

AB ASSOCIATES
201 E. Baltimore Street, #1150, 21202

October 20, 2020

Edward Reisinger, Chair. Land Use Committee
Room 500, City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 20-0623

Dear Chairman Reisinger and Members of the Committee

I am writing in support of the above Bill that will correct an unfair and monopolistic provision of Transform Baltimore. This Bill is fundamentally different than the controversial Bill 20-0570 that the Committee put on-hold last week as this Bill applies only to conversion of existing billboards to digital and will not lead an increase in signs. Further, unlike the other proposal, it retains the City and community review and approval process such as the 250 foot separation distance from residential neighborhoods.

The subject Bill was originally introduced following the Zoning Board's review of an existing billboard in 2018 to convert an existing sign at 846 N. Eutaw by Bay Properties 2, LLC. At the time, the new Transform Baltimore code had two conflicting provisions pertaining to alterations of existing billboards and the Board decided that the provision requiring the removal of three existing billboards was required to convert an existing sign to digital. Planning recognized this conflict when the comprehensive sign amendment (Bill 18-0272) was introduced and, in fact, I testified at the November 14, 2018 hearing on this very subject and Councilman Dorsey submitted amendments similar to Bill 20-063 but the Chairman recommended that it be introduced as a separate Bill, which is now before you.

The Planning Department may have been well intentioned in thinking that the removal requirement would lead to a reduction throughout the City but it is my understanding that this has not been the case. In the meantime, the existing Code requires individual owners without an inventory of signs that wish to upgrade their signs to negotiate with a competitor that controls an estimated 90% of the existing billboards in the City and for which there is no incentive to cooperate. This fact alone enhances a monopolistic condition that is blatantly unfair.

You will also hear today from Herbert Burgunder III, Bay Properties attorney, in support of this issue and Will Shanklin who is partnering to operate the proposed digital sign at 846 N. Eutaw Street as a gateway sign for West Baltimore and the new Black Arts and Entertainment District. Mr. Shanklin currently operates the iconic digital sign on Charles street north of Penn Station that features content related to the Station North Arts and Entertainment District. Both offer compelling reasons for the Committee's support.

I also will address the recommendations of the Planning Commission that correctly recognized the unfairness of the existing removal provision but recommended against the other provisions of the Bill that I am recommending be retained.

The Bill as written applies to any owner that wants to convert from paper to digital, and, in that way, is neutral in its application. Planning suggested that the removal should only apply to those owners that own over seven signs. The Council may want to evaluate the practical effect of this or any other number. Bay Properties 2, LLC only owns the N. Eutaw Street sign.

The second group of provisions in the Bill that Planning recommended against dealt with the removal of the 15 foot relocation restriction and the restriction of converting signs on buildings less than 35 feet in height. Both of these provisions in the Bill should be retained as drafted as they allow the Zoning Board on a case by case basis to review the requests while retaining the existing 250 foot distance requirement from a residential district. The N. Eutaw Street building is less than 35 feet high and the sign is affixed to the entire side of the building, across from the State Office complex and approximately 600 feet from a residential district. The sign is at eye level to vehicles on westbound MLK and is therefore more appropriate than replacing it with a taller pole sign.

I recommend that Bill 20-0630 be approved by the Committee.

Alfred W. Barry III
AB Associates on behalf of Bay Properties 2, LLC

cc: Bay Properties 2, LLC
Members of the Committee

October 20, 2020

The Honorable Edward Reisinger (Edward.Reisinger@baltimorecity.gov)
Chair, Land Use Committee
Baltimore City Council
100 North Holliday Street, Suite 500
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill #20-0623
Zoning – Signs – Conversion of Existing Non-Digital Billboards

Councilman Reisinger and Members of the Land Use Committee:

I represent Bay Properties 2, LLC, the owner of a property in Baltimore City at 846-848 North Eutaw Street. Affixed to the top of the building on this property is a single paper billboard. My client seeks to convert this paper billboard to a digital billboard. While my client can and is willing to meet the basic standards provided by the law for digital billboards, including restrictions that minimize any negative impact on residential neighbors, the law requires that my client (who owns just one billboard) remove three billboards. This requirement is fundamentally unfair – it rewards and empowers one company that owns more than 90% of all billboards in Baltimore City to the extreme disadvantage of billboard owners who own just one billboard.

The original moratorium on new billboards from 1999 was passed with the express purpose of eliminating billboards that were considered a public nuisance. Four years ago, with Transform Baltimore, the law added the three-for-one conversion requirement that recognized that digital billboards could be a public benefit, and the City Council sought to permit conversions (with standards and a hearing) with the tradeoff that three billboards would be removed if there was to be a new digital billboard. Four years later, there are digital billboards in Baltimore City, but there has not been a corresponding elimination of three billboards for each new digital billboard. The law has not accomplished its stated purpose.

The fact is that the law inequitably rewards the one company that owns more than 90% of the billboards in the City while tying the hands of single billboard owners who can otherwise meet the design and location criteria for a conversion to a digital billboard. The unintended consequence of the three-for-one billboard conversion rule is to further cement a monopoly and to increase the price that a single billboard owner would need to pay to remove three billboards that are likely owned by the monopoly. Basic supply and demand principles apply here: the prohibition on new billboards limits the supply, thus increasing the prices to meet the demand.

With this legislation, the City Council and the Planning Commission have the opportunity to level the playing field so that any billboard owner can convert to a digital billboard while still meeting design standards and community needs. No one is asking that design criteria be waived or that community concerns be ignored. We are requesting that the three-for-one conversion rule be eliminated in favor of a policy that permits conversion of paper billboards to digital billboards with government oversight, community input, and specific design and impact criteria.

The revised law will be neutral as to who owns the vast majority of billboard in Baltimore City. The revised law will not favor one company. The revised law will remove the unintentional effect on billboard values and remove the incentive for some billboard owners to permit their billboards to fall into disrepair in favor of an incentive that will reward billboard owners who invest in upgrading their billboards.

As for eliminating unwanted billboards, the City should use its police power to eliminate blighted billboards in neighborhoods that are not served by them. This is similar to how the City has used its receivership law to eliminate blighted housing. The current three-for-one conversion rule has not resulted in the elimination of any billboards. It has had the opposite effect: cementing the position of the dominant player in the marketplace to keep dilapidated billboards in place without any plan to convert the billboards, upgrade the billboards, or remove the billboards if they do not serve the community.

We ask that you support this modest change to create a balance in the law while still serving the law's purpose.

Sincerely,



Herbert Burgunder III

HB3:rlk

cc: Bay Properties 2, LLC (by e-mail)
The Honorable Shannon Sneed (by e-mail)
The Honorable Mary Pat Clarke (by e-mail)
The Honorable Eric Costello (by e-mail)
The Honorable Ryan Dorsey (by e-mail)
The Honorable Sharon Green Middleton (by e-mail)
The Honorable Leon Pinkett (by e-mail)
The Honorable Robert Stokes (by e-mail)
Mr. Matthew Peters (by e-mail)

1700 DIGITAL, LLC
1700 North Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21211

October 20, 2020

Edward Reisinger, Chair. Land Use Committee
Room 500, City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 20-0623

Dear Chairman Reisinger and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the above Bill so that we may transform the current static billboard located at 846 N. Eutaw St. into a modern LED board that will serve as the West Baltimore Black Arts and Entertainment Billboard. We will replicate the very successful Arts and Entertainment Program that myself and my business partner, Michael Shecter, created five years ago in Station North. Over the past five years that our Station North billboard has operated, it has displayed art more than 4 million times, has displayed work from over 500 local artists, and has enabled us to create more than 460 artist profiles on our billboard website. We have donated free ad campaigns to local small businesses and non-profits over 330 times. We have become a major attraction for Artscape each year and have donated 15 full days to this yearly festival. We have done all of this at no cost to Baltimore City. Our donations over this five-year period have totaled over \$574,000.

Our Station North billboard has received great notoriety in the arts community as well as the advertising industry and has been viewed and written about all over the world. It is the only one of its kind in the United States. The success stories from local artists and small businesses appearing on the Station North board have been overwhelming. We regularly receive letters telling us of the boost of business from local shop-owners, and the local artists tell us of the increased sales, job opportunities, and positive exposure they have received from appearing on the board. Another great benefit of our Station North board is the numerous young people that have told us that the art and creative works on the board have inspired them to explore their artistic talents and career paths.

Establishing an Arts and Entertainment Billboard for West Baltimore will allow their local businesses, students, and local artists to enjoy the same opportunities as Station North. It will show the residents and business owners of West Baltimore that we are investing in their community. We will also be exposing the youth of West Baltimore to the numerous forms of creative expression art allows.

Young people have come to us and told us that seeing the various forms of art and artist profiles from our Station North billboard has literally changed their lives by meeting like-minded people and networking with other artists from the board. We have also witnessed the great pride and joy students and artists have experienced from seeing their work showcased on the board. I cannot stress enough the immeasurable benefits this Arts and Entertainment Billboard can bring to the West Baltimore community and Arts District.

Young people want to be heard. They want to express their feelings. This billboard will provide the youth of West Baltimore a platform to express themselves in a creative manner on a grand scale. This program will not only entertain and inspire, it will change lives and save lives.

This project is a one-of-a kind example that a billboard can give more to a city than it takes. I ask that the Committee vote to approve the creation of the West Baltimore Black Arts and Entertainment billboard.

I recommend that Bill 20-0630 be approved by the Committee.

Will Shanklin
1700 Digital, LLC

cc: Bay Properties 2, LLC
Members of the Committee

The West Baltimore Arts & Entertainment Billboard



PROJECT

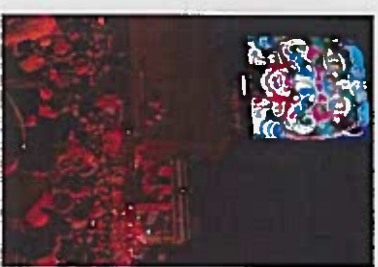
To transform a standard vinyl billboard located at the intersection of N. Eutaw Street and Martin Luther King Blvd (846-848 North Eutaw Street) from its limited and outdated state into a landmark structure that is not only beautiful and unique, but serves as an incredible forum to display public service messages and showcase various forms of art by local students and artists.



What makes this project so unique is the responsible and positive mix of corporate advertising, public messages, and artwork.

The overall purpose for this project is to provide a structure that shows Baltimore as a progressive and desirable City that can have corporate sponsored attractions as unique as other major cities but can do it in a way that is positive and beneficial to its citizens.

To create a structure that is a living and always evolving canvas for Baltimore's youth to display their talents and be inspired by, while seeing that their city does truly **BELIEVE** in them.



"I have not seen anyone in the country do what Will Shanklin is doing. He has more than evolved the concept of a digital billboard."

- Daniel Hooper
Formetco Marketing Director



BILLBOARD INSIDER™

Baltimore's Spectacular LED Art Board

Business
 April 13, 2016 1:05 am
 Comments Off on Baltimore's Spectacular LED Art Board
 Views: 499

Insider has written before about how digital signs can be used to create buzz in urban environments. Baltimore has a spectacular 52' by 12' Formco digital sign which runs ads and also provides free space for artists to showcase their work. The digital sign was constructed in July 2014 and is located at 1700 North Charles Street to Baltimore's Penn Station. The site is home to theatres, opera houses, restaurants, Johns Hopkins, Loyola, University of Baltimore and the Maryland Institute of Art. The sign invites advertising with the work from local artists. Shanklin is both static and LED billboards, and may be by phone at 410-939-0117



VISION

consulting and management of
 -banklinmedia.com or

Share Article 9 2016

Artistscape Launches With the Largest LED Arts and Entertainment Billboard in the Country

The Baltimore board art board artists hundreds of thousands of residents in the heart of it is a high-impact, engaging LED billboard that had artists, adobe been and spectators all clamoring for a minute in the first days

Share Article 9 2016
 Artistscape is a new art board in Baltimore, MD. It is the largest LED art board in the country. It is located at 1700 North Charles Street, near Penn Station. The board is 52 feet high and 12 feet wide. It is a high-impact, engaging LED billboard that had artists, adobe been and spectators all clamoring for a minute in the first days. The board is a new art board in Baltimore, MD. It is the largest LED art board in the country. It is located at 1700 North Charles Street, near Penn Station. The board is 52 feet high and 12 feet wide. It is a high-impact, engaging LED billboard that had artists, adobe been and spectators all clamoring for a minute in the first days.

Baltimore

Art and words pair up on LED billboard

By [Author Name]
 [Date]



Digital arts billboard near Penn Station worth a longer look than Male/Female statue



By [Author Name]
 [Date]

HOW IT WORKS

Rotated among the advertisements are submitted images of every form of art: from painting, drawing, and illustration, to sculpture, photography, poetry and game design.



We welcome submissions from all ages: amateur, student, and professional alike. Each artist has their work displayed for ten consecutive days after which a new artist is put into the rotation.



Beyond showcasing artist's work on the LED board, we have created a companion website where every artist has a profile showcasing their work, links to their portfolio, and contact information.

This allows each artist to be contacted directly by individuals or businesses to purchase art or place job offers.

There is no commission fee, each artist keeps 100% of the sale price.



HOW DOES IT BENEFIT BALTIMORE CITY?

- There is zero financial cost for the City and its taxpayers
- A LED billboard pays the City 3x more in taxes compared to a vinyl billboard
- It shows the world that Baltimore is thriving and keeping up with modern technology and doing it in a much smarter and unique manner that benefits its citizens
- It is a great forum that is free to the Mayor's office to make announcements and promote City programs
- The artwork that is displayed on the board travels all over the web throughout the United States and the world showing Baltimore as a vibrant and creative City
- The art and creative works displayed on the board not only entertain all who see it, it exposes art to people who have never been to a gallery or museum



- Exposing people, especially our youth, to the many forms of art, teaches them that there are endless ways to express their creativity and have their voices heard
- It allows artists and designers to see and meet like-minded people to network with, gain new friends, and career paths
- It teaches Baltimore's youth how to channel their thoughts and feelings into creating art, poetry, photography, music and other forms of creative expression
- The various works of art that are displayed each day will serve to entertain and inspire all who see it



HOW DO WE KNOW THIS PROJECT WILL BE A SUCCESS?

Because it already is!

- We have partnered with the same management team that created and successfully runs the Station North Arts & Entertainment Billboard, located at 1700 N. Charles Street across from Penn Station.
- This team, led by Will Shanklin, is a pioneer in blending arts, entertainment and education into the standard advertising platform.

- The results this board has achieved has gained critical acclaim in both the advertising and art world.
- There is no other city in the United States that has a billboard that has benefitted the lives of its citizens in such a positive manner.
- The new Arts & Entertainment Billboard located at 846-848 N. Eutaw Street will allow the expansion of the successful program that was started in Station North.

Over \$574,836 in donations to date



- From January 2015 through August 2020, we have:
- Displayed 505 artists on the billboard
- Displayed 3,052 works of art
- Displayed art 3,953,283 times
- Created 457 artist profiles on our website
- Displayed 326 art-related promotions
- Completed 11 community art projects
- Displayed 15 full days for Artscape

LARRY PONCHO BROWN



WHY IS THIS BOARD CRUCIAL FOR BALTIMORE CITY?

Pure and simple: It improves lives, and more importantly, it **SAVES** lives.

Thank you all for the opportunity to show my work on the billboard. I received so much positive feedback." - Colette

"I cannot express the gratitude that we have for you all at Shanklin Media. Words cannot express how much the Arts Community appreciates you all for doing what you do....We have created a setting which creates a Station North environment focused on our interpretation of the positive influence Baltimore and Station North has had on my craft." - Carlitos

Thank you so much for the opportunity to present the BSA visual art student's work on the LED billboard. It was an amazing opportunity and we greatly appreciate it! It is so nice for them to have this treat following the cancellation of many in-person events this year." - Lisa



billboard23
Baltimore, Maryland

Liked by aprilwatslive, julielawsonking and 884 others
billboard23 **Dope feeling when you riding down N. Charles Street in Baltimore and look up and there is a 5211 electronic billboard with you on it. Shout out to the amazing artist @artpoetryimages for his work and allowing his opportunity to become mine as well.**

"Thank you so much for the esteemed honor of displaying my curated art collection and broadcasting it via the Baltimore LED Billboard. The response was overwhelming and the support from the community, public figures, and social networks was amazing. I am truly humbled and grateful for being chosen as a featured artist and I cannot thank you enough." - Jason

"Oh my goodness! You've made my week!! Thank you so much for featuring my work. It truly is an indescribable feeling seeing my work on your billboard. So unbelievably amazing." - Ruzica



[Click below for the LED Baltimore video](#)



LED Billboard Technical Data

Screen refresh rate

Image dwell time is 10 seconds per image and transition between images is instant and seamless and occurs over the entire face of the sign. This prevents the sign from having any type of flash, twinkle or blink and makes the image change imperceptible to the human eye.

Light Emission

There are two terms to understand when referencing LED billboard light emission.

1. NIT: NIT is the brightness of the light at the source. The NIT value is based upon a screen being fully illuminated white, which does not happen, therefore the actual value would be lower.
2. FootCandle: FootCandle is the amount of light cast from the source. Industry standard for measuring FootCandle is 250 ft. straight out from the front of a billboard. The nationwide standard in most municipalities is .300. The technology that we use for our billboards is .130, making it far below industry standards. With current LED technology, there is no marked difference in light emission between a static vinyl billboard that is illuminated at night and a modern LED screen billboard.

Minimum Height

A minimum height requirement is a non-issue in municipalities throughout the United States. You will find billboards from ground level to 8 ft off the ground and higher. The nationwide guidelines address the height maximums, not the height minimums. The majority of concern with height maximums is obstructing neighboring buildings view of the public and the view out of the building

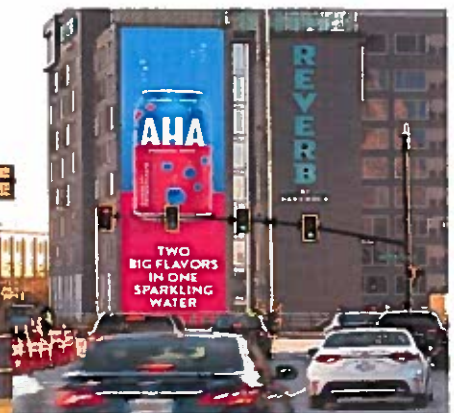
Below are just a few examples of billboards lower than 35 feet.



KANSAS CITY



WASHINGTON, DC



ATLANTA



Black Arts District
25 W. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

October 14, 2020

Bay Properties 2, LLC
846-848 N Eutaw Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
West Baltimore Arts & Entertainment Billboard

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this today to express my support for the West Baltimore Arts & Entertainment Billboard project involving the conversion of the Billboard located at 846-8 N Eutaw Street, 21201, from Static to Digital.

As the executive director of the Black Arts District, established July 2019 as Maryland's first and only A&E District that promotes, highlights and celebrates the cultural production of African American creatives, I believe the West Baltimore billboard could greatly benefit our district. We cover 149 acres of West Baltimore, predominantly running along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor and unfortunately there are very few art venues or exhibit spaces. The billboard provides a unique opportunity for artists to showcase their work despite this deficit.

The Black Arts District has been invited to be a partner for the West Baltimore Arts & Entertainment Billboard project to help curate and procure artwork and advertisements to be displayed. Therefore we fully stand behind this project.

We have already seen what they have done at the Penn Station Billboard, which is located in the Station North Arts and Entertainment district and have enjoyed a direct benefit accordingly. This would be an asset to the community, its artists, residents and stakeholders.

Therefore, it is without reservation the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts and Entertainment District supports the West Baltimore Arts & Entertainment Billboard project. As such we encourage you to approve the conversion.

Sincerely,

Brion N. Gill, executive director
Black Arts District

TESTIMONIALS FROM COMMUNITY ON THE BENEFITS OF THE STATION NORTH SIGN

“Since seeing the LED billboard for the first time, it has been a dream of mine to have my work displayed on it. I didn’t think it would happen, and I would always admire others work whenever I was in the area. When the opportunity presented itself for me to showcase my art, I worked hard for several months to showcase my best work to date. It was a major accomplishment not only for myself but for everyone involved and it was such a blessing to be able to showcase on my actual birthday. Since then I have gone on to do great things and it has shown me that all you have to do is dream and you will achieve it. Thank you LED Baltimore Billboard for making my dreams come true.”

- Dana Rhone

“I'm very grateful to the program and glad I can help somehow to expand it. I've been fortunate to have my work displayed twice. Both times I've posted images of it on my Instagram and have received a great response including [449 likes and 46 comments](#) for the latest time. Some of the comments included "Orgullo Latino" meaning Latin Pride. Being an immigrant from Colombia, having my work on LED Baltimore not only means a lot to me but to my community as they see representation.

While it is hard to quantify the jobs and projects that have come out of it since I get a lot of my commissions through Instagram, I am sure that for a patron to see my work in a billboard has had an impact.

I can recall one time when I was talking to a possible client and they said that it was weird, kind of uncanny, how they had just finished sending me an email as they were getting off the train only to see my work displayed there, like a sign from destiny.”

- Katty Huertas

“In terms of work, it didn't provide any direct commissions but it did go onto my Facebook photography site which did add to my sales. As far as the community, people who knew me called or wrote to say congrats to me. It was amazing to see my wife on the screen very tall. Thank you for the opportunity. I would do it again if given the chance.”

- Glenn Strachan

“I think LED Baltimore has done such an amazing job promoting arts and artists in the area. For me personally, it was such a rush to see my artwork blown up into such proportion. To see them up high from my car from a few blocks away is simply amazing. I have received recognition from people who saw my art works on the billboard. I even have gotten exhibition opportunity from curators who saw my art because of the LED Baltimore Artist Program. To have this program so accessible for local and regional artists is extremely valuable. I can't thank LED Baltimore Artist program enough for giving me the opportunity to display my art in a way that I otherwise would not be able to do on my own. I am certainly looking forward for more opportunity like this in the future!”

- Nico Gozal

"I have been featured on LED Baltimore billboard several times. Each time has been so different. I was featured as a model and one of the pictures led me to be featured on NBC's The Today Show. In their interview they asked if I had done anything major in my city. That feature was just that to me, major! I was proud and thankful to LED Baltimore. And that picture also opened many doors as a speaker. I am a fashion model who has ostomy bags as result of childhood cancer, so my Ostomy Community is very proud which then allowed me to travel and speak about a great awareness. LED BALTIMORE gives artists another voice to display their talent. It has been a blessing in disguise."

- Jearlean Taylor

"I still think of my photos of Cuba on the "big screen" with fondness and pride. The first morning they appeared I was at Penn Station, catching an early train to NYC for a photography conference. I saw the photos and stood in the middle of Charles Street, in the dark, snapping pictures with my cell phone. Traveling to Havana was a lifelong dream of mine. Every photo brought back terrific memories. I felt grateful that others felt these images were artistic and worthwhile.

So many people saw the display -- friends, families, coworkers. Their comments encouraged me, and gave me confidence as I continued my photography career. I look for the latest artwork every time I drive up Charles Street. Some of the artists are people I know, others are new to me. All the work, though, is unique and soulful. Having a chance to view the art as it makes its way across the screen is never a waste of time.

I've returned to Cuba four times since that first trip. My photography path has turned toward portraits, and I now own a studio in Old Goucher. But every time I find myself at the train station, or waiting at a nearby traffic light, I remember how excited I felt to see my photos on the LED Baltimore display. I hope many others will have a chance to experience that feeling joy and gratitude."

- Vickie Gray

"I loved seeing my art in that format and size. I received several commissions and I was given the ability to curate a Fiber show at MAXgallery in Butcher's Hill. I, as well, became acquainted with another artist who had seen my art and we struck up a friendship and began doing collaborations.

I feel that this has had a positive influence on my art and career. I hope the city decides to further this endeavor as it would be amazing for the art community and for the city as a whole."

- Robert Hoffman

"My alma mater used the billboard to write an article about me in our biannual journal. When the print publication was released, people contacted me about purchasing my work. I'm actually shipping a piece off in a few days.

Another positive was that after seeing what my photos looked like on a digital display, a curator suggested that I submit similar work for an invitational call that shows art in Times Square.

The exposure was great, my family and friends were/are tremendously excited and it was really neat to see my photos as I walked to school (MICA) every day."

- Tyler Yvette Wilson

"In my short career thus far of 10 plus years, I've had the opportunity to have my work be seen by a lot of eyes....in different states, different countries, whether in digital format, or in print. Being from Baltimore, there's certain accolades you chase after and hope to reach as a Photographer. Have my work in The Sun? Check. Baltimore Magazine? Check. City Paper? Check. Still upset I never made it to the Urbanite, but its legacy will forever live on (as well as the City Paper). Driving up Charles St. frequently, I always yearned and hoped to have my work featured on LED Billboard. That was one of the things missing that I hoped would come. I loved to watch the different art pop up and shined proudly, day and night. It was November 2019 when I received the email that my work would be featured. I was ecstatic! My work wound up being featured during the holiday season and it was really special to me. To know that anybody who took the train ride in, and happened to take a look outside, or while they were waiting for their ride, and saw my work as their introduction to Baltimore, went straight to my soul. When I shared my photos of my work on the billboard, it came with a resounding feeling of achievement and congratulations from my colleagues and friends. That's the beauty of the LED Billboard. It's our Times Square. Advertising the people that make up the work that shows the beauty of a city that will one day, with continued projection, get the accolades it deserves as an incubator for some of the most talented individuals in the world. With venues like LED Billboard, it gives creators a benchmark to work towards, let's them relish in the feeling of accomplishment, and to be humbled at the same time. When the city of Baltimore looks at what the things it needs to do to improve the community for its dwellers, and it comes across the opportunity to add more installations around town to promote those who want the true message and vibrance of the people to shine, only one thought should come to mind - Check."

- Sean Dackermann

"The LED light board has helped Rebecca Myers Collection gain brand recognition in the greater Baltimore area. I have had several clients mention they see my images when they depart from Penn Station. In challenging times, when retail business is compromised on many fronts, having an opportunity to show my work to a large demographic through the light board has been invaluable. Our gallery and showroom has been a recipient of its reach."

- Rebecca Myers

"Having four images of my paintings on LED Baltimore created quite a buzz around the art, especially in Baltimore. I have met people in gallery exhibitions who recognized the work from display. Once I shared the images of the board on social media (Facebook, Instagram), the exposure increased, even nationally. It added cache when speaking with curators about my work."

- Schroeder Cherry

"I was featured in Feb, and it was the validation I needed to feel like a real artist!!!! Thank you thank you THANK YOU!!!!"

- Deanna Pratt

"It was so neat to see my artwork on the billboard (you can see I was excited enough to make it my profile picture). I was shocked to find that people actually traveled, from as far as DC even, to go and see it. One person went twice so that he could see it during the day and at night! It definitely made me feel good and has added some great conversation in art circles."

- Kimmary I. MacLean

"I'm a goofy guy and I make silly things. Goofy and silly aren't always the most respected of tones in the artistic world. Being on the LED Baltimore board was one of the most satisfying moments in my life as a film guy. After spending roughly a decade making comedy videos and movies in Baltimore, seeing stills of my work towering up there was a refreshing reminder why I do what I do. Even for the most independent of us, just the act of "being seen" is the goal and the LED board did that in the biggest way possible. I'm proud to be born and raised in Baltimore, and having my weird work broadcast high over Baltimore was honestly emotional for me. It bookmarked a creative moment in time for me personally, which I will always be thankful for. Being up there after and before so many gifted artists who I respect and admire and discovered was not only an honor but it really helps fight some of that imposter syndrome I have, haha. It made me, a weird dude, feel satisfied, seen and included. I think a lot of weirdos out there would agree, that is pretty important to any community."

- Bob Rose

"As a serious amateur artist, I'm on the alert for unusual exhibit possibilities. LED Baltimore was an ideal canvas! To see my portraits of life in Southern India writ large was an enormous thrill, as was the recognition I received from family and friends. It was also gratifying to know that images of anonymous people going about their lives in a faraway land can hold a city's attention, even if for a few seconds. Thinking about it today, I realize it was a way to share the chaos, beauty, humor and despair of a country that most Baltimoreans will never get to see in person."

- Stephanie Shapiro

"I was featured on the billboard when I was just starting in portrait photography. I was proud of the work I put up, but I didn't have enough to be ready for a gallery. Showing on the LED Baltimore billboard gave me a chance to present my art in a way that wasn't really possible elsewhere. My models were all volunteers, and they got a chance to see their work in a new way. It would have just been sitting in my portfolio and marketing materials otherwise, and I loved being able to give them that experience.

I've grown my business since, and promotion is everything to a small business owner. Having your work professionally presented to a massive downtown audience is such a gift, and the LED Baltimore billboard offers that to artists who really need it.

However, I think my favorite aspect of the billboard is that it's a source of pride. It is very public, and right in the center of the city. In a world of conflicting corporate interests, it's committed to propping up Baltimore artists, and really does follow through on that promise."

- Greg Bowen

"I was thrilled to discover LED Baltimore and delighted when Laura accepted my flower photographs to display on that gigantic screen! I was a beginner photographer, taking photos at flower farms and farmers markets. This was a fabulous opportunity to have my photographs seen. I remember standing on the bridge with my husband waiting for my photos to come up on the display. Pure happiness. I wanted to tell everyone on the bridge that they were my photos. I captured my images on the screen and shared them on social media. It was one of my most liked posts! The flower farmer was so excited to have one of his flowers on the LED screen.

LED allowed me a great opportunity to display my photos, giving me the confidence to move forward with my photography business. I researched other opportunities in Baltimore leading to one of my photographs being displayed at the new Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore as part of the All You Need is Love collection. I have applied to have my photographs of the Pride of Baltimore displayed at the Hotel Indigo. One of my garden photos was featured on the breakfast menu at the Hotel Indigo. One of my flowers will become a mural on a historic building in downtown Frederick supporting locally grown flowers and farmers.

Each opportunity leads to better things for the artist and for the community. Art work on vacant buildings and at playgrounds is a great way to make a neighborhood look great and maybe give the residents pride in where they live leading to neighborhood clean-ups and planting new gardens."

- Kathy Lynn

"First off, I want to express how grateful I am to have had my work featured on the LED billboard multiple times. It has had such an impact on me and how confident I am in my work. When I was first featured my work was nowhere near the quality that it is today. I wasn't as confident in it, but I thought, "Hey why not share my work with the rest of the city?" When my work went up and I shared it on social media, there was an influx of support from my peers and everytime my work had been up there I have experienced the same reaction. I have gained clientele, met new creatives and have had inquiries about showcasing my work in other places. I believe this is a great initiative to let artists be seen and given their flowers from people around the city. Even the area it is placed in is important because it is a known hub for creatives."

- Shae McCoy

"Being on the Billboard was great! My work had never been on a Billboard before. It felt great to know that my artwork was seen by so many people in Baltimore. People who may have never seen my artwork in person were coming up to me telling me they saw my artwork. My friends and family who live out of town also sent well wishes after seeing my work was on a billboard, so that felt great. This is great for the community. Families, Kids and the general public got to experience my artwork for a few while walking and experiencing Baltimore. This led to people seeing my skill level and led to more commission opportunities."

- Jasmin Manning

“Being able to have my artwork displayed on the LED billboard in Baltimore was an extremely positive experience. Not only was it a dream come true to see my work at that scale, but it was also a stepping stone to be connected with a much broader audience. After the display went up I received so many positive messages, email inquiries for commissions as well as requests for prints of the displayed work. Based on the display I was able to connect with new people and do more collaborative work with other artists in the DMV area. This art program allows artists to turn their dream into a reality. The exposure allowed me to better visualize my goals as an artist, to actually be attainable. The Prince piece and the afro book cut out piece is what I received the most feedback on, from fellow Prince fans and book lovers that felt seen through my work. I received an email from a teacher who saw my pieces on the billboard and wanted prints for her classroom right in a school in Baltimore. I think the art program is very beneficial to the community, it makes art of all different styles accessible to all different types of people. It was truly rewarding, and I felt so proud of the work I created positively impact others as well. I am so grateful for the opportunity and experience that the LED Baltimore Artist brought me and really hope other artists in more cities can have the same type of opportunity to shine.”

- Brianna Pippens

“For me, it felt amazing to see my work displayed, and I think it had a positive impact on my career and my art's visibility. It inspired new fans to engage with my work, and it also generated tons more shares and engagement on my social media pages. I'm really thankful to have been included in LED Baltimore's program.”

- Sumner Crenshaw

LOCUST POINT



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Via Email

October 21, 2020

Baltimore City Council Land Use Committee
Councilman Reisinger, Chairperson
100 Holliday Street, Suite 500
Baltimore, MD 21202
Edward.Reisinger@baltimorecity.gov

Re: City Council Bill 20-0623

Dear Councilman Reisinger:

This letter is to inform the Land Use Committee of the Baltimore City Council that the Locust Point Civic Association (LPCA) took a vote at its October 14, 2020 General Meeting to oppose formally City Council Bill 20-0623.

As discussed and voted on during the meeting, Locust Point Civic Association is opposed to the bill for three primary reasons: (1) concern regarding the adverse effect that billboards generally, and digital billboards, specifically, have on driver safety; (2) concern about the light pollution caused by the digital billboards; and (3) concern regarding the number of billboards in the area generally and how those billboards affect community aesthetics, development, and growth.

A study published in the Traffic Injury Prevention Journal found that drivers look at digital billboards significantly longer than other billboards and signs, with the digital billboards taking drivers' eyes off the road for at least two seconds. This is especially alarming given the 2006 study by Virginia Tech for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which found that anything that takes a driver's eyes off the road for more than two seconds greatly increases the risk of a crash.

Digital billboards can be up to ten times brighter at night than traditionally lit billboards, and they can be harmful to the nighttime environment. The LED lights used within the digital billboards cannot be shielded; thus, the light emitted floods the night sky, both wasting energy and causing light pollution. There are billboards situated near Locust Point that have the potential to flood the area with unnatural light; this light would not only be damaging to the environment, but irritating to the community residents and visitors. No one wants to live in a house where billboard light streams through the windows at night; no one wants to play in a park inundated with such light.

As you know, Locust Point Civic Association generally opposes the increase in the number of billboards in our community and the city at large. This bill changes the current rules to preserve more billboards following their conversion to digital. The Locust Point Civic Association fears that the ultimate result of the change will harm aesthetics not only in the Locust Point area, but around Baltimore as a whole, thus curbing the progress which has been made and encouraging residents to move out of, rather than into, our great city.

The LPCA urges you to vote against the bill, or to withdraw it entirely, as it could be detrimental not only to the residents of Locust Point, but to all of us living in the South Baltimore Peninsula.

Please feel free to reach out if needed to contacts@mylocustpoint.org or kate.mccomiskey@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



Kate McComiskey
President, Locust Point Civic Association

cc: Councilman Eric Costello (via email to eric.costello@baltimorecity.gov)
Baltimore City Council President (via email to councilpresident@baltimorecity.gov)