901 Montpelier Street
Invitation for Proposals

Issued October 5, 2026
Letters of Interest Due: November 24, 2026

Summary
This is an invitation for proposals for the use and operation of the building at 901 Montpelier Street, longtime home of 901 Arts, an after-school and summer arts program that has served Better Waverly youth for 20 years. The 901 Arts program as it currently operates is sunsetting at the end of May 2027.

The 901 Arts advisory board (which includes the building owner and the director) are seeking proposals that will activate the space and serve the community into the future. This is an "emergent" process, one where we are figuring it out as we proceed; we have never sunset a program before. We are eager to work with proposers in the coming months to find the next use and owner for 901 Montpelier Street and, we hope, to continue to serve our youth and the Better Waverly community into the future.

This document includes:

- Overview of 901 Arts
- Decision criteria
- The process as far as we have been able to sketch it
- Information on how to replicate something like the 901 Arts program
- Submission information for letters of interest
- Building information

Overview of 901 Arts

We are including this information to give context about what the program and 901 Arts, operating out of 901 Montpelier Street, have meant in the community.

A summer arts program for Better Waverly youth was initially offered in 2005 through a partnership between MICA's community arts program and the youth committee of the Better Waverly Community Organization – specifically Debra Evans and Eleanor Montgomery. The program moved to 901 Montpelier, then owned by Habitat for Humanity, the following year. Eleanor Montgomery bought the building in 2007 and has provided it rent-free since then.

In the following years, the program expanded: from summer to year-round, from 12 youth to 100+, from serving middle schoolers to 1-12th graders (and sometimes beyond). Full time staff were hired, the center relies on more than 20 college volunteers per semester, and it offers art, drum-line, instrumental instruction and homework help. Youth are provided with snacks and meals. Additional activities have included field trips, youth showcases, hosting community events, gallery exhibitions, a teen summer job program, creating public art in the community, administering a scholarship program for youth to have various arts experiences, and administering 8 adopt-a-lots to have maintained outdoor green space for youth and community use.

901 Arts was made possible by a generous donor, whose annual commitment is no longer guaranteed. At the same time, Eleanor, who owns the building, is ready to no longer be the landlord of the building. Eleanor, Debra, and Sarah have recognized that the season of their lives focused on 901 Arts is coming to a close.

Decision Criteria

The goal is for the building at 901 Montpelier to remain a positive force in the community. To that end, 901 Arts has identified these criteria for proposals.

- Ideally, there will be a program for neighborhood youth, ideally in the arts.
- If not that, the use of the building should value community. This could look like many things – here are just two examples:
    - A program that serves neighborhood residents
    - A residence
- The most basic criterion is that the building should be occupied and well maintained.

Process (as understood so far)

- October 5: Meeting to generate energy and ideas, and release this Invitation for Proposals to be shared widely
- November 24, 5pm: Letters of Interest due. See below for information on how to submit a letter that sketches a proposal.
- December 15: 901 Arts will respond to applicants to engage further, or to indicate that they are not currently interested in the proposal sketched.

NOTE: We are looking for 1-3 volunteers *who are not submitting letters of interest* to help review applications. Desired expertise includes: experience in program development, arts administration, and community organizing. Neighborhood residents and people connected to 901 Arts are encouraged to apply. If you are interested, please email intern@901Arts.org with subject line "Proposal Reviewer Interest" by November 7. Include your name, contact info and why you would like to be a reviewer and any relevant information about your experience.

Information on How to Replicate Something like the 901 Arts Program

Many people, including us, are eager to see a program like 901 Arts continue in the building, so we are providing basic information on what would be involved:

- Secure the building (need to demonstrate ability to take on owning and maintaining. The current owner will not continue as owner).
- Secure or form a host organization that can:
    - Staff the program or absorb our program staff (hiring our program staff would provide the best continuity of services);
    - Act as fiscal sponsor or absorb program into their current 501c3 or fiscal sponsor;
    - Fundraise to cover all associated program and building expenses (see "current annual building expenses based on 901 Arts use and needs" below; and
    - Identify how the program will be stewarded: for example, an advisory board, program staff at an existing organization, or other means.
- Possibilities could also include starting with a pared-down version of 901 Arts. What would it look like to cut back expenses and programs?

Submission Information for Letters of Interest

You may submit a letter of interest of up to 6 pages by November 24, 5pm.

- Email a pdf of your letter to SarahTooley@901arts.org.
- Include the subject line: Letter of Interest for 901 Montpelier Street

The review committee will look at:

- The program or use you propose: See "Decision Criteria" section above.
- The capacity of your organization or group of people: Tell us about the resources – people, know-how, and money – that will bring your vision to light and enable the acquisition and ownership of the building
- The connection to the community. How do you know the program will serve real needs of the community? Are people involved connected to Better Waverly, and how?
- Obstacles or challenges you foresee, and initial thoughts on how you will address them.
- Your proposed timeline.

There is no formal rubric. We are trying to understand the possibilities, and will work from there. Please include anything else you would like us to know about you, the organization, or your proposal in your letter of interest.

Building Information: 901 Montpelier Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

After May 2027, the owner of 901 Montpelier Street plans to dispose of it, either by selling it to a program/person to continue a community-based program there, or selling it for conversion to residential use. It will not be available to rent from the current owner. The assessed value as of 1/1/26 is $112,800. Zillow estimates its value at $134,800. It has not been formally appraised. No sales price has been determined. The property is currently exempt from real estate taxes based on its use for charitable purposes.

Description of Physical Space

Interior

901 Montpelier is an end of row storefront building built in 1920. It is 2 stories with an above grade area of 1,600 square feet and a full unfinished basement. The first floor has an entry way approximately 10 x 10 ft sq. There is a small "office" 6 x 6 ft sq. The large back "art room" is 14 1/2 x 24 ft sq including a kitchen (stove, sink, fridge and counters) in the rear. There is a half bathroom with a sink and toilet. The second floor has the 14 ½ x 13 ¼ ft sq "guitar room" in front, and the 17 x 17 ft sq "drum room" in the back. Between these rooms are 4 "closets" (formerly shower stalls with the plumbing and shower pans in place) and 2 half bathrooms with a sink and toilet each.

The HVAC system (gas fired furnace and condenser) was replaced in October 2021. We are in the process of putting a new roof on the building. Other systems to our knowledge are OK. The building shows signs of wear and tear.

Exterior

There are steps, a handrail and grab bar up to the front door. The exterior side wall of the building has a mural designed and painted by Iandry Randriamandroso and 901 Arts youth over the summer of 2019. There is a sidewalk that extends around two sides of the building, two tree wells with mature cherry blossoms along one side, the exterior rear is fenced in and has access to the 1st floor and basement via steps and full size doors. The front of the building has a metal sculpture of a giant spider that was welded and installed by artist Desmond Moore based on designs by 901 Arts youth using found materials.

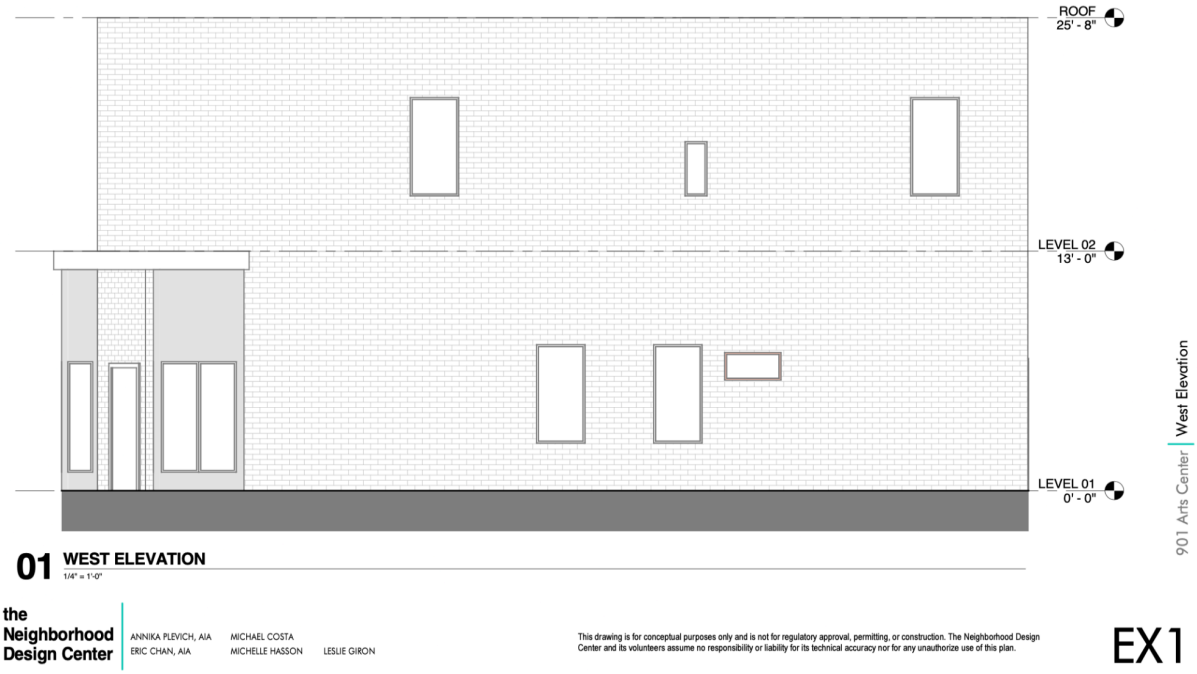
Current annual building expenses based on 901 Arts use and needs:

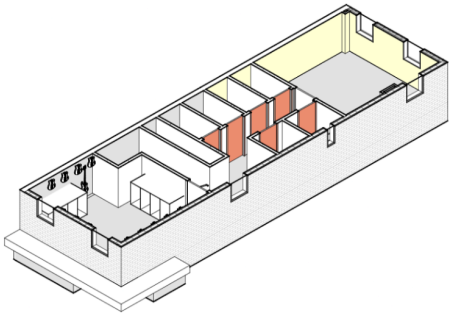
Insurance - $1,846/annual
BGE - $4,080/annual
Water - $816/annual
Landline Phone + Internet - $2,400/annual
Professional Cleaning: $2,880/annual
Licence & Permits: $150 fire permit/annual
Fire extinguisher servicing fee: $150/annual
Food Facility Fee issued by Health Dept: $50/annual
Building Alarm system: $350/annual

History of Use

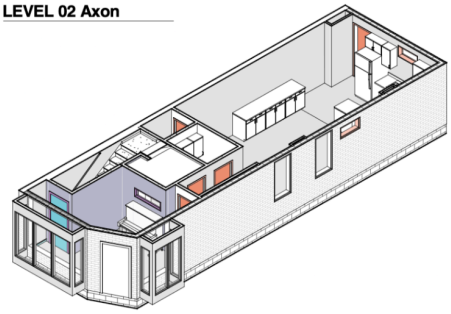
- 2006–2026: 901 Arts operates out of the building, first under Habitat ownership then under private ownership
- 1999–2005: Habitat for Humanity owned and operated out of used the building, using it as office space and housing for college student volunteers working on rehabbing houses in Better Waverly and Penn Lucy neighborhoods
- 19xx?–1999: Waverly Family Center, owned and operated out of this location, . This was its home before moving into the building across the street at 829 Montepelier once it was built.
- 1920–19xx?: Some long-time neighborhood residents still remember when the building was a corner store, before that it was probably a private residence.

Architectural Renderings of 901 Montpelier Street

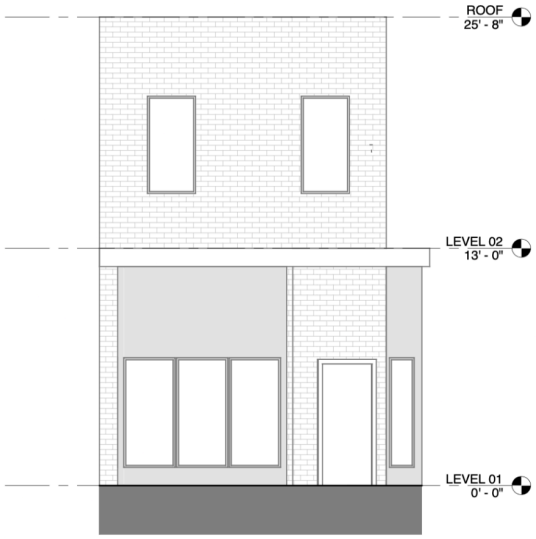




01 LEVEL 02 Axon



02 LEVEL 01 Axon



03 NORTH ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

901 Arts Center | North Elevation

the Neighborhood Design Center | ANNIKA PLEVICH, AIA | ERIC CHAN, AIA | MICHAEL COSTA | MICHELLE HASSON | LESLIE GIRON

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