

University of Maryland Public Art RFQ
University Context and Site Description -Tawes Plaza

Location and Context

About Us

The university is conveniently situated within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, 25 miles south of the city of Baltimore, 5 miles north of Washington, D.C. and 24 miles east of the state capitol in Annapolis, and is accessible by air, rail, bus and/or auto. The campus lies within the City of College Park boundaries and represents approximately 40 percent of the city's total land area. It has a daytime population almost double that of the City of College Park's 23,714.

From its founding as land-grant institution, the Maryland Agricultural College has evolved to become the University of Maryland, the flagship of the State of Maryland's 11-campus system of higher education. The university is engaged in collaborative environmental agreements with local municipal, county, regional and federal agencies, and many public-private partnerships for joint planning and development, and public-public research partnerships. The University of Maryland is emerging as one of the county's premier public universities, whose sphere of influence extends locally, statewide, nationally and internationally.

History and Context

The State of Maryland chartered the Maryland Agricultural College in 1856 to offer a practical and scientific education to the sons of farmers. The original site of the College consisted of 428 acres and was part of the Rossborough Farms, then owned by Charles B. Calvert, a prime mover in planning and securing the college. Located in northwestern Prince George's County, the university campus comprises 1,250 acres of rolling topography, east of the fall line in the westernmost portion of the Coastal Plain Province and within the Anacostia-Potomac-Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Cultural Landscape

Over its history, the campus's landscape heritage has evolved to comprise a variety of eco-cultural landscape types that a trained eye may recognize on a campus walk. Recently established, the Campus Arboretum and Botanical Gardens will further reveal and enhance these landscape themes and types that include:

- **Natural** (stream valleys of Paint Branch and Campus Creek, wetlands and forested areas)
- **Rural/Agrarian** (The *Farm* on Regents Drive near Campus Creek)
- **Romantic/Picturesque** (Morrill Hall Quad, Memorial Chapel Lawn; Golf Course)
- **Classical** (McKeldin Mall, with its cross-axis between Hornbake Plaza and Talbot Hall)
- **Town/Urban** (East Campus New Town at U.S. Route 1- in design for forthcoming development)
- **Eco-Revelatory** (native plantings, rain gardens, forthcoming botanical gardens)

Planning Context

Facilities Master Plan 2001-2020

The university completed a campus master plan that presents a vision for development beyond programmatic 20 year projections. This campus master plan envisions the future campus as a more cohesive whole and a place of beauty, an environment that nurtures diversity and contributes to the total learning experience and broader community.

Campus Districts

The contiguous campus is characterized by eight campus districts, plus outlying university owned properties, one of which is the Historic Core District (134.5 acres). A surrounding view shed or

“traditional context” zone (130.6 acres) is part of five additional campus districts as defined in the University’s 2001-2020 Facilities Master Plan and Aesthetic Guidelines for Campus Development. Tawes Plaza is located in the West Campus District and lies within the “traditional context”.

The size of each defined district is approximately a five to seven minute walk radius. Various campus districts have developed over time, from natural woodland and meadows, to agrarian fields, to more "urban" areas, resulting in the general orthogonal street grid and the high-density buildings found in some areas. Each district has unique physiographic and cultural characteristics, evidenced in its natural features, open spaces, buildings, and their uses. Embracing the principle of understanding the most positive characteristics of the campus and extending them forward into the future, each district has been planned accordingly.

Aesthetic Guidelines for Campus Development

The Aesthetic Guidelines for Campus Development (ACDG) documents refine master plan objectives and will also serve university facilities committees, especially the university’s Architectural Design Standards Board (ADSB), providing the basis for conducting design review and assessing design quality assurance for campus development. The AGCD fulfill one of the main responsibilities of the ADSB to develop campus design guidelines for architecture and the landscape that provide design guidance to A/E teams. For the Maryland Public Art Program, Tawes Plaza Site, recommended ACDG volumes are: 1) Campus; 2) Historic Core; and, 3) West District.

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

The future development of the University’s physical plant will have dramatic consequences not only for the campus’ character, but also for its operating costs and resource demands long into the future. Creating a healthy and environmentally sustainable campus requires an integrated, systematic approach that not only includes departments of facilities management, but also environmental safety, purchasing, transportation, and related academic programs. Achieving sustainability requires changes in policy and practices at all levels of the University community, and requires action from individual students, staff and faculty members through to the executive level.

The university is a recognized national leader via its master plan, as host of multiple, national *Smart & Sustainable Campuses Conferences* and as a participant in the national *College and University President’s Climate Commitment*. Regionally, as the State’s flagship campus, the University is by definition a role model both to the University System of Maryland, and to the citizens of the State. Therefore, the manner in which it carries out its daily activities is an important demonstration of ways to achieve environmentally responsible living and to reinforce desired values and behaviors in the whole community.

References:

Campus Master Plan:

www.facilities.umd.edu/MasterPlan

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability:

www.sustainability.umd.edu

www.facilities.umd.edu/MasterPlan2/envguide.htm

Aesthetic Guidelines for Campus Development:

www.facilities.umd.edu/MMD/Aesthetic/index.cfm

Site Description - Tawes Plaza

Tawes Plaza is one among a network of campus open spaces, situated immediately adjacent to the Historic Core of the campus in the West District. The space of Tawes Plaza was shaped mostly by campus expansion and building development, west of McKeldin Mall and Anne Arundel Hall, in the decade of the mid-1960s through the mid-1970's. Tawes Plaza: 305'L x 275'W x 44' Ht. is the rectangular volume shaped by its surrounding campus buildings. Campus buildings that form the public space that is Tawes Plaza include:

- **Anne Arundel Hall (Bldg 060):**
 - Use: Division of Student Affairs; Student Residential Building
 - Constructed:1937; Georgian Revival; considered a contributing resource to the Campus Historic District
 - Footprint: 200' x 42'
 - Building Height: 3 ½ Stories; 58' top of roof ridge
- **Tawes (Bldg 141):**
 - Use: originally – College of Arts and Humanities; Performing Arts (Music & Theater); on-going renovation for the Department of English, including College of Journalism Television Studios
 - Constructed:1965; Neo-classical Revival; Considered a contributing resource to the Campus Historic District, named in honor of J. Millard Tawes, Governor of Maryland, 1958-1966
 - Footprint: 290' x 280'
 - Building Height: 3 Stories; 74'
- **Benjamin Building (Bldg 143):**
 - Use: College of Education; Academic Building
 - Constructed:1966; Neo-classical Revival; Considered a contributing resource to the Campus Historic District, named in honor of Harold Benjamin, Dean of Education, 1947-1952, whose idea of extending educational opportunities to working adults eventually resulted in the creation of University College;
 - Footprint: 261' x 144'
 - Building Height: 3 Stories; 54'
- **Art / Sociology Building (Bldg 146):**
 - Use: College of Arts & Humanities / College of Behavioral & Social Sciences; Academic Building
 - Constructed:1976; Modern; Considered a non-contributing resource to the Campus Historic District
 - Footprint: 319' x 165'
 - Building Height: 3 Stories; 50'at Tawes Plaza

As a public space, Tawes Plaza was originally developed with an orthogonal layout of concrete walkways, foundation planting areas, and rectangular grass panels; some of which included modest hedge rows and ornamental specimen trees and shrubs.

Typical to Tawes Plaza, as throughout most of the campus, is the underground web of the utilities distribution network evolved, including: steam, potable water, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, gas, high-voltage electrical, electrical (lighting) and communications. Heat from steam lines, utilities repairs and other maintenance operations resulted in challenges to maintain plant materials; there were public amenities.

In the mid-1980's, a landscape improvements project for Tawes Plaza was undertaken to improve public use and enhanced aesthetics of the place. Input was sought and obtained by Facilities Management staff to inform the Tawes Plaza space enhancement program. Adjacent campus stakeholders, especially those from adjacent building occupants (students, faculty and staff) conveyed the desire to make a variety of places within Tawes Plaza.

The resulting design and implementation provided for multiple locations and elements within the plaza to accommodate a variety of gathering and seating areas, with appropriate plantings and a sculptural fountain within the plaza. The physical pattern of paved and planting areas seen today reflects a functional response to the underground network of utilities.