



FY27 Budget Testimony to the Maryland General Assembly

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House of Delegates

Appropriations Committee

Education and Economic Development Subcommittee

West North Avenue Development Authority

FY27 Budget Hearing

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Senate

Budget and Taxation Committee

Health and Human Services Subcommittee

West North Avenue Development Authority

FY26 Budget Hearing

Miller Senate Building, William Amoss Room, 4th Floor

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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.

With the approval of SB04/HB258 (2025), our authority is now authorized to provide loans; acquire, own, dispose and lease property; establish a special benefits zone; charge and collect fees for services, and operate as private business. These additional powers and authorities will be essential in the agency becoming self-sufficient.

Therefore, in addition to our [grant manual](#) that is used for soliciting, evaluating and awarding grants, we are now in the final stages of completing a [loan manual](#).

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's FY76 Budget Request

The Governor's proposed FY27 request for our agency represents an appropriate funding level to meet our legislative mandate within our new and increased powers and authorities.

The West North Avenue Development Authority for Baltimore City is an essential agency for achieving the economic, housing and transportation goals of the Governor and General Assembly. The agency achieves this by

ensuring the second most traveled public bus and rail transit corridor in the State, that has 56% (15,400 units) of the residential and commercial vacancies in Baltimore City, becomes safer, affordable and economically competitive by providing affordable transit-oriented development (TOD) workforce housing options; improving public safety that reduces crime; and creating multi-modes of transit for residents to achieve their career goals in various manufacturing, retail, technology and professional opportunities.

These activities will increase property, sales, and income tax revenue for the State and Baltimore City that can be invested in other programs and other areas of the State that also need economic investment over the next 15 - 20 years like the communities located within the inner beltway of Prince George's and Montgomery County, rural areas of western Maryland and the Eastern Shore.

WNADA's Economic Impact

To annually justify the economic valuation of our State funded investments for economic development that will increase population and generate increases in income, property and sales taxes, WNADA contracted with the University of Baltimore, Jacob France Institute to provide an economic impact metrics value analysis.

The analysis determined that over the full fifteen years of WNADA's redevelopment efforts from FY26 – FY41, based on our objectives, strategies and funding approach, total aggregated construction expenditures of \$290.6 million will support \$473.3 million in Maryland economic activity and support 2,753 jobs earning \$192.8 million in Labor income and generate \$10.8 million in estimated State government revenues and \$8.1 million in estimated City/County/local government revenues and support the development/renovation of 450 single family and 750 multi-family units and 403,750 square feet of commercial space.

State of Maryland Impacts

- In the first year of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total construction expenditures of \$19.4 million will support \$31.6 million in Maryland economic activity and support 184 jobs earning \$12.9 million in Labor income and generate \$0.7 million in estimated State government revenues and \$0.5 million in estimated County/local government revenues.
- Over the first five years of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total aggregated construction expenditures of \$96.9 million will support \$157.8 million in Maryland economic activity and support 918 jobs earning \$64.3 million in Labor income and generate \$3.6 million in estimated State government revenues and \$2.7 million in estimated City/County/local government revenues.
- Over the first ten years of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total aggregated construction expenditures of \$193.8 million will support \$315.6 million in Maryland economic activity and support 1,836 jobs earning \$128.5 million in Labor income and generate \$7.2 million in estimated State government revenues and \$5.4 million in estimated City/County/local government revenues.
- Over the full fifteen years of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total aggregated construction expenditures of \$290.6 million will support \$473.3 million in Maryland economic activity and

support 2,753 jobs earning \$192.8 million in Labor income and generate \$10.8 million in estimated State government revenues and \$8.1 million in estimated City/County/local government revenues.

- WNADA's directly funded redevelopment accounts for 31% of total construction impacts and leveraged funds for 69%.

Baltimore City Impacts

- In the first year of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total construction expenditures of \$19.4 million will support \$24.9 million in Baltimore City economic activity and support 151 jobs earning \$10.9 million in Labor income and generate \$0.4 million in estimated State government revenues and \$0.3 million in estimated City government revenues.
- Over the first five years of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total aggregated construction expenditures of \$96.9 million will support \$124.4 million in Baltimore City economic activity and support 754 jobs earning \$54.3 million in Labor income and generate \$2.1 million in estimated State government revenues and \$1.7 million in estimated City government revenues.
- Over the first ten years of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total aggregated construction expenditures of \$193.8 million will support \$248.7 million in Baltimore City economic activity and support 1,508 jobs earning \$108.6 million in Labor income and generate \$4.3 million in estimated State government revenues and \$3.4 million in estimated City government revenues.
- Over the full fifteen years of WNADA's redevelopment efforts, total aggregated construction expenditures of \$290.6 million will support \$373.1 million in Baltimore City economic activity and support 2,262 jobs earning \$162.9 million in Labor income and generate \$6.4 million in estimated State government revenues and \$5.1 million in estimated City government revenues.
- WNADA's directly funded redevelopment accounts for 31% of total construction impacts and leveraged funds for 69%.

WNADA's Performance

Housing Development

To date, since FY24, our housing development activities have acquired 70 vacant and blighted residential properties with 16 completed, 54 under construction to be completed in FY26 with another 30 in the pipeline for acquisition and development completion in FY28. **This makes a total of 100 previously vacant and abandoned single-family homes that are currently within the WNADA portfolio of development in less than three years of fiscal State operations.**

We have also funded the redevelopment of a previously abandon and neglected segregated school building, located at 1801 N Rosedale, into 34 apartment style units of student housing with 72 beds, for Coppin State University in the Rosemont community in partnership with a Black-female developer.

Economic Development

Our economic development activities have acquired 6.8 acres of vacant and abandon land for commercial and retail development. These acquisitions and development include:

- 2.5 acre - Greenwood Towing Site (1358-1370 West North Ave.); large scale mixed-use transit-oriented development (TOD) destination site featuring commercial, retail, entertainment, and recreational space in the Penn North neighborhood that will be similar to Center City in downtown Washington, D.C.
- 1.5 acre - 600 W North Avenue; acquisition and development in partnership with Blank Slate Development LLC and MCB Real Estate, LLC to construct a [Streets Market grocery store and retail space](#) in the Reservoir Hill neighborhood.
- 2.8 acre - 2636 W. North Avenue Land Unit 2; construct into a [Westside Open Works \(WOW\)](#) light industrial and manufacturing makerspace. The project is designed to improve economic opportunity for small minority-owned businesses in Baltimore City with access to small businesses in Baltimore, Howard and Anne Arundel Counties.

Transportation

Our vision is to transform West North Avenue into a hub of vibrant public spaces that enhance walkability and support diverse transit and micromobility options to energize and improve the pedestrian economy.

In partnership with the Graham Projects and Open Works Baltimore we have improved transit access and pedestrian safety at the intersections of West North Avenue and McCulloh Street and Druid Hill Avenue.

The enhancements to date include:

- Construction of three 40-foot, wheelchair-accessible bus platforms along the corridor, which were put into daily use and commended by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA).
- Placement and vibrant painting of six large concrete blocks designed to protect each bus platform.
- Installation of three pervious, wheelchair-accessible rubber tree pits near North and Druid Hill Avenues, facilitating drainage, reducing weeds, and ensuring wheelchair access across sidewalks.
- Implementation of traffic calming measures such as bump outs, flex posts, and high-visibility crosswalks at the intersection of Druid Hill Avenue and McCulloh Street.
- Creation of a colorful traffic calming mural in the bump outs at North and McCulloh.
- Strategic placement of planters along the corridor, initially maintained by our project team.

Neighborhood Development & Social Connection

In our additional efforts to create a social environment that will attract residents to privately acquire vacant and abandon homes we are launching *Social Connectivity* initiative that will be funded through grants to existing neighborhood associations and community development corporations to support social connection and community development activities in WNADA's 16 neighborhoods.

Investing in social connectivity will help neighbors and families build relationships through organized, consistent events such as block parties, cultural festivals, and recreational gatherings that bring people together naturally. These investments will also help to create and maintain green spaces, parks, and public realm gathering areas that allow residents to spend time outdoors safely.

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.

Lastly, this programming strengthens resident stewardship by encouraging participation in planning activities that meet their needs and reflect neighborhood priorities in collaboration with their local neighborhood association and CDC.

These efforts will be further codified with the approval of SB0816/HB000 sponsored by Senator Antonio Hayes and Delegate Sarah Wolek through the [WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection Development Act](#).

Arts and Culture

Since launching our event series, we have focused on transforming the Mill on North into a vibrant cultural hub that welcomes and engages the community. Our diverse lineup of events, ranging from open mics and curated performances to happy hours and comedy nights, has successfully brought people together and fostered a sense of belonging within gathering spaces.

These initiatives have significantly raised awareness of the Mill on North and boosted foot traffic, leading to increased sales for local businesses. For instance, during the weekend of our recent event, Soulful Saturday, held on January 28, the Mill reported approximately \$27,000 in sales.

This surge in activity not only underscores the popularity of our events but also demonstrates their potential to contribute to the local economy and tax revenue for which WNADA has presently invested \$175,000 to help provided health food options in the Coppin Heights community.

Public Safety

As West Baltimore communities grapple with the enduring effects of systemic issues and the intersecting crises of mental health and substance use, the State of Maryland's West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) has taken bold steps to reimagine the West North Avenue corridor.

Recognizing the importance of public safety and resident support as essential components of economic and community revitalization, WNADA is prioritizing strategic, community-centered reform.

In 2023, WNADA awarded a grant to Frontline Management, a collaborative team of leaders in public safety, cleanliness, and community services. With strong community input, Frontline developed a strategy that responds directly to local calls for enhanced public safety, cleanliness and support for ongoing City initiatives in West Baltimore.

The WNADA public safety team have built their approach around three strategic pillars:

- Cleanliness and maintenance
- Resident resource coordination
- Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

The public safety team has been successful in improving safety, creating full-time jobs for local residents, and providing services such as trash removal, greenspace upkeep, business outreach, and referrals for behavioral health and addiction recovery.

This multi-partnership, institutional approach is essential for addressing deep-rooted challenges along West North Avenue, particularly the rise in residential and commercial property vacancy, inequitable transportation access, and illegal activity. Reinvestment in community-led solutions, along with strong public-private partnerships, is key to creating a lasting impact.

MBE

WNADA achieved a 55.5% MBE grants and contract award participation rate in FY25.

Managing for Results and FY25 Grantees

The committee may review both our [WNADA Pitch Deck](#) and [FY27 Managing for Results](#) for a summary of our mission, vision, neighborhood analysis, goals, objectives, strategies and expected quantitative and qualitative performance measurement outcome benchmarks to be achieved. We have also included a list our [WNADA FY25 Grantees](#) that were funded to accomplish either housing, economic, transportation or neighborhood development activities to revitalize W Baltimore.

Response to DLS Budget Analysis

- 1) WNADA should comment on major areas of contract expenses in fiscal 2026 and if the agency expects these contracts to continue to be needed in fiscal 2027.**

The agency expects FY27 contractual expenses to align with the expended budget levels incurred during our FY25 budget while continuing to maintain adequate fiscal controls to meet our operational growth functions within our funding appropriation.

- 2) The Department of Legislative Services recommends that the committees adopt narrative requesting that WNADA and the Department of Budget and Management program anticipated spending to minimize the potential for reallocating large percentages of funds intended for grants to other purposes.**

The agency agrees and fully supports this recommendation.

- 3) WNADA should comment on the feasibility of tracking these or similar outcome metrics in the MFR submission.**

The committee may review both our [WNADA Pitch Deck](#) and [FY27 Managing for Results](#) for a summary of our mission, vision, neighborhood analysis, goals, objectives, strategies and expected quantitative and qualitative performance measurement outcome benchmarks to be achieved. We have also included a list our [WNADA FY25 Grantees](#) that were funded to accomplish either housing, economic, transportation or neighborhood development activities to revitalize W Baltimore.

In February 2025, the agency adopted and presented to the committee a [performance metrics dashboard](#) that tracks our performance towards reducing vacant and blighted residential and commercial properties and increasing population, sales, income and property taxes. This dashboard, along with our recent [grantee performance dashboard](#), that was presented at our December 2025 WNADA Board meeting, ensures we are transparent in our reporting to the General Assembly and public of our operational and grantee performance metrics that align with our MFR submissions.

- 4) The WNADA comprehensive planning process identified metrics that could indicate the agency's economic development activities are positively affecting the area's economic stability, such as decreases in the number of vacant residential and commercial buildings and vacant lots or increases in the area population and unemployment rate. WNADA should comment on the feasibility of tracking these or similar outcome metrics in the MFR submission.**

See answer to #3.

5) WNADA should provide an update on its plans for a loan program.

The WNADA loan manual is scheduled for review, discussion and approval by the WNADA Governing Board on Monday, March 30. However, in concept the agency is considering a very competitive low-increase loan program that will be aligned to the Federal Applicable Rate for residential and commercial developers. This program will also provide better lending terms to minority developers and businesses that unfortunately have far too often been dependent on hard money lenders that use discriminatory high-interest rates in particular for minority borrowers.