

The A. J. Advisor



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On Odenton

WINER



The Future of OTC "Clarifying (putting glasses on) the Vision"



Odenton Town Center is finally beginning to look like it. In the midst of such a weak economy, still there rise numerous projects in the town center. After forty years, it's just beginning to deliver on its promise. Full build-out is still years away and many question if the planned density can ever actually be attained. Yet progress is undeniable and the look and scope of the Town Center is taking shape. But will the finished product match the original vision for our town center?

One question I believe can now be answered for sure is whether our town will be the retail hub for west Anne Arundel County as originally planned. A broad base of shopping and retail services, surrounded by residential and office development was envisioned in the Plan and that just is no longer in the cards.

While the County struggled to get the town center out of the ground, creating new iterations of its original plan, two major and previously unplanned developments came to be. Arundel Mills was a project many feared and some fought. Yet, when the incoming county executive saw the fiscal impact, the project was not only zoned and approved, it was up and operating in less than two years! Waugh Chapel and more lately Waugh Chapel South (now cleverly called "Town Center") were both projects that were not previously planned, zoned or served with utilities. A case was made and the County decided to allow the use, notwithstanding its commitment to make Odenton Town Center its main focus of development for the area.

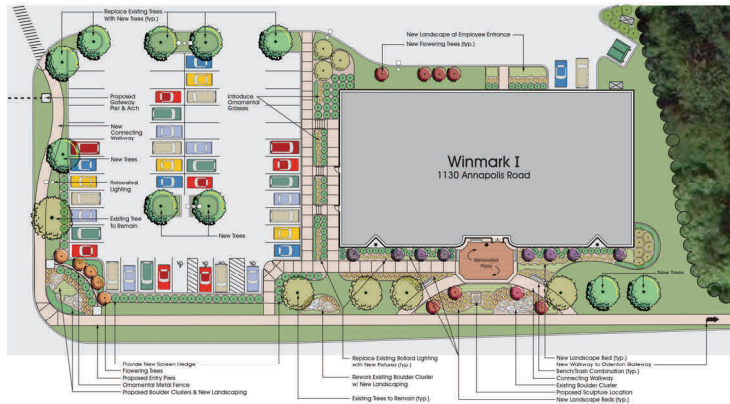
Some may make the argument that OTC might have developed sooner and quite differently if county planners would have stuck to their original plans. But that would have flown in the face of reality. Anne Arundel County bound and gagged itself when it became a tax capped municipality. The short term euphoria all tax payers felt from insurance our real estate taxes would not rise precipitously was replaced by the unintended results. The County was forced to begin approving projects that could pay



Sprucing Up



Adjoining the new Odenton Gateway project, site improvements to the ODENTON HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS will connect them with new sidewalks and upgrades to landscaping, lighting, and parking. Plans include a sculpture as the first public art in Odenton Town Center.



Odenton Health & Technology Campus Odenton, Maryland



The work is being managed by A. J. Properties and will be complete this fall. The next phase for the project is the addition of a new 64,000 sq. ft. office building which is currently pre-leasing.



DO YOU KNOW?



Recognize this building? Today it is where A. J. Properties is located but in 1908 it looked like this and served as the WB&A Dispatcher's Tower and Offices at Naval Academy Junction. To see other historical pictures, please visit the About Us section of our website.

fees and taxes to make up the difference. The problem is, rising assessments over the years have us paying higher real estate taxes anyway.

It became impossible for the County to finance the improvements needed on a grand scale as in the case of Odenton Town Center and pay them back over time through improving revenue. Instead it was forced to look to single developers to foot all of the up front expense and get the job done. Don't get me wrong, both Arundel Mills and Waugh Chapel have been high quality, well developed and well run projects with great financial benefit to the County.

These are major underlying reasons the County must now be much more flexible with Odenton Town Center development. Now that private investment and development have gained momentum, the County has got to revise its plan to fit reality. The reality is that with its additional residential growth, Odenton Town Center will be a center for health care, education, office development to serve Fort Meade's cyber security efforts and service retail for this bedroom community. This is not necessarily a bad thing, just different; the reality that the original vision in the OTC Plan, the "dream" for Odenton Town Center to be the vibrant retail hub creating a dynamic sense of place just may not be what we wind up with. Unfortunately for Odenton the timing for major retail opportunities favored Arundel Mills & Waugh Chapel. It calls for the County and community leaders to accept this reality and adjust. The model for a grid street lifestyle center planned 15 years ago for Odenton is just now outdated. Embrace the changes in the market and move on. Get rid of the also outdated and arbitrary requirements for specific percentages of mixed use. Modify the definitions for the use of impact fees so the \$100 million the County is collecting in fees from Odenton Town Center development can pay for road and all other future infrastructure needs. Allow Odenton to respond to the market as it develops, much like Arundel Mills and Waugh Chapel.



Jay Winer Appointed AACC Foundation President

We are pleased to announce Jay's leadership as President of the Anne Arundel Community College Foundation Board of Directors. The Foundation was begun in August 1967 and supports the vision of Anne Arundel Community College. Their mission is to secure and manage funds to enhance education through programs, scholarships and the like. The Foundation also has a Corporate Partner Program which affords increased company visibility along with enhanced programming. Prior to his role as President, Jay has served on the Board since 2004 and has a personal interest in Entrepreneurial studies. A. J. Properties also congratulates the College on its 50th Anniversary.



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