

Study shows need for grocery stores, retail in Odenton



Commuters file off a government bus on at the Odenton MARC station. Odenton's population has spiked 28 percent since 2012 and growth is expected to continue. County officials say more restaurants and grocery stores will soon come to the area. (By Matthew Cole, Staff / September 26, 2013)

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In recent months, West County has seen some major development.

Odenton has welcomed new apartment complexes, townhouses and single family homes but there's something missing in the area that outskirts Fort George G. Meade – grocery stores and restaurants.

Monday, the Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corp. held a networking breakfast to discuss a recent retail study on Odenton Town Center and highlight financing opportunities and investment incentives.

Area households currently spend about \$200 million per year on "food at home" including other grocery store items and spend \$100 million at restaurants, according to the Retail Market Analysis.

The analysis says Odenton can support at least 240,000 square feet of supermarket space and 125,000 square feet of restaurant space. By 2017, the accommodations will grow to 280,000 square feet of supermarket space and 147,000 square feet of retail space.

Odenton's population has spiked 28 percent since 2012 and growth is expected to continue. County officials say more restaurants and grocery stores will soon come to the area.

"There is a lot of interest in the grocery stores and I think it's just a matter of time before one commits," Mary Burkholder, executive vice president of AAEDC said.

Baltimore Coffee and Tea opened an Odenton location two months ago and company President Stanley Constantine believes the area has growth potential.

"It actually reminds me a lot of Columbia when Columbia first started," Constantine said.

"The area is incredibly underserved. You've got all this residential but there are no restaurants, no retail."

Restaurateurs interested in opening in Odenton were encouraged to ask about flexible rental rates.

"Rental rates are very flexible for restaurants," Patricia Palumbo, director of leasing and marketing for Metropolitan Management Co. said.

"We want good restaurants here, we want quality service. Don't let rental rates scare you. Come and talk to us," Palumbo said.

Those looking for another reason to do business in Odenton may be interested in possible tax incentives.

"The county is working on whether or not there will be special districts set up for tax incentives," Ellen Miller, developer partner at StonebridgeCarras Associates said.

"I believe the county is pretty devoted to seeing that Odenton and the transit oriented development moves forward."

Burkholder said the districts would be similar to Arundel Mills or Parole Town Center and that a decision might be made by the end of the year.

With more people working near the Odenton area, homes are in high demand just like restaurants and grocery stores.

There are currently six proposed residential developments for Odenton that include townhouses and apartments, three of which are projected to break ground within 12 months.

"Residential development here has done very well," Burkholder said.

"In the last few years, there have been several apartment complexes that have been developed. We're getting more people. This area has a greater potential to be a full community with live, work and play."

- See more at: <http://www.capitalgazette.com/news/government/ph-ac-cn-odenton-tif-20140909,0,843952.story#sthash.cXkVbY7u.dpuf>