, and centers for workforce development, financial literacy, and environmental education
Recreation Resources	Recreation centers, playgrounds, ball courts and fields, and green spaces
Cultural Zones	Black Arts and Entertainment District, and activities such as performances in collaboration with churches and theaters
Transportation and Sanitation Infrastructure	New Circulator shuttle, transit, and dedicated parking
Economic Development	Retail amenities and services such as grocery stores and farmer's markets
Vacancy Rates	Filling empty residential and commercial spaces
Employment	Fill existing job openings

The most commonly noted key challenges highlighted by community members are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3** Key challenges along WNADA corridor

CHALLENGE	EXAMPLES
Transportation-Related Safety Threats	High vehicular speeds, lacking or low-quality dedicated bus lanes and bicycle infrastructure
Cleanliness	Litter and poor upkeep of public areas such as sidewalks and alleys, as well as storefronts
Loitering	Frequent and disruptive lingering by individuals engaged in illicit activities in public spaces
Vacancy Rates	Unfilled residential and commercial spaces
Insufficient Green Spaces	Lack of dog parks, pocket parks, and other welcoming public spaces for local residents

### Community Visioning Questionnaire

WNADA distributed community visioning questionnaires to attendees at its public meetings to learn about communities' current understanding of their collective identity, visions for what a successful comprehensive planning project would look like, and desires for improved neighborhood connections, transportation infrastructure, housing, and parks/open spaces. Among 99 fully or partially completed questionnaires, community members focused on the following points or topics.

#### COMMUNITY IDENTITY

A revitalized WNADA Corridor will prioritize:

Prosperity and Vibrancy
Culture and Heritage
Safety
Connection
Representation and Liberation
Equity and Diversity
Joy

#### PROJECT SUCCESS

A successful Comprehensive Plan will include:

Local Amenities
Environmental Improvements
Empower Leadership
Community Safety and Wellness
Retention of Existing Residents
Repopulation
Preservation and Reinvestment

#### NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

The following would make residents feel more connected to surrounding communities:

Community Gatherings
Collaboration and Communication
Spaces for Recreation (Humans and Pets)
Cleaning, Greening, and Lighting Improvements
Safer Spaces With Less Vacancy and Increased Patrols
Transportation and Walkability Improvements
Local Businesses (Food and Retail)
Historic Preservation

#### PROJECT QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

Residents are curious or concerned about the following issues with the comprehensive planning process:

Project Cost
Project Length and Longevity
Project-Related Job Opportunities
Transparency and Accountability
Authentic Community Involvement
Housing Affordability, Gentrification, and Displacement
Holistic Approaches to Community Wellness (Focusing on Economic Development)



### TRANSPORTATION

Residents said transportation can support quality of life through:

Accessibility (for All Abilities; to Jobs, Goods, and Services)
Service Frequency and Reliability
Expansion of Bus Service, Stops, and Shelters
Removal of Bike and Bus Lanes
Improved Air Quality
Parking (Including Safety)

### HOUSING

Residents said housing can support quality of life through:

Housing for All
Homeownership (Building Generational Wealth)
Affordable Housing (Serving Vulnerable Populations, Grants for Home Maintenance/Renovation, Facilitating Repopulation)
Community Safety and Stability
Cleanliness, Sustainability, and Beautification
Green Space (Front and Backyards)

### PARKS/OPEN SPACES

Residents said parks and open spaces can support quality of life through:

Safety
Maintenance/Cleanliness
Spaces for Recreation, Socializing, Meditation, Connecting with Nature, Growing Food
Health Promotion (Physical and Mental)
Amenities (Restrooms, Water Fountains, Picnic Facilities)
Job Creation

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Residents said economic development can support quality of life through:

Wealth Generation
Career Opportunities
Small Business Growth
Educational Attainment
Retail Variety
Retention: Residents and Businesses
Crime Reduction
Youth Engagement
Tourism

### Visual Preference Board Takeaways

In addition to questionnaires and the priority area mapping exercise, WNADA used the two public meetings to gather public feedback about four major issues – housing, open/green space, transportation, and economic development – using visual preference boards. For each of these four categories, attendees placed sticker dots on their preference of various typologies fitting within each category, i.e., for housing, choices between rowhome renovation, medium-density attached housing, infill development, high-density towers, and high-density low-rises.

Based on the tallies from the visual preference boards, community members' preferred choices (from most preferred to least preferred) are listed in the below tables.

### Housing

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The community shared a strong preference for rowhome renovation, with some support for mixed-use infill development and new, high-density low-rises.
- The community expressed an aversion to new towers and higher-density rowhomes.
- Community members hope the project will focus on stabilization of existing housing resources (rather than widespread redevelopment) to bring families back to the community, provide affordable housing, and undertake development without displacement.

Table 4 Ranked preferences for housing, by density and type

#### How Do You Visualize Housing?

DENSITY	RANK	TYPE
Low/Medium	1	Row Home Renovation
	2	Infill Development
	3	Medium Density Attached
High Density	1	High Density Low Rises
	2	High Density Towers



## Open Space

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The community strongly supported a wide variety of open and green space opportunities, including stormwater management, urban farms, and outdoor performance spaces.
- Community members also expressed support for plazas, playgrounds, and public art in the form of murals and sculptures,
- Participants also expressed interest in a dog park and pop-up markets at the metro and bus stops.

**Table 5** Ranked preferences for open space, by category and type

### How Do You Visualize Open Space?

CATEGORY	RANK	TYPE
Landscape Amenities	1 (Tied)	Stormwater Management with Green Amenities
Urban Farm and Amphitheaters	1 (Tied)	Urban Farms
	2	Outdoor Performance Space
Plazas, Playgrounds, and Public Art	3 (Tied)	Public Wall Art
	3 (Tied)	Playgrounds
	4	Paved Plaza Open Spaces
	5	Public Sculptures, Artistic Structures

## Public Meeting 2

Public Meeting 2 took place on December 2, 2023. Over 150 participants were in attendance. This section summarizes the Priority-Urgency Strategies Matrices engagement activity conducted throughout the meeting, whereby participants voted on their preferred objectives and strategies within the three Core Concept Areas of Economic Development, Community, and Transportation, across the four quadrants of, Do Now, Schedule for Later, Nice to Have/Low Importance, and Do Not Proceed. Key findings are outlined below. The information gathered helped inform the **refined** Goals, Objectives, and Strategies which are illustrated in this report's section by the same name. The **draft** Goals, Objectives, and Strategies shared out during the December 2 meeting are included alongside the results for the relevant Core Concept Area – Economic Development, Community, and Transportation.

## Transportation

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The community focused on safety and user experiences in proposed transportation improvements. The strongest preference was for pedestrian and ADA accommodations at intersections and improved user experiences and reliability for public transportation, especially bus service improvements – including implementation of BRT, upgrades to shelters, and stoplight priority.
- Fewer community members prioritized creative placemaking and mixed mobility for transportation improvements. If creative placemaking is included, residents said they prefer it emphasizes Black history and culture. Community members also expressed an aversion to bike lanes, deeming them polarizing for their association with gentrification. Additionally, community members cited the need for more shared parking in commercial areas.
- Residents also said they would like to explore how to lower insurance rates based on ZIP code in Baltimore.

**Table 6** Ranked preferences for transportation, by category and type

### How Do You Visualize Transportation?

CATEGORY	RANK	TYPE
Pedestrian and ADA Accommodations	1	Protected Pedestrian/ADA Intersections
Transit Priority Enhancements	2	Improvements to the Transit Experience
Shared Mobility Lanes	3	Roadways for All Users, Walking and Rolling
Tactical Urbanism/ Creative Placemaking	4	Artistically Designed, Temporary Roadway Treatments/Testing Ideas

## Economic Development

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Community members placed the highest priority on retail, including both neighborhood-scale shopping and urban markets like Mount Vernon Marketplace and R. House in Remington.
- Participants expressed interest in adaptive reuse of existing facilities, as well as concentrating on a commercial node for students near Coppin State University.
- Office space, transit-oriented (TOD) development, and activated indoor commercial spaces ranked lower.
- Community members also noted a preference for II-season opportunities and co-working spaces, and expressed positive attitudes towards higher-density, low-rise housing adjacent to transit.

**Table 7** Ranked preferences for economic development, by category and type

### How Do You Visualize Economic Development?

CATEGORY	RANK	TYPE
Retail	1	Neighborhood-Scale Shopping
Urban Market	2	Urban Market with Indoor and Outdoor Spaces
Office Space	3	More Places to Work Comfortably
Mid-Scale Large Development/TOD	4	Higher-Density Development Tied to Transit Accessibility
Commercial	5	Activated Indoor Spaces



## Priority-Urgency Strategies Matrices

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Goal:** Encourage development of buildings with a mix of uses, engage stakeholders, and promote job creation to support growth, investment, and shared prosperity in the community.

**Objective 1: Increase local job opportunities by lifting up new and existing small business owners and the future workforce.**

1. Conduct a request for qualifications (RFQ) process focused on WNADA's six priority development zones to spur the establishment of new local businesses and attract existing ones. Does the RFQ spur new business?
2. Establish a local activity center to encourage economic self-reliance that leverages educational, vocational, and financial resources across the community, city, and state through curated programming.
3. Establish a WNADA Workforce Development Officer position to identify the skillsets and develop the training curricula needed by residents to place them in the best position for success.

**Objective 2: Increase food and retail access and variety.**

1. Establish temporary retail spaces, refrigeration, and communal food preparation sites within the corridor for local farmers, food truck operators, and other small business owners to help reduce barriers of entry.
2. Identify grants, in-kind support, and other incentives for small business owners – including local food producers – to inhabit permanent spaces within the six priority development zones.
3. Attract one or more anchor grocery stores and accompanying businesses to support a diverse and vibrant mix of essential and select retail.

Figure 27 Economic development draft goal, objectives, and strategies

A total of 45 objective or strategy-specific votes were gathered for the Economic Development matrix. Separated by the four quadrants, the summary results are as follows:

- **Do Now**  
Most of the 30 votes received for this quadrant pertained to job creation (Objective 1) and increased food and retail access (Objective 2).
- **Schedule for Later**  
Most of the eight votes received for this quadrant pertained to commercial and community development (Objective 3) while strategies pertaining to job creation (Objective 1), did not receive any votes – likely illustrating the urgency that meeting participants feel for an increase in local job opportunities.
- **Nice to Have/Low Importance**  
The five votes received for this quadrant were quite evenly distributed across the four objective areas, with all votes either falling into the “medium-term” or “long-term” category.
- **Do Not Proceed**  
Only one vote was received for this quadrant, which somewhat surprisingly pertained to attracting an anchor grocery store.

Community comments reflected a desire to see an economically vibrant, regionally significant corridor filled with local businesses that are connected to resources. Community members also wanted to discuss the importance of heritage and culture while exploring options for Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

### COMMUNITY

**Goal:** Provide a range of housing options that promote economic development, preserve historic character, and support existing population retention and future growth, while also making community spaces safe, accessible, welcoming, and resilient.

**Objective 1: Provide housing options for people of all incomes so that no one is housing cost burdened.**

1. Provide residents with pathways to homeownership and retention by providing access to trainings, grants, and other relevant resources.
2. Provide additional developer incentives, such as a Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE), to help make construction of multifamily housing a priority.
3. Leverage city-owned parcels in transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning areas to increase density and affordable housing units.

**Objective 2: Strike a balance between introducing new housing options to address vacancy and depopulation while investing in existing residents, cultural spaces, and historic structures to maintain, grow, and enhance the richness of the community.**

1. Establish community space for local experts to advise on home improvements, identify sourcing for basic building materials and tools, and share access to programs that provide resources for weatherization and energy efficiency.
2. Improve housing quality and maintain legacy neighborhood character by leveraging local, state, and federal historic tax credits.
3. Rezone portions of the corridor for higher-density, mixed-use development to help ensure long-term affordability for renters and homeowners while also preserving neighborhood character in the more residential portions of the adjacent neighborhoods.

Figure 28 Community draft goal, objectives, and strategies

A total of 40 objective or strategy-specific votes were gathered for the Community matrix. Separated by the four quadrants, the summary results are as follows:

- **Do Now**  
The vast majority of votes were placed in this quadrant (34 out of 40). They were quite evenly distributed across housing for people of all incomes (Objective 1) and investing in existing residents and spaces (Objective 2), with public space (Objective 3) and life expectancy/quality of life (Objective 4) each receiving a few votes as well. The strategy pertaining to pathways to homeownership (Objective 1, Strategy 1) received the most votes.
- **Schedule for Later**  
Only five votes were cast for this quadrant, three of which were for Objective 4. No votes were cast for housing-related topics (Objective 1), which likely underscores the urgency event participants feel regarding housing security for themselves and/or their fellow community members.
- **Nice to Have/Low Importance**  
Only one vote was cast for this quadrant, pertaining to a community space for local experts to provide home improvement-related resources (Objective 2, Strategy 1).
- **Do Not Proceed**  
No votes were cast for this category, from which one might infer that participants found nearly all of the objectives and strategies proposed to be worthwhile in some capacity.

Members of the community seek a safe, comfortable, beautiful, vibrant corridor that supports a Black Arts District, draws tourism, includes CSU students, attracts young homeowners, and supports existing residents with resources such as financial literacy.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Goal:** Improve multimodal transportation safety, accessibility, and quality of travel for people of all ages and abilities.

**Objective 1: Improve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and pedestrian safety at intersections.**

1. Pilot the repair of high priority existing malfunctioning and non-compliant ADA infrastructure.
2. Repair remaining malfunctioning and non-compliant ADA infrastructure.
3. Re-configure streets, pedestrian paths, and other travelways to calm traffic and improve safety.

**Objective 2: Improve safety for roadway users along the corridor.**

1. Invest in a pilot of street lighting enhancements within the six priority development zones, including lighting fixtures that creatively activate public spaces and help to address safety concerns and traffic incident hotspots.
2. Conduct a study or pilot to evaluate a wider range of enforcement mechanisms to preserve the integrity of bus-only lanes.
3. Create performance and mitigation measures to help reduce the number of fatal and non-fatal crashes along the corridor.

**Objective 3: Improve transit rider experience via enhancements to bus stops, service improvements, and bus lane/signal priority.**

1. Conduct a multimodal corridor study to evaluate the need for and feasibility of high-capacity transit service and related initiatives, such as parking reform.
2. Evaluate the current MTA On Time Performance (OTP) metrics and individual stop dwell times and work with MTA to institute bus priority features, such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP) to enhance the transit accessibility and reliability along the corridor.
3. Attract expanded transit service to West North Avenue, such as the addition of a new Circulator bus line, bus rapid transit (BRT), or light rail transit (LRT).

**Objective 4: Strengthen support for infrastructure improvement projects by minimizing the negative impacts of long construction and development periods.**

1. Conduct creative placemaking efforts, such as pop-up events that simultaneously provide information sharing concerning upcoming improvements while also providing activation and connection for the surrounding community.
2. Develop an outreach plan with a detailed, continuous communications strategy.
3. Create a permanent, centralized information hub that tracks infrastructure projects along the corridor.

*Figure 29* Transportation draft goal, objectives, and strategies

A total of 48 objective or strategy-specific votes were gathered for the Transportation matrix. Separated by the four quadrants, the summary results are as follows:

■ **Do Now**

The majority – 33 votes – were cast for this quadrant. They were nearly evenly split between ADA/pedestrian safety improvements (Objective 1) and improved safety for roadway users (Objective 2), highlighting the urgency that event participants feel in addressing transportation safety.

■ **Schedule for Later**

Seven votes were cast for this quadrant, four of which were for minimizing the negative impacts of infrastructure improvement projects (Objective 4). No votes were cast for Objective 1.

■ **Nice to Have/Low Importance**

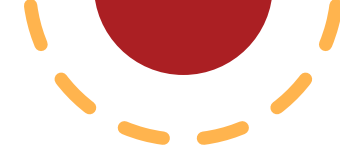
Only three votes were cast for this quadrant – two pertaining to transit rider experience (Objective 3), and one pertaining to Objective 4.

■ **Do Not Proceed**

Five votes were cast for this quadrant – three pertaining to Objective 3, and one each regarding Objective 1 and Objective 4. No votes were cast for improving safety for roadway users along the corridor (Objective 2).

Community members shared a number of concerns about traffic congestion, suggested alternative transportation, such as street cars, and stated a general desire for more functional and more permanent infrastructure.

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# HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT





## HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was conducted to determine how to maximize health benefits and reduce health risks during the WNADA. A streamlined HIA refers to a HIA that is informed by a literature review, assessment of existing health-related data, and some community engagement, as opposed to a Comprehensive HIA that would involve more time, primary data collection, and deeper engagement by various stakeholders. The initial scope of the HIA included plans to enhance economic, housing, transportation, and neighborhood development. Community input on how health connects with each of these areas was obtained through a brief eight-item questionnaire survey administered to attendees at Community Meeting 1 on September 9, 2023. A total of 59 two-sided documents were collected (noting 19 people filled out only one side). A copy of the questionnaire is in the [Appendix](#). Through this input the scope of the streamlined HIA was refined to focus on those aspects that the community and study team determined could impact health.

## Overview of Current Health Status

The most up to date public data on key health indicators were obtained from the Baltimore City Health Department Neighborhood Health Profiles (<https://data.baltimorecity.gov/>) and the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (<https://bniajfi.org/>). With input from WNADA, data were collected for the six neighborhoods that will be impacted by the WNADA proposal. The table below includes health indicators for those neighborhoods and for comparison, data for Baltimore City overall and Roland Park/Poplar Hill, one of the most affluent neighborhoods in the city. The data displayed indicate that the neighborhoods in the target areas have lower average life expectancy, lower median household income, lower number of miles of bike lanes, and higher fast food outlet density, as compared to Baltimore City overall. Residents in the community are also transit dependent; at least 26% of the population uses public transportation to get to work. This level of transit use is higher than the overall city average of 16.1% and significantly higher than the Roland Park average of 4.7%. All six neighborhoods were rated as having greater walkability to nearby amenities as compared to Baltimore City and Roland Park.

Table 8 Key health indicators for neighborhoods impacted by the West North Avenue proposal

	LIFE EXPECTANCY IN YEARS (2018)	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2021)	WALK SCORE (2017)	NUMBER OF MILES OF BIKE LANES (2020)	% POPULATION USES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO GET TO WORK (2021)	FAST FOOD OUTLET DENSITY PER 1,000 RESIDENTS (2019)
Greater Mondawmin	69.4	\$43,574	67.3	0	26.4	1.72
Greater Rosemont	68.5	\$37,577	68.0	1.4	30.2	1.77
Midtown	76.7	\$60,407	89.4	9.7	21.7	0.97
Penn North/Reservoir Hill	70.2	\$35,965	77	11.1	28.7	0.9
Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park	68.1	\$25,844	80.8	0.1	32.4	1.9
Upton/Druid Heights	68.5	\$23,780	86.5	0	32.7	1.84
Baltimore City Averages	72.7	\$54,215	56.2	207	16.1	1.49
Greater Roland Park/Poplar Hill (Highest Values City-Wide)	83	\$128,821	52.6	6.6	4.7	0.95








## Pathway Diagram

The HIA process involves creating a pathway diagram, which illustrates conceptually how the proposed plan might impact health. These pathways were constructed based on existing literature, public health knowledge, and input from Community Meeting 1. The diagram is intended to be read from left to right, with the factors in each column relating to the factors in the adjacent column. The factors within each column are also interrelated. The direction of the potential impact is indicated by the up and down arrows, for increase and decrease, respectively, or a delta ( $\Delta$ ), which indicates a change in either direction rather than in a specific direction.

The proposed strategies could impact health through mechanisms that operate in the short, intermediate, and long-term. For example,

in the short term, the proposal could impact business development, housing, physical or built environment, and transportation. Each of these areas are interrelated and have multiple intermediate impacts, including increasing the availability of jobs, increasing the availability of affordable housing, improvements in walkability, as well as changes in traffic safety, community and social cohesion, and community identity. These intermediate impacts can influence health-related behaviors such as diet and physical activity, which could impact long-term health outcomes such as the risk for or prevalence of diabetes, obesity, asthma. The intermediate impacts could also lead to long-term impacts in mental, physical, and emotional health of the community.



Proposed Project	Short-Term Impacts	Intermediate Impacts	Key Health Impacts
<p><b>WNADA (Priority Areas):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Economic Development</b></li> <li> <b>Community Design</b></li> <li> <b>Transportation</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Businesses</b></li> <li> <b>Housing</b></li> <li> <b>Built Environment</b></li> <li> <b>Transportation</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ <b>Availability of Jobs</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Income and Wealth</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Affordable Homes</b></li> <li>▲ <b>Number of Vacant Homes</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Food Sources</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Safe and Inclusive Public Spaces</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Gentrification</b></li> <li>▲ <b>Community Cohesion</b></li> <li>▲ <b>Community Identity</b></li> <li>↓ <b>Crime</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Reliable and Accessible Transit</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Walkability</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Traffic Safety</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ <b>Change in health-related behaviors (e.g., diet, physical activity)</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Mental Health</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Emotional Health</b></li> <li>↑ <b>Physical Health</b></li> <li>↓ <b>Risk and Prevalence of Diabetes</b></li> <li>↓ <b>Risk and Prevalence of Obesity</b></li> <li>↓ <b>Intentional and Unintentional Injury</b></li> <li>↓ <b>Rates And Prevalence of Asthma</b></li> </ul>

## Key Findings Regarding Connections with Health

An expedited review of the literature was conducted as part of this streamlined HIA to describe the connections between key elements of the proposed project and health. The three principal areas of this streamlined HIA - community and economic development, and transportation - can benefit or harm health because they are part of the social or structural determinants of health (SDOH). SDOH are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, play, learn, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping conditions of daily life such as social norms, policies, structural racism, and climate change.<sup>1</sup>

The public health literature presents strong and consistent evidence regarding the role of the SDOH on overall health and wellbeing, and health equity. Community development as a key SDOH can improve the physical or built, economic, and social environment by promoting affordable housing, small business development, local job creation, and social cohesion.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, strategies that involve building affordable and safe homes, childcare centers and schools, and retail hubs can all benefit health by changing one's environment and through supporting wealth building and financial growth.<sup>3</sup> Community development can also provide access to healthy food sources through farmer's markets and urban markets, which can improve food security and improve nutrition.<sup>4</sup> Community development can

also lead to gentrification and negatively impact social cohesion and mental health.<sup>5</sup> Thus, it is critical to ensure that development occurs without displacement.

Improvements to the physical and built environments are possible through creating inclusive healthy public spaces that support health equity and community context.<sup>6</sup> Neighborhood walkability can support opportunities for pedestrian safety, safe recreation and play, and physical activity, or through active transportation.<sup>7</sup> Improved bikeability provides an alternative mode of transportation and recreation, but must move forward with community input on where to install bicycle lanes and with a commitment to Vision Zero and Safe Systems to ensure all road users travel safely.<sup>8</sup>

For transit dependent community members, there are significant benefits of transit for health because of reductions in transportation safety, air pollution and asthma, increases in physical activity, and improved access to healthy food, jobs, and medical care.<sup>9</sup> Lack of access to public transportation disproportionately impacts older adults, individuals with disability, and households that do not own a vehicle,<sup>8</sup> thus, the impacts on these members of the community must be considered so health inequities are not exacerbated.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/about/sdoh/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20111110.912687/>

<sup>3</sup> Braunstein, Sandra and Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, "How the Health and Community Development Sectors Are Combining Forces to Improve Health and Well-Being," *Health Affairs* 30, no. 11 (2011): 2042-51.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/resources-tools-perspectives-revitalizing-communities-healthy-food-access>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7240775/>; <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0190139>

<sup>6</sup> [https://ihp.gehlpeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Inclusive-Healthy-Places\\_Gehl-Institute.pdf](https://ihp.gehlpeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Inclusive-Healthy-Places_Gehl-Institute.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335522000109>

<sup>8</sup> [Recommendations of the Safe System Consortium \(jhu.edu\)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335522000109)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20210630.810356/>; <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212267216001568>



This streamlined HIA reveals a significant opportunity to improve the community's health as part of the WNADA. The health indicators and measures of SDOH presented in the table above could be improved through the proposed economic, housing, transportation, and neighborhood development. The health benefits suggested by this analysis will only be realized if the strategies that are implemented: 1) advance health equity rather than exacerbate inequities; 2) engage community in decision-making regarding health; 3) include training and education so residents are able to sustain the health gains; 4) ensure that resources like access to healthy food, affordable housing or transit are affordable and inclusive; and 5) change policy, systems, and structures to modify the SDOH and sustain the health-related improvements.

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# *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development through inclusive, responsible growth and shared prosperity lies at the heart of WNADA's mission. This section speaks to identifying spaces for commerce that can lead to strong *Neighborhood Development* and outlines policies and practices for Equitable Development.

### Existing Conditions

The WNADA corridor is among the most economically diverse sections of the city in terms of land uses, thanks to a medley of residential or commercial zones, the presence of transit-oriented development outside of key transit nodes such as Metro Subway stations, and current and future development areas in the vicinity of Coppin State University. This report section showcases points

of interest, sub-areas featuring buildings with shared, continuous building and roadway characteristics, and key nodes of traffic, pedestrian activity, and commercial uses. WNADA intends to use these distinctions to inform investment decisions, community-informed planning activities, and potential site-specific development proposals.

### West North Avenue Corridor: Sub Areas, Nodes, and Parcels

Along West North Avenue, five sub-areas were identified based on their built condition: the street wall and the character of each corridor segment. Segments that share a similar character, predominantly building type and street width, continuously without interruption were considered sub-area. Characterizing sub-areas promotes the identification of location-specific conditions and interventions and assists in setting priority focus areas for investment. By identifying individual sub-areas, and proposing interventions based on their specific character, the unique character of the whole corridor is preserved.

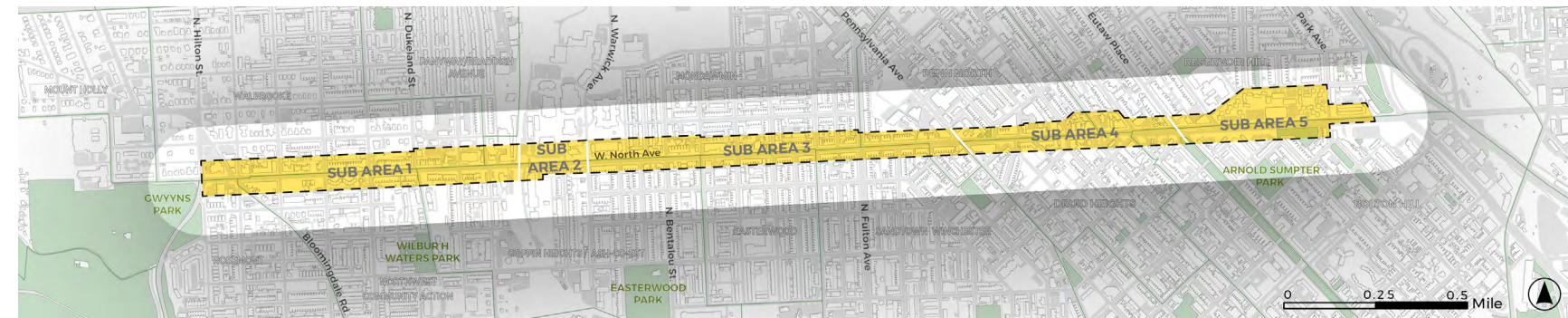


Figure 30 Sub areas

Alongside the sub-area, key nodes on West North Avenue were identified based on intersection with major road connectors. These nodes have a higher volume of traffic, pedestrian activity, and commercial use. Similarly to the sub-areas, the identification of nodes assists in suggesting site-specific interventions and setting priorities for investment. These nodes range from mixed-use commercial areas to major transit nodes and TOD. The nodes identified are:

- **The intersection of Bloomingdale Avenue and West North Avenue:** mixed-use commercial area and intersection with key North-South road connection.
- **The intersection of N. Dukeland St. and West North Avenue:** key North-South road connection.
- **Coppin State University:** Public space, wide sidewalks, a zone of consistent character and potential civic activity.

- **The intersection of N. Fulton Avenue and West North Avenue:** mixed-use commercial area and intersection with key North-South road connection.
- **The intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and West North Avenue:** mixed-use commercial area, major transit node, and an intersection with key North-South road connection. Parcels around the station are also zoned for TOD.
- **The intersection of Eutaw Pl and West North Avenue:** mixed-use commercial area and intersection with key North-South road connection, entrance to Eutaw Pl Boulevard / public space.



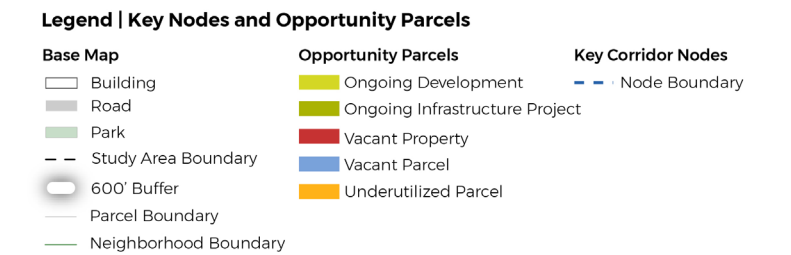
Figure 31 Key nodes



Moving to a yet smaller scale, individual parcels within the key nodes are identified here. Both forthcoming development, already underway, as well as clusters of vacant properties and underutilized parcels are indicated. The particular category of parcel may lead to different types of development strategies as well as opportunities to enhance the public realm. (see more in Opportunities and Constraints).



Figure 32 Opportunity parcels within key nodes



### Walkshed Analysis

With an average walking speed of about 2.5 miles per hour, an adult human can cover about one quarter mile in five minutes on foot. While there is great variability among people's preferences and abilities as well as in the built environment itself (closed sidewalks, construction, bodies of water, foul weather, etc.), the Five-Minute Walk has become an industry standard indication of walkable convenience. In the simplified walkshed analysis below, we see selected points of interest within 0.25 miles of West North Avenue Study Area. Just as importantly, it shows the absence of walkable assets. These absences can indicate opportunities for commerce, recreation, and services. Neighborhoods with higher walkability are not only healthier places to live, they are better for economic development.

People living or visiting the eastern side of the corridor can walk to a number of parks and greenspaces, one grocery store (Save A Lot), and two to three recreation centers. There is, however, a notable lack of these facilities along the western and especially the central portions of this corridor. There are clearly opportunities—and according to public outreach, demand—for a greater number and diversity of grocery options, parks and recreation, and medical services, among other assets.

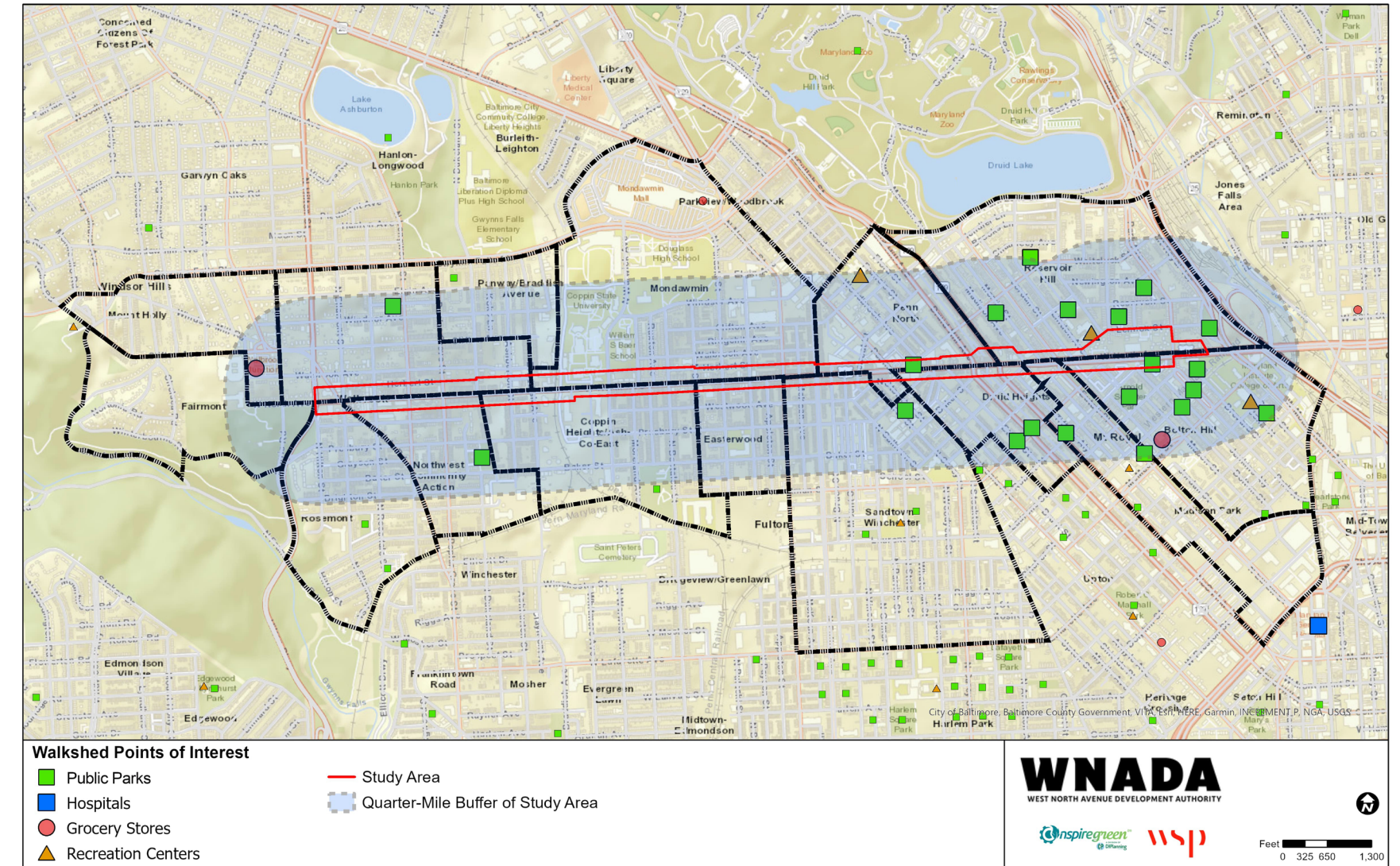


Figure 33 Points of interest within 0.25 miles of the corridor



## Opportunities and Constraints

Economic diversity breeds opportunity. Following a review of existing conditions, WNADA has examined development opportunities at so-called *soft sites* – untapped areas suitable for development – as well as color-coded areas of development

potential in the below maps. Several zones towards the center of the WNADA corridor have realized or approaching realizing of their economic development potential, while others towards the eastern and western edges of this territory have not received

adequate attention and will benefit from planning interventions. This section also includes an analysis of strategies to improve long-term housing affordability, restore historic buildings and improve existing housing stock, empower neighborhoods and community members,

and reduce displacement. This analysis is followed by two case studies from Philadelphia and Minneapolis, and a sub-section on foreclosure and vacancy prevention.

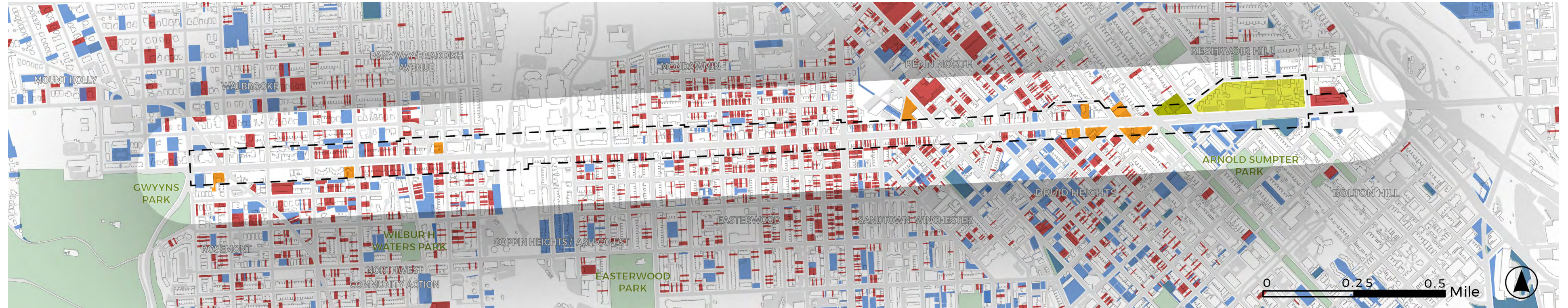


Figure 34 Soft site development opportunities

### Legend | Soft Sites

#### Base Map

- Building
- Road
- Park
- Study Area Boundary
- 600' Buffer
- Parcel Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary

#### Opportunity Parcels

- Ongoing Development
- Ongoing Infrastructure Project
- Vacant Property
- Vacant Parcel
- Underutilized Parcel

- Number of Vacant Parcels within Map Extent: 1353
- Estimated Number of Vacant Parcels within the Study Area: 84
- Estimated Number of Vacant Buildings within Map Extent: 1944
- Estimated Number of Vacant Buildings within the Study Area: 246



### Spaces for Development

Soft sites are parcels that were identified as suitable for development along West North Avenue. Three types of soft sites were identified: Underutilized sites – parcels on which the existing buildings don't maximize the allowable building rights; Vacant buildings – parcels where the existing building is vacant and/or in need of rehabilitation to be occupied; and Vacant lots - empty parcels with no building or structure. Vacant buildings are the most dominant type of soft sites along West North Avenue. The largest clusters are between Penn North and Coppin State University, and Baddish Avenue and Poplar Grove St. Soft sites, especially vacant lots, can be locations for direct intervention along the corridor to spur activity and development.

Coppin State University is an excellent example of West North Avenue's potential. With an advanced planning toolkit, community engagement, and the right policy tools for each zone, the corridor could receive interventions to help other zones achieve their potential.

### Approaches to Equitable Development & Quality Housing

Ensuring all residents have access to stable, safe, and affordable housing is a vital step in building a more equitable city. See **Appendix** for a set of approaches to preserve and create affordable housing along West North Avenue, plan for future investment, and lay the groundwork to prevent neighborhood displacement. All too often, displacement is a symptom of neighborhood investment. To ensure all residents benefit from future investment, maintaining affordability for current and future residents and developing investment without displacement polices will be a priority.



Figure 35 Equitable development framework

### Foreclosure and Vacancy Prevention

- Row houses (single-family attached homes) are the primary building type on most of the blocks of West North Avenue, as well as in the neighborhoods on the north and south sides of the corridor. These historic structures require renovation and ongoing maintenance, which has been historically provided by owner-occupants. Therefore, protecting this housing stock means helping homeowners acquire, renovate, and stay in their homes, keeping ongoing maintenance requirements up to date.
- New generations of homeowners in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington have renovated row houses and reestablished these neighborhoods as the most desirable and highest priced in their respective cities. Several neighborhoods in Baltimore are distinguished by a similar historic character, including those on the West North Avenue Corridor. Some, like Reservoir Park, have high home occupancy and maintenance rates. Others, like Penn North and Coppin Heights, have higher vacancy rates. When this building type is vacant or abandoned, row houses can quickly fall into disrepair. Fires in vacant row houses have sometimes destroyed entire blocks of adjacent buildings.
- Improving the economic outlook for the corridor and reducing fire hazards have the same solution: increasing occupancy. Preventing further destruction and demolition of historic row houses is key to maintaining the unique historic character of the corridor and its neighborhoods. Fully renovated, blocks of attractive, historic homes would be a key asset in attracting businesses and jobs.
- Both the neighborhood association and the city can support row house occupancy and vibrancy with two implementation programs, focusing on helping homeowners renovate and retain their properties:

#### MOVING IN: ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR ACQUISITION AND RENOVATION

Acquiring and renovating a row house usually requires getting a mortgage and/or construction loan. A long history of redlining urban neighborhoods, racial discrimination in mortgage lending, and prioritizing detached single-family homes have made it harder and more expensive to get a mortgage for this type of house. In order to “rebalance the scales,” lenders must regard the risk on lending for row houses in the West North Avenue Corridor similar to lending for detached single-family homes in suburban municipalities. There are several steps that WNADA and the City of Baltimore could take to assist:

- Pool risk by combining groups of individual homeowners into larger groups, leveraging credit union style lending.
- Actively engage local banks' Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) departments to target the West North Avenue Corridor for investment.
- Churches and religious communities as housing developers.
- Leverage funds from Amtrak's eminent domain acquisitions in the neighborhood to support direct reinvestment in the building.



### STAYING IN: ACCESS TO FORECLOSURE PREVENTION RESOURCES

Unforeseen financial circumstances can strain financial resources, leading to missed loan payments and accumulating fees that often lead to foreclosure and eviction. Baltimore residents face higher rates of unemployment, divorce, and incarceration than their suburban peers – three sudden changes to financial circumstances that can disrupt regular loan payments and trigger a cycle of foreclosure and eviction. Foreclosure has major negative impacts on residents, including losing savings that were applied to down payments and any equity and appreciation on their home value, significantly impacting wealth building. On the neighborhood level, vacant and abandoned homes impact property values, local businesses lose customers, and the next generation of residents will have to spend more money and resources to renovate buildings as

they decline again. Stopping this cycle is vitally important to creating positive impacts for residents, families, and neighborhood economic development. There are several methods for assisting residents and keeping the neighborhood in good condition:

- Pool fund: residents may voluntarily pay a small fee each month into an insurance fund that can be withdrawn from when they are at risk of missing payments
- Pool ownership: create cooperatives or tenancy-in-common agreements on adjacent homes on the same block to spread risk and incentivize cooperation
- Church or other community of worship as trust holder
- Homestead exemption allows homeowners to reduce the taxable value of their homes and reduce their property tax burdens

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# COMMUNITY



## COMMUNITY

Where people live: *Community* encompasses far more than concrete and buildings. This section touches on only a few, vital components: *Housing, Neighborhood Development, Greenspace* and the *Public Realm*.

### Existing Conditions

This section includes maps showing the dispersal of various land use and zoning types, as well as definitions for housing types and an analysis of recent development patterns that suggest building momentum for development along North Avenue feeding off of building booms from other parts of the city.



Figure 36 Zoning

### Zoning and Land Use

The corridor features a mix of land uses befitting a major commercial-residential artery, with West North Avenue providing ample single-family residential and commercial zoning, with additional uses peppered throughout. More interior neighborhood blocks mirror these concentrations, if with larger stretches of uninterrupted residential land uses. A closer analysis of Baltimore City zoning classifications shows classifications allow for a wider mix of uses than currently exists, including limited commercial uses at the foot of blocks that are currently mostly residential.

#### Legend | Land Use

##### Base Map

- Building
- Road
- Park
- Study Area Boundary
- 600' Buffer
- Parcel Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary

##### Corridor Zoning

- R-6
- R-8
- R-10
- C-1
- C-2
- OR-1
- EC-2\*
- TOD-1
- OS
- I-MU

Zoning immediately along West North Avenue is mixed with two dominant zoning code types: C-1, and OR-1. These zoning codes provide an opportunity for active streetscape as OR (Office-Residential) and C1 (Commercial) allow for retail and commerce on the ground floor, with residential units on the floors above. Variations in zone density along the corridor include C-2 zones, as well as strictly residential zones with density ranging from R-6 to R-8. In terms of building typology, this zoning allows for building heights mostly in the 35'-45' range, with a few areas allowing taller, 60' multi-family dwellings.

Land uses along West North Avenue are primarily residential, with occasional nodes of mixed-use commercial. The largest mixed-used commercial nodes are at the intersection with Bloomingdale Road, Pennsylvania Avenue, and between Eutaw Place and Pennsylvania Avenue. The Coppin State University campus is located on both sides of West North Avenue on a large block west of North Warwick Avenue. On the same block is a recently completed public park, an amenity for the corridor.

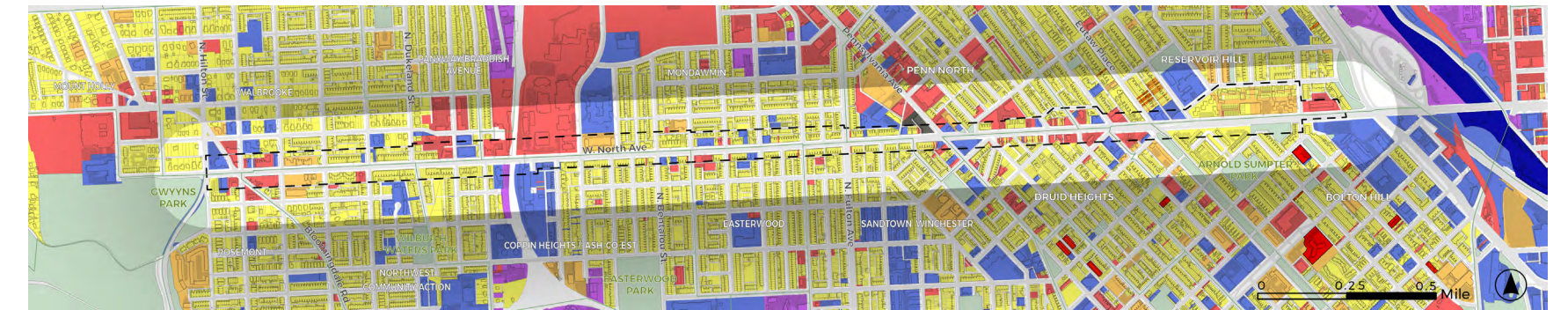


Figure 37 Land use

#### Legend | Land Use

##### Base Map

- Building
- Road
- Park
- Study Area Boundary
- 600' Buffer
- Parcel Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary

##### Corridor Land Use

- Commercial
- Exempt
- Industrial
- Multi-family Residential
- Single-family Residential





Figure 38 Attached single family rowhomes



Figure 39 Semi-detached single family



Figure 40 Commercial first floor



Figure 41 Higher density infill

## Housing

### BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

Building types have a major impact on the look and feel of a community. Identifying the existing building types can provide a roadmap for future development that preserves the character of the existing community. See four of the major building types along the corridor here:

TOD: The integration of multiple building types and land uses to achieve high density surrounding transit stations. The primary goal of TOD is to build in a manner that promotes walking, biking, and public transit chosen modes of travel, as opposed to personal automobiles. To effectively achieve this urban form, development patterns must be compact, dense and mixed-use while served by a high-quality transit service, typically a heavy rail, light rail, bus rapid transit or streetcar. TOD works best when people can live where they work.

### DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

#### INTRODUCTION

A preliminary assessment of the market position of the West North Avenue submarkets was conducted (Reservoir Hill, Penn North, and Mondawmin on the north side of the avenue; Bolton Hill, Madison Park, and Coppin Heights on the south side). The Reservoir Square project currently under construction demonstrates that the corridor can attract new market rate development. However, to understand the larger potential for private market real estate development on the Corridor, it must be placed in relative context of the pace of development in other parts of Baltimore. Only the core neighborhoods of Historic Baltimore (Downtown, Mount Vernon, Midtown, and Old Goucher) are seeing more new development at the time of analysis. Given these market conditions, the West North Avenue Corridor is in a strong position to recruit and retain development partners for future Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects.

#### METHODOLOGY

We completed an analysis of new multi-family developments that are currently proposed or under construction. The initial dataset was retrieved from CoStar, focused on proposed or under-construction projects that are currently in the pipeline. This initial dataset was checked against public

records and local news sources to verify project size, location, timing, and when each project was proposed, approved, begun, completed, and/or withdrawn or abandoned.

The Forecast Amount of new development in each submarket is based on a probability-weighted total of all projects in each submarket. Projects that have begun construction are considered 100% certain to add new supply to the real estate market within 1-2 years. Projects that are in various stages of proposed, submitted, approved are considered between 50% (no plan submitted for approval yet) and 90% (approved but has not yet broken ground) likely to be completed. The future is uncertain, and it is likely that some projects will be cancelled due to changes in demand, inability to secure funding, or failure to receive approval and entitlement from the City.

CoStar divides the Baltimore City market into several neighborhood-scale submarkets. This report uses CoStar's definitions and boundaries. Subtotaling projects and housing units in the pipeline by neighborhoods allows for comparing neighborhoods within the city of Baltimore. This comparison creates an analytical picture of which neighborhoods are currently the hottest and most interesting to developers, where they are in relation

to each other and within the city, and what the near-term future looks like for the West North Avenue Corridor.

The "Low Range" forecast includes only projects that are currently under construction. The "High Range" estimate includes all announced and proposed projects, assuming each of them receives approval, secures funding, and breaks ground. The "Forecast Amount" is the probability-weighted median, calculated as described above.

### RESULTS

Current real estate development in urban areas is focused on multi-family residential uses (apartment and condo buildings). This trend is occurring nationwide, as changes in work-from-home technology have decreased demand for new office buildings and changes in online shopping have decreased demand for new shopping centers.

Within Baltimore City, large-scale projects in South Baltimore (Baltimore Peninsula) and East Baltimore (Brewers Hill) have reached completion. The new focus for development is on a north-south axis, concentrated from Downtown CBD north to Charles Village. Mount Vernon, Midtown, and Reservoir Hill have the most units proposed and under construction.



The scale of the Reservoir Square development is very large, with 750 apartment units proposed in two phases. The first phase of 600 units has begun construction. This ambitious project alone places the West North Avenue Corridor at the center of the current development market.

**CONCLUSION**

The central neighborhoods of Mount Vernon and Midtown are adjacent to the corridor and seeing the most interest from the market. A building boom in South Baltimore (“Baltimore Peninsula”) and East Baltimore (Brewers Hill/Canton) has been completed and most building sites there are finished. Energy is moving to neighborhoods on the north side, starting from Downtown and passing north through Charles Village and Homewood.

The Reservoir Square development clearly demonstrates that market-rate development is feasible in the West North Avenue Study Area. The overall movement of new development from the south side to the north-central neighborhoods is a beneficial trend that could positively influence the West North Avenue Corridor.

The neighborhood has a very strong demonstration project under construction with Reservoir Square, which also includes a second phase to come. This energy could be used to catalyze new development westward from Reservoir Hill, focusing on Penn North and potentially expanding toward Coppin Heights. Further research will be required to estimate the potential timing and amounts of new development that would be feasible at specific development sites along West North Avenue.

**Opportunities and Constraints**

*Corridor Development Opportunities*

Preliminary review of current land uses and vacancies, building inventory, and overall urban form reveals a large number and wide variety of opportunities for rehabilitative, adaptive, and infill real estate projects. The preceding high-level market analysis indicates that the corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods are competitive in the private real estate development market. However, projects must be located at specific sites. This review examines where projects are most likely to occur, and the corridor has several development opportunities.

The existing urban fabric on West North Avenue is already in excellent shape. It is a historic neighborhood, designed and built before cars and highways, rare and desired in the housing market. Preserving the urban fabric will generate financial returns to current homeowners and economic benefits for the neighborhood.

To maintain consistency with existing neighborhood patterns, concentrating more intense transit-oriented development (TOD) projects on the eastern and western side, while focusing more on rehabilitating and filling in the existing urban structure on western sections.

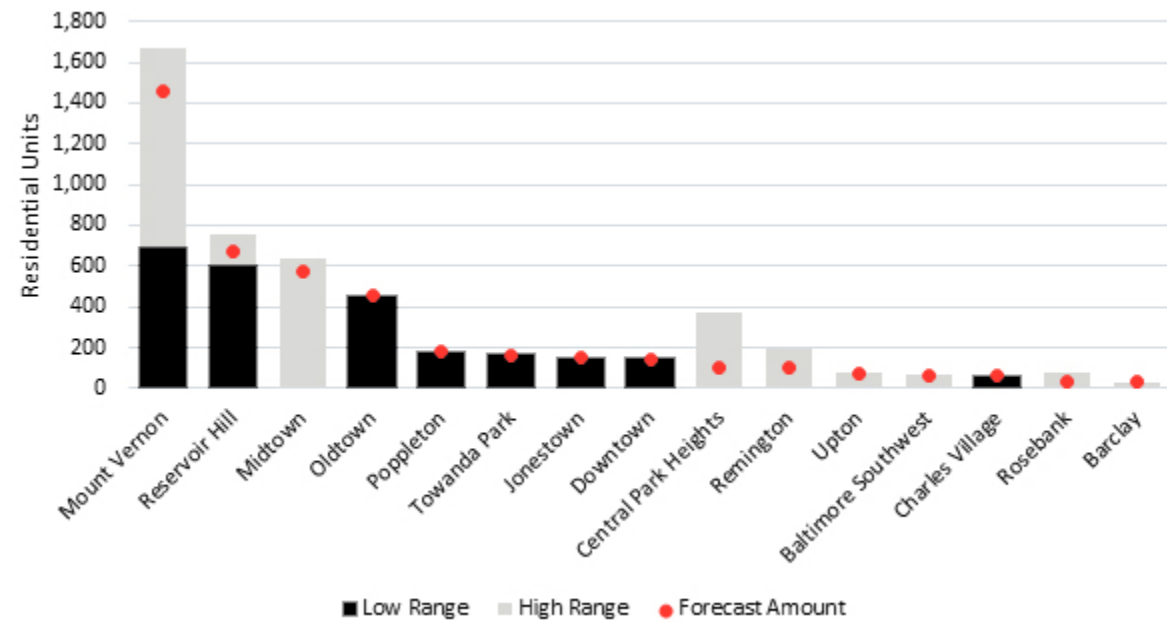


Figure 42 New residential units project pipeline



**Legend | Development Opportunity**

**Base Map**

- Building
- Road
- Park
- Study Area Boundary
- 600' Buffer
- Parcel Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary

**Opportunity Realization Level**

- Not Yet Realized
- Fully Realized



Figure 43 Land development opportunities



The Reservoir Square development brings new energy to the corridor, and the Penn North Metro station at Pennsylvania Avenue presents an anchor for TOD. Successful TOD is densest immediately surrounding the station area. Development intensity should taper off away from the station, to create an appropriate transition that preserves lower density residential areas across the historic corridor within a ½ mile of a station.

Between the TOD nodes, focusing on rehabilitating and reinhabiting vacant row houses presents flexible opportunities that could be pursued by current neighborhood residents without requiring commercial development firms. Adaptive redevelopment of a row house is not limited to use as a single-family house. Row houses can have retail or small offices on the first floor, while the upper floors can be divided into residential apartments or offices for small businesses. While the commercial office market is not currently demanding large office buildings, the market remains strong for small-scale “storefront” offices for businesses such as tax preparation, dentists and physicians, and administrative offices for churches and congregations, that make strong neighbors for retail stores. Renovation and rehabilitation of vacant row houses can be accomplished by owner-occupants and funded by mortgages, placing these

opportunities within reach of household investors. Between these TOD nodes, a number of low-density, auto-oriented businesses such as (gas stations, car wash, parts store) around Eutaw Place have parking lots and open pavement that could be converted into more pedestrian-oriented uses with adaptive redevelopment strategies.

To the west, Coppin State University has added buildings and streetscape amenities between Warwick Avenue and Braddish Avenue. This activity node brings students and teachers into the area each day, as well as providing student housing by night. This creates opportunities for stores and restaurants on the blocks east and west of campus. To the east, row houses could be renovated, like the blocks closer to Pennsylvania Avenue. To the west, there are more vacant lots, particularly on corners, where new retail/residential mixed-use projects could take advantage of the University’s customer base. Preliminary review finds there is a sufficient number and variety of opportunities for rehabilitative, adaptive, and infill projects. Market analysis demonstrates that the corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods are competitive in getting interest from the market, and initial survey of available sites shows opportunity for new development. Coppin State University has launched a Live

Near Your Work Program to incentivize homeownership adjacent to campus for employees and graduates.

In conclusion, there is both demand and opportunity for market-rate infill development on the West North Avenue Corridor.

### *Reducing Barriers of Entry*

Providing ladders of success and improvement for the full range of local residents doesn’t happen on its own. Fully embracing the idea of investment without displacement requires an upfront understanding that residents of a community all have different educational, financial and social backgrounds. Therefore, it is critical to this initiative’s overall success to identify tailored resources and educational programming to help reduce specific barriers of entry impacting the West North Avenue community.

Introducing new building typologies, activated spaces, and transportation enhancements along the corridor without providing the broadest level of beneficial impact to the existing population is a hollow victory and falls woefully short of the transformative vision this community deserves. The following initiatives have been identified to start the conversation at the very beginning of the development and

investment phase to promote long-term sustainable economic and community-building opportunities that support existing and future residents. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a launch point for a larger conversation about sustainable growth and prosperity.

### **COMMUNAL FOOD PREPARATION FACILITIES**

Communal or shared-use kitchens play a critical role in any local food system. In most cases, someone seeking to sell food legally to consumers must produce it in a licensed commercial space. These shared spaces are regulated by the local health department and offer a safe and clean environment that follows standards of practice for food safety and human health.

Communal kitchens allow multiple tenants or food businesses to rent or use the facility by the hour, shift, day, week, or month. These kitchens can be used by local chefs, caterers, food trucks, product manufacturers, and restaurateurs to provide a safe, healthy option for their food preparation needs. This can be especially important for non-brick-and-mortar food

preparers like food trucks, and for remote festival or street vendors that are unable to or prefer not to pay the upfront and long-term overhead costs associated with a stationary restaurant or storefront.

### **MULTI-VENDOR MEETING AREAS AND EVENTS**

Providing meeting and event spaces for small business vendors serving food, merchandise, and other wares can help to reduce the upfront costs of starting a business. Individuals can start out with as little as the cost of supplies, a small pop-up tent, and a burning desire to change their current financial outlook and status. Everyone needs to start somewhere, and this approach – coupled with access to resources like communal kitchens – is a beneficial way for small entrepreneurs to embark on their road to success.



Figure 44 Shared kitchen



Figure 45 Communal kitchen



Figure 46 Multi-vendor meeting areas



Figure 47 Community activity center



Figure 48 Community activity center



Figure 49 Before and after school childcare

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER

Education must be at the cornerstone of any sustainable economic development initiative. Meeting people at their existing financial and educational conditions is critical for reducing barriers of entry and giving them the tools to be successful. Establishing a community-based activity center along the corridor with educational and resource-building programming specifically geared to addressing the highest level of identified needs and interest within the community could be a major benefit to local residents. Some of our preliminary programming ideas include, but are not limited to the following:

- Financial Literacy / Investment Classes
- Business Start-up Classes
- Workforce Development Training
- Home Ownership and Retention
- Building Material Sourcing Events / Real Estate Investing Courses
- Career / Job Fair Events
- College Preparatory Classes
- Before and After School Care
- Rental Assistance Programs

The community activity center could help to strengthen existing assets like the E.M.A.G.E. Center on West North Avenue to create vital resources to encourage and provide the educational acumen needed to develop the next generation of CEOs and entrepreneurs within the community. Such capital investments can not only uplift the economic viability of the entire community, but can create opportunities for generational wealth for individual families, which can be a catalyst for sustainable neighborhood growth.

### URBAN FARM REFRIGERATION AND GREEN HOUSE SPACES

Access to healthy, budget-conscious food choices can go a long way to address food insecurities and core health determinants like obesity and high blood pressure. Urban farms, if planned and executed correctly, can not only provide healthier food choices for the surrounding community, but can also be a strong source of income if transitioning to small production farms. There are several urban farms and gardens throughout the Baltimore area, including ones along the West North Avenue Corridor such as the Lennox Street & Whitelock Community Gardens and the

Strength to Love II Farm off of Kavanaugh Street. Small urban farms must strive to become more financially solvent, including by having access to refrigeration facilities to store food and green houses to help aid with food production during colder months.

### FOOD HALL SITES

A food hall is a cafeteria-style market that can be used to showcase local chefs and restaurants as well as smaller specialized chains. Food halls provide a unique opportunity for food entrepreneurs interested in starting a new restaurant-based start-up business with significantly lower costs compared to purchasing a standalone brick-and-mortar site. The Walbrook Mill Apartments Food Hall is a great local example of how this form of establishment can be seamlessly integrated into the urban fabric of the community while providing opportunities to local entrepreneurs.

### LOCAL FARMERS MARKET

Farmers markets are not only a great resource for healthier food sources, but can also provide an economic boost for urban farmers and local retail vendors. The lower financial entry point provides access to a wide range of individuals interested in creating business start-up opportunities.

### FOOD TRUCK LOT

Food truck lots allow mobile food vendors to sell food, beverages, and other retail merchandise in a centralized location. These lots provide vendors and patrons a common meeting place that can be activated on a periodic basis, i.e. weekly or monthly depending on interest. This is another example of a low-cost opportunity to enter the restaurant business with low upfront capital, as entrepreneurs can purchase a truck and mobile kitchen equipment for relatively low costs compared to brick-and-mortar sites.



Figure 50 Urban farm refrigeration



Figure 51 Urban green house



Figure 52 Food hall





Figure 53 Farmers market



Figure 54 Food truck lot

### Public Realm Opportunities

#### URBAN DESIGN TOOLKIT

The urban design toolkit presents various types of interventions and enhancements to the public realm applicable to West North Avenue. Each intervention/enhancement is placed on a sliding scale that indicates the time horizon for its implementation, ranging from an “early win” to long-term. Early win indicates enhancements can be implemented in a short period of time, and long-term indicates enhancements need further study and significant funding. The different tools are then matched to the specific conditions identified on West North Avenue.

Larger intersections tend to have more space around them and as such may have more opportunities for quick wins like the installation of outdoor potted plants and benches. In minor intersections, it is important to make sure any enhancements to the public realm do not limit the view range, thus compromising safety. Many interventions/enhancements double as public realm and safety improvements.

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			Temporary Garden	Street Closure	Public Congregation	Pocket Park	Curb-side Public Space
Early Win	1. Outdoor Potted Plants	Plants and flowers in moveable pots.	■			■	—
	2. Way-finding	Signage that is sometimes artistic or branded with pedestrian scale indications of place and direction.			●		
	3. Public Art	Murals, sculpture, or even recorded music in public areas. These can be temporary or permanent.			●		
	4. Events and Programming/ Allev Activation	One-time or recurring activities, such as performance, education, or physical activity that enlivens public space.		■			
	5. Bulbouts (Painted or Raised)	Traffic calming/pedestrian safety interventions—these can be indicated with creative art or built out of raised surface.					—
	6. Painted Curb Extensions	Extensions of the sidewalk/pedestrian space indicated by paint, often artistic. Can be temporary or permanent.					—
	7. Accessibility Amenities	Amenities that enable accessibility, such as tactile paving, crosswalk beacons, ramps, seating, and more.					—
	8. Pedestrian Amenities	The installation of public seating areas and similar pedestrian amenities along will create a comfortable, usable, and active urban environment where people socialize and interact.	■		●	■	
	9. Raised Curb Extensions/ Parklets	More substantial, permanent extensions of the sidewalk, some large enough to accommodate a small greenspace or parklet.					—
	10. Micro-Mobility Amenities	Stations, docks, or other infrastructure for shared bikes or e-scooters.		■			—
	11. Landscape Design & Street Trees	Permanent, earthen plantings of trees, shrubbery, or flowers, often built into sidewalks or medians.	■		●	■	
	12. Pocket Parks / Garden	Small scale, often permanent parks or gardens created from the closure of street blocks or cleared lots.	■		●	■	
	Long-Term	13. Enhanced Crosswalks	Traffic calming/Pedestrian safety intervention using durable materials (raised concrete) to elongate pedestrian crossings.				
14. Plazas		Large, permanent paved areas for pedestrians, intended for beatification, congregation, or other programming.			●		

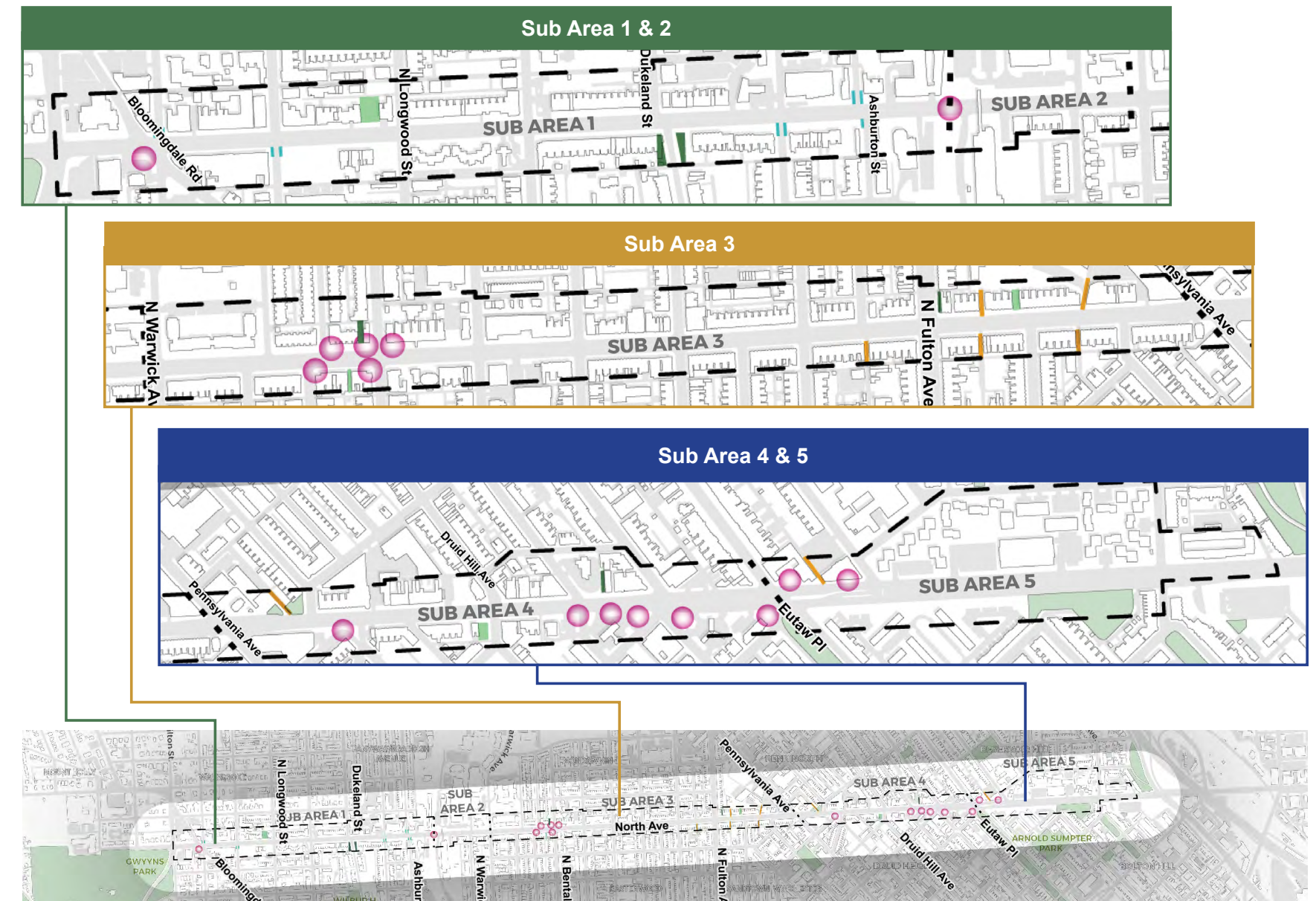
**Temporary Garden**  
Live growth intended to temporarily beautify lots prior to development

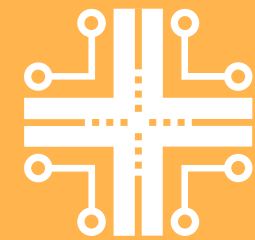
**Street closure**  
Area suitable for the temporary (or occasionally permanent) closure of streetspace to use for festivals or other pedestrian-oriented activities

**Public Congregation**  
Areas suitable for groups of people to gather for arts, entertainment, discourse, or other activities

**Pocket Park**  
A small, sometimes temporary park made from an unused blocks of roadway or cleared lots

**Curb-side public space**  
Pedestrian amenities and improvements that extend past the curb





# TRANSPORTATION



## TRANSPORTATION

Getting people where they need to go but it impacts much more than that. Sidewalks, streets, roads, and transitways are also part of the public realm and constitute a major factor in quality of life. Transportation infrastructure for people who walk, roll, and ride is not only critical to Neighborhood Development, it can be a tool to enhance the experience for people all along the West North Avenue Corridor and offer a cost-effective mode of travel that builds wealth and reduces poverty.

### Existing Conditions

West North Avenue is a heavily traveled, multimodal corridor. Residents, visitors, and commuters get where they need to go on foot, on wheels, on bicycles and scooters, in cars, on buses and Metro trains. Along the roughly 2.5 miles of our study area, there are four main traffic configurations—with minor block-to-block changes—illustrated below. For multimodal amenities, the entire corridor is well served by sidewalks, and the majority also accommodates both an eastbound and westbound shared bus and bike lane.



Figure 55 Typical configuration near Coppin State University



Figure 56 Typical configuration west of Bloomingdale Road



Figure 57 Typical configuration for the eastern portion of the corridor



Figure 58 Typical configuration for the middle of the corridor and west of Coppin State University

### Safety

There are many opportunities to improve safety for all roadway users along the entire West North Avenue Corridor. While different roadway and land use conditions lend themselves to different interventions, some concerns—such as ADA, or Americans with Disabilities Act, compliance—are universal.

#### ADA COMPLIANCE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that transportation infrastructure accommodate people in wheelchairs, unsighted people and people who do not hear. There are a variety of technological and

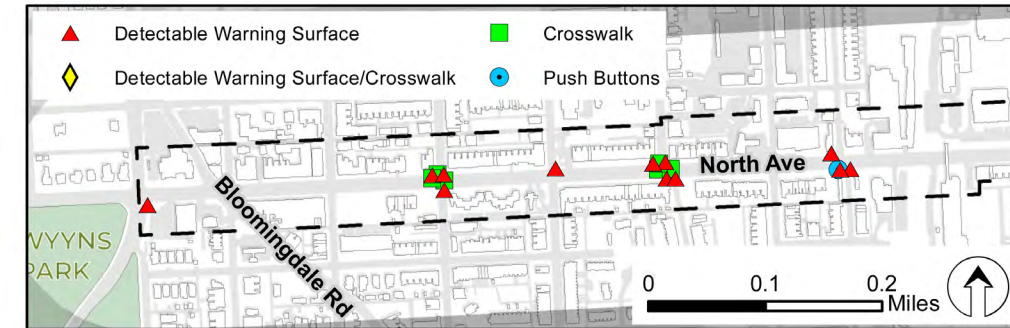
design-based methods that make roadways safer, not just for these users, but for all users. The maps below indicate intersections that lack one or more of three specific ADA compliance mechanisms:

- Detectable Warning Surfaces (DWS)—raised bumps or other surfaces on ramps that provide a tactile warning. Missing DWS strips are indicated
- Pedestrian Push Buttons—buttons that allow pedestrians to signal their intent to cross. Missing buttons are indicated
- Crosswalks—Missing or faded crosswalks are indicated

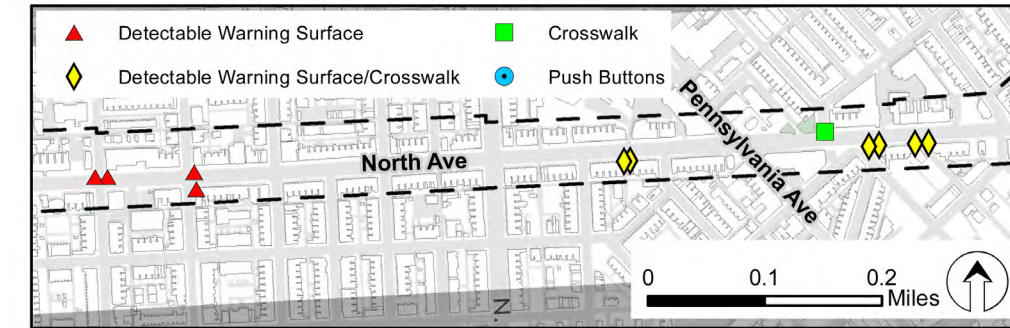


Figure 59 Intersections with ADA compliance issues

Sheet 1



Sheet 2



Sheet 3

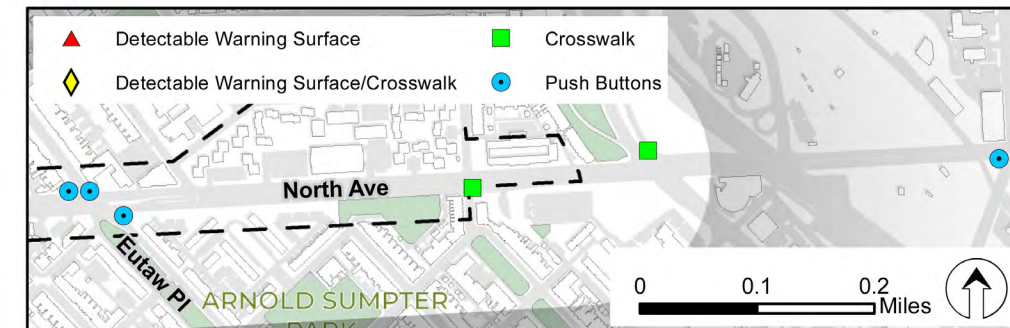


Figure 60 Specific sub-area compliance issues



Figure 61 Missing crosswalk



Figure 62 Faded crosswalk

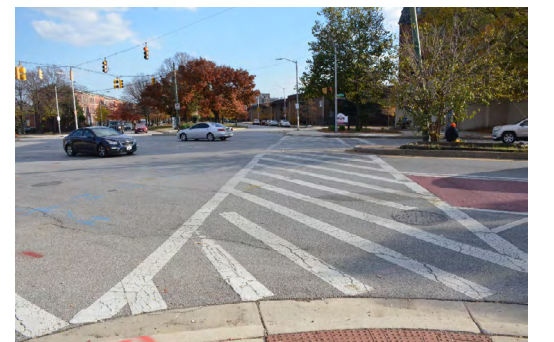


Figure 63 Median strip that does not extend through the crosswalk

**CRASHES**

Car crashes are an unfortunate and persistent reality across the United States. The data below indicate that safety interventions are necessary throughout the corridor.

West North Avenue unfortunately is the site of many vehicular crashes. These crashes cluster along major intersections but are

also thoroughly distributed across the corridor. Intersection crashes are most significant. Intersections related crashes take place outside of the intersection but are caused by maneuvers made in an intersection and interchange related crashes occur where the Interstate 83 transitions to the surface roadway.



Figure 64 Crash locations

**Legend | Crashes - Location**

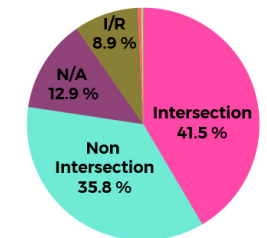
**Base Map**

- Building
- Road
- Park
- Study Area Boundary
- 600' Buffer
- Parcel Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary

**Numbers of Crashes by Location Type**

- Intersection | 41.5% | 353
- Non Intersection | 35.8% | 297
- Not Applicable | 12.9% | 107
- Intersection Related | 8.9% | 74
- Interchange Related | 0.5% | 4
- Alley | 0.3% | 3

**2019-2023 Crashes by Location**  
Total Number of Crashes: 830



Crashes by lighting condition allow insight into why crashes may occur. While one might suspect more crashes happen at night, the data reflect that crashes happen most during daylight when more people are on the road. It may be more dangerous to drive in traffic conditions than at night with less traffic. A comparison of crashes per VMT at various time periods would need to take place to determine that, but to mitigate risk from poorly lit streets, simple observation of those conditions would suffice.



Figure 65 Crashes by lighting condition

**Legend | Crashes - Lighting**

**Base Map**

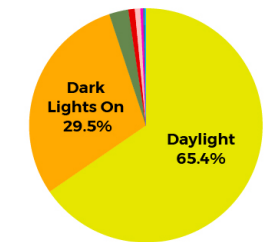
- Building
- Road
- Park
- Study Area Boundary
- 600' Buffer
- Parcel Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary

**Numbers of Crashes by Lighting Condition**

- Dark Lights On | 29.5% | 245
- Dark No Light | 0.9% | 8
- Daylight | 65.4% | 543
- Dusk | 0.1% | 2
- Dawn | 0.4% | 3
- Unknown | 0.3% | 3
- Not Applicable | 2.7% | 22
- Other | 0.8% | 7

**2019-2023 Crashes by Lighting Condition**

Total Number of Crashes: 830



This map shows crashes by type, indicating that most crashes do not produce injury to individuals and very few (possibly 1 or two in these four years) were fatal. As improvements to the corridor are made, fewer crashes would hopefully result in no fatalities and less injuries and property damage. Urban design best practices allow for traffic calming, improved transit ridership, and conditions favoring safer streets for all.



Figure 66 Crashes by type

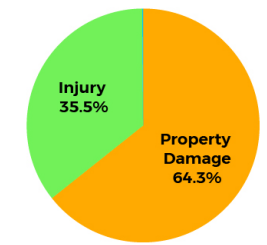
**Legend | Crashes - Type**

- Base Map**
- Building
  - ▬ Road
  - ▬ Park
  - - Study Area Boundary
  - 600' Buffer
  - ▬ Parcel Boundary
  - ▬ Neighborhood Boundary

**Numbers of Crashes by Type**

Property Damage	64.3%	534
Injury	35.5%	295
Fatal	0.1%	2

**2019-2023 Crashes by Type**  
Total Number of Crashes: 830





## Transit

West North Avenue is served chiefly by MTA Bus service as well as the Penn North Metro Station. While the Metro station itself is central to the corridor and the heart of many development strategies, in terms of transit strategy itself the below data focus on MTA Bus service at 28 stops along the entirety of the corridor.

The quality of bus service can be measured in many quantitative and qualitative ways. This study uses two common quantitative indicators to indicate bus performance:

- **On Time Performance:** Expressed as a percentage, this number is a measure of how often buses arrive at their stop on time. A higher percentage means service at the indicated stop is more reliable. On this map, stops are graded by color, where Green stops are higher performing, Yellow stops are in the middle, and Red stops are lower performing.
- **Dwell Time:** Expressed in number of seconds, Dwell Time measure how long a bus stays at a stop without moving. A certain, base amount of time is required for passengers to board and deboard the bus, but excessively long times can negatively impact performance. Higher numbers indicates service at a stop may be less reliable. On this map, the number of seconds are reflected by the size of the stop's dot. The larger the dot, the higher the dwell time.
- The highest performing stops on this map are represented by small, green dots.

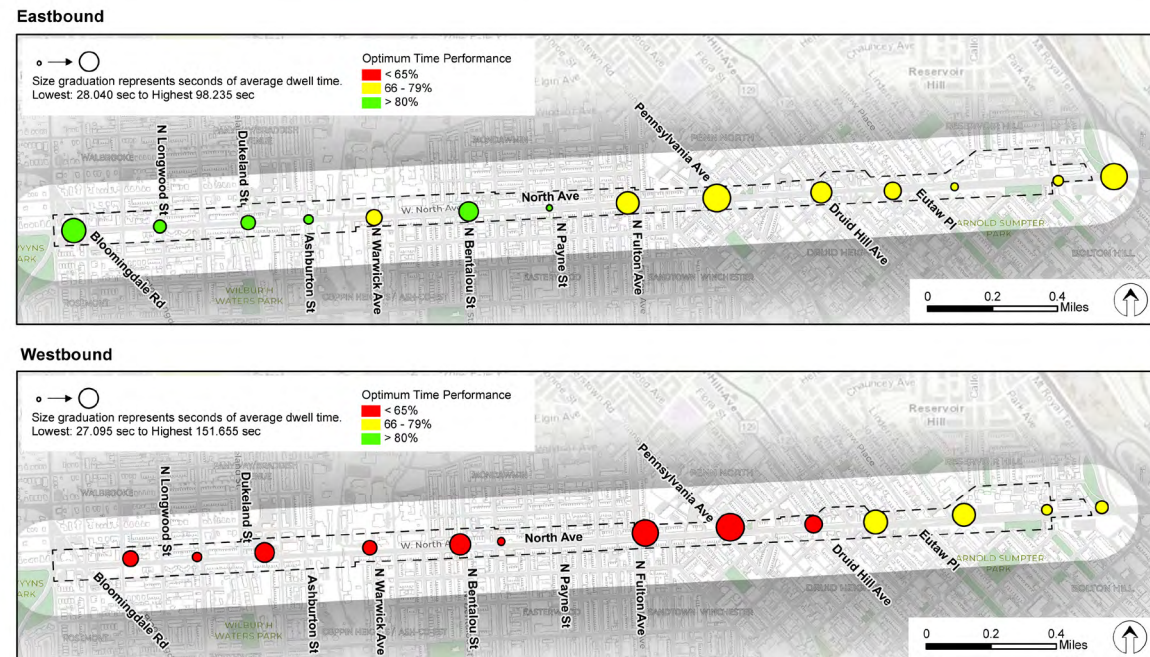


Figure 67 Bus performance, on-time performance and dwell time

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## Opportunities and Constraints

The corridor provides ample opportunities to complement and enhance existing transit service and walkability, given the presence of MTA bus and Metro Subway service mixed in with a heavily trafficked auto-centric corridor. Below are strategies to amplify these features and improve safety conditions more broadly through lighting, Complete Streets, and transit investment decisions.

## Safety

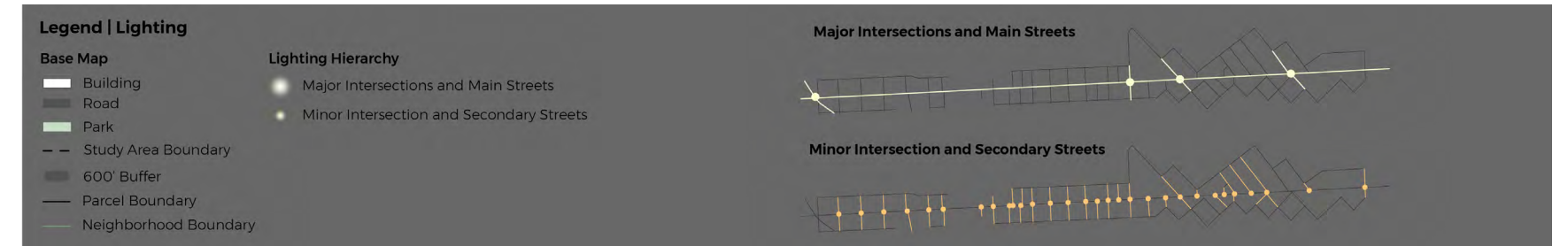
Safety for all roadway users is central to any discussion on transportation. Improved visibility combined with ADA compliance and proven pedestrian safety design principles provide a solid foundation for making all roadways feel safer.

## LIGHTING STRATEGY

Streetscape lighting plays a pivotal role in urban development, enhancing transit and pedestrian safety by providing well-lit pathways. Strategically designed lighting not only fosters a sense of security but also contributes to the aesthetics of the streetscape, increasing the likelihood of redevelopment in urban areas. By creating a visually appealing environment, streetscape lighting can reduce vacancy



Figure 68 Lighting strategy



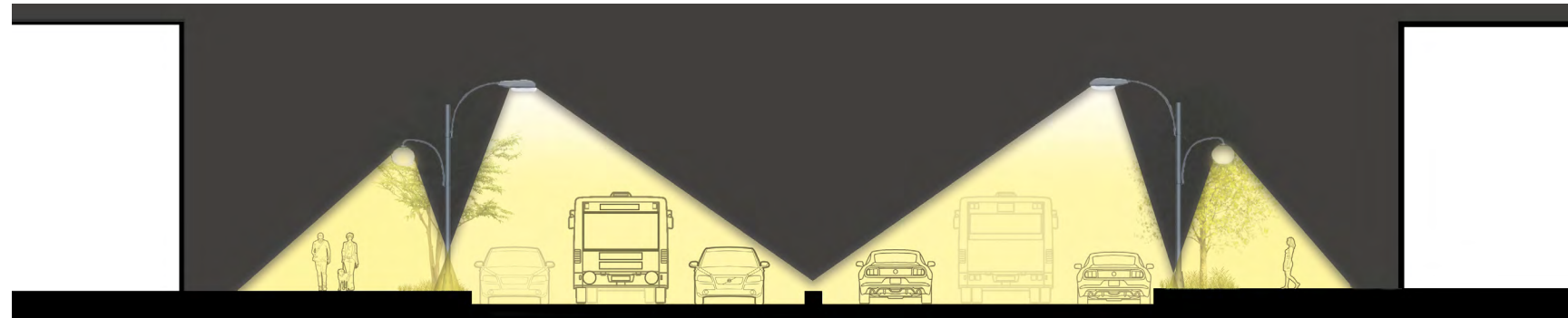


Figure 69 Lighting strategy section

rates, transforming urban spaces into vibrant, inviting hubs conducive to community engagement and economic growth.

**INTERSECTION VISIBILITY**

To improve roadway safety along the corridor sightlines and pedestrian visibility must be addressed. Interventions that 'day-light' intersections by increasing visibility by a minimum of 15 feet reduce crashes and increase pedestrian safety. Introducing physical barriers like bollards or planters, curb extension, and restriping to prohibit parking near intersections will reduce the risk of crashes simply because pedestrians and automobile operators have increased sightlines of one another.

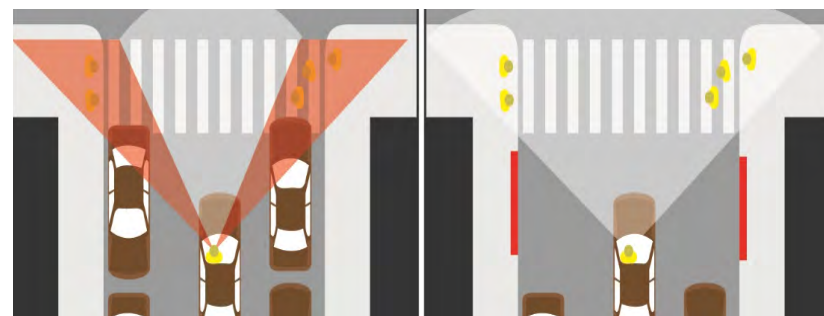


Figure 70 Improving sightlines for pedestrian safety

**ADA-PEDESTRIAN INTERVENTIONS**

Below a number of well-tested safety interventions are displayed in a before-and-after comparison. In addition to ADA compliance, extended medians, pedestrian refuge islands, and bulb-outs all serve to both calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety through design, rather than enforcement.

The first image below is an aerial photograph of North Smallwood Street and West North Avenue, with callout bubbles indicating where potential improvements could occur. The next image is a rendering that depicts the intersections with the improvements in place.

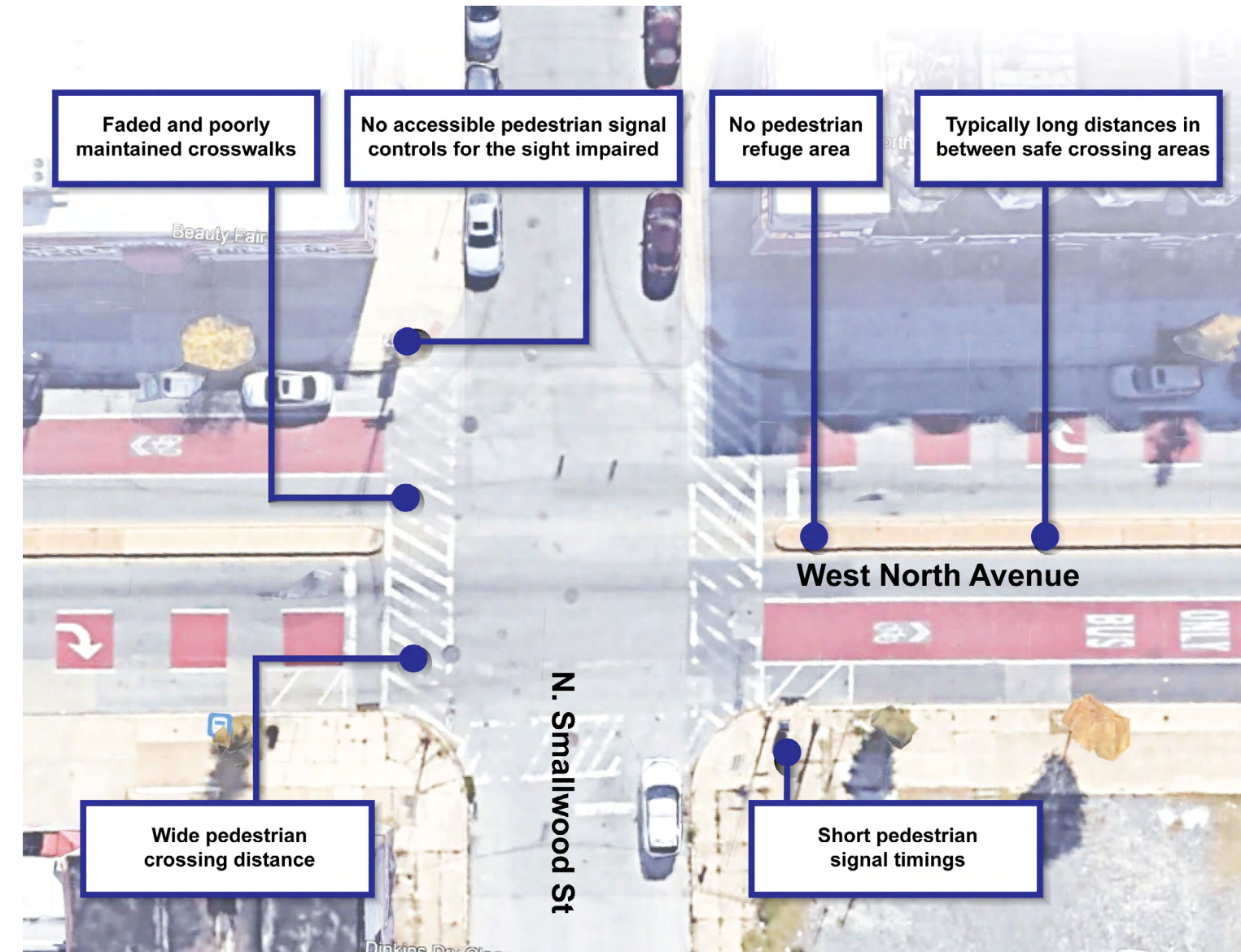


Figure 71 Safety improvement opportunities at West North Avenue & North Smallwood Street



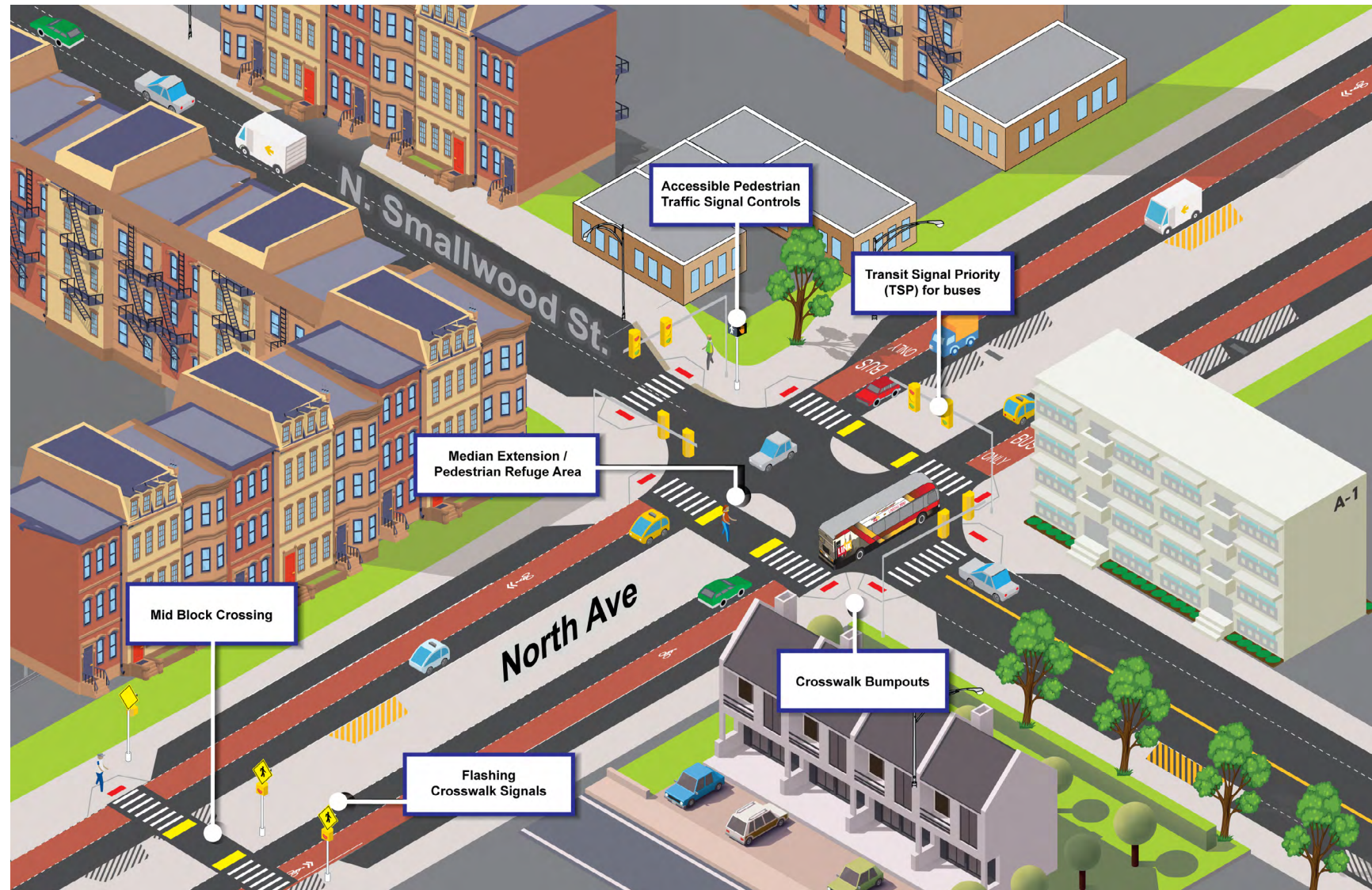


Figure 72 Safety interventions in place at West North Avenue & North Smallwood Street

### Transit

Communities along West North Avenue deserve an efficient, reliable, and pleasant transit system that offers a truly viable alternative to driving. As density along the corridor increases, this need will intensify, and new options must be proactively planned.

#### CIRCULATOR BUS

WNADA is already exploring options for a “circulator” bus service to fill transit network gaps. While this term can mean different things in different communities, in the context of West North Avenue, a circulator could provide additional service specific to the corridor (as opposed to city wide). Potential service would prioritize connections to activity centers and transit hubs to enhance transit connections.

#### LRT VS. BRT

The revival of the Red Line has spurred great debate regarding Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Either mode could be a viable future option for West North Avenue, and both can provide high quality transit service. While many

Baltimoreans are already familiar with the city's Light Rail system, Bus Rapid Transit is not so common. BRT can be designed to a number of standards, where in its most intense form it can act very much like a train on wheels. Station platforms are raised, BRT-only lanes are channelized, and passengers pre-pay on the platform. Further, the buses themselves may have transit signal priority and make limited stops across the corridor to increase frequency, and reliability. The main Pros and Cons of each mode are briefly described below:

#### LRT: More permanent

- More likely to attract long-term development
- Takes longer and costs more to build
- Harder to change or add routes

#### BRT: Less permanent:

- Less expensive and faster to build
- More adaptable, easier to change or add routes
- Less likely to attract long-term development

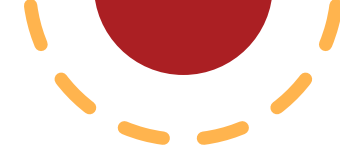


Figure 73 LRT Station in Austin, Texas  
(credit: Austin American Statesman)



Figure 74 BRT Station in Richmond, Virginia  
Richmond, VA saw a 17% bump in transit ridership within a year of introducing the GRTC Pulse BRT system in 2018.  
(credit: GRTC Transit System and WBUR)





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# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES



# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES






















































This section contains a set of short/medium (1-5 years) and long-term (5-15 years) strategies, organized across the following four goal areas and associated objectives:

1. Provide a range of housing options that promote economic development, preserve historic character, and support existing population retention and future growth.
2. Improve West North Avenue economic competitiveness and growth through equitable business investments, job creation, and workforce stability for local residents.
3. Establish a balanced, safe, universally accessible transportation ecosystem that provides a quality experience for pedestrians, transit riders, and automobiles.
4. Increase access to community, green, and recreational spaces that are safe, health-promoting, and environmentally sustainable.

The goals, objectives, and strategies correspond to WNADA's five key priorities of Economic Development, Neighborhood/Community Development, Transportation, Housing, and Greenspace. Graphics have been produced and included in the table below to highlight the many overlapping key priorities that each strategy addresses.

### Legislative Key Priorities Legend














 Economic Development	 Neighborhood / Community	 Transportation	 Housing	 Greenspace
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Goal	Provide a range of housing options that promote economic development, preserve historic character, and support existing population retention and future growth.									
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES				
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)	Economic Development	Neighborhood / Community	Transportation	Housing	Greenspace
1.1	Reduce factors leading to depopulation within the West North Avenue area.	1) Stabilize and increase housing stock by partnering with developers to acquire and rebuild vacant and blighted single-family and multifamily properties for mixed-income ownership and tenancy to prevent depopulation.	 Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)							
		2) Identify and prioritize policies that promote inclusivity of local students, residents, and workforce.	 Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED)							
1.2	Provide a diverse range of housing options for people of all family sizes and economic circumstances.	1) Provide residents with pathways to homeownership, retention, and creating intergenerational wealth through financial literacy and housing counseling, down payment assistance grants, and other relevant resources.	 Baltimore City DHCD: Office of Home Ownership; Baltimore City DHCD: Emergency Mortgage & Housing Assistance Program (EMHAP)							
		2) Provide additional developer incentives, such as a Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE), similar to the model being used in Seattle, Washington to support multifamily housing construction.	 Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT)							
		3) Leverage city-owned parcels in transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning areas to increase density and affordable housing units.	 Baltimore City DHCD							
		4) Reduce residential utility costs and direct greenhouse gas emissions by replacing fossil fuel equipment with electric and solar equipment.	 Baltimore City DHCD: Multifamily Energy Efficiency and Housing Affordability (MEEHA) Program							
		5) Support a tech-focused TOD, a mixed-use development anchored by student housing and a tech training center.	 Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), Maryland DHCD, Baltimore City DHCD, Maryland Chamber of Commerce							
		6) Facilitate resident use of the Lease Equitably and Purchase (LEAP) mortgage, whereby an assumable, fixed rate, high loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage product is made available to non-profit organizations and private entities as part of a lease-purchase program.	 Maryland DHCD, Baltimore City DHCD							
		7) Establish a limited equity cooperative (LEC) for low-income homeowners, whereby the residents are owners of the property and pay a monthly maintenance fee, property tax and mortgage. LECs are income-restricted programs that preserve the affordability of the property by limiting the resale value.	 Maryland DHCD, Baltimore City DHCD							
		8) Establish a mutual housing association (MHA) for low-income homeowners, whereby the board-governed residents are owners of the property and pay a monthly maintenance fee, property tax and mortgage. Compared to LECs, MHAs are governed by a board and have the opportunity to develop, own and manage property.	 Maryland DHCD, Baltimore City DHCD, Baltimore City Department of Planning							

### Legislative Key Priorities Legend










































 Economic Development	 Neighborhood / Community	 Transportation	 Housing	 Greenspace
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Goal 1 Cont.	Provide a range of housing options that promote economic development, preserve historic character, and support existing population retention and future growth.						
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES	
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)		
1.3	Establish land use zoning that promotes economic viability and sustainable development typologies.	1) Update zoning code recommendations in residential areas and re-zone industrial uses near residential areas.	 Baltimore City Department of Planning		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Determine benefits of converting current commercial (C-1) and residential (R-8) zoning between Bradish Avenue and Hilton Parkway to R-MU and C-2 to allow for more mixed use commercial and rowhouse residential units.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Evaluate current TOD zoning level (TOD-1) near Penn / North Intersection to determine if providing access to a wider range of retail uses consistent with TOD-2 is warranted.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		 
		4) Accelerate the conversion of commercial buildings into residential affordable housing units by leveraging federal HUD and DOT guidelines and funding sources.	 Baltimore City Department of Planning,  US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD),  US Department of Transportation (DOT)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

-  Economic Development
-  Neighborhood / Community
-  Transportation
-  Housing
-  Greenspace

Goal 2	Improve West North Avenue economic competitiveness and growth through equitable business investments, job creation, and workforce stability for local residents.							
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES		
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)			
2.1	Improve advocacy and marketing efforts to increase investment in the area and create a branded slogan or pitch for the corridor.	1) Preserve and enhance social, cultural, and historic identity.	 Maryland Historic Trust		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 		
		2) Cultivate a partnership with Main Street America, focusing on design, organization, promotion, and economic elements.	 Main Street America		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 		
		3) Employ a special events or cultural affairs officer to coordinate related initiatives.	 Live Baltimore			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 	
2.2	Stabilize the local economy.	1) Recruit businesses to the corridor with financial incentives provided by the state and city.	 Baltimore Development Corporation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		2) Develop an annual, neighborhood-based employment program that provides skills in information technology (IT), textile and lighting manufacturing, and other relevant industries.	 MOED, YouthWorks		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 		
		3) Provide funding support, such as venture capital grants or loans, to businesses looking to expand along West North Avenue.	 Baltimore BASE Network		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 		
		4) Work with local employers to participate in the "Live Near Your Work" (LNYW) program to incentivize home buying through downpayment and closing cost support funding.	 Baltimore City DHCD		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	  		
2.3	Identify local supply chain partnerships to support future grocery stores, local corner markets, food halls, and urban farms.	1) Conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify and establish local supply chain partnerships, including initiating discussions with local farmers, distributors, and producers.	 Maryland Department of Commerce		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	  		
		2) Develop urban farms that can contribute to the long-term availability of fresh produce and locally sourced goods.	 Farm Alliance of Baltimore		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	  		
		3) Facilitate the creation of pop-up markets, food trucks, ghost kitchens, mobile grocery units, and community supported agriculture (CSA) initiatives to help reduce barriers to entry for new small business owners.	 Baltimore Development Corporation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	  		
		4) Attract an anchor grocery store and food hall to support a diverse and vibrant mix of essential and select retail offerings.	 Maryland Department of Commerce			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	  	
		5) Implement educational programs and community initiatives to enhance food literacy, empower local residents, and ensure the long-term success and resilience of the improved food landscape.	 Baltimore Office of Sustainability, Regional Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	  	

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

-  Economic Development
-  Neighborhood / Community
-  Transportation
-  Housing
-  Greenspace



Goal 2 Cont.	Improve West North Avenue economic competitiveness and growth through equitable business investments, job creation, and workforce stability for local residents.							
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES		
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)			
2.4	Identify geographic target areas for financial incentives when considering attracting new industries or businesses to the corridor.	1) Identify prime geographic target areas for the immediate implementation of tax incentives.	Baltimore Development Corporation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
		2) Streamline the process of attracting new industries or businesses to the corridor.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
		3) Construct complementary and characteristically discrete pockets of development along the corridor containing a variety of commercial, residential, and community-oriented uses.	Baltimore City DHCD		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		4) Establish a sustainable model that encourages long-term investment, innovation, and diversified economic activities.	Baltimore Development Corporation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		5) Create prominent areas of commercial and community activity to spur infill development.	Baltimore City Department of Planning			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		6) Construct a variety of buildings with a mix of residential and commercial uses, including smaller footprints for "micro-retailing" to accommodate niche markets and provide retail space for the e-commerce base.	Baltimore City DHCD			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		7) Attract large-scale investment to undertake block-level infill development that retains and encourages additional growth of local businesses.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		8) Offer small business owners the opportunity to leverage crowdfunding platforms to acquire commercial property through a co-op agreement with other small business owners.		External Investors, Small Business Owners		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
2.5	Establish a business improvement district (BID) to generate revenue for re-investment of West North Avenue and fund public safety, trash collection, infrastructure improvements, and marketing.	1) Conduct a feasibility study to assess the establishment of a local West North Avenue BID.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
		2) Establish a local West North Avenue BID comprised of local residents and business owners.	Baltimore City Department of Planning		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		3) Following the establishment of the BID, create a "Clean, Green, and Safe" initiative to promote a holistically healthier community.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

Economic Development	Neighborhood / Community	Transportation	Housing	Greenspace
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Goal 2 Cont.	Improve West North Avenue economic competitiveness and growth through equitable business investments, job creation, and workforce stability for local residents.							
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES		
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)			
2.6	Identify capital building opportunities for local small businesses.	1) Provide technical assistance, grants, and below market rate loans to MBE/WBE businesses with a priority towards local residents.	Baltimore Development Corporation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
		2) Meet or exceed the state of Maryland's 29% MBE/WBE target for all WNADA-funded focus area development projects.	City of Baltimore Minority and Women's Business Opportunity Office (MWBOO)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Leverage capital gains tax incentives by connecting local small businesses with private impact investors who are interested in development opportunities within West North Avenue's development focus areas.	Baltimore Development Corporation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
2.7	Increase rental housing stock to meet forecasted market demand and incorporate additional measures to improve rental tenant retention.	1) Support housing and economic development organizations with access to capital to preserve unsubsidized rental housing properties similar to the MassHousing Opportunity Fund in Massachusetts.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		2) Identify favorable public and private financing options for affordable rental housing to lower risk to private investors.	Baltimore City DHCD		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		3) Institute a rental stabilization program that balances tenant and property owner needs.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
2.8	Create a diverse range of financial entry points for locally based small businesses to take advantage of future economic opportunities.	1) Develop communal or shared use kitchens for safe food preparation for mobile restaurateurs like food truck operators and outdoor vendors to reduce overhead costs.	Empower of Maryland: The Food Project		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		2) Identify multiple sites for food truck and outdoor vendor pop-ups with adequate water and electrical hook-ups.	BCDOT: Right of Way Services		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		3) Develop new and leverage existing food hall sites, such as Walbrook Mill, to encourage suitable space for local restaurant owners and food vendors.	Baltimore Development Corporation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		4) Establish local incubators, accelerators and coworking spaces to provide resources and office space for all levels of entrepreneurs. Utilize existing assets like the E.M.A.G.E. Center to foster opportunities for new and developing entrepreneurs.	AccelerateBaltimore			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

Economic Development	Neighborhood / Community	Transportation	Housing	Greenspace
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Goal 3	Establish a balanced, safe, universally accessible transportation ecosystem that provides a quality experience for pedestrians, transit riders, and automobiles.										
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES					
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)						
3.1	Improve the pedestrian experience and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.	1) Initiate and fund quick build projects that improve pedestrian accessibility and safety using prefabricated curb extensions, concrete bollards, crosswalk striping, and delineators. 2) Achieve ADA compliance and improve pedestrian priority and safety through accessible pedestrian signals (APS), Countdown Pedestrian Signal (CPS), smart energy-efficient LED street and sidewalk lighting, Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs), striping and delineation along West North Avenue. 3) Initiate and fund additional crosswalks such as mid-block or diagonal crossings in mixed-use commercial areas to support higher volumes of foot traffic.	BCDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
3.2	Institute a Safe Systems Approach to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and roadway safety to achieve Vision Zero goals.	1) Initiate and fund quick build 'daylighting' interventions that increase street visibility by 20 to 25 feet using curb extensions, prohibitive paint stripes, plantings, and bollards.	BCDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		2) Restripe and widen pedestrian crosswalks to a minimum of 15 feet in residential areas and 20-25 feet in mixed-use, commercial areas.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		3) Conduct a study to explore the reclassification of truck route designations on Monroe Street, Fulton Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, and North Avenue (Route 1 and Highway 40 Bypass) to limit or prohibit commercial truck use and reconnect communities.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		4) Enhance traffic signal timing to improve vehicle flow and reduce idling along West North Avenue.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
	Institute a Safe Systems Approach to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and roadway safety to achieve Vision Zero goals.	5) Reduce corridor speed limits from 30 mph to 25 mph to improve safety, pedestrian accessibility and economic vibrancy.	BCDOT, MDOT SHA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		6) Restrict vehicle left and right turns where turn lanes are not present and pedestrian activity is high to reduce roadway conflicts and inefficiencies along corridor.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		7) Initiate 'pop-up' shared mobility lanes to demonstrate and test the efficacy of separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities along North Avenue and residential streets.	BCDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		8) Reduce street lane widths to 10-11 feet, as appropriate, to naturally reduce vehicle speeds and create safer streets.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		9) Improve and update roadway and parking signs to reflect new policies, replace missing signs and ensure Baltimore City codes are clear and concise.		BCDOT, MDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
		10) Initiate permanent complete street and 'daylighting' strategies that enhance North Avenue Rising infrastructure and complement a future high-quality transit mode.	BCDOT, USDOT, MDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		11) Upgrade and install smart energy efficient LED street and sidewalk lighting to improve safety, reduce traffic accidents, and activate public spaces.	BCDOT: Bmore Bright	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

- Economic Development
- Neighborhood / Community
- Transportation
- Housing
- Greenspace

Goal 3 Cont.	Establish a balanced, safe, universally accessible transportation ecosystem that provides a quality experience for pedestrians, transit riders, and automobiles.										
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES					
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)						
3.3	Establish a dignified, high-quality public transit system that reduces car dependency and transportation-related carbon emissions.	1) Conduct a corridor-wide transit alternatives study to evaluate the need for and feasibility of high-capacity transit service and supportive infrastructure. 2) Initiate and fund quick-build projects that improve bus stops and transit service along West North Avenue such as prefabricated bus-bulbs, bus shelters, real-time service information, bike racks and storage facilities, solar phone chargers, and smart LED lighting. 3) Install and modernize bus shelters at every major bus stop, including all that are switching points between bus routes. 4) Initiate and fund a transit ambassador program led by community stakeholders to identify areas for transit service improvements including identifying network inefficiencies, better wayfinding, opportunities to improve rider safety and accessibility, and technological modernization that enhances overall service desirability, reliability and community use. 5) Initiate and enhance bus priority amenities, such as transit signal priority (TSP), queue jumps, automated traffic violation enforcement systems (ATVES), bus bulbs and bus lane channelization that improves transit accessibility, reliability, and desirability. 6) Strengthen West North Avenue's transit network through the addition of a reliable, frequent, high-quality transit service; bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail transit (LRT), modern streetcar and/or a Circulator Service.	Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
3.4	Strengthen West North Avenue's social infrastructure through progressive transportation policies and innovative programs that promote organic, interpersonal connection.	1) Initiate and fund tactical urbanism placemaking efforts that beautify and activate the public realm, improve pedestrian mobility, and support local commerce, such as restaurant parklets, plazas, murals, and rain gardens in commercial, mixed-use districts. 2) Pilot 'Flex Zones' to better organize West North Avenue curbsides by dedicating space for commercial loading, passenger pick-up/drop-off, accessible/paratransit accessible loading, street dining and parklets. 3) Install and improve street furnishings, including compacting trash and recycling cans, artistic and new seating, bicycle corrals, and street art to support a vibrant public realm.	BCDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		4) Incorporate historical markers and information in the public realm to pay homage to past generations and recognize the rich history of West North Avenue neighborhoods.	BCDOT, Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW), MTA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
		5) Initiate and fund a wayfinding program that encourages pedestrian circulation and connects activity centers, and community amenities.	BCDOT, Baltimore City Department of Planning (BCDOP)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
6) Develop a progressive curbside management policy that improves vehicle circulation and curb access for drivers, passengers, and commercial loading and delivers accessible and vibrant commercial, residential, and retail zones.	BCDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>									

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

- Economic Development
- Neighborhood / Community
- Transportation
- Housing
- Greenspace



Goal 3 Cont.	Establish a balanced, safe, universally accessible transportation ecosystem that provides a quality experience for pedestrians, transit riders, and automobiles.					
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)	
3.5	Employ an equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) framework to achieve a livable, mixed-income, environmentally sustainable, economically resilient, and age-friendly corridor.	1) Develop an eTOD framework that aligns land use and transportation policies to guide compact, mixed-use economic development activities along West North Avenue.	Baltimore City Department of Planning, Baltimore Development Corporation, BCDOT, MTA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Rezone strategic areas of West North Avenue to achieve dense, mixed-use, compact nodes with density gradients that preserve lower density row homes and single-family neighborhoods.	Baltimore City Department of Planning, Baltimore City DHCD, BCDOT, MTA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Explore the establishment of a new TOD zone designation, a TOD Innovation Hub, to attract investment from technology start-ups and entrepreneurs along West North Avenue.	Baltimore City Department of Planning, Baltimore Development Corporation, BCDOT, MTA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		4) Initiate progressive housing development reforms that support transit use such as eliminating minimum parking and lot size requirements, allowing multi-family dwellings, allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and increasing height limits near public transit.	Baltimore City Department of Planning, Baltimore City DHCD, BCDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		5) Initiate the development of a high-capacity, reliable transit service to support a vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and economically resilient corridor.	MTA		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.6	Prioritize new and emerging 'smart city' infrastructure to promote digital equity and modernize public amenities.	1) Initiate projects that promote digital equity and improve well-being.	Baltimore City Office of Infrastructure Development (MOID)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Initiate and fund automated traffic management systems to collect and leverage data-informed infrastructure planning and implementation.	BCDOT, MTA, MDOT SHA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Develop and utilize a public infrastructure dashboard to monitor and communicate development projects along West North Avenue.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		4) Utilize a data-driven approach to deliver equitable smart growth and improve quality of life.	Baltimore City Department of Planning, Baltimore City DHCD, BCDOT, MTA		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

Economic Development
 Neighborhood / Community
 Transportation
 Housing
 Greenspace

Goal 4	Increase access to community, green, and recreational spaces that are safe, health-promoting, and environmentally sustainable.					
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)	
4.1	Develop new parks, community gardens, and green recreational corridors to increase green space accessibility.	1) Identify and fund the improvement of outdoor spaces.	EPA; USDA; Clean Energy Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Facilitate community engagement and construction of green spaces, parks, and outdoor recreational facilities that will increase available spaces within each released focus area.	Baltimore Office of Sustainability		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4.2	Implement green infrastructure projects such as rain gardens, pollinator spreads, water filtration systems, solar panel energy grids, and permeable pavements.	1) Identify funds and initiate projects to support 75 rain gardens along West North Avenue to promote biodiversity and manage stormwater runoff for businesses and homes.	EPA; Baltimore Office of Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Upgrade existing spaces along West North Avenue to support urban agriculture operations, such as indigo and pollinator growing, and solar charging.	Baltimore Office of Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Participate in community engagement-informed design/construction/maintenance of rain gardens and climate resilient buildings that will reduce stormwater runoff bills, increase pollinator access, and enhance air and water quality.	Baltimore Office of Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		4) Quantify the impact of green infrastructure along West North Avenue, including reduced water bills, decreased tax lien foreclosures due to unpaid water bills, and increased urban agricultural production.	Parks and People - Community Greening Resource Network	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		5) Quantify the impact of green infrastructure along West North Avenue, including reduced water bills, decreased tax lien foreclosures due to unpaid water bills, and increased urban agricultural production.	Baltimore Office of Sustainability		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4.3	Increase urban reforestation by planting and maintaining trees and vegetation to increase canopy cover and improve air quality.	1) Fund the planting of tree canopies and other green infrastructure along West North Avenue.	EPA; Baltimore Tree Trust	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Provide vegetation education to residents and plant shrubs, tall grass areas, and native Maryland bushes in each released focus area.	Parks and People	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Analyze the survival rate of all vegetation within each focus area, as well as the overall impact of new green and/or recreational spaces along West North Avenue.	Baltimore Office of Sustainability		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Legislative Key Priorities Legend

Economic Development
 Neighborhood / Community
 Transportation
 Housing
 Greenspace



Goal 4 Cont.	Increase access to community, green, and recreational spaces that are safe, health-promoting, and environmentally sustainable.					
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PARTNER ENTITY	ESTIMATED STRATEGY TIMEFRAME		RELATED KEY PRIORITIES
				SHORT / MEDIUM (1 to 5 yrs.)	LONG-TERM (5 to 15 yrs.)	
4.4	Partner with neighboring organizations and associations to host environmental education workshops and awareness campaigns to inform the community about the benefits of green spaces and environmental conservation.	1) Launch a series of environmental educational sessions to learn more about keeping West North Avenue cleaner and greener.	Baltimore Office of Sustainability; Coppin State University	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Provide learning sessions about soil conservation and residential gardening to increase awareness of environmental challenges and enhance hands-on skills.	Farm Alliance of Baltimore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Launch a campaign to inform residents on the disposal of chemicals and physical items in order to reduce water and air pollution.	Baltimore Office of Sustainability		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4.5	Collaborate with community health providers and institutions to measure the positive impact of green and recreational spaces on public health while establishing West North Avenue as a Blue Zone.	1) Identify local organizations to support physical education, doula care, training, and therapy with a new athletic facility for children, teens, mom/adults, and seniors.	Coppin State University	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Support access to local food markets and food producers through the establishment of a farmers market.	WNADA Economic Development Officer; USDA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		3) Using a satisfaction and mental health improvement survey, initiate a community study to analyze the number of community members engaged in initiatives related to green space, physical activity, and food.	Coppin State University		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4.6	Establish and enhance existing public spaces for community gatherings.	1) Activate targeted public spaces – including existing green spaces, vacant lots, and street segments – through small-scale infrastructure improvements, increased maintenance protocols, event programming, and temporary street closures.	Baltimore City DOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		2) Partner with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations to design, build, program, and maintain public spaces that honor the corridor's rich arts and cultural history.	Preservation Maryland		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		3) Work with city agencies to identify and acquire unused parcels through long-term lease agreements to establish a network of public spaces with a variety of recreational, educational, food production and commercial uses, informed by a robust community engagement process.	Baltimore City Department of General Services (DGS)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4.7	Celebrate the historic legacy of the West North Avenue community.	1) Implement a historic building stabilization program to preserve valuable physical assets.	Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2) Re-create aspects of the Arts/Jazz district through programmed activities such as history demonstrations and an annual arts and jazz festival along Pennsylvania Avenue with pedestrian-only access.	Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

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Legislative Key Priorities Legend

- Economic Development
- Neighborhood / Community
- Transportation
- Housing
- Greenspace

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# CONCLUSION

Photo: Image of Rowhouses, Edmondson Avenue Historic District via Flickr by Baltimore Heritage.



## CONCLUSION

Over the last half-century, West North Avenue has underperformed in many ways – including in each of this report’s focus areas of economic development, community, and transportation – and not by accident. Discriminatory planning practices and policies set the stage for this culturally rich, historically Black corridor’s decline. Federal, state, and local government used the practices of urban planning to engineer the corridor’s struggle and decline over the second half of the 20th century – through redlining practices that robbed residents of deserved equity and generational wealth; through the removal of streetcar lines and the construction of highways that eliminated safe conditions for walking, shopping, and living; and through the broader disinvestment patterns that have left blocks of once cozy dwellings now vacant and deteriorating.

Against these odds, the communities of the WNADA Corridor have persisted, raising families, forming bonds, and establishing treasured institutions and traditions of their own. Faith-based and nonprofit organizations have put down roots to fill resource gaps for education and youth programming. Coppin State University has generated its own force of Black-led momentum for improvements across West Baltimore, offering a pathway to higher education and research for the residents of the neighborhoods at its own borders.

The latest step in the corridor’s resurgence is the establishment of WNADA by the Maryland General Assembly in 2021, with elected leaders carefully crafting legislation to create a body tasked with righting the wrongs committed by their own predecessors at the state government level. This corridor has many of the ingredients it needs to become a thriving economic force for West Baltimore and the city as a whole. A strong plan and fortitude by public, private, nonprofit, and other partners are key to seeing this vision through.

The WNADA Comprehensive Revitalization Plan – Phase I report represents the beginning of the next chapter, capitalizing on community planning efforts already completed by neighborhoods over the last two decades. WNADA’s efforts have already injected new life into the corridor. Its Phase I community outreach process has introduced new opportunities for today’s residents to map out what the next generation’s West North Avenue Corridor will look like. The completed streamlined Health Impact Assessment explains how the built environment can holistically improve the health and overall well-being of residents by uplifting economic, community, and transportation-related conditions. The technical analyses, in turn, builds a roadmap to realizing those improvements. Together, these report components construct a thorough understanding of the past and the present, establishing a sound bedrock from which plans can move into actions in Phase II: Implementation.

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# APPENDICES



## APPENDICES

### Public Meeting 1 Questionnaire

1. How would you describe the **identity** of the community once revitalized?
2. What will the **success** of this project look like?
3. What would make you feel **more connected** to surrounding neighborhoods?
4. What **questions or concerns** do you have about this project?
5. What are some ways that **transportation** can support quality of life?
6. What are some ways that **housing** can support quality of life?
7. What are some ways that **economic development** can support quality of life?
8. What are some ways that **parks and open spaces** can support quality of life?

## Equitable Development Case Studies

### Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program (EDP)

#### HOW THE EDP WORKS

Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) **requires landlords to go through mediation with tenants before filing for an eviction in court.** This is an opportunity to prevent an eviction filing going on a tenant's records, which is highly detrimental to their ability to find quality housing in the future. Additionally, it reduces the costs of a drawn-out court process as well as the backlog of cases. The EDP was first launched in September 2020 as a response to financial hardships and housing inequities exacerbated by the pandemic. EDP was modeled on another Philadelphia program to prevent home foreclosures, created in the wake of the financial crisis in 2008, that saved 11,000 homeowners from foreclosure in the program's first decade.

EDP has been nationally recognized as a success. While most other cities are still seeing eviction filings that exceed pre-pandemic averages, Philadelphia's average has dropped below pre-pandemic levels. Since its launch EDP has **protected 4,000 tenants from losing their housing** and getting an eviction filing on their records.

The program works as follows:

- Landlords who wish to file for eviction must first apply to the court's Eviction Diversion portal. This initiates a **30-day period** where the landlord is not able to file an eviction case.
- Applications are assigned pathways (one of which is mediation) depending on factors such as the amount of back rent due.
- If mediation is deemed appropriate, a **city-funded housing counselor** meets with tenant(s) before mediation to talk through the scope of issues and their financial situation prior to mediation. These counselors join tenants at the session.

- Mediation consists of a one-hour session where a trained mediator guides a conversation between both parties.
- If an agreement is reached, the mediator writes down the agreed upon terms and shares them with both parties.
- If reasonable efforts are met to complete the program, **one-time payments** are available to cover up to \$3,000 in overdue rent owed by qualifying tenants, plus two months (formerly through [PHLRentAssist](#), now included to the program as Targeted Financial Assistance).
- If landlords participate in good faith, but do not reach an agreement in mediation within the 30-day period, they may proceed to file an eviction case.

#### PROGRESSION: POLITICAL BUY-IN AND TARGETED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (TFA)

As the EDP has become a long-term program, its scope has increased. Initially, the program only applied to landlords who were seeking evictions due to nonpayment of rent where the tenant had a pandemic-related financial hardship. Mediation is still required before filing for an eviction, but EDP is now available for landlords and tenants who need assistance reaching other agreements as well.

As the program has evolved, it has transitioned from a separate COVID-based rental assistance program (PHLRentAssist) to **Targeted Financial Assistance (TFA). TFA is a one-time payment to landlords of tenant arrears, plus two months' rent.** In order to qualify for TFA, arrears must be \$3,000 or less and the tenant's income must be below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). TFA is a separate application which is initiated by a City official upon good faith participation in EDP by both parties. TFA has played an important role in bringing down median arrears from a peak of \$6,100 in February 2022 (when PHLRentAssist was closed) to \$4,100 as of June 2023. Even with an influx of funds from the TFA, the amount of median back rent still exceeds pre-pandemic marks where it sat near \$2,000. The city's allocation of \$30 million to the TFA has made an impact on how effective the EDP is in keeping

cases out of housing court, but without financial support from the state or federal level, it is only a stopgap for one to two years to keep the program functioning.

#### CHALLENGES: FUNDING, MEDIATION TRAINING, AND SMALL LANDLORDS

In October 2022, Philadelphia voted to extend the EDP program through June 2024. In 2022, the program prevented just under 1,000 evictions as the caseload of the eviction court subsided. Despite this continued success, the EDP program has faced some challenges in the transition from the crisis response stage into a long-term program.

Federal funds bolstered the EDP early on, but the burden has now shifted towards the city as pandemic relief funds expired. The success of the EDP is tied closely to the availability of rental assistance money, and early in 2022, the city's rental assistance program was frozen for nearly a year due to lack of funds. In the city's latest vote to continue to program in 2022, \$45 million was committed to eviction diversion and rental assistance programs, the majority share going to form the TFA. **Any successful diversion program needs to have sustainable and diverse sources of funding, including local and/or regional financial commitments.**

As EDP has become more permanent, **some landlords have expressed frustration about the cost and length of the process.** Landlords and other property interests have organized to press the city on changes to the EDP program, with a primary focus on small landlords. Small landlords, or those which own one or two units, make up **73% of licensed landlords and nearly half of the rental units in Philadelphia.** In some ways, EDP mediation is advantageous for them (and the city) by preventing foreclosures on their properties since rents can make or break mortgage payments. However, small landlords have identified an issue with the need to participate in EDP for at least 30 days as this gives the tenant time to get organized but eliminates a month of income for landlords. HAPCO Philadelphia, an association of rental property owners, has

proposed that the city reimburse landlords for rents they are unable to collect during this period. **Sufficient buy-in from landlords—small landlords, in particular—is a key element to ensuring the long-term strength** of an eviction diversion program as securing political and financial capital for these programs becomes more challenging with the loss of federal relief funds.

EDP first and foremost protects and supports tenants and makes eviction more onerous for landlords. Something as procedurally simple as a 30-day waiting period is integral to the power of the EDP. However, the EDP's success often lies in the procedural burden alone and not the success of the mediation. **A criticism from tenants and tenant advocates is that mediation too often rests on volunteer mediators (with just 1 to 2 hours of training) or lawyers who already have a heavy caseload and are ushered in with no training in mediation.** Well-trained mediators with cultural competence and facilitation skills would likely be able to save a sizable batch of cases from heading to court. A program looking to emulate the EDP might consider how to better staff and train mediators, including collaborating with community-based organizations and building long-term relationships between people with legal expertise and the communities hit hardest by evictions.

### *Neighborhood Development and Stabilization in South Minneapolis*

#### **A THREE-PART ALIGNMENT FOR INVESTMENT IN THE PHILLIPS NEIGHBORHOOD**

In 2019, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC ) published the [Growing Taproots: Anchor Institutions, Community Development, & Neighborhood Stabilization](#) report on leveraging anchor institutions in the Phillips neighborhood of South Minneapolis towards stabilization instead of gentrification. The Phillips neighborhood is 40% Black and 30% Hispanic or Latino with a median household income of \$30,000—half that of Minneapolis as a whole. Anchor institutions traditionally tend to be hospital systems or universities, and this is the case in Phillips. Allina Health, a health care system including hospitals, clinics, and urgent care, filled a 2,000 job sized hole in the neighborhood after the departure of a Sears regional center.

LISC measured the impact that investment in the neighborhood had between 2014 and 2017 through home loan values, controlling for renter-occupancy, poverty rate, and adult labor participation rate per Census data. First, they found that during the period of investment, median home loans increased by 46% compared to similar low-income neighborhoods in Minneapolis (such as Near North), but that loan values did not increase at a faster rate than similar neighborhoods. Second, these investments demonstrated a stabilizing effect on home values as measured by home loan values indexed to 1995. After the 2007/08 financial crisis, median home loans in Phillips recovered at the same rate as Minneapolis as a whole, while in Near North, home loan values lagged Minneapolis' recovery rate. These analyses—backed up by a broader qualitative

assessment from community partners—describe economic growth in the neighborhood without the indicators of gentrification that often follow this growth, such as a steeper increase in home loan values compared to other parts of the city. The success of this program was credited to a well aligned vision between private sector investment, government support, and community development capacity.

#### **IDENTIFYING THE KEY STRATEGIES IN STABILIZATION WITHOUT GENTRIFICATION**

LISC's report points to Northwestern University and University of Pennsylvania as two examples of anchor institutions which have caused or contributed to gentrification of their surrounding communities. Below are some main strategies which the report describes as instrumental in investments that stabilized without gentrification:

- **Affordable housing comes first:** Community stakeholders and development partners emphasized early on that housing would be the bedrock of the plan, and that certain housing metrics would need to be met before focusing investment in other areas. One of the earliest investments in Phillips was a 240-unit development called South Quarter over four phases from 2003 to 2015. Making the first major investment both phased and focused on affordable housing was essential to build trust with the community and to ensure that more commercial development that would come later in the process wouldn't have a gentrifying effect on current housing stock.

- **Make culturally relevant investments:** Phillips is home to one of the largest urban Native American populations. After a 1990s foreclosure of Little Earth on Franklin Avenue, the only HUD-subsidized complex with a Native American preference, local activists sought to begin to transform the corridor. As remaining affordable housing along Franklin Avenue was refurbished, Native-owned businesses and new tailored affordable housing was built along the corridor. As housing investments were done in an integrated, culturally relevant fashion, it further stabilized the neighborhood by making displacement of a particular marginalized group less likely.

- **Anchors play a key role in revitalization, but they should not be leading the charge:** Community-based organizations (CBOs) should be playing a leadership role, and non-anchor stakeholders should be collaborating as equal partners. Increasing CBO capacity, building relationships with local activists, and ensuring public sector support are all essential to balance the political and economic power that an anchor institution brings.

- **Community organizations should work largely autonomously under common goals:** In order for community stakeholders to effectively balance the power of anchor institution, they need to first be in alignment on what their goals and vision are for a revitalized neighborhood. Once this alignment is created, it is advantageous for some collaborative work, but groups should largely work autonomously with the established goals in mind. If community organizations agree to always act in unison or under shared leadership, it has been documented to create collaboration fatigue and slow or weaken their work. The advantage to working individually under shared goals is that resources are spread throughout the community as much as possible, and different voices and interests within the community continue to be engaged throughout the process instead of subsumed by the interests of others.





## Approaches to Equitable Development & Quality Housing

### Approach #1: Ensure Long-Term Affordability For Renters and Homeowners

#### INCREASE DENSITY AND SUPPLY OF HOUSING ALONG WEST NORTH AVENUE AT SPECIFIC NODES.

To ensure that housing supply remains adequate for current and future residents, steps should be taken to increase the density of development, particularly at the development nodes identified in the later portion of this plan. Strategically increasing density along main corridors can help neighborhoods stay affordable, increase available retail and services, and reduce the risk of neighborhood displacement.

	GOAL	DESCRIPTION
LONG-TERM	Rezone portions of West North Avenue corridor identified through community engagement	Zoning designations that allow for higher density, mixed-use development at strategically selected nodes. This strategy can also preserve neighborhood character and context in the more residential portions of the adjacent neighborhoods, concentrating density along a commercial corridor at key locations well-served by transit.
	Leverage city-owned parcels in transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning areas to increase density and affordable housing units	Developing government-owned property gives more direct control over the process, timeline, and desired outcomes. Leveraging city- or state-owned property in TOD zoning areas can increase density while ensuring that affordability and community amenities are a part of development in the places where the risk of displacement is highest.

#### INCENTIVIZE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED.

While providing incentives for developers to create below-market rate units is best practice, many policies and programs do not do enough to provide housing to those with the lowest incomes. This is particularly important in West Baltimore where median household income in 2015 was only about \$45,000 and nearly 50 percent of residents spent more than 30 percent of their income on rent. For reference, area median household income (AMI) for a family of four in the Baltimore City was \$59,000.

	GOAL	DESCRIPTION
SHORT-TERM	Provide additional developer incentives, such as a Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE), to help make construction of multifamily housing a priority	Baltimore City already offers developer incentives, but they are often highly competitive, and funding is limited. Developing additional incentives for developers that are less competitive and more targeted could better incentivize affordable housing development for those most in need and make efficient use of limited funds.  One example to consider is the Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE). Often, it is difficult for families with children to find affordable housing that can accommodate them. The MFTE provides a tax exemption on new multifamily buildings in exchange for setting aside a percentage of units as income- and rent-restricted based on area median income (AMI). This mechanism can be used to encourage construction of larger units (two bedrooms or more) for families.
LONG-TERM	Reform Baltimore City's existing inclusionary zoning policy and institute an aggressive mandatory inclusionary zoning policy targeting the West North Avenue Corridor	Over the past decade, efforts have been made to make Baltimore City's existing inclusionary zoning policies more effective. These efforts should continue. A revised inclusionary zoning policy could be targeted to the West North Avenue corridor and serve as a pilot; a version of this policy could eventually be expanded citywide. We recommend the policy be mandatory and require a share of all new multifamily development (both rental and owner-occupied units) resulting from any zoning change be set aside as permanently income- and rent-restricted.  To ensure that residents most in need benefit, associated AMI cut-offs should be lower than previously proposed. Due to limited subsidies, the lowest AMI cut-offs included in many mandatory inclusionary zoning policies around the nation are around 60 percent. Given that household incomes in West Baltimore are very low and many residents are rent burdened, a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy where AMI cut-offs are lower will likely be most beneficial. As financing and funding has been a hurdle to lowering AMI cutoffs, alternate funding mechanisms should be examined. Possible funding options include methods of land-value capture, which are discussed later in this toolkit.



Approach #2: Improve Housing Quality and Restore Historic Buildings

IMPROVE HOUSING QUALITY THROUGH BETTER CODE ENFORCEMENT AND ACCESS TO OTHER CITY RESOURCES.

Many houses in West Baltimore have not been consistently well-maintained largely due to decades of redlining and other restrictive lending practices that discriminated against African Americans and Jewish people. In addition to addressing affordability and increasing supply, any housing strategy should seek to improve housing quality.

	GOAL	DESCRIPTION	CASE STUDIES
SHORT-TERM	Establish community space for local experts to advise on home improvements and provide basic building materials and tools	Making building materials, tools, and local expertise more readily available will aid the community in making small improvements to their homes in a "one-stop shop" model. Disparate services and resources would be accessible in one, convenient location.	Opportunities for making home improvement accessible are currently available at community-wide level. This is an opportunity to pool resources and decrease barriers for individual homeowners. For example, the <a href="#">Baltimore Tool Bank</a> is a tool-lending program for qualifying partner organizations such as non-profits, faith groups, and neighborhood organizations. Another possible model for individuals is the Station North Tool Library. Partnerships with local hardware stores such as Carey Hardware or Hardware Plus could be explored.
	Improve access to programs that provide resources for weatherization and energy efficiency	According to a 2015 report from the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA), just over 70 percent of applications to the Maryland State Weatherization Assistance Program from residents of Upton and Druid Heights were denied. While the reasons for this high rate of denials is unclear, it is likely that structural issues resulting from poor housing conditions played a role in disqualifying applications. Baltimore City's Baltimore Energy Initiative (BEI) includes many components aimed at community outreach and recruiting in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods, focused on aid-ing households denied services due to structural issues. To build on BEI's efforts, we suggest working with BEI to conduct a thorough review and assessment of available state and city weatherization and energy efficiency programs to determine how they can reach more residents.	In 2022, Pennsylvania created the <b>Whole Home Repairs program</b> to address habitability and safety concerns, including water/energy efficiency and accessibility. Grantees (local governments and non-profits) are directed to give funds to PA homeowners whose household income does not exceed 80% of AMI and small landlords. \$50,000 is the maximum grant per homeowner or loan per small land-lord. The program received bipartisan support with a statewide budget of \$125 million for FY22-23.
	Improve code enforcement and encourage landlord compliance through high fines	To improve housing quality for residents, we recommend working with the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Code Enforcement Division to improve code enforcement and create penalties for landlords who do not comply. Fines must be high enough to motivate landlords to fix the underlying issues. Specific efforts could include improving the permitting system to allow live up-dates and photos/videos from the field, increasing funding to hire additional enforcement officers and lawyers, enhancing training for historic district and business district enforcement, and digitizing all per-mit records including drawings. As part of this effort, code enforcement officials should be engaged.	
	Work with DHCD's Lead Hazard Reduction Program and other local organizations	Remediating water pipes, paint, and soil contaminated with lead will immediately improve people's lives and long-term outcomes and will make West North Avenue more attractive for additional investment.	

	GOAL	DESCRIPTION	CASE STUDIES
LONG-TERM	Improve housing quality and maintain historic neighborhood character through historic tax credits	To make better quality housing more affordable, local historic districts offer tax credits for property improvements on top of existing state and federal incentives. As following historic guidelines can sometimes increase the cost of renovations, we recommend working with Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) to explore the possibility of small start-up grants to cover initial repairs or tax credit program modifications to reduce barriers for low-income homeowners.	
	Host capacity for coordinated delivery of various home repair funds and services in a single organization	Although increasing home improvement money available for low- to middle-income homeowners is an essential short-term measure, <b>promoting their ease of access and delivery is essential to make those funds successful in the long-term.</b> A municipal agency should build capacity to manage delivery of funds. For example, if a homeowner is denied weatherization funds due to existing mold, they might not be aware of funds which qualify for mold elimination that are needed prior to Weatherization Assistance Program eligibility. When there is a designated program to holistically assess repair needs and layer funding sources, homeowners can much more successfully make necessary improvements.	This recommendation is modeled on the Philadelphia Energy Authority's <b>Built to Last</b> program, piloted in 2021-22 with a full rollout in 2023. One potential challenge to scaling up the program is the need for additional funding.



### Approach #3: Empower Community Residents and Build Neighborhood Strength

#### CREATE POLICES TO ALLOW THE COMMUNITY TO HAVE INCREASED CONTROL OVER LAND.

When considering how to develop land, private landowners generally aim to gain the greatest market return. This can make it difficult to convince a private landowner to develop their land for community-centric uses, such as affordable housing, community centers, or parks and urban farms, which may not be as profitable. While developer incentives can be helpful, taking steps to give the community more direct control of how land is developed will ensure residents have control over how their neighborhood changes and benefit from future investment.

GOAL	DESCRIPTION	CASE STUDIES
<b>SHORT-TERM</b> Develop and encourage community benefit agreements (CBAs) with tangible outcomes	Large-scale new developments should include CBAs developed in consultation with the community that include quantifiable goals and benchmarks as well as legal consequences/public accountability for developers who fail to hold up their end of the bargain. Legal enforcement mechanisms should consider how to ensure the community is not left without any promised funds if development changes hands, is downsized, or ultimately cancelled.	The CBA related to the redevelopment of Port Covington—one of the largest in the country at under \$136 million—has been challenged as the Under Armor campus plan has severely downsized. The obligations imposed by the CBA do not run with the land, and after the land changed hands multiple times to Goldman Sachs, City Solicitor Shea has been tasked with attempting to ensure the value of the CBA remains as signed and is not watered down or eliminated.
<b>LONG-TERM</b> Establish neighborhood community land trusts	A community land trust (CLT) promotes long-term housing stability, community participation, and wealth building. CLTs are usually run as nonprofit organizations that treat land as a public good. Ownership of the land and building is separated with buildings owned and used by local organizations, business, and individuals, while the CLT owns the land itself and works to ensure it is used to benefit the community. Three CLTs (Charm City Land Trusts, North East Housing Initiative, and South Baltimore Community Land Trust) exist in Baltimore City and additional CLTs could be formed along West North Avenue.  Use of CLTs is gaining momentum in other cities. Recently, New York City received over \$1.5 million in grant funding to expand CLTs across the city and officially codified them into city law so that they can be allowed to enter regulatory agreements with the city. Efforts to expand the role of CLTs are also ongoing in places like Miami and Oakland.	Since 2018, the South Baltimore Community Land Trust (SBCLT) has been created, becoming the third CLT in the city. SBCLT was born out of community action against a proposed incinerator in an area historically taken advantage of for hazardous waste disposal. In March 2021, the city announced that the three CLTs were awarded \$750,000 each for affordable single-family homeownership opportunities in Broadway East, Belair Edison, and Curtis Bay. In September 2021, the city released a NOFA of \$4 million for CLTs to develop affordable housing (up to \$1 million per project) and up to 100,000 per CLT for operating costs.
<b>LONG-TERM</b> Investigate methods of land value capture to support community-centric uses	Given that plans for TOD have been proposed around the Penn North station, one possible strategy for land value capture is collecting developer fees and contributions on new development. Developer fees and contributions could be assessed against the resulting publicly created land values and paid into a WNADA or city-managed fund. The fund could be used to make neighborhoods investments such as creating and preserving affordable housing, subsidizing rents, improving housing quality, or upgrading streetscapes and open spaces.	In 2019, Baltimore County approved the collection of developer fees, anticipating it would bring in ~\$10 million a year, primarily for building new schools. Developers were critical of the measure, claiming it would particularly slow the construction of multi-family housing. In January 2022, Baltimore County Inspector General Madigan released a report revealing that millions of dollars in fees were waived for the Metro Centre development at Owings Mills through a corrupt arrangement with a longtime county official. This led to the passage of Bill 41-22 in July 2022 which notifies City Council of any requests to waive developer fees.

#### EMPOWER RENTERS AND GIVE THEM THE TOOLS TO FIGHT EVICTION AND NEIGHBORHOOD DISPLACEMENT.

Evictions in Baltimore have nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels as the various pandemic-era funds and measures to protect tenants have subsided. As of September 2022, just over eight tenants were evicted for every 10,000 city residents compared to two per 10,000 residents for the entire state. <sup>12</sup> A Baltimore Sun report noted that ACS figures were likely underestimated, as hundreds of renters each year are evicted without going through the court system. Given this context and the fact that most residents along West North Avenue rent, expanding renter protections, connecting renters to available resources, and empowering renters to be their own advocates will be integral to curbing evictions and preventing neighborhood displacement.

GOAL	DESCRIPTION	CASE STUDIES
<b>SHORT-TERM</b> Offer legal services to vulnerable renters	One way to help renters in danger of eviction is to connect them with legal counsel and representation. As renters often have difficulty understanding their rights and retaining a lawyer to represent them in Baltimore City's rent court, we recommend providing legal services to low-income renters. This service could be offered through the "one-stop shop" model described above. Alternatively, a public fund could be established to provide free legal aid to renters facing eviction.	In New York City, a successful program provides renters with an income below 200% of the federal poverty (about \$50,000 per year) free legal representation and renters earning more will qualify for free legal counseling. Creation of a public fund was recently pro-posed in Baltimore City and funds have already been established in Washington D.C. and Philadelphia.
<b>SHORT-TERM</b> Institute and enforce just cause eviction controls	Just cause eviction controls ensure landlords can only evict tenants with proper cause. While some of these controls are already in place in Baltimore City, polices should be reexamined and strengthened. Revised controls should include strict penalties levied on landlords who illegally evict tenants and additional safety nets for tenants.	
<b>LONG-TERM</b> Reform Baltimore City's rent court system	In 2020, Baltimore gave tenants in eviction cases a legal right to counsel. However, full implementation by 2024 is contingent on full funding of \$12 million. In addition to ensuring the right to counsel measure is implemented, possible changes include making court records available electronically, allowing for a mediation session prior to going before a judge, and broadening tenant representation requirements beyond the tenant or an attorney (landlords are already allowed broader representation).	Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) requires landlord-tenant disputes to go through mediation prior to being escalated to appearing in front of a judge. Mediations solved almost 75% of disputes, allowing tenants to avoid eviction as well as a possible judgement on their record that could be a roadblock to accessing housing in the future. In 2023, Targeted Financial Assistance (TFA)—a one-time payment to cover a tenant's total overdue rent plus an additional month—became available if an eligible tenant and landlord participate in EDP in good faith.
<b>LONG-TERM</b> Create more tenant friendly laws	Examples to consider include Washington DC's Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) where current renters have the first right to buy their home should the landlord decide to sell and increasing the amount of time it takes for a landlord to start an eviction case.	San Francisco passed the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA), closely modeled on TOPA, in 2019. It has more regulated outcomes than TOPA, where all units must remain rentals with long-term affordability regulations. In May 2023, New York introduced a stricter version of TOPA, where ownership rights cannot be assigned to private developers—only a public housing authority or non-profit.
<b>LONG-TERM</b> Build capacity of local organizations to support tenants	Continue to support and build the capacity of local organizations such as Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Druid Heights CDC to help them renovate and construct more rental and owner-occupied housing.	



**Approach #4: Reduce Displacement.**

**ENCOURAGE AND BUILD HOMEOWNERSHIP.**

Residents who own their homes are better equipped to resist neighborhood displacement than those who rent. Along West North Avenue, only 41 percent of housing units are owner-occupied, about seven percent lower than the citywide figure of 48 percent. Given that the overall rate of owner-occupied units is low, an important strategy to prevent neighborhood displacement is to encourage and build homeownership.

	GOAL	DESCRIPTION	UPDATES
SHORT-TERM	Educate prospective buyers	Enrollment in housing education and counseling programs gives prospective buyers the option to learn more about the processes involved in purchasing and owning a home. These programs offer personalized guidance on finding a suitable home, obtaining a mortgage, saving for a down payment, and planning for future expenses. Research has shown that counseling can be effective in preparing new buyers to be better homeowners and helping troubled homeowners avoid foreclosure. Counseling from HABC and Druid Heights Community Development Corporation are available and both groups should be engaged to determine strategies to better reach residents. HABC offers homeownership courses through the Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program and the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation offers housing counseling on financial planning, pre- and post-purchase, mortgage default and delinquency prevention, predatory lending, and reverse mortgages.	
	Connect prospective home buyers to assistance programs	Assistance programs offer low-cost mortgage loans and/or down payment and closing cost assistance. Often, one of the biggest barriers to purchasing a home is saving for a down payment and assistance programs can help homebuyers reach that goal. We recommend working with LiveBaltimore, which is already involved with these efforts, to connect with prospective homebuyers and build homeownership along the West North Avenue corridor.	
LONG-TERM	Freeze property taxes for homeowners who low-income, 65 years or older, and/or long-time residents	Currently, Maryland offers the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Program—a "circuit-breaker" form of tax break for low-income homeowners. To avoid neighborhood displacement, low-income homeowners should be protected against the tax consequences of higher property values resulting from neighborhood investment. This could come in the form of a total tax freeze or automatic enrollment in the existing program which currently requires reapplication every year.	

**DEVELOP A NEIGHBORHOOD EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DISPLACEMENT.**

While rising home prices and increased property taxes and rents are often a result of neighborhood investment and can lead to neighborhood displacement, it is possible to counteract these forces if action is taken early. One way to track housing costs and other factors that lead to displacement is through a neighborhood early warning system. An early warning system could take the form of a data dashboard, maps, or regular reports. The system can be used to guide planning and policy efforts, as well as guide ongoing discussions with the community. Data that has traditionally been included in early warning systems includes changes in demographics, housing and building conditions, evictions, property transactions, building permits, vacancies, crime, and mobility (moves in and out of neighborhood). When developing an early warning system, we recommend engaging a wide variety of stakeholders that include local government representatives, researchers, technology firms, real estate developers, community organizations, and residents. WNADA or Baltimore City may want to partner with a local research organization, such as BNIA, or university, such as Coppin State University, to create a neighborhood early warning system.

	GOAL	DESCRIPTION	CASE STUDIES
SHORT-TERM	Engage local researchers and community stakeholders	To determine which factors should be included, it is recommended that the city work with local researchers and community stakeholders.	The <a href="#">Urban Displacement Project (UDP)</a> developed a typology of neighborhood change and mapped them onto New York City Census tracts, identifying neighborhood trajectories (including those experiencing displacement without any measure of gentrification).
	Develop short-term policy solutions	Identify the potential additional policy solutions, resources, or other tools that can be used to respond to early warning signs of neighborhood displacement.	
LONG-TERM	Host neighborhood early system within community-based organization	Any neighborhood early warning system that is developed should eventually be hosted at an existing or new community-based entity, such as WNADA. This organization will take the lead in monitoring the early warning system and lead response efforts. As part of this effort, long and short-term interventions for possible scenarios should be developed.	The UDP is an initiative by UC Berkeley and the University of Toronto, but research for the NYC map in particular is a joint initiative, sponsored by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and hosted in NYU's Center for Urban Science + Progress. A similar city-based financial sponsor and university partnership might be a strong model for Baltimore.

**Applying Approaches to WNADA Strategies**

Ensuring all residents have access to stable, safe, and affordable housing is a vital step in building a more equitable city. To reach this goal, the project team developed strategies to preserve and create affordable housing along West North Avenue, plan for future investment, and lay the groundwork to prevent neighborhood displacement. All too often, displacement is a symptom of neighborhood investment. To ensure all residents benefit from future investment, maintaining affordability for current and future residents and developing investment without displacement polices will be a priority.



## Community Outreach Activities: Written Comments

The following written comments were received on the Economic Development matrix:

- Identify job growth clusters.
- Objective 3 is difficult to do in the near-term but could have a widespread impact.
- Do not see goal, objective, or strategy for heritage/culture.
- Attract people to an area to see an experience that would have a citywide and regional impact.
- Local Shopping, Local Support
- Free street parking for North Avenue: jump in/jump out access to businesses.
- Transit-Oriented Development
  - » Start with one block at a time.
  - » Consulting assistance for existing commercial businesses to access resources.

The following written comments were received on the Community matrix:

- Address loitering, panhandling, crime, which makes people unlikely to patronize businesses on North Avenue or want to live nearby.
- Missing:
  - » Food, entertainment, tourism on Penn North
  - » Streetscape as public space (activation)
- Demolish all blighted buildings and plant meadow as temporary greenspace until development begins.
- Support the Black Arts District
- Baltimore Social Environmental Collaborative is a great community resource for this work and can leverage their resources to assist organizations doing sustainability work/modernization.
- Not overnight, but CSU students should be part of the community:
  - » Future residents
  - » More young homeowners
- Stabilization of existing housing resources
  - » Financial literacy
  - » Support groups for accessing resources
- Diversity of open spaces
  - » Maintenance of beautification

The following written comments were received on the Transportation matrix:

- Bus lanes are a travesty; they cause road rage, which results in cars that disregard safety rules.
- Bus/Bike lanes:
  - » Baltimore is not a small town. We have infrastructure that worked: 2 lane travel in both directions.
  - » Bikes are not more important.
- Bus lanes:
  - » Slow traffic due to mandatory lane.
  - » Causes poor traffic management across city including East-West travel on North Avenue.
- Balti-sticks are not working. Please do NOT add to West Baltimore.
  - » (Separate commenter) AGREE!!
- Objective 1, Strategy 3
  - » Please make sure you ask Baltimore City about other initiatives such as B+P Tunnel project construction starting in 2024. Ask hard questions.
- Objective 2, Strategy 3
  - » To preserve 2 lane drive lane, instead of a green buffer, build tree wells in sidewalk to provide green space.

- Objective 3, Strategy 3
  - » Add “modern streetcar” as a possible mode of transportation.
- Objective 4, Strategy 1
  - » Tactical Urbanism!
- Objective 4, Strategies 2 and 3
  - » When Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School closes, young scholars going to Dorothy I Height Elementary will have to travel walk by construction for 10 years due to B+P tunnel ventilation being built at North and Eutaw.
- Objective 2, Strategy 1
  - » Prioritize flow of car/truck traffic on North Avenue to avoid backups. Perform a simulation of 1 lane traffic 1-3 months and collect feedback from all of Baltimore City. Before reducing vehicle traffic to one lane. 1 lane traffic between Park and Mount Royal on North Avenue is already a disaster. Please don't extend it west any further.

