

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

THE COLUMBIA DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

# Implementation Strategies



prepared by

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# THE COLUMBIA DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

## Chapter 4

### Implementation Strategies

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This *Preliminary Draft* of the Columbia Downtown Master Plan, Chapter 4, Implementation Strategies was prepared by the Department of Planning and Zoning. These draft implementation strategies will be refined to address comments and concerns raised by the public and County officials. This document will be subject to several opportunities for comment.

The content of this document is identical to the draft issued February 17, 2006. Minor formatting changes have been made to incorporate the original document into the Master Plan.

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# 4: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

## INTRODUCTION

*Implementation Strategies* is the third and final section of the Columbia Downtown Master Plan. The Master Plan is comprised of three major sections: the Vision Plan, the Design Guidelines and this Implementation Strategies section.

The Vision Plan sets broad goals for the future of Columbia Downtown and its potential as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use center for all people. Revitalization of this vision extends over a 20- to 30-year timeframe.

Let's look at what might be and be invigorated by it ~ *James Rouse*  
(Kellner, *Images of America: Columbia*, 9).

Although the latest movement in town planning, New Urbanism, envisions different methods of community-building, it embraces goals similar to those of James Rouse and the New Town planning movement of the 1960's. Both planning movements rely on the creation of new, specially designed, physical places to foster a sense of community and encourage greater social interaction among people to create a *place* that embodies social and economic diversity.

The vision for Downtown Columbia and its Design Guidelines is for a more urban place, with greater pedestrian activity, transit, buildings closer to the street and more residential, office, retail, cultural and civic activities. Based on the recommendations of participants, the Master Plan presents a new set of images and challenges for Downtown. In order to make the plan a reality, there are many implementation issues that must be addressed. This will require the involvement of the County, the State, property and business owners, residents and other organizations. Just as the charrette and resulting Vision Plan are the result of a collective effort, implementation will be too.

Implementation is complex and involves multiple areas of concern. Short-term and longer-term objectives are identified. Implementation strategies are grouped in a number of categories:

- Development Issues
  - Infrastructure and Services
    - Internal Street Network
    - Major Roads and Intersections
    - US 29 Interchanges
    - Transit
    - Water and Sewer Capacity
    - Schools
    - Fire & Rescue Facility
    - Central Library
- Development Issues (continued)
  - Affordable Housing
  - Merriweather Post Pavilion Noise
  - Environment
  - Downtown Management
  - Zoning
  - Development Phasing
  - Monitoring Progress and Results

# **DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

## ***INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES***

Development of the public infrastructure and services needed to support a more urban downtown is crucial. There are many components. First, there is transportation infrastructure and transit. The other critical component is public utilities and services which include water and sewer, schools, fire and rescue, and library services.

### **Internal Street Network**

An internal network of multiple, new local streets is necessary to provide sufficient capacity for additional traffic from new office, retail, residential, cultural and civic uses Downtown. At the same time, pedestrian-friendly streets are desired within the Downtown. Improving the quality of the pedestrian environment was identified as most crucial.

The street Design Guidelines specify appropriate street standards to create both an expanded street network and the walkable, lively pedestrian environment envisioned. These standards are located in the Design Guidelines and referred to by the Street Framework map.

While the internal road network and streetscape construction are the responsibility of the developer, DPZ and DPW are researching different approaches to road and streetscape maintenance, including the creation of a downtown partnership to ensure a coordinated approach to caring for enhanced streetscape elements in the public road right-of-way.

### **Key Strategies**

- 1.1 The street standards adopted as part of this Master Plan will be implemented via the Subdivision and Site Development Plan review process for individual developments.
- 1.2 Since internal streets will include higher amenities than typical public roads, maintenance obligations will be shared by the developer, the Columbia Association and the County, complete research regarding structure and funding of a Columbia Downtown Partnership during 2006.

### **Major Road and Intersections Connecting to Other Villages**

The traffic capacity of the intermediate level of roads that link Downtown to US 29 and the Villages is of the greatest concern. The Vision Plan identifies three potential choke points within the intermediate network:

- Northern intersection of Governor Warfield Parkway and Little Patuxent Parkway
- Intersection of Little Patuxent Parkway and Broken Land Parkway
- Intersection of Broken Land Parkway and Hickory Ridge Road

The intersection of Broken Land Parkway and Hickory Ridge Road is not a constrained Adequate Public Facilities (APF) intersection and will be improved by developers.

- To identify potential solutions, the Department of Public Works will initiate studies for future improvements to the two problem intersections, including:

- Improvements to South Entrance Road, including a possible extension towards the Mall
- Possibility of a traffic circle or intersection redesign of Governor Warfield Parkway and Little Patuxent Parkway
- Widening eastbound Little Patuxent Parkway between Governor Warfield Parkway and US 29
- Realigning the Broken Land Parkway and Little Patuxent Parkway intersection to give priority to traffic flow between the Village of Hickory Ridge and US 29

The County’s Adequate Public Facilities regulations currently exempt a number of “constrained” intersections from meeting APF levels-of-service standards due to concern that further expansion to serve cars contradicts pedestrian objectives for Downtown. DPW and DPZ will research whether there is an appropriate level-of-service standard for assessing traffic adequacy for a more urban Downtown. Such standards should ensure intersections are safe for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Short-term improvements to major intersections must be addressed in ways that improve the pedestrian environment while minimizing impacts on through traffic between nearby villages and US 29. Long-term improvements will be evaluated to determine their feasibility and to understand how the phasing of development will affect the need for and timing of infrastructure improvements.

A collaborative effort of County and developer funding will be necessary to implement road improvements. For major roads and intersections that surround Downtown, County funding will primarily come from the APF road excise tax of \$ 0.80 per square foot charged for all development when building permits are approved.

## **Key Strategies**

- 2.1 Complete studies of proposed improvements to major streets and intersections surrounding Downtown by Jan 2007 including:
  - Northern intersection of Governor Warfield Parkway and Little Patuxent Parkway
  - Intersection of Little Patuxent Parkway and Broken Land Parkway
  - Intersection of Broken Land Parkway and Hickory Ridge Road [study by developer]
- 2.2 Fund design and engineering of the widening of Governor Warfield Parkway eastbound to the US 29 ramps.
- 2.3 Extension of and improvements to South Entrance Road to connect to the Mall.
- 2.4 Develop cost estimates and schedule for inclusion in capital budget.
- 2.5 Complete study of APF level-of-service alternatives and, if appropriate, recommend preferred approach for consideration by APF Committee and County Council in 2007.

## **Us 29 Interchanges and Downtown Access**

Three potential problem areas were identified by the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) and the Department of Public Works (DPW). There are intersections and road configuration changes that can improve regional connections to Downtown. These involve the interchanges at South Entrance Road ramp, Little Patuxent Parkway eastbound ramp to US 29, and US 29’s

westbound exit ramp onto Broken Land Parkway. In addition to studies of these interchange improvements, Howard County and SHA are jointly funding widening northbound US 29 by one lane from MD 32 northward to MD 175.

The Department of Public Works has begun to study the possibility for short-term improvements to Downtown access to northbound and southbound US 29 at the MD 175 interchange and from southbound US 29 at the South Entrance Road interchange. Once the Master Plan has been approved and the development parameters have been established for Downtown, DPW, DPZ and the State Highway Administration (SHA) will evaluate the design options, timing and funding for the other long-term improvements, including potential interchange improvements at South Entrance Road and Broken Land Parkway. The APF road excise tax paid by new development will provide funding for the County's share of these improvements.

## **Key Strategies**

- 3.1 Complete study of short-term options (signage, lighting and length of turn lane) available at South Entrance Road interchange by the end of 2006.
- 3.2 Complete study of widening MD 175 bridge over US 29 to increase interchange capacity by 2006.
- 3.3 Complete study of additional westbound exit ramp from Broken Land Parkway interchange into The Crescent by 2007.
- 3.4 Study of South Entrance long-term to allow some access from/to northbound US 29.
- 3.5 Develop cost estimates and schedule for inclusion in County's capital budget.

## **Transit**

Three distinct levels of transit were discussed and envisioned by the participants at the charrette: Short-term ~ enhance the existing, countywide Howard Transit system and current transit hub located in Downtown

Mid-term ~ improve existing shuttle bus routes with frequent headways in Downtown core and connect Downtown with:

- Howard County Community College
- Howard County General Hospital
- Wilde Lake Village Center
- Oakland Mills Village Center

Long-term ~ potential regional transit connections via bus rapid transit (BRT) or possibly rail to Washington, DC and Baltimore transit systems.

Transit approaches from other similar environments such as Reston in Virginia or the Woodlands in Texas should be studied, as well as the potential to expand the existing, local Howard Transit system.

Research by DPZ and Howard Transit's contract manager, Corridor Transportation Corporation (CTC), is needed to identify optimal routes, schedules and service frequencies for added bus service to, from and within Downtown. The County's Transit Development Plan (TDP) is

scheduled for updating in Fiscal Year 2007. The TDP must be updated every 5 years, thus providing an opportunity for periodic review of Downtown transit service.

Since Federal and State funds are limited, added service components, such as a Downtown shuttle, will likely require new funding sources, possibly through private sector initiatives. After adoption of the Columbia Downtown Master Plan, DPZ and CTC will project potential future demand for public transit and assess the feasibility, cost and potential funding sources associated with various service options and phasing. One charrette suggestion was the establishment of a public-private Downtown Partnership to fund desired improvements and services, including potentially a local shuttle service within the Downtown.

## **Key Strategies**

- 4.1 Complete short-term and mid-term transit feasibility studies as part of Transit Development Plan by 2008.
- 4.2 Assess potential for Downtown Partnership to fund Downtown shuttle transit service.
- 4.3 Promote evaluation by Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) and Washington Council of Governments (WashCOG), Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) of the long-term potential for express bus or light-rail transit connections between Downtown Columbia, Washington and Baltimore area transit systems.
- 4.4 Require potential Howard Transit stops be identified in each district as plans are submitted.

## **Water and Sewer Capacity**

**Water:** The Department of Public Works projects that maximum water demand for the proposed development will range from 1,030,000 gallons per day (gpd) to 1,830,000 gpd. DPW has determined that the current water supply is adequate to meet this additional demand; however, the US 29 water pumping station will need upgrading.

**Sewer:** DPW projects the design peak sewerage flow for the proposed development will range from 2,128,000 gpd to 3,400,000 gpd. DPW already has capital projects underway for both expansion of the Little Patuxent Water Reclamation Plant and for additional capacity for three sewer interceptors within Town Center and the Little Patuxent parallel sewer interceptor from Columbia to the Water Reclamation Plant in Laurel (about 8 miles). DPW will have its consultant study the anticipated additional capacity needed for Downtown.

Water and sewer system improvements will be needed to support the proposed development in Downtown. Water and sewer lines within Downtown will be constructed by developers. System improvements (water pump station, sewer interceptor, and waste water treatment plant expansions) are funded by user revenues paid to the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund.

## **Key Strategies**

- 5.1 Complete upgrade to existing water pump station by June 2009.
- 5.2 Complete study of sewer interceptors and wastewater treatment plant upgrades by June 2009.

## Schools

Charrette sessions, discussions with the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), and meetings with the Downtown Focus Group identified pupil yields from new Downtown housing as an important concern. The market study by ZHA, Inc. found that households likely to relocate to new housing units in Downtown would be primarily empty nesters or young workers without children. Pupil yields in Downtown are lower than elsewhere in the County, but similar to Montgomery County pupil yields in more urban areas. HCPSS staff expects future pupil yields to be similar to the pupil yields from existing Downtown housing.

**Figure 1. Projected New Students by Units for Various Build-out Scenarios**

Existing Number of Students				
Dwelling Units	ES	MS	HS	TOTAL
1237	48	21	27	96

Existing Unit Yield Rate				
	ES	MS	HS	OVERALL
	0.039	0.017	0.022	0.078

Projected New Students				
Proposed New Units*	ES	MS	HS	OVERALL
1000	39	17	22	78
3000	116	51	65	232
5000	194	85	109	388

Source: Howard County Public School System

\* Assumes mix of units similar to that currently built and in process: 13% age-restricted; 10% townhouse; 90% apartment with 36.7% rental and 63.3 condo. Actual yield will depend on ultimate mix of unit types.

HCPSS staff believes projected middle and high school pupil enrollment will not generate the need for additional middle and high school capacity. Short- and mid-term yields for elementary are not expected to require a new school, although an addition to an existing school may be needed. In the longer term, for the highest number of proposed residential units, additional elementary school capacity is available in East Columbia, but will likely be limited in West Columbia.

If over the 30-year timeframe for Downtown build out, additional elementary capacity is needed, options are available to address this need. If a new school site were needed to meet long-range projections, the HCPSS already has a site available at Sunny Spring. This site would be sufficient for a small new elementary school, but not sufficient for the current 788-seat prototype.

One factor that may have an impact on pupil yield projections is the provision of a mix of residential units in Downtown. Many citizens expressed a desire for a mix of units that includes moderate-income housing. Providing a mix could result in some additional school age children living within Downtown. Another factor that may impact pupil yield projections is whether the homes being vacated by empty nesters who move Downtown will be purchased by families. Such housing turnover is occurring in many neighborhoods.

The APF housing allocations and open / closed schools tests will continue to control the pace of residential development, so the HCCPPS will have time to evaluate and address the needs of

Downtown students. The HCPSS updates its pupil projections each year and will thus be able to monitor whether pupil yields are greater than expected and whether additional school capacity is needed.

While some additional school capacity will clearly be needed, even the highest range of housing proposed for Downtown is not currently expected to yield enough students to generate the demand for a new elementary school within Downtown. However, a Downtown school site can be available to help meet those needs if and when they arise. The school excise tax (\$1.00 per square foot), paid by all new residential development, will help fund any school capacity improvements.

The HCPSS and Department of Planning and Zoning will continue to review the data and projections as the Master Plan is implemented to ensure that schools are adequate to meet the projected pupil population.

### **Key Strategies**

6.1 Prepare revised pupil yield analysis based on adopted Downtown affordable housing requirements which include more housing units for families.

6.2 Monitor and revise projections annually to provide updated annual APF open/closed school charts and to plan for needed school capacity and budget.

6.3 If needed, reserve a potential school site, most likely in The Crescent.

### **Fire & Rescue Facility**

Capital funds have been approved for the design and construction of a new Banneker Fire Station. The project schedule is for design and construction completion by FY08. As of the FY06 Capital Budget, \$3.04 million has been approved for the project.

Because this is the central Fire and Rescue facility for Columbia, accessibility is a key factor. A location on or near Broken Land Parkway is desired. The current station cannot fully accommodate new equipment and cannot be renovated. The station is poorly laid out as a result of being renovated or added onto three times since it was built more than 30 years ago. Two alternatives are possible: tear down the current station and rebuild on the existing site, or relocate to a new site. Redevelopment of the existing site would require a temporary facility. The pros and cons of the existing location versus relocation are still being evaluated.

The County should continue to evaluate the desirability of the two options. An alternative site should be identified and reserved along Broken Land Parkway, unless it is determined that redevelopment of the existing site is preferable.

### **Key Strategies**

7.1 Complete current study of alternatives and/or possible land exchange by June 2006.

7.2 Begin design in FY07.

## Central Library

The role, programmatic needs, location and parking of the Central Library in a redeveloping Downtown Columbia requires further study. The charrette called for expansion towards Little Patuxent Parkway or possible relocation of the Library to a larger site with greater expansion potential. The County's Library Master Plan calls for shifting the library system's administrative staff to the expanded Miller Branch Library in order to free up building space and parking at the Central Library. However, issues raised in the charrette will require further study and perhaps alterations to the Countywide plan for the library system.

Expansion and relocation of the Central Library is not a short-term need, since it was recently renovated and other County library needs have higher priority. The next update of the Library's Master Plan should evaluate the charrette proposals for expansion or relocation to another site in Downtown.

### Key Strategies

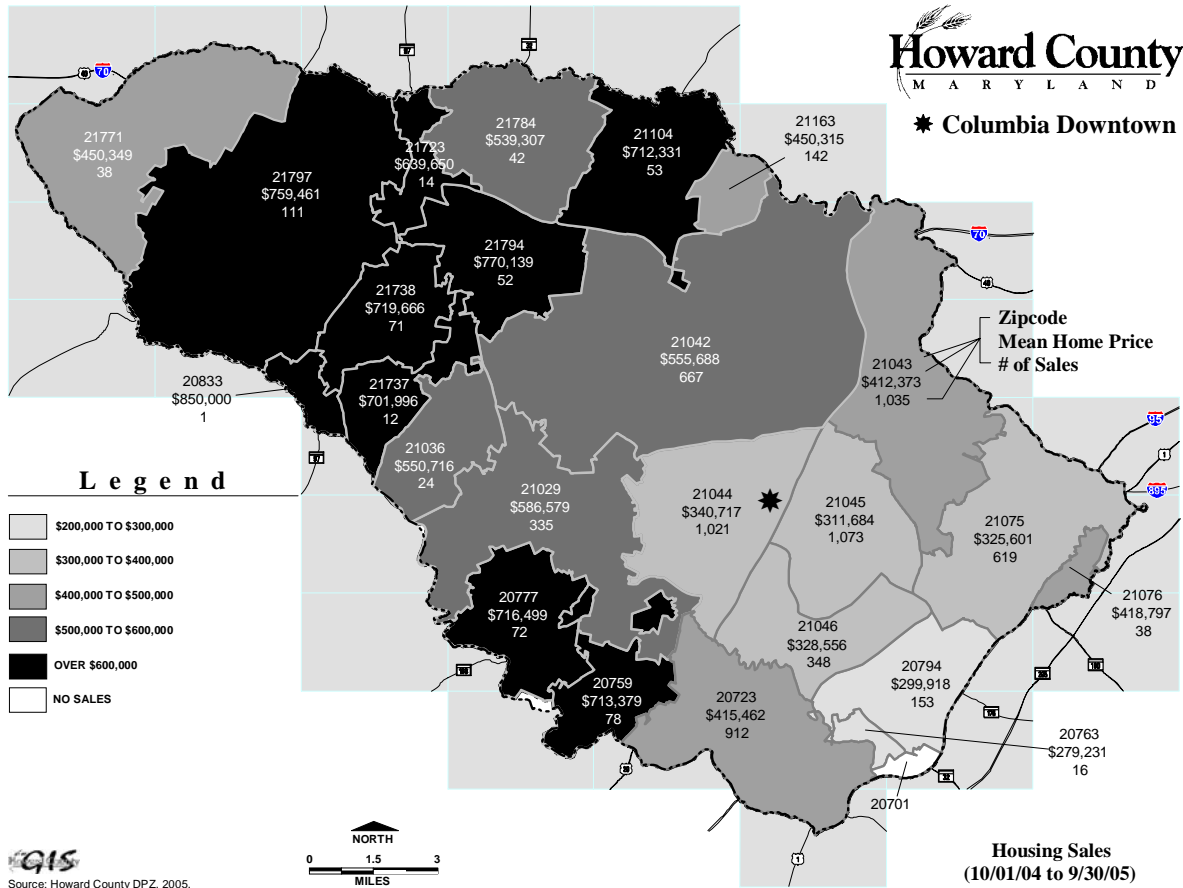
8.1 Complete preliminary studies of alternatives and/or possible land exchange by 2009, so Howard County Library can incorporate such studies into its amended *Facilities Assessment and Master Plan 2005-2030*, which the Library plans to complete in 2010.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Moderate Income Housing Units (MIHUs) are currently required in many zoning districts, but not in the New Town (NT) District. DPZ and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) have been working with a group of housing developers and affordable housing advocates to identify potential changes in the County Code that will encourage a larger number of moderate-income housing units to be created. The intent of the draft proposal would be to amend the current MIHU program to require more units in exchange for allowing developers flexibility in meeting the MIHU obligation. The draft proposal also includes a new provision for Middle Income Housing Units and recommends that income standards be based on Howard County's median household income, rather than the Baltimore regional median income.

As a result of Jim Rouse's social purpose, Columbia as a whole has a higher percentage of affordable housing than the remainder of the County. The Columbia Downtown Master Plan, and the zoning that implements the Plan, should include a MIHU requirement. The 15% MIHU provisions in the Corridor Activity Center (CAC) and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Districts would seem the most comparable to the development intensity proposed for Columbia Downtown. If MIHU amendments are adopted to address middle-income housing needs, a 10% requirement for moderate-income and 5% for middle-income units would be appropriate.

**FIGURE 2. Number of Homes Sold in 1995 and Mean Home Price by Zip Code**



**Key Strategies**

9.1 Complete legislation to amend the MIHUs program for Howard County by early 2007.

9.2 Amend the Zoning Regulations to require 15% MIHU or 10% MIHU and 5% middle-income housing in Downtown Columbia.

**MERRIWEATHER POST PAVILION NOISE**

Concerns expressed during and after the charrette regarding potential future residents objecting to concert noise continue to demonstrate that the community values the existing venue at the Merriweather Post Pavilion. Testimony by Village Managers and others indicate that noise is no longer the subject of complaints by the residents living near Downtown. Concerns expressed by non-residents may reflect their desire to ensure that new Downtown residents do not seek closure or alteration of Merriweather based on noise complaints.

Noise, however, can and has been addressed. Noise affecting residential areas is governed by Subtitle 9, Section 8.9 of the Howard County Code. It regulates the standards, measurement, exemptions and penalties for persons causing excess noise levels to carry from one property onto adjacent residential property. The Code of Maryland Regulations [COMAR, 26.02.03.03A (1)] is referenced in determining standards for both daytime and nighttime hours.

**Figure 3. Maryland Noise Regulations**

<b>Maximum Allowable Noise Levels (dBA) for Receiving Land Use Categories</b>			
	Industrial	Commercial	Residential
Day	75	67	65
Night (10:00 p.m.)	75	62	55

Improvements in acoustical design and sound systems at Merriweather have reduced both the sound volume and the complaints. However, acoustical soundproofing of future residential development is desirable.

The Columbia Downtown Master Plan must ensure that the long-term viability of this cultural asset is not jeopardized by future development that fails to incorporate noise mitigation. To this end, several measures can be taken. Restricting the operating hours of entertainment activities and establishing maximum noise levels are tools that are already in place for minimizing conflict between existing residential uses and Merriweather. New residential development should be required to use materials and building techniques to acoustically protect new units. County regulations could be amended to require an analysis of how the location, orientation, design and siting of structures influence how sound is carried and what controls are needed.

### **Key Strategies**

10.1 Develop standards for noise mitigation to be included in development criteria for The Crescent.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

Environmental concerns expressed during and after the charrette can be divided into two broad categories: existing regulatory concerns and new green building concerns. Existing environmental regulations address storm water management, sediment control, stream, floodplain, and wetland protection via the plan review process on a case-by-case basis for each proposed development.

Most Downtown environmental resources are already protected as open space. Resources within The Crescent will be added to the open space network in the future.

Storm water management will be a significant challenge, since some parts of Downtown were developed prior to storm water management requirements. Redevelopment must comply with current storm water management regulations.

Charrette participants suggested Columbia could be a model of green building and site design techniques like those advocated via LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Howard County has property tax incentives to promote the use of green building techniques

under § 20.119 of the Howard County Code. State of Maryland has a Green Building Tax Credit Program pursuant to Title 14, Subtitle 26, Chapter 2, as authorized by Article 41 § 10-722 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

The County's current development regulations will help protect environmental resources in the Downtown. The County should promote the use of State and County tax incentives to developers to further encourage the use of innovative green building and site design techniques.

### **Key Strategies**

11.1 In order to develop a comprehensive strategy, encourage General Growth Properties, Inc. (GGP) to undertake storm water analysis for the Downtown as a whole, or by district rather than the individual development projects.

11.2 Promote use of County and State tax credits for green building.

## **DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT**

The development of a desired first-class Downtown will require a much higher level of streetscape and open space improvements, as well as enhanced maintenance and programming in the public realm than currently exists. GGP, the County and CA currently all have some responsibility for these functions. However, this mostly occurs on an *ad hoc* basis.

In order to effectively manage the extensive improvements that are expected, a formal public-private partnership is proposed to provide a high-quality environment within Columbia Downtown. The Baltimore Downtown Partnership might be used as a case study for further investigation. The three largest owners of land in Downtown, namely, GGP, CA and Howard County, have agreed to explore the possibility of forming a downtown partnership.

A partnership, if formed, should investigate options for funding, such as the creation of a Tax Increment Financing District to use a portion of additional revenue collected from increased property values due to Downtown redevelopment, or other financing mechanisms, as deemed appropriate.

In addition to enhanced maintenance, the partnership could serve an important role by providing amenities and/or programming to make Downtown vibrant. A partnership could also undertake marketing or special projects such as the Downtown shuttle bus. Cooperation between public and private sectors plays a central role in creating successful downtowns.

With their majority land holdings in Downtown, the CA and GGP, together with Howard County Government and other private sector interests, are in a unique position to participate in a Downtown Partnership. These parties should investigate a management structure for maintenance of streetscape improvements and public spaces. This analysis should lead to a better understanding of how a downtown partnership should be crafted to enhance Downtown's success.

### **Key Strategies**

12.1 Study cost/benefits and structure for potential collaboration via a Columbia Downtown Partnership during 2006.

12.2 Develop a projected timeline for formation and preliminary activities by June 2007.

## **ZONING**

Implementation of the Master Plan requires modification to the framework of existing Zoning Regulations that govern Columbia. A two-step approach to amending Columbia's zoning is proposed. The first phase will specifically address changes to implement the Downtown Master Plan. These will include a new Downtown Columbia overlay district that creates the opportunity for increased development if specific criteria are met. The second phase will address Columbia-wide issues and a comprehensive update of the New Town District. The Columbia-wide review is needed to reflect the fact that initial build out of Columbia is nearly complete and that most future property renovations and redevelopment will be undertaken by individual property owners, not General Growth Properties.

Proposed amendments to the Zoning Regulations to implement the Downtown Master Plan will be available for public review at the same time as the Master Plan. Both documents require public review before the Planning Board. After appropriate revisions are made, legislation will be submitted to the County Council for review and approval after a public hearing.

### **Key Strategies**

13.1 Prepare, refine and adopt amendments to the Howard County Zoning Regulations to implement the Master Plan for the Columbia Downtown during 2006.

13.2 Prepare, refine and adopt amended New Town Zoning Regulations to address Columbia-wide issues by the end of 2007.

## **DEVELOPMENT PHASING**

During the charrette, differing ideas for phasing were proposed. Some wanted to establish a specific sequence of proposed developments and accompanying amenities to be prescribed for each district in Downtown. While flexibility is needed to respond to the market and funding opportunities, all residential, office and retail development is expected to provide related public water, sewer, road, streetscape and open space improvements. The following projects have been identified as proposed early initiatives:

### ***Downtown Wide***

- Prepare more refined plans and phasing for the four districts: Warfield Triangle, Corporate Boulevard Lakefront / Little Patuxent Parkway and The Crescent / Symphony Woods
- Study potential locations for pedestrian crossings within Downtown; begin feasible pedestrian improvements in conjunction with early roadway or development initiatives
- Study potential short and long term improvements to South Entrance Road; begin feasible short term improvements
- Study potential short and long term improvements in the vicinity of the MD 175 / US 29 interchange to improve access to US 29 from Downtown and nearby communities; begin feasible short term improvements
- Study alternative redesigns of the Governor Warfield Parkway / Little Patuxent Parkway northern intersection; begin feasible short-term improvements

- Work with the State Highway Administration to investigate potential ramp improvements from Broken Land Parkway into The Crescent district
- Evaluate proposed changes to the Twin Rivers Road / Broken Land Parkway intersection and the proposed extension of Twin Rivers Road as it relates to traffic and the impact on developable land in the Warfield Triangle
- Begin consideration of potential long-term expansion or relocation of the Columbia Association headquarters and the Central Library in Downtown
- Investigate the potential formation of a Downtown Partnership

### ***Warfield Triangle***

- Begin planning and marketing for mixed use development, including additional parking for the Mall

### ***Little Patuxent Parkway / Lakefront***

- Evaluate the options for making Little Patuxent Parkway a pedestrian-friendly street; identify phasing for engineering and construction
- Plan and design the pedestrian link from the Mall to the Lakefront
- Plan and design the first section of Wincopin Street
- Complete the dredging of Lake Kittamaquidi
- Plan and design the north-south extension of the Lakefront Promenade

### ***Corporate Boulevard***

- Plan and design Corporate Boulevard
- Begin marketing the Corporate Boulevard office district

### ***The Crescent / Symphony Woods***

- Begin design of the street through The Crescent, linking Broken Land Parkway to Little Patuxent Parkway and South Entrance Road; obtain Maryland Department of the Environment permitting requirements for the needed stream and wetland crossings
- Prepare initial designs for improvements to Symphony Woods; study such concepts as a covered skating rink / event space
- Study ways to improve entrance to Merriweather Post Pavilion, enhancing its connection to Little Patuxent Parkway
- Identify the appropriate location for the Fire and Rescue Station (at the current Banneker Station site or a new location); begin design and identify construction phasing
- Identify potential locations for a future school site in the event that actual pupil yields are higher than anticipated

The pace and amount of development throughout Howard County is phased via the County's APF tests for roads, as well as allocations and schools tests for residential projects. Howard County APF regulations are also a critical factor in phasing Downtown development. As indicated under Schools above, HCPSS staff currently anticipate the ability to accommodate projected pupil increases resulting from new Downtown housing. However, should this not be the case, the elementary and middle schools serving Downtown will be closed for new residential development for up to four years, so that additional capacity can be created.

The APF allocation test is used to phase residential development in an orderly manner to permit other County agencies to plan for needed infrastructure and services. Approximately 1500

allocations are available over the next six years for all of Columbia. The 2010 *General Plan* update will determine the appropriate number of allocations to be available for Downtown residential development between 2010 and 2030.

## **MONITORING PROGRESS AND RESULTS**

The Department of Planning and Zoning currently monitors and reports on development activity in Howard County via the annual Development Monitoring System (DMS) Report. This report will track the amount and type of development in Columbia Downtown, including the number of moderate-income and age-restricted adult housing units.

Another monitoring mechanism is also proposed to assess the progress in implementing the Columbia Downtown Master Plan. A Downtown Master Plan monitoring process similar to the General Plan Monitoring Report is proposed. Howard County has a formal process for monitoring the implementation of General Plan policies. The final chapter of *General Plan 2000* establishes priorities and associated indicators, which identify specific progress measures and the schedule for accomplishments. The Department of Planning and Zoning, in consultation with a monitoring committee, prepares a General Plan Monitoring Report that is distributed for public review. The report is then presented for comment and discussion at a public meeting before the Planning Board. This process requires the County to establish action priorities, recognize accomplishments, and identify where adjustments are needed.

The first Downtown Master Plan Monitoring Assessment should be held in conjunction with the scheduled review and update of the *General Plan* in 2010. This will help determine whether infrastructure and service capacity are keeping pace and what the phasing of residential allocations should be.

Progress in implementing some aspects of the Columbia Downtown Master Plan will be reported annually via the DMS Report: location, type and amount of development, including affordable housing. However, other performance measures should be assessed every five years via the Downtown Master Plan Monitoring Report.

Progress indicators should include infrastructure capacity improvements, as well as the timely provision of streetscape, open space and other civic improvements. A broad-based Master Plan Review Committee should be convened to review progress relating to the Columbia Downtown Master Plan. The committee's report should be presented at a public meeting before the Planning Board.

### **Key Strategies**

- 14.1 Incorporate reporting on Columbia Downtown into the 2007 Development Monitoring System (DMS) Report.
- 14.2 Establish the Columbia Downtown Master Plan Monitoring Committee to monitor implementation progress in conjunction with the next General Plan update cycle scheduled for 2010. Report to the Planning Board before adoption of General Plan 2010.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Implementation Strategies outlined above are starting points for the evolution of Downtown Columbia into an urban center. Actual implementation will require the investment, hard work and dedication of property and business owners, County residents, the Columbia Association, Howard County Government and numerous other community organizations.

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