

# Columbia Downtown

Frequently Asked Question Sheet # 17

Issued: April 28, 2006

## CULTURAL, CIVIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### WHAT TYPES OF FACILITIES ARE NEEDED?

This discussion is focused on facilities (the physical aspect of places that are available) and assumes that providing associated services (the programming aspect) will be covered by relevant agencies and management organizations (County Government, CA and nonprofit organizations).

### Cultural (Arts) Facilities

#### *Discussion points:*

1. What facilities exist, are under construction or are being planned? What is missing?
2. Will facilities occur incrementally as population increases? How are facilities encouraged, facilitated, and, if needed, incentives provided? What might occur in Columbia (versus in Baltimore or Washington)? Is there a market for an “arts district” with an upscale arts scene with a regional draw? Should an affordable arts component be in Downtown or a Village?

#### *Performing Arts*

Existing and Planned Venues: theaters, auditoriums, outdoor pavilions, and amphitheaters

- Merriweather Post Pavilion (4,000 seats under cover)
- Toby’s Dinner Theater (310-320 seats)
- Jim Rouse Theater (Wilde Lake HS, 736 seats)
- Smith Theatre (HCC, 420 seats, to be renovated when Performing Arts Center opened)
- Existing Black Box (114 seats at HoCo Center for the Arts)
- Performing Arts Center (under construction, HCC, 114 seat recital hall, black box theater with 150 performance seats / 210 lecture seats)
- Grass Amphitheater (Lakefront)
- Slayton House Theater (240 seats)
- Drama Learning Center, Columbia (100 seats, used for drama students)

#### *Visual Arts, Museums and Exhibit Centers*

Existing Venues: galleries, community center spaces

- The Artist’s Gallery, American City Building
- Slayton House (Wilde Lake)
- Columbia Art Center (Long Reach)
- Columbia Archives
- African Art Museum, Columbia (Oakland)

The **Arts Vision: State of the Arts in Howard County 2003** report states that the arts in Howard County have prospered over the last decade. Among the continuing challenges are funding, finding leaders for the future, arts education for children, space limitations, and marketing and audience development. This study focuses on nonprofit organizations and does not include commercial arts industry such as Merriweather Post Pavilion. Learn more about the Howard County Arts Council at <http://www.hocoarts.org/>.

The **Merriweather Post Pavilion Feasibility Study** in 2004 identified an existing need for additional performing arts facilities as follows:

- 400-600 seat performance hall
- Rehearsal facilities
- 1000 - 1200 seat performance hall
- More community art centers to support these facilities

The study also mentions that Symphony Woods and the Merriweather parcel would be a good site for a new arts facility. The report in its entirety including three appendices is available at: <http://www.co.ho.md.us/dao/doapdfs/merriweatherfeasibilityreport.pdf>.

## **Civic, Cultural and Community Facilities**

Defining and distinguishing between these terms is difficult. Civic usually implies facilities owned or leased by the government that provide services to the public. Ellicott City, as the County Seat, is the location for most government offices and the courts (traditionally the civic function of government). What is the difference between a civic and a community facility: ownership, type of use? If we use a multi-use building model, the definition may get blurred.

### ***Discussion points:***

The charrette attendees and Focus Group members have made several suggestions about cultural and community facilities that may be desired in Downtown. The list includes profit-based business and facilities that may need funding from the public sector or nonprofit organizations:

- Art galleries (market rate, community cooperatives, spaces to exhibit community art)
- Public Art (outdoors)
- Entertainment venues such as comedy clubs, art house cinema
- Incubator space for community use, artists studio space

### ***Issues Addressed Elsewhere***

Each of the following categories of civic and community facilities has been addressed in a separate FAQ, in the Design Guidelines and/or in the Implementation Strategy chapter of the CDMP.

- Schools: A site for a potential future public school site will be proposed in The Crescent. It will be shown on the CDMP.
- Libraries: The current location for the library is shown on the CDMP.
- Fire and Rescue: An optional relocation site for the Banneker Station will be proposed in The Crescent. It will be shown on the CDMP.
- Open Space and Urban Amenity Areas: Framework Diagram showing potential locations is included in the Design Guidelines chapter of the CDMP. Requirements will also be stipulated in the zoning.

### ***Issues to be addressed***

- Community Centers: Existing community centers in Town Center and adjacent villages:
  - Slayton House, Wilde Lake
  - Wilde Lake Interfaith Center
  - Historic Oakland Manor
  - The Other Barn

A civic/cultural/community site is shown on the Vision Plan in The Crescent at the western end of Symphony Woods along Little Patuxent Parkway. The potential use of this site has not been discussed. The Vision Plan shows this as a freestanding building with surface parking.

Instead, could this be a community use on the ground floor of a mixed-use building? If a community center is needed, is this the optimal location?

- Senior Centers: Existing County senior centers in Columbia:
  - Florence Bain Senior Center
  - East Columbia Senior Center and Saturday Senior Plus (at Library)
  - Longwood Senior Center (Longwood Apartments)
  - Owen Brown Senior Center Plus (at Parkview)

Howard County's Office on Aging does not envision an additional senior center for Downtown, even if the senior population increases as projected by the market analysis. The Office, instead, promotes providing transportation to existing facilities, providing programs in other facilities within Downtown and providing a livable, walkable environment that encourages senior participation in civic and community life.

Age-restricted housing, if created in Downtown, would be expected to provide on-site private facilities for senior activities.

- Recreational Facilities: This may include indoor facilities, facilities with an indoor component or outdoor facilities in parks and natural areas. It does not include greens and plazas, which are dealt with elsewhere. The 2005 Howard County Land Preservation, Recreation and Parks Plan identified recreation facilities needs Columbia-wide. There is a shortage in existing inventory of ice rinks / hockey rinks, multi-use fields and multipurpose diamonds. The possibility of an ice rink in Downtown was identified at the charrette.

Facilities might be provided in parks and open space by CA, on HOA open space as part of project-based amenity packages or as private commercial recreation enterprises:

- Pools
- Clubhouses (multipurpose recreation and meeting spaces)
- Gyms and health clubs
- Skating rinks (outdoor, covered)
- Tot lots, basketball courts, tennis courts, etc.
- Clubs/community organizations (boys/girls clubs meet in facilities owned by others)
- Outdoor festivals (do Lakefront and Symphony Woods adequately serve as the place where public festivals and gatherings occur?)

## **WHO PROVIDES FACILITIES?**

### ***Discussion points:***

1. Who provides the facilities?
2. How does providing civic/community facilities and services fit with the providers' mission?
3. How and when are the facilities funded, built and maintained?

### ***Public Sector***

- Howard County Government, including the Public School System, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Citizen Services (including Office on Aging and Office of Children's Services), Department of Housing and Community Development, Library, Fire and Rescue Services and Howard Community College. The proposed Revenue Authority might play a role for some types of revenue generating facilities.

### ***Private Sector***

- Property owners, developers, business owners.
- The private sector decision to provide these facilities is usually market-driven. When sufficient population exists, the demand for these facilities increases and the business sector satisfies the demand. Developers may provide these facilities by selling, leasing or donating space to users.
- If the public sector wishes the private sector to be more proactive in providing space for such facilities, incentives may be needed. For developers, density and height bonuses are often used as an incentive. For businesses, tax credits or subsidies may be considered. Joint public / private partnerships may be established to provide facilities.
- Need to define the facilities that the private sector is most likely to provide or assist in providing.

### ***Nongovernmental or Nonprofit Organizations***

- Columbia Association. Facilities provided by CA are funded through the lien which is paid by all property owners in Columbia.
- Arts organizations and other civic groups.

## **WHERE SHOULD FACILITIES BE LOCATED?**

### ***Discussion points about optional approaches:***

- Basic question discussed by every agency – should facilities be:
  - Centralized (in the County or in Columbia). This may be the most efficient for facility development, but need to provide transportation with good pedestrian access.
  - Dispersed (in Villages or Downtown). Although multiple locations are often proposed so that facilities are closer to the population that needs them, this may not be cost effective or efficient for delivery of services. Satellite / shared offices located within other facilities are a possible variation on this approach.
- Should the building that houses the facility or function be:
  - New freestanding building dedicated to that single use
  - New freestanding building used for several related community uses
  - New mixed use building
  - Integrated into existing locations (schools, interfaith center / faith-based facilities, office or mixed use building, recreation and community centers)
  - Example: CA headquarters is currently located in the Teachers Building. Options could include relocating to a new building at Lakefront or The Crescent or leasing or purchasing space in a new office or mixed-use building. Could their headquarters contain a community center for activities rather than just administrative functions?
- What type of venue is needed for various types of facilities:
  - Permanent building
  - Permanent outdoor space (paved, unpaved)
  - Temporary space in a building
  - Temporary covered or uncovered space outdoors (festivals)