

Macy's to Close Laurel Mall Store, Bloomingdale's at White Flint

January 4, 2012, Baltimore Business Journal, Ryan Sharrow

Macy's Inc. plans to close a store in the Laurel Mall, as well as a Bloomingdale's at White Flint Mall in North Bethesda. The closures, set to take place in early spring, will result in the loss of 234 jobs. Macy's said associates laid off may be offered positions at nearby stores. The Laurel Mall store, which opened in 1981, occupies 123,000 square feet. The White Flint Bloomingdale's, a tenant in the Montgomery County mall since 1977, is 259,000 square feet. Read more...

New Development Proposed at Columbia Mall

January 6, 2012, Baltimore Sun, Kevin Rector

TA large-scale development project at the Mall in Columbia that would remove 30,000 square feet of existing retail space and add a 75,000-square-foot "lifestyle center" will be shared with the public at a community meeting Jan. 17 at Howard Community College. Katie Essing, the mall's senior general manager, declined to comment on the specifics of the proposed project, but in a statement said the mall "is excited to begin the planning and design process of the center's future expansion." She said the community meeting would be "the first of many steps needed to gain the support and approval of Howard County and the surrounding communities." Read more...

For Malls, Occupancy Firms Up

January 9, 2012, Wall Street Journal, Kris Hudson

U.S. malls and shopping centers experienced a slight improvement in occupancy during the fourth quarter, a relief for landlords that have been battling lackluster demand from retailers for most of the downturn. But data service Reis Inc. cautioned that any recovery remains precarious and the outlook for this year is mixed, given the clouds hovering over the economy. While some retailers are expanding—such as Forever 21 Inc., Dick's Sporting Goods Inc. and Dollar General Corp.—landlords can expect more headaches from high-profile store closures by companies such as Sears Holdings Corp. and Gap Inc. Read more...

DuClaw's President has Big Plans for New Havre de Grace Brewery Location

January 12, 2012, The Aegis, Marissa Gall

It was important for DuClaw President David Benfield to stay in Harford County when he was looking for a new site to expand the popular brewery. After all, the 41-year-old businessman has lived in the county his whole life. In the beginning of December, Benfield signed a deal that will put a 165,000-square-foot brewery at an industrial park in Havre de Grace, hoping to amp up DuClaw's craft beer manufacturing and distribution, as well as make it a place for various events. The microbrewery, which began in Harford in 1996, has four restaurant and pub locations — the Arundel Mills Mall in Hanover, in Bowie, at BWI airport and Bel Air. Read more...

People Brave the Cold at Abingdon Joe's Crab Shack Opening

January 17, 2012, The Aegis, Kayla Bawroski

A line wrapped around the newly opened Joe's Crab Shack in Abingdon Monday morning, as people braved the cold to earn a free bucket of snow crabs a month for a year. The grand opening for Joe's Crab Shack in Abingdon was scheduled for 11 a.m., but the first person in line arrived at noon on Sunday to hold his spot to be one the first 100 people when the new restaurant opened. Eric Lashley, of Middle River, came with his family of five, including a daughter who works at Wegmans in the same shopping center. As the first person, Lashley also cut the ribbon during the grand opening ceremony, surrounded by Joe's Crab Shack representatives and Baltimore Ravens cheerleaders. He first ate at Joe's Crab Shack in Virginia Beach, Lashley said, and when he heard about the Abingdon opening, he had to be there. Read more...

Owings Mills Development Breeds Competition, Concern

January 21, 2012, Baltimore Sun, Alison Knezevich

When Baltimore County officials gathered for a news conference in the fall to reveal plans to revitalize the half-empty Owings Mills Mall, a cheery slogan lit up a screen behind them: “Owings Mills — it’s happening!” The mall event was one of three major economic development announcements within six months for an area that has long awaited a makeover. But behind the scenes, a battle is brewing between the prominent developers investing in the projects. Plans for Owings Mills include a \$65 million revamping of the mall; a huge, mixed-use development called Metro Centre near the end of Baltimore’s subway line; and Foundry Row, an upscale retail complex anchored by a Wegmans grocery store at the Solo Cup manufacturing site off Reisterstown Road. [Read more...](#)

CRE Show: US Retail Real Estate Market on the Road to Recovery

January 23, 2012, CityBiz Real Estate, Staff Writer

The Great Recession left the retail real estate market ailing, but the sector exhibited some significant signs of health last year and should continue to recover in 2012. Guests of the most recent episode of the “Commercial Real Estate Show” provided those observations and others in a detailed look at the market. Topics included retail spending, investment sales activity, landlord-tenant negotiations and the growth of Smashburger, an award-winning, fast-casual restaurant chain. On a chain-store basis, retail spending grew by 4.7 percent in 2011 when compared to the year before, according to Michael Niemira, chief economist for the International Council of Shopping Centers. The growth was the largest since 1999, but Niemira qualified the rise by noting it was fueled to a large degree by price increases implemented by retailers grappling with inflation in their supply chains. [Read more...](#)

Deloitte Study Discusses the Store of the Future

January 24, 2012, Retail Traffic, Elaine Misonzhnik

Battling powerhouse Internet retailers like Amazon.com and smartphone apps that allow consumers to shop from virtually anywhere, the retail industry has spent the past few years trying to imagine the future of the brick-and-mortar store. A new research study released by Deloitte, “The Next Evolution: Store 3.0,” promises that traditional stores will not disappear from the landscape, but advises retail executives to start thinking about how to best integrate the various sales channels now available to shoppers. [Read more...](#)

Woodberry Kitchen Owners to Open Cafe in Hampden

January 24, 2012, Bmore Media, Julekha Dash

Woodberry Kitchen’s Spike and Amy Gjerde will open a coffee shop at Hampden’s Union Mill this spring. The 1,500-square-foot café will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. Allie Caran, the lead barista at Woodberry Kitchen will manage the store, Spike Gjerde says. Also still in the works is Half Acre, a fast-casual eatery that the Gjerdes will open at 3801 Falls Rd. in the middle of this year. The 75-seat restaurant will serve lunch and dinner and employ 30, Gjerde says. The restaurant is also opening an office at Union Mill for about half a dozen employees at the cafe and restaurants. [Read more...](#)

J.C. Penney Chief Thinks Different

January 26, 2012, Wall Street Journal, Dana Mattioli

Shortly after taking the top job at J.C. Penney Co. last fall, Chief Executive Ron Johnson signed up for the company’s email alerts. He was shocked by what landed in his inbox. The former Apple Inc. retail executive was deluged by sales announcements, sometimes two a day. He and his team counted 590 separate sales last year. They didn’t bring in shoppers—Mr. Johnson’s team found the average customer purchased only four times a year—but they did crush prices. Alarming, he learned nearly three-quarters of Penney’s products sold at discounts of 50% or more. [Read more...](#)