



Preventing Small Business Displacement in Six Neighborhoods Along Maryland's Purple Line Light Rail Corridor

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**PURPLE LINE
CORRIDOR
COALITION**

This case study is part of the report *Keeping Small Businesses In Place: Voices From the Field*, a collection of case studies published by the Small Business Anti-Displacement Network. Read the full report: antidisplacement.org/research/publications/

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PLCC steering committee, which provides ongoing leadership to the coalition (see Appendix A for full list of members).

Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, County Councilmembers and Maryland State Assembly Members who touch the Purple Line corridor, and state agencies. All have supported Purple Line small businesses at the systems level.

This case study is a 'point in time' story, representing the viewpoints of the authors and the perspectives reflected in interviews. The analysis is based on the limited data and available history of the organization and community. We acknowledge that it is impossible to summarize the rich and complex history of the space we occupy and honor the wisdom of all voices of the past and present that have tirelessly worked in this space. We also acknowledge that the anti-displacement tools described in this document involved the contributions of many others. We hope for continued opportunities to hear and share these stories of organizing, community building, and shared progress in our community and beyond.

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Executive Summary

The Purple Line is a planned 21-station light rail line reaching east-west across a 16-mile corridor of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in the State of Maryland, USA. The new transit system, currently under construction, is an exciting opportunity to increase mobility in the region, but from the construction period itself to the increased property values associated with enhanced transit, the arrival of the Purple Line poses risks to nearby small businesses.

The Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) connects stakeholders in the region with the goal of pooling expertise, influence, and resources in a way that ensures positive, equitable outcomes for the people and businesses along the Purple Line.

The PLCC's efforts are focused in four subject areas, one of which is reducing the risk of small business displacement, particularly in six identified "equity areas" where the risk of adverse impacts is the greatest. The PLCC's Small Business Action Team was tasked with identifying tools for this specific area. The primary tools and strategies developed and deployed include:

1. **Technical assistance to adapt to change:** From supporting small businesses in the creation of social media accounts to providing assistance around financial and legal issues, technical assistance for individual businesses enables them to grow alongside the community.

2. **Strong places to support strong businesses:**

Strong businesses thrive in strong places, and place-based small business governance models like Main Streets can help scale marketing and other placemaking to drive business to commercial hubs.

3. **State funds to address construction**

disruption: Businesses facing loss of customers and income due to Purple Line construction are able to access grants that offset some of those losses, especially helpful for businesses that already lost revenue during the pandemic.

4. **Structured collaboration for amplified**

impact: A key function of the PLCC is the creation of spaces for strong dialogue among stakeholders and facilitating collaboration that generates new action and enables partners to play to their strengths.

Because Purple Line construction is still underway, achievement of the ultimate goal – that small businesses, especially BIPOC-owned micro businesses, survive and benefit from the Purple Line investment – is still to be determined. However, qualitative evidence indicates these tools have already alleviated stress on affected small businesses and positioned them for growth and sustainability as the project continues.

Introduction

The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area's metro transit system spiders out from downtown Washington, with legs that reach up into Maryland and down into Virginia suburbs. Automobile transport easily connects the ends of the "spider legs" via the beltway that surrounds the city, but public transit has historically been more limited in connecting different parts of suburban Maryland to one another (see Fig. 1). The Purple Line is a 16-mile planned light rail line reaching east-west Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in the State of Maryland, USA. The transit system, currently under construction, will bring transit to underserved communities in the northern suburbs of DC.

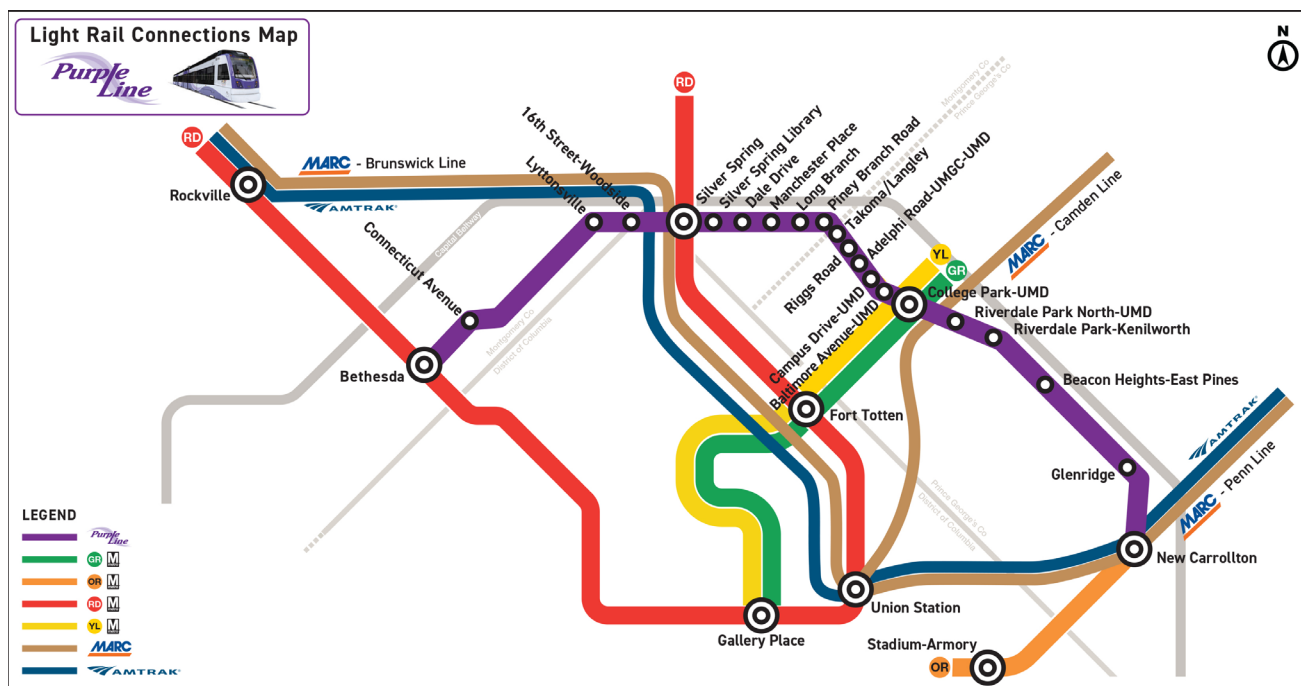
The Purple Line's 21 stations connect New Carrollton in Prince George's County to Bethesda in Montgomery County, touching a

diversity of neighborhoods and several hubs of economic and cultural activity along the way. The arrival of the Purple Line portends an exciting new level of mobility in the region, and with it, transformative change and growth that can either benefit or harm small businesses, especially BIPOC-owned microbusinesses.

The Purple Line presents both opportunities and threats to the thriving network of small businesses along the corridor. New transit will stitch together communities currently disconnected from each other, grow, and diversify the local small business customer base, and prompt investment in aging commercial corridors. However, the Purple Line also brings long-term construction disruptions, rising property values and rents, and a risk of redevelopment that could displace existing small businesses.

Figure 1

Purple Line route connections with regional Metro and commuter rail service. Map: Maryland Department of Transportation



The Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) exemplifies how strategic and intentional collaboration between the many vested interests along a transit corridor can address the risk of small business displacement at a time of uncertainty. The PLCC is an equitable development collaborative led and administered by the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG) in partnership with a range of community and civic organizations, state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, philanthropies, and large and small businesses.

This diversity of perspectives facilitated the creation of a collective vision for vibrant economic and community development, called the **Community Development Agreement (CDA) for the Purple Line Corridor**, with up-front buy-in from over 50 stakeholders. Since the signing of that agreement in 2017, the PLCC has mobilized across the areas of: 1) affordable housing, 2) workforce development, 3) vibrant communities, and 4) small business preservation and growth. This work

happens primarily through partner-based "action teams" that advance PLCC's comprehensive community development platform.

In 2018, PLCC formed its Small Business Action Team (SBAT) to focus on the small business pillar of the agreement. The SBAT has coordinated services, aligned policy positions across stakeholders, supported place-based management strategies, and engaged partners to address short-term challenges, like the COVID-19 pandemic and construction disruptions, as well as challenges that will continue or emerge once construction is complete and the Purple Line becomes operational. The common theme across all solutions is the need to coalesce a wide range of partners in support of the small businesses, microbusinesses, legacy businesses, and BIPOC- and immigrant-owned businesses disproportionately pressured by displacement and press all stakeholders towards creative thinking and coordinated action.

"We are at the cusp of an unprecedented opportunity for economic growth and expansion—not just along the corridor but for the entire metropolitan region. And we have a shot to shape that growth sustainably, equitably, and in ways that create new pathways to opportunity, particularly for the culturally rich but economically fragile communities that dot the corridor."

—Gerrit Knaap, PLCC co-chair and former NCSG Director

Case Study Approach

PLCC approaches this case study through the lens of coalition-builders with an interest in connecting with small businesses to determine their needs and goals, engaging partners, and building capacity to help meet these needs, and identifying common ground to serve the best interests of the whole community.

Because PLCC itself does not directly deploy the tools examined in this report, but rather supports and enhances them by acting as a central hub for coordinating efforts, this case study's analysis is two-fold:

1. First, the effectiveness of the tools themselves.
2. Second, the value add of a coalition framework in implementing them.

This case study relies on publicly available demographic data and reports covering the region and the corridor, qualitative interviews conducted with select champions, media reports, legislative documents, first-hand knowledge of PLCC's director, and conversations with PLCC staff and consultants.

The authors both bring a personal and professional position to this case study. Sheila Somashekhar has served as PLCC's director since 2020, anchoring the coalition's work across goals with central capacity to advance various partner-driven initiatives. Nicole Weissman has an MBA from the Johns Hopkins Carey School of Business and over a decade of experience at the intersection of business and social and environmental impact. Both Sheila and Nicole live within blocks of a Purple Line station and are personally invested in equitable outcomes for the light rail project.

Leading Organization

Along the Purple Line, as in most places, there is no single entity that has the capacity to meet the charge of supporting small and micro-businesses. Rather, it requires a coordinated approach that brings together the assets and expertise of public agencies, nonprofit service providers, private sector entities, and the lived experience of small business owners. PLCC is joined by a broad landscape of practitioners and other stakeholders who are the primary actors in bringing these tools and strategies into the field.

Purple Line Corridor Coalition

The PLCC was established in 2013 by NCSG to maximize the benefits of the Purple Line for all residents and businesses and to address potential disruption and displacement from construction of the line. The PLCC brings diverse stakeholders together to develop policies and actions leading to racially and economically equitable development. For a list of key PLCC stakeholders, see Appendix A.

PLCC Small Business Action Team

Since 2019, the PLCC Small Business Action Team (SBAT) has convened regularly to envision and advance a coordinated, corridor-wide approach to small business preservation and growth. The SBAT is co-chaired by the [Latino Economic Development Center](#) (LEDC), a regional community development financial institution (CDFI) with strong lending and technical assistance services, and [CASA](#), a regional member-based power building organization that offers a range of services and advocacy in the Purple Line corridor. The SBAT includes public sector stakeholders, community-based organizations, and small business associations and leaders. Together, the SBAT developed the [2021-2022 PLCC Small Business Support Action Plan](#) and [Small Business Strategy](#), which address the tools and strategies in this document.

Neighborhood Context

The Corridor in Context

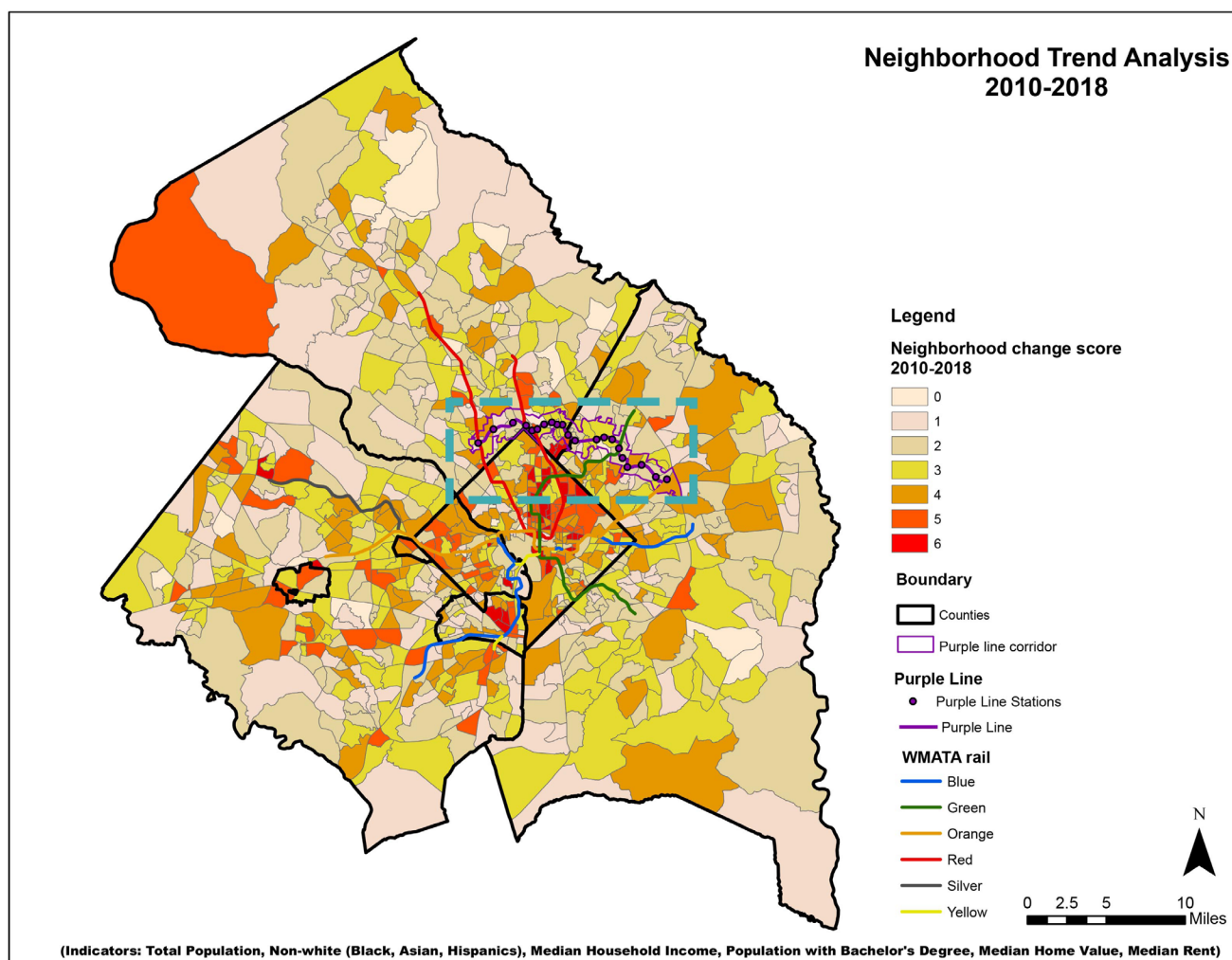
More than 183,000 residents live within a mile of the Purple Line (ACS 2017-2021 data). Nearly half of those households earn below 60% of area median income ([PLCC, 2019](#)). The Purple Line connects areas that vary economically, racially, and culturally. While areas like Bethesda/Chevy Chase (the western end of the Purple Line) are 75% white and have a median income of nearly \$140,000 annually, areas like the International Corridor and Riverdale/New Carrollton (the eastern end of the Purple Line) are majority Latino and Black, with a median income just over \$60,000 annually ([PLCC, 2019](#)).

Based on an analysis conducted by NCSG in 2020, the D.C. area saw significant demographic

shifts between 2010-2018. Using census data, NCSG developed a Neighborhood Change Index, considering total population, median household income, population 25 years or over with a BA, median home value, median rent, household income, and race (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). Changes within the boundaries of D.C. were significant, while changes in the Purple Line corridor were less pronounced. A more recent analysis suggests that gentrification is actively occurring in parts of the corridor, with measurable impact on businesses (Finio, 2023). Both analyses suggest the process of gentrification has not yet fully unfolded in this area, making PLCC's efforts timely. In short, the right interventions at this moment can influence the outcomes of Purple Line fueled gentrification.

Figure 2

Neighborhood change in the Purple Line corridor context, 2010-2018.



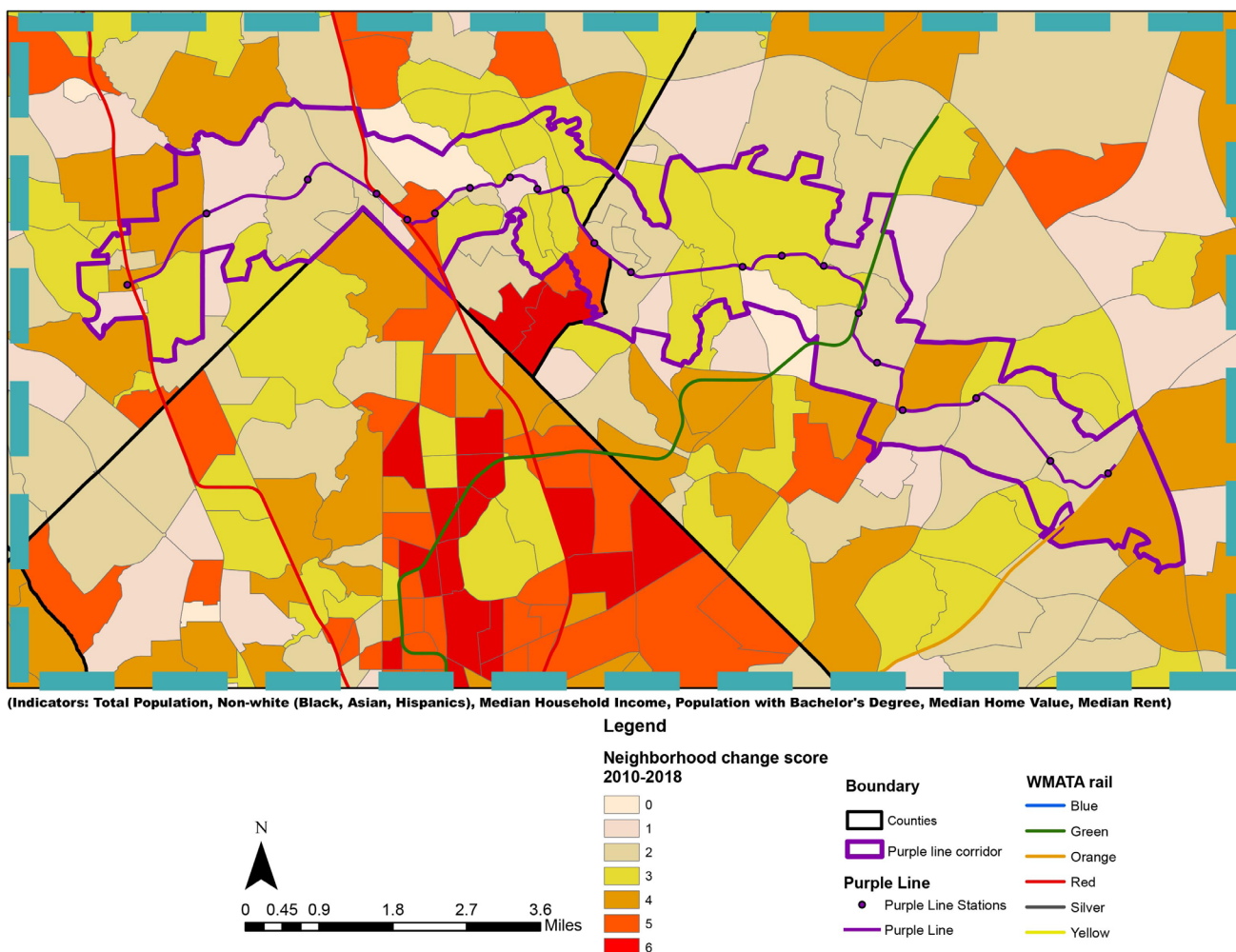


Figure 3

Expanded view of neighborhood change in the Purple Line corridor, 2010-2018.

Local Historical Context

Given the demographics of the Purple Line geographic area and historical trends around gentrification in the D.C. region, it is likely that displacement effects associated with the Purple Line will be felt most intensely by immigrant, Latino, and Black communities. This potential displacement marks at least the second time these particular groups have been pushed out by redevelopment and rising property values. In the 1990s, similar cost-related shifts pushed minority- and immigrant-owned businesses out of Washington, D.C. (Ochoa, 2020). Today, gentrification continues across much of D.C., now reaching into the same Maryland suburbs where Black and Brown people relocated previously.

Areas of the corridor have also served as a prime destination for immigrants fleeing violence and economic hardship in Central America, and others simply seeking opportunity in a new country.

According to a [2019 report published by CASA](#), an estimated 68,000 undocumented immigrants live in Prince George's County, the largest concentration in Langley Park (discussed later as a priority area for the PLCC). For at least the last two decades, the corridor has offered some of the only remaining affordable housing and commercial space in the region, where small businesses have contributed to a sense of community and neighborhood identity.

Equity Areas

Across the corridor, 4,498 small or micro-businesses are located within half a mile of Purple Line stations, and 2,402 are within a quarter mile. Among those businesses, a large number are located in six PLCC-designated "equity areas," districts with a higher concentration of BIPOC and immigrant-owned businesses (see Fig. 4). Together, the equity areas are home to 830 small

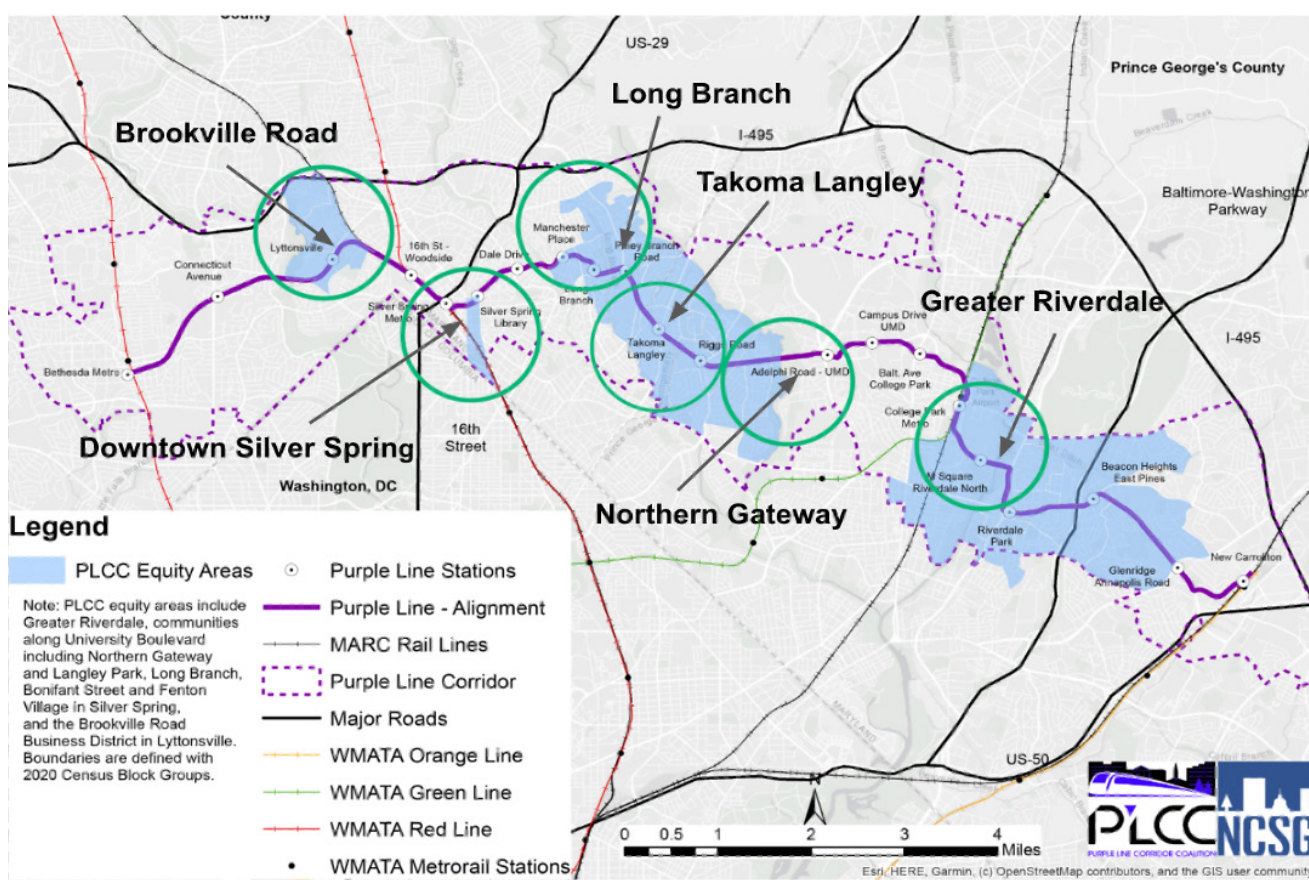
and micro-businesses within half a mile of Purple Line stations, and 513 within a quarter mile. These businesses were identified by PLCC as most at risk for displacement due to Purple Line construction and Purple Line-related development (PLCC, 2020; Ochoa, 2020).

While all six areas are unique, they share commonalities beyond their proximity to the Purple Line. Many of these neighborhoods are historically disinvested. As a result, most are characterized by older buildings that have historically offered

relatively affordable market-rate rents to independent businesses. These buildings also house more legacy businesses, meaning businesses that have been in the community for a decade or longer. The equity areas also tend to be neighborhoods that combine retail or commercial uses with residential uses, often with single-family housing in close proximity. Finally, almost all are majority immigrant, Black, or Latino, with strong neighborhood identities anchored in part by the network of small businesses in the area. For more detailed descriptions of the equity areas, see Appendix B.

Figure 4

Six equity areas that are the focus of PLCC's work.



Anti-Displacement Tools and Strategies

This case study spotlights replicable tools and strategies being applied in the Purple Line corridor to support small businesses, and all involve collaboration among PLCC partners, consultants, and staff.

The tools detailed for this case study include:

1. Technical assistance to adapt to change

2. Strong places to support strong businesses
3. State funding to address construction disruption
4. Structured collaboration for amplified impact

Each tool includes a description of how it was conceptualized and put to use along the Purple

Line, its implementation to date, the evaluation of the tool, and recommendations for other small business anti-displacement initiatives seeking to learn from the Purple Line experience.

Tool 1: Technical Assistance

Technical assistance (TA) is a broad tool that can support a variety of small businesses' needs in a major market shift. The PLCC's role in TA has been to connect and coordinate the work of service providers with small businesses in the corridor, raise and align resources to scale TA, and fill capacity gaps with technical consultants.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

The SBAT was initially formed with the idea that high quality TA is a core tool to support businesses, to ensure they are aware of impending shifts in the market and able to adapt (K. Ross, personal communication, August 23, 2022). LEDC and CASA were selected as action team co-chairs because of their mission-based focus on BIPOC and immigrant owned microbusinesses, their hands-on and on-site approach to TA, and their commitment to the Purple Line corridor. Other partners also recognized TA as a foundational tool to ensure small businesses were prepared to access capital, pursue grants, and enter into loans intended to provide relief during Purple Line construction, COVID recovery, and other related challenges.

IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE

Today, LEDC is the lead PLCC member providing TA for storefront businesses. CASA leads outreach to home-based businesses and street vendors, primarily through triage and referrals at their service centers throughout the region (L. Carballo, personal communication, December 15, 2022). Neighborhood-based organizations and small business associations also offer services and strong relationships with the small business community at varying levels of capacity. PLCC facilitates connections between these organizations to ensure coverage, encourage information sharing, limit redundancy, make small businesses aware of partner services available to them, and contextualize efforts within the broader community development ecosystem.

In 2019, a \$5 million JPMorgan Chase PRO Neighborhoods grant funded three regional Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) working in the Purple Line corridor,

Technical Assistance: Key Takeaways

- Technical assistance (TA) is an effective tool, but it is also heavily resource intensive and challenging to scale due to the need for skilled staff and funding.
- Organizations that have a strong reputation and relationships in the community are well-positioned to undertake this work, though organizations with varying levels of expertise, capacity, and track record can also offer TA.
- A coalition like PLCC plays a valuable role in coordinating efforts among partners, identifying service gaps, building trust, structuring collaboration, and providing space for networking.
- Direct TA is recommended for supporting businesses with intensive needs and has proven successful for a range of situations.



Figure 5

When Roxana's Floral in Long Branch was targeted by a website hack, the small business struggled with the time-consuming process of navigating a solution. PLCC partners came together to offer support of various kinds so the business could bounce back from the incident.

including LEDC. The grant prominently framed the PRO Neighborhoods work under the PLCC's umbrella. It was the largest investment in PLCC's mission to date, funding both affordable housing and lending to small businesses. LEDC set a goal to preserve 210 small businesses, and in the first two years of the program made 22 small business loans and provided TA to 155 businesses ([Bogle et al., 2022](#)). Funds from the PRO grant allowed LEDC to scale small business TA from Montgomery County into Prince George's County, a process facilitated in part by the PLCC. (J. Rivas, personal communication, August 20, 2022).

PLCC has also recruited specialized consultants to fill TA capacity gaps where existing organizations are unable to meet an identified need. For example, with federal grant funding from 2020-2022, PLCC hired a retail expert to help businesses adapt their interiors to increase customer appeal. PLCC also hired a marketing consultant, who offered support ranging from Instagram training to temporary social media takeovers for businesses lacking a strong social media presence. Social media TA has proven a strong entry point for businesses to access additional services from partners, due to the clear gap it fills and the quick results it can deliver.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Using grant funding directly to NCSG from 2020-2022, PLCC's partners jointly provided one-on-one TA and workshops to more than 200 small businesses. Anecdotally, the impact has been dramatic, but PLCC struggles to quantify it because TA is a coordinated effort amongst multiple organizations that track and measure impact in different ways and typically have no formal reporting requirements to PLCC. Many funders of TA require only outputs, rather than long-term outcomes such as increased revenue or small business survival through change, given the difficulty of tracking such data (J. Rivas, personal communication, August 30, 2022). Even if TA helps achieve a short-term goal like driving social media growth or resolving a legal issue, its long-term impact on reducing displacement is hard to measure.

Still, businesses value this form of support, and partners share that coordination of TA efforts has increased its effectiveness. By connecting the right partners with the right businesses, challenges ranging from succession, to debt, to unfair lease terms have all been addressed to the satisfaction both of partners and businesses.

Small Businesses Technical Assistance: El Arbol Del Pan Restaurant

Figure 6

Long Branch based El Arbol Del Pan offered fresh-baked pizza, breads, and pastries, but struggled to capture customers. PLCC consultant & Access created new branding and helped re-envision the shop's interior, incorporating marketing concepts like active merchandising to build customer interest. These design concepts were shared with the owners in summer of 2022, along with cost estimates that demonstrated the affordability of investing in such changes.



LOGO



ICON

- Redesign brand to create strong imagery and communicate goods offered
- Consider high contrast interior color palette to help store look occupied through dark windows
- Natural woods lower costs and time to build out, and complement color palette
- Pull brand elements through the interiors (e.g., wooden slats to mirror tree, logo or icon painted throughout interior)
- Actively merchandise areas throughout the store for visual interest

REPLICABILITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the Purple Line corridor, the combination of effective institutional service providers, skilled consulting support to fill service gaps, and a collaborative culture fostered in part by the PLCC, has allowed for greater reach and depth of support to businesses.

When delivering TA, strong and persistent outreach, skilled multilingual staff, and on-site service delivery have proven key success factors. Additional valuable approaches include good record keeping, brevity of the initial service assessment, and provision of easily accessible next steps for business owners (J. Rivas, personal communication, August 30, 2022). Above all, PLCC partners emphasize that relationships and trust with the businesses are key.

"The deeper the relationships in the community, the more people come in."

— **Lindolfo Carballo, Senior Director of Community Economic Development Department, CASA**

"Sometimes you just have to patronize the business—get a haircut, meal or purchase a product—to demonstrate your personal investment in their success. Along with repeated visits and time investment, this ensures you become a familiar face and gain trust."

— **Javier Rivas, former Senior Small Business Development Manager, LEDC**

The work also faces challenges. The level and quality of TA available depends on capacity, skill in meeting the unique needs of microbusinesses, and commitment to PLCC's goals—all of which vary among partners. For PLCC's strongest TA partners, funding to sustain staff to work corridor-wide is limited. The counties have offered crucial funding for TA provision and prioritized Purple Line support, especially during the pandemic. But additional sources of multi-year funding are needed.

Tool 2: Strong Places to Support Strong Businesses

Strong businesses thrive in strong places. PLCC's comprehensive approach to supporting small business in the Purple Line Corridor includes an

emphasis on strong commercial districts in each equity area to ensure the physical, social, and political neighborhood infrastructure supports small businesses. From social media platforms celebrating commercial districts, to placemaking reflecting local neighborhood identities, PLCC adds capacity to local efforts and helps share and scale best practices between commercial areas.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Prior to the pandemic, space activation and community engagement models such as the [Irrigate Project](#) and [SPARCC Memphis](#) were identified by PLCC as examples of holistic and long-term small business support. Local groups like the LBBL, CKAR, Takoma Langley Crossroads CDA and Northern Gateway CDC had been working to use murals, signage, and other neighborhood-based improvements that celebrate local identities and attract traffic to small businesses.

The pandemic intensified the need to think creatively about outdoor spaces surrounding small businesses. For PLCC, the timing of these shifts aligned with the Small Business Support Action Plan development process, which began just prior to the pandemic. The pandemic lifted up new tools such as [Design for Distancing](#) to drive traffic to local businesses while avoiding indoor crowds, further elevating placemaking as a priority for SBAT as part of its overall plan.

IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE

From 2020-2022, PLCC helped seed new pilots and scale place-based support to small businesses across equity areas in the corridor. PLCC hired a skilled marketing consultant already familiar

Strong Places: Key Takeaways

- Commercial district improvements, including creative use of social media, as well as placemaking, can generate interest that supports all businesses in a commercial district.
- Place-based management models like Main Streets provide a long-term structure for ongoing support to the businesses, but funding is key to success.
- Place-based efforts require staffing.

with the area, who organized community events, and trained junior communications staff at place-based organizations. In partnership with CKAR and building from previous PLCC and UMD efforts to support local restaurants, she helped launch a new Taste of Greater Riverdale Instagram platform spotlighting local restaurants and garnering 1,100 followers in just a few months. The consultant also engaged local media, Yelp, and food bloggers to raise the profiles of local restaurants in equity areas along the Purple Line.

To ensure longevity of these commercial district strategies, PLCC has invested in training and capacity-building for place-based management models such as Main Streets. With a belief that grassroots change needs to be anchored at the local level, PLCC has pushed to ensure that all six equity areas have a trusted local nonprofit or business association to act as a champion for small businesses. With US Economic Development Administration grant funding, PLCC has provided trainings to potential Main Streets organizations on topics such as fundraising, board development, and staffing, working especially closely with four organizations well-positioned to lead place-based management. PLCC has brought experts from Main Street America to train local organizations on the model, organized walking tours of existing Main Streets outside the Purple Line corridor, and led informational webinars with national experts, like Mary Means, the founder of the Main Streets model.

Local placemaking efforts have also benefited from the design capacity of the University of Maryland. In 2022, UMD launched a creative placemaking minor with a stated priority to direct student and faculty design capacity to Purple Line efforts. Over the past three years, three studio projects have generated design concepts for spaces along the Purple Line, as well as pop-up events to engage community and support locally led visions for growth and change. One example of a UMD placemaking project is the [“Ignite Your Taste Buds Tour”](#) in Riverdale, Maryland.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

PLCC measures progress primarily through social media engagement and dollars invested in commercial districts. Anecdotally, we know that social media campaigns have also resulted in an immediate increase in traffic to the spotlighted businesses (C. Rytönen, personal communication, July 15, 2022). As of writing, there were a combined total of 4,700 followers on commercial district promotional platforms in Bonifant, Long Branch, and Riverdale.

PLCC’s work has helped raise funds for place-based management in the past year. An \$800,000 Montgomery County investment in Main Streets, a \$90,000 county investment in Long Branch placemaking, a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award to CKAR for place-based

Small Business Social Media Growth Along the Purple Line Corridor

From March-July 2022, the primary firm managing commercial district social media accounts along the Purple Line reported the following results from four commercial district platforms and 12 small businesses (Rosy Owl Creative, 2022).

16
PROFILES
MANAGED

1,080,788
IMPRESSIONS

15,791
TOTAL AUDIENCE

42,615
ENGAGEMENTS

528
POST LINK
CLICKS

1,346
NET AUDIENCE
GROWTH

995
PUBLISHED
POSTS

587,586
VIDEO VIEWS

308,309
REEL VIEWS

small business support, and approval of a new BID for the Northern Gateway championed by state Delegate Deni Taveras are all promising signals that place-based management is taking root. Partners have anecdotally shared that PLCC's work to raise the profile and potential impact of the Main Streets model has helped both grassroots and institutional stakeholders make the case for these investments. Long term impacts of placemaking interventions are harder to measure, and PLCC is only starting on the journey to assess the impact of this work.

REPLICABILITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ability to build strong commercial districts depends on a mix of ingredients, including: (a) an engaged small business community, (b) an organization to anchor the effort, (c) political support, (d) marketing and design talent, and (e) sufficient funding to support staffing and programming. Even when the ingredients are in place, the process of launching a successful place-based initiative can be messy, and in the Purple

Neighborhood Spotlight: Long Branch

The Long Branch neighborhood offers lessons for place-based small business efforts. Over a decade ago, Making Homes Possible (formerly Montgomery Housing Partnership, MHP) hired Paul Grenier to organize small business owners and support neighborhood initiatives in Long Branch. Grenier brought past experience in small business organizing in a neighboring commercial district and was charged with reviving a long defunct business association. He led the launch of the Long Branch Business League (LBBL), a 501(c)6 of 15-20 small businesses that meet monthly, pay dues, and help drive neighborhood change from the grassroots. He continues to be the only paid staff member for the business league.

Prior to 2020, MHP and the LBBL piloted community events, launched a "Discover Long Branch" shared social media platform, and pushed for improved pedestrian and bike infrastructure. During the pandemic, MHP and the LBBL working with the County, mobilized quickly to transform underutilized parking spaces into attractive outdoor seating. Restaurants like El Gavilan,

serving Tex-Mex food in the local community since 1990, benefitted from low-cost transformations that protected revenue during the pandemic and are still heavily used today.

Grenier emphasizes the value of investing in small-scale and visible projects that garnered trust with businesses early on. Building on that trust, committed small business owners have invested time and resources to the LBBL and have been drivers in the process of change. Of note, the partnership with MHP, a 501(c)(3), has enabled the LBBL to raise and deploy grant funding to pay for Grenier's time and other costs. According to Grenier, "Unless you have someone on salary by some means or another, helping to keep it together, it's not going to happen. Period."

Grenier emphasized the long-term nature of these commercial district efforts, even after a decade. "It's a process that we're in the middle of. We're very happy to see things that we've improved... but there are a ton of improvements that still need to be addressed."

Figure 7

Before. Photo: Google Maps



Figure 8

After, November 2022.



Line corridor we have yet to be able to measure the long-term impact of this work.

Tool 3: State Funds to Address Construction Disruption

Purple Line construction disrupts operations for many of the businesses in the PLCC's equity areas, posing an existential threat to businesses unable to withstand multiple years of reduced business. The tool developed to address this challenge is a \$2.5M State of Maryland commitment over three years, funding construction disruption grants to businesses with the greatest need. PLCC partners worked in close collaboration with a Purple Line legislator to create the grant program. PLCC partner-led mobilization and advocacy also helped ensure this funding became a reality when funding for the program faced obstacles.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Even before construction began, the community knew construction would be a challenge for small businesses because the Purple Line travels at grade and through dense commercial areas, meaning construction would close roads and walkways, impact traffic patterns, and affect utilities. When construction began, nonprofits and the public sector quickly mobilized to scale up TA to affected businesses, installing “we’re still open” signage in affected areas and offering other targeted support (K. Ross, personal communication, June 30, 2022).

The need for financial support to supplement those efforts became clearer as construction ramped up in 2017. In particular, a well-organized group of business owners on Bonifant Street in Silver Spring, MD, appealed to Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins for help (J. Wilkins personal communication, September 15, 2022). In 2018, Delegate Wilkins introduced [HB0978](#), which would provide a tax credit to businesses affected by construction. While there had been previous county initiatives to support small businesses impacted by construction disruption from county projects (“[Small Business Assistance](#),” n.d.), there was no precedent at the state level, which meant there was a significant need for education and advocacy to peer legislators. The bill did not pass in 2018, nor when Delegate Wilkins re-introduced it in 2019.

State Funds: Key Takeaways

- Securing public dollars for construction disruption grants requires advocacy that is attuned to the local political environment.
- Small business owners themselves are key champions in that advocacy work.
- Deploying funds equitably requires strong and thoughtful program design, as well as effective outreach mechanisms.

When construction halted in summer of 2020 and long-term construction delays became likely even as businesses faced reduced revenue due to COVID, the urgency of the issue became even more apparent. In the 2020 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly set aside \$2 million in grants to help businesses impacted by Purple Line construction. The governor had discretion to allocate the funds, and they went unspent. In fall of 2020, Delegate Wilkins and local advocates led a major push for release of the funds, including a press event with small business testimonials ([Byrne, 2020](#)). PLCC helped craft a letter in support of a bill that would begin allocating the funds, and partners circulated it for signatures within their network.

In 2021, Delegate Wilkins was successful in securing \$2.5 million in mandated funding for construction disruption grants. Though initially vetoed by Governor Hogan, community mobilization once again proved essential in garnering support to override the veto. Delegate Wilkins says the engagement of business owners was key to the eventual success of the effort, and that PLCC partner organizations made that engagement possible. Partners like Fenton Village, Discover Bonifant, LEDC, and the City of Takoma Park helped recruit business owner advocates and ensure visibility on the issue and the solution.

IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE

In 2021, businesses became eligible to apply for grants of \$5,000 to off-set disruptions to business associated with Purple Line construction. Those funds were dispersed in late 2021 (J. Rivas, personal communication, November 1, 2021). The remaining \$2 million was made available through

Construction Disruption Spotlight: Bonifant St., Silver Spring



Figure 9

*Construction in front of small businesses.
Photo: Manuel Ochoa*

The future Purple Line passes through the center of Bonifant Street in Silver Spring, in a subarea of downtown called Fenton Village. Fenton Village is home to the majority of Downtown Silver Spring's independent businesses, including cafes, restaurants, and shops. With vehicular and pedestrian traffic limited by construction, businesses were eligible for \$5,000 construction disruption grants to offset losses.

an application process for each county in 2023. Partnerships ensure these grants reach the businesses most in need. Montgomery County and LEDC have both administered grants, and LEDC served as lead TA provider for the grants being distributed by FSC First in Prince George's County. LEDC's experience disseminating funds and conducting outreach to small businesses has helped with fund distribution. LEDC has also depended on relationships with other PLCC SBAT members who have trusted, neighborhood-based relationships to help get word out about the grants.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Success is measured by how much money the community is able to secure in construction disruption support, and whether those funds are sufficient to prevent businesses from closing. A partner shared that even the modest \$5,000 grants the businesses received with the first tranche of funds provided "an infusion of capital" that helped cover rent and basic operating expenses while businesses are struggling 9 (J. Rivas, personal communication, August 30, 2022).

Another metric is successful and equitable distribution of available dollars. Of the \$500,000 allocated in 2021, all available \$5,000 grants were released to affected small businesses. As of June 2023, the second tranche of funds are actively being distributed. Distribution of funds has faced some challenges, with the burden of application paperwork falling on businesses.

The ultimate metric – whether these grants will enable businesses to survive construction disruptions – is hard to assess given that construction is ongoing, and that the causes of turbulence in retail environments right now extend beyond construction disruption. In light of overlapping challenges, these grants are only a small part of the picture of anti-displacement interventions. However, many of the businesses that received funds are still operating now.

Finally, the effort was also formative in shaping PLCC's role in the policy arena. The successful engagement of community partners to mobilize small business advocates demonstrated that PLCC can add credibility and a collective gravitas to policy discussions.

REPLICABILITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Purple Line experience, a successful construction disruption grant program requires strong legislative champions, an engaged small business community, and thoughtful design of grant requirements and outreach strategy to achieve equitable impact. Challenges in creating such a program include scaling resources to meet the true need, which may be unpredictable. In the case of the Purple Line, construction delays of 4+ years have meant growing need without an increase in funds. Challenges in fund distribution include the tension between creating a simple and streamlined application process and targeting resources toward businesses with demonstrable construction-related losses.

For PLCC, the kind of advocacy that led to the creation of the construction disruption fund continues to be a complex endeavor. PLCC's position at UMD lends unparalleled credibility to the coalition's name. But taking specific advocacy positions is often not possible for a project housed within a public university. Partner-led advocacy continues to be crucial to PLCC's mobilization efforts.

Tool 4: Structured Collaboration for Amplified Impact

The final tool studied here is the use of a coalition in itself—how an organization driven by partnerships can facilitate efficient, effective change in support of small businesses in the community. PLCC brings diverse voices together to shape and implement a shared agenda that is larger than the sum of its parts.

Structured Collaboration: Key Takeaways

- Structured collaboration - whether it takes the form of a coalition or another framework - is well suited to the many potential approaches to small business preservation and support.
- There is a need for dedicated funding for the work of collaboration and collective impact.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

PLCC's founding built on momentum from CASA's local community organizing around displacement concerns following the announcement of the Purple Line. Gerrit Knaap, former Executive Director of NCSG and a professor in UMD's School of Architecture and Planning, had a longstanding relationship with CASA and wanted to offer support. Inspired by new TOD collaboratives in other parts of the country, Knaap approached CASA and proposed the formation of a collaborative. Enterprise Community Partners, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County joined CASA and NCSG as founding partners, with seed funding from the Maryland Transit Administration, and with an eye towards large-scale collaboration.

Collective impact ([Kania & Kramer, 2011](#)) presented a useful framework for operationalizing the complex goals of the CDA, described in the introduction. The creation of various stakeholder tables, including the SBAT, mirrored the organization of collective impact efforts nationally, and the partners at the table proved highly committed to the work of collaboration.

PLCC's coordinating role has also helped ensure a greater collective commitment to equity. Explicit commitments to racial equity made by the PLCC, especially since 2019, have impacted all the coalition's work and, by extension, the work of member organizations. One outcome of these evolving commitments was the decision to focus on the six equity areas and push for partner-led services and investment in these areas.

IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE

PLCC's work happens through a variety of connection points, including large group meetings that happen 3-4 times per year. At these meetings, 20+ partners share updates, discuss goals and challenges, and make commitments to work on joint projects between the larger meetings. PLCC also creates opportunities for learning and small group collaboration throughout the year, including walking tours, webinars, and working groups.

Funding is key to coordination. PLCC staff and consultants dedicate a great deal of time to raising and aligning resources to advance the work. This includes educating public officials on priorities, such as Main Streets, to encourage investment in projects and partners throughout PLCC's network. It also includes encouraging partners to apply for funding opportunities, and sometimes offering support letters or even direct help in crafting

Collaboration Spotlight: Queensway Restaurant

Queensway Restaurant has fed the community for 26 years. The restaurant is housed in Riverdale Plaza, steps from a Purple Line station. Tinu Ogunsalu, the owner, wants to stay in the community.

During an outreach visit to Queensway Restaurant, a PLCC consultant learned that the business had been operating without air conditioning and in a severely deteriorated building. It appeared that the owner was actively disinvesting in the property. The consultant flagged the case for further PLCC discussion, leading to a walk-through with area business owners, partners, PLCC staff, and additional

consultants. The visit revealed that a municipal code enforcement policy had recently been extended to cover commercial properties, which can also benefit other businesses. It also led to information sharing within the SBAT about state and county programs that may be useful to Tinu.

As of fall of 2022, some cleanup had taken place at this commercial plaza. However, the displacement risk persists. PLCC is forming a loose real estate working group to understand the financial, policy, and development mechanisms available to support Queensway Restaurant and other businesses in similar situations.

Figure 10

Owner Tinu Ogunsalu.
Photo: Catherine Rytkenon



Figure 12

West African fare at Queensway.
Photo: Catherine Rytkenon



Figure 11

Building deterioration.
Photo: Catherine Rytkenon



Figure 13

At an Old Takoma Main Streets walking tour organized by PLCC in fall 2021, various partners spoke with Main Streets leaders and small business owners about the operation of a successful Main Street organization. Photo: Catherine Rytkenon



proposals. PLCC staff also work to raise funds for the backbone operation, to ensure a continued space for structured collaboration.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

PLCC relies on a small selection of metrics to capture shared progress—including progress on the other tools described in this case study, level, and type of participation in meetings, amount of investment secured in the coalition's goals, and success of policy and advocacy efforts.

Ideally, the coalition would also rely on community-level data to track holistic progress, which

presents a challenge and an opportunity for the coalition. Because PLCC is situated within NCSG, the coalition can tap into the data capacity of university researchers. NCSG created a Purple Line data dashboard ("[Purple Line Corridor Data Dashboard](#)," n.d.), which captures community-level data points that help practitioners understand the larger landscape connected to their Purple Line work. However, the public data currently available on the state of small business is limited. NCSG is working to encourage local jurisdictions to collect more granular data—for example, including a question about owner's race in business licensing applications.

"What is unique about PLCC from a service provider perspective is that it's rare that you have a lens into what everyone is doing. We're all able to maximize on the strengths of the other players. I've rarely been in a scenario where it works that way, and I think there is an X factor to the PLCC that is very impactful for the end beneficiaries of the work we are trying to push forward."

—Marla Bilonick, former Executive Director of LEDC, current President & CEO at National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders

REPLICABILITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Ross, several ingredients are key to PLCC's success in facilitating effective and authentic collaboration. These include: a) recruiting trusted partners at the outset, who can attract other partners to the work and create a ripple effect; b) investing time and capacity to build trust with and among the partners; c) identifying clear challenges and goals that are bigger than any one organization can achieve, in order to build a shared understanding of the value of collaboration; d) creating specific action commitments to achieve

both short-term wins and long-term impact; and e) creating ongoing opportunities for group communication to assess progress, identify gaps to be filled, and respond to changing conditions.

There are areas of growth for the coalition moving forward. PLCC could expand its umbrella by cultivating more high-capacity partners, investors, and community groups. PLCC is also working to recruit more small business owners to contribute to and influence this work. By continuing to bring in more perspectives and more advocates, the work will grow not only in its scale but in its depth.

Analysis and Recommendations

The PLCC case study gives two kinds of insight: insight into the tools deployed by community organizations in the Purple Line corridor, and insight into the role of this coalition. PLCC is a case study in how to leverage coalition-building as a tool to drive equity and promote conscious placemaking during a moment of change.

A core foundation of this work is the conscious commitment of partner organizations to a set of shared goals, and the resulting alignment of many organizations working to make the Purple Line a positive inflection point for the community. Coalition members are also known to have their own separate missions or tactics that are not always in alignment with each other. PLCC creates a unique space to find common ground.

The tools reflected in this case study are all effective components of supporting at-risk small businesses in this region and show promise for other communities. Each is also further enhanced by the existence of a coalition that looks at any given organization's work with a fuller view and an eye towards ensuring no one is left behind. Following are a few key lessons for others seeking to draw lessons from PLCC.

Geographic Considerations

Target efforts where they will have the most impact. The Purple Line transit "corridor" is an informal geography defined by the transit project rather than formal political boundaries, crossing two counties, six municipalities, and dozens of neighborhoods. PLCC is the only entity coordinating equitable development across the bi-county area, which has repeatedly been identified as value add that the coalition brings. However,

the breadth of this geography is a challenge. Given the diversity and sheer size of the 16-mile corridor, PLCC's decision to focus on six equity areas for its small business work has allowed a greater level of focus. Even with this decision, the work of collaboration is significant.

Organizational Considerations

Funding is key. Those looking to replicate the collaborative work of PLCC should be prepared to invest in the coalition itself, as staffing is required to operate a hub that can drive continued alignment and collaboration. Funds to support both the backbone organization and partner-led work have been insufficient to meet the need, with nonprofits relying largely on modest year-to-year grants and contracts. Fundraising requires investment of time to build ongoing funder relationships – which still may not yield funds at scale. Multi-year funding for such small business initiatives is in scarce supply, and the indirect and long-term nature of such work may not appeal to funders who measure their success on short-term outcomes.

Invest in skilled capacity. To build a collaborative culture, staff must be skilled in facilitation and the difficult work of building trust among many stakeholders. Identifying an evaluation strategy early on and investing in data capacity also helps set a coalition up for success. This is an ongoing challenge for PLCC, even being situated in a world-class research center.

Build trust with businesses. Microbusinesses have limited capacity to follow and keep up with anticipated changes that the Purple Line might bring. Having partners and/or staff who can build

trust with business owners over time creates opportunity to ensure businesses are prepared to adapt to change, able to engage in advocacy, and ideally be the drivers of change.

Build local capacity. An ideal outcome of the work of PLCC is to obviate the need for a coalition. Organization-based capacity to lead this work has been limited to a handful of organizations that grapple with funding and competing strategic priorities, and PLCC has leaned heavily on consultants to drive short-term needs forward. It is a strategic goal for the coalition to cede leadership of on-the-ground efforts to local organizations, and to invest in local leadership and capacity for effective small business support. Case-making to local organizations, funders, public officials, and others to achieve this vision has been an important part of PLCC's work.

Political Considerations

Find a balanced approach to transit-oriented development. As smart growth advocacy and pro-development policies converge on the Purple Line corridor, there is a tension between the slow-boil, community-led placemaking visions being built at the grassroots level – and the potential for sudden and radical changes in the built environment. PLCC is increasingly challenged with finding ways to integrate and align sometimes competing pushes for density near transit, new affordable housing construction, and new neighborhood investment alongside the need for stability for existing small businesses and community-driven placemaking.

Advocacy capacity is key. Local advocacy capacity is critical to achieving systemic change, and a coalition framework can be helpful in bringing together voices to support effective public decision making. PLCC, although not a lobbying entity in and of itself, has found creative ways to coordinate the work of advocates around a common Purple Line agenda.

Find public sector champions. PLCC is unique among collaboratives in its inclusion of public agencies and elected officials as part of the leadership of the coalition. County Councilmembers have been vocal champions for many of PLCC's goals, working across counties in ways that would be unlikely without the presence of PLCC. However, there is sometimes difficulty in

identifying clear pathways to progress at various levels of government. Without a single agency committed to the breadth of issues affecting small business, PLCC partners must seek support from multiple local and state agencies whose primary missions span economic development, housing and community development, planning, transit, and other areas. In some cases, we have seen strong leadership and great success. But in other cases, we fall short, unable to identify public sector champions to lead the charge on addressing contentious questions like rising commercial rents. PLCC's ongoing work includes building interest in and continued energy for this work within government, which is key to achieving scale.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, PLCC is examining the opportunities presented by a new governor in Maryland. The coalition is looking at statewide synergies—including the revival of Baltimore's red line transit project—to attract new attention, resources, and support to equitable TOD. There have also been changes in leadership within County Councils, with several new leaders in 2023 seeking to build their agendas. With this new energy, PLCC is setting its sights on big, systemic goals, such as protecting affordable commercial spaces.

PLCC's work to align disparate voices around a common equity agenda helps address a critical gap in the planning of infrastructure projects. With at least four years ahead until the Purple Line is fully operational, the coalition is working with urgency to raise significant funds across the network, advance effective public policy, and ensure that the community has done everything it can to bring equitable outcomes for the project. ●

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APPENDIX A: PLCC STAKEHOLDERS

A list of PLCC's Steering Committee Members [can be found here](#).

The SBAT includes:

- Representatives from Montgomery County and Prince George's County economic development departments and other county staff;
- Small business service organizations such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the small business lending-focused FSC First;
- Neighborhood-based organizations such as Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization CDC (CKAR) and Northern Gateway CDC;
- Public entities such as Takoma-Langley Crossroads Community Development Authority and the Silver Spring Urban District;
- Business associations such as Fenton Village and Long Branch Business League;
- Small business owners;
- and the municipal economic development departments of the City of College Park and the City of Takoma Park ([PLCC, n.d.](#)).

APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIONS OF EQUITY AREAS

The following descriptions of the six equity areas capture the formalized development context, as reflected in sector plans for these areas, and the locally-based organizational capacity that is key to PLCC's approach to collective change:

1. Greater Riverdale

The Greater Riverdale area is a loose collection of neighborhoods near the eastern end of the Purple Line route. A Prince George's County sector plan for East Riverdale-Beacon Heights describes the built environment as largely unchanged over the last 50-60 years, though prior plans called for changes that would evolve housing, retail, and office spaces. Commercial and retail businesses are mainly situated along Kenilworth Avenue and a second dense strip just south of East-West Highway, with the remainder of the area as housing and suburban office buildings.

With three Purple Line stations planned in this area, much of the sector plan is dedicated to re-envisioning the area once the Purple Line is in place, including themes around mixed use redevelopment and easier mobility within areas around stations and between commercial and residential areas ([Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 2017](#)). Groups like [Greater Riverdale Thrives](#), [Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization CDC](#), [Centro de Apoyo Familiar](#), as well as numerous faith and community leaders are delivering essential services while mobilizing the community in support of inclusive redevelopment visions.

2. Northern Gateway/Langley Park/Hyattsville

The Northern Gateway/Langley Park/Hyattsville area includes the most densely populated parts of Prince George's County. While the "International Corridor" includes a number of these PLCC equity areas ([Feola, 2002](#)), this area also includes Prince George's County's greatest number of foreign-born residents, reflected in the small businesses located in the area. (["Northern Gateway", n.d.](#))

Three Purple Line stops here will serve a large residential population, as well as retail businesses largely housed in strip malls along University Boulevard, Adelphi Road, and Riggs Road. The

neighborhood has experimented with community-level marketing support ([Northern Gateway CDC, 2018](#)). With a mission to “increase the quality of life for residents and economic potential of small businesses in our community,” [Northern Gateway CDC](#) has supported placemaking efforts in the area. Legislation approving a business improvement district (BID) for the Northern Gateway passed in late 2022, which could increase local capacity, but—as with any BID—also carries the potential to exacerbate gentrification. Further, with its roots in Langley Park, CASA is active in community organizing and service delivery in the area, as are several other organizations, such as the Langley Park Civic Association.

3. Takoma/Langley Crossroads

Takoma/Langley Crossroads sits at the nexus of Prince George’s County, Montgomery County, and the City of Takoma Park, with two planned Purple Line stations. With a combination of low-density strip commercial complexes and housing, the area’s businesses share a multicultural diversity common to many of the PLCC’s equity areas.

A 2009 sector plan for the area calls for a more pedestrian-friendly neighborhood that preserves cultural diversity while making improvements like a mixed-use center, replacing some of the physically aging structures in the area. ([Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 2009](#)) Takoma Langley Crossroads Development Authority—a 501(c)6 business association founded by the City of Takoma Park—represents nearly 200 businesses and property owners in the Montgomery County side of the area. Many of the organizations active in Prince George’s County/Northern Gateway area are also active here.

4. Long Branch

With not one but two Purple Line stations with commercial activity in the area, the arrival of the Purple Line is a key part of the planned redevelopment of Long Branch through the Long Branch Sector Plan. Designated as a revitalization area by Montgomery County in 2014, and as an Enterprise Zone by the state of Maryland in 2013 ([“Long Branch,” n.d.](#)) ([Maryland Department of Commerce, n.d.](#)), the neighborhood is receiving significant investment focused on making the neighborhood “a denser, mixed use, transit-oriented, and pedestrian-friendly place” ([Montgomery County Planning Department, 2013](#)).

In Long Branch, the challenge becomes how to leverage the arrival of the Purple Line to connect two separate commercial areas, enhance streetscapes and facades to build on an already strong neighborhood character, and ensure redevelopment is supportive of grassroots visions for change. The question of affordable housing is also an ongoing challenge, with many garden style apartments offering market rate affordability to primarily immigrant households. Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP) has been proactively generating investment in the neighborhood to ensure long-term affordable housing, small business preservation, and placemaking that is driven at the neighborhood level. The [Long Branch Business League](#), staffed by MHP, has been organizing small business owners for over a decade. Local groups like [CHEER](#) and Action in Montgomery are organizing tenants and community residents around housing and other community development goals.

5. Bonifant Street/Fenton Village in Downtown Silver Spring

Located in downtown Silver Spring, MD, Bonifant Street, and the larger Fenton Village area are characterized by having the highest density of small, independent businesses. Over half (50.7%) of downtown Silver Spring’s independent retail businesses are located in Fenton Village, which also boasts downtown Silver Spring’s lowest retail vacancy rate (4.9%). With smaller spaces in older buildings not owned by major management or property development firms, rents are comparatively low, influencing both the low vacancy rate and the prevalence of legacy businesses ([Partners for Economic Solutions, 2021](#)).

The downtown Silver Spring area experienced a major County-led redevelopment in the early 2000s, with new investment that brought rapid change and accompanying displacement. The remaining independent businesses have built a strong and tight network, organized through the Fenton Village Inc. business association. With the Purple Line passing directly down Bonifant Street, businesses that took a hit during construction will rapidly be occupying “prime real estate” just steps away from the Purple Line station at the Silver Spring library, potentially leaving them unable to absorb increased costs during a second wave of gentrification. MHP, with support from the County, has also made a place-based commitment to Bonifant Street, with current priority to assist businesses struggling with construction disruption.

6. Brookville Road Business District

The commercial area on Brookville Road in Lyttons ville, among the last remaining light industrial zones inside the Beltway in the D.C. area, employs roughly 6,100 individuals. The total increase of visitors to the area with the arrival of the Purple Line is estimated to be moderate, and while there is value associated with preserving what is one of the few light industrial sites remaining in Montgomery County, a 2015 report does not anticipate long term shifts on the basis of the new transit. The report cites other nearby retail and commercial areas as reasons retail presence in Brookville Road are likely to remain “very limited.” ([Bolan Smart Associates, 2015](#)) However, there is a low commercial vacancy rate ([Fawley-King, 2021](#)) and the uses of commercial spaces are increasingly non-industrial—for example, a gymnastics school and a winery. There is some history of local business owners coming together to help drive local change. But there has been no robust, organized effort to date, other than the creation of a now-dated website for the commercial district.

APPENDIX C: CASE STUDY INTERVIEWEES

Lindolfo Carballo, CASA

Josefina Estrada, CASA

Paul Grenier, Long Branch Business League/
Montgomery Housing Partnership

Patricia Parker, Central Kenilworth Avenue
Revitalization CDC

Javier Rivas, Latino Economic Development Center

Kim Ross, PLCC Consultant

Jheanelle Wilkins, Maryland State Delegate



SMALL
BUSINESS

Anti-Displacement Network

🖱️ antidisplacement.org
sban@umd.edu

The Small Business Anti-Displacement Network (SBAN) is a network of organizations across the United States and internationally that work to prevent the displacement of BIPOC- and immigrant-owned small businesses in gentrifying neighborhoods. Housed at the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education, SBAN includes policymakers, nonprofit advocates, technical assistance providers, developers, financial institutions, scholars, and small business owners, who share knowledge and collaborate to advance innovative policies and practices that keep small businesses in place.



PURPLE LINE
CORRIDOR
COALITION

🖱️ purplelinecorridor.org

The Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) is an equitable development collaborative focused on Maryland's planned 16-mile Purple Line light rail route. With its administrative home at the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth, PLCC is working to ensure that communities along the transit corridor—especially BIPOC and immigrant residents, workers, and small business owners—benefit from changes resulting from the Purple Line. PLCC's equity agenda includes affordable housing, small business preservation and growth, vibrant and sustainable communities, and workforce opportunity.