

General Membership Kick Off Breakfast
Downtown Columbia Revitalization: The Vision for the Inner Arbor

Guest speaker: Michael McCall, President and CEO, Inner Arbor Trust

With several projects now underway as part of Howard County's plan for Downtown Columbia, the framework for a revitalized vision of Columbia is beginning to take shape.

A strategically critical part of the County's Plan is the Merriweather-Symphony Woods Neighborhood. While five of the six neighborhoods are defined by mixed-use development, "Merriweather-Symphony Woods will be a new kind of cultural park where the landscape becomes a setting for arts, cultural and civic uses." As of February 1, 2010, this mandate has literally been the law of the land.

This new arts, culture and civic uses park encompasses the 10 acres of Merriweather Post Pavilion, which is completely surrounded by the 35 acres of Columbia Association's Symphony Woods. On February 14th of this year, the Columbia Association board approved the adoption of the Inner Arbor Plan, called for the creation of the Inner Arbor Trust as a 501(c)(3) charged with the implementation of the Plan, and voted to empower the Trust with a perpetual easement and \$1.6 Million of initial seed capital for that purpose.

Michael McCall, the author of the Inner Arbor Plan, was unanimously elected by the Trust's board to be the President and CEO of the Trust. In 1982, McCall began a decade long career working for Columbia's founder, Jim Rouse, at The Enterprise Development Company, where he led a joint venture between Rouse and The Walt Disney Company on urban entertainment.

In 1992, McCall founded Strategic Leisure, which has worked for 21 years with entertainment companies, landowners, developers, restaurateurs, cultural institutions and economic development agencies. Bringing to bear the breadth and depth of his unique experience, McCall says of the Inner Arbor, "Living in Columbia for more than 30 years, and knowing the latent strategic value of the Merriweather-Symphony Woods Neighborhood, it is an honor to lead the unlocking of the Park's potential for all of us in Howard County and beyond.

Speaking of McCall, Bruce Laval, the former Executive Vice President of Operations Planning and Development for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts worldwide, said, "His greatest strength as a developer is his ability to blend different aspects into one big picture. He's got the creative ability, and the business sense, and he knows how to put the team together to get the best out of everybody – that's a rare talent."

Friday, September 20

7:30 am – 9:00 am

Ten Oaks Ballroom

Purchase tickets: www.leadershiphc.org