



RENDERING OF CRESCENT NEIGHBORHOOD

Downtown Columbia News

August 26, 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

Downtown Columbia Plan

Visit the [website](#) to read the Plan.

The Downtown Columbia Plan provides recommendations about its future redevelopment by continuing the evolution of Downtown Columbia into a mixed-use urban center supported by a variety of open spaces and amenities in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

THE NEIGHBORHOODS

This Plan includes six new and reconfigured downtown neighborhoods – Warfield, The Mall, The Lakefront, The Crescent, Merriweather and Symphony Overlook. The neighborhood structure for downtown encourages a greater mix of uses with the emphasis on certain uses varying between neighborhoods. That mix of uses combined with each neighborhood’s plan for amenity spaces creates a distinctive identity for each neighborhood.

WARFIELD

A Traditional Mixed-Use Neighborhood for Families

Location: East of Governor Warfield Parkway and west to northwest of The Mall in Columbia.

Warfield will be directly adjacent to existing residential and retail areas. Future development will be compatible with these existing areas and will occur along streets connecting to The Mall. Mixed-use buildings will include up to eight stories of residential units and offices above retail shops. Streets and sidewalks are expected to be active with both residents and shoppers. Parking will be provided both on-street and in garages. The sidewalks, parks, plazas, playgrounds and other public spaces in this distinctly urban residential neighborhood encourage interaction of residents and are activity centers for all ages.

The Warfield neighborhood will have a number of unique features. Development will include a cross-town walking route from the Warfield Parkway entrance to The Mall and through it to the Lakefront. After regular Mall operating hours, new sidewalk connections along all new streets will provide alternate routes for accessing the various Neighborhoods and amenity spaces downtown. These pedestrian connections should be attractive and well lighted. The existing plaza entry to The Mall will be expanded with additional green space; the resulting Warfield Plaza will be the focus of



A Highlight of The Plan

A description of the neighborhoods in Downtown Columbia.

Page 1-3



Affordable Housing

The Plan and ideas for ensuring affordable housing in Downtown Columbia.

Page 3

the neighborhood and serve as a daytime and evening gathering space for programmed and impromptu activities. Warfield Square, adjacent to restaurants and a cinema, will be another important gathering space that will be active into the evening hours. Warfield Plaza and Warfield Square will be connected by a retail-lined street. Warfield Playground will be a small neighborhood children's park that provides a safe and secure area for young children to play. Soft surfaces along with planted areas will characterize the space. Other small green respites and recreation spaces will further enhance the Warfield neighborhood.

THE LAKEFRONT AND LAKEFRONT CORE

Bringing Community Life and Activity Back to the Water's Edge

Location: Lake Kittamaqundi westward to The Mall and from Little Patuxent Parkway on the north to The Crescent on the south.

The Lakefront neighborhood will be a walkable community, connected and oriented to the Lakefront Core and Lake Kittamaqundi. The Lakefront and Lakefront Core should be designed to encourage access to Lake Kittamaqundi and the public spaces adjacent to the Lake. Design objectives for new construction in this area should include the creation of inviting and welcoming spaces and outdoor corridors to enhance visibility and access to the Lake. This is also the potential location for the development of additional signature buildings, in addition to the existing former Rouse Company Headquarters' signature building [now Whole Foods]. The Design Advisory Panel Review of proposed Neighborhood Design Guidelines will be particularly important in the Lakefront and Lakefront Core.

The recorded open space in the Lakefront Core will retain its identity as an important historic and symbolic gathering place. Although additional public amenities may be added to enhance this area, its character will be preserved. The remaining land in the Lakefront Core may be revitalized with new development that could include cultural, retail, restaurant, office, residential and hospitality uses adjacent to the amenity area that will help bring people to this part of Downtown Columbia and activate the Lake. Specific Design Guidelines for the Lakefront Core must be prepared to address building height, massing, scale, building orientation, pedestrian and vehicular access and amenity area appropriate for its lakefront location. Restoration of the area's physical amenities and natural environment will also encourage more active use, as well as provide an

enhanced setting for performances, festivals and other events.

The Lakefront area has been isolated from other areas of Downtown Columbia, and this Plan includes a variety of means to enhance connectivity. Three new amenity space corridors extending east to west will link The Lakefront neighborhood to other downtown destinations. The Mall will be connected to the central lakefront area by a series of terraces with fountains that descend down the slope to the water. The Symphony Overlook neighborhood will be linked to Lake Kittamaqundi by extending a major east/west retail street to a green park that slopes and terraces down to the water's edge. To the north, a pedestrian promenade will extend from the Warfield neighborhood to the natural area north of Lake Kittamaqundi. Each of these connections to the lake crosses Little Patuxent Parkway which will be transformed into a more pedestrian-friendly street with sidewalks, crosswalks and signal timing for pedestrians to encourage walking between adjacent neighborhoods.

Additionally, this Plan encourages exploring the possibility of improving the existing pathway connection between the Lakefront and Symphony Woods or providing a new pedestrian connection between these two activity centers. This Plan further recommends completing the pedestrian pathway around Lake Kittamaqundi.

THE CRESCENT

Where New Urban Settings Face an Extensive Wooded Park

Location: East of Broken Land Parkway, south of Little Patuxent Parkway, west of South Entrance Road and south of the Merriweather neighborhood.

The Crescent neighborhood will have many distinctive features. Its greatest asset will be its natural setting amidst preserved and enhanced woodlands and tributaries to Symphony Stream and the Little Patuxent River. A new mixed-use neighborhood with residences, offices, shops, restaurants, and other uses, The Crescent will become a live-work location as well as an employment center. Maximum building heights of 15 to 20 stories will frame the Merriweather neighborhood in a distinctive curving arc. A new street between The Crescent and Merriweather will provide an entry for these buildings. This curving street with sidewalks along building fronts and paths along the edge of the green space will connect The

Crescent north to Symphony Overlook and The Lakefront. Paths will also connect The Crescent to Merriweather, which will allow parking built for office uses in The Crescent to be shared by patrons of Merriweather Post Pavilion.

MERRIWEATHER

A Strengthened Tradition in a New Kind of Cultural Park

Location: South of Little Patuxent Parkway between The Crescent and Symphony Overlook

Merriweather will be a new kind of cultural park where the landscape becomes a setting for arts, cultural and civic uses. It will be anchored by an enhanced Merriweather Post Pavilion and Symphony Woods. Civic and cultural uses, such as a new Columbia Association headquarters, library, museum, galleries, and sculpture garden could be located along the northern edge of Merriweather. These civic and cultural uses may have compatible commercial uses such as a café in the park or museum shop. Buildings will be set back from roads with tree canopies framing the cultural buildings as a way to integrate those uses into the natural landscape. A new system of paths and infrastructure will support festivals and other events in the park. Natural areas to the south will be improved by removing invasive species, restoring stream corridors with native vegetation and the planting of up to 15,000 new trees.

Merriweather will be connected to the heart of Symphony Overlook along a new north/south axis from Market Square at The Mall. Pedestrians will cross Little Patuxent Parkway at a new entrance to Merriweather. This intersection, designed to allow for safe crossing of the Parkway, will lead to a new Fountain Plaza which connects directly to Merriweather Post Pavilion. The streets of Merriweather that connect to the civic and cultural uses will be designed as park drives compatible with the topography. These drives can be closed during performances and other events.

SYMPHONY OVERLOOK

Where the New Downtown Meets Culture in the Park

Location: North of Little Patuxent Parkway and south of The Mall.

Symphony Overlook will connect The Mall to the cultural uses in the Merriweather neighborhood. It will be a crossroads of activity where a vibrant mix of retail, office, hotel/convention and some residential uses

are focused on two walkable urban streets lined with retail at street level. One is west-to-east connecting Warfield to The Lakefront. The other key street is north-to-south connecting The Mall to Merriweather. These two streets will intersect at Market Square, a new amenity space to be created in the heart of Symphony Overlook. Market Square will be an urban plaza that changes with the seasons and with events staged in the space. At various times, an overhead structural frame could become an interactive fountain, a canopy for a market or concert, or even a shelter for ice skating. Programming of Market Square will be done to complement activities and events planned throughout Downtown Columbia as well as in the other villages.



THE MALL

As shown on Exhibit E to this Plan, the Mall in Columbia is placed within its own neighborhood. Any redevelopment of the Mall must comply with the Design Guidelines for this neighborhood and adhere to the Maximum Building Height Plan (Exhibit F [of the Plan]).

Housing in Downtown Columbia



The Metropolitan at night in the Warfield neighborhood of Downtown Columbia.

The Plan recognizes and celebrates the original vision of Jim Rouse to create a socially responsible city of people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds. The establishment of an ongoing mechanism to provide a full spectrum of housing is clearly indicated within the Plan.

The CDHC presented to the County Council its third annual report in April 2015. A link to the report is provided [here](#).

Members of the CDHC Board of Directors and staff of the Howard Hughes Corporation ("HHC") met with the County Council on April 13, 2015 and on June 8, 2015. Links to the meetings are available under "Watch Us" on the Council's home [webpage](#). Expand the list of Monthly Meetings to watch both sessions during which representatives of CDHC and HHC discussed affordable housing in Downtown Columbia.

The Downtown Columbia Plan legislation established a Downtown Columbia Community Housing Foundation, now known as the Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation ("CDHC")

The Council will hold a special work session on affordable housing Tuesday, September 8, 2015 immediately following the regular Legislative session (which will begin at 7:00 p.m.) in the Banneker Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City.

Representatives from the CDHC and HHC will present recommendations to the County Council regarding providing a mechanism to develop affordable housing in Downtown Columbia. The meeting is open to the public and will be streamed live via the Council's website and broadcast on the local government station.

MARY KAY SIGATY

Howard County Council, District 4
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043
(410) 313-2001 mksigaty@howardcountymd.gov