

The A. J. Advisor



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WINER

On Odenton
**OTC Master
Plan-
Hopeful but
Realistic**



The Odenton Town Center Master Plan was passed in 2004 to guide development in the area the County Executive calls one of his highest priorities. After working on previous planning efforts for 10 years, Chairing the committee that oversaw this latest Plan for 6 more years and spending the last two years on the effort to amend this plan now before the County Council so development can actually occur, it seemed appropriate I write this as my testimony before the County Council:

Mr. Chairman and members of the County Council, my name is Jay Winer and my address is 8373 Piney Orchard Pky., Odenton, Md. I have worked in land development in Anne Arundel County for forty years, much of it in Odenton. I have also worked with business organizations and county agencies responsible for planning and implementation of the County's land use policy over that same time frame. I know whereof I speak.

Contrary to its primary intent, the OTC Master Plan passed five years ago made it even more difficult to develop in Odenton Town Center than previously. The Plan which originally sought to expedite OTC development was incomplete and rife with conflicts in intent and specific criteria. County staff agreed. Look at the result. During one of the most dynamic development periods in the country, with BRAC looming in this area of "highest priority", several proposed projects processed plans but none started construction due to an average permit approval time of three years!

Community organizations, county sanctioned committees, developers and others asked this process be started earlier, but to no avail. So, for the last two years we have all worked to improve the Plan. Is it clearer? Yes. Is it more defined? Yes? Is it going to make it faster to develop this critical part of our county? I fear not.

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AJP Welcomes BRAC Employees To Odenton in Anne Arundel County, Maryland

by Stuart Title

Well after years of rhetoric, planning, discussion and more, BRAC has commenced on Fort George G. Meade as of 13 November 2009, when the first 300 DISA employees were assigned seats in temporary quarters while construction on their permanent location continues with delivery for interior improvements in February.

Lots of information and misinformation has been bantered around since the announcement of BRAC in September 2005. AJP and its partners have been associated with Odenton dating back to the early 70's and still continues strong today. We would like to share some information with you on things you should know and appreciate as you spend more time in the area:

Businesses and residences are looking forward to the opportunity that you bring to the area and are working diligently for your benefit.

Although Odenton needs more restaurants, there are many, many good restaurants in Odenton and within a ten minute drive.

It is very easy to travel in and around the area once you get here.

There are plenty of housing choices in and around the area with more on the way including around MARC train stations.

Centrally located, Fort Meade is truly 30 minutes or less from "everywhere": Eastern Shore/Annapolis, Columbia, Baltimore and Washington DC, and the countryside of Carroll and Howard Counties.

We have very good K-12 schools that are constantly improving and are gearing curriculum towards training for high-tech/high-security employers moving into the area (STEM: science, technology, engineering & math).

AMTRAK, MARC and BWI are all located within 10 minutes for all your mission centric travel in and out of the area.

Major shopping at Arundel Mills, Westfield Shopping Town (Annapolis Mall) and Columbia Mall, is all located within 20 minutes.

We are surrounded by higher learning institutions such as: Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland, UMBC, Anne Arundel CC, Capitol College, Howard CC, Bowie State University, Catonsville CC and Strayer University - all less than 30 minutes from Fort Meade.

A. J. Properties has and continues to participate in this preparation. We were involved in bringing new liquor license legislation to promote restaurant opportunities in the area. We are active in local and regional transportation issues providing some real and cost effective solutions to traffic impacts. We've had direct input in The Odenton Town Plan since its inception and we serve in various capacities in area chambers of commerce which directly impact the area. So we say *Welcome*; and if there is anything we can do to help you find your way, please feel free to ask.

DID YOU KNOW?

**Maryland has the
highest
median
household income
in the nation
at
\$84,415.**

uscensus.gov 9-21-09

Here's the problem: Articles 16, 17 and 18 of the County code already regulate development. Under the proposed OTC Master Plan, they will continue to do so. But the 189 pages of this Plan and the additional requirements contained therein overlay all of those codes. It has to take longer.

The most important goal of this Plan should be to expedite development and insure that all aspects of the county code regulating development and the county's capital program are coordinated. I wish that were the case. You need only look at the delay we now face with insufficient sewer line capacity and impact fees going other than in our own area, to name a few.

The Plan now has language allowing the P&Z Officer to be flexible in interpretation and application of the Plan. It even stipulates the development process will take one year for approval. Assuming the developer does everything required, there is no recourse if the County delays approvals. The Plan says that in the event of conflict with code provisions, the Plan will rule. However, there is no specific language contained in the Plan with which to overrule the existing code. As the largest TC in the County, the work of the Plan divided Odenton into sections by character but 'married' them with appropriate design criteria. There is now an overabundance of desire to have all 1600 acres of this Town Center be urban in character. The core of the town center should have this designation and the criteria for this enforced. The other areas of the town center should be encouraged but not required to meet this same standard.

In closing, the Plan is clearer but still will likely create conflicts for reviewers. Flexibility and urgency will be required by the County to make our town center successful. Without them, quality developers the County relies on to make the huge investments that create tax revenue for the benefit of the taxpayers of all of Anne Arundel County, will not come. Results show the County's track record has not been stellar. We need an "affirmative action" Odenton Town Center Master Plan.



BEHIND THE CURRENT SNOW BANK

We realize you may have to wait for the spring thaw to notice but we've changed the name of our center on Annapolis Road. Formerly known as Winmark Center, we've changed the name to the **Odenton Health & Technology Campus**. This comes in anticipation of our new building to better reflect both the uses and the connectivity of the sites.

By the way, our first two buildings are 100% leased and with just one more piece to get in place, we'll be all set to begin construction on the new building!



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