



Oakland Mills Village Center Area Redevelopment Feasibility Study

June 6 Community Kickoff Meeting Synopsis

Howard County, in partnership with Columbia Association (CA), has engaged a consulting team led by Bolan Smart Associates to evaluate economic and market opportunities for the Oakland Mills Village Center area. The consultant team also includes Retail & Development Strategies (RDS) and Urban Design Associates (UDA).

On June 6, 2016 the study began with a community kickoff meeting. This meeting provided an opportunity for the project team to: 1) introduce team members, process, and schedule; and 2) ask the community for input via small “focus group” style sessions.

Bolan Smart Associates described their multi-step method of studying economic feasibility that includes:

- understanding the real estate market (market reconnaissance);
- engaging stakeholders;
- profiling case study examples;
- modeling demand for various land uses; and
- preparing conceptual frameworks for development.

This method allows Bolan Smart to identify, test, and compare different land use scenarios. In terms of schedule, the consultants will conduct stakeholder meetings and develop recommendations over the summer. They will return to Oakland Mills to present findings and possible recommendations in the fall and present final results later in the year.

The second half of the June 6th kickoff meeting consisted of small “focus group” style sessions with community members invited to participate in four focus groups:

- 1) Retail
- 2) New Residential/Offices
- 3) Institutional and Recreational Uses
- 4) Physical Building Configurations / Access / Connectivity

For each focus group, a consultant asked participants a series of questions to gain insight into preferences and behaviors. These questions sought input on current conditions, such as what draws people to the village center today and existing shopping behaviors. The questions also posed “what ifs,” asking participants to weigh in on future potential uses including retail, office, residential, and recreational opportunities. The community will be invited to offer additional feedback in the fall when the consultant team presents their findings. In the meantime, community members are welcome to submit comments via the study’s comment form.