

Reimagine Middle Branch & Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative

Baltimore, Maryland



James Corner Field Operations

A bold vision begins to reverse a legacy of degradation and environmental injustice by restoring habitat, flood resilience, and human connection to 11 miles of urban waterfront.

SERVICES

Climate Adaptation & Resilience
Ecological Restoration
Nature Based Solutions

The Middle Branch of the Patapsco River is adjacent to Baltimore's lively Inner Harbor, but its history of heavy industry, aging infrastructure, and fragmented neighborhoods has severed it from the city. To bring greater resilience, vibrancy, and connectivity to its communities and waterfront, the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) launched a large-scale effort to reimagine the 11-mile waterway.

Biohabitats contributed to the transformative "Reimagine Middle Branch" master plan, which promotes community health, climate resilience, and biodiversity by improving access and connectivity to 598 acres of parkland and restoring Chesapeake Bay habitats. Biohabitats characterized more than 550 acres of terrestrial and intertidal habitats and provided the design team with a more detailed picture of existing conditions by assessing specific sites on foot and by boat. Biohabitats prepared concept designs for expanding and restoring intertidal marsh habitat to improve flood resilience, water quality, and biodiversity along critical stretches of shoreline. The designs and associated cost estimates were incorporated into grant applications. Cost benefit analyses indicated high ROI, and led to funding for design, permitting, and construction of 40+ acres of tidal marsh.

The Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative represents the implementation of the ecological elements envisioned in Reimagine Middle Branch. Biohabitats led design of these nature-based solutions, which included tidal marshes and creeks, habitat structures, and critical area buffer restoration. In an aligned effort, Biohabitats also helped SBGP and GreenVest procure over \$50 Million in grant funding to date.

With public access and marsh ecology woven back into the water's edge, and with improved access on the horizon, the Middle Branch is poised to become a model for rectifying a legacy of environmental injustice by building a waterfront park that enhances quality of life and provides greater climate resiliency.