



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

June 28, 2024

John McHugh  
Columbia Association  
6301 Hillside Ct, Suite 100  
Columbia, MD 21046

RE: WP-24-100, Town Center (Lakefront Stage)

Dear Mr. McHugh:

This letter is to inform you that your request for alternative compliance to the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for the subject project was reviewed.

On June 27, 2024 and pursuant to Section 16.104, the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, considered and **approved** your request for alternative compliance with respect to **Section 16.115(c)(2)** of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to construct a permanent stage within designated floodplain.

The Department of Planning and Zoning hereby determines that you have demonstrated to its satisfaction that strict enforcement of Section 16.115(c)(2) would result in an unreasonable hardship or practical difficulty. This determination is made with consideration of your alternative compliance application and the [four (4) items OR one (1) item] you were required to address, pursuant to Section 16.104(a)(1):

**1. Strict conformance with the requirements will deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by others in similar areas;**

Strict conformance with the regulations would deny the Columbia Association's ability to replace the stage or provide any future envisioned improvements along the lakefront public gathering spaces as envisioned Downtown Columbia Plan. Property owners may be afforded the ability to disturb the floodplain if mitigation measures are provided to improve the floodplain condition. Except for the revised floodplain elevation on the updated FEMA maps, there are no environmental features within the limit of disturbance. The proposed stage will improve the current impacts to the floodplain by raising the stage above the floodplain elevation.

**2. Uniqueness of the property or topographical conditions would result in practical difficulty; other than economic, or unreasonable hardship from strict adherence to the regulations;**

The existing stage and plaza was designed and constructed within the floodplain. Strict adherence to the regulations would create a practical difficulty by not allowing any minor improvements along the lakefront, even in areas previously developed as impervious surface. It is only the topography of the plaza that conflicts with the revised FEMA maps. The Lakefront Plaza is a unique and integral part of the vision for Downtown Columbia by providing an active gathering place.

**3. The Variance will not confer to the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants and;**

The approval of the requested alternative compliance will not confer upon the applicant any special privilege that would be denied to other similarly situated applicants. This area was built decades ago and is used by the public daily. The applicant proposes to rebuild an existing structure and raise it above the floodplain elevation so that floodplain storage is not negatively impacted. More extensive improvements were approved for properties along the lakefront provided the condition of the floodplain can be improved.

**4. The modification is not detrimental to the public health; safety or welfare, or injurious to other properties.**

The proposed permanent stage conforms with the Downtown Columbia Plan to create an improved setting for special events and performances at the Lakefront. The increased elevation of the new stage will mitigate the minor impact to the floodplain for the construction of the stage by providing floodplain storage below the stage during flood events. The construction of the permanent stage does not create a condition that causes a detrimental impact to public health, safety or welfare and it will not be injurious to adjacent properties. In addition, the Engineering Division and the Department of Public Works have no objection to the request with the associated conditions.

Approval of this Alternative Compliance is subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed stage bottom shall be at least 2' above the floodplain elevation.
2. The stage will be built on stilts on an area of existing impervious surface.
3. The volume of the floodplain displaced by the supports of the stage should be replaced within the limit of disturbance of this project.
4. Prior to construction, verify with SCD that the limit of disturbance for construction is less than 5,000 SF, and the total cut/fill volume is under 100 cubic yards to exempt from sediment and erosion control measures.
5. The stage will not impede pedestrian and bicycle access as currently permitted along the Lakefront.
6. The floodplain disturbance approved is limited to the area shown on the exhibit.
7. A note shall be included on the redlined site development plan (SDP-08-108) with the file number, purpose, date of approval, and conditions of approval of this alternative compliance.

Indicate this alternative compliance petition file number, request, section of the regulations, action, conditions of approval, and date on all related plats, and site development plans, and building permits. This alternative compliance approval will remain valid for one year from the date of this letter or as long as a subdivision or site development plan is being actively processed in accordance with the processing provisions of the Regulations.

If you have any questions, please contact Jill Manion at (410) 313-2350 or email at [jmanion@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:jmanion@howardcountymd.gov).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
 for  
1D2E2CF6431548F...

Anthony Cataldo, AICP, Chief  
Division of Land Development

AC/jam

cc: Research  
DLD - Julia Sauer  
Real Estate Services  
Dan Sweeney, GLW



**Howard County Maryland**  
**Department of Planning and Zoning**  
 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

(410) 313-2350

**DPZ Office Use only:**  
 File No. *WP-24-100*  
 Date Filed

**ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE APPLICATION**

**Site Description:** CA Replacement Stage

**Subdivision Name/Property Identification:** Columbia Town Center Lot 7, Section 1

**Location of property:** 10275 Wincopin Cir

**Existing Use:** Stage      **Proposed Use:** Stage

**Tax Map:** 36      **Grid:** 1      **Parcel No:** 293      **Election District:** 5

**Zoning District:** NT      **Total site area:**

Please list all previously submitted or currently active plans on file with the County (subdivision plans, Board of Appeals petitions, alternative compliance petitions, etc.). If no previous plans have been submitted, please provide a brief history of the site and related information to the request:

SDP-08-108 redline submitted concurrently with this request.

In the area below, the petitioner shall enumerate the specific numerical section(s) from the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for which an alternative compliance is being requested and provide a brief summary of the request. Please use the additional page if needed.

Section Reference No.	Brief Summary of Request
Section 16.115.(c)(2)	Practical difficulties and unnecessary hardships result from the strict application of Section 16.115(c)(2). The Applicant is requesting Alternative Compliance to permit grading and other construction within the floodplain.



Section Reference No.	Brief Summary of Request

Signature of Property Owner:  Date: 5/1/24

Signature of Petitioner Preparer:  Date: 5/1/24

Name of Property Owner: Columbia Association Name of Petition Preparer: GLW

Address: 6310 Hillside Ct, Suite 100 Address: 3909 National Drive, Suite 250

City, State, Zip: Columbia, MD 21046 City, State, Zip: Burtonsville, MD 20866

E-Mail: john.mchugh@columbiaassociation.org E-Mail: dsweeney@glwpa.com

Phone No.: 410-381-0384 Phone No.: 410-880-1820

Contact Person: John McHugh Contact Person: Dan Sweeney

Owner's Authorization Attached