

The Sounds of Prince George's County - Part II

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In Collaboration with
Prince George's County Planning Department
PALS - Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability
An initiative of the **National Center for Smart Growth**

List of Locations and representative songs in Prince George's County

The following list consists of the locations of various music venues in the county and their attributed area, genre, and songs along with their opening and closing dates, or the current state of the location. The corresponding artist for each location is someone who has performed at that venue.

1. Surf Club

Location: 4201 Bladensburg Road, Colmar Manor and 4211 Kenilworth Avenue, Hyattsville

Town/neighborhood: Colmar Manor/Hyattsville

Previous Function: Country Nightclub

Dates open/closed: 1940 - Oct 29, 2011

Current Function: Kenilworth Laundromat

Styles/Genres: Country/Western, Jazz, Blues, Rock and Roll

Representative Song: Crazy - Patsy Cline

2. Rustic Cabin Restaurant or Berk Motley's Sirloin Room

Location: 4321 Bladensburg Rd, Colmar Manor

Town/Neighborhood: Colmar Manor

Previous Function: Restaurant and nightclub

Dates Open/Closed: opened 1938, closed 1997

Current Function: N/A

Styles/Genres: Rock and Roll, R&B, Jazz, Pop

Representative Song: What'd I Say - Ray Charles, Big Bad John - Jimmy Dean, Teardrops From My Eyes - Ruth Brown

3. Chubby's Restaurant

Location: Central Avenue

Town/Neighborhood: Capitol Heights

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1944, Closed September 1989

Previous Function: Restaurant and Bar

Current Function: N/A

Styles/Genres: Country/bluegrass

Representative Song: Weeping Willow Twist - Roy Clark

4. Armstrong's

Location: 101 Brightseat Rd. Landover

Town/Neighborhood: Landover

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1941, closed 1959

Previous Function: Music venue

Current Function: N/A

Styles/Genres: Bluegrass/country/western

Representative Song: Little Cabin Home On The Hill - Bluegrass Champs

5. Campus Club

Location: 1429 52nd ave, Capitol Heights, Now 1266 Benning Road

Town/Neighborhood: Capitol Heights

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1936, closed December 1961

Previous Function: Country/Bluegrass venue

Current Function: Freedom Way Baptist Church

Styles/Genres: Country/Bluegrass

Representative Song: Orange Blossom Hoedown by Scotty Stoneman

6. Mike Young's Cafe

Location: 5200 Marlboro Pike, Capitol Heights, now 4856 Marlboro Pike

Town/Neighborhood: Capitol Heights

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1937, Closed 1999

Previous Function: Nightclub

Current Function: JC Liquors

Styles/Genres: Popular music, later country/western

Representative Song: Yesterday When I Was Young - Roy Clark

7. Hilltop Restaurant

Location: 5211 Marlboro Pike, then 4857 Marlboro Pike

Town/Neighborhood: Capitol Heights

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1939, Closed 1953
Previous Function: Restaurant and Bar
Current Function: N/A
Styles/Genres: Popular music and Jazz
Representative Song: Willow Weep For Me - Arnett Cobb

8. Strick's

Location: 3211 Branch Ave
Town/Neighborhood: Temple Hills
Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1934
Previous Function: Restaurant and Bar
Current Function: Liquor Store
Styles/Genres: Country/Western, Jazz, Rock and Roll
Representative Song: Ain't No Wheels On This Ship - Patsy Cline

9. Mac's Sunnybrook or Sunnybrook Tavern

Location: 900 Livingston rd, Fort Washington
Town/Neighborhood: Fort Washington
Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1934, Closed 1992
Previous Function: Restaurant/Bar/Venue
Current Function: Restaurant/Bar
Styles/Genres: Country and Rock and Roll
Representative Song: Link Wray - Comanche

10. Senate Inn

Location: 5000 Marlboro Pike
Town/Neighborhood: Hillside
Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1940,
Previous Function: Nightclub
Current Function: Liquor Store
Styles/Genres: Variety
Representative Song: Gotta Travel On - Billy Grammer

11. Waldrop's Restaurant or Jimmy Comber's Supper Club

Location: 4318 Rhode Island Avenue

Town/Neighborhood: Brentwood

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1950 (approx.), Closed 1993

Previous Function Restaurant and venue:

Current Function: Faith Outreach Center (church)

Styles/Genres: Popular music, Jazz, Swing, Rock and Roll

Representative Song: A Blues Serenade - Glenn Miller & His Orchestra

12. The Varsity Grill

Location: 7410 Baltimore Avenue, College Park

Town/Neighborhood: College Park

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1932, closed 1980

Previous Function: Venue and restaurant

Current Function: Restaurants/local business

Styles/Genres: Punk Rock and Variety

Representative Song: Sheena Is A Punk Rocker - The Ramones, Johnny B. Goode -
Chuck Berry, Unconscious Power - Iron Butterfly

13. Dude Ranch or Club Laonga

Location: 9410 Baltimore Avenue:

Town/Neighborhood: College Park/Berwyn

Dates Opened/Closed: Opened 1934, Burned down in 1959

Previous Function: Restaurant and venue

Current Function: Car Dealership

Styles/Genres: Popular Music, Rock and Roll, Latin Dance music

Representative Song: Here We Go A Wassailing - the Frankie Condon Orchestra

14. King Kong Restaurant

Location: 2350 University Blvd E

Town/Neighborhood: Adelphi

Dates Opened/Closed: Unknown, Still open

Previous Function: Music Venue and Restaurant

Current Function: Restaurant

Styles/Genres: Punk-rock/Hardcore
Representative Song: Joyride - Government Issue

15. Archie Edwards Blues Foundation

Location: 4502 Hamilton St, Hyattsville — formerly Riverdale Park
Town/Neighborhood: Hyattsville
Dates Opened/Closed: In 2008, located in riverdale park, moved to hyattsville in 2019
Previous Function: formerly Barbershop (DC) then Music venue/education center
Current Function: Music venue/education center
Styles/Genres: Blues, Piedmont Blues
Representative Song: The Road Is Rough And Rocky - Archie Edwards

16. Sis' Tavern

Location: 4512 41st ave, North Brentwood
Town/Neighborhood: Brentwood
Dates Opened/Closed: Built 1912, Closed 1996 - subsequently revitalized
Previous Function: Tavern and Venue
Current Function: Community space
Styles/Genres: Jazz, R&B
Representative Song: Sweet Georgia Brown - Pearl Bailey, Take The "A" Train - Duke Ellington

Sources

Opsasnick, Mark. *Rock the Potomac: Popular Music and Early-Era Rock and Roll in the Washington, D.C. Area*. BookLocker, 2019.

Opsasnick, Mark. *The Cultural Badlands Tour: An outsider's guide to obscure landmarks and offbeat historical sites in Prince George's County, Maryland*. Philadelphia, PA: Xlibris, 2003.

Accessed via UMD Libraries, Special Collections in Performing Arts, Mark Opsasnick Papers.

Spotify Playlists

Julia's spotify playlist:

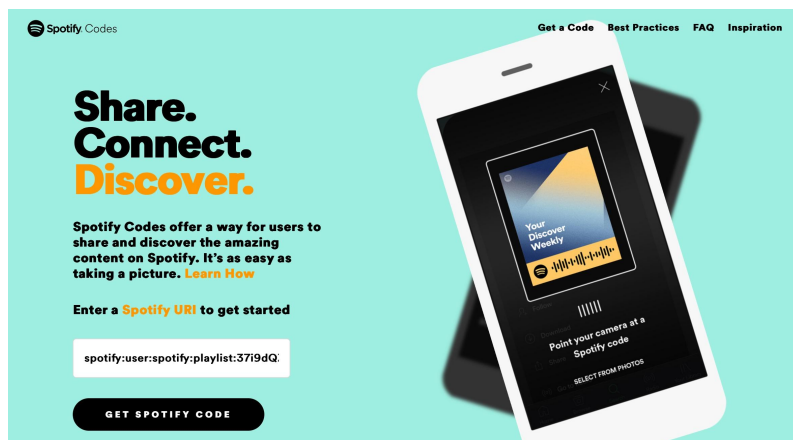
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4XBZ1A3ZsSlh8hUxzFL9VO?si=dfb47d4d96ab40dc>

Amanda's spotify playlist:

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3UgNF8ERJ80zOxYTdwOxoh?si=fiWqGEH_TjKRDz2YOJBy-w

Using the Playlists

Spotify is a great platform when it comes to sharing music. Along with the ease of sharing a link and the ability to collaborate, users can also create unique QR codes so that someone with a camera phone can scan and view it.



"Spotify Codes" are another option similar to a traditional QR code - screengrab from the front page of the Spotify Codes website.

QR codes, when generated for a spotify playlist, can pretty much go anywhere and allow someone to see and listen to curated playlists from PALS students. This has the potential to be a great method not just to get traction for the playlists, but for sending out polls and surveys.

Future Leads and Ideas

Local archives/libraries, historical societies, and community organizations

Prince George's County Historical Society - <https://pghistory.org>

Maryland State Archives - <https://msa.maryland.gov>

University of Maryland **Special Collections** -
<https://www.lib.umd.edu/collections/special>

University of Maryland **Special Collections in Performing Arts** -
<https://www.lib.umd.edu/collections/special/performing-arts/holdings>

SCPA is currently curated by John Davis (jrdavis@umd.edu) and managed by Ben Jackson (bjacks11@umd.edu).

SCPA holds the [Mark Opsasnick Papers](#), which holds all of his books along with myriad other materials from the Greenbelt historian including notes and recorded interviews.

University of Maryland - **School of Music - Division of Musicology and Ethnomusicology** -
<https://music.umd.edu/areas-of-study/musicology-ethnomusicology>

[Current Student Page](#)

The students, lecturers, and professors of the division are a dedicated group who are very dialed into music communities locally. Some are historians, performers, and practitioners as well and come from a variety of backgrounds with varied areas of expertise. Reaching out to those involved in the division can be a good starting point for further research.

Partnering with local musicians for performances

UMD's School of Music often has students performing and doing lecture series in local areas such as Riverdale Park, The Hall CP, The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Collington Retirement Center, and many other locations.

[The School of Musical Traditions](#) and the [House of Musical Traditions](#) - Though based in Takoma Park/Montgomery County, many of its affiliates and participants are based locally - giving music lessons, participating in jams, and performing.

Murals/plaques and other visuals

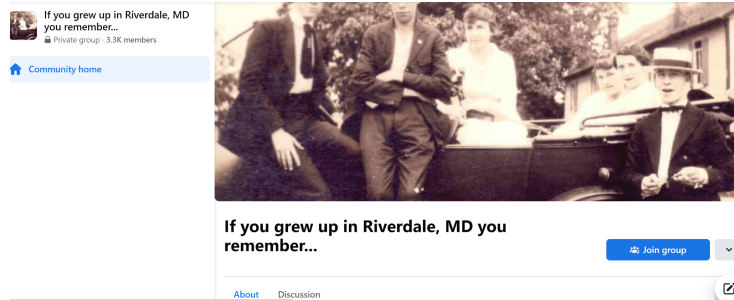
Though not applicable to every designated location, there is potential for a visual aspect of placemaking to be incorporated into the project in areas where there are nearby landmarks, open space, metro stations nearby, room for signs, boards, or plaques, or even murals. As exemplified in the project taking place with [Sis' Tavern](#), a similar approach could be taken in or around these places.

Murals or commemorative images can incorporate things like portraits of artists, or [album art](#), which can function as an important signifier in and of itself.

Utilizing social media

Engaging with the community

There are many Facebook groups based on nostalgia and sharing memories – in groups like this people discuss places they grew up with that are no longer there. This practice can also be seen on [Instagram](#) and Reddit.



Screenshot of an example of one of these local and nostalgic Facebook groups

This account is of a blogger in a midsize city in Upstate New York who used his platform to promote discussion of local history. The comment section is often a place for reminiscing and connecting with others.

<https://www.instagram.com/syracusehistory/?hl=en>

Many local and university affiliated libraries have made excellent use of their social media accounts, particularly on Instagram, Twitter, and even TikTok (the success of [Milwaukee Public Library](#) is notable — with their humorous and educational videos having gained them almost 100,000 followers and millions of views).

Locally, the revitalization of [Wilmer's Park](#) in Brandywine provides a potential source of inspiration for some of these former music venues. Though most aren't still standing or have the buildings being used for other purposes, the idea of allowing the community to submit memories, holding events with musicians, and having leaders provide the historical background and significance might be applicable here.

Turning to social media as an option for promotion, marketing, sharing, and reminiscing can provide a sense of convenience both for users and for those working behind the scenes — particularly if venues are in areas that are car-centric or difficult to access by foot or metro.