



SB0816/HB1276

**West North Avenue Development Authority
Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Program**

WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Act

**Chad Williams
Executive Director**

&

**Christy Turner
Sr. Policy Analyst**

House of Delegates

Economic Matters Committee

West North Avenue Development Authority

HB1276

House Office Building, Room 230

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 - 1:00 PM

Senate

Finance Committee

West North Avenue Development Authority

SB0816

East Miller Senate Building, Room 3

Thursday, March 5, 2026 - 1:00 PM

West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA)

WNADA's Mission

As you know the [West North Avenue Development Authority for Baltimore City \(WNADA\)](#) is empowered by the General Assembly to revitalize the historical communities along the W North Avenue corridor where residents and businesses can thrive in an environmentally friendly area with economic equity, various housing options, reliable public transportation access, and neighborhood improvements; that supports diverse entertainment, commercial, and recreation along with light industrial manufacturing and retail as destination site for Baltimore City and the State of Maryland.

WNADA's Comprehensive Plan alignment to Governor and General Assembly Goals

On January 25, 2024, the Authority submitted a [Comprehensive Plan](#) to the Governor and General Assembly for West North Avenue through a series of stakeholder forums bringing together 16 different neighborhoods to agree on one plan. In the Comprehensive Plan, pages 117 – 128, the Authority lists Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Tasks, Timeline, and the State and City agencies responsible for achieving measurements, outcomes and benchmarks in coordination with the Authority. These WNADA goals, objectives, and strategies are aligned to the Governor's priorities of safer, affordable and competitive as illustrated in our [Governor and WNADA - Goals/Objectives/Strategies](#) matrix sheet. This matrix sheet also illustrates the measurable quantitative and qualitative impact of our work.

Since last session, our agency has now included goals, objectives and strategies for Arts and Culture, Neighborhood and Public Safety development, along with Housing, Real Estate, Economic, Business, Transportation, Infrastructure and Green Space development.

This current fiscal year our agency has taken those various development visions and created conceptual development plans in partnership with community development organizations, neighborhood associations and residents for the [Future of West North Avenue](#).

WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Act

Since our inception, community engagement has been engrained in our strategy. We've conducted listening tours, hosted planning sessions and resident coordinating council meetings, and facilitated community-led and partner-based events. As our agency has evolved, so has our approach to defining neighborhood development; however, our primary goal remains to foster holistic development that strengthens the corridor and facilitates collaboration among residents. Our vision is to create thriving and self-sustaining communities by prioritizing the preservation of community identity and the amplification of local voices. We are also committed to enhancing public spaces, ensuring public safety, workforce readiness and empowering resident leadership and civic capacity.

Despite the innovation and demand for programming among residents and community organizations along the West North Avenue Corridor, financial and capacity barriers often limit access to grant funding opportunities and the consistency and scaling of events and non-profit operations, in comparison to other

Baltimore communities, highlighting the need for alternative approaches for neighborhood development support.

This is why HB1276 is crucial. The WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Program seeks to establish a rolling grant process, allowing neighborhood associations and community-based organizations year-round access to funding. The legislation will focus on providing technical support, capacity building, and grant funding for initiatives like social gatherings, cultural events, outreach efforts, and activation of recreational green spaces is vital for revitalizing the West North Avenue corridor that will generate increase population growth and generate additional property, sales and income revenue for the State and Baltimore City.

The program will also facilitate pathways for youth involvement in community activities, ensuring they are active participants in shaping their neighborhoods by partnering with youth focused nonprofits and recipients of ENOUGH Act funding located in neighborhoods along the WNADA Corridor.

Additionally, the social connectivity grants will support neighborhood newsletters, community bulletins, and digital platforms that help residents connect with local resources and learn about neighborhood events to ensure both legacy residents and newcomers don't struggle to find information or feel isolated. Stipends offered to volunteer organizers and funding for operational staff will ensure programming doesn't depend solely on volunteer efforts so neighbors and youth participants can count on consistent events and activities year-round while receiving compensation for their time and efforts.

The neighborhood-led implementation of events will serve as a blueprint for other grassroots economic development activities across Maryland.

The funding structure and eligibility requirements enables grassroots efforts to thrive and expands WNADA's capacity to address diverse neighborhood needs beyond traditional focuses on preservation and public safety. By emphasizing initiatives that promote social connectivity, economic vitality, and community engagement, this legislation broadens our impact.

Supporting neighborhood-driven events demonstrates how strategic investment in local initiatives can enhance social cohesion that is essential for retaining and attracting residents, businesses, and visitors.

WNADA is committed to building stronger, safer, and more connected communities in West Baltimore.

Fiscal Impact

This Act will have no additional impact on the General Fund and the agency is not presently or will in the future request additional funding to implement this program. This program simply defines the use of existing annual appropriated funds for neighborhood development activities.

WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Program Boundaries

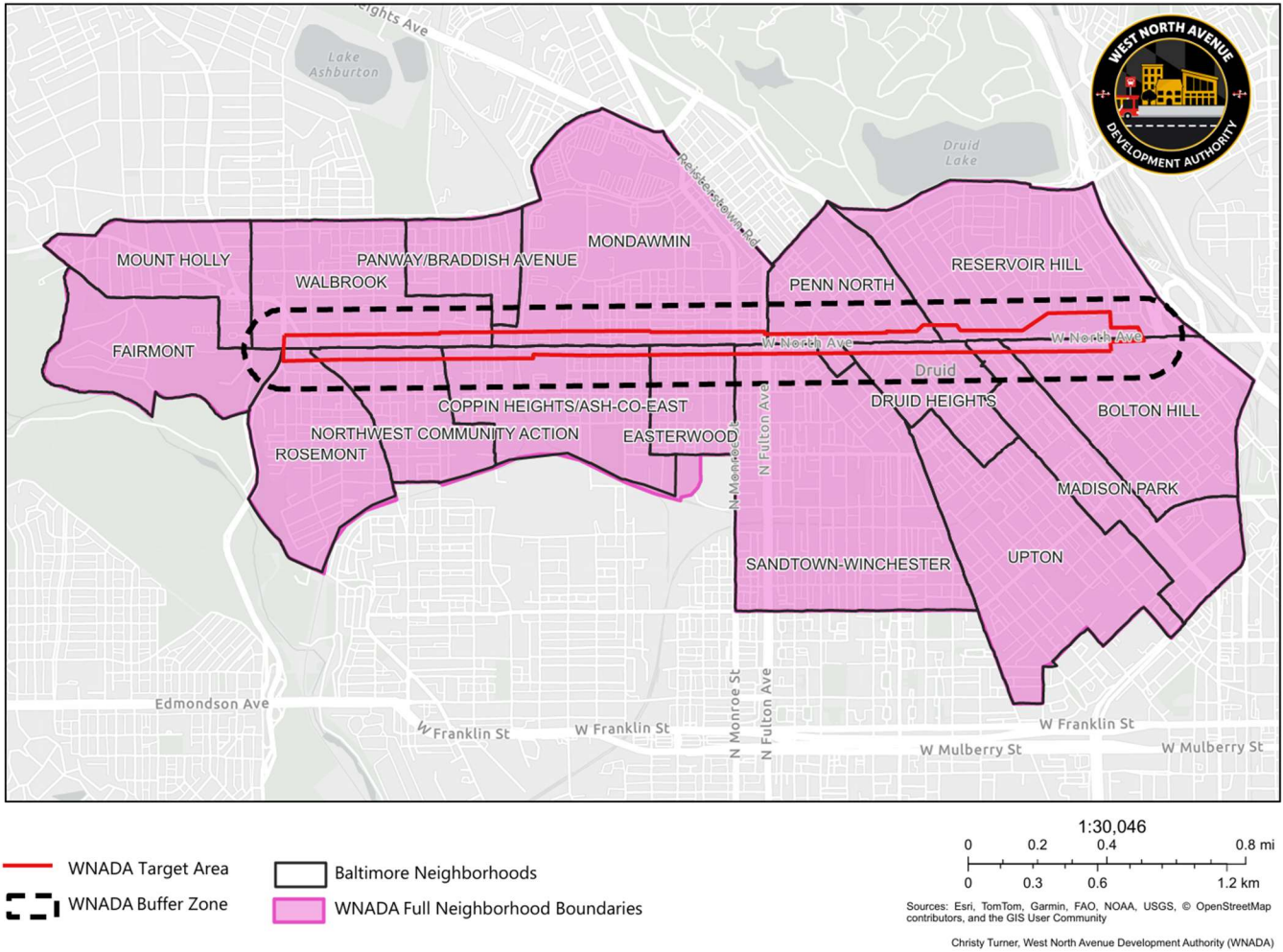


Figure 1: WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Program Boundaries