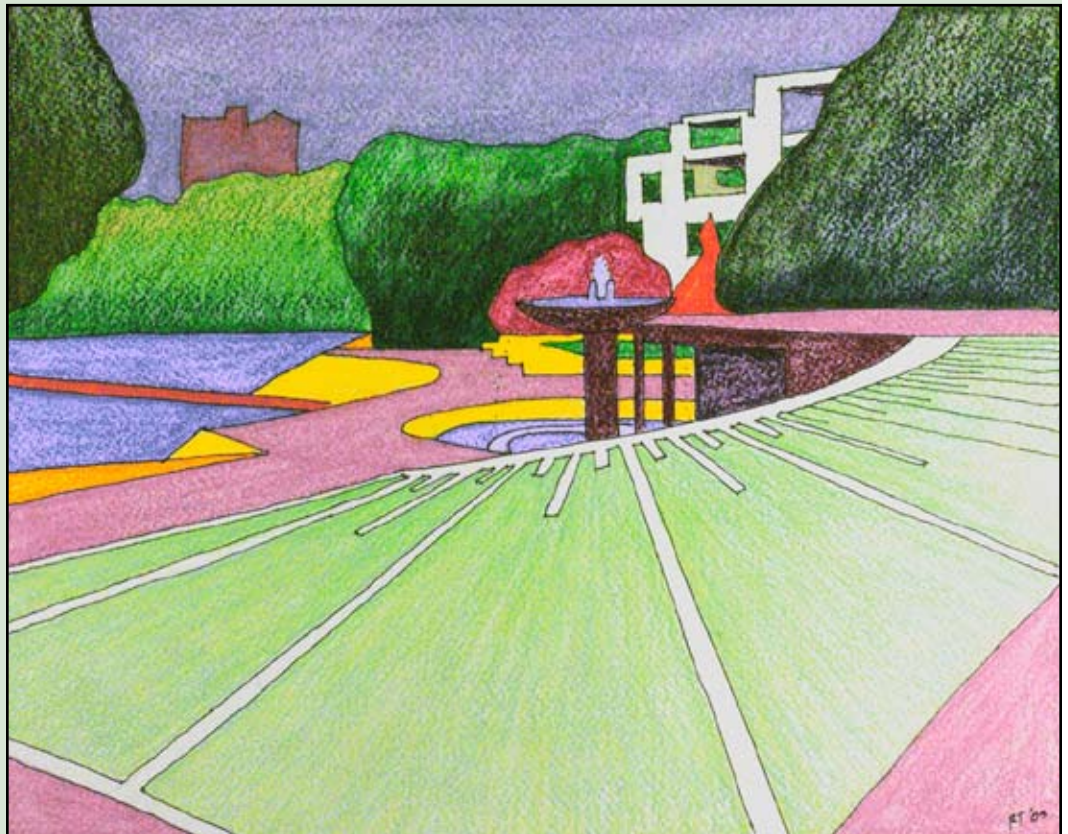


# Downtown Columbia: A Community Vision

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December 2007

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# A Letter from the County Executive

*“Over the coming years and decades, this vision will guide us towards a truly special downtown that connects our community, respects the environment, balances growth and includes everyone.”*



Dear Neighbor,

Two years ago we began a community-driven process to outline the future of Downtown Columbia. Now, after significant public discussion and engagement, I am proud to present the culmination of this effort, *Downtown Columbia: A Community Vision*. As an embodiment of the principles that define our community and the vision that guides it, this document provides the necessary framework to achieve a downtown the community desires, one that preserves Columbia’s character and reflects the values on which it was founded. Over the coming years and decades, this vision will guide us towards a truly special downtown that connects our community, respects the environment, balances growth and includes everyone.

This document grew out of a wide range of input from many interested individuals and groups as the public dialogue about Downtown Columbia evolved during the past two years. Over the last few months, the public has had the opportunity to review a draft of this framework and has provided compelling, thoughtful comments that helped shape the final form. One of the more notable suggestions offered was that there should be a greater level of detail within this document’s vision statements. While I appreciate and agree with many of the specific ideas that were proposed, I remain committed to the notion that this document should serve as a broad framework for the future rather a prescriptive set of specific regulations. It is my hope and sincere belief that initially defining our goals as bold visions will foster creative and ambitious approaches in meeting them. For the first time in Columbia’s history the County has taken the initial step of setting a high bar for future development by establishing a vision for what Downtown Columbia can and should be.

As the planning process for Downtown Columbia moves forward, first with General Growth Properties' proposal of a downtown development master plan to achieve the vision described in this document and then through the public review of that proposal by the Planning Board and the County Council, your ongoing participation is critical. The decision-making authority for zoning matters and the adoption of any master plan for downtown lies with the County Council. While the County Administration will provide guidance to the Council through the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Council will want and need continued guidance from the public as well. Citizens can and must be active participants if we are to establish a plan that truly achieves the vision of this framework and this community.

I thank you for your interest and involvement in shaping the future of Columbia and Howard County. I look forward to working with you as we finalize a master plan for Downtown Columbia, and I am also aware that this plan is not the end, but rather the beginning of a downtown that is truly worthy of the community it centers.

Sincerely,



Ken Ulman  
County Executive

# A Letter from the Planning Director

*Mort Hoppenfeld, Columbia's original chief planner, challenged us all when he said, "To build a better city is to work at the heart of civilization."*



To All County Citizens,

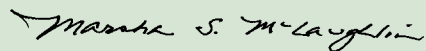
The Department of Planning & Zoning is pleased to present *Downtown Columbia: A Community Vision*. After six public outreach sessions and a great deal of citizen input, we believe this document articulates community consensus points about the future of Downtown. While the draft that was issued in September was generally well received, this document has been refined to address many issues raised during the public comment period. Amongst the refinements are an expansion of ideas related to environmental sustainability, further discussion of issues such as public space, civic life and transportation, and inclusion of a flow chart outlining the processes to be used for adopting a downtown development master plan and the accompanying zoning changes.

We also heard varying views regarding the need for greater specificity, and suggestions to replace the words "should or may" with "shall or must". However, the vision framework is intended to allow property owners the flexibility necessary to propose a master plan that creatively captures the core values and concepts expressed by Downtown's many stakeholders. The framework articulates our shared vision of a Downtown that makes a special place, connects the community, respects the environment, balances growth and includes everyone. The process, by which the master plan proposal and associated zoning will be vetted and adopted by the County Council, will establish appropriate requirements and controls. As in the draft, this document describes the vision in five themes, each detailed by vision statements. The 23 vision statements build upon and seek to extend James Rouse's vision for Columbia so that it will become a model community for the 21st century.

Mort Hoppenfeld, Columbia's original chief planner, challenged us all when he said, "To build a better city is to work at the heart of civilization." This is no small task. Change is often both exciting and unsettling at the same time. Fortunately, change doesn't occur overnight and there will be many, ongoing opportunities to continue to participate in guiding Downtown's evolution over the next year and years to come.

Thank you for taking the time to help develop Downtown Columbia: A Community Vision. We look forward to working with you to help Columbia's Downtown achieve its potential to be a very special place—a place that will serve us well now and for generations to come. If at any time you have a question or would like to comment on this document, please feel free to visit us at [www.howardcountymd.gov](http://www.howardcountymd.gov) (select Downtown Columbia Update).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marsha S. McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Making a Special Place</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Moving and Connecting People</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Sustaining the Environment</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Balancing and Phasing Growth</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Involving Everyone</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix A: Master Plan &amp; Zoning Approach</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendix B: Traffic Analysis</b>	<b>43</b>







# Introduction

*“We have in our hands the opportunity to make our city—in our generation—the most livable, the most beautiful, and the most effective city in America.”*  
Jim Rouse



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From its inception, much was expected of Columbia, and this is still true today, over 40 years later. Unlike many other communities—planned or otherwise—Columbia is more than just a collection of buildings, a center for commerce or a place for residents to rest their heads at night. Columbia is, and always has been, a community built on principles, ideals, a shared vision and,

perhaps most importantly, the belief that, in founder Jim Rouse’s words, “what ought to be, can be.”

Throughout the planning and construction of Columbia, Jim Rouse described four objectives for designing a rational city as a model for other developers to follow. These four objectives are expressed in his own words below.

## Jim Rouse’s Vision for Planning Columbia

**We set four main objectives in our planning:**

1. To provide a real City—not just a better suburb, but a comprehensively balanced community...
2. To respect the land. With sets of overlays we recorded the topography, the stream valleys, the forests, the southeastern slopes, the historic buildings, the special vistas, the quiet tree lined areas. We allowed the land to impose itself as a discipline on the form of the Community...
3. To provide the best possible environment for the growth of people. It would seem elementary that cities should be planned for people... We wanted to allow these overlays, these insights about people, to influence the physical plan and the institutions we should seek to stimulate in the community just as we allowed the plan to be influenced by the land itself...
4. Our fourth goal was profit. This was no residual goal, not something just hoped for. It was our primary objective...

Source: “Great Cities for a Great Society,” speech given to the Chicago Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects on April 8, 1965. Provided courtesy of the Columbia Archives.

Community members voiced their desire for a vibrant Downtown with a diverse mix of uses, open spaces and amenities.

Although not perfect, Columbia has demonstrated that seemingly lofty goals are certainly within reach. Columbia has lived up to Rouse's objectives in almost every respect: it enjoys tremendous diversity in people; it includes thousands of acres of open space; it has been a financial success; and it has produced a community of residents who are concerned, informed, dedicated and hardworking.

Today, 40 years after Columbia's first "pioneers" moved in, Columbia and its residents are looking to the future and wondering where the community is headed. While there is much that Rouse and the company he founded did right in crafting Columbia, there is room for innovation and improvement. Downtown Columbia, in particular, has yet to capture the essence of the city envisioned by Rouse and desired by residents.

At no time was this more apparent than during the October 2005 Downtown charrette, the most inclusive planning exercise in Howard County history. Community members shared their thoughts and concerns about Downtown Columbia today and what they hoped it could become in the future. After the weeklong series of intensive meetings and public forums during the charrette, the downtown discussion continued. Feedback was received in formal, public settings such as community forums, focus group meetings and in letters pages of newspapers, as well as more informal ones

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Charrette participants discuss their visions for Columbia's future.



City of Rockville, MD

such as emails, messages to listservs, coffee houses and elsewhere. In total, hundreds of people added their voices to the dialogue about Columbia's Downtown, and from this a collection of visions, common themes and goals emerged.

Residents desire a vibrant, active downtown full of a diverse mix of uses, expanded transportation options, amenities and attractions, as well as with areas for quiet reflection and appreciation for nature. They also seek a city center that embodies the values and principles that have guided the first 40 years of this community. Indeed, because Columbia has enjoyed thoughtful, groundbreaking development over the last 40 years, residents rightly expect that future development in Downtown will follow the same general, albeit updated, model.

## Approach

The public discourse on Downtown Columbia has shown a clear and strong consensus for a livelier Downtown, but there are also broad concerns about infrastructure capacity, building heights, housing affordability and other issues. A new plan for development in Columbia must reflect the community's priorities and adequately address its concerns. Accordingly, the process to achieve the community's goals for Downtown Columbia involves three steps.

This document provides a vision and framework to guide the evolution of development in the Downtown Columbia study area.

### Step 1

As the first step, the Department of Planning and Zoning offers this thematic document, which serves two purposes:

- to describe a **vision** for Downtown Columbia, highlighting the themes that have emerged through public dialogue over the course of the past two years and
- to establish a **framework** that will provide guidance for General Growth Properties, Inc. (GGP), the major property owner in Downtown, as GGP prepares a downtown development master plan for public review and approval.

### Step 2

The second step will be GGP’s proposal of a downtown development master plan. GGP has engaged nationally known consultants to help prepare a downtown development master plan and is expected to present this plan to the public in the near future. GGP would formally propose their plans by requesting both a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to adopt the downtown development master plan and a corresponding Zoning Regulation Amendment (ZRA) which would enable implementation of the downtown development master plan. This second step follows the tradition of the New Town zoning process wherein the original petitioner initiates proposed changes in Columbia.

### Step 3

The third step involves public review and testimony on the proposed amendments before the Planning Board and County Council. Ultimately, the County Council will make the final decisions on the General Plan Amendment and the Zoning Regulation Amendment.

Public participation is an essential contribution to each of the three steps outlined for this approach. This document provides a framework for the dialogue among the three



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major parties: the applicant that submits a downtown development master plan, the County Council which will consider the plan and the community that the plan will serve.

## Key Components

In order for Downtown Columbia to be successful, there must be an appropriate balance of three key components – the amenities that contribute to quality of life, the amount of development, and the transportation infrastructure. These factors are economically interrelated and interdependent and should therefore be coordinated.

**Amenities.** The community desires additional amenities. These include interconnected sidewalks, public art, attractive streetscapes, gathering places, preserved natural spaces, and a variety of retail, restaurant, artistic, entertainment and community-based opportunities. These desired Downtown amenities may be categorized under two broad headings.

- **Commercial amenities.** Commercial amenities include shops, restaurants, cafes, jazz clubs and entertainment venues. Although not the same kind of



Urban Land Institute



WDC, Inc.



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A vibrant Downtown must balance key components: amenities, development and traffic.



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Downtown serves as a commercial hub for the County. The shops and offices contribute to the County's economic health and improve its regional reputation.

amenity as public art, the community wants these for-profit ventures and the activities that they would provide in Downtown. These enterprises should be planned, built and maintained by private property owners.

- **Community enhancements.** Community enhancements include outdoor art, community arts facilities, public sidewalks, streetscapes and roadways, preserved natural spaces, parks, plazas and other community spaces such as a public square. These amenities should be planned and built by private property owners with continuing maintenance and operations by private property owners, the Columbia Association (CA), Howard County and/or a partnership of these entities.

*Development.* Additional commercial and residential development is needed to increase vibrancy and support infrastructure improvements and amenities. Increased foot traffic, especially from new residents living Downtown, is a key factor in the success of local businesses such as shops and restaurants. Civic facilities and cultural programs such as artists' workshops, galleries and small entertainment venues are dependent on a critical mass of pedestrians attracted to the liveliness of the surroundings for potential customers. New development could continually support maintenance of desired amenities. The maintenance of some amenities like public art, arts programming and some community spaces could be financed by a portion of

rents collected on retail spaces and a portion of condo fees collected from residential units constructed in Downtown.

Additional development also provides funding for transportation and infrastructure improvements and generates needed ridership for mass transit. Affordable housing can be subsidized through the construction of new, market-rate housing.

*Transportation Improvements.* New transportation improvements are needed to access the new amenities and new development. Throughout the County, private property owners are responsible for the construction of local, network-related improvements. In general, regional transportation improvements are funded through the County road excise tax and by federal and State funding. GGP as the developer in Columbia would be responsible for local street network improvements. GGP could offer to participate in regional projects to ensure both timely delivery of needed road improvements and a higher quality of pedestrian improvements than are currently required.

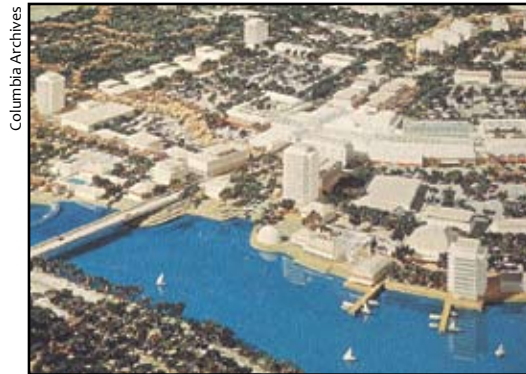
At the County's request, a detailed traffic study has been prepared by the firm of Sabra, Wang & Associates, Inc. to address traffic capacity and multimodal approaches to downtown transportation. A summary of the report is included in Appendix B.

Since costs for the construction of amenities, development and transportation

The Lakefront, with its civic amenities and many original buildings, remains the heart of Downtown Columbia.



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Association, Columbia Association, Town Center Village Board, Wilde Lake Village Board, Oakland Mills Village Board, Harper's Choice Village Board, King's Contrivance Village Board, Howard Community College, the Coalition for Columbia's Downtown (CCD), Bring Back the Vision, Howard County Tomorrow and others.

The themes are organized around two broad categories: Vision and Process. The first three—the Vision themes—serve as extensions of Jim Rouse's original goals for Columbia - a reaffirmation of the community's founding principles and shared values. The last two—the Process themes—outline a planning and development process necessary to achieve the vision for Downtown Columbia. This process is further explained in Appendix A.

### *Vision Themes*

1. Making a Special Place
2. Moving and Connecting People
3. Sustaining the Environment

### *Process Themes*

4. Balancing and Phasing Growth
5. Involving Everyone

The five themes and their associated vision statements are listed below to provide a summary of this framework document. Each of the five themes is addressed in detail in the five chapters that follow.

## Making a Special Place

**Theme 1: Downtown Columbia will be a diverse, mixed-use, livable, physically distinctive and human-scaled place with a range of housing choices and recreational, civic, cultural and educational amenities.**

improvements will be borne primarily by GGP as Downtown's major property owner, it is appropriate that GGP propose the levels of commitment that they are willing to bear. The appropriate balance among these improvements should also reflect the vision of this framework and meet its goals.

Additionally, the major property owners—GGP, CA and Howard County—should collaborate on the maintenance of streets, sidewalks and other community-oriented amenities in Downtown. These three owners could create a downtown partnership to manage and maintain the Downtown area more consistently and to higher standards. Jointly financing and coordinating maintenance efforts could provide a higher quality environment. After gaining experience with the partnership, the partners could then discuss if further collaboration and investment in Downtown by the partnership would be of benefit to the current and future residents.

## Vision Summary

This framework is organized around five themes that emerged from extensive input by the public. Feedback from the charrette, the Downtown Columbia Focus Group meetings in 2006, input on this document in Fall 2007, and comments from independent groups and individual citizens form the basis of the five themes. Participating groups include Howard County Citizens'

Downtown and the village centers embody distinctive commercial characteristics and provide special places for civic gathering.

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## 1.1 Rouse Vision

Continue and enhance Jim Rouse’s vision of Columbia as a thriving, socially responsible and environmentally-friendly place for people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds.

## 1.2 Symbols

Conserve symbols of Columbia’s past found throughout the Downtown area, recognizing that they contribute to the authentic character of Downtown and reinforce its qualities as a special place.

## 1.3 Districts

Shape new development to form well-defined districts within Downtown; orient structures to the street, making them inviting to pedestrians; and establish bulk regulations, including height limits, appropriate to each district’s character.

## 1.4 Commercial Balance

Design a variety of Downtown commercial activities that complement the flexible evolution of neighboring Village Centers in Oakland Mills and Wilde Lake, recognizing each center’s identity and role.

## 1.5 Diverse Housing

Provide a full spectrum and diverse mix of housing, ensuring that low-, moderate- and middle-income families have an opportunity to live in Downtown, thus continuing the original vision of Columbia as an inclusive community.

The Howard Transit network is a key component of a multi-modal Downtown transportation system.

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Vitality comes from having a diverse population living Downtown and participating in a full range of activities.

## 1.6 Economic Activity

Support Downtown’s function as a major financial and economic center for Columbia and for Howard County.

## 1.7 Civic Life

Expand civic, community and educational facilities to augment Columbia’s nationally recognized quality of life.

## 1.8 Arts & Culture

Enhance art and cultural offerings, providing new spaces and opportunities for an active arts community and for public art.

## 1.9 Design

Improve the design of Downtown development through flexible design guidelines and a design review panel to ensure that buildings, streets and public spaces will be aesthetically pleasing and contextually appropriate.

# Moving and Connecting People

**Theme 2: Downtown Columbia will enhance multimodal connectivity through a variety of safe, convenient and innovative transportation alternatives.**

## 2.1 Multimodal System

Develop a multimodal transportation system through investment in transit programs



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Streets should be animated by the uses that line them and offer a lively pedestrian environment that invites activity.

and roads that will provide a pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment.

### 2.2 Traffic

Mitigate traffic congestion so that vehicles will be able to move smoothly into and around Downtown without impeding pedestrian flow; encourage outside traffic to bypass Downtown.

### 2.3 Pedestrians

Improve pedestrian connections throughout Downtown, to surrounding villages and to nearby destinations to encourage strolling and human interaction.

### 2.4 Transit

Improve and expand transit service, reinforcing Downtown as the central hub for the local bus system, adding a Downtown shuttle and setting the stage for the possibility of future bus rapid transit and rail mass transit.

### 2.5 Parking

Provide an appropriate level of parking, fostering a park-once approach, substantially reducing or eliminating surface parking lots and integrating well-designed structured parking into Downtown.

Columbia is renowned for its natural beauty and for setting a “city in a park.”

## Sustaining the Environment

**Theme 3: Downtown Columbia’s natural resources will be protected and enhanced; a network of public spaces will provide places for individual contemplation and social gathering.**

### 3.1 Green Technology

Include green technology to help build a sustainable environment, incorporating measures to reduce energy consumption and pollution while preserving the environment.

### 3.2 Nature

Protect the natural resources and natural beauty of Downtown’s lake, streams and woodlands, forming them into a greenway system.

### 3.3 Central Park

Identify Symphony Woods as Columbia’s “Central Park” area, which deserves special design and conservation measures.

### 3.4 Outdoor Spaces

Require additional open space and amenity areas so that Downtown will retain the character of a “city in a park” with plazas, greens, promenades, paths, public art, natural areas and street trees.



## Balancing and Phasing Growth

**Theme 4:** The development of Downtown Columbia will be served by public facilities provided in a timely manner.

### 4.1 General Plan

Recognize and implement the *General Plan 2000* policy to direct growth into Downtown as the largest of the County's mixed-use centers.

### 4.2 Phasing

Establish targets for commercial and housing development for a balance of land uses and public services. This ensures that development does not place undue burdens on existing residents, infrastructure or service providers.

### 4.3 Monitoring

Monitor and evaluate implementation using a formal reporting process that will provide regular opportunity for public discussion and feedback, and that will allow for refinement as needed.

## Involving Everyone

**Theme 5:** The community will be actively engaged in decisions concerning the evolution of Downtown.

### 5.1 Participation

Enhance communication between citizens and County decision-makers through opportunities for public information and public participation, so that citizens are knowledgeable about the planning and development of Downtown and have multiple opportunities for input.

### 5.2 Collaboration

Encourage a partnership in planning and implementation, realizing that many of the recommended strategies will depend on collaboration among the County, private property owners, residents, business owners and community organizations.

Public review will continue to engage the Columbia community.



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# Making a Special Place

**Theme 1.** *Downtown Columbia will be a diverse, mixed-use, livable, physically distinctive and human-scaled place with a range of housing choices and recreational, civic, educational and cultural amenities.*



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A statue honoring Jim Rouse, Columbia's founder and visionary developer, and Willard Rouse is at Downtown's Lakefront.

The Rouse Company building, designed by Frank Gehry, is a Downtown landmark.

## Rouse Vision

**1.1 Continue and enhance Jim Rouse's vision of Columbia as a thriving, socially responsible and environmentally-friendly place for people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds.**

As a pioneering planned community of the 1960s, Columbia represents an experiment on how to build a better city. Always guiding this process has been Jim Rouse's vision for a close-knit community that contains both physical and social attributes capable of supporting the growth of people including future generations. Today, the implementation of Jim Rouse's vision can be experienced in Columbia in a number of ways:

- Residents feel a connection with nature through the preserved environmental features such as streams and wooded areas. These natural areas help shape and give character to the built environment and create a "city in

a park" setting for the community.

- Columbia contains many of the cultural, civic and recreational activities, businesses and institutions found in large urban areas including a community college and a hospital. Yet the daily functions and amenities are reminiscent of the small hometown atmosphere that inspired Jim Rouse.
- As a community of celebrated diversity, people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds are brought together to live with one another, creating the life experiences that shape an accepting



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Sculptures like the People Tree, The Bears and The Hug are symbols of Columbia.

The entrance to the Mall in Columbia near Warfield Triangle is developing into an attractive and pedestrian-friendly dining and entertainment district.

and caring society. Columbia truly is a garden for growing people.

As development continues, new opportunities need to be provided to continue Columbia's purposeful inclusiveness, its physical design structured to promote community, its planned approach to growth, its social responsibility and its stewardship of nature.

## Symbols

**1.2 Conserve symbols of Columbia's past found throughout the Downtown area, recognizing that they contribute to the authentic character of Downtown and reinforce its qualities as a special place.**

The Lakefront is Downtown's living room, where celebrations such as the 4th of July, City Fair, International Day and Festival of the Arts provide memorable experiences that foster community spirit. The former Rouse Company headquarters, the American City Building, the Teachers Building and the original Exhibit Building frame a series of outdoor spaces. These spaces are punctuated by sculptures that symbolize the people and values of Columbia.

Symbols of Columbia's history should be conserved and enhanced. As the city grows, opportunities to introduce additional public art reflecting Columbia's values should be pursued at the Lakefront and throughout Downtown.

## Districts

**1.3 Shape new development to form well-defined districts within Downtown; orient structures to the street, making them inviting to pedestrians; and establish bulk regulations, including height limits, appropriate to each district's character.**

Columbia's villages each contain several neighborhoods. Over the past 40 years, the Downtown has slowly evolved into several recognizable neighborhoods or districts. The Lakefront area is the heart of Downtown, the destination for community gathering and leisure-time activities. Along Governor Warfield Parkway there are several residential communities. The west entrance to the Mall has been redeveloped over the past decade and, with its restaurants and movie theaters, now serves as a major entertainment magnet in all of Downtown.

North of Symphony Woods, along Little Patuxent Parkway, the cluster of tall office buildings, small plazas and attractive landscaping has become a premier office address. Some areas of Downtown, with their suburban-style low-rise office buildings set in large featureless parking lots, have yet to attain a recognizable identity.

The crescent-shaped property, located south and west of Symphony Woods, is the last major parcel of undeveloped land in Columbia. This large, vacant site offers great opportunity to create a distinctive mixed-use neighborhood.

A downtown development master plan should craft an identity for various districts and determine how these districts are shaped and interconnected. Each district should have a consistent design theme in both public and private areas. A particular



## Commercial Balance

### 1.4 Design a variety of Downtown commercial activities that complement the flexible evolution of neighboring Village Centers in Oakland Mills and Wilde Lake, recognizing each center's identity and role.

A downtown development master plan should envision a Downtown that provides retail opportunities for both local stores and national chains. Combinations of national department stores, independent local shops and kiosks can create a more vibrant marketplace that will provide a broader spectrum of goods and services. Different districts may be typified by the type of retail goods and services that they offer.

Wilde Lake and Oakland Mills are early examples of Columbia's model for community commercial design that allows people to socialize while shopping. As consumer preferences shift towards regional shopping destinations, new strategies are needed to balance the development of Downtown and the neighboring village centers. To enhance the movement of people, pedestrian connections and a shuttle system could link Downtown and the village centers to facilitate choice and encourage ties among these locations, as was envisioned in Columbia's early design.

Kiosks and outdoor stalls can complement the Downtown retail experience.



mix of uses, range of building heights and public spaces should be used to differentiate districts. Street furniture, lighting fixtures and landscape treatments are other means to create easily recognizable and cohesive districts. Particular attention should be paid to balancing the differentiation of districts and maintaining an integrated design for all Downtown. Special attention should be given to include additional amenities at the Lakefront.

Building entrances and interesting façades facing public sidewalks are the primary means of orienting structures to the street. Also, appropriately scaled buildings should line streets to define street edges that frame and enclose outdoor spaces. Short, walkable blocks of mixed uses should be encouraged to stimulate street life through pedestrian activity. Public spaces animated with interactive features such as fountains or lined with restaurants help to create special places.

The massing and proportion of buildings is critical and should be guided by height limits that respond to the pedestrian environment, allow for visual variety and balance urban activity with open space. A flexible height limit that allows bonuses for additional low- and/or moderate-income units or other desired features exceeding the required levels could be proposed.

As people's shopping habits change, village centers could strategize to round out the range of retail stores offered in Columbia.



With a range of housing options, new forms of residences can be added to Downtown.

WDG Architecture



### Diverse Housing

**1.5 Provide a full spectrum and diverse mix of housing, ensuring that low-, moderate- and middle-income families have an opportunity to live in Downtown, thus continuing the original vision of Columbia as an inclusive community.**

Columbia's far-reaching original goals reflect a commitment to having different types of people live together to create a fully realized community. The types of housing built can influence whether people with various backgrounds can find a home in the community. A downtown development master plan should reaffirm a commitment to a diverse mix of housing.

By providing a full range of housing choices including universal design features, people from all walks of life will be able to continue to come together, exchange ideas and learn from one another. Expanded residential options for in-town living could include mid-rise and high-rise apartments or condominiums, lofts, stacked townhouses, accessory apartments and live-work units. New models for developing affordable housing in combination with mixed-use development should generate new and innovative techniques. Establishing co-housing communities, employer-assisted housing and contributions from commercial and office

New office buildings in attractive settings can contribute to the prestige of the Downtown office market.

development could become strategies for affordable living in Downtown.

### Economic Activity

**1.6 Support Downtown's function as a major financial and economic center for Columbia and for Howard County.**

Downtown is intended to be the financial and economic center of Columbia and Howard County. Enhanced activity, updated structures and better infrastructure in Downtown would increase the draw for office space. Currently, there is a concern that Downtown is losing tenants and opportunities to newer office parks.

A downtown development master plan should build on the vision of sustaining Downtown as the location for the region's most successful shopping mall and high-quality office market. Recent expansions to the mall have begun to take on the more outward-oriented character of popular lifestyle centers that provide pedestrian-oriented outdoor shopping experiences.

Howard County has a strong office employment base and Downtown offers the potential for growth in high-paying office jobs. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) plans for Fort Meade may offer additional opportunity for offices in Downtown.



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Columbia's Downtown will continue to serve as Howard County's downtown.

Downtown office buildings and office workers are important to sustaining the daytime vitality of supporting uses including restaurants, shops and lodging. Businesses typically need meeting space, hotel rooms and conference facilities nearby to hold their activities. Such facilities are currently lacking and would help to support and enhance the attractiveness of Downtown as a premier office location.

the County prepares and updates a series of facility master plans to address individual program needs (for example, the Library Master Plan, the Water and Sewer Master Plan, the Senior Housing Master Plan, etc.). Finally, the County uses its multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to program and fund needed public facilities. Each of these plans and processes involves the public in a review and approval process.

## Civic Life

### 1.7 Expand civic, community and educational facilities to augment Columbia's nationally recognized quality of life.

A vibrant Downtown needs public places, civic spaces, community facilities and educational institutions to provide the quality of life that the public expects. This is especially important because of a growing senior population, aging public facilities and an increasingly diverse population. The County has several mechanisms to ensure that public facilities are well planned and delivered in a timely manner. The County's *General Plan 2000* sets the broad parameters for the delivery of facilities and services, then

**Howard County Library.** A major component of Howard County's strong educational system, Howard County Library consistently ranks as one of the best in the nation. Providing equal access to quality educational opportunities for all, the Library system's Central Library is one of the most important public facilities in Downtown. The Central Library could potentially take on a greater role as a business, healthy living, and cultural center - a hub for public life in Downtown Columbia. The Central Library could accommodate more and new uses if it were expanded and/or relocated. The building's location should reflect its vital role in the community. Ideally, it would be centrally located with increased ease of access for pedestrians.

**Fire Station.** The Banneker Fire Station is one of the busiest fire stations in Howard County. A downtown development master plan should be coordinated with County plans for a relocated or redeveloped fire station. Access to major roadways is the highest priority for the fire station. A relocated fire station could be designed as a show-place of mixed use and affordable housing.

Downtown is the site of fairs, concerts, exhibits, entertainment and activities that enrich the community's civic and cultural life.





Oakland Manor at Town Center is a graceful setting for community events.

**School.** If a potential school were eventually needed in Downtown, it could enhance the civic identity and offer a place for community gatherings. If the County determines that a school would be needed, such a school should be a model appropriate to Downtown with multiple stories and limited parking on site, rather than a suburban model with a single story and expansive surface parking lots.

**Columbia Association Headquarters.** The Columbia Association's headquarters on the Lakefront is also a focal point for community gathering and engagement. Collaboration with the Columbia Association to ensure a permanent headquarters at the current location or at a new, equally prominent site is highly encouraged.

**Archives.** The Columbia Archives is a research library, repository and museum of Columbia's history. The Archives should continue to serve that function. A strong sense of civic pride in Columbia's history may provide opportunities to expand both the collection and its community education programs.

**Community Centers.** Existing community centers such as Oakland Manor in Town Center, the Other Barn in Oakland Mills and Slayton House in Wilde Lake currently

serve as magnets for civic and community activities. Providing for pedestrian connections between the outlying village centers and Downtown by a shuttle or other means would be one way to enhance community life.

A new community center could continue the Columbia tradition of providing residents with nearby gathering spots for programs and events. A community center, designed as a signature building and located adjacent to a major public space, could be included in a downtown development master plan. Proposed sources of funding for the construction, maintenance and program operations of a community center should be identified to ensure the facility's long-term success.

**Public Square.** Downtown should have a true public square to permit assembly and the exercise of free speech. The public space might be either a landscaped town green or a plaza. The square should be centrally-located and highly visible to Downtown visitors. It might be associated with a public building site, such as the library, or it could be adjacent to existing open space areas. This public space should be designed in collaboration with the County, improved by the developer and dedicated to Howard County to be held in trust for the public.

## Arts & Culture

**1.8 Enhance art and cultural offerings, providing new spaces and opportunities for an active arts community and for public art.**

In addition to civic and community facilities, a vibrant Downtown needs arts and cultural facilities and programs. Downtown has many existing resources that are well recognized and highly valued. To nourish these critical resources, arts and cultural offerings should be expanded to create a supportive

Toby's Dinner Theatre



Toby's Dinner Theatre, a pioneer arts venue in Downtown Columbia, continues to entertain residents and the region with award-winning shows.

environment and attract new patrons. New spaces and programs should be provided along with new public art.

**Important Resources.** Toby's Dinner Theater is a pioneer arts venue and provides an award-winning dinner theater in the heart of Columbia. The recently completed Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center and the Rep Stage at Howard Community College, as well as the Jim Rouse Theatre at Wilde Lake High School, add to the variety of theater experiences offered in Columbia. These arts facilities should be protected, perhaps expanded, promoted, nurtured and adequately funded so that they will continue to provide an active cultural life and serve the residents in Downtown and in the County. They are important components that draw people Downtown, helping to make the area lively by day and night.

**Merriweather Post Pavilion.** Another important resource, set within the natural beauty of Symphony Woods, but not part of the woods property, is Merriweather Post Pavilion (MPP), owned by General Growth Properties, Inc. MPP has always been a social gathering place and premier entertainment venue. MPP would benefit from conversion to an indoor/outdoor venue so that performances can be enjoyed year-round. With expanded programming, MPP's function as a gathering place would be enhanced. A downtown development master plan should

address funding for an improved facility and propose a reasonable strategy to achieve year-round performances at MPP.

**New Offerings.** Columbia residents have long supported local artists. A downtown development master plan should require space for arts and cultural programs, especially on the ground floors of select new buildings. The Artists' Gallery in the American City Building could be a prototype. Strategies should include subsidized/low-cost incubator opportunities for artists and performers.

**Public Art.** Public art plays a vital role in sharing the life stories of people who shaped the cultural history of the city. The People Tree, The Hug, The Bears and the Willard and Jim Rouse statuary group are all iconic sculptures that tell the story of Columbia. The importance of embedding meaning into the physical landscape also helps people form bonds with the places built for them. Learning from the examples of public art at the Lakefront, a downtown development master plan should include public art to continue building a memorable place filled with the life and character of Columbia.

Additionally, the walls of buildings and parking garages could become the surfaces for murals and sculptural relief that tell the story of Columbia and its people. Common elements such as water fountains, bus shelters and signage could be transformed into objects of cultural meaning.

Artistic expressions should be incorporated into both newly formed and existing public spaces throughout Downtown. Within these centers of civic life, art can play an important role in communicating what Columbians value. Sources of inspiration might include nature, social diversity or even significant events in Columbia's history. Outdoor plazas, greens and promenades as well as institutions such as the library, hospital,

Cy Paumier



The Family sculpture, located in the Wilde Lake village green, is an early example of public art in Columbia.

The Artist's Gallery in the American City building is an example of an arts space in an office building. Downtown festivals also offer a venue for community art exhibits.



Howard County, MD



Howard County, MD

community college, Columbia Archives and a new community center could showcase and provide appropriate locations for public art.

An equally important goal is to include art in private developments. The architectural form of buildings could feature sculptural reliefs and integrate the design of both freestanding and attached installations. In addition to other locations, mixed-use storefronts wrapping parking garages could become studio and live-work space for local artists adding to the vitality of Downtown's art scene.

To support public art, a percentage of funding for art could be set aside based on total construction costs for private and public projects in Downtown. Multidisciplinary project teams including artists and landscape architects, together with the community, should design unique pieces that will become the hallmarks of Downtown.

## Design

**1.9 Improve the design of Downtown development through flexible design guidelines and a design review panel to ensure that buildings, streets and public spaces will be aesthetically pleasing and contextually appropriate.**

Downtown building design review is currently undertaken by Howard Research and

Design (HRD), a wholly owned subsidiary of GGP, in its role as the developer of Columbia.

A new approach is needed for design review in Downtown. Design guidelines are needed as a measure against which to evaluate any site-specific development proposal. The various groups that review plans could use these guidelines: community groups, County technical staff and the Planning Board. The County is also working on a proposal for the establishment of a Design Advisory Panel (DAP), comprised of design professionals, that could have authority to review plans for Downtown development. Together, the design guidelines and the DAP would set high standards for Downtown development to create a special place with distinctive design.

A downtown development master plan should include specific design guidelines for Downtown and for each of its districts. These guidelines should be flexible enough to promote creativity and high-quality design. Guidelines should address scale as well as the quality of materials, articulation of facades and the degree of interest created at the pedestrian level of structures. Guidelines should be established for each proposed district in Downtown.

Additionally, criteria for Planning Board review of plans should be included. Ultimately, any proposed guidelines and plan review criteria need approval from the County Council.



The development of Addison Circle in Dallas, Texas, was guided by an architectural review panel.



At a minimum, proposed design guidelines for each district should address the following:

- District Purpose / Mix of Uses – uses and overall design character for each proposed district in Downtown
- Site Design - character or general layout of sites and their relation to streets, sidewalks and public realm; variety of buildings and open spaces
- Street Design - detailed description of street functions, street furniture, streetscapes and the pedestrian-level experience

- Open Space - general descriptions, general layout, anticipated functions, appropriate amenities, public art; parties responsible for maintenance
- Building Design - general descriptions of heights, bulk, character, materials, and green building certification level
- Signature Buildings - criteria for locating such buildings and descriptions of how they are to be distinctive
- Landscaping - criteria for materials suitable for Downtown, compatibility with built and natural environment, screening and use of native Maryland plant species.

Design guidelines apply not only to buildings but also to the public realm.





# Moving and Connecting People

**Theme 2.** *Downtown Columbia will enhance multimodal connectivity through a variety of safe, convenient and innovative transportation alternatives.*

## Multimodal System

**2.1 Develop a multimodal transportation system through investment in transit programs and roads that will provide a pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment.**

Transportation capacity and safety are critical to the success of Downtown Columbia. Capacity should be in balance with amenities and development. The downtown development master plan provides a vehicle for demonstrating how multimodal transportation improvements will be phased and funded. It is also important that phasing plans identify who (developer, County and/or State) will be responsible for financing and constructing improvements. Although most improvements are expected to be the responsibility of the developer, certain components may be funded through public-private partnerships or public sector capital budgets.

Strategies to address overall transportation capacity in Downtown should address the following:

1. Intersection improvements should be made on major roads.
2. The internal network of local streets should be expanded.
3. More lanes should be added in and out of Downtown. This includes improvements to the MD 175 and Broken Land Parkway interchanges of US 29 and either a new interchange at South Entrance Road or an overpass across US 29.
4. Different ways of traveling to and within Downtown need to be encouraged in order to improve the travel experience. Using public transportation, walking, biking and park-and-ride alternatives are all good options. Tools such as transportation demand management and parking management can also help. Alternatives and tools are discussed



Multimodal travel is the goal for Downtown Columbia.

## Chapter 2: Moving and Connecting People

in section 2.4 of this chapter and in Appendix B.

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All intersections should be designed to accommodate vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic in a safe manner.

**Major Intersections.** The traffic capacity on major Downtown roadways (Little Patuxent Parkway, Broken Land Parkway, Governor Warfield, South Entrance Road and Hickory Ridge Road) is of concern. They provide local access to Downtown uses and serve through traffic that is traveling to and from US 29.

Improvements to major intersections should be addressed in ways that improve the pedestrian environment while minimizing impacts on traffic between nearby villages and US 29. A collaborative effort of the County and property owners is needed to fund major road improvements. For major roads and intersections, County funding will primarily come from the Adequate Public Facilities road excise tax, which is levied on development when building permits are approved. Private funding sources should also be identified in a downtown development master plan. Phasing of development needs to be tied to transportation improvements.

This street's design creates an environment oriented towards pedestrians, not cars.

**Internal Street Network.** Currently, Downtown streets have been designed to move vehicles as efficiently as possible between destinations. As a result, the mobility of pedestrians has been limited. The street network needs to be redesigned to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment that encourages people to walk rather than drive in Downtown.

A downtown development master plan should include new connections to expand the number of choices people have for traveling within Downtown. Streets should be designed for both pedestrians and drivers. The most important streets should be lined with shops and restaurants and have amenities including wide sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees and furniture. New streets, some carved from existing parking lots, will serve a critical role in forming a network of connections. This network will help disperse vehicles along a greater number of routes, thereby reducing congestion.

An improved network will reduce the need to travel on the major Downtown streets that serve through traffic. Developing a grid-like internal network of local streets is also necessary to provide sufficient capacity for traffic generated by new office, retail, residential, lodging, cultural and civic uses in Downtown.



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## Chapter 2: Moving and Connecting People

Howard County, MD



City of Rockville, MD



Interchanges can be reconfigured to meet future traffic demand. The urban diamond interchange (lower image) offers the potential for more efficient traffic flow and consumes less land.

A proposed plan should include street design guidelines for an expanded street network and a walkable, lively pedestrian environment. Provisions should be made to accommodate all travelers including people on foot, on bicycle, in wheelchairs and those driving automobiles, delivery trucks, ambulances and fire rescue vehicles. New trends in personal mobility such as Segways, Global Electric Motorcars or other golf-cart type vehicles should also be considered. Safe and convenient access to the street system for all users is paramount.

Although it is essential to add internal streets to the Downtown road network to enhance connectivity for all users, alignments and right-of-way widths need to respond to and respect natural features. Due to environmental conditions, certain corridors may not be achievable; some may need to be pedestrian-only streets; and others may need to be designed so that they can be closed to vehicles at certain times, when traffic would have an undesirable effect on adjacent public spaces.

**Interchange Improvements.** Howard County and the State Highway Administration (SHA) are jointly funding the widening of northbound US 29 by one lane from MD 32 north to MD 175. This project is independent of any proposal for development or redevelopment in the Downtown. Potential improvements to the three interchanges that connect Downtown to the US 29 regional highway system should be coordinated by the County, the State and the developers as part of a downtown development master plan. These are:

- MD 175 / US 29 interchange, which provides full movements at the northern entrance to Downtown.

- South Entrance Road / US 29 interchange, which provides Downtown access inbound and outbound from the southbound lanes of US 29.
- Broken Land Parkway / US 29, which provides full movements at the southernmost entrance to Downtown.

A downtown development master plan and zoning proposal must demonstrate that needed interchange improvements can be phased and funded to meet the needs of proposed development. The capacity of and plans for improvements to the Downtown interchanges will affect the development capacity of Downtown.

**Modal Shifts.** A downtown development master plan should include strategies for shifting to a multimodal system. Several strategies for making a multimodal shift could be addressed:

- Construct and expand safe and accessible pedestrian connections.
- Develop a transportation center within or near the Downtown area.
- Establish a Downtown shuttle service.
- Expand existing satellite park-and-ride lots.
- Designate priority transit corridors and regional connections.
- Develop shared parking facilities.
- Create a multimodal planning team to spearhead efforts in and around Downtown.

To complement transportation choices, a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program could be established. A TDM is a set of specific strategies that fosters increased efficiency of the transportation system by influencing travel behavior



Wide crosswalks at busy intersections will help ease safe pedestrian connections throughout Downtown.

by mode, time, frequency, trip length, cost and/or route. TDM tools include carpooling, transit, telecommuting, flextime, compressed workweeks, value pricing, bicycle strategies, pedestrian strategies, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, commuter choice, parking management and Advanced Travel Information System (ATIS). Although TDM incorporates elements that require investment in infrastructure and technology, it also offers approaches that can be cost-neutral and involve behavior change. Given that the most problematic traffic congestion is during the the PM peak hour when employees depart Downtown offices, flexible work hours can help lessen that problem. To make effective use of pedestrian improvements, people should change their modal patterns and walk more. A Downtown partnership among major property owners could be the vehicle to support a Downtown TDM program.

### Traffic

**2.2 Mitigate traffic congestion so that vehicles will be able to move smoothly into and around Downtown without impeding pedestrian flow; encourage outside traffic to bypass Downtown.**

Both plazas and broader sidewalks will encourage pedestrian activity along streets lined with shops and restaurants.

Adequate Public Facilities regulations exempt some Downtown intersections from level-of-service (LOS) standards. A proposed downtown development master plan would set forth new LOS standards to include all intersections and to address pedestrian access. Such standards would ensure that sidewalks, streets, medians and intersections are safe, efficient and commodious for drivers, cyclists and people on foot and in wheelchairs. New standards for Downtown streets should be proposed and provide short-term and long-term approaches.

### Pedestrians

**2.3 Improve pedestrian connections throughout Downtown, to surrounding villages and to nearby destinations to encourage strolling and human interaction.**

A proposal for Downtown should both strengthen existing and create new physical linkages within Downtown and to surrounding villages and their village centers. Sidewalks and trails linking Downtown to the community college and the hospital are likewise important. These linkages will become the building blocks of an expanding pedestrian-oriented public realm. Columbia has always been noted for its extensive system of off-road paths through the open space network. The existing network of pathways



## Chapter 2: Moving and Connecting People



Landscaped promenades will help enhance pedestrian connections throughout the Downtown.

and sidewalks should be expanded for pedestrians and cyclists in order to provide connections among important destinations and as an integral part of open spaces.

A more walkable Downtown calls for an expanded network of sidewalks and crosswalks at all intersections. Throughout the Downtown, streets should have sidewalks along both sides. In areas where retail uses are concentrated and greater pedestrian use is expected, wide sidewalks should be provided with shade trees and street furniture to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Promenades, such as the one along Lake Kittamaqundi, are another important component of a Downtown pedestrian system. A promenade is an extended walkway, more prominent and frequently wider than a sidewalk, which accommodates significant pedestrian movement and provides a formal connection between important destinations. A promenade may also be used as a setting for planned events such as festivals.

To improve overall accessibility in Downtown, major promenade-type walkways should be provided from the Mall to Symphony Woods, from the Mall to Lake Kittamaqundi, from Symphony Woods to the Lakefront and from the Mall toward Wilde Lake village center. These promenades should establish strong pedestrian and visual connections. Each should be devel-

The pedestrian bridge over US 29 has the potential to be an attractive and inviting connection, such as this example from the city of Greenville, SC.



oped with distinctive characteristics to create memorable and diverse walkable environments.

As part of planning for the 20th anniversary of Columbia in 1987, a vision for creating new amenities along the Lakefront included an expanded pedestrian promenade wrapping around the lake edge and connecting to Nomanisan Island. Recent additions to the promenade have gradually increased the accessibility of the waterfront. A downtown development master plan could propose completing the lakeside pathway loop. As part of this project, efforts could be made to enhance the variety of activities the Lakefront offers. For example, the Kennedy Gardens could extend along the walkway to provide a lush and attractive arboretum setting. Sitting and gathering areas could offer opportunities to rest and enjoy the natural beauty of the Lakefront. Some areas could feature structures nestled alongside the banks for other forms of leisurely activity such as fishing. Larger segments of the promenade could host performance areas and spaces for vendors.

Early models and sketches of Downtown created in the 1960s portray a prominent connection from Oakland Mills for east-west travel in Columbia. The US 29 pedestrian/bike overpass built in 1983 serves as an important feature of the County's spinal pathway system for walking and biking.

## Chapter 2: Moving and Connecting People



Maryland Transit Authority



New Haven, CT Trolley

Howard Transit, regional MTA bus rapid transit and a local Downtown shuttle or trolley could help reduce vehicular congestion.

A proposed plan should recognize and address the importance of this connection and should enhance the overpass as a grand promenade across US 29. An attractive new, renovated or remodeled bridge is needed and could be designed as an iconic symbol of Columbia. With added lighting, the existing pathways connecting to the bridge would provide a safe and inviting place for evening users.

As Downtown attractions expand and pedestrian access becomes an ever more important and viable transportation alternative, attention may need to be given to improving pedestrian access across the interchanges that connect east and west Columbia.

### Transit

#### **2.4 Improve and expand transit service, reinforcing Downtown as the central hub for the local bus system, adding a Downtown shuttle and setting the stage for the possibility of future bus rapid transit and rail mass transit.**

The vision for Downtown Columbia is a place where people are more important than their private vehicles and where easy connections are provided to village centers, community facilities and neighboring developments. Improved public transit will reduce dependency on private car use and ownership and will support a more pedestrian-friendly and walkable environment. All members of society from young children to senior citizens benefit from improved public transportation options. A downtown development master plan should address the phased implementation of several modes of transit service including Howard Transit; regional commuter bus transit; a shuttle, trolley or other such local service



Howard County, MD

and an expanded Downtown transit hub. If the proposed development warrants it, rail mass transit should also be addressed.

*Howard Transit.* Potential Howard Transit stops throughout the new Downtown districts need to be identified in a downtown development master plan. Research by Howard Transit's contract manager, Corridor Transportation Corporation (CTC), will identify optimal routes, schedules and service frequencies for added bus service. DPZ and CTC will also study transit approaches in similar environments. Property owners should work with the County pursuant to the Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP is updated every five years, thus providing an opportunity for periodic review of Downtown transit service. DPZ will also complete short-term and mid-term transit feasibility studies as part of the 2008 TDP.

*Increase Regional Bus Transit (RBT).* The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) provides several commuter bus routes along US 29 between Baltimore and Washington that also serve Columbia. As Downtown develops, the hours of service may need to expand.

*Establish Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).* BRT encompasses a variety of techniques for enhancing traditional bus service via higher-quality vehicles, dedicated transit rights-of-way, traffic signal preemption,



## Chapter 2: Moving and Connecting People

Smart Card fare collection and other strategies. Additionally, a Downtown transit hub would encourage greater use of a potential BRT service.

**Downtown Shuttle.** To complement Howard Transit, an independently funded Downtown shuttle system is needed as development increases. The shuttles could carry passengers around the Downtown core and to outlying parking garages, neighboring village centers and nearby major institutions such as the hospital and community college. The shuttle system could include distinctively designed vehicles and artistically designed stops or shelters that would enhance Downtown as an attractive destination.

Establishing a shuttle system would also showcase the strength of Downtown as a premier office and residential location with convenient options for travel among hotels, conference space, shopping and entertainment amenities.

**Downtown Transit Hub.** Downtown Columbia will continue to serve as a Howard Transit transportation hub, although other hub locations may be created as development continues east of Downtown in the Gateway and Fort Meade areas. A transportation center in or near Downtown as part of the long-range plan for transit-oriented development would assist in achieving higher transit use.

Such a center would ideally be centrally located for all districts, with direct access to major arterials, but within convenient walking distance of major retail and activity centers. It should have sufficient space for commuter parking, provide opportunity for shared parking for different Downtown uses and could include some retail or office space. As transit ridership increases, the current hub system may evolve into a more complex and diverse web of connections among destinations.

**Rail Transit.** Located within the growth corridor of the Baltimore-Washington metro area, Columbia is an important population and employment center. Downtown's significance, combined with other existing and proposed economic activity hubs (BWI Airport and NSA / Fort Meade), creates an opportunity to evaluate transit access within a regional context. If connections to Baltimore, Washington and various other corridor activity centers could be achieved, they would expand the range of travel choices necessary for connecting people with employment, mitigating dependency on automobile travel and restoring environmental health.

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), Washington Council of Governments (WashCOG), Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) and Washington Metropoli-

The long-range plan for multimodal travel in Columbia should include a transportation center. Rail transit may include improved MARC service or a future extension of the Washington DC Metro Green Line.

Sabra, Wang & Associates, Inc.



Bic Green, courtesy of KCI Technologies, Inc.



As Downtown grows, parking lots will be replaced by attractive parking garages.

tan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) should all be partners in decisions about connections between Downtown Columbia and the Washington and Baltimore area transit systems. The success in bringing rail mass transit to Columbia largely depends on the level of development in Downtown.

A recent feasibility study of the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority's Green Line extension from Greenbelt to Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport generated several concepts for service to Columbia. Although the cost of service to Columbia is currently seen as too expensive to be feasible, there is hope that the option will remain a consideration for future planning. Even without a direct rail spur to Downtown, the Green Line extension offers important opportunities for expanded transit connections to service Downtown and the remainder of the County.

As part of the regeneration of Wilde Lake and Oakland Mills village centers, shuttle service could be extended to pick up and drop off passengers on the parking lot in front of Slayton House and between the Barns. This would provide new shopping opportunities that support local merchants.

Ideally, parking structures should be designed so they are not visible from the street. Where possible, they should be located internal to the block. Buildings with structured parking as their sole use are discouraged. Vehicular access to and from the structures should preferably be from secondary streets, while pedestrian access should be from primary streets where first-floor, street-front retail should also be located.

## Parking

**2.5 Provide an appropriate level of parking, fostering a park-once approach, substantially reducing or eliminating surface parking lots and integrating well-designed structured parking into Downtown.**

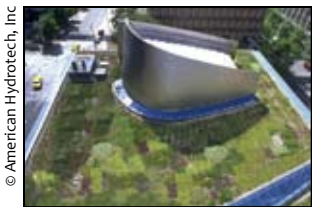
Most development of Downtown over the past 40 years has relied on large, surface parking lots provided at each destination. As development continues, a park-once environment that guides vehicles coming into Downtown toward peripheral garages could become an effective element to minimize traffic congestion in and around Downtown. The park-once concept relies on a shuttle system that circulates among peripheral parking areas along a main route with access to major destinations within Downtown, neighboring villages and to nearby institutions such as the community college and hospital.

Parking structures with shops on the ground floor can offer a pleasant pedestrian experience on Downtown streets.



# Sustaining the Environment

**Theme 3.** *Downtown Columbia's natural resources will be protected and enhanced; a network of public spaces will provide places for individual contemplation and social gathering.*



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## Green Technology

**3.1** Include green technology to help build a sustainable environment, incorporating measures to reduce energy consumption and pollution while preserving the environment.



Howard County, MD

Green buildings and green infrastructure systems help promote an environmentally sustainable Downtown.

In February 2007, County Executive Ken Ulman endorsed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and created a Commission on the Environment and Sustainability. These two acts were aimed at making Howard County a model green community. In its report to the Executive, the Commission made recommendations about air and water quality, energy, open space and land preservation, and green building and development that, if embraced, could establish a new environmental ethic for Downtown. This new sustainable approach to development, which would include special protection for natural resources or sensitive environmental areas; green buildings;

innovative ways to manage stormwater, wastewater and energy flows; and reduced carbon emissions, would greatly expand the original Rouse objective of respecting the land.

In the summer of 2007, the County Executive proposed and the County Council approved Green Building standards for Howard County based on the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.

Green building standards, which play an integral part in energy strategies for a more sustainable community, should become the hallmark of Downtown Columbia. Given that many of the future buildings in Downtown, by virtue of their size or type, will be required to meet green building standards, Downtown Columbia has the potential to establish an identity as one of the leading green communities in the region.

Green building technology could also inspire forward-looking architectural design for Downtown. The façades and roofs of structures might even become green canvases contributing to the outward expression of the “city in a park.” These green buildings could become the centerpieces of an expanded environmental strategy for Downtown. This environmental strategy could also emphasize the role that healthy buildings play in the well-being of those who live and work Downtown; promote programs to reduce, reuse and recycle materials; incorporate active and passive solar and other renewable energy source technologies; and undertake other activities that would ultimately help to combat global warming.

Property owners are strongly encouraged to exceed the LEED certification level required for certain projects after July 1, 2008. By exceeding minimum LEED certification levels, Downtown developers would be building a more energy-efficient Downtown, one that could be less costly for future generations to manage and maintain. Qualifying commercial, residential and mixed-use buildings that achieve silver, gold or plati-

num LEED ratings can take advantage of the County’s tax incentives and fast-track plan processing for high performance buildings.

Another area where green technology should be used is water conservation. Efforts should include shared resource systems between buildings and outdoor public spaces. Methods for harvesting and reusing rainwater should be developed to support gardens and street trees. Natural drainage systems designed with the land can filter pollutants from stormwater runoff and increase groundwater recharge, thus reducing the impacts from impervious surfaces. Even recycled wastewater could have a place in managing Downtown’s water resources.

### Nature

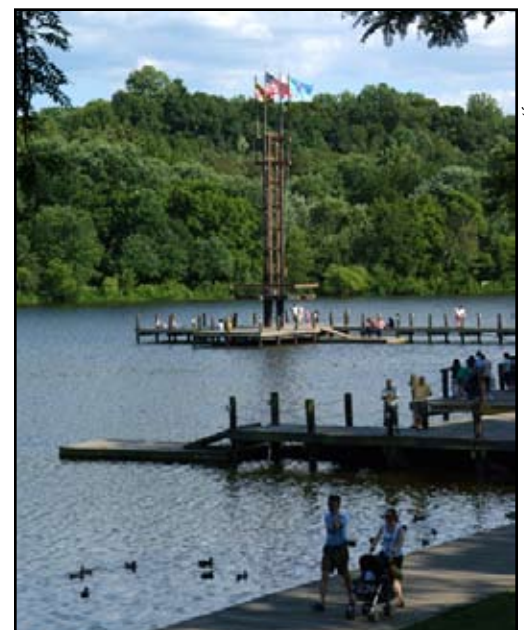
**3.2 Protect the natural resources and natural beauty of Downtown’s lake, streams and woodlands, forming them into a greenway system.**

The physical planning of Columbia is organized around its natural environmental

Sustainable site design and green building can help protect the water quality in Lake Kittamaquidi and in the Little Patuxent River.



Howard County, MD



Howard County, MD

Howard County, MD



Symphony Woods is a well-loved green space, but it needs both woodland restoration to enhance its value as a natural area and additional activities to meet its full potential as the “Central Park” for Downtown.

Development is clustered so that stream valleys, lakes and wooded areas create a green system of preserved open space that respects the land and provides for people’s need to interact with nature. All future development in Downtown should preserve and enhance the natural patterns that define Columbia’s open space network, placing special priority on connectivity which is necessary for ecological sustainability. Downtown should be an environmentally-friendly and sustainable place, befitting of Jim Rouse’s vision of Columbia as a “city in a park.”

The natural environment of Downtown can be expanded and restored to health by planting native vegetation, selectively clearing and removing existing invasive plants and prohibiting the planting of new exotic invasive plant materials. Downtown’s natural resources need to be managed not only for the people who will use Downtown but also as a habitat for the other species that dwell there. There is a special need to develop and implement forest management plans. Areas that have potential for accommodating interior dwelling species or have other high ecological value need to be protected and preserved. Areas that currently have severe degradation need to be prioritized for restoration.

A downtown development master plan should recognize that Downtown is part of the Little Patuxent River watershed. Most of Downtown stormwater drains into Lake Kittamaquidi and the Little Patuxent River. A

downtown development master plan should include a commitment to the preservation of sensitive lands and the development of a stormwater management system that follows natural subwatershed boundaries and effectively manages runoff and water quality in Downtown.

Currently, most of Downtown’s environmental resources are protected as permanent, credited open space. Environmentally sensitive areas within the Crescent property should be added to the open space network as part of any future development on that parcel.

Beyond the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands, a downtown development master plan should also include provisions to restore stream and wetland habitat and to address stormwater management. Because parts of Downtown were developed prior to stormwater management requirements, updating systems will present a challenge. Retrofitting Downtown to address past stormwater deficiencies and restore stream channels would help improve water quality and habitat within streams, and reduce future silt and nutrient impacts in Lake Kittamaquidi. Implementing a green infrastructure system and low impact development practices which minimize disturbances to the land and provide natural means for filtering, controlling and containing stormwater is encouraged.

Howard County, MD



Howard County, MD



Downtown green areas should be protected, used wisely and, if degraded, restored to health.

Originally the summer home of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, MPP is in the center of Downtown Columbia's "Central Park."



### Central Park

#### 3.3 Identify Symphony Woods as Columbia's "Central Park" area, which deserves special design and conservation measures.

Currently, Symphony Woods is a jewel in the rough. Symphony Woods needs to be preserved and enhanced as the "Central Park" within Downtown. To increase its visibility and promote the use of this natural area, selected new recreational features may need to be added and activities may need to be programmed. In addition, a connection such as a promenade should link Symphony Woods to the Mall. Other connections could better link Symphony Woods to the Lakefront area, to Merriweather Post Pavilion and to any potential new development at the adjacent Crescent property.

Protection of tree roots and a sustainability plan for the healthy maintenance of the woods, including the introduction of understory plantings, is greatly needed. In addition to preserving the natural features, the park could also be enhanced by the addition of public art.

### Outdoor Spaces

#### 3.4 Require additional open space and amenity areas so that Downtown will retain the character of a "city in a park" with plazas, greens, promenades, paths, public art, natural areas and street trees.

Over the last 40 years, Downtown has gained praise for its open spaces and amenity areas: first for Symphony Woods and Lake Kittamaquundi with its surrounding green spaces and activity areas, and more recently for the small plazas associated with the Mall and Downtown office buildings. In addition to preserving the existing open space network, the Downtown open space network should continue to evolve and expand with the introduction of new green spaces and public places.

In keeping with Columbia's famed open space design, opportunities for nature appreciation, private contemplation and social gatherings should continue to flourish within Downtown. To expand the range of these experiences, additional amenity areas such as greens, plazas and promenades should be designated in a downtown development master plan, as should a location for a new public square. These various elements should be linked to form an expanded network of outdoor spaces. These areas should be designed to orchestrate a sequence of transitions between built and natural environments that maintain and diversify the natural beauty of Downtown.

A downtown development master plan should devote additional land to the public realm in Downtown. It should establish minimum requirements in two categories:

*Open Space.* The first category is land that is set aside permanently for community and public use. New Town zoning calls for the



Downtown needs a variety of outdoor spaces—public and private, formal and casual—for the enjoyment of all.

The Lakefront has the largest concentration of Downtown's most treasured open spaces and amenities.

creation of permanent credited open space. Traditionally, open space land has been set aside for the following purposes:

- Environmentally sensitive lands, including steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains and associated woodlands. Most of the land in this category is undeveloped, although pathways, small sitting areas and tot lots may be introduced in appropriate locations.
- Passive recreation and community gathering areas such as parks, plazas, amphitheatres, and gardens.
- Active recreation facilities such as playgrounds, gyms, neighborhood centers and tennis clubs.

Open space land is typically dedicated to and is under the stewardship of the Columbia Association. Lands owned and managed by the Columbia Association may be considered privately-held, but since the inception of Columbia these lands have been available for use by the public. Maintenance of new Downtown open space dedicated to the Columbia Association would be funded through the lien paid by Columbia property owners. Some Columbia open space land is publicly-owned and used for schools, libraries, fire stations and similar uses. A new Downtown public square would be included in the open space category. Publicly-owned Downtown open space and facilities would be maintained by the County.

**Amenity Areas.** The second category is land enhanced with planting, outdoor furnishing and special surface treatment that provides space for the property users' enjoyment. Although these spaces are often available for the public to use, amenity areas are located on private property and are typically owned, built and maintained by the owner of the associated residential or commercial property. A major amenity area, accessible to the public, is strongly encouraged for each proposed district. Smaller amenity areas may be included throughout the Downtown. The following are examples of Downtown amenity areas:

- Existing amenity areas associated with Downtown commercial development include the LL Bean plaza and J.C. Penney playground at the Mall, and the small parks and sitting areas adjacent to several Downtown office buildings. Maintenance of amenities in commercial areas is typically the responsibility of the developer or property owner and is financed through the rents charged on retail and office uses.
- New residential buildings or complexes often provide outdoor amenities such as landscaped entrances, seating areas, gardens, fountains and courtyards. Amenities in new Downtown residential development may be maintained by a management company or homeowners' association (HOA) and are funded by residents' rents or HOA fees.



New open spaces and amenity areas will present an opportunity to build upon Columbia’s legacy as a “city in a park.” Innovations should integrate elements of Columbia’s environmental founding principles with current sustainable practices, such as forest and habitat enhancements, stream restoration, community gardens and farmers’ markets.

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Community gardens and farmers’ markets can play a role in making a healthier and more sustainable community.

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### Phasing

**4.2 Establish targets for commercial and housing development for a balance of land uses and public services. This ensures that development does not place undue burdens on existing residents, infrastructure or service providers.**

Public input and comments during the Downtown Columbia planning process showed concern that public amenities and traffic capacity be addressed prior to beginning construction of a project. Infrastructure requirements are currently overseen through the subdivision and site development plan review process. Improvements required by the Adequate Public Facilities regulations are addressed through these existing processes.

The public also expressed concern that an appropriate balance of uses (office, retail, residential) be provided so that one single use does not dominate the redevelopment of Downtown in its early phases. The public's greatest concern was to have a planned approach for all development.

A phasing plan is essential to provide infrastructure in a timely manner and to ensure a balanced mix of uses. Phasing addresses development timing by defining the amount of construction expected within certain periods. It addresses the mix of development in each phase, requiring that specific amounts of each major use (office, commercial, residential, civic/cultural, open space and public space) be completed before the

next phase begins. Phasing also requires that certain benchmarks be reached for infrastructure improvements (amenities and transportation capacity) before the next phase begins.

Because of the complexity, scale and duration of redevelopment in Downtown, this framework calls for the downtown development master plan to provide a phasing plan. Each phasing component should indicate the potential funding sources for construction and maintenance. The following planning requirements are expected for each phase:

- **Phasing:** Timetable with amounts of residential, office, retail and civic/cultural facilities per phase.
- **Pedestrian Connections:** Specific projects and their completion dates for each major phase.
- **Roadway Improvements:** Specific projects and their completion dates for each major phase.
- **Transit Solutions:** Proposed transit solutions and timeline for their implementation for each major phase.
- **Other Amenities:** Arts, civic and cultural facilities, locations and timing
- **Outdoor Spaces:** Environmentally sensitive areas to be dedicated as open space, proposed private amenity areas and the location of a public square.
- **Future Public Facilities:** potential sites for new fire station, library, a transit hub and a school.



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Phasing plans define an appropriate balance of uses and help ensure that infrastructure and amenities keep pace with development.

As the County's and Columbia's population increases, ages and becomes more diverse, the demand for public services, facilities and arts programs can be expected to increase.

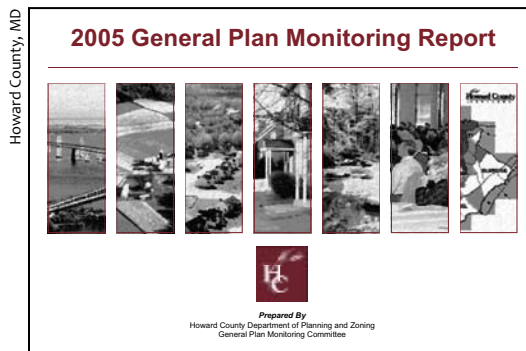


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### Monitoring

**4.3 Monitor and evaluate implementation using a formal reporting process that will provide regular opportunity for public discussion and feedback, and that will allow for refinement as needed.**

Development activity in Howard County is currently monitored by means of the annual *Development Monitoring System* (DMS) report and the periodic *General Plan Monitoring Report* (GPMR).



The *General Plan Monitoring Report* provides for public review and comment on the progress toward *General Plan 2000* goals and objectives.

The County's principal development tracking mechanism is the annual DMS Report. Approved and in-process residential and nonresidential plans are analyzed by location, type and amount. Resulting population and employment impacts are also discussed. In addition, there are sections on housing sales prices, land preservation statistics and the status of APF housing unit allocations. Information on senior housing and moderate-income housing are also tracked. Using the DMS, the County will be able to monitor Downtown development to ensure key benchmarks are being met before allowing the next phase of development to begin.

A GPMR is issued every two to three years. Members of the GPMR task force gather to review progress toward the indicators set forth in *General Plan 2000*. As a General Plan Amendment, a downtown development

master plan should identify benchmarks that would be added to the GPMR. As part of the monitoring report, those indicators would be discussed by the committee, published, then reviewed by the Planning Board at a public meeting.

Together, the annual DMS report and the periodic GPMR would provide a formal reporting process that includes regular opportunities for public discussion and feedback.

In addition to these County-generated reports, the property owner should propose a process to deliver a Downtown Columbia Monitoring Report. This report could track the progress made toward meeting the phasing requirements adopted as part of a downtown development master plan. The report process should include an opportunity for review by a monitoring committee and by the public.

## Chapter 4: Balancing and Phasing Growth

# 5

## Involving Everyone

**Theme 5.** *The community will be actively engaged in decisions concerning the evolution of Downtown.*

### Participation

**5.1 Enhance communication between citizens and County decision-makers through opportunities for public information and public participation, so that citizens are knowledgeable about the planning and development of Downtown and have multiple opportunities for input.**

The general public will continue to participate in the planning process for Downtown Columbia. The downtown development master plan would be subject to multiple public meetings before the Planning Board and the County Council. This is the purpose for the legislative process being recommended by this framework. At any time in the process, citizens are able to submit both formal and informal comments to staff, and appointed and elected officials via email, telephone, letter and the County's web site.

During fall 2007, a series of public meetings and workshops were held to review and discuss both this framework and the traffic study. The community and property owners may refer to this revised framework document as a guide for the downtown development master plan and any future zoning regulation amendments.

Using this framework as a foundation, General Growth properties, Inc. (GGP) may request approval of a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and a Zoning Regulation



People will have numerous opportunities to confer with decision-makers about the issues that may affect their communities.



Amendment (ZRA) by the County Council. This process is summarized in Appendix A. These two amendments require multiple public meetings, thus providing additional opportunities for public comment and input before the Planning Board and the County Council.

Subsequent to the adoption of a downtown development master plan and a Zoning Regulation Amendment, the review process should follow the traditional requirements of the New Town zoning district. With the additional requirement for professional peer review by a Design Advisory Panel (DAP), the process should include the following:

- Public Meeting(s) before the Planning Board for Comprehensive Sketch Plan (CSP) review.
- Public Meeting(s) before the Planning Board for Final Development Plan (FDP) review.
- Community pre-submission meeting by developer with the Town Center village board.
- Design Advisory Panel review prior to Site Development Plan (SDP) submission.
- Public Meetings(s) before the Planning Board for Site Development Plan (SDP) review.

With the adoption of a General Plan Amendment, new General Plan indicators and benchmarks for Downtown phasing can be added to the General Plan Monitoring Report. As described Chapter 4, the General Plan Monitoring Report provides an opportunity for public review by a monitoring committee and Public Meeting(s) before the Planning Board.

## Collaboration

**5.2 Encourage a partnership in planning and implementation, realizing that many of the recommended strategies will depend on collaboration among the County, private property owners, residents, business owners and community organizations.**

This framework strongly encourages Downtown property owners to work collaboratively to define a plan for their properties and the property that they hold in trust for the public. The primary property owner and original petitioner, HRD (now GGP), as it develops a downtown development master plan for its holdings, is encouraged to consider the entire Downtown and to confer with other property owners.

Unique experiences and destinations in Downtown require that service providers, property owners, business owners and the County collaborate to develop a new

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A Downtown partnership can help provide additional signage and public street furniture. It can program activities and provide for ambassador services.



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management model. Currently, the management of activities and improvements are the separate responsibilities of the County, Columbia Association and various private property owners.

To provide the high-quality amenities envisioned for Downtown, a Downtown partnership among the various entities responsible for planning, managing and programming the Downtown would be desirable. This coordinated effort could create a more efficient approach to safety, security, maintenance, marketing, physical improvements and transportation. Such collaboration should result in a more coordinated public realm with new directional signage, upgraded sidewalks, integrated street furniture, pedestrian lighting and lush landscaping that will generate an aesthetic quality that is operationally functional, attractive and vibrant.

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Those who own and manage property in Downtown - including GGP, the County, the Columbia Association and others - should collaborate to ensure the long-term vitality of the County's most valuable urban center.





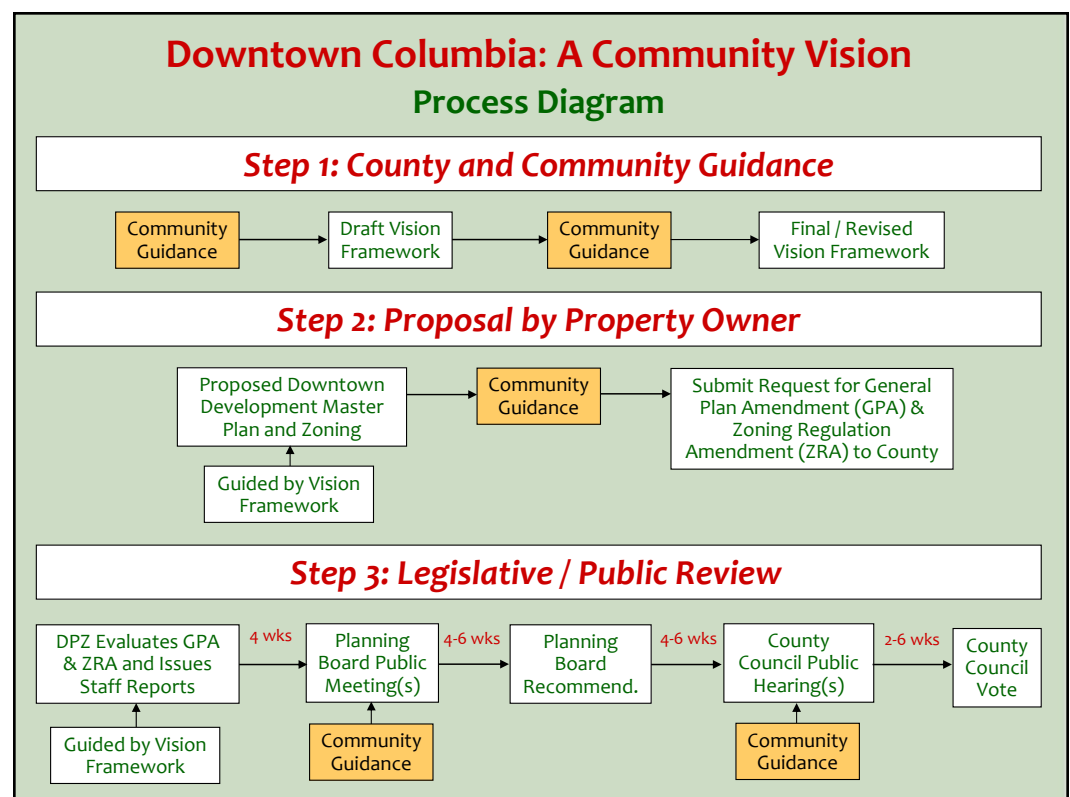


# Master Plan & Zoning Approach

## General Plan Amendment (GPA) Zoning Regulation Amendment (ZRA)

The approval process recommended for Downtown Columbia is comprised of three steps and the legislative adoption of two components: a General Plan Amendment and a Zoning Regulation Amendment.

### Overview



## 3 Steps

The preceding diagram portrays the three-step process needed to implement the community vision for Downtown.

1. **County and Community Guidance.** The County prepares a vision framework document incorporating public comment. With the publication of this document, step 1 is complete.
2. **Proposal by Property Owner.** Using the framework and informal community guidance, General Growth Properties, Inc. (GGP), formulates a General Plan Amendment and Zoning Regulation Amendment for submittal to County Council.
3. **Legislative / Public Review.** Planning Board and County Council review GGP's proposal and receive community guidance through the County's formal, legislative process for amendments. Council votes to approve, to deny or to approve with modifications. The timeframe for this step will depend on the complexity of the proposal and quantity of the public testimony.

## 2 Components

1. **A General Plan Amendment (GPA),** requested by the principal property owner (original petitioner), which proposes to formally adopt a downtown development master plan for Downtown Columbia, and
2. **A Zoning Regulation Amendment (ZRA),** requested by the principal property owner (original petitioner), which defines the development program, amenity requirements, required phasing, Planning Board review criteria, and all of the related entitlement grants, exactions and County-mandated requirements.

## Legislative Process

To achieve the community's vision for Downtown Columbia, the County Council will need to review and eventually approve a downtown development master plan and Zoning Regulation Amendment to implement that plan. The County Administration is proposing that the original petitioner request an approval of a General Plan Amendment by the County Council via the legislative process.

Consistent with the submittal of a General Plan Amendment and consistent with the requirements set forth under Section 125 of the *Zoning Regulations*, (New Town District), the original petitioner would be expected to petition for a Zoning Regulation Amendment that would implement the downtown development master plan. These two proposed amendments, GPA and ZRA, would be introduced to the public at the same time, so that the relationship between the downtown development master plan and its implementation through the *Zoning Regulations* would be clearly understood.

The County Administration proposes this as the recommended approach for Downtown because the amendments are adopted through legislation. Legislative processes afford the public the maximum opportunity to interact with their elected officials. The other processes that could be utilized, such as amendment to the Preliminary Development Plan or a rezoning case, would be quasi-judicial, requiring that elected officials not speak with the public or anyone else about the case. With the legislative approach, elected officials are free to meet with the public and to discuss the amendments as much as they may find helpful.



# Traffic Analysis

**Columbia Town Center Short and Long-Term Traffic Analysis  
September 2007  
Sabra, Wang & Associates, Inc.**

## Executive Summary

Howard County Government contracted with the consulting firm of Sabra, Wang & Associates, Inc. to conduct a traffic study for Downtown Columbia. For the purposes of the study, the County provided sets of assumptions about potential development scenarios. It is important to note that these sets of assumptions are simply examples of possible development scenarios at varying levels of intensity. They do not represent any specific development plans for Downtown.

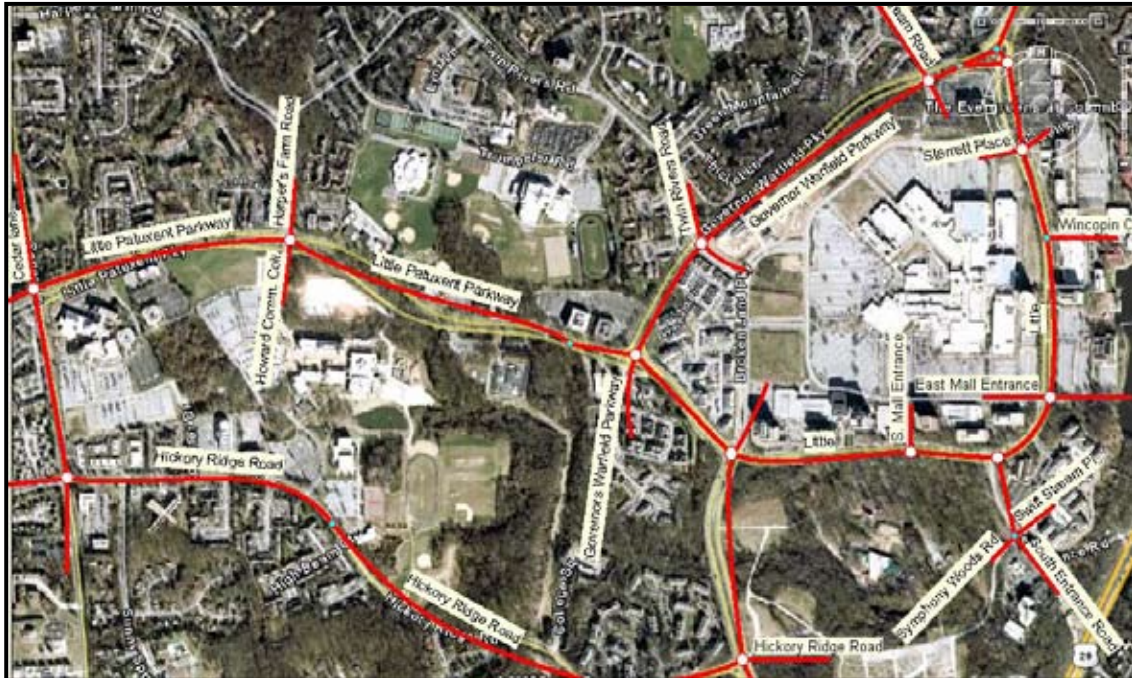
Using these assumptions, the study evaluates the traffic capacity of the existing road network as well as several proposed road network improvements. The study recommends a number of road extensions, intersection and interchange improvements and the creation of a transportation management center to monitor and manage traffic operations. The study also highlights the

importance of improvements to local and regional mass transit as well as improved connections for pedestrians and bicycles to decrease dependence on individual automobiles and support a shift to other modes of transportation.

The following is the Executive Summary from the traffic study. The full traffic study report is available on line at [www.howard-countymd.gov/downtowncolumbia](http://www.howard-countymd.gov/downtowncolumbia).



# Columbia Town Center Short and Long-Term Traffic Assessment



September 2007



**Sabra, Wang & Associates, Inc.**  
Engineers • Planners • Analysts





## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Howard County Department of Public Works requested a comprehensive assessment of the traffic impact of planned and potential mixed-use development scenarios in the Columbia Town Center area in Howard County, Maryland to identify and aid in the programming of current and future capital projects required to improve the existing roadway network and meet future travel demand needs. The study network includes 18 intersections and 2 interchanges in and around the Town Center area primarily on Little Patuxent Parkway, Governor Warfield Parkway, Broken Land Parkway, Hickory Ridge Road and Cedar Lane. The report documents existing conditions including baseline traffic volumes, capacity and level of service, and identify of network deficiencies. An analysis of short-term (five to ten-year) and long-term (30-year) conditions is also performed including traffic projections under various development scenarios, future capacity and levels of service, and identification of future network improvements to maintain adequate mobility levels in the Town Center area.

The findings of this report demonstrate that all signalized intersections currently operate at acceptable levels of service, with the exception of Little Patuxent Parkway at Broken Land Parkway (PM level of service E). In addition, one stop-controlled movement, Wincopin Circle at Little Patuxent Parkway, (PM level of service F) and one weaving movement, eastbound Little Patuxent Parkway at US 29 ramps (PM level of service E) currently fail. New traffic signals, signal phasing modifications, and ramp modifications are suggested to mitigate existing year traffic back to an acceptable level of service.

A potential development program of 1,125 residential units, 1,100,000 square feet of office space, 420,000 square feet of retail space, 274,000 square feet of medical/ hospital space and 125 hotel rooms was evaluated for the short-term scenario. The short-term range is a five to 10 year horizon, which is defined for the purposes of this report as year 2014. The results of a travel forecasting analysis indicate that approximately 3,300 AM and 4,500 PM new peak hour vehicle trips will be added to the network by 2014. Under the short-term development scenario, three additional intersections and one additional ramp movement would deteriorate to failing conditions. New traffic signals, signal phasing modifications, added turn lanes, and ramp modifications are suggested to mitigate year 2014 traffic back to an acceptable level of service.

Beyond 2014, three development scenarios were evaluated:

- A high-intensity development program with an additional 4,375 residential units, 4,000,000 square feet of office space, 330,000 square feet of retail, and 425 hotel rooms to be built or redeveloped in the study area
- An medium-intensity development program with an additional 2,075 new dwelling units, 1,900,000 square feet of new office space, and 330,000 square feet of new retail to be built or redeveloped in the study area
- No additional development in the study area with a 1% annual growth in ambient external traffic volumes



The high-intensity development scenario is projected to generate an additional 5,750 AM and 7,340 PM peak hour vehicle trips. With the year 2014 improvements to the roadway network in place, and no transit improvements, thirteen of eighteen intersections will fail, including ten intersections along Little Patuxent Parkway, one intersection along South Entrance Road, one intersection along Cedar Lane, one intersection along Broken Land Parkway as well as four ramp movements at the US 29 interchanges. Under the medium intensity development scenario, eleven intersections will fail, while under the No Build scenario seven intersections will fail. Based on these findings, several improvement strategies are required beyond year 2014 to enhance network capacity, manage network demand, and increase access to alternative transportation modes.

The recommended improvements include:

- **Roadway extensions** of Wincopin Street, Hickory Ridge Road, Corporate Boulevard and South Entrance Road
- **Intersection improvements** such as added turn lanes at Governor Warfield Parkway, Wincopin Circle, Broken Land Parkway, Hickory Ridge Road, and Symphony Woods
- **Interchange improvements** along US 29/ South Entrance Road and US 29/ MD 175
- Creation of a County-wide **Transportation Management Center** to monitor and manage in real-time traffic operations and incidents using advanced traffic control technologies

**These roadway improvements would mitigate all but one intersection to a level of service E or better.** However, the intersection of Little Patuxent Parkway at Broken Land Parkway cannot be mitigated without major roadway widening or grade separation.

Further strategies to manage network demand, and increase access to alternative transportation modes include:

- New and improved **Pedestrian and bicycle** connections
- **Transit initiatives** such as the establishment of a Transportation Center, new shuttle service, satellite parking, shared parking and improved regional transit connections.







For information or alternative formats contact:

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