

Inner Arbor Trust Report

The Inner Arbor Trust is excited that in 2021 it will be able to operate a meaningful season of outdoor programming at the Chrysalis and in other portions of Symphony Woods. While the pandemic has been devastating, the Trust has obtained sufficient funding to maintain its financial stability and is focused on the 2021 season and funding the proposed updated Concept Plan, pending approval of the updated concept plan by the CA board.

Grant Funding And Earned Revenue

The Trust has obtained in excess of \$150K in grant funding from the Maryland State Arts Council and the MD-SERI program. The Trust is cautiously optimistic that certain other private grant applications, along with a potential Federal grant, may also be forthcoming.

The Trust is creatively growing earned revenue by renting the Chrysalis for dance recitals, performances that would otherwise be at the James Rouse Theater, and other events. The Trust anticipates 20 paid rentals for the 2021 season. These rentals are unlikely to include substantial concessions sales until the fall, and Trust-produced ticketed events are unlikely until later this year. The Trust continues to operate under the assumption that its primary renter will continue to fail to pay rent and that the opportunities for typical earned income streams will be reduced until late summer or fall 2021. In calendar 2019 (which consisted of parts of fiscal years 2019 and 2020) the Trust brought in total revenue of \$904K, of which \$477K was unencumbered funds used for operating expenses and the balance restricted capital grants.

Similarly, while the Trust has been continuing to correspond with donors and sponsors, and to obtain some gifts, the majority of donor and sponsor funds are directly related to specific performance events, and we do not anticipate returning to prior giving levels until those events restart. The Trust is planning a fundraising campaign for the spring, with a transition to capital fundraising towards the end of the calendar year.

Symphony Woods Concept Plan: A Community Vision

The concept plan is before the CA Board for review and approval. After the concept plan is approved, the Trust plans to work with CA and others to establish the implementation plan to realize the community vision. While to some extent the Trust recognizes that the implementation is in part influenced by funding availability, initially the Trust sees the following as the highest priority items to implement:

- Site furnishings / landscaping - this will be ongoing and can start in 2021, and includes things like bike racks, picnic tables and benches, turf improvements, native and non-invasive plantings, improvement of diversity among trees and in the canopy
- County-funded east-west pathway
- Ridgeline pathway and colonnade
- Bend-in-the-creek playground

Fundamental to the implementation plan is a funding plan. As each portion is reviewed, cost forecasting is required for project phases. From cost forecasting, the Trust will be able to apply for a variety of grants and other funding sources. As the implementation plan is executed, specific construction projects will be defined, cost estimated, and aligned with grant and other revenue sources. Immediately, the Trust, pending approval of the concept plan, is beginning the process to apply for funding from the following grant sources:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Wetlands Conservation (for watershed and recreational improvements)
- National Endowment for the Arts, Our Town grant program
- Federal/Maryland Recreational Trails Program
- Pending the legislature passing proposed legislation, Maryland State Arts Council capital grants program

The Trust intends to continue to review public and private capital grant, sponsorship, and donation opportunities to achieve the community vision. The Trust should benefit CA and lienpayers by serving as a funding vehicle to obtain funding for Symphony Woods that would not be otherwise available to CA. The Trust will continue to work closely with CA staff to make sure that communication on the status of the plan continues and, where appropriate, may make reasonable grant requests of CA as well.

Amenities Building Planning

The Trust holds certain grant funding that is specific only to the planning and design of the amenities building. Pending approval of the concept plan, the Trust will move forward with planning for this building and will present the building concept later in 2021.

Bike Rest Stop

Working with Downtown Columbia Partnership, a local sponsor, Bike HoCo, and CA, the Trust will be installing a “bike rest stop” in the park - essentially bike racks, some seating, and a pump as well as signage. Though small, this collaborative effort is an early win on beginning to place additional outside investment into the space to benefit the entire community.

Downtown Columbia Collaborative 2021 Planning

The Inner Arbor Trust, the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission, and the Columbia Festival of the Arts is inviting the entire arts community and key stakeholders to a second planning meeting for 2021 on 2/2/2021. At that time, each of the three entities will present the opportunities that the organizations have at this time for 2021 for performing arts in the “new normal” until larger programming can begin. The Trust will present options for socially distanced events at the Chrysalis.