

# The A. J. Advisor



Autumn 2012

Volume 18, Issue 3

On Odenton

WINER



## Misplaced Rumbblings

I've been hearing some rumbblings that the accelerated pace of apartment development in Odenton Town Center should be a cause for concern. I've even read some accounts of similar concerns by area residents. It seems the concern centers around the demographics of apartment residents; that the typical transiency of apartment living is somehow going to bring down the area.



I believe all the concern is unwarranted. What is being built is exactly what the publicly adopted Plan for Odenton calls for. If the community feels cause for concern,

getting involved with groups such as the Odenton Town Plan Oversight Committee and Chamber of Commerce can give them a voice in helping to change the directives of the Plan. Apartment construction is the only way to obtain the planned density. More important, retail services desired and requested by the community for many years can only be supported by concentrated residential growth. Until now, most commercial development has taken place in areas surrounding Odenton. One reason is that there just hasn't been enough "roof tops" in Odenton to warrant faster retail and service development. We can talk to retailers until we're blue in the face about all that is going to happen. Retailers ONLY respond to what has happened.

*"There is a warning signal however, and it's timing."*

The make-up of the new residents of Town Center's new apartments is likely to be quite different as well. Start with rental rates that are high enough to encourage only qualified and professional renters. In addition, the jobs supported by the growth in our area bring residents that are

## 1995 Vision Plan for 2012?



Stuart Title

Back in 1995 as part of the Odenton Town Center Plan a Vision diagram was made to illustrate and define the TC area as well as conceptual uses on various parcels throughout the Town Center. Fortunately the vision plan was supposed to be just that, but was then taken more objectively when approving the Town Center Plan that was adopted in 2003 and revised again in 2010.



Seventeen years later, as the OTC Plan has begun implementation on some properties, developers are finding difficulties turning a somewhat generic vision plan into reality. Two major factors have contributed to this. First is the fact that the uses mandated by the Odenton Town Center Plan development guidelines did NOT take into account the numerous mandatory AA County/State planning and zoning guidelines which make it sometimes impossible to follow what should be a flexible, rather than somewhat inflexible, Town Center development plan.

Second is the change in market conditions not only in Odenton, but what has changed in the surrounding markets as well (i.e. Arundel Mills, Waugh Chapel, Annapolis, Laurel and Columbia). Market opportunity in retail has been greatly diminished even though the 1995 vision might have been for that to happen in Odenton. Our surrounding neighbors outside of Odenton have satisfied the market demand for retail in such a way that literally "the lay of the land" in Odenton would have never been able to accomplish. This isn't a bad thing but something that needs to be recognized and adjusted with-

*Continued page 2, column 2*

## DO YOU KNOW?

### FACTS:

1. More than \$10 million in impact fees has already been collected from development in West Anne Arundel County.
2. None of it has been spent and the County does not have a single road project listed in its capital improvement plan.
3. The County has spent significant funds on study of road projects to support town center growth.
4. The County will collect another \$90 million in impact fees in the Odenton Town Center alone as it builds out.
5. County code now says only increase in road capacity can be funded by impact fees.

!\* None of this makes any common sense \*!

*Continued page 2, column 1*

continued from page 1, column 1

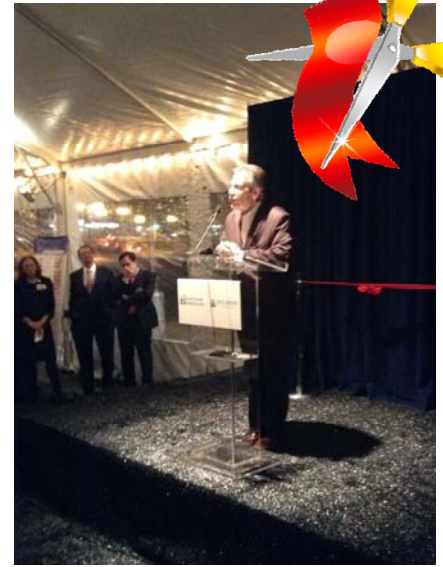
filling those jobs. There is a warning signal however, and it's timing. New residents will add to the market encouraging new retail services. However, those services cannot and will not occupy small "lifestyle" spaces in the first floor of the new residential development as required by current Town Center Plans. They need free standing space with residential support surrounding and the plan needs to change to support the market. The Plan should change until there is enough "urban" density to warrant that requirement.

We should count ourselves lucky that in this recent era of paltry economic and housing development with declining values in our region, housing prices and apartment rents have been sustained at higher levels than most in west county. We need to literally build on that if we are to get the vision for our Town Center ever realized.

continued from page 1, column 2

in the OTC Plan in order to build what is useable based on current market demand and not an outdated vision plan. This reality has shifted the demand for Odenton to restaurant, service retail, office and residential. This shouldn't be perceived as a bad thing just different, which is okay. Three recessions during this 17 year period have also changed how the market has been defined and this needs to be considered in moving forward.

To conclude it may be a good time to adopt a revised vision plan that adapts and also takes into consideration market conditions that have changed a vision from nearly two decades ago.



Jay welcomed Odenton Gateway's new medical building to the community at their Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Dec. 6th. Mr. Wylie of Johns Hopkins Medical Mgmt. introduced Jay as Odenton's 'unofficial mayor'.



### PROUDLY REVEALED

In the last edition of *The A. J. Advisor* we alerted you to new site improvements at our Odenton Health & Technology Campus to include a sculpture as Odenton Town Center's first public art. Now installed at the entrance to 1130 Annapolis Road, this sleek design depicts the transformation of Odenton. Created by Florida sculptor, Pat Pacifico, this brushed aluminum art piece forges the railroad tracks of yesteryear with the new road to vibrancy that is finally becoming Odenton Town Center converging at an wind driven O.

The sculpture stands as a reminder from where we came and that our significance as a community is still measured as we move forward and grow.

It's titled "All Roads Lead to **O**denton."

Our paper newsletter is fading away. Sign up for our e-version at [www.ajprop.net](http://www.ajprop.net) under the News tab or call us with your email address.

8373 Piney Orchard Parkway  
Odenton, MD 21113  
410-551-9116  
[www.ajprop.net](http://www.ajprop.net)  
[info@ajprop.net](mailto:info@ajprop.net)

