

CONNECTING WESTPORT TO MOBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

FY 2023

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will restore community connectivity in Westport, an economically disadvantaged area in Baltimore City, by removing barriers to transit and recreational opportunities created by roads and freight rail tracks, creating new active transportation infrastructure on a facility that currently lacks sidewalks, and sparking transformative and inclusive economic development in the neighborhood.

Westport is a community on the north shore of the Middle Branch portion of the Patapsco River in south Baltimore. It can trace its early roots to primarily German immigrants seeking work opportunities at a local iron works facility and, at the turn of the 20th century, was a burgeoning working-class industrial area. During the mid-1950s, it was one of the most racially diverse areas in Baltimore with a strong manufacturing workforce base, largely employed along Baltimore's industrial waterfront. However, development of the freight railroad industry and the creation of MD 295, a six-lane high-capacity parkway, split the neighborhood in half and separated the area from the Middle Branch. Westport is disproportionately impacted by waste and energy facilities including the former Reedbird incinerator, the active Wheelabrator incinerator, and numerous landfills and waste deposal sites along the Patapsco River. Together, these current and historic burdens spurred a long and persistent economic decline in the neighborhood. The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will help to revitalize the community and lead to sustainable economic development and transit opportunities.

The project will reconfigure and realign Kloman Street between Waterview and Clare Street, creating meaningful community access to transit, active transportation, and the Middle Branch waterfront and trail network. The current alignment of Kloman Street, refer to Figure 1, does not safely accommodate current pedestrian and vehicular traffic, fails to provide legitimate access to those with mobility challenges to the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Westport light rail station from the street, and does not have sidewalks or bicycle facilities. Additionally, the current street alignment is located directly between MTA's light rail and CSX's freight rail tracks, which presents a challenging environment for non-motorized uses on the street. The CSX tracks create a barrier between the Westport community and access to the Middle Branch waterfront. There are three railway-highway grade crossings on Kloman St. on the streets directly bordering Kloman (Wenburn Street and Waterview Avenue) in the project area. Two of the crossings are public and active, while the third is closed.



Figure 1 Kloman Street, Baltimore: Current Conditions

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The proposed realigned Kloman Street from Waterview Street to Wenburn Street will be located away from CSX and MTA property, eliminating transportation conflicts, and will include the latest environmental infrastructure features, new lighting, a defined landscaped barrier between the street and CSX facilities, and dedicated active transportation infrastructure, in accordance with Baltimore City's Complete Streets Manual. Between Wenburn and Clare Streets, the project will widen the road to accommodate on-street parking and transit uses, create active transportation linkages to the Gwynn Falls Trail, part of the East Coast Greenway and proposed Baltimore Greenway Trail, and the Middle Branch waterfront. The scope also includes enhancements to user safety by reconstructing the Clare Street intersection and creating defined landscaped barrier between the street and MTA facilities. The Kloman Street improvements are demonstrated in Figure 2.

4. REINVENTING KLOMAN STREET

4.1 A COMMUNITY THOROUGHFARE UDAAP 3. Clarify Kloman Avenue design

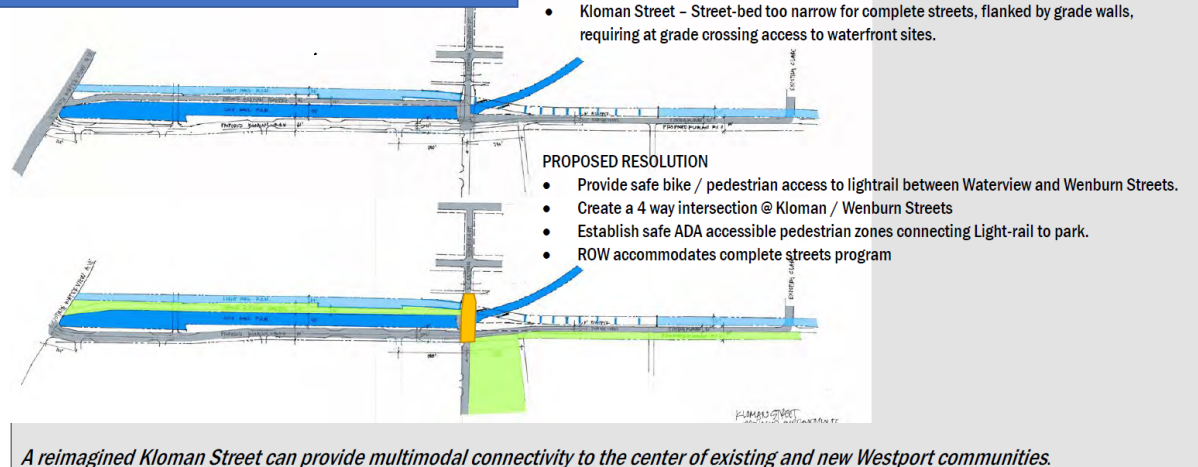


Figure 2 Baltimore City Dept. Of Planning - [Westport Master Plan \(2021\)](#)

An accessible, safe, and multimodal Kloman Street is essential to supporting sustainable transit-oriented development (TOD) in Westport and near the MTA light rail station. The Westport area is a designated Transit Oriented Development Area by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).¹ The TOD designation signifies the proposed development is within .5 miles of transit, provides a preference to Maryland's Sustainable Communities-related programs and tax incentives², and allows MDOT to more closely coordinate with the local land use agency on site development. In addition to the State's site prioritization, TOD in Westport has been identified by the City of Baltimore as a priority in its Consolidated Transportation Program

¹ Maryland Department of Information Technology. GIS Catalogue: Designated TOD Areas.
<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/datasets/maryland::maryland-incentive-zones-designated-transit-oriented-development-tod-areas/about>.

² Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Sustainable Communities: Partnering to Revitalize Maryland Communities.
<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Documents/dn/Benefits-3-2.pdf>.

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(CTP) request letters³ and in numerous Baltimore City Department of Planning efforts including the Middle Branch Master Plan and the Westport Mount Winans Lakeland Master Plan.

A TOD is proposed in the Westport neighborhood known as the ONE Westport project. The project has planned a 1,300-unit community, which includes 300 affordable rate units, that will generate over \$300 million in private development and public property tax revenues. The project's proposed development includes community-accessible waterfront areas and pathways, the completion of a public park, a combination of affordable and market rates townhouse, senior, multi-family dwelling units, and mixed-use retail, office and commercial buildings as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3 Baltimore City Dept. Of Planning - Westport Master Plan (2021)

The ONE Westport project is strongly supported by the local community. The Westport Community Economic Development Corporation (Westport CEDC), founded in 2013, is a 501(c)3 non-profit that promotes equitable development, waterfront access, and welfare improvements for the residents and business owners of Westport, Mount Winans, Lakeland, and Saint Paul.⁴ The Westport CEDC has continually advocated for waterfront access, affordable housing, and placemaking to be included in the development and these efforts have yielded positive impacts for both the community and the proposed TOD. The Westport CEDC has identified that the current configuration of rail lines and the alignment of Kloman Street forms a barrier to community connectivity, the proposed TOD project, and transit and recreational facilities.⁵ The City of Baltimore also strongly supports the proposed TOD project and the reconfiguration of Kloman Street. Further, the ONE Westport project developer has continued to work closely with the Baltimore City Department of Planning – Urban Design and Architecture

³ City of Baltimore. Consolidated Transportation Program – 2021 Supplemental Request.
[https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/BALTIMORE_CITY-Supplemental-\(Hon.BrandonScott\)\(832394\).pdf](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/BALTIMORE_CITY-Supplemental-(Hon.BrandonScott)(832394).pdf)

⁴ Westport CEDC. Who We Are. <https://www.westportcedc.org/who-we-are>.

⁵ Westport CEDC. State Funding Support Letter, October 17, 2022. See support letter list.

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Advisory Panel and has directly incorporated public feedback into the development's design.⁶ The ONE Westport project is contained in the Reimagine Middle Branch Masterplan and aligns with the objectives of the City of Baltimore and local communities on creating a vibrant and inclusive Middle Branch waterfront.⁷

The MDOT Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project is seeking a \$15,147,520 Capital Construction award from the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhood (RCN) program. As the project is contained wholly in a disadvantaged community, MDOT is seeking a 100% federal project share. The scope of the project is:

- Completing National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) clearance, which is expected to require an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
- Implement the following Kloman Street-related improvements that have been cleared and permitted by the City of Baltimore and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT)⁸:
 - Kloman Street – Waterview Avenue to Wenburn Street:
 - Revised signalized intersection at Waterview Avenue and Kloman Street.
 - 1,710 LF of newly constructed public road for the southern portion of Kloman Street, repositioning the road from private property between CSX freight and MTA light rail lines. This road will be deeded to the City of Baltimore and maintained as a local public road. This will include curb-and-gutter, street lighting, utility reconfiguration, traffic calming, and stormwater management infrastructure.
 - 1,710 LF of an 8'-wide path for bike and pedestrian usage above the curb on the east side of Kloman Street.
 - Screening and landscaping as a physical and visual barrier from CSX right-of-way.
 - Kloman Street – Wenburn Street to Clare Street:
 - 1,540 LF of reconstructed public road which will be rebuilt to accommodate on-street public parking.
 - Screening and landscaping as a physical and visual barrier from MTA right-of-way.
 - 2,470 LF of 12'-wide Gwynns Falls Trail path as a part of the Baltimore Greenways loop network.
 - 1,760 LF of 12'-wide public waterfront pathways.
 - Reconstructed and signalized Clare Street intersection at Kloman Street.

⁶ Baltimore City Department of Planning, Urban Design and Architecture Advisory Panel. Meeting #41, January 7, 2021.
https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/UDAAP%20Meeting%20Minutes%20-%20Westport%20-%20Schematic%20I_010721.pdf.

⁷ The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan. Executive Summary.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61d5a3764255e44942256d56/t/6427087eff91e50523056948/1680279765850/0_RMBS~1.PDF.

⁸ City of Baltimore. Developer's Agreement #1808.

PROJECT LOCATION & MAP

The project is in the Westport neighborhood (Census Tract #24510250301) along the shores of the Patapsco River in Baltimore City and contains approximately 1,287 residents per the 2020 Census. It is bounded by I-95 and the Gwynn Falls trail to the north, the Middle Branch of the Patapsco to the east, Hollins Ferry Road to the west, and the CSX railroad tracks form the southern boundary (Figure 4). Similar to the rest of Baltimore City, Westport is a majority-minority community with over 85% of residents identifying as African American and it has experienced recent population decline. The community has seen systemic disinvestment and neglect and currently 166 community houses are noted as vacant per the 2020 Census. There is a growing Latino population in south Baltimore with several neighboring communities in Brooklyn and Lakeland experiencing over 100% Latino population growth in the 2020 Census. The Westport community is directly divided by the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD 295) and the CSX freight rail line, including three railway-highway crossings adjacent to Kloman Street, which divides the community from direct waterfront access.

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) is the responsible agency for Kloman Street. The Maryland Department of Transportation will closely coordinate with BCDOT on improvements to this facility, including a potential future sub-recipient arrangement. BCDOT classifies the street as a Neighborhood Street, meaning it primarily reserves residential and local traffic with speeds between 25-30 miles per hour (MPH). The City's Complete Streets policies call for Neighborhood Streets to always have sidewalks, sufficient street lighting, some level of pedestrian signals and lighting, parking, and various levels of streetscaping and landscaping. Kloman Street currently lacks these elements.⁹

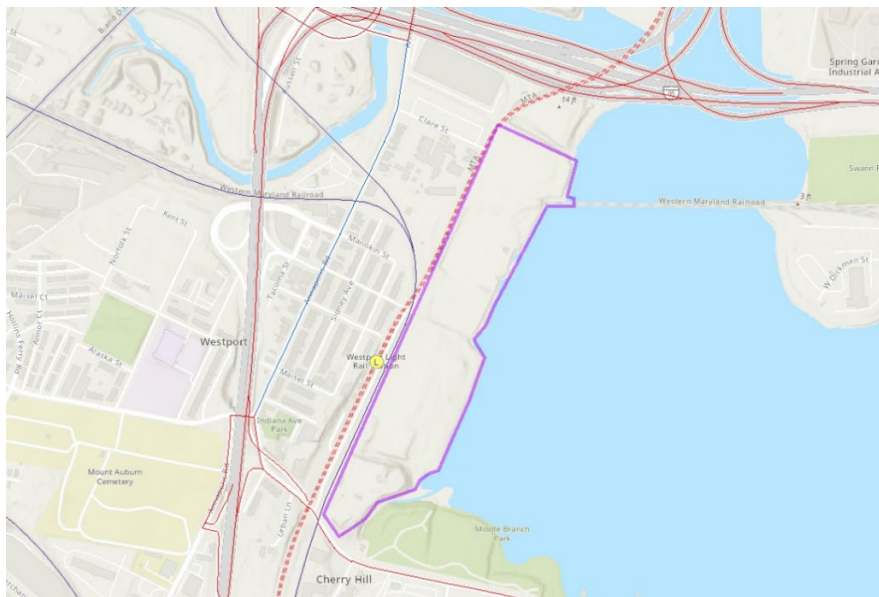


Figure 4 Westport Transportation and TOD Elements

⁹ Baltimore City Department of Transportation. South Baltimore Gateway Complete Streets Plan: Westport Chapter. February 2017. https://transportation.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Westport_2-17-2017rev.pdf.

RESPONSE TO MERIT CRITERIA

EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Westport, and the entire south Baltimore area, have borne a disproportionate impact from the City's and State's decisions in land use planning, zoning, public housing, and the location of burdening energy and waste facilities. The community is one of the oldest in Baltimore, tracing its roots to as early 1675. In the early 1700s, much of south Baltimore and Westport was contained in Charles Carroll's Georgia Plantation and was home to enslaved peoples. However, Carroll ceded many tracts in Westport to the Baltimore Iron Works Company, beginning Westport's industrial history. The area was for some time dubbed "Minersville" due to iron ore shipping and smelting that occurred along Westport's waterfront.

In the 1800s, Westport continued its industrial tradition as the community supported locomotive production for the then-fledgling Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. This led to the continued development of the community and it attracted a diverse mix of workers seeking opportunity. In 1872, the Sharp Street Church purchased a thirty-acre parcel in Westport and established the first, and what would long be the only, burial ground for Baltimore's African Americans. By the turn of the century, the neighborhood was one of the most diverse in the City of Baltimore with a diverse employment mix with a strong industrial base.

In the 20th century, the development of the highway systems and the freight railroad network, the codification of Baltimore's redlined housing policies, the closure of several prominent industrial employers including the BGE power plant, and the establishment of burdening environmental facilities including the nearby Reed Bird Island incinerator, contributed to a slow and steady decline in Westport.



"The history of the area surrounding the Middle Branch and its population is one of environmental negligence, shortsighted planning and racism."¹⁰

Today, Westport is a primarily African American community and is home to several prominent historical sites, including one of the oldest African American cemeteries in Baltimore at Mount Auburn. Approximately 50% of its residents do not have any level of college education and nearly 50% of households make less than \$25,000 per year. The is a disadvantaged area according to the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening (CEJST) tools and bears a disproportionate share of environmental impacts according to the United States

¹⁰ Restoration plans for Baltimore's Middle Branch, historically, a dumping ground, take shape. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/politics/bs-md-ci-baltimore-middle-branch-20220502-fx3wsvy3dbe65omubknu343zba-story.html>.

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Environmental Protection Agency EJScreen (Figure 5). Westport is defined as an Area of Persistent Poverty (2503.01).

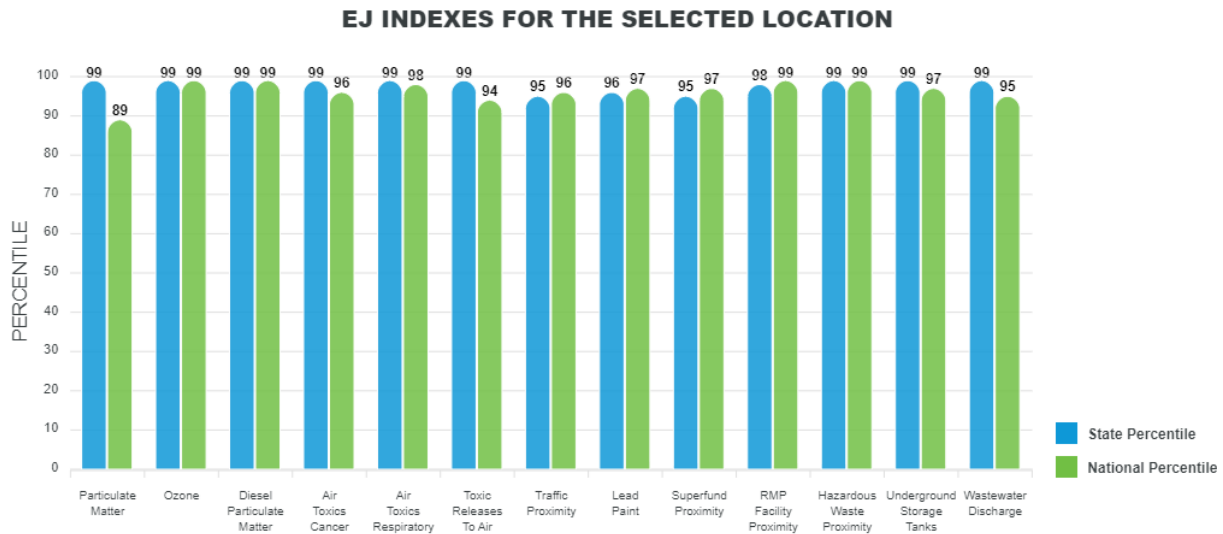


Figure 5 U.S. EPA: EJScreen, Westport

However, due to the tenacity of local advocates, community centering-planning efforts conducted by regional and city organizations, and the coordination of both private and state resources to encourage inclusive economic revitalization, the 21st century presents Westport and the south Baltimore community an unprecedented opportunity to restore community connectivity, affordable transportation options, and access to essential neighborhood destinations including the Middle Branch waterfront, the Gwynn Falls Trail, and the Baltimore Greenway Network. The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project seeks to compliment these local efforts by working with the Westport community to reimagine Kloman Street as a functional, multi-modal, and safe neighborhood street facility that supports vulnerable users and planned TOD densities and activities.

The Maryland Department of Transportation, in conjunction with BCDOT, will work closely with the Westport community to ensure as minimal community disruptions as possible during the reconstruction and realignment of Kloman Street. As the proposed Kloman Street project scope does not contain abutting residential units and is largely surrounding by undeveloped area and railroad facilities, it is expected direct community disruption impacts will be minimal. MDOT will also implement innovative practices to prevent disruptions and community noise, like work schedules during off-peak travel times. The project is not anticipated to displace any residents and, in fact, will help to create additional affordable housing opportunities for the community as the project will better align Kloman Street and community access to transit and active transportation in advance of the ONE Westport TOD project.

ACCESS

The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will provide new and safe access to transportation, transit, and recreation opportunities that has not existed in the Westport community. By realigning Kloman Street away from CSX facilities, the project will directly

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reduce vehicular and pedestrian interaction with freight railroad facilities, including two, active public crossings in the project area. This project will provide context-sensitive, complete streets access along the realigned Kloman Street to safely accommodate and encourage travel for cars, pedestrians, and people who roll. In addition to Kloman Street complete streets improvements, the project will lay the groundwork for access improvements to the Westport light rail station from Kloman Street.

The Westport neighborhood will also gain access to new TOD planned improvements which will include access to townhouse homeownership, multi-family apartments both affordable as well as market rate, senior apartments, retail, office, public parks, waterfront promenade, and a multi-purpose public recreation field. This scale of vital community amenities does not currently exist in Westport. The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will also provide new access to environmental and recreation opportunities. Historically, Baltimore residents haven't had access to the waterfront greenspace they can see from their doorsteps. This project will provide that access, as well as recreation trail connections between Middle Branch and the Gwynn Falls Trail, and the planned Baltimore Greenway Trail Network.

The planned improvements to Kloman Street are designed to seamlessly integrate with the character of the surrounding community, enable dense land-use patterns that include affordable housing development, and provide new, integrated access to natural areas and the waterfront.

FACILITY SUITABILITY

Kloman Street and CSX freight rail facilities present a significant barrier to connect connectivity, mobility, and economic growth. Current conditions are not suited to the desires of the community and the City of Baltimore's comprehensive plans for the area. The realignment and recreation of Kloman Street will reconnect the Westport community, reduce railway conflicts, and help spur inclusive development activities that create access to the waterfront and a community resident can freely and safely work, live, access transit from, and play in.

Utilizing the CEJST tool (Figure 6), the Westport community bears a disproportionate share of environmental burdens stemming from its transportation environment. The community ranks in the 89th percentile nationally for exposure for diesel particulate matter and is in the 94th percentile in proximity to major roads that carry high volumes of high-speed traffic. The community meets USDOT's threshold for disadvantage relating to transportation burdens and environmental impacts.

The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will help to overcome these community transportation burdens by creating a complete street project, away from current CSX facilities, and spur the creation of accessible community greenspaces to include new public parks and recreational trails. Additionally, the project scope includes community-driven landscaping and *greening* efforts to create a visual screen between the realigned Kloman Street and CSX facilities, which will reduce harm and increase the visual appeal of the new facility. Left unaddressed, current transportation conditions in Westport will

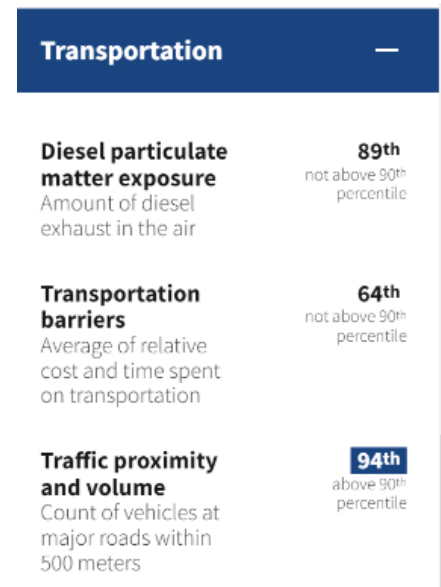


Figure 6 CEJST Westport

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continue to create a disproportionate impact on community residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

This project is not expected to impact the movement of goods in the area. The project may cause minor impacts, during construction, to adjacent freight rail facilities. However, these issues will be overcome in a negotiated right-of-way access agreement with CSX. Kloman Street is not a designated Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CUFC) and MD 295 does not allow for heavy duty vehicles. There are no expected impacts to truck traffic or movement of goods by trucks.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY-BASED STEWARDSHIP,
MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS**

MDOT will create a comprehensive Community Participation Plan at the beginning of the project to guide outreach throughout the Project's life cycle, particularly during the NEPA process, in order to build on and incorporate the work performed by community advocates calling for improved waterfront access and economic opportunity and the City of Baltimore's local masterplans. Consistent with USDOT Order 1000.12C, MDOT's plan will facilitate meaningful public engagement to ensure all communities and individuals, regardless of race, economic status, or other protected class, are adequately informed about how this project may impact them through all states of the decision-making process.¹¹

MDOT will build on the established partnerships that have already been created by the community and the City of Baltimore regarding improvements to the Middle Branch waterfront and the Westport community. South Baltimore maintains robust civic and community advocacy, and potential formal partnership entities include the Westport CEDC, the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership and the SB7 Coalition.

The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project emerged from grassroots advocacy for waterfront access and sustainable development and safe streets. The Westport CEDC has identified the Kloman Street project and the ONE Westport TOD as a community priority. Additionally, the multi-modal safety and access improvements proposed on Kloman Street meet the objectives of the South Baltimore Gateway Complete Streets Plan. The project would leverage the existing urgency and advocacy efforts surrounding community and waterfront redevelopment to work with local leadership and advocacy groups to ensure that broad community needs are accounted for and fully represented.

The City of Baltimore Public Works Department accepted public comments for the realignment of Kloman Street and the proposed improvements from December 2, 2022, to December 19, 2022 as required to provide a redevelopment waiver regarding impervious service area coverage.¹²

¹¹ DOT 100.12C. <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/us-department-transportation-title-vi-program>.

¹² Baltimore City Department of Public Works. Public Notice: Westport – Kloman Street. <https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/news/public-notices/2022-12-02-public-notice-westport-kloman-street>.

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will help to spur equitable and inclusive transit-oriented development in Westport. The proposed ONE Westport project has planned a 1,300-unit community that will generate over \$300 million in private development and public property tax revenues. The project proposed development includes community-accessible waterfront areas and pathways, the completion of a public park, and a combination of townhouse, senior, multi-family dwelling units, at both affordable and market rates, and mixed-use retail, office and commercial buildings.

Importantly, the TOD project will restore Westport's access to the Middle Branch waterfront. The ONE Westport project is cited in the city's Reimagine Middle Branch Masterplan, which provides a framework for sustainable development, access, and recreation for historically disadvantaged communities that border the Middle Branch. Historically, these communities have been separated from a productive waterfront due to environmentally burdening facility and transportation infrastructure barriers.

In addition to creative placemaking contained within the TOD site, the Kloman Street realignment will feature community-driven landscaping and *greening* efforts to create a visual screen between the realigned Kloman Street and CSX facilities, which will reduce harm, create a new public greenspace, and increase the visual appeal of the new facility.

The City of Baltimore's Department of Planning convenes an Equity in Planning Committee (EIPC). EIPC promotes the use of an "equity lens" for planning. An equity lens is a tool used to improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs. EIPC maintains an Equity Action Plan that provides guidance for projects to address and overcome structural, procedural, distributional and generational equity issues.¹³ The Plan guides the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity has pledged funding support from the CIP.

The Maryland Department Planning provides an equity development framework in its planning process and this approach is woven into its *Better Maryland* State development plan. The proposed project meets several objectives of the *Better Maryland* plan to include improving economic growth and development in existing communities, addressing Maryland's transportation and infrastructure challenges and opportunities, and spurring the creation of affordable housing.¹⁴

The City of Baltimore is updating its Inclusionary Housing and Eligibility policy, which expired in 2022. The city's inclusionary housing policy requires a given share of new construction to be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes. The ONE Westport project, as structured, currently exceeds the City of Baltimore's requirements for the supply of affordable housing units in new construction. As the policy is updated by the City of Baltimore, the land use and housing

¹³ Baltimore City Department of Planning. *Equity in Action Plan (2017)*. <https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Equity%20Action%20Plan.pdf>.

¹⁴ Maryland Department of Planning. *A Better Maryland* (2021). <https://abetter.maryland.gov/plan/topics/Pages/default.aspx>.

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requirements may change in Westport and the TOD is committed to meeting all local land use and housing ordinances, as required.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will provide access to new community greenspaces, reduce air pollution caused by vehicular travel, and provide for stormwater and environmental improvements along Kloman Street in the scope of the project. The project will create a defined landscaped barrier between the realigned Kloman Street and CSX rail facilities. This will replace sections of gravel and concrete with natural infrastructure which will improve stormwater collection and increase safety for Kloman Street users. The realigned Kloman Street will feature complete streets infrastructure, as defined by the City of Baltimore, which will include new and widened sidewalk, on-street parking, and striping and signs to create a street environment that is more conducive to walking, cycling, and other modes of active transportation. Current conditions on Kloman Street only provide for vehicular travel, as there are limited sidewalks and the street directly abuts freight and transit railroad facilities. These complete streets investments will provide for high-quality choice for lower-carbon travel for Westport community members and visitors. The project scope also includes curb-and-gutter and stormwater management infrastructure along Kloman Street to manage run-off and environmental conditions.

While the scope of this project is limited to Kloman Street, the Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity will provide stronger access to the proposed ONE Westport TOD project. The ONE Westport project will provide new pedestrian and cyclist access to the Middle River waterfront and direct recreational trail connections to the Gwynn Falls and other city trails on site. In addition, the TOD project will also create a dedicated stormwater management and resiliency project. The project will create a series of shallow, terraced forebays and a newly constructed wetland to provide natural stormwater treatment and will provide positive impacts to additional communities like Cherry Hill (Figure 7). This will improve local water quality and provide habitat to both aquatic and terrestrial species.

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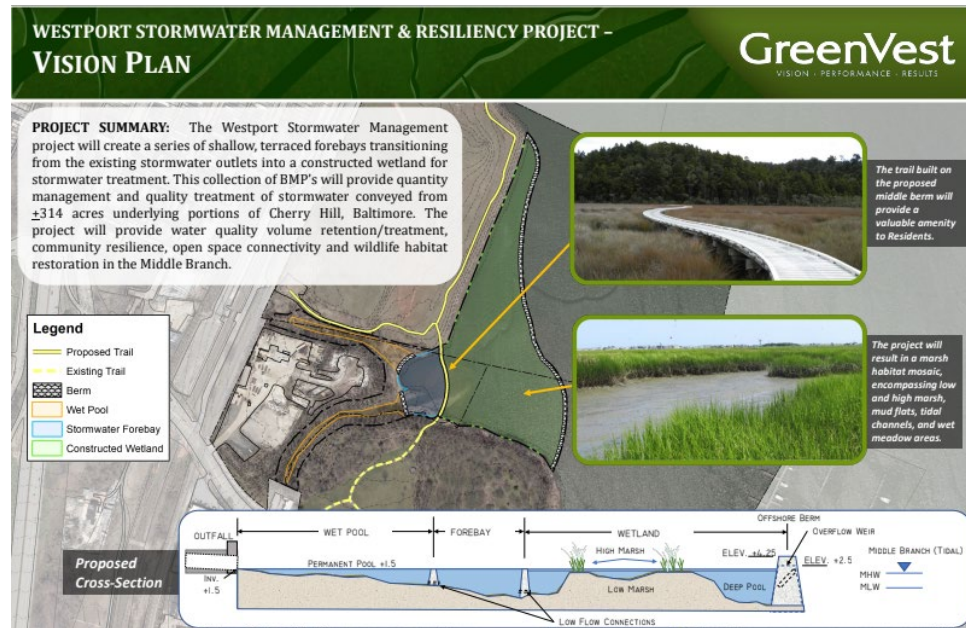


Figure 7 Middle Branch Environmental Restoration - [ONE Westport](#)

The ONE Westport project and the Westport Waterfront Masterplan, in partnership with the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, will create over fourteen acres of publicly accessible public parks and trails. Once completed, these public amenities will be deeded to the City of Baltimore (Figure 8).

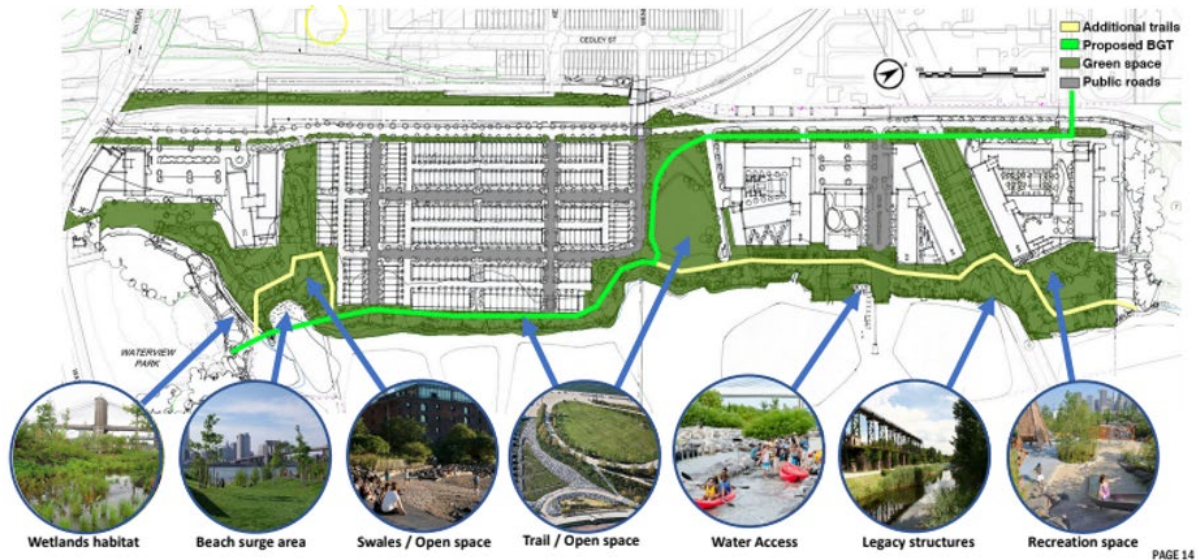


Figure 8 Westport Waterfront Masterplan - [ONE Westport](#)

Both the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore maintain Climate Action Plans. The project's vision actively promotes mode shift to carbon neutral alternatives. Under the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization (GGRA of 2016), the State of Maryland is required to achieve a minimum of 40% reduction in statewide greenhouse gas

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(GHG) emissions from 2006 levels by 2030. The 2030 GGRA Plan¹⁵ proposes a set of measures to meet this goal. Of these, MDOT has taken the lead on transportation-related emissions through initiatives to improve transit capacity/service expansion and expand bike/pedestrian system. MDOT's GGRA Plan (2020) identifies policy scenarios that support the GGRA goal of achieving a 40% GHG reduction by year 2030 for the transportation sector and includes recommendations aligned with this project's intent to include active transportation and transit investments.¹⁶

The City of Baltimore's Climate Action Plan provides for strategies to achieve sustained GHG reductions. The plan directly calls for investments in high-quality pedestrian infrastructure and the creation of more transit-oriented neighborhoods.¹⁷

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The project fully intends to support local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship in both its short-term Project Development & Environment (PD&E) and construction processes. PD&E and construction will be executed by MDOT, which also administers Maryland's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) participation goal and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation goal for contracts that receive assistance from the USDOT. Effective August 13, 2013, Maryland's MBE participation goal for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 is 29%; the MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) has set overall DBE goals for fiscal years 2023 and 2024 at 26.39%.¹⁸ Planning and construction of this corridor revitalization will fully adhere to small business hiring goals consistent with these programs.

According to CJEST, the Westport community is in the 98th percentile of number of unemployed people as part of the workforce, the share of people in households that are at or below the Federal poverty level is at the 95th percentile, and 27% of people ages 25 years or older whose high school education is less than a high school diploma. The Connecting Westport to Mobility and Opportunity project will support new employment and economic opportunities for the community by increasing access to transit and supporting local economic development.

Additionally, in May 2023, Baltimore was designated as a Workforce Hub by the Biden-Harris Administration. This designation brought together leaders within public agencies, private partners, and stakeholders in the transportation and energy industries to strategize how to grow the workforce development pipeline. The Workforce Hub is collaborating with the trades unions, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, and other training and workforce partners to

¹⁵ Maryland Department of Environment. 2030 GHG Reduction Act Plan (2030 GGRA Plan). [https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/Pages/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions-Reduction-Act-\(GGRA\)-Plan.aspx#:~:text=%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8BThe%202030,Maryland%20Commission%20on%20Climate%20Change](https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/Pages/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions-Reduction-Act-(GGRA)-Plan.aspx#:~:text=%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8BThe%202030,Maryland%20Commission%20on%20Climate%20Change).

¹⁶ Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). 2020 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan. <https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=88>.

¹⁷ City of Baltimore. Baltimore Climate Action Plan (2015). <https://www.baltimoresustainability.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/BaltimoreClimateActionPlan.pdf>.

¹⁸ Maryland Department of Transportation, [Office of Minority Business Enterprise Overview website](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/index.aspx?pageid=114#:~:text=The%20Maryland%20Department%20of%20Transportation's,Business%20Enterprise%20(ACDBE)%20Program%2C), [https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/index.aspx?pageid=114#:~:text=The%20Maryland%20Department%20of%20Transportation's,Business%20Enterprise%20\(ACDBE\)%20Program%2C](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/index.aspx?pageid=114#:~:text=The%20Maryland%20Department%20of%20Transportation's,Business%20Enterprise%20(ACDBE)%20Program%2C)

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build up the local Baltimore workforce so that is equipped with the skills and opportunities to work on Maryland's infrastructure and energy projects. Further, the Workforce Hub centralizes a labor approach that focuses on creating stable and sustaining jobs in the Baltimore area that leverages fair contract agreements, incentives, and local hiring preferences.

Maryland maintains a strong commitment to fairness and dignity in its labor practices.

Prevailing wage is governed by Md. Code Ann State Finance and Procurement § II-17-201:226 and regulates the hours of labor, rates of pay, conditions of employments, employer obligations, and power and duties of public officials under contracts and subcontracts for public works in Maryland. Coverage extends to any contract of \$250,000 or greater with State funding of 25% or more. Contractors on State-funded construction projects covered by the law must submit certified payroll statements for regular and overtime work. A wage determination is issued for each project that specifies the wage and fringe benefit rates for each classification of worker. The Maryland Department of Labor's (DLLR) Prevailing Wage Unit compiles an annual Prevailing Wage Rate Survey to ensure compliance with the law and may issue fines to any contractor deemed out of compliance.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), union workers, on average, earn more than their non-union counterparts. Maryland is a strong union state, ranking in the top ten nationally in workforce union membership rate. States, like Maryland, with strong unionization maintain higher-on-average wages than states with lower unionization rates. Maryland maintains robust collective bargaining access and protections for public sector workers. Md. Code Ann., State Personnel and Pensions § 3-301:306 provides state employees the right to form, join, or participate in unions, maintain fair union representation before the State, engage in concerted activities for the purposes of collective bargaining, and be free from undue interference or coercion in the exercise of their rights. As new job and wealth-building opportunities are created by infrastructure projects, Maryland will continue to lead the nation in ensuring free and fair access to collective bargaining and collective representation for workers.

PROJECT READINESS: ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

The Project is not currently included in the STIP. However, MDOT will work to prepare a TIP Amendment for the Project with the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) to incorporate into the Constrained Long-Range Plan by the time of the grant agreement execution.

The Project has not completed federal environmental compliance activities. Based on a review of the potential impacts of the Project, MDOT estimates that an Environmental Assessment (EA) may be required due to the reconfiguration of the roadway.

While this lack of environmental approvals is a source of risk, MDOT has identified the following previous and planned actions to address this risk:

- The Project Sponsor has secured all necessary permits from Baltimore City to implement the project.
- Pending funding, the Sponsor is ready to construct and, once all necessary agreement and environmental steps are complete, anticipates that construction can begin within three-six months.
- Once the award is received, MDOT can initiate NEPA activities, and the Project Sponsor will further engage with the community on the Project. Extensive existing community engagement has gone into the development and design of the redevelopment that the Project supports.

Another source of risk concerns property rights at the development site. The development site is the subject of an active eminent domain lawsuit related to the potential Baltimore – Washington Maglev project.

Additionally, a public right-of-way for the new road will not be established until the construction activities are completed. At that time, the new roadway will be deeded over to the City of Baltimore. To mitigate any risks the right-of-way transfer, the Project Sponsor will design the new roadway to fully comply with Baltimore City standards. Adequate street lights, street trees, and stormwater management will be provided on the street, upgrading the current condition. Additionally curb extensions and bicycle sharrows will be provided consistent with Baltimore City's Complete Streets Manual.

Schedule

The below schedule outlines the high-level steps that the Project Sponsor will take once the grant is awarded. This schedule assumes the grant agreement is finalized by Q2 2024.

Task	Time Period	Duration
NEPA Activities and Public Engagement	July 2023 – June 2024	12 months
Final Design	April 2024 – June 2024	3 months

Final Site Preparation	July 2024 – September 2024	3 months
Construction Procurement	October 2024 – December 2024	3 months
Construction	January 2025 – December 2026	24 months

Engagement Plan

During the final design period, engagement will be conducted with the public to further inform them of the proposed Project. This engagement will be conducted in coordination with local stakeholders and community groups, consistent with the extensive community engagement and collaboration that has occurred during the advancement of the larger redevelopment program.

During construction, the Project Sponsor will provide regular updates to the community on Project progress and in informing the public of any disruptions due to construction activities.

Public engagement activities will be coordinated with BCDOT, MTA, and local elected officials.