

There's robust development around the Greater Baltimore region

By: [Joe Nathanson](#) March 2, 2023



In my end-of-year column, I placed a spotlight on the many new projects underway or beginning to come to fruition around Baltimore City. Some of those changes have already made their mark in the early weeks of the new year. The new Lexington Market has had its official grand opening. The CIAA basketball tournament and attendant academic and athletic events have been taking place in the renovated CFG Bank Arena. And, folks are busy considering the future of Harborplace, now under new ownership, four decades after Jim Rouse launched his festival marketplace in the Inner Harbor.

Of course, there is much development activity in the counties ringing the city. Here's a brief look at some notable developments in Greater Baltimore.

In **Anne Arundel County**, with the National Security Agency based at Fort Meade, NSA's seven-story Morrison Center has begun welcoming its first occupants. The building is described as "serving as the hub for NSA's most critical missions ... this innovative, state-of-the-art facility will soon become home to the National Security Operation Center (NSOC) and many more vital elements."

The county is also looking at reinvesting in its established communities. In the fall, Glen Burnie Town Center began receiving new attention with the help of a \$250,000 grant from the state, leading to anticipated significant redevelopment. Annapolis Town Center will also benefit from new investment by its owners, Trademark Property Company, including a community gathering space called Village Green, installations of public art and other amenities.

Baltimore County has important job-generating projects at points east, north and west around the jurisdiction. Certainly, chief among them is Tradepoint Atlantic. Located at the site of the former Bethlehem Steel manufacturing complex on the county's southeastern waterfront, the development continues to make strides in attracting logistics and distribution companies.

Tradepoint recently announced a strategic partnership with Terminal Investment Limited to establish a 165-acre container terminal with an on-dock rail connection. The developers report the entire 3,300-acre site now supports 10,000 jobs and counting.

Towson Row, a 1.2 million square-foot, mixed-use development by Caves Valley Partners in the heart of the county seat, has already changed the local scene. Its retail is anchored by a new 63,750 square-foot Whole Foods market, but Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers has clearly hit a sweet spot, with eager customers lining up around the block.

Even a long-neglected property on the west side of the county is gaining renewed attention. The county has a process underway to reimagine Security Square mall at the intersection of the Baltimore Beltway and Interstate 70. This effort, which has included an extensive community engagement process, seems headed in the direction of transforming a dated and underused suburban shopping mall into a vibrant lifestyle community, with midrise residential structures occupying what had been acres of parking.

The development folks in **Howard County** talked enthusiastically about activity in their jurisdiction. Lawrence Twele, CEO of Howard County Economic Development Authority, and Chris Moyer, who manages business development and marketing for HCEDA, first focused on the progress being made in advancing plans for downtown Columbia. They see the actual growth taking place as matching the renderings first presented by Howard Hughes Corporation.

As described by that private development company, they are "transforming Downtown Columbia into a new regional hub for culture and commerce. A walkable, vibrant place where families, individuals and businesses thrive." As it moves toward "transforming 391 acres into a city in a garden," Howard Hughes will be delivering 4.3 million square feet of commercial office space, 1.25 million square feet of retail, 6,250 residential units, 640 hotel rooms and over 60 acres of outdoor recreation space, including lakes, trails and parks.

It's becoming, in Twele's words, that "third city" between Baltimore and Washington.

Howard County is also upbeat about other projects moving forward, including a 60,000 square-foot office building in Columbia Gateway delivered by Corporate Office Properties Trust and leased to Ascension St. Agnes for a wide range of medical services. Another major initiative involves Goodier Properties' acquisition and planned renovation of a six-building, 250,000 square-foot office campus off Route 175, also for medical services.

After a pandemic-induced slowdown in activity, development teams are making their moves around the region and area residents will have many more opportunities in the way of job centers, retail choices, dining and entertainment venues. There is much to look forward to in 2023 and beyond.

Joe Nathanson is the retired principal of Urban Information Associates, a Baltimore-based economic and community development consulting firm. Since 2001, he has written a monthly column for The Daily Record and can be contacted at urbaninfo@comcast.net