

# Tirzah Basit Khan

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I'm a designer passionate about the human-centered, mobility justice side of transportation and the built environment. With nearly a decade of experience in graphic design for politics and advocacy, I use visual communication skills and systems thinking to address gaps in policy, data, and lived experiences through thoughtful public engagement and participatory design strategies.

## EDUCATION

### Master of Urban Planning candidate @ Harvard University Graduate School of Design

08/24 to 05/26

Publications co-lead at Womxn in Design. Website editor at Urban Review, GSD's student planning journal. Member of GSD Mobility  
*Relevant coursework:* Spatial Analysis, Quantitative & Qualitative Methods, Travel Behavior & Forecasting.

### Bachelor of Science in information systems @ University of Maryland, Baltimore County

08/17 to 05/21

Psychology minor & web development certificate. Founder and lead organizer of TEDxUMBC. Vice president of design at UMBC's student engagement board. Design team lead at hackUMBC. Helped organize a campus-wide voter registration campaign. Developed communications strategy for university leadership to amplify social justice initiatives and increase student engagement

## URBAN RESEARCH & STORYTELLING

### Contested Cities graduate assistant @ Harvard Divinity School

12/24 to now

Develop a website using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and ArcGIS to map cultural spaces in Haifa, integrating spatial data, oral histories, and multimedia elements. Use georeferencing techniques and geoJSON data to accurately show ownership of cultural landmarks over time. Implement interactive features for community engagement. Collaborate with Palestinian planning scholar Dr. Orwa Switat

### Media production freelancer @ Next City

09/23 to now

Redesign email newsletter for a nonprofit media organization focused on equitable cities. Produced, filmed, and edited social media videos communicating urbanist concepts, gaining a combined 83,000+ views across platforms

## COMMUNITY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### Graphic designer @ Neighborhood Design Center

02/23 to 06/24

Collaborated with local stakeholders to design signage to revitalize a business district in an underserved neighborhood in Baltimore. Attended meetings with community members and distilled the wide array of ideas into mockups on quick turnarounds

### Islamic art advisory committee @ the Walters Art Museum

05/21 to 04/23

Invited to serve on a committee that redesigned Islamic art exhibit to bridge the gap between the art's history and Baltimore Muslims' lived experiences. Pushed for a focus on Black Muslims, resulting in the addition of three didactic panels

### Intern @ UMBC Center for Democracy and Civic Life

08/20 to 05/21

Facilitated restorative dialogues for student and staff groups on topics like racial violence and policing, mental health stigmas in Asian communities, and the 2020 election. Organized two dinners for students to meet and engage with local politicians. Launched, hosted, and produced a weekly interview-style podcast on community empowerment strategies

## CREATIVE LEADERSHIP & DESIGN

### Freelance graphic designer

09/15 to now

Create illustrations, logos, ads, and more for clients including: Empowerment Avenue, Solutions Journalism Network, and Analyst News

### Graphic designer @ Winning Mark

03/24 to 11/24

Designed ads, social media posts, and web interfaces for political, union, environmental advocacy, and voter education campaigns

### Graphic designer @ Democratic National Committee

06/21 to 11/22

Designed ad campaigns, emails and merchandise for the Democratic Party and White House to mobilize grassroots supporters. Served as interim design director, leading a team of three designers. Supervised intern by holding one-on-ones and providing feedback

## ACADEMIC PROJECTS

### The People's Corridor, equity-driven redesign proposal of a cloverleaf interchange into a vibrant public space

2025

Developed a proposal to transform Denver's Colfax and Federal interchange into a community-centered corridor, repurposing underutilized land for public space and equitable development, with affordable housing and sustainable transportation options.

### Transportation as Liberation, independent study project researching anti-colonial frameworks in transportation planning

2025

Analyzing anti-colonial strategies, case studies, and critical urban theory to create a course syllabus with readings and annotations, designed to help planners rethink mobility through a liberatory lens. Research under transportation scholar Dr. Carole Voulgaris

### Changing the Game, proposal for a climate and racial justice-centered renovation of a public stadium

2024

Developed a proposal to transform Boston's White Stadium, facing privatization, into a climate refuge with solar power, stormwater management, and climate education. Presented before key stakeholders, earning recognition for its unique environmental justice lens

## SKILLS

**Design & software** ArcGIS, SketchUp, Adobe Creative Suite (particularly Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Premiere Pro, XD & After Effects), Figma, presentation design, UI/web design, branding design, audio/video editing

**Programming** HTML5, CSS, JS, Python, C++, R

**Interpersonal** Collaboration, project management, community engagement, restorative practices, dialogue facilitation