

# Howard/Arundel REPORT

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## *In Brief...*

**The Country Inn & Suites in Linthicum Heights belongs to a new owner.**

Herndon, Va.-based Fairbrook Hotels paid \$7.505 million for the 107-unit hotel at 1717 West Nursery Road recently. Hospitality Lodging Investors parted with the hotel, which it had developed. The 69,800 square foot building on 3.61 acres was built in 2005. The State Employees Credit Union of Maryland provided a \$4.5 million loan.

**Bozzuto Homes is readying its 'Murray Hill' sales effort in Annapolis.** The builder recently paid \$2.4 million for 23 towns and seven singles on West Street. A sign on the now-grassy site near Park Place says sales will start at \$399,000.

**Nova Services must have heard that Mark Twain quote about buying land: Do it, he said, as "they're not making any more of it."** Nova just paid \$1.3 million for five acres in Curtis Bay. The land in this case is improved with a 10,000 square foot building, but it was the dirt that Nova wanted, looking for a place for outside storage.

Last home to a trucking company, Nova's land is located at 701 Pittman Road. Bob Oare and Alan Orman of Cassidy Turley represented the seller, while John Boote of CBRE brought the buyer.

## **A Whole New Approach** *Developer Nixes Condo Plan for Townhouses*

Though Reliable Real Estate Services was well along in the approval process for 96 walk-up condominiums and 28 singles, located directly behind the Waugh Chapel Village shopping center, it will deep-six that proposal in favor of a more market-friendly approach.

Millersville based Reliable, an affiliate of Reliable Contracting, had gone to the trouble of getting a PUD approval for 'Summerfield Village,' on about 18 acres off Route 3 at Waugh Chapel Road. But the company's John Dixon said the "market is stronger in this area for towns than for condos, so we went back and completely redesigned it."

Dixon said he has had only preliminary conversations with builders about the redesigned plan for 221 townhouses, as it is early in the process. School capacity actually only exists for the first half of the job, so 126 towns will move ahead to final plan, while the remainder will go to the waiting list for school capacity. Reliable decided it could pull off a redesign because it owned additional parcels behind the Summerfield Village property, and acquired the development rights to several others.

**Similar Thinking.** Farther north, Elm Street Development has decided the same condominium-to-townhouse approach makes sense at 'Red Oak Crossing' in Glen Burnie. But there, the developer is yielding density to make the switch.

Citing a difficult market for condos, Elm Street wants to replace the final phase of 56 units with 38 townhouses at the Crain Highway community. Though it will forgo density in the switch, Elm Street says in a justification filed with the application that 'financing constraints have made condos very challenging to sell.' Thus, the developer will lose 18 units but perhaps gain pace and a higher price tag for builder NVR. So far, NVR has sold 32 condo units and has another 12 under construction. Red Oak is located on Crain Highway near Thelma Avenue.

Condos generally are more difficult to sell now because of mortgage limitations.

**And More Plans.** Meanwhile, several other townhouse plans are in the door at the Anne Arundel planning department, and Ribera Development plays a role in two of them. The larger is Arundel Gateway on Route 198 in Laurel, where a first-phase plan for 401 townhouses has been submitted.

Ribera also controls newly-zoned land at Watsons Glen in Millersville. A product of the recent Comp Zoning changes, Ribera's parcel in the southeast quadrant of Brightview Road and General's Highway will accommodate 50 townhouses. And Ameri-Star Homes will make a 45-lot project on Oakwood Road in Glen Burnie its first venture into townhouses.

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