

# CROWN COMMUNITY CENTER

## THE RETREAT | GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND

### PROJECT CATEGORY: INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

#### PROJECT SYNOPSIS:

Located on the former site of the historic Crown Farm, the 182-acre, transit-oriented development is comprised of distinct neighborhoods interconnected by parks, woodlands, and walkable streets in close proximity to a state-of-the-art high school, high-quality retail, and a Light Rail station in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Designed to be an iconic building located in the center of the Crown development, it is a symbol of the various neighborhoods and a place where all in the community feel welcome. The architecture is civic and communicates its role as the place for social gathering.

#### PROGRAM AND SOLUTION:

The interior of the building required fitting a large amount of program into a compact building footprint totaling 4,300 sf with an overall building area of 8,700 sf. Spaces include a community great room; kitchen; yoga studio and fitness center with locker rooms; a climbing wall; HOA offices and meeting space.

Anchored on the visual East-West axis of the development, exterior features of the community center include a swimming pool; tennis courts; a bocce ball court; a horseshoe pit; wrap-around deck with a stone fireplace; and a rooftop terrace with grilling capabilities featuring expansive views of the recreational complex, parks, and community. Complex site grading and the overall parcel size presented challenges for the connection between the amenities and the trail network. The team was able to adopt a more urban strategy with spaces sized only as large as necessary. Another strategy employed was the decision to arrange all of the uses closely together in lieu of expanding large areas for parking and lawns. These strategies yielded two positive effects. First, a real sense of place is established, and because visitors are guaranteed to encounter a human connection, a definite sense of energy and activity is created.



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## THE VISION

To create an architecturally iconic civic building that serves as a centerpiece and symbol of the various neighborhoods, where all in the community feel welcome.





Future Residential

CROWN PARK AVENUE

DISCOVERLY DRIVE

City Park

Community Amenity Building Envelope

Garden and Outdoor Cooking Area

Public Dropoff

Surface Parking

Toddler Swimming Pool

Optional Out Structure

Toddler Playground

Lap Swimming Pool

Tennis Court

Grass Play Area

Neighborhood Footpath

0' 20' 40' 80'



## THE SITE

Located on the former site of the historic Crown Farm, the 182-acre, transit-oriented development is comprised of distinct neighborhoods interconnected by parks, woodlands, and walkable streets.

## THE STRUCTURE

To complement the surrounding aesthetic of the neighborhood, the exterior of the building features a modern interpretation of Crown's farm heritage, utilizing brick, board and batten siding, and glass elements along with natural stone accents adding to the building's iconic character. The massing and form of the building is intended to be contemporary while both respecting and recalling the rural forms that existed on the old Crown Farm.



## THE PROGRAM

The program for the building contains amenities to serve the social and fitness needs of the community, including meeting rooms, a climbing wall, a public hall, bathroom facilities, and office space.



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## THE GROUNDS

The grounds contain a swimming pool, tennis courts, gardens and paths, a bocce ball court, horseshoe pit, and parking.



## THE GROUNDS

The building sits at the corner to address its urban obligations, and the grounds are behind, adjacent to the forest buffer.





## COMMUNITY GREAT ROOM

The spaces were conceived to function as a true third place for the community, a place that is neither their house, nor their workplace, but a comfortable environment to come together.



## OTHER AMENITY SPACES

The spaces were conceived to function as a true third place for the community, a place that is neither their house, nor their workplace, but a comfortable environment to come together.

