

**COLUMBIA DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN
DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT
(for discussion)**

PURPOSE

As Jim Rouse intended, Columbia Downtown will be an urban center serving Howard County in a setting of natural beauty. It will provide a vital and exciting mix of employment, housing, shopping, entertainment, dining, cultural amenities as well as public facilities and services that will enhance the quality of life in the community. A civic center, landmark buildings and cultural amenities will create a vibrant sense of place. Downtown will be a destination primarily for County residents but will draw from the greater metropolitan area for purposes of entertainment, dining and shopping. Developers shall incorporate the intent of the Downtown Master Plan and its Design Guidelines in each phased development proposal. Overall development will be designed in partnership with the community.

SOCIAL VALUES

The social values shall be those on which Columbia was founded: building community, encouraging diversity and respecting the environment.

PARTNERSHIP

Development will be a partnership among landowners, citizens, and the County. In return for increased development density and the accompanying economic benefits resulting from rezoning, property owners will contribute ongoing financial support to benefit the Downtown community. Support will include providing permanent facilities and operating costs for cultural amenities, community centers, open space and public art, free shuttle buses and other benefits as determined by the community. Land development in each phase is contingent on a commitment by the developers and the County to fund and provide necessary infrastructure and amenities.

SPECIFIC GOALS

Open Space: Downtown shall retain the character of a "city in a park." Current open space shall be preserved. There will be an additional requirement for open space between or within structures, to include parks, plazas, greens, promenades, paths, public art and natural areas. Trees will border all streets.

Architecture: Buildings will be aesthetically-pleasing, offering a varied yet harmonious urban scene favoring forward-looking architecture in the Rouse tradition. Structures will be street-oriented and inviting to passers-by. They will incorporate mixed-use principles combining business, residential and other functions. Height limits will be established for each district as appropriate to express that district's character, to preserve natural beauty, and to remain within the constraints of the

public infrastructure. New buildings are to use 'green' technology and other measures to reduce energy consumption and pollution as well as to preserve the environment. All designs will be subject to prior review and approval by a County-designated professional Architectural Review Board.

Residential Structures: Residential buildings will comprise a full spectrum of housing including low income and affordable housing to meet workforce and moderate-income needs, and to achieve diversity.

Pedestrians: Pedestrians will have priority over vehicular traffic throughout Downtown. This is to encourage strolling, purposeful walking and bicycling, as well as to accommodate those with disabilities. There will be safe pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

Traffic and Parking: Development proposals will be guided by a comprehensive Transportation Study which is part of the Master Plan, presenting coordinated options for traffic solutions. Traffic will be reduced in areas designated as pedestrian priorities by diverting through traffic, by intercepting Downtown-destined traffic, and by utilizing speed-deterrent methods to slow traffic. Vigorous efforts will be made to identify feasible road configurations, improvements and signage that would allow traffic not destined for Downtown, particularly commuter traffic, to bypass Downtown. Parking space in Downtown office buildings will be limited to encourage employees to use satellite parking garages which will have frequent, free shuttle service to Downtown.

Mass Transit. Mass transit options will be planned at the outset for incorporation into development plans, to preserve possible sites and necessary rights of way to meet future needs as density increases. Transit and connections to transit will be designed to encourage commuters to reduce the use of cars. Bus rapid transit and light rail should be explored fully; rights of way will be ascertained before development begins under the Master Plan.

Coordinated, Phased Development, and Community Oversight. Development shall be coordinated, with Downtown landowners consulting each other in preparing any petition for rezoning and any development proposals. Development will be in specified phases which ensure a logical, coordinated progression, and which ensure adequate public infrastructure for each phase. Development of outlying parcels will be deferred until development of infill areas is substantially complete. No new phase may begin until at least 70% of the previous phase is completed. Public participation shall be sought on planning for each phase, in addition to and in advance of hearings on specific development proposals. The planning and approval process will be efficient and open. DPZ will coordinate with MTA and regional transportation entities to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is available at each phase.

By Alex Hekimian, Bridget Mugane, Tim Sosinski, Bob Tennenbaum, Ed Walter
8/16/06