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## **Lee Will Continue to Seek Retail Zoning for Aspen Hill**

*Retail Most Viable Use for Vacant Property*

Silver Spring, Md. (August 12, 2014) – Lee Development Group will continue to seek retail zoning for the former BAE/Vitro property in Aspen Hill, Md, the company said today. “We are confident that this is a great retail location, ultimately offering much-needed shopping options to the under-served Aspen Hill community,” said Bruce H. Lee, president of Lee Development Group. “Once the property is zoned appropriately for retail use, we expect strong interest from retailers looking to come to Aspen Hill.”

Lee said one prospective tenant, Walmart, has decided against moving forward with its plans because of the uncertain length of the county’s planning and regulatory processes. Walmart had expressed interest in opening an 118,000-square-foot store with expanded grocery offerings at the site that would have employed 300 people.

Built in 1968, the 262,923-square-foot office building at 4115 Aspen Hill Road has sat vacant since 2010. The empty BAE/Vitro building and its surrounding 10 acres will be part of the area addressed by the Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment Process.

The amendment process allows Montgomery County Planning staff to reevaluate potential zoning and uses for the property, which had been previously zoned for office use. As noted by county planners, the market for large-scale, single-tenant office buildings has declined throughout the region. Current office development trends instead focus on moving away from suburban, car-oriented campuses while clustering more compact offices around multiple-use, mass-transit-centered areas.

Accordingly, county planners have recommended that the BAE/Vitro property be re-zoned as a Commercial/ Residential Town Zone, allowing for a mix of commercial and residential uses. Based on the economic analysis performed by staff for the Minor Master Plan Amendment, retail is the most viable use for the site in the near term, and would be allowed under this zone.

“On behalf of the Aspen Hill Business Coalition, I’d like to express our utmost disappointment with the news that Walmart is withdrawing their plans for the BAE/Vitro site,” said Boris Lander, co-president of the organization and owner of two nearby Dunkin Donut stores. “After working diligently for two years, our organization will continue to work to urge a rezoning of the property in order to help local businesses and to revitalize our community by providing the opportunity to bring in a major retailer and present more shopping choices.”

(more)

Plans for retail at the property have received a great deal of support from Leisure World residents and from community groups like the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Montgomery County, the Aspen Hill Business Coalition and the Aspen Hill Civic Association, which for more than 30 years has served as an advocate for area residents.

Residents and shoppers have responded enthusiastically to the 2012 opening of Kohl's in the Northgate Shopping Center, which is owned and was redeveloped by Lee Development Group, providing further evidence of the demand for new retail options in central Montgomery County.

### **About Lee Development Group**

Lee Development Group is a family-owned business specializing for over 80 years in real estate development and management. With headquarters in downtown Silver Spring, LDG develops office, retail, residential and warehouse/flex projects throughout Montgomery County. Its newest project is the redevelopment of the BAE/Vitro property in Aspen Hill. To learn more, visit [www.leedg.com](http://www.leedg.com) or call 301-585-7000.

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