

# MARKET CENTER MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER QUARTERLY NEWS & UPDATES FROM YOUR BUSINESS DISTRICT

## GAMING AND CAMARADERIE at M.A.P. GAMING LOUNGE

— MERCHANT SPOTLIGHT —



- By Tom Volper

It's what's on the inside that counts. That sounds like advice a grandmother might give. It also applies to 229 Park Avenue in Baltimore.

That's the address of M.A.P. Gaming Lounge. The owner, Mike Peace, would be the first to admit he doesn't spend a lot on marketing, maybe Facebook ads occasionally. He often leaves the store's steel shutters down even when he's open.

But inside on any afternoon, or evening, you'll find something unique in the

city and rare in a world where everyone seems to have gaming technology at home. Here are banks of computers, sure, but also so much more. Mike has made M.A.P. a home entertainment center away from home.

"There's really nothing like it anywhere," Mike says. "There are few gaming lounges...but there is absolutely, positively nothing like this... We do a multitude of things... My goal was to have a place people can come in and cool out and not worry about things, enjoy themselves."

A PUBLICATION OF

**MARKET CENTER  
MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION**

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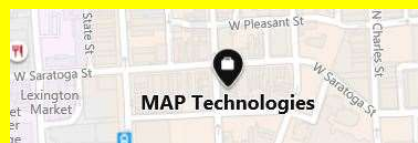
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**MAP Technologies**  
219 Park Avenue



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# FROM THE LEADERSHIP

— OF THE MARKET CENTER MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION —

FROM MCMA  
PRESIDENT  
**JUDSON H. KERR, III**

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Residents mean business. At MCMA, we strive to learn from Market Center residents – what they like and dislike about their neighborhood – and build relationships. In many ways, residents’ opinions mirrors those of business owners. They all want fewer vacant buildings, less trash, and functional infrastructure.

In other ways, residents’ feedback differs from that of business owners, but the desires are complementary. Business owners must make a living, and residents want to live in a community that meets their needs with a home they can afford, transportation that works for them, and necessary and desired amenities, such as parks and communal gathering spaces, shopping, dining, and services. The more the businesses of Market Center meet the needs of the residents, the likelier both groups will be content.

To this end, MCMA conducted a survey of Market Center residents and held focus groups attended by many residents. To date, 60 people responded to the survey. While the survey is not statistically valid, it does give us helpful insights. For example, when asked what three qualities are most important when deciding where to shop and dine, respondents cited personal safety most frequently, followed by the presence of unique businesses, arts and entertainment venues; cleanliness of neighborhood; and low prices/good value.

During our focus group sessions, we learned that residents (and people who work in Market Center) would appreciate having more communal gathering spaces, such as parks, plazas, indoor activity centers, and coffee shops. With such amenities, people are more likely to spend time in Market Center, which also translates into them patronizing Market Center businesses. Win-win!

FROM MCMA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**KRISTEN MITCHELL**

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In recent months, I spent many hours working with institutional and civic partners, residents, artists, employees, and business and property owners on the Market Center Strategic Revitalization Plan (“SRP”). I felt guilty because I spent a lot of time figuring out how to communicate what I heard at focus groups and work sessions and turning that information into measurable objectives and strategies. I had less time to commit to my normal activities, such as connecting with business owners, submitting and following up on 311 requests, and getting the newsletter out on time!

However, we cannot underestimate the power of working together to develop a shared vision for Market Center, and strategies to achieve that vision -- and this does take time and thought. This shared vision – which covers housing, transportation, economy, quality of life, environment, and community engagement – will help guide future actions in Market Center. When civic, institutional, and nonprofit leaders understand the community’s goals, they can make more informed policy and funding decisions. This also gives private investors more confidence to invest in Market Center.

We also plan to request Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development approval of the Market Center SRP, which would make Market Center a Baltimore Regional Neighborhoods Initiative (“BRNI”) partner. As a BRNI partner, Market Center will be eligible to apply for BRNI funds. This June, in addition to submitting the SRP, we also intend to submit grant proposals which – if funded – would allow us to support building renovation and reuse (to support a clear public good), public space improvements, and stabilization of key buildings.

For more information about the Market Center SRP, visit [www.marketcentercdc.com](http://www.marketcentercdc.com).

# NEWS & UPDATES

— IN THE MARKET CENTER —



Images of proposed new Lexington Market from left to right: view from Eutaw Street, the plaza, and view from Paca Street, with proposed new adjacent development project in background. Courtesy of Seawall Development.

## LEXINGTON MARKET PROCEEDS

In March and again in May, Seawall Development and its design team, BCT Architects and Fluora Teeter Landscape Architects, presented schematic designs for the redevelopment of Lexington Market to the city's Urban Design and Architectural Advisory Panel (UDAAP).

The project includes demolition of the Arcade, a 1980s addition to the East Market; new construction on the surface parking lot; and creation of a new urban plaza, which will re-establish a pedestrian and visual connection between the 300 and 500 blocks of W. Lexington. The East Market will be repurposed for new uses in the future.

The new building is expected to be 58,000 square feet, and it will include space for fresh and prepared food vendors, seating, and events. The plaza will feature a variety of seating options, event space, and a ramp that is both practical and integral to the overall design.

Typical of many public markets and harkening back to an earlier version of Lexington Market, the

new building will have a shed-like design, though it will feature modern materials including steel and cement, in addition to brick and wood. The building will have entrances on Paca Street, Eutaw Street, and the plaza. Delivery and service entrances will be concentrated on the south side of the site, in an alley shared with another much-anticipated future development project.

Seawall will host a town hall meeting on Lexington Market on June 26, from 6 – 8 p.m. For information, visit: <https://lexingtonmarket.com/about/>.

## MCMA HOSTS ANNUAL MEETING, WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

On May 14, the Market Center community came together for MCMA's annual meeting, featuring Zed Smith, COO of The Cordish Companies, who spoke about how small businesses can thrive in the age of Amazon. MCMA members also approved the budget and new board members. We are proud to welcome **Bill King, City Center Residents Association, Claudia Jolin, Downtown Partnership, and Sahena Tethe, International Fragrance Shop**, to our board.

## LE MONDO CELEBRATES ITS GRAND OPENING

For an artistic community to thrive, artists need access to space in which they can live, work, create, and share, and that space must be safe, affordable, and permanent. In other words, artists need to own real estate.

Driven by this reality, Le Mondo, an artist-owned-and-driven arts initiative, purchased three historic buildings at 406-412 N. Howard Street, which they are transforming into a "midsize, multi-use performance venue, an intimate black box theater, studio, rehearsal, and office spaces, affordable live-work apartments, and a neighborhood café" (from [www.LeMondo.org](http://www.LeMondo.org)).

On May 17, Le Mondo welcomed the public into its home, celebrating the grand opening of 406 N. Howard in style, with music, live performances, art installations, food and beverages. Guests were also treated to building tours and a glimpse of work underway in their next two buildings.

Le Mondo is an asset to the community, with its stop-you-in-your tracks building façade, anticipated schedule of public events, and most importantly, resource for artists.

## MARKET CENTER STRATEGIC REVITALIZATION PLAN

MCMA has been working with the Market Center Community Development Corporation (MCCDC) and many other partners throughout 2019 to develop a Market Center Strategic Revitalization Plan ("SRP"). The SRP addresses housing, transportation, economy, environment, quality of life, and community engagement; it includes visions, measurable objectives, strategies, and responsible parties. To date, we have attracted 130+ people (90 unique individuals) to focus groups, workgroup meetings, advisory committee meetings, and a public meeting, a clear indication that people care about this community and want to have a say in its future.

For more information on the SRP, visit [www.marketcentercdc.com](http://www.marketcentercdc.com).

## M.A.P. GAMING LOUNGE

*Continued from page 1*

Yes, you can play video games. There are theme nights for different kinds of competition, and even a tournament once a month. Mike and his staff also will fix your broken electronics. But he also has a smorgasbord of non-tech entertainment at any one time: live bands, poetry nights, live rap music, art nights complete with wine. The list goes on. Perhaps because of the diverse events, the lounge attracts a wide assortment of customers.

Most of the big events happen at night. But if you just want to come in after school or work, the vibe is chill, friendly. Mike says some afternoons the place serves as a sort of latch key program.

"Kids will come in, pay \$3 for an hour, and end up staying 3 hours," Mike says.

Parents know their children are at M.A.P. They trust Mike. That's not surprising, really.

When he's not at the lounge, Mike works for the Baltimore School District instructing autistic children. Talking to him, you feel yourself starting to relax. He sits back in his chair, or walks casually about his business. No rush.

Mike grew up in Baltimore. He was a middle child, with an older brother and sister who also are his business partners in M.A.P. He and his brother always were into tech. From when he was young it was Mike's dream to open a place like the lounge, somewhere customers could enjoy gaming, but also where they could push away from a device and get to know another human being face to face casually.

Mike is chill, but he does worry about Baltimore, and his block of Park Avenue just south of W. Saratoga Street. He knows the history of the area, how it used to be the commercial hub of the city.

"It's disheartening," Mike says.

But he likes being downtown. He had a much smaller store up on Belair Road for 11 years. Then his uncle bought a few properties on Park Avenue. Mike liked the idea of being "in the heart of the city." He opened M.A.P. almost five years ago. Marketing is mostly word of mouth.

"It's friendly, welcoming," says William Harcum, a regular customer. He said he likes that other gamers are always willing to teach you, and there is also a lot of great merchandise, everything from new games to oldies-but-goodies. William comes in 3-4 times a week.

"I never feel like I'm breaking my pocket when I come here," he says.



*Photos: Guests at Out of Order, Maryland Art Place's signature annual exhibition and benefit, 218 W. Saratoga; Gorgeous new paint, Ingerman & Horwitz, 20 Park Avenue; Dessert – Peruvian toast and chocolate ice cream – at Puerto 511 Cocina Peruana, 102 W. Clay.*

# MCMA COMMITTEE UPDATES

If you are interested in participating on a committee, contact  
Kristen Mitchell at 443-478-3014 or [executivedirector@marketcenterbaltimore.org](mailto:executivedirector@marketcenterbaltimore.org)

## CLEAN & SAFE COMMITTEE

P.C. Price, *Chair*  
*Legal Services Assoc., Inc.,*

Ann Winder, *Co-Chair*  
*The Place Lounge*

*Meets the second Monday of every month at 10:00 a.m.*

- MCMA is supporting the City Center Residents Association's Community Cleanup days, held the last Saturday of every month. MCMA supplies rakes, brooms, dust pans, and some volunteer assistance. We would LOVE to bring more volunteers to these events. Contact Kristen Mitchell if interested.
- The committee facilitated the creation of MCMA's 50/50 Power Washing Incentive Program. If you would like to have the front of your business power washed, MCMA will cover half the cost, up to \$300. Contact Kristen Mitchell if interested.
- The committee coordinated MCMA's successful efforts to get the liquor license at 117 N. Eutaw Street revoked due to confirmed illegal activity at the liquor store.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Wendy Blair, *Chair*  
*Re/Max Commercial Logic*

*Meets the first Thursday of the month at 8:30 a.m.*

- The committee is collaborating with the Market Center Community Development Corporation (MCCDC) to facilitate a community-driven Strategic Revitalization Plan (SRP) for Market Center. Visit page 4 of this newsletter or [www.MarketCenterCDC.com](http://www.MarketCenterCDC.com) for more information.
- The committee is collaborating with the Market Center Community Development Corporation (MCCDC) to facilitate a community-driven Strategic Revitalization Plan (SRP) for Market Center. Visit page 4 of this newsletter or [www.MarketCenterCDC.com](http://www.MarketCenterCDC.com) for more information.
- Thus far, through the SRP process, we have connected with more than 90 individuals. We have held five focus groups, four workgroup meetings on housing, transportation, economy, quality of life, environment, and community engagement, one broad public meeting, and three advisory committee meetings.
- The committee is coordinating submission of the SRP to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, to request designation as a Baltimore Regional Neighborhood partner, which will open new funding opportunities to the community.

## MARKETING COMMITTEE

Scott Garfield, *Chair*  
*Lexington Market*

*The Marketing Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of the month at 9:00 a.m.*

- The committee is creating a business directory and map, which MCMA will make available in hard copies and on-line.
- In conjunction with the Community Development Committee, the committee continues to host monthly Market Center Mingles, which connect business owners, property owners, residents, and other interested parties over their shared interest in Market Center, but in a relaxed social atmosphere. Participants at the Mingles have created their own initiatives: they are working with the owner of CenterPoint Apartments to create a community center, hosting events (the inaugural Game Night was held on April 18), doing research and outreach to create a public policy agenda for Market Center, and planning ways to prepare Market Center businesses to reap the benefits of the CIAA Basketball Tournament in 2021.
- MCMA is sponsoring the Charm City Night Market on September 21, 2019, which will take place on Lexington Street between Howard Street and Center Plaza.

# INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

— OF THE MARKET CENTER MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION —



*Developers, architects, and engineers evaluate the Brager-Gutman building, 201 W. Lexington Street.*

## **STREET TREE MAINTENANCE**

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Through its Urban Forestry Division, Baltimore City's Department of Recreation & Parks cares for more than 125,000 trees on the city's sidewalks, and in medians and parks. With such a significant task, Forestry cannot always respond to requests for pruning or removal of dead trees as quickly as they would like. Therefore, Recreation & Parks allows private entities to hire and pay for Maryland Licensed Tree Experts to do work on street trees. The Licensed Tree Expert must obtain approval of the work and a permit from Recreation & Parks. The permit is free. For information, contact 410-396-6109.

Of course, you can still call 311 to request city services on street trees.

## **SIDEWALK REPAIRS**

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Many of Market Center's sidewalks need repairs. The City of Baltimore will repair sidewalks if problems are caused by utility work or tree roots, and you can call 311 to submit a request. Private property owners are responsible for repairing the sidewalk that abuts their property if it is damaged for reasons other than utility work or tree roots.

Property owners who need or want to repair the sidewalk must hire a licensed contractor and get a permit, the price of which is based on linear feet of work. Apply for a permit at 200 N. Holliday Street, Room 6, First Floor. For information, call 410-396-4508.

## **HOMELESS OUTREACH**

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Many people who live, work, and spend time in Market Center are interested in helping people they see in distress, and it can be difficult to figure out how best to do that. We have compiled a list of several options:

- If someone is experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.

If you are concerned about someone who is not in medical distress, you can:

- Email the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS) at [homelessoutreach@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:homelessoutreach@baltimorecity.gov). Include a short description of the person and the location. MOHS will send an outreach team to respond, develop a relationship with the person if they do not already have one, and follow up with you.

- Call 211, available 24/7/365. Operators can guide you to essential services for health care, mental health and substance abuse, children and families, veterans, housing and homelessness, food, utilities, employment, legal and tax issues, and seniors and people with disabilities.
- Email Nate Fields, VP of Clean Streets with the Downtown Partnership: [nfields@dpop.org](mailto:nfields@dpop.org). He oversees an outreach team that has relationships with people experiencing homeless, and they are well connected with service providers.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

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Interested in learning about Maryland's workforce development resources? Check out <https://businessexpress.maryland.gov/grow/workforce>.

## **RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES**

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MCMA's webpage includes information on grants, loans, technical assistance, and other resources available to business owners. For information, visit <http://marketcenterbaltimore.org/information-for-businesses/>.

# MARKET CENTER MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

## ABOUT THE MARKET CENTER

Market Center is comprised of 27 blocks near Lexington Market, roughly bounded by Baltimore Street to the south, Greene to the west, Cathedral/Liberty to the east and Madison to the north. The exact boundaries are best shown on a map [back page].

Established in 1983, Market Center is one of ten Retail Business District License (RBDL) areas in the City of Baltimore. Each RBDL was established by a separate City Council ordinance, and the businesses within the RBDL boundaries are required to pay an annual fee, which the city collects and then redistributes back to the business association for use in the district.



*City Center Residents Association and MCMA volunteers on Howard Street.*

## ABOUT THE MARKET CENTER MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

The Market Center Merchants Association (MCMA) represents the businesses within Market Center. MCMA promotes commerce, retains and attracts business, and enhances the customer and residential experience. MCMA uses the RBDL fees to support a variety of work, much of which is outlined in the reports in this newsletter.

### ADVERTISING SALES RATES

MCMA offers advertising opportunities in this quarterly newsletter, which we send to our email distribution list (406 members and growing), post on social media and our website, and distribute to Mount Vernon Marketplace and some apartment buildings for welcome packets.

Advertising Prices*				
	1 issue	2 issues	3 issues	4 issues
¼ page	\$60	\$110	\$155	\$200
½ page	\$100	\$190	\$275	\$355
Full page	\$170	\$320	\$460	\$590

\* Market Center businesses that are current on their Retail Business District License fees receive a 10% discount.

## WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES TO THE DISTRICT

- **A-2 Mart**, 313 W. Madison
- **Fan Fare Food Mart**, 501 W. Lexington
  - **Indi Bowl**, 520 Park
- **Refocused (Vegan Restaurant)**, 429 N. Eutaw
- **Luxury Imports Auto Tag & Title**, 219 Park
  - **Taco Town**, 413 W. Baltimore

# DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

— IN MARKET CENTER —

## Key

- A – 602 N. Howard – retail, storage
- B – 426 W. Franklin – artists' housing, retail
- C – 501 W. Franklin – 96 apts.
- D – 418-24 N. Howard – apts.
- E – 416 N. Howard – 5 apts., retail
- F – Le Mondo Arts Incubator
- G – 108 W. Saratoga, 7 apts.
- H – Lexington Market
- I – 106-110 N. Eutaw – 11 apts., retail
- J – University Lofts – Mixed-use
- K – Four Ten Lofts – artists' housing
- L – 511 Park – 16 apts.
- M – 505 Park – 10 apts.
- N – 500 Park – 153 apts., retail
- O – Hela Franklin Apartments – 50 apts., retail
- P – 9 N. Howard – 15 apts., commercial
- Q – Howard Row – 41 apts., retail
- R – 400-15 Park – Mixed-use
- S – Pratt Library Renovations
- T – Mulberry at Park Apts. – 70 apts.
- U – La Quinta Hotel – 42 keys
- V – L on Liberty – 72 apts.
- W – 101 W. Lexington – 8 apts., retail
- X – 2 Hopkins Plaza – 183 apts.
- Y – Howard Station – Mixed-use
- Z – Paca House Renovation, Expansion
- 1 – 109 W. Lexington – 20 apts., commercial
- 2 – 106 Park – Retail
- 3 – 600 N. Howard – 12 studio apts., commercial
- 4 – Crook Horner Lofts – 15 loft apts., commercial
- 5 – Mayfair – 50 apts., commercial
- 6 – Fayette/Liberty - 20 apts., commercial
- 7 – 106 W. Saratoga – 10 apts.



Blue - Complete \* Green - Under Way \* Orange - Breaking Ground Soon

## MARKET CENTER MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kristen Mitchell

executivedirector@marketcenterbaltimore.org \* 443-478-3014



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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