

LEARNING

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LEXINGTON

Voices + Visions

Lexington Market: 1800s - 2017

INTRO

Learning from Lexington is an American Studies course at UMBC where students research the history, cultures, and stories of the iconic Lexington Market, a public market located in the westside of downtown Baltimore. There is a proposed plan to build a new market building replacing the current one, built in 1952. Students explored what these changes may mean for the city and asked people what they thought about the Market and its future.

Thanks to those who shared their thoughts and stories with us.

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The Baltimore Traces courses have allowed me to do things I never thought were possible with my academic career. I am able to combine the love I have for my city with my passion to capture meaningful stories from the city's residents and visitors. This has opened up new doors for me and given me a different perspective on parts of the city I've known my whole life.

To me, the Lexington Market isn't just the place you go to hang out and get good food anymore. It's a cornerstone in people's lives. It is a community that's full of good and bad, hope and despair. No matter how I view the market, one thing never changes... the people. The people of Baltimore never give up. They always have hope. The buildings may change but the people of Baltimore won't. We will continue to live, love, fight, laugh, and persevere through all of the city's changes.

-Christina Kwegan
Baltimore Traces fellow
American Studies, UMBC class of 2016
Baltimore City Resident



Pictured above: Christina Kwegan, Adam Droneburg and Miranda Supeno

HIST ORY

Lexington Market is a part of the fabric of Baltimore city. The first building was built in 1805 so that farmers selling produce, fish, and meat could be under cover.

For a century, the market grew until in 1918 there were 1,200 spots for sellers, inside and on the nearby streets. But in the early and mid 20th century, grocery stores emerged, selling food closer to homes in the expanding city. In 1949, Lexington Market burned down and the market building we know today opened in 1952 with 417 stalls, eliminating outdoor vendors . Today there are plans to build a new market building.

Many of today's vendors have been around for decades. The oldest stall is Faidley's seafood, which opened in 1886 and is still run by the same family. Three successive owners have kept the Mary Mervis Delicatessen open for 103 years. Many of the longtime vendors blend with new arrivals and the largest percentage of stalls are run by Korean American vendors.

Customers like Thurston Jennings, who was buying a \$4 breakfast at Joy's, come to Lexington Market for its low prices and for the convenience of finding so many options in one place. But, for Jennings, it is the spirit of the market that is most appealing...

"For me, Lexington Market is kind of like an embodiment of the spirit of Baltimore. In Baltimore, you really have the get up and go attitude. A lot of the residents, as far as I've you know encountered, don't necessarily have the easiest ways of succeeding in life. But it's the will, it's the drive that a person has that makes them go out and get and achieve. Lexington Market you look around at all the business shops and you look around at all the faces, it's that same spirit, that same drive, that same get up and go, and I don't know what the day will bring, but, you know, let's hope for the best."

Timeline

1782-1802

Lexington Market
Bought and Built

1900

Lexington Market
existed for around 100
years, beginning of
discussions of fixing
and changing the market



1949

Lexington
Market caught
on fire

1952

The new Lexington
Market was built
after the tragic
fire.

1982

The Arcade Emerges

2016

Development Plans
Announced for the
new market



Photo: Bill Risen

Baltimore August 12, 1818

To The city commissioners Gentlemen I have made in examination Agreeable
to your Advertisement for Proposals to building An Addition to the Lexington market
50 feet in Length And as wide as the present Market House
with 4 Brick pillars on each side and 4 posts on each side with Lime Sonts
Foot under each post pavement from kerb Stone to kerb Stone ~~as the former market~~
with good paving Buck each Brick ~~with~~ pillar shall be well built
with good brick and well laid with mortar shingles of the best quality
And All timbers except the Lating And them will be cuttings
And the same shall be done in a workman Like manner For 110000 Dollars
And so on to the Satisfaction of The city cornishoners and be commenced as quick
As possible By Me Stephen Waters

Baltimore August 24th 1818

To the City comiss^{rs}
Gentl^{rs}

Last Monday I proposed to build
an addition to Lexington ^{street} Market House of fifty feet
in the same manner as that already built for the sum
of Thirteen Hundred and twenty five Dollars. I have since
examined the house already built and am willing to
finish fifty feet in the same manner for the sum of
Twelve hundred dollars.

Daniel Cunningham

NB I wish to commence it in the course of this week if
possible

D C

To The Mayor & City Council of Baltimore
Now in session

The subscribers commissioners for erecting
a market house in the Western Branch, beg leave to represent
that they have paved the public part of Calaw street at
the intersection of Lexington street, out of their funds, they therefore
pray that an appropriation may be made to refund the same
Balt. March 19th 1805

P. S. The sum required is \$2000

Wm Kennedy
E. Finley
Geo Johnston
Dan Lammitt
J. S. Horul

Original Documents for
Lexington Market

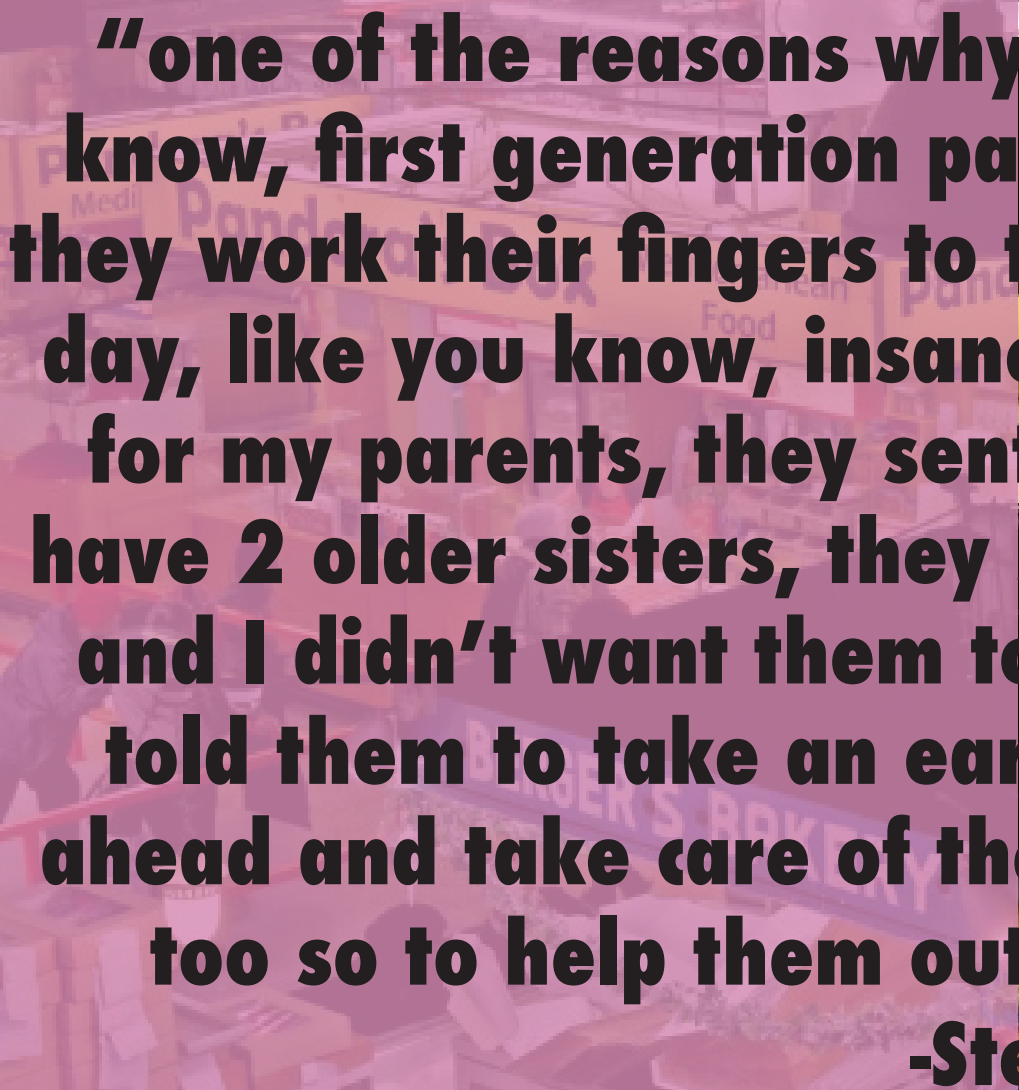
Stories of Lex Market Vendo



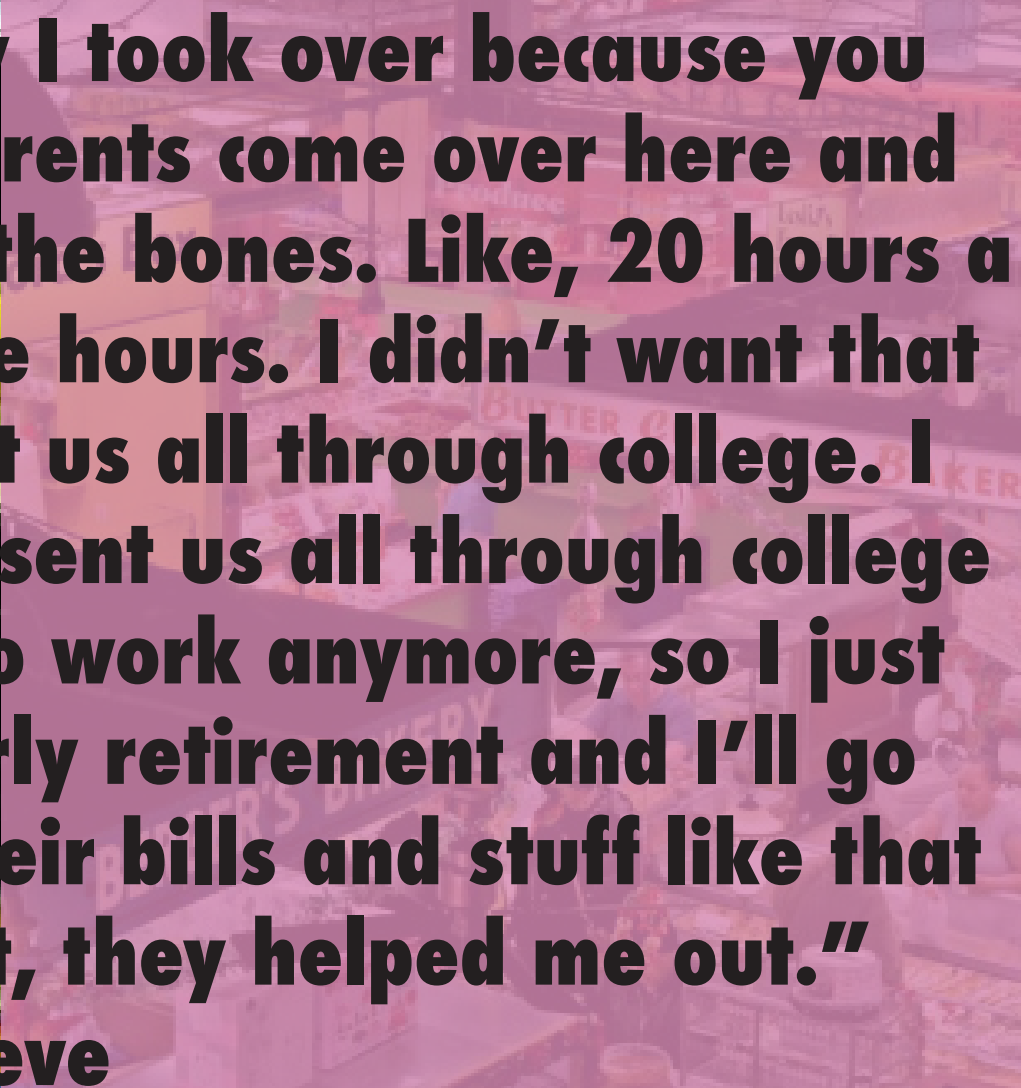
Photo: Kenneth K. Lam

Lexington Vendors

With 70% of vendors in Lexington Market being Korean and Korean American, their hard work and dedication is what embodies the American Dream. Grace works towards the American Dream for her children just like Steve's parents, a dream that most people come here to obtain.



**“one of the reasons why
know, first generation parents
they work their fingers to the
day, like you know, insane
for my parents, they sent me
have 2 older sisters, they
and I didn't want them to
told them to take an earner
ahead and take care of the
too so to help them out
-Ste**



**y I took over because you
rents come over here and
the bones. Like, 20 hours a
e hours. I didn't want that
t us all through college. I
sent us all through college
o work anymore, so I just
rly retirement and I'll go
eir bills and stuff like that
t, they helped me out."
eve**



Photo: Amy Davis

"But we have the dream, kinda what you can say the American Dream. So it is a big part of the children or even my dreams. That is why we work so hard. It's not for me, I think most immigrants are the same."

- Grace, JA Reagan

A Baltimore T

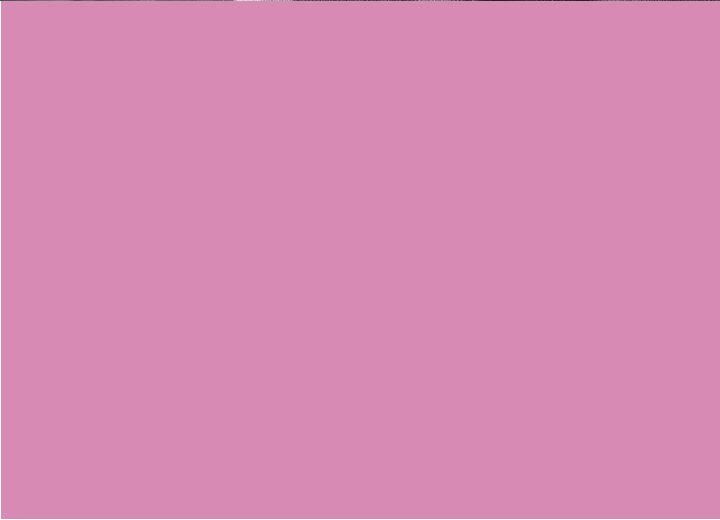


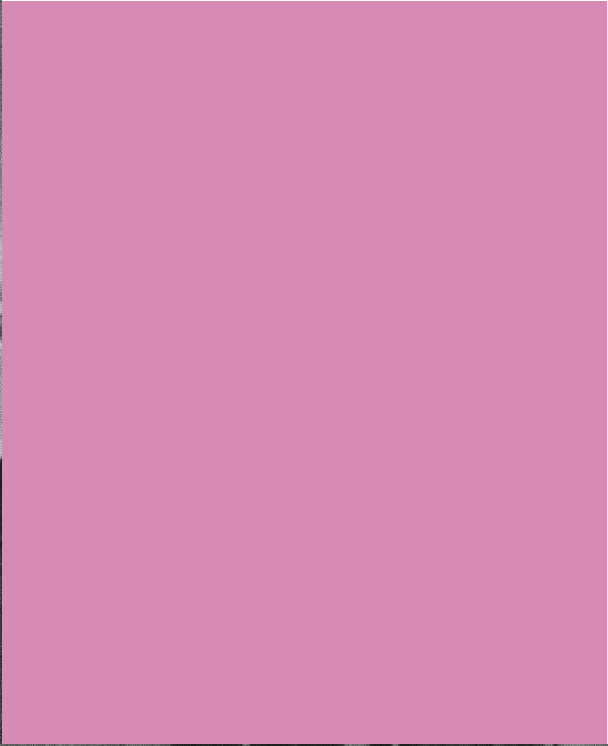
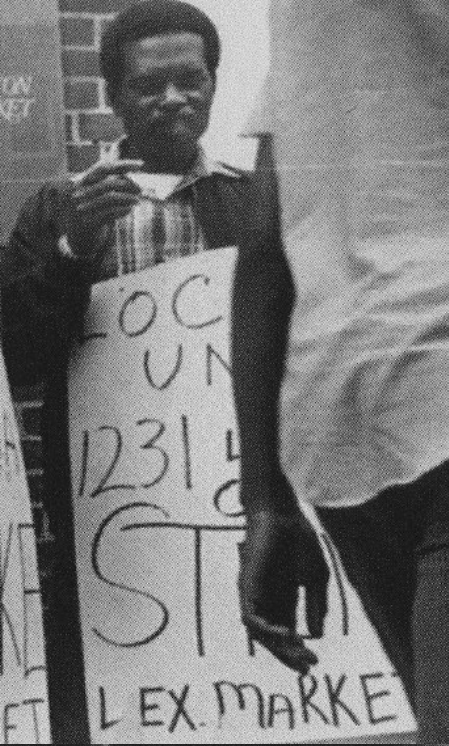
First imagined in 1782, Lexington Market has been renovated, expanded, burned down, and put back together again. What has remained are the generations of returning customers. Baltimore residents who once visited the Market as children continue to do so as adults.

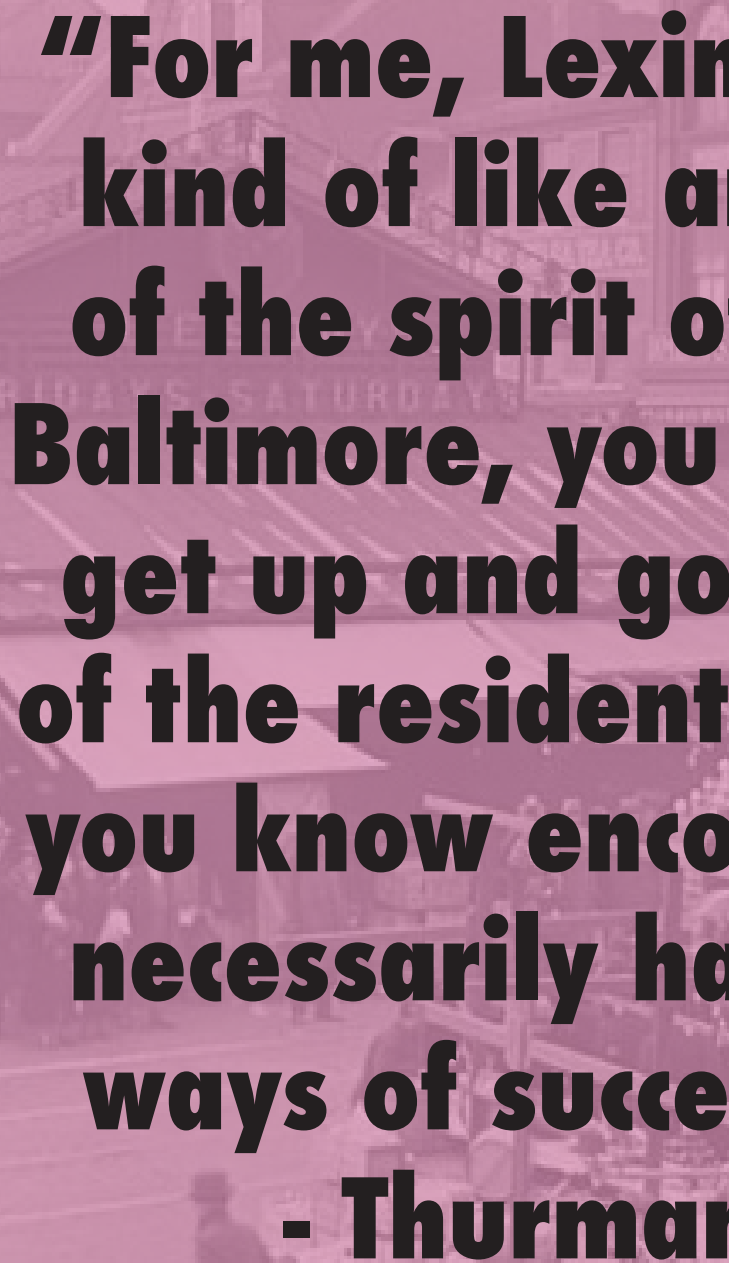
tradition

"Coming down here, just before me and my mother would go shopping, and getting a shrimp salad sandwich from Mary-Mary's," he says with a laugh. "That's my fondest memory," says 55-year-old Tyrone Spease, who has been visiting the Market since childhood "That's when you had major department stores and such, Hutzler's, stuff like that."

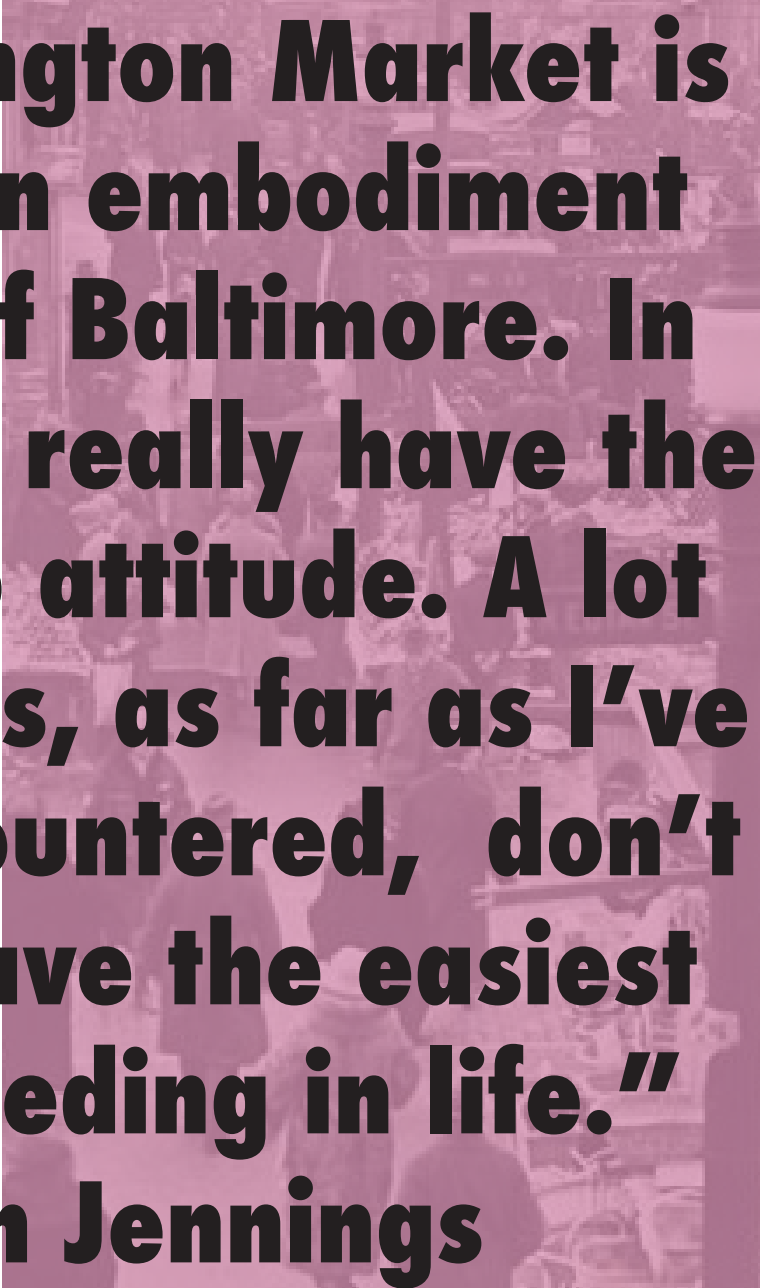
- Carol Harris







“For me, Lexington is kind of like a combination of the spirit of Baltimore, you get up and go of the resident you know encourage necessarily have ways of success - Thurman



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from market managers

In 2016, Lexington Market, Inc., the non-profit that manages the market, released a new master plan for Lexington Market.

The plan calls for erecting an entirely new market building on the surface lot adjacent to the current facility, demolishing the 1952 market shed and 1982 arcade, creating new open space for outdoor uses and re-opening Lexington Street to pedestrians.

Development projects moving forward without input from community members are all too familiar in Baltimore. The destabilizing effects can be seen clearly around the city. To their credit, the executives of Lexington Market seem to acknowledge this reality. Lexington Market & Baltimore Public Markets Corp.

In terms of what the future market offers, Marketing and Communications Manager at Lexington Market Stacey Pack let us know that the market executives "want to get [a] connection back with local farmers and merchants who might not be able to afford a stall six days a week." She adds that the renovated Market can offer, "a nice outdoor space in central West Baltimore that has outdoor seating and just is a nice friendly type of environment."

Lexington Market & Baltimore Public Markets Corp. Executive Director Robert Thomas agrees with lifelong customers of Lexington Market:

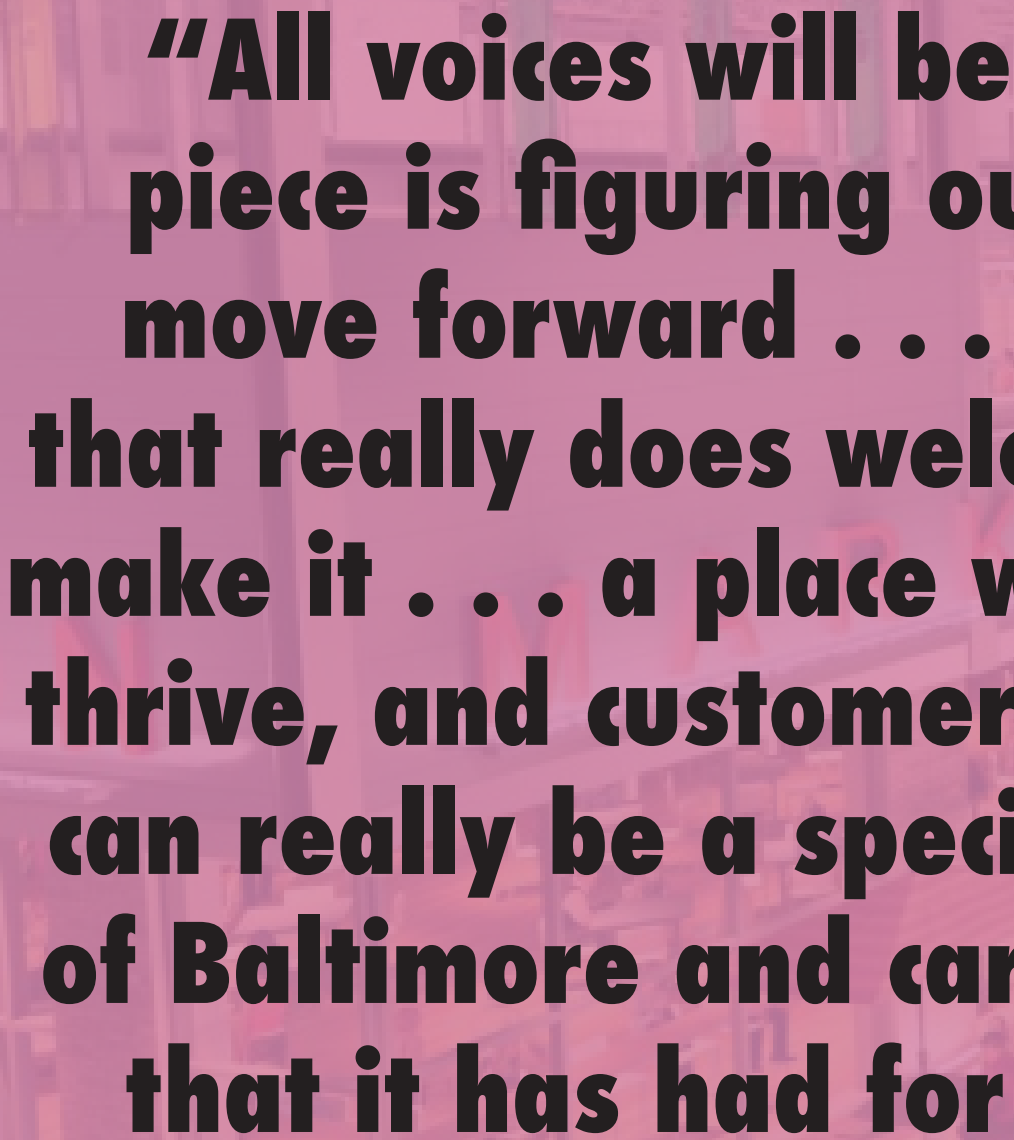
“I would be cautious too, but I’d also say we want to make sure that the market offers what people need first, and then offers what people want after that.”



Photo: Cook



Photo: Amy Davis



“All voices will be heard. The next piece is figuring out how to move forward . . . how to create a culture that really does welcome everyone and make it . . . a place where people can thrive, and customers can really be a special part of Baltimore and care about the city that it has had for

- Stacey



**heard. The tricky
but the best way to
making it a space
come all people and
where merchants can
s can come and that
ial place for the city
ry on that tradition
over 200 years."**

y Pack

The Future Lexington Market



Of ton



**“To be honest, it looks like
If I wanted to go to
would go to the Harbor
I’m saying? I would
or something of that
a Harbor for Lexington
Lexington Market has
you know, everyone
up and modernize
doesn’t really need to
and dirty is good. You
wanna think of it like
– Thurman**


oks like the Harbor.
o the Harbor then I
bor. You hear what
d go to The Gallery
t sort. I don't want
ton Market. I think
s a rustic feel. But,
ne wants to clean
or upscale it. And it
that. Sometimes old
ou know, we don't
ke that. But it is."

Jennings

Reactions



During our interviews, the public was often surprised to hear of the upcoming changes to the Lexington Market, especially tearing down the current market and arcade. Many visitors want a change, but hope that the essence of the Market itself will stay the same.

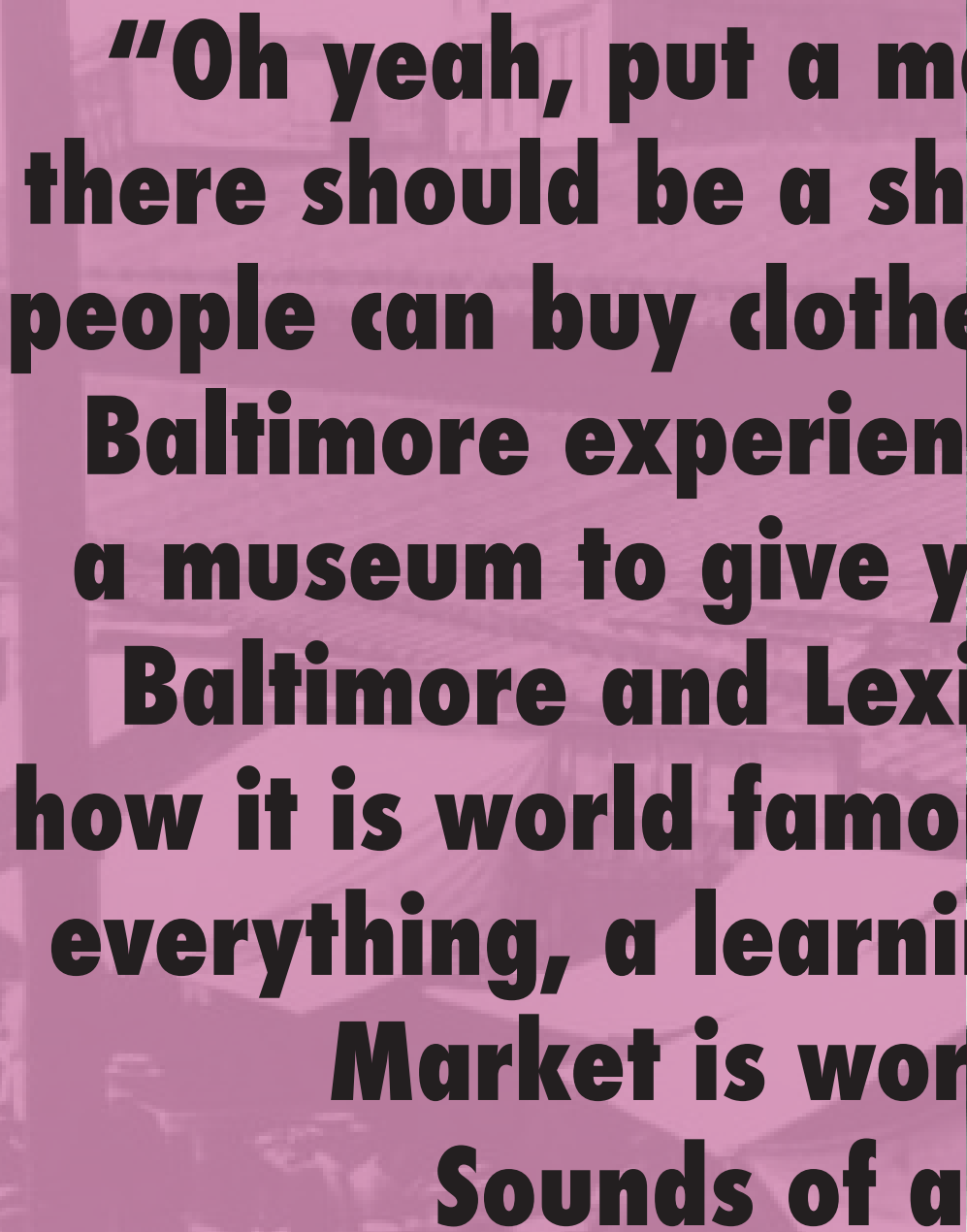


"I don't think they can change Lexington Market, cause it's a staple... even with the new building you still have the same atmosphere and the same people that are gonna be here; people make Lexington Market; the people, the customers, the vendors make Lexington the market that it is today"

– Carol Harris

"I would like to see a better food offerings and I'd like to see us stay open later, so when people got off their jobs, they can come get dinner here."

–Larry from Konstant's



**“Oh yeah, put a market
there should be a shop
people can buy clothes
Baltimore experience
a museum to give you
Baltimore and Lexington
how it is world famous
everything, a learning
Market is world
Sounds of a**

**all in there. I think
opping center where
es and make a whole
ce. There should be
you the education of
ington Market and
us. They should have
ng center. Lexington
ld famous." –
Millionaire**



Photos: Bill Risen



**“I am kinda concerned. don't want it to lose its you come across any bus consider whether or not i personality. As time goes out of the homestyle feel It goes commercial. I w Market to go commercial think about business, homestyle when doll
- Thurman**

**. I am very concerned. I
soul. Oftentimes when
iness really, you have to
it has its natural original
s forward you lose a lot
ing that you would have.
ouldn't want Lexington
l. But, I mean, you gotta
and, who cares about
ars are concerned?"**

n Jennings

What Do you
Think about The
Future of
Lexington



Write your
thoughts
down below

