



**Sheila Dixon**

*Mayor,*  
Baltimore

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Mayor Dixon and Central Baltimore Community Announce Charles North Vision Plan**

Baltimore, MD (October 30, 2008) – Mayor Sheila Dixon and the Central Baltimore Partnership unveiled a multi-phased development initiative for the Charles North community; Baltimore’s crossroads of residential, retail, artist galleries and transit to be anchored with four unique zones.

The Charles North Vision Plan incorporates input from a broad spectrum of community members – public, private, institutional and community. This plan leverages an already existing surge in artist and small business incubators with a common development strategy focused on stimulating private sector investment in small business while substantially increasing residential density.

“The Charles North Vision Plan is the result of a strong partnership between the residents, business and the cultural community,” said Baltimore City Mayor Sheila Dixon. “By coming together, we will build on the momentum that has already been taking place throughout the community, and help built a stronger and more sustainable neighborhood for everyone.”

Central Baltimore is a collection of some of Baltimore’s most historic neighborhoods, situated between the rapidly developing Charles Village to the north, and Midtown-Mount Vernon to the south. The area overlooks the Jones Falls River Valley, is culturally and ethnically diverse, and ready for rebirth and sustainable growth.

With the success of many independent, yet scattered efforts including the Charles Theatre, Metro Gallery, Station North Arts Café Gallery, the Windup Space, Load of Fun, Schuler Art School and Railway Express redevelopment there is a need for a comprehensive and cohesive approach to a community-wide plan. The area is a premier transit-oriented-development site in the State of Maryland and many property owners of key parcels are ready to act.

This plan is focused on transforming Charles North into a key residential, commercial, creative and entertainment destination point for the Baltimore region. It includes: retail, high-density residential buildings on small footprints, open green space, robotic parking garages, hotel and historic preservation developed around a pedestrian-orientated community.

“Seeing the Charles North Vision Plan come to fruition is an important part of our economic development strategy for the city and for the area,” said Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) President M.J. “Jay” Brodie. “The BDC has managed this process and coordinated the city’s effort as part of this unique public-private partnership to orchestrate the renewal of a once great neighborhood into a destination following years of disinvestment.”

Four anchor areas have been identified as places ready for revitalization: Charles Gateway/Penn Station, Charles and North corners, Asia town, and Creative/Design Zone.

“This area is already undergoing an exciting renaissance and the vision plan will help guide us into a future of sustainable growth,” said Fred Lazarus, President of the Maryland Institute College of Art and Chairman of the Central Baltimore Partnership. “There are long-range plans, as well as immediate actions that we will be involved in.”

Phase I recommendations of the action plan features concrete, immediate actions that include supporting current pioneers, initiating the Penn Station redevelopment process, targeted new redevelopment initiatives, building on existing incubators for diverse entrepreneurship. These efforts range from immediate to near future implementation.

Phase II and beyond include a call for the initiation of “Asia Town” along 20<sup>th</sup> Street at Charles Street, development of a Design Center facility, creation of a live-work-study tower building, and creation of Falls Hill Park along the Jones Falls.

Already a designated Arts and Entertainment District by the State of Maryland in the Station North area, this plan further leverages the connection between existing artists, galleries and leading institutions like Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA).

“I am particularly pleased that this planning effort was initiated by the community and included neighborhood residents and organizations and all important stakeholders, as well as city agencies,” said Councilman Bernard “Jack” Young.

“We have before us an ambitious & challenging plan one that perhaps stretches us to look beyond the ordinary to be creative not only in our thinking but in action,” said Reverend Dale Dussman, President of the Charles North Community Association.

The plan was developed over a number of months by BTA+, a Boston firm that invented the festival marketplace concept utilized in marquee projects like Faneuil Hall in Boston

and Harbor Place in Baltimore. They are also the planner and co-developer of the highly successful Union Station project in Washington, D.C., and were selected through a national competition managed through the BDC. Four city agencies, area property owners, UB, MICA and the Goldseker Foundation teamed together to raise over \$150,000 needed to fund the plan.

The Central Baltimore Partnership is collaboration between institutions, community organizations, stakeholders, and local government to foster the arts and sustainable development in healthy, transit-oriented neighborhoods at the center of the Baltimore metropolitan region.

The Central Baltimore Partnership is comprised of: MICA, University of Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, the City of Baltimore – Office of the Mayor, Baltimore Development Corporation, Baltimore Housing, Office of Neighborhoods, Department of Planning, community organizations, and area property owners.

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