



Bernard C. "Jack" Young
Mayor

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PRESS RELEASE

Middle Branch Planning Effort Continues with Expanded Team Focused on Equity and Community Engagement

New 'Reimagine Middle Branch' website helps community stay involved

BALTIMORE, MD. — Today, Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP), and Parks & People Foundation (P&P) announce the latest efforts underway to keep the Middle Branch Master Plan and other activities for reconnecting South Baltimore to its 11+ miles of shoreline along the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River moving forward. This includes a new public website, Reimagine Middle Branch (reimaginemb.com), for bringing project information and updates together under one umbrella.

"I am truly excited to announce that the Reimagine Middle Branch initiative is moving forward full steam ahead," said Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young. "We recognize there are parallel efforts taking place in the Middle Branch that would benefit greatly from coordinated communication. The Master Plan is best understood as a way to organize the small and large moves that together will realize the community's vision over many years. Projects like this with dedicated community support are how we will continue to build Baltimore."

"This effort is bigger than any one project or property, or the Master Plan itself," said Michael Middleton, Chairman of the SB7 Coalition, which represents the South Baltimore communities of Brooklyn, Cherry Hill, Curtis Bay, Lakeland, Mount Winans, Saint Paul, and Westport. "The new website will be an excellent community resource as we work toward our goal of delivering a world-class waterfront with new recreational amenities, parks, trails, and sustainable community development."

Current work on the Middle Branch Master Plan is focused on confirming the goals, priorities, and engagement strategies with an eye towards circulating a Project Brief for public feedback in January 2021. This phase is being led by Mahan Rykiel Associates, with technical consultants BioHabitats, HR&A Advisors, Living Design Lab, Moffatt & Nichol, and Toole Design, and a communications and engagement team comprised of Assedo Consulting, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, KG&A, MD Strategic, and Public Mechanics, all involved since the 2019 Middle Branch Waterfront Design Competition.

New team members joining the project will strengthen the focus on equity, inclusion, and resiliency. These include:

Kofi Boone, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning with North Carolina State University's College of Design;

DesignJones, LLC, co-led by Diane Jones Allen, former Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at Morgan State University;

Proof Projects, an interdisciplinary design research firm focused on large-scale landscape systems;

The Urban Studio, a DC-based interdisciplinary art and design collaborative.

In addition, James Corner Field Operations (JCFO), a finalist and team leader from the competition, joins the consultant team to provide input and feedback on the forthcoming Project Brief. The City and SBGP are working with JCFO on scoping out the design tasks of the Master Plan for the next phase.

The City of Baltimore, through the Departments of Planning and Recreation and Parks, is collaborating with SBGP and Parks & People Foundation, who facilitated the design competition, plus SB7 and other City and State agencies, to keep the Master Plan effort moving forward. In addition, over 100 local residents, property owners, and technical experts are serving on advisory committees that will guide the project.

“Several collaborations are yielding progress on projects that will anchor the Master Plan,” said Brad Rogers, Executive Director, SBGP. “The Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center broke ground in September. The Gwynns Falls Trash Wheel will be installed in December. We’re working on grants and financing to build trails and restore wetlands. These efforts are happening in tandem with the Master Plan, and the new website will capture all of this activity, making it easier for people to get involved.”

“The Parks & People Foundation is pleased to join with the Mayor’s Office, Department of Planning, Department of Recreation and Parks, the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, community leaders, and so many concerned and committed persons to reimagine the Middle Branch. P&P led the design competition that helped to launch this initiative and I am grateful to see this environmental justice and equity work continue. It is much needed and the Middle Branch communities deserve it,” said Franklin Lance, President and CEO, P&P.

As the Master Plan advisory committees convene for workshop meetings this week, and an intensive round of public outreach is planned for early next year, the information on reimaginemb.com offers a baseline for orientation about the project. The site will evolve and become a dynamic hub for engagement and information-sharing as the process develops in the new year.

For more information, visit reimaginemb.com.

