

Long Reach Community Association

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Village Center Master Plan Fall 2011

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This report is meant to be used as a guide. Our master plan covers only our vision. It is premature to put in details of a design plan when there is no redevelopment in the near future. We would want a design that is current with the industry standards and meets the needs of the community at the time when we are actually working with a redevelopment of the village center.



The Purpose Of This Report

The Howard County Council amended its developmental regulations and passed Council Bill 29-2009 which allows each village to develop a Village Center Community Plan.

In addition, CB 29-2009 allows the owner of any portion of a village center in the New Town zoning district to petition to amend certain approved development plans for the owners' properties and establishes public notice, information, and justification requirements for such petition. It also establishes standards to be used by the Zoning Board in evaluating and considering these petitions. This regulation defines a village center as a mixed-use development in the New Town district that is designed to be a **“community focal point and gathering place for the surrounding village neighborhoods.”**

This plan is intended to provide guidance from the Village of Long Reach to the County and developers on the vision and planning concepts that are desired by the Long Reach Community Association as the village area changes over time. It is anticipated that this plan will be referred to as property improvements and development proposals are considered and to help guide decision-making about appropriate uses and design issues in the village center area

Our History

Long Reach is the largest and one of the oldest of 10 villages that make up the new town of Columbia, Maryland. Our village comprises four neighborhoods: Jeffers Hill, Kendall Ridge, Locust Park and Phelps Luck. From our start in 1971, we have grown to more than 17,000 people living in 6,108 households. Long Reach Community Association is the nonprofit organization that governs and represents our village. Both property owners and residents of Long Reach are members of the Association and elect a five-member Village Board and council representative to the Columbia Board of Directors. Stonehouse, our community center is located in the Long Reach Village Center. The Columbia assessment contributes about one-third of our funding and our own activities generate the remaining two-thirds.

A town meeting in 1972 yielded a resident opinion poll that established an "arts & crafts center" as the Village's recreational center. In July 1974, Antioch University's



Visual Art Center opened. The Columbia Association currently operates its Art Center in the building. In September 1974, Stonehouse, the Village Community Center, opened. Earlier in that year in April, the Long Reach Village Center opened offering the residents a near-by place to shop. The Village Center was renovated in 1998. Stonehouse is the non-profit, multi-purpose Community Center for the Village of Long Reach

The Vision

The Long Reach Board of Directors feels that in order for village centers to be viable we must look at new interpretations of the role of the village center so that it not only serves our residents but also embraces a more global audience. More than most other village centers, Long Reach is surrounded by many retail choices. Our village center is in a prime location as evidenced by all the surrounding retail development.

Due to all the nearby retail, we question whether the concept of the Long Reach Village Center is sustainable as a predominately neighborhood retail center. Does the village center need to include other concepts?

We are poised to accommodate businesses that wish to take advantage of this location but do not fit the big box store model. Any redevelopment needs to leverage the surrounding retail to benefit the village center. We support unique destination retailers as well as the usual village center mix of retail stores. For example, due to the surfeit of nearby grocery stores, we encourage a targeted market type of store that would not compete with but compliment a high-end market like Wegmans and traditional markets like Giant and Safeway in place of a conventional grocery store.

Long Reach is not adverse to a mixed-use approach to any redevelopment of the village center noting that the commercial, residential and recreational use must be proportionately divided with the main emphasis on the commercial and recreational components.

We want to see our village center set the standard for what a village center should and can be in the 21st century.



Village Center Boundaries

The Village Center is loosely bounded by Tamar Drive on the west; Cloudleap Court on the south; Old Dobbin Road and Foreland Garth on the north, with the eastern boundary ending at the Longwood House, Shalom Square , and Lazy Hollow Apartment properties.

The Parcels



Exxon Station



Village Center



Stonehouse & Art Center

Celebration Church



Deli Town



Richburn Liquors



Surrounding Growth Since 1970

- **Benson Business & Restaurant Park (1990)**
- **Dobbin Center**
(Walmart, Banks, Medical Offices, Gas Station, Multiple Restaurants, etc.)
- **Columbia Crossing I & II**
(Target, Banks, Pier One, Borders, Joanne's, Pet Box Store, Old Navy, Gas Station, Multiple Restaurants, etc.)
- **Snowden Square**
(BJ's, Home Depo, Pet Box Store, Michael's, Hobby Lobby, Gas Station, Banks, Multiple Restaurants, etc.)
- **Gateway Overlook**
(Costco, Trader Joe's, Lowes, Liquor Store, Multiple Restaurants, Royal Farms, etc.)
- **Columbia Palace**
(Giant Food, Multiple Restaurants, Gas Station, Banks, Royal Farms, Office Buildings)
- **Oakland Mills Village Center**
(Food Lion, Bank, Restaurants, Various Village Center Merchants)
- **Owen Brown Village Center**
(Giant Food, Bank, Gas Station, Restaurants, Various Village Center Merchants)
- **Intersection of Snowden River Parkway/108**
(Multiple Restaurants, Elder Care Facility, Hotel, Gas Station)
- **Long Gate Shopping Center**
(Safeway, Various National Chain Stores, Bank, Gas Station, Multiple Restaurants, etc.)
- **Wegman's** - Anticipated opening in summer of 2012

Recreational Sites (within a 3 mile radius)

- Blandair Park
- Centennial Park
- Rockburn Branch Park
- Lake Elkhorn
- Downtown Lakefront
- Symphony Woods
- Meadowbrook Park
- Sewells Orchard Park
- Jackson Pond
- The 4 CA Outdoor Pools
- The potential for another 5 acre recreational area within the Village Center boundaries.



Current Community Uses

- Stonehouse - the Long Reach Community Center
- CA Art Center
- Interfaith Center (Celebration Church)
- Howard County Police Substation

The Goals for the Master Plan

- Support commercial success for the village center owners and merchants.
- Make the village center a destination point for shoppers.
- Make the village center a vital part of the Long Reach residents lives.
- Improve the connectivity of the village center to surrounding shopping areas, and Blandair Park by improving & increasing the public walkways/pathways and bicycle paths/lanes.
- Ensure that adequate public transportation sites are included in any future redevelopment plans.
- Retain and enhance the current assets - Stonehouse, the CA Art Center, Interfaith Center (Celebration Church) site, the 5+/- acres of open space.

The Plan

Plan must incorporate the four (4) components as defined in the Ho. Co. Zoning Regulations that make up a Village Center.

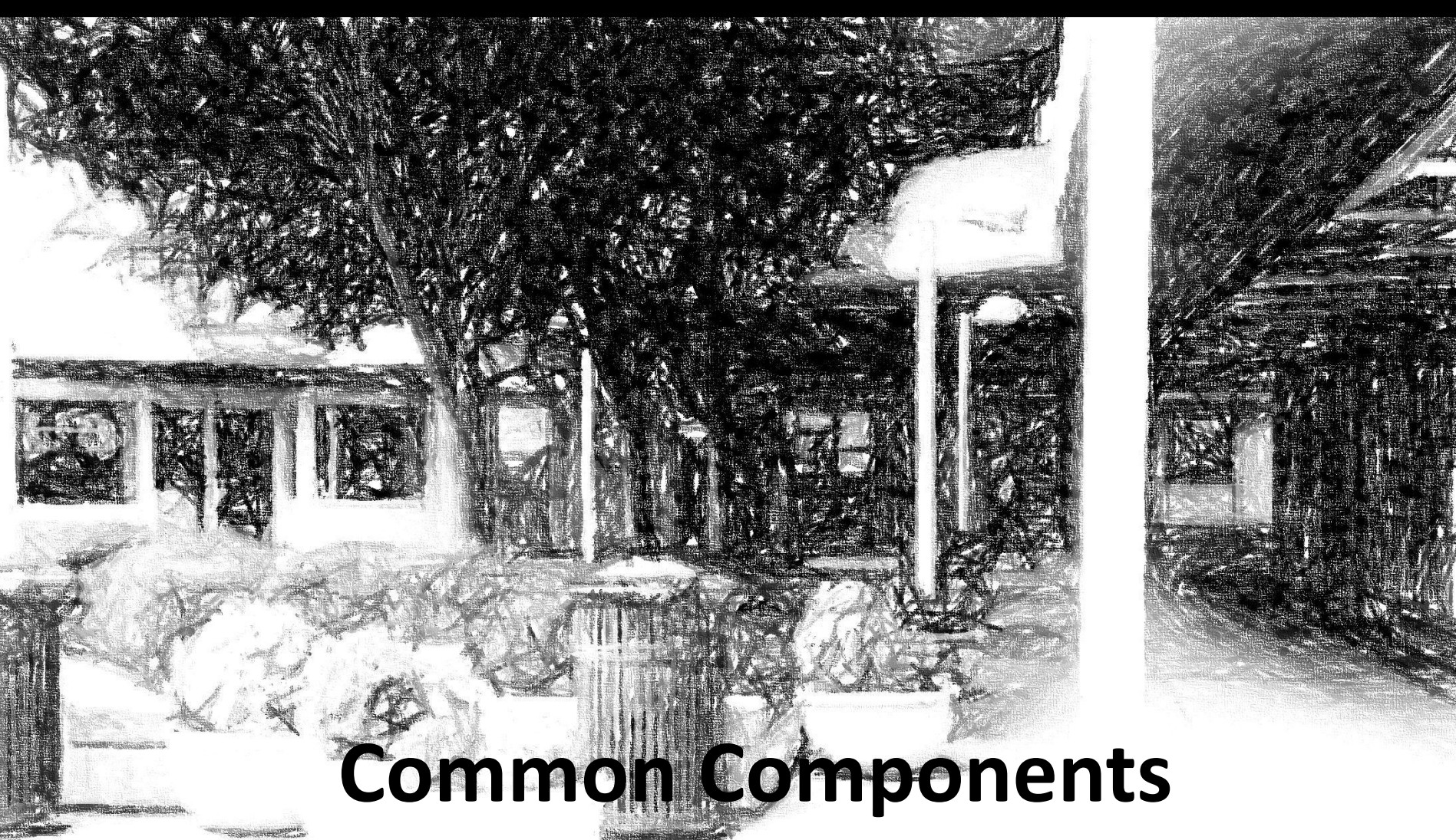
1. An outdoor public village green, plaza or square which has both hardscape and softscape elements which should be designed to function primarily as a pedestrian-oriented promenade connecting the various village center buildings and shall include public seating features.
2. Stores, shops, offices or other commercial uses which provide opportunities to fulfill the day-to-day needs for the village residents, such as food stores, specialty stores, service agencies, financial institutions, personal services, medical services and restaurants.
3. Space for community uses and/or institutional uses.
4. If appropriate, to support and enhance other uses in the village center, residential uses.

Common Components



- Wayfinding signage on nearby roadways as well as adequate signage in the village center proper.
- Adequate Parking





Common Components

- **Redevelopment should also incorporate green building standards, water conservation, native plantings.**

Outdoor Public Spaces



- Any redevelopment plan should include a plaza component within the design to encourage community engagement and provide an **aesthetic** element to the design.
- Due to the CA Art Center's unique presence within the village center, space should be designated in any redesign for exterior art work displays.
- Consideration should be given to developing the 5 +/- acres of open space for recreational use.



Transit

- There are currently 2 Howard Transit bus stops on the property. Ensure that public transportation sites are included in any future redevelopment plans.
- There are bike racks at various locations around the village center and need to be included in any future redevelopment to encourage the use of alternate means of transportation.
- Improve the connectivity of the village center to surrounding shopping areas, and Blandair Park by improving & increasing the public walkways/pathways and bicycle paths/lanes .

Commercial/Retail/Residential Uses

All new development must recognize that the retail component is the most important part of any redesign of the village center.

While Long Reach is not adverse to a mixed-use approach to any redevelopment of the village center, we feel that a strong emphasis should be placed on the retail portion in a way that will enhance the daily lives of Long Reach's and the surrounding neighborhoods' residents.

If done correctly, the use of a housing component in the village center could help attract a unique variety of vendors to enhance the shopping experience. It would also increase foot traffic and provide a vibrancy to the village center.

The final piece of a redesign must include the community/recreational component. The Village Center is home to Stonehouse and the CA Art Center. The Interfaith Center houses the Celebration Church. The village is fortunate to have an undeveloped 5 +/- acre open space parcel that could be used to enhance any redevelopment plan for the Village Center.