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D CENTER @ MAP LAUNCHES WITH THE OPEN CITY COMPETITION

Baltimore, MD (May 24, 2011): Starting in June, D center Baltimore, a group invested in improving and encouraging design in the Baltimore region, will occupy its first physical space after three years of nomadic existence. Through early 2012, D center will activate a 2,000-square-foot storefront gallery at 218 West Saratoga Street, Maryland Art Place (MAP)'s building.

Dubbed D center @ MAP, the gallery is supported by one of Downtown Partnership's Operation: Storefront grants, which were designed to fund creative uses of vacant commercial space in the city center. D center's mission to create a nexus for interdisciplinary design, collaboration, and creative conversations in Baltimore is evidenced in its inaugural exhibition at D center @ MAP, the *Open City Challenge Exhibition*.

The *Open City Challenge Exhibition* presents all submissions to the Urbanite Project: Open City Challenge, an ideas competition announced in March 2011 that is being organized by D center Baltimore, *Urbanite* magazine, the year-long Exhibition Development Seminar at Maryland Institute College of Art, the Maryland Transit Administration, and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation. These collaborators invited self-organized teams or individuals from around the world to compete for \$10,000 in prize money and the chance to implement their solution to a pressing Baltimore issue: the quality-of-life issues brought about by the construction of the Red Line. The proposed Red Line is a 14-mile light rail transit line that will run east to west across the city, linking up with existing public transit to create a comprehensive transportation system—and, hopefully, connect neighborhoods that have historically felt disconnected.

The Open City Challenge addresses one major drawback: Construction could dramatically disrupt life in the communities through which it will pass, creating noise, dust, and disruptions for traffic, pedestrians, and businesses. The challenge invited proposals from architects, urban planners, artists, and community members for creative, innovative ways to deal with these negative effects of construction and leave a positive impact on the affected neighborhoods.

These proposals make up the *Open City Challenge Exhibition*. They will be on display at D center @ MAP from June 17 to July 8, during which time the public is invited to vote on their favorites. An opening reception will take place Friday, June 17, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thereafter, the gallery will be open from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. During the week of July 11, a national-level jury of urban planners, architects, artists, and writers will vote on the finalists. The winners will be announced in October.

For more information about the Open City Challenge and the exhibition, visit www.urbaniteproject.com or www.dcenterbaltimore.com.