

Novus, Alliance in Odenton

Side by side in Odenton, Novus Residences and Alliance Residential are moving in lockstep towards their leasing starts later this summer.

Both multi-family projects are on Route 175 opposite the MARC station and closer to the Odenton Town Center 'core' than anything else that has been built. Both bought the land at about the same time, poured the footings and are now going vertical at the same pace.

But they'll start to diverge. Novus is aiming for higher rents and more expensive finishes than Alliance, starting with the structured parking. Though right next to each other, Alliance's project has a more suburban look, than the more urban appearance Novus is aiming for.

Ironically, both are in the Town Center but there isn't much Town Center yet. The two are going up on a grid of streets that is still home to scattered single-family homes. Eventually, planners and pioneers like Novus and Alliance hope, the streets will fill with retail, office and more multi-family.

Many Townhouses Sold – At Once

A bundle of rental townhouses traded hands recently.

Seller Home Properties collected \$76.13 million in parting with the 'Townes at Heritage Hill.' It is Baltimore-based Sage Management LLC that now owns the 469 units on Cedar Furnace Circle in Glen Burnie.

APF Task Force Assembling in Howard

A task force on the APF test in Howard County is getting underway just as the issue heats up.

Builders fear that the next 'school chart,' slated to be brought to the Council soon and showing which schools are open or closed to development, will reveal more congestion problems in elementary schools. At the same time, the line for allocations likewise appears to be growing longer, as more projects vie for approval.

The twin problems have builders concerned about the length of time it will take some projects to get from initial submission to final plan approval.

It's in the Established Communities 'bin' in particular that the line, like that for a popular rock band, is starting to go around the block. Right now, only 400 units per year are 'allocated' to developers whose property falls in the 'EC' areas. By the Department of Planning & Zoning's figuring, the backlog is not particularly serious, but DPZ's count of pipeline units doesn't include those developers that have only submitted an environmental concept plan. When those are factored in, plus those plans that have been aired in pre-submission meetings, the extent of new development starting to line up for allocations begins to grow uncomfortably long.

County Exec Allan Kittleman is only now choosing the members of the APF task force, and ahead of the group of course is months of meetings. Builders likely will lobby for more flexibility, such as 'borrowing' from adjacent clusters, getting built into the test. But that's no easy task. Ditto for the allocation issue, which came out of the recent General Plan. There, builders see the allocation system as unbalanced, with too many projects vying for the limited capacity of the Established Communities bin. That bin is the one into which many of the county's single-family communities go, and builders had hoped during General Plan discussions to allow 700 such allocations per year, instead of 400.

Greenfield Accepting Offers

Greenfield Partners was expecting bids for its Simpson Oaks property as this newsletter goes to press. Market sources say the Connecticut firm's deadline was early May to submit an acquisition offer for the 184 units it can develop off Route 32 next to the W.R. Grace Co. headquarters in Columbia. Greenfield's plan for 103 singles and 81 townhouses was the first application in the county under the new CEF zoning.

Simpson Oaks is the newest sizable community of singles and towns in play and was expected to generate some fierce bidding. Fraser Forbes Real Estate is handling the disposition of the project.

A Builder Underway

A custom builder is getting started, based in Howard but ready to work the larger area. Cairn Custom Homes will be operated by Steve Appler and Lisa Rosenthal, both long-time Goodier / Baker Homes employees who will continue to work with the firm through the end of 2015 as they set up the new company. Besides Cairn's custom work, the firm has a first presence lined up with 10 lots in Walnut Creek, in the back of the Sheppard Road community.

