

# WHEATON REDEVELOPMENT



# ANNUAL REPORT 2003

Wheaton Redevelopment Program  
11501 Georgia Avenue, Suite 403A  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
Telephone - 240-777-8121  
Fax - 301-929-5571  
[www.wheatonmd.org](http://www.wheatonmd.org)



## WHEATON REDEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2003

### Summary

The Redevelopment Office continues to work with developers and new businesses interested in opportunities in downtown Wheaton, existing businesses looking to expand or enhance their operations, as well as assist the residential community.

Substantial progress is being achieved in redeveloping and rejuvenating downtown Wheaton into a vibrant center with a balanced mix of residential, office, and retail uses typical of an urban environment.

Development activity has been initiated by the private sector on seven key gateway sites. Once completed, it will create 736 residential units, nearly 400,000 square feet of new retail and 300,000-400,000 square feet of new office space in the downtown. This will create nearly 1.8 million square feet of new development and generate \$305 million in private capital investment.

The Wheaton Redevelopment Program is based on the concept of

encouraging private reinvestment through targeted, complementary public investment. To date, the County has leveraged over \$21 from the private sector for every County dollar spent in the downtown.

Pedestrian improvements and new safety measures are being utilized to make the downtown environment more attractive and friendly.

### Redevelopment Projects Completed Or Under Construction

#### Retail/Commercial

Construction is underway for Westfield Shoppingtown Wheaton's \$95 million expansion and renovation. Macy's is preparing for construction of their new \$30 million store -- both will be completed in spring of 2005.

Westfields welcomed the opening of Wachovia Bank, Starbuck's, Quiznos, Nextel and Baja Fresh this past winter and Giant Food opened a new full service supermarket in October.

### **Retail/Commercial Con't.**

Bally's has broken ground for a state of the art facility using a model the corporation has built on the west coast. The facility will front Veirs Mill Road at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and will open in September 2004.

In the fall of 2003, an in-fill retail/specialty building with 8,200 square feet was completed at the former Little Tavern site along Veirs Mill Road.

This new building is home to the first public/private art display by internationally-known artist Phillip Ratner. The six musically-themed sculptured plaques located on the outside of the building are a tribute to the late Chuck Levin.

### **Residential Development**

Wheaton is very excited to have several upscale residential projects underway. In early 2003, Bozzuto Group and Eakin/Youngentob Associates purchased six acres located south of the Wheaton Metro Kiss-n-Ride. Their combined project *The Brownstones and Montgomery at Wheaton Metro* will include 318 residential units and a 400-space parking garage.

A landscaped pedestrian walkway is being constructed through the Bozzuto/EYA site that will link to the Wheaton Metro station. This is being funded by a State Mass Transit Administration Smart Growth grant and supplemented by County funds.

*The Brownstones at Wheaton Metro* have sold 70% of their 75 townhouses and occupancy will begin in summer of 2004. Average price for these townhouses was in the mid- to upper-\$500,000 range.

*Montgomery at Wheaton Metro* will begin occupancy of their 243 luxury rental apartments in fall of 2004.

Another project underway is *Clairmont at Wheaton Metro* being developed by Pulte Homes. All 42 townhouses have been sold and occupancy will begin in summer of 2004. Average price for these townhouses was low to mid \$400,000 range. This project also includes a single-family dwelling and small park.

*Pembridge Square*, owned by Montgomery Housing Partnership, is a 50 year old apartment complex that began a major multi-phased renovation of their 133 units in October 2003.

## **Residential Development**

### **Con't.**

*Georgia Square*, a Winchester Homes development, is being constructed several blocks south of the downtown at Georgia Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. This project of 30 masonry townhomes with garages is priced from the mid-\$400,000 range. Occupancy is expected in the fall of 2004.

### **Future Projects**

There are three development projects that are anticipated to break ground in 2004-2005. These include the Bozzuto/HOC Metro air rights residential project, the Wheaton Rescue Squad and a commercial townhouse project along University Boulevard.

*Wheaton Rescue Squad* will construct a new 28,000 square foot two-story operations center and community/social hall in mid-2004, at the corner of Arcola and Georgia Avenues.

*Bozzuto & the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC)* will begin construction in 2005 of 175 apartment units at the Kiss & Ride site at Georgia Avenue and Reddie Drive. The project, to be completed in 2007, will include an on-site parking garage.

An 8,500 square foot office/townhouse project has been proposed along University Boulevard opposite Westfield Shoppingtown Wheaton.

There are several proposed development projects still in the planning stage: Developers Centex and John Laing Homes are contract purchasers of the Good Counsel High School site. They plan to construct approximately 201 residential units on this site. The developer is considering the retention of the 16,000 square foot Rafferty Center as a Wheaton Recreation site that includes an all-purpose room, gym, stage and classrooms. Construction should begin in 2005-2006. Good Counsel plans to move to a larger site in Olney.

Bozzuto's plans to construct dual office towers with a combined square footage of 300,000 over the existing bus bays of the Metro Station between Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road are on schedule. The developer is working with the Wheaton Redevelopment Program to identify potential private sector tenants. Projected construction is set for 2006.

## **Economic Development**

The Wheaton Enterprise Zone was established in late 1998 as a tax incentive program. It's used to attract and expand the base of downtown businesses and encourage new developments and jobs in the downtown. This year's participants are: Anchor Inn/Blue Marlin Sports Grill; Greenberg/Triangle Park; and Hugo Salon and Spa.

With the help of state and federal grants as well as County funds, Wheaton has provided some major improvements in the downtown:

- spring of 2003, the two-block radius of Georgia Avenue/Triangle Lane received streetscape improvements, facade work, restoration and paving;
- fall of 2003, storefronts along Triangle Lane received new Canopies -- spring of 2004 a similar canopy project will begin on the storefronts along Georgia Avenue; and
- a major streetscape project along Amherst Avenue, in proximity to the Metro Station was completed in 2001.

Also, with the help of a \$250,000 Federal grant, the Wheaton Technology Center was established in 2003 to assist local businesses

in computer literacy resources. Classes are being held at the Montgomery College Wheaton Campus Building and also at the Gilchrist Center.

## **Community Interaction**

In spring 2003, the Wheaton Redevelopment Steering Committee (WRSC) completed its original assignment. The County Executive appointed a new Steering Committee to continue working with the Redevelopment Office on the redevelopment issues in Wheaton and fine tuning a visioning process. The Committee meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend.

The Business and Community Outreach Subcommittee of the WRSC has established and helped redesign a community-based web site, [www.wheatonmd.org](http://www.wheatonmd.org), to provide current information on Wheaton; redevelopment and revitalization projects; restaurants, retailers, businesses; events and community activities and organizations.

During 2003 and 2004, the Urban Design and Image Subcommittee of the WRSC has been working on a specific visioning scenario for

## **Community Interaction – Con't.**

the redevelopment of the County's Parking Lot 13. After completion, it is expected that this visioning scenario will provide a planning tool to help gauge future development plans for this area.

In October 2000, National Main Street Center, a program of the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation completed its Visioning Process for downtown Wheaton that resulted in four distinct potential redevelopment scenarios which will be utilized to help determine the desirability and feasibility of future redevelopment proposals. The community can vision the hybrid of all these scenarios in future development.

The Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity opened in September 2001. It serves as a central point of contact for services and programs available primarily for immigrants and new residents to the County. The Center serves over one thousand clients a month from over 60 different countries. Specific programs offered include:

- New Americans Welcome Center;
- cultural programs;

- small business development information and classes; and
- a cultural ambassador program.

## **Safe & Attractive Environment**

The County is very committed to pedestrian safety and much progress has been made. In 2002, Wheaton was one of the first to install new count-down pedestrian crossing signals at Georgia Ave. & Reddie Drive and Arcola Ave. & Lamberton Drive. Cross-walk "paddle signs" were also installed on Reddie Drive.

In the fall of 2003, the State Highway Administration began a study program in Wheaton to identify resources that can improve the pedestrian environment while maintaining vehicle operations in the Wheaton Central Business District (CBD) and enhance accessibility within the  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile area of the Wheaton Metro Station. The study began with current conditions and will take into account the Wheaton Metro area's planned future. Wheaton is of particular interest to the State due to the downtown's unique situation of being traversed by three State highways.

## **Safe & Attractive Environment - Con't.**

The final product of this study will be an action plan of street cross sections and/or detailed drawings of intersections or critical areas to be improved as a model for the rest of the CBD. Preliminary recommendations have been given to the community and the final report will be released in March 2004. The plan addresses traffic operations at four to five key intersections in the context of an effective overall downtown traffic and pedestrian plan.

A Public Safety Audit (Public Safety Master Plan) began in October 2003. Participants from

all of the stakeholder groups have organized to address issues of appearance, perception and resources needed currently and as the new projects open. A final report is expected in summer of 2004.

**Staff of the Wheaton Redevelopment Program is available to work with individuals, community groups, businesses and developers. Please call 240-777-8121 for information and assistance.**