

## 'Quarry town' traffic an issue

Traffic concerns dominate questions after Luck Development presentation about Ni Village

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Luck Development Partners brought in a landscape architect, a master planner and others to help design a lush, environmentally responsible and pedestrian-friendly community in eastern Spotsylvania County known as Ni Village.

They laid out plans for a community inspired by the idea of an "old-fashioned quarry town."

They explained how the design respects and incorporates the wetlands that feed into the Ni River.

And they spoke of opportunities for academic enrichment and cultural activities.

But when the 50-minute presentation was over, the primary topic on the minds of the 75 people who turned out Thursday night was traffic.

It's the same topic that dominated the discussion the last time Luck Development officials presented the project to the community in November 2009.

Chris Petrini and his wife, Terri, are concerned about the impact the 330-acre development would have on their ability to get across U.S. 1 from their home.

The couple lives off Hickory Ridge Road, immediately south of where Luck plans to create Ni Village.

Ni Village is envisioned as a mixed-use development that would straddle U.S. 1 just south of Massaponax High School.

On the east side of U.S. 1 would be 162 acres devoted to business, with 562,700 square feet of office space and 20,000 square feet for retail.

On the west side would be Smith's Mill Education Center, 950 residential units, 85,700 square feet of retail space, 105,200 square feet of office space, and a hotel.

### TENANT EXPECTED IN 2011

Development is expected to begin on the west side of the project, Luck general manager Eileen Dahlstedt said.

There, the National Academy of Environmental Design is projected to become the first tenant of Smith's Mill and to move in by year's end, Dahlstedt said.

The academy--a nonprofit think tank--would move into an existing structure there.

Smith's Mill is envisioned as a place for research and development with a focus on green technology.



The University of Mary Washington and Germanna Community College are already involved and more universities are being sought to create a hub for higher education and research and development with a focus on green technology, sustainability and resource conservation.

The Spotsylvania County school division would also become part of the education center. Its central office is within the proposed development, but would eventually move into a new building on that campus, Dahlstedt said.

## TRAFFIC WORRIES ON U.S. 1

Bill Blaine, who lives off Courthouse Road in Spotsylvania, is concerned about the safety of Massaponax High School students who might want to cross U.S. 1 to visit the shops.

Dahlstedt said Spotsylvania school officials have been kept abreast of plans for the development and have provided input and support.

Three school division managers attended Thursday's meeting, including Superintendent Jerry Hill.

Dahlstedt said the company looked into using a tunnel or bridge for pedestrians but found "the financial impact of that is enormous." Besides, many pedestrians don't like tunnels and bridges.

Instead, the developers plan to have well-marked pedestrian lanes, a wide median and warning signs for drivers approaching the area.

Two people asked whether a new Interstate 95 interchange was planned to accompany the development and expressed concern about the increased traffic at the already congested Spotsylvania exit.

They were told that's not part of the plan.

The Petrinis, whose home is on the western side of U.S. 1, are concerned because they already have trouble getting across U.S. 1 to drive north.

They and their neighbors have pressed county and state officials to add a traffic light at the intersection of Hickory Ridge Road and U.S. 1.

The additional traffic the project would bring only adds to their concerns.

Dave Beardsley, a traffic engineer with VHB Inc. in Richmond, told the crowd Thursday night that additional traffic from the project could aid in getting a light installed.

He also said the developer has already asked for the speed limit to be reduced in that area.

"I'm sort of all for this," Petrini said after the presentation. "At the same time, they need to realize people are doing 55 and 60" mph along U.S. 1.

For more on the project, see [nivillage.com](http://nivillage.com)

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