



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS, LICENSES AND PERMITS
 7125 Riverwood Drive, Suite D2 ■ Columbia, Maryland 21046 ■ 410-313-1823

Robert J. Frances, P.E., Director

FAX 410-313-1861
 TDD 410-313-2323

MEMORANDUM

MEMO TO: Hearing Examiner for Howard County

TO: Robert Frances, P.E., Director
 Department of Inspections, Licenses & Permits

THROUGH: Thomas Huskins, Division Chief
 Inspections and Enforcement Division

Brenda Saucedo, Supervising Sign Code Inspector
 Inspections and Enforcement Division

FROM: Matthew Bischoff, Sign Code Inspector
 Inspections and Enforcement Division

DATE: July 10, 2026

SUBJECT: Sign Variance Petition: BA-26015S "Burlington – Deals. Brands. Wow!"
 Sign Location: 6161 Columbia Crossing Circle, Columbia, MD 21045
 Variance Package Acceptance Date: July 2, 2026.
 Sign Permit Applications: S26000022, S26000023, S26000024, & S26000025
 Petitioner: Bailey Meyers – Baltimore Signs and Graphics
 23 Fontana Lane Ste 104, Rosedale, MD 21237
 Owner: Columbia Crossing Outparcel LLC, 500 N Broadway Ste 201
 Jericho NY 11753

Request Description:

The Petitioner is requesting a variance of the Howard County Sign Code to install four signs for the retail outlet "Burlington" at 6161 Columbia Crossing Circle in Columbia. This business is replacing the previous retail space of "Joann Fabrics," which previously had a wall sign permitted under S19000280, which measured 87.58 square feet.

The proposed signs consist of:

S26000025 – a projecting commercial identification sign measuring 9.75 square feet (See *Figure B*)

S26000024 and S26000023 – two wall plaque commercial identification signs measuring 6.25 square feet each (See *Figure B*)

S26000022 – a commercial identification wall sign on the front facade of the building measuring 467 square feet. (See *Figure A*)

The total square footage of the requested signs total at 489.25 square feet, well over the 200 allowable per the sign code (per the 100 lineal feet of building frontage).



Figure (A): The submitted render of the proposed commercial identification wall sign from the Petitioner.

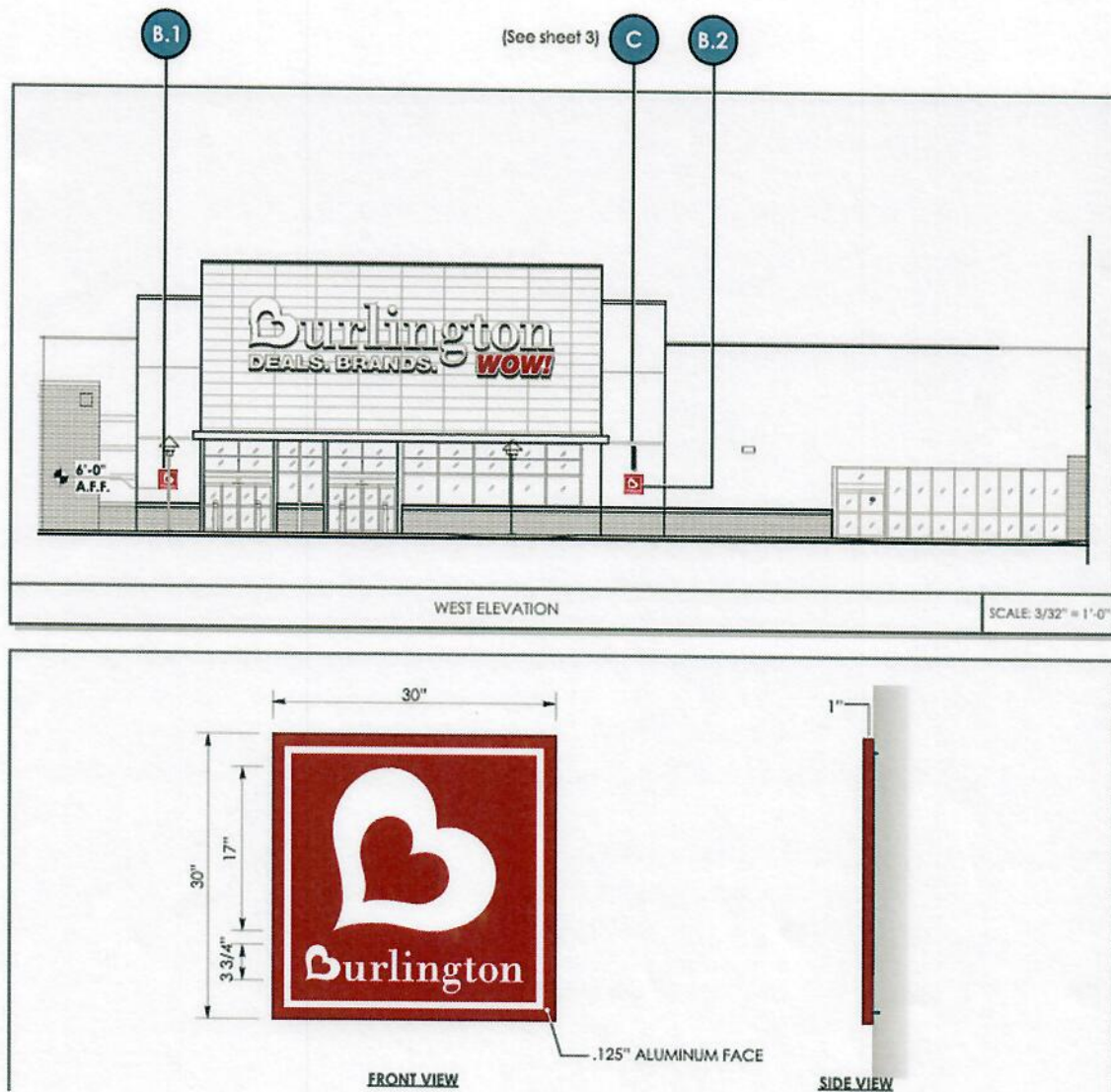


Figure (B): Details of the design of the wall plaques and projecting sign.

Findings of Fact:

This technical evaluation from the perspective of the Howard County Sign Code is based upon the BA26-015S variance petition package submittal for sign permit applications #S26000022, S26000023, S26000024, and S26000025, originally filed on June 16, 2026, and additional revision documentation received on July 2, 2026. The information was submitted by the Petitioner Bailey Meyes from Baltimore Signs and Graphics at 23 Fontana Lane Ste 104, Rosedale, MD 21237, acting as authorized agent for the property owner Columbia Crossing Outparcel LLC, located at 500 N Broadway Ste 201, Jericho, NY 11753.

The proposed sign described within the variance petition, would be in violation of the following sections of the Howard County Sign Code, To Wit:

- **Section 3.501(c) – Sign Standards by District:**

*(1) a. Size: The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply in Downtown Columbia. **A total sign area of two square feet for each lineal foot of building frontage shall be allowed.** If the building has multiple frontages, an additional sign area of one square foot for each additional lineal foot of building frontage shall be allowed. **The total area of all signs erected on the lot and building shall be within the allowable square footage.** Where there are multiple frontages, no more than two square feet of sign area for each lineal foot of building frontage shall be allowed to face that frontage.*

- **Section 3.508 – Illumination:**

(a) Shading: The light from any illuminated sign or billboard or from any light source, including interior of a building, shall be so shaded, shielded, or directed that the light intensity or brightness shall not adversely affect surrounding or facing premises nor adversely affect safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on public or private roads, highways, or parking areas. Light shall not shine or reflect on or into residential structures.

(b) Blinking or Flashing: Except as provided in section 3.502A of this subtitle, a sign shall not have blinking, flashing or fluttering lights or other illuminating devices which have a changing light operated as to create an appearance or illusion of writing or printing. A variance may be granted by the Board of Appeals for movement showing the date, the time and the temperature exclusively. Nothing contained in this section shall, however, be construed as preventing the use of lights or decorations related to religious and patriotic festivities. Beacon lights or search lights shall not be permitted as a sign for advertising purposes.

(c) Strobe and Incandescent Lamps: No exposed reflective type bulbs and no strobe lights or incandescent lamps which exceed 15 watts shall be used on the exterior surface of any sign so as to expose the face of the bulb, light or lamp to any public street or adjacent property.

In addition to the setback requirements, since the sign will feature internal illumination, the sign will have to comply with the above code requirements for illuminated signs.

Additionally, an Electrical Permit must be obtained for the wall sign.

Variance Requirement Questions:

Are there unique physical conditions or exceptional topographical conditions peculiar to the property on which the proposed sign is to be located, including the location of existing buildings and other structures, irregularity, narrowness or shallowness of the lot, irregularity of the road right-of-way, location on a highway that has a dependency on nonlocal use?

This property is in the rear southeast corner of the shopping center fully removed from main roadways (similar to most other establishments in this shopping center, so it is not unique in that regard).



Figure (C): An aerial view of the shopping center, Columbia Crossing. Route 175 to the south, and Dobbin Road to the north. The site of the variance is circled in yellow.

Are there obstructions, such as excessive grade, building interference, structures or landscaping on abutting property or properties which seriously interfere with the visibility of a proposed sign?

Yes, but not more than other businesses in this same shopping center. The design of the Columbia Crossing shopping center is recessed from Dobbin Road by design. Most of the businesses are obscured along Dobbin Road with elevated grading, dense deciduous tree coverage, and landscaping. This is also true along MD175 (a.k.a. Rouse Parkway) where dense trees mostly obscure this and other businesses in this shopping center.



Figure (D): *North entrance into the Columbia Crossing shopping center (intersection of Dobbin Road, Columbia Crossing Circle, and Old Dobbin Road).*



Figure (E): South entrance into the Columbia Crossing shopping center (across from the Columbia Crossing II shopping center).

Are there historical, architectural, or aesthetic characteristics which shall be considered?

Architectural: The tenant is expanding the facade (under building permits B26002282 / B26001130) on the front of the building and claiming hardship that the sign "is not proportionate to the facade upon which it will be placed," whereas the existing facade and previous "JOANN" sign were proportional and in-line with the other businesses in the shopping center. See Figure (F) below for details.



Figure (F): The previous sign at this location, Joann Fabrics, previous permitted under S19000280. This sign was 87.58 square feet in measurement.

If the variance is granted, will it adversely affect the appropriate use or development of adjacent properties, or result in a dangerous traffic condition?

No.

Is the requested Variance the minimum necessary to afford relief, and can it be granted without substantial impairment of the intent, purpose, and integrity of the code?

The proposed wall sign is much larger in size than similar examples in the same shopping center. Of the comparable signs that were submitted as part of the variance package by the applicant, the petitioner references the stores of Dick's Sporting Goods (signage of 211 square feet), Ross Dress for Less (signage of 163 square feet), Bob's Discount Furniture (signage of 177 square feet), and Old Navy (signage of 142 square feet). These are all far less in area than this sign variance request of 489.25 square feet.

In addition, one of the requestor's hardships refers to the proportion of signage to the facade. The existing facade was proportional to the previous sign (JOANN) while at 87.58 square feet in area. Part of the remodeling for the store is to expand the existing facade, which in turn has self-created this hardship (under building permits B26002282 / B26001130).

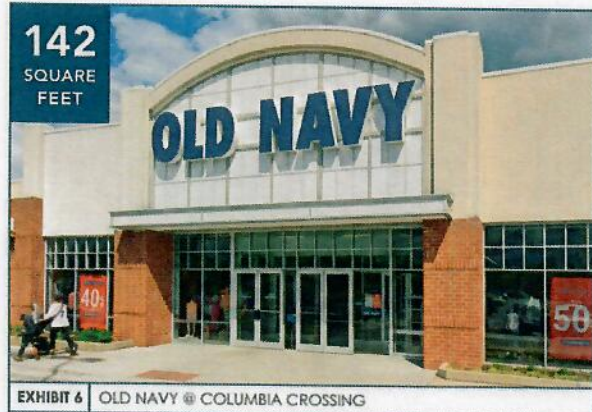
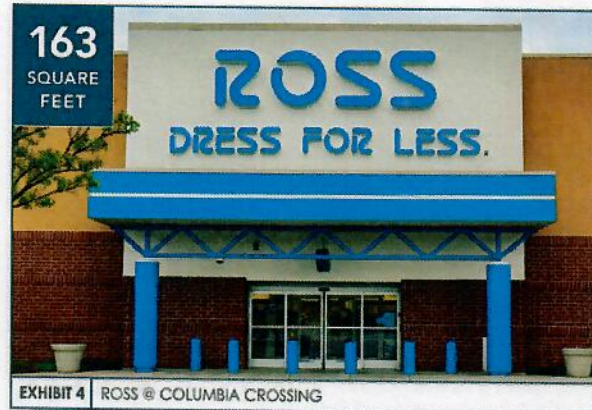
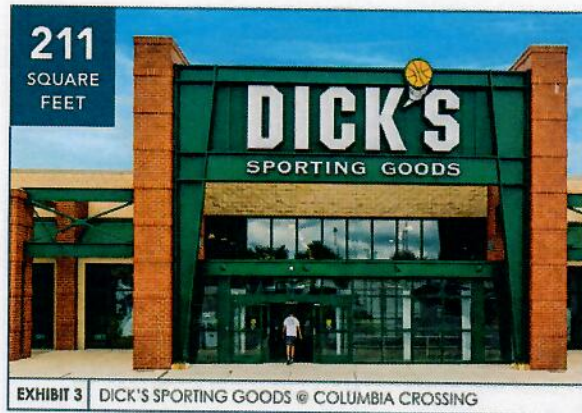


Figure (G): The figure the applicant provided highlighting neighboring signs; DILP added square footage of those signs to the image to provide context for comparison.

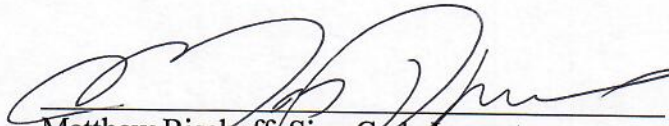
DILP finds that the proposed signage is excessive in size for its location and is not proportionate to the surrounding signage within the shopping center.

Were the practical difficulties or hardships created by the Applicant?

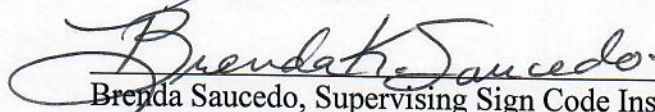
Yes. Per the previous explanations, the fact that one of the claimed hardships relates to the proportion of size of the sign to the facade. The previous tenant identification sign was proportional while fitting within the sign code requirements.

The hearing date for this case is scheduled for August 19, 2026, at 10:00 AM.

Report Prepared by:


Matthew Bischoff, Sign Code Inspector

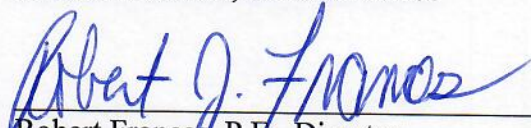
Report Reviewed by:


Brenda Saucedo, Supervising Sign Code Inspector

Report Reviewed by:


Thomas Huskins, Division Chief

Report Approved by:


Robert Frances, P.E., Director
Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits

**HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING**

3430 Court House Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2350

Lynda D. Eisenberg, AICP, Director

FAX 410-313-3467

Subject: BA-26-015S, 6161 Columbia Crossing Circle
Sign Variance Petition

To: Julia Sauer, Chief
Division of Public Service and Zoning Administration

From: Jill Manion, Chief
Division of Land Development 

Date: July 8, 2026

The Division of Land Development (DLD) has reviewed the above referenced Sign Variance Petition for 6161 Columbia Crossing Circle. The property is not located within the Downtown Columbia Revitalization area; therefore, Planning Board review is not required. The proposal is for signage mounted on the building with no alterations to the site plan. No red line revision to the SDP is required. DLD has no objection, no comments.

JM/DD



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

3430 Court House Drive

■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■

410-313-2350

Lynda D. Eisenberg, AICP, Director

FAX 410-313-3467

Subject: BA-26-015S, 6161 Columbia Crossing Circle
Sign Variance Petition

To: Julia Sauer, Chief
Division of Public Service and Zoning Administration

From: Jill Manion, Chief
Division of Land Development

Date: July 8, 2026



The Division of Land Development (DLD) has reviewed the above referenced Sign Variance Petition for 6161 Columbia Crossing Circle. The property is not located within the Downtown Columbia Revitalization area; therefore, Planning Board review is not required. The proposal is for signage mounted on the building with no alterations to the site plan. No red line revision to the SDP is required. DLD has no objection, no comments.

JM/DD