An aerial photograph of a city grid, likely Baltimore, with a yellow overlay. The text is centered over the image.

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

Parks, projects & programs to connect
communities in South Baltimore

The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan

Volume 2: Implementation Strategy

February 2023

The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan is led by the City of Baltimore, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, and Parks & People, working alongside a team of expert consultants, local and regional stakeholders, and South Baltimore residents.



The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan was prepared by a collaborative team of consultants, including:

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DesignJones LLC
Waldon Studio Architects
Toole Design
P.E.L.A. Design, Inc.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Kofi Boone
The Urban Studio

Equitable Development

Urbane

Engagement and Communications

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Ecological and Marine Engineering

Moffat & Nichol
Biohabitats

Feasibility and Costing

Dharam Consulting

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 - Brooklyn
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 - Cherry Hill
 - Curtis Bay
 - Federal Hill
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 - Mount Winans
 - Otterbein
 - Pigtown
 - Ridgely’s Delight
 - Riverside
 - Saint Paul
 - Sharp-Leadenhall
 - Stadium Area
 - South Baltimore
 - Westport

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The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan was adopted by the Baltimore City Planning Commission on February 9, 2023

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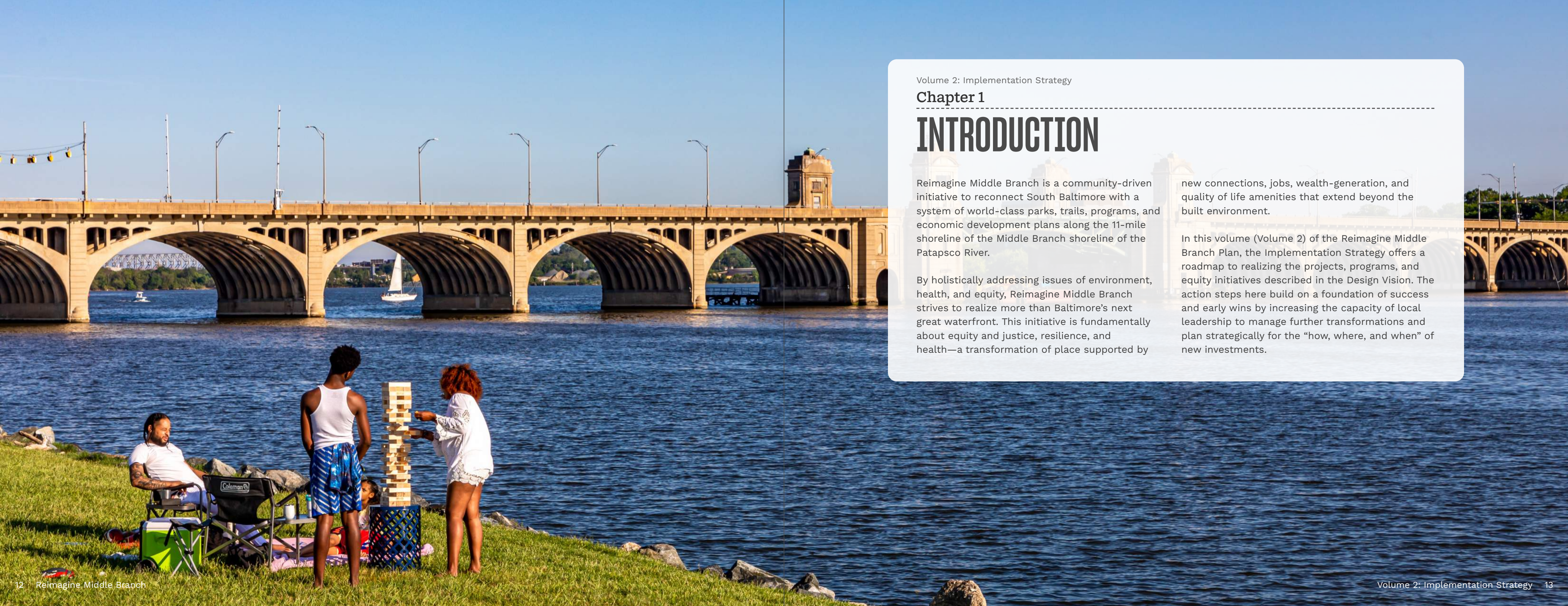
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Reimagine Middle Branch is a community-driven initiative to reconnect South Baltimore with a system of world-class parks, trails, programs, and economic development plans along the 11-mile shoreline of the Middle Branch shoreline of the Patapsco River.

By holistically addressing issues of environment, health, and equity, Reimagine Middle Branch strives to realize more than Baltimore's next great waterfront. This initiative is fundamentally about equity and justice, resilience, and health—a transformation of place supported by

new connections, jobs, wealth-generation, and quality of life amenities that extend beyond the built environment.

In this volume (Volume 2) of the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan, the Implementation Strategy offers a roadmap to realizing the projects, programs, and equity initiatives described in the Design Vision. The action steps here build on a foundation of success and early wins by increasing the capacity of local leadership to manage further transformations and plan strategically for the “how, where, and when” of new investments.

Implementation for an Equitable and Inclusive Middle Branch

The scope of Reimagine Middle Branch is purposefully expansive—it speaks to the power of new green spaces and pedestrian networks to catalyze and improve on access and connectivity, economic equity, cultural heritage programming, environmental resilience, civic engagement, and public health. The project includes 11+ miles of shoreline, 598 acres of parkland, and extensive new trails and Complete Streets connecting South Baltimore neighborhoods to the Patapsco River’s Middle Branch and to one another.

Among other ambitions, the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan (the Plan) presents a powerful, long-term vision for a new “park-shed.” As a watershed is a land area that channels rainfall and snowmelt to creeks, streams, and rivers, the park-shed is the territory within South Baltimore that channels people to the Middle Branch shoreline via a network of parks and other public open spaces.

While the Plan outlines the physical transformation of the Middle Branch, it is also meant to catalyze the intangible transformation of the place—to one that

is just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive. To that end, the Plan paves the way for new physical uses on-site along with programming, partnerships, policies, job creation, and equitable economic development.

Project Leadership & Stakeholders

Reimagine Middle Branch is led by the City of Baltimore and the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP), working in collaboration with Parks & People, South Baltimore 7 Coalition (SB7), federal and state agencies, and a variety of other local organizations. Over 150 residents and technical experts serve on advisory committees, and over

1,000 community members have actively participated via surveys, events, and public input sessions.

The team of consultants whom the City and SBGP engaged to create the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan (the Planning Team) includes 16 local and national collaborators from a wide cross-section of disciplines, including Ecology and Marine Engineering, Mobility and Community Planning, Communications, Cultural Landscapes, and Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Planning. This team has guided the process and developed plans that are responsive and visionary, equitable, and technically feasible.

CSX Swing Bridge in Ridgely’s Cove



Reimagine Middle Branch Plan

This document is the “**Implementation Strategy,**” or **Volume 2** of the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan. The entire RMB Plan is organized as four volumes, each with a specific emphasis and purpose:

- Volume 1: Design Vision
- Volume 2: Implementation Strategy
- Volume 3: Engagement Summary
- Volume 4: Resource Guides

In the previous volume (**Volume 1 – The Design Vision**), the four “Equity Frameworks” situate Reimagine Middle Branch in South Baltimore and form the organizing principles for the Plan’s design proposals and strategies. The Frameworks are: **Restore and Protect the Shoreline, Transform Barriers into Connections, Activated and Inclusive Parks,** and **Equitable Development.** The Design Vision culminates with “**A Walk Around the Middle Branch,**” which synthesizes these principles and applies them to locations around the shoreline and in the surrounding neighborhoods, forming an integrated network of parks, trails, and facilities that wrap the shoreline and connect back into the neighborhoods.

West Covington Park



This document, **Volume 2 – The Implementation Strategy**, offers a roadmap to realizing the projects, programs, and related initiatives described in the Design Vision. Equally important to having a strong vision is the financial, technical, and political feasibility of the Plan. The vision needs to be buildable, implementable, and sustainable.

This Implementation Strategy lays out measures for building on a foundation of success and early-wins by increasing the capacity of local leadership to manage further transformations and planning strategically for how, where, and when new investments are made.

Implementation for an Equitable and Inclusive Middle Branch

Key to this implementation is identifying the funding, phasing, permitting, management, and stewardship of capital improvements and equity initiatives articulated in the Plan. Hence, this volume is organized into the following sections.

Chapter 2 – The Funding Strategy frames the ambitious goal of implementing the RMB vision against the considerable progress and momentum already underway. It also organizes the “uses” of funding, and hence the “sources” suitable to meeting them, by categories of expenditures that will need to be addressed: capital projects, equity investments, programming, operations, and maintenance. A separate chapter on Funding Strategy Resources included in Volume 4 – Resource Guides describes these potential sources in more detail.

Chapter 3 – The Phasing Strategy offers a timeline of “what” projects are likely and feasible to occur “when.” Through a series of maps and order-of-magnitude cost projections, this analysis looks ahead to the next decade and beyond. It highlights both the need for and opportunities presented by

coordinating between “RMB Projects” and the many “Stakeholder Projects” that will be led by others.

Chapter 4 – The Permitting Strategy outlines a coordinated approach to navigating the regulatory processes required for RMB’s projects and other physical developments to proceed on this ambitious but manageable timeline.

Final public meeting & ice cream social



Chapter 5 – The Management and Stewardship Strategy envisions the “who” and “how” of implementing the RMB vision. What are the roles and functions that need to be covered by the “RMB management entity” who will be the “Project Champion” for the RMB vision long into the future? And, as important, what principles must be applied to its operations in order to sustain and advance JEDI principles?

Centering Equity

As the RMB partners engage in a transformative process to reinvest in the health and vitality of the Middle Branch, the principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) are at the center of both the design and planning processes and are key to their successes. Building on the work of the City of Baltimore’s Equity in Planning Committee (EIPC), as well as best practices from other communities, the project’s sponsors and the Planning Team are evaluating the equity of the Plan through four lenses:

1. **Procedural Equity:** Are the planning and development processes transparent and collaborative?
2. **Distributional Equity:** Are the range and type of public amenities, services, and programs equitably distributed within neighborhoods and do they meet the needs of the community? Are projects mitigating against the negative impacts of gentrification?

3. **Structural Equity:** Are public spaces welcoming and connected without barriers or gates? Are the means of connection free and universally accessible?
4. **Transgenerational Equity:** Are projects addressing historic advantages and disadvantages? For instance, are they supporting the physical, mental, and economic health of historically disenfranchised communities with a healthy environment and opportunities for recreation, education, employment, and entrepreneurship?

The recommendations in both the Design Vision and the Implementation Strategy were developed with these lenses in mind. The Planning Team conducted extensive outreach to local organizations and stakeholders, to understand their interests and capacities and test out new ideas and approaches. The Team also reviewed past planning processes for the Middle Branch and South Baltimore, in order to acknowledge and incorporate the community’s work that preceded this effort.

In addition to engaging with stakeholders locally, the Team met with park organizations around the country to understand how other large, complex, public waterfronts are built, managed, operated, and maintained. From this research, the Team sought out implementation strategies and best-practices that foreground JEDI principles and can help advance an environmental justice agenda. Taken together, the recommendations contained in the Implementation Strategy lay out a smart, “implementable,” and just approach to achieving RMB’s aims and ambitions.

The Mobile Project Hub at Cyclovia in Carroll Park



Implementation is Underway

What is remarkable about the RMB initiative is that many key elements of the Plan are already underway. The fact is that Reimagine Middle Branch is happening.

More than \$165 million in federal, state, and city funding, casino local impact grant (LIG) funds, and foundation funding has been raised for first- and second- generation public space projects that are now in progress or completed. These include:

- Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center (opened fall 2022)
- BGE Field at Reedbird Park (opened fall 2021)
- Gwynns Falls Trash Wheel (diverting trash from the Middle Branch since 2021)
- The first 25 acres of restored wetlands as Phase 1 of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative
- Ridgely’s Cove brownfield mitigation project and shoreline trail
- Planned donation of a new, public waterfront park and trail in the ONE Westport development

- Warner and Stockholm Street streetscaping and extension of the Gwynns Falls Trail
- New public parks planned as part of the Baltimore Peninsula development
- Renovation of the long-vacant Carroll Park Recreation Center
- Major capital improvements to Solo Gibbs Park and Florence Cummins Park
- Designs for the Baybrook Connector and MPA’s Proposed Masonville Cove Connector in Brooklyn.

This includes millions of dollars in casino LIG funds that have been invested as operating support for parks and community and economic development efforts, such as:

- Enhanced maintenance, trash pickup, tree planting and pruning, and public art in parks
- Supporting Main Street commercial corridors
- Recreational, cultural, and educational programming like the South Baltimore Gateway Sports Network and the Cherry Hill Arts and Music Waterfront Festival

- Operating support and program-based funds for community development corporations (CDC’s)
- Competitive grant programs and technical assistance for community-based organizations.
- Workforce development programs and summer youth jobs dedicated for South Baltimore residents and businesses.

On top of this work, **hundreds of millions of dollars in private investment are now taking place** in South Baltimore along its Main Streets, and at major development projects like Baltimore Peninsula, the Warner Street Entertainment District, and the ONE Westport waterfront development. The Baltimore Peninsula redevelopment project brings a pledge of over \$19 million for community investments to be managed by the SB7 Coalition, facilitated through a community benefits agreement and memorandum of understanding with community leaders.

The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan is expansive because it rests on a foundation of audacious and unprecedented success. The task now is to build the funding streams,

action plans, and organizational structures needed to sustain that success in the coming years. The four main interrelated elements of this Implementation Strategy – Funding Strategy, Phasing Strategy, Permitting Strategy, and Management and Stewardship Strategy – are intended to guide the community and RMB leadership in this effort.

Reimagine Middle Branch is not a single project or plan, but a collaborative, cooperative model of mutual support among a wide range of projects and initiatives under a coordinated vision. The breadth of this vision has several important implications for the success of the overall effort and individual projects and milestones that can benefit from the overall momentum:

- **Division of Labor / Distributed Staffing** – The staffing burden for this work is spread over multiple organizations so that the partner organizations in the RMB initiative do not carry the burden alone.
- **Distributed Fundraising** – The fundraising burden is also spread out, with different partners seeking funding from different

sources while being able to demonstrate synergy and leverage with related projects and programs.

- **Collaborative Acceleration** – By working together, partners are able to access and leverage funding from different sources and at different times over the life of a project. Casino local impact grant (LIG) funds offer great flexibility because their use is relatively unrestricted, and they accrue annually. South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) brings capacity and focus, as well as flexibility, in deploying casino LIG funds when they are most needed.
- **Public/Private Partnership** – Public agencies have unique access to a certain suite of funding opportunities, such as federal grant programs designated for local governments; nonprofit partners can access other sources, such as foundation grants limited to non-profit organizations; and private sector developers or firms have access to sources of capital sources unavailable to governments and non-profits. This Plan maximizes the opportunity to harness the power and

potential that each type of entity can bring to this vision.

As an example, for more than a decade, the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks (BCFP) had planned to develop the **Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center** in Cherry Hill. A partnership between **BCRP** (with access to City and State funds), **SBGP** (with access to casino LIG funds), and the **Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation** (with its fundraising capacity) helped make the project a reality. The City’s external partners were able to fill a critical funding gap, allowing the project to expand in size and be brought to completion.

The table on the following pages illustrates the impact that has resulted from this collaborative effort. The work done to date or currently in the pipeline adds up to over \$165 million. More than the sum of the funds raised, this represents an initiative with an unexpectedly broad capacity to sustain momentum and harness outside funding sources beyond the City’s resources or any one organization’s budget capacity.

Projects Already Funded and Underway or Completed

Project Name & Purpose	Source (General)	Amount (Capital)		Amount (Program)		Amount (Total)	
Baybrook Connector Trail							
Trail Design & Construction	State	\$	500,000			\$	500,000
		\$	1,000,000			\$	1,000,000
Carroll Park Recreation Center Reopening							
Design, Construction & Furnishings	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	2,500,000			\$	2,500,000
	City General Funds	\$	500,000			\$	500,000
CDC Operating Support Fund							
3-Year Operating Grants for CDCs	SBGP Casino Funds			\$	900,000	\$	900,000
Cherry Hill Arts and Music Waterfront Festival							
Annual Event (Multiple Years)	SBGP Casino Funds			\$	800,000	\$	800,000
	City Casino Funds			\$	35,000	\$	35,000
Complete Streets Plan and Projects							
District-wide Inventory & Demonstration Projects	City Casino Funds	\$	1,100,000			\$	1,100,000
Community Development Fund							
Project-based Grants	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	3,200,000	\$	300,000	\$	3,500,000
	City Casino Funds	\$	700,000			\$	700,000
Impact Investment Area (Pigtown) Support	City Casino Funds	\$	300,000			\$	300,000
Enhanced Code Enforcement	City Casino Funds			\$	200,000	\$	200,000
Community Grants							
Grants to Community Groups & Nonprofits	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	600,000	\$	4,000,000	\$	4,600,000
Cromwell Street Park							
Design & Construction	Private	\$	1,000,000			\$	1,000,000
East-West Footbridge							
Preliminary Engineering / Feasibility	Private	\$	350,000			\$	350,000
	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	150,000			\$	150,000
Florence Cummins Park Renovations							
Master Plan, Design, Construction (Partial)	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	1,650,000			\$	1,650,000
Gateways & Corner Cans Trash Management							
Enhanced City Services	City Casino Funds			\$	3,000,000	\$	3,000,000
Gwynns Falls / Middle Branch Trail							
Design & Construction	Private	\$	50,000			\$	50,000
	State	\$	250,000			\$	250,000

Purpose	Source	Amount (Capital)		Amount (Program)		Amount (Total)	
Gwynns Falls Trail							
Design & Construction	City General Funds	\$	1,000,000			\$	1,000,000
	Federal	\$	3,000,000			\$	3,000,000
Wayfinding Trail Signage	City Casino Funds			\$	200,000	\$	200,000
Gwynns Falls Trash Wheel							
Capital & Operating	State	\$	700,000			\$	700,000
	City General Funds	\$	100,000			\$	100,000
	Other Public	\$	100,000			\$	100,000
	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	300,000			\$	300,000
Main Streets Enhancements							
Maintenance and Programming	SBGP Casino Funds			\$	700,000	\$	700,000
Marine Trash Removal							
Boom Maintenance & Shoreline Cleaning	City Casino Funds			\$	1,200,000	\$	1,200,000
Masonville Cove Connector Trail							
Trail Design	Federal	\$	625,000			\$	625,000
Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center							
Building and Campus	City General Funds	\$	14,000,000			\$	14,000,000
	State	\$	6,000,000			\$	6,000,000
	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	2,200,000			\$	2,200,000
	City Casino Funds	\$	1,000,000			\$	1,000,000
BGE Field Powered by Kelly Benefits	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	1,150,000			\$	1,150,000
	Private	\$	750,000			\$	750,000
	City General Funds	\$	750,000			\$	750,000
Community/Police Sports Program	SBGP Casino Funds			\$	100,000	\$	100,000
Middle Branch Park Improvements							
Regular Upgrades and Improvements	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	200,000			\$	200,000
Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (MBRI) Stage 1							
BGE Spring Gardens, City Parking Lots	Federal	\$	32,000,000			\$	32,000,000
Site 5a	State	\$	3,500,000			\$	3,500,000
	City General Funds	\$	5,100,000			\$	5,100,000
MedStar Harbor Hospital Shoreline	Other Public	\$	6,500,000			\$	6,500,000
	Federal	\$	650,000			\$	650,000

Projects Already Funded and Underway or Completed

Project Name & Purpose	Source (General)	Amount (Capital)		Amount (Program)		Amount (Total)	
Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (MBRI) Stage 1 (Cont.)							
Dredged Material Research Pilot Project	State	\$	300,000			\$	300,000
Ridgely’s Cove Remediation and Mitigation Area							
Environmental Assessment	Federal	\$	100,000			\$	100,000
Design & Construction	State	\$	640,000			\$	640,000
	Private	\$	1,800,000			\$	1,800,000
	City General Funds	\$	100,000			\$	100,000
Solo Gibbs Park Improvements (Phases 1A, 1B, 1C)							
Site Demolition	City General Funds	\$	300,000			\$	300,000
School Demolition	State	\$	1,400,000			\$	1,400,000
Playground Improvements	State	\$	190,000			\$	190,000
Phase 1 Park Enhancements	City Casino Funds	\$	7,000,000			\$	7,000,000
	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	1,000,000			\$	1,000,000
South Baltimore Gateway Sports Network							
Free Youth Programs in Multiple Parks	SBGP Casino Funds			\$	1,500,000	\$	1,500,000
Triangle Park							
Design & Construction	Private	\$	1,000,000			\$	1,000,000
Warner Street Entertainment District							
Streetscaping and Trail	City Casino Funds	\$	8,100,000			\$	8,100,000
	State	\$	5,000,000			\$	5,000,000
	City General Funds	\$	500,000			\$	500,000
Animal Shelter Relocation	City Casino Funds	\$	8,500,000			\$	8,500,000
	City General Funds	\$	7,900,000			\$	7,900,000
Westport Waterfront Park							
Land Donation	Private	\$	5,000,000			\$	5,000,000
Design & Construction	Private	\$	2,000,000			\$	2,000,000
	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	500,000			\$	500,000
Future Maintenance	Private	\$	5,000,000			\$	5,000,000
	SBGP Casino Funds	\$	500,000			\$	500,000
TOTAL FUNDS RAISED TO DATE		\$	152,605,000	\$	12,935,000	\$	165,540,000

Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center



Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center - BGE Field Powered by Kelly Benefits



Gwynns Falls Trash Wheel



Cherry Hill Arts and Music Waterfront Festival



Warner Street Entertainment District





Chapter 2

FUNDING STRATEGY

One of the key functions of the Reimagine Middle Branch (RMB) initiative will be to raise funds for the operations, maintenance, programming, and capital development of the RMB projects and equity initiatives. Fortunately, RMB is not starting from scratch in identifying funds to implement the Plan. The initiative starts with a variety of funding streams already in place and a demonstrated track record of raising funds from a diverse range of sources.

Moreover, the Middle Branch and South Baltimore have benefited from two unprecedented sources of funding that are available for direct community investments and for leveraging additional resources:

- Annual **casino local impact grant (LIG) funds** dedicated by State and City enabling laws for use in South Baltimore
- Community investments pledged through the **Community Benefits Agreement** executed by the Baltimore Peninsula Development team and the **SB7 Coalition**

While these sources will not build and sustain all the elements of the Plan, they provide a crucial source of seed funding and local match for jump-starting RMB's many capital projects and equity initiatives. RMB provides the opportunity for coordinating investments, so that worthy uses can find appropriate funding sources, and projects can be planned to maximize impacts and minimize duplication of efforts.

Uses of Funds: RMB Project Types

Nobody expects the City of Baltimore to fund the entirety – or even the majority – of this work. Nor is South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) capable of funding everything in the Plan.

Finding the resources to sustain this effort requires actively seeking new outside funding sources and building new partnerships to secure them. Luckily, this is exactly what the RMB initiative has already done with tremendous success. The key now is to maintain that success by carefully matching different kinds of projects – or categories of expenses – with different funding sources.

One of the things that makes RMB unique is the way it has been structured to date. This effort has been organized under a cooperative model, where work is done not by a single lead but by a coalition of neighborhood, nonprofit, public sector, and private sector partners. This has important implications, not just for a Phasing Strategy (Chapter 3) or a Management Strategy (Chapter 5), but for its Funding Strategy as well. Coordinating a wide range of projects with diverse sponsors and partners has attracted funding for different types of projects and activities at different

scales – while providing these efforts the benefit of being part of a larger vision.

Before addressing where funding for all this work will come from, it is useful to envision where funds will be deployed. What are the types of projects, programs, and activities that will need to be funded in order to realize the RMB vision? By viewing RMB projects and programs within categories of need – or the “uses” of funds – we can more easily target the “sources” most appropriate to each use.

Categories of projects and the types of expenditures that need to be planned for in the future may be organized as follows:

- **Stakeholder Projects**, initiated and led by various partners, yet contributing to the overall Reimagine Middle Branch vision. These include:
 - **Park and Trail Projects** (examples include the Baybrook Connector)
 - **Programming** (such as the annual Cherry Hill Arts and Music Waterfront Festival)
 - **Economic Development Projects** (ranging in scale from the Pigtown Homeownership Zone to Baltimore Peninsula Development)

- **RMB Projects**, led by the RMB principals (South Baltimore Gateway Partnership and the City of Baltimore) with myriad partners as cornerstones of the Plan. These include:
 - **Park and Trail Projects** (examples include the Middle Branch Trail connector and reopening the Carroll Park Recreation Center)
 - **Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative Projects** (projects planned over many years to transform the shoreline with wetlands, berms, and habitat areas that foster resilience against climate change and increase biodiversity)
- **RMB Equity Investments**
 - Economic Development Projects (such as funding for commercial “Main Street” corridors)
 - Programming (regular programs within parks and development of an African American Heritage Trail)
- **RMB Operations & Maintenance**, ensuring parks and facilities have adequate resources for their ongoing care and upkeep.
- **RMB Overhead**, providing the capacity to plan and manage these initiatives

Sources of Funding

RMB is not simply a park project, or an ecological restoration project, or an environmental justice project, or a resiliency project, or an economic development project. It is a **creative synthesis of all of these**, which means that it is eligible to seek resources from an extremely wide range of funders. A more detailed review of these sources of funds is covered in the Resource Guides (Volume 4) of the Plan (See **Funding Strategy Resources**).

Reimagine Middle Branch is fortunate to have local organizations in place with significant revenue streams. These include casino local impact grant (LIG) funds that are directed separately by the State of Maryland to the City, with guidance from the Casino Local Development Council (LDC), and to **South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP)**, as well as funding directed to the **SB7 Coalition** as a result of the Port Covington community benefits agreement that covers the Baltimore Peninsula development.

Both SBGP and SB7 have already set in motion numerous projects and stakeholder engagement processes, including this master planning process. As the partners in the RMB

initiative seek to raise additional funds, it will be important to assess what amount of these funds are available for direct investments and leveraging other sources that can be used to realize the Plan.

When considering opportunities for leveraging local funding, it is important to note that several of the benefits of the RMB agenda, notably environmental justice, resiliency, and water quality, are experiencing a once-in-a-generation wave of public funding. This is buoyed in no small part by post-COVID federal infrastructure spending with a focus on rectifying past inequities in both the allocation of resources and in the dumping of environmentally harmful uses in communities of color. Amidst these policy priorities, the RMB initiative is well positioned to take huge strides very quickly.

As an example of the potential for leveraging local funds and the capacity that comes with having an organization dedicated to this work, SBGP secured a grant of \$32 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program for the Middle Branch Resiliency

Initiative (MBRI) – which is an important component of the RMB vision. This competitive award is leveraging another \$15 million from other federal, state, city, and even county grant programs, and will create the first phase of constructed wetlands and “resiliency berms” around the Middle Branch.

RMB has already proven to be extremely successful at harnessing new and nontraditional funding – some of which have never been sought before in Baltimore City. **The table on the following pages illustrates how traditional and nontraditional funding sources could align with the diverse project types and expense categories of the RMB vision, in order to see it realized in the next 10 years.** This table reflects funding received or committed to date, plus budgeting goals, and it uses approximate, “order of magnitude” numbers to represent the general scale of what would be needed in each category. **In this light, the comprehensive vision of the RMB plan begins to look feasible.**

10 Year Funding Matrix

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

Stakeholder Projects			RMB Projects		RMB Equity Investments		RMB O&M	RMB Overhead
Parks/Trails	Programs	Economic Development	Parks/Trails	MBRI	Economic Development	Programs		
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X	X						
			X	X			X	
			X	X				
			X		X		X	
	X					X	X	X

10 Year Funding Matrix

Funding Source	Background	10-Year Fund-raising Goal (Approx)	Raised to Date (Approx)
Federal Funds			
FEMA BRIC Program	FEMA recently introduced the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program to fund nature-based hazard mitigation, and the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (BMRI) secured a \$32 million grant to fund its first phase of wetland restoration. This is likely just the first example of how RMB can tap into the growing stream of resiliency funds.	\$50,000,000	\$32,000,000
NFWF Coastal Resilience Fund	Over the past year, the Coastal Resilience Fund at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has grown from \$30 million to \$140 million. RMB has already secured a \$650,000 design grant for the MBRI, which fits squarely within the project goals of this fund. There are potentially millions more available for shoreline restoration projects.	\$15,000,000	\$650,000
USDOT RAISE Grants	The RAISE program funds pedestrian improvements, with an emphasis on underserved communities and environmental restoration. Baltimore has successfully secured major RAISE grants in the past.	\$20,000,000	\$0
USDOT PROTECT Funds	This massive USDOT appropriation is designed to improve the resiliency of surface transportation networks, with an emphasis on nature-based solutions. \$7.3 billion will be provided directly to state DOTs, while \$1.4 billion will be available as competitive grants scheduled for release in the Winter of 2022. South Baltimore is the home of many critical transportation networks for the Port of Baltimore.	\$25,000,000	\$0
NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants	Up to \$85 million in funding is available for habitat restoration and coastal resilience through the NOAA FY2022 Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity. This funding will prioritize habitat restoration actions that rebuild productive and sustainable fisheries, use natural infrastructure to reduce damage from flooding and storms, promote resilient ecosystems and communities, and yield socioeconomic benefits.	\$7,000,000	\$0
NOAA Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Underserved Communities	\$10 million available in FY22 for habitat restoration and resilience in communities just like South Baltimore.	\$1,000,000	\$0

Stakeholder Projects			RMB Projects		RMB Equity Investments		RMB O&M	RMB Overhead
Parks/Trails	Programs	Economic Development	Parks/Trails	MBRI	Economic Development	Programs		
			X	X			X	
			X	X				
			X					
			X	X				
			X	X				
	X		X	X		X		

10 Year Funding Matrix

Funding Source	Background	10-Year Fund-raising Goal (Approx)	Raised to Date (Approx)
Federal Funds			
NOAA Marine Debris Removal Grants	The NOAA Marine Debris Program will award up to \$56 million to fund projects that remove marine debris. This focuses on two priorities: removing large marine debris and using proven interception technologies to capture marine debris	\$1,000,000	\$0
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Stateside Grants	The LWCF State and Local Assistance Program provides matching grants to state, local and tribal governments to create and expand parks, develop recreation facilities, and further local recreation plans. Each year, funds are distributed to every U.S. state and territory using a population-based formula. LWCF grants are provided to the states, and through the states to local governmental jurisdictions, on a matching basis for up to 50% of the total project-related costs for the acquisition of land and the development of facilities for public outdoor recreation and for fulfilling the program's planning requirements.	\$5,000,000	\$0
LWCF Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership	The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) is a nationally competitive grant program that delivers funding to urban areas, especially economically disadvantaged areas lacking outdoor recreation opportunities. BCRP received a \$1 million grant through ORLP for the Middle Branch Trail.	\$3,000,000	\$1,000,000
Chesapeake Bay Program Grants	The Chesapeake Bay Program provides grants to reduce and prevent pollution and to improve the living resources in the Chesapeake Bay. Grants are awarded for implementation projects, as well as for technical assistance, monitoring, environmental education, and other related activities. While it typically distributes \$35-\$50 million per year, the infrastructure bill provided an additional \$238 million (spread over 5 years).	\$10,000,000	\$0
Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)	FLAP provides grants to improve connections between federal properties and the communities they serve. These funds have provided \$625,000 for the design of MPA's Proposed Masonville Cove Connector to Masonville Cove Environmental Center.	\$3,000,000	\$625,000
America the Beautiful Initiative	In 2021, President Biden issued a challenge to conserve 30 percent of America's lands and waters by 2030. This includes achieving more equitable access to nature and its benefits for all people in America – no matter their zip code. Though currently an aspirational goal, the Administration is reportedly working towards a \$100 million funding package to support conservation activities.	\$2,000,000	\$0

Stakeholder Projects			RMB Projects		RMB Equity Investments		RMB O&M	RMB Overhead
Parks/Trails	Programs	Economic Development	Parks/Trails	MBRI	Economic Development	Programs		
X			X				X	
X			X	X			X	
X			X				X	
			X	X			X	
X			X				X	

10 Year Funding Matrix

Funding Source	Background	10-Year Fund-raising Goal (Approx)	Raised to Date (Approx)
State Funds			
Maryland Chesapeake and Coastal Grants Gateway	Maryland's Chesapeake and Coastal Grants Gateway funds projects that foster healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies that are resilient in the face of change. Projects must achieve outcomes related to non-point source pollution, planning for flood risks, and using nature-based infrastructure for resiliency, education, and/or boating. The MBRI was already awarded \$3.5 million through this effort.	\$10,000,000	\$3,500,000
Maryland Coastal Zone Management Grants	DNR distributes \$4.5 million annually under the Coastal Zone Management Act for the acquisition of fee simple and other interests in land, public access improvements, or habitat restoration projects.	\$500,000	\$0
Maryland SEED Grants	DHCD provides grants for community and economic development projects supporting major institutions. SEED funds provided \$500,000 for the Baybrook Connector design project.	\$2,000,000	\$500,000
MDOT Bikeways Grants	MDOT provides grants for the design and construction of bike lanes and trails.	\$2,000,000	\$0
Philanthropy			
Property Owner Donations	Landowners, such as the developer of One Westport, have already made donations valued in excess of \$12 million.	\$20,000,000	\$12,000,000
Foundations	Although traditional foundation funds have not provided a significant portion of the funding raised to date, it is entirely reasonable to expect them to provide strategic gap financing for key projects as RMB proceeds.	\$5,000,000	\$0

Stakeholder Projects			RMB Projects		RMB Equity Investments		RMB O&M	RMB Overhead
Parks/Trails	Programs	Economic Development	Parks/Trails	MBRI	Economic Development	Programs		
X			X	X			X	
X			X	X			X	
X								
X			X					
X			X					
	X	X			X	X	X	X

Analysis

While it is impossible to know the exact cost of any future project, or the exact award amount of any future grant, the preceding table makes clear that there exists a practical and feasible roadmap to funding the different elements of the Plan. This conclusion is further substantiated by the track record of successful funding secured to date. Specifically, the table illustrates the following:

- **Stakeholder Projects** – that is, those led by organizations or partners other than SBGP and the City – will generally be financed through third-party private, state, federal, and philanthropic funding programs, using casino funds to strategically fill gaps. SB7 funds will continue to be distributed for stakeholder projects in accordance with the community benefits agreement.
 - **Park and Trail Projects** led by others will benefit from targeted investments of casino LIG funding and City support to attract and fill gaps in funding assembled from developers’ contributions and state and federal programs.
 - **Programming** efforts that have benefited from grants or contracts from SBGP in the past would continue

to have the opportunity to apply for these funds while leveraging this track record of success to build a larger funding base.

- **Economic Development Projects** will rely on the traditional suite of private and public financing mechanisms used by developers across Baltimore, augmented by a new subsidy pool that targets casino LIG funds to accelerate such efforts.

- **RMB Projects** and program expenses will rely on casino LIG funding and the well-developed fundraising capacity of core RMB team members, notably SBGP, Parks & People, and the City. This foundation combines with nontraditional funding sources, such as “ecosystem services credits” and “value capture,” resulting in a complex yet achievable “capital stack” for undertaking large and complicated projects – while supporting the organizational capacity to realize these projects and deliver on the commitment to equity initiatives:
 - **Park and Trail Projects** will rely on larger blocks of targeted casino revenues to attract multi-party funding

MBRI wetlands & outdoor classroom



partnerships from government and nonprofit collaborators. For example, the BGE Field project at the Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center leveraged investments by the City through the Department of Recreation and Parks and SBGP to attract a significant fundraising effort by the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation.

- **Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative (MBRI) Projects** will continue to follow the successful model of “Phase 1,” combining hazard mitigation funds with ecosystem services credits and the beneficial reuse of dredge material.
 - ◆ This strategy has raised \$47 million to date for **“Phase 1”** wetlands to be constructed alongside City parks and MedStar Harbor Hospital in Cherry Hill and Brooklyn alongside the main stem of the Patapsco, and for a planted “resiliency berm” at BGE’s Spring Garden facility in Ridgely’s Cove
- **Equity Investments** will also rely on the fundraising capacity of the core RMB team, combined with new programs supported substantially with casino LIG funds.

- **Economic Development Projects** under the banner of RMB will follow the model of stakeholder-led economic development projects, combining commonly used private and public financing mechanisms with pre-development and gap funding from a new pool of casino LIG funds targeted for development subsidies.

- ◆ **“Value capture,”** of which tax increment financing, or TIF, is one type, has traditionally only been used for market-rate development in Baltimore. Yet, TIF instruments are also being used to create permanent affordable housing in the Perkins Somerset Oldtown redevelopment in East Baltimore and can be explored as a funding source for equitable development around the Middle Branch.
- **Programming** can be funded in part through outside grants but is likely to be substantially supported with casino LIG funds under grants and contracts held by SBGP – in line with the types of programming SBGP has supported for the past several years.

- **RMB Operations and Maintenance and Organizational Overhead** will principally be covered with casino LIG funds through SBGP and the City.

Community Design Lab Equity Initiative



Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

Many of the sources of funding from the previous table are described further in the Resource Guides (Volume 4) **Funding Strategy Resources**, along with recommendations for accessing them and a framework for considering future operating and maintenance costs in creating annual budgets.

As noted above, the table estimates how much from each source may be generated over a 10-year period, for a total targeted goal of \$400 million in direct and leveraged

investments. Much of this total represents one-time capital costs – the “big-ticket items.” However, the planning for such a budget recognizes the need for ongoing revenue-generation to meet the expenditures of operating and maintaining parks, trails, and recreation facilities; supporting programming that activates the park-shed and meets community needs and priorities; building equity, capacity, and wealth-generation in neighborhoods; and sustaining the capacity to do this work.

Based on this ultimate goal, the following list offers near - and longer-term recommendations on accessing and coordinating funding for the capital, programming, equity investments, O&M, and overhead uses that will be needed to implement the Plan.

Middle Branch Loop Trail



Funding Strategy: Summary of Recommendations	
1.1	SBGP, SB7, and the City strategize and align funding priorities for RMB projects and programs, ongoing operations, and equity initiatives.
1.2	City and SBGP set annual allocations of casino LIG funds towards RMB initiatives with targets for capital, O&M, programs, and equity investments.
1.3	SBGP, SB7, and community organizations in Brooklyn, Curtis Bay & Locust Point create an agreement to include neighborhoods in implementation plans; include an allocation of SB7 funding for RMB initiatives.
1.4	Consider hiring full-time, dedicated funding development staff to monitor grant opportunities, build relationships with elected officials and funders, and oversee proposal development.
1.5	Develop an inclusive programming strategy for break-even, nominal, or free access for community residents; identify operators and content providers, expense and revenue projections, staffing, equipment, and facility needs.
1.6	Consider models to weigh the financial benefits and risks of serving as a programming operator versus contracting with third-party providers.
1.7	Analyze revenue-generating opportunities (such as facility rentals, concessions, permitting fees), so that the City, the RMB management entity, and other partners share benefits of user fees and program revenue.
1.8	Assess opportunities to enter into ground leases or strategically purchase properties that will reduce costs or generate revenue for RMB operations and equity initiatives over the long term.
1.9	Conduct market/feasibility studies for sites under consideration, including restrictions, expenses, and potential revenue.
1.10	Determine the appetite of stakeholders for upgrading and monetizing existing parking lots.
1.11	Conduct a traffic and parking study to determine parking needs and possible locations where leases can be secured for parking revenue, including electric vehicle charging stations.
1.12	Explore pay-as-you-go (PAY-GO) funding model where incremental tax revenues are leveraged to a dedicated fund for community priorities like small business development and affordable housing.
1.13	Engage a municipal finance expert to understand the opportunities and limitations of applying an area-based (instead of project-based) TIF and other forms of value capture that do not require bonding.
1.14	Explore other opportunities to apply innovative value-capture models that promote equity and community investments.
1.15	Develop sponsorship guidelines with recommended ranges of funding to be eligible for naming rights and other related benefits.
1.16	Hold early conversations with local South Baltimore businesses, regional corporations, and foundations to determine interest in sponsoring RMB programs and projects and develop criteria to apply in evaluating opportunities.

Chapter 3

PHASING STRATEGY

As mentioned above, under the collaborative model, the RMB initiative helps to lead, coordinate and support the work of many partners, while filling in gaps between them. This includes accelerating the pace at which new funding is brought to the table, and by extension the pace of project implementation. This enhanced capacity is reflected in the **Phasing Strategy**, which imagines how the RMB visions may roll out over time.

Which projects are assigned to each phase is shaped by existing opportunities and development partnerships, community and government priorities, and regulatory timelines. Ultimately, projects are grouped into four phases for development over the next 20 years:

- **Phase 1 – Immediate:** Projects already underway.
- **Phase 2 – 2-5 Years:** Early-win projects, to be prioritized upon completion of the Plan seek

to deliver projects that address major priorities including resiliency, connectivity, and equitable development.

- **Phase 3 – 5-10 Years:** Beyond the early wins, projects in the third phase will build out the “Heart of the Middle Branch” to create Baltimore’s next great waterfront.
- **Phase 4 – 10+ Years:** Expanding beyond the heart of the Middle Branch, these long-term initiatives pair open space improvements with transformational development around the Middle Branch.

The maps and tables highlight which developments in each phase are **Stakeholder Projects** – led by organizations or partners other than SBGP and the City – and those that are **RMB Projects**, led by the RMB principals South Baltimore Gateway Partnership and the City of Baltimore with myriad partners.

Phase 1: Underway

Between RMB Projects and Stakeholder Projects, **\$130 million worth of work is currently underway on open space, recreation, and related projects, with hundreds of millions more in private sector investment. This means that Phase 1 primarily involves stewarding the projects already in the pipeline and helping to keep them on track.**

In most settings, this list would constitute unbridled success. For Reimagine Middle Branch, it constitutes a firm foundation from which to build.

It is worth noting that Phase 1 includes a number of **innovative and unprecedented funding strategies**. For example, the **\$47 million first phase of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative** – the wetland and shoreline enhancement component of

Reimagine Middle Branch – has been fully funded through non-traditional sources. This includes a \$32 million grant from FEMA to protect BGE Spring Gardens and MedStar Harbor Hospital from flood damage through a network of wetlands and nature-based resiliency infrastructure. It also includes investments from state and local governments seeking to meet water quality obligations at a scale that delivers relatively high impact in terms of mitigation (and “credits” to the local governments) for relatively low cost.

This phase of work also includes the \$23M state-of-the-art **Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center**, which opened in fall 2022, as well as improvements to several neighborhood-scale parks and recreation centers, including the **Carroll Park Rec**

Center and Phase 1 of **Solo Gibbs Park** in Sharp-Leadenhall.

Also in fall of 2022, Topgolf Baltimore opened as the second destination in **The Walk @ Warner Street** entertainment district, with the **Paramount Baltimore’s** live performance venue scheduled to open in summer 2023. The **Ridgely’s Cove Remediation and Mitigation Area** was also completed, involving restoration of upland and shoreline habitat areas in the five-acre, City-owned parcel between the Horseshoe Casino and the water. The project encompasses environmental remediation of a former brownfield site, removal of non-native species on land and at the waterside, planting of native species, and reconstruction of this segment of the Gwynns Falls / Middle Branch Trail.

Timeline: Immediate – 2 Years

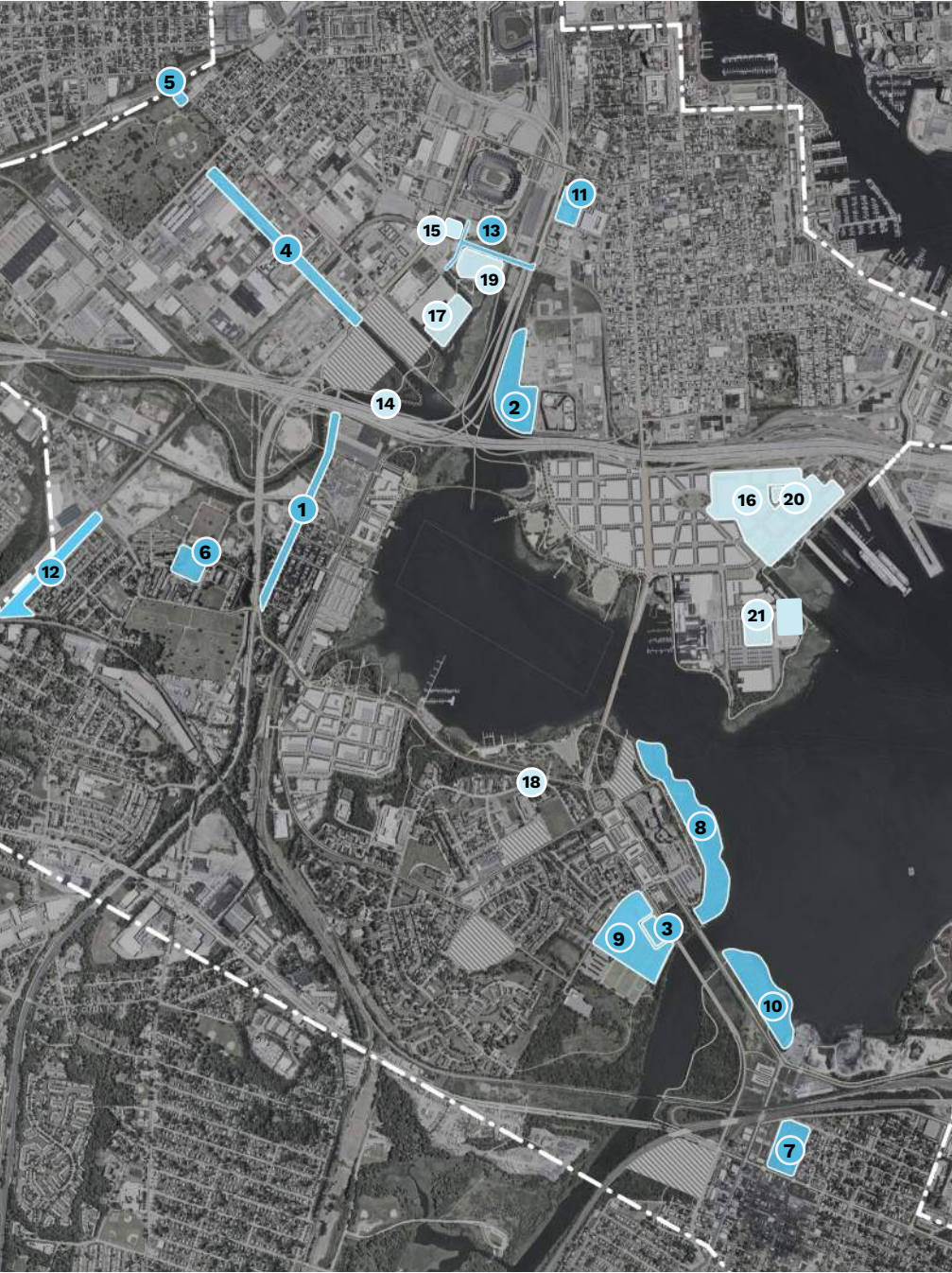
Key Recommendation for Phase 1:

Deliver on the large pipeline of projects that are already funded and underway, in order to maintain momentum and build public trust.

Estimated Cost of Phase	Already Funded	Funding Identified	Remaining Gap
\$130 million (plus stakeholder projects)	100%	N/A	N/A



#	Project Name	Project Type
1	Annapolis Road Quick-Build Traffic Calming	RMB
2	BGE Resiliency Berm and Wetland (MBRI)	
3	BGE Ripken Field	
4	Bush Street Cycle Track	
5	Carroll Park Rec Center	
6	Florence Cummins Park Phase 1	
7	Garrett Park Improvements	
8	Harbor Hospital Marsh (MBRI), Boardwalks, and Classroom	
9	Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center and Reedbird Park	
10	Patapsco Marsh (MBRI)	
11	Solo Gibbs Park Phase 1	
12	S. Paca Street Park Improvements	
13	Warner / Stockholm Streetscape (Gwynns Falls Trail)	
14	Gwynns Falls Trash Wheel	Stakeholder
15	Paramount Baltimore	
16	Baltimore Peninsula Chapter 1 Development	
17	Ridgely's Cove Remediation and Mitigation Area	
18	Seamon Avenue Green Infrastructure Project	
19	Topgolf Baltimore	
20	Triangle Park	
21	Under Armour “Track & Field” Campus	Equity Initiative
	CDC Operating Support	
	Commercial Corridor Grants	
	Community Design Lab	
	Employment Connection Center	
	Morgan State University Fellowship	
	YouthWorks Funding	



Phase 2: Equity and Connectivity

Phase 2 builds upon and extends the profound success of the project to date by focusing on two critical tasks. First, it begins building out the core network of connectivity giving neighborhoods access to the waterfront and one another. This involves projects that are already significantly underway, such as the establishment of new public open space at the **Westport Waterfront Park** and moving from design to construction on the **Baybrook Connector** and **MPA’s Proposed Masonville Cove Connector**. Second, it sets in motion major equity initiatives, such as the **Native Plant Nursery** and **Patapsco Point**, a mixed-income housing development, both in Cherry Hill.

Phase 2 also includes interim improvement projects that address immediate needs while preparing for larger investments.

Timeline: 2-5 Years

Key Recommendation for Phase 2:

Build out the core network of connectivity, establish major equity initiatives, and undertake “quick-build” enhancements.

These include quick-build enhancements to the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge** and expanded capacity at the **Middle Branch Boathouse**.

And, like every phase, it includes an informed projection of how private sector investments will progress alongside public space enhancements. Of these, a large number constitute **Stakeholder Projects** that are already underway, where the RMB initiative plays a supportive but important role in coordinating and fostering communication among these discrete efforts.

The remainder constitute **RMB Projects** in which the RMB partners will take the lead. These include improving the trail between Middle Branch Park and the new Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center in

Reedbird Park, and capitalizing on the new living shoreline and restored wetlands that will be created under Phase 1 of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative.

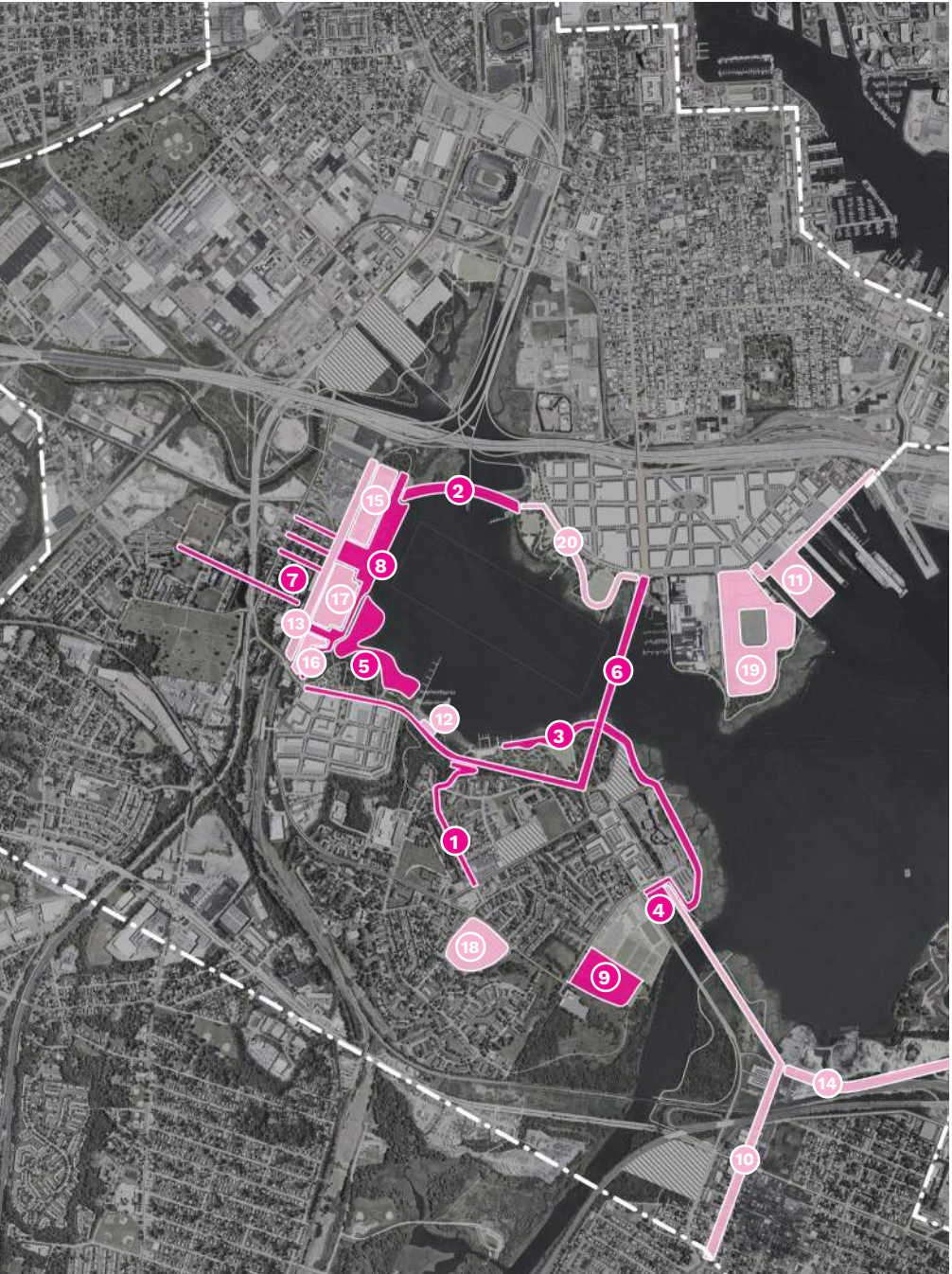
More than a third of the funding for Phase 1 is already secured and another 25% has been identified. Funding from SBGP and the property owner is already in place for the **Westport Waterfront Park**, and a portion of the **Middle Branch Park Trail** project is already funded in the Baltimore City Capital Improvement Program.

This phasing schedule assumes that concept designs now being developed for the **East-West Pedestrian Bridge** will form the foundation of a large USDOT RAISE grant in 2023.

Estimated Cost of Phase	Already Funded	Funding Identified	Remaining Gap
\$105 million (plus stakeholder projects)	35%	25%	40%



#	Project Name	Project Type
1	Cherry Hill Neighborhood Connector Trail	RMB
2	East-West Pedestrian Bridge	
3	Middle Branch Park Trail & Interim Improvements	
4	Native Plant Nursery	
5	Smith Cove Wetland (MBRI) and Pedestrian Bridge	
6	Waterview Ave. & Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Phase 1	
7	Westport Complete Streets	
8	Westport Waterfront Park	
9	Tournament Center	
10	Baybrook Connector	Stakeholder
11	East Waterfront Park	
12	Environmental Justice Center	
13	Kloman Street Relocation	
14	MPA's Proposed Masonville Cove Connector	
15	ONE Westport North	
16	ONE Westport South	
17	ONE Westport Townhouses	
18	Patapsco Point Development	
19	Under Armour Headquarters	
20	West Covington Temporary Loop Trail	
	African American Heritage District	Equity Initiative
	Commercial Corridor Grants	
	Development Funding	
	Support for Disadvantaged Businesses	



Phase 3: Heart of the Middle Branch

Phase 3 envisions the realization of flagship waterfront open space and connectivity projects that together comprise the “heart” of the Middle Branch and, once completed, will provide continuous public waterfront access along more than five miles of shoreline. Major projects include improvements to **Middle Branch Park**, the **Ridgely’s Cove Wetlands and Boardwalk Trail**, **Smith Cove Park** and structural repairs and continued multi-modal improvements to the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge**.

As a group, these projects incorporate elements from each of the Design Vision’s Equity Frameworks: **trails, living shorelines, active programming and destinations**, and investments in **equitable development**. It is

also anticipated that **Baltimore Peninsula’s Chapter 2 Development**, new residential development at **2525 Insulator Drive**, and the waterfront features of the **Under Armour Headquarters** will be completed during this phase.

With more lead-time for planning over the next five years, the total cost of projects in Phase 3 is significantly larger than the prior two. The vision of Reimagine Middle Branch has demonstrated the power to attract significant financing, and the RMB partners will continue leveraging this momentum to build coalitions and attract funding to complete the network of waterfront projects and nearby developments. It is worth noting that the **first \$20 million** has already

been identified from a potential funder for **improvements at Smith Cove**.

Phase 3 also represents a point of inflection for the funding model. Having generated quality-of-life improvements and supported major private-sector investments, this is when value-capture mechanisms start to become feasible. Conversations with elected officials should begin now about how to **create just and equitable value capture mechanisms that are community-based, rather than project-based**. These can support not just RMB projects, but also stakeholder-driven equity investments like affordable housing and economic development.

Timeline: 5-10 Years

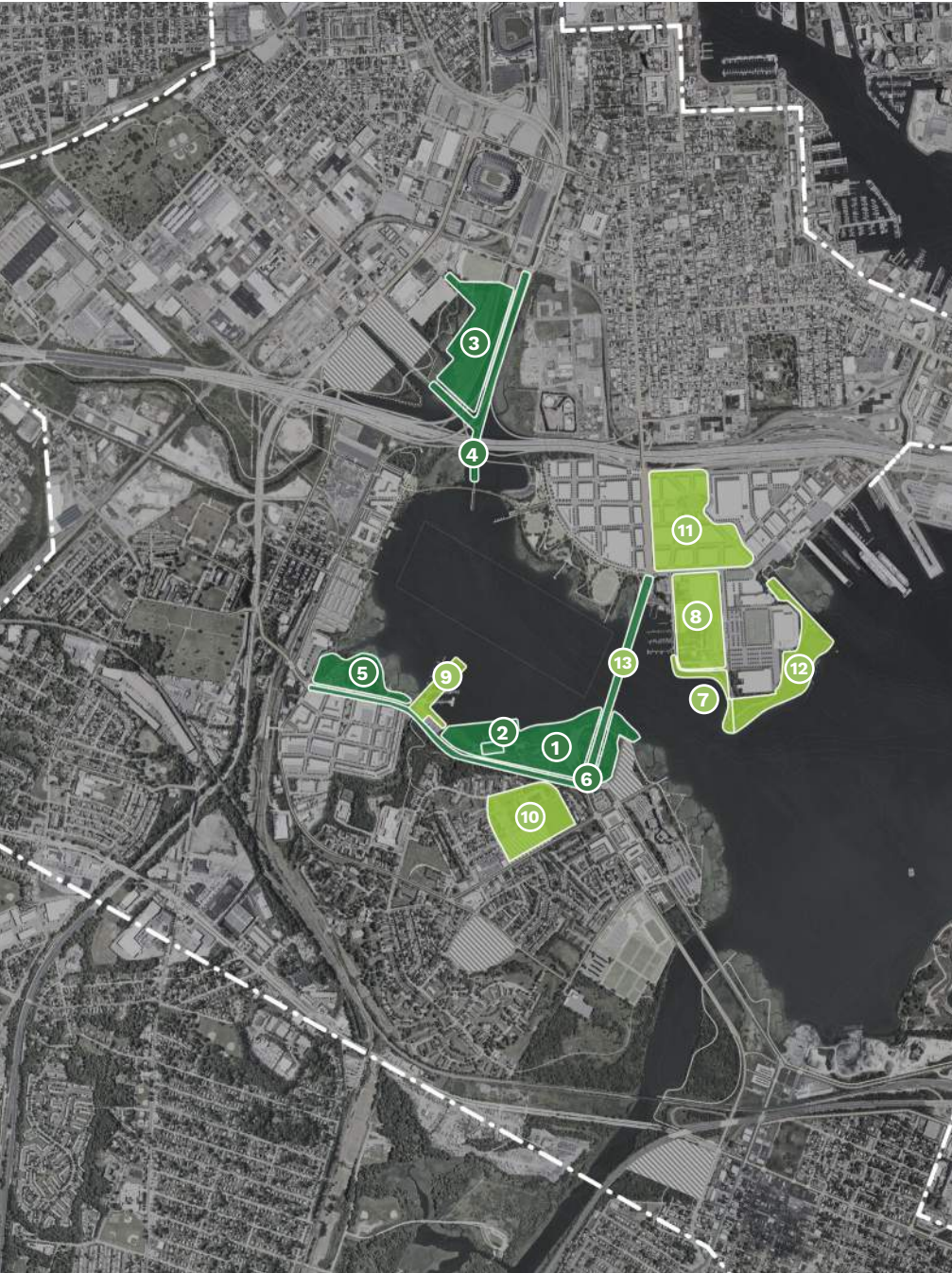
Key Recommendation for Phase 3:

Harness the success from the previous phases to build coalitions and attract funding for a multiple large capital projects.

Estimated Cost of Phase	Already Funded	Funding Identified	Remaining Gap
\$200 million (plus stakeholder projects)	0%	10%	90%



#	Project Name	Project Type
1	Middle Branch Park Improvements	RMB
2	New Middle Branch Boathouse	
3	Ridgely’s Cove Wetland (MBRI)	
4	Ridgely’s Cove Over-Water Boardwalk Trail	
5	Smith Cove Park	
6	Waterview Ave. & Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Phase 2	
7	Ferry Bar Park	Stakeholder
8	2525 Insulator Drive Development	
9	Renovated Middle Branch Marina	
10	New Era Academy Redevelopment	
11	Baltimore Peninsula Chapter 2 Development	
12	Under Armour Waterfront Promenade	
13	Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Structural Repair	



Phase 4: Long-Term Development

The long-term future of RMB involves steady, ongoing improvements, built on the successful implementation of the project’s first decade. After the ten-year mark, the work shifts to fleshing out an already-robust network of parks, trails, economic development, and equity projects around the Middle Branch.

Key projects during this phase include new mixed-use development in the **Hanover-Potee Corridor**, realizing the vision of routing the **Gwynns Falls Trail** up the stream valley to Carroll Park Golf Course, and opening **Reedbird Island** to the public with new trails and water access. Ongoing during this period will be continued build-out of the **Complete Streets** network.

Timeline: 10–20 Years

Key Recommendation for Phase 4:

Maintain steady, ongoing progress that builds on the success established in the first decade, continuing to add to an already robust network of parks, trails, economic development, and equity projects around the Middle Branch.

The plan also envisions a significant amount of development taking place during this time period, including the transformation of the **Wheelabrator Incinerator** site, the gradual realization of the **TOD zone in Cherry Hill**. Concurrently, final phases of the **Baltimore Peninsula** development and **West Covington Park** would be realized.

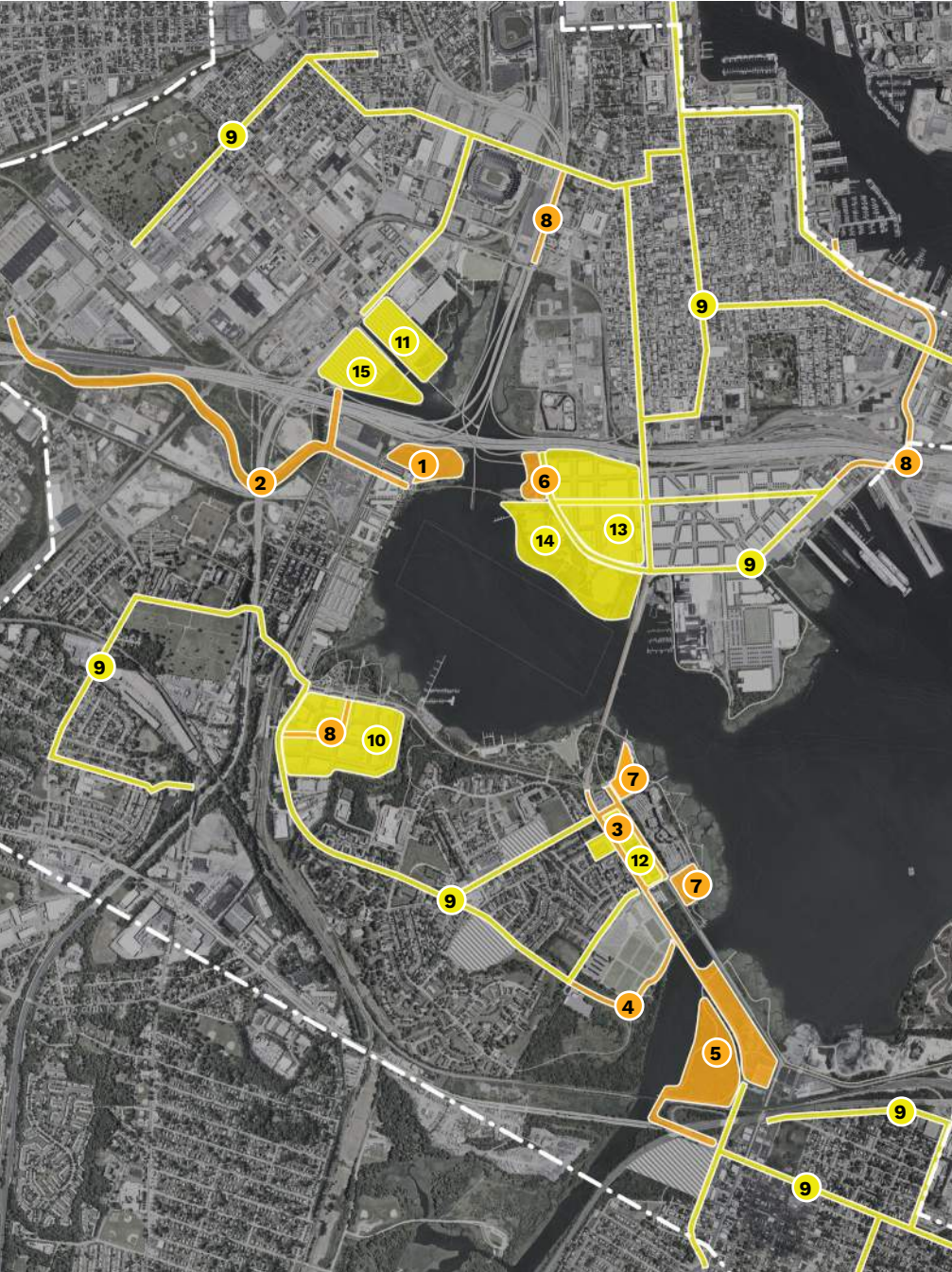
All projects in this phase include large, complex issues that will take many years to resolve, requiring time, coordination, and collaboration. However, doing this work need not hold up progress on building out many other aspects of the Plan.

Estimated Cost of Phase	Already Funded	Funding Identified	Remaining Gap
\$125 million (plus stakeholder projects)	0%	0%	100%

- RMB Projects
- Stakeholder Projects
- Equity Initiatives

RMB Study Area

#	Project Name	Project Type
1	Black Sox Park	RMB
2	Gwynns Falls Stream Valley Trail Connector	
3	Hanover / Potee Street Corridor Improvements	
4	Patapsco River Connector Trail	
5	Reedbird Island Park Improvements	
6	Swann Landing Boathouse	
7	Waterfront Parking Lots Greening & Development	
8	Neighborhood Connector Trails	
9	Complete Street Improvements	Stakeholder
10	Cherry Hill TOD Zone	
11	Downtown Bus Station Redevelopment	
12	Hanover / Potee Corridor Redevelopment	
13	Baltimore Peninsula Chapter 3 Development	
14	West Covington Park	
15	Wheelabrator Incinerator Redevelopment	



Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations: Composite Phasing Plan

Over the next 20 years, the Middle Branch is poised to see enormous change, as illustrated by the composite map on this page, which shows all RMB and Stakeholder projects from the four phases in one view. The next map shows only the RMB projects, highlighting how they form a new open space and connectivity network that equitably supports existing neighborhoods and integrates them with new development.

Phasing Strategy: Summary of Recommendations	
3.1	Phase 1 (Immediate - 2 Years): Deliver on the large pipeline of projects that are already funded and underway, in order to maintain momentum and build public trust.
3.2	Phase 2 (2 - 5 Years): Build out the core network of connectivity, establish major equity initiatives, and undertake “quick-build” enhancements.
3.3	Phase 3 (5 - 10 Years): Harness the success from the previous phases to build coalitions and attract funding for multiple large capital projects.
3.4	Phase 4 (10-20 Years): Maintain steady, ongoing progress that builds on the success established in the first decade, continuing to add to an already robust network of parks, trails, economic development, and equity projects around the Middle Branch.

Phase 1 – Underway
RMB Projects
Stakeholder Projects

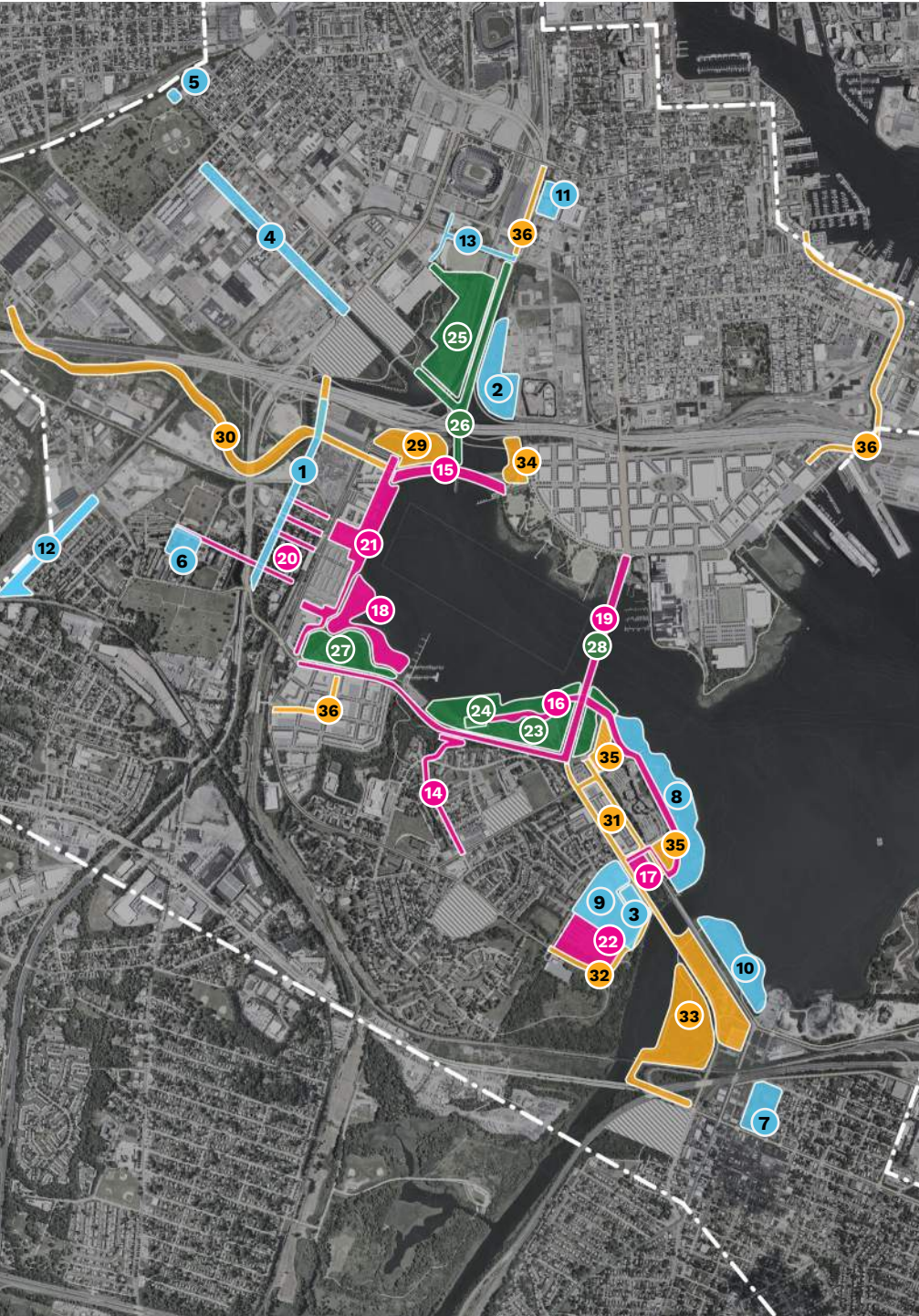
Phase 2 – Equity & Connectivity
RMB Projects
Stakeholder Projects

Phase 3 – Heart of the Middle Branch
RMB Projects
Stakeholder Projects

Phase 4 – Long-Term Development
RMB Projects
Stakeholder Projects



RMB Projects		
#	Project Name	Project Type
1	Annapolis Road Quick-Build Traffic Calming	RMB
2	BGE Resiliency Berm and Wetland (MBRI)	
3	BGE Ripken Field	
4	Bush Street Cycle Track	
5	Carroll Park Rec Center	
6	Florence Cummins Park Phase 1	
7	Garrett Park Improvements	
8	Harbor Hospital Marsh (MBRI), Boardwalks, and Classroom	
9	Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center and Reedbird Park	
10	Patapsco Marsh (MBRI)	
11	Solo Gibbs Park Phase 1	
12	S. Paca Street Park Improvements	
13	Warner / Stockholm Streetscape (Gwynns Falls Trail)	
Total Cost (5 Year Escalation Applied)		\$130 million (plus stakeholder projects)
14	Cherry Hill Neighborhood Connector Trail	RMB
15	East-West Pedestrian Bridge	
16	Middle Branch Park Trail & Interim Improvements	
17	Native Plant Nursery	
18	Smith Cove Wetland (MBRI) and Pedestrian Bridge	
19	Waterview Ave. & Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Phase 1	
20	Westport Complete Streets	
21	Westport Waterfront Park	
22	Tournament Center	
Total Cost (5 Year Escalation Applied)		\$105 million (plus stakeholder projects)
23	Middle Branch Park Improvements	RMB
24	New Middle Branch Boathouse	
25	Ridgely's Cove Wetland (MBRI)	
26	Ridgely's Cove Over-Water Boardwalk Trail	
27	Smith Cove Park	
28	Waterview Ave. & Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Phase 2	
Total Cost (5 Year Escalation Applied)		\$200 million (plus stakeholder projects)
29	Black Sox Park	RMB
30	Gwynns Falls Stream Valley Trail Connector	
31	Hanover / Potee Street Corridor Improvements	
32	Patapsco River Connector Trail	
33	Reedbird Island Park Improvements	
34	Swann Landing Boathouse	
35	Waterfront Parking Lots Greening & Development	
36	Neighborhood Connector Trails	
Total Cost (5 Year Escalation Applied)		\$125 million (plus stakeholder projects)





Chapter 4

PERMITTING STRATEGY

This chapter outlines a preliminary strategy and goals for permitting Reimagine Middle Branch park-shed and shoreline projects. Fundamental to the success of this strategy is a unified approach to the permitting of the major waterfront and shoreline projects within the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan. The Permitting Strategy addresses three regulatory review and approval processes that require mitigation to offset environmental impacts of the proposed improvements:

- State and federal Joint Permit Application process and Joint Evaluation Committee review for in-water impacts
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area review for shoreline impacts
- Baltimore City Stormwater Management review for landside impacts

The **Permitting Strategy** is intended to facilitate an efficient, long-term implementation process

by creating a program-wide approach to the submission and approval of capital projects within the Plan. This approach will enable the RMB initiative to advance with regulatory flexibility during the design development, sequencing, and permitting of individual projects or components that align with the larger vision.

It will be necessary to work with leadership at the regulatory agencies whenever novel attempts to meet their overall policy objects fall outside of the typical project mold. However, the Permitting Strategy will only succeed if comprehensive supporting documentation is completed and filed at the onset of review, and the RMB partners follow the permit process with transparency and good-faith efforts to meet all regulatory requirements. Hence, moving quickly to identify, analyze and document projects or groups of projects for permitting is a critical early step in realizing the Plan.

Joint Permit Application

While some of the tasks undertaken under the Plan are relatively straightforward, many are highly sophisticated. As an example, the shoreline restoration work of the Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative requires intense coordination between local, state, and federal agencies.

In order to implement many of the exciting projects that have already been funded and others still being planned, it will be necessary to follow a thoughtful and diligent strategy for getting these projects permitted. Yet, it is important not to wait for the design of these projects to be finalized before presenting them to regulatory agencies, so that they can provide guidance along the way. Similarly, it is not necessary to wait for the RMB management entity to be formed to begin the application process. The City of Baltimore and SBGP can serve as applicants in the interim.

For this reason, the Reimagine Middle Branch Planning Team initiated outreach to the state and federal regulatory bodies that must approve changes to the shoreline and new structures built in or “over” the water during creation of the plan, and dialogue with these agencies is continuing.

Joint Permit Application (JPA) is the permitting process jointly run by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Tidal Wetlands Division and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) for approval for over-water or in-water improvements. For RMB, this permit process would be required for all structures constructed over the water – bridges, boardwalks, piers, docks, marinas – and for any disturbance to wetlands or the river-bottom of open water areas. This applies to the marshes and berms that are part of the Design Vision, and for any filling, dredging, or placement of dredge material within waters of the Middle Branch.

The JPA is typically applied for by one owner/ developer, but it can span multiple parcels. The Joint Permit approval leads to the issuance of a Tidal Wetlands License (TWL) by the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW), which grants the legal authorization to construct the work. The TWL typically carries an initial 3-year term to complete the work, followed by a second 3-year extension if more time is needed and requested by the permit applicant.

Typically, only one TWL will be issued for a site at any given time. Therefore, considering Reimagine Middle Branch’s connected network of shoreline open spaces and facilities, it is desirable to submit one permit application for all in-water improvements or groups of improvements envisioned to be completed in the “near-term,” so that related improvements can be completed under a single TWL. For this discussion, “near-term” should be considered the timeframe of the permit review process (1 year) and permit life (up to 6 years).

When considering a JPA strategy, there are four key project characteristics or components to address:

- 1. **Independent Utility:** A single and complete project that would be constructed absent the construction of other projects in the project area. For each in-water project, the project must be completed in its entirety so that full use of the improvements is possible at the completion of the project, and that the project does not need to rely on future improvements. Basically, the Joint Permit process will not allow partial construction of projects—you cannot build a bridge without connecting

to both shores and ensuring it meets its intended use at the completion of construction. In-water projects can be broken down into their independent utility items, and then packaged into JPAs based on shared goals, funding availability, and timeline similarities.

- 2. **Cumulative Impact:** The combined, incremental effects of human activity, including past, present, and future changes to the environment and natural processes. When evaluating in-water impacts to the Middle Branch as a result of the RMB proposed improvements, MDE and USACE want to know the whole picture, not just impacts from individual projects. Demonstration of cumulative impact early in the permitting process will allow the regulatory agencies to see the completed end result, which will facilitate the evaluation of individual projects by eliminating long-term uncertainty of the cumulative impacts of the individual projects.
- 3. **Avoid, Minimize, and Justify:** For a project to be permitted, practicable steps must be taken to avoid impacts to wetlands and other aquatic resources; to minimize the potential impacts to wetlands if

impacts are unavoidable; to provide justification through a social and economic analysis to support the project elements; and to provide mitigation to offset impacts to wetlands.

- 4. **Mitigation:** Mitigation is the final consideration for a project that has already attempted to “avoid, minimize, and justify” potential impacts. Mitigation is the process of addressing impacts to the environment caused by human action, and it is typically administered as a part of an environmental crediting system established by governing bodies, which involves allocating debits and credits. In-water project improvements must be offset by environmental benefits if they are deemed to be a detriment to the environment. Any in-water structure— bridges, boardwalks, piers, docks, marinas— will need to be offset with environmental mitigation.

The fundamental goal of the JPA strategy is to ensure that planned environmental benefits of the RMB environmental regeneration projects— wetlands, living shorelines, water quality improvements, vegetation improvements—are accounted for and used

to offset the RMB projects that are seen as an environmental detriment: hard structures such as bridges, boardwalks, piers, docks, marinas over the water, and rooftops, streets, sidewalks, and parking lots on land. Typically, mitigation completed under one TWL does not transfer to offset projects completed under a second TWL. Therefore, our goal is to create an overall project framework that will facilitate the transfer of mitigation benefits within a small number of TWL’s each covering multiple projects that can reasonably be expected to see completion within a finite time period (a “program-wide TWL”).

That said, special consideration should be given to early-win projects that need to be completed sooner than those that would comprise a program-wide TWL. These projects should be developed and permitted as standalone improvements for a separate utility, to allow for permitting evaluation and approval as quickly as possible. However, leveraging these projects’ benefits or impacts against future projects is not guaranteed. Offsetting impacts and benefits in early-win with future projects would require direct coordination and a written agreement with regulatory agencies.

Joint Evaluation Committee

Presenting in-water projects to the Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC) is typically a proactive first step to introduce a project and engage with regulatory agencies responsible for the review and approval of a Joint Permit Application (JPA) prior to formal submission of the application. JEC presentations do not effect the JPA review and approval process, and JPA approval cannot be influenced by the content or outcomes of the JEC presentation.

The JEC should be viewed as a fact-finding mission for the RMB team to become familiar with regulatory agency concerns and address those concerns proactively in the JPA submission documents. This can be accomplished through a simple and targeted presentation that explains the project vision and the RMB team’s strategy and tactics to realize the vision, hopefully leading to feedback during the JEC meeting.

- Agencies that typically attend the JEC are:
- Maryland Board of Public Works
 - Maryland Critical Area Commission
 - Maryland Department of the Environment
 - Maryland Department of Natural Resources
 - Maryland Historic Trust
 - US Army Corps of Engineers
 - US Environmental Protection Agency
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Ridgely’s Cove



Proposed over-water boardwalk and wetlands in Ridgely’s Cove



Critical Area

All land within 1,000 feet of the tidal water shoreline (mean high water line) falls within the **Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (CA)** boundary and is regulated jointly by the City of Baltimore Department of Planning and Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) **Critical Area Commission (CAC)**.

The **Critical Area Buffer** is set 100 feet from the tidal water shoreline and includes various limitations on development and improvements. Additionally, the CAC maintains permit review and approval authority for in-water improvements, such as those described in the Joint Permit Application (JPA) section above.

Improvements within the CA are evaluated based on the positive or negative impact on two metrics:

- 1. Meeting “The 10% rule” by reducing pollutants running off the land by at least 10% above existing conditions, as measured by phosphorus, and typically address by stormwater treatment facilities.
- 2. Preserve, enhance and restore trees, vegetation, and habitat within the CA by creating a net increase of vegetative cover with native species.

Similar to the JPA strategy, a CA permitting strategy is required to ensure that planned environmental benefits derived from the RMB initiative’s environmental regeneration projects—wetlands, living shorelines, water quality improvements, vegetation improvements—are accounted for and used to offset the projects that are viewed as having an environmental detriment: hard structures such as bridges, boardwalks, piers, docks, marinas in water, and impervious surface areas (parking lots, streets and sidewalks, rooftops) that may be proposed on land.

Reedbird Park and MedStar Harbor Hospital



This can be accomplished by setting up Critical Area **“mitigation banks”** for both phosphorous and vegetation. Similar to a bank account, net benefits are considered credits to the mitigation bank, while net determinates are considered debits to the mitigation bank. Over time, the RMB initiative would be expected to maintain a positive balance within the mitigation banks where the project as a whole can be viewed as a net benefit to the environment through treatment of phosphorous in stormwater runoff and planting vegetation.

Westport waterfront



Stormwater Management

All land-side projects that disturb more than 5,000 square feet of area and/or 100 cubic yards of excavation are subject to “stormwater management,” meaning water-quality measures to treat rainwater hitting the ground (or rooftops) on “impervious” (hard, non-absorbent) surfaces before it enters streams, rivers and the waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

Projects are evaluated based on the capture and treatment of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces. Water quality treatment is typically achieved using the stormwater management standards of **Environmental Site Design (ESD)** or **Best Management Practices (BMP)** specified by the **Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Stormwater Design Manual**.

Water quality treatment can also be accomplished using MDE-approved Alternative/Innovative Technologies, as well as Alternative BMPs defined in the MDE **Accounting for Stormwater Wasteload Allocations and Impervious Acres Treated** manual. Water quality treatment is reviewed and approved by the City of Baltimore’s Department of Public Works, Office of Plans Review and Inspections.

Similar to both the Joint Permit Application and Critical Area strategy, a stormwater management permitting strategy is required to ensure that planned environmental benefits of the RMB environmental regeneration projects—wetlands, living shorelines, water quality improvements, vegetation improvements—are accounted for and used to offset the RMB projects that are seen as an

environmental detriment—all new impervious surfaces. This can be accomplished by setting up a **mitigation bank** that tracks impervious area, where net benefits for water quality treatment of impervious areas are considered credits to the mitigation bank, while net detriments for the creation of new impervious areas are considered debits to the mitigation bank.

Proposed MBRI wetlands along Middle Branch Trail at Harbor Hospital



Mitigation Banking

There are two local precedents for mitigation banks that can serve as the model for mitigation banking for RMB projects. On the local level, the Baltimore Peninsula development maintains a stormwater management impervious area treatment bank to track stormwater requirements, and a tree mitigation bank to track tree-planting requirements within the Critical Area. On the state level, the **Maryland Port Administration (MPA)** maintains mitigation banks for both impervious area treatment and tree planting requirements as well. Members of the RMB Planning Team have had experience in both establishing and maintaining mitigation banks for both Baltimore Peninsula and the Port Administration. Aspects of these successful mitigation banks can form the basis of mitigation banks for RMB projects.

Multi-level Contract Permitting

Building consensus for a project is required at all regulatory and stakeholder levels. It is critical to work through the standard permitting process at the staff level while simultaneously working with leadership at the regulatory agencies whenever novel

approaches to their overall policy objectives fall outside the typical project mold. Regulators at the staff level have very clear directives to ensure that documentation of permitting decisions can demonstrate that the permitting process was followed as prescribed. The “top-down” influence of regulatory agencies may speed up the permit review process or help to sway a true 50/50 permit decision, but it does not reduce the amount of work or statutory compliance required for permit approval.

Proposed MBRI wetlands along Reedbird Island



The Permitting Strategy will only succeed if comprehensive supporting documentation is completed and filed at the onset of review, and the RMB team proceeds through the permit process with transparency and good-faith efforts to meet the regulatory requirements. Hence, moving quickly to identify, analyze and document projects or groups of projects for permitting is a critical early step in realizing the Plan.

Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

Key to the Permitting Strategy is not waiting for final designs to be complete before presenting projects for review. Meeting with the JEC, CAC and City-review staff from Public Works, Sustainability and Forestry should be done early in the process, in order to obtain feedback. Similarly, it is unnecessary to wait for the ultimate RMB management entity to begin the application process. The City and SBGP can serve as applicants in the interim.

The prep work involves analyzing projects from the Design Vision for quantities and areas of environmental benefit (wetlands, habitat, tree plantings), which provide mitigation for impacts from hard structures (docks, piers, rooftops, roads, pathways, parking areas). Even playgrounds and other active open spaces may require mitigation. Creating extensive wetlands and upland habitat will generate ample mitigating

benefits. The key is planning for both types of projects together and establishing mitigation banks for treating phosphorus and removing or creating vegetative cover. This will reduce challenges for projects that represent impacts, while fully capturing the mitigating benefits of restoration projects.

Potential stormwater treatment wetlands in Smith Cove



Permitting Strategy: Summary of Recommendations	
3.1	Identify early-win projects that need to be completed as standalone improvements, to allow for permitting evaluation and approval as quickly as possible.
3.2	Where possible, submit one permit application for multiple near term sites so they can proceed under a single Tidal Wetlands License.
3.3	Present multiple times at the Joint Evaluation Committee to identify and address agency concerns.
3.4	Plan for and quantify environmental benefits (such as wetlands, habitat areas, tree plantings) as offsets for anticipated impacts of hard structures like new docks, rooftops, roads, pathways and parking areas, in both Joint Evaluation Committee and Critical Area Commission filings.
3.5	Establish program- or plan-wide mitigation banks for both phosphorous and vegetative cover.
3.6	Establish a program- or plan-wide mitigation bank for stormwater management practices.
3.7	Begin proactively identifying and compiling the supporting documentation that will be needed for permit-filings.



Chapter 5

MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY

The Reimagine Middle Branch initiative is already underway in transforming the waterfront and park-shed environment while also fostering inclusive and equitable economic development and community-driven programs and projects. Going forward, instituting effective, sustainable management processes and the structures to implement the Plan is critical to sustaining momentum and building on early wins.

Therefore, the Management and Stewardship Strategy envisions a **“Project Champion”** or management entity to lead a coalition supporting the RMB initiative, while being wholly focused on implementing the RMB vision and priorities on a full-time basis. It also recommends an **“Incubation Period”** for standing up the management entity within an existing organization on an interim

basis, in order to maintain momentum on project-development and funding, while decisions on the ultimate organizational structure are resolved.

This chapter provides models for the organizational structure of the ultimate management entity, plus a review of its functional responsibilities and activities and the staffing and budget needed to carry out this work. And it offers frameworks and “checklists” for equitable decision-making about key areas of operations. Through innovative, cohesive, inclusive, and locally vested partnerships, the management process for developing the RMB vision will harness the Middle Branch’s open space resources while fostering equitable development and economic opportunities in the surrounding communities.

An Inclusive and Collaborative Public-Private Partnership

From the beginning, Reimagine Middle Branch has operated under a **collaborative model**, with work led by a wide range of partners. These have included:

- Neighborhood organizations
- Regional coalitions with a range of funding sources
- Issue-oriented nonprofits;
- Large institutions and property owners
- City agencies
- State and Federal counterparts

In many ways, this approach has provided an incredible advantage so far. For example, it has enabled embedding JEDI principles into the Plan, since the collaborative model is built on broad participation and inclusion from the start. As a demonstration of success, the existing partners have already undertaken far more projects than any one organization could do on its own.

Lastly, because this collaboration includes both grassroots neighborhood groups and private development interests, projects in

South Baltimore have empowered historically disadvantaged communities while activating parties with the resources to enact rapid change.

That said, a collaborative approach also imposes certain obvious risks. Coalitions are inherently vulnerable to internal conflicts and are notorious for slow decision-making. It is therefore essential to balance the strengths of this collaborative effort with the urgent need to take decisive action and maintain momentum.

West Covington Park



The Project Champion

While no single organization can perform every task, **the Plan recommends that one designated Project Champion be responsible for moving the effort forward**. A Project Champion functions less like a director and more like a quarterback, helping to organize and lead a larger team of people.

The RMB Project Champion will lead on the following critical tasks:

- **Vision and Stewardship:** Performing the outward-facing function of communicating the larger vision, building and maintaining momentum, and inspiring project partners to push forward;
- **Funding and Development:** Leading efforts to raise project funds through multiple avenues and mechanisms with support from project partners; and
- **Capital Project Implementation:** Provide stewardship of the design, permitting, and construction phases of RMB projects that are not led by partners.

The RMB Project Champion will maintain close relationships with project partners

and coordinate day-to-day functions across the park-shed, including maintenance and operations (M&O) and planning for inclusive events and programming.

Because efforts around the Middle Branch have been collaborative to date, there is not yet a defined Project Champion. Identifying

an entity to lead in this role is critical to the future, long-term success of the RMB initiative. And yet, the process by which the Project Champion is identified and developed must be collaborative and deliberate to further the Plan’s commitment to equity and inclusion, and to retain the trust and collaboration of South Baltimore communities.

Below the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge at Middle Branch Park



An Inclusive and Collaborative Public-Private Partnership

Efficient Incubation

The Plan recommends a six to twelve-month “incubation process” for shaping and nurturing a future “management entity” to assume the role of Project Champion, while continuing to make progress on advancing the Plan.

Far too often, successful efforts get bogged down in organization building. It will be critical for RMB to avoid this danger by taking advantage of the momentum and structures that have already been built, such as active committees and existing partnerships with a diverse range of organizations. While it may someday be necessary for RMB to be its own organization, for now, it makes sense to incubate the program within an existing partner. This preserves options for the future without requiring anyone to build an entirely new organization right out of the gate.

During the 6 to 12-month incubation period, the RMB management entity would start as a program of its host organization. The following local entities were considered for the role of host organization:

- South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP)
- SB7 Coalition

- Harbor West Collaborative
- Waterfront Partnership
- Parks & People
- City of Baltimore Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP)

The Plan recommends that South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) serve as the host organization that incubates the future RMB management entity. A scan of “success factors” developed from a review of large waterfront park organizations around the country reveals that SBGP meets many of the criteria for success, as illustrated in the table on the following page (“Success Factors Considered”). The combination of SBGP’s organizational strength, robust experience, and continued involvement in the community makes it an ideal choice.

Moreover, while the plan recommends that the Reimagine Middle Branch initiative stand outside of government, SBGP holds a unique role in its accountability to city and state governments by its nature as the public authority created to manage 50 percent of casino local impact grant (LIG) funds designated for South Baltimore. SBGP is also the only organization to encompass most

of the Middle Branch study area, with only three neighborhoods, Locust Point, Brooklyn, and Curtis Bay, not covered in its jurisdiction. Since there is no single organization whose territory exactly matches the RMB planning area, it would be necessary for SBGP to develop MOUs or other agreements with these neighborhoods.

During the incubation period, SBGP will serve in the role of Project Champion and RMB management entity. Much of the ongoing work on individual projects will continue to be performed by partners, with SBGP filling gaps and providing the support that will ensure coordination and synergy among different projects. Along with this work of championing projects, SBGP will collaborate with City agencies and the RMB steering and advisory committees on a plan for the ultimate management entity’s organizational model, core functions, responsibilities, and relationships with City agencies and other partners.

SUCCESS FACTORS CONSIDERED

Success Factors	Priority	SBGP
Has a trusted relationship with the community & community has confidence in their ability to execute	High	Yes
Has an existing partnership with the City/State government.	High	Yes
Currently works in the community and has intimate familiarity of local partners, concerns and priorities	High	Yes
Prioritizes equity, community economic development, anti-displacement	High	Yes
Has operational model for and experience in public space management	Medium	While the organization is limited in this function, members of its team have this experience.
Fiscal strength	High	Yes
Experience in capital project development	Medium	Yes
Experience in capital campaign fund development	Medium	SBGP has begun to raise dollars beyond casino revenue and some of its members have this experience from prior jobs.
Experience managing a waterfront	Low	No

Organizational Models

The Plan offers three organizational models (M1, M2, and M3) for how the work involved in the implementation of the RMB vision can be scaled-up within South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) during this incubation period. These range from carrying out RMB-related activities within SBGP’s existing program areas, as is happening today, to planning for and eventually launching a standalone organization:

- M1. **Embedding RMB fully within SBGP** – This model embeds RMB activities (capital projects, O&M, community engagement, programming, grant-making) across all of SBGP’s functional areas, rather than as a stand-alone program.
- M2. **Establishing RMB as a discrete, long-term program with SBGP** – This model nests RMB in SBGP, but as a dedicated initiative with its own staffing and budgets separate from the other activities of SBGP.
- M3. **Developing RMB into an independent organization, or “conservancy”** – This model creates a stand-alone structure for RMB so that it can operate independently of SBGP’s organizational structure, while still retaining SBGP as a core partner (and likely a major funder).

These options are merely a starting point for discussion, and each raise different considerations. Other models or hybrids of these arrangements may emerge.

Future Organizational Model Assessment Tool

The **decision matrix** on the following page is provided as a tool for assessing these options and for decision-making about the future RMB management entity. It groups priorities as “Need to Have” and “Nice to Have,” with sample scores for each of the three models from above.

This scoring is based on an initial, high-level understanding of the implications of each scenario. **It is recommended that SBGP and RMB use this tool as part of a planning process for assessing these models and evaluating future actions.** New or revised priorities can be added to the tool, and the scores may change over time as the partners gain new perspectives. The questions raised here are not proposed as perfect or finite, but they can be helpful in assessing which model ticks the most boxes while confirming stakeholders’ shared goals and values.

Other Considerations

All three models require additional financial resources to augment staff capacity, with the expectation that adding staff will, at least to some extent, generate more revenue. In any of the models, staff will need to be added gradually as funding permits. In the case of Models 1 and 2, the structure exists to hire personnel as soon as funds are available. In the case of a conservancy, SBGP and RMB stakeholders may consider starting from Models 1 or 2 as a step toward incubating Model 3. Model 2 is closer to the end-result of an independent conservancy-type organization. Based on precedents from around the country, launching and establishing a new conservancy could take several years.

DECISION MATRIX

Which operational model is right for the RMB initiative?

MATRIX KEY

- Models** under consideration:
- M1 = Embedded within SBGP
 - M2 = Program of SBGP
 - M3 = Incubated into an independent Conservancy by SBGP

Factors important to this decision

- Rank** (from 0 to 3) of each factor from nice to have to necessary for good management.
- Need to have
 - Really nice to have
 - Nice to have

- Score** (from 0 to 3) of models for each of the decision-making factors.
- Does the model meet need/criteria:
- 0 = not at all
 - 1 = fairly well (can deal with it, but it’s not ideal)
 - 2 = close to ideal
 - 3 = ideal

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

Transparent and Responsive Management

The future RMB management entity will need to adopt an operational model that is transparent and responsive to community priorities, financially sustainable, and has sufficient capacity to oversee large-scale capital development projects, coordinate ongoing maintenance, operations, and programming, and foster robust community engagement and partnerships. And, it must have its own internal and external guideposts on staying true to the values and goals that have been established.

Management of a public space project of this size is a long-term endeavor that will require steady, strategic growth to meet evolving needs. The following sections speak to aspects of organization-building that will help plan for and manage growth. These include continuing to engage stakeholders and advisors through a refreshed and targeted set of oversight committees and building-out a staff to handle both the breadth of scope and the specificity of functions envisioned for Reimagine Middle Branch.

Lastly, tools for “equitable decision-making” are included as “checklists” for

keeping tabs on “how” equity enters into the choices that are made and “what” the priorities are for the work of RMB in the future. These checklists are meant as tools for staff, oversight committees, consultants, and constituent groups to use as they implement RMB projects and programs across South Baltimore.

RMB public meeting & ice cream social



Oversight Committees

One of the strengths of the RMB initiative to date has been the robust and engaged committee structure that has provided a mechanism for myriad stakeholders to be involved with the project. It is important to build upon this engagement and carry it forward from the planning phase into implementation.

Even incubated within another organization, the RMB management entity should have its own oversight committees to ensure the faithful execution of stakeholder needs. Membership would include organizations and individuals who participated in the RMB Plan committees in order to ensure continuity and capitalize on their knowledge of the project. These committees would be advisory at first – at least concerning SBGP’s staffing, finances, and contracting authority, which will continue to be governed by the SBGP Board of Directors, bylaws, and enabling legislation.

The Plan recommends that during the incubation period the RMB initiative reengage the Executive Committee and Steering Committees and update their membership as needed. The committees will help guide decisions on the organizational model for the RMB management entity, while maintaining communication, excitement, and momentum on short- and long-term projects. They should include robust representation from the community and other key stakeholders such as City agencies, the Maryland Port Administration, and elected officials. Yet, these committees must also be constituted in

a way that facilitates hands-on participation and decision-making by members who have both the time and the expertise to contribute to this effort.

At a minimum, during and beyond the incubation period, the Plan recommends roles for three key advisory committees – two existing and one added to the roster of RMB committees:

- The **Community Advisory Committee** will continue to liaise between South Baltimore communities and RMB to ensure the alignment of priorities and communications with residents, and to balance the goal of advancing the overall vision with supporting projects and concerns that emerge from the neighborhoods.
- The **Technical Advisory Committee** will continue to advise the project on a range of technical issues as RMB projects move through design, construction, and operations.
- A new **Finance Committee** will advise on the creation of the overall RMB budget and individual project budgets and will assist with funding development strategies.

RMB virtual Advisory Committee meeting



RMB public input survey



RMB Management Entity Staffing and Operations

After the initial incubation period, **the Plan recommends building a relatively modest staff structure to support the growth of RMB projects, partnerships, and programming.** The roles below and in the following diagram are based on models from similar organizations around the country:

- **Reimagine Middle Branch Director:** Works closely with SBGP leadership and the City; oversees all aspects of capital improvements, programming, M&O of the park-shed, and equity initiatives.
- **Development Director:** Leads resource development and grant proposals; manages relationships with philanthropic partners, government funders, and corporate and individual donors; plans fundraising events and campaigns; works closely with contracted government relations and communications consultants. Ensures outcomes related to funding are tracked, met, and reported on in a timely manner.
- **Capital Projects Director:** Oversees construction projects in the park-shed. Works with landscape architects, architects, engineers, general contractors, and public agencies to implement capital projects.

- **Programming & Operations Director:** Manages landscaping, cleaning, and greening; coordinates regular maintenance with contractors, City Recreation and Parks, friends groups, Parks & People, and other advocacy organizations; coordinates programming with local partners; responsible for maintaining a calendar of programming, landscape work, and preventive maintenance.
- **Business/Administrative Manager:** Assists with scheduling, purchasing, logistics, and “front desk” duties.

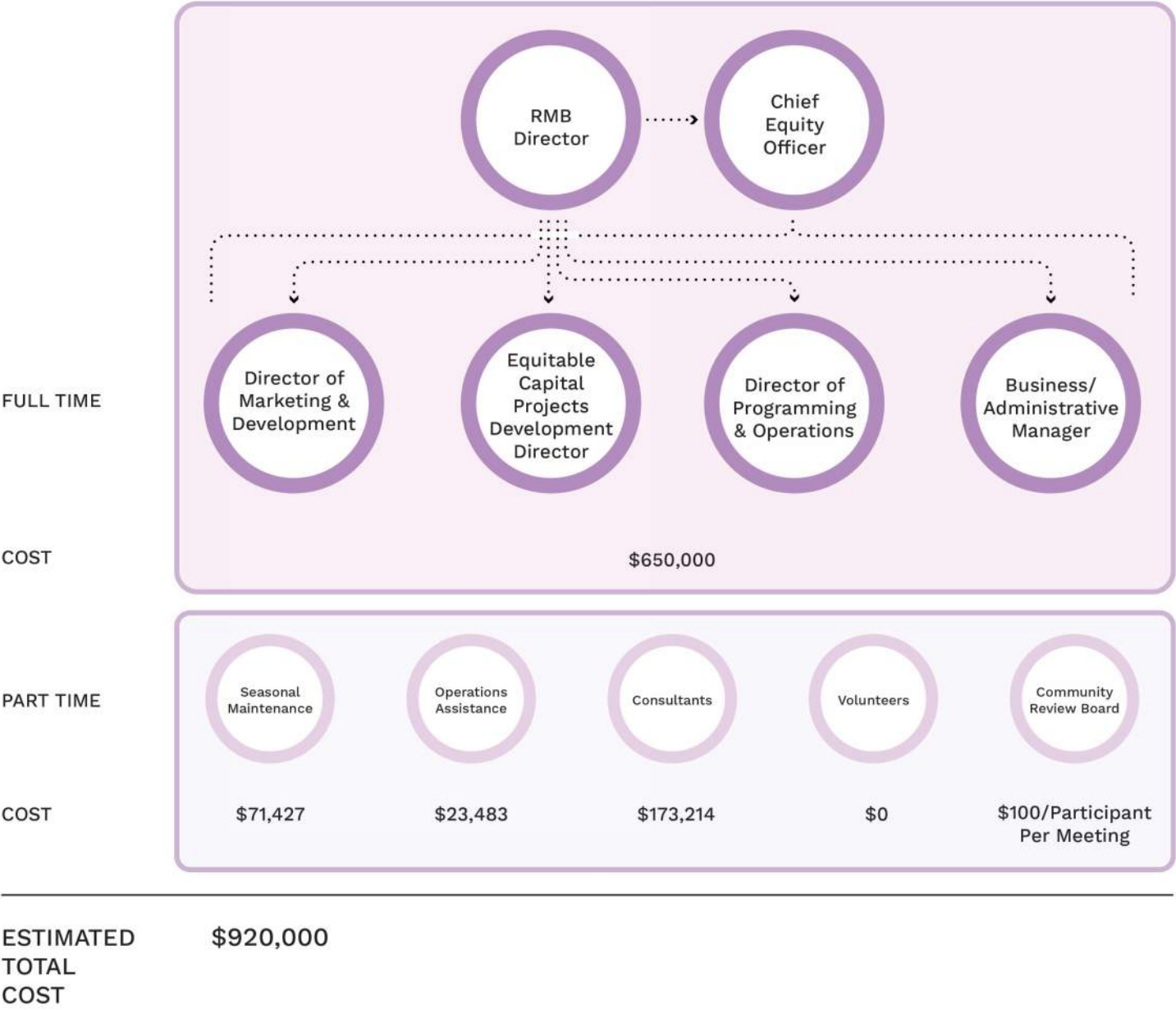
The estimated annual budget for this initial full-time staff of six is projected at approximately \$500,000 including fringe benefits. In addition, many open space organizations include a **Chief Equity Officer** to oversee diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts – typically involving inclusive and equitable procurement and human relations policies, and cultivating partnerships for equitable economic development. Adding this role could increase the annual budget to \$650,000.

Part-time staff, consultants, and volunteers may also be part of the operations needed.

These roles and functions could include the following and should be factored into adding another \$290,000 in yearly costs:

- **Seasonal maintenance:** assumes four workers at 20 hours a week. Total: \$75,000.
- **Operations assistance:** assumes one person at 20 hours a week. Total: \$25,000.
- **Consultants:** assumes consultants to assist with marketing, government relations, comptroller/budget, grants, and IT. Total: \$175,000.
- **Volunteers:** assumes 60 annual volunteers at no cost.
- **Community Review Board:** representatives from the community would meet quarterly to advise on programming, capital projects, maintenance, etc. It is recommended participants be paid \$50 to \$100 per meeting as a stipend. Total: \$15,000.

POTENTIAL STAFFING AND BUDGETING FOR FUTURE RMB MANAGEMENT ENTITY



Checklists for Equitable Decision-Making

In order to sustain RMB’s commitment to the broad principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI), the Plan recommends several areas where JEDI principles come into play, in terms of the “what” and “how” of daily operations and longer-term strategic planning:

- **Diverse and Inclusive Hiring**
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
- **Procurement and Supplier Diversity**
- **Displacement Prevention and Community Wealth Building**
- **Community Preservation and Cultural Literacy**
- **Environmental Justice**

These topics are offered as a set of guideposts to steer future operations and decision-making. For each one, there is a checklist for keeping tabs on how equity enters into the choices that are made and what priorities rise to the top in the work of the future management entity. The checklists are intended for use by RMB staff, oversight committees, consultants, and partnering organizations in implementing the RMB vision and goals across South Baltimore.

Diverse and Inclusive Hiring

An organization’s ability to recruit and retain a diverse staff is essential. The RMB management entity needs to prioritize diverse and inclusive hiring practices for management and operations positions. In particular, a focus should be placed on hiring from communities served, looking to staff the entity with similar demographic characteristics to Middle Branch communities.

Moreover, the management entity should aim to incubate talent in community residents that may have non-traditional learner/experience backgrounds. There is potential to connect with programs for adult “interns” like AmeriCorps if community residents lack job-specific skills but bring valuable life or community experience. The following checklist is offered for points to consider in hiring and retaining a diverse management team.

CHECKLIST FOR INCLUSIVE HIRING	
	RMB management entity staff complete regular JEDI training (such as the Race Forward curriculum).
	RMB management entity sets a goal that the organization’s staff will reflect the racial demographics of the population served.
	RMB management entity has protocols in place to limit biases in recruiting and hiring, ensure a diverse hiring panel, and strategies to maximize diversity in the interview candidate pool.
	RMB management entity has a long-term plan that includes recruiting diverse staff and providing them (and all rising staff members) with tools for professional development.

Stakeholder Engagement

Robust, inclusive participation is critical for equitable development and environmental justice. There are many forms of engagement, and they are not all created equally. The goal for RMB should be to sustain ongoing mechanisms for participation in decision-making and resource allocation, which truly empower residents, businesses, and the organizations that represent communities.

The following checklist is offered for points to consider in fostering meaningful, long-term community engagement for the RMB initiative.

CHECKLIST FOR RESPONSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	
	Community members of different ages and stages in life have the opportunity to fully weigh in on major developments and changes in their communities.
	Meeting times and locations meet the needs of residents.
	Meetings are accessible by public transportation.
	In-person meetings and alternate communication options are available for residents who do not have access to the Internet or a computer.
	Meeting locations and informational materials are accessible to people with disabilities..
	Meetings are offered in multiple languages for residents who have limited English proficiency.
	A formalized structure exists or is being built so that decision-making is driven by local community leaders and residents.
	Meetings address more than reporting out and seeking feedback from communities, but rather focus on gathering input, ideas, and ownership from communities before decisions are made.
	Residents have opportunities to generate ideas for programs and investments and provide input on how to ensure such programs can be successful.
	Neighborhoods that have experienced the greatest historic injustice will receive a higher share of new investments.

Checklists for Equitable Decision-Making

Procurement and Supplier Diversity

Centering equity in economic development requires an organization to embed diversity and inclusion in all activities. This principle applies to procurement – dollars used for contracting and purchases should benefit the communities that the organization serves, proportional to the demographics in those communities.

Specifically, it is critical that local and under-represented entrepreneurs have access to business opportunities created by RMB. This includes minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) and women-owned business enterprises (WBEs) and can also include small, local business enterprises (often referred to as SLBEs or LBEs). In Baltimore City, the Minority and Women’s Business Opportunity Office (MWBOO) is responsible for the certification of Minority Business Enterprises and Women’s Business Enterprises which can contract with the City. MWBOO maintains the directory of certified businesses and monitors compliance with City contracts. Both the City of Baltimore and South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) are committed to MBE and WBE participation

goals in all their contracting. SBGP follows the City’s rules and, as a result, submits all of its contracts over \$50,000 for review by MWBOO.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the structural barriers that face MBEs in particular. According to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), MBEs have lower rates of utilization when it comes to contracting and procurement due to several factors:

- Difference in levels of capital at time of start-up or expansions

- Differences in education levels of the companies’ principals
- Differences in direct experience with growing up in a family business
- Differences in social networks and thus connections to investors and B2B relationships
- Differences in dealing with overt discrimination or racism

The following checklist has metrics for fostering equity through procurement and purchasing power.

CHECKLIST FOR PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLIER DIVERSITY	
	Procurement programs contain or connect vendors to capacity-building programs.
	Community outreach efforts about upcoming procurements are thorough and intentional, casting a wide net to reach historically underrepresented groups.
	The organization provides resources to MBEs, WBEs and SLBEs for obtaining certifications and navigating the bid process.
	Payments are processed in a quick, understandable, and timely manner. Robust, measurable targets are set on equitable procurement, and a program is established to monitor and report on the progress of those efforts.

Displacement Prevention and Community Wealth Building

There have been mixed findings about which anti-displacement and neighborhood stabilization policies work and why. In a “White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness,” of February 2021, authors Karen Chapple (UC Berkeley) and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (UCLA), lay out the relative effectiveness of such policies in various market types, scales, and timeframes.

The report finds that when funding is available, programs that create net-new production of affordable units are more effective in preventing displacement than indirect incentives or requirements, such as inclusionary zoning, which rely on leveraging the value of higher-market units to create affordable ones. Renovation of existing affordable units that freezes or limits costs from being passed along in higher debt or rents for occupants has a high impact on both the viability of the housing stock (reversing deterioration) and financial stability for households that live there. “Community control of land,” such as through land trusts, has the benefit of reducing production costs and limiting profit motives.

Programs that help local businesses to grow and would-be entrepreneurs to start businesses near where they live help to preserve and circulate wealth within

communities and benefit other residents with employment opportunities and access to goods and services.

CHECKLIST FOR DISPLACEMENT PREVENTION & COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING	
	Programs that assist homeowners are designed and offered.
	Affordable financial assistance programs for homeowners to make basic improvements exist or are being created.
	Building and safety codes are being enforced to hold property owners accountable and counter deterioration.
	In advance of incoming investment, parallel investments are planned for job training, up-skilling and job-readiness, especially for the new jobs anticipated.
	Programs that prioritize local hiring are established (Baltimore City Local Hiring Law and employee-training partnerships are examples.)
	Existing businesses are trained in M/WBE certification, e-commerce and merchandising to meet opportunities.
	Programs and work spaces exist to preserve affordable rents for businesses and create property-ownership opportunities for legacy businesses.
	Payments are processed in a quick, understandable, and timely manner. Robust, measurable targets are set on equitable procurement, and a program is established to monitor and report on the progress of those efforts.

Checklists for Equitable Decision-Making

Community Preservation and Cultural Literacy

Beyond the preservation of buildings, community and cultural preservation is about acknowledging legacy residents, their right to remain if they wish, and their stake in directing the future of their neighborhoods.

As an illustration, the name of “Nos Quedamos” or “WE STAY” – a community development corporation in the South Bronx of New York City – conveys a mantra of collective self-determination that espouses “engagement, empowerment, and transformation of marginalized communities to remain and thrive.” Locally, grass-roots organizations across the RMB’s communities are advancing a similar agenda.

Fundamentally, the empowerment of legacy communities and the dissemination of their stories both serve to enhance self-determination and increase social equity. Social equity has been defined as fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions that serve the public directly or indirectly through contracts.

In order to ensure social equity, these stories must be respected, and organizations and leaders must make every attempt to reduce the cultural and knowledge gaps between themselves and those they intend to serve.

CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION AND CULTURAL LITERACY	
	Plans for community investments are culturally relevant and include leadership/staff from the community and that represent communities being served.
	History and heritage of longstanding communities will be honored and shared through educational and cultural programs.
	Past injustices and discrimination are acknowledged, and there is a commitment to righting past wrongs.
	Plans, programs and investments leverage existing efforts, programs and organizations – increasing the capacity within communities rather than adding competition for resources or influence.
	Storytelling and intergenerational programs are being deployed.

Environmental Justice

Given the history of the area, environmental justice is critical to applying a JEDI lens in the vision for Reimagine Middle Branch. Long-standing, unaddressed issues of environmental justice in South Baltimore include the need for phasing out the Wheelabrator Incinerator and reversing discriminatory policies in the siting of highways and polluting facilities.

Yet, the communities involved in Reimagine Middle Branch have also achieved hard-won victories, like converting a former landfill to Middle Branch Park in the 1980’s and defeating the construction of another trash incinerator in Curtis Bay in 2016.

Addressing past environmental injustice is a long-term process and will require funding over a number of years to build upon existing community-driven efforts. Community priorities, such as establishing a comprehensive zero-waste resource recovery park and creating a green education, enterprise and jobs center, are initiatives that would proactively address this history and would benefit from prioritization, collaboration and resource development facilitated through the RMB initiative.

Core to environmental justice is the empowerment of communities to address problems and implement solutions. RMB staff should function in a facilitator role, working in neighborhoods around the Middle Branch with accountability to communities. RMB personnel can provide value by supporting and fostering

collaborations among local residents, community-based coalitions, and businesses, and helping to bridge the gap between local knowledge and technical expertise available from advisory committees, City and State agencies, and hired consultants.

CHECKLIST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	
	Policies and projects seek ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and resources furthering sustainability for humans and other species
	Policies and priorities are based on mutual respect and justice and free from discrimination and bias, affirming political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination.
	Communities are supported in holding past and current producers of toxins accountable for detoxification and containment at the point of production.
	Communities have the opportunity to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
	Communities and their partners are collaborating to clean up and rebuild neighborhoods in harmony with regional ecosystems, and to provide fair access for all to the full range of resources.
	Present and future generations are educated about environmental issues in ways that are culturally relevant and respect their communities’ experiences.

Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

The breadth and complexity of the RMB vision calls for designating a Project Champion to move the Plan forward with focus and transparency while coordinating its many moving parts. SBGP, collaborating with the City and community partners, has been identified as a natural fit for this role.

Ultimately, this requires creating a new RMB management entity, either as a program of SBGP or as a standalone operation. The

Management and Stewardship Strategy recommends a six- to 12-month incubation period to develop the entity, understanding that the principles of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI), which have informed the Plan, must now guide the process for creating the organization charged with its implementation. The checklists in this chapter offer guideposts for future decision making that embraces these principles.

And yet, it is essential to continue advancing initiatives already underway and avoid halting progress during this process. For the interim, the recommendations that follow reflect actions for maintaining momentum while building out structures and policies for the equitable, long-term stewardship of RMB’s resources.

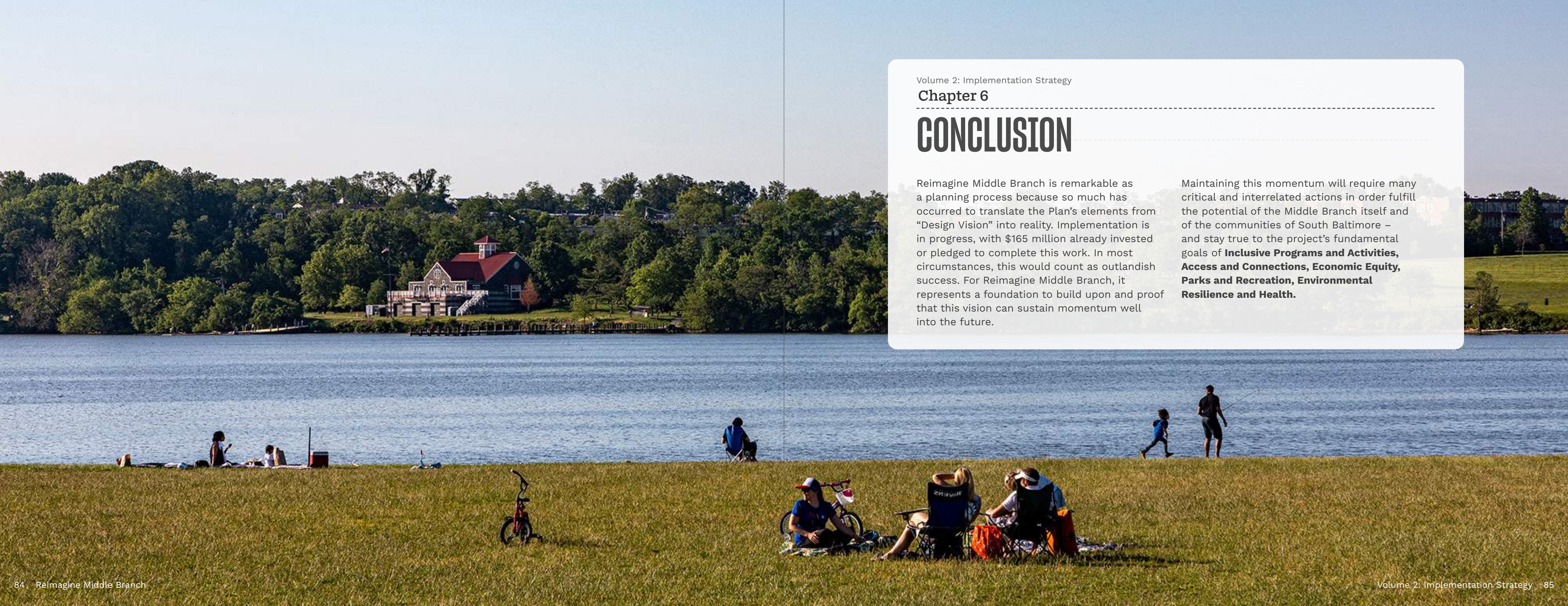
Public input gathering with the RMB Mobile Project Hub in Carroll Park



RMB presentation to community members



Management and S Strategy: Summary of Recommendations	
4.1	Oversee ongoing projects, “gap-filling activities,” and incubation process.
4.2	Hire or designate a RMB program manager.
4.3	Reconvene updated RMB Steering and Executive Committees and schedule regular briefings.
4.4	Identify and meet regularly with informed advisors to explore future organizational models and the steps to put them in place.
4.5	Meet with similar, peer open space management entities around the country to learn how they have established, sustained, and grown their organizations.
4.6	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with lead community organizations in Locust Point, Brooklyn, and Curtis Bay regarding coordination on RMB initiatives.
4.7	Develop an MOU with Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks related to maintenance and operations (M&O) of new and existing parks and facilities in the park-shed.
4.8	Select an organizational model for the future management entity, and begin strategic planning for its start-up.
4.9	Establish an initial staffing plan and operating budget for the future management entity.
4.10	Create capital, permitting, and funding plans for realizing the first 2 to 5-year project pipeline (see Phasing Strategy).



Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Reimagine Middle Branch is remarkable as a planning process because so much has occurred to translate the Plan’s elements from “Design Vision” into reality. Implementation is in progress, with \$165 million already invested or pledged to complete this work. In most circumstances, this would count as outlandish success. For Reimagine Middle Branch, it represents a foundation to build upon and proof that this vision can sustain momentum well into the future.

Maintaining this momentum will require many critical and interrelated actions in order fulfill the potential of the Middle Branch itself and of the communities of South Baltimore – and stay true to the project’s fundamental goals of **Inclusive Programs and Activities, Access and Connections, Economic Equity, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Resilience and Health.**

Implementation Strategies

As outlined in the previous chapters, the components of the Plan’s Implementation Strategy provide four sets of guideposts for advancing the larger vision of a reimagined Middle Branch and the surrounding the communities over the coming years and decades.

1. The **Funding Strategy** outlines an aggressive but feasible approach to securing resources for the elements that comprise the Design Vision.
2. Funding, in turn, informs the **Phasing Strategy**, which provides the gameplan and timeline for prioritizing RMB Projects and coordinating with Stakeholder Projects. It is the knitting together of initiatives led through RMB and those led by other stakeholders that result in this transformational vision.

Middle Branch Park



3. The **Permitting Strategy** tells us how we get there, at least how we navigate the myriad regulatory reviews that will be required for evaluation and approval of projects that achieve the ambitious goals for shoreline restoration and transforming on-land spaces along the Middle Branch within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.
4. Lastly, the **Management and Stewardship Strategy** lays out an inclusive and collaborative model for leadership and partnerships that are needed to coordinate the many organizations and interests now engaged in this work.

Whereas recommendations for the **Equity Frameworks** of the Design Vision largely address “what” is in the Plan (the projects and programs that, if realized, would

collectively add up to the overall vision), the recommendations of these four **Implementation Strategies** (recapped in the tables that follow) address the “who, how, when and where” of making things happen. These recommendations comprise a framework for actions – many of which must be taken concurrently in order to advance the interrelated elements that comprise the Design Vision.

This is certainly a large and complex undertaking. Yet, the tremendous track record of success to date is testament to the fact that the RMB partners and the communities of South Baltimore are prepared to seize this opportunity and keep moving forward with persistence and care.

Funding Strategy: Summary of Recommendations

1.1	SBGP, SB7, and the City strategize and align funding priorities for RMB projects and programs, ongoing operations, and equity initiatives.
1.2	City and SBGP set annual allocations of casino LIG funds towards RMB initiatives with targets for capital, O&M, programs, and equity investments.
1.3	SBGP, SB7, and community organizations in Brooklyn, Curtis Bay & Locust Point create an agreement to include neighborhoods in implementation plans; include an allocation of SB7 funding for RMB initiatives.
1.4	Consider hiring full-time, dedicated funding development staff to monitor grant opportunities, build relationships with elected officials and funders, and oversee proposal development.
1.5	Develop an inclusive programming strategy for break-even, nominal, or free access for community residents; identify operators and content providers, expense and revenue projections, staffing, equipment, and facility needs.
1.6	Consider models to weigh the financial benefits and risks of serving as a programming operator versus contracting with third-party providers.
1.7	Analyze revenue-generating opportunities (such as facility rentals, concessions, permitting fees), so that the City, the RMB management entity, and other partners share benefits of user fees and program revenue.
1.8	Assess opportunities to enter into ground leases or strategically purchase properties that will reduce costs or generate revenue for RMB operations and equity initiatives over the long term.
1.9	Conduct market/feasibility studies for sites under consideration, including restrictions, expenses, and potential revenue.
1.10	Determine the appetite of stakeholders for upgrading and monetizing existing parking lots.
1.11	Conduct a traffic and parking study to determine parking needs and possible locations where leases can be secured for parking revenue, including electric vehicle charging stations.
1.12	Explore pay-as-you-go (PAY- GO) funding model where incremental tax revenues are leveraged to a dedicated fund for community priorities like small business development and affordable housing.
1.13	Engage a municipal finance expert to understand the opportunities and limitations of applying an area-based (instead of project-based) TIF and other forms of value capture that do not require bonding.
1.14	Explore other opportunities to apply innovative value-capture models that promote equity and community investments.
1.15	Develop sponsorship guidelines with recommended ranges of funding to be eligible for naming rights and other related benefits.
1.16	Hold early conversations with local South Baltimore businesses, regional corporations, and foundations to determine interest in sponsoring RMB programs and projects and criteria they apply in evaluating opportunities.

Implementation Strategies

Phasing Strategy: Summary of Recommendations	
2.1	Phase 1 (Immediate - 2 Years): Deliver on the large pipeline of projects that are already funded and underway, in order to maintain momentum and build public trust.
2.2	Phase 2 (2 - 5 Years): Build out the core network of connectivity, establish major equity initiatives, and undertake “quick-build” enhancements.
2.3	Phase 3 (5 - 10 Years): Harness the success from the previous phases to build coalitions and attract funding for multiple large capital projects.
2.4	Phase 4 (10-20 Years): Maintain steady, ongoing progress that builds on the success established in the first decade, continuing to add to an already robust network of parks, trails, economic development, and equity projects around the Middle Branch.

Permitting Strategy: Summary of Recommendations	
3.1	Identify early-win projects that need to be completed as standalone improvements, to allow for permitting evaluation and approval as quickly as possible.
3.2	Where possible, submit one permit application for multiple near term sites so they can proceed under a single Tidal Wetlands License.
3.3	Present multiple times at the Joint Evaluation Committee to identify and address agency concerns.
3.4	Plan for and quantify environmental benefits (such as wetlands, habitat areas, tree plantings) as offsets for anticipated impacts of hard structures like new docks, rooftops, roads, pathways and parking areas, in both Joint Evaluation Committee and Critical Area Commission filings.
3.5	Establish program- or plan-wide mitigation banks for both phosphorous and vegetative cover.
3.6	Establish a program- or plan-wide mitigation bank for stormwater management practices.
3.7	Begin proactively identifying and compiling the supporting documentation that will be needed for permit-filings.

Management and Stewardship Strategy: Summary of Recommendations	
4.1	Oversee ongoing projects, “gap-filling activities,” and incubation process.
4.2	Hire or designate a RMB program manager.
4.3	Reconvene updated RMB Steering and Executive Committees and schedule regular briefings.
4.4	Identify and meet regularly with informed advisors to explore future organizational models and the steps to put them in place.
4.5	Meet with similar, peer open space management entities around the country to learn how they have established, sustained, and grown their organizations.
4.6	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with lead community organizations in Locust Point, Brooklyn, and Curtis Bay regarding coordination on RMB initiatives.
4.7	Develop an MOU with Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks related to maintenance and operations (M&O) of new and existing parks and facilities in the park-shed.
4.8	Select an organizational model for the future management entity, and begin strategic planning for its start-up.
4.9	Establish an initial staffing plan and operating budget for the future management entity.
4.10	Create capital, permitting, and funding plans for realizing the first 2 to 5-year project pipeline (see Phasing Strategy).

Broening Park Pier



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