

Monthly Columbia Association (CA) Update Report for Hickory Ridge

Hickory Ridge's Columbia Council Representative: Micajah McGarity

Month: September 2026

Disclaimer: Please note that the views and commentary expressed in this report are my own.

Here is a summary of the latest news, facility updates, and upcoming events from the Columbia Association to keep the Hickory Ridge community informed.

1. Governance & Leadership Updates

- **CA Board Town Hall on September 24:** CA will hold a Board Meeting Town Hall on Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. This is an opportunity for residents to stay engaged with CA's ongoing work and hear more about issues before the Board.
- **Kings Contrivance Representative Selected:** Ted Bauer has been selected as the new Kings Contrivance Representative to The Columbia Council. This brings the number of current vacancies to three, with River Hill, Long Reach, and Oakland Mills still vacant.
- **CA Headquarters and Adjacent Building Purchase Under Consideration:** CA is considering purchasing its current headquarters at 6310 Hillside Court and the adjacent building at 6315 Hillside Court. The combined purchase price is \$10.3 million, with an estimated \$3 million in renovations and buildout, for a total projected investment of about \$13.3 million. CA has noted that it currently spends about \$1 million annually to lease its headquarters, and that the adjacent building could also provide rental revenue.
- **Potential Childcare and STEAM Center:** One of the most exciting possibilities associated with the adjacent building is a proposed learning center that could include an early learning center and a STEAM center. At full capacity, the early learning center could serve approximately 180 children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. I really like the idea that, if this concept moves forward, CA could provide childcare at a discounted rate to CA residents. Affordable childcare is a major need for families, and this could be a meaningful way for CA to support Columbia residents while making productive use of the property.

2. Community News & Facility Highlights

- **Deer Management in Columbia Open Space:** CA announced that it will conduct five controlled archery hunts this fall in select areas of Columbia to help address the overpopulation of white-tailed deer and protect natural areas. CA reports that Columbia has about 100 deer per square mile, well above the 20–25 deer per square mile considered sustainable. The goal is to gradually bring the deer population to a healthier level, protect forests and new plantings, reduce landscaping damage, and help lower deer-vehicle collisions.
- **Beech Leaf Disease Has Reached Columbia:** CA also shared information about beech leaf disease, which has been confirmed in Howard County and is spreading throughout Maryland. Residents are encouraged to look for dark green bands between leaf veins, curled or distorted leaves, premature leaf drop, and thinning canopies. CA is asking residents to report suspected symptoms on CA open space to sustainability@columbiaassociation.org and to avoid moving potentially affected beech material.

- **CA App Update:** CA has updated its mobile app with a new design and features including in-app bill pay, an account dashboard, and appointment booking. CA also noted that some users may need to adjust filters to see all available classes, programs, and activities across locations.

3. Upcoming Events & Seasonal Activities

- **Make it a September to Remember:** CA's September community update highlights several ways for residents to reconnect as the fall routine begins, including racquetball leagues, Lakefront Live activities, the Young Adult Listening Lab, and a community blood drive.
- **Young Adult Listening Lab:** CA is hosting a Young Adult Listening Lab for residents ages 21–35 on Monday, September 14, from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Celia's Cuban Cuisine & Mojito Bar at the Hickory Ridge Village Center. This is intended as a relaxed conversation for younger adults to share ideas and hopes for Columbia's future.
- **Community Blood Drive:** CA is partnering with the Red Cross and CareFirst for a community blood drive at Columbia Gym on Friday, September 25, from 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
- **Lakefront Live Continues into September:** Although summer is winding down, CA noted that Lakefront Live activities, including concerts, Dancin', movies, and special events, continue through mid-September.