



Middle Branch Master Plan Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

August 2020

Q: What is the Middle Branch Master Plan?

A: We are transforming the Middle Branch into Baltimore's next great waterfront, with 11 miles of parks and trails connecting South Baltimore neighborhoods to the shoreline and to one another. This will provide safe and healthy activities for families and correct the historic injustice that has divided South Baltimore residents from their waterfront.

Q: Who is involved in the planning effort?

A: This project is being led by the City of Baltimore and the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP), in collaboration with the Parks & People Foundation, SB7, State agencies, and others. In addition, roughly 150 local residents and technical experts are serving on advisory committees that will help guide the project.

Q: What is the current status of the Master Plan?

A: The Master Plan is moving forward. The City and SBGP are assembling a team to complete the first essential element of the Master Plan: the Project Brief. The Project Brief will be the guiding document that shapes the Master Plan — the road map that spells out our objectives and establishes shared definitions of success. West 8, the firm originally leading the Master Plan's design team, was selected after an extensive public process but recently withdrew from the project. Other firms previously working under West 8 are continuing to complete their research and analysis for the Project Brief.

Q: Is there any work under way in the Middle Branch now?

A: Yes. Several major projects are moving forward in coordination with the Master Plan as a whole. Baltimore City's Department of Recreation and Parks will break ground in September on the Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center, a \$23 million regional recreation complex in Cherry Hill's Reedbird Park. The complex includes a multi-purpose field to be built by the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, which will provide a safe, clean space for team sports, including baseball, soccer, lacrosse, football, and flag football. (SBGP and others are contributing funds to these projects.) In addition, the Gwynns Falls Trash Wheel is currently under construction and is expected to be in operation by the end of 2020. And we are pursuing funds for shoreline projects that foster resiliency to climate change and improve the ecology of the area.

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Q: How will the Master Plan address racial equity and social justice as community priorities?

A: Racial equity and social and environmental justice are key drivers for this project. We are reaching out to local and national experts in Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) to help enshrine these topics in the Project Brief, which will inform our understanding of what skills and tasks we need in creating the final design. JEDI principles will not just be theoretical language tacked onto the Master Plan, but will be enshrined in tangible goals, clear definitions of success, and measurable outcomes. This is our commitment, and we want to get it right.

Q: How will community residents learn about the project and express their views?

A: A detailed communications and community engagement strategy is being developed as part of the Project Brief. This will include a range of COVID-safe approaches, like one-on-one phone interviews and a virtual Open House on social media. An experienced, local minority-owned firm is taking the lead on this aspect of the project.

Q: How can I keep up with the latest news about this project?

A: Visit the Middle Branch website, <https://www.middlebranchwaterfront.com/>. Or subscribe to updates from SBGP at <https://bit.ly/39Ew2Ls>.

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