

GREEN AWARENESS

To be first green shopping center in Mid-Atlantic region

Black Oak Associates closes on property and unveils plans for green shopping center

OWING MILLS, MD — Black Oak Associates, Inc. closed on a 12.5 acre site which will become Main Street Eldersburg — a 90,000 s/f “lifestyle center” that is situated near the intersection of MD Rtes. 32 and 26 in Carroll Cty., MD. The company today unveiled plans for the development of the center, which will be the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED)-certified shopping center in the Mid-Atlantic region, and among the first to be built in the country.

The project received final approval from the Carroll County Planning Commission on May 15. Groundbreaking will occur this summer, and the company anticipates delivery of the new \$20 million shopping venue by fall 2008.

Main Street Eldersburg will front on Londontown Blvd. and consist of approximately 90,000 s/f of space among three separate buildings, with five pad sites on the surface parking lot that are designed for complimentary restaurant uses and convenience retail. The project is located on a 12.5 acre site adjacent to Eldersburg Marketplace, a 310,000 s/f community shopping center that was previously developed and is currently owned and managed by Black Oak Associates.

Green design and environmentally-friendly features

The project has received pre-construction Silver Core and Shell LEED certification from the United States Green Building Council due to a number of energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly design features that have been incorporated into the center. Bignell, Watkins and Hasser is the architect of Main Street Eldersburg and Daft-McCune-Walker is the landscape architect.

The green aspects of the project include:

- The incorporation of a passive solar “daylighting” system that is maintained through the strategic placement of glass panels for interior daylighting. A high efficiency Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) package



Main Street Eldersburg aerial rendering



and advanced energy modeling that will also contribute to an expected energy savings of 30% each year.

- The installation of a cistern water system that captures and reuses rainwater from the project’s roof that, when combined with the use of drought-resistant plants, will save approximately 30% of water use on an annual basis.
- The use of white pavers to reflect light in order to reduce the “heat island” effect.
- To reduce the overall environmental impact during the construction process, approximately 10% of all materials used in the construction of Main Street Eldersburg are made with recycled content, 75% of construction wastes will be recycled and 50% of building materials will be manufactured locally, thereby reducing transportation fuel costs.

“Black Oak Associates is committed to developing future projects LEED-certified and sustainable, and Main Street Eldersburg has been designed as the model for this process, moving forward,” explained R. Dixon Harvey, Jr., president of Black Oak Associates. “The trend towards creating new projects that are environmen-

tally-friendly and energy-efficient is quickly gaining momentum and is top-of-mind among government entities, retailers and the consumer public. Our company’s goal is to be among the first development groups in the retail sector to demonstrate the importance of building green,” he added.

“In the past few years, we have seen a monumental increase in the amount of green building nationwide — from single family homes to commercial office buildings to large-scale developments. Builders, developers and consumers alike are becoming aware of the benefits of sustainable design. Green buildings offer decreased operating costs, improved indoor environmental quality, increased employee productivity and increased market value,” stated Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO and founding chair of the U. S. Green Building Council.

“Retail stores in particular have much to gain from going green. Studies have linked the skylights in green retail spaces to increased sales, products located under sky lit areas sell better than products located in non-sky lit areas of the store. Besides boosting in-store sales, green buildings pay for them-

selves within one to two years and yield a 25-40% return on investments,” Fedrizzi added.

Retailer benefits

In addition to constructing Main Street Eldersburg as a “green” project, Black Oak Associates has created guidelines to encourage its tenants to utilize green practices when building out their space and operating their store. In addition to realizing reduced operating costs, research exists from the USGBC that green construction contributes to healthier working conditions, primarily from improved interior air quality.

According to USGBC, a higher indoor air quality helps prevent employee sickness, and improved lighting, temperature control and access to daylight contribute to increased worker productivity.

“We are rapidly approaching a time when employees of retail merchants and consumers themselves will begin making employment and shopping decisions based on how green the center is,” added Dixon Harvey. “This trend is occurring in the commercial office sector currently, and the progression to the retail environment is a natural one.”

Carroll County retail environment

More than 43,000 consumers reside within a five-mile radius of Main Street Eldersburg, featuring an average household income of more than \$103,000. The site is directly accessed from MD Rtes. 32 and 26 and approximately 30,000 vehicles pass the site on a daily basis from each highway. Big-box and grocery stores that are presently open in Eldersburg include Home Depot, Kohl’s, Wal-Mart, Safeway and Martin’s.

KLNB Retail has been selected as the exclusive leasing agent for Main Street Eldersburg, and the firm is actively marketing the project for a range of uses including casual dining, soft goods, men’s and women’s apparel stores and the home furnishings category. The project is designed to provide space for smaller shops and boutiques to compliment the five anchor retailers contained in Eldersburg Marketplace.

“We have designed Main Street Eldersburg to function as the community center element of the greater Eldersburg area, by incorporating features that will encourage residents to spend their leisure time here,” explained Dixon Harvey. “This naturally occurs at outdoor, lifestyle centers that are reminiscent of old Main Street, and which include open spaces, benches, gathering places around common areas and outdoor restaurant seating,” he added.

Eldersburg is located in the southeast portion of Carroll County and is approximately 12 miles from Westminster and 20 miles from downtown Baltimore City. According to figures maintained by the Carroll County Department of Planning, Eldersburg is contained in the election district that features among the highest growth in the County region.

“We have positioned our company as a real estate developer that concentrates on building and managing its assets over the long-term. This is an important differentiation point when creating a green project, because we can take advantage of the economic efficiencies associated with a long-term position,” added Harvey. ■