

8/20/2007



Challenges to Success of Clarksburg Town Center Retail Plan

1. Clarksburg market small and immature

- Eventual Clarksburg population of 30,000+ supports three planned grocery anchored centers with neighborhood-serving retail (approximately 1 grocery store per 3,500 rooftops or 10,000 residents), but not large quantity of urban, foot-traffic-dependent street-facing retail spaces.
- Trade area has extremely low density to the north and significant retail competition to the south
- Poor performance currently being demonstrated by adjacent Highlands of Clarksburg retail center.

2. Designed as 'destination town center' rather than 'neighborhood town center'

- Not consistent with neighborhood service/retail nature of outer-suburban location
- No variety in size or type of retail spaces - all are small (due to shallow depth and grade dictated slab breaks), with no rear truck loading.
- Too many tenants required to absorb 75,000 square feet of small, front-loaded, street-facing spaces (1,000 - 2,000 square foot units results in approximately 50 tenants)
- 51 live/work first-floor spaces (approx. 1,400 square feet each) similar to and compete with street-facing retail.

3. Secondary access and visibility

- Site too far off I-270 and Rt. 355 to draw from a large trade area
- View of retail area blocked by townhouses
- Does not meet typical requirements of national tenants

4. Unconventional grocery store

- Little or no visibility for anchor
- Parking structure with ramps not conducive to shopping carts or suburban drivers
- Difficult (described by some as un-workable) truck access and loading

5. Cost of structured parking not supported by market rents

6. Difficult current climate

- Sluggish residential sales
- Obstructionist reputation of Montgomery County government
- Powerful and organized opposition
- Tarnished reputation of Clarksburg