



Downtown Columbia Partnership

2018  
Annual  
Report



# Downtown Columbia Partnership

# Letter from Board Chair and Executive Director

Temporary banner on ground level of Two Merriweather office building



The establishment of the Downtown Columbia Partnership (DTCP) was an integral part of Howard County government’s adoption of the Downtown Columbia Plan, which was passed unanimously by the Howard County Council in 2010 to guide the redevelopment of Columbia’s center.

Created by legislation in 2013 as a non-profit organization, the DTCP is focused on working on behalf of every business and resident in Downtown to support an urban community that is a destination of choice for people to live, work, play and visit.

The functions of the DTCP also include supporting transportation initiatives; initiating and sponsoring cultural arts and sustainability programs; implementing downtown beautification and maintenance projects; and promoting public safety.

Everything the DTCP does involves partnerships with other organizations – such as the Columbia Association, Howard County Government, the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission, Brookfield Properties Retail (formerly General Growth Properties), the Inner Arbor Trust and Downtown Columbia businesses, especially developer The Howard Hughes Corporation, which has been the primary funder of the Partnership, through its grants, CEPPA payments, and in-kind contributions.

This annual report showcases some of the events and activities of the past year, most of which would not have been possible without DTCP’s partners.



Greg Fitchitt



Phillip Dodge

For the Downtown Columbia Partnership, 2018 was a year of experimentation and outreach, building relationships, testing new programming and working with other organizations. Week by week, progress was made in creating a livelier community where there is something always happening.

It was a year in which some of the planning of the past decade began to take shape. In April we watched ground broken for the Merriweather District, the first fully realized neighborhood of the Downtown Columbia revitalization now underway. The urban character of the development dramatically emerged as construction of the high-rise headquarters for cyber security giant Tenable, Inc. changed the Merriweather District skyline.

While economic development is front and center on our agenda, we are also acutely conscious of our opportunity to help create and foster an inclusive community by providing occasions when people of all types mingle and share ideas and experiences.

We are proud that Books in Bloom, one of DTCP’s signature events, was presented a Certificate of Merit Award in the Events and Programming category at the International Downtown Association (IDA) Conference and Tradeshow in San Antonio, Texas. The festival was cited for improving “the image and vitality of downtown.”

The word is out: Downtown Columbia is the place to be.

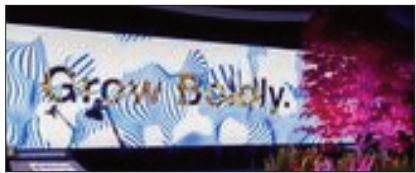
Greg Fitchitt  
President and Board Chair  
Downtown Columbia Partnership

Phillip Dodge  
Executive Director  
Downtown Columbia Partnership





# Downtown Development Update



The highpoint of the revitalization project underway in Downtown Columbia was the official groundbreaking for the Merriweather District in April. Hundreds of elected, community and business leaders gathered to hear the Governor, Comptroller of Maryland, County Executive, representatives of The Howard Hughes Corporation and lead tenant cyber security giant Tenable, Inc. praise the project and its potential for attracting more industry leaders to what is being called the Center of Culture and Commerce for the region.

The urban character of the Merriweather District was evident as construction began on the 12-story signature building that will be Tenable’s headquarters. Construction of the new office building, said one reporter, was “the first visible indicator that the next step in the 30-year journey that is the redevelopment of Downtown Columbia” had begun.

Over \$300 million worth of construction is underway in the Merriweather District. Tenable’s move will further grow its current local employee base in the area and further establish Downtown Columbia as an emerging hub in the new economy.

When fully built out, the Merriweather District will consist of 2.8 million square feet of new development, including 1.1 million square feet of office space, 1,100 residential units, 200,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, 210 hotel rooms and a new central library and a park. It will be the first fully realized neighborhood to reflect the urban character identified as a goal in the Downtown Columbia Plan.



*The Howard Hughes Corporation President Grant Herlitz, Tenable, Inc. Chairman and CEO Amit Yoran and The Howard Hughes Corporation CEO David R. Weinreb at the Merriweather District groundbreaking*



*Tenable, Inc. Chairman and CEO Amit Yoran at the Merriweather District Groundbreaking*

Meanwhile, plans for the Lakefront District, which is the next neighborhood to be developed, began moving through the development process. Characterized as a hub of health and wellness, the Lakefront District will include approximately 3 million square feet of new development at full buildout. The initial Lakefront phase approved in 2018 will include 245,000 square feet of new office space, 72,000 square feet of new retail and restaurant space, new outdoor gathering spaces around Lake Kittamaqundi and 509 new residential units.

## Housing

The Downtown Columbia Plan calls for diverse housing options to support the city’s history of inclusion. The first inclusionary housing is now under construction in the Merriweather District. The otherwise market-rate apartment building will include 12 units for very low income households earning 30% of the Area Medium Income and 12 units for middle income households earning less than 80% of AMI.

The apartments for very low-income households will be leased and managed by the Howard County Housing Commission and, like the units for middle income households, will be scattered throughout the building and include the same finishes as the other apartments. The project is due to be completed in early 2020.

The Lakefront District is planned to include Downtown Columbia’s first condos, a frequently requested housing type for Downtown Columbia.

The Lakefront Core area plans include three residential buildings in the area that sits between Lake Kittamaqundi and Little Patuxent Parkway. Two condominium buildings, one with 120 units and another with 80, as well as an apartment building with 300 units, are planned.



*STEER Tech Founder and CEO Anuja Sonalker and Maryland Governor Larry Hogan at the Merriweather District Groundbreaking*

*Plein Air competition at Lake Kittamaqundi*





## Downtown Development Update

### Entertainment and Dining

Nationally acclaimed Merriweather Post Pavilion, the heart of the Merriweather District, is a cultural attraction and economic driver for Columbia, Howard County and the region. It is undergoing a \$60 million renovation to incorporate modern features and amenities required by performers and audiences. Three of the five phases of the project had been completed by the end of 2018, including new stagehouse and backstage building, new concessions, warehouse, offices and box office, doubling the height of the stage to support larger performance set pieces, new seating and other improvements.

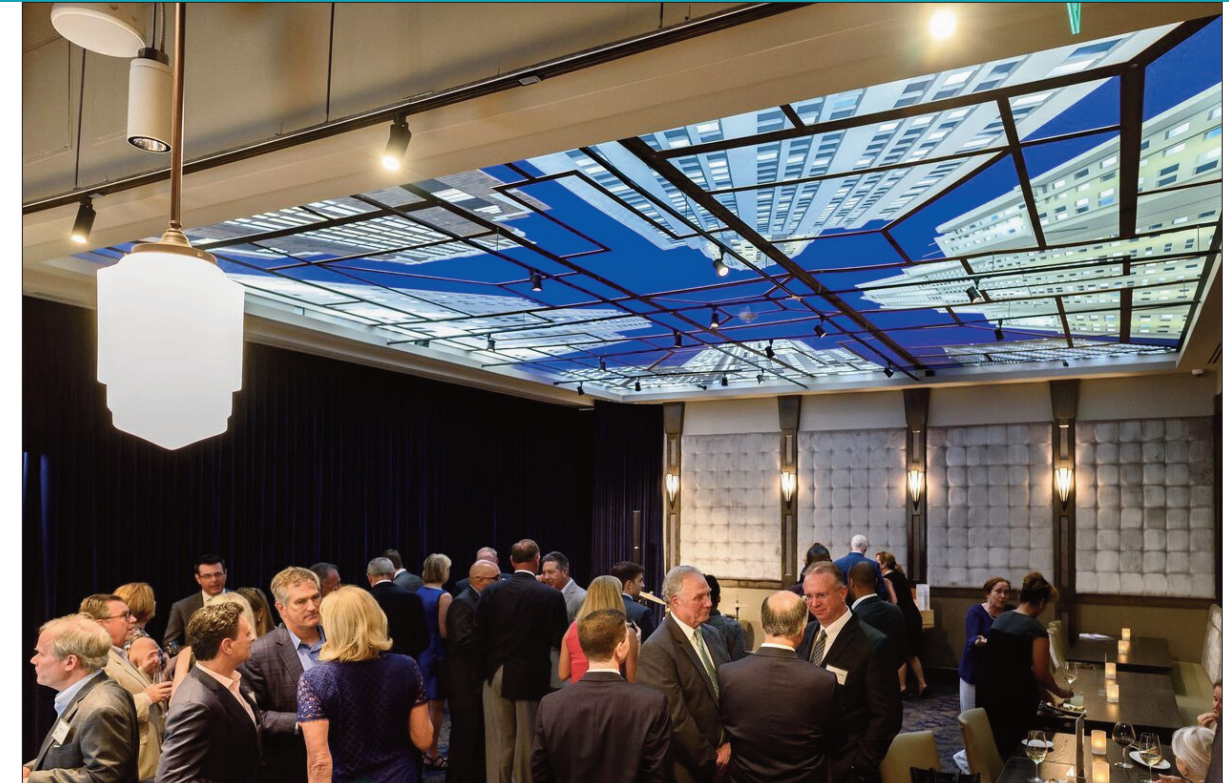


New places to eat and be entertained proliferated in 2018. Among the latest offerings in Downtown Columbia are the following businesses.

In April The Walrus Oyster and Ale House joined The Mall in Columbia dining options. It offers fresh oysters, Chesapeake-inspired seafood and craft beers in a casual environment.

A month later Uncle Julio's, which is known for its made-from-scratch Mexican and Tex-Mex food, margaritas and fresh made tableside guacamole, also opened at the Mall in Columbia.

*The Walrus  
Oyster and  
Ale House*



*18th & 21st  
cocktail  
lounge*

Also in May The Wecker Hospital Group, renowned in Howard County as the operator of Ironbridge Wine Company, opened Cured Table & Tap, an innovative restaurant that embodies the rustic elegance of the region's recipes of the past with a modern twist, and 18th & 21st, a cocktail lounge featuring both imaginative dining and live music which gives a nod to the classics. Both are located on the ground level of the One Merriweather office building where MedStar is headquartered, at the corner of Broken Land Parkway and Little Patuxent Parkway.

Main Event Entertainment, the nation's fastest-growing bowling-anchored dining and entertainment destination, also opened in May at The Mall in Columbia. The 50,000-sq-ft center features 22 state-of-the-art bowling lanes with unique technology and luxury seating, laser tag, billiards, shuffleboard and games gallery with over 120 of the latest interactive and virtual video games.





# Downtown Development Update

The long-awaited concert venue from the Clyde’s Restaurant Group, The Soundry, opened in June in the completely renovated former site of the Tomato Palace on the Lakefront. It has quickly proved to be a popular spot for music lovers, not unlike their famous The Hamilton venue in DC. It offers local craft beers and street-inspired fare before performances.

In September Urban Plates became a new addition to The Mall in Columbia’s places to eat. It is noted for made-from-scratch cuisine that features grass-fed beef, sustainably sourced free-range chicken, and fresh produce.

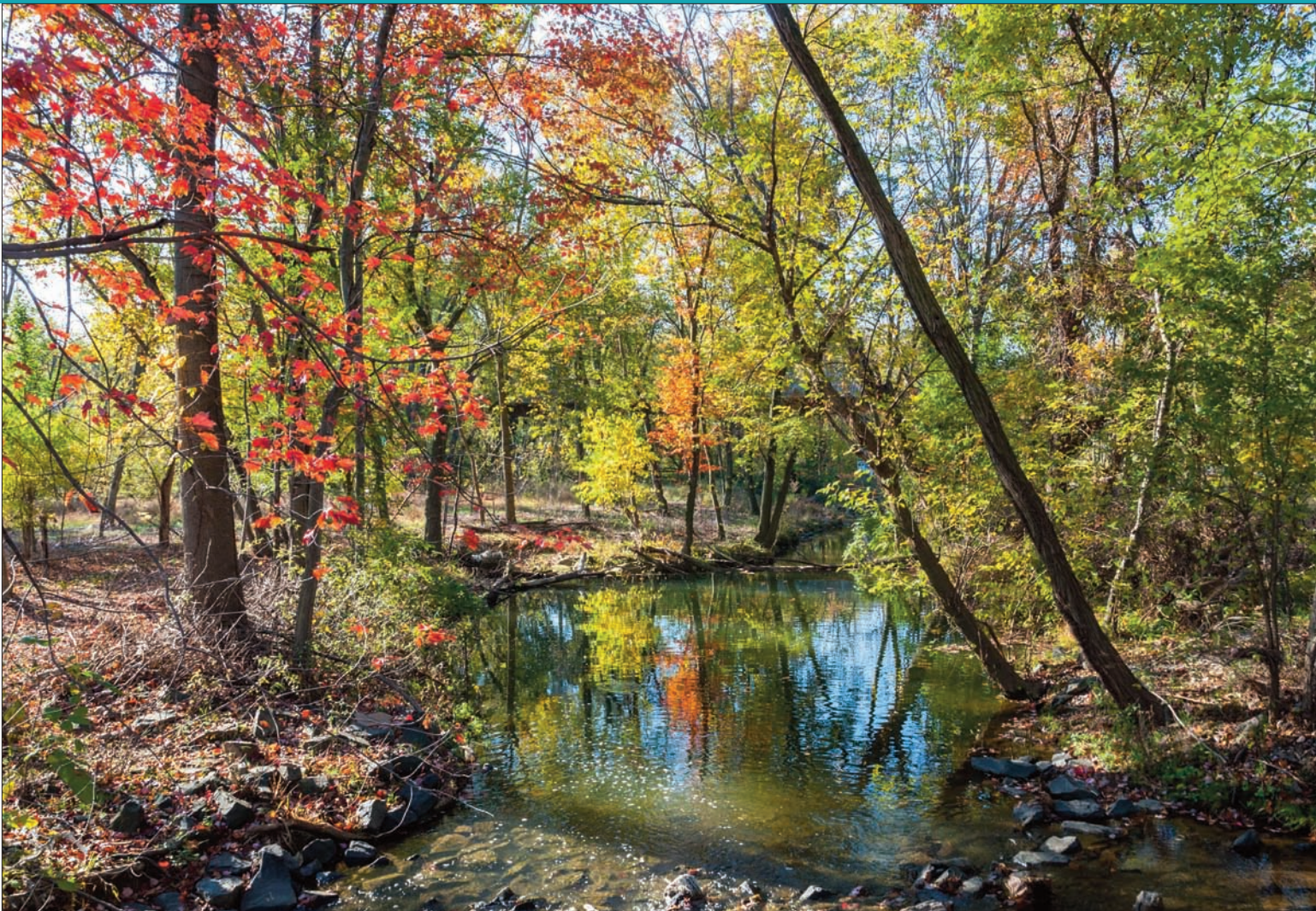
Barnes & Noble, the #1 bookseller in the U.S., has joined The Mall in Columbia stores. It sells books, music, movies, and gifts, and the Barnes & Noble Cafe serves Starbucks Coffee, Cheesecake Factory Cheesecake, Godiva Chocolate, and a selection of both savory and sweet items for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Cold Stone Creamery treats are now available on the street level of m.flats apartments. The store is noted for its ice cream, shakes, smoothies and cakes.

Bonchon opened on the ground floor of the TEN.M apartment community. The restaurant’s signature dish is Korean fried chicken wings.



*Soulful Symphony founder Darin Atwater in performance at The Soundry*



*Woods at Lake Kittamaquni*

Other new businesses include a range of retailers and services.

Crown Castle, a large provider of wireless infrastructure, moved its regional headquarters to the One Merriweather office building where it occupies 38,000 square feet.

A cutting-edge hair salon, BUBBLES Metropolitan, has opened on the ground floor of The Metropolitan apartments.

Soft Surroundings is a new retailer at The Mall in Columbia. It offers bedding and casual wear, shoes, jewelry and beauty products for women.





## Events

*A panel discussion at the Open Studio closing event of the Merriweather District Artist-in-Residence Program*



There was a lot going on in Downtown Columbia in 2018, with events popping up all over the redevelopment area.

### Merriweather District Artist-in-Residence Program

While not exactly an “event,” the launch of the Merriweather District Artist-in-Residence (MD AIR) program was a highlight of 2018. Three multi-media, cross-disciplinary artists lived and worked in Downtown Columbia during the summer of 2018. The artists included Hoesy Corona and Eric Dyer of the Baltimore/Washington area, and Sophia Brous, an international artist working in New York and Melbourne, Australia. Each received a stipend of \$10,000, the use of studio space in the Two Merriweather office building and housing in The Metropolitan. The trio talked with invited guests and displayed their work in an Open Studio at the conclusion of the residency.

Created and funded by The Howard Hughes Corporation, in collaboration with the Howard County Arts Council, the MD AIR program attracted 73 applications from around the globe. The awardees were selected by a panel including artist William Cochran; Ken Farmer, curator of a New York City-based art production and design company, Wild Dogs International; Howard County Arts Council Executive Director Coleen West; and Vanessa Rodriguez, Vice President of Marketing for The Howard Hughes Corporation.



*Spring Cocktail Crawl at The Plaza at Corporate Row on Little Patuxent Parkway*

### Spring Cocktail Crawl

In response to the success of its winter craft cocktail events, DTCP launched a series of similar activities at various locations in Downtown Columbia. The first for 2018 was the Spring Cocktail Crawl held in May at The Plaza at Corporate Row on Little Patuxent Parkway. Young professionals poured out of nearby office buildings and nearby residents walked over to visit the pop-up bars and enjoy such specialties as a Blood Orange Sage Screwdriver from Clyde’s, Hawaiian Pineapple Cosmo from Seasons 52 and Smoked Old Fashioned from Cured and 18th & 21st. TEN.M and m.flats provided a DJ and outdoors games along the route. It was a reminder that Downtown Columbia can be a great place to live, work and play.

### Books in Bloom

The second annual Books in Bloom festival hosted by the DTCP featured critically acclaimed and best-selling authors participating in readings, panel discussions and other activities. Included were First Lady Michelle Obama’s photographer Amanda Lucidon; Haitian-American novelist and short story writer Edwidge Danticat; Hilary Clinton’s former Communications Director Jennifer Palmieri; and Vikram Sunderam, James Beard Award-winning chef and co-author of the Rasika cookbook, among many others. The Presenting Sponsor was The Howard Hughes Corporation.

### Columbia Lakefront Summer Festival

The Columbia Association’s annual Lakefront Summer Festival, which runs from June until the end of September, included live music, family movies, Dancin’ Under the People Tree and Teen Open Mic Nights. Lunchtime and evening concerts featured a variety of performers, and weekly family movies attracted hundreds of parents and children who sat outside on blankets and folding chairs and enjoyed an evening at the Lakefront in Downtown Columbia.

### Inner Arbor Trust

The Inner Arbor Trust, Inc., which manages the 51 acres of open space surrounding Merriweather Post Pavilion and the Chrysalis amphitheater, held 36 community events during 2018. A Mini Maker Faire attracted 3,000. The 16 free events in the Chrysalis Kids Series included everything from opera to a Fairy Tale Brunch for families. The DTCP served as a marketing partner.



*Boy reading at Books in Bloom book festival*



# Events



## Hops & Harvest Festival

Another new event taking advantage of Downtown Columbia prime location is the Hops & Harvest Festival which featured unlimited tastings of more than 75 different Maryland beers, wines and other spirits, 25 Maryland artisans and vendors, fresh local food, live entertainment, games and more at the Columbia Lakefront.

## #TapIntoColumbia

Owner Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission invited the public to Merriweather Post Pavilion to view music-themed movies on the amphitheater's outdoor screens. In June, it paired up with DTCP for #TapIntoColumbia, which featured a pub crawl ending at the pavilion for a showing of “This is Spinal Tap” and a final beer on the VIP Deck. Participating restaurants included The Walrus Oyster and Ale House, Union Jack’s, and Cured and 18th & 21st.

## Columbia Festival of the Arts

The Columbia Festival of the Arts made the most of venues and partners in the Downtown Columbia area in 2018, holding Stoop Storytelling at Howard Community College, where a one-woman show, and a series of films, including Sundance Shorts on Tour, followed. eVenti Verticali’s showmanship starred at LakeFest at the Lakefront along with dozens of other local and regional performers. There was something for everyone.

*Patio to Patio cocktail crawl  
in The Plaza at The Mall in  
Columbia*



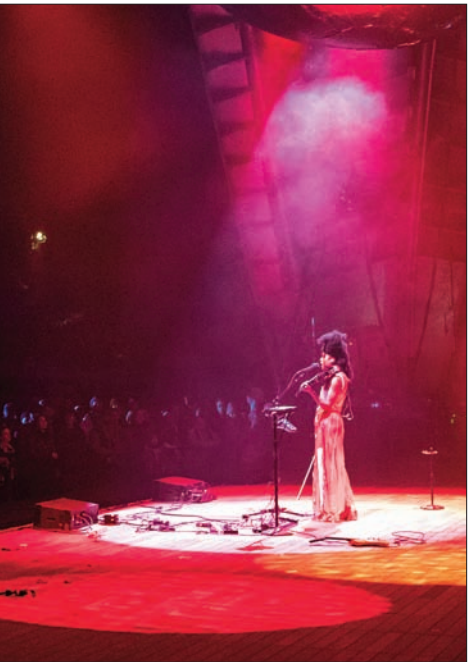
*OPUS Merriweather  
performance at  
the Chrysalis in  
Symphony Woods*

## OPUS Merriweather

Setting the bar for extravaganzas, in October OPUS Merriweather transformed Symphony Woods and Merriweather Post Pavilion into an an open-air theatre featuring state-of-the-art mixed media installations, music, vocal and dance performances, as well as premieres of contemporary art works. Highlights included a 75’ long laser cathedral, a lawn stage with several EDM DJs, and a culinary village with 16 vendors. It was a dazzling spectacle with 25 artists from 13 countries. Presented by The Howard Hughes Corporation, with the DTCP and STEER tech sponsoring, OPUS Merriweather attracted more than 15,000 visitors to Downtown Columbia’s Merriweather District in 2018.

## Patio to Patio Cocktail Crawl

The DTCP presented its first Patio to Patio Cocktail Crawl on The Plaza at The Mall in Columbia in early October. Participating restaurants included Main Event Entertainment, Seasons 52, Shake Shake, Urban Plates, and The Walrus Oyster and Ale House.



*OPUS Merriweather  
performer*



Events

Mother and son wearing race medals at Discover Downtown Columbia 5K



Attendees at Festive Friday Family Fun event



Festive Fridays

For the fourth year, the DTCP hosted seasonal Festive Friday events at the Lakefront Promenade in Downtown Columbia. The holiday Craft Cocktail Crawl attracted a sell-out crowd of 250 attendees who enjoyed artisanal cocktails and specialty food items from participating restaurants Clyde’s, The Soundry, and Cured and 18th & 21st. The highlight was the 600-pound St. Bernard ice sculpture and cocktail luge.

The Family Fun event attracted a record-breaking 1,588 reservations, but a light rain kept the crowd to 350 guests. Thanks to some tented activities, parents and children still enjoyed the music, holiday arts and crafts, photo booth, ice sculptor, and strolling characters and snacks.



Participants at Festival Friday Craft Cocktail Crawl

Discover Downtown Columbia 5K

The DTCP hosted the fifth annual Discover Downtown Columbia 5K, featuring a loop trail that began and ended at the People Tree. In addition to passing other Columbia landmarks along the way, participants crossed the stage at Merriweather Post Pavilion and enjoyed a live band and complimentary post-race beer and other refreshments at the finish. Hysteria Brewing Company was the official beer sponsor for the race.

Presenting sponsor Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission and Merriweather Post Pavilion provided registrants a lawn seat pass for the 2019 concert of their choice. Gold Sponsor Howard Bikeshare provided registrants a month of free unlimited Howard County Bikeshare use. Runners also received an Under Armour race shirt and a new finishing medal.

The start of Discover Downtown Columbia 5K at the Lakefront



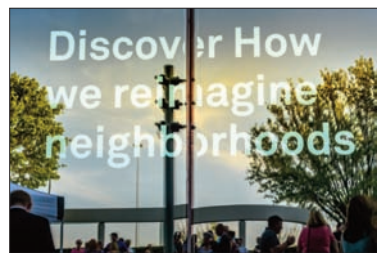




*Poinsettia Tree at  
The Mall in Columbia*

## Beautification and Connections

In every season of the year, Columbia is beautiful. The evolving urban character of the city's central core is complementing Downtown Columbia's natural beauty – its setting as a “city in a garden.”



*Construction barricade  
banner*

The Columbia Association is the steward of most of the city's open spaces, lakes and woodlands and maintains 100 miles of pathways. The Downtown Columbia Partnership, too, has responsibility for supporting and enhancing the beauty – natural and man-made – and connectivity in Downtown Columbia. During 2018, several initiatives by partners advanced those goals.

**Trees and Flowers** The Howard Hughes Corporation and Blossoms of Hope established a partnership in 2017 with the shared intention of lining the streets with pink flowering trees from the Merriweather District to the Lakefront and beautifying other city sites. Blossoms of Hope raises funds to benefit the Claudia Mayer/Tina Broccolino Cancer Resource Center and other local charities. The first plantings – of 65 Native Dogwood and 35 Kwansan Cherry trees – bloomed in the spring of 2018. Over the next 20 years, The Howard Hughes Corporation has committed to planting 10,000 trees of various kinds throughout Columbia and elsewhere in Howard County.

**Recycled Beauty in a Bench** Redevelopment in Downtown Columbia has produced material for a creative use. The Howard Hughes Corporation challenged Morgan State University and Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) students to design a wooden bench for the Merriweather District with boards cut from trees that were removed when land was cleared for construction. Morgan student Courtney Torbert's bench was the winner. The company awarded her \$7,500 for her creation, which is placed in the courtyard along Divided Sky Lane.



*Executive Director Phillip Dodge of the  
Downtown Columbia Partnership, David Dymond  
of Gensler, bench designer Courtney Torbert,  
and Brian Stansbury, instructor at Morgan's  
School of Architecture and Planning, and  
(standing) Nancy Tucker and Antony Justin  
of The Howard Hughes Corporation at the  
installation of the award-winning bench*

**Art in the Park** Symphony Woods is the temporary home of Becky Borland's Prisms. Each year, the Howard County Arts Council seeks 12 publicly accessible sites to host sculpture for a temporary outdoor exhibit, and Symphony Woods was selected as one of the 2018 ARTsites. The goal is to make art more accessible to the entire community, enhance and activate community spaces and generate interest in public art.



*Becky Borland's Prisms  
in Symphony Woods*

**Walking and Biking** In February, DTCP convened the Downtown Walkability and Pedestrian Safety Committee, bringing together stakeholders to identify and address walkability and pedestrian safety concerns in Downtown Columbia. Stakeholders included Downtown Columbia and Town Center residents, staff from The Howard Hughes Corporation, The Mall in Columbia, the Columbia Association and Howard County Government. Issues included location of crosswalks, extension of sidewalks and need for signage and lights. Plans emerged and are being implemented to address concerns.

**Signage** The Downtown Columbia Signage Subcommittee of the DTCP Advisory Committee met in October to consider existing and needed signage in Downtown Columbia, with a special concentration on wayfinding and identification signs. The group decided to use transportation funds to hire a consultant to assist with the project.



*Public parking at  
TEN.M apartments*

Meanwhile The Mall in Columbia installed new signs to address issues raised by stakeholders and to encourage safe driving. Attractive and colorful construction barricades have become temporary murals at The Mall, as well as on the ground level of the Two Merriweather office building.

*Bike to Work Day  
participants*

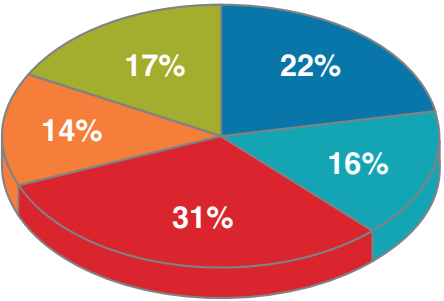




# Financial Snapshot FY18

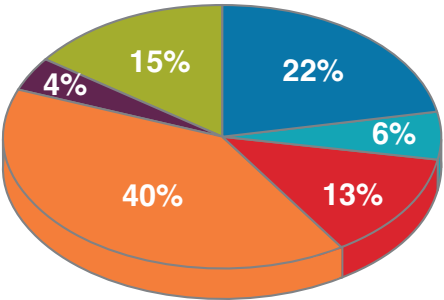
## Revenue

The Howard Hughes Corporation	\$	141,708
CEPPA 25 Assessments	\$	100,206
Columbia Association Grant	\$	200,000
Sponsorship & Earned Income	\$	88,711
In-kind Services	\$	107,137
Total	\$	637,762



## Expenses

Administration	\$	127,373
In-kind Services	\$	33,137
Marketing & Advertising	\$	74,114
Events & Sponsorships	\$	228,000
CEPPA 25 Transportation	\$	18,361
Maintenance & Beautification	\$	89,289 *
Total	\$	570,274



\*includes \$74,000 in-kind services  
\*\*\$102,366 of CEPPA 25 Transportation restricted funds are not included in these charts and are being carried over from FY18 to FY19.



Families at arts and crafts table at Festive Friday Family Fun event

# Leadership

## Board of Directors

- Greg Fitchitt  
*Chair*  
President, Columbia Region  
The Howard Hughes Corporation

Nancy Tucker  
*Secretary*  
Community Relations Manager  
The Howard Hughes Corporation

Ruth Hoang  
*Treasurer*  
Vice President, Development  
The Howard Hughes Corporation

Valdis Lazdins  
Director, Planning & Zoning  
Howard County Government

Milton Matthews  
President/CEO  
Columbia Association

Barb Nicklas  
Sr. General Manager  
The Mall in Columbia

Vanessa Rodriguez  
Vice President, Marketing  
The Howard Hughes Corporation

## Staff

Phillip Dodge  
*Executive Director*

## Advisory Committee

- Chuck Bubeck  
Ease Technologies, Inc.

Tom Glaser  
Howard Community College

Joan Lancos  
Resident Representative

Barbara Lawson  
Resident Representative

Leonardo McClarty  
Chamber of Commerce

Kristy Myers  
Kettler

Elizabeth Kromm  
Howard County General Hospital

Larry Twele  
Howard County EDA

Lynn Foehrkolb  
Town Center Village Board



Author Edwidge Danticat at Books in Bloom book festival at the Columbia Lakefront





PARTNERSHIP

10480 Little Patuxent Parkway | Suite 400 | Columbia, MD 21044 | 443.539.8468  
[www.downtowncolumbiamd.com](http://www.downtowncolumbiamd.com)

© 2018 Downtown Columbia Partnership