Planning America’s Best Known Master Planned Community:
A Look at Downtown Columbia for 2014

Randy Clay, AICP, Howard County Planning and Zoning

The Downtown Columbia Plan is a 30-year master plan for evolving the suburban-oriented Town Center in Columbia, Maryland into a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable urban community. Following an extensive planning and community engagement process, the Downtown Columbia Plan was adopted in February 2010. The plan guides the mixed-use development of 5,500 residential units, 1.25 million square feet of retail uses, and 4.3 million square feet of commercial development including 600 hotel rooms. Now, after four years of implementation planning, the vision for evolving Downtown Columbia into a mixed-use urban center is yielding early successes with new private investment in projects ranging from mixed-use development, retail mall expansion, public amenities, cultural park enhancements and environmental restoration.

Plan Implementation Results

Current projects are being implemented throughout the planning area. In the study of Downtown, its nearly 400 acres were reconfigured into six distinct neighborhoods– Warfield, Lakefront and Lakefront Core, Symphony Overlook, The Mall, Merriweather-Symphony Woods and The Crescent – to encourage a greater mix of uses and preserve unique qualities at the micro level while maintaining a unified, urban development pattern at the macro level.

Warfield

The plan recognizes Warfield as an important transitional zone between its neighboring residential edge built in the early 2000s, The Mall in Columbia’s core commercial district and the Symphony Overlook neighborhood. Its location along Downtown’s transect is a crossroads for more urban expression across a mix of uses, densities and activities. Two new projects are pioneering Warfield’s emerging urbanization.

The Metropolitan

The Metropolitan is a mixed-use residential and retail development consisting of 5 to 6 stories of 380 residential units, nearly 14,000 square feet of retail and structured parking wrapped by the building’s design. A signature community amenity space – Warfield Promenade – is an integral part of the project and will include a sculptural playscape for children.

Continued on page 3
Thanks to everyone who took the time to respond to the Chapter members’ survey. The Executive Committee is using the results to guide the revision of the Strategic Plan as well as to select and schedule future activities. You told us that you:

1) Are seeking training programs, social and networking opportunities and professional advocacy; 2) Prefer webcasts, the regional conference, full and half-day training programs and educational tours, and; 3) Prefer social events scheduled on weekday evenings.

Of the planners responding to the survey 50% work in the Baltimore Metropolitan Region, 60% are public sector planners and almost all rely on the listserv for chapter information.

In response we are gearing up the chapter activity schedule. Steering committees are already planning four day-long Local Government Exchange programs. The inaugural Eastern Shore and Baltimore-Washington programs are finalizing dates for the Spring. The Holiday Gathering held in Fells Point was well-attended and provided many members with the chance to meet and mingle. Some of us even learned to play shuffleboard! Watch the listserv, website and Facebook page for more events and CM opportunities in coming months.

By now you know that the National Conference in Atlanta is in April. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about emerging issues in the profession and earn CM credits. Closer to home, the Delaware and Maryland Chapters of APA are once again joining together along with Nemours Health and Prevention Services to host the regional planning conference October 28 -29, 2014 at the Embassy Suites in Newark, Delaware. The conference theme is “Planning for Healthy & Sustainable Places”, and the program features speakers, mobile workshops, and sessions. The search is on for conference sponsors, and opportunities exist at several contribution levels. If your program or organization would like to be highlighted at the conference, contact Herb Inden, Chair of the Sponsorship, Booth, & Advertising Committee, at 302.577.5188 or herb.inden@state.de.us.

Finally, we are searching for volunteers to serve on Chapter committees and those interested in offering in-person training events. Many of you indicated an area of interest in the survey. Committee chairmen have been provided the lists and should be following up with you. If you would like to volunteer and have not heard from someone, please let me know (seneschaljm@pbworld.com), there is plenty of work to be done.

Stay warm and safe this winter.

Jackie Seneschal
President, APA Maryland Chapter

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Call for Presentations – 2014 Regional Planning Conference – Deadline February 10

Organizers of the 2014 Delaware/Maryland Regional Planning Conference have extended their search for conference sessions and presentations through February 10. The two-day event, co-sponsored by Nemours, will be held at the Embassy Suites in Newark, Delaware on October 28 and 29, 2014.

Click here to learn more and submit an idea: http://delawareapa.wordpress.com/2014-conference/
The plan calls for the 34,500 square foot amenity in conjunction with new development to support the active social life anticipated in the growing Downtown. The promenade also functions as an important north-south link stitching together more developed northern neighborhoods with planned development in the southern Crescent and Merriweather-Symphony Woods neighborhoods.

Phase II of the Metropolitan is planned for an adjacent parcel which will be developed as two mixed-use residential and retail buildings consisting of 5 to 6 stories of 437 residential units, 30,000 square feet of retail and structured parking of similar design to the Metropolitan. A continuous retail front extends between development blocks to engage in an active dialogue with the Mall’s outdoor retail and entertainment spaces. Ground floor residential units adapt a context sensitive approach to balance the publicly oriented retail edge with more privately oriented use along all other portions of each building to harmonize with neighboring residential development. Both projects feature environmentally sensitive site design in keeping with the plan’s sustainability goals. Micro-bio retention planters are utilized at both the street and building edges as well as within internal amenity spaces. Green roofs are incorporated at lower levels of buildings to maximize visual access and awareness at the street level. Finally, the pedestrian realm will be further activated with the introduction of public art, as required by Downtown’s 1% for Art program.

**Lakefront/Lakefront Core**

The former Rouse Company building, an icon of the Lakefront Core, was originally designed by Frank Gehry in 1969 and modeled on adaptable modular principles that would accommodate changing spatial needs during Columbia’s development. Its design allowed developers to retrofit the building for commercial reuse as a 75,000-square-foot Whole Foods anchor and community health center. Design guidelines were adopted as a plan requirement and provided a framework for preserving the building’s architecture and site design while allowing for its adaptive reuse through modifications that continue its relevance in the emerging Downtown.

Little Patuxent Square is a mixed-use project planned as a 9-story building consisting of 160 residential units and 130,000 square feet of office space with 12,000 square feet of ground floor retail. The project features a green roof amenity space and embodies a new phase of modern architecture for the Lakefront neighborhood.

**The Mall in Columbia**

The Mall in Columbia was frontloaded early in the city’s development and positioned as a key amenity for new residents and commercial businesses. Successful outdoor retail expansions were completed in 2004 and remained the most significant expansion until 2013 when owners proposed a 75,000-square-foot expansion to complement earlier additions. The plan envisions The Mall as a commercial district which provides critical east-west and north-south connections to surrounding neighborhoods. An opening along the mall’s west side was closed in 2004 but was reopened as part of the expansion’s design to facilitate east-west movement from nearby Wilde Lake Village, through the Warfield neighborhood to connect The Mall with the Lakefront neighborhood.
The plan identifies signature amenity spaces such as Warfield Plaza, the Lakefront Steps and Market Square as transitional elements that not only functionally support Downtown’s pedestrian environment but also claim the importance of its public realm.

**Merriweather-Symphony Woods**
The plan recognizes Merriweather Post Pavilion as an iconic symbol of Downtown arts and culture and calls for merging that identity with Symphony Woods as an enhanced meeting ground for people and place that celebrates music, arts and nature. The conceptual design of first phase improvements to the new Merriweather Park includes a shared-use amphitheater pavilion, pathways and circulation within Symphony Woods and public amenities. Future phases will include renovation of Merriweather Post, as required by the plan, and transfer of its ownership to the Downtown Arts and Culture Commission, an independent nonprofit that oversees the planning, coordination and implementation of artistic and cultural activities.

**The Crescent**
Currently utilized for parking Merriweather Post events, the plan envisions The Crescent’s development as Downtown’s urban face amidst its preserved nature. The preliminary program calls for 4 to 5 million square feet of development with a mix of residential, retail, office and hotel uses. Streams and woodlands form a network of green fingers that separate blocks and give the neighborhood its signature environmental character in connecting people to nature. Phase I environmental restoration is underway to preserve and enhance The Crescent’s environmental assets through forest plantings, invasive species removal, and the repair and creation of wetlands.

**Plan in Reflection**
The Downtown Columbia Plan provides a comprehensive framework for evolving Columbia, Maryland’s suburban-oriented Town Center into a mixed-use urban center. The breadth and scope of projects to date reflect the quality and applicability of its vision, which is the result of a collaborative effort with private enterprises and significant public input that will continue as the plan comes to life.

The planning, design and development of early projects respect the environment and continue to be shaped by the Plan’s emphasis on Downtown’s public realm through implementation with leading-edge environmental standards, sustainability concepts and social design for people. As communities struggle with plans for future growth and the process of rethinking suburban sprawl, The Downtown Columbia Plan serves as a blueprint for transforming suburbs into socially, economically and environmentally-sustainable communities.
A State of Collaboration

By Peter G. Conrad, AICP, and Zachary Chissell, Maryland Department of Planning

The new National Collaborative of State Planners kicks off with a successful survey.

The National Collaborative of State Planners, a new project of the Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division, was launched in November to create a network within the American Planning Association for state planners in all 50 states. The Collaborative is a place to share success stories and ideas, and provides a venue to work together and advance effective state-level planning.

A survey distributed to almost 350 state planners across the United States yielded a surprisingly high response rate and a wealth of meaningful feedback that validated the premise that state planners are indeed seeking a means for increased collaboration.

"Great idea for a state collaborative...It would be good to know what each state thinks it does best - this may be an entire program and not just a best practice." Rhode Island State Planner

According to the survey, important issues facing state planners today include climate change, the need for outreach regarding the benefits of statewide planning and the integration of economic development with planning. Additionally, planning for public health is a growing area of interest that is currently not well addressed.

Survey results showed that with tight budgets, state planners prefer a free online platform to share best practices, seek and provide feedback, and connect with one another. Additionally, state planners see the most value in periodic e-newsletters and webinars that address state-level planning issues. The Collaborative’s website, www.stateplannersus.wordpress.com, features an initial set of best practices from across the country and additional collaborative features are being explored.

The National Collaborative will host a webinar this winter on issues of disaster mitigation and response, another issue identified by survey participants. You can also join the National Collaborative at a facilitated discussion at the APA national conference in Atlanta to learn more about this new division initiative. It is an exciting time for this new division initiative, and we encourage all state planners to get involved and add their voices to the collaboration.

For more information: Peter G. Conrad, AICP – Division Director of Membership
The oldest of Maryland’s wineries, Boordy Vineyards is nestled in the Long Green valley of northeastern Baltimore County. Fine wines, champagne, and port are crafted in a historic 19th-century fieldstone barn. (Source: Boordy Vineyards official website)

On October 18, 2013, the Maryland Chapter of American Planning Association (APA) sponsored a tour at the Boordy Vineyards. Some chapter members and students from the University of Maryland at College park and Morgan State University took part in this multi-purposed, meaningful tour on the bountiful autumn day.

The tour Vineyards began with conversations from third generation owner, Rob Deford, III. Deford began with the history of the Long Green Farm in the 1960s. The advent of the interstate system and long distance trucking was placing stress on a farm that relied on a more conventional farming model of “cattle, turkeys and tomatoes”. This, along with ties to the Wagner family (original owners of Boordy) led the family to establish a vineyard at the farm in 1965.

The Defords became one of the first “cooperating growers” of Boordy and trucked grapes to Riderwood for the next 15 years. Subsequently the close ties between the families led to the acquisition of the Boordy Vineyards in 1980. Deford, after attending the School of Enology and Viticulture in University of California, started a completely redesigned model at Long Green that would rely on a fully independent vineyards. In the following decades, Deford hired a dedicated winemaker, promoted modern sustainable viticulture practices, and continued improvement to equipment. These innovations helped assist Deford to realize the full potential of local soils, resources and climate.

Boordy described a multi-faceted model that has a nucleus, dialogue, information that “ferments” suppliers, geography/climate, and the academics of viticulture. All these components function together in a harmonious blend to make the farm a profitable business that provides employment to a growing local populace. A sustainable-farm enterprise, the vineyards also incorporates composting by using all waste from wine production, local streams as a water source, natural air drying to reduce pesticides, bio-diesel powered vehicles, and recycles all wine bottles and boxes. Today, Boordy wine is critically acclaimed locally and nation-

In addition to technological innovations, Boordy Vineyards is in permanent preservation with the Maryland Environmental Trust. The preservation effort faces the challenges by the vineyards related to zoning ordinances and relating definitions including “acceptable activity” and “no commercial” activities on farms. According to Deford, Maryland wineries could benefit from state-level, broad guidelines that describe “what a winery is” with further guidance and concurrence from counties and local communities. The other issue is a lack of tax incentives for the vineyard, especially given its stewardship practices.

Ron Wates, the winery manager, led the second phase of the tour. Wates manages the growing, picking, and wine pressing operations at Boordy. Wates introduced that the vineyard encompasses 240 acres, growing over 75,000 vines. The second phase of the tour emphasized on winegrowing methods including single canopy, vertical shoot methods, close-spacing configuration,
secondary/tertiary grape-picking avoidance, and introducing hybrids and sub-varieties. These practices prevent uneven ripening, result in higher maturity. In addition, matching wines with the appropriate local soils such as clay and limestone are critical to the quality of wines.

The third phase of the tour was led by Tom Burns, the winemaker at Boordy, at a recently built, state of the art winemaking facility on the vineyard grounds. The tour went to an assembly of machines or a "crush pad" that de-stem, sort and crush the berries. Inside the facility, special stainless steel tanks to process wines, called Ganymedes, control fermentation temperatures and the CO₂ given off by the fermentation. An assortment of computerized filters, pumps, lab and equipment, and a bottling line constitutes the rest of the facility. The facility has a considerable 170,000 gallon capacity and can generate a staggering 3,500 bottles an hour. The tour was then led to an above-ground wine cellar, where an impressive array of French oak barrels was stacked within several feet long solid walls, providing ambient temperature for the wines to age.

At the end of the tour, James Richardson, Director of the Office of Economic Development at Harford County spoke to the tour discussing the local wine-making industry and its place in farm-related businesses. He highlights several key facts about wine consumption in the Maryland region and nationally. Currently Maryland has 62 wineries, encompassing 1,000 acres of cultivation and producing 800 tons of grapes. Wine sales in the state have increased substantially from 228,700 gallons in 2007 to 345,600 gallons in 2011 (a growth of 51%). Economically, this translates to an increase from $16.2 million to $24.5 million in revenue, a growth about three times higher than the consumption Nationwide. Wine sales in the United States grew from $30.4 billion to $34.6 billion between 2007 and 2012. According to Richardson, the cost of establishing a vineyard varies between $8 to $12 an acre and each acre produces 3-5 tons of grapes ($800 to $1,500). There is a 10 acre minimum size requirement for a vineyard in Maryland and locations may be critical to the success of wineries.

The Boordy Vineyards tour enlightened the APA members and students with a thorough understanding of the history of local wine-making, providing insights on sustainable wine growing practices, and sparking important conversations between planners and wine-growers in the region. Even though there is a substantial increase in wine consumption in the state in the recent decade, Maryland wines account for only 2.16% of all wines sold in the state. It is important to promote local wine-making that not only protects this pleasurable farm-based industry, but also provides a vital opportunity to stimulate the state’s economy and enhance economic diversity.
Historic Preservation as a Key for Red Line’s Success

By Johns Hopkins, Baltimore Heritage

Transit planners, historic preservationist, and communities have partnered to promote historic preservation along the Red Line corridor on Route 40, which is a 200-year transit route that goes back to the historic National Road (America’s first federally funded highway) and before. Thirty years ago, neighborhood residents and historic preservationists squared off against transit planners over a proposed highway on the west side of Baltimore City. Neither side won: the highway was partially constructed but never completed and some neighborhoods and parks were spared while others were demolished. Today, the partnership among transit planners, historic preservationist, and communities is of significance for preserving historic places and promoting community revitalization by means of transit along the Red Line segment of the national route.

The Red Line Community Compact

The proposed Red Line light rail will transect the City, running from the Social Security Administration complex in Woodlawn, Baltimore County on the west to the Johns Hopkins Hospital’s Bayview campus on the east. The Red Line follows Route 40 before transitioning into an underground tunnel at Fremont Avenue. The Red Line bypasses numerous established communities and brings transit, amenities, and other services to thousands of residents, public agencies, private companies, and academic institutes.

In the first phase of planning for the Red Line, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), Baltimore City, and over sixty neighborhood associations and non-profit organizations developed and signed the Red Line Community Compact ("the Compact"). The Compact establishes a framework for the planning, design, and operation of the Red Line system to ensure that there is community involvement and that they will work together to achieve their common goals, including promoting workforce development, managing changes to communities by the Red Line, leveraging community development opportunities, and promoting historic preservation. Since it was signed in 2008, the Compact has been the guidebook for engaging communities and organizations across the Baltimore area in supporting and promoting the Red Line.

Heritage Preservation and Education

The Compact sets the stage for leveraging the energy and investment in planning for the Red Line to promote historic preservation in the transit corridor. Heavily developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, almost all of the communities along the Red Line corridor have been designated or eligible to be nominated as the historic places. Transit planners and heritage organizations have been able to launch a number of new initiatives for the sustained historic preservation efforts. These initiatives include organizing guided walking tours in the Red Line vicinity around historic themes such as the Civil War and Civil Rights and a new online site and smart phone application, http://explore.baltimoreheritage.org/, which provides historic photographs and short stories regarding dozens of historic sites in the corridor. A document featuring historic places within the walking distance from the six station stops along the Red Line corridor is in the making and to be published soon.

Community Building and Revitalization

Some of the communities along the Red Line corridor are rich in history yet have experienced decades of disinvestment and neglect. Historic preservationists, community activists, and transit planners agree that community development in conjunction with the new transit line is a priority.

Baltimore Heritage, a preservation organization in the city, has drafted National Register nominations for
three neighborhoods along the Red Line corridor enabling residents to apply for historic tax credits to maintain and renovate their historic properties. The Baltimore Heritage was also able to list two signature historic buildings, the American Ice House, an iconic brick building next to the West Baltimore MARC train station, and the Baltimore Hebrew Orphan Asylum, on the National Register of Historic Places. The Hebrew Orphan Asylum, with the Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation, another signatory to the Red Line, has secured state historic tax credits, undergone significant stabilization and is poised for conversion into a new center for health care and healthy living for supporting health services and food needs in the community.

The Red Line has been years in the planning and will be years more in the engineering and construction phases. However, unlike thirty years ago, the planning stage of the project is leveraging on-the-ground benefits for the historic neighborhoods it will transect.

**Conclusion**

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor of Baltimore City, proclaimed, “The Red Line is at the core of this system, providing a critical east-west link that has the potential to revitalize neighborhoods, protect the natural environment and boost economic empowerment. A stronger public transit system will support growth of jobs, promote healthy living, and serve as a connection to vital services.” The Baltimore Heritage believes that the historic preservation is an integral part of elements contributing to the success of the goals achieved by the construction and operations of the Red Line.

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**Making Great Communities Happen**

**American Ice House**

At a time of limited public spending following the national economic downturn, many local officials find it difficult to attract quality development projects that also provide community benefits like expanded sidewalks, street tree plantings, parks, and water and sewer improvements.

In the spring 2013, the Maryland General Assembly expanded the ability of local governments to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF), a financing tool that uses the increase in property tax value from new development to pay for public improvements. While TIF has been allowed in Maryland for years, the new law expanded TIF to target revitalization in strategic areas.

**Tax Increment Financing: User Guide for Maryland Sustainable Community Revitalization**, is the latest in a series of guidance documents produced by the Maryland Department of Planning to educate local government officials and planners, helps break down TIF and how it works. Using case studies and best practices, the document de-mystifies what can be a complex process. View and download the user guide at the [MDP Library Digital Bookshelf](#).

The 2013 law enhances local authority to use TIF to spur redevelopment and promote revitalization in some of Maryland’s older communities. The law expands use of TIF to areas that have received Sustainable Communities designations, which strengthen reinvestment in Maryland’s older communities by creating a framework to receive state aid and technical assistance.

TIF can be an appealing financing tool because it does not require a local government to increase its tax rate to pay for public improvements in a specific area. Rather, TIF pays for improvements generated by the increased property values that are taxed.

**Tax Increment Financing Guide Published**

*By Chuck Boyd, AICP, and David T. Whitaker, AICP, Maryland Department of Planning*

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Higher property values mean more property tax revenue ultimately for the community.

The 2013 law also allows the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) to issue TIF bonds for local governments to finance projects in Sustainable Communities. MEDCO has a long history of helping jurisdictions with the financing, development, ownership and management of economic development projects, some examples of which are highlighted in the publication.

Since using TIF to jumpstart redevelopment efforts requires a good understanding of land value and finance, the publication provides a step-by-step primer and highlights the experiences of communities that have successfully used TIF to promote economic development projects.

For additional information or for technical assistance contact Chuck Boyd, AICP at 410-767-1401.

The Manayunk Bridge: An Urban Trail Success Story

By Jeff Riegner, Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP

Thanks to a highly collaborative planning and design process, a nearly century-old railroad bridge is poised to become the crown jewel in Philadelphia's burgeoning trail network.

The Manayunk Bridge is a well-known landmark to Philadelphians, as its nine handsome concrete arches have marched across the Schuylkill River, its namesake expressway, and the center of the City's vibrant Manayunk neighborhood since 1918. The Pennsylvania Railroad built the S-shaped structure to replace an obsolete bridge whose tight curves restricted train traffic between Center City Philadelphia and the industrial cities of Norristown and Reading upstream. By the 1970s the Pennsylvania was no more, and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA, Philadelphia's transit agency) acquired the bridge for regional rail operations. After only ten years, however, the bridge was closed due to disrepair. Deeming demolition too costly, SEPTA rehabilitated the bridge in the late 1990s but never restored rail service.

By 2010, the trail movement in the Delaware Valley was in high gear. Community leaders had long envisioned a significant trail network along the Schuylkill River, many parts of which were already in place. Lower Merion Township, across the river from Manayunk, was developing the Cynwyd Heritage Trail along the old Pennsylvania Railroad right of way. The Manayunk Bridge would be the linchpin tying the network together. SEPTA granted conceptual approval for a trail using the bridge, and the City of Philadelphia won a Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI) grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to build it.

As excited as the stakeholders were about the progress the trail had made so far, they soon realized that they had to move quickly to take advantage of the grant. Construction needed to be underway in two years and planning hadn’t even started yet! A committee was formed to request planning and design proposals, ultimately selecting a team led by Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP (WR&A) www.wrallp.com.

Despite the compressed timeframe, the project partners continually expressed a strong commitment to meaningful public involvement in planning the trail. WR&A and subconsultant Interface Studio, LLC (www.interface-studio.com) developed a stakeholder engagement program that would establish a shared vision for the project. Manayunk Development Corporation and Lower Merion Township each hosted a public workshop so input could be sought from stakeholders on both sides of the river.

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Participants were asked to send “postcards” from the top of the Manayunk Bridge expressing what they would see and feel when the project was complete. Ideas ranged from conventional (enjoying the views up and down the river) to highly creative (an observation tower and zipline!)

Despite the variety, some common themes emerged. The public wanted a project that is more than just a trail—an unforgettable civic space 80 feet above the river. The bridge would be the setting for meeting friends, community events, walking to shops, and commuting by bike. It was clear that the project needed to embrace users of all ages and abilities, acting in many different ways and moving at a wide range of speeds. This was a tall order for a space only about 30 feet wide.

The planning phase also involved investigating the highly complex regulatory requirements of retrofitting the bridge for trail use. The bridge crosses a freeway, City streets, three different rail lines, and the river, all of which have different requirements for railings and fencing. The team conducted nationwide research of similar bridges to develop an elegant solution to meet those design criteria—10-foot fences over railroads and the freeway, and 4-1/2-foot railings of a similar design elsewhere. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which has jurisdiction because the bridge is a contributing element within a National Register historic district, further informed the railing and fencing design. The new railings and fencing needed to supplement the existing railings visually while addressing today’s code requirements. All of the fencing is as visually light as possible to recede into the background when viewed from the ground — and to make it more transparent to people on the bridge.

The team also discovered technical issues. Although the main arch bridge was largely rehabilitated in the last 15 years, the approach spans at either end were not. This meant that drainage improvements on those portions of the bridge needed to be incorporated into the design. It was also determined that the trail pavement needed to accommodate very heavy maintenance equipment that would occasionally service the electrical transmission lines remaining above the structure. It was also necessary to develop an accessible solution to overcome the four-foot grade difference between the end of the bridge and the adjacent street and trailhead.

Assembling all of these disparate elements into a coherent vision and developing a plan to achieve that vision ultimately fell to the committee of project partners. This committee met monthly throughout the development of the project. Given the diversity of the committee members and their goals for the finished project, a shared vision was essential to keep the effort on track.

The vision consists of separate pedestrian and bicycle paths on either side of the bridge. As the bridge’s curves give way to the straight section above the river, these paths will transition into a shared civic plaza. The transition points will be marked by bike racks, seating, and planters. Public art and a more regimented design are planned for the Manayunk side, reflecting its urban and industrial heritage. This includes an open canopy and sculpture paying homage to the former East Manayunk train station at the end of the bridge. The Lower Merion Township side is much more idyllic, with a more organic connection to the existing Cynwyd Heritage Trail.
During the planning process it became apparent that the initial grant money would be insufficient even for basics such as railings and paving, let alone other elements of the vision. The team responded in two ways. The project partners successfully sought additional funding from a variety of public and private sources. Furthermore, the design team identified ways to phase construction of the project. The current design creates a functional and beautiful framework upon which other elements of the vision can be added over time. Permanent elements such as pavement and railings have a very high level of design to establish the level of quality of the project, and items such as conduit for future lighting are placed to preserve the integrity of those permanent elements over time. Other components of the design such as lighting, landscaping, and public art will plug into that framework as funding becomes available, ultimately completing the vision.

Thanks to an extraordinary joint effort by all of the project partners, the Manayunk Bridge trail was advertised for bids in December 2013. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2014, establishing not only an important trail connection, but a landmark public space to be enjoyed by generations of Philadelphians and visitors to come.

Welcome

Thomas Barnett joined the Calvert County Department of Community Planning and Building as the new Director on September 30th. He brings with him a wealth of knowledge and expertise from his former positions as President of Hands On Consulting, Executive Director of Metropolitan Development for the City of Evansville, Ind., and Director of the Planning Department for Paducah, Ky. His experience ranges from planning, community development, and programmatic design to economic development, housing, and neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment.

"I am excited to be part of the Calvert County business community. I want to sit down and listen to the desires and expectations of our stakeholders - everyone from my bosses to the people who live here - and figure out what the community wants as a whole. I believe there is great potential and opportunity in both Calvert County and in Southern Maryland and, working with my team of professionals, I hope to make this a place where people want to live, shop, work and play. I look forward to meeting as many of our business owners, developers, contractors, architects, engineers and our citizens as possible and hearing your suggestions and ideas for how we can keep improving. Feel free to email me directly or complete one of our anonymous customer surveys."

Thomas Barnett, Director, Community Planning and Building
410-535-1600, ext. 2332 or 301-855-1243, ext. 2332
Making Great Communities Happen

Code for Community Competition: A tool for civic engagement

By Alex Chen, Associate Professor / Associate Dean, Urban Studies and Planning Program / The Graduate School at University of Maryland

The University of Maryland has sought to prepare students to make a difference in their own world and the communities around them, by encouraging them to have fully informed and actively engaged lives. To achieve this vision, the faculty and students collaborated to create a culture of civic engagement by building bridges between students and our neighbors.

The Spring 2013 Code for Community Competition challenged undergraduate students to form their own teams and in three months create a mobile or web-based “app” to meet a community need. This innovative effort contributes to a new dimension to the University’s portfolio of civic engagement strategies.

The Competition neither relied on classroom lectures or off campus community placements, nor provided course credits in exchange for participation. Instead, students had the responsibility of negotiating for course credit with individual faculty. The Competition encouraged multidisciplinary teams or those that were comprised of both programmers and non-programmers. In addition, there would be no cash awards. The Competition highlighted the opportunity to sharpen existing skills, or learn new ones. The University emphasized the potential rewards of creating the next “killer app”. Most importantly, we appealed to the student’s social conscience, and their desire to make a difference in the life of communities.

In January 2013, over 50 students registered for the Competition. They would have three months to develop their app. Over this period, programming workshops on programming were provided. In addition, the Competition participants invited guest speakers to share their insights and experiences in adapting technology to community needs. They included, Steve Ressler, Founder and President of GovLoop.com for the “Knowledge Network for Government” that connects and fosters collaboration among over 60,000 members of the government community; Andrew Coy, Co-Executive Director at Digital Harbor Foundation (DHF), Baltimore whose mission is to foster a culture of innovation, technological advancement, and entrepreneurship through local and national educational initiatives; Sharon Paley, Chief Operating Officer of gb.tc (formerly known as the Greater Baltimore Tech Council) whose mission is to help build a better Baltimore by harnessing the creative and innovative power of technology; Beth Blauer, Director of Socrata’s GovStatTM initiative and who help design and bring Socrata’s GovStat platform to governments, non-profit organizations and international NGOs; and Seema Iyer, Associate Director and Research Assistant Professor at the Jacob France Institute (JFI) in the University of Baltimore’s Merrick School of Business. The JFI serves as a leading source of statistical information and research, supporting the interaction of business, worker and government investment decisions. All speakers shared their experiences in bringing technology to communities.

In April 2013, six teams submitted “homemade” videos of their apps, and made formal presentations to a panel of judges from the University’s Division of Information Technology, Prince George’s County Department of Recreation and Parks and the Baltimore City Department of Planning. The winning apps included “Parks and Rec”, a mapping app to help residents locate the nearest recreational resources based on their location; a web based app, “How do I get Involved” helped students identify and contact volunteer opportunities in their community; and finally, “Remind You”, a mobile or web based app to allow community residents keep abreast of community events in the neighborhood.
The 2013 Code for Community Competition proved to be a means to educate students about community, engage students in meaningful real world experiences, and empower students to make a difference in the community quality of life. It is a mechanism that can provide direction and purpose for efforts inspired by the growing interest in technology, entrepreneurship and innovation. Of the most important, this inaugural event of the Competition showed that there are students who are passionate, skilled, socially conscientious, and committed to help maintain or strengthen vibrancy of communities and their constituents.

The second annual Code for Community Competition II took place in October, 2013 and was as successful as the Competition I of spring 2013. The Competition II reached out to the broader non-university community. Additional information about the Competitions can be found on the website: [www.arch.umd.edu/Planning/cfc](http://www.arch.umd.edu/Planning/cfc)

**Welcome the New MD APA Newsletter Editors**

**Kui Zhao, AICP**  
Kui earned her Master of Arts in Rural Geography from Northern Arizona University and Master of Community Planning from University of Maryland at College Park. Kui currently works for the Baltimore County Department of Planning as a demographer and master plan coordinator. Kui also assists the department management to recommend the water/sewer designations and analyze the development's impact on public schools.

**Holly A. Tompkins**  
Holly earned her Master of Urban and Environmental Planning with a minor concentration in Land Use and Growth Management at the University of Virginia. Holly is the lead development review planner at the Department of Planning & Zoning in Queen Anne’s County where she handles an extensive range of projects which include everything from simple lot line revisions to complicated major residential/mixed use and commercial site development plans. In addition, she is also the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Administrator as well as managing multi-departmental reviews for conditional uses before the Board of Appeals.

**Shubha Adhikari, AICP, LEED GA**  
Shubha earned her Master of Regional and City Planning with a major in Transportation Planning and Urban Design from the University of Oklahoma. She also has a background in architecture. Shubha currently works for the Baltimore City Department of Transportation Red Line Office as an Environmental Policy Analyst where her role is to coordinate and implement policies and strategies to leverage on health and environmental benefits of the proposed Red Line, a new light rail transit through Baltimore area.

**Coming Up:**

**March 3, at 5:00PM** — Deadline for Open Society Institute-Baltimore Community Fellowships submittals. Seeking dynamic individuals interested in implementing projects that address problems in underserved communities in Baltimore. [Download the application](http://www.arch.umd.edu/Planning/cfc)

**March 3-6, from 6:00-7:00PM** — The Student Planning Association of the University of Maryland is holding a Career Week at the University of Maryland College Park campus

**March/April** — Port of Baltimore tour (dates pending – watch the [Chapter website](http://www.arch.umd.edu/Planning/cfc))


**June 10, from 9:00AM-5:00PM** — Local Government Exchange Conference for the Maryland Metro Region at the Charles Miller Library in Ellicott City, Howard County. The Metro Region includes Baltimore City as well as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties.