



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

News Release

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Leggett and Metro Announce Development Team Choice For Downtown Wheaton Redevelopment

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) today announced that a development team led by B.F. Saul has been selected to develop mixed-use projects in downtown Wheaton and the Wheaton Metrorail station area. In addition to B.F. Saul, the development team consists of architect, Torti Gallas and Partners, Inc.; and civil engineers, Loiederman Soltesz Associates, Inc.

“Selection of the B.F. Saul team for the Wheaton redevelopment project mirrors the successful strategy Montgomery County employed with Silver Spring,” said Leggett. “This highly qualified development team will work with community stakeholders to develop and execute a redevelopment concept that will change the face of downtown Wheaton.”

With only 8.2 acres of land publicly owned, the project will entail leveraging private property, as well as integrating with existing businesses such as Wheaton Westfield. The development team will work with Montgomery County, Metro and the Wheaton community to develop a project concept plan. Montgomery County and Metro anticipate that such outreach will lead to an agreement that will grant development rights to the B.F. Saul team.

“This is the first step in adding Wheaton to the list of exemplary Transit Oriented Development projects created as a result of Metro’s Joint Development Program,” said Steven Goldin, Metro’s Director of Real Estate. “Throughout the Washington region, Metro has completed 21 Transit Oriented Development projects, and another 10 are in various stages of completion. Notable Montgomery County projects include Bethesda Metro Center, Grosvenor, Twinbrook and Wheaton (east). Metro has begun to forge a new relationship with the B.F. Saul Company, an experienced, high quality developer, who we expect to lead the exciting re-creation of the Wheaton Triangle.”

Frank Saul III, President of B.F. Saul Company, said, “The B.F. Saul Company is proud and pleased to be selected to lead the redevelopment of downtown Wheaton. We believe there is great potential in the sites assembled by the County and Metro. We look forward to meeting with the diverse Wheaton community to craft a development plan

that benefits all stakeholders; and to working with Montgomery County and Metro to negotiate a development agreement to implement the plan.”

“We all knew that a piecemeal approach was not the answer to revitalize the Wheaton Central Business District,” said Council Vice President Valerie Ervin who represents District 5, which includes Wheaton. “This partnership with B.F. Saul Company and Metro is a tremendous opportunity for the residents of Wheaton to shape the future of the central business district and to invigorate Wheaton’s core, while maintaining the quality of life in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.”

“With the selection of this top-notch development team led by B.F. Saul, we're taking a big step toward revitalizing Wheaton in a way that will take advantage of the terrific assets the area already has,” said County Council President Nancy Floreen. “I'm pleased by the selection, and I'm very optimistic about Wheaton's future.”

B.F. Saul has been active in the Washington metropolitan area for more than 100 years. The firm has experience in ownership, development, and construction of commercial real estate. It also has large property management, leasing, and insurance departments. The B.F. Saul Company and related entities own and manage over \$1.5 billion in real estate development, comprising over twelve million square feet. The majority of the properties are located in the Washington, D.C. area.

"Wheaton redevelopment is critical to the future economic success of the County and this mixed-use revitalization project is another step forward," said At-Large Councilmember George Leventhal. "Wheaton has the potential to be an even greater draw if we capitalize on its diversity, geographic location and transportation network. And if we emphasize that which is unique to Wheaton and can't be found anywhere else, the small businesses, it will become yet another great destination spot in Montgomery County."

"The announcement that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has selected a development team led by B.F. Saul to design a mixed-use project near the Wheaton Metro Station is not only great news for Wheaton, but for Montgomery County, as a whole," said At-Large Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg, who chairs the Council's Management and Fiscal Policy Committee. "The revitalization of downtown Wheaton will bring many benefits to the residents and neighborhoods nearby, and will support the County's overall strategy of economic and business development. A strong and dynamic partnership with all community stakeholders will lead to an exciting project concept plan."

Wheaton was recently announced by Governor Martin O'Malley as one of the first projects in a new state Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) program, which supports good examples of TOD with financial tools, funding, tax credits and other incentives. Thus far, the Maryland Department of Transportation has supported the Wheaton TOD efforts with \$200,000 in planning funds. Additionally, Maryland’s representatives at WMATA advocated for changes to the WMATA Joint Development Program policies, to allow for this type of partnership approach.

Maryland Transportation Secretary Beverley K. Swaim-Staley applauded the progress on Wheaton. “Locally-supported projects like Wheaton are critical to a sustainable future for Maryland,” she said. “By revitalizing areas in walking distance to transit, we increase transit ridership and reduce sprawl, traffic congestion and environmental impacts. We look forward to supporting this partnership in Wheaton, to help make the local vision a reality.”

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