



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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Voice/Relay

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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

“Downtown Columbia-The Mall in Columbia”

Planning Board Meeting of January 20, 2020

For Consideration of Redline Revisions Affecting the unoccupied lower level of the former “Sears” store on Lot 22 and the existing Plaza located on Lot 47

File No./Petitioner: SDP-13-016, Brookfield Properties

Project Name: The Mall in Columbia

DPZ Planner: *Jill Manion, Planning Supervisor*
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Request: To approve redline revisions located within the “Mall In Columbia”-Parcel 460, Lot 22 and Lot 47 (Tax Map 36, Grid 1 and 2) in accordance with Section 125.0.G. of the Howard County Zoning Regulations.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends approval of redline revisions to SDP-13-016, “The Mall in Columbia”, for both exterior renovations associated with the tenant fit-out of the unoccupied lower level of the former Sears store located on Lot 22; and for updates to the existing Lifestyle Plaza located on Lot 47, in accordance with Section 125.0.G. of the Howard County Zoning Regulations and subject to any conditions imposed by the Planning Board.

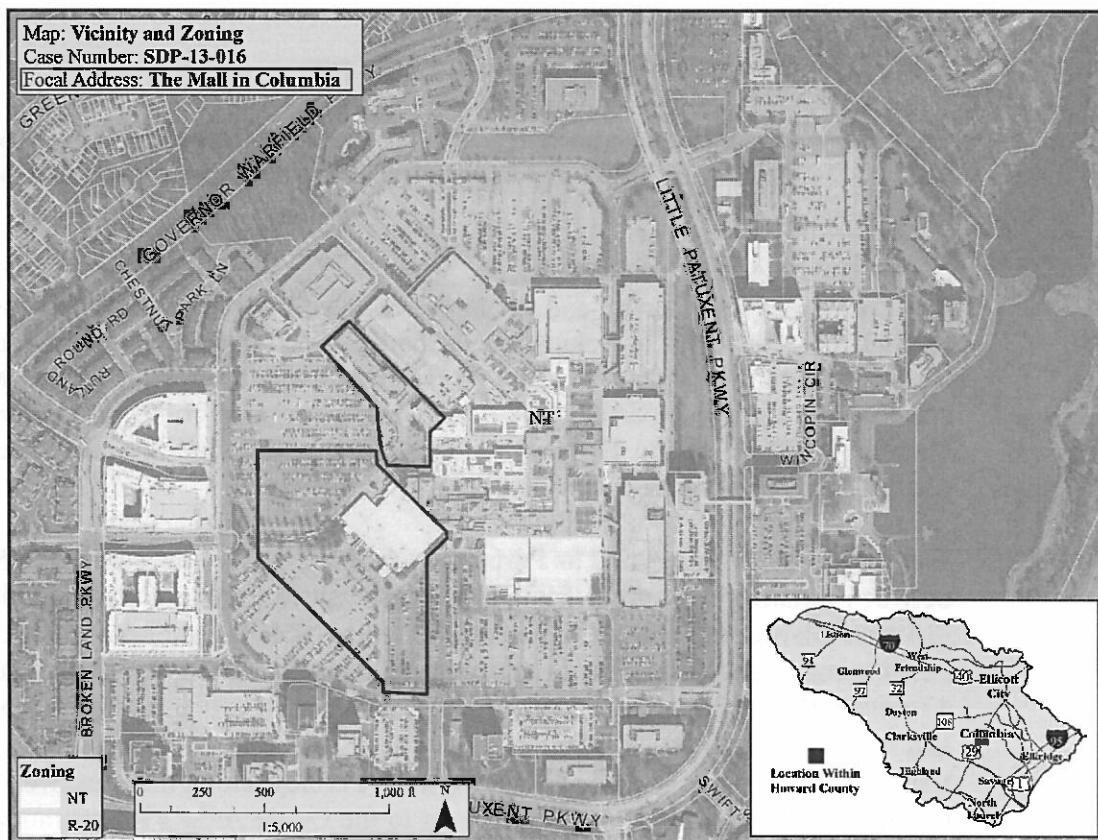
Location: The subject site is identified as Parcel 460, Lots 22 and 47 on Tax Map 36, located between existing Columbia Mall Circle and Little Patuxent Parkway in the 5th Election District of Howard County. The entire Mall Neighborhood encompasses 38.04 acres, with this redline involving 0.70 acres on Lot 22 and 0.43 acres on Lot 47 within the neighborhood itself. Lot 22 and Lot 47 are zoned New Town (NT) and are designated as Downtown Mixed-Use area per the Downtown Columbia Plan. The Sears store is located adjacent to JC Penney, along the southwest entrance to the Mall. The plaza is located adjacent to the Uncle Julio’s Restaurant along the west entrance to the Mall at the beginning of the existing Lifestyle Plaza.

Vicinal Properties:

North: The Mall is bounded to the North by the Warfield Neighborhood, more particularly by surface parking areas (generally accessed from Columbia Mall Circle) and the cinema.

- South:** The Mall is bounded to the South by the Symphony Overlook Neighborhood, more particularly by surface parking areas.
- East:** The Mall is bounded to the East by The Lakefront Neighborhood, more particularly by a small piece of undeveloped land (Parcel 460, Lot 48) and an office building (Parcel 322), which in turn, are both immediately adjacent to Little Patuxent Parkway.
- West:** The Mall is bounded to the West by surface parking and the Warfield Neighborhood. Three mixed-use residential buildings with ground floor retail are located just beyond the surface parking, on the far side of the private Columbia Mall Circle.
- Neighborhood:** The Mall Neighborhood is described as a “commercial center that serves as a hub of social activity and economy for Downtown and Howard County”. It is unique in its configuration in that it is surrounded by three separate Downtown Columbia Neighborhoods- Warfield, The Lakefront and Symphony Overlook.

Vicinity Map:



- Legal Notice:** The property was properly posted and electronic notification has been provided to all required parties as verified by DPZ.
- Plan History:** Parcel 460 is the site of the Mall Neighborhood, a central shopping facility in the planned community of Columbia. Built in 1971, it has undergone several

expansions, and currently contains four anchor department stores including, J.C. Penney, Nordstrom, Macy's and Lord and Taylor, along with approximately 200 specialty stores. The Lifestyle Plaza was approved through the Downtown Revitalization Process in 2013. The former Sears department store is currently unoccupied on the lower level while the upper level has been redeveloped into a restaurant, entertainment venue and bookstore, which was approved in 2017. This proposal seeks to make some exterior renovations ahead of a tenant occupying the lower level of Sears and to make some minor improvements to the Lifestyle Plaza. The following additional review has occurred during the review of SDP-13-016 for these proposed changes:

- A simplified ECP for the proposed redline revisions to SDP-13-016 to Lot 22 for the lower level of "Sears" was approved in October 16, 2019.
- The redline for the lower level of "Sears" was submitted December 11, 2019 and approved January 23, 2020 by all applicable SRC agencies. It is subject to the review and approval by the Planning Board.
- The applicant held a courtesy Design Advisory Panel (DAP) meeting regarding the lower level of Sears in the Columbia Mall on October 30, 2019. At the meeting, the DAP made three advisory motions. The applicant submitted responses to all three DAP motions on November 25, 2019. The DAP motions and applicant responses were endorsed by the Director of Planning and Zoning on November 26, 2019 (see "Attachment A").
- A simplified ECP for the proposed redline revisions to SDP-13-016 to Lot 47 for the existing plaza was approved in October 25, 2019.
- The redline for the existing plaza was submitted November 22, 2019 and approved January 23, 2020 by all applicable SRC agencies. It is subject to the review and approval by the Planning Board.
- The applicant held a courtesy Design Advisory Panel (DAP) meeting regarding the existing plaza on October 16, 2019. At the meeting, the DAP made three advisory motions. The applicant submitted responses to all three DAP motions on November 4, 2019. The DAP motions and applicant responses were endorsed by the Director of Planning and Zoning on November 15, 2019 (see "Attachment B").

These projects are not subject to the Downtown Revitalization process. The proposed changes fall within the parameters of Section 125.0.A.9.e(1). The primary use continues to be retail commercial, and the proposed changes include interior renovations with limited outdoor improvements (on existing impervious). There is no expansion of the building footprint.

Current Redline Proposal: The redline for Lot 47 proposes renovations to the outdoor elements on the western edge of the mall. Improvements include removing the outdoor fountain and replacing the outdoor paved area with large synthetic turf lawn and wide walkways. Adjacent to the lawn, will be a permanent stage for performances or movies. Two large outdoor pavilions and a smaller seating area are also proposed for outdoor

seating and passive recreation. The eastern end of the plaza will contain a large shade trellis structure and additional seating. Additional enhancements include alterations to the building facades, new decorative building materials, new lighting, and outdoor furniture. While the changes were minor and did not trigger the Downtown Revitalization process, the improvements were reviewed against the Mall Neighborhood Design Guidelines for consistency with the surrounding Downtown Revitalization improvements in the neighborhood.


The redline for Lot 22 proposes to reconfigure the exterior entrance wall and storefront and enhance the building façade and hardscape elements for the new tenant. Improvements include expanded drop-off/pick-up zone, raised planters, a micro-bioretenion stormwater management facility, site amenities, and landscaping. Proposed amenities include outdoor tables & chairs, benches, trash and recycling receptacles.

The site stormwater management qualifies as “redevelopment”, therefore, 50% of the existing impervious and 100% of any increased impervious area will be managed. All stormwater management requirements have been met. Stormwater management will be treated with one micro-bioretenion facility located on Lot 22 and with an underground stone trench located beneath the turf lawn on Lot 47. Both facilities will outfall to the existing storm drain located within the existing parking lot.

Planning Board Review:

Section 125.0.G.1 requires that the Planning Board approve any Site Development Plans for downtown revitalization, except for minor modifications as described in Section 125.0.G.2 and G.3. The proposed modifications did not meet the minor modification criteria in those sections and therefore require Planning Board review and approval at a public meeting.

FDP-47-A, which governs the former Sears building states that “all structures and improvements shall be constructed, and land used developed in accordance with a site development plan approve by the Howard County Planning Board. Adequate planting and landscaping must be provided as required by the Howard County Planning Board where Employment Center Commercial areas are in proximity to residential use areas.” Landscape is proposed as required by the FDP. No other FDP requirements are triggered with this redline request.

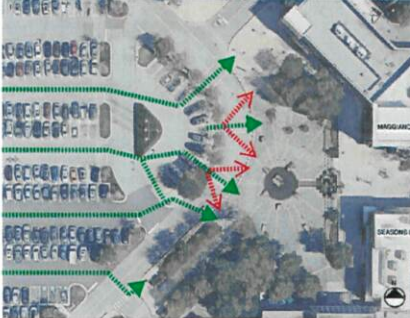
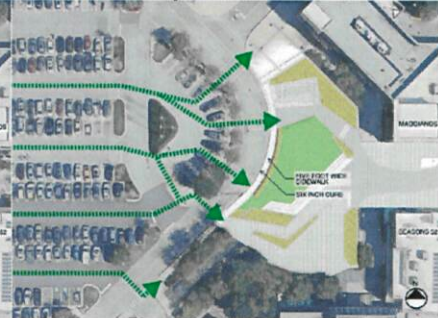
 2-6-2020
Amy Gowan, Director Date
Department of Planning and Zoning




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

AGV 11-26-19

Ref #	Design Advisory Panel Recommendation	Response by Applicant	DPZ Director's Endorsement
1.	<p>That the applicant consider a different color other than pitch black for the bulk of the building and to think creatively about livening up the side of the building when the applicant returns for signage.</p> <p>Vote: 4-0 (approved)</p>	<p>The design team has no objections to using lighter color to assist in livening up the façade of the building. This color will ultimately be selected by the proposed anchor tenant (Lidl) and will be brought forward for DAP review when the tenant is ready to present their façades to the panel. The design team will convey this request to the tenant for their action.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept DAP Recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept Applicant Response</p>
2.	<p>That the applicants look at the corner and side elevations and make them more welcoming and lighter.</p> <p>Vote: 4-0 (approved)</p>	<p>The design team has no objections to funding design measures that improve the look of the façades. Again, the exterior façades will ultimately be designed by the future tenants. The design team will convey this request to Lidl for their action and will be brought forward for DAP review when the tenant is ready to present their façades to the Panel.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept DAP Recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> Accept Applicant Response</p>
3.	<p>That the final proposal consider context and expands the termination of the exterior paint, irrespective of the ultimate color.</p> <p>Vote: 4-0 (approved)</p>	<p>The design team will coordinate the termination of the paint colors with each tenant when their respective façade designs are complete. The design team will ensure that the background wall paint terminates in a logical manner. The paint termination will be presented by each tenant when they bring their façade design to DAP for review. Where the base building façade continues past tenant storefronts/facades, the landlord will extend the finishes/paint to areas not touched by the tenants to ensure continuity on both sides of the building.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept DAP Recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept Applicant Response</p>

AG 11-15-19

Ref #	Design Advisory Panel Recommendation	Response by Applicant	DPZ Director's Endorsement
1.	<p>That the applicant study the relationship of the front entry drop off area and the plaza. The proposed wall, screen, stage, pedestrian safety and circulation, vehicular circulation, and pinch points should be evaluated. The applicant should go back and take another look at whole front area with any ideas or thoughts for the aforementioned comments provided.</p> <p>Vote: 5-0 (approved)</p>	<p>The design team has reviewed the wider condition and we believe that the situation is actually improved by the proposed configuration. Today, the drop off and the plaza are separated by a row of bollards but no curb. Despite the clear demarcation of crosswalks in this area pedestrians approaching the plaza cross the drop-off heading in any direction. In the proposed scheme the crosswalks guide the pedestrians to the pathways into and through the new plaza arrangement thus enhancing their safety. At these areas we retain the depressed curbs and bollards. Between the crosswalks there is a five-foot-wide sidewalk with a six inch raised curb to make the passage along the face of the new wall safer and make the interaction between pedestrians and vehicles more managed and predictable. See diagrams below.</p> <p>Existing Conditions (Current Plan):</p>  <p>Proposed Plan:</p> 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept DAP Recommendation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept Applicant Response</p>
2.	<p>That the applicant looks more at entries 5 & 6, the pedestrian bridge entrances at the side of the mall, to include enhancements the entries to make more inviting and less sterile.</p> <p>Vote: 5-0 (approved)</p>	<p>Agreed. To address these concerns the design team proposes two changes. One is to revise the finish of the proposed frames to make them consistent with wood elements elsewhere in the project. The second improvement is the addition of planters and vines at the frames to bring color, movement and a degree of softness to the hard condition at the bridge. See images below.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept DAP Recommendation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept Applicant Response</p>

			
3.	<p>The applicant continues the design treatments proposed along the service door adjacent to the food court entry to make the wall and entrance design consistent.</p> <p>Vote: 5-0 (approved)</p>	<p>Agreed. See revised image below.</p> <p>Before (In DAP submission):</p>  <p>After:</p> 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept DAP Recommendation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept Applicant Response</p>