

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

26-0188

*Ordinance of Estimates for the Fiscal Year Ending June
30, 2027*

Public Testimony



Baltimore City Council
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

May 27, 2026

RE: FY2027 Funding Request — Baltimore Main Streets

Dear Council President Cohen and Councilmember Blanchard,

I write on behalf of Federal Hill Main Street, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving and energizing our historic commercial district. We respectfully request your support for increased funding for Baltimore's Main Street partner sites.

Main Street programs are proven engines of revitalization. In 2026 alone, Federal Hill will host a Sail250 festival site, historic walking tours, the Retrospect Vintage Market, and approximately 70 public-private events — all managed by just one full-time staff member responsible for communications, outreach, grant reporting, small business support, and required annual reporting.

We are being asked to do more with less. Baltimore Main Streets partner sites recently lost a longstanding \$8,000 state improvement grant beginning in FY27. This compounds an already significant funding gap: comparable Main Street programs in Boston, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. receive approximately \$130,000 per site annually, while Baltimore sites receive \$75,000 — stretched across catchments that are on average considerably larger.

Increased funding would allow us to expand free family programming, grow Facade Improvement Grant engagement, support independent business operators, and more intentionally activate vacant commercial spaces.

We ask for your leadership in bringing Baltimore's Main Streets funding in line with peer cities and offsetting the loss of state support. Investing in our commercial districts strengthens neighborhoods, supports entrepreneurs, and advances our shared vision of an equitable and prosperous Baltimore.

Our 2025 Annual Report is attached for additional context. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meg Murray', written over the printed name.

Meg Murray
Federal Hill Main Street Board President

From: David Yaffe <baltimorelibrarypotential@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2026 11:19 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Budget -- Library

Categories: Red Category

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Baltimore City IT Network Systems.

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I was stuck waiting outdoors for near an hour at the time of the meeting, so here's a version in writing.

The \$800,000 targeted to boost the collection can be greatly appreciated -- it's a step in the right direction, but not the whole solution. Maryland's premier library (State Library Resource Center) has suffered through many budget cycles with inadequate acquisition funds. It's one of the unfortunate obvious areas for belt-tightening. If people come to the library and can't find the materials they need, they may not come back. Would you? It would be well worthwhile to look hard for funds to boost acquisitions still higher!

A number of Pratt Library branches have been closed to receive much-needed upgrades to heating and cooling. Some have reopened and others will soon. It's satisfying to check them off, but other branches still lack heaters and coolers that can be trusted. Summer heat arrives soon, and the coming fiscal year may see another frigid winter as well. You may recall the extent of the disruption before the Central Library renovation when the air conditioning often failed for considerable periods and made the building intolerable for employees and the public. All the services of certain branches might be lost in the same way.

Heat and cooling upgrades may be items in the capital budget. Branches reopened as this fiscal year ends and during FY 2027 also create operating budget needs.

There must be staff added -- librarians, clerks, security, custodial. The existing personnel, already stretched thin, can't just be stretched thinner. So funds for salary and medical insurance are definite needs, and at levels that enable Pratt to attract and retain the best candidates and enable those already employed to give their best. Thank you for your attention and your efforts.

David Yaffe, Board of Directors, Friends of Pratt Library

From: Denitra Braham <denitra@belair-edison.org>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 9:43 AM
To: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; Taxpayernight (Comptroller);
Glover, Antonio (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council)
Subject: RE: FY2027 Funding Request for Baltimore Main Streets

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Good Morning Esteemed Officials,

We respectfully ask that you review and give urgent consideration to Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc.'s request for increased funding for Belair-Edison Main Street and Baltimore Main Streets as a whole. These programs play a critical role in supporting small businesses, attracting investment, improving public spaces, and strengthening neighborhood commercial corridors throughout the city.

Additional funding will help ensure that Main Street organizations can continue to provide the services, programs, and improvements that drive economic growth, create vibrant business districts, and enhance the quality of life for Baltimore residents. Your support is essential to sustaining these vital programs and expanding their impact in communities across Baltimore.

--

Kind Regards,

Denitra Braham
Executive Director
Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc.
[3545 Belair Road](#)
[Baltimore, MD 21213](#)
[410-914-4245](#)-Direct
[410-485-8422](#)-Office
[410-485-8448](#)-Fax
Email: denitra@belair-edison.org

During the summer months, our office will close early every Friday at 3PM. Starting on Friday May 22nd 2026 until September 4th 2026. (Memorial Day-Labor Day)

www.belair-edison.org
www.belairedison.city

Learn how Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc. can turn your dream of homeownership into a reality. Click [here](#) for more information.

Follow us on:



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June 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen, President
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCCRC) at The Family Tree and its request for funding over the next three years.

For more than 30 years, the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center has served as the central hub for issues related to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. Through its comprehensive services, BCCCCRC has been a trusted resource for families, child care providers, educators, community organizations, and business leaders working to strengthen Baltimore's early childhood system.

The Center plays a critical role in supporting the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of child care services across the city. Through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, family support services, and business development initiatives, BCCCCRC helps child care providers improve program quality while ensuring that children and families have access to safe, nurturing, and enriching early learning environments.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland has a successful partnership with The Family Tree. We coordinate with them to ensure that the families we serve are connected to their Family Resource Specialist (FRS) and Parent Leadership services. The impact of these programs is critical for the families and communities CASH serves. Specifically, their assistance with the Maryland child care scholarship and support to find high quality/affordable child care provided via the FRS or Parent Leadership Specialist.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope



Continued investment in the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center will ensure that these critical services remain available and that the organization can continue to meet the evolving needs of Baltimore City's children, families, and child care professionals. The impact of this work extends far beyond individual programs and families—it contributes to the long-term health, stability, and prosperity of our entire community.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support BCCCRC's funding request and recognize the significant value this organization brings to Baltimore City. Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the well-being of our youngest residents and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Johnson".

Sara Johnson (She/Her)

Co-Founder & COO

CASH Campaign of Maryland
575 S. Charles Street, Suite 500
Baltimore, MD 21201

📞 410-234-2801

🌐 www.CASHMD.org

✉️ Sara@cashmd.org



Creating Assets, Savings and Hope

FEDERAL HILL MAIN STREET

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



FEDERAL HILL
MAIN STREET



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Substantial Funding Secured

We successfully brought in over \$500,000 in funding to support critical initiatives, including:

- Business attraction & empty storefront activation
- Street & bar safety measures
- Community events & activations
- Marketing campaigns
- Cleaning, greening, & beautification projects

These funds are also enable us to sustain our team as they complete this work that keeps our business district vibrant, safe, and thriving.



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Project Restore 2.0

We stewarded the opening of two new businesses in our district with a third one its way.

- South Baltimore Music Academy opened in February to offer fun and high-quality music lessons and classes for both children and adults.
- Mudhouse Pottery Studio opened in March with a variety of classes and workshops for all levels and memberships for experienced potters.
- Royal Deli is on its way into Cross Street Market with a spread of delicious sandwiches, salads, and more.



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Safety Initiatives

We activated over \$100,000 to improve safety in our district by providing ID scanners to licensed bars in our district, funding to businesses according to their needs, and continual support across our district in accessing resources.

- 21 bars received ID Scanners
- 15 businesses received funding for cameras, lighting, & security
- 4 blocks of trees trimmed for visibility



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Retrospect Holiday Market

We hosted a new annual event that drew hundreds of new patrons into our small business district, strengthening our community's reputation as a vibrant and welcoming destination.

Event Highlights:

- Increased foot traffic to local businesses
- Showcased Federal Hill's unique character
- Created opportunities for community connection



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Marketing & Digital Growth

This year, we increased our digital presence to bring more awareness about our events, local businesses, and more while promoting our activations:

- 3 digital initiatives to promote our district
- 114% increase in content interactions across platforms
- 30% increase in newsletter readership



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Expanded Partnerships and Advocacy

We opened new partnerships to address community needs:

- Addressing vacant buildings and predatory landlord practices
- Proactively engaging the city on safety concerns
- Connecting with local community engagement teams
- Collaborating with nearby Main Streets to boost foot traffic

FUTURE OUTLOOK

These achievements are a direct result of our vision and dedication to strengthening our organization and the district we serve.

Your unwavering support has been instrumental in turning challenges into opportunities and ideas into actions.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we are excited for what we will accomplish together. Thank you for your leadership and trust as we continue to build a community in which our shared visions can thrive. Here's to another year of progress and shared success!





Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development

25 E. 20th Street, Baltimore MD 21218 | 443.488.4396 | info@buildiaf.org

An affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation

June 4, 2026

Dear Council President & City Council Members:

At this moment, we need you to lead with us and with our allies to support and protect immigrant families here in Baltimore City.

You can act concretely now to keep immigrant families together and to act on the trauma immigrant youth are facing by increasing funds an additional \$1.6 million for MIMA to \$5 million in this year's budget— specifically for legal & mental health services. We heard directly during the budget hearings that additional monies will increase the number of people who can be served in the next fiscal year; accessible legal counsel is essential to navigate the complexities of status adjustment to keep families united.

BUILD has learned from doing hundreds of listening sessions with our immigrant members and with legal service providers that—

- **Money from the federal government has been reduced and/or become unreliable.**
- **There is increased uncertainty & increased need for legal service answers.** Given all the changes around immigration status during the Trump administration from changes on if/who can apply for asylum, TPS status and more; the need for legal services has increased.
- **Immigrants in need of legal counsel are being turned away because providers are at capacity.** Just *one* of the legal service providers in Baltimore reported that in 2025 they had to turn away **531 people**.
- **Many people turn to unscrupulous lawyers** who promise hope and steal people's money, often charging \$15,000 or more.
- **Many immigrant parents and children are living in fear—** young people unable to eat, onset of stuttering, refusal to go to school for fear of not seeing their parents when they return and more.

We appreciate all that you do on behalf of Baltimore City and the communities you represent. We understand that the City Budget is tight and there are many competing interests. But these are unprecedented times for our Baltimore immigrant families, and they demand that we act in bold ways.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. M. Cristina Paglinauan
BUILD Clergy Co-Chair
Church of the Redeemer

Leslie McMillan
BUILD Lay Co-Chair
Zion Baptist Church

Fr. Ako Walker, C.Ss.R.
Sacred Heart of Jesus / St. Patrick Catholic Churches
Episcopal Vicar for Hispanic Catholics, Archdiocese of Baltimore

Bishop Dr. Kevin Daniels
BUILD Clergy Co-Chair
St. Martin Church of Christ

Elizabeth Reichelt
BUILD Lay Co-Chair
Brown Memorial Park Ave. Presbyterian

The Rt. Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent
Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Rev. Canon Margarita Santana
Canon for Latino Ministries, Iglesia de la Resurrección

Rev. Dr. Tom Harrington & Rev. Dr. Isaac M.T. Mwase
University Baptist Church

Fr. W. David Nestler, O.F.M. Cap.
St Ambrose Catholic Church

Imam Mustafa Brent
Masjid Ul-Haqq

Bishop Douglas Logan
Zion Hill Baptist Church

Rev. Msgr. Richard J. Bozzelli
St. Bernardine's Catholic Church with Historic St. Peter Claver

Rev. Jonathan Wade
Macedonia Baptist Church

Rev. Andrew Connors
Brown Memorial Park Ave. Presbyterian Church

Fr. Mike Murphy
St. Joseph's Monastery Catholic Church

Fr. John Jicha
Community of St. Athanasius & St. Rose of Lima

Rev. Dr. J. Anthony Murray
Doxa Ministries, Church Without Walls

Pastor Angelic Williams
St. Luke UMC & Mt. Vernon Place UMC

Rev. Cat Goodrich
Faith Presbyterian Church

Rev. Darryl Kemp
Mission Developer for Congregations of African Descent

Fr. Joe Muth
Notre Dame of Maryland University

Rev. Mark Dickson-Patrick
St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Rev. Canon Randy Callender
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Rev. Brent A. Brown
Greater Harvest Baptist Church

Rev. Arthur Stewart
North Baltimore Mennonite Church

Fr. Brian Frain, S.J.
St. Ignatius Catholic Church

Rev. Dr. Walter Parrish III
Northside Baptist Church

Elder Charese Jordan Moore
Knox Presbyterian Church

Rabbi Andy Gordon
Bolton Street Synagogue

Rev. Dante K. Miles
Koinonia Baptist Church

Rev. Andre Briscoe
Govans Boundary & St. Matthew's-New Life UMC

Rev. Tamara Hawkins-Parker
Sharon Baptist Church

Pat Shannon Jones
Immigration Outreach Service Center

Dr. Scott Buresh
Coracle

Fr. Claudio Piccololongo
Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church

Rev. Dr. David Ware
Church of the Redeemer

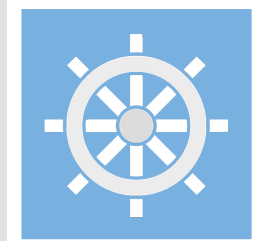
Rev. James Snodgrass
Cathedral of the Incarnation

Rev. Andy Nagel
Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore

Rev. Canon Dr. Kristofer Lindh-Payne
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Rev. Mark Stanley
Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church

FELL'S POINT MAIN STREET 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Economic Vitality ■ Design ■ Promotions ■ Organization



ECONOMIC VITALITY [\(PAGE 2-5\)](#)

Focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

DESIGN [\(PAGE 6-7\)](#)

Supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart as a destination.

PROMOTION [\(PAGE 8-15\)](#)

Positions the commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases our community's unique characteristics.

ORGANIZATION [\(PAGE 16-17\)](#)

Involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

FPMS Bucks

Acknowledging continued challenges in discretionary consumer spending, Fell's Point Main Street launched the "FPMS BUCKS" initiative during the 2025 holiday season to drive direct support for independent businesses. At the annual Olde Tyme Christmas Tree Lighting, 350 \$10 vouchers were distributed for redemption at 26 local retailers and restaurants between December 6-18, 2025. FPMS reimbursed for all redeemed vouchers using reserve funds, generating immediate economic activity while strengthening relationships with both consumers and operators. An economic impact summary and key lessons learned are included below.

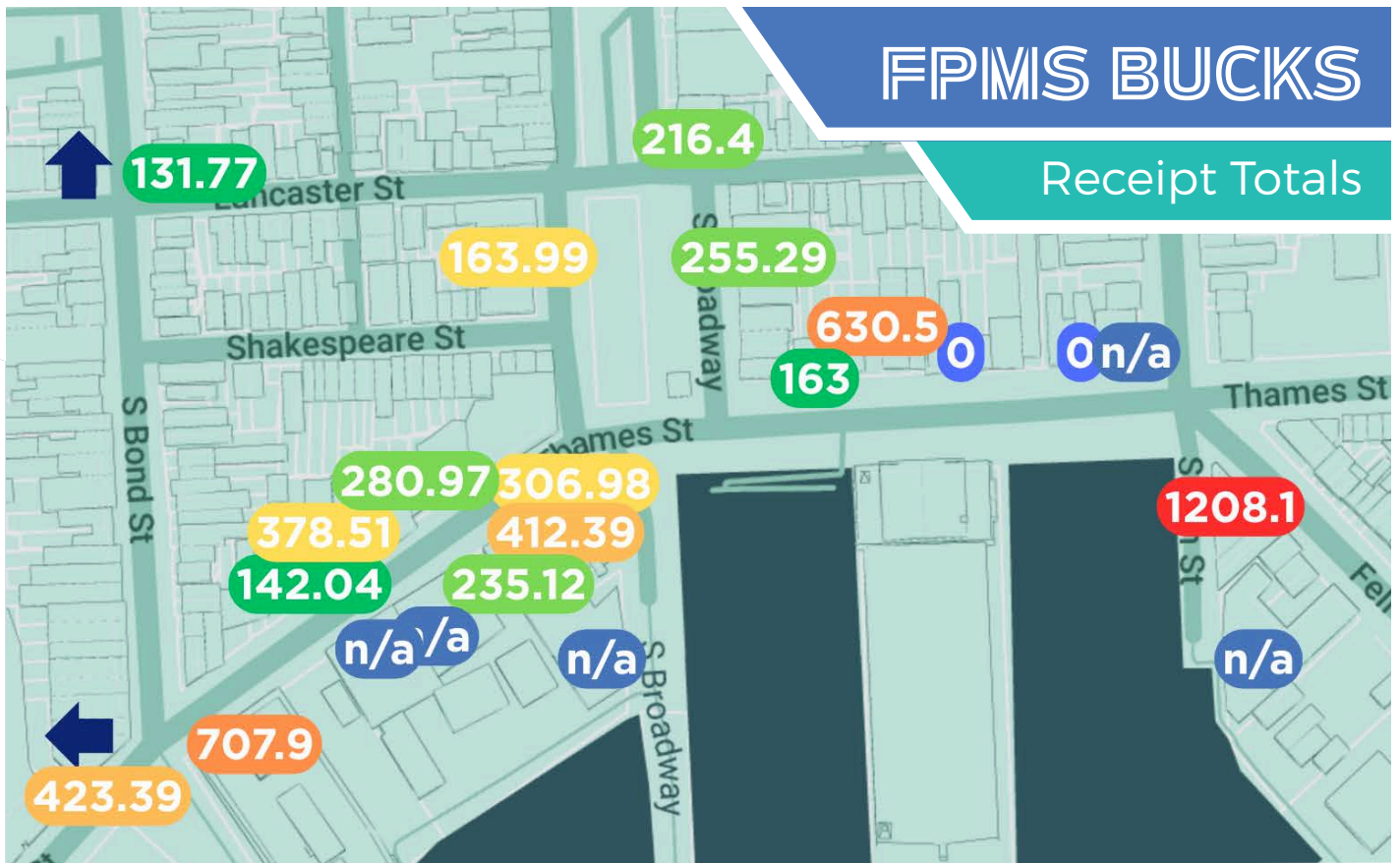
Special thanks to Senate President Bill Ferguson, Comptroller Bill Henry, Delegate Mark Edelson, and Councilmember Mark Parker for assisting with the inaugural voucher distribution!



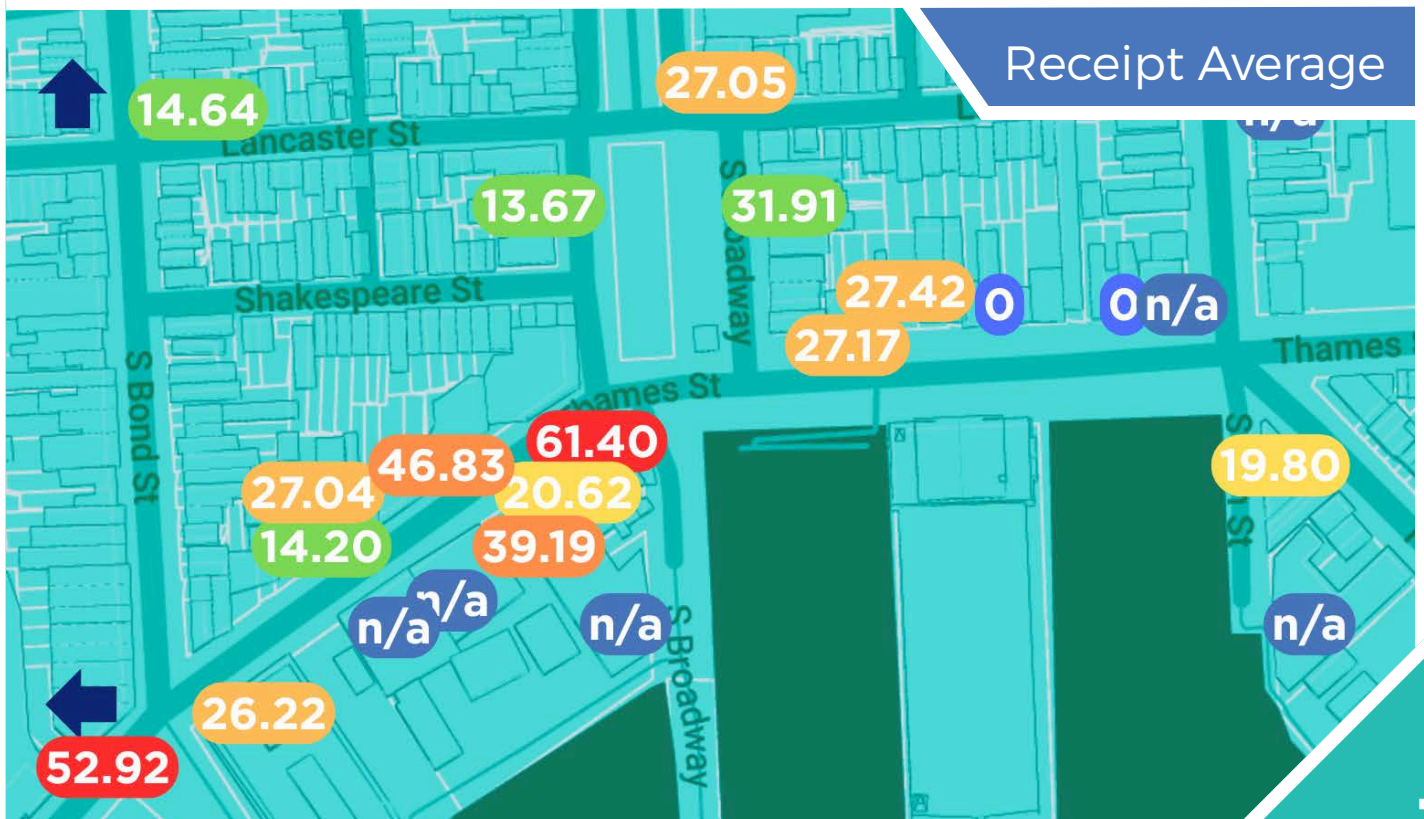
ECONOMIC VITALITY

FPMS BUCKS

Receipt Totals



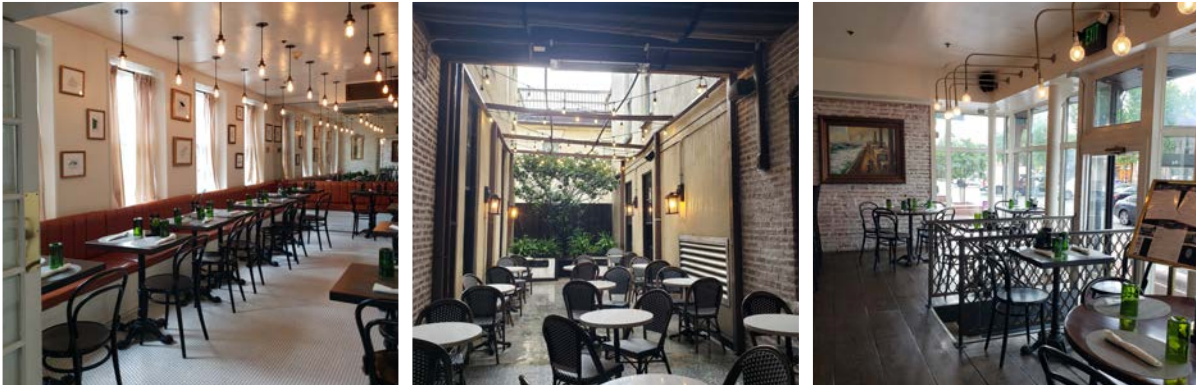
Receipt Average



ECONOMIC VITALITY

Project ReStore 2.0

Fell's Point Main Street was awarded funding through the second iteration of Maryland DHCD's Project ReStore program, supporting the restoration and reactivation of long-vacant commercial spaces within the district. Project ReStore advances economic vitality by pairing strategic investment with technical assistance to return underutilized storefronts to productive use.



Through this initiative, FPMS supported the reopening of the William Fell Tavern following the departure of its previous restaurant tenant in 2024. Project ReStore funds helped underwrite interior renovations, exterior restoration, and historically appropriate signage of the tavern, which is located within the historic The William Fell Baltimore hotel, contributing to the tavern's successful opening in June 2025.

At Broadway Market, grant support enabled the renovation of two vacant stalls: Soul Smoked BBQ which transitioned from a mobile operation to its first brick-and-mortar location; and a second, flexible pop-up space for short-term tenants. A third Project ReStore site at 1640 Thames Street provides a temporary home for community meetings and listening sessions while phased restoration work moves forward.

Collectively, these investments advance Main Street America goals by reducing vacancy, supporting small-business growth, preserving historic character, and ensuring that district spaces remain active, accessible, and responsive to community needs.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

311 Programing

FPMS continues to innovate in its tracking of community 311 needs and responses. In 2025, we coordinated a Main Street area 311 walk, providing business owners and residents tips and training on how to report municipal complaints through the City's 311 app. The primary goals of this effort were to empower local business owners, strengthen the Main Street organization by appropriately routing priority concerns, and support coordination with the City of Baltimore to address service and infrastructure needs. The process also emphasized follow-up to assess the effectiveness of temporary fixes and identify opportunities for longer-term solutions.

The walk consisted of approximately 20 attendees. Subsequently, the committee developed a Main Street 311 tracker, where all requests are stored and organized for review.

Vacancy Tracking

FPMS provides vacancy statistics as required for Main Street America and as a useful tool for tracking trends in the catchment. The 2024 vacancy report was brand new data collection. The 2025 updated report contains supplemental data, such as zoning, ownership, and previous tenants. FPMS also began a photographic inventory of vacant storefronts to track upkeep and maintenance as an additional tool to fight blight in the neighborhood.



DESIGN

String Lights

In FY23, Fell's Point Main Street secured DHCD Safety and Community funds to advance district safety and stewardship through new lighting and cameras. State investment helped leverage additional business, board, and community support, expanding coverage from 11 blocks to 16 and creating more welcoming residential and commercial corridors. In 2025, the program continued to deliver impact through maintenance of the initial installation and by sharing replicable best practices with peer communities across Baltimore.

Storefronts and Seasonal Decorating

FPMS encourages businesses to decorate their storefronts for the holiday season. Painted windows and holiday displays make the neighborhood a welcoming and festive place for visitors.



Wayfinding

In collaboration with celebrated Baltimore-native artist Justin Duvall, Fell's Point Main Street developed a series of custom wayfinding signs highlighting the district's distinctive assets and resources. Featuring locations such as Thames Street Park, the Water Taxi, and the historic streetlights along Broadway Pier, the program reinforces Fell's Point's iconic character while improving navigation, supporting local exploration, and strengthening a shared sense of place.

DESIGN

Broadway Square Fencing

Fell's Point Main Street via MD DHCD Community Health and Safety Works grant funds, implemented a seasonal, secure fencing solution for Broadway Square in alignment with Baltimore Police Department's public safety requirements and Main Street America Design principles. During warmer months, BPD has closed Broadway Square overnight using city-supplied bike racks. This was proposed as a "temporary measure" that returned year over year and generated community concern due to its visual clutter, instability, and the barriers it created for strollers, individuals with disabilities, and everyday pedestrian movement.



FPMS identified and installed a prefabricated, modular fencing system that significantly improves the appearance of the square while reducing long-term maintenance and replacement costs. Individual fence panels can be repaired or replaced as needed, minimizing downtime and expense. To further balance safety with accessibility, FPMS also designed and constructed rollable gates, allowing BPD to secure the square overnight while maintaining full, unobstructed access during daytime hours. Together, these improvements advance public safety, accessibility, and stewardship of a key public space, reinforcing Broadway Square as a welcoming, functional, and well-managed community asset.

PROMOTION

Spring Sticker Shop Hop

In 2025, Fell's Point Main Street launched the Spring Shop Hop as a pilot promotional initiative to drive foot traffic, encourage cross-district exploration, and support independent businesses through coordinated marketing. Led by a volunteer committee, the Spring Shop Hop activated five neighborhood zones, each with a unique sticker design, motivating customers to visit multiple locations across the district. With 28 participating businesses, the inaugural event demonstrated strong buy-in for collaborative promotion and scalable, low-barrier strategies that support economic vitality and promotion. Artworks created by Justin Duvall for the Wayfinding initiative were used as the sticker images, helping to capitalize on that investment.



Assistance

For the third consecutive year, Fell's Point Main Street supported the annual Fell's Point Oysterfest in Broadway Square in three critical ways: permitting assistance, volunteer coordination, and outreach to local operators. The family-friendly, destination-driven event welcomed approximately 3,000 visitors across generations, showcasing the district as a vibrant waterfront destination and encouraging repeat visitation to local businesses. Expanded educational programming through the Kid Zone was well received. Under the event MOU, Oysterfest contributed \$3,100 to FPMS, representing approximately 10% of the organization's annual fundraising requirement under the Baltimore Main Streets FY26 agreement.

PROMOTION

Halloween

In 2025, Fell's Point Main Street again organized a district-wide Halloween Trick-or-Treat to encourage family-friendly visitation and support local businesses through a low-barrier promotional event. Participating businesses received signage and inclusion on a neighborhood Trick-or-Treat map to help guide families throughout the district. 36 businesses participated, 4 more than 2024 and 8 more than 2023, reflecting success in our community outreach efforts and the importance of consistent annual events.

Olde Tyme Christmas

Olde Tyme Christmas remains Fell's Point Main Street's signature annual event, drawing residents and visitors to the waterfront for a full day of holiday programming and seasonal activation. Festivities begin with Santa's arrival via decorated tugboat at Broadway Pier, followed by free photos with Santa and children's crafts, pet photos, complimentary hot beverages, and historical education from a Town Crier. The evening tree lighting and lighted boat parade viewing at Broadway Pier attracted an estimated 1,200 attendees in 2025, reinforcing FPMS' role as a destination for family-friendly tourism and supporting increased foot traffic for local businesses.



PROMOTION

Olde Tyme Christmas- cont.

In 2025, FPMS partnered with the Baltimore Water Taxi and the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore to offer a free holiday Harbor Connector route, expanding access and encouraging cross-harbor visitation. Strong participation prompted the Water Taxi to extend holiday service through the following weekend.

Eggnog Tasting Tour

The annual Eggnog Tasting Tour is Fell's Point Main Street's most successful fundraiser, combining destination-driven promotion with direct financial support for the organization. In 2025, the ticketed event welcomed 365 participants who sampled house-made eggnog recipes at 24 local businesses, driving significant foot traffic throughout the district. Additional check-in locations were added to manage volume and improve the participant experience, and attendees were invited to vote for their favorite recipe. After event expenses, the Eggnog Tasting Tour generated approximately \$7,000 in unrestricted operating funds, providing critical support for FPMS's year-round programming.

5th Annual Cookie Crawl

The Cookie Crawl returned in 2025 for its fifth year, drawing the largest crowd in the event's history. Similar to Trick-or-Treating, this event is free for businesses and participants. Event goers receive a wayfinding map of participating local operators. 28 businesses offered cookies and the starting point went through more than 350 cookies during the run of the event.



PROMOTION

Small Business Saturday

Small Business Saturday remains one of Fell's Point Main Street's most important annual promotional priorities, serving as a cornerstone campaign for supporting independent businesses during a critical retail period. In 2025, FPMS expanded its Small Business Saturday activation, increasing participation from 25 to 31 businesses and distributing 700 branded tote bags, up from 500 the previous year, allowing for broader business inclusion and district-wide visibility.



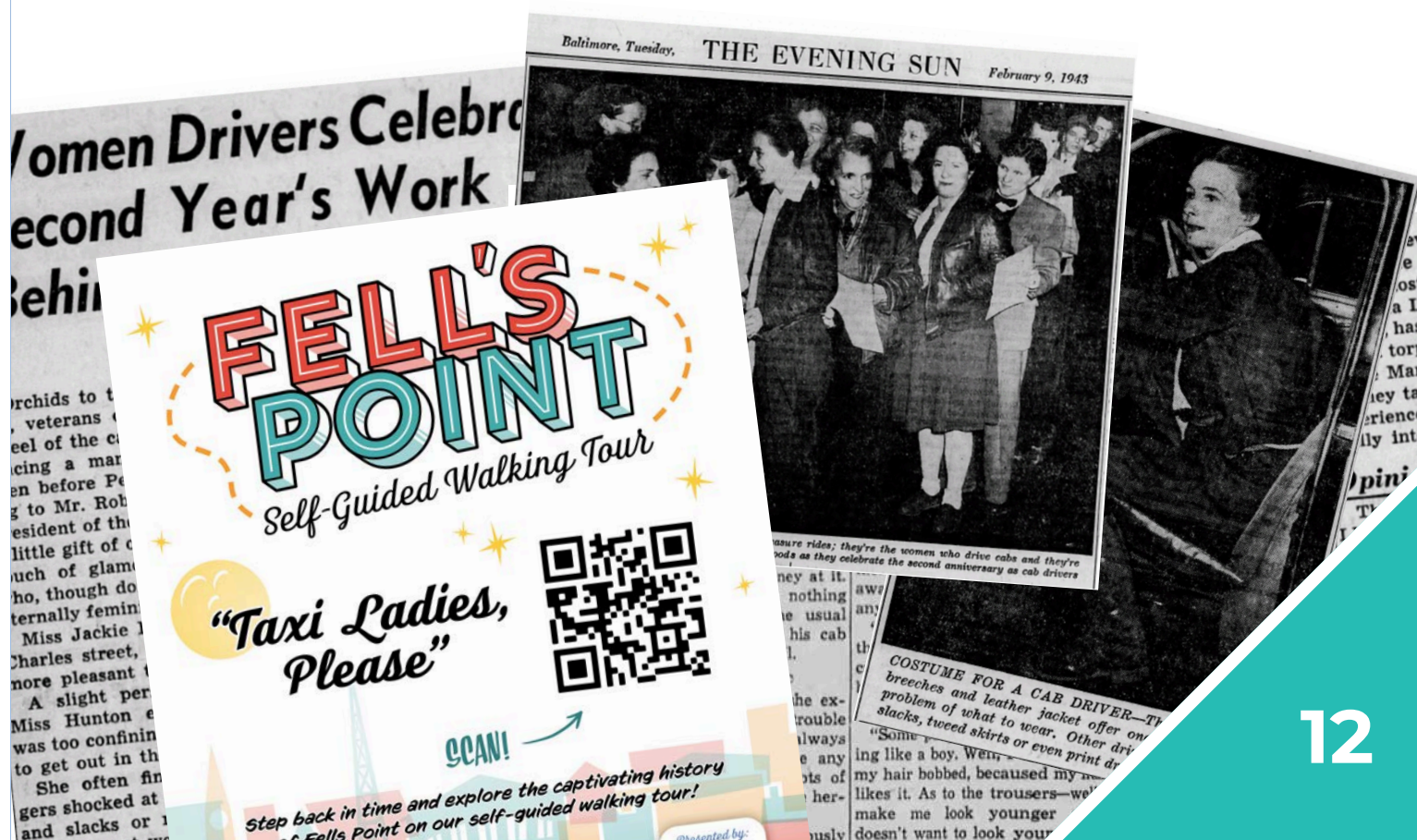
Participating businesses collectively contributed \$1,550 in support of FPMS as well as providing \$1,550 in raffle prizes to incentivize local spending. Customer engagement continued to grow, with 195 receipts uploaded through the promotion, up from 139 in 2024, representing at least \$11,647 in tracked local spending compared to \$9,957 the prior year. Receipts were submitted from both participating businesses and additional neighborhood retailers, underscoring the campaign's spillover benefits beyond direct participants.

While receipt uploads capture only a portion of total activity, the program demonstrates Small Business Saturday's role as a high-impact, scalable tool for driving foot traffic, encouraging local purchasing, and reinforcing Fell's Point as a destination for independent shopping, making it one of FPMS's most consistent and effective promotional investments.

PROMOTION

Walking Tour

Fell's Point Main Street launched a Self-Guided Walking Tour in the Spring of 2024. This placemaking initiative was designed to highlight the neighborhood's layered history and support deeper public engagement with its commercial corridors. **Each stop on the tour tethers a specific location to a short, documented story drawn from original print journalism spanning 1850 to 1950.** These vignettes are accessed via QR codes displayed in storefront windows or adjacent assets. Curated by Ginny Lawhorn and hosted online through a print-forward, citation-based platform, the tour began with 25 stories and has since expanded to more than 40 distinct stops. Fell's Point Main Street maintains and grows the tour annually, ensuring continued community representation and equitable storytelling across the district. We are excited to share our first full year of analytics and are looking forward to choosing new themes and highlights in 2026!



PROMOTION

WALKING TOUR METRICS 2025



Country	City	Region	Page views	Site sessions ↓ ⓘ	Unique visitors ⓘ
Summary			1,526	1,345	907
United States	Washington	DC	494	425	338
United States	Baltimore	MD	368	328	240
United States	Silver Spring	MD	87	81	63
United States	Hyattsville	MD	50	45	39
United States	New York	NY	46	42	37
United States	Ashburn	VA	38	36	27
United States	Alexandria	VA	30	30	27

Country	Page views	Site sessions ↓ ⓘ	Unique visitors ⓘ
Summary	1,540	1,358	917
United States	1,526	1,345	907
United Kingdom	7	6	6
Canada	5	5	4
Spain	1	1	1
India	1	1	1

PROMOTION

SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS 2025

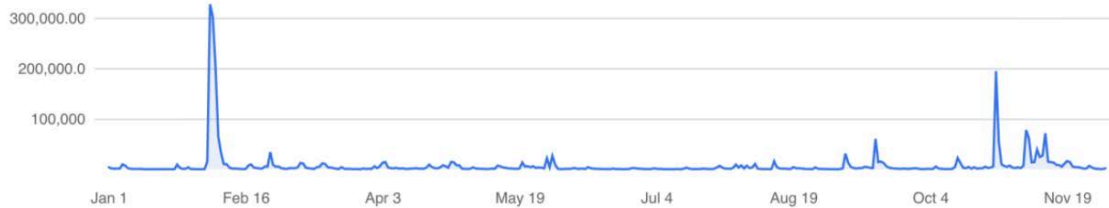
Views breakdown ⓘ

Custom: Jan 1 - Dec 31 ▼

2,698,980
Views ⓘ

375,379 ↑ **42,948%**
3-second views ⓘ

703 ↑ **4,035%**
1-minute views ⓘ



Audience overview ⓘ

Custom: Jan 1 - Dec 31 ▼

21,247 Total followers ⓘ
+14.7% from previous 365 days



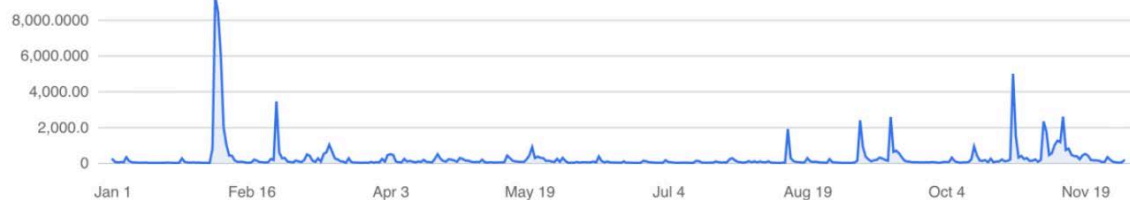

2,756
Net follows ⓘ


513
Unfollows ⓘ

Engagement overview ⓘ

Custom: Jan 1 - Dec 31 ▼

96,843 Engagement ⓘ
+30.6% from previous 365 days




36,208
Reactions ⓘ


2,573
Comments ⓘ

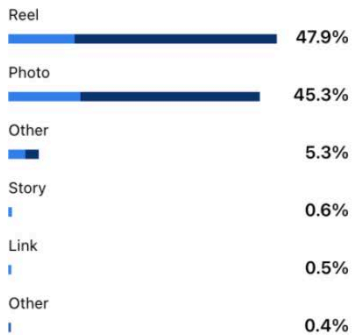

3,277
Shares ⓘ

PROMOTION

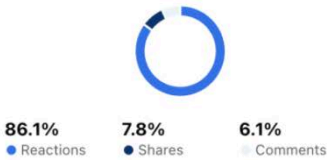
SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS 2025

By content type ⓘ

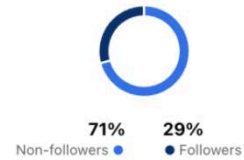
Followers Non-followers



By interaction type ⓘ



By followers vs non-followers ⓘ



Views ⓘ

631.0K



Reach ⓘ

106.6K ↑ 17.8%



ORGANIZATION

Community Meetings

In 2025, Fell's Point Main Street hosted five community meetings and listening sessions, consistent with Main Street America best practices for ongoing engagement and feedback. Three sessions were held in January across morning, afternoon, and evening timeframes to equitably engage a wide range of operators, providing opportunities to welcome new businesses and clarify FPMS's role within the district. Key themes raised included parking challenges and concerns around property stewardship. Additional sessions in October focused on upcoming FPMS-led events, introduced FPMS BUCKS programming for the holiday season, and supported relationship-building with new members of the community.

Record Setting Participation

2025 saw record numbers of business participation in events. The Trick-or-Treat event had 36 business participants, 4 more than last year. The Eggnog Tasting Tour had 24 participants, 7 who were new and had not participated the previous year. Cookie Crawl had 28 participants, 7 more than last year, 10 who had not signed up the previous year.

Grant Execution of FPRA Thames Street Park

Working with MD DHCD, Fell's Point Main Street facilitated the conversion of \$27,373.02 in remaining Fell's Point Residents Association FY23 Community Safety funds to activate improvements at Thames Street Park. In collaboration with Waterfront Partnership Baltimore, WEBCON Construction Company was engaged to repair and restore the park pavilion and refinish all park benches. With a total project cost of approximately \$32,000, FPMS supplemented grant funds with Board Reserve resources to cover the remaining balance, ensuring the project's completion and the realization of its full intended community benefit.

ORGANIZATION

Main Street Maryland Conference

In October, Fell's Point Main Street board members Ginny Lawhorn and Matt Garono presented at the second annual Main Street Maryland Conference, sharing practitioner-led strategies rooted in local experience. Together, they co-hosted *Creative Paths to Property Ownership: Alternative Models for Main Street Success*, outlining nontraditional pathways to property ownership using personal examples as working models.

Ginny Lawhorn also led a session on creating place-based experiences rooted in Fell's Point's Self-Guided Walking Tour, demonstrating how storytelling can support engagement and destination development.

Both sessions reached capacity and generated follow-up engagement requests, underscoring strong statewide interest in replicable Main Street tools and approaches.



Under Sail Baltimore's leadership and organization, Fell's Point is gearing up to serve as one of the main sites for SAIL250 Baltimore, hosting approximately seven ships from around the world during the week of festivities in Baltimore. FPMS will be organizing a bunting and decoration program throughout the neighborhood for SAIL250 and the semiquincentennial Fourth of July.

FPMS will also be adding new spring and summer programming to encourage local shopping. We will continue to program Small Business Saturday and all Olde Tyme Christmas traditions, while also expanding the Eggnog Tasting Tour. We are currently analyzing FPMS BUCKS usage to fine-tune the program and bring it back in 2026. We are also looking forward to expanded Harbor Connector and Water Taxi service in 2026 and will encourage visitors to take advantage of transportation options that connect Fell's Point with other Baltimore waterfront communities.

Thanks and Acknowledgements:

Annual Report Produced and Curated by
Ginny Lawhorn and Tessa Farnham

Special Thanks to:

**SMBA&D Director Lundy, Deputy Director Campbell,
and the Baltimore Main Streets Coordinating Program,
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development,
Senate President Ferguson,
Delegate Clippinger, Delegate Edelson, Delegate Lewis,
Delegate Stinnett,
Council President Cohen,
Councilmember Glover, Councilmember Jones,
Councilmember Parker,
Waterfront Partnership Baltimore,
Sail Baltimore, Fell's Point Residents Association,
The Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill & Fell's Point,
Visit Baltimore, BCT Design Group, Su Casa,
Fells Point Surf Co., Brown Advisory,
2025 Board Class.**

OUR 2025 BOARD



Samantha Hofferr - Executive Committee

Nick Johnson - Organization Committee

Terri Chetelat - Promotions Committee

Matt Garano - Economic Vitality Committee

Bryce Turner - Design Committee



Hayley Cushing

Liam Davis

Gail Furman



Katherine Gregory

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Laura Mattingly

Kate Simms

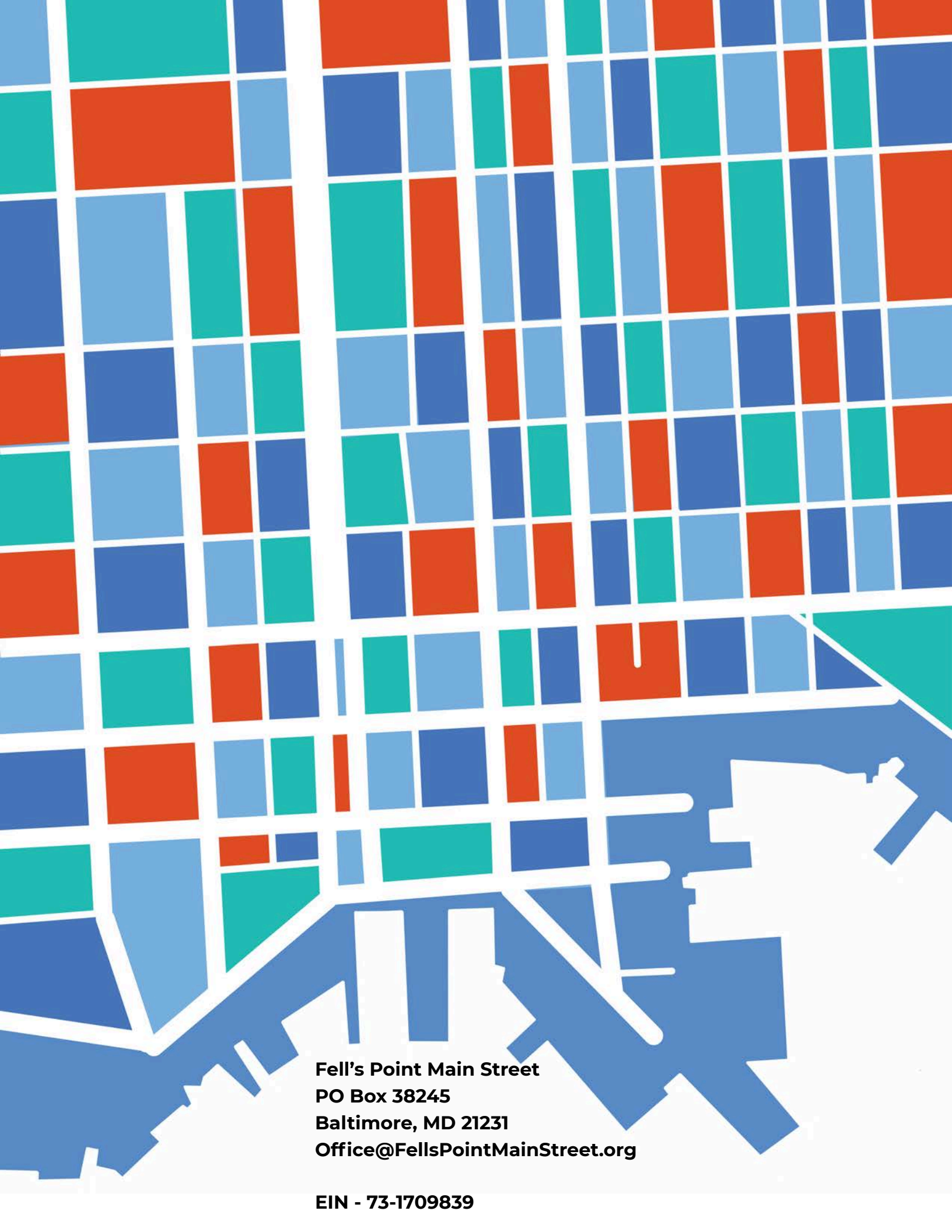


Secretary - Ginny Lawhorn

Administrative Coordinator - Tessa Farnham

Social Media and Marketing - Alison Schuch





Fell's Point Main Street
PO Box 38245
Baltimore, MD 21231
Office@FellsPointMainStreet.org

EIN - 73-1709839



Fell's Point Main Street

901 South Bond Street, Suite 203
Baltimore, Maryland 21231

Baltimore City Council –
Attn: Council President Cohen; Councilmembers Glover, Jones, Parker
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: FY2027 Funding
May 27, 2026

Dear Council President Cohen; Councilmembers Glover, Jones, and Parker,

I am writing on behalf of Fell's Point Main Street, a vital community-based 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving, enhancing, and energizing our historic commercial district. Our efforts provide meaningful support not only to the businesses and residents within our catchment but also to the broader Baltimore community. We respectfully request your advocacy and support for increased funding for Baltimore's Main Street partner sites, recognizing the critical role we play in driving economic vitality, community engagement, small business support, and tourism for our city.

Main Street programs are transformative engines for preservation and revitalization, with our organization serving as a prime example. Our community events draw thousands of residents and visitors each year, boosting local commerce, strengthening neighborhood identity, and fostering a sense of pride among our stakeholders.

Through carefully crafted initiatives, we:

- Promote Local Entrepreneurship
- Curate Engaging Public Programming
- Preserve Baltimore's Historic Charm & Unique Character

We appreciate the support the Main Streets program finds in the working relationship with our Baltimore City Council and shared catchments. In calendar year 2026, Fell's Point will host a festival site for Sail250, a multi-part Baltimore x Baltimore experience, the 60th Anniversary of the Fell's Point Fun Festival, the fourth annual Oyster Festival, approximately 160 public-private events, and our annual signature Small Business Saturday and multi-day holiday experiences. We will support the partner programming while producing our signature experiences with two part-time team members managing the demands of communication, outreach, grant reporting, programming, small business support, and the delivery of annual Main Street America and Baltimore Main Streets reporting.

At the same time, the Baltimore Main Streets partner sites are being asked to do more with fewer resources. The Baltimore Main Streets partner sites have lost a long-standing \$8,000 Main Street Improvement grant from the State of Maryland beginning in FY27 and beyond. For organizations already operating with lean staffing and limited discretionary funding, the loss of this grant further reduces our ability to respond to district needs, support small businesses, activate commercial corridors, and leverage other public and private investments.

Main Street programs in comparable cities such as Boston, Orlando, and Washington, D.C., receive annual funding of approximately \$130,000 per partner site, empowering them to deliver significant results within smaller Main Street designations. In contrast, Baltimore Main Streets' annual funding is currently \$75,000, which must stretch across catchments that are, on average, significantly larger than those in these other cities. This disparity places undue strain on organizations like ours and limits our ability to realize the full potential of our initiatives.

An increase in funding would allow Fell's Point Main Street to expand impactful programs such as free family entertainment activations, increased outreach for Facade Improvement Grant engagement, and support for independent business operators interested in joining our community. It would also help us more intentionally curate and activate street-level commercial vacant spaces. These enhancements not only strengthen our neighborhood but also bolster Baltimore's reputation as a vibrant, thriving city that respects and values independent commercial districts and the entrepreneurs who help define them.

We ask for your leadership in advocating for additional funding to bring Baltimore Main Streets partner site support more in line with our peer cities and to help offset the loss of state-level improvement funding. By investing in program and places, Baltimore can better compete on a national level while furthering our shared vision of an equitable and prosperous city.

For additional context, please find our 2025 calendar year annual report also attached.

Thank you for your continued support of our work and for considering this request.

Respectfully,

Tessa Farnham, Administrative Coordinator - Fells Point Main Street

From: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council)
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2026 4:48 PM
To: Charlotte Faust
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; Taxpayernight (Comptroller)
Subject: Re: FY2027 Funding Request — Baltimore Main Streets

Categories: Red Category

Charlotte,

Noted, thank you!

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From: Charlotte Faust <projects@fedhill.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2026 11:49:50 AM
To: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; Taxpayernight (Comptroller) <Taxpayernight@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Re: FY2027 Funding Request — Baltimore Main Streets

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Thanks so much for your quick response,

We are asking for any reasonable increase to the \$75k per Main Street. The \$130k is a reference point of the funding landscape for comparable organizations in other cities.

Best,
Charlotte

On Thu, May 28, 2026 at 11:40 AM Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov> wrote:

Charlotte,

To clarify, is the request to cover the \$8k lost in state funding? Or to raise the \$75k per Main Street to \$130k?

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
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From: Charlotte Faust <projects@fedhill.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2026 11:36:13 AM
To: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; Taxpayernight (Comptroller) <Taxpayernight@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: FY2027 Funding Request — Baltimore Main Streets

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Council President Cohen and Councilmember Blanchard,

As you may know, Baltimore Main Streets partner sites are facing a significant funding challenge in FY2027. On behalf of Federal Hill Main Street, we respectfully request your support for increased funding for our sites.

Please find a letter from our Board President, Meg Murray, detailing the significance of a funding increase and our 2025 annual report attached.

Thank you for your time,
Charlotte Faust
Program Manager
Federal Hill Main Street
projects@fedhill.org

LaRissa Woodard

Owner/Provider Simplistic Minds llc

4509 Glenarm Avenue

Baltimore, Maryland 21206

May 18, 2026

Fund for Educational Excellence

Dear Rudi Zelman:

I am writing this letter to share my experience and the dedication and support I have received from GOFCC. GOFCC has helped me and many others in tremendous ways, and any additional financial support will continue to benefit even more childcare providers and families in our community. I strongly support their efforts to improve the quality of childcare programs through coaching, technical assistance, and professional development opportunities for early childhood providers.

Through my experience working with GOFCC, I have witnessed the positive impact their support services have on childcare providers like me as well as the families they serve. GOFCC provided valuable technical assistance throughout my licensing process by helping me understand state requirements, complete necessary documentation, and navigate the steps required to become a fully licensed childcare program. GOFCC provided me with the essentials needed to complete every task on the road to licensing. Their guidance and ongoing support made the process more manageable and helped me build confidence as I worked toward meeting licensing standards.

In addition to licensing support, GOFCC has also played an important role in helping me advance professionally through Maryland EXCELS and the Child Development Associate (CDA) credentialing process. The coaching, encouragement, and technical assistance provided during the CDA process helped me stay motivated and successfully complete important requirements such as coursework, portfolios, and observations. The level of dedication that was shown to me as I fought to obtain my CDA during my mother's passing exemplified how far they go for providers. From the phone calls to the emails sent to the Council they showed me that in my time of grief I was not alone. They fought for me and I obtained my CDA, and for that I am thankful. Their staff consistently demonstrated professionalism, patience, heartfelt prayers, and dedication while helping me strengthen my knowledge and skills in early childhood education.

The services GOFCC provides are essential for improving the quality of care available to children and families in our communities. They support childcare providers with education,

coaching, and professional development opportunities, GOFCC helps create stronger learning environments that positively impact children's growth and school readiness. Continued funding for these efforts will allow even more providers to access the resources and support needed to achieve higher quality standards and advance within Maryland EXCELS. GOFCC is more than a program we are all family and I have made great connections in the childcare world, connections that may have never happened if I traveled this journey alone.

I fully support GOFCC's application and believe their work continues to make a meaningful difference in the early childhood education field. Thank you for considering their proposal and continued commitment to improving the quality of childcare programs.

Sincerely,

LaRissa Woodard

Owner/Provider Simplistic Minds llc



Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street, Inc.
a 501(c)(3) community organization and
a Baltimore Main Streets Initiative
3015 Hamilton Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21214
hamiltonlauraville.org

via email (testimony@baltimorecity.gov
& individual addressees' accounts)

Honorable Danielle McCray, Chair
Budget & Appropriations Committee
Zeke Cohen, Council President
Ryan Dorsey, 3d District Representative
Baltimore City Council
100 Holliday Street
Suite 400
Baltimore, Maryland, 21202

June 1, 2026

Re: Funding for Baltimore City Main Streets

Dear Chairperson McCray, Council President Cohen, and Councilperson Dorsey:

I write as the Treasurer and on behalf of the all-volunteer Board of Directors of Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street, Inc. ("HLMS") to emphasize the importance of community and economic development organizations like HLMS and to urge you to consider increasing the budget and support for Baltimore Main Streets ("BMS") programs in Fiscal Year 2027.

As you may know, I've devoted my career to historic preservation and community development work – mostly in Baltimore City - by undertaking mission-driven real estate projects that align with the physical and economic development plans created by the communities where the projects are located. I started my own company, Timshel, in mid-2021 and have focused on North Avenue in Central Baltimore: The "main street" of the Station North Arts District. My work is centered on the thesis that thriving commercial districts serving local entrepreneurs are critical to the health of nearby residential neighborhoods, create economic opportunities for Baltimore City residents from all backgrounds, and impact citywide economic development.

HLMS is a small, volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) not-for-profit whose mission is to help our Main Street businesses and neighborhoods thrive by supporting and creating opportunities for local businesses – the lifeblood of the community – thereby providing amenities and quality of life experiences that retain and attract residents. HLMS' geography has the potential to increase residential density and attract new residents to Baltimore City seeking inclusive, historic, and charming neighborhoods within walking distance of viable commercial districts. After living in Brooklyn, NYC and CA's East Bay for a decade before moving back to Baltimore in 2009, Lauraville (where my wife and I reside) is one of only a handful of neighborhoods in Baltimore City that meets my minimum requirements for city living. The opportunities to enhance the Harford Rd. commercial district in NE Baltimore are boundless and, if realized, can lure people to Baltimore from D.C., Philadelphia and other cities. The same is true for Baltimore's other Main Streets.

As one of the City's nine (9) designated Main Streets programs, HLMS has a long history of yearly contracts with the City and BMS, including an anticipated one for this fiscal year, under which HLMS is entitled to receive a modest amount of operating funds that factor significantly into our budget and programming decisions.

Although we regularly raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in state, local, and private grants that leverage much larger private investments in our neighborhoods, most of these grants do not provide funding for HLMS' staffing and overhead. In addition, the state grants we secured for MCB Real Estate's adaptive reuse of the Markley will bring \$1 million+ of federal funding into Baltimore City through the project's use of Federal Historic Tax Credits. With the operational capacity to support similar projects, our work could leverage significantly more federal funding.

Over the last few years, we've been optimistic that city government is developing a deeper appreciation of the roles that BMS and organizations like HLMS play in helping the City address economic disparities, growing small businesses, and creating opportunities to gain independence and build generational wealth: components of the long-term solutions to some of the most vital issues in our city. The reorganization that aligned BMS with other small and minority business resources and its placement under the direction and vision of Christopher Lundy; the increased staffing and appointment of talented, energetic individuals who genuinely care about our City and its direction; modestly increasing operating funding for BMS organizations; and, empowering Director Lundy, Deputy Director Stephen Campbell, and their staff to become more responsive to the nine unique Main Streets' individual and diverse needs are examples of changes that have each helped us carry out our work more effectively. But there is so much more to do!

Other east coast cities provide their Main Streets programs with significantly more operating funding and resources that include technical assistance – such as architects on retainer – as well as funding for each organization to distribute façade and other beautification grants. Baltimore City, however, still does not provide sufficient funding to fully cover the costs of one full-time professional or appropriately-skilled employee, even without offering health insurance or similar benefits. Therefore, while we are truly grateful for the funding increases over the last few years and understand they may appear substantial to elected officials, Baltimore City remains uncompetitive with its peers in terms of support for vital programs that support small and minority businesses and build successful communities.

HLMS's reliance on city funding through BMS has increased because, in addition to the ongoing state budget deficit and general economic and political conditions impacting the capacity of foundations to support community development work, the State of Maryland has decided that Baltimore Main Streets partner sites are no longer eligible for the Main Street Improvement grants upon which we have relied for several years.

Main Streets are a smart investment that creates positive impact disproportionate to the dollars involved (direct funding for BMS organizations represents just .015% of the city's FY26 budget). We respectfully ask for your leadership and support in bringing Baltimore's Main Streets funding in line with peer cities and offsetting the loss of state support. Investing in our commercial districts strengthens neighborhoods, supports entrepreneurs, and advances our shared vision of an equitable and prosperous Baltimore.

Very truly yours,



John Renner,
Board Treasurer

cc (via email): Daniel Doty, HLMS Exec. Dir.
Christopher Lundy, SMBA&D Director
Senator Cory McCray, Maryland 45th District
Board of Estimates (taxpayernight@baltimorecity.gov)

From: John Renner <jrenner@timsheldevelopment.co>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 9:26 AM
To: Daniel Doty
Cc: Testimony; McCray, Danielle (City Council); rdorsey; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); City Council President; Lundy, Christopher R. (Mayor's Office); Cory McCray; Taxpayernight (Comptroller)
Subject: Re: HLMS Letter Testimony in Support of Baltimore Main Streets Program and Increased Funding

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I appreciate everyone considering our arguments regarding the importance of Main Street organizations. I do not envy your position of determining how to allocate the city's financial resources. Countless city actions and supported initiatives are urgent priorities, and everyone on this email shares a bond of loving Baltimore City and believing in its deep potential.

Between the efforts of the Hamilton-Lauraville and Belair-Edison Main Street organizations, other community development work in Northeast Baltimore, and the numerous strengths to build from in this geography—including Morgan State University, Herring Run/Clifton Park/Lake Montebello, the amazing diversity of our population and housing stock, and strong historic neighbors to the north in Overlea and Parkville—there is an opportunity to grow both the city's population and the number of successful small businesses, resulting in a huge swathe of Baltimore City that is thriving. As you probably know, many commercial gems currently exist on Harford and Belair Roads (inside and outside the Main St boundaries). We need to fill in the gaps, add additional businesses that address residents' needs, capitalize on opportunities for higher density housing along the commercial corridors, and support specific struggling businesses or geographies (like Hamilton's commercial district) that are suffering due to macroeconomic conditions and/or bad luck.

Best regards,
John

On Mon, Jun 1, 2026 at 7:16 AM Daniel Doty
<daniel@hamiltonlauravillemainstreet.org> wrote:

Good morning.

In connection with the Budget & Appropriations Committee hearing this afternoon, attached please find a letter from HLMS Treasurer John Renner on behalf of our northeast Baltimore

organization that addresses funding for the Baltimore City Main Streets program and its successes under the Mayor's Office of Small and Minority Business Advocacy and Development.

Mr. Renner's direct e-mail is included in the cc's.

Thank you for your consideration of this important topic.

Daniel P. Doty (he/him/his)
Executive Director
Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street, Inc.
3015 Hamilton Avenue, 2d Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21214
daniel@hamiltonlauravillemainstreet.org
[Visit our Website!](#)

You can help support the mission of this
501(c)(3) organization by visiting
<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/webs>
and making a donation!

--

John W. Renner
Owner, Timshel, LLC
(443) 440-0778
Follow what's happening at the Parlor on Instagram (@theparlorbaltimore)
Keep abreast of the redevelopment plan and status of the [North Avenue Market](#) redevelopment.



From: La-Faye Connor <laconnor13@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 10:37 AM
To: Cohen, Zeke (City Council)
Cc: Testimony
Subject: Support for Budget Bill 26-0188 – Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center

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Dear President Cohen,

I am writing in support of continued funding for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC).

As the Director and Co-Owner of Shining Stars Childcare Center, I have seen firsthand the positive impact BCCCRC has on child care programs throughout Baltimore City. Running a quality child care program requires ongoing training, support, and access to resources, and BCCCRC has consistently been there to provide those services.

Over the years, BCCCRC has helped our program through professional development opportunities, technical assistance, coaching, and guidance on quality improvement initiatives. Their support has been especially valuable as we worked toward higher Maryland EXCELS quality levels and explored opportunities to expand services for children and families through the Pre-K Expansion Grant program.

The staff at BCCCRC are knowledgeable, responsive, and genuinely committed to helping child care providers succeed. Their guidance has helped us strengthen our classrooms, improve our practices, and better meet the needs of the children and families we serve.

Organizations like BCCCRC are essential to maintaining a strong early childhood system in Baltimore City. The resources and support they provide help child care programs remain sustainable while improving the quality of care available to young children.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support funding for BCCCRC through Budget Bill 26-0188. Their work makes a meaningful difference for providers, families, and children across our city.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

LaFaye Connor
Director & Co-Owner
Shining Stars Childcare Center

From: Laura Syron <juliecenterchildcare@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2026 9:02 PM
To: Testimony; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council)
Subject: Support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center/Budget 26-0188

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Good day,

I am writing to extend my support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center and the upcoming budget 26-0188. For many years the Julie Community Center has collaborated with the Resource Center to strengthen the child care landscape of Baltimore. The Resource Center has been steadfast in their commitment to providing educational opportunities to child care providers and folks entering careers in early childhood education and care. Throughout the years they have supported and guided programs and staff in providing quality care that is educationally sound, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and safe. They have been a keystone for the childcare community and will continue to ensure that the children and families of Baltimore have access to high quality and safe child care.

Sincerely,
Laura B. Syron
Julie Community Center

Julie Community Center
100 S. Washington Street
Baltimore, MD 21231
Sent from my iPad



Lin's Kids Child Care (LKC)
Future Leaders in Progress (F.L.I.P)
Chanta Brown Ivery, Director/Owner

June 1, 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen, President
Baltimore City Council
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree and its request for funding over the next three years.

For more than 30 years, BCCCRC has been an invaluable partner to Baltimore's early childhood community, supporting childcare providers, educators, families, and community organizations. Their work strengthens programs through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, and access to critical resources that improve the quality of care and education available to young children throughout Baltimore City.

As the Director of Education at Lin's Kids Childcare & Prekindergarten Program, I have personally experienced the impact of BCCCRC's support. Their guidance has helped our program strengthen instructional quality, achieve Maryland EXCELS Level 5, earn MSDE Accreditation, and better serve children and families in our community and to extend support for long-term wellness of our organization's health, wellness and prosperity to support members of the greater community.

The investment in BCCCRC is an investment in Baltimore's children, families, and workforce. Their services help providers build sustainable, high-quality programs that prepare children for long-term success. By strengthening early childhood education, BCCCRC helps cultivate resilience, opportunity, and a brighter future for Baltimore's children and families.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support BCCCRC's funding request and ensure this essential resource remains available to the early childhood community.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to the wellness of our youngest residents and their families.

Onwards and upwards,

India Ivery, M.A.T.

Director of Education & Prekindergarten Teacher
Licensed Maryland Educator (Pre-K – Grade 3)
Lin's Kids Childcare & Prekindergarten Program
MSDE Accredited Program | Maryland EXCELS Level 5

Physical Address: 2107-23 Mura Street, Baltimore, MD 21213

Mailing Address: 1200 N. Collington Ave, Suite #107, Baltimore, MD, 21213

Phone: 667-212-5110 Fax: 667-212-5111 Email: info@linskidschildcare.com

March 12, 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen
President, Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

On behalf of the Baltimore City Office of Child Care (OCC), I am writing to express our strong support for the request for \$1.2 million over three years to support the work of the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree.

The Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center serves as the hub for issues relating to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. As a member agency of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, BCCCRC provides essential services and leadership to parents, childcare providers, the business community, and others who share a commitment to strengthening early care and education in our city.

Our organization has seen firsthand the important role BCCCRC in supporting family child care applicants in Baltimore City. Through our GOFCC collaboration with BCCCRC, we have also witnessed an increase in the number of individuals who have been approved to operate as family child care providers. At the same time, there is growing concern regarding the decline in the number of family child care programs across Maryland since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The GOFCC program serves as an essential resource in addressing this challenge by helping to bridge the gap between registered family child care providers and families who are in urgent need of safe, high-quality, and reliable child care.

The requested funding would allow BCCCRC to provide direct technical assistance to childcare providers so they can become eligible for Pre-K expansion slots. This support is critical. Many providers have the commitment and experience necessary to serve young learners but need targeted guidance and resources to meet the standards required for publicly funded Pre-K programs. With additional technical assistance, more providers will be able to participate in Pre-K expansion, increasing the number of high-quality early learning opportunities available to Baltimore City families. In addition, this support would reinstate the Family Resource Specialists which provided critical services to families in Baltimore City such as help finding child care, navigating the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Application, and connecting them to other resources.

Expanding access to high-quality Pre-K not only supports children's early development and school readiness but also strengthens families and the local workforce by ensuring parents have reliable childcare options. Investment in BCCCRC's work will have a lasting impact on the early childhood ecosystem across Baltimore City.

We respectfully urge Baltimore City Council to support this \$1.2 million investment over three years so that BCCCRC can continue to lead efforts to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care in our city.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to Baltimore's children and families.

Sincerely,

Allison Van Horn

Allison Van Horn
Regional Manager
Office of Child Care – Baltimore City



March 16, 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen
President, Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

On behalf of The Fund for Educational Excellence, I am writing to express our strong support for the request for \$1.2 million over three years to support the work of the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree.

The Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center serves as the hub for issues relating to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. As a member agency of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, BCCCRC provides essential services and leadership to parents, childcare providers, the business community, and others who share a commitment to strengthening early care and education in our city.

Our organization has seen firsthand the impact of BCCCRC and the critical role it plays in strengthening Baltimore City's child care system. BCCCRC has been an essential partner in expanding the city's mixed-delivery Pre-K system by both recruiting child care providers to become state-funded Pre-K sites and providing hands-on, individualized technical assistance to help providers meet the qualifications needed to apply.

In a pilot launched in fall 2025 with The Fund, BCCCRC supported five programs in improving their Maryland EXCELS quality ratings. As a direct result of that support, all five were able to submit competitive applications for the state's Pre-K Expansion Grant and are currently awaiting award decisions. Without the technical assistance provided by BCCCRC's highly skilled coaches, these programs would not have been as well positioned to apply as strong candidates.

This year, The Fund has also partnered with BCCCRC to support five child care programs in their first year of implementing public Pre-K. This work is helping programs build toward long-term sustainability as Pre-K sites and begin the path toward accreditation, which is required within five years for state-funded Pre-K providers. All five programs have successfully met MSDE standards in their first year and plan to continue offering public Pre-K slots next year.

The BCCCRC team is highly professional, accountable, and deeply knowledgeable. What stands out most, however, is the credibility and trust they have built with child care providers and families across Baltimore City. BCCCRC is widely respected in the child care community as a trusted partner that understands providers' realities, offers meaningful support, and follows through on its commitments.



The requested funding would allow BCCCRC to provide direct technical assistance to childcare providers at a larger scale so they can become eligible for Pre-K expansion slots. This support is critical. Many providers have the commitment and experience necessary to serve young learners but need targeted guidance and resources to meet the standards required for publicly funded Pre-K programs. With additional technical assistance, more providers will be able to participate in Pre-K expansion, increasing the number of high-quality early learning opportunities available to Baltimore City families. In addition, this support would reinstate the Family Resource Specialists which provided critical services to families in Baltimore City such as help finding child care, navigating the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Application, and connecting them to other resources. The Family Resource Specialists are also critical support in helping connect families with seats in our city's growing mixed-delivery Pre-K system.

Expanding access to high-quality Pre-K not only supports children's early development and school readiness but also strengthens families and the local workforce by ensuring parents have reliable childcare options. Investment in BCCCRC's work will have a lasting impact on the early childhood ecosystem across Baltimore City.

We respectfully urge Baltimore City Council to support this \$1.2 million investment over three years so that BCCCRC can continue to lead efforts to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care in our city.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to Baltimore's children and families.

Sincerely,

Rudi Zelman

Rudi Zelman

Program Director, Pre-K Expansion

The Fund for Educational Excellence

From: Michal' Frieson <lovedaycare723@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 6:42 PM
To: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; Conway, Mark (City Council)
Subject: Budget bill 26-0188

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June 2, 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen, President
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

I am writing to express my support for continued funding and investment in programs and services that strengthen Baltimore City's early childhood education system, as reflected in Budget Bill 26-0188.

As the owner and director of Little Praises Learning Center, I have personally experienced the positive impact that organizations such as the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) have on childcare providers, children, and families throughout our city. BCCCRC has been instrumental in my professional development through training opportunities, technical assistance, Maryland EXCELS support, accreditation guidance, and ongoing coaching.

The resources and support provided by BCCCRC have helped me improve program quality, strengthen health and safety practices, enhance learning environments, and expand services to better meet the needs of working families. Their guidance has enabled me to pursue higher quality standards, grow my program, and provide children with enriching educational experiences during their most critical years of development.

Investments in early childhood education and provider support programs are investments in Baltimore's future. Quality childcare allows parents to participate in the workforce, supports children's school readiness, and strengthens communities. Continued funding ensures that providers like myself can access the tools, training, and resources necessary to maintain and improve the quality of care we offer.

I respectfully urge the City Council to support Budget Bill 26-0188 and continue prioritizing resources that benefit Baltimore's children, families, and childcare

providers.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to the residents of Baltimore City.

Respectfully,

Michal Frieson
Owner/Director
Little Praises Learning Center

From: Shwanquana Owens <allmyangelschildcare22@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 3:46 PM
To: Testimony; Gray, Paris (City Council)
Subject: budget bill 26-0188

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June 3, 2026

The Honorable Paris Gray
Baltimore City Council District 8

Dear Paris Gray,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree and its request for funding over the next three years.

For more than 30 years, the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center has served as the central hub for issues related to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. Through its comprehensive services, BCCCRC has been a trusted resource for families, child care providers, educators, community organizations, and business leaders working to strengthen Baltimore's early childhood system.

The Center plays a critical role in supporting the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of child care services across the city. Through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, family support services, and business development initiatives, BCCCRC helps child care providers improve program quality while ensuring that children and families have access to safe, nurturing, and enriching early learning environments. I hope my letter reaches the right person to help support budget bill **26-0188**.

I have firsthand seen the important role that BCCCRC plays for me and so many other family childcare providers. When it comes to my childcare program, within the last 3-month span, they have supported me with one-on-one coaching to help me start the accreditation journey. My coach even helped me prepare for my first CLASS observation by coming out last week to do a mock observation of my students and me. I am even honored that when I graduated on May 22, 2026, from Coppin State University, the director of Family Tree embraced me after I returned to my chair. I know that if the BCCCRC continues to receive the funding needed, they will continue to be invested in providing any needed resources that I or any other childcare provider may need. And for the ones that may not be aware, they will continue to

send emails and come out to the many training sessions or conferences that are held in the communities around Maryland and educate them as well.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support the BCCCRC funding request and recognize the significant value this organization brings to Baltimore City.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the well-being of our youngest residents and their families.

Sincerely,

Ms. Shwanquana Owens/ Director

All My Angel's Childcare, LLC program

June 4, 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen, President
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree and its request for funding over the next three years.

For more than 30 years, the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center has served as the central hub for issues related to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. Through its comprehensive services, BCCCRC has been a trusted resource for families, childcare providers, educators, community organizations, and business leaders working to strengthen Baltimore's early childhood system.

The Center plays a critical role in supporting the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of childcare services across the city. Through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, family support services, and business development initiatives, BCCCRC helps childcare providers improve program quality while ensuring that children and families have access to safe, nurturing, and enriching early learning environments.

I have had the opportunity to witness firsthand the important role that the Parent Leadership Specialist plays in supporting the families and children enrolled in the Early Head Start Program. Ms. Nea Abrahams consistently demonstrates professionalism, courtesy, and a wealth of knowledge in her work with families.

In addition to the direct support she provides, the agency offers ongoing resources, services, and community-based support to families and children. These efforts are instrumental in helping families access the assistance they need, strengthen family well-being, and promote positive outcomes for children.

Ms. Abrahams' dedication, combined with the agency's commitment to family support, has made a meaningful impact on the families served by the program.

Continued investment in the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center will ensure that these critical services remain available and that the organization can continue to meet the evolving needs of Baltimore City's children, families, and childcare

professionals. The impact of this work extends far beyond individual programs and families—it contributes to the long-term health, stability, and prosperity of our entire community.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support BCCCRC's funding request and recognize the significant value this organization brings to Baltimore City. Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the well-being of our youngest residents and their families.

Sincerely,

Claudia Ray

Early Head Start Director

From: Tabitha Hedgepeth <tabitha.hedgepeth@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2026 7:46 AM
To: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council); Testimony
Subject: Funding of Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center resources support

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June 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen, President
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree and its request for funding over the next three years.

For more than 30 years, the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center has served as the central hub for issues related to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. Through its comprehensive services, BCCCRC has been a trusted resource for families, child care providers, educators, community organizations, and business leaders working to strengthen Baltimore's early childhood system.

The Center plays a critical role in supporting the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of child care services across the city. Through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, family support services, and business development initiatives, BCCCRC helps child care providers improve program quality while ensuring that children and families have access to safe, nurturing, and enriching early learning environments.

As a first-time mom single parent, I stand up to say that the programs such as the Family Resource Specialist and the Parent Leadership specialist at The Family Tree has helped me extraordinarily. The program has great benefits to all families and the overall community such as direct assistance with the Maryland Child Care scholarship, nutritional workshops, and assisting families in finding high

quality affordable child care. Some parents may not be able to obtain the help they need on their own the services offered by the Family Resource Specialist/the Parent Leadership Specialist has always been there to help, guide, and assist. I am forever grateful to personally have received the services. We need to keep programs around like this.

The budget bill number for this is 26-0188.

Continued investment in the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center will ensure that these critical services remain available and that the organization can continue to meet the evolving needs of Baltimore City's children, families, and child care professionals. The impact of this work extends far beyond individual programs and families—it contributes to the long-term health, stability, and prosperity of our entire community.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support BCCCRC's funding request and recognize the significant value this organization brings to Baltimore City. Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the well-being of our youngest residents and their families.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Hedgepeth
(443)-704-2584

June 4th, 2026

To Baltimore City Council,

My name is Shantrice Bazemore, and I am a family childcare educator in Baltimore city. I am writing in strong support of continued funding for the Family Resource Center, including its coaching services and the return of the family resource specialists. Over the years, the Family Resource Center has been an invaluable source of support for both my program and the families I serve. Through coaching, professional development, and access to resources, I have strengthened my ability to provide high-quality early childhood education and family support services. The guidance and encouragement I received helped me improve my program, navigate challenges, and better meet the needs of children and families in my care. The resource center has helped me with obtaining my CDA, NAFCC Accreditation, and Maryland Excels advancements. I have also earned a Bachelor of Science degree in early childhood education human development because of the encouragement of the resource specialists.

The family resource specialists have been especially important in connecting families with community resources, educational opportunities, and support services. Many families face barriers related to employment, housing, health care, and access to quality childcare. The resource center has helped bridge those gaps, ensuring that families receive the assistance they need to thrive. Their support has had a positive impact not only on individual families but also on the broader Baltimore City community.

As an educator, I have seen firsthand how the coaching services and family resource specialists empower childcare professionals to grow in their practice while strengthening family engagement and child outcomes. Losing these services would create a significant gap in support for providers and families alike. I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to continue funding the Family Resource Center's coaching services and restore the family resource specialist positions. These services are essential to building strong families, supporting quality early childhood education, and creating brighter futures for Baltimore City's children. Thank you for your consideration and commitment to the children, families, and providers of Baltimore City.

Sincerely,

Shantrice Bazemore

Owner/Educator

Shan's Christian Learning Center

Baltimore, Md. 21229

Testimony in Support of Worker Cooperative

My name is Casey McKeel, I live in District 14 and I've lived in Baltimore city for the past 16 years. I am a worker-owner at Thread Coffee Roasters, a Baltimore-based worker coop, that I co-founded in 2012. I am also the director for Finance at Seed Commons, which is a cooperatively governed CDFI & nonprofit financial institution. I've been involved in coops for 20 years. So you could say, I live and breathe coops.

I've dedicated my life to coops because I believe they create jobs with dignity that can shift the power back into the hands of the workers, and I believe in their ability to transform communities for the better. I've witnessed this myself. And experienced it myself.

Baltimore is full of cooperatives, and I'd love to see that continue to grow and be even more of a model city of how much we care about the residents here . So I strongly urge you to please do the same, invest in our city and commit funding for worker cooperative development.

June 5, 2026

Baltimore City Council Budget and Appropriations Committee

Council Bill 26-0188 – Ordinance of Estimates for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2027

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chair McCray, Vice Chair Schleifer, and Budget and Appropriations Committee Members:

The Family Tree strongly supports Council Bill 26-0188, Baltimore City’s Ordinance of Estimates for Fiscal Year 2027, and respectfully requests an additional appropriation of **at least \$400,000** for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC). This request directly advances the City’s stated commitment to early childhood education and childcare. In November of 2025, Mayor Brandon M. Scott and Council President Zeke Cohen highlighted the expansion of high-quality pre-K and childcare for Baltimore families as key priorities and announced initial funding commitments in support.¹

Access to affordable, high-quality childcare remains a significant challenge for Baltimore City families. Baltimore City is home to approximately **37,232 children under age five**, yet many families continue to face barriers to finding and maintaining quality childcare.² At the same time, childcare providers face workforce shortages, regulatory challenges, and limited access to technical assistance and support. Expanding the City’s childcare infrastructure is essential to strengthening workforce participation, promoting economic stability for families, and improving outcomes for children.

The Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center, operated by *The Family Tree*, serves as a critical resource for both childcare providers and families. During Fiscal Year 2025, BCCCRC delivered **1,882** trainings to childcare professionals throughout Baltimore City. Moreover, the Center provided technical assistance or touchpoints to **3,619** childcare providers. Beyond assistance to childcare professionals, BCCCRC directly supported **135 families** through our parent coalition and application assistance for the Maryland Child Care Scholarship which helps with paying for childcare, and parent workshops.

Under the proposed Ordinance of Estimates, Baltimore City is making important investments in early childhood development. However, additional funding is necessary to maximize the impact of those investments and address critical service gaps created by the expiration of federal funding.

Previously, BCCCRC employed Family Resource Specialists, or Family Navigators, who played a critical role in supporting families throughout Baltimore City. Family Navigators assisted families in locating quality childcare, navigating and completing the Maryland Child Care Scholarship

¹ City of Baltimore, Office of the Mayor, “Mayor Brandon M. Scott Announces Investment Supporting Early Childhood Education and Care,” press release, November 24, 2025.

² Baltimore City Early Childhood Advisory Council, *Baltimore City Early Care and Education Landscape Analysis: Supply, Demand, Obstacles, and Opportunities* (Baltimore, MD: Baltimore City ECAC, 2025).

application process, and connecting with essential community resources. Through strategic partnerships with organizations such as Community Action Partnership (CAP) Centers, Baltimore City Public Schools Judy Centers, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) offices, and other community-based agencies, they served as trusted guides for families seeking support. Their work ensured families had access to the resources, information, and services needed to promote stability and positive outcomes for children. Since federal funding expired, these positions have been eliminated.

To meet growing demand and further strengthen Baltimore City's childcare infrastructure, BCCCRC seeks funding to restore its lost **Family Navigator positions** and establish additional **Early Childhood Coaches positions** to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to current and prospective childcare providers.

These critical positions represent an estimated investment of **\$1.2 million over three years**. For Fiscal Year 2027, *The Family Tree* respectfully requests an appropriation of **at least \$400,000** to begin implementation of this initiative to advance the City's goals related to workforce participation, economic mobility, school readiness, and family stability. A relatively modest investment today will strengthen Baltimore City's childcare system, expand opportunities for working families, and ensure more children have access to safe, high-quality early learning environments.

For these reasons, *The Family Tree* respectfully requests a favorable report on Council Bill 26-0188 with an **amendment providing at least \$400,000 for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center in Fiscal Year 2027**.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Brown, M.Ed, LCPC
Executive Director
The Family Tree
2108 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218
Phone: (410) 889-2300 x 75361
familytreemd.org
The MD Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America

D'Paul Nibber
Government Relations and Community Development Manager
LifeBridge Health
Phone: 301-254-6870
dnibber@lifebridgehealth.org

June 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen, President
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree and its request for funding over the next three years.

For more than 30 years, the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center has served as the central hub for issues related to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. Through its comprehensive services, BCCCRC has been a trusted resource for families, child care providers, educators, community organizations, and business leaders working to strengthen Baltimore's early childhood system.

The Center plays a critical role in supporting the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of child care services across the city. Through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, family support services, and business development initiatives, BCCCRC helps child care providers improve program quality while ensuring that children and families have access to safe, nurturing, and enriching early learning environments.

I am a parent and have had firsthand seen the important role that the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center plays in supporting families. I have worked with Nea Abrams when she was a Family Resource Specialist and been a part of the Parent Coalition since its inception after being invited to join by Nea Abrams, Parent Leadership Specialist for The Family Tree. This program has been a tremendous source of assistance and support for me because it provides opportunities to meet with staff in person and receive hands-on help with the child care scholarship application process. The support, guidance, and resources provided through the program have made navigating the system much less overwhelming and have given me the confidence and tools needed to secure quality child care services for my family. Through the services of the Family Resource Specialist and the Parent Leadership program, I have also had the opportunity to connect with other parents, share experiences, and advocate for the needs of families in our community. The budget bill number for this is 26-0188.

Continued investment in the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center will ensure that these critical services remain available and that the organization can continue to meet the evolving needs of Baltimore City's children, families, and child care professionals. The impact of this

work extends far beyond individual programs and families—it contributes to the long-term health, stability, and prosperity of our entire community.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support BCCCRC's funding request and recognize the significant value this organization brings to Baltimore City. Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the well-being of our youngest residents and their families.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Watts

From: Tiny Twigs Childcare <tinytwigshome@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2026 1:20 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: RE: Support for Funding Request – Budget Bill 26-0188

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Dear Councilwoman McCray,

My name is Kimberly Epps, and I am the Owner and Educator of Tiny Twigs Early Learning, a nationally accredited early childhood education program serving children and families in Baltimore City. I am writing to express my strong support for the funding request contained in Budget Bill 26-0188 on behalf of the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center.

For more than two decades, the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center has been an invaluable partner in the growth and success of my program. Their dedication to supporting early childhood educators has had a direct and lasting impact on the quality of care and education that I am able to provide to young children and their families.

Through their technical assistance, professional development opportunities, coaching, and ongoing support, I have been able to strengthen my program, advance through Maryland EXCELS, maintain high-quality standards, and continue my professional growth as an educator. Their guidance has helped me navigate licensing requirements, improve program quality, access valuable resources, and remain informed about best practices in early childhood education.

The Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center does more than support individual providers; it strengthens the entire early childhood education system in Baltimore City. By investing in providers, they help ensure that children enter school prepared to learn, families have access to high-quality care, and educators receive the support needed to sustain and improve their programs.

As a small business owner and early childhood educator, I have personally witnessed the positive impact of their services. The continued funding of the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center is essential to maintaining these critical supports for providers and the families we serve.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to approve the funding request outlined in Budget Bill 26-0188. This investment will continue to strengthen Baltimore City's early childhood workforce and ensure that high-quality early learning opportunities remain available to children throughout our community.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Baltimore's children, families, and early childhood educators. I appreciate your service to our community and your support of initiatives that strengthen early childhood education.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Greene - Epps, Owner
Tiny Twigs Early Learning
tinytwigsearlylearning.com
(410) 818-3781



From: Tracy Harris <tharris@familytreemd.org>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 8:00 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Fw: Family Tree request concerning our Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center

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Tracy Harris (she, her, hers)

Director for The Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center

The Family Tree

2108 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: (410) 889-2300 x (75375)

Direct: (410) 469-5375 (New direct line)

familytreemd.org

Need Training: <https://training.bcccrc.org>

Parenting Helpline: (800) 243-7337



From: John Meyerhoff <sinaidoc@verizon.net>

Subject: Family Tree request concerning our Child Care Resource Center

You don't often get email from sinaidoc@verizon.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

LBH SECURITY ALERT: This email is from an external source. Do not click on any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Never provide your username or password.

Hello Zeke,

I am writing to ask of your assistance with \$1.16 million proposal (over 3 years) that we have pending with the Baltimore City Council for our Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC). Specifically, this proposal is to bring back our Family Navigation program, which

assists families with finding childcare and completing the lengthy and cumbersome Maryland Child Care Scholarship Application, which helps eligible families pay for child care.

In addition, these funds would provide the staffing to engage in community outreach, link families to needed resources, and assist existing child care providers to participate in and/or move up in the state's child care quality improvement initiatives, like getting their program accredited and moving up in Maryland EXCELS (the 1 to 5 Level quality improvement rating system, with 5 being the highest quality rating). Our programs with childcare providers also help them identify children suffering from exposure to trauma and provide additional resources for those children are particularly in need.

Our staff has participated in two panel presentations on child care to the Baltimore City Council this winter and have been working through Shamoyia M. Gardiner, M.Ed., of your staff.

Also, as a FYI, we have a \$582K, over three years, proposal pending the Mayor's Office to expand our Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care program, which helps interested individuals become licensed family child care providers and small business owners.

If you are asking what is driving all of this, simply put, our community is in crisis. There are only enough licensed child care slot for half (50%) of the children under 5 in Baltimore City and this drops to only 20% for families with infants and toddlers who are trying to get back into or stay in the workforce.

Tracy Harris, our Director of the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center would be happy to provide any additional information you may need.

Anything you can do on our behalf would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,

John

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June 4, 2026

Dear Baltimore City Council,

I am writing in support of Bill 26-0188, specifically 'Service 109' for the Office of Children and Family Success, which allocates \$204,000 to increase funding for Early Childhood Initiatives.

As proposed, these funds will enable the Family Tree's Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center to resume two important supports for families and child care providers. The Family Tree will use the funds to reinstate their successful child care provider coaching service and resume helping parents navigate the Maryland Child Care Scholarship application process.

Child care is essential to the Baltimore City economy. Parents cannot work without child care. This modest investment in The Family Tree is one of the smartest investments the city can make. Child care programs are small businesses in our community, and coaching support helps ensure they survive and thrive. [The Baltimore City Child Care Landscape Analysis](#) found:

"There are available early care and education opportunities for an estimated 50% of the city's children under five, but only 20% of infants." Baltimore city cannot afford to lose more child care supply.

The Landscape Analysis also highlights the unaffordability of child care:

"Early care and education is unaffordable for families who are at or below the median annual income and who pay more than 30% of their income for regulated care. It is even more unaffordable for families of color whose annual earnings are lower than the city average."

The Maryland State Scholarship Program addresses the unaffordability of child care for qualifying working parents. However, the application system is difficult to navigate. The Family Tree has proven success in being a helping hand to parents navigating this frustrating bureaucratic process. I urge you to support this important investment in Baltimore City's children, families, and child care providers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Molly McGriff

Senior Director, United for Childcare

United Way of Central Maryland

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon Scott, Mayor
City of Baltimore
Robert Salley, Chair
Board of School Commissioners
Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

March 13th, 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen
President, Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

On behalf of Baltimore City Judy Centers, I am writing to express our strong support for the request for \$1.2 million over three years to support the work of the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree.

The Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center serves as the hub for issues relating to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. As a member agency of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, BCCCRC provides essential services and leadership to parents, childcare providers, the business community, and others who share a commitment to strengthening early care and education in our city.

Our organization has seen firsthand the important role BCCCRC, as they are one of the strongest and most valued partners of the Baltimore City Judy Centers. Our collaboration is rooted in a shared commitment to advancing high-quality early learning experiences, strengthening the early childhood workforce, and ensuring families have equitable access to resources that support school readiness. Their work has had a measurable, positive impact on childcare providers and families, and this initiative will further strengthen trust, quality, and alignment across multiple systems.

The requested funding would allow BCCCRC to provide direct technical assistance to childcare providers so they can become eligible for Pre-K expansion slots. This support is critical. Many providers have the commitment and experience necessary to serve young learners but need targeted guidance and resources to meet the standards required for publicly funded Pre-K programs. With additional technical assistance, more providers will be able to participate in Pre-K expansion, increasing the number of high-quality early learning opportunities available to Baltimore City families. In addition, this support would reinstate the Family Resource Specialists which provided critical services to families in Baltimore City such as help finding child care, navigating the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Application, and connecting them to other resources.

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon Scott, Mayor
City of Baltimore
Robert Salley, Chair
Board of School Commissioners
Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

Expanding access to high-quality Pre-K not only supports children's early development and school readiness but also strengthens families and the local workforce by ensuring parents have reliable childcare options. Investment in BCCCRC's work will have a lasting impact on the early childhood ecosystem across Baltimore City.

We respectfully urge Baltimore City Council to support this \$1.2 million investment over three years so that BCCCRC can continue to lead efforts to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of childcare in our city.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to Baltimore's children and families.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Lurz
Citywide Coordinator – Judy Centers
Baltimore City Public Schools





SHERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION

March 13, 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen
President, Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen:

On behalf of the Sherman Family Foundation, I am writing to express our strong support for the request for \$1.2 million over three years to support the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC), housed at The Family Tree.

Strong early childhood systems depend on the availability of high-quality childcare providers and the infrastructure that supports them. In Baltimore City, BCCCRC plays a vital role in that system. As part of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network and housed within The Family Tree, BCCCRC provides technical assistance, professional development, and direct support that strengthens providers and helps families access the care they need.

Our connection to this work is longstanding. Betsy Sherman has served on the Board of The Family Tree since the 1980s, spanning more than four decades of leadership and commitment to Baltimore's children and families. When the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center became part of The Family Tree in 2019, it further strengthened the organization's ability to support families and providers across the city. Since then, BCCCRC and The Family Tree have worked in strong partnership to expand access to high-quality early care and education.

This investment would allow BCCCRC to expand targeted technical assistance to childcare providers seeking to participate in Pre-K expansion. Many providers already have the experience and commitment necessary to serve young children but need additional guidance to meet the standards required for publicly funded Pre-K programs. With this support, more providers will be able to participate in Pre-K expansion, increasing the number of high-quality early learning seats available to Baltimore City families.

The funding would also restore Family Resource Specialists who provide essential assistance to families navigating the childcare system. These specialists help families identify childcare options, access the Maryland Child Care Scholarship program, and connect to other services that support family stability and child development.

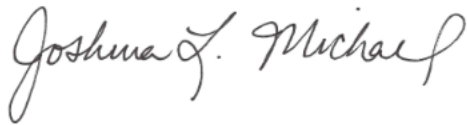
It is also worth noting that among the seven Child Care Resource Centers operating across Maryland, the Baltimore City center is currently the only one that does not receive operating support or in-kind contributions from its local jurisdiction. Through this action, Baltimore can support the Child Care Resource Center as other jurisdictions across Maryland support their local centers, while

also taking a leadership role in demonstrating how strategic annual operating investments can advance the regional child care ecosystem.

Expanding access to high-quality early learning strengthens children's development and school readiness while supporting working families and the broader workforce. Investments in BCCCRC strengthen the early childhood infrastructure that Baltimore families depend on.

We respectfully request that the Baltimore City Council support this \$1.2 million investment over three years. Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to Baltimore's children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Joshua L. Michael". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joshua" and last name "Michael" clearly legible. The middle initial "L." is smaller and less distinct.

Joshua L. Michael, Ph.D.
Executive Director



May 27th, 2026

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association
Comments on Baltimore City Budget 26-0188

Dear Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Region Senior Lead of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

The American Heart Association strongly supports additional resources being allocated to tobacco control enforcement and education in Baltimore City. With the extreme density in tobacco retail establishments, the Baltimore City Health Department needs additional enforcement officers in order to complete compliance checks in the city.

From a report compiled by the Alcohol Tobacco and Cannabis Commission and the Maryland Department of Health, Baltimore City has more licensed tobacco retailers than anyone else in the state. Sitting at 1287 licensed cigarette retails, the density is deeply concerning. We also see high numbers near schools (38) which we do not see in other jurisdictions¹. The density is extremely high in Baltimore City and we do not see it at this level anywhere else in the state, with Prince George's following a distant second.

The tobacco industry has long targeted communities of color and it is not surprising that Baltimore City and Prince George's county have significantly higher numbers of licensed tobacco establishments. The industry through released documents has shown to time and time again target communities of color.

It is extremely important that enforcement is strengthened in the city. With so many establishments the city needs more enforcement officials to make sure that everyone is complying with the law. We look forward to support the efforts of the city to limit licensure and also note that enforcement is a key part of addressing tobacco use in the city.

"These retailers *are* the GROWN UPS." They are responsible for obeying the law, which protects children. Proper enforcement of the law is needed and the Baltimore City Health Department needs more money for enforcement dollars. The state just cut 1.5 Million dollars in tobacco control funds from the state health department, the need in Baltimore will become greater.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Baltimore, we urge you to fund additional enforcement officers for the Baltimore City Department of Health.

¹ [SB1056Ch462\(2\)\(2024\).pdf](#)



CHANGING LIVES,
ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

June 2026

The Honorable Zeke Cohen, President
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear President Cohen,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) at The Family Tree and its request for funding over the next three years.

For more than 30 years, the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center has served as the central hub for issues related to the care and education of young children throughout Baltimore City. Through its comprehensive services, BCCCRC has been a trusted resource for families, child care providers, educators, community organizations, and business leaders working to strengthen Baltimore's early childhood system.

The Center plays a critical role in supporting the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of child care services across the city. Through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, family support services, and business development initiatives, BCCCRC helps child care providers improve program quality while ensuring that children and families have access to safe, nurturing, and enriching early learning environments.

At NCIA, we serve individuals throughout the greater Baltimore City area, and one of the biggest barriers our participants face is access to adequate and reliable child care or resources and support for raising children. BCCCRC has been a tremendous support in helping relieve the stress of childcare for our participants while they attend vocational training and work toward obtaining gainful employment.

I have seen firsthand the important role BCCCRC plays in the lives of our participants. Without this support, many of them would be forced to choose between attending class to better their lives and provide for their families, or staying home to ensure their children are cared for. This program has helped our participants continue their training, maintain employment, and feel confident knowing their children are in a safe and supportive environment.

I support Bill 26-0188, as BCCCRC has tremendously helped NCIA and the participants we serve. As a community member of Baltimore, I have also seen the impact that the lack of child care has on families. Continued support for BCCCRC will help ensure that individuals and families have access to reliable child care and family supportive services.

Continued investment in the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center will ensure that these critical services remain available and that the organization can continue to meet the evolving needs of Baltimore City's children, families, and child care professionals. The impact of this

Vocational Training Center – Baltimore
310 S. Eden Street Baltimore, MD 21231
Phone: 443-822-0409 website: www.ncianet.org

work extends far beyond individual programs and families—it contributes to the long-term health, stability, and prosperity of our entire community.

I respectfully urge the Baltimore City Council to support BCCCRC's funding request and recognize the significant value this organization brings to Baltimore City. Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the well-being of our youngest residents and their families.

Sincerely,

Y'Mani Brown

Program Coordinator for Case Management

Ymani.brown@ncianet.org

410-564-9510

RE: Support for Funding Request – Budget Bill 26-0188

Dear Council President Cohen, Members of the Baltimore City Council, and Budget Committee,

My name is Sonja Tuck, and I am the owner and operator of Sonja Sunrise Till Sunset Family Child Care in Baltimore City. I am writing in strong support of continued funding for the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center (BCCCRC) through Budget Bill 26-0188.

For more than 25 years, I have provided early childhood education and care to children and families in Baltimore. Throughout my career, BCCCRC has been an invaluable resource that has helped me grow professionally and improve the quality of care I provide.

When I first began participating in Maryland EXCELS, Ms. Tracey from BCCCRC helped guide and support me as I worked to improve my program. With her encouragement and assistance, I progressed from Maryland EXCELS Level 1 to Level 3 and ultimately achieved Level 5. Without that early support, I am not sure I would have reached the level of quality that my program maintains today.

BCCCRC also played a major role in helping me earn my Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Ms. Jen provided guidance, encouragement, and resources that motivated me to continue my education and professional growth.

My educational journey is another example of how investments in the early childhood workforce make a difference. Through support from the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPD Fund), I was able to continue my education and recently earned my Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. This achievement has strengthened my knowledge and ability to provide high-quality care and education to the children and families I serve.

I am also preparing to participate in Aspire Pre-K, which will allow me to continue expanding quality early learning opportunities for children in Baltimore City. Professional development programs, coaching, and educational supports are essential for providers who are committed to improving outcomes for young children.

In addition, the Circle meetings and workshops facilitated by staff such as Ms. Chaquana and Ms. Janae have provided valuable information, networking opportunities, and resources that have strengthened my program. The trainings offered through BCCCRC are affordable and accessible for child care providers who are often working with very limited budgets. I have attended trainings throughout Maryland, and many organizations charge \$100 to \$400 for professional development. BCCCRC consistently offers high-quality training opportunities at reasonable costs.

One of the programs I appreciate most is the annual Emotional Wellness Conference. For approximately \$35, providers can receive six hours of child care training while focusing on their own well-being and professional growth. Opportunities like these are critical for supporting and retaining early childhood educators.

BCCCRC has also connected providers to valuable resources such as books from the Maryland Book Bank, helping us replace worn materials and keep quality books available for the children in our care.

The support, coaching, training, and resources provided by BCCCRC directly impact the quality of care available to Baltimore City's children and families. Continued funding will allow BCCCRC to

continue serving child care providers who work every day to support the healthy development and education of young children.

Thank you for your consideration and for supporting Budget Bill 26-0188.

Sincerely,
Sonja Tuck
Owner/Operator
Sonja Sunrise Till Sunset Family Child Care
733 Linnard Street
Baltimore, MD



Baltimore City Council

100 Holliday Street

Baltimore, MD 21202

May 27, 2026

RE: FY2027 Funding Request for Baltimore Main Streets

Dear Council President Cohen and Councilmembers Glover and Dorsey:

On behalf of Belair-Edison Main Street, I respectfully request your support for increased funding for Baltimore's Main Street partner sites in the FY2027 budget.

Belair-Edison Main Street works to strengthen and revitalize one of Baltimore's most important commercial corridors by supporting small businesses, improving the appearance and functionality of our business district, promoting economic development, and creating community-centered events and programming. Through these efforts, we help attract investment, support local entrepreneurs, and enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Over the past year alone, Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc. (BENI) invested more than **\$400,000** into the Belair Road commercial corridor. These investments included **\$180,000 for commercial property acquisition and rehabilitation**, **\$120,000 for commercial lighting improvements**, including solar-powered streetlights, café and bistro lighting, tree pit lighting, and decorative string lighting, **\$30,000 for Frontline porter services**, **\$37,000 for greening and cleaning initiatives**, **\$25,000 for marketing, promotions, and community events**, and more than **\$30,000 for façade and commercial renovation projects**. These strategic investments have helped improve the corridor's appearance, safety, economic vitality, and overall business climate while maintaining approximately **90% occupancy among the corridor's 75 small businesses**.

Like Main Street organizations throughout Baltimore, we are being asked to do more with limited resources. Beginning in FY2027, Baltimore Main Street partner sites will lose a longstanding \$8,000 state improvement grant, further widening an already significant funding gap. While comparable Main Street programs in cities such as Boston, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. receive approximately \$130,000 annually per district, Baltimore Main Street organizations receive only \$75,000 per site despite serving larger geographic areas and facing substantial economic development challenges.

Additional funding would allow Belair-Edison Main Street to expand business support services, increase participation in façade improvement and commercial revitalization programs, activate vacant storefronts, provide more family-friendly community events, and strengthen marketing efforts that attract customers and investment to the corridor. Increased resources would also enhance our ability to leverage private and philanthropic investments, maximizing the impact of public dollars.

Investing in Baltimore's Main Streets is an investment in neighborhood stability, entrepreneurship, job creation, and equitable economic growth. Strong commercial districts create vibrant neighborhoods,

increase property values, improve public safety, and contribute to the overall economic health of our city.

We respectfully ask for your leadership in bringing Baltimore Main Street funding more in line with peer cities and helping offset the loss of state support. Your investment will ensure that neighborhood commercial districts like Belair-Edison continue to serve as engines of economic opportunity and community revitalization.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Baltimore's neighborhoods and commercial corridors. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the impact of Main Street programming and the importance of sustained investment in these critical community assets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Denitra Braham", followed by a horizontal line.

Denitra Braham, Executive Director

Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc.