

**MAY 2023**



# REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

Parks, projects & programs to  
connect communities in South  
Baltimore

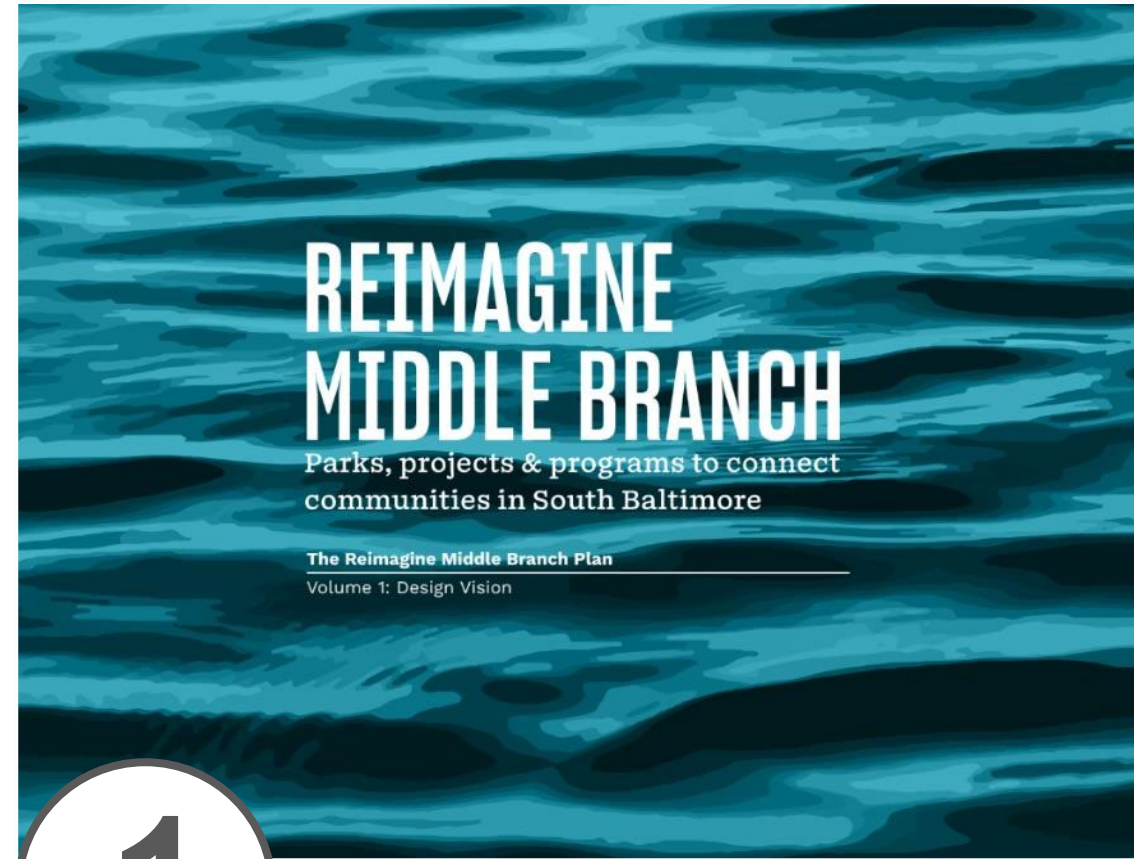


**Brandon M. Scott**  
Mayor



**SOUTH BALTIMORE**  
**GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP** 

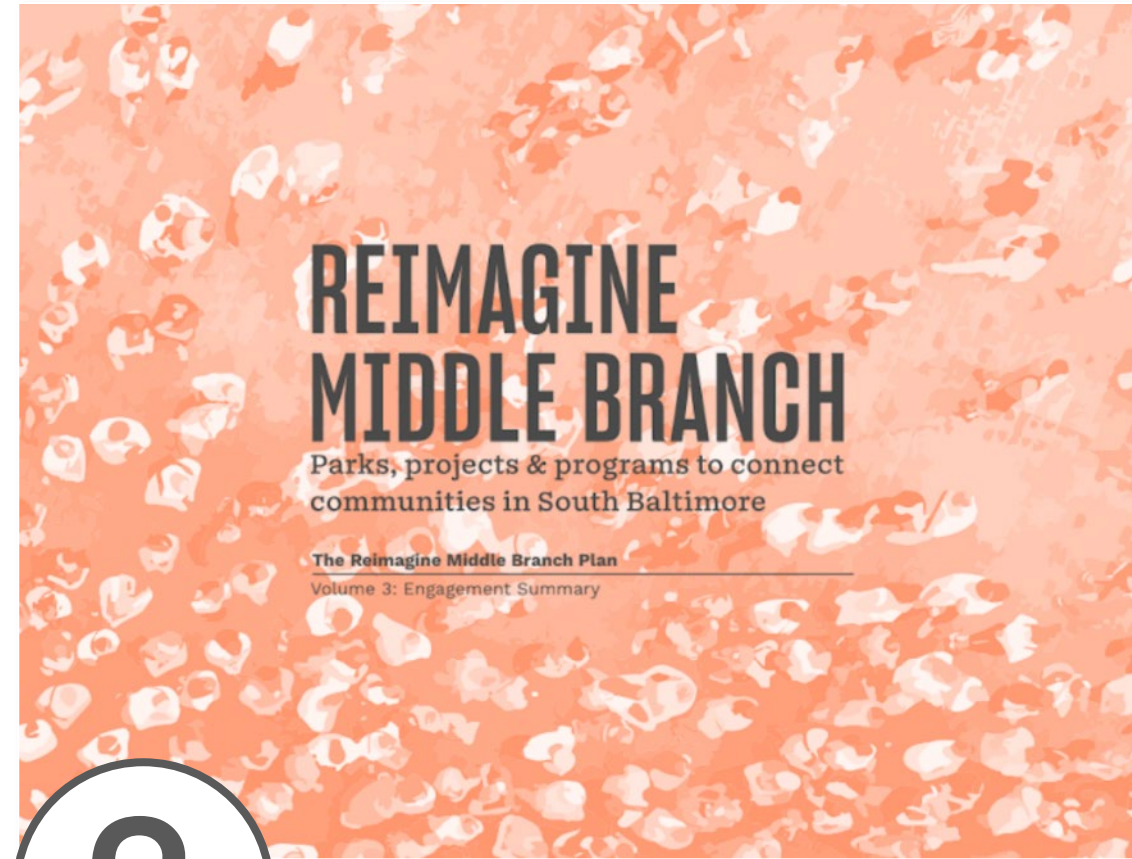




1

### DESIGN VISION

- Project Background and Planning Context
- Four Equity Frameworks
- Walk Around the Middle Branch



2

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- Phasing
- Permitting
- Funding
- Management and Stewardship



3

### ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

- Summary of Equity Initiatives
- Record of Meetings and Events
- Input from Stakeholder Workshops and Public Meetings
- Survey Results



4

### RESOURCE GUIDE

- Equity Resources
- Anti - displacement Resources
- Transportation Resources
- Funding Resources

### READ THE PLAN:

<https://www.reimaginemb.com/plan>

THE REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH MASTER PLAN HAS BEEN ADOPTED!

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH



## 1. Inclusive Programs & Activities



Develop social space, activities, and events that reflect the people and communities around the Middle Branch

## 2. Access & Connections



Strengthen existing and establish new convenient, safe pedestrian and bike access to and around the waterfront, and improve transit infrastructure, roads, and sidewalks connecting neighborhoods, jobs, education, and other amenities

## 3. Economic Equity



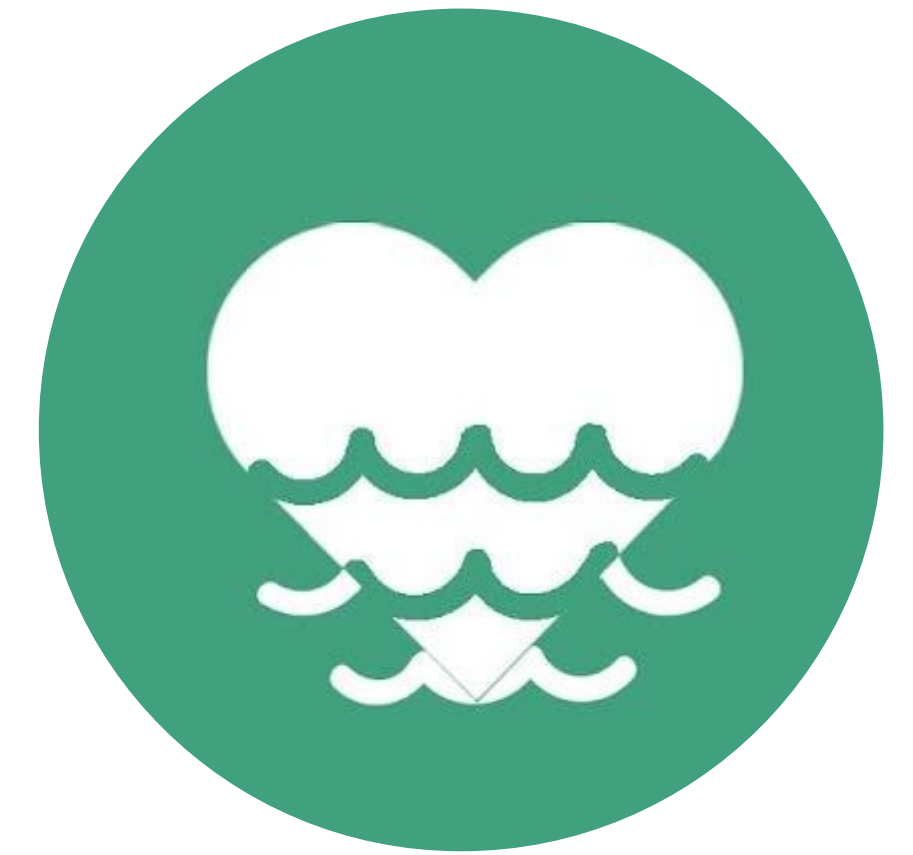
Incentivize local development that does not displace established communities, but rather creates jobs, educational opportunities, and governance roles with local communities

## 4. Parks & Recreation



Create new parks and public spaces that support diverse and affordable recreation amenities

## 5. Environment, Resilience & Health



Support environmental sustainability, enhance climate resiliency, improve air and water quality including trash clean up, and enhance public health and quality of life

“This is not a capital project with environmental justice elements, but rather an environmental justice project with capital elements.

*Dr. Frank Lance, CEO Parks & People Foundation*





















# PROJECTS IN PROMOTION

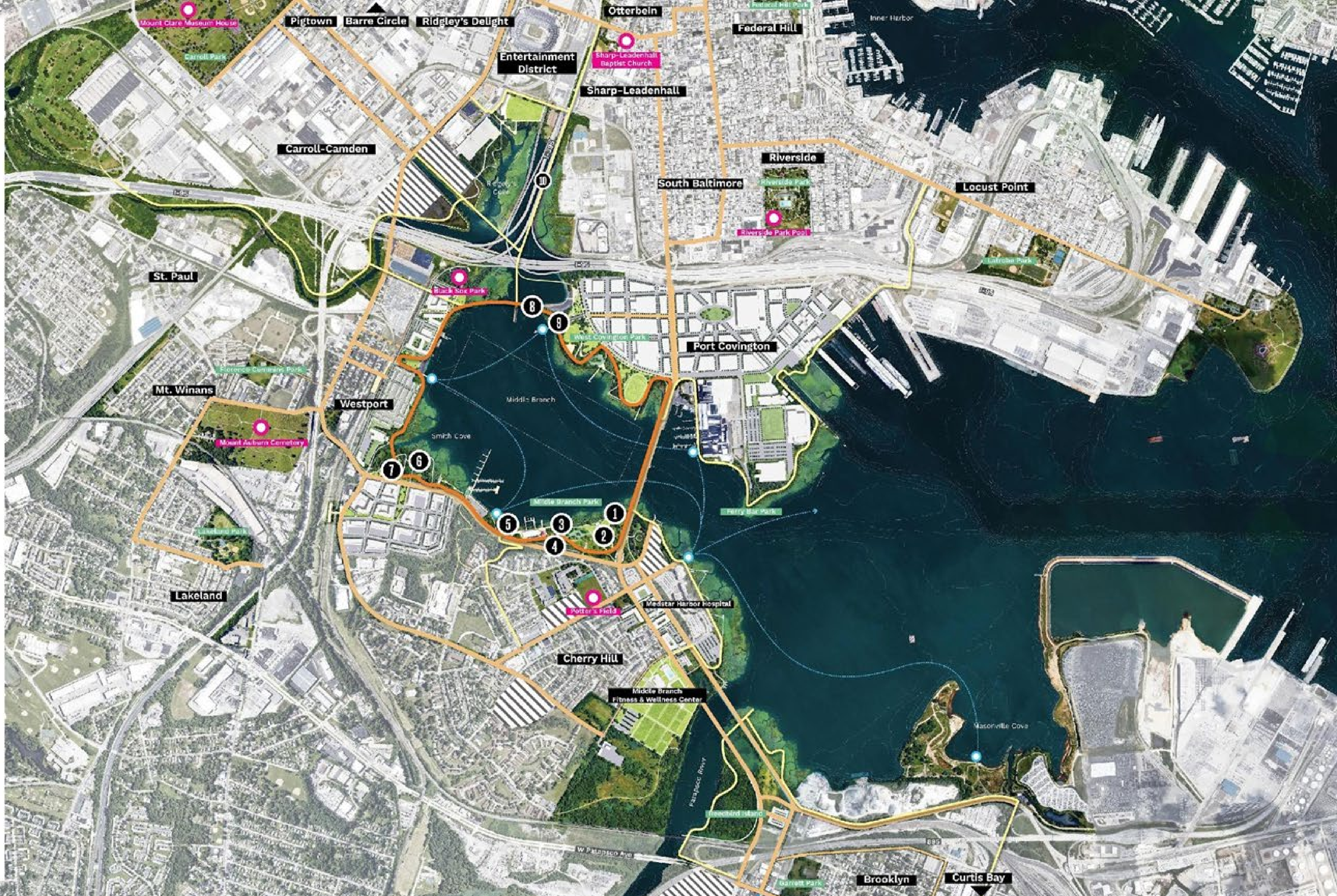




# REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

-  Middle Branch Loop Trail
-  Neighborhood Connectors
-  Complete Streets
-  Water Trails
-  Water Access Stops
-  African American Heritage Site
-  Future Development Opportunity
-  1 Middle Branch Park
-  2 Event Lawn
-  3 Event Pavilion
-  4 Hilltop Playground
-  5 Boathouse and Kayak Launch
-  6 Smith Cove Boardwalk
-  7 Woodland Playground
-  8 East-West Bridge
-  9 East-West Bridge Landing
-  10 Ridgely's Cove Boardwalk

 0.25 mile







# \$25 Million Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center

This new facility in Cherry Hill is the **nicest recreation campus in Baltimore**, featuring indoor and outdoor pools, indoor and outdoor basketball courts, and indoor and outdoor walking tracks.



# Ripken Field at MBFWC

BCRP, SBGP, and the Ripken Foundation collaborated on this **\$3 million turf field** in Cherry Hill.

This waterfront field, which comes complete with lighting, is a major part of the **Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center Campus** in Cherry Hill.



# REEDBIRD COMMUNITY PARK MEETING #2



## Reedbird Park Next Phase Meetings

Join us for updates on the next phase of Reedbird Park! The community meeting will be held in a virtual format where community members can join online. All are welcome to join!

BCRP has been hosting community meetings to begin planning the next round of improvements for Reedbird Park, surrounding the Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center.

When: Wednesday, April 26, 2023 6:00 PM



MIDDLE BRANCH RESILIENCY INITIATIVE WETLANDS

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH







# Major New Park Along Westport Waterfront

BCRP, SBGP, Westport CEDC, the Mayor's Office, and the developer of ONE Westport are collaborating to **create a new park and trail system** along the Westport Waterfront.

Design meetings are **now underway**.



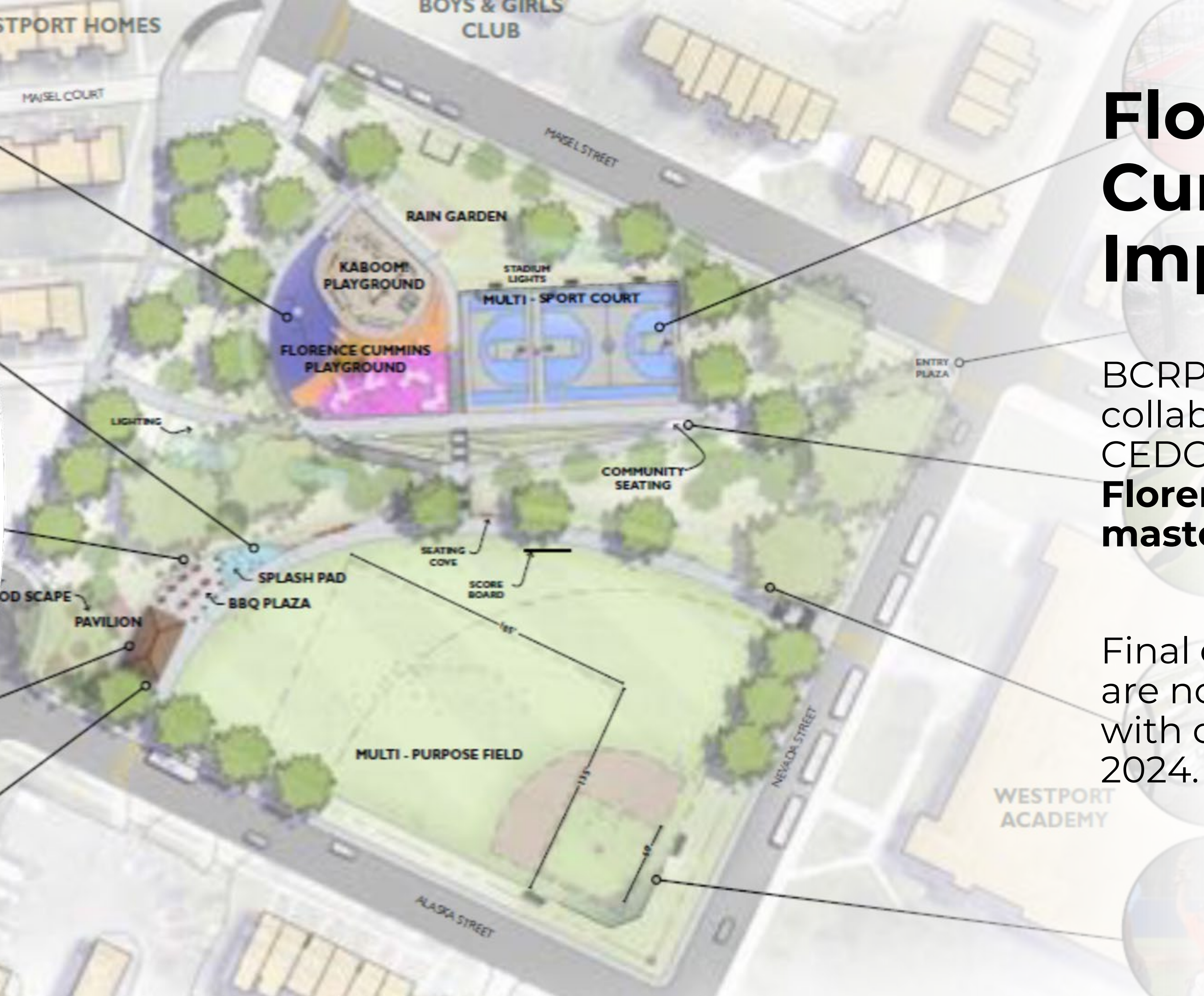


# Black Sox Memorial Park

**Parks & People** is establishing a memorial park for the **Baltimore Black Sox** and other long-overlooked South Baltimore athletic heroes.

This will be located along the **Westport Waterfront**. The exact location will be determined by the planning process now underway.





# Florence Cummins Park Improvements

BCRP and SBGP are collaborating with Westport CEDC to **implement the Florence Cummins Park master plan.**

Final **construction drawings** are now being completed, with construction to begin in 2024.



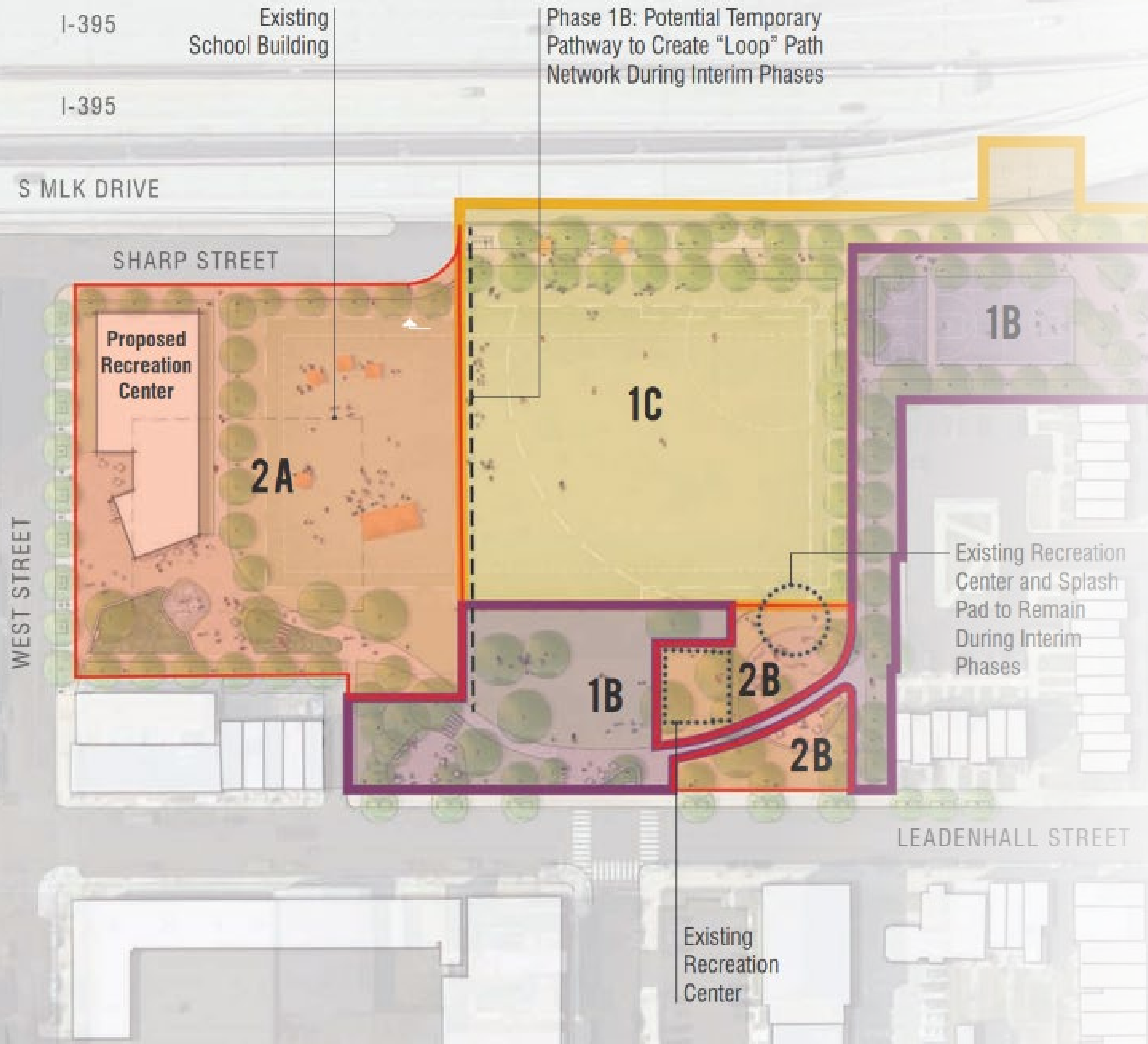
# Solo Gibbs Park Improvements

BCRP, Parks & People, SBGP, and the Mayor's Office are collaborating to **implement the Solo Gibbs Park master plan.**

**Phase 1 (New Playground)** will open this summer.

**School demolition** is now underway.

**Construction documents** are now underway, with bidding and construction to begin 2024.



# Carroll Park Recreation Center

BCRP and SBGP are reopening this **shuttered Rec Center in Pigtown** after 20 years.

It is being designed with a “**Campus Model**” connects this building to the nearby park, playground, skate park, and school gymnasium





# Conway Street Park Improvements

BCRP and SBGP are collaborating to **restore Conway Street Park** in Ridgely's Delight.

The **community planning** process kicked off this month.



An aerial photograph of a large body of water, likely a bay or harbor. In the foreground, a landscaped walkway with a paved path and a bicycle lane runs along the shore, featuring young trees and people walking and cycling. In the middle ground, a large steel truss bridge structure is under construction on a barge in the water. The background shows a city skyline across the water under a clear blue sky.

# Footbridge Preliminary Engineering

SBGP funded the preliminary engineering for a **new pedestrian footbridge** connecting **Westport and Baltimore Peninsula**.

This is the critical **first step** in developing a budget and implementation strategy.






# Middle Branch Marina

The **Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative (EJJI)** has taken over part of the marina for use as an environmental education and career development center. They have now brought in partners:


**UMBC** is using the marina to train a new generation of scientists from under-represented backgrounds.

**IMET** has installed a water quality monitoring station as part of DNR's Eyes on the Bay.


**SERC** is also doing research and seeking joint funding with EJJI.




**ICARE NRT**  
A Master's Degree program to Broaden Participation Across the Environmental Sciences in Baltimore Harbor



at



Speaking: Professor Tamra Mendelson, Biological Sciences  
Contact: tamram@umbc.edu



**ICARE**  
Ecology • Engineering • Social Science • Policy



University of Maryland  
**CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**  
INSTITUTE OF MARINE & ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY



**Smithsonian**  
*Environmental Research Center*





# South Baltimore Gateway Sports Network

SBGP funds **Youth Sports in Low-Income Communities.**

Often these are operated by nonprofit **Community-Based Providers.**





# Walk @ Warner Street

**Gwynns Falls Trail/Ridgely's Cove** restoration opened in Fall 2023.

**Top Golf** opened in October, 2022.

**The Paramount** scheduled to open Fall 2023.

**Warner and Stockholm Pedestrian Streetscaping, with Trail Extension**, starts construction in late 2023.





# Baltimore Peninsula

**Two New Parks** are now being completed.

**Mixed-Income Apartments** are now being leased.

**Office Space** tenants are now moving in.

**Townhomes and Additional Apartments** now being developed by 28 Walker.

**Under Armour** headquarters now under construction, along with new **athletic field**.





# NEW Community Development Fund

SBGP and Mayor's Office have assembled approximately **\$5M** to support community-driven real estate projects, like:

- **Rehabbing Vacants**
- **New Affordable Housing**
- **Mixed-Income/Mixed-Use Development**
- **New Retail**

Milestones –

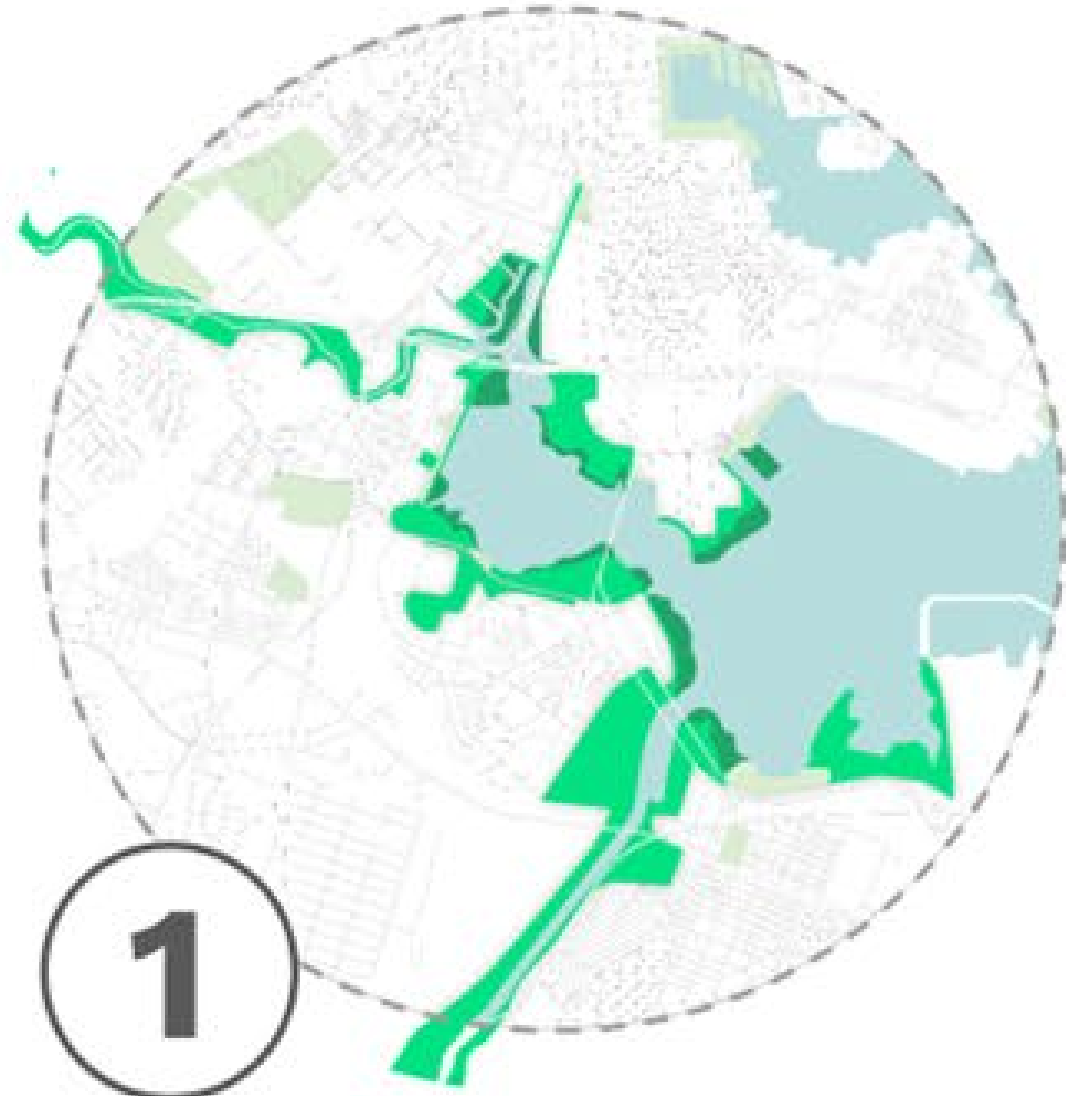
- 1st grant award: **Cherry Hill Blight Reduction Initiative** – for rehab of 5 vacant houses.
- **Call for proposals** process to start this summer/fall



Design Vision and Implementation Strategy

STRATEGIES FOR  
REALIZING THE  
VISION





**1**

**Protect and Restore  
the Shoreline**



**2**

**Transform  
Barriers  
into Connections**



**3**

**Activated and  
Inclusive Parks**



**4**

**Equitable  
Development**



## KEY STRATEGIES

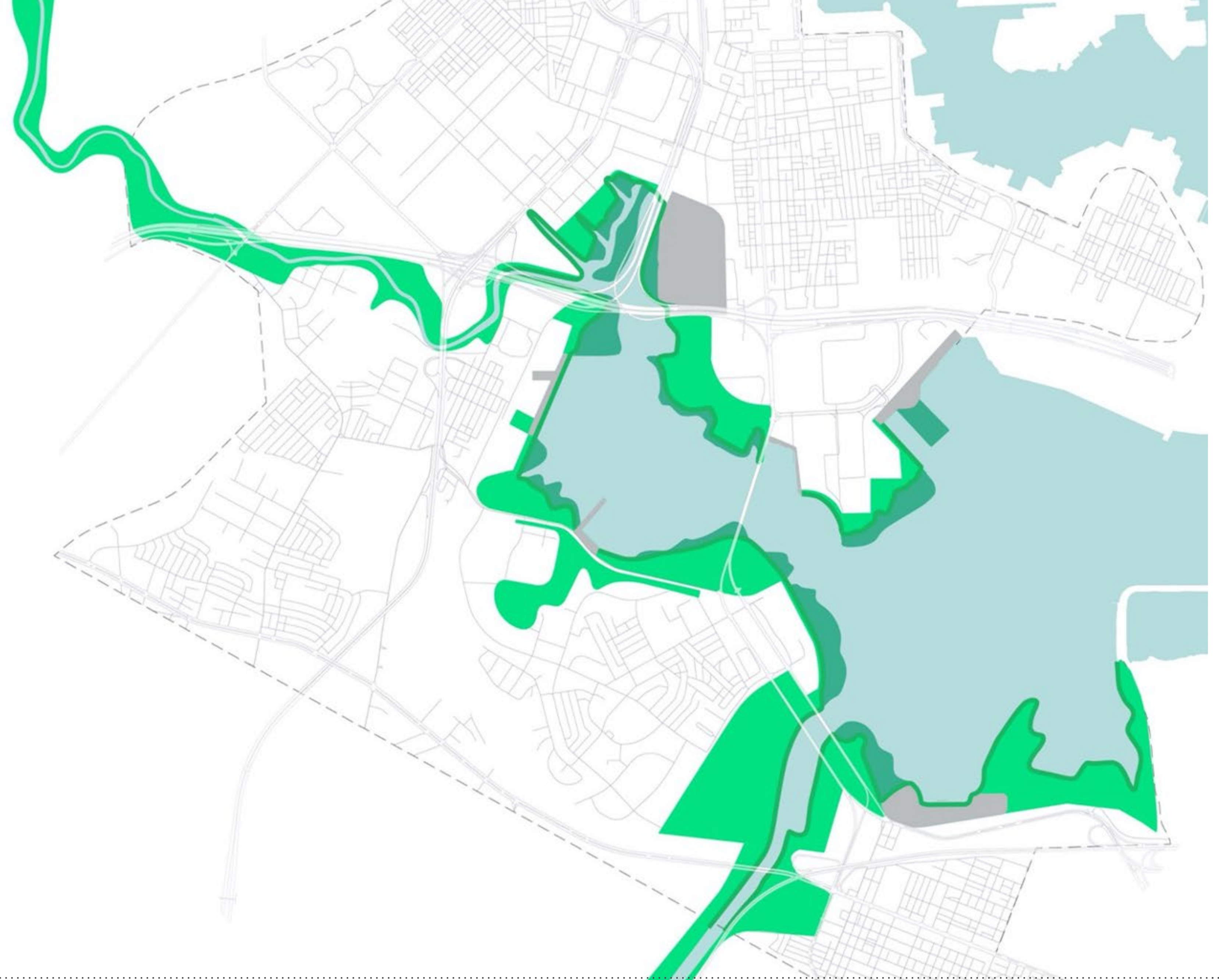
“Living shorelines” that add beauty and habitat and resist erosion

“Green infrastructure” techniques that divert run-off and trash from entering the water

Supporting and expanding environmental education and “citizen science” programs

Incorporating safe reuse of dredge material to build marshes and other new landscapes

-  Waterfront Parks
-  Living Shoreline
-  Wetlands



PROTECT AND RESTORE THE SHORELINE

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH



## KEY STRATEGIES

A Shoreline Trail with a central 3-mile "Loop Trail" around the water

A new East-West Pedestrian Bridge between Westport and Port Covington

Complete Streets corridors that connect neighborhoods and parks to the water, transit, and goods and services

Improving truck freight routes from Frankfurst Ave. to Route 2 and I-95



TRANSFORM BARRIERS INTO CONNECTIONS

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH



## KEY STRATEGIES

Coordinating capital projects and programming across the park-shed

Linking shoreline parks and open spaces, and creating connections to neighborhood parks

Creating waterfront anchors that draw diverse uses and support operating costs

Expanding canoe/kayak and rowing programs with new boat houses, piers and landings

-  Large-scale Park Anchors
-  Small-scale Structures
-  Waterfront Parks - Passive
-  Waterfront Parks - Active
-  Wetlands
-  Piers





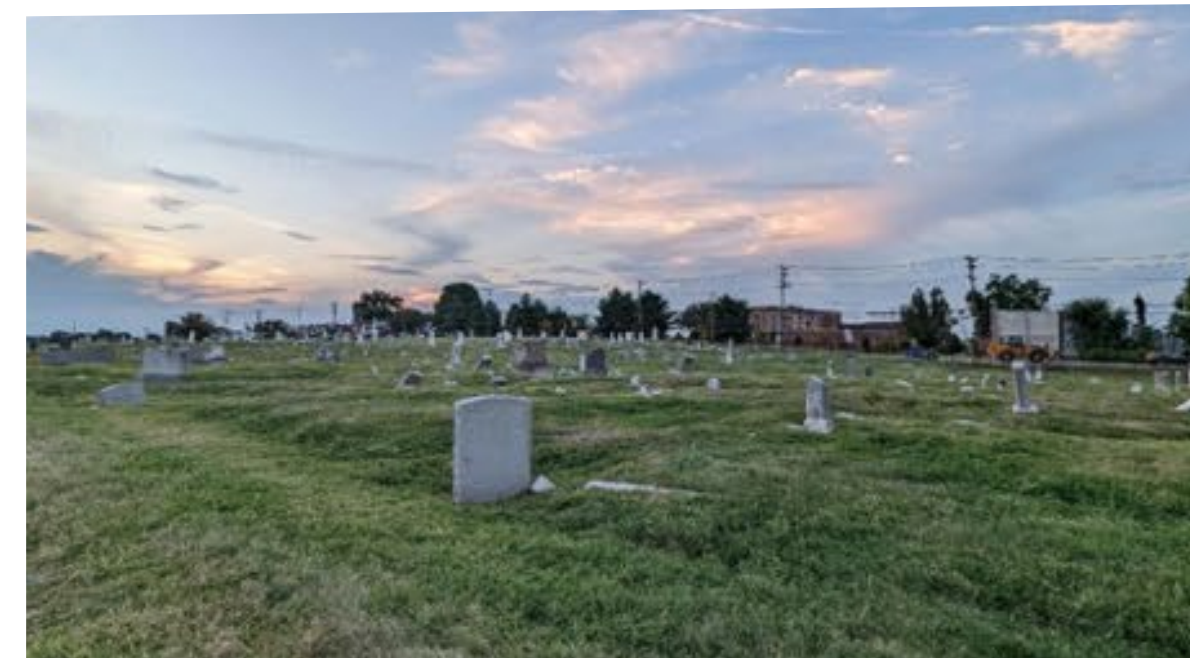
# KEY STRATEGIES

Sustaining and expanding investments in youth, workforce development, small businesses, and CDC capacity-building

Assembling capital for equitable investment in housing and mixed-use development

Establishing an African American heritage district rooted in historical commemoration AND current cultural expression

Support for “green” social venture enterprises and new business start-ups







1

FUNDING



2

PHASING



3

PERMITTING



4

MANAGEMENT &  
STEWARDSHIP

---

FOUR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH



# 10 Year Funding Matrix



## FUNDING STRATEGY

### IMMEDIATE / NEAR - TERM

- Synch priorities & schedules of LIG \$ and other public \$ to advance / track capital projects.
- Balance support for long-term capital AND programming.
- Plan and target pipeline of equity-based investments

### LONGER-TERM

- Explore leveraging and monetizing opportunities, e.g. parking revenue
- Collaborate on new models for a community development TIF or PAY-GO bond financing
- Promote initiative(s) for corporate sponsorships and foundations support

Funding Source	Background	10-Year Fund-raising Goal (Approx)	Raised to Date (Approx)
<b>Nontraditional</b>			
<b>Casino Local Impact Grants</b>	Casino revenues spent annually by Baltimore City and South Baltimore Gateway Partnership are already investing \$14-\$16 million per year into the neighborhoods of the South Baltimore Gateway District. These funds have supported a wide array of parks, programs, CDC operations, and economic development projects. They have also been used successfully to leverage state, philanthropic, and private funds. Casino funds spent inside the South Baltimore Gateway District have even been used as a match to secure money for projects outside the District (such as the \$500,000 SEED grant for the design of the Baybrook Connector).	\$140,000,000	\$70,000,000
<b>SB7 Community Benefits Agreement</b>	Another innovative funding stream is the Port Covington Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) that covers the Baltimore Peninsula development. The developer is obligated to provide or raise at least \$19 million over 20 years, to be managed by the South Baltimore 7 (SB7) Coalition. These funds are included, not because they will be managed by anyone but SB7, but because the projects they will support align with and further the RMB Plan.	\$19,000,000	\$10,000,000
<b>Ecosystem Services Credits</b>	The Clean Water Act imposes strict water quality goals for local governments, state and federal agencies, and other major institutions. Across the region, these organizations have struggled to find ways to meet these obligations at economically efficient scales. But RMB can provide water quality, stormwater volume, and other urgently-needed regulatory compliance at a large scale with a low credit price. RMB has already raised more than \$12 million in the past year for wetland restoration that provides documentable water quality improvements, and has the potential to provide tens (or perhaps hundreds) of millions of dollars more.	\$50,000,000	\$12,000,000
<b>Beneficial Reuse of Dredge Material</b>	The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) needs to remove enough soil from the Harbor channels to fill M&T Bank Stadium twice each year, at a cost to the taxpayer of \$20 million. Meanwhile, the largest expense for wetland restoration will be the soil required to complete such projects. This creates an opportunity for the beneficial reuse of millions of dollars worth of tested dredge material that would otherwise take up valuable space at containment facilities. This will not only support the port economy and save money for taxpayers; it will further lower the cost of ecosystem services credits. These wetlands will then provide free encapsulation of any contaminated material along the shoreline (usually a major project cost that RMB will get for free). They also provide resiliency benefits, which in turn become recreational amenities and economic development opportunities.	\$5,000,000	\$2,000,000
<b>Value Capture</b>	Across the country, projects like the Atlanta Beltline used value capture techniques to fund critical quality of life improvements, paid for from the value they generate. These have developed a bad name locally, in part because State law makes it difficult to create district- or community-based TIFs (as opposed to project-based TIFs tied to one large development project). This is something that project members may want to discuss with their elected officials. It is worth noting that state law does allow these funds to be used for affordable housing and parks, and that the Port Covington TIF that applies to Baltimore Peninsula has supported the creation of both.	\$20,000,000	\$1,000,000
<b>Revenue Generation</b>	RMB has the potential to generate revenue from its own success. This can come from the leasing of restaurants and other retail space, or through branding strategies such as requiring vendors to use only private label bottled water. While this will not fund large capital projects, it will help defray the cost of operations and maintenance. In practice, many of these funds may accrue to BCRP, who will in turn need to decide how best to allocate them.	\$500,000	\$0

Stakeholder Projects			RMB Projects		RMB Equity Investments	
Parks/Trails	Programs	Economic Development	Parks/Trails	MBRI	Economic Development	Programs
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X	X				
			X	X		
			X	X		
			X		X	
	X					X



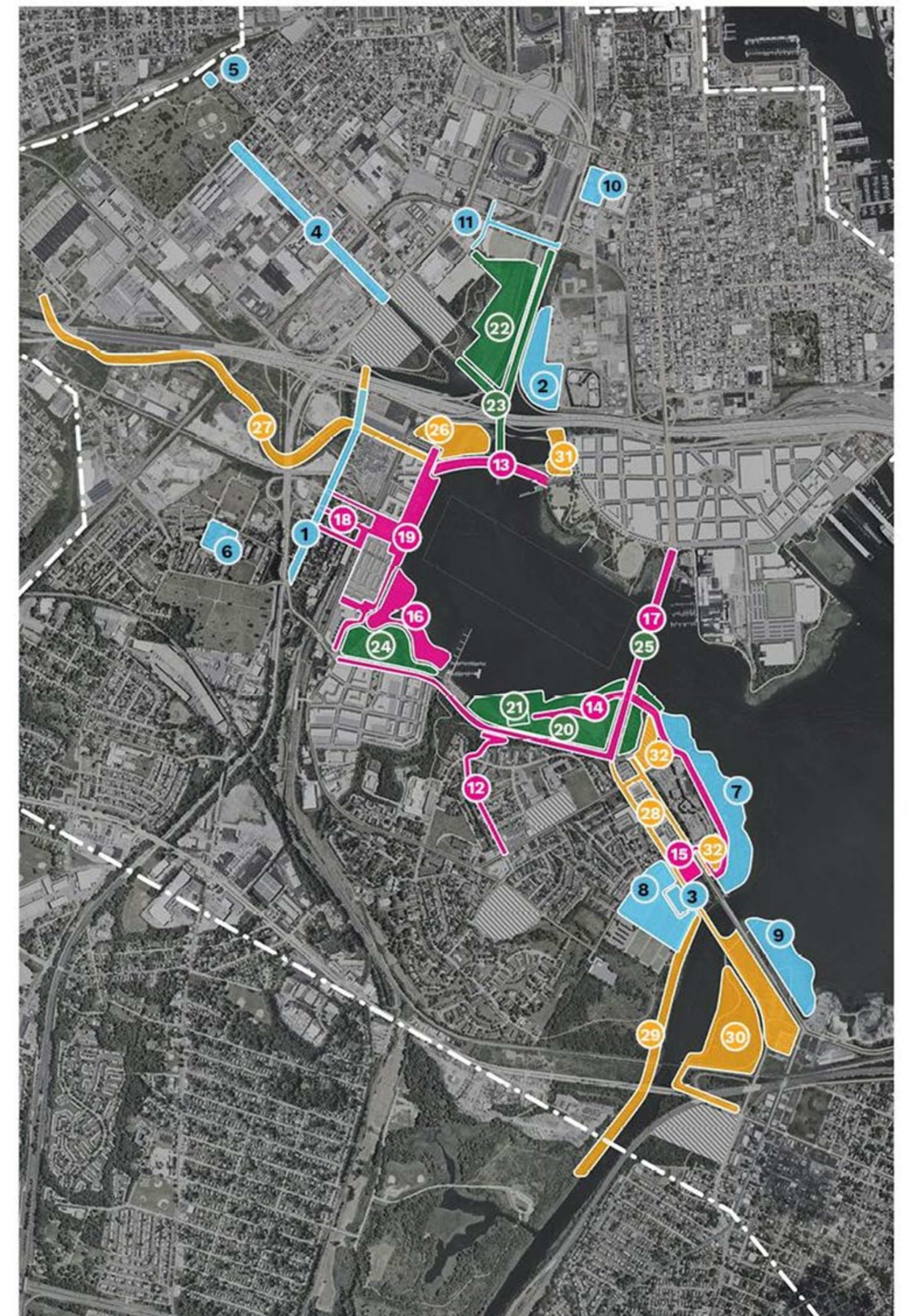


2

## PHASING STRATEGY

### RMB Parkshed Projects

#	Project Name	Project Type
1	Annapolis Road Quick-Build Traffic Calming	RMB
2	BGE MBRI Phase 1 Resiliency Berm	
3	BGE Ripken Field	
4	Bush Street Cycle Track	
5	Carroll Park Rec Center	
6	Florence Cummins Park Phase 1	
7	Harbor Hospital MBRI Phase 1 Wetland	
8	Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center	
9	Patapsco Site 5a MBRI Phase 1 Wetland	
10	Solo Gibbs Park Phase 1	
11	Warner/Stockholm Streets Gwynns Falls Trail Connection	
<b>Total Cost</b> (5 Year Escalation Applied)		\$124 million (plus stakeholder projects)
12	Cherry Hill Neighborhood Connector Trail	RMB
13	East-West Pedestrian Bridge	
14	Middle Branch Park Trail	
15	Native Plant Nursery	
16	Smith Cove MBRI Wetlands Phase 2 & Foot Bridge	
17	Waterview Ave. & Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Phase 1	
18	Westport Complete Streets	
19	Westport Waterfront Park	
<b>Total Cost</b> (5 Year Escalation Applied)		
20	Middle Branch Park	RMB
21	Middle Branch Park Boathouse	
22	Ridgely's Cove MBRI Phase 3 Wetlands	
23	Ridgely's Cove Over-Water Boardwalk Trail	
24	Smith Cove Park	
25	Waterview Ave. & Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Phase 2	
<b>Total Cost</b> (5 Year Escalation Applied)		\$200 million (plus stakeholder projects)
26	Black Sox Park	RMB
27	Gwynns Falls Stream Valley Trail Connector	
28	Hanover / Potee Street Corridor Improvements	
29	Patapsco River Connector Trail	
30	Reedbird Island Park Improvements	
31	Swann Landing Boathouse	
32	Waterfront Parking Lots Greening & Development	
<b>Total Cost</b> (5 Year Escalation Applied)		\$125 million (plus stakeholder projects)



## PHASING STRATEGY





3

## PERMITTING STRATEGY



1. Identify early - win projects as standalone improvements, for permitting evaluation and approval.
2. Where possible, submit one application for multiple sites under a single Tidal Wetlands License.
3. Provide regular updates to Joint Evaluation Committee to identify and address agency concerns.





4

## MANAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY

### DECISION MATRIX

Which operational model is right for the RMB initiative?

MATRIX KEY

Models under consideration:

- M1 = Embedded within SBGP
- M2 = Program of SBGP
- M3 = Incubated into an independent Conservancy by SBGP

Factors important to this decision

Rank (from 0 to 3) of each factor from nice to have to necessary for good management.

- Need to have
- Really nice to have
- Nice to have

Score (from 0 to 3) of models for each of the decision-making factors.

Does the model meet need/criteria:

















- 0 = not at all
- 1 = fairly well (can deal with it, but it's not ideal)
- 2 = close to ideal
- 3 = ideal

Factors and Rank	models		
	M1	M2	M3
Community representation in leadership/governance	1	2	3
Incorporates robust input from local stakeholders on new structure	2	2	3
Potential for participation from local orgs at the decision making level	2	2	3
Can coordinate programming in coordination with local orgs	3	3	3
Greater diversity in staff across the board	1	2	3
Built-in senior leadership involvement from City government	3	3	3
Ability to clarify roles and responsibilities from City vs. management entity	2	2	3
Fundraising capacity/potential	1	2	3
Ability to own/control land	1	1	0
Needs robust pipeline of executable projects	2	2	1
Autonomy in decision making	1	2	3
Includes entire geography of RMB	2	2	3
Dedicated significant funding source beyond casino and SB7 revenue	0	0	1
Joint venture partnerships with public and privates organizations	3	3	2
Legislated construct to manage geography	1	1	3
Support from public and private concessionary capital providers	1	1	1
Experience with capital projects	2	2	1
Leads programming focused on the waterfront	2	3	3
Distributed leadership	1	2	3
<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>97</b>

1. Identify early - win projects that need to be completed as standalone improvements.
2. Hire or designate a RMB program manager.
3. Reconvene updated RMB Committees & schedule regular briefings.



# REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

-  Middle Branch Loop Trail
-  Neighborhood Connectors
-  Complete Streets
-  Water Trails
-  Water Access Stops
-  African American Heritage Site
-  Future Development Opportunity
-  Middle Branch Park
-  Event Lawn
-  Event Pavilion
-  Hilltop Playground
-  Boathouse and Kayak Launch
-  Smith Cove Boardwalk
-  Woodland Playground
-  East-West Bridge
-  East-West Bridge Landing
-  Ridgely's Cove Boardwalk

 0.25 mile

