

## **COLUMBIA CONCEPTS, LLC.**

\* **BEFORE THE**  
\* **PLANNING BOARD OF**  
\* **HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**MOTION:** *To recommend approval of the petition to amend the existing Preliminary Development Plan for the Columbia New Town District for a Major Village Center Redevelopment to the Long Reach Village Center.*

**ACTION:** *Recommend Approval; Vote 4-0.*

On December 18, 2025, the Planning Board of Howard County, Maryland, considered the petition of Columbia Concepts, LLC., the Petitioner, to amend the existing Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) for the Columbia New Town District for a Major Village Center Redevelopment to the Long Reach Village Center.

The Planning Board considered the petition and the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) Technical Staff Report, and the comments of the reviewing agencies. DPZ presented the redevelopment plan (the “Plan”), and discussed the criteria laid out in Section 103.0 (“Village Center, New Town” definition criteria), Section 125.0.J.1 (Major Village Center redevelopment criteria), and Section 125.0.J.4.a.(8) (Major Village Center redevelopment criteria) of the Zoning Regulations. DPZ noted the Plan shows five different buildings:

1. Building A – 50 townhomes
2. Building B – 28,700 square-foot commercial building
3. Building C – mixed use building with 20,000 square feet of commercial/retail space and 255 dwelling units
4. Building D – 136,300 square-foot sports complex
5. Building E – mixed use building with 73,900 square feet of commercial/retail space and 200 age-restricted adult housing apartment units.

DPZ indicated the redevelopment proposal is in alignment with the definition of a “Village Center” by the mix of uses being provided in the redevelopment proposal as well as the pedestrian connectivity, open space, and mix of housing types being proposed. DPZ explains the PDP amendment would be increasing the approved dwelling units in the “Employment Land Use” category by 190 units

1 due to the previous Long Reach PDP amendment, which was approved for 315 units. If the PDP  
2 granting the 190 units were approved, the overall New Town “NT” density, would still be below the  
3 required 2.5 du/acre.

4

5 Owen Jarvis (Carney Kelehan, LLP, attorney), Eric McWilliams (Bohler, landscape architect),  
6 Patrick McGowan (KGD), Katie Wagner (Gorove Slade, transportation engineer), and Brian Kim  
7 (Columbia Concepts) all testified on behalf of the Petitioner. Mr. Jarvis introduced the Plan on behalf  
8 of the Petitioner and testified to the current conditions of the Long Reach Village Center and how the  
9 Plan aims to help the Village Center reach its full potential to serve the surrounding community and  
10 serve James Rouse’s vision of New Town, Columbia. Mr. Jarvis explained how the Plan has been  
11 reconfigured throughout its inception in response to community feedback and the surrounding  
12 properties concerns; for example, the church that is adjacent to the Village Center is no longer included  
13 in the proposed Village Center boundaries and Plan. Mr. Eric McWilliams testified regarding how the  
14 proposed Plan achieves the goals and visions of James Rouse vision of Columbia. Mr. Patrick  
15 McGowan testified to the process of the Plan before Planning Board, which included community  
16 workshop meetings and pre-submission community meetings. Mr. McGowan testified that the Plan  
17 was altered in response to community input at these meetings. Mr. McGowan further testified to the  
18 proposed layout of the site including townhomes, a sports complex, commercial/retail space, two  
19 multi-family buildings, age-restricted apartments, open spaces, mixed-use buildings, and a new  
20 entrance to the site off Tamar Drive. Mr. McGowan presented the proposed phasing of the Plan:

21 Phase 1 – street network

22 Phase 2 – building B and mixed-use building C

23 Phase 3 – mixed use building E

24 Phase 4 – sports complex building D

25 Phase 5 – townhomes buildings A

26 Ms. Katie Wagner testified on behalf of the Petitioner on the proposed parking and circulation of the  
27 Plan proposal. Ms. Wagner explained that the site will be accessible through a new access point on  
28 Tamar Drive with the existing access points to remain on Foreland Garth, and the proposed townhomes  
29 will have their own access from Cloudleap Court to the underground garage. Ms. Wagner also  
30 discussed the proposed pickup and drop-off zones in front of the buildings, specifically the sports  
31 complex, for those who are at the site for a quick visit and not utilizing the parking garages. Ms.

1 Wagner testified to the proposed grocery store in Building E and the parking lot serving that building  
2 to the rear. Mr. Brian Kim was last to testify on behalf of the Petitioner. Mr. Kim testified that the Plan  
3 was originally called “Destination Long Reach” when responding to the County’s RFP to align with  
4 James Rouse’s vision. Mr. Kim asserted that the Petitioners believe the Plan reflects James Rouse’s  
5 vision and also supports what the community wants based on the public meetings held and feedback  
6 that was received.

7  
8 Following the Petitioner’s presentation, Ms. Barbara Mosier, Planning Board member, asked  
9 for clarification of the Plan’s timeline following Planning Board’s recommendation. Mr. Chad  
10 Edmonson, Acting Executive Secretary to Planning Board, explained following Planning Board’s  
11 recommendation, the requested PDP amendment will go to the Zoning Board for their approval or  
12 denial. If approved, the Plan would go through an Environmental Concept Plan (ECP) looking at  
13 environmental aspects on the site such as stormwater management and forest conservation. Following  
14 the ECP would be a Comprehensive Sketch Plan (CSP) which analyzes adequate public facilities such  
15 as schools and roads, as well as parking and site grading. The Plan would then go through the Site  
16 Development Plan (SDP) process which serves as the most site-specific construction document  
17 showing types of retail and commercial uses. Ms. Hannah Weber, Department of Planning and Zoning,  
18 explained the Plan will need to amend the Final Development Plan (FDP) which details the allowable  
19 uses, bulk regulations, and parking requirements of the area. The CSP, FDP, and SDP would all go  
20 back to the Planning Board for approval.

21  
22 Testimony  
23

24 Mr. Brian Shepter, Deputy Chief of Staff with Howard County Government, Ms. Nina Basu,  
25 Long Reach Village Board Chair, Mr. Phil Cher, Balt P.O.P., testified in favor of the Plan. Several  
26 members of the public who signed up to speak at the Planning Board meeting chose to wait to testify  
27 until the Zoning Board hearing that will be scheduled for a future date. Mr. Richard Bannister, Ms.  
28 Karen Emory, Ms. Amy Bennett, and Mr. Joel Hurwitz testified with concerns of the Plan including  
29 topics related to density concerns, lack of parking, the need for a library in the Long Reach Village  
30 Center, lack of incorporation/consideration to the surrounding community like the existing church and  
31 gas station, and closeness of the existing gas station and the proposed pocket park.

## Board Discussion and Recommendation

Mr. James Cecil, Planning Board chair, asked if it would be appropriate to discuss the phasing of the Plan at this stage. Ms. Weber indicated that a phasing plan was included in the submission for the Planning Board to evaluate and discuss. Mr. Cecil asked if the inclusion of the residential units in the earlier phases was intentional for financial reasons. Mr. Brian Kim explained the critical need to have residential density established first to be able to serve/utilize a commercial/retail tenant later down the line. Mr. Cecil inquired about the surface parking lot and how it would be utilized by the existing church and the proposed redevelopment Plan as well as having access to Foreland Garth. Mr. Kim explained the access point to the church on Foreland Garth is not changing and the easement of the shared parking lot for the church is not changing with this Plan. Mr. Cecil inquired about the surface materials for the proposed pocket park. Mr. McGowan stated the intent of each open space is for each area to have their own identity, and each have a hard and softscape regarding surface material. Mr. Cecil questioned shared use paths, specifically the proposed width of 8-feet when perhaps a 10-foot-wide path would be more ideal when sharing between foot traffic and bicyclists. Mr. McGowan explained that there are different proposed widths around the site and at certain points the shared paths will widen to 10-feet. Ms. Mosier asked to look closer at the shared use paths since it was a criterion the Board needed to evaluate. Ms. Weber clarified that the Planning Board does not have specific criteria to evaluate that was similar to staff, the Petitioner, or the Zoning Board. Ms. Weber further explained that The Planning Board is tasked with making a recommendation of the overall proposal and PDP amendment to the Zoning Board. Ms. Katie Wagner explained the circulation of the shared use path, highlighting a specific connection to the Elkhorn trail off-site leading to the proposed townhomes. Ms. Wagner confirmed that there is a considerable grade change along Cloudleap Court which is why the circulation is proposed largely inside the site boundaries. Ms. Mosier asked if the intent is for bikes coming from elsewhere on the site to access and travel via the street network, rather than internal shared use paths. Ms. Wagner confirmed. Mr. Cecil asked if the Petitioner evaluated a potential connection to the site from MD 175. Ms. Wagner stated that the connection was not explored but the Petitioner is working closely with the County and analyzing any potential impacts the new access on Tamar Drive would have. Mr. William Tilburg asked specifically how the Plan changed in response to community feedback as testified to. Mr. McGowan listed examples of bike/ped circulation, increase of art/cultural undertones to reflect the Long Reach Village Center history, connections to

1 open spaces, and parking needs for the site. Mr. Mason Godsey, Planning Board Vice-Chair, asked  
2 about parking for Building E, which includes an underground garage and surface parking lot. Mr.  
3 McGowan explained the number of surface parking spaces available for the church is not changing  
4 with the Plan. Mr. Godsey asked for clarification regarding the public comment of the required  
5 distance from a gas station to the proposed park. Ms. Weber explained that a buffer is part of the  
6 required Conditional Use criteria which states that any newly constructed gas stations be at least 300  
7 feet from an existing park, and that this requirement is part of the Conditional Use criteria an applicant  
8 must meet in order to be approved by the Hearing Examiner. Mr. Godsey asked for clarification of the  
9 Zoning Board's criteria. Mr. David Moore, Planning Board counsel, explained the Zoning Board must  
10 make findings of fact included in Section 125.0.J. of the Zoning Regulations. Ms. Mosier inquired  
11 about the Community Association building. Mr. McGowan stated it is planned to be within Building  
12 B. Ms. Mosier asked if the Stonehouse building would remain in its current location until Building B  
13 is constructed and once completed if the Community Association would relocate to this new space.  
14 Mr. McGowan confirmed.

15 Mr. Cecil asked if the Planning Board wished to make any recommendations to the Zoning  
16 Board. Ms. Mosier said she felt the main purpose of the Planning Board's role at this meeting is to  
17 evaluate the PDP amendment which specifically amends the amount of housing units being proposed,  
18 to which she stated that she felt was reasonable. Mr. Godsey agreed. Mr. Williams also agreed and  
19 asserted the mix of housing types would be beneficial. Mr. Cecil appreciated the opportunities for both  
20 rental and home-ownership units. Mr. Godsey made the motion to recommend approval of the petition,  
21 ZB-1132M, to amend the existing Preliminary Development Plan for the Columbia New Town District  
22 for a Major Village Center Redevelopment to the Long Reach Village Center. Ms. Mosier seconded  
23 the motion. The motion was decided by a vote of 4 to 0.

24  
25 For the foregoing reasons, the Planning Board of Howard County, Maryland, on this 2nd day  
26 January 2026, recommends that Zoning Board Case No. ZB-1132M, as described above, be  
27 **APPROVED.**

28  
29 HOWARD COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
30  
31

