

LIVING ON THE AVENUE

MAKING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ON LIBERTY HEIGHTS AVENUE

BALTIMORE, MD



Earth
series



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
ARCH 700 | SEMESTER REPORT - FALL 2024

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our semester focused on supporting Baltimore neighborhoods through targeted homeownership programs, grants, and loans aimed at fostering stability and growth. By building partnerships with local organizations, we seek to enhance community infrastructure and create lasting, positive change. Drawing inspiration from success stories in other Baltimore neighborhoods, we analyzed how these initiatives could be tailored to meet the unique needs of Liberty Heights Avenue. Potential collaborations, particularly with local schools, businesses, and community groups, offer opportunities to leverage existing resources for greater impact. A special shoutout to our collaborator, Cheron Jones, whose involvement underscores the importance of community-driven partnerships in achieving shared goals.

PROJECT SCALE

Liberty Heights Avenue: (3.3) Miles

Primarily east-west corridor running from Druid Hill Park all the way up to Baltimore County

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

*Rejuvenation of five major nodes on Liberty Heights Avenue
Incorporation of various design strategies: Adaptive Reuse, Selective Demolition, Sustainability*

PROJECT PROCESS

- 1. Initial Site Visit to explore the corridor in three sections (Image of Initial Site Visit Scope)*
- 2. Documentation of Issues/experiences found from initial visit*
- 3. Engaged with Healthy Neighborhoods and local community members for more in depth discussion of issues/opportunities for improvement on the corridor (3 nodes identified)*
- 4. Further analysis and scheme development for corridor improvement (2 more nodes identified, 5 nodes total)*
- 5. Site Visit with Healthy Neighborhoods*
- 6. Final Presentation and Report*

STUDIO FACULTY

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Fall 2024 | Arch700



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We recognize the generous support for this studio of:

Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
*Maryland Department of Housing &
Community Development*

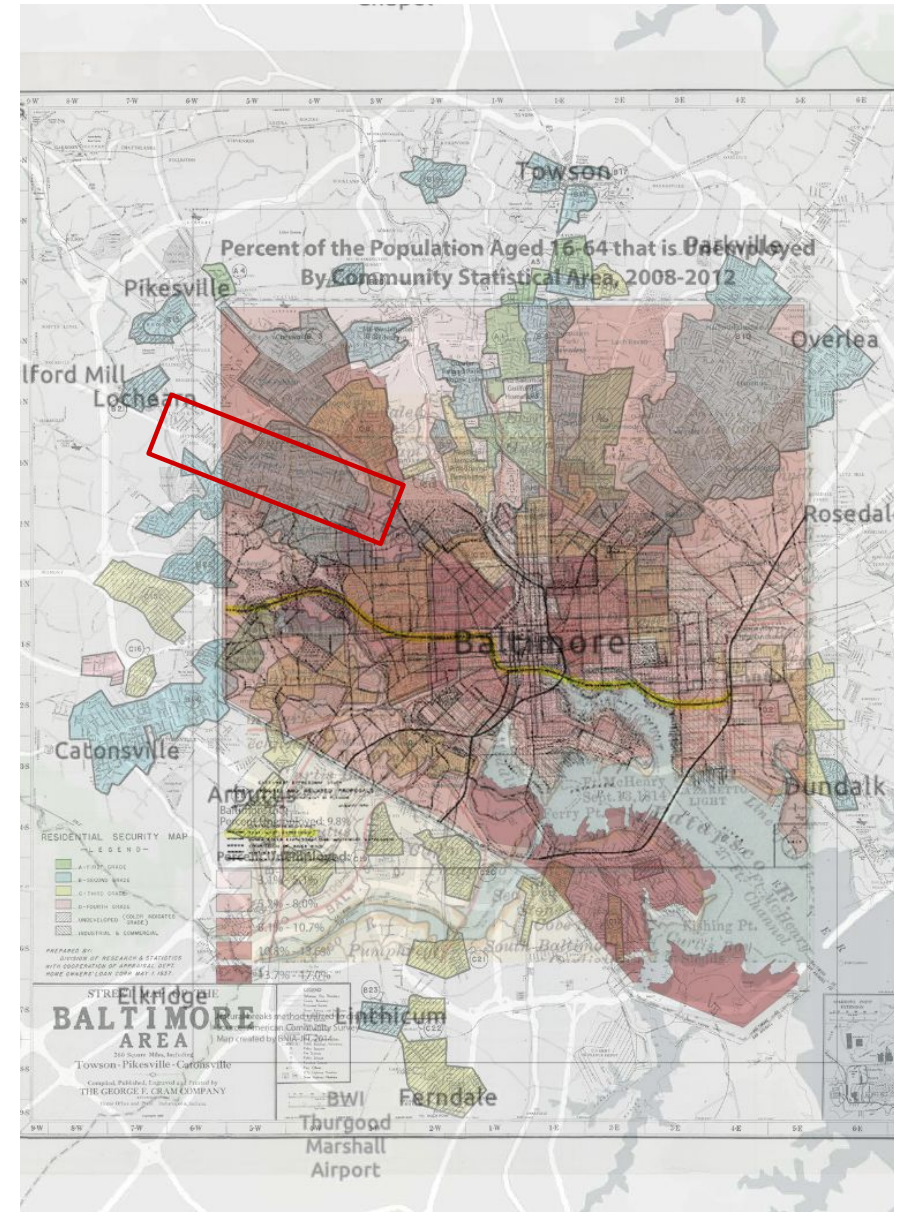
Carol Carol Gilbert, Assistant Secretary

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Site Location



HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS INC.



Students join Healthy Neighborhoods Inc. for a site visit, learning about the area's history, transformation, and future potential.



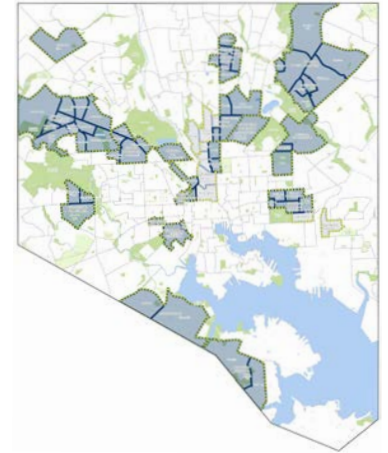
Students engage in a thoughtful discussion with Baltimore City Council and Cheron Jones (right), Grand Administrator at Healthy Neighborhoods Inc., exploring the past, present, and future of the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor

HOW DOES HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS HELP?

Healthy Neighborhoods Inc. supports community revitalization by providing resources for homeowners and local stakeholders to improve housing conditions, strengthen neighborhoods, and promote long-term investment. Through initiatives like home renovation assistance, financial incentives, and community engagement programs, the organization fosters stable, attractive, and economically vibrant neighborhoods. Their efforts contribute to increasing property values, enhancing public spaces, and encouraging residents to take pride in their communities.

THEIR MISSION

Healthy Neighborhoods helps strong but undervalued neighborhoods increase home values, market their communities, create high standards for property improvement and forge strong connections among neighbors. Using its capacity to attract and invest public and private capital, HNI has improved neighborhoods throughout Baltimore City. Healthy Neighborhoods uses its capacities and relationships to bring capital on favorable terms to these Baltimore neighborhoods.



***Healthy Neighborhoods Inc.
Impact in Baltimore City***

COLLABORATORS

Cheron Jones serves as a Grants Administrator at Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc., where she plays a pivotal role in securing funding and supporting initiatives that empower communities across Baltimore. With years of experience working in urban neighborhoods, she has developed a strong understanding of how to connect financial support with impactful local initiatives.

This semester, Cheron worked closely with ARCH700 students and faculty on a project aimed at revitalizing the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor in Baltimore. Her knowledge of grant processes and her deep understanding of the local community provided critical insights that shaped the studio's approach to creating inclusive, sustainable, and community centered design solutions.

Cheron's ability to bridge the gap between funding resources and grassroots needs underscores her commitment to empowering neighborhoods and ensuring equitable growth. Her organizations contribution to this project reflect her passion for transforming Baltimore's historic corridors into vibrant and thriving community anchors.





From a vibrant center of Jewish worship to a new chapter reflecting the shifting demographics of Liberty Heights Avenue—this historic synagogue tells the story of Baltimore’s evolving communities



Unrest on Liberty Heights Avenue: A moment of turmoil during the 1968 Baltimore riots.

01 THE PAST

Liberty Heights Avenue in Baltimore has a rich and complex history, reflecting the city’s broader social and economic shifts. In the early 20th century, the corridor was a key transportation route, serviced by Baltimore’s streetcar network. The streetcars facilitated the development of residential neighborhoods and commercial hubs, connecting West Baltimore to the city’s downtown core. The avenue became a thriving corridor for middle-class communities, particularly Jewish families who established businesses and places of worship along the route. By the mid-20th century, Liberty Heights was home to several synagogues, reflecting the significant Jewish presence in the area. Over time, as suburbanization and demographic shifts occurred, many residents moved to the suburbs, with those changes many synagogues were converted into churches to serve the new African American residents. The area also witnessed racial tensions and civil unrest, particularly during the 1968 riots following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. These riots led to widespread damage to businesses along Liberty Heights Avenue and accelerated patterns of economic decline and disinvestment in the corridor.



Liberty Heights Avenue bustling with streetcar activity, a glimpse into Baltimore’s transit-driven past - now a relic of Baltimore’s growth





Limited retail options and a lack of public amenities along Liberty Heights Avenue contribute to reduced street activity and a diminished sense of community engagement.

02 THE PRESENT

Liberty Heights Avenue today reflects both the resilience and challenges of West Baltimore. While the corridor remains a vital thoroughfare, it faces issues such as aging infrastructure, economic disinvestment, and limited retail and amenities. The area around Lake Ashburton, once a scenic community hub, has experienced environmental concerns and maintenance challenges.

The 2015 unrest following Freddie Gray's death further impacted businesses and public perception of the corridor, echoing the struggles seen after the 1968 riots. Many commercial spaces remain vacant, and residents continue to advocate for improved services, grocery stores, and economic investment. Despite these challenges, ongoing revitalization efforts aim to restore the corridor's vibrancy and address long-standing disparities.



With Lake Ashburton now a shallow, muddy puddle, residents are fed up with six-year-old reservoir project

After the DPW project closed the park, claimed nearly 800 trees, blew construction dust into their homes and, lately, rendered the lake a drained, mucky eyesore, this proud West Baltimore neighborhood wants answers from city officials.

Below: Tara Reddick and neighbor Jessica Pledge look across the street from Lake Ashburton, where reservoir tanks, debris and mud are the water that is now, after a storm.

The challenges facing Lake Ashburton along Liberty Heights Avenue reflect broader issues in the neighborhood, including economic decline and limited resources and opportunities.



Liberty Heights Avenue during the 2015 riots, a moment of turmoil that exposed deeper community challenges



Landscape Figure/Ground of Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor

DENSE IN PARK AREAS, SCARCITY IN VEGETATIVE COVER ALONG THE CORRIDOR

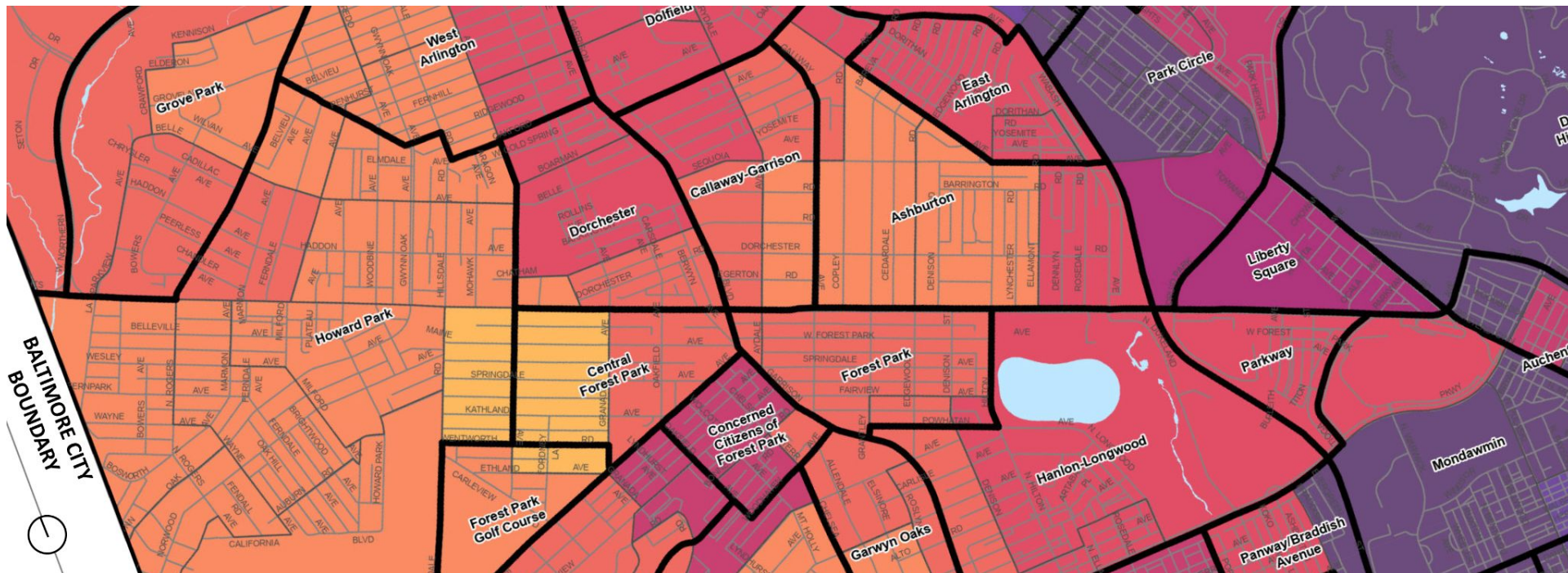
The Liberty Heights Avenue corridor faces a noticeable scarcity of vegetation, particularly along its streetscapes and residential areas. While greenery is more abundant near parks and golf courses, such as Hanlon Park and Forest Park Golf Course, the main corridor itself lacks adequate tree cover and pedestrian-friendly landscaping. This disparity creates an environment that feels harsh and unwelcoming, especially during extreme weather conditions. The lack of shade trees contributes to the urban heat island effect, making sidewalks uncomfortable for pedestrians in the summer. Additionally, minimal vegetation reduces air quality and stormwater absorption, increasing flooding risks. Without adequate greenery, walkability suffers, discouraging pedestrian activity and limiting opportunities for a more vibrant, community-friendly streetscape. Addressing this issue through strategic tree planting and green infrastructure improvements could greatly enhance the corridor's livability and environmental resilience. For those living in the area, the lack of vegetation also means fewer natural cooling effects, leading to higher energy costs as homes rely more on air conditioning. Greenery plays a vital role in stormwater management, and its absence increases runoff and flooding risks, worsening infrastructure conditions. Adding trees and vegetation would dramatically improve the corridor's livability.



Scarce vegetative cover along Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor (Typical)

More shade would create a more comfortable, pedestrian-friendly environment, encouraging outdoor activity and strengthening community interactions. Increased greenery would also help reduce pollution, mitigate heat, and enhance property values, fostering a healthier and more attractive neighborhood. Investing in urban greening initiatives could transform Liberty Heights Avenue into a safer, more welcoming space for residents and visitors alike.





This map, based on the CodeMap of Baltimore, visually represents income disparities along the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor through color variations.

		Median Sales Price	Sales Price Variance	Foreclosures as % of sales	% of Land either Vacant Building or Vacant Lot	% Owner-Occupied	% Residential Properties >\$10k Permits	Housing Units per Acre
A	30	\$482,888	0.06	0%	0%	69%	0%	11
B	49	\$306,949	0.46	2%	3%	16%	8%	67
C	61	\$287,342	0.36	0%	2%	57%	5%	42
D	96	\$211,471	0.39	1%	1%	66%	5%	10
E	71	\$184,693	0.47	1%	4%	23%	6%	26

HOUSING TYPOLOGY ON THE CORRIDOR

The Liberty Heights Avenue corridor reflects stark income disparities, as shown in the CodeMap of Baltimore. Lower-income areas, represented in darker red and purple, include Liberty Square, Parkway, and Mondawmin, which face economic disinvestment and a lack of amenities. Middle-income neighborhoods like Ashburton, Callaway-Garrison, and Forest Park show more stability but still lack major retail hubs.

Higher-income areas, such as Howard Park and Central Forest Park near the golf course, have better-maintained infrastructure and larger homes. These income contrasts impact commercial investment, walkability, and overall development, with lower-income areas facing more vacant properties and underdeveloped streetscapes. Addressing these disparities through targeted economic and infrastructure improvements could create a more balanced and thriving corridor.

The Liberty Heights Avenue corridor reflects Baltimore's broader economic disparities, with wealthier pockets near parks and suburban-like areas, while central and eastern sections experience higher poverty rates. Addressing these income gaps through targeted investment, infrastructure improvements, and business incentives could enhance economic opportunities and quality of life along the corridor.

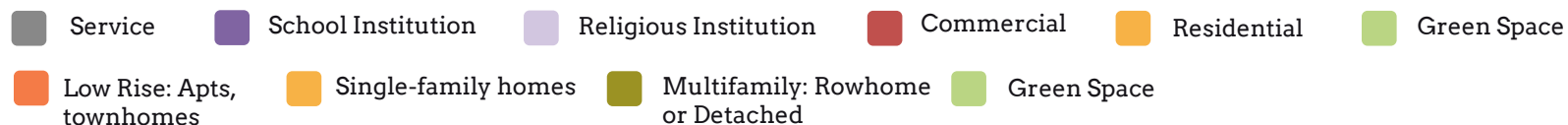
The Liberty Heights Avenue corridor is a key connector in a diverse urban landscape, but it faces challenges such as uneven walkability, limited retail, and disparities in vegetation. The varying street grid patterns indicate different levels of accessibility, with some neighborhoods being more pedestrian-friendly than others. Addressing these differences through urban planning initiatives could improve connectivity and overall quality of life.

CURRENT LAND - USE



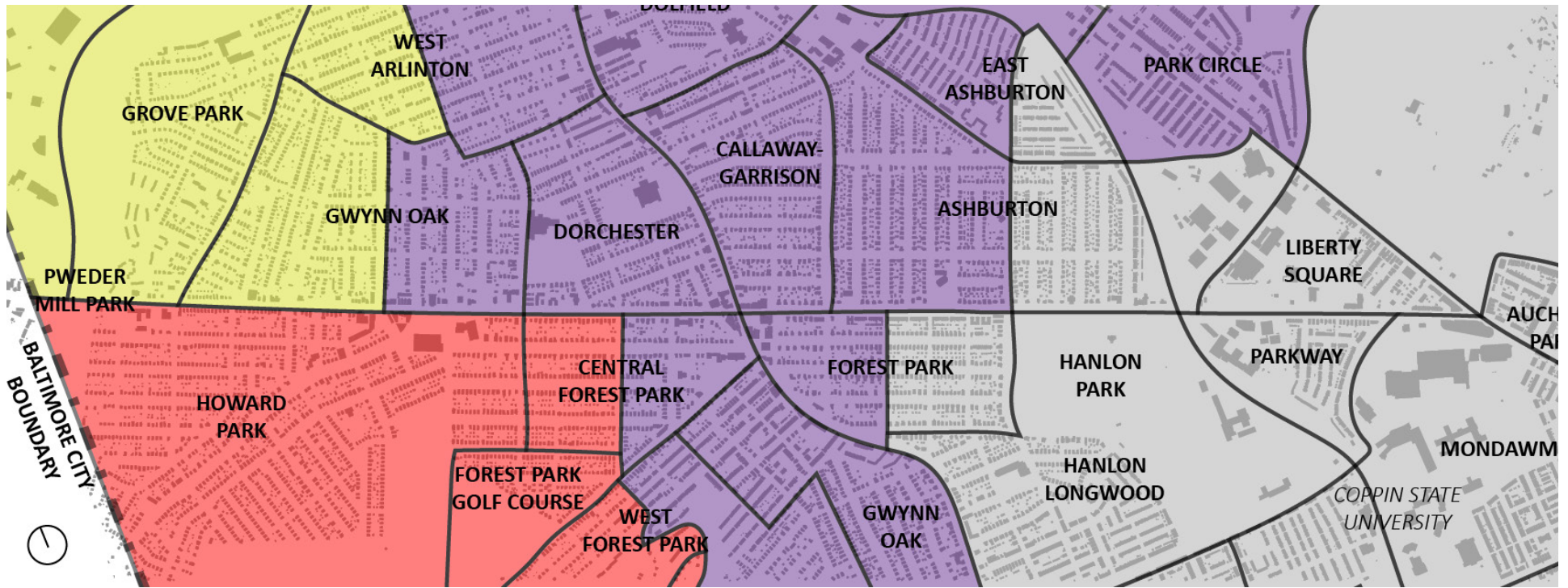
A transition can be identified east of the industrial rail line, where Mondawmin Mall and BCCC reside, going west past Hanlon Lake where patches of residential neighborhoods developed. Of the housing stock available, the attached rowhomes east of the corridor also transition to large single-family estates moving west.

CURRENT LAND-USE (RESIDENTIAL)



The majority of the neighborhood is single-family homes that cater to specific groups. Thus, can limit housing for other income levels.





This map provides an insightful look at the districts surrounding the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor in Baltimore. The color-coded regions highlight distinct neighborhoods, each contributing to the corridor's identity.

DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS:

The corridor runs through a mix of residential and institutional areas, including historically significant neighborhoods such as Ashburton, Howard Park, and Forest Park. The presence of Coppin State University and major parks (Hanlon Park, Forest Park Golf Course) suggests areas of higher activity.

STREET GRID VARIABILITY

The layout varies from a traditional grid (in Liberty Square and Parkway) to a more suburban, curvilinear street pattern in areas like West Arlington and Forest Park. This suggests differences in urban density, with some areas having a tighter, more walkable grid and others favoring auto-oriented development.

COMMERCIAL VS. RESIDENTIAL

The corridor appears to cut through primarily residential neighborhoods, with fewer designated commercial hubs. The lack of commercial density explains the corridor's challenges maintaining vibrant retail spaces.

GREEN SPACE DISTRIBUTION

Parks and golf courses concentrate greenery, but residential areas have less tree coverage, which aligns with concerns about pedestrian-friendliness. Areas like Howard Park and West Forest Park have more open space, while others, like Callaway-Garrison, are denser and may lack sufficient greenery.



Nearly all existing bike routes are situated perpendicular to Liberty Heights. However, several routes are inconsistent and don't provide adequate infrastructure to traverse safely. There is an opportunity to connect east to west for micro-mobility users that is also safe.

— ONSTREET BIKE FACILITIES
(INCLUDING BIKE LANS, SHARROWS & SIGN ROUTES)
— ROUTES COMMONLY USED BY CYCLISTS
— SIDEPATH

BIKE ROUTES AND THE CHALLENGES FOR PEDESTRIANS

The Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) corridor lacks a well-integrated and continuous bike route network, making cycling challenging and unsafe for many residents. While some adjacent streets and parks offer limited bike-friendly paths, the corridor itself has minimal dedicated lanes or bike infrastructure. High traffic volumes, inconsistent road conditions, and a lack of protected bike lanes discourage cycling as a viable transportation option.

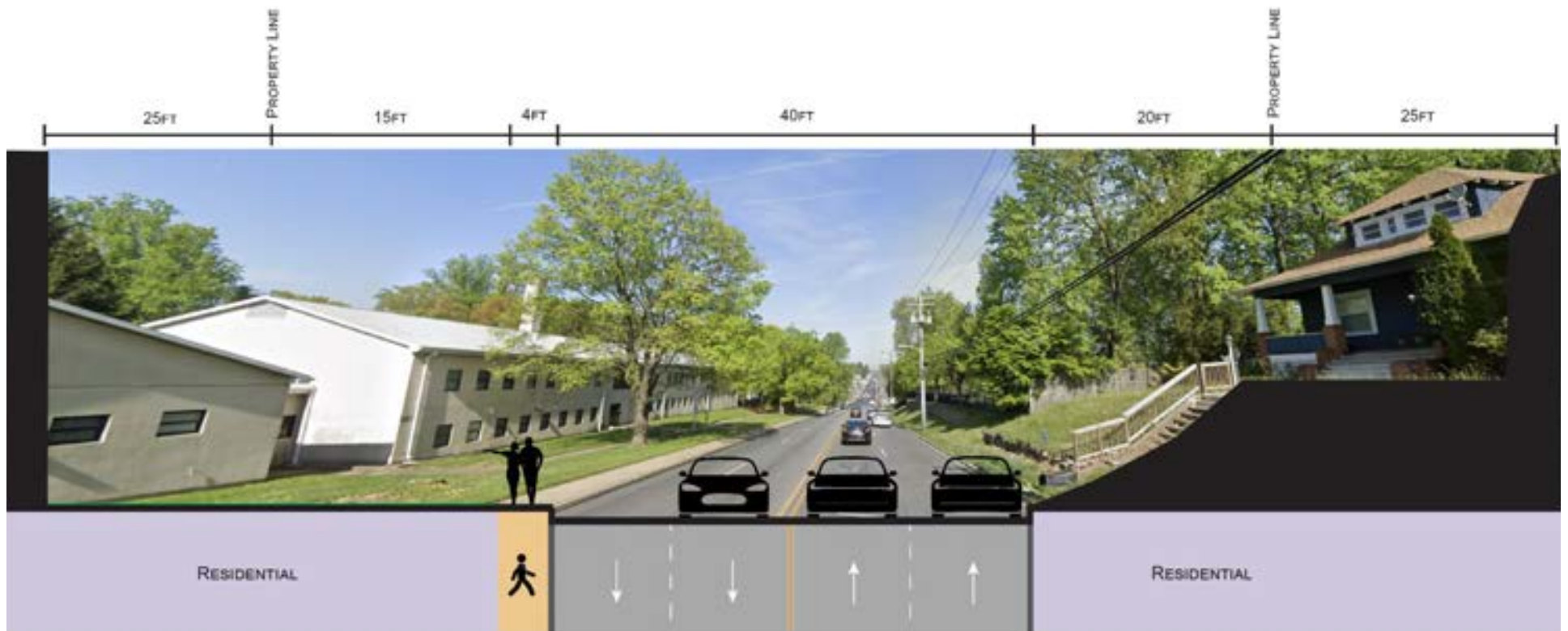
Despite these challenges, there is significant potential to enhance bike accessibility. Implementing dedicated bike lanes, shared-use paths, and improved signage could promote safer cycling while encouraging alternative transportation. Connecting bike routes to nearby parks, transit hubs, and commercial districts would also provide greater mobility options for residents, fostering a more sustainable and active corridor.

The development of biking infrastructure along Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor is essential for promoting sustainable transportation, enhancing accessibility, and improving safety for cyclists. By prioritizing dedicated bike lanes, secure bike parking, and improved crossings at key intersections, the corridor can become a model for urban cycling.

In addition, integrating bike-share programs and ensuring connectivity with other transportation networks will encourage more residents and commuters to consider cycling as a viable mode of travel. With continued investment and community engagement, the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor can support healthier lifestyles, reduce traffic congestion, and contribute to environmental sustainability in the long term.



Liberty Heights Ave. is an important spine connecting neighborhoods but has a poor public realm



Inconsistent street edges and sidewalk conditions pose safety concerns for pedestrians and passerby alike



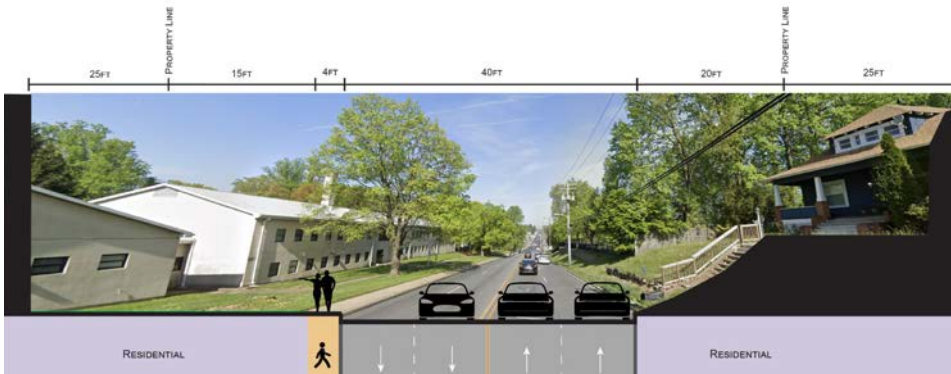
Missing Nodes

The missing nodes along the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor refer to the gaps in essential spaces or facilities that could enhance the overall functionality and appeal of the area for a wide range of users, especially cyclists. These nodes are critical locations that serve as key destinations or connections, but currently, the corridor lacks some vital elements that would make it more inclusive and engaging.

One of the key challenges is the lack of diverse programs and activities along the corridor. A vibrant streetscape should offer a range of options that cater to various user groups, from cyclists and pedestrians to families, tourists, and local residents. However, the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor currently lacks spaces for recreation, leisure, and community engagement.

This absence makes it difficult to attract a broad demographic, reducing the corridor's potential to become a truly inclusive and dynamic public space. For example, there could be more spaces for outdoor fitness programs, pop-up markets, public art installations, or social events that would not only enhance the cultural and social fabric of the area but also make it a more attractive destination for cyclists and others.

Addressing these missing nodes and challenges requires a comprehensive planning approach that prioritizes connectivity, diverse programming, and inclusive infrastructure to create a safe, vibrant, and dynamic space for all users.



Residential area

Inconsistent Sidewalks

The sidewalk infrastructure along the Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) corridor is highly inconsistent, reflecting disparities in urban investment and maintenance. In some areas, particularly near parks, institutions, and commercial nodes, sidewalks are wider, better maintained, and equipped with pedestrian-friendly features such as crosswalks and street lighting. However, in many residential and underinvested sections, sidewalks are narrow, cracked, or even missing, creating accessibility challenges.

Poor sidewalk conditions discourage walkability, making it difficult for residents—especially seniors, children, and individuals with disabilities—to navigate the corridor safely. The lack of continuous sidewalks and pedestrian buffers increases safety risks, particularly in high-traffic areas. Additionally, inadequate lighting and street furniture contribute to an uninviting pedestrian environment. Addressing these inconsistencies through improved sidewalk infrastructure, ADA compliance, and streetscape enhancements would make Liberty Heights Avenue a safer and more walkable corridor, encouraging local activity and economic development.



Commercial area



Street sections along the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor that show the lack of street trees and no parallel parking which provides a safer pedestrian realm





Historic Foundations, Future Possibilities: Once vibrant landmarks, vacant sites like the Ambassador District hold rich history and immense potential for revitalization, offering opportunities for cultural, commercial, and community-driven reuse.

Vacant Sites

The Liberty Heights Avenue corridor has several vacant and underutilized sites that present opportunities for new development, adaptive reuse and revitalization. Many of these properties, including historic buildings like the Ambassador Theater and St. Mark's Church, have the potential to be transformed into community assets, fostering economic growth and cultural enrichment.

The Ambassador Theater, once a thriving entertainment hub, could be restored as a cultural venue or mixed-use space. The St. Marks Church, previously an educational center, could be repurposed for co-working, business incubation, or arts programming. Additionally, vacant commercial storefronts along the corridor could be revitalized into local markets, small business spaces, or affordable housing, driving economic growth and community engagement.

By repurposing these sites, Liberty Heights Avenue could regain its vibrancy while preserving its historical character. Adaptive reuse strategies—such as converting old theaters into mixed-use spaces or transforming vacant lots into public gathering places—could stimulate local investment, attract businesses, and enhance the community's quality of life. With strategic planning, these underutilized assets can become catalysts for economic and social revitalization.



Ambassador Theater stands vacant, a relic of Liberty Heights Avenue's past, symbolizing both its legacy and the challenges of revitalization.



03

BEST PRACTICES

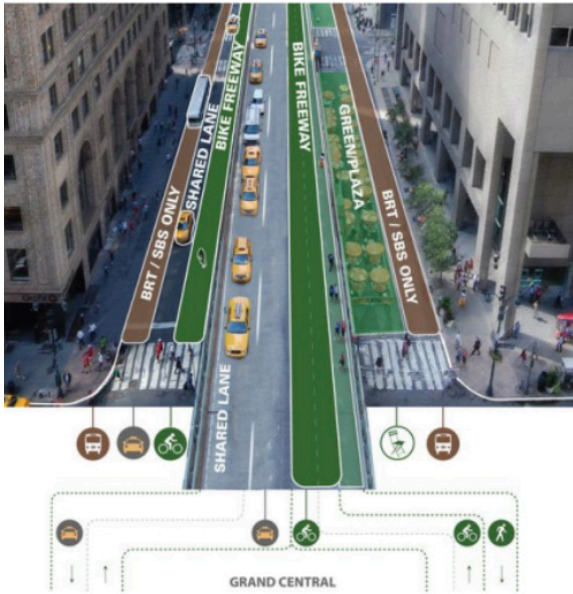
Proven strategies and principles that create sustainable, functional, and inclusive communities. These practices are informed by research, real-world case studies, and community engagement to address challenges like connectivity, housing, public space activation, and economic development.

By implementing best practices—such as Complete Streets, placemaking, and adaptive reuse—cities can enhance livability, support diverse populations, and promote long-term resilience in the built environment. They serve as a roadmap for equitable and strategic development, ensuring that growth is intentional, inclusive, and responsive to community needs and help create the ideal of “LIVE WORK PLAY”

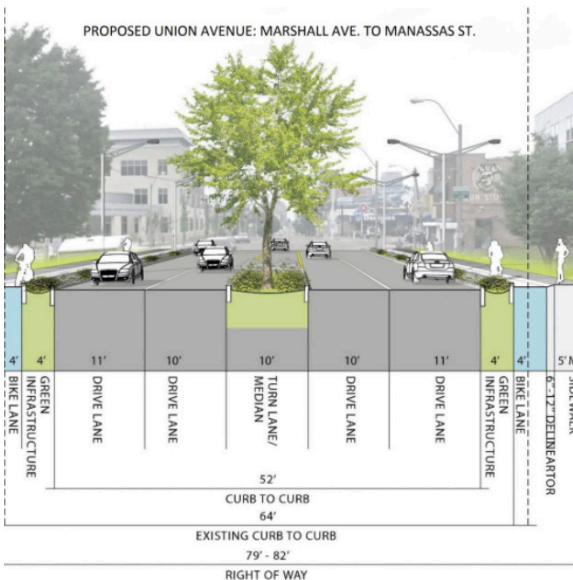
IDENTIFYING BEST PRACTICES FOR LHA CORRIDOR

Our analysis of the Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) Corridor provided critical insights into existing challenges and opportunities, allowing us to select the best practices that would have the greatest impact. By examining factors such as disconnected parks, lack of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, limited diverse housing, and underutilized historic spaces, we identified targeted strategies to address these issues. For example, the corridor’s fragmented green spaces and mobility barriers led us to adopt Complete Streets and Linear Development to enhance connectivity.

The lack of cultural and commercial diversity informed our emphasis on Placemaking and Adaptive Reuse, ensuring that revitalized spaces like the Ambassador Theater become vibrant hubs for the community. Additionally, gaps in housing options and access to fresh food drove the selection of Diverse Housing and Healthy Living as core principles to support long-term neighborhood stability. By aligning best practices with the corridor’s specific needs, we ensure a thoughtful, data-driven approach that transforms Liberty Heights Avenue into a more inclusive, connected, and resilient urban corridor.



Precedent: Park Avenue, NYC



Precedent: Northern VA

LINEAR DEVELOPMENT

Linear development ensures that growth along the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor happens in a continuous, cohesive manner rather than in disconnected pockets. By focusing on strategic infill development, mixed-use spaces and an improved public environment, the corridor becomes an active, vibrant urban spine that supports housing, businesses, and public spaces.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR LINEAR DEVELOPMENT INCLUDE:

Mixed-Use Growth – Encouraging residential, commercial, and cultural spaces along the corridor ensures a diverse and engaging streetscape.

Transit-Oriented Design – Positioning new developments near public transit and enhancing pedestrian access reduces car dependency and improves connectivity.

Gradual Density Increase – Introducing mid-rise and mixed-income housing options supports population growth while maintaining a human-scaled, walkable environment.

Through smart, connected growth, the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor evolves into a well-integrated, continuous urban fabric that enhances accessibility and economic vitality.

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets ensure that Liberty Heights Avenue is designed for all users—pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists—creating a safe and efficient transportation network.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR COMPLETE STREETS INCLUDE:

Dedicated Bike & Pedestrian Lanes – Safe, protected pathways encourage walking and cycling as viable transportation options.

Traffic Calming Measures – Crosswalks, median islands, and reduced-speed zones enhance pedestrian safety and improve street usability.

Public Transit Integration – Enhancing bus stops, adding shelters, and improving accessibility ensures efficient and equitable transit options.

By adopting Complete Streets principles, Liberty Heights Avenue becomes a more accessible, sustainable, and multimodal corridor that prioritizes people over cars.



Precedent: Baltimore, MD

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking turns the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor into a people-focused, interactive, and inviting environment. It ensures that spaces are not just functional but also engaging and culturally rich.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR PLACEMAKING INCLUDE:

Public Art & Identity – Murals, sculptures, and artistic interventions add character and reflect the community's spirit.

Community Gathering Spaces – Parks, plazas, and public squares encourage social interaction and outdoor activities.

Walkability & Safety Enhancements – Well-lit sidewalks, green buffers, and pedestrian crossings make the corridor more accessible and welcoming.

Placemaking fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens Liberty Heights Avenue as a lively, connected, and inclusive corridor.



Precedent: The High Line, New York

HEALTHY LIVING

Encouraging a healthy lifestyle along the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor ensures long-term well-being for residents by providing access to recreation, fresh food, and clean air.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY LIVING INCLUDE:

Green Spaces & Recreation – Enhancing parks, fitness trails, and outdoor activity areas supports physical and mental well-being.

Access to Fresh Food – Introducing walkable food markets, grocery stores, and urban agriculture initiatives ensures healthy food choices are available.

Air Quality & Sustainability – Expanding tree coverage, reducing traffic congestion, and promoting non-motorized transport contribute to a healthier environment.

With these efforts, the corridor becomes a model for active, sustainable, and health-conscious urban living.

By prioritizing access to fresh food, green spaces, and active transportation, the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor promotes a healthier lifestyle, reducing health disparities and fostering a more resilient community.



Precedent: An old JCPenney department store transformed into an innovative campus center. Austin, TX



Georgetown, DC

Small, medium, and large buildings are almost all a type of townhouse. Extra Large are typically commercial and located near to the south of M St.

ADAPTIVE RE-USE

Adaptive reuse transforms existing structures into functional, modern spaces while preserving the history and character of the corridor. By repurposing underutilized buildings, the corridor gains new cultural, commercial, and residential opportunities without extensive demolition or waste.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR ADAPTIVE RE-USE INCLUDE:

Revitalizing Historic Spaces – Projects like the reuse of the Ambassador Theater and the St. Mark's Church breathe new life into significant landmarks while maintaining their architectural identity.

Flexible Use Design – Spaces designed for multiple uses (e.g., coworking, retail, community events) ensure long-term viability and responsiveness to changing needs.

Sustainable Development – Retrofitting buildings with modern energy-efficient systems reduces environmental impact and operational costs.

Through adaptive reuse, Liberty Heights Avenue preserves its past while creating new opportunities for economic and cultural growth.

DIVERSE HOUSING

A mix of diverse housing options along the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor ensures that the area remains inclusive, accessible, and adaptable to the needs of residents from various income levels and lifestyles. Providing a range of housing types fosters economic and social diversity while supporting long-term neighborhood stability.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR DIVERSE HOUSING INCLUDE:

Mixed-Income & Affordable Housing – Incorporating a blend of market-rate, workforce, and affordable housing ensures that people of all income levels have a place to live.

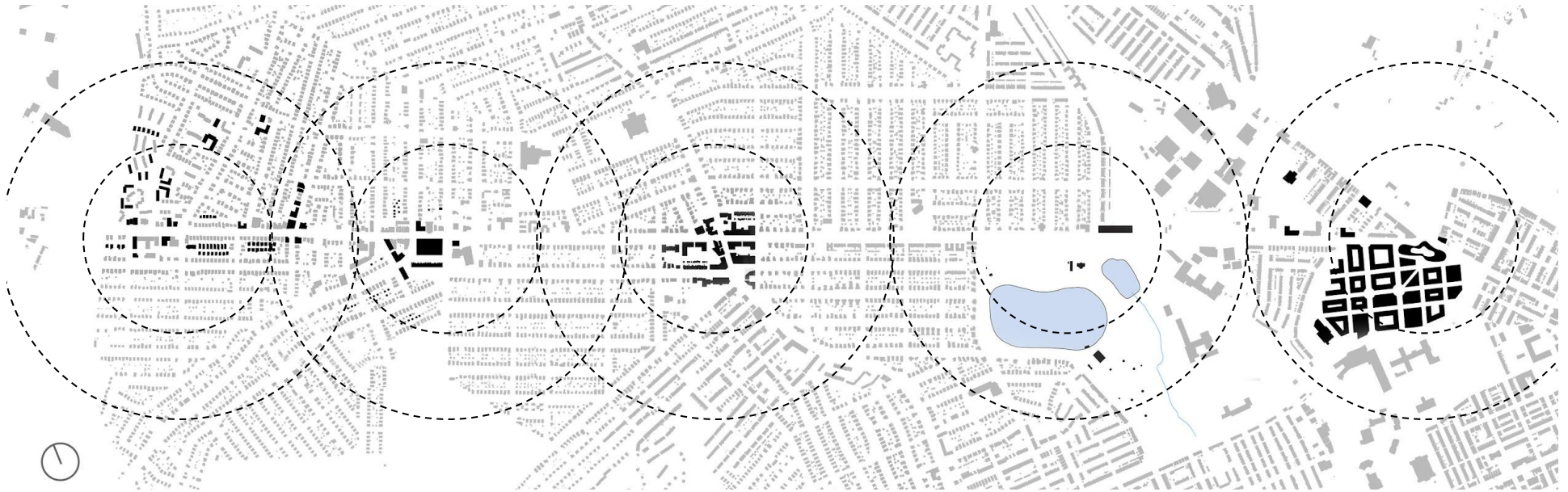
Varied Housing Typologies – Offering a mix of apartments, townhomes, senior housing, and live-work units accommodates different family sizes, ages, and work-from-home needs.

Transit-Oriented & Walkable Development – Locating housing near transit stops, commercial hubs, and public spaces enhances accessibility and reduces car dependency.

Adaptive Reuse for Housing – Converting underutilized buildings into residential units preserves historical character while meeting modern housing demand.

By integrating diverse housing options, Liberty Heights Avenue fosters an inclusive and resilient community where people of all backgrounds can live, work, and thrive.





Figure/Ground plan highlighting the proposed interventions along the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor

04

THE FUTURE

The future of the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor, envisions a revitalized space that blends adaptive reuse, green infrastructure, and community amenities. The proposed changes aim to address the current issues and transform the corridor into a vibrant, connected, and sustainable area.

An adaptive reuse of historic buildings will preserve the area's heritage while breathing new life into the corridor. By repurposing these structures, the design creates cultural and educational hubs, offering spaces for local businesses, art galleries, community events, or small-scale entrepreneurship. This approach not only preserves the identity of the corridor but also supports economic and social vibrancy. Integrating more green space along the corridor will enhance its aesthetic appeal, improve air quality, and create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Planting trees, adding landscaping, and creating green buffers will not only beautify the space but also offer ecological benefits, such as reducing heat island effects and promoting biodiversity. The design proposals prioritize diversity in programming by introducing a range of activities and spaces that cater to various age groups, interests, and cultural backgrounds, ensuring the corridor is welcoming and engaging for the entire community.

Overall, the design proposals set the stage for a more inclusive, sustainable, and dynamic future for the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor. Through adaptive reuse, enhanced green infrastructure, and active public spaces, the corridor has the potential to become a thriving, interconnected area that serves the needs of a diverse community.



 **EXISTING**

NODE 5: POWDERMILL GATEWAY	NODE 1: AMBASSADOR DISTRICT	NODE 2: GARRISON ROW	NODE 3: HANLON PARK	NODE 4: CROSSROADS VILLAGE: MONDAWMIN
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 **PROPOSED**



THE FUTURE AT A GLANCE:

Incorporating diverse programming, the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor will become a more inclusive space that fosters community engagement, supports local businesses, and attracts a wider variety of people. This approach ensures that the area isn't just a pass-through, but a dynamic, multi-functional destination that enhances the quality of life for everyone who uses it.

FIVE IDENTIFIED NODES

Node 5:

Powder Mill Gateway

Node 1:

The Ambassador District

Node 2:

Garrison Triangle

Node 3:

Hanlon Park

Node 4:

Crossroads Village
Mondawmin







Proposed Figure/Ground

05

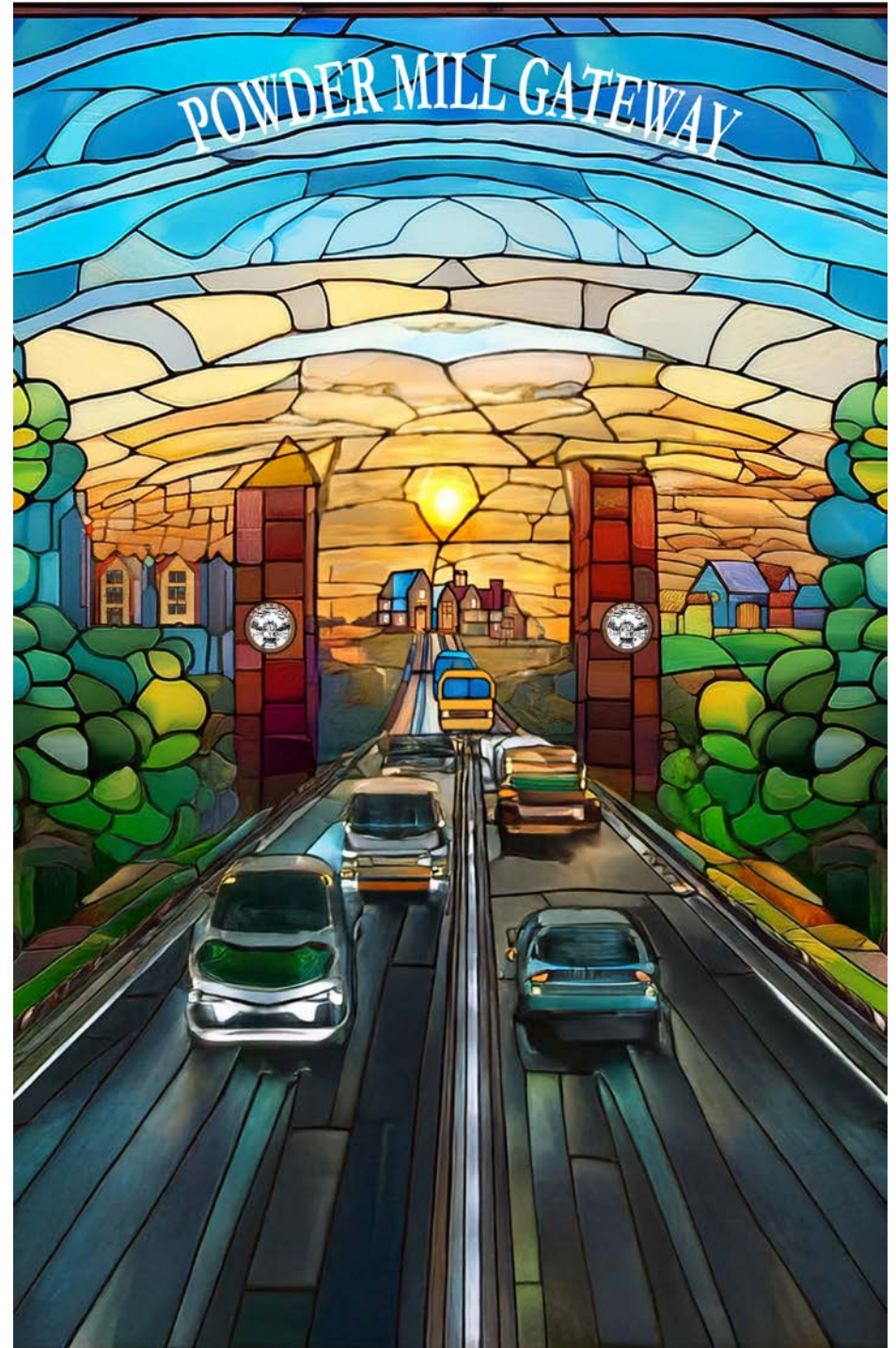
POWDER MILL GATEWAY

Powder Mill Gateway, serves as the westernmost gateway to the Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) Corridor and the Baltimore City boundary. However, despite its strategic location, it lacks the infrastructure, amenities, and identity needed to function as a true entryway into the corridor.

EXISTING CHALLENGES:

Throughout LHA, lack of mobility and monoculture of program create a disconnected and underutilized corridor. Narrow sidewalks, unsafe bike infrastructure, and an auto-oriented streetscape make mobility difficult, while limited housing diversity and public amenities fail to support a dynamic, livable environment.

At Powder Mill Gateway, these issues are intensified by food deserts, lack of access to green space, no sense of place, and vacant lots, preventing it from becoming an active, community-centered hub.





Proposed Land-use



Walkability to nearest amenity within the node (Existing)



Enhancing walkability along Liberty Heights Avenue—bringing amenities within reach to support a vibrant live-work-play community.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:

Identifying three key sites for intervention: Powder Mill Park, where improved accessibility and ecological restoration can activate public space; the N. Rogers Ave & Liberty Heights Ave intersection, a prime location for transit-oriented development; and the existing commercial node near Family Dollar, an opportunity for mixed-use revitalization. These sites serve as anchors for improving connectivity, economic activity, and community engagement.

THE VISION: REIMAGINING POWDER MILL GATEWAY

Our proposal enhances mobility, public space, and urban fabric by introducing Complete Streets, vegetative buffers, and new pedestrian pathways to improve connectivity. Powder Mill Park will be transformed with stream restoration, native vegetation, and an ecological center, creating spaces for recreation, education, and wellness. Vacant lots will be filled with diverse housing, retail, and community uses, while adaptive reuse preserves key structures and strengthens neighborhood identity.



Aerial view of existing vacant lots



Aerial view of proposed ADUs - provide diverse housing options for all income levels





The Places at Powder Mill Gateway



Existing Street Infrastructure - Milford Ave



Aerial Perspective: Trinity Church at N. Rogers Ave. (Before)



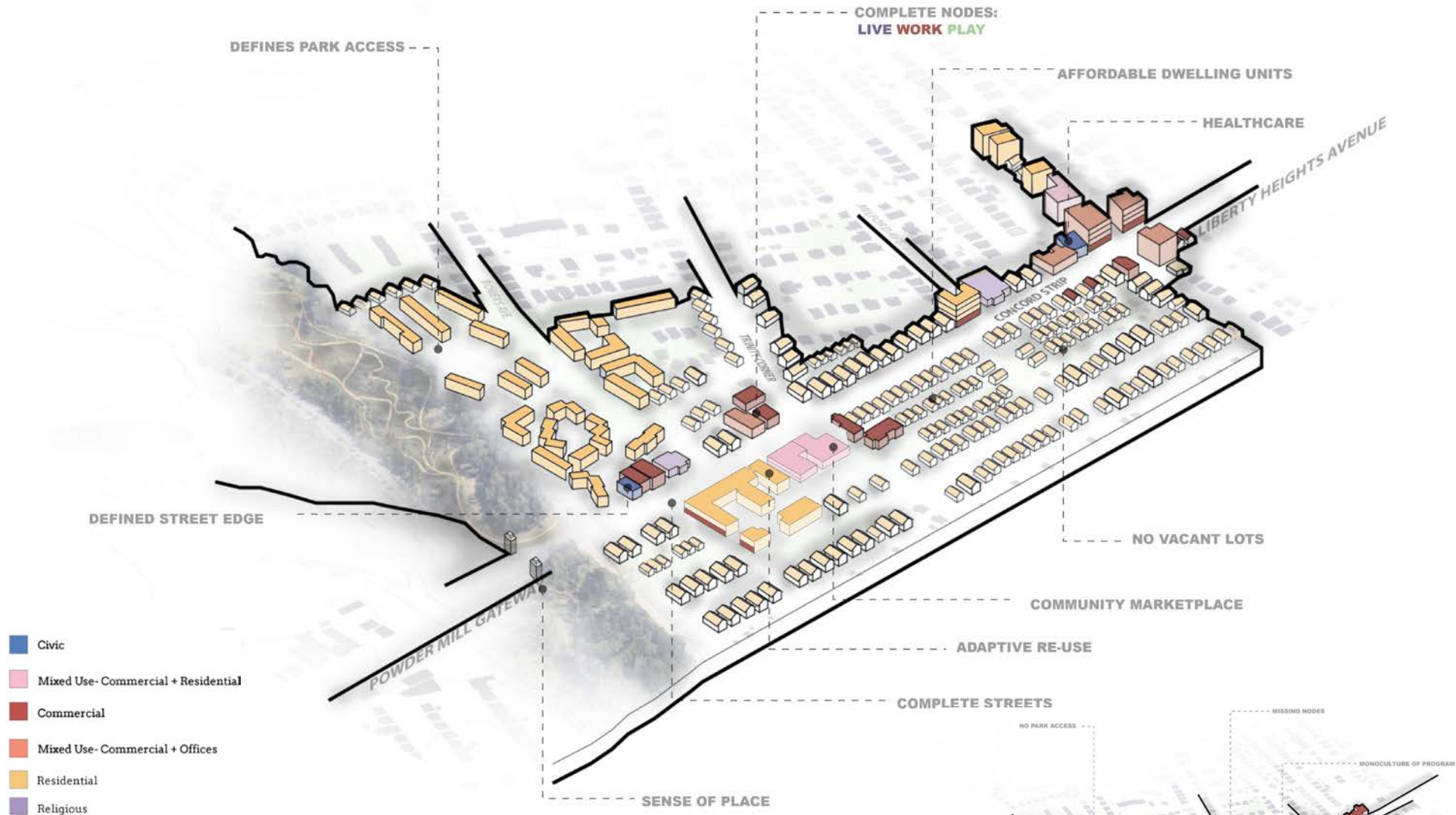
Proposed Street Infrastructure (Daytime) - Concord Strip (Milford Ave)



Aerial Perspective: Trinity Corner (Currently N. Rogers Ave.)



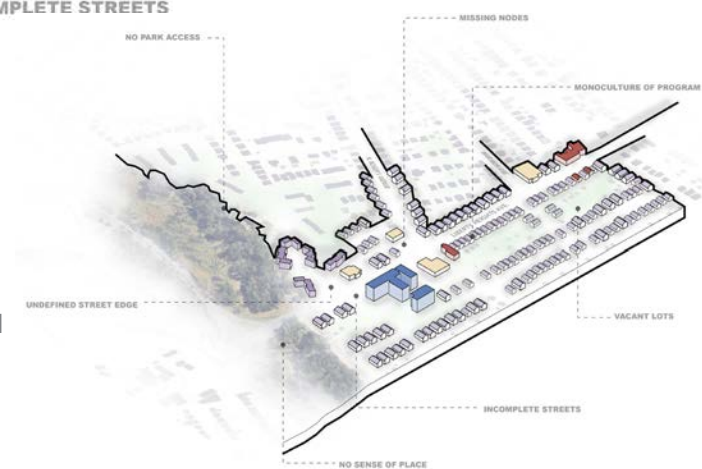
Proposed Street Infrastructure (Night) - Concord Strip (Milford Ave)



Proposed Axon land-use diagram communities that emphasize “Live, Work, Play”

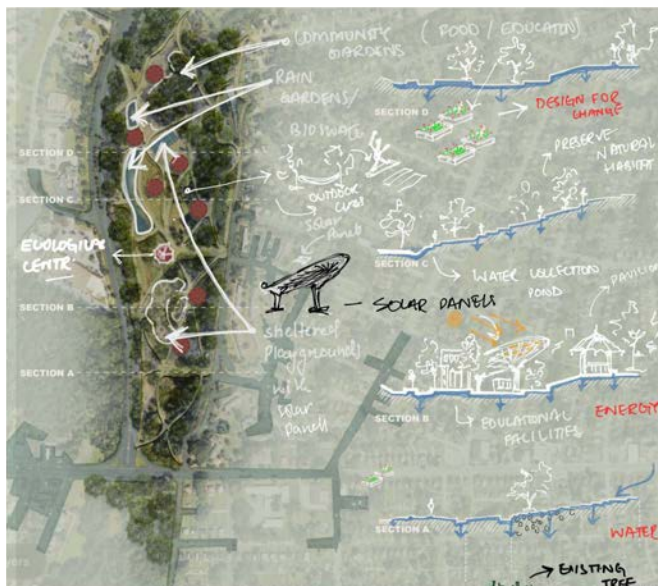
CONCLUSION: NEW IDENTITY FOR POWDER MILL GATEWAY

By addressing gaps in connectivity, amenities, and sense of place, our proposal transforms Powder Mill Gateway into a walkable, vibrant, and inclusive urban node. Once an underutilized area, it will now foster economic opportunities, ecological sustainability, and dynamic public spaces, redefining it as a true gateway to Liberty Heights Avenue and Baltimore City. This revitalization not only enhances the daily lives of residents but also establishes a lasting framework for future growth, community engagement, and urban resilience.



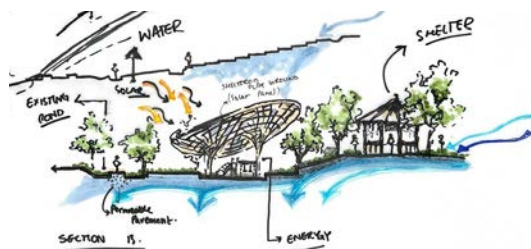
Existing conditions axonometric



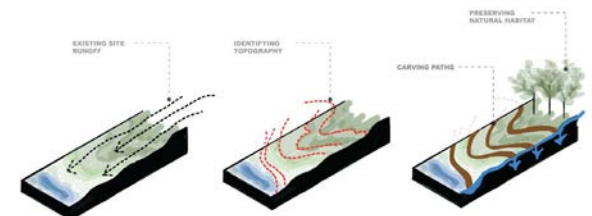


PowderMill Park proposed sustainable strategies

Sustainability Goals:



Site Goals:





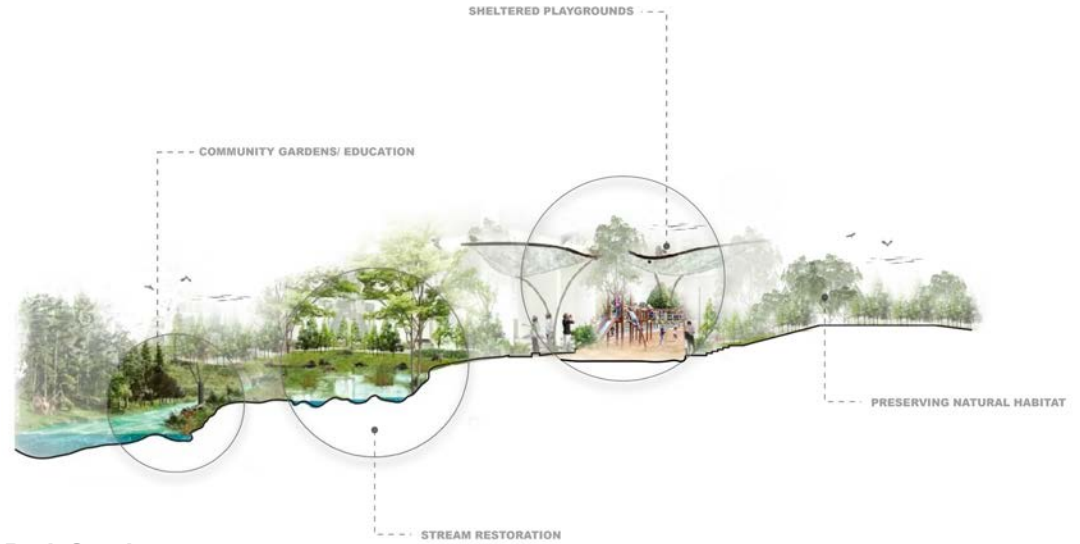
Park Proposed



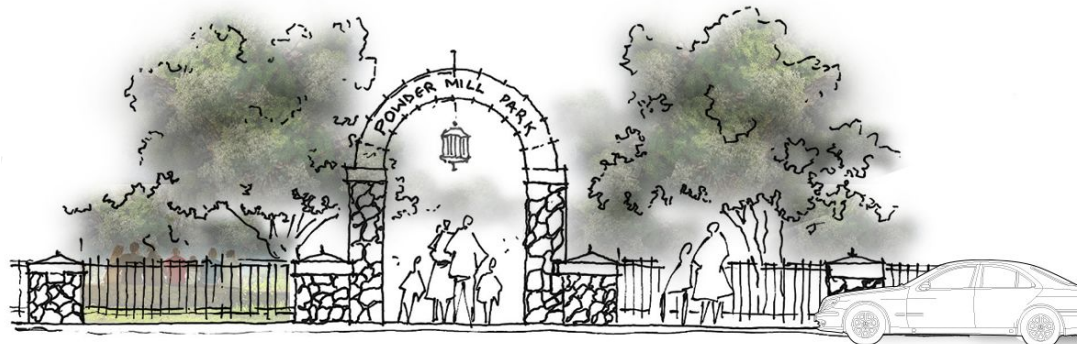
Park Existing



Park trails and shelter promote healthy living along the corridor



Park Section



Sense of Place and Identity - Neighborhood overlooking Powder Mill Park

Activating Powder Mill Park through strategic programming and the addition of gated entrances can establish a stronger sense of identity and place along Liberty Heights Avenue. By introducing community-driven activities, such as outdoor markets, performances, and recreational amenities, the park can become a vibrant gathering space that fosters social interaction and local engagement. The addition of well-designed entry gates enhances visibility, clearly defining access points and reinforcing the park as a distinct landmark within the corridor. These improvements not only promote safety and accessibility but also create a more welcoming and recognizable destination, strengthening the park's connection to the surrounding neighborhood and encouraging greater public use.

INTRO:

The Ambassador District, centered around the historic Ambassador Theater at 4604 Liberty Heights Avenue in Baltimore's Howard Park neighborhood, is a key commercial and cultural node with both challenges and opportunities for revitalization. Centered around the historic Ambassador Theater in Baltimore's Howard Park neighborhood, represents both a legacy of cultural significance and a challenge of urban decline. Once a vibrant hub for entertainment and commerce, the district has struggled in recent decades due to economic disinvestment, vacant properties, and declining infrastructure. However, with strategic redevelopment and community-centered urban design strategies, the district holds great potential for transformation into a thriving, mixed-use corridor that benefits both residents and businesses.

06

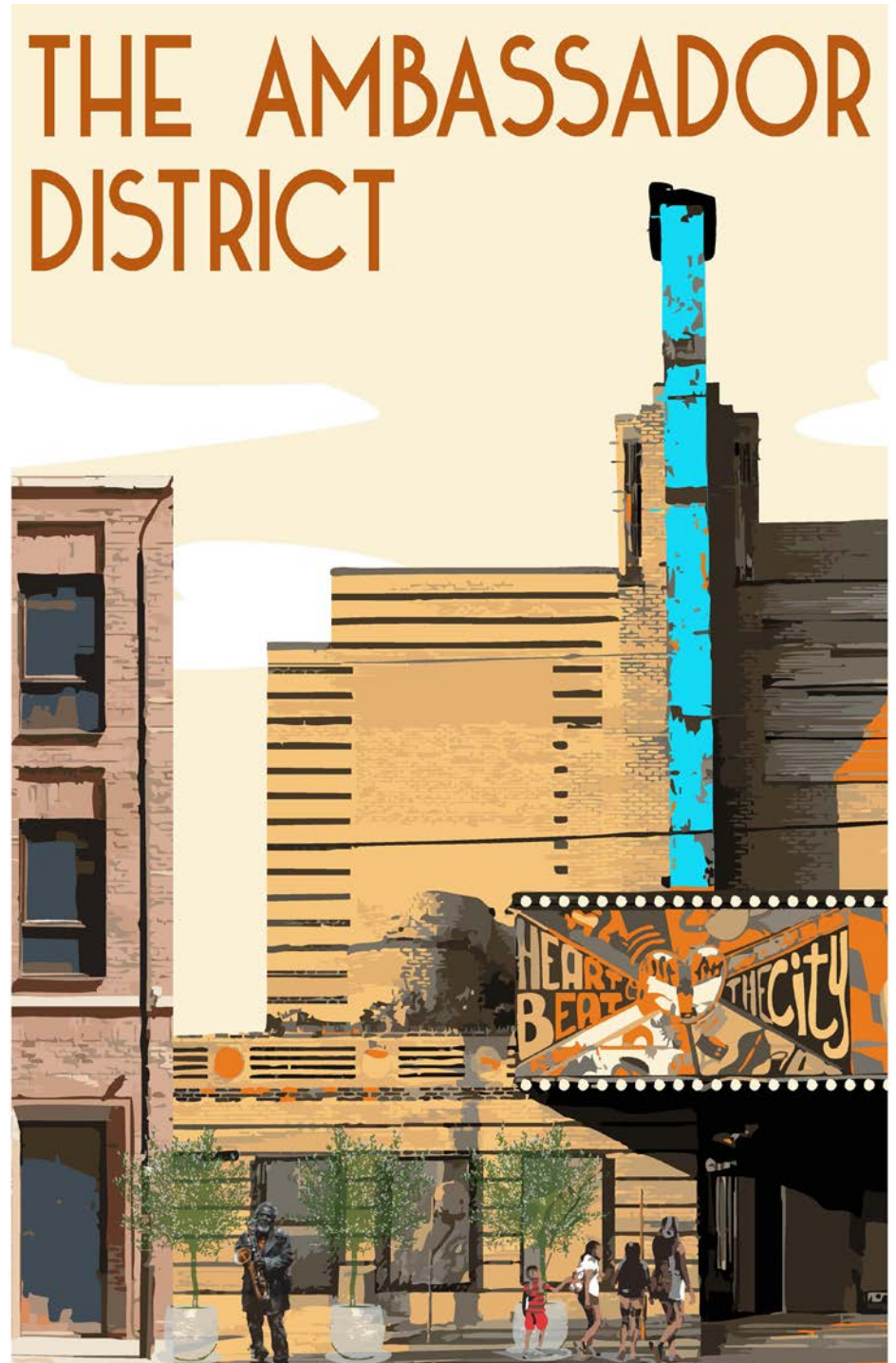
THE AMBASSADOR DISTRICT

CHALLENGES:

- 1. Vacant and Underutilized Properties** – Many buildings in the district, including the Ambassador Theater, have fallen into disrepair, reducing foot traffic and limiting economic activity.
- 2. Lack of Public and Private Investment** – Limited redevelopment efforts have left the area stagnant, making it difficult for new businesses to thrive.
- 3. Infrastructure and Streetscape Concerns** – Sidewalks, lighting, and public spaces need upgrades to improve walkability and safety.
- 4. Limited Retail and Community Amenities** – A lack of diverse businesses and gathering spaces restricts the district's appeal to residents and visitors.

*The team's study identified three key principles essential to revitalization of the node: **CULTURE, COMMERCE AND CONNECTIVITY***

The team determined that revitalization of the Ambassador District on Liberty Heights Avenue requires a comprehensive approach that balances historical preservation, economic revitalization, and urban design improvements. By leveraging the district's architectural heritage, supporting local businesses, and creating vibrant public spaces, the area can evolve into a thriving, community-driven destination that serves both current and future generations.





Existing Site Conditions



Senior Living Autobody Grocery Store School

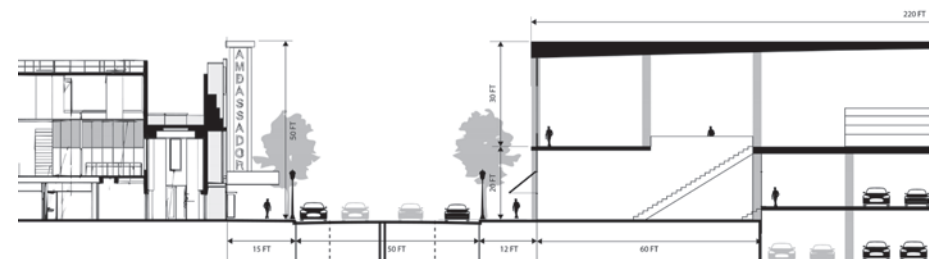
The principle of **cultural preservation** guided the decision to restore and repurpose the Ambassador Theater, ensuring the district's historic significance was respected while introducing a new, sustainable function. The study emphasized the need to honor the local heritage and community identity through architectural interventions that integrated historical elements with modern design.

For **economic revitalization**, the team's analysis highlighted the importance of a mixed-use development strategy. The introduction of residential, retail, and office spaces, alongside a business incubation program, was proposed to attract investment and foster local entrepreneurship. This approach was rooted in the realization that a diverse economic base would support long-term growth and ensure the district's resilience.

Lastly, the focus on **urban connectivity** influenced the design of enhanced public spaces, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and green spaces. By improving walkability, transit access, and the aesthetic quality of public areas, the team aimed to foster community interaction and support local businesses. These principles combined to create a design that not only addresses the current challenges but also lays the groundwork for a vibrant, sustainable future for the Ambassador District.



Proposed site plan



Section highlights the relation between the street and the building — design emphasizes a cohesive public realm that fosters connectivity, accessibility, and community interaction.



The Places at the Ambassador District



Existing Aerial View



Existing Perspective View of the theater



Proposed Land-use

Commercial Residential Green Space



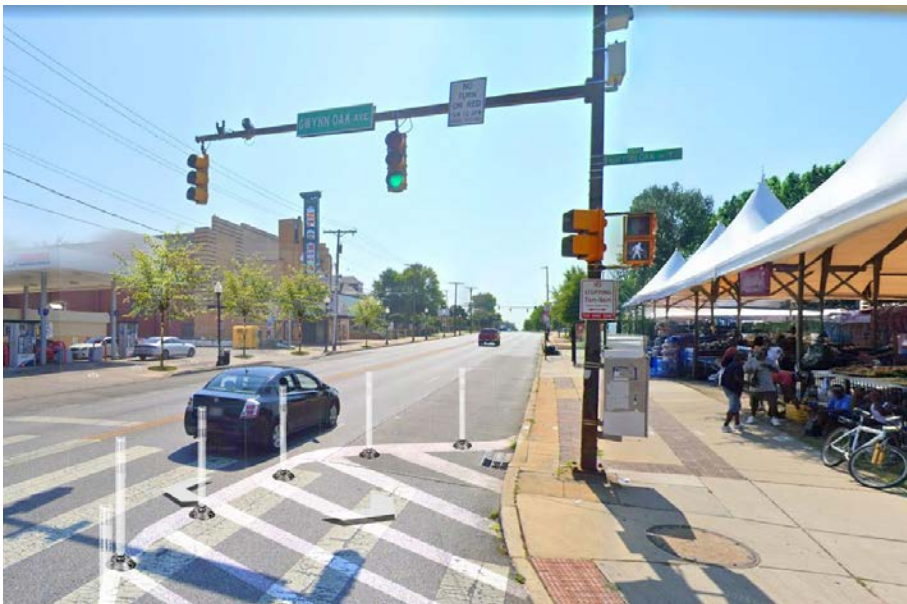
Existing Buildings



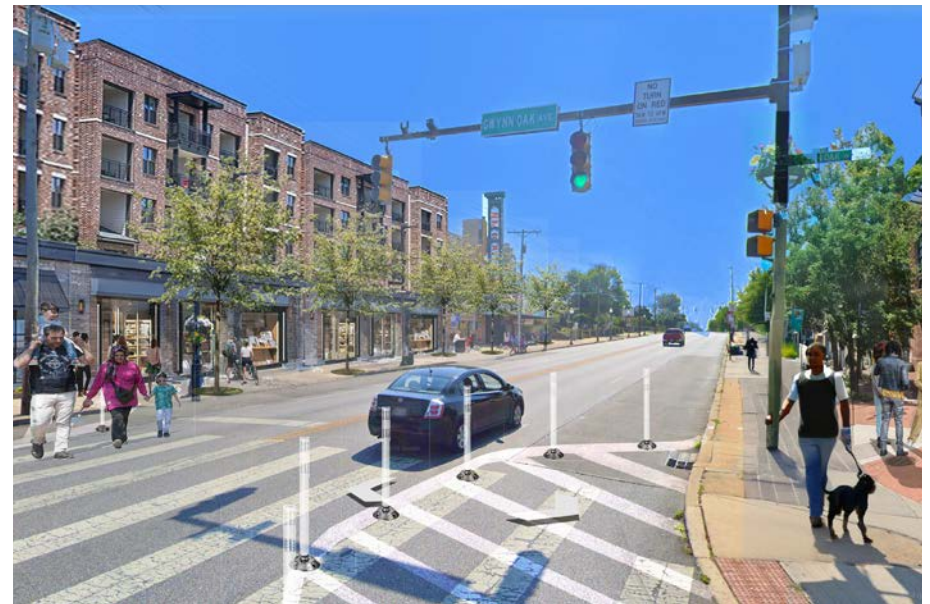
Phase I - Aerial: Surface parking with temporary retail tents



Phase II - Aerial: Grocery Store with parking under



Phase I - Perspective



Phase II - Perspective



Proposed Figure/Ground

07

GARRISON ROW

INTRO:

Garrison Triangle, a key intersection within the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor, serves as a transition point between residential neighborhoods and commercial activity. Its location at the convergence of multiple streets positions it as a potential gateway, offering opportunities for placemaking, improved connectivity, and economic activation. However, several challenges hinder its ability to function as a vibrant and accessible urban space.

CHALLENGES:

The area faces issues related to fragmented land use, underutilized public space, and weak pedestrian infrastructure. Vacant lots and inactive storefronts contribute to a lack of visual cohesion and economic vibrancy, limiting engagement and investment. Additionally, poor street design and traffic congestion create safety concerns, making pedestrian movement difficult and discouraging non-motorized transit.



On Liberty Heights Avenue
Garrison Row

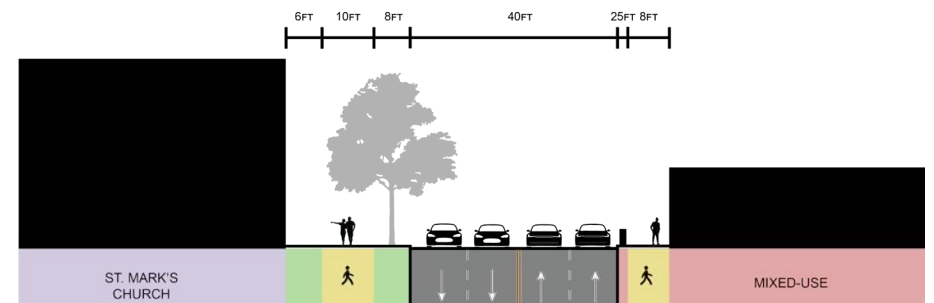
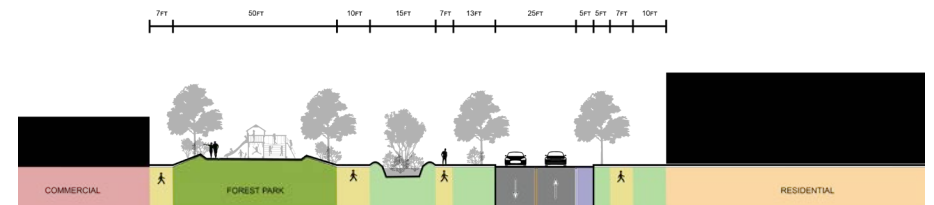


Proposed Site Plan

The absence of dedicated public gathering spaces further diminishes the node's potential as a community focal point. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive strategy that balances mobility improvements, urban design enhancements, and economic reinvestment to transform Garrison Triangle into a more active and connected district within the LHA corridor.

DESIGN APPROACH

The expansion of Garrison Triangle, achieved by converting Garrison Boulevard into a pedestrian-only street while maintaining existing infrastructure, presents an opportunity to create a more dynamic and multifunctional urban space. This expansion allows for a larger, more flexible public plaza that can accommodate markets, outdoor dining, and community events, fostering increased social interaction and economic activity. Prioritizing pedestrian movement and reducing vehicular conflicts would improve safety and walkability, encouraging greater foot traffic and supporting local businesses. Additionally, the integration of green infrastructure, seating areas, and adaptable open spaces would enhance environmental sustainability and overall urban comfort. Strengthening multimodal connections while optimizing land use ensures that Garrison Triangle evolves into a vibrant, accessible, and community-oriented destination within the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor.



Proposed Street Sections enhancing the public environment





Adaptive Re-use



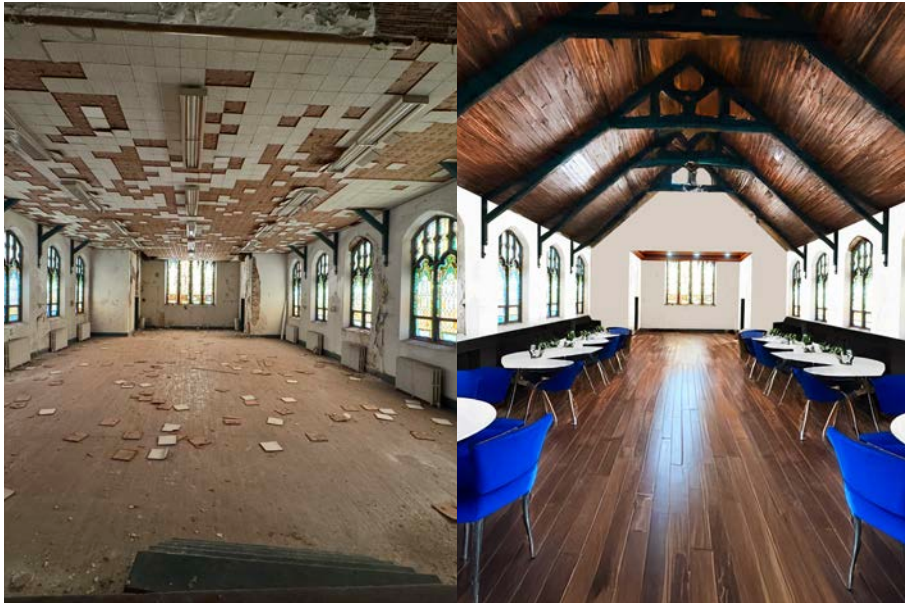
Proposed perspective looking towards the School of Original Thought



Adaptive Re-use



Proposed perspective - Pedestrian friendly streets & neighborhoods



Interior (Before)

Interior (After)



Interior (Before)

Interior (After)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION THROUGH ADAPTIVE RE-USE

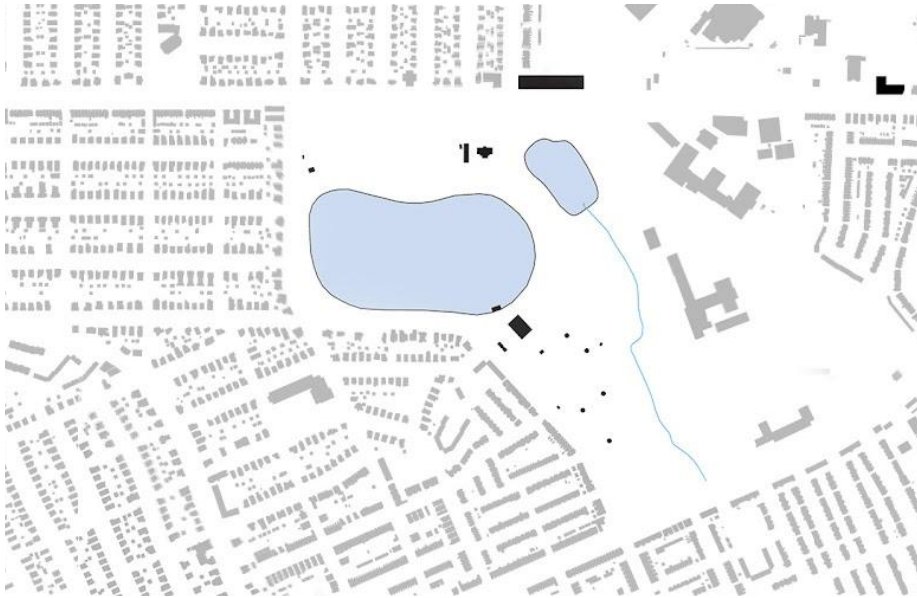
The School of Original Thought (formally St. Mark's Church) is a defining feature of the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor and a key piece of its architectural and cultural history. Though currently unoccupied, the building holds immense potential to become a transformative community asset for the area. Recently purchased by an owner considering demolition, the building's future is uncertain. Our studio developed a preservation focused vision that aligns with the owner's goals while celebrating the structure's historical significance.

While challenges such as the possibility of asbestos and the theft of all copper piping from the building remain, the building's unique design and spacious layout present significant opportunities for meaningful reuse. The proposed phased development plan outlines a clear path forward: Phase One focuses on modernizing the church space, improving its acoustics, and integrating contemporary functionality; Phase Two introduces leasing opportunities for housing and community services to address critical local needs; and Phase Three creates flexible public spaces, incubator programs, and a food hall to energize the corridor with economic activity and social engagement.

Demolishing this structure would remove a key element of the Liberty Heights corridor's identity and history. Preserving it offers an opportunity to transform the site into a cornerstone of community resilience and growth. Restoring and adaptively reusing the building honors the heritage of the Liberty Heights corridor while establishing a vibrant, inclusive future for the community.



School of Original Thought (Formerly St. Mark's Church)



Proposed Figure/Ground

08

HANLON PARK

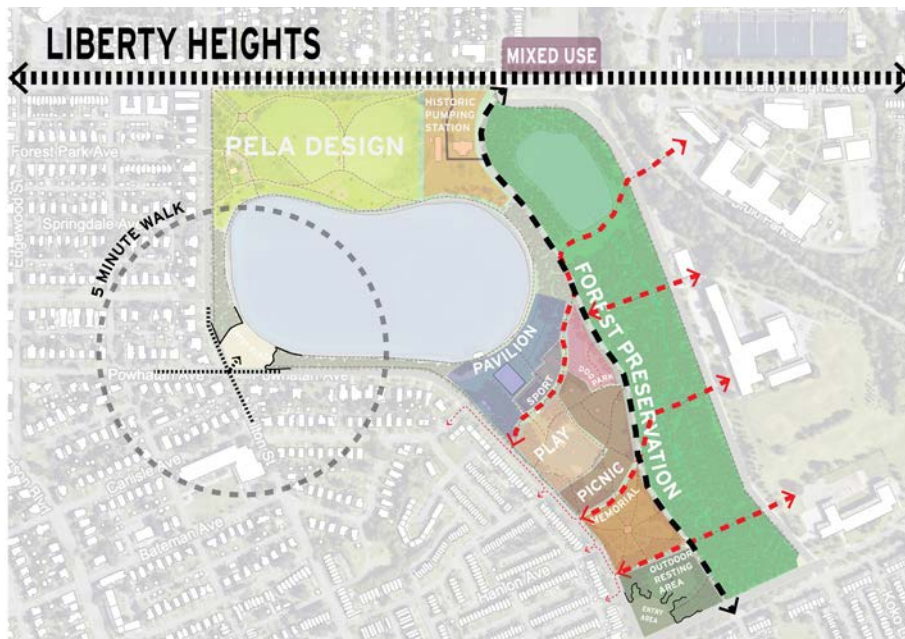
The Hanlon Park node on the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor has evolved significantly over time. Originally an open space with a stream running through it, the area underwent a transformation in 1906 when it was divided into parcels, though no development occurred. In 1909, the reservoir was established, and the stream was piped underground.

Recent issues surrounding Hanlon Park have primarily revolved around delays in the park's development and concerns about its accessibility and utility for the community. While there are ambitious plans to transform the park into a public space with green infrastructure, residents have voiced frustration over the slow pace of progress. The project, initially planned to open earlier, has been delayed multiple times, leaving the park inaccessible and underutilized.





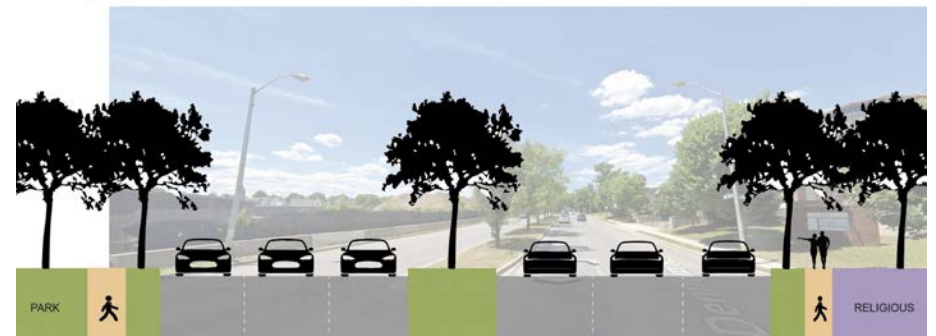
Proposed Site Plan



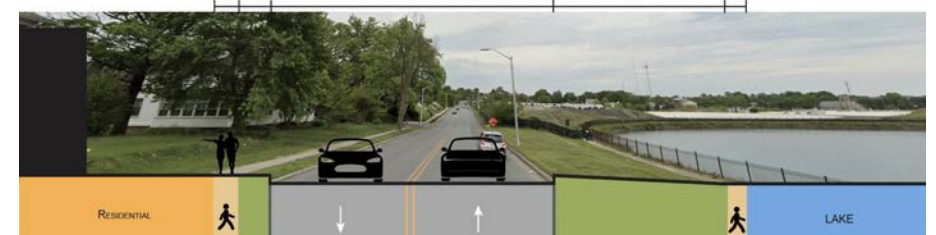
The "PLACES" at Hanlon Park



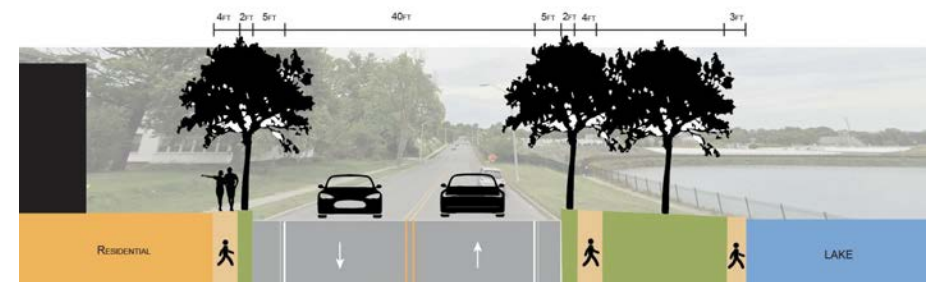
Street Infrastructure: Reinvisioning Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor



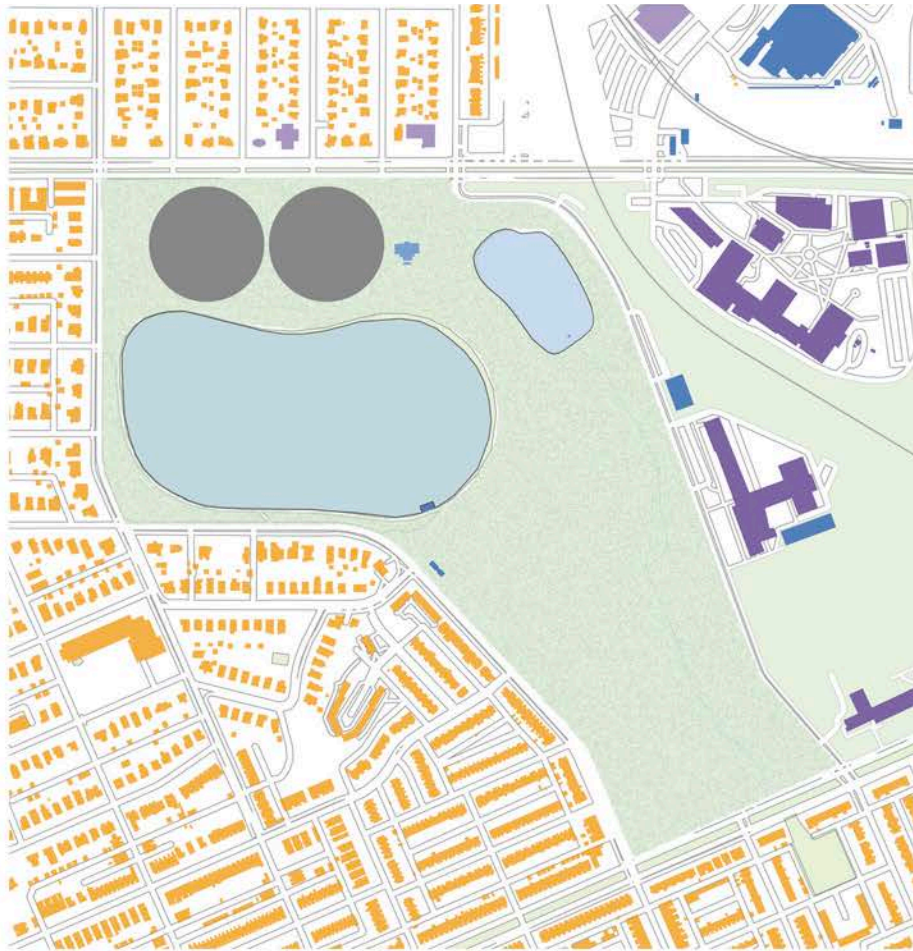
Proposed street section along the LHA corridor



N. Hilton St. (Before)



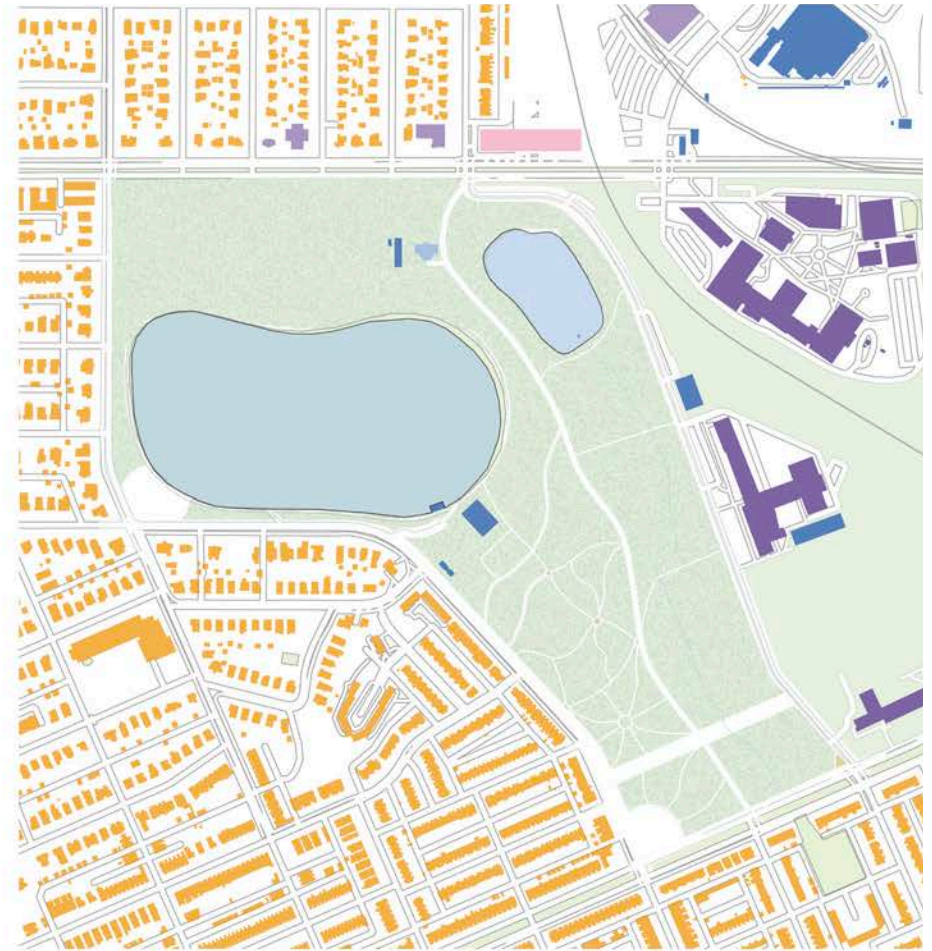
N. Hilton St. (After)



Existing Land-use

NODE ISSUES: The park has acted as a barrier for residents due to the lack of pedestrian-friendly pathways, preventing easy access between homes and schools. The reservoir park, currently inaccessible to the public, also suffers from a lack of programming and amenities. The small commercial strip along Liberty Heights Avenue offers few services, and there is no diversity in the commercial area, leaving residents without walkable food sources or essential services.

CHALLENGES: Plans for the park's development are already in place. PELA's design includes covering the reservoir tanks with a new park, and the project is set to open later this year. While residents are eager for its completion, the process has been slow due to complex topography and planning hurdles.



Proposed Land-use and Park Activation

THE PROPOSAL: The design proposal aims to complement the PELA plan by enhancing park programming, improving connectivity between schools and residential areas, and introducing new infrastructure to support housing and food options. Additionally, it proposes linking parks across Liberty Heights Avenue to form the Liberty Greenway, creating a more connected, accessible, and vibrant space for the community.



Site Plan: Creating connections and eliminating barriers



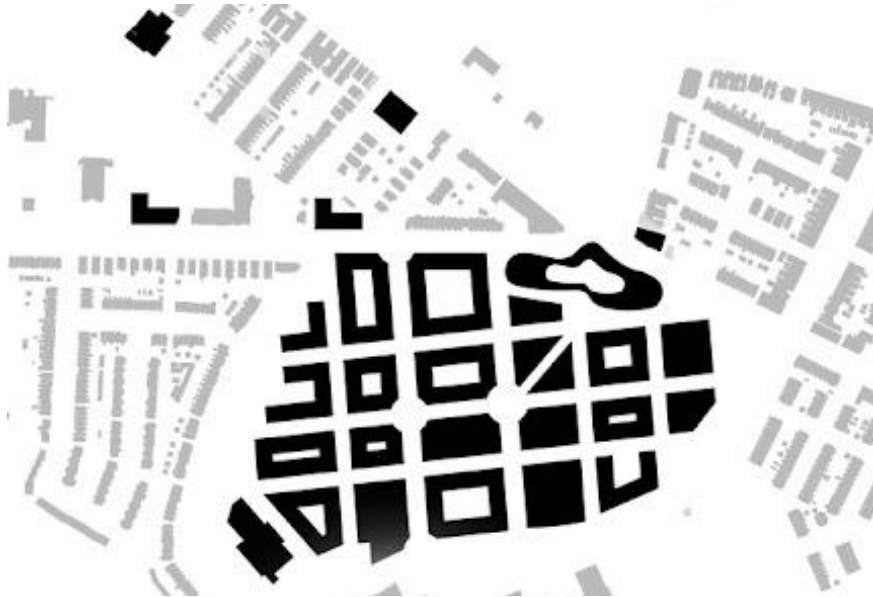
Amenities for all ages



Connecting to the neighborhood



A space for all



Proposed Figure/Ground

09

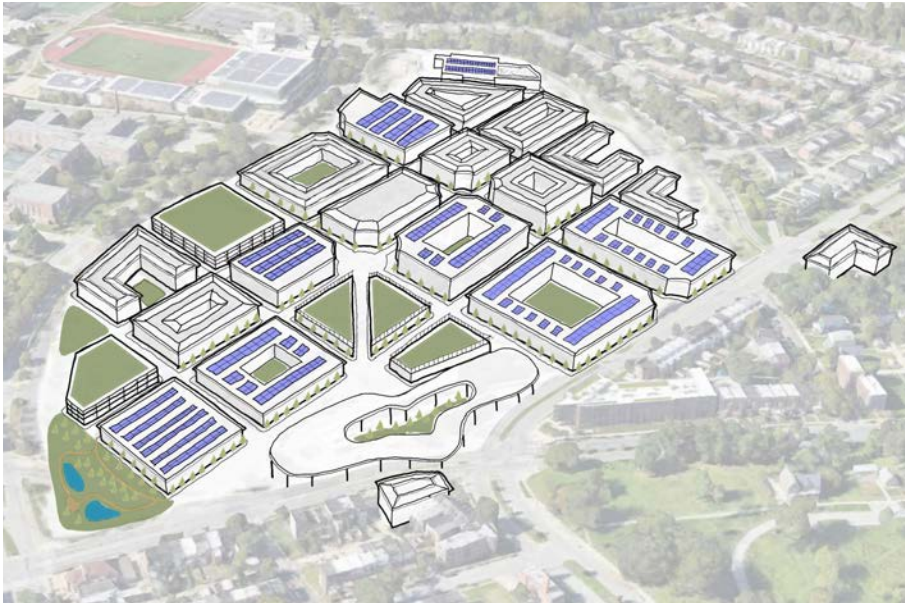
CROSSROADS VILLAGE: MONDAWMIN

The area near Mondawmin Mall along Baltimore Avenue faces several urban challenges, including economic decline, lack of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and underutilized public spaces.

Once a key retail hub, the mall has struggled with vacancies and shifting commercial trends, impacting surrounding businesses and job opportunities.

Additionally, the corridor lacks strong transit connections, safe walkability, and diverse housing options, limiting accessibility and community engagement. These issues highlight the need for strategic revitalization efforts to transform the area into a more vibrant, connected, and inclusive urban space.

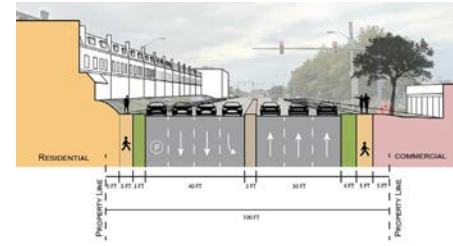




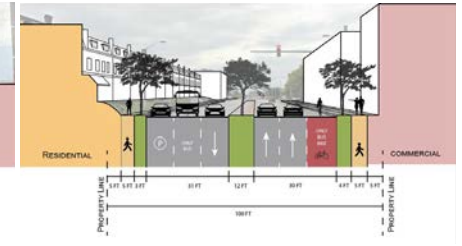
Proposed Sustainable Strategies



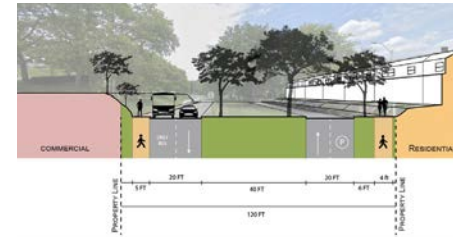
Proposed biking and pedestrian routes



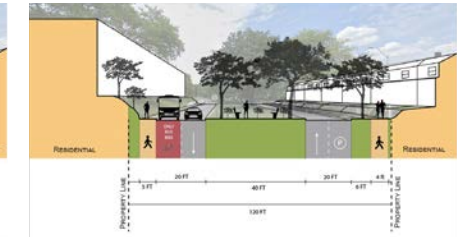
Street Sections (Before)



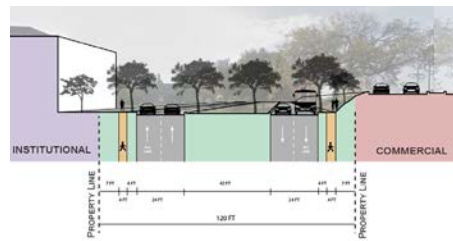
Street Sections (After)



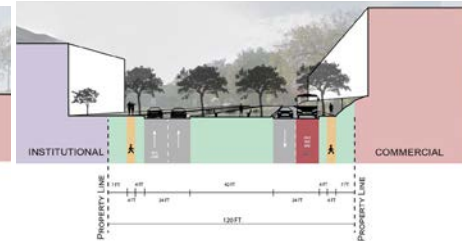
Street Sections (Before)



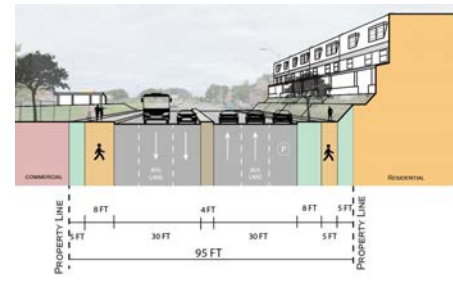
Street Sections (After)



Street Sections (Before)



Street Sections (After)



Street Sections (Before)

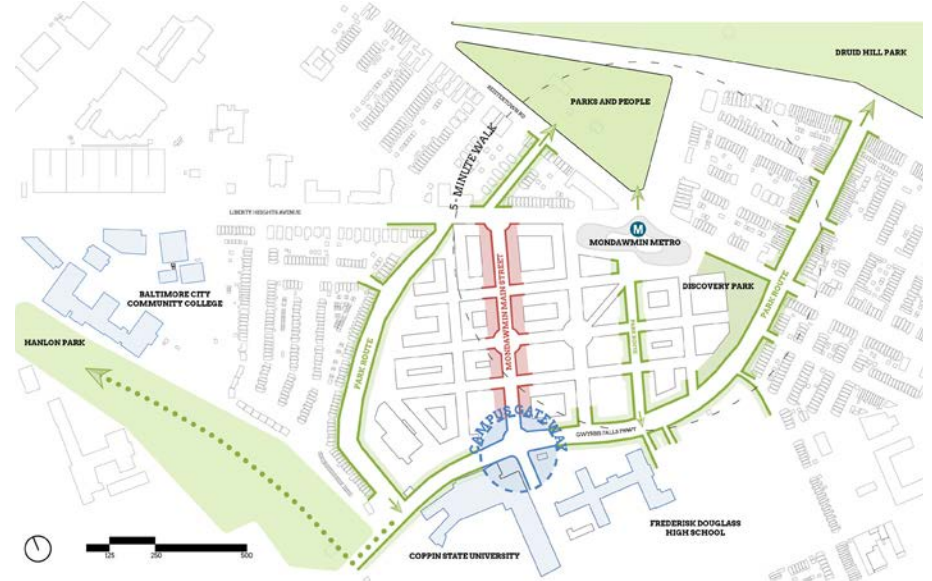


Street Sections (After)





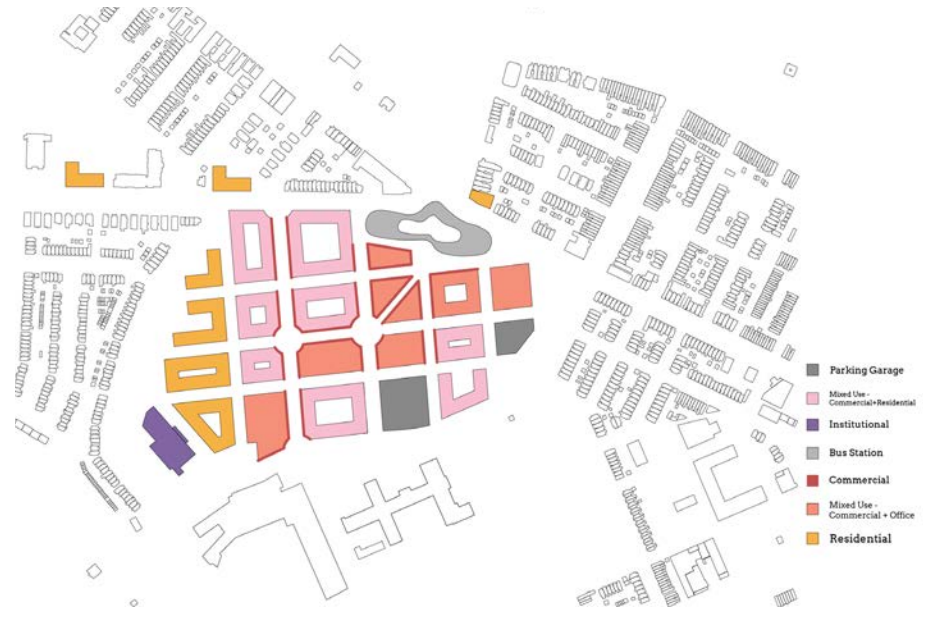
Proposed routes



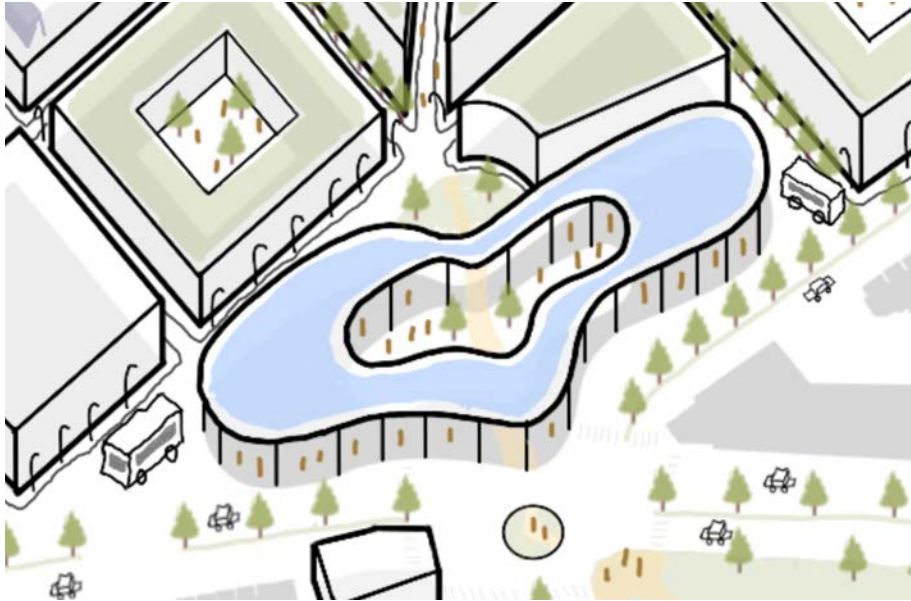
The Places at Crossroads Village Mondawmin



Connections along the corridor



Proposed Land-use



Axon of proposed condition



Sense of Place and Identity



Proposed adaptive re-use of ROSS



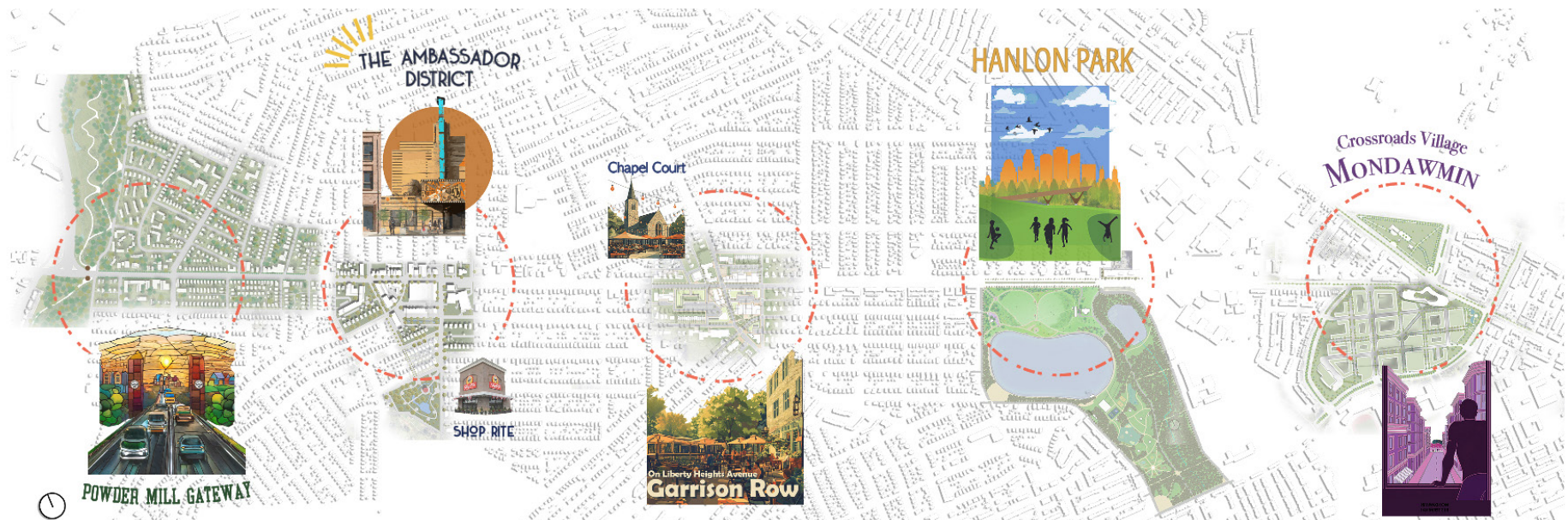
- Auditorium
- Open Working Space
- Open Floor with Restaurant & Art Gallery
- Open Working Space with Small Classrooms

Existing Aerial view of ROSS



Activating sidewalks through placemaking





Living on the Avenue: Nodes proposed emphasize the potential of Liberty Heights Avenue

10

RECOMMENDATIONS

Living on the Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) Corridor after addressing its challenges and implementing best practices transforms the experience into one of accessibility, vibrancy, and opportunity. With improved pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, residents can move safely and efficiently between their homes, schools, parks, and businesses. The introduction of the Liberty Greenway seamlessly connects green spaces, creating a healthier and more engaging environment for recreation and social interaction.

Economic revitalization, driven by adaptive reuse projects like the Ambassador Theater and the St. Mark's Church, brings cultural and commercial diversity, offering new gathering spaces, job opportunities, and essential services. Walkable food sources and enhanced public spaces promote a stronger sense of community, ensuring that Liberty Heights Avenue is no longer a corridor of barriers but a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable urban destination.

With the integration of diverse housing options, adaptive reuse of historic structures, and intentional placemaking, the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor is transformed into a more livable and inclusive space for all. By offering a mix of affordable and market-rate housing, the corridor ensures that residents from different backgrounds can call it home. Adaptive reuse projects breathe new life into underutilized spaces, creating cultural, economic, and social hubs that foster community engagement. Placemaking efforts, such as the Liberty Greenway and revitalized parks, enhance connectivity, encourage walkability, and provide vibrant public spaces for recreation and gathering. Together, these elements shape a dynamic corridor that supports a thriving, diverse, and connected community.

The analysis of the Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) corridor identified both node-specific challenges and broader corridor-wide issues that inform the overall revitalization strategy. By examining land use patterns, economic conditions, infrastructure quality, and community dynamics, key areas were distinguished based on their unique characteristics and development potential. Addressing both localized and corridor-wide issues is essential to fostering a more cohesive, connected, and resilient urban environment. Node-specific improvements focus on enhancing existing assets, activating underutilized spaces, and fostering economic opportunities tailored to each area's distinct characteristics. At the corridor-wide scale, recommendations emphasize strengthening infrastructure, improving mobility, creating a more cohesive public realm and supporting a more functional, accessible, and dynamic urban environment.



Liberty Greenway (Proposed)

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. LIBERTY GREENWAY

The vision for the Liberty Greenway is inspired by Boston's Emerald Necklace, a connected system of parks and green spaces that enhances mobility, recreation, and ecological sustainability. Just as the Emerald Necklace links diverse landscapes through continuous green corridors, the goal is to unify the parks along the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor into an interconnected network. By integrating pedestrian-friendly pathways, bike lanes, and accessible public spaces, the Liberty Greenway transforms isolated parks into a cohesive system, fostering community engagement, improving connectivity, and enhancing the overall urban experience. This approach ensures that green spaces are not just destinations but part of a larger, accessible framework that serves residents and visitors alike.

The existing parks around the Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) Corridor are largely disconnected due to physical barriers, lack of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and inadequate wayfinding. Major roads, topographical challenges, and the reservoir at Hanlon Park create obstacles that prevent seamless access between green spaces. Additionally, limited sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike-friendly routes make it difficult for residents to move safely between parks. Without clear linkages, these parks function as isolated pockets rather than a cohesive network, reducing their overall impact and accessibility for the community.



Powder Mill Gateway (Proposed) provides a sense of place and identity

2. PARK ACTIVATION

CREATING A SENSE OF IDENTITY:

Introducing a gateway at the entrance of the Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) Corridor establishes a strong sense of identity and belonging, marking a clear transition into a distinct and vibrant community.

A well-designed gateway creates a visual and symbolic entry point that signals arrival, fosters pride, and strengthens neighborhood character. It serves as a unifying landmark that connects the past, present, and future of the corridor while reinforcing its unique cultural and historical significance. Beyond aesthetics, the gateway enhances wayfinding, improves pedestrian experience, and instills a sense of place, making the corridor more inviting and cohesive.

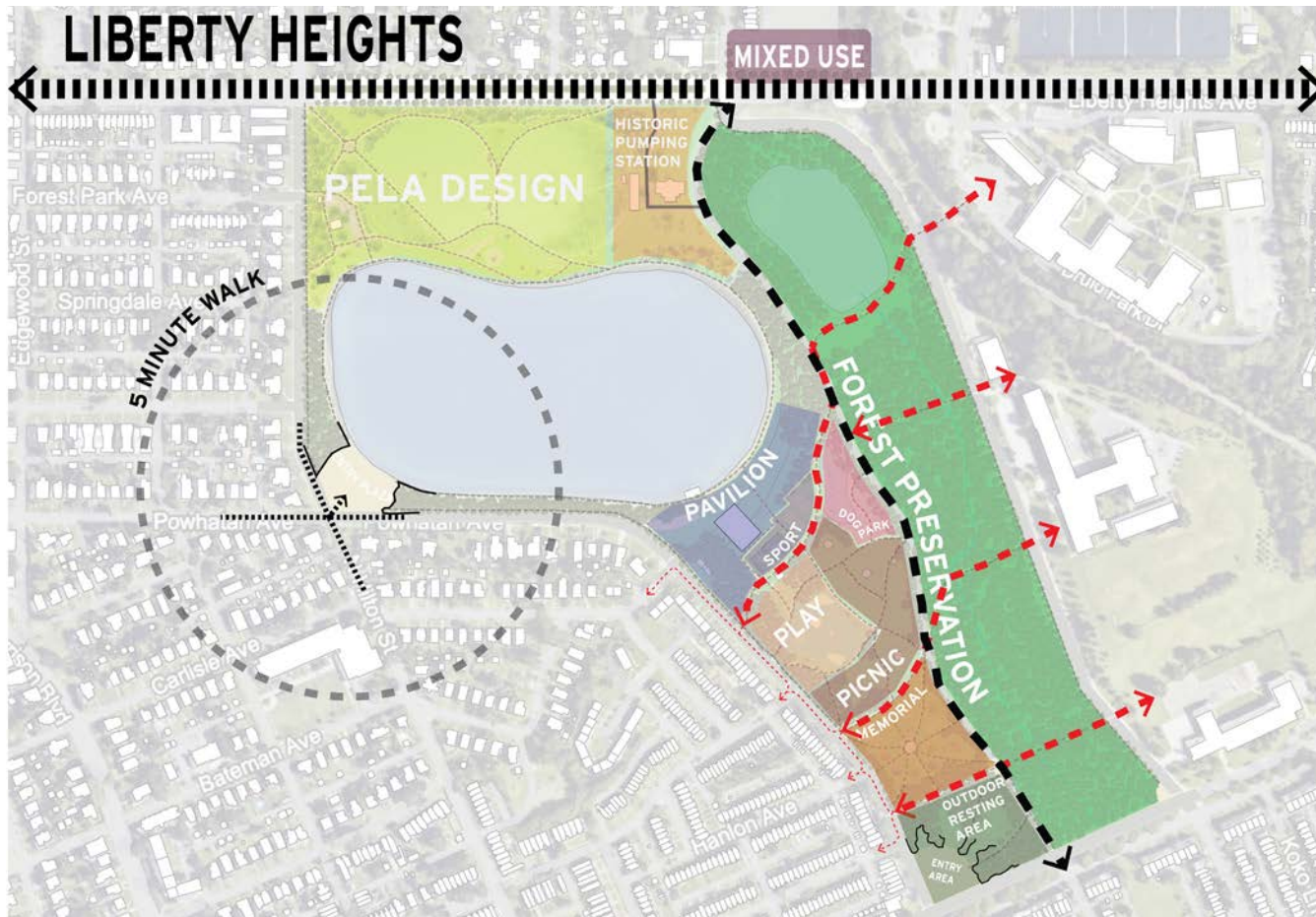
By defining the entrance, we not only create a recognizable identity for LHA but also cultivate a feeling of inclusivity, community ownership, encouraging residents and visitors TO take pride in the evolving corridor.



The gateway seal at Liberty Heights Avenue (LHA) symbolizes its historic and evolving role as a vital transit corridor, enhancing identity and wayfinding. Designed to reflect mobility, culture, and urban vitality, it reinforces LHA's transformation into a more accessible, multimodal hub. Positioned at the entrance, the seal marks a clear sense of arrival while celebrating the corridor's connectivity and progress, fostering pride, inclusivity, and a unified urban identity.



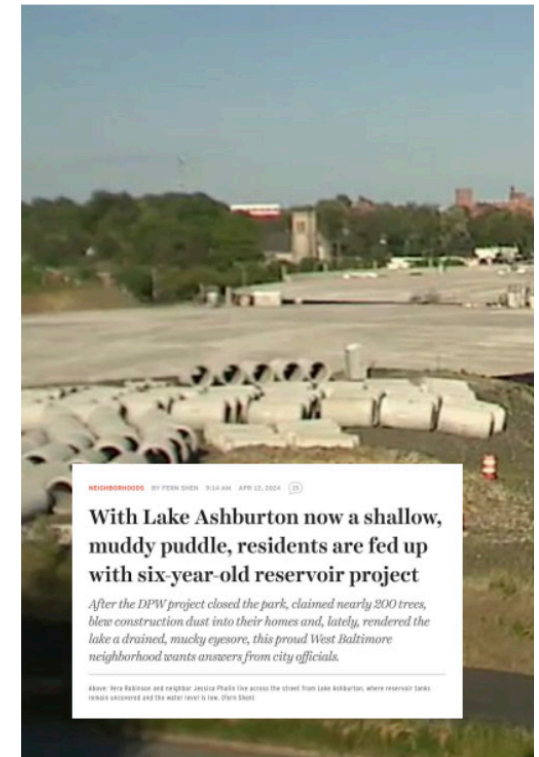
Liberty Heights Corridor has a rich historical significance, yet lacks a sense of identity



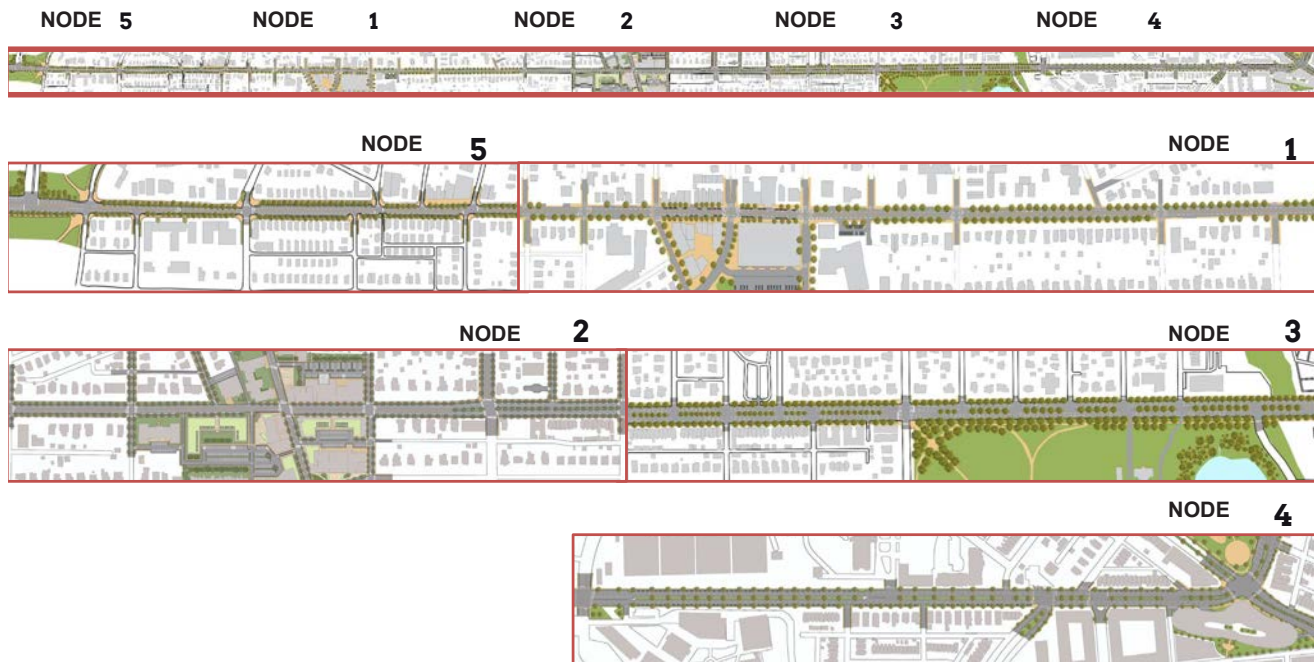
Activating park trails and activities and making connections to provide amenities for the neighboring communities

ACTIVATING HANLON PARK

Activating Hanlon Park with amenities and trails can enhance community health, connectivity, and sustainability as part of a Healthy Neighborhood Initiative. Walking and biking trails promote physical activity and mental well-being, while gathering spaces foster social cohesion and safety. Green infrastructure can improve water quality, manage stormwater, and reduce urban heat. The project can also boost property values, local businesses, and workforce opportunities while ensuring equitable access to nature. Implementing this initiative through community engagement, public-private partnerships, and phased development can make it a sustainable, impactful investment in neighborhood revitalization.



Lake Ashburton Today

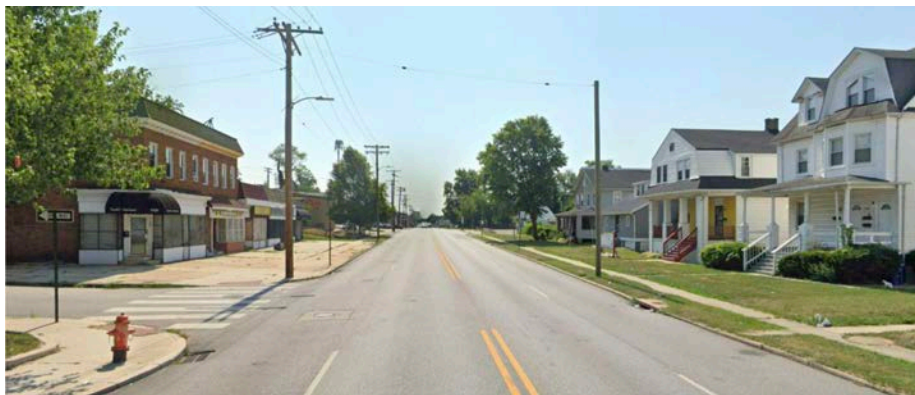


Street plan proposed along the entire LHA corridor

3. STREET INFRASTRUCTURE

GREENER, SAFER, AND MORE WALKABLE:

Enhancing Liberty Heights Avenue with street trees and parallel parking offers significant benefits for the community, transforming the corridor into a safer, more pedestrian-friendly environment. Street trees not only provide shade and improve air quality but also create a calming effect that slows traffic, making walking and biking more comfortable. This greener streetscape encourages outdoor activity, fosters neighborhood pride, and supports mental well-being. Parallel parking adds to this dynamic by creating a protective buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles, enhancing the sense of safety while supporting local businesses through easier access and increased foot traffic. Together, these improvements promote a vibrant, walkable corridor where residents and visitors can engage with their surroundings, strengthening community connections and contributing to the long-term revitalization of



Street Infrastructure along the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor (Typical)



Street trees and parallel parking enhance the Liberty Heights Corridor for a Thriving Community



41104 LIBERTY HEIGHTS AVE. - 4 BEDS/ 3 BATHS - 1,946 Sqft.

4. DUPLEXES TO Nth PLEXES

REVITALIZING LIBERTY HEIGHTS AVENUE: CONVERTING SINGLE UNIT DUPLEXES TO MULTI-UNIT HOUSING

Transforming single-unit duplexes into multi-unit (N-plex) housing along the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor presents an opportunity to enhance affordability, density, and economic growth in the neighborhood. By repurposing existing structures, this approach maximizes housing options without drastically altering the area's architectural character. Increased residential density can attract new businesses, boost property values, and support public transit accessibility. Thoughtful redevelopment also fosters a more vibrant, walkable community, ensuring long-term sustainability while preserving the historic charm of Liberty Heights.

Converting a single-unit duplex into a triplex maximizes housing potential, increases affordability, and revitalizes the Liberty Heights corridor—creating a more vibrant, sustainable community."



41104 LIBERTY HEIGHTS AVE. EXISTING FLOOR PLANS



Conversion of existing one unit to three units





Existing



Precedent: Infill townhouses

NODE RECOMMENDATIONS: **1. POWDERMILL PARK (NODE 5)**



Proposed

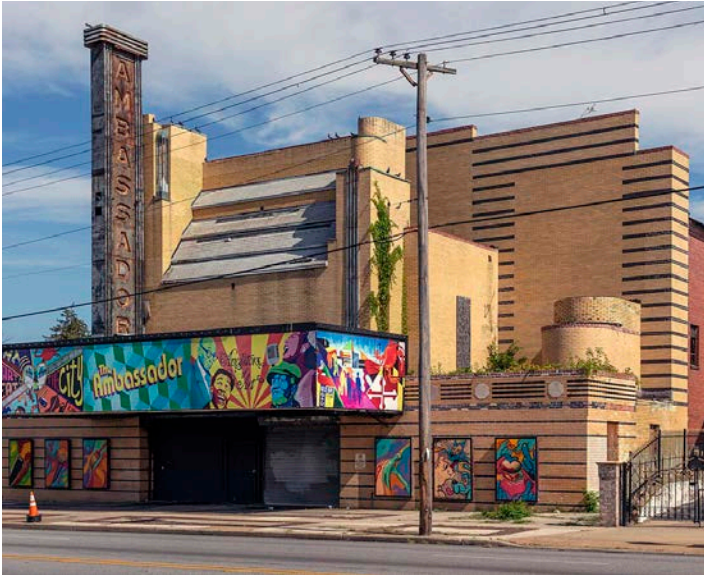


Existing

UNLOCK THE HOUSING POTENTIAL IN THE AREA AROUND POWDER MILL PARK

The area around Powder Mill Park (Node 5) along Liberty Heights Avenue contains several underutilized vacant lots that present an opportunity to address housing diversity and neighborhood revitalization. These parcels, currently inactive and contributing to gaps in the urban fabric, can be strategically repurposed for the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and other infill housing solutions. By introducing ADUs, the node can accommodate a mix of housing types that support affordability, multi-generational living, and increased residential density without altering the neighborhood's character. This approach strengthens the corridor's housing stock, promotes walkability, and fosters a more inclusive and dynamic community while making efficient use of existing infrastructure.





Existing

2. AMBASSADOR DISTRICT (NODE 1)

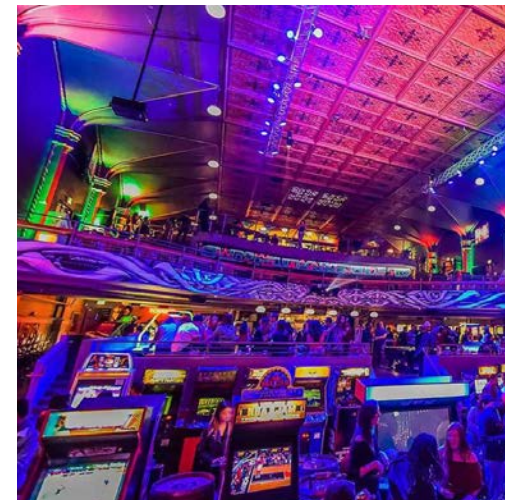
RE-USE THE AMBASSADOR THEATER

The development of the Ambassador District involves placemaking activities that catalyze foot traffic and demand situated affront the landmark. The development involves working with the old theater for indoor public and arts events, encouraging small businesses, and providing shaded trees and park space to give the node a strong sense of place. The activation of the flea market in the existing ShopRite parking lot intended to set the phase by marking the plaza as a local place for exchanges. This would also encourage small businesses to eventually set up shop in the neighborhood. Adaptively reusing the Ambassador Theater will serve as a catalyst for revitalizing the Liberty Heights Avenue Corridor by preserving its history while creating a cultural and entertainment hub. This transformation will attract visitors, stimulate economic activity, and contribute to a sense of identity, making the corridor a more vibrant and connected place for residents and visitors alike.



Proposed

■ Arcade
 ■ Community Center



Precedent: The Emporio, San Francisco, California

91 year old Divisader theater - Vacant for 26 years and repurposed as an arcade bar in 2017





Eliminate a section of Garrison Boulevard, making it a pedestrian only zone by activating the street

3. GARRISON TRIANGLE (NODE 2)



Perspective looking towards St. Mark's Church

ELIMINATE PART OF GARRISON BOULEVARD TO MAKE A BETTER DEVELOPMENT

The expansion of Garrison Triangle, achieved by converting Garrison Boulevard into a pedestrian-only street, presents an opportunity to enhance connectivity, activate public space, and strengthen economic vitality within the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor. By reallocating space for pedestrian movement and community-oriented uses, this transformation addresses existing challenges while creating a more vibrant and accessible urban environment.

Public Space & Placemaking: Expanding the triangle allows for a centralized plaza that accommodates markets, outdoor dining, and cultural programming, fostering community interaction and reinforcing the area's identity as a local destination.

Pedestrian Safety & Walkability: Eliminating vehicular traffic along Garrison Boulevard reduces pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, improves crossings, and enhances sidewalks, promoting a safer and more walkable environment.

Economic & Commercial Activation: Increased foot traffic supports local businesses, attracting vendors, pop-up retail, and street performances, transforming the triangle into an active commercial and cultural hub.

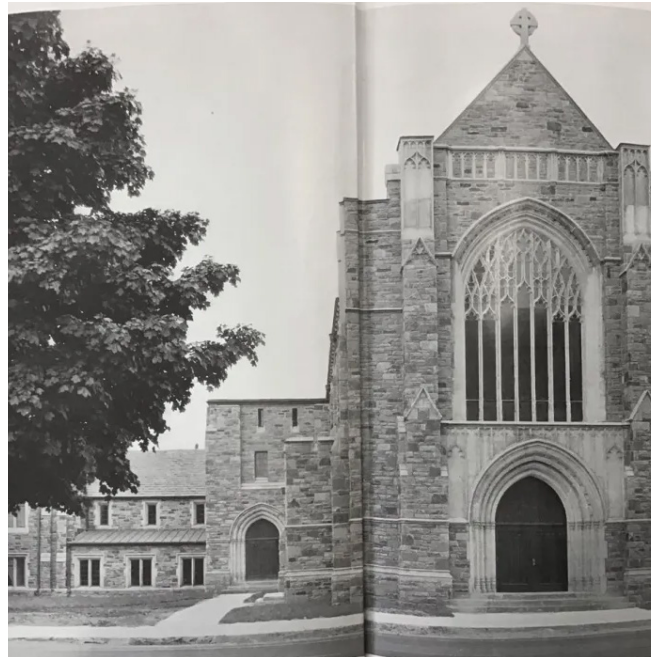
Green Infrastructure & Sustainability: The redesign integrates permeable surfaces, tree canopies, and stormwater management, improving environmental resilience and creating a more comfortable public realm.

Multimodal Connectivity: Strengthening pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, along with enhanced transit stops and shared mobility options, ensures seamless connections to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas.

By reclaiming space for pedestrians and fostering a mix of uses, the expansion of Garrison Triangle serves as a model for urban revitalization, reinforcing Liberty Heights Avenue as a dynamic, inclusive, and economically thriving corridor.



St. Mark's Church Aerial View



St. Mark's Church Street View

SAVE AND RE-PURPOSE THE ST. MARK'S CHURCH

The School of Original Thought (formerly, St. Mark's Church) is a vital cultural and educational asset along the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor, fostering creativity, learning, and community engagement. Preserving this institution ensures that its role in intellectual growth, artistic expression, and local identity remains central to the corridor's revitalization.

The building that houses the school, originally St. Mark's Church, is a testament to the rich architectural heritage of Baltimore. Its design features hallmark elements of early 20th-century architecture, including pointed arch windows, intricate brickwork, and a commanding façade that anchors the surrounding streetscape. The stone detailing, stained glass windows, and vaulted interior ceilings reflect craftsmanship and artistic expression, elevating the building from a place of worship to a symbol of historical and cultural significance and should be preserved as a landmark.

A cost-effective approach to preservation includes renovating the interiors to improve functionality while maintaining the building's historical character. Retaining key architectural features—such as exposed wooden beams, original moldings, and decorative motifs—would honor the building's past while adapting it for modern use. By integrating the school into revitalization efforts, strengthening partnerships, and securing sustainable funding, this initiative preserves Baltimore's architectural legacy while fostering cultural continuity and reinforcing Liberty Heights Avenue's identity as a hub for education, innovation, and preservation.

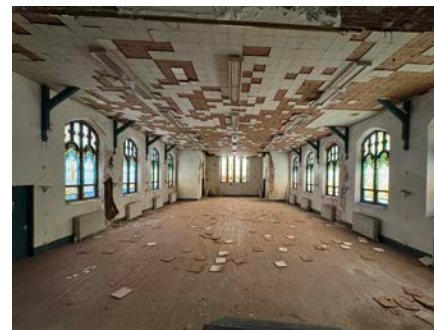
4. St. Mark's Church



Interior (Before)



Interior (After)

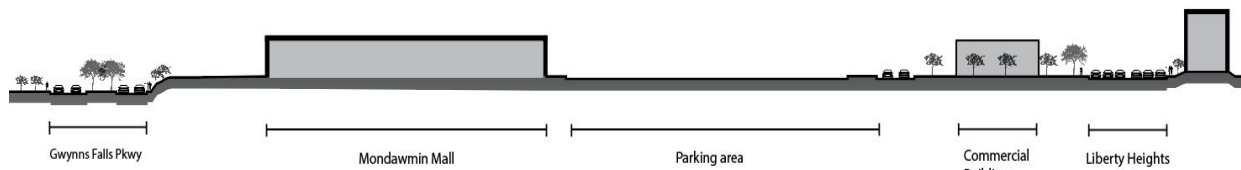


Interior (Before)



Interior (After)

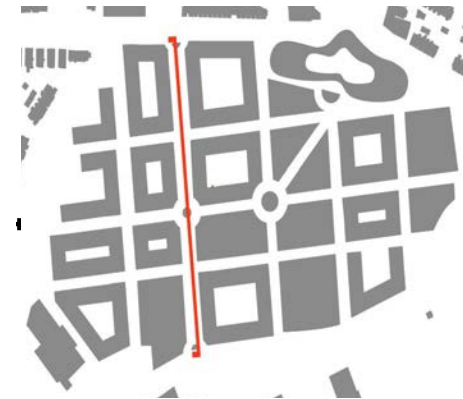




Street Elevation (Before)



Street Elevation (After)



Proposed Figure/Ground Plan

5. MONDAWMIN VILLAGE (NODE 4)



Before



After

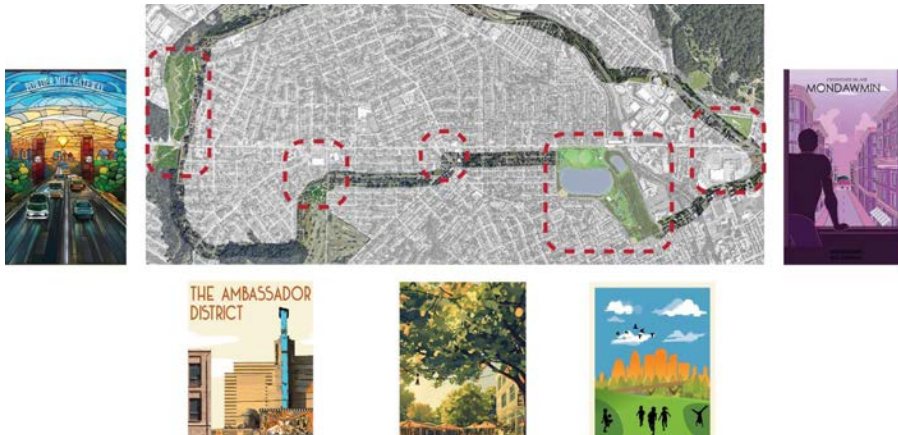
Precedent: Pike & Rose - North Bethesda, Maryland

Carefully orchestrated environment of open plaza parts and creative commonareas for events, street festivals, farmers market pedestrian-oriented , urban minede, and mix-use neighborhood

AT MONDAWMIN MALL, PLAN FOR A NEW, WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

The area around Mondawmin Mall along Liberty Heights Avenue faces several urban design challenges, including a lack of a processional sequence, an underutilized and inward-facing mall, a lack of a safe street experience, and limited connected green space. These issues contribute to a disconnected and underperforming commercial district that does not fully engage with its surrounding community.

A precedent like **Pike & Rose in Rockville, Maryland** offers a model for transformation by replacing an outdated, inward-focused retail space with a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district. Applying similar strategies at Mondawmin Mall—such as restructuring the site into a walkable street grid, introducing active ground-floor uses, and integrating green spaces with public plazas—could enhance safety, connectivity, and economic vitality. By shifting from an enclosed mall format to a more dynamic urban center, the area can attract a diverse mix of retail, housing, and entertainment, creating a more engaging and community-driven destination.



Living on the Avenue

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CONCLUSION

The revitalization of the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor presents both significant challenges and unique opportunities. Economic disinvestment, underutilized spaces, and deteriorating infrastructure have hindered the area's growth, but through targeted architectural interventions, adaptive reuse of historic structures, and community-centered design strategies, these obstacles can be transformed into catalysts for renewal. The recommendations provided, such as the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, improvement of public spaces, and encouragement of mixed-use development, aim to enhance the overall experience along the avenue.

By improving walkability, fostering local businesses, and strengthening community partnerships, these strategies aim to create a vibrant, accessible, and engaging environment for both residents and visitors. These efforts are designed to revitalize Liberty Heights Avenue and its neighborhoods, fostering economic growth, social cohesion, and cultural continuity. Through thoughtful architectural design and sustainable development, the corridor can reclaim its role as a dynamic hub for education, innovation, and community life, ensuring long-term resilience and opportunity for its residents.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The analysis of the Liberty Heights Avenue corridor revealed several significant challenges that hinder its growth and community engagement. These challenges were addressed through a series of proposed solutions that aim to transform the area into a more vibrant, inclusive, and functional space for residents and visitors.

Key Challenges Identified:

Vehicular-Centric Design: The corridor currently prioritizes vehicle traffic, limiting pedestrian access and creating a less inviting environment. Key spaces are occupied by gas stations, parking lots, and vacant buildings, which reduce the street's potential as a community gathering place.

Monoculture Housing: The predominance of single-family homes offers limited housing options, which does not meet the needs of a diverse and growing population. Many of these homes are also in poor condition or vacant, contributing to an overall sense of disrepair and neglect.

Lack of Public Amenities: The corridor is missing essential public spaces such as libraries and accessible parks, which are vital for supporting community life beyond convenience stores and fast-food options.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

Walkable Neighborhoods and Pedestrian-Friendly Streets: To encourage more active transportation and community interaction, the corridor should prioritize pedestrian-friendly design, with improved sidewalks, bike lanes, and green spaces. This will create safer and more inviting spaces for residents to walk, gather, and engage with the neighborhood.

Activating the Park: The underutilized park spaces in the corridor should be activated with public amenities, such as recreational areas, community gardens, and gathering spots, to encourage social interaction and healthier lifestyles.

Gateway Design for Sense of Place: Introducing gateways along the corridor will help provide a strong identity and sense of arrival, contributing to a more cohesive and welcoming environment for both residents and visitors.

Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings: Vacant and historically significant buildings offer an opportunity for adaptive reuse. Repurposing these structures into multi-use spaces, such as residential units or community hubs, would preserve the corridor's architectural heritage while providing functional spaces for modern needs.



"LIVING ON THE AVENUE"

Hanlon Park

Mondawmin
Metro

Baltimore City Community
College

Metro Heights at
Mondawmin

Parks and People

Crossroads Village at
Mondawmin

Reisterstown Rd

