A Report by

the Neighborhood Design Center

in partnership with Southeast Community Development Corporation
funded by the Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative

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HIGHLAND AVENUE
TRANSIT PLACEMAKING
Introduction

The Southeast Community Development Corporation (CDC) is one of the oldest community development corporations in Baltimore. Southeast CDC operates a number of community revitalization programs in the Highlandtown area such as the Highlandtown Main Street District and the Highlandtown Arts and Entertainment District, and they partner with Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc. on four neighborhoods in SE Baltimore, including Bayview, Greektown, Highlandtown and Patterson Park. Recently, with the assistance of the Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative, the Southeast CDC has begun working in the CARE, McElderry Park, and Madison East-End neighborhoods.

In 2012, the Southeast CDC was selected by the Baltimore Community Foundation's “Targeted Neighborhoods Initiative” to develop a new, inclusive model of community development work with residents of all ages, ethnicities, nationalities and races in the neighborhoods of Baltimore Highland, Highlandtown and Patterson Park. Community School work with schools has increased parent involvement, created “green schools” and brought new community resources to schools. The Southeast CDC has also partnered with a wide variety of environmental organizations, including Blue Water Baltimore, the Parks and People Foundation and the Chesapeake Bay Trust to reduce storm water run-off and increase the tree canopy in southeast Baltimore. Most importantly, Southeast CDC values their partnerships with the community based organizations of SE Baltimore, such as the Friends of Patterson Park, Banner Neighborhoods, HEBCAC and numerous community and business associations.

Southeast CDC has secured Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative funding for a streetscaping design effort for the area of Highland Avenue between Pratt Street and Fayette Street, inclusive of Lombard Street east of Highland to Grundy Street. This design effort will inform Southeast CDC’s use of implementation funding and their advocacy to public and private agencies. Southeast CDC requested Neighborhood Design Center assistance with facilitating a participatory conceptual design process.

The design process consisted of two meetings with stakeholders invited by Southeast CDC, the first being a visioning workshop for idea generation and the second a design review and prioritization session. Additionally NDC staff attended a Highlandtown community meeting to provide an update on the process.

It is anticipated that Southeast CDC will secure project design services from local artists/partners and pursue implementation in coordination with residents and appropriate City agencies.
The preferred project list was developed over two working sessions with community stakeholders facilitated by Neighborhood Design Center staff. The first session focused on documenting strengths and weaknesses of the intersection and setting goals for it and the larger Highland Avenue corridor. At the second session participants evaluated potential project ideas against their predefined goals and the program budget to determine specific priorities.

**Preferred Projects at Baltimore Street and Highland Avenue Intersection**

**Lighting:** More lighting was the highest priority improvement to the intersection, however participants were flexible whether it was deployed as a new formal light post or as other types of storefront lighting. The feasibility and cost of new lighting varies greatly depending on its scope.
- Street post lighting would require installation by and extensive coordination with DOT. It is likely to be the most expensive and difficult method of increasing lighting, but also the most permanent, and would be maintained by DOT. The next step in pursuing this option would be to begin conversations about feasibility with DOT.
- Storefront lighting would require permission from property owners to install, and potentially right-of-way permission from the City permitting.
department. Electrical operating costs would be paid by property owners, so it would be critical to utilize LED fixtures so those costs are minimal. Installation costs would be significantly less per unit than a street post, and lumen output would also be less. However, multiple fixtures means light can be targeted to specific areas at the intersection which need it most, or spread around for ambient lighting.

• Artistic lighting would be any non-traditional fixture option: hanging string lights, lighting integrated into signage or artwork or infrastructure, etc. The two main considerations with installation are electrical supply and right of way usage, both of which would require coordination with DOT if private electrical connections are not being used.

**Vibrant Crosswalks and Painted Curb Extensions**: These strategies utilize paint to identify pedestrian-priority areas at the intersection. Paint is a lower-cost intervention compared to raised crosswalks or curb areas. As both of these occur in the right-of-way, DOT permission is needed to proceed. Painted curb extensions specifically will need to be coordinated with the required turning radii. Budget will vary based on the quality of paint used, which also will correspond with lifespan of the intervention.

**Mural**: A mural on the building at the northeast corner of the intersection will require permission from the property owner. The expense of a mural varies greatly with the existing condition of the surface, size, grade of paint and design. Application of an anti-graffiti coating is recommended.

**Trash Cans/Planters**: Objects in the right-of-way will require advance permission from DOT. Trash cans also require coordination from DPW to facilitate waste removal. Planters have ongoing maintenance requirements that must usually be met by community members or third-party organizations.

**Lampost Signs**: Lampost signs are coordinated with DOT and can be a relatively low-cost method of promoting neighborhood identity. Metal signage offers more long-term value compared to fabric which can fade.
What’s Next?

After improvements are made to the intersection of Highland and Baltimore, community stakeholders would like to see additional traffic calming and public art in Baltimore Highlands, but in different locations. Traffic calming is desired mainly along Highland Avenue, while most would like to see more public art at the shopping center where there is a large parking lot and another popular bus stop.

Input for these recommendations was gathered from 13 participants at a community visioning workshop held on October 13, 2016. Stakeholders were given maps of the area and asked to document where they usually walked, at which intersections they felt needed pedestrian safety improvements, and at which areas they felt needed public art.

Key Locations for Traffic Calming
(in order of importance)

1. Intersection of Pratt and Baltimore Street
2. Intersection of Baltimore Street & Highland Avenue
3. Intersection of Lombard Street & Highland Avenue
4. Intersection of Fayette Street & Highland Avenue

Key Locations for Public Art
(in order of importance)

1. Intersection of Baltimore St & Highland Avenue
2. Shopping Center on Lombard Street
3. Intersection of Conkling & Lombard Street
4. Intersection of Haven & Lombard Street
Key Walking Locations
(in order of importance)

1. Highland Avenue from Pratt Street to Baltimore Street
2. Baltimore Street west of Highland Avenue
3. Lombard Street between Highland Avenue and the Shopping Center
4. Conkling Street between Pratt and Lombard Street

Note: Some residents avoid the Lombard/Conkling Street intersection due to drug activity.
Community Process Summary

Visioning Workshop
October 13, 2016, 6-8pm
Breath of God Church, Highlandtown
13 Participants

Members of the Baltimore Highlands community were invited to participate in a visioning workshop to assist with Highland Avenue Transit Placemaking.

Following a welcome and introduction, participants broke into groups led by facilitators. There were three activities that helped to identify the types of interventions they envisioned for their neighborhood, and specific areas where these could take place. The keys areas of focus included the Highland Avenue corridor between Pulaski Highway and Pratt Street, and the Lombard Street corridor between Highland Avenue and Haven Street. Activities included a precedent image card game, a guided discussion of issues/goals for the intersection of Baltimore Street and Highland Avenue, and a mapping of individual use of the larger corridor.

Design Review
November 10, 2016, 5:30-7:30pm
Southeast Anchor Library, Highlandtown
6 Participants

Stakeholders convened again to review potential project ideas curated by NDC staff that included rough scope and pricing guidelines. They then individually created their own “project stack” through an exercise designed to look at priorities given a specific budget. Participants completed the exercise for a second time as a group to arrive at a comprehensive list of project priorities.

Meeting activities were designed and facilitated by the Neighborhood Design Center with hosting coordinated by Southeast CDC.
Appendix: Workshop One
Card Game

Each participant group was given a deck of 26 image cards and was asked to select six cards which best represented their vision for streetscape and placemaking improvements. There were 4 groups with 3-4 participants in each. The images on this page are the images chosen sized by their popularity. The images on the next page were also selected but were less popular.

- **functional, community info, transit**
- **storm water, traffic calming, permanent**
- **interactive, musical, self expression, colorful, family orientated, shaded**
- **complete streets, zones, bike lane NOT on street, no curbs**
- **multicultural, people, stories, values, context appropriate, non-graphic style**
Highland Ave Transit Placemaking

- Colorful environment message water
- Gateway helps to define neighborhood lighting
- Bus stop provides shelter makes people happy
- Complete streets traffic calming green vibrancy includes wayfinding visual
- Attractive trash cans matching street lights furniture planned clean streamline discrete signage
- Laid back people outside interactive
- Fun interactive playful many can get involved
- Colorful culturally inclusive warm welcoming area
- Colorful horses bright visual attraction
- Crosswalks safety traffic calming textured crosswalk median strip
- Gateway helps to define neighborhood lighting
- Interactive fun playful many can get involved
- Colorful culturally inclusive warm welcoming area
- Colorful horses bright visual attraction
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Appendix: Workshop One
Intersection Discussion

Proposed Solutions

Uses and Activities
- family orientated businesses
- more food choices
- gated alleys
- bike share, zip car
- coffee shop

Comfort and Image
- trees and vegetation, flowers
- more trash cans
- security cameras
- lighting for safety
- better seating
- better business facades
- high pressure cleaning
- murals

Access and Linkages
- better traffic organization
- bumpouts
- safer pedestrian crossing
- left turn signals
- information kiosk

Identified Issues

- pedestrian safety
- dirty
- drug activity
- trash
- unpleasant
- jaywalking
- lack of food and shopping options
Appendix: Workshop Two Prioritization Exercise

Details:
- Working with a fixed budget of $75,000, each participant selected projects from the potential project list that they wanted to see happen at the Baltimore Street and Highland Avenue intersection.
- Individual choices and reasoning was shared.
- A group project list was compiled by the community members at the conclusion of the workshop.

Purpose:
- To identify projects that were important to the workshop participants.
- To assist with determining the priorities of the community.

Outputs:
- Group Response (1)
- Individual Responses (5 + 2 Southeast CDC)

Potential Project List
All pricing is ballpark estimate for purposes of prioritization only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Bus Stop</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Curb Extensions</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mural - NE</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mural - SW</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Lighting</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Solar Trash Cans</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrant Crosswalks</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painted Curb Extensions</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Information Kiosk</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Decorative Trash Cans</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Standard Crosswalks</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Decorative Planters</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 “State Law” Crosswalk Signs</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Community Lampost Signs</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Exercise Notes:
Trash cans were considered important with solar trash cans also worth considering if the budget could extend that far.

There was support for community information to be conveyed through a project(s) such as a mural or community lampost signs.

Lighting could be placed on buildings rather than lampposts.
Highland Ave Transit Placemaking

Placemaking at Baltimore Street and Highland Avenue

The current budget for improvements is $75,000. There are many possible improvements that Southeast CDC can pursue within this budget.

Select the improvement you most wish to see happen and place it at the bottom of the chart. Each chart is sized based on its approximate cost. As you add more options to the chart, you'll see how much money is left in the overall budget. Make adding options until you fill the chart.

The costs listed for each option are approximate and will change as the project moves into design and implementation. Improvement costs you place in the gray shaded area are those you think can be added or removed from the project at budget allows. When you have filled your chart, please tear or glue down your selections and answer the following questions:

El presupuesto actual para las mejoras es de $75,000. Hay muchas mejoras posibles que la organización Southeast CDC puede conseguir dentro de este presupuesto.

1. ¿Por qué seleccionaste estas mejoras?
2. ¿Cómo impactará este proyecto al vecindario?
3. ¿Qué costará este proyecto?
4. ¿Cómo afectará esto el vecindario?
Placemaking at Baltimore Street and Highland Avenue

The current budget for improvements is $70,000. There are many possible improvements that Southeast CDC can pursue within this budget.

Select the improvement(s) you wish to see happen and place it at the bottom of the chart. Each circle is scored based on its approximate cost. You may add more options to the chart; you’ll see how much money is left in the overall budget. Keep adding options until you fill the chart.

The costs listed for each option are approximate, and will change as the project moves into design and implementation. Improvements that you place in the gray shaded area are those you think can be added or removed from the overall budget without affecting the overall project. When you have filled your chart, please tape or glue down your selections and answer the following questions:

1. Overall, why did you select those improvements? En general, ¿por qué seleccionaste estos proyectos?

2. Which improvement did you place at the bottom of the chart? ¿Qué proyecto seleccionaste en la parte inferior de la lista? ¿Por qué?

3. Which improvement did you place in the gray shaded area? Why are these optional for your budget? ¿Qué elementos (n) de mejora (n) colocaste en el área sombreada gris? ¿Por qué son opcionales para el presupuesto?

4. What features or options are not offered here that you would like to see? ¿Qué características o opciones no se ofrecen aquí que gustaría ver?

5. I would like to see more family-oriented businesses like a cafe and coffee shop... ¿Cómo podría mejorar la comunidad con más negocios familiares como un café y una cafetería...?
Appendix: Direct Outreach

What do you MOST want to see happen here?

A - murals by bus stops
B - artistic bus shelter
C - lighting
D - community sign
E - safer pedestrian crossing

To reach users of the space who weren’t attending design meetings, two strategies were employed. First, Andy Dahl of Southeast CDC canvased users of the bus stations. Second, flyers as shown above in English and Spanish were hung on all four corners of the intersection requesting responses via text message. No text responses were received, but Andy recorded 30 responses from bus riders in English and Spanish.

This was the first time either organization had attempted text message canvassing, and future attempts will strive to promote responses.

A - 6
B - 2
C - 7
D - 0
E - 15