



WHEATON URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Ana L. van Balen
Director

January 26, 2015

County Executive Isiah Leggett
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Leggett,

On November 17, 2014, Mr. Jim Agliata, a manager at Westfield, informed WUDAC of Westfield's interest in developing the former Ourisman Chevrolet property, located at the corner of Viers Mill Rd and Reddie Drive in Wheaton. Mr. Agliata told us that Westfield's investment hinges upon WMATA's willingness to relinquish an easement condition that it currently holds over the property. He explained that Westfield had been unsuccessful in getting WMATA to discuss the matter. Thus, WUDAC is writing to request that your office be of assistance in bringing the parties together for discussions.

The location of the property is a critical one, as it is where Wheaton's downtown business district meets Westfield Wheaton. Development of this site has the potential to improve the connectivity between the popular mall and downtown Wheaton and to improve the flow of pedestrian and car traffic in the vicinity. Moreover, the site as it is currently configured presents a challenge to any potential business as we have seen by the failure of recent ventures.

Recognizing the importance of the site and the need for WMATA involvement, WUDAC has some concerns which it hopes the County and Westfield will address as development plans proceed.

Our first concern has to do with traffic flow if the upper entrance to the Metro garage is closed due WMATA's relinquishment of the easement. This would leave the garage with only one entrance near the Wendy's restaurant, which could exacerbate the current bottleneck traffic conditions in the area. WUDAC advises the County to work with Westfield to come up with a long-term solution to the traffic jams at the mall entrances and to facilitate communication between Westfield and WMATA to ensure sufficient access to the parking garage in the event the upper ramp is closed.

Our second concern is pedestrian traffic. Westfield has closed the pedestrian overpass that allowed shoppers to cross over the mall's "ring road" from the Metro garage, now forcing pedestrians to cross at street level near the entrance to JCPenney. This raises concerns about pedestrian safety. WUDAC advises the County to take this opportunity to

work with Westfield and WMATA to develop a seamless pedestrian connection between the Mall, the Metro, and the new town square.

While these were some of the main concerns raised during our meeting with Mr. Agliata, there are others that can only be addressed through a continued dialogue with the community. We advise the County to continue to seek community feedback on the development of this property. WUDAC looks to the leadership of your office to bring about a successful resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Devala Janardan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Devala Janardan, Chair