



Town Center Community Association

February 9, 2022

To: Howard County Planning Board and Design Advisory Panel

From: Town Center Community Association Board of Directors

RE: Plan No. 22-05 Lakefront Residential North

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Fitzgerald
Lynn Foehrkolb
Joel Broida
Dean Dworkin
Jamie Hibbard
Clara Pino

COLUMBIA COUNCIL

Lin Eagan

The Board of the **Town Center Community Association (TCCA)** reviewed the site plan for the Lakefront North project presented at the Pre-Submission Community Meeting on February 8. Overall, we are pleased with the architectural design, site layout and landscaping that was presented. However, we have comments regarding traffic flow, school overcrowding, noise, and unit “make up” that we ask to be reviewed and considered as part of the overall development process.

As we stated in our previous letter regarding the Lakefront FDP, we are committed to the Downtown Columbia Plan as passed by the County Council in 2010 and we been involved in since 2005. We are excited that the development of Downtown Columbia is continuing and that the Howard Hughes Corporation is working with the public and its many partners to continue to make Columbia “**the place to live, work and play.**”

TCCA Board comments:

1. Building Heights, Design, and Site Locations:

- a. The staggering of building heights in Parcel A, Parcel B and Parcel D2, and “green scape” terracing offering different angles adds visual interest to the overall project. The buildings seem to mesh well with the existing structures, e.g., Merriweather Lakehouse Hotel, Lakeside at Town Center Condominiums, and the office buildings along Wincopin Circle.
- b. There is a lot of green space and thoughtful paths that connect the overall Lakefront North Project and other amenities in Columbia, e.g., the Mall. The larger green spaces -- Neighborhood Square and Wincopin Green – are laid out beautifully and have different textures and touch points that make it an inviting place to walk, live and play.
- c. We like the distinct zones which mix urban with wild/natural looking areas. The designs are visually appealing and generate a lot of interest encouraging people to return.
- d. Do the site plans for the future buildings (Parcel D1 and Parcel E) take into consideration the sight lines/views from the

condominiums **Lakeside at Town Center**? If sight lines are going to be 100% blocked, is there anything that can be done with the exterior design of the new building that would reflect more light to those facing condominiums at **Lakeside at Town Center**?

2. **Traffic and Parking:**

- a. We think that you will have a traffic bottleneck with the road system as presented, including the “at grade” pedestrian crossings along Wincopin Street, Sterrett Place, and the access points off Little Patuxent Parkway. We would ask that possible “pebbled cobblestone” materials be used in certain places on the streets to slow the traffic in and around Lakefront North. Since this is intended to be a “pedestrian friendly” area we would ask that the normal “at grade” crosswalk not be put in. The “pavers” shown in the design drawing show a smooth texture and we would like more of a rough texture in a few areas to add a traffic calming effect. This is a better solution than speed bumps.
- b. The cascading foliage facades off the buildings will offer visual interest when you approach Lakefront North from Little Patuxent Parkway from the North and when you drive along the new road system in and around the buildings.
- c. With three new residential buildings at Sterrett Place will there be enough parking for residents, visitors, workers, and the public? There is not any *designated public parking* in Town Center per se (Downtown, North or Central) and, as more development expands there may need to be more parking.

3. **Schools:**

- a. Since the intention is to build all three buildings simultaneously over a 24–30-month period as noted at the January 10 meeting, it is important that when the 675 rental residential units come to market that those families with children have a place to send their kids to school that is not overcrowded. It is incumbent on the County to plan for this eventuality as the existing school system that Town Center feeds into probably will not be adequate given this increase in density.
- b. Will the residential interior designs specifically target families at various income levels that have school-aged children?

4. **Noise:**

Noise could be an issue for Lake Kittamaquandi events hosted by the Columbia Association and others during the Spring, Summer, and Fall. It looks like the tree plantings along the new streets toward the lake shown of page 64 (Tulip and Red Oak) will offer a noise buffer as those trees mature.

We look forward to seeing all the site designs for all the projects. These are our preliminary comments on the design and guidelines as submitted recently for review.

We appreciate the investment of the master developer Howard Hughes Corporation and the County in the development of Downtown Columbia which is near and dear to everyone. Our comments and questions are for clarification and not intended to infer that we are not in support of a fully completed Downtown Columbia Plan. All stakeholders working together can achieve the best results that continue to make Columbia the best place to “live, work and play.”

Mission: To advocate for quality of life, to increase social engagement, and to foster a sense of community and safety for all in our mixed-use neighborhoods.