



SUN

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A focus on public transit in city plans

Tour meant to show need for development near subways, light rail

BY SUMATHI REDDY
(SUN REPORTER)

They went from a parking garage in Owings Mills to a mall in Northwest Baltimore to an eco-friendly, upscale development in Hampden.

The sites, vastly different in character and location, all had one common element: a transit stop, be it a Metro subway or light rail station.

That was the ultimate theme of a tour sponsored yesterday by the Citizens Planning and Housing Association. More than 50 people walked around six transit stations that are sites for redevelopment projects in various stages, taking public transportation to reach each destination. The sites include office buildings, apartments and houses, and even parking garages.

"Transit-oriented development is not something you think of here in Baltimore too much, but there's quite a bit under way right now, so we wanted to draw attention to that and help people see it first-hand," said Dan Pontious, regional policy director of CPHA, a regional transportation and housing advocacy organization.

"As traffic congestion gets worse and worse, ... we need to offer them more choices like this to be able to live and work near these places," he added. "We are working to try to get communities involved in these projects."

Some projects viewed on the tour, such as the State Center Metro station, required a bit of imagination, as planners talked about transforming the now aging complex of state offices into a thriving mix of new commercial, residential and retail space.

Ultimately, that means 1.35 million square feet of office space, 250,000 square feet of retail and 1,000 housing units, 20 percent that will remain "work-force housing" for people who earn less than a certain annual income, said Christopher Patusky, director of the Office of Real Estate for the Maryland Department of Transportation.

By contrast, the Clipper Mill development in Hampden near the Woodberry light rail station is just about completed, featuring an underground pool, immaculate rowhouses and apartments, and \$700,000 homes.

Along the way, the diverse group up of planners, community members and government officials posed difficult questions, such as how to maintain affordable housing and ensure that the community has a voice in planning. The tension was palpable at times. Otis Rolley III, who recently resigned

as the mayor's chief of staff to launch a new nonprofit advocacy group focusing on regional transportation, talked of the "broken promises" that have accompanied the planning process.

"There's distrust," he said. "And there still is," chimed in June Johnson, who lives in the nearby McCulloch Homes public housing development and is a member of the State Center Neighborhoods Alliance.

McCulloch Homes will not be altered as part of the development but is still represented in the alliance, which consists of representatives from nine surrounding communities.

In addition to the State Center complex and Clipper Mill, other sites toured yesterday included Metro stations at Owings Mills and Mondawmin Mall, and the Westport light rail station.

As participants toured Clipper Mill, many marveled at the developer's ability to preserve the mill's structure, even its charred roof.

"Look at how they've done this," said Zelta Robinson, a West Baltimore resident involved in the

"THIS GIVE[S] PEOPLE A SENSE OF WHAT'S OUT THERE."
DAN PONTIOUS

planning process for redevelopment near the metro station in her neighborhood. "I'm thinking of the Ice House and what we could do there," she said of the industrial building in West Baltimore that was damaged by a fire.

"It's quite a transformation," she added. "It's gives you some visuals to see the possibilities of what can happen."

But Clipper Mill is a project with no moderately priced housing, which had some participants wondering how to avoid such situations in the future and how to include employment opportunities for those in the community.

"What I see is most of the things that are happening are happening on the high end of the totem pole," said Robinson at a session at the conclusion of the tour.

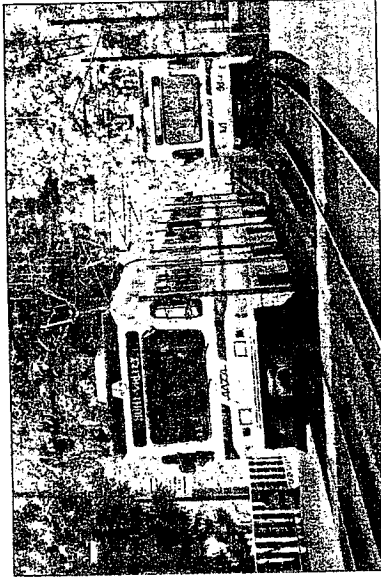
"We need opportunities built into the package," she added, referring to employment to enable community members to be able to afford new housing.

Janet Allen, a member of the Heritage Crossing Resident Association near the State Center project, talked about the need to spread the wealth.

"How are you going to spread the wealth as well as the poverty throughout transit-oriented developments?" she asked. "It doesn't look like it's going that way."

Pontious asked participants to write down their input on provided sheets. He also urged them to contact their legislative leaders and ask for more funding for transit projects.

"Communities are going to assert themselves more, and they are saying we really need to make



The Clippers Mill development near the Woodberry light rail station was featured during the Citizens Planning and Housing Association's tour yesterday. (SUN PHOTOGRAPH 2006)

sure the community benefits from the project in terms of job opportunities and also affordability, so it's not just for new people coming in," he said. "Hopefully

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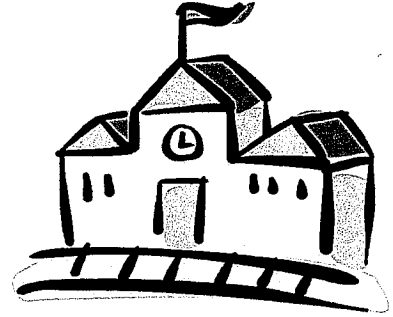
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**Saturday, October 20, 2007
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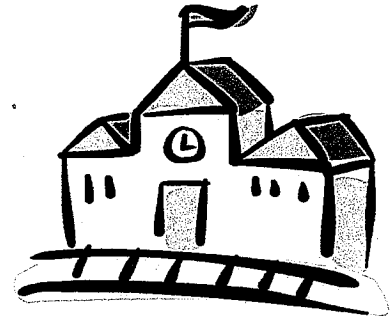
Maryland Transit Administration

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Saturday, October 20, 2007
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Presenters**Owings Mills Metro Station**

- Chris Patusky, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Jackie MacMillan, Baltimore County Office of Planning

Mondawmin Metro Station

- Charlotte Waters, General Growth Properties
- Earl Arnett, Greater Mondawmin Coordinating Council
- Seema Iyer, Baltimore City Department of Planning (for other City stops as well)

State Center Metro Station

- Chris Patusky, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Marcia Hart, State Center Neighborhoods Alliance, Bolton Hill
- June Johnson, State Center Neighborhoods Alliance, McCullough Homes
- Arlene McCain, State Center Neighborhoods Alliance, McCullough Homes

Cultural Center Light Rail Station

- Chris Patusky, Maryland Department of Transportation

Westport Light Rail Station

- Patrick Turner, Turner Development Group
- Linda Towe, Project TOOUR (Westport Community)

Woodberry Light Rail Station

- Jennifer Goold, Struever Bros., Eccles & Rouse