

Baltimore developer Caves Valley Partners bids for \$750M Social Security project

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One hundred undeveloped acres in Woodlawn are on the short list for the largest single federal stimulus building project, a \$750 million data center for the Social Security Administration.

But there's no guarantee the facility will go next to Social Security headquarters in Baltimore County. An undisclosed number of other sites within 40 miles of the headquarters are also in the running, in other counties and potentially other states.

Pikesville developer Caves Valley Partners [and Annapolis developer Ribera Development, LLC](#) made a proposal for the land between Johnnycake and Dogwood roads, near the western end of Security Boulevard. Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith and county economic development officials have lobbied Social Security officials to choose the site and keep their facilities centered in Woodlawn.

The project, regardless of where it is located, could bring massive development and construction work. It would also potentially move about 100 permanent jobs to another county or state.

Officials for the General Services Administration, which is handling site selection for the project, would not disclose how many sites are under consideration, or where they are. But the agency plans to make a decision on the location by the end of the year.

The center would replace an existing facility on Social Security's main campus that dates back to the 1980s. Officials say that center is obsolete.

The new center would include 2.4 petabytes — enough to fill 20 million four-drawer filing cabinets — of data listing millions of names and social security numbers. The project is receiving \$500 million in federal stimulus money, half of the total amount the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allotted to Social Security.

Baltimore County Economic Development Executive Director David Iannucci said county officials hope to lure the project by stressing the importance of keeping the bulk of Social Security workers in one place, in Woodlawn. Social Security employs about 12,000 workers there, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services employs another 4,000.

“We want to maintain the integrity” of the employment center, Iannucci said. Baltimore County has seen a significant number of mass layoffs and plant closures in recent years, from employers including Solo Cup, GM and Stanley Black & Decker.

Economic development leaders in neighboring areas declined to reveal any other sites in contention. Howard County Economic Development Authority CEO Richard Story declined to comment on the project, and Baltimore Development Corp. President M.J. “Jay” Brodie said through a spokeswoman that sites in the city had been proposed for the project, but would not comment further. Harford County Economic Development Director James C. Richardson said several sites in that county were pitched, but none made the short list. Anne Arundel County officials could not be reached.

The 40-mile radius also includes parts of Northern Virginia and southern Pennsylvania. The GSA was seeking at least 30 to 40 acres for the project.

Caves Valley partner Arthur Adler could not be reached for comment. Iannucci said the county is not offering any financial incentives to lure the project but is helping to guarantee that needed infrastructure such as roads and sewer service would be paid for.

Caves Valley is already working on another key economic development project in Baltimore County, the redevelopment of the Investment Building in downtown Towson as a headquarters for Mile One Automotive. The developer received up to \$16 million in tax-exempt federal aid for that project, which is part of efforts to redevelop downtown Towson.

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