May 2, 2022

**FINAL PRESS RELEASE - UPDATED 6 PM ET 5/1/2022:**

**Let there be light! New art installation points to brighter Baltimore future**

(Baltimore, Maryland) – Driving along North Gay Street through the Amtrak overpass, Baltimore will be greeted with a glimpse of the city’s 22nd Century future.  Sixteen light totems that glow in vibrant blue and amber will provide a welcoming path for drivers, pedestrians, residents and workers. It’s an artistic gateway that connects neighborhoods, improves safety and serves as a reassuring sign of more to come in Charm City.

On Monday, May 2, 2022, **Mayor Brandon Scott** with **China Boak Terrell, CEO of nonprofit American Communities Trust**, and over 100 Baltimoreans will dedicate the finished project. Entitled "The Beacon," it is the first permanent artistic light installation of Last Mile Park. Residents and American Communities Trust are planning a one-mile urban ecological and public art trail that will loop through Amtrak's eight overpasses.

With The Beacon, the overpasses that serve as boundaries for neighborhoods will become entry points. The lights will help link the Oliver, Broadway East, and Berea neighborhoods in the north with the Eager Park, EBDI and the Johns Hopkins University communities in the south.

**FINAL Quote 1:**  “Showcasing inspiring local art is a great way to express our pride in Baltimore and its communities. I’m excited to see the Last Mile Park project kick off with this creative installation to light up our neighborhoods. This initiative will continue helping to spotlight the heart, culture, and talent of Baltimoreans from all parts of our city,” said **Senator Van Hollen**

**FINAL Quote 2:** “We are completely rewriting the standard for what’s possible and should be expected in working-class neighborhoods,” **China Boak Terrell**, project lead and CEO of American Communities Trust, Inc. “The Beacon is the first of its kind because of where it is. Completing projects like Last Mile Park are how we build value for working-class residents. This must be the beginning.”

**FINAL Quote 3:** “This beautiful installation will literally and figuratively light up our East Baltimore communities,” said **Mayor Brandon M. Scott**. “We are showing our residents that they deserve to have world-class parks and public art. These amenities are essential to improving the well-being of residents in these communities.”

**FINAL Quote 4:** "Every neighborhood deserves to be safe and walkable,” said **State** **Senator** **Cory V. McCray**. “To keep the promise of investing in our neighborhoods, the 45th Legislative district introduces The Last Mile Park Project: to provide opportunities of neighborhood connection, through creative lighting, and the establishment of a new concept in Baltimore."

Each year one of The Beacon’s light totems will be dedicated to an individual or organization that has been a source of hope and change by serving Baltimore. **Pastor Dantwan Broady and the Temple of God Baptist Church** are the first honorees for their selfless service in helping to get the project completed. They will also award future honorees for their service going forward.

**FINAL Quote 5:** “I’m honored that our work has meant so much to our community.  The lights are breathtaking and inspiring. We need more.  Our community is ready to push for that,” said **Pastor Dantwan Broady.**

**Ms. Ella Durant**, community leader and chair of City Life Community Builders’ Board of Directors is among the residents involved in the project with ACT from the beginning.

**FINAL Quote 6:** “Pedestrians need safe, lighted pathways. As this evolves, Last Mile Park will connect more prominent communities to communities that were once overlooked,” said Ms. Durant.

Artist-designers from the architectural firm, **PI.KL** led the work. They were supported by engineers from **MC Dean**, **Flux Studio, Sixty Forty Design, and Tarantino Engineering Consultants** and fabricator **Seymore Welding & Mechanical**.

The Beacon’s artistic team was minority-led. Additionally, **Ms. Boak Terrell** said that at least 65% of all design and construction spending went to Black- and minority-owned firms.

Funding support for this nearly $600,000 investment comes from the **State of Maryland, the Abell Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Baltimore Ravens, and the James and Mary Miller Charitable Gift Fund.**

Baltimore City agencies, especially the **Departments of Planning, Transportation and Public Works** provided valuable technical support.

# # #

Media Contacts:

China Boak Terrell

CEO, American Communities Trust, Inc.

410.989.1607

china@actimpact.org