



**Baltimore City Mayor Selects the Baltimore Development Corporation and Neighborhood Design Center to Lead *Design for Distancing: Reopening Baltimore Together*, a Tactical Public Health and Business Recovery Initiative Throughout Baltimore City Districts**

**Baltimore, May 26, 2020** – With a \$1.5 million investment from Baltimore City’s COVID-19 Small Business Assistance Initiative, Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young has announced that Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) and Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) will lead *Design for Distancing: Reopening Baltimore Together* ([www.designfordistancing.org](http://www.designfordistancing.org)), a tactical urban design initiative intended to help small businesses reopen without compromising public health. The effort will encompass over a dozen selected districts across the city, including current and former Main Streets, Retail Business Licensing Districts (RBLD), and Arts & Entertainment Districts identified as priority areas for the Small Business Assistance Fund grant program.

Working in partnership with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) experts and local stakeholders, the BDC and NDC will:

1. **Launch** a design competition brief on May 29 that seeks tactical concepts for innovative urban public space configurations for safe, socially distancing and patronizing businesses using JHSPH proposed guidelines. The top concepts will be selected by June 7, 2020, and there will be \$50,000 in stipends available for those chosen. Winning designers may participate in the physical implementation, but are not required to do so.
2. **Create** a digital Pattern Book containing the winning designs along with additional resources, made free for download to anyone in the world to utilize.
3. **Implement** public space reconfigurations in select Baltimore City Districts. Each district will be paired with a local design-build team to scope, develop and implement public space interventions in July. Design-build teams will be awarded a \$10,000 design stipend.

This effort is part of Mayor Young’s COVID-19 Small Business Assistance Initiative, which established the COVID-19 Small Business Task Force, a public-private partnership with a \$5.5 million fund to provide financial assistance to small businesses, as well as other resources and guidelines to help neighborhood businesses reopen safely.

“In Baltimore, the streets, sidewalks and stoops are important gathering spaces, and in many ways the intersection of our lives. Recapturing these areas is critical to our reopening and economic recovery but it must be done in a creative and safe use of space. This is a special chance to show these spaces love and keep our citizens safe in order to support activities like lining up for restaurant carry-out, patronizing farmer’s markets, and waiting outside of barbershops and salons, laundromats, and banks all while using public health best practices,” said Mayor Young. “We have the most capable and brightest public health experts, designers, makers, and innovators living and working in Baltimore City. We are well poised to lead the world in this way.”

The districts were selected based on eligibility criteria that aligns with the BDC’s Small Business Assistance Fund [Grant](#).

“Reopening in a manner consistent with public health best practices will require businesses to make significant adjustments to their operation and capacity,” said Colin Tarbert, president and CEO of BDC. “BDC’s goal is to support small businesses by assisting them to adapt to these social distancing guidelines by reconfiguring public spaces to maximize outdoor seating and waiting areas as they begin to reopen.”

To learn more about BDC’s larger efforts, visit <https://www.baltimoretogether.com>, a repository of information and resources for both residents and businesses that is continuously updated as new information becomes available.

“Over the next few months, cities around the world will be working to develop innovative solutions that safely allow their economies and public lives to open up again. Baltimore has the opportunity to not only support its own incredible small business community, but also be a leader in creating new urban models for social distancing,” said Jennifer Goold, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Design Center. “We are looking for creative design submissions from local agencies and freelancers, even if they don’t have the capacity to implement their creation. These concepts will then be built in Baltimore and shared with others around the world to borrow from in order to create their own practical solutions.”

### **About Baltimore Development Corporation**

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) is the economic development agency for the City of Baltimore. Its mission is to grow the city’s economy in an inclusive manner by retaining, expanding and attracting businesses and promoting investment, thereby increasing career opportunities for residents.

### **About Neighborhood Design Center**

Since 1968, Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) has helped low and moderate income communities build new playgrounds, reclaim abandoned buildings and vacant lots,

develop affordable housing, revitalize commercial districts and create neighborhood master plans. With offices in the Station North area of Baltimore and in Hyattsville, Maryland, NDC's assistance strengthens civic participation in development initiatives, educates the public about the value of good design, planning and preservation as community revitalization tools, and increases investment in the responsive rebuilding of neighborhoods. Learn more at <https://ndc-md.org/>.

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