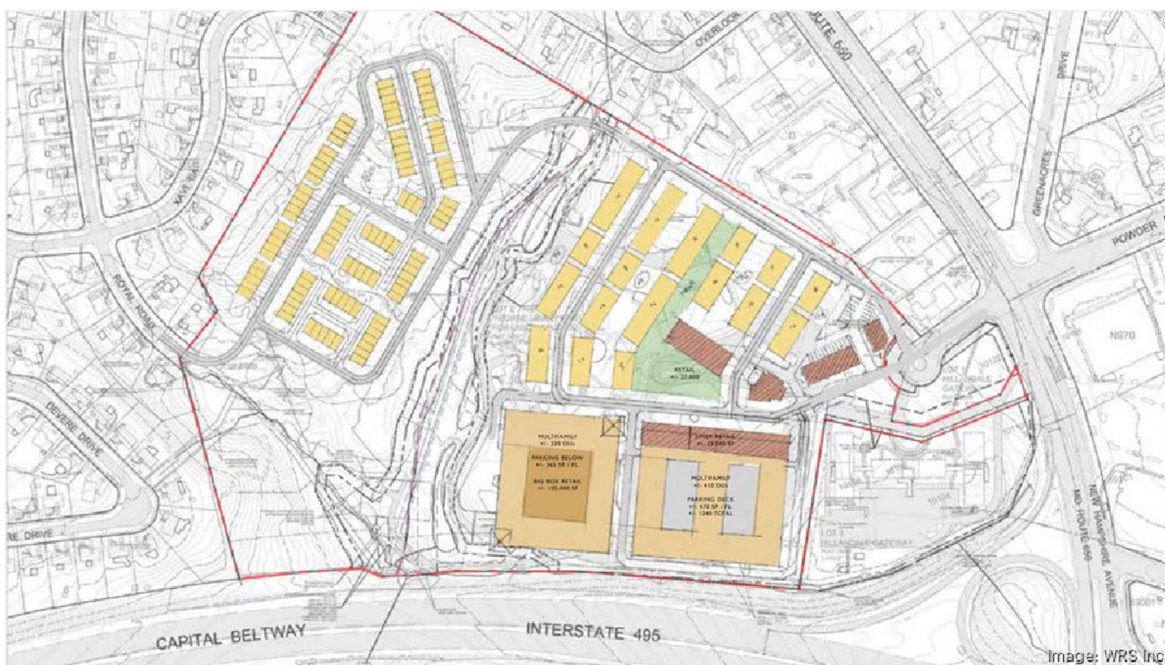


Commercial Real Estate

WRS Inc. eyeing big mixed-use redevelopment of union headquarters site in Silver Spring



A mixed-use redevelopment concepts for the 46-acre site at 10000 New Hampshire Ave. in Silver Spring.

WRS INC.



By **Dan Brendel** – Staff Reporter, Washington Business Journal
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WRS Inc. is looking to redevelop the **Amalgamated Transit Union's 46-acre international headquarters** site in Silver Spring with roughly 1.3 million square feet of new residences and retail.

The union bought the property at 10000 New Hampshire Ave., just north of the Capital Beltway, in 2014 for \$31.4 million, but is now looking to relocate. WRS, a South Carolina-based real estate firm that's also spearheading the \$1.2 billion **redevelopment of Gaithersburg's Lakeforest Mall**, put the property under contract last summer with the hope of turning it into a "town center," Pat Marr, a WRS principal, told me in an interview.

The redevelopment would provide on the order of 900 new residential units as well as new shopping and restaurant offerings in a submarket Marr said is "underutilized from a retail perspective."

The Amalgamated Transit Union didn't immediately return a request for comment. Marr said the union, representing more than 200,000 members across the U.S. and Canada, occupies about 200,000 square feet at its current home.

The project is in the early stages, with initial project applications headed to the county's planning department probably around February. WRS intends to proceed with by-right development, with the eastern side of the site currently zoned for mixed-use and the western side, adjacent to an existing neighborhood, only for residential. The developer hopes to close on the acquisition within the next two years, if not sooner, and break ground within the next two to three years, Marr said.

The site's total redevelopment potential weighs in at about 1.9 million square feet, depending on future proffers for additional affordable housing beyond what the county otherwise requires, Marr said. For now, WRS is looking to develop about 1.3 million square feet, including townhomes and/or stacked two-over-two flats on northern and western portions of the property WRS would probably sell to a homebuilder.

The county's 2014 White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan marked the site, as well as Hillandale Shopping Center just to the east across New Hampshire Avenue, for potential mixed-use redevelopment.



A big redevelopment site could become home to some 1.3 million square feet of new uses.

M-NCPPC

While the precise mix of WRS's intended buildings and uses isn't set in stone, conceptual drawings the developer shared with me, depicting several possible configurations, show the bulk of new development on the parcel's southeastern quarter. That would include two mid-rise, mixed-use multifamily-over-retails buildings with roughly 640 units, plus a 105,000-square-foot big box retailer and up to 49,000 square feet of "linear retail" along a main street bisecting that part of the project.

Those uses will sit immediately adjacent to Hillandale Gateway, a separate, nearly 600,000-square-foot redevelopment, including 460 residential units, approved in 2021 and currently under construction. That neighboring project represents a partnership between the county's Housing Opportunities Commission, an affordable housing agency, and Silver Spring-based The Duffie Cos.

On the north and west parts of the ATU site, WRS's drawings show between about 250 and 290 townhomes and flats, bringing the total number of residential units across the whole site to between about 890 and 930.

The site was home to the AFL-CIO's National Labor College, which closed in 2014. Around that time, Monument Realty considered the site for mixed-use redevelopment, and a church also sought to buy it before the Amalgamated Transit Union acquired it.