

NORTH AVENUE RISING

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT | 2017-2018



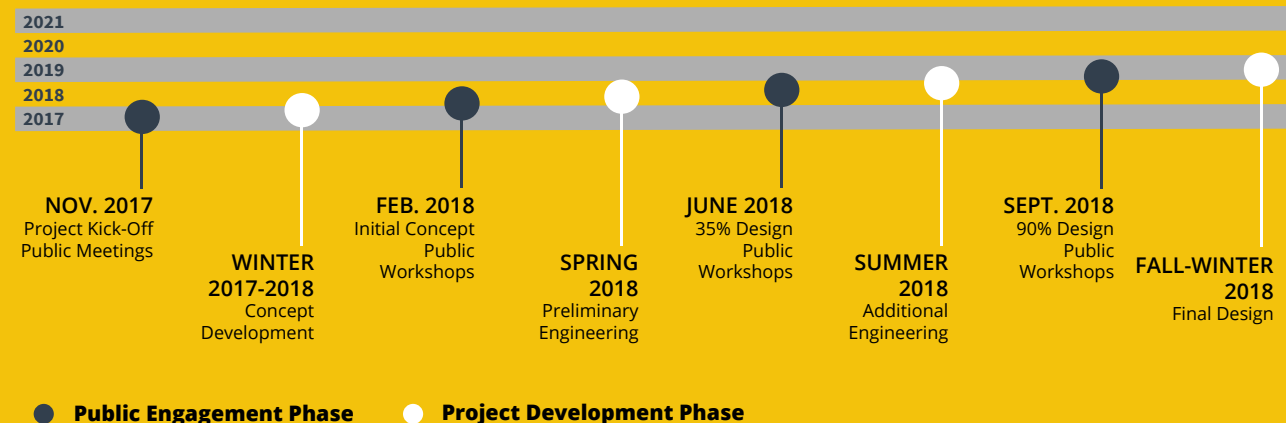
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Avenue Rising is a collaboration between State, City, and federal partners to support economic revitalization along North Avenue through improved transportation infrastructure. In Spring 2016 the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) and the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) assembled the original application to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program. The project applied an approach to public engagement that has been consistent, accessible, and responsive.

North Avenue Rising builds upon previous efforts and master plans for the area, including the Streetscape Master Plan for West North Avenue, by engaging both community members and organizational partners. From November 2017, when *North Avenue Rising* had its official public kick-off, to September 2018, when 90% plans were presented for final review, representatives from over 25 community organizations and institutions attended quarterly Community Advisory Panel meetings. In total, more than 1,600 people participated in various in-person outreach activities including over 70 distinct community-hosted meetings and neighborhood events.

In November 2018, BCDOT and MDOT MTA signed and submitted final designs to USDOT. The final plans are consistent with the proposed elements from the grant application, including dedicated bus lanes and transit signal priority to improve transit reliability, along with targeted streetscaping, sidewalk investments, roadway repaving, improved pedestrian crossings, and upgrades to the Penn-North Metro SubwayLink Station. A full year of constant communication between stakeholders and the project team has helped refine the overall vision and sharpen its details. This report provides an overview of how and when the project incorporated public participation to both guide and improve the design process.

PROJECT TIMELINE



BY THE NUMBERS

 **1600+**

People Reached in Direct Interactions

 **25+**

Community Advisory Panel Representatives

 **70+**

Community-Hosted Outreach Events Attended

 **500+**

Attendees at *North Avenue Rising* Public Workshops

WINTER
2019
Advertise
Project for
Construction

FALL 2020
Award
Construction
Contract

2020-2021
Public
Outreach and
Construction



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PROJECT OVERVIEW





NORTH AVENUE RISING

northavenuerising.com

PATRICK

MTA METRO-NORTH TRAIN AND STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



HARTFORD TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

BACKGROUND



North Avenue Rising is a joint project of MDOT MTA and BCDOT, with additional funding from the federal TIGER program and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to make a series of targeted transportation investments along North Avenue that support the economic revitalization of the corridor.

North Avenue is one of the most important transit corridors in the Baltimore region. From Hilton Street to Milton Avenue, North Avenue touches dozens of neighborhoods and is the primary route for thousands of people to access jobs, shopping, medical institutions, and schools. North Avenue has 12 of MDOT MTA's 100 busiest bus stops and carries nearly 4 million bus trips per year on the CityLink Gold. It is also one of the only streets that has both a Light RailLink (North Avenue) and Metro SubwayLink (Penn-North) Station.

North Avenue also presents many transportation challenges. From 2013 to 2015, there were 200 crashes involving people walking or bicycling. Neighborhood surveys consistently show that people want safer ways to walk along and cross North Avenue. Most importantly, MDOT MTA buses (most notably the CityLink Gold) are frequently caught in traffic, making it difficult to provide fast and reliable service.

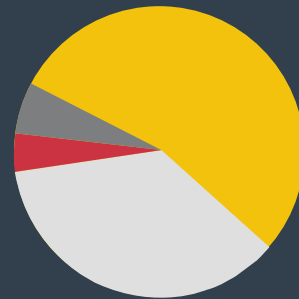
PROJECT DETAILS

MDOT MTA and BCDOT settled on a request of \$14.7M to USDOT based on the record of previously awarded amounts from the TIGER program. After USDOT responded with a funding offer of \$10M, MDOT MTA increased its financial commitment to the project by \$4.7M in order to fully fund the project.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

Streetscaping	\$8,795,000
Penn-North Station Improvements	\$4,915,000
Dedicated Bus Lanes	\$4,675,000
Repaving	\$3,783,000
Penn-North Intersection Improvements	\$2,000,000
Transit Signal Priority	\$1,355,000
Enhances Bus Stops	\$1,129,000
Bike Routes/ Traffic Calming	\$426,000
Bike Share	\$252,000
Total	\$ 27,330,000

BUDGET



- MDOT
\$14,730,000
- USDOT TIGER
\$10,000,000
- City of Baltimore
\$1,000,000
- FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant Program
\$1,600,000



Budgets shown are estimates from the 2016 grant application and are subject to change throughout the design, procurement, and construction process.

PROPOSED ELEMENTS

North Avenue Rising includes significant improvements within the road right-of-way and also offers improved amenities for passengers and pedestrians on the sidewalk. While some of the investments, such as streetscaping, are targeted in very specific locations, many of the other elements span significant stretches of the five-mile North Avenue corridor.

Dedicated Bus Lanes and Transit Signal Priority

North Avenue Rising will implement over seven miles of dedicated bus lanes, complementing the existing dedicated lanes installed downtown under BaltimoreLink. The dedicated lanes will improve the reliability of bus service while also allowing safe shared use with bicycles. Transit Signal Priority (TSP) equipment, which will be installed at traffic signals throughout the corridor, will allow traffic signals to add critical seconds to the end or beginning of a signal's green phase to allow buses to travel with less delay.



Enhanced Bus Stops

The project will add shelters at key bus stops to provide waiting passengers with protection from the elements. At some locations, streetscaping will incorporate curb extensions, thereby reducing crossing distance for pedestrians, eliminating the need for buses to pull in and out of the travel lane, and providing more space for bus stop amenities.



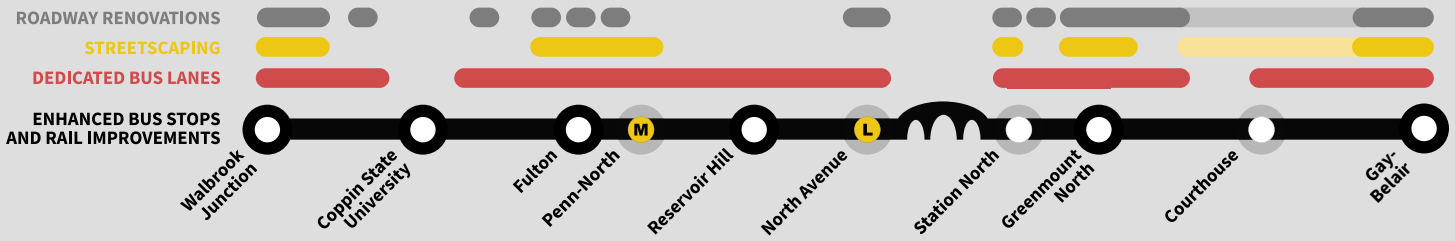
Penn-North Metro SubwayLink Station Improvements

North Avenue Rising will overhaul the Penn-North Metro SubwayLink Station elevators, add security improvements to the station entrance, and replace lighting with energy efficient fixtures. In addition, the project team is working with Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts to install a mural by local Baltimore artist Megan Lewis in the mezzanine level (see photo at right for example of artist's work).



ELEMENTS BY LOCATION

Faded elements are funded separately from North Avenue Rising



Roadway Renovations

The project includes roadway resurfacing and reconstruction at specific sections along the corridor, in addition to the new dedicated bus lanes. The team selected the targeted segments based on BCDOT’s pavement management system, as well as field visits and observations. This resurfacing and reconstruction of the roadway will not only benefit buses, but also the trucks and automobiles that use North Avenue for crosstown mobility.



Streetscaping and Pedestrian Safety Improvements

North Avenue Rising includes streetscape improvements in locations that maximize benefits around new development, neighborhood commercial areas, enhanced bus stops, and locations with high pedestrian crash rates. Streetscaping investments include highly-visible crosswalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, pedestrian-scaled lighting, accessible pedestrian signals, full traffic signal reconstruction, and new street trees and other plantings.



Traffic Calming and Bicycle Facilities

In addition to seven miles of shared bus/bike lanes and a two-way protected bicycle facility across the North Avenue bridge, *North Avenue Rising* includes traffic calming investments on Baker Street and 20th Street, which are parallel streets to North Avenue. To slow through-traffic and improve safety along the parallel streets, the project team designed bicycle-friendly speed humps, intersection bump-outs, contraflow bicycle lanes, and improved pedestrian crossings. The project also includes installation of parking areas for scooters and dockless bikeshare vehicles.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW





APPROACH

Over approximately one year (November 2017 through October 2018), MDOT MTA and BCDOT created a multi-tiered outreach campaign to engage not only individual residents and elected officials, but also the broader network of community associations and local institutions, including faith-based organizations, businesses, and schools. The project team hosted and attended standard public meetings, and also made a concerted effort to meet people where they were. Whether inside the reading room of the three nearby libraries or at the bus stop at the corner, MDOT MTA and BCDOT committed themselves to a community participation process that was consistent, accessible, and responsive.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

✓ Consistent

Community partners have access to the project team before, during, and after project milestones

✓ Accessible

Communication materials put stakeholders in a position to understand what is being proposed and how the public can participate in shaping the project

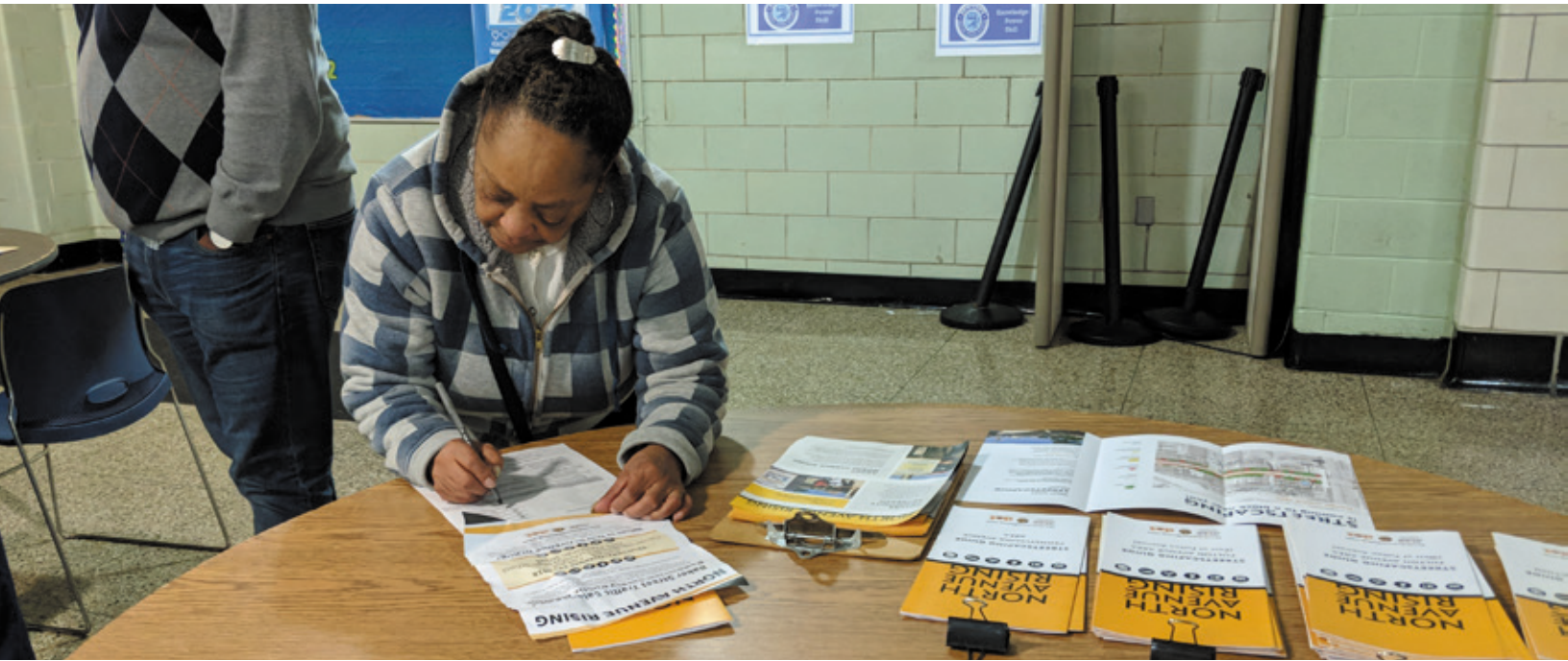
✓ Responsive

Project proposals and activities are adapted to community priorities



Consistent

While official public meetings hosted by MDOT MTA and BCDOT are traditionally the primary opportunities for public involvement in project planning, *North Avenue Rising* team members worked to expand the variety of ways for North Avenue communities to stay in contact with the project. In between each of the 13 official public workshops, project team members helped organize dozens of more intimate interactions directly on North Avenue (often at bus stops), including neighborhood-led walk-throughs, clean-ups, fairs, and regular community meetings. **This broader approach gave stakeholders the opportunity to consider the project within a larger context of community improvements and reinvestments.** In addition, all project materials presented at in-person community events, including maps and presentation boards, were immediately made available at the project website: www.northavenuerising.com.



Accessible

Though many of the proposed project elements, such as dedicated bus lanes, are easily seen and understood, other elements of transportation infrastructure or the transportation planning process are not always as clear. *North Avenue Rising* used a variety of methods, from digital newsletters and printed meeting announcement flyers to oversized printed streetscape guides and a mobile information kiosk, to keep stakeholders updated on project developments and to invite them to join the planning process. Just as important, **project materials made it clear what had changed since the last public workshop so that stakeholders could focus their attention on the elements that mattered to them.** Materials were available in other languages upon request.

Responsive

North Avenue Rising **builds directly on community-led planning efforts that identified needed improvements throughout the corridor.** Examples include but are not limited to the West North Avenue Streetscape Conceptual Master Plan and Greater Rosemont and Mondawmin Area (GRAMA) Master Plan. Since many of these plans placed special emphasis on the street-level experience, one of the first activities *North Avenue Rising* undertook was to develop a survey that asked stakeholders how they use North Avenue as part of their day-to-day lives. More than 400 responses confirmed that non-motorized travel is challenging and, at times, dangerous. These surveys, supplemented by focused questions at public meetings, gave strong support for incorporating additional lighting and safer pedestrian crossings into the project design.

Before every major public engagement period, *North Avenue Rising* convened two sets of advisory groups to anticipate the priorities of both community and government partners. Community Advisory Panel members, representing more than 25 neighborhood organizations as well as elected officials, gave suggestions on the types of communication materials to produce as well as the locations where project team members could reach community members who were unlikely to attend standard community meetings. Participants in the Inter Agency Group discussed current or upcoming City and State projects that could complement the project.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The *North Avenue Rising* team made a concerted effort to meet people where they were so that community members could speak directly with those designing the project. This meant providing a variety of ways for people to find out about the project, ask questions, and offer their perspective on proposed plans.

Face-to-Face Interaction

Over the course of the 12-month design process, MDOT MTA and BCDOT **hosted 13 public workshops at schools, libraries, and recreation centers for community members** to examine block-by-block maps of the entire project, review presentation boards, and share responses to questions posted by the project team. Project team members also participated in more than 70 community events and outreach activities. While these often included presentations at traditional community meetings, team members also participated in community clean-ups, resource fairs, and neighborhood walk-throughs to review area conditions in person.



Public Workshops



Neighborhood Events



Neighborhood Walk-Throughs

Electronic Media

North Avenue Rising used www.northavenuerising.com as a central repository for all project information and materials. Members of the public could access presentation materials and boards shown at public meetings, and team members used regular e-blasts to announce updates with the most recent project news. **The email mailing list went to more than 500 individuals**, and social media posts on MDOT MTA's Facebook page announcing upcoming public meetings were seen by thousands more.



E-blasts



Website



Social Media Posts

Printed Materials

North Avenue Rising also used traditional outreach methods to notify community members and stakeholders when there were major milestones, project news, or public meetings. Prior to the first two public outreach periods, **the team mailed postcards to all households within a half-mile of the project corridor**. Print newsletters provided a medium by which the project team could communicate more detailed updates, such as design revisions, recaps of previous rounds of public outreach, upcoming outreach activities and dates, and other project news.



Print Newsletters



Postcards

On the Street

The *North Avenue Rising* project team met hundreds of people at public events and even more through electronic communication. However, the project team recognized there were still many people who were unaware of the project. And, more importantly, the project team wanted to make sure that **the people most affected by the project— transit riders and people who lived closest to North Avenue— participated in the design process.** To that end, team members posted bus stop meeting notices along North Avenue. Team members also distributed annotated streetscaping brochures to every household and business located in one of the four areas designated for streetscaping improvements. These brochures used large-scale maps and easy-to-read icons with language to describe exactly what was being proposed on each block. Finally, team members created a mobile information kiosk to provide a synthesized version of materials presented at public meetings. The kiosk moved around the corridor throughout the summer of 2018, rotating among locations where large numbers of people used transit.



Bus Stop Notices



Streetscaping Brochures



Mobile Information Kiosk



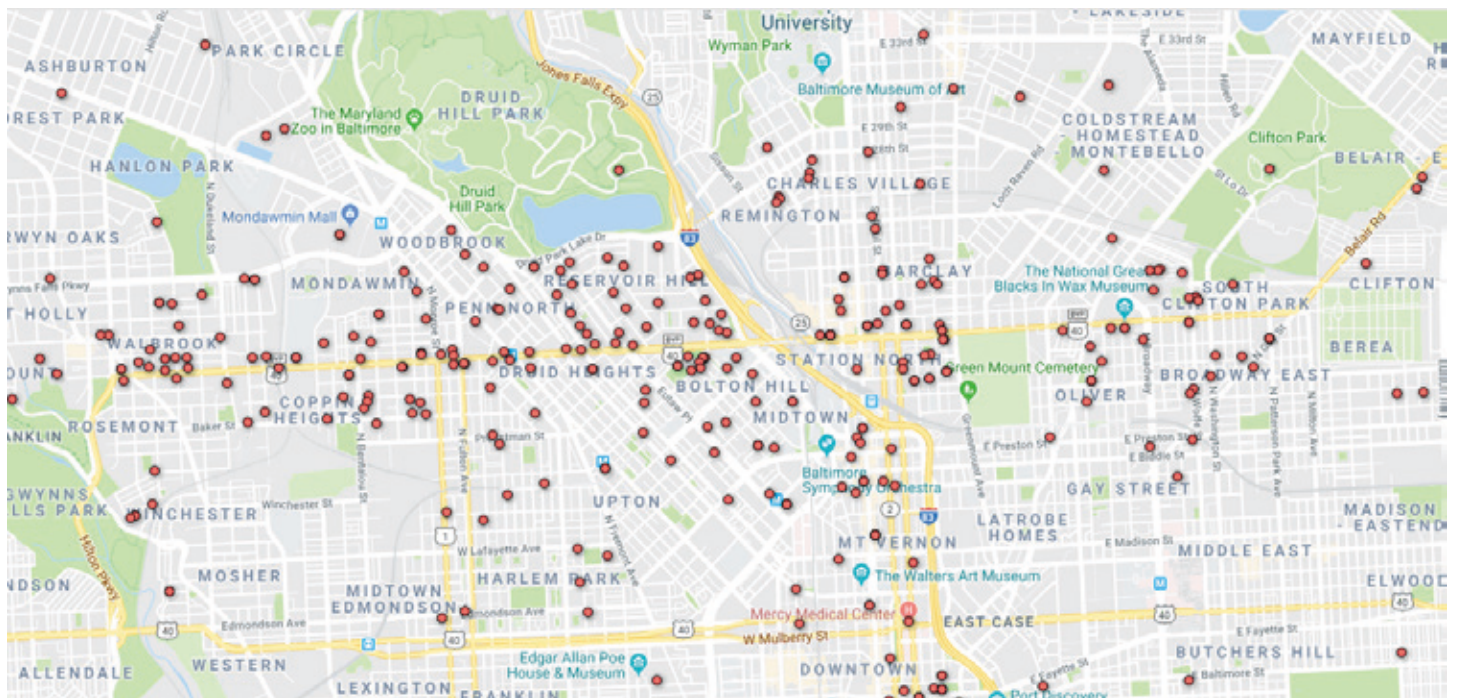
BEYOND OUTREACH

In order to convert one-off contacts into more consistent partners, *North Avenue Rising* developed strategies that encouraged community members to feel part of the design process. First, project team members created a comprehensive database of all project participants to make sure stakeholders were aware of upcoming meetings. Second, the team presented materials in a variety of ways to put participants in a position to be informed contributors.

RECRUITING BEYOND SIGN-IN SHEETS

Many public outreach campaigns use sign-in sheets to collect contact information from attendees, but *North Avenue Rising* went further by mapping participants' addresses from sign-in sheets to visualize the areas represented. This not only gave team members a sense of where they were reaching people, but, more importantly, it offered ideas for how to focus future outreach on areas that were being missed. Mapping participants confirmed that the project was receiving strong participation from the central and western sections of North Avenue, but was not as well connected to the east side. In response, the team prioritized east side locations, including Eastside District Court Building, The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, and the Clifton Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, for displaying the mobile information kiosk throughout the summer of 2018.

LOCATIONS OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS



● Address provided on sign-sheet at public event

COMMUNICATING BEYOND MAPS

Many planning projects rely heavily on maps to convey proposed project plans, but *North Avenue Rising* recognized that not everyone is comfortable interpreting what map symbols are trying to say. Below are examples of how the project team created multiple versions of maps to make it easier to visualize what the proposed designs would actually look like.



In the **roll map**, the area around Greenmount Avenue is shown in a typical design view, where every proposed element is presented in detail. This is the main map style presented at public workshops, but staff members are often required to be present in order to fully explain the significance of each item.

In the **rendering**, the same area around Greenmount Avenue is shown as a perspective drawing, where proposed elements are more stylized and it is easier to grasp their relative scale. Renderings were presented at public workshops as a complement to the roll map, positioned immediately next to the section of the map they described.

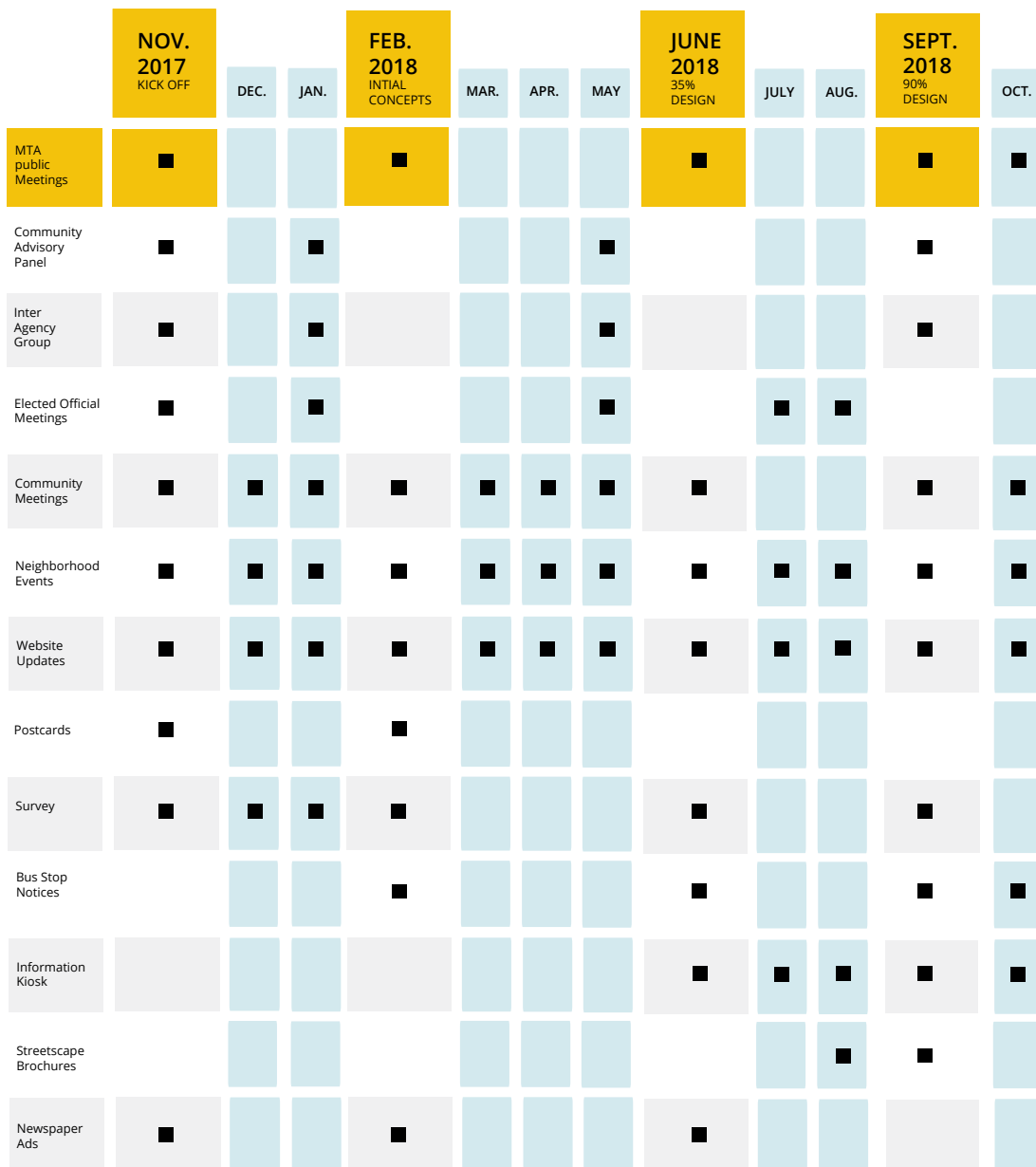


The **streetscape brochure** presents an enlarged snapshot of the area around Greenmount Avenue that is slated for streetscaping improvements. This streetscape brochure shows all of the same information as the roll map and rendering, but it is intended as a stand-alone document that could be distributed to local residents and business owners who might not be able to attend a public meeting. It uses over-sized icons and text to identify the elements that are most important, and includes invitations to learn more at upcoming public workshops or at the project website. In total, the team produced unique brochures for each of the four streetscaping areas: Walbrook, Pennsylvania, Greenmount, and Belair.

TIMELINE

North Avenue Rising used four rounds of public workshops to provide major updates on project milestones, with public outreach continuing in the weeks between. The following charts show how project team members maintained a constant presence in the corridor, whether in person at community events, in meetings with elected officials, or through digital and print communication.

BY ACTIVITY





BY DATE

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
Nov. 4, 2017	MICA Knowledge Exchange	Y-Not Lot
Nov. 9, 2017	Community Advisory Panel Meeting	Pennsylvania Ave. Library
Nov. 9, 2017	Inter Agency Group	Charles Benton Building
Nov. 13, 2017	Project Kick-Off Public Workshop	Impact Hub
Nov. 14, 2017	Project Kick-Off Public Workshop	Knowledge and Success Academy
Nov. 15, 2017	Project Kick-Off Public Workshop	Rita Church Community Center
Nov. 16, 2017	Project Kick-Off Public Workshop	Parkview Recreation Center
Dec. 5, 2017	Tenant Council Meeting	Lakeview Towers
Dec. 11, 2017	Survey Distribution and Collection	Pennsylvania Ave. Library
Dec. 12, 2017	Survey Distribution and Collection	Walbrook Library
Jan. 2, 2018	Mount Royal Improvement Association Meeting	Memorial Episcopal Church
Jan. 8, 2018	East North Avenue Community Development Corporation Meeting	National Great Blacks in Wax Museum
Jan. 9, 2018	Greater Greenmount Community Meeting	Cecil Elementary School
Jan. 13, 2018	Citizens for Community Improvement/Westwood Avenue Meeting	First Mt. Carmel Christian Church
Jan. 17, 2018	Charles Village Community Benefits District Meeting	CVCBD Office
Jan. 18, 2018	Oliver Community Meeting	Oliver Recreation Center
Jan. 24, 2018	Reservoir Hill Improvement Council Meeting	Beth Am Synagogue
Jan. 25, 2018	Community Advisory Panel Meeting	Pennsylvania Ave. Library
Jan. 25, 2018	Inter Agency Group	Charles Benton Building
Feb. 1, 2018	Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation Meeting	CHCDC Office
Feb. 1, 2018	Belair Edison Community Meeting	Herring Run Library
Feb. 1, 2018	Parents Meeting	Knowledge and Success Academy
Feb. 5, 2018	Initial Concepts Public Workshop	Walbrook Library
Feb. 6, 2018	Initial Concepts Public Workshop	Pennsylvania Ave. Library
Feb. 7, 2018	Initial Concepts Public Workshop	Baltimore City Public Schools Headquarters
Feb. 8, 2018	Initial Concepts Public Workshop	Harford Heights Elementary School
Feb. 22, 2018	Alliance of Rosemont Community Organizations Meeting	Belmont Elementary School
Mar. 8, 2018	New Auchentoroly Terrace Community Meeting	Parks and People Foundation
Mar. 10, 2018	Citizens for Community Improvement/Westwood Avenue Meeting	First Mt. Carmel Christian Church
Mar. 13, 2018	Rosemont Neighborhood Improvement Meeting	Belmont Elementary School
Mar. 14, 2018	Bridgeview-Greenlawn Community Meeting	Church of the Holy Trinity
Mar. 15, 2018	Four-by-Four Community Association Meeting	New Pleasant Grove Missionary Church
Mar. 19, 2018	Greenmount West Development Committee Community Meeting	Open Works Baltimore
April 28, 2018	Oliver Community Clean-Up	Oliver Recreation Center
April 28, 2018	Reservoir Hill Spring Clean-Up	St. Francis Neighborhood Center

- Community-Hosted Outreach Event
- *North Avenue Rising*-Hosted Meeting
- Community-Hosted Meeting

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
April 28, 2018	Rosemont Community Clean-Up	2300 Block of Westmont Avenue
April 28, 2018	Citizens for Community Improvement/Westwood Avenue Clean Up	2000 Block of Poplar Grove Street
April 28, 2018	Auchentoroly Terrace Community Clean Up	3300 Block of Auchentoroly Terrace
May 1, 2018	Robert W. Coleman Community Meeting	Robert W. Coleman Elementary School
May 17, 2018	Western District Community Relations Council Meeting	Western District Police Station
May 24, 2018	Inter Agency Group	Charles Benton Building
May 31, 2018	Community Advisory Panel Meeting	Pennsylvania Ave. Library
June 6, 2018	35% Design Public Workshop	Pennsylvania Ave. Library
July 24, 2018	Matthew A. Henson Neighborhood Association Charette	Matthew A. Henson Elementary School
July 27, 2018	Kiosk at Walbrook Library	Walbrook Library
July 29, 2018	Bentalou Street Bus Stop Review	Mt. Hebron Church of God in Christ
Aug. 4, 2018	Reservoir Hill Resource Fair	St. Francis Neighborhood Center
Aug. 7, 2018	National Night Out Reservoir Hill	Reservoir Hill Mutual Homes
Aug. 7, 2018	National Night Out Western District	Mondawmin Mall
Aug. 7, 2018	National Night Out Oliver	Oliver Recreation Center
Aug. 7, 2018	National Night Out Belair-Edison	Herring Run Park
Aug. 23, 2018	Baker Street Walk-Through with Councilman Pinkett	2400 Block of Baker Street
Aug. 24, 2018	Harford Heights Back to School Event	Harford Heights Elementary School
Aug. 25, 2018	Mt. Hebron Church of God in Christ Community Fair	Mt. Hebron Church of God in Christ
Sept. 4, 2018	Midtown Partnership and Central Baltimore Partnership Meeting	Midtown Partnership Office
Sept. 6, 2018	Councilman Pinkett Town Hall	Baltimore City Community College
Sept. 13, 2018	Inter Agency Group	MDOT MTA Headquarters
Sept. 13, 2018	Pennsylvania Avenue Arts and Entertainment District Meeting	Arch Social Club
Sept. 18, 2018	Door-to-Door Streetscape Brochure Distribution	Blocks around Belair/Gay and North; Blocks around Greenmount and North
Sept. 19, 2018	Community Advisory Panel Meeting	Walbrook Library
Sept. 20, 2018	Door-to-Door Streetscape Brochure Distribution	Blocks around Walbrook Library; Blocks around Fulton and North; Blocks around Pennsylvania and North
Sept. 26, 2018	90% Design Public Workshop	Harford Heights Elementary School
Sept. 27, 2018	90% Design Public Workshop	Walbrook Library
Oct. 11, 2018	20th St. Traffic Calming Preliminary Meeting	Central Baltimore Partnership Office
Oct. 17, 2018	20th St. Traffic Calming Public Workshop	Cecil Elementary School
Oct. 17, 2018	Alliance of Rosemont Community Organizations	St. Edward's Roman Catholic Church
Oct. 18, 2018	Baker St. Traffic Calming Public Workshop	Carver Vocational Technical High School
Oct. 24, 2018	BOPA Meet the Artist	Arch Social Club

YOU SPOKE, WE LISTENED





NORTH AVENUE RISING
northavenuerising.com

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ALX

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Throughout the design process, from the Project Kick-Off in November 2017 to the presentation of 90% design plans in September 2018, the project team applied insights gathered from stakeholders to inform priorities going forward. These pages synthesize comments taken directly from the hundreds of sticky notes and project comment cards collected at public engagement activities, and show how the project responded.

PROJECT KICK-OFF | *NOVEMBER 2017*

ANNOUNCED PROJECT FUNDING AND SURVEYED IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR

WHAT WE HEARD:

- Prioritize transit by dedicating more roadway space to buses
- Pedestrian safety improvements are needed for crossing the street

WHAT WE DID:

- ✓ Included dedicated shared bus/bike lanes for roughly 70% of the corridor
- ✓ Included curb extensions to effectively narrow North Avenue in specific locations, reducing vehicle speeds and making it easier to cross the street

INITIAL CONCEPTS | *FEBRUARY 2018*

CREATED LARGE MAPS FOR PARTICIPANTS TO PROVIDE BLOCK-BY-BLOCK FEEDBACK

WHAT WE HEARD:

- Provide better pedestrian lighting and crosswalks at key intersections
- A center-running bus lane is preferred in order to provide more efficient transit operations
- Future development in the Reservoir Hill community requires flexibility in the design for on-street parking and potential future bicycle facilities

WHAT WE DID:

- ✓ Added lighting under the I-83 bridge and at more than a dozen bus stops beyond the initial plans that only included lighting in areas designated for streetscaping
- ✓ Applied to the Transportation Alternatives Program for a grant to study a future implementation (beyond the scope of the current project) of a center-running design for dedicated bus lanes
- ✓ Shifted the dedicated bus lane away from the curb between Madison Avenue and Park Avenue to accommodate on-street parking and future investments along the curb by private developers

35% DESIGN MILESTONE | JUNE 2018

RECEIVED FEEDBACK ON 35% ENGINEERING DRAWINGS

WHAT WE HEARD:

- Confirm proposed far-side bus stop locations are accessible and comfortable
- Concern over loss of parking within the Station North section of North Avenue
- Request to prioritize certain areas for repaving and reconstruction of the roadway

WHAT WE DID:

- ✓ Met with community members for on-street walk-throughs to evaluate conditions at multiple bus stops throughout the corridor
- ✓ Transitioned to a part-time dedicated bus/bike lane eastbound between St. Paul Street and Barclay Street to preserve night-time parking for residents on North Avenue
- ✓ Reviewed roadway repaving and reconstruction sections to align with areas that stakeholders singled out for repair

FINAL DESIGN MILESTONE | SEPTEMBER 2018

REFINED 90% PLANS FOR FINAL SUBMISSION

WHAT WE HEARD:

- Review the traffic calming designs on parallel streets to ensure appropriate use of speed humps, striping, and signage through each neighborhood
- A protected bicycle connection across the North Avenue bridge is important to link the growing bicycle network in Baltimore City

WHAT WE DID:

- ✓ Met with community members for on-street walk-throughs to refine locations and designs for speed humps, high visibility crosswalks, and bicycle facilities
- ✓ Created a protected two-way cycle track connecting the Maryland Avenue cycle track with the North Avenue Light RailLink Station and Mt. Royal Avenue



FAQ

■ **While the majority of comments during the design process related to a specific characteristic of the project's design at a particular milestone, other questions raised by members of the public applied more broadly to the project and future goals for the North Avenue corridor.**

Is it possible to put in center-running dedicated bus lanes?

This option was considered early in the process, but the cost and stormwater management impact went considerably beyond the available budget and timeline. In response to public comments, MDOT MTA also applied for a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to fund a feasibility study on a future center-running option, but did not receive the grant. However, nothing in the final design precludes the potential for a center-running project going forward.

Why are there gaps in the dedicated bus lane coverage?

Though 70% of the corridor will have full-time bus lanes, there are a few segments with either narrow right-of-way or high traffic volumes where bus lanes would have severe impacts on vehicle traffic (especially since North Avenue is also a major east/west truck route). It is still possible that bus lanes could be added to these segments in the future.

Is there space for more on-street bicycle facilities?

It is challenging to install protected bicycle infrastructure in addition to dedicated bus lanes along the vast majority of North Avenue without taking away parking or dramatically reducing the roadway vehicle capacity. As a result, this project proposes improving conditions for walking and bicycling on more than two miles of adjacent streets in addition to the approximately seven miles of shared bus/bike lanes on North Avenue. The project also includes a two-way, protected on-street facility over the North Avenue bridge.

Why isn't this a bigger project with more funding?

TIGER grants have typically been awarded in the \$10M-\$15M range, with additional matching funds from the applicant of roughly \$10-\$15M. In this case, MDOT MTA increased its contribution from \$10M to \$14.7M when the federal government did not fully fund the grant request. Before *North Avenue Rising*, BCDOT recently completed a \$13M road improvement project on East North Avenue, and moving forward the corridor will continue to be a priority.

How will this project translate into improved economic opportunities?

Better transit connections for residents living along the corridor make it easier to access jobs throughout the region. The significant investment in the corridor, particularly in the four streetscaping areas, will improve the visual appearance and support private investments into private property. The project team has also used the Inter Agency Group meetings to coordinate programs of local planning, housing, and economic development agencies in order to better leverage the investment being made in the corridor.

How is this project going to impact traffic in the corridor?

Creating a dedicated lane for buses, bicycles, and emergency vehicles along much of the corridor will have an impact on the movement of automobiles, but will benefit the many residents without access to cars. With approximately 11,000 transit riders per day along the corridor, the dedicated lanes will improve travel times for a large portion of those traversing North Avenue. Further analysis suggests that the added travel time for vehicles will be limited and focused largely on the A.M. and P.M. peak periods. While some comments suggested that North Avenue should be reduced to a single travel lane between Madison Avenue and Greenmount Avenue, MDOT MTA and BCDOT recognized that it was essential to maintain two through travel lanes for automobiles in the more heavily trafficked core area between Mt. Royal Avenue and Greenmount Avenue.



WRAP UP

North Avenue Rising was inspired by community-led planning processes; consequently, public participation has always been an essential part of the design process. *North Avenue Rising* featured a variety of avenues for public engagement, ranging from traditional public meetings to innovative methods such as a mobile information kiosk.

At the same time, *North Avenue Rising* positioned transportation investments as a catalyst for complementary community improvements, ranging from housing and community development to safety and greening. The project team regularly convened partner agencies from City and State government offices to meet with each other as well as with community partners. These interactions not only expanded opportunities for cross-department coordination related to North Avenue, but also provided community members with additional information about available resources and services.

While this \$27.3M project is an important step forward for North Avenue, other efforts are underway by various organizations and agencies. Project team members have worked with other City and State agencies to identify existing and potential investments and programs that can build upon the work being done through *North Avenue Rising* to help further revitalization of the neighborhoods along the corridor. These range from street tree plantings and façade improvement programs to homeownership assistance and strategic demolition of vacant housing.

As *North Avenue Rising* transitions into the construction phase, the project team will build on the relationships established during the design phase. Consistent, accessible, and responsive communication will continue to be paramount throughout the approximately two-year construction timeline. The project team looks forward to ongoing partnerships with all its community and project stakeholders.

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