

# The A. J. Advisor



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On Odenton



Remember when the circus came to town?

Forty years ago, the circus would visit and one of the most exciting acts was the lion tamer. Chair in one hand and whip in the other, the animals were put through their paces to everyone's delight while the tamer herded his or her big "cats".

Of course, today our concern for the animals has reduced the show to a very expensive parade at best.

Speaking of parades, the parade of new candidates for County Executive has come to west county and Odenton in particular to all who pledge their undying and total support for Odenton Town Center.



Primary candidate signs at Anne Arundel County polling place.

All the politicians shake their head (elephants for the republicans and donkeys for the democrats) over the collective failure of the county in the past to implement the necessary steps to build the town center rather than talk, talk, talk about it. Every candidate professes to know the facts and "understand" exactly what it will actually take for their administration to make it happen.

From appointing a czar of Odenton, to "cleaning" administrative house, to funding only they can ensure will be available, there's a long list of how they will lead the successful culmination of forty years of planning for the largest and most unrealized town center in the county and the entire metropolitan region.



## NO CRYSTAL BALL REQUIRED



Michele Waits

We've been looking into the future for quite a long time. A Fiscal Impact study on Odenton Town Center (OTC) done by ZHA in 2007 as a private/public partnership concluded the conditions were right to reap great reward if government would act immediately to complete priority capital improvements and capture the market. New revenues from full development of the Odenton Town Center through the year 2032 could have totaled up to \$1,193,391,944 (yes those are all commas). In autumn 2013, the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation retained Valbridge Property Advisors to do a retail market study on OTC to assess prospects for the current market.

Now the stars are no longer aligned the same as other concentrations of area retail have developed, and Valbridge determined Odenton's trade area is constrained to more local and convenience goods and services. Still, over 1,200 new residential units have entered the market with more than 3,000 additional units to come and those people, as well as long time residents, want and need the services that have long been promised.

The Valbridge study (using conservative residential expense patterns and local daytime employment spending) shows that the current retail demand for Odenton Town Center's market targets grocery stores; restaurants; niche retail and entertainment; medical/pharmacy space and financial services. We're still anxiously waiting for these services.

The time for study and delay is over. As Jay mentioned, Odenton is currently Anne Arundel's 'breadbasket' and to reap the full financial benefit, the County must aggressively pursue completion of priority capital improvements for which they will be richly rewarded many times over; including an influx of new businesses as mentioned above. No crystal ball needed—the future is now.

## Farewell to Pete



After a long career with the State, private real estate, Anne Arundel Economic Development Corp. and A. J. Properties, Inc. we bid Evelyn "Pete" Kellner farewell as she retires this summer. Pete has been with us at AJP for eleven years and her efficient hand will be missed.

Please join us in wishing her well as she embarks on this new adventure.



They all seem to get that the county's ability to fund programs and provide services is based on the "bread basket" that is west county. The taxes and economic activity that is even yet to come is in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Unfortunately, the steps taken thus far have been limited and the promises hollow, when it comes to results: no road projects in the last five years, few sidewalks or crosswalks to even connect communities and businesses; and cutbacks in public transportation to name a few. Instead, the politicians point to all the development now in progress as proof of their commitment, underscoring all the "public-private" partnerships getting the job done. They all seem surprised over how much has been built in recent years when they show up, only underscoring how little they've even visited in the past. Of course, supply and demand and the market have been the real reason for "progress" to date, despite the ridiculous amount of time it's taken due to delays in permitting in the past, or permitting and development fees that are collectively the highest in the entire region. Public-private partnerships are really the private sector somehow getting the job done and the public sector taking the credit.

Will our 40 plus year plan ever be completed? The answer will be in the hands of the next elected lion tamer to answer. Will they crack the whip and make it happen or will the circus just move on to the next town?

## World's Best...

Jay, Stuart, Donna and AJP received high praise from Kennedy Krieger.

"In the modern rush of our 21<sup>st</sup> century lifestyle, we often do not take time to pause and recognize how we have helped each other. You have helped establish a new clinic in Odenton for providing Behavioral Health services to families, especially active military families. In my opinion, your unique contribution was not only invaluable, but I know that this clinic could never have been a reality without your diligence and the manner in which you shared in the vision."

*-Michael Cataldo, PhD,*

*Director, Department of Behavioral Psychology - Kennedy Krieger Institute*



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## AJP Welcomes Kapla

Kayla Waits has officially joined the AJP team as a part time office assistant. She is also a full time student attending Anne Arundel Community College.



**How do you feel about property preservation?** With the latest update to the Odenton Town Plan currently under review by the County, there have been discussions and meetings with regard to the "Village" area of the Plan. What does historic really mean and where is its place as Odenton redevelops into a town center? Read our latest blog and [let us know what you think](#).



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.

