

"I hope I can move you to action" Ned Tillman "Saving Places" 2014

Columbia Planning

Phase 1 Open Space

James Rouse

"Preserve and enhance the qualities of the land"

Parks, Woods, Forests, Stream Valleys 3 Lakes

50 ponds, 100 miles of bike paths, 150 Tot Lots



Plants grow, people grow, communities grow

Let's have a Columbia Open Space Plan

The distinctive tight weave of Columbia's open spaces, residential and other development is distinguishing feature of the Columbia. These open space resources provide health, recreation, aesthetic and ecological benefits that contribute to Columbia's quality of life.

CA Guiding Principles for the 21st Century Planned Community of Columbia Md.

While being a member of the CA Watershed Advisory Committee (WAC) and other watershed groups over the past decade, I have heard many different ideas related to the watershed and open space coming from an assortment of different perspectives. At a recent WAC meeting two issues came up, one relating to Wilde Lake, presented by Bess Caplan, and the other by John Mc Coy that related to open space that was farmland. This led me to review all the input I have heard and review the WAC charter.

When the Columbia Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) was released seven years ago, the concentration was mainly focused on fixing the problems of an antiquated "Stormwater Removal System." Now it has become clear to many people that a more holistic approach is needed, one that looks at the big picture. One idea would be to have an open space committee or expand the scope of the WAC to include Open Space. The other is to develop an "Open Space Plan."

It's an ideal time to do this as we review the last 50 years as part of our celebration of Columbia (March 21st-June 20th 2017) and look to the future (June 21st-September 21st 2017). "Columbia 50" is about appreciation of the past and imagining the future.

"Columbia 50" goals are to:

1. Generate awareness of Columbia's history and values;
2. Serve as a catalyst for imagination, innovation and intentionality in creating community;
3. Promote the original values of Columbia in addressing the needs of the people.

Irrespective of changing the WAC focus, starting a visioning and planning process fits in perfectly with the goals of "Columbia 50." It will identify the issues related to open space and then look at how open space will be used and look 50 years from now.

We should also keep in mind there are currently rules governing open space in the FDP's, and it is very important to abide by and enforce the current regulations until they are changed after a county wide process that includes public participation.

I started have started the process with an overview of the different issues affecting open space interjected with the ideas I have heard.

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Goal

To use this document to develop a "request for proposal" that will be distributed to companies experienced in developing a community open space plan. An example of a companies that has done this. OvS <http://www.ovsla.com/portfolio/> or Sasaki

Threats to open space

Not prioritized

1. Changes in weather (heavy rain and other extreme weather)
2. Build-up of dead wood
3. Lack of public input
4. Lack of a comprehensive communication plan for the future
5. Failing to communicate the special aspects of Open Space
6. Invasive plants and animals (deer)
7. Unauthorized use
8. Lack of a comprehensive plan (design and use)
9. Crime and safety (and exaggeration of crime)
10. Failing to adopt new and innovative ideas
11. Failing to protect the environment in every way possible
12. Failing to learn from other similar planned communities
13. Development that ignores the founding goals of Columbia.
14. Failing to realize that open space includes "Public Space" and how the responsibilities of private land, CA maintained land and Howard County blend together in the protection of this space.

Inventory of Open Space and new ideas

James Rouse "Provide growth for people"

Columbia Open Space regulations

Inventory of current Open Space plans (CWMP Etc.)
Review current policies and regulation

Watershed

Residential and business property
Streets
Rapid street assessment and micro watershed plans
Stormwater drains
Outfalls
Open Space
Streams
Rivers and Lakes

Trees and Forests

Dead wood build up, remove and restore woodland plan.
Removal of Invasive plants, woodland and forest protection plan.
Reforestation plan
Transitioning land (old farmland) plan.
Fruit trees

Open Space programs

Guided lake walks
Frog watch
"Families in Nature"
"Weed Warriors"
Where does food come from...<http://www.andreajbrown.com/>

Community Gardens

Traditional community gardens
Neighborhood Raised Bed gardens

Local Kitchen gardens
Open Space vegetable gardens
Local orchards
Utilization of sunny areas for food production
Ornamental gardens

Wild and domestic animals

Deer
Ducks and other waterfowl
Fish
Deer and other animals
Dogs and cats

Lakes

Mowing and other maintenance
Sediment reduction and maintenance plan
Riparian area protection and restoration
Future use, policies, regulations, fishing, picnicking, boating, walking, cycling and future modes transportation

Paths

Future uses
Bridge across Rt.29
Design
Maintenance plan
Transition zone protection of native plants (path to woods, path to lake, path to parkland)
Signs

Parkland

Future uses
Reforestation
Regulations

Stream valleys

Inventory of outfalls and their condition

Stream assessment
Restoration of streams (Stormwater Ditches to natural streams)
Restoration of riparian area and maintenance
See woodland, paths etc.

Tot Lots

Restoration
New ideas for tot lot areas
Use and Safety

Maintenance Plan

Maintenance plans for each of the features of Columbia Open Space
Include and update past Stormwater, ponds, and facility plans.
Innovative replacements for grass.
Change over to using only native plants.

Staffing and volunteers

Maintenance staff "Environment stewards" rather than "mowers" etc
Training programs
Coordination of volunteers
Stream stewards
Watershed stewards
Gardeners

New comprehensive plan

Design
Uses
Transportation (new types, electric bikes, self driving pod system, Segway)
Lighting
Conservation landscaping

Open Space, commercial areas and roads.

James Rouse "Build a Complete City and make a profit"

Gateway

Transfer from 12 to 24 hour use

New Town (new village)

Connectivity (paths, train and other public transportation)

Retail

Housing

Industrial Parks

"Property owner associations"

Change in uses

Design

Connectivity (paths, roads, public transportation)

Flex Space use

Covenants

Village Centers

Village Center Plans (Re: Council Bill 29)

Connectivity (paths, roads, public transportation)

Housing

Large Retail Centers

Future uses (Re: Effect of online retailing)Housing

Large Parks

(Blandair, Regional Park, Wilde Lake Park, Symphony Woods....)

Future and other uses

New modes of transportation

Design

Small strip malls

Landscaping and blending in with Columbia

Signs

Access

Out parcels.

Housing

Commercial uses

Landscaping and blending in with Columbia

Road Design

Parkway medium design

Parkway uses

Multi use (blend of cars bikes and pedestrians)

Safety

Speed limits

Stormwater, curb design and grass verge use and design

Traffic calming

The original goals (1965)

Columbia's original goals come from "The Planning Workgroup"

Those directly related to Open Space

1. A plan for the growth of the people and the life-long enrichment of their lives.
3. A plan for the environment in which people feel free to express, in word and action their highest spiritual aspirations.
5. The widest possible range of constructive leisure opportunities where leisure activities are not means to an end, but a sign and substance of the good life itself.
11. The provision of the natural amenities- trees, grass, water---into our community as an integral part of its design to provide an accessible enrichment of the environment, and a perpetual protection of the community's identity.

Rouse Company Employee quote

"Brian they didn't employ a consultant, Rouse Company employees developed an open space plan as an integral part of a Planned Community. They visualized how people would use the paths and what they would see. Paths would flow through the stream valleys and give the walker, jogger and cyclists an experience to remember" Jervis Dorton

From CA Website

Guiding Principles <http://tinyurl.com/gwsh6hy>

Columbia's lush green acreage is just one of the perks of living in Columbia, where nearly a quarter of the land is protected as open space. The open space provides a place for walking, fishing, bird watching, biking, picnics, family reunions and community fairs, among many other uses

Columbia Association maintains more than 3,600 acres of Columbia's open space. This includes more than 114 miles of pathways and sidewalks for

walking, biking and jogging.; 165 tot lots; 284 footbridges; three manmade lakes; 41 ponds; 34 miles of stream valleys; the 40-acre Symphony Woods; Wilde Lake Park; and the Lake Elkhorn Park and Pavilion. It also includes an extensive network of pedestrian underpasses and overpasses, meadows, forestland, basketball courts, public tennis courts, Town Center and village center plazas located throughout the community.

Maintaining and enhancing these natural and man-made amenities is an enormous task, requiring the expertise and dedication of a diverse team from many different CA divisions, including planners, horticulturists, a landscape architect and land management and construction specialists.

Columbia Association's Open Space Management team plans, develops, manages and maintains Columbia's impressive green spaces. In addition, some villages have an Open Space Committee, made up of community volunteers, who assist CA in managing the appearance of the village's open spaces

Residents can help protect the open space. If you see downed or hazardous trees, vandalism or illegal dumping, or notice facilities that need attention, contact the open space office at 410-312-6330.

The survey is related to response to contacting the CA Open Space Management.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OpenSpaceAmenitiesSurvey?sm=anYrZarZ2bquqd3uakHF6JxThogL4Y0ulYB3068xniA%3d>

Parks and People, Green Corp. (Washington DC)

Why do you love Columbia's Open Space ?

"Thank you for your positive input and support"

Bess Kaplan (Wilde Lake Lovers)
Elaine Pardoe (CLEAR)

Daniel Kirk-Davidoff (WAC)
Chiara D'Amore
Deborah Wessner (WAC)
Rhoda Toback (WAC)
JD Smith (HCCA)
CA Board members
ColumbiaMD50
Barbara Kellner
Jervis Dorton
Gerry Witte (Oakland Mills Board Chair)
Kevin McAliley (Wilde Lake Village Board)
Robert Moynihan (WAC)
and many more.....

Oakland Mills (OM) Public Space Advisory Committee (PSAC)
Background

My name is Gerry Witte. I am the current chair of the OM PSAC. We have been working with Dan Damore and the Columbia Association (CA) Open Space Maintenance Division (OSMD) for close to two years. Our committee acts as a intermediary between OM residents and the OSMD on issues, plans and changes to Public Space (including Open Space) and reports to the OM Village Board (VB). The OSMD implemented two "beautification" projects within OM as samples of some improvements that could be made within Columbia.

I testified on behalf of the OM VB and OM PSAC last September (2015) at the CA FY17-18 Pre-Budget Workshop. I stressed the need for a Columbia-wide Open Space Plan because of the high budget priority Columbia Residents give Open Space and because the appearance of Open Space seems to be declining.

The decline in appearance of Open Space is not a reflection on the OSMD.
Rather the decline seems to be a lack of budget focus and a lack of a
suitable, comprehensive plan.

Open Space Working Group (OSWG) Activities

- 1) Establish a CA Open Space Working Group consisting of representatives from each village. (In progress)
- 2) Formulate a specific recommendation regarding action to fund a nationally recognized landscape architectural firm to develop a comprehensive Columbia Wide Plan for Open Space. The OSWG will develop a sample Statement of Work to highlight the intended scope. (In progress)
- 3) Identify organizations (CA Board of Directors, Columbia Flier, HCCA New Town Committee, Columbia 50 Committee, etc) to contact in order to promote this idea. (In progress)
- 4) Promote the idea with a primary goal of making a coordinated presentation to the CA Board during the resident speak-out sessions during the September 2016 CA FY 18 Pre-Budget Workshop

Columbia Sorely Needs an Open Space Plan

The CA Open Space Management Division (OSMD) provides many good services to residents. The high importance of open space benefits to the people of Columbia is evident in the many surveys that CA has commissioned. Most recently, in the 2012 Columbia Marketing and Communications Survey, residents ranked Open Space as one of the top three funding priorities. Also, in the 2015 Membership Pricing and Revenue Enhancement report, of the various CA services listed, residents gave the highest value to the Open Space benefit of bike paths/trails. After conducting such surveys, it stands to reason that CA should respect the results and fulfill residents' funding priorities.

The beauty of Open Space seems to be declining. There is considerably more invasive vegetation, apparent less frequent mowing, less acreage being mowed, deteriorating tot lots, etc.

It's been 50 years since CA's Fred Pryor first formulated a plan for open space. It is time to take a fresh look at the current status and develop a comprehensive plan for the future. Now is a good time to develop a plan since Howard County has contracted to update their Land Preservation and Recreation Plan. The CA Open Space plan should evaluate various land use designations, identify improvements needed for forested and mowed areas, recommend an Invasive Species Vegetation Plan, address ways to combat the increased deer population, address safety concerns of the path system (lighting, line of sight, etc), evaluate the role and modernization of tot lots, make recommendations for new plantings, etc.

This is not a trivial task.¹ It is beyond the scope of existing staff. It should be undertaken by a nationally recognized landscaping architectural planning firm that will work with the CA to develop a viable, long term Columbia-wide plan for probably its most valuable asset - Open Space.

¹ This Comprehensive Plan is a concept first described to me by Jervis Dorton who was a building architect at The Rouse Company for 30 years, a former OM VB Member and who is now on the OM PSAC.