

2023 MERIT AWARD

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LYCEUM

A traveling fellowship in Architecture

Space to Grow

Old Town Mall: Reimagined

Project Narrative

Old Town Mall, located at the heart of the Black Butterfly, is a site in Baltimore with great potential. From music to food, the area is rich in culture despite its roots in segregation and oppression. However, due to its dark history, its residents have long been deprived of essential services, amenities, and the possibility of urban upkeep and renovation.

This proposal aims to provide such services in specifically tailored spaces to foster an environment of community engagement, collective growth, and enrichment. The strategy is creating a plan combining public open spaces for collaboration/group activity with private spaces for more personal care and ambitions. Both open and closed spaces will allow for the community's well-being and safety.

This strategic plan will empower and enable the local community to reappropriate the Black Butterfly, often portrayed in pop culture as dangerous and unwelcoming, and especially inhabit Old Town Mall in the ways they see fit.

Inspired by the Executive Director of the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition, Marceline White's description of the Black Butterfly neighborhoods as the vital organs, the heart, and breath of Baltimore City, the open public spaces act as lungs expanding throughout the old mall, enabling the community to take the space they need. Therefore, community engagement is critical, and building occupants should be actively involved in the design process.

This proposal encourages adaptation and personalization according to the locals' needs and resources. As such, it gives the community space to freely grow their businesses and careers, an opportunity they have historically been deprived of.

2023 Lyceum Fellowship Competition

LF-11465

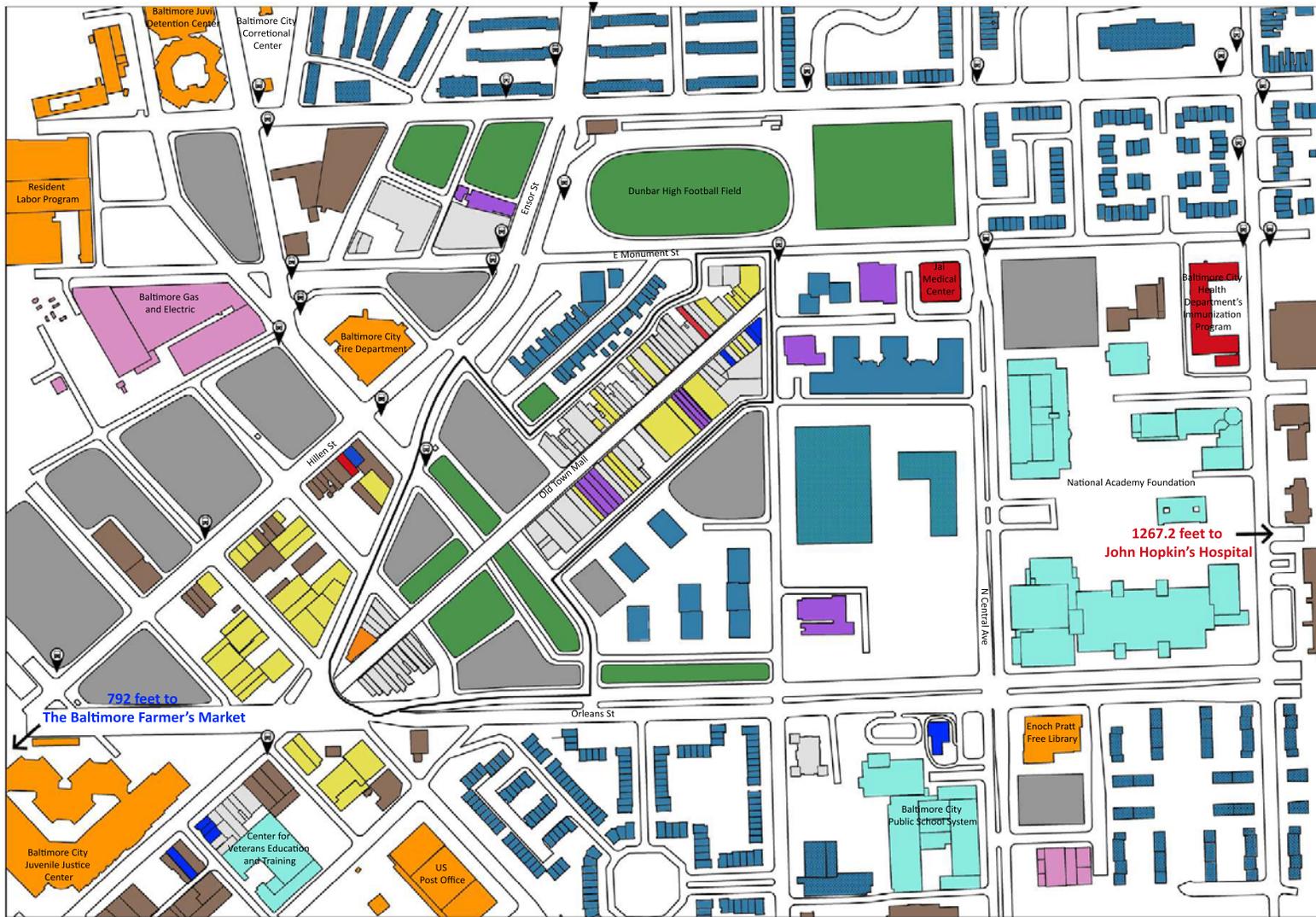


Performer [Photograph]. Farmers Market Baltimore.



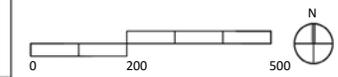
Vendor [Photograph]. Farmers Market Baltimore.

Context Analysis Plan



Based on the context analysis plan, the area in which the site is located is lacking in three main categories: leisure, access to fresh produce, and green space. These three categories are essential to foster a healthy and welcoming environment where local businesses can attract clientele and grow.

- Residential
- Affordable or public housing
- Housing in construction
- Government and public service
- Health service
- Education
- Food
- Green space
- Commercial
- Religious
- Industry and utility
- Other
- Vacant
- Surface parking
- 📍 Bus stop



Old Town Neighbourhood Demographic

Aside from leisure, access to fresh produce, and green space, and based on further research into Old Town neighbourhood, the community would most likely benefit from both public and private infrastructure that supports their job and career opportunities as well as mixed-income housing that will accommodate their needs.

This design hopes to integrate these aspects harmoniously with the community that is already living there by preserving as much of the existing architecture as possible and assuring that businesses already established in Old Town Mall do not lose what they have built.

By demolishing unsalvageable buildings and repurposing the space used as surface parking, there will be opportunity for green space and leisure space. Meanwhile, the vacant buildings that can be preserved and repaired will serve as start up spaces for local businesses on their ground floors and housing on their upper floors.

Chart 1: Age of the Population of Old Town

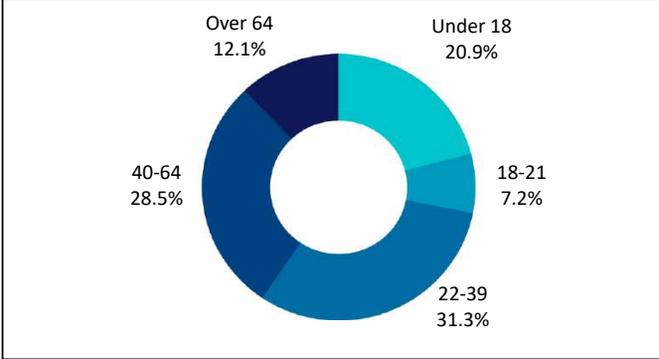


Chart 2: Employment in Old Town

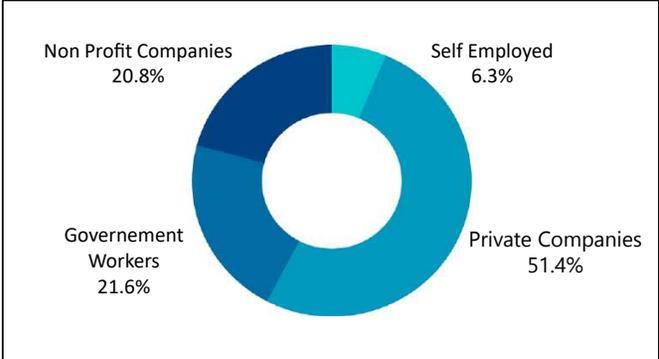


Chart 3: Level of Education amongst adults

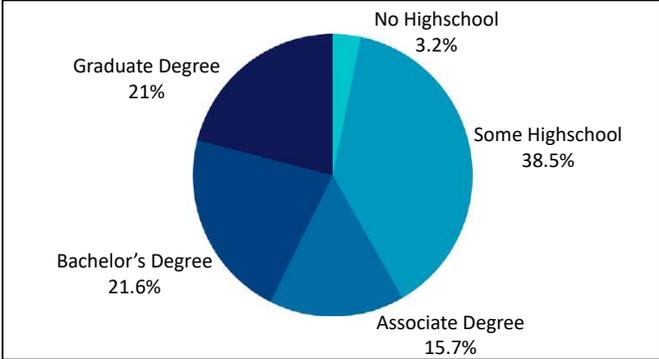
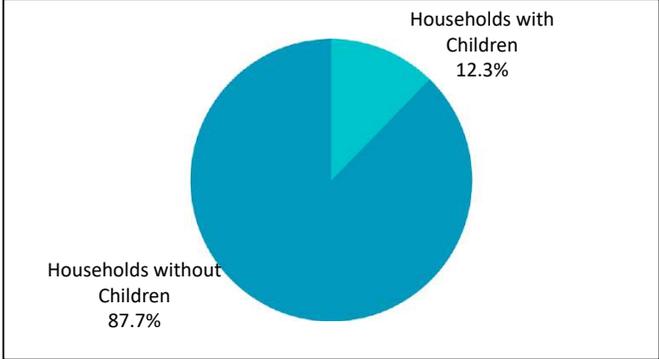
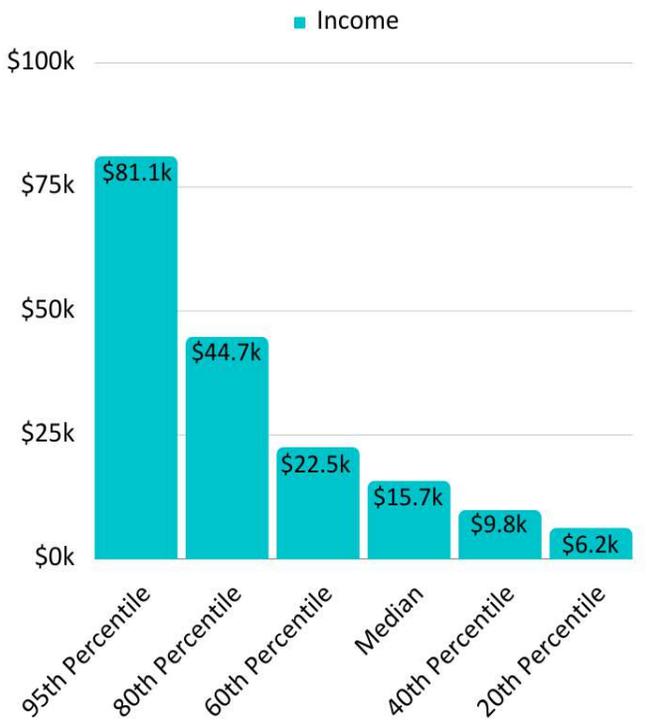


Chart 4: Household Types in Old Town



Graph 1: Household Income Percentiles in Old Town

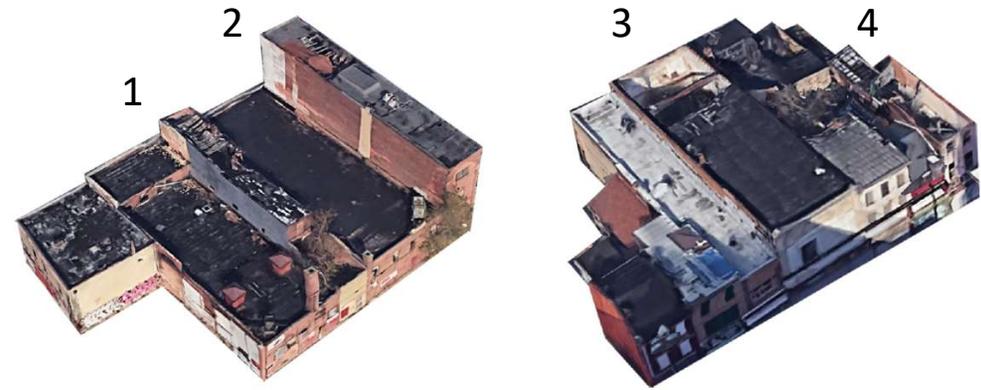
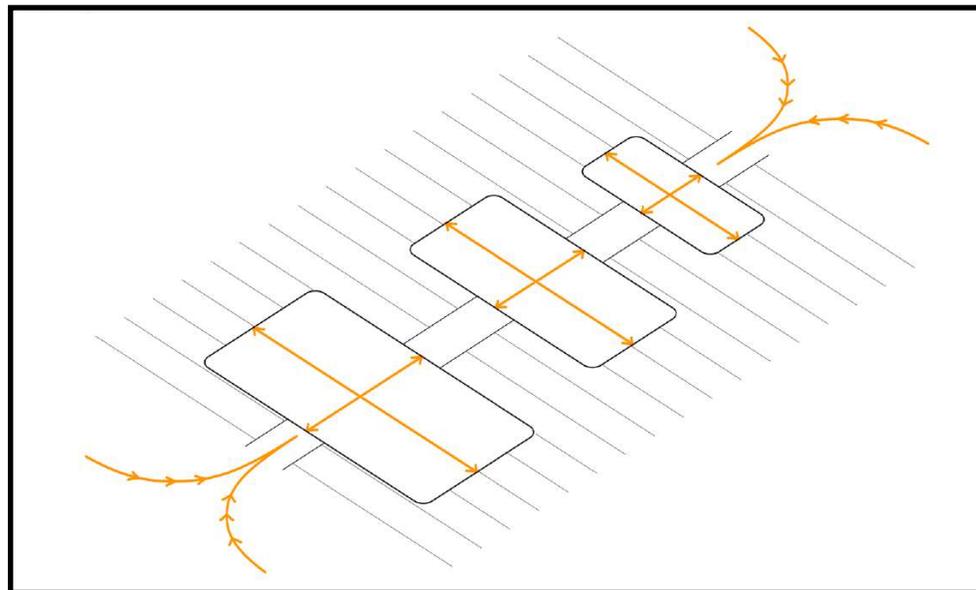


Demographic Data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau

Building Damage Analysis



Parti Diagram



- Relatively good condition
- Currently in use
- In need of repair
- To be removed

Adaptive Reuse

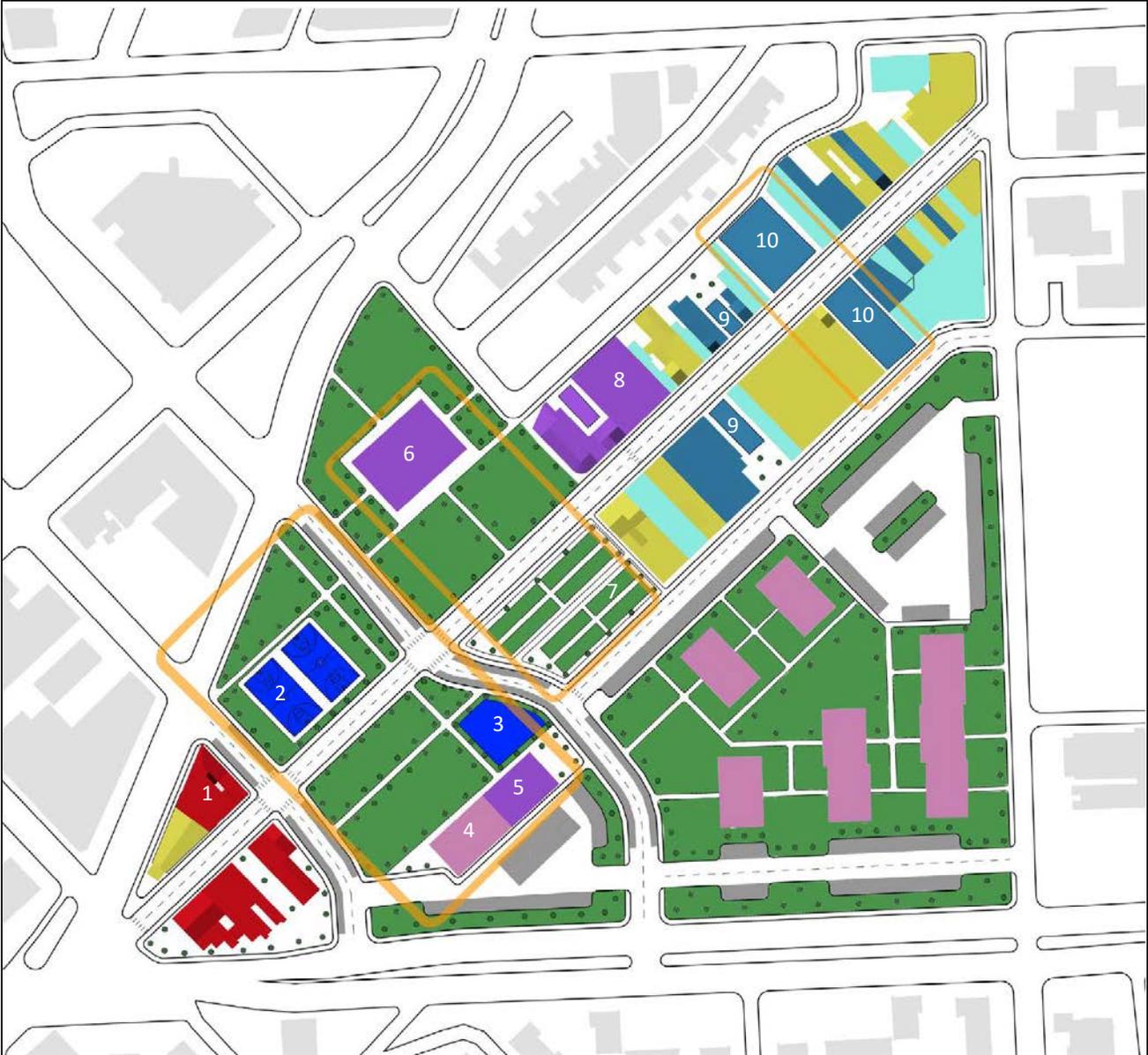
Although there are some destroyed buildings and others in need of repair, the majority of the buildings on the site are in relatively good condition and some are even in use. This proposal aims to preserve the historic architecture of Old Town Mall as much as possible and will reuse the buildings in suitable condition for local businesses to establish themselves. This is more sustainable than completely demolishing and rebuilding and will prevent businesses already established on the site from losing their visibility and clientele.

Design

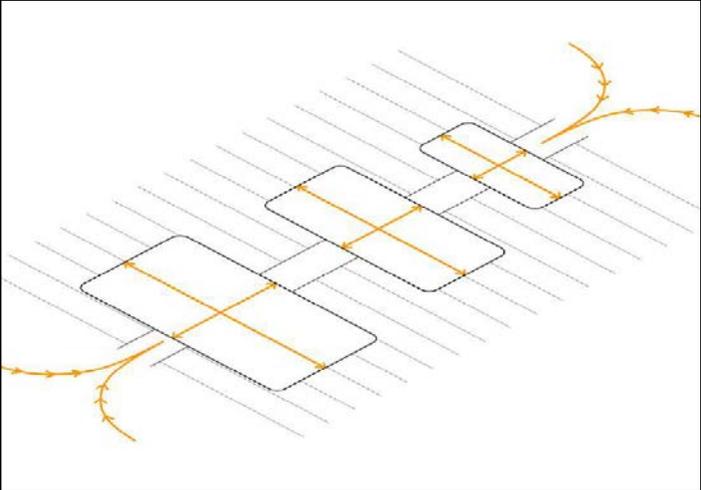
On one hand, the removal of the buildings that cannot be reused will create public spaces that act as lungs expanding throughout the historic buildings, enabling the community to take the space they need and grow collectively. On the other hand, the preservation of buildings will offer private spaces as well as the possibility of residential spaces where locals can find space for more personal care and ambitions.

The growth within and around the historic buildings is symbolic of the Black Butterfly's community's resilience and flowering despite several years of systematic oppression.

Proposed Site Plan



Parti Diagram

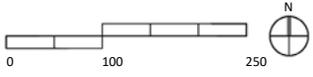


Each of the three 'lungs', shown in the parti diagram above and identified in orange on the site plan (left) act as spaces which once entered allows members of the community to grow.

The proposed site addresses the lack of green space, leisure and access to fresh produce in the area and offers additional opportunities that would benefit the community.

- Access to fresh produce
- Existing businesses
- Start up space for local businesses
- Education/ Community space
- Green space
- Leisure
- Residential
- Health Facilities
- Surface parking

- 1 Physical and mental health facilities
- 2 Basketball courts
- 3 Playground
- 4 Mixed housing
- 5 Daycare center with housing above
- 6 Business incubator and maker spaces
- 7 Community garden
- 8 Community center
- 9 Terraces
- 10 The Old Town Market



Axonometric View of the Site



The upper floors of the commercial buildings will be turned into residential space. As seen through Graph 1: Household Income Percentiles in Old Town, the neighbourhood includes households of varying incomes, therefore this proposal will introduce mixed income housing to tailor to the needs and resources of the residing population.

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- Existing businesses
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Collage of The Old Town Market

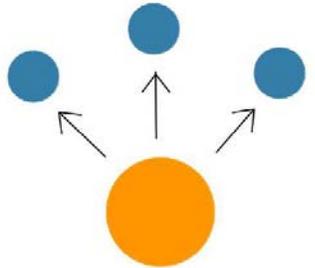


Vignette Featuring the Community Garden

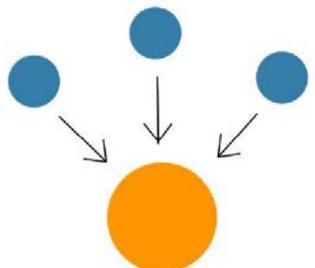


Process Statement Proposal

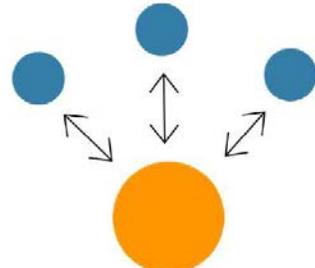
INFORM



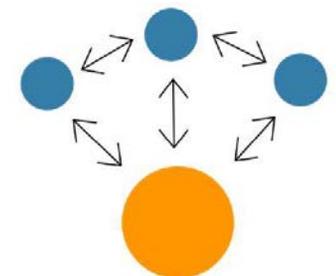
CONSULT



INVOLVE

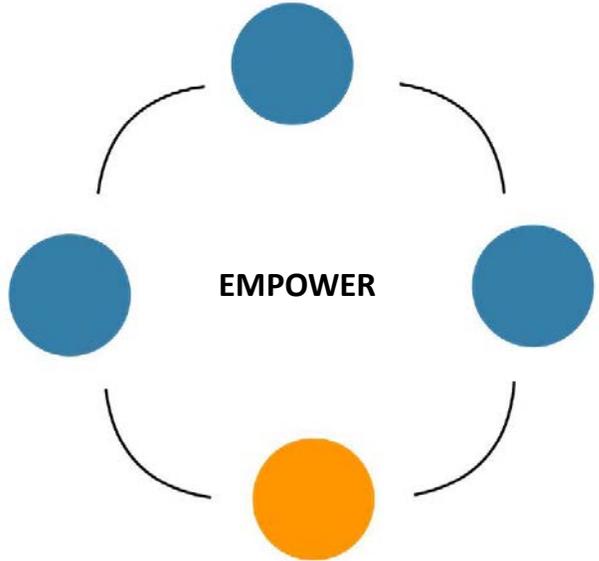


COLLABORATE



Since this proposal involves the repurposing and adaptive reuse of space and infrastructure, it is essential to involve local community members since the spaces first belonged to them and they are the ones currently or who will be using them. The process statement includes four phases that work together to ultimately empower the members of the community to reappropriate the Black Butterfly and inhabit Old Town Mall in whichever ways they see fit. They must be informed, consulted, involved and must collaborate between each other.

Discussing with Baltimoreans, it became clear that the proposed programming, or uses associated with spaces in Old Town Mall, particularly artistic or creative spaces, must come from the community's motivation rather than that of the city or architects. Therefore, the aim of this design proposal requires direct engagement with and support from the community in the form of participatory design.



First, the community must be informed of the noticed lack of leisure space, green space and access to fresh produce, as well as opportunities for start-up spaces for local businesses. Moreover, it must be communicated that the proposal wishes to create a space of mental, social, and physical well-being while its safety and housing. Then, the community must be given the chance to express their own concerns and needs and must see their voice being implemented in the design. Seeing their ideas are heard and used not only by the city but by other members of the community will empower them.

The program for the site will build off the relationships and trust it forms with locals and seek commitment from community organizations and leaders to create processes for mobilizing the community. Community outreach is an integral part of social work and community development practice. As a part of community outreach, we must provide information to individuals, families, groups, and the community and connect them to existing organizations that can help with our program for Old Town Mall.

Community Outreach Proposal

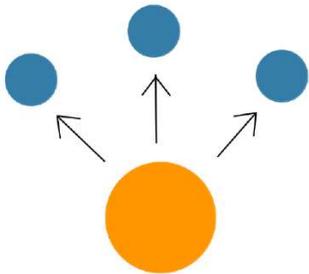
Fliers will be placed throughout Old Town neighbourhood mainly in public areas, gathering spaces and community spaces where they will get more visibility.

Postcards will be mailed to residents of Old town neighbourhood.

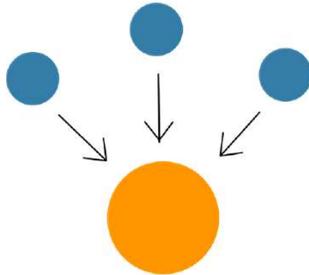
A social media page as well as a website will be created where those who are interested can find information.

The fliers, postcards and social media posts will announce in person as well as virtual meetings. The in person meetings will be held at Old Town Mall in front of The Nevermore Haunt, which is a well known and established business and the virtual meetings will be held on Zoom. These meetings will serve to inform the community as well as hear their initial concerns and thoughts about Old Town Mall as it is and what it could be.

INFORM



CONSULT

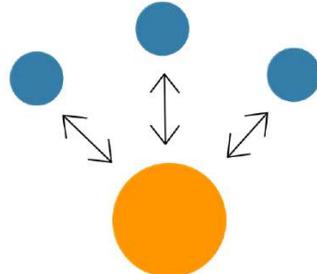


Community Engagement Proposal

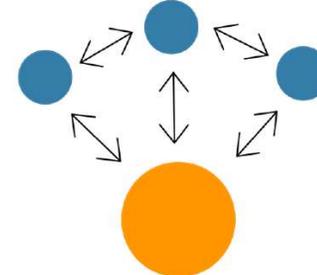
The neighborhood community is the expert on what programs best serve the residents. The participatory design intends that the community drives the development of specific critical infrastructures and public spaces of the Old Town Mall, such as The Old Town Market.

The market will be a gathering place where Baltimoreans can eat, shop, and connect for fresh produce and support local businesses, organizations, and performers. It will be inspired by The Baltimore Farmers' Market approximately 792 feet south-west of Old Town Mall and designed in collaboration with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts (BOPA), a non-profit organization as well as The Farm Alliance of Baltimore, a membership organization of urban farms and neighborhood growers. Through a series of workshops with the designers and organizations, locals will be empowered to use their creative voices and express what they would benefit most from.

INVOLVE



COLLABORATE



Community Impact Proposal

Economic: Offer space for local businesses to start and grow and other job and career opportunities.

Social: Offer social services in the form of a community center, gathering areas, leisure and green spaces and mixed housing

Health: Offer mental and physical health facilities, basketballs courts for physical activity and access to fresh produce.

By the completion of the project, there should be a level of trust built between the city officials and designers and the local community because it's voice has been heard and embraced. This trust will empower the community members to pursue thier ambitions.

EMPOWER

