

Design Baltimore: Gateways

Reimagining the front doors to Baltimore — three corridors, one civic invitation.

Launch	June 8, 2026
Submissions Deadline	August 15, 2026 · 11:59 PM EST
Jury Review Deadline	September 17, 2026
Phase 1 Stipends	Up to 12 × \$15,000 (\$300,000 prize pool)
Phase 2 Implementation Budget	Up to \$3,000,000 (2027)
Corridors	Russell · Conway · President
Administered by	Baltimore Development Corporation

The opportunity

Design Baltimore: Gateways is an open, international design competition transforming three major highway entryways into iconic civic thresholds. The initiative dismantles the visual and physical barriers historically created by urban highway infrastructure — turning sterile transit corridors into welcoming, community-centric landmarks that integrate public art, traffic calming, and neighborhood storytelling.

Legacy of civic design

Twice in two centuries, Baltimore has changed how American cities imagine themselves — first with Robert Mills and the 1815 Washington Monument competition, then with James Rouse's 1980 Inner Harbor revolution. Gateways 2026 opens the next chapter.

TIMELINE

At-a-glance schedule

Every public milestone, top to bottom.

Date	Milestone
June 8, 2026	Portal / landing page launch
June 23, 2026	Public technical engagement (in-person)
June 25, 2026	Public technical engagement (virtual)
July 1, 2026	Partner assets released
July 8, 2026	Public site tours
August 15, 2026	Submissions deadline
Aug 16 – Sept 17, 2026	Jury review (deadline Sept 17)
October 8, 2026	Top 12 presentations & celebration
October 15, 2026	Live-streamed winners announcement
Oct 18 – Nov 30, 2026	Public exhibition
2027	Phase 2 design-build implementation

Detailed phases

PHASE 01 · June 8, 2026

Launch & Public Awareness — Portal / Landing Page Launch

- Competition website goes live
- Program overview, timeline, eligibility, and submission details available
- Public sign-up and information collection begins

PHASE 02 · June 23 & June 25, 2026

Community Engagement & Input — Public Technical Sessions

- June 23 — In-person session: project overview, design challenge briefing, community input
- June 25 — Virtual session for broader participation
- Recording and resources shared with interested participants

PHASE 03 · July 1, 2026

Recruitment & Outreach — Partner Asset Distribution

- Marketing toolkit released to partners
- Social graphics, flyers, email templates, and outreach materials distributed
- Active recruitment campaign begins

PHASE 04 · July 8, 2026

Site Exploration — Open Public Site Tours

- Russell Street · Conway Street · President Street
- Visit project locations, ask questions, and gain context on site conditions

PHASE 05 · Aug 15 – Sept 17, 2026

Submissions & Jury Review

- Submissions deadline: August 15, 2026 · 11:59 PM EST
- Jury review runs August 16 – September 17, 2026
- Jury review deadline: September 17, 2026
- Evaluation based on established design criteria

PHASE 06 · October 8, 2026

Finalist Selection — Top 12 Presentations & Celebration

- Finalists present concepts to the jury and public audience
- Community celebration and networking event
- Jury deliberations conclude; final selections determined

PHASE 07 · October 15, 2026

Winner Announcement — Live-Streamed

- Official announcement of selected designs
- Recognition of finalists and participants
- Public unveiling of winning concepts

PHASE 08 · Oct 18 – Nov 30, 2026

Public Exhibition

- Public exhibition showcasing winning and finalist submissions
- Community engagement and educational programming
- Celebration of Baltimore's creative talent and design vision

Three gateways

Each corridor carries its own urban context, stakeholders, and design opportunities. Concepts may address one, two, or all three.

01 - Southern Gateway — Russell Street

Stadium District · I-295 / I-95 / Russell Street

Baltimore's ceremonial entrance sequence — where sports, waterfront ecology, entertainment, and infrastructure collide.

Anchors

M&T; Bank Stadium · Camden Yards adjacency · Horseshoe Casino · Topgolf · Middle Branch waterfront · Gwynns Falls Trail · Baltimore Peninsula · Future Greenway Trail

02 - Western Gateway — Conway Street

Camden Yards · Convention Center · I-395 / Conway / Howard Street

A civic arrival corridor connecting Baltimore's tourism, sports, convention, entertainment, and cultural ecosystems.

Anchors

Baltimore Convention Center · Oriole Park at Camden Yards · CFG Bank Arena · Inner Harbor · Charles Street · Light Rail access · Harbor tourism

03 - Northern Gateway — President Street

East Baltimore · I-83 / President Street

The eastern threshold bridging highway infrastructure with the historic and commercial districts of East Baltimore.

Anchors

Harbor East adjacency · Little Italy · Jonestown · Fells Point · I-83 terminus · Historic + commercial East Baltimore

COMPETITION

Structure & eligibility

Phase 1 — Concept selection

- Up to 12 design concepts selected to receive a \$15,000 development stipend.
- Selected concepts showcased in a city-wide public exhibition for resident feedback.
- Submissions deadline: August 15, 2026 · 11:59 PM EST.
- Jury review deadline: September 17, 2026 (review runs Aug 16 – Sept 17).

Phase 2 — Implementation

- Finalists transition to local design-build teams in 2027 for final construction.
- Up to \$3M implementation budget across the three corridors.

Who can participate

- Architects, urban designers, landscape architects, engineers, planners.
- Artists, public-art collectives, MICA students and faculty.
- Community organizations and multidisciplinary teams.
- Open international competition — joint ventures between global firms and local MBE/WBE businesses are encouraged.

Evaluation criteria

Criterion	What we're looking for
Design excellence	Originality, clarity, craft, and visual impact.
Civic identity	How clearly the proposal reads as Baltimore.
Community fit	Responsiveness to adjacent neighborhoods.
Feasibility	Buildability within Phase 2 budget and rights-of-way.
Equity & inclusion	Local representation and MBE/WBE participation.

EXECUTION

30 - 60 - 90 day plan

How the administering team will operationalize the launch and the first quarter of the competition.

First 30 Days — Foundation & Alignment

Goal — Establish structure, clarity, and momentum before launch.

- Kickoff working session with Rodney and Roy to align on scope and immediate priorities
- Review existing materials: competition brief, BCT concept study, workback schedule, partner landscape
- Finalize master project plan and critical path timeline
- Confirm stakeholder map and engagement ownership
- Stand up tracking systems: milestones, risks, communications cadence
- Identify gaps, dependencies, and pressure points ahead of June 8 launch
- Begin outreach coordination with City agency and community partners

Success: Team aligned, plan locked, no ambiguity heading into launch.

Days 31–60 — Execution & Activation

Goal — Drive a clean competition launch and build strong participation momentum.

- Support all June 8 launch logistics: portal, materials, communications rollout
- Coordinate technical engagement (June 23 in-person, June 25 virtual) and site tours (July 8)
- Release partner asset toolkit (July 1) and activate recruitment campaign
- Manage FAQ process and participant communications
- Ensure stakeholder alignment across BDC, City, and partners
- Begin planning for jury process, review logistics, and panel coordination
- Identify visibility and strategic partnership opportunities

Success: Strong launch, robust participation pipeline, zero operational breakdowns.

Days 61–90 — Optimization & Delivery

Goal — Ensure quality execution through the evaluation and selection phase.

- Oversee submission intake through the August 15 deadline
- Coordinate jury review materials and deliberation logistics (Aug 16 – Sept 17, deadline Sept 17)
- Support selection process, internal alignment, and panel communications
- Plan Top 12 finalist event (Oct 8), winners announcement (Oct 15), exhibition (Oct 18 – Nov 30)
- Begin early Phase 2 transition planning and design-build procurement prep

Success: Smooth evaluation, strong outcomes, clear path to Phase 2.

More than 200 years after Baltimore launched one of America's earliest civic design competitions, the Monument City returns to civic design — inviting designers, artists,

architects, and communities to help shape its future identity.

Administered by the Baltimore Development Corporation · Reporting to Rodney LoveJones and Roy Broderick, Jr.
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