

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

3430 Courthouse Drive Ellico

Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-313-2350

Voice/Relay

Valdis Lazdins, Director

FAX 410-313-3467

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Planning Board Hearing of December 8, 2018

Case No./Petitioner: PB 441, Howard Research and Development Corporation (HRD)

Project Name: SE Quadrant Broken Land Parkway/Little Patuxent Parkway (Downtown

Columbia - Crescent Neighborhood) - Downtown Columbia Sign Variance for

Temporary Signage

DPZ Planner: Jill Manion, Planning Supervisor

Request: The petition, filed under Section 3.516 of the Howard County Code seeks to allow

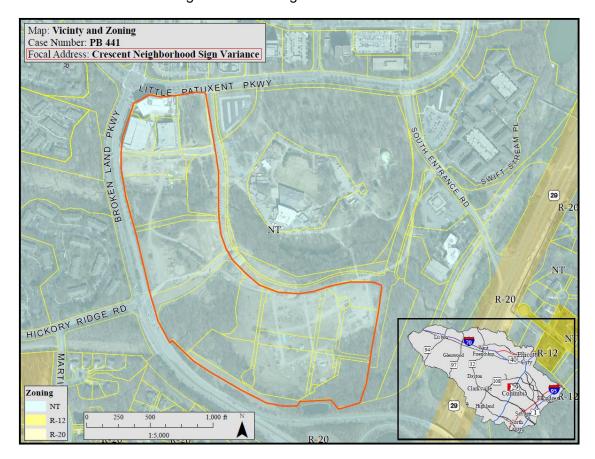
temporary signage within the Crescent Neighborhood for temporary wayfinding signage, identity signage, leasing signage, fence scrim and use of a barricade banner while the area is under construction until such time permanent signage is erected in accordance with the approved site development plans. A variance is required due to the quantity of signs proposed, sizing requirements and the length of time the signage

will be erected.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Zoning and the Department of Inspections Licenses

and Permits recommend **APPROVAL**, subject to a permit being issued for each sign to be erected, and that all signage is removed at the completion of construction and, as appropriate, leasing, and replaced with permanent signage in accordance with the

Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines.



Location:

The subject property is located in the 5th Election District, at Little Patuxent Parkway, Broken Land Parkway, and Merriweather Drive in Columbia, MD. Signage will be located on properties along Merriweather Drive, Divided Sky Lane, Hickory Ridge Road and Symphony Woods Road.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Relevant Site History:

- FDP-DC-Crescent-1 encompasses most of the land area within the Crescent Neighborhood and includes four designated development areas (including "Area 3"), a network of roads that expand the overall Downtown road network, and a network of land designated for environmental restoration and Downtown Parkland. The Crescent Neighborhood Concept Plan, the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines, and the Crescent Neighborhood Implementation Plan were included as part of the FDP package, which was reviewed and approved at a Planning Board hearing held on March 19, 2015. The Decision and Order was signed by Planning Board on April 16, 2015. The Plans and Documents were recorded on July 2, 2015.
- **FDP-DC-Crescent-1A** is an amendment to the previously approved FDP for Phase 1 of the Crescent Neighborhood, to identify the street and block structure of Crescent Neighborhood Area 3. It was approved by Planning Board at a public hearing on September 15, 2016. The Decision and Order was signed October 14, 2016, and the amended FDP was recorded in the Land Records on February 24, 2017 as Plat #24102-24110.
- **SDP-15-068** is a site development plan for two mixed-use office buildings and a parking garage on the southeast corner of Little Patuxent Parkway and Broken Land Parkway, known as Crescent Area 1. The plan was approved by Planning Board on October 15, 2015. All building construction is completed. The buildings are still completing their leasing.
- **SDP-17-027** is a site development plan for a mixed-use office building, a mixed use residential building, a free-standing restaurant building, a café, a parking garage and a park within Crescent Area 3. The project was approved by Planning Board on November 16, 2017 and is currently under construction.
- SDP-18-005 is a site development plan for a mixed use residential building and free-standing retail building, as well as surface parking on the southern and western side of Crescent Neighborhood Area 3. The project was approved by Planning Board on November 8, 2018 and is proceeding through the final approval process. Construction has not commenced.

B. Legal Notices

- The subject site was properly posted with two (2) official Planning Board hearing notices (one on Little Patuxent Parkway and one on Broken Land Parkway. These signs were posted beginning on November 6, 2018, as verified by County staff.
- Legal advertisements for this case appeared in the Baltimore Sun and the Washington Post on November 6, 2018. Certifications from the newspapers have been placed in the case file.
- **C. Regulatory Compliance**: Sign Variances for Downtown Columbia are decided by the Planning Board in accordance with Section 3.513(c) of the Howard County Code which states:

"In Downtown Columbia, the Planning board may approve a variance from the provisions of this subtitle where the proposed signage is approved by the Planning Board and the Board determines that:

- (1) The proposed signage is otherwise allowed;
- (2) The proposed signage is appropriate given its location and the anticipated scale and intensity of existing or planned adjacent uses;
- (3) The proposed signage will not adversely affect the use or development of adjacent property, nor result in a dangerous traffic condition;

- (4) The proposed signage will not be detrimental to the downtown revitalization; and,
- (5) Extraordinary hardships or practical difficulties may result from strict compliance with this subtitle or that the goals of downtown revitalization will be served to a greater extent by the proposed sign.

Section 3.500(e) of the Howard County Code also emphasizes that the approach to signage in Downtown Columbia should be different than elsewhere in the County:

"Provisions relating to Downtown Columbia were enacted as part of the Downtown Columbia Plan, a comprehensive development scheme to establish for the first time in the County an urban center that is well planned, economically successful, vibrant, and visually attractive in order to draw in businesses, residents, and tourists, and to attract events of a regional, national and international interest. The provisions governing signage in Downtown Columbia are intended to ensure that signs are an integral part of an overall development plan aimed at achieving an aesthetically pleasing and high quality visual environment that reinforces the planned character of each of the neighborhoods, is compatible with the identification and wayfinding for pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and establishes a coordinated and harmonic urban streetscape while, at the same time, provides for a signature environment for each of the six distinct neighborhoods that make up Downtown Columbia. The provisions are also aimed at achieving well-designed, coordinated signage and a process that encourages creativity in the use of signage to enhance the urban experience."

Additional signage regulations for Downtown Columbia pertinent to this sign variance request include:

- Section 3.501(c)(1)(b) In Downtown Columbia, the total sign area allow for a building shall be computed based on two square feet of sign area for each linear foot of downtown building frontage, including all building frontages on buildings having multiple frontages. Buildings with less than 60 linear feet shall be allowed up to 120 square feet of sign area.
- In Downtown Columbia, flat wall signs shall not cover all of a window. No flat wall sign shall extend above the top of the wall. A flat wall sign may be permitted within the area of screening for elevator shafts, stars or heating and air-conditioning units.
- In Downtown Columbia, a monument building sign, including its structure shall be no more than six feet in height. The maximum sign area for a monument building sign is 30 square feet per side or face. Monument building signs are exempt from setback requirements.
- In Downtown Columbia, directional signs are allowed and are not counted toward the total sign area of the building. Section 3.501(c)(9)a-d details the permitted directional signage in Downtown Columbia, which is included as Attachment A.

II. SIGN VARIANCE REQUEST DETAILS

As stated in HRD's request, the requested sign variances are for signage that will be erected for a limited duration during construction and prior to the conclusion of leasing activity within the Neighborhood. Upon conclusion of construction and leasing, permanent signage will be installed in accordance with the Sign Regulations and Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines unless a subsequent variance is required. Each approved SDP for the neighborhood (SDP-15-068, SDP-17-027, and SDP-18-005) includes wayfinding signage that is in accordance with the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Downtown-wide Design Guidelines. In detail, the variance request includes:

- The Area 1 signage is associated with street-level retail space in the existing Two Merriweather building (SDP-15-068, Building B) and with office leasing efforts. This signage will remain in place until the retail space is leased, at which time appropriate storefronts and tenant signage will be installed.
- The Area 2 signage is limited to temporary wayfinding signage near the intersection of Hickory

Ridge Road with Merriweather Drive.

• The Area 3 signage includes temporary wayfinding, leasing and Downtown promotional materials. Area 3 includes about 20 acres and will be the first fully mixed-used area created Downtown. Construction of Phase 1 of Area 3 will last about 24 months.

Please see the enclosed signage package and letter to the Planning Board for complete details of the requested variances and for examples of the signage being proposed.

III. PLANNING BOARD CRITERIA FOR SIGN VARIANCES IN DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA

The criteria for signage variances for Downtown Columbia are outlined in Section 3.513(c) of the Howard County Code, and in section I.C. of this Technical Staff Report. Staff provides the following analysis:

A. The proposed signage is otherwise allowed.

None of the proposed signage is prohibited by the County Code.

B. The proposed signage is appropriate given its location and the anticipated scale and intensity of existing or planned adjacent uses.

According to HRD's request, each sign has been designed with its specific location in mind. Area 2 and Area 3 are isolated from existing development. The signage proposed for Area 1 is designed to be appropriate given its location related to adjacent vehicular, pedestrian or opens space areas. While the development adjoins existing developed properties, the signage proposed for Area 1 is internal to the Crescent Development. Except for wayfinding signage, the proposed signage should not be overtly visible to adjoining properties or to the pedestrian or vehicular traffic on Little Patuxent Parkway and Broken Land Parkway. Each sign is sized to achieve its purpose while respecting the scale and intensity of nearby existing or planned uses.

C. The proposed signage will not adversely affect the use or development of adjacent property, nor result in a dangerous traffic condition.

The proposed signage does not include any flashing, movement or excess verbiage that would create distraction to vehicular drivers or to pedestrians. The signage will be temporary but will be securely affixed. The proposed signage would not be overtly visible to properties outside the Crescent Neighborhood that would create any nuisance.

D. The proposed signage will not be detrimental to the downtown revitalization.

The proposed signage is deemed by the applicant to be critical to promoting Downtown Columbia and its success. Rather than be detrimental, it would further the goals of Downtown Columbia by promoting the transformation of the area into a vibrant, mixed-use environment. Promotion of this environment during construction while keeping an aesthetically pleasing experience, is essential during lease up. The signage proposed is consistent with signage found in other downtown areas both regionally and throughout the Country.

E. Extraordinary hardships or practical difficulties may result from strict compliance with this subtitle or that the goals of downtown revitalization will be served to a greater extent by the proposed sign.

The goals of Downtown Revitalization will be served to a greater extent by the proposed signage because it allows for temporary wayfinding while construction is on-going, which will direct visitors both to the Crescent Development, and to events at Merriweather Post Pavilion and Symphony Woods. The signage will be attractive and aesthetically pleasing to reduce the visual impact of construction and will promote the new mixed-use community being constructed. Finally, the proposed

variance will allow the signage to remain throughout construction rather than meet an arbitrary timeline. The signage proposed is consistent with signage found in other urban areas. The proposed variance more effectively meets the goals of Downtown signage than the sign code for the remainder of the County is able to address.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Zoning and the Department of Inspections Licenses and Permits recommend APPROVAL, subject to a permit being issued for each sign to be erected, and that all signage is removed at the completion of construction and, as appropriate, leasing, and replaced with permanent signage in accordance with the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

Valdis Lazdins, Director Date

Department of Planning & Zoning

Please note that this file is available for public review by appointment at the Department of Planning and Zoning's public service counter, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A

SECTION 3.501(c)(9) - DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA DIRECTION SIGNS

Downtown Columbia directional signs. In Downtown Columbia, directional signs are allowed as follows and are not counted toward the total sign area of the building as calculated in subsection 3.501(c)(1)b. of this subtitle. A plan coordinating the design and appearance of directional signs with respect to style, color, and font shall be approved as part of the Downtown Neighborhood Design Guidelines. Directional signs will conform to any applicable Downtown Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

- a. Vehicular directional signs are allowed and may contain the neighborhood name or "Downtown Columbia" or logotype, generic uses (such as "parking", "library", "plaza", "shops", "hotel", "restaurants", "grocery", "theatre", etc.) and wording of a directional nature, or public service information (such as information concerning transit routes and schedules, transportation demand management activities, community events, weather, and similar information). These signs may be placed on private land or in the public right-of-way, and shall be designed to direct and inform drivers to allow expedient movement through Downtown Columbia. Potential locations for vehicular directional signs shall be indicated on the neighborhood concept plan. Final locations shall be approved as part of a site development plan unless erected pursuant to subsection 3.503(a) or subsection 3.505a(b) of this subtitle. The area of these signs shall not exceed 18 square feet per side.
- b. Pedestrian directional signs are allowed and may contain the neighborhood name or "Downtown Columbia" or logotype, generic uses (such as "parking", "library", "plaza", "shops", "hotel", "restaurants", "grocery", "theatre", etc.) and wording of a directional nature, or public service information (such as information concerning transit routes and schedules, transportation demand management activities, community events, weather, and similar information). These signs may be placed on private land or in the public right-of-way, and shall be designed to direct and inform pedestrians. Potential locations for pedestrian directional signs shall be indicated on the neighborhood concept plan. Final locations shall be approved as part of a site development plan unless erected pursuant to subsection 3.503(a) or subsection 3.505a(b) of this subtitle. The area of these signs shall not exceed 18 square feet per side.
- c. Directory signs which contain specific retail or office tenant names and information, directional information, and/or public service information (such as information concerning transit routes and schedules, transportation demand management activities, community events, weather and similar information) are allowed. These signs may be placed on private land only. Potential locations may be indicated on the Neighborhood Concept Plan. Final locations shall be approved as part of a site development plan, unless erected pursuant to subsection 3.503(a) of this subtitle. The area of these signs shall not exceed 12 square feet per side.
- d. Site directional signs such as "entrance," "exit," "parking" etc., shall be allowed. Site directional signs shall not contain any message other than the directional text and may be placed on private land or in the public right-of-way. Each sign may contain an arrow or graphic to accentuate its message and the area of each sign shall not exceed six square feet.

Merriweather

District

Temporary Signage Package October 16, 2018

Howard Hughes.

ALTE HAAS GROTESK - BOLD ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890



C = 0, M = 0, Y = 0, K = 100

C = 0, M = 0, Y = 0, K = 0

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

ALTE HAAS GROTESK - REGULAR





<u>LEGEND</u>

Barricade Banner

Fence Scrim

Identity Sign

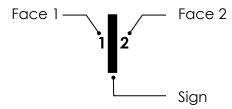
Leasing Sign

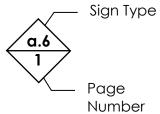
Wayfinding

AREA 3

(Pg.4)

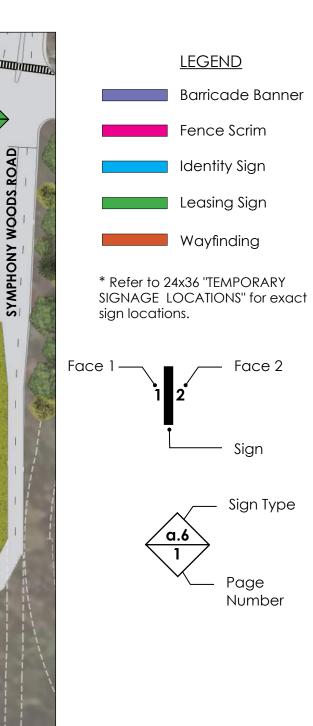
* Refer to 24x36 "TEMPORARY SIGNAGE LOCATIONS" for exact sign locations.





MERRIWEATHER SYMPHONY WOODS

KEY PLAN



OFFICE A1

PARKING GARAGE

N 0 10 20 40

MERRIWEATHER DRIVE

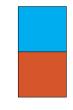
BUILDING B

PAVILION

BUILDING E2

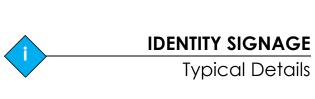
BUILDING E2

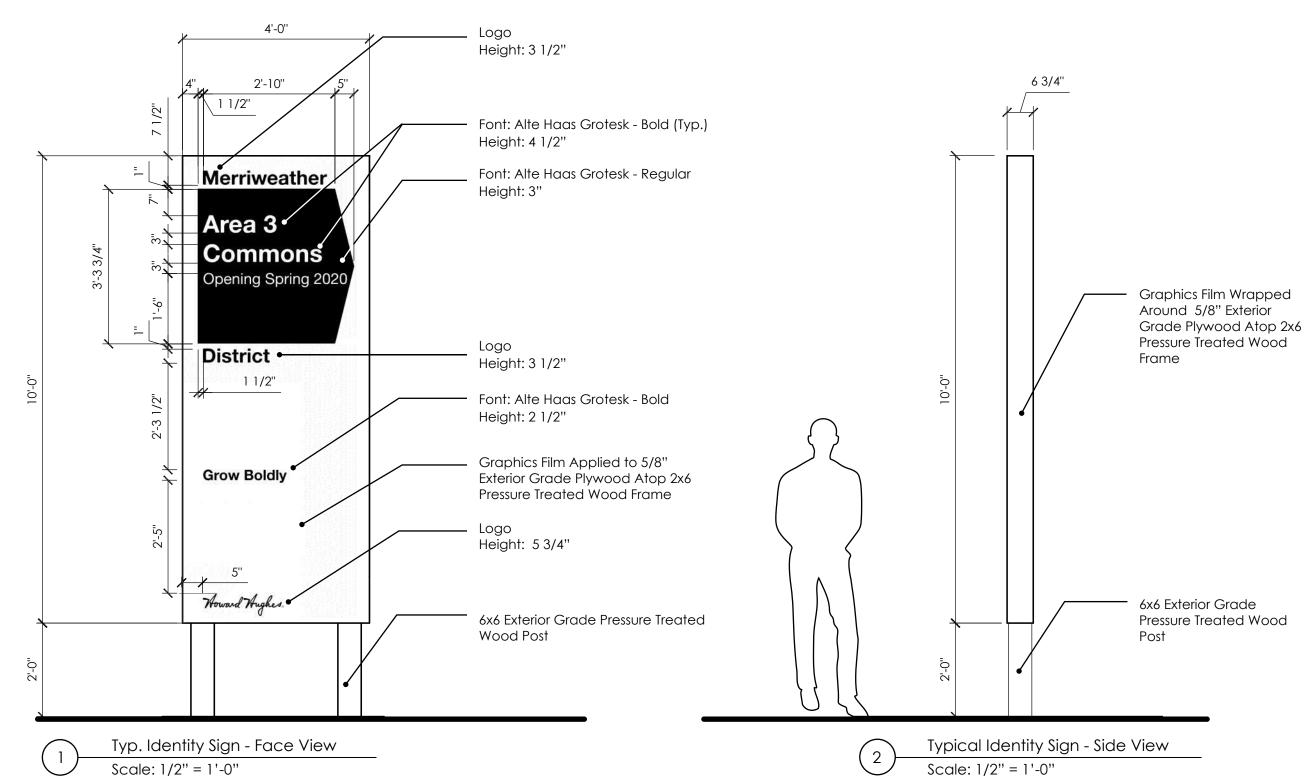
AREA 3 - SITE PLAN PHASE 1



MWD Identity + Wayfinding Signage







- * Face 2 (Back view) is opposite hand for all identity signs
- ** All Hardware/Fastners to be concealed beneath graphic treatment

Merriweather

Office 30A Opening Fall 2019

District

Grow Boldly

Howard Hughes.

Identity i.3 - Face 1

Merriweather

Area 3 **Commons**

Opening Spring 2020

District

Grow Boldly

Howard Hughes.

Identity i.1 - Face 1

Identity i.2 - Face 1

Howard Hughes.

Merriweather

Residential

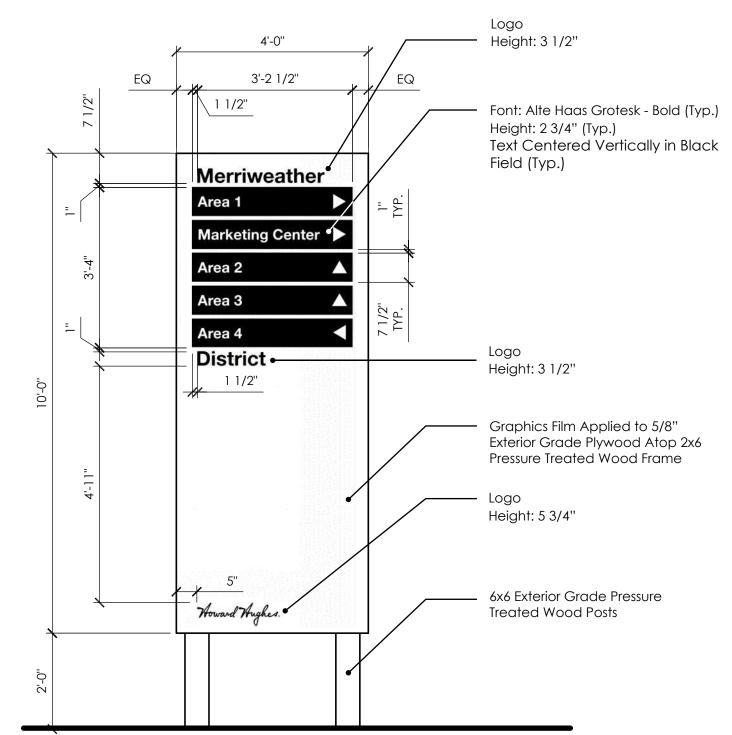
Opening Spring 2020

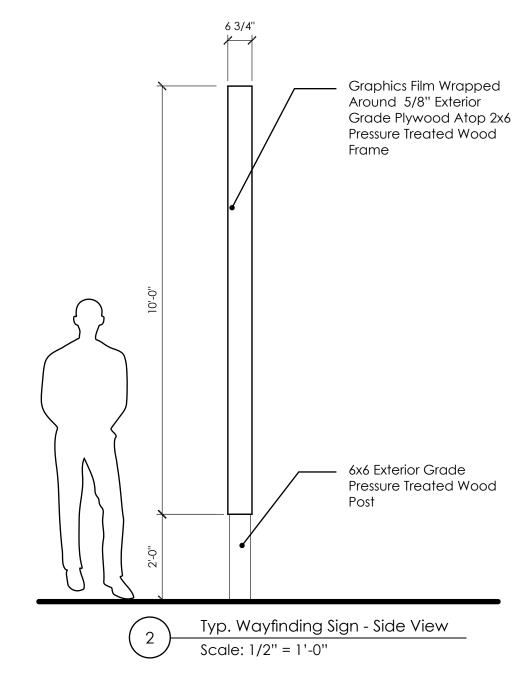
District

Grow Boldly

* Face 2 (Back view) is opposite hand for all identity signs
** All Hardware/Fastners to be concealed beneath graphic treatment

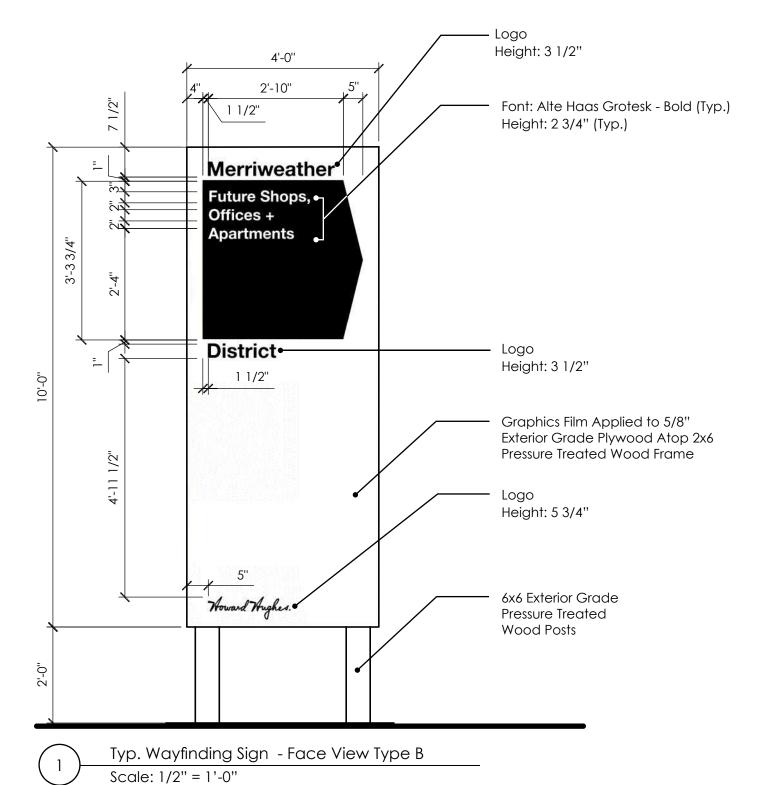






Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Typ. Wayfinding Sign - Face View Type A

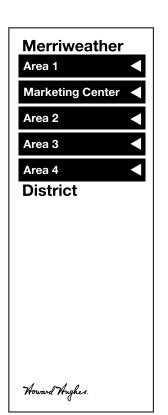


Wayfinding - w.3 - Face 1

Merriweather Area 1 Marketing Center Area 2 Area 3 Area 4 **District**

Wayfinding - w.3 - Face 2

Howard Hughes.



Wayfinding -w.1 - Face 1

(Intentionally

Left Blank)

Wayfinding - w.2 - Face 1

Howard Hughes.

Merriweather

Marketing Center <

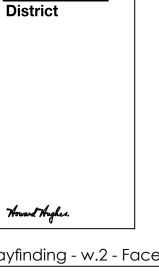
Area 2

Area 3

Area 4

District





Wayfinding -w.1 - Face 2



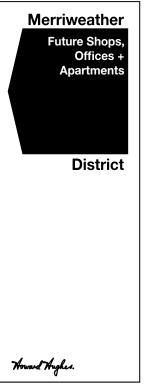


Merriweather District Columbia, MD

MWD AREA 3 Temporary Signage







Wayfinding -w.4 - Face 1

Area 1

Area 2

Area 3

Area 4

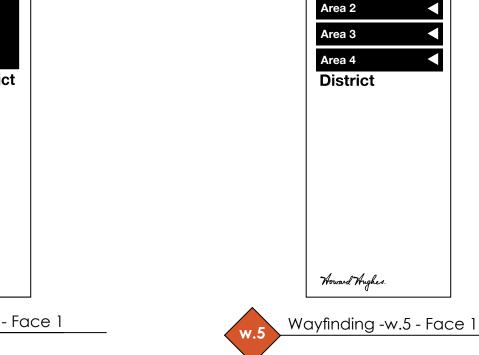
District

Howard Hughes.

Wayfinding -w.4 - Face 2

Merriweather

Marketing Center

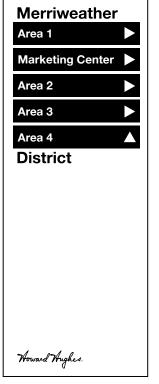


Merriweather Area 1 Marketing Center

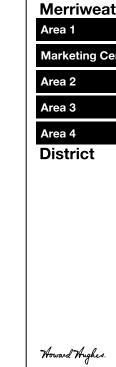
Merriweather

Marketing Center

Area 1



Wayfinding -w.5 - Face 2



Merriweather

Marketing Center

Area 1

Area 2

Area 3

Area 4

District

Howard Hughes.

Wayfinding -w.6 - Face 1

Merriweather

Marketing Center

Area 1

Area 2

Area 3

Area 4

District

Howard Hughes.

Wayfinding -w.6 - Face 2





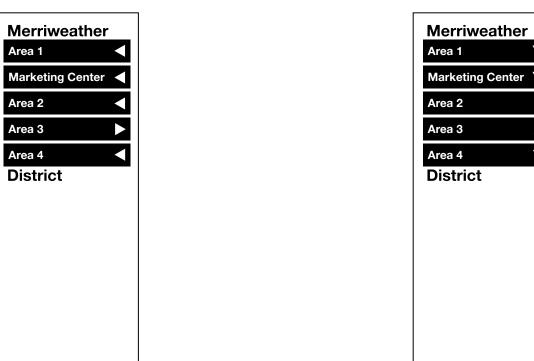
Merriweather District Columbia, MD



MWD AREA 3 Temporary Signage







Marketing Center ▼ Area 2 Area 3 Area 4 District Howard Hughes.

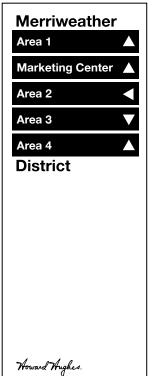
Merriweather Area 1 Marketing Center Area 2 Area 3 Area 4 **District** Howard Hughes.

Wayfinding -w.9 - Face 1

Merriweather

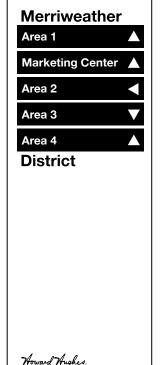
Area 1

Wayfinding -w.8 - Face 1



Marketing Center ▼ Area 2 Area 3 Area 4 **District** Howard Hughes.

Wayfinding -w.9 - Face 2



Wayfinding -w.8 - Face 2



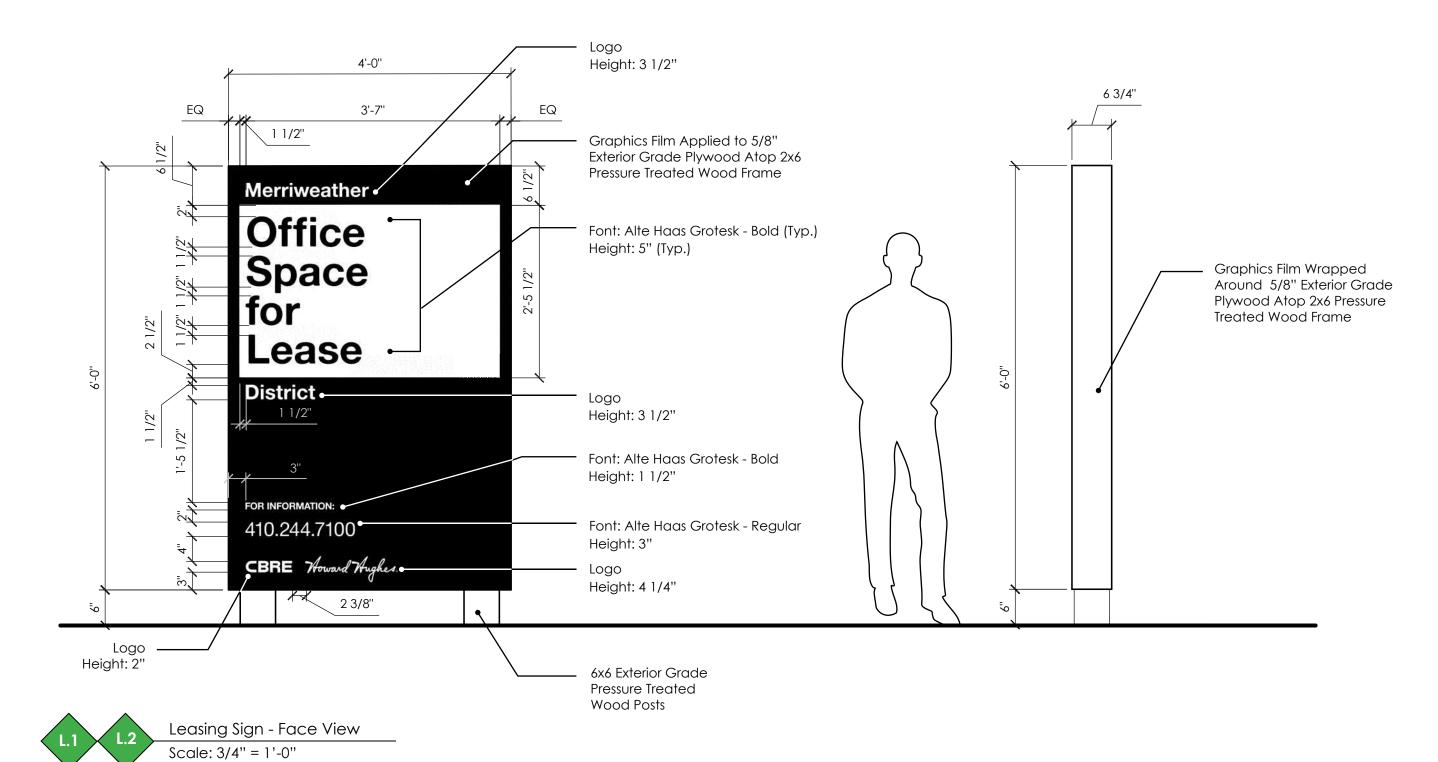
Wayfinding - w.7 - Face 2

Howard Hughes.

Wayfinding - w.7 - Face 1

(Intentionally

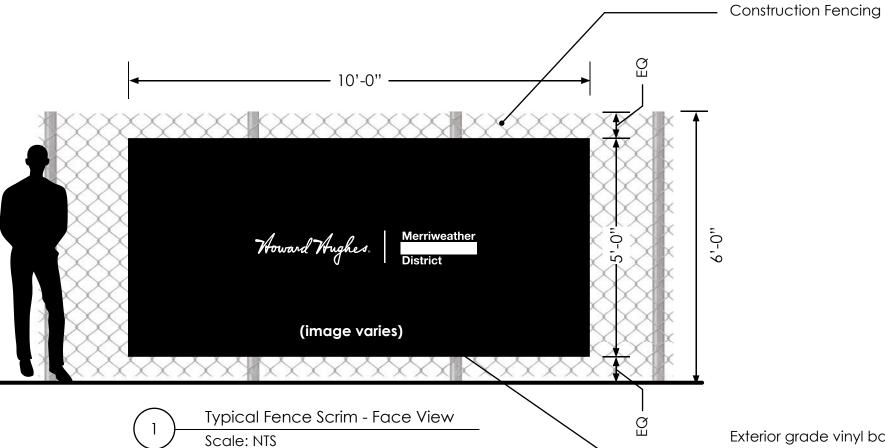
Left Blank)



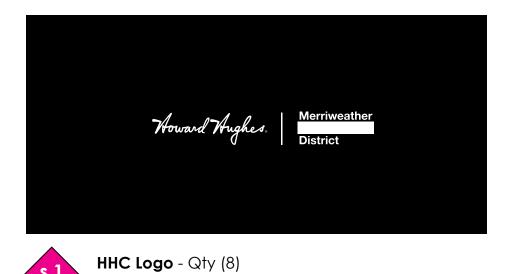
^{*} Face 2 (Back view) is opposite hand for all identity signs

^{**} All Hardware/Fastners to be concealed beneath graphic treatment

Area 3 Fence Scrim

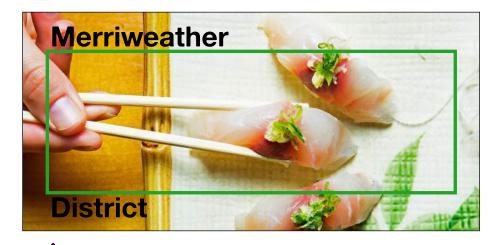


Exterior grade vinyl banner; back view is blank. Repeat Panels in order from s-1 through s-13 around Bldg. B fencing. Space panels 4" apart.





Partner Logos - Qty (8)



s.3

Food A- Qty (10)



s.4

Food B- Qty (10)



s.5

Food C - Qty (10)



s.6

Farmers Market A - Qty (10)





Farmers Market B - Qty (10)



s.8

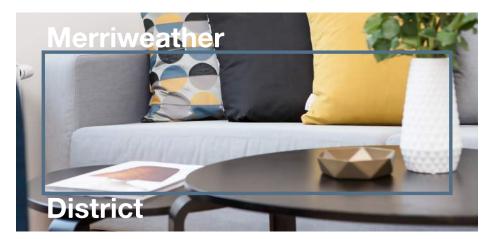
Cultural (Opus) - Qty (10)



Residential A - Qty (10)



Residential B - Qty (10)



Residential C - Qty (10)



Office - Qty (10)



Fitness - Qty(10)

Merriweather Barricade



Barricade Кеу



HOESY CORONA











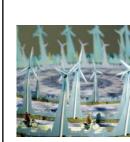
















Merriweather District



_	Barricade Linear Feet
West	34'-10''
South	95'-6"
East	38'-10"
Total	169'-2"

MERRIWEATHER BARRICADE Sign Graphics



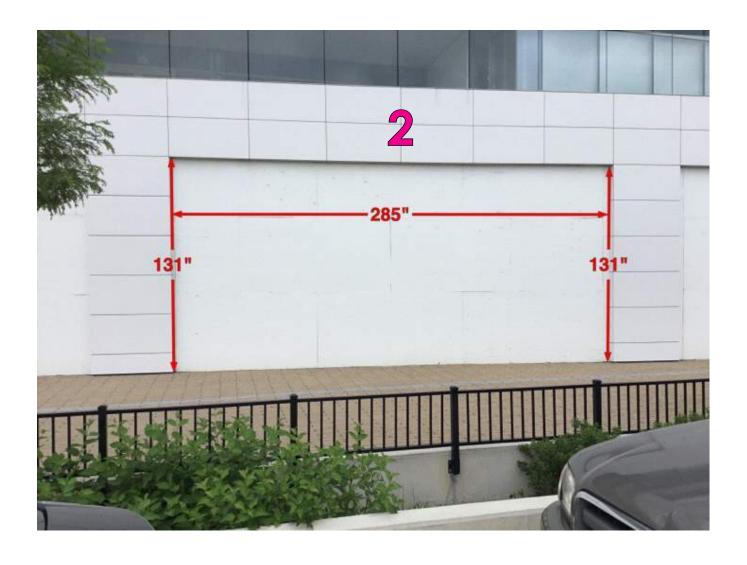


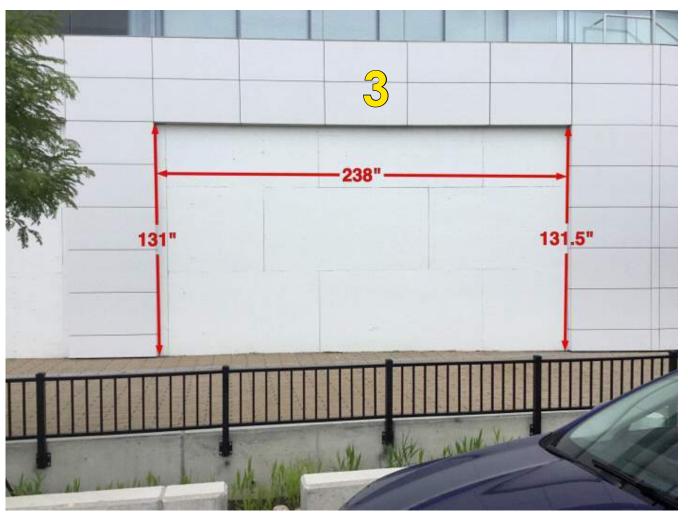




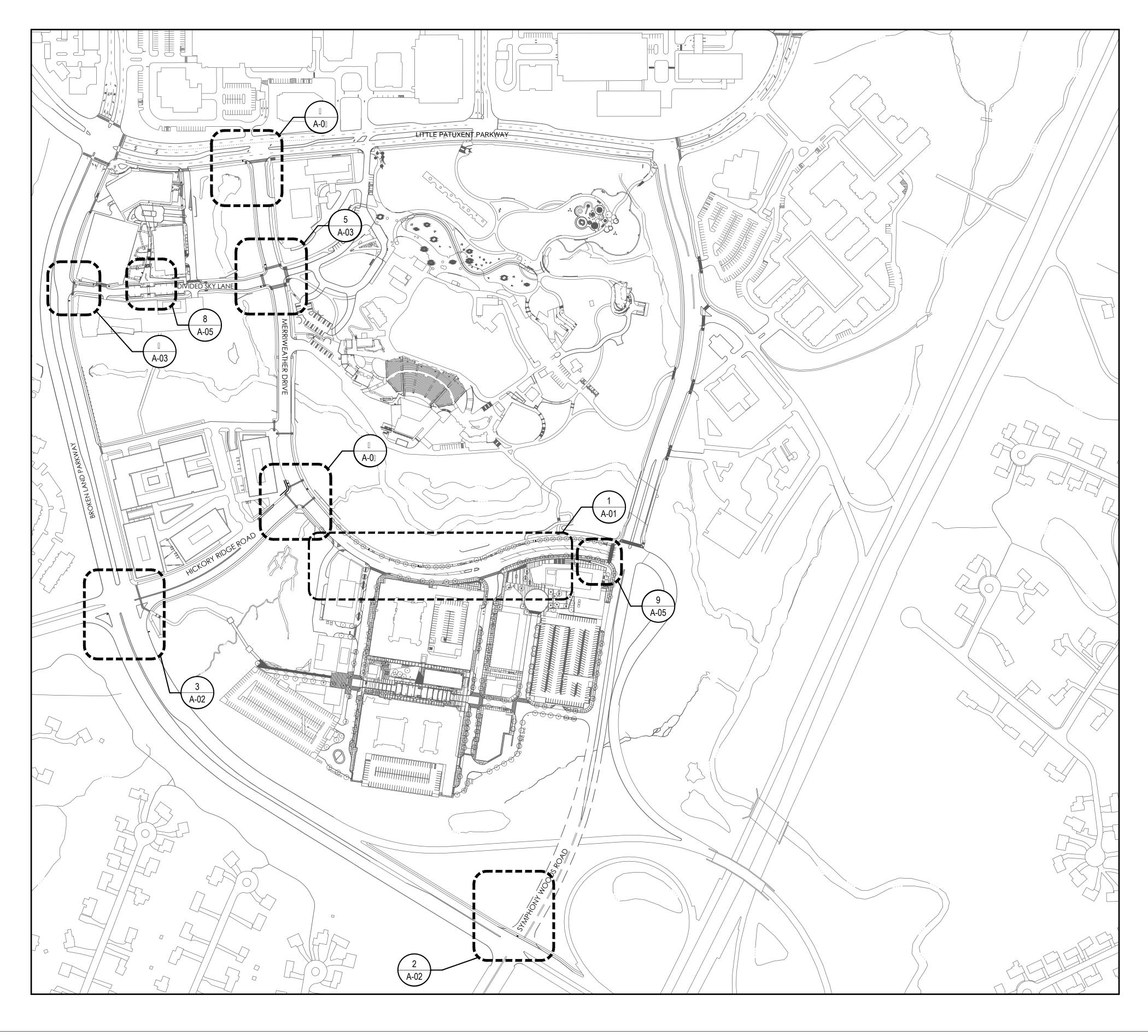
















Client:



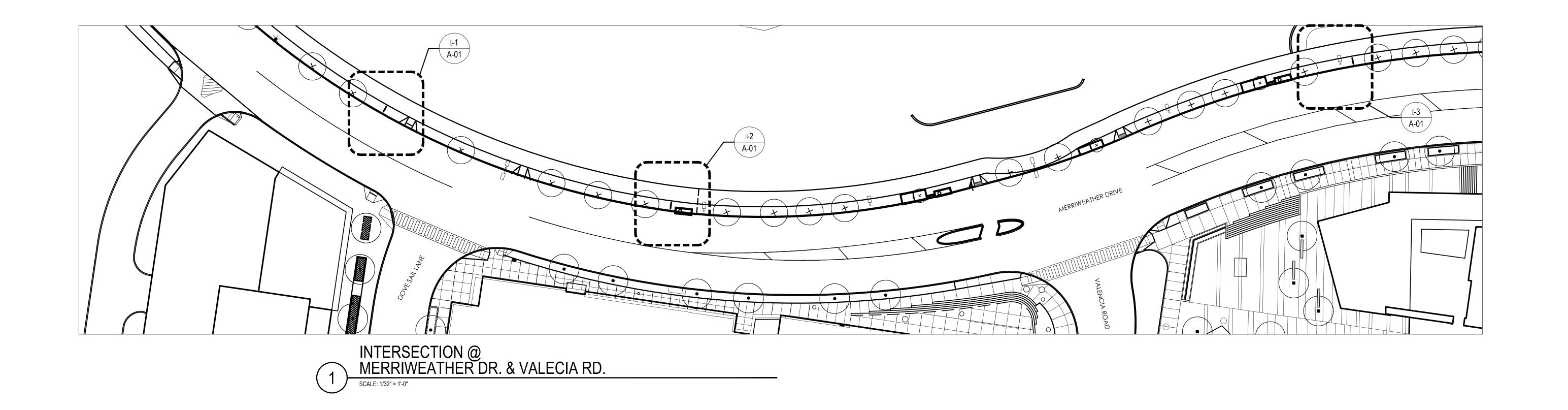
JP2 ARCHITECTS 2811 Dillon Street Baltimore, MD 21224 *t* 410.276.7470 410.276.7471

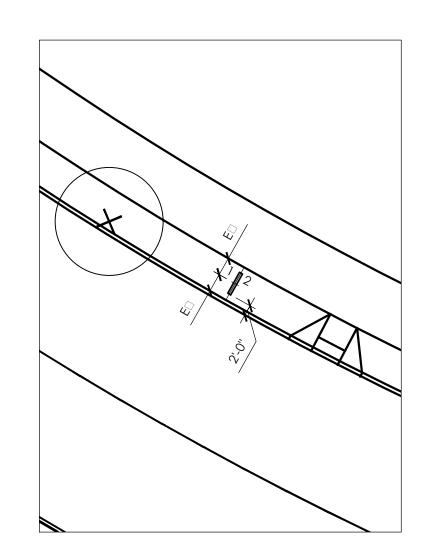
TEMPORARY SIGNAGE LOCATIONS October 16, 2018

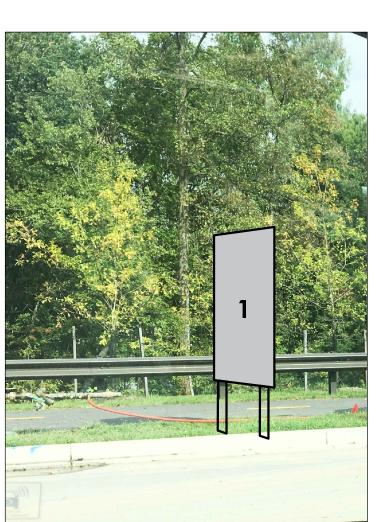
MERRIWEATHER DISTRICT

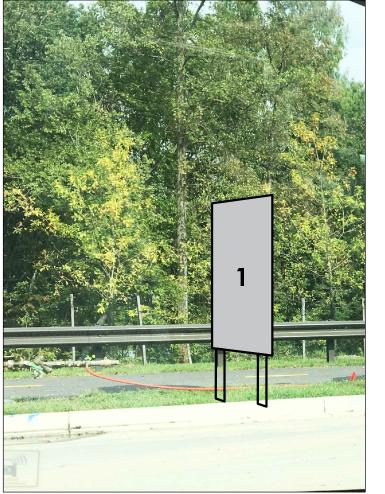
COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

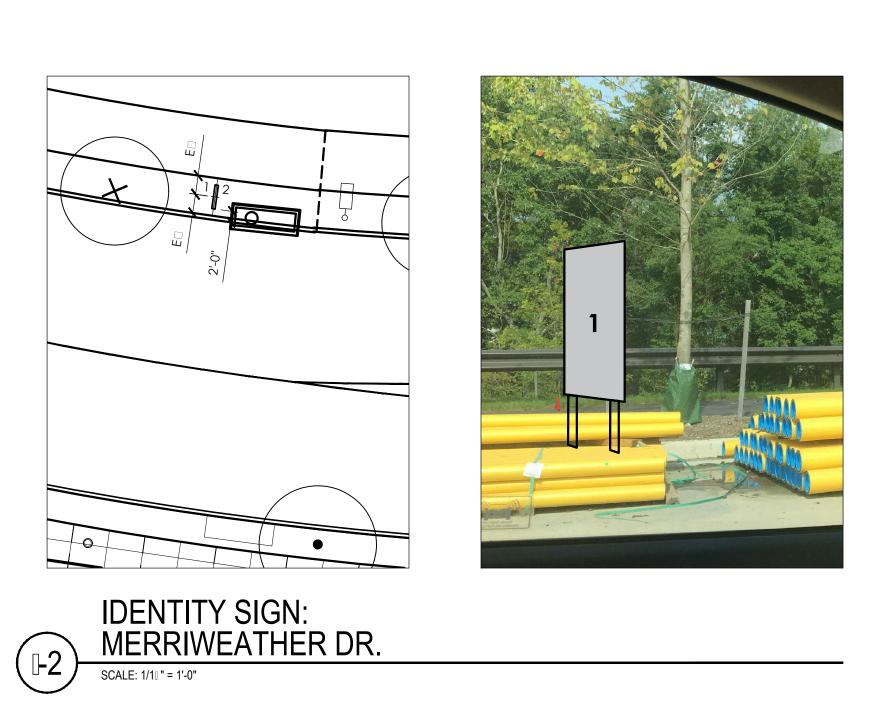
Howard Hughes Corp. 10480 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 400 Columbia, MD 21044 *t* 410.964.4800

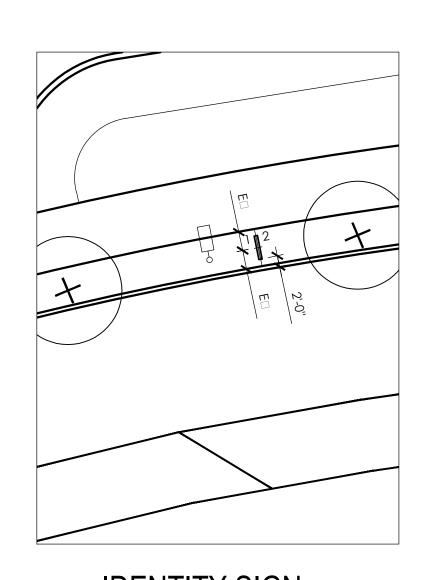














IDENTITY SIGN: MERRIWEATHER DR. SCALE: 1/10" = 1'-0"





JP2 ARCHITECTS 2811 Dillon Street Baltimore, MD 21224 *t* 410.276.7470 410.276.7471 www.JP2architects.com

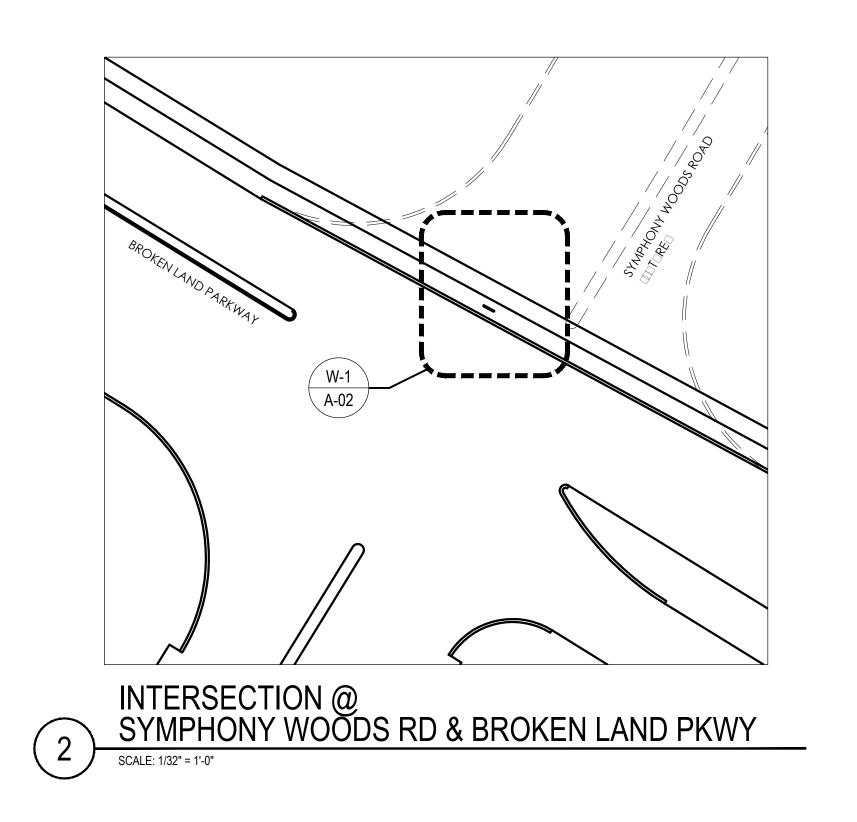
TEMPORARY SIGNAGE LOCATIONS October 16, 2018

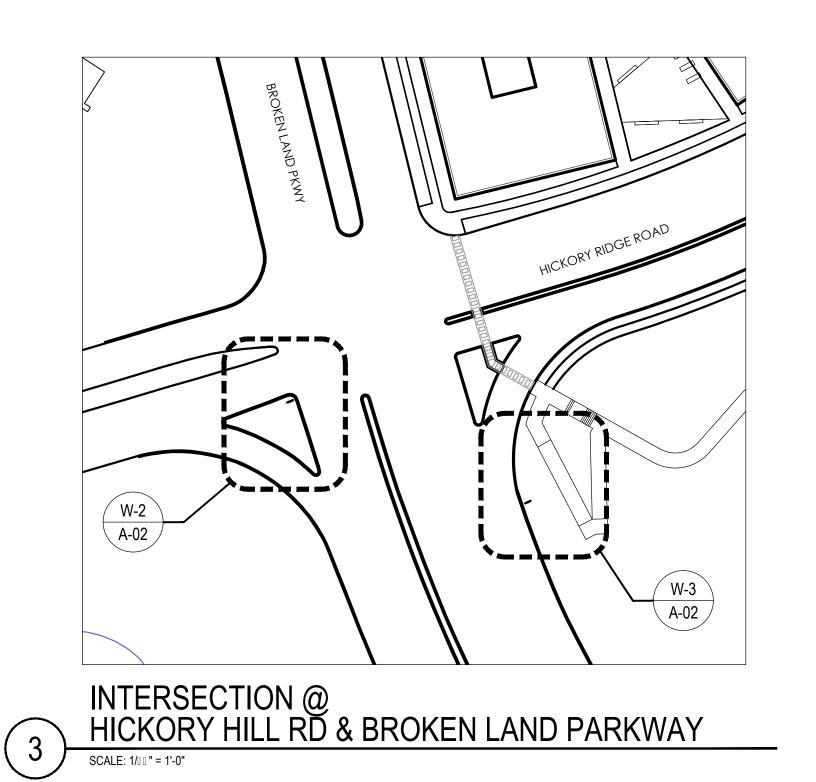
MERRIWEATHER DISTRICT

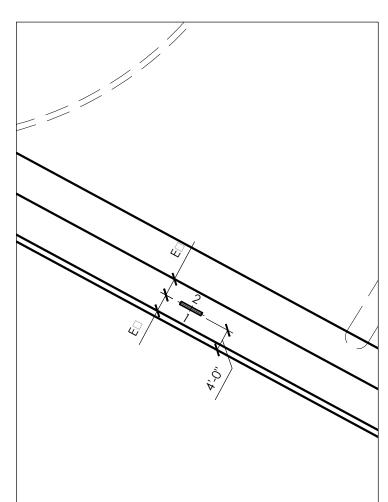
COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

Client:

Howard Hughes Corp. 10480 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 400 Columbia, MD 21044 *t* 410.964.4800

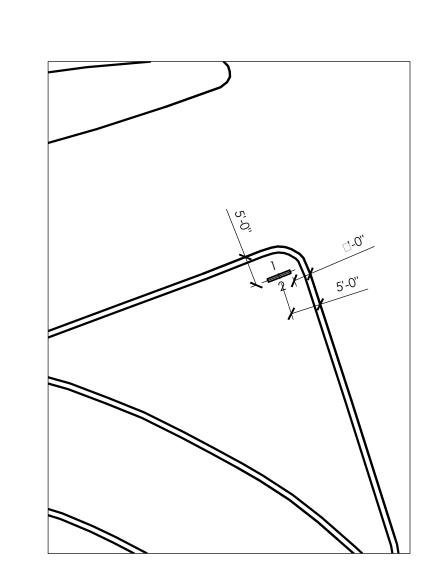








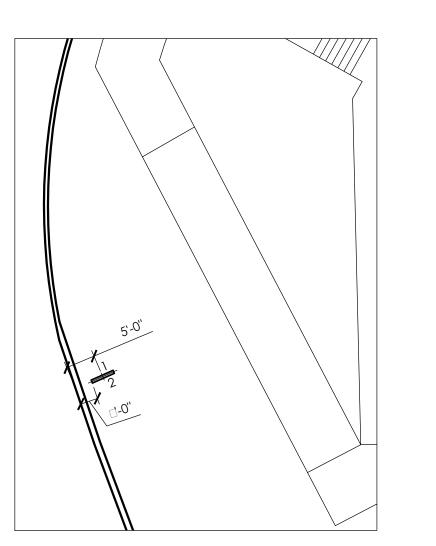
















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TEMPORARY SIGNAGE LOCATIONS October 16, 2018

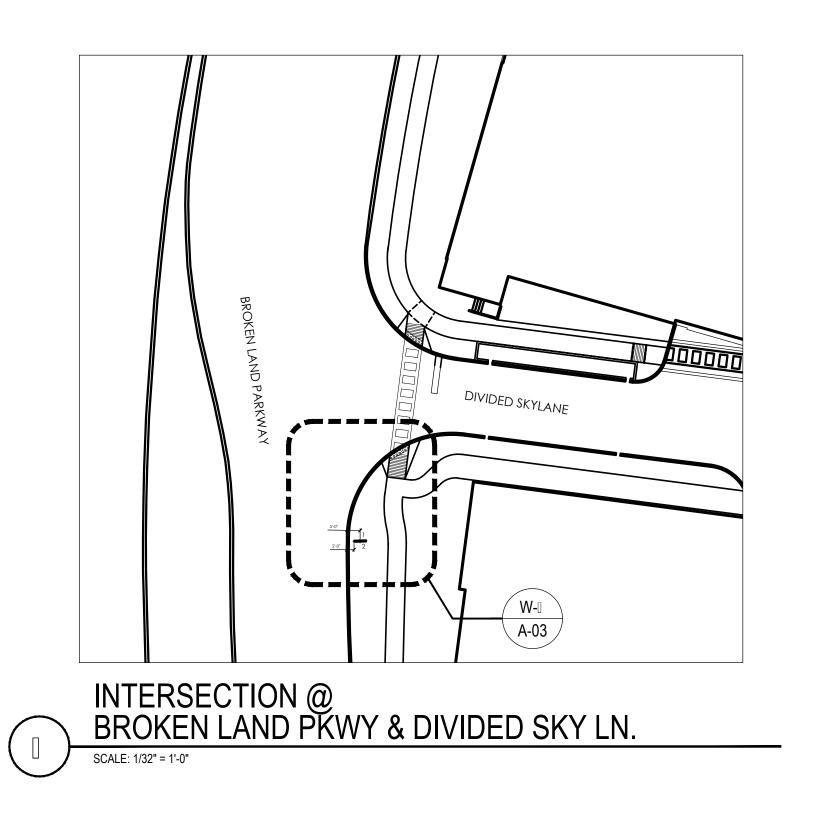
MERRIWEATHER DISTRICT

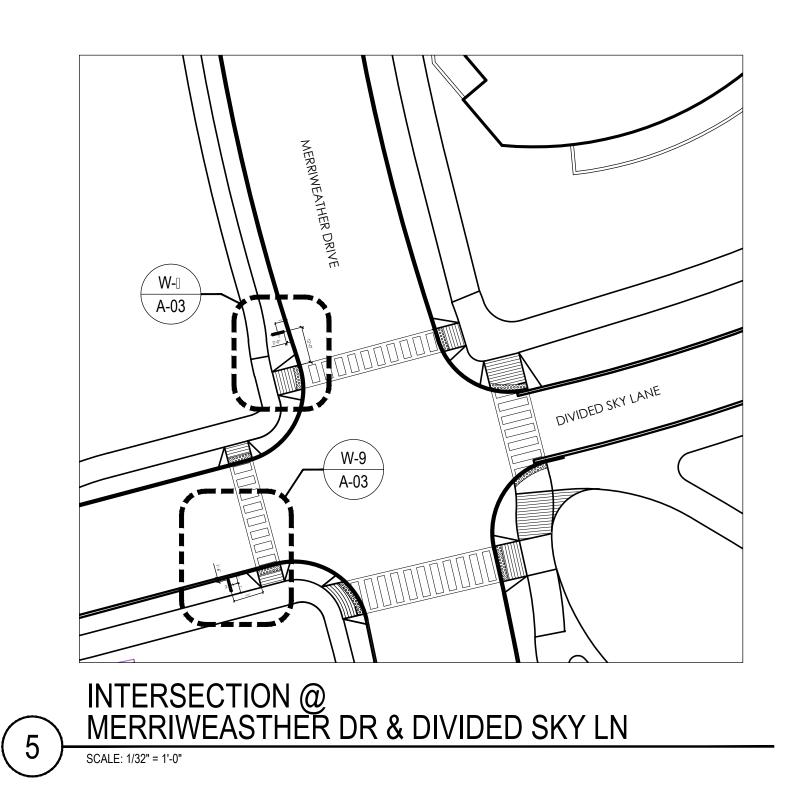
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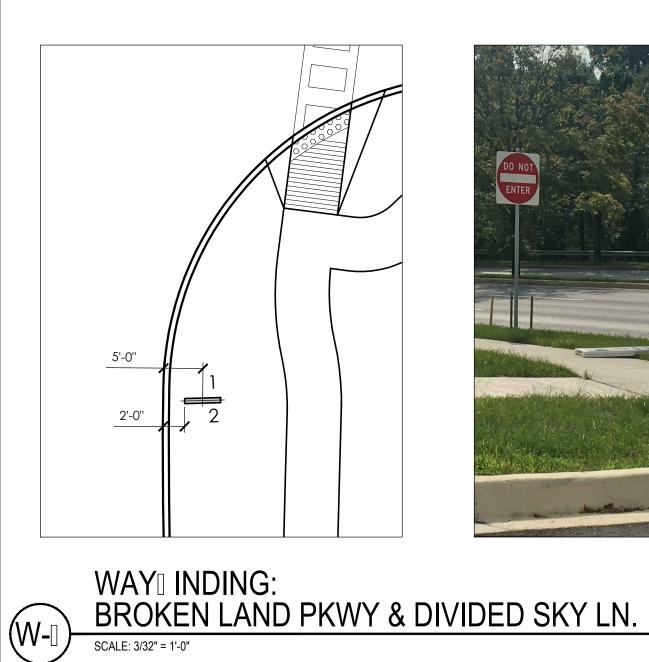
Client:

t 410.964.4800

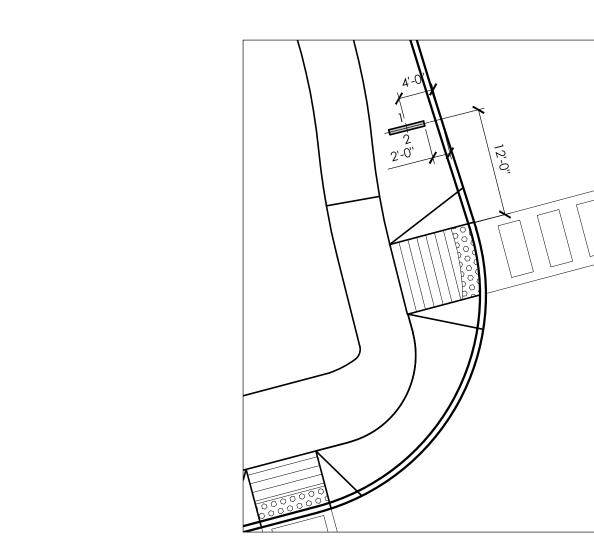
Howard Hughes Corp. 10480 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 400 Columbia, MD 21044



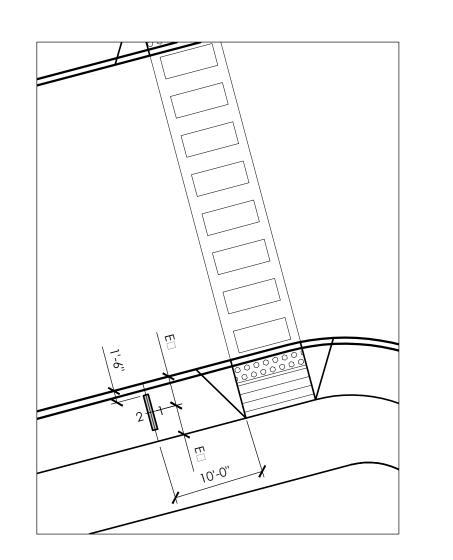














WAY INDING:
DIVIDED SKY LN. & MERRIWEATHER DR.

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"





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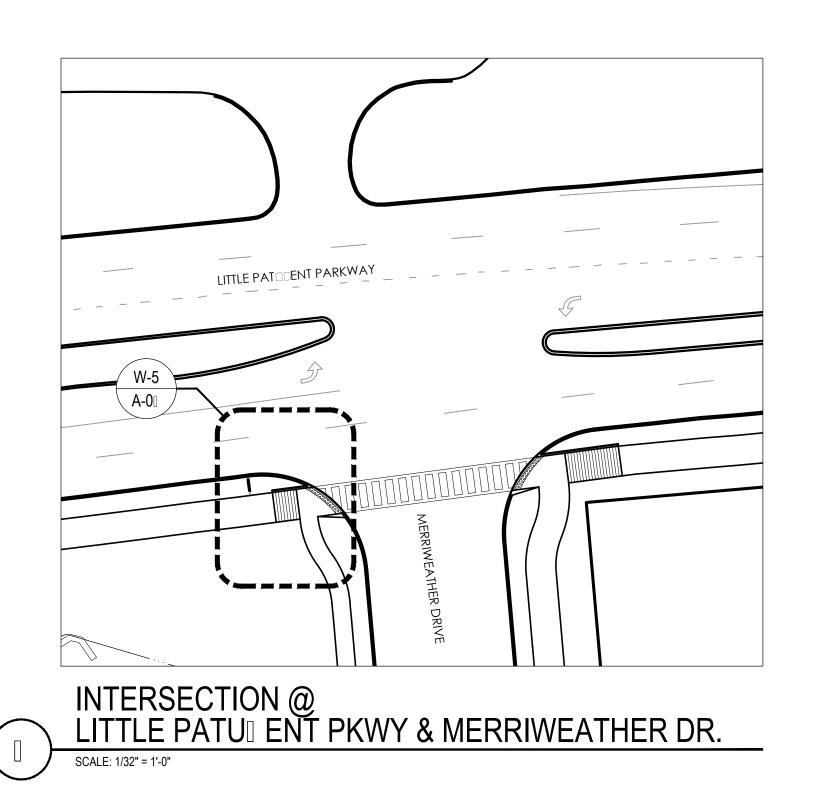
COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

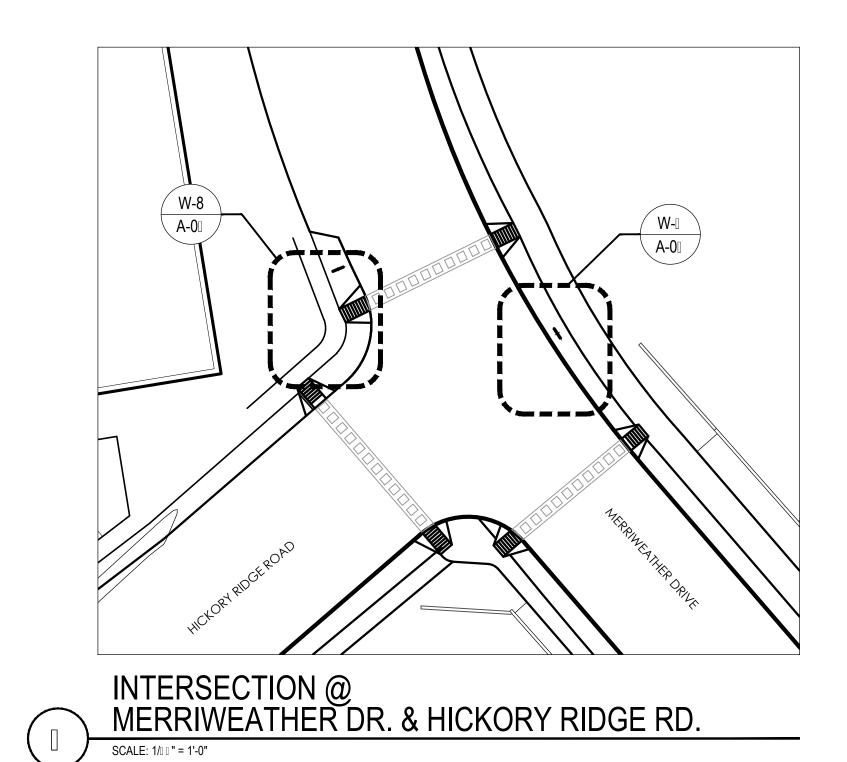
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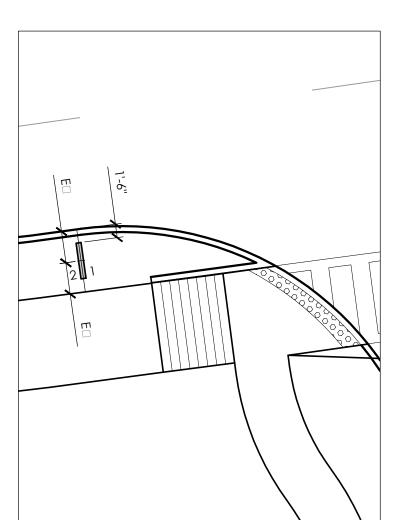
Howard Hughes Corp.

10480 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 400
Columbia, MD 21044

t 410.964.4800

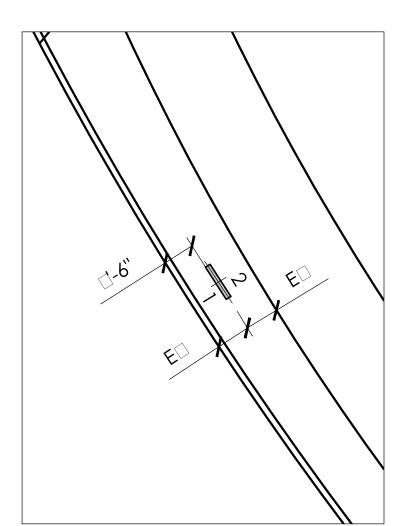


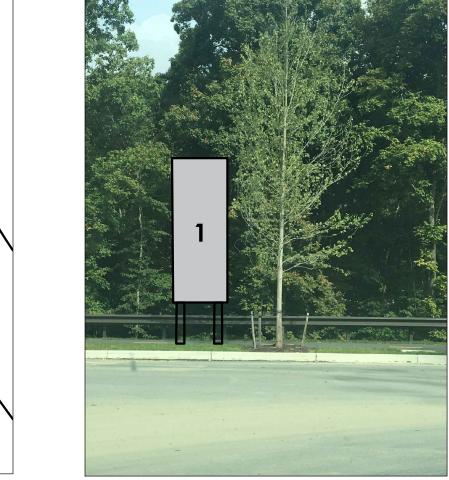




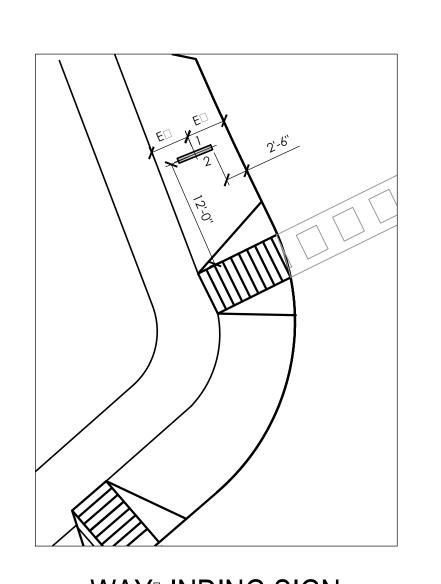


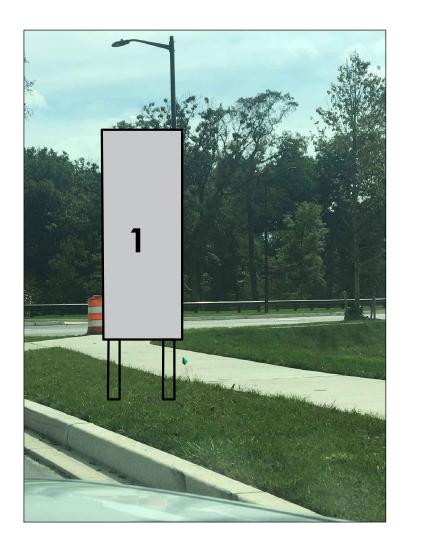






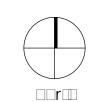






WAY: INDING SIGN:
HICKORY RIDGE RD. & MERRIWEATHER DR.

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"





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MERRIWEATHER DISTRICT

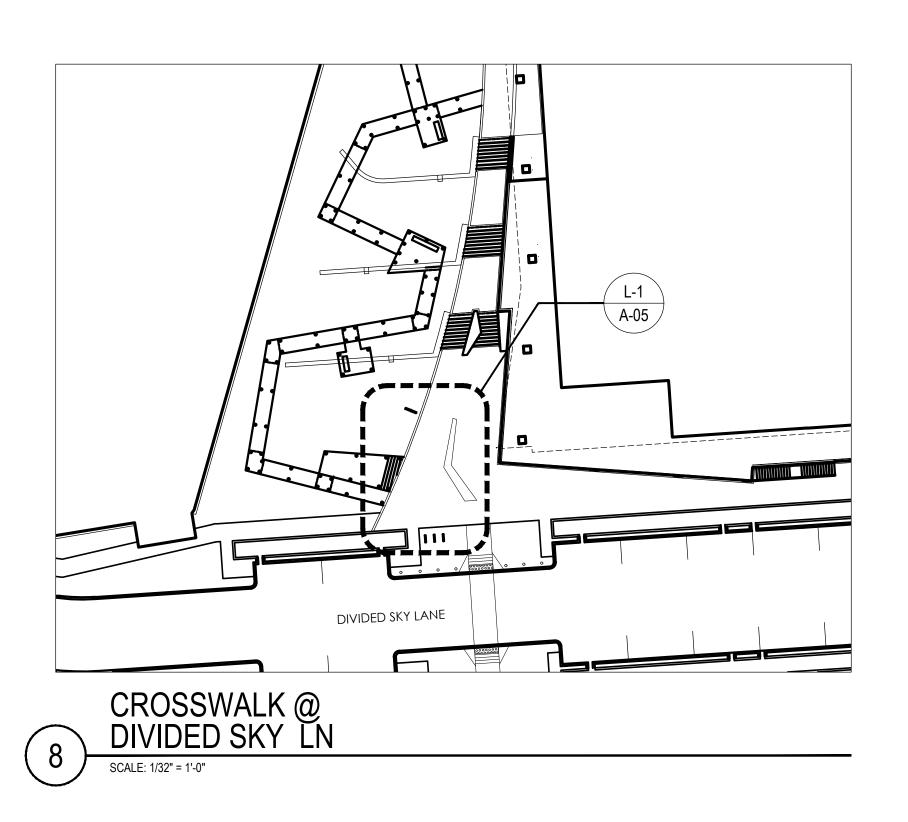
COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

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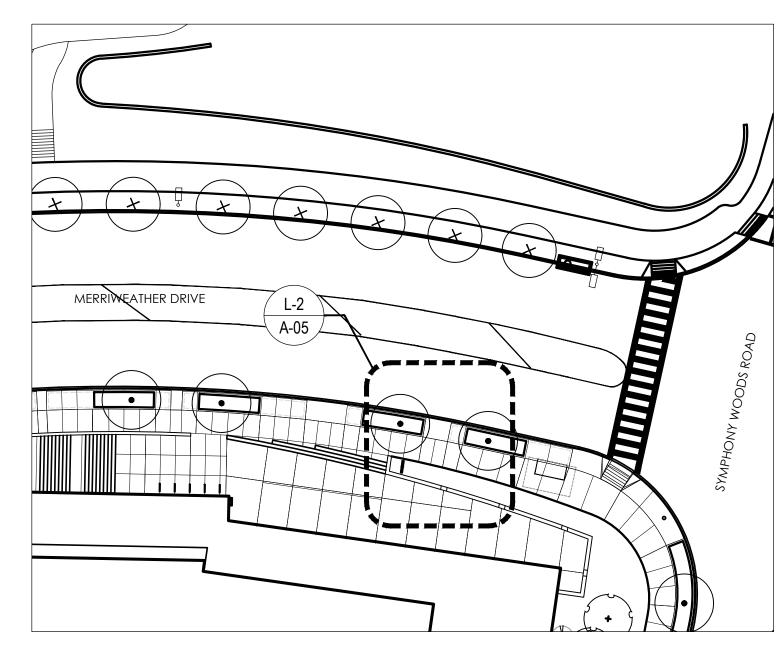
Howard Hughes Corp.

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Columbia, MD 21044

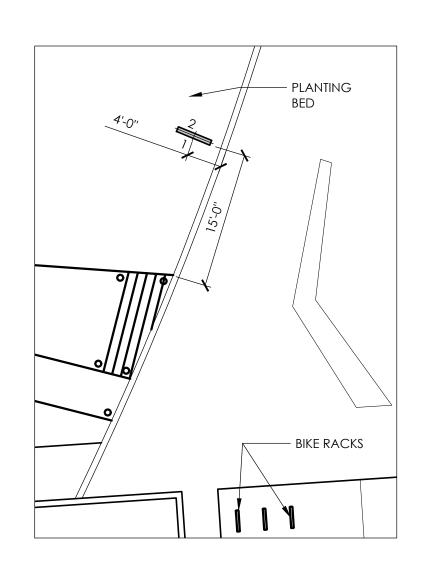
t 410.964.4800

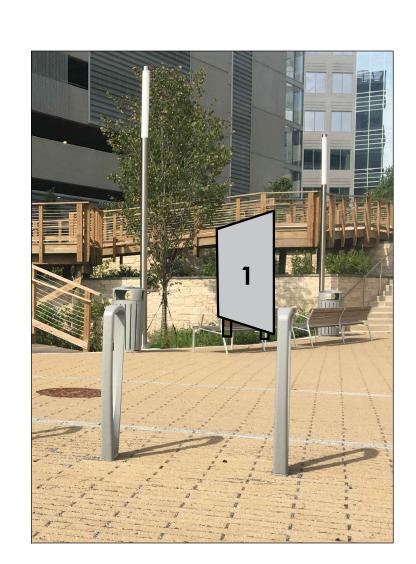




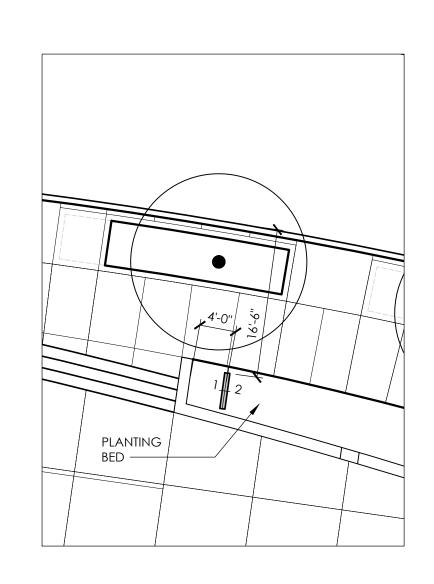


INTERSECTION @ MERRIWEATHER DR. & SYMPHONY WOODS RD.









LEASING SIGN: MERRIWEATHER DR.

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"





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