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News

'Green' neighborhood breaks ground next month

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Perryville development to have moss-covered roofs

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At first glance, the roofs at Woodlands Perryville will cause double takes.

After all, its not every day you see peat moss and potting soil where shingles usually go.

Developer Doug Hill said Monday that he plans to use the innovative stormwater management technique at the 250-home residential and commercial development, which is expected to break ground at the intersection of Route 40 and Coudon Boulevard next month.

The Stormwater Management Act passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2007 gives jurisdictions several options for handling runoff, including green roofs.

Jay Apperson, spokesman for the department of the environment, said jurisdictions have to have ordinances for an environment site design reflecting the state's desire to reduce pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

"The green roof is one of the things you could do along with pervious pavers," Apperson said.

Hill said rainwater passing over homes in the Woodlands development would be filtered by passing through the all-natural matter planted on the roof.

Yes, planted.

"We'll put down a liner like any other roof, then add planting medium," he said.

That mixture of soil, peat moss and shale would be followed by rows of drought resistant plants.

It would take a few years to get the 60,000-square-foot roofs established, but afterward it would be maintenance-free, Hill said.

"(The plants) increase the insulation value ... and reduce heating and cooling costs," he said, adding that the roofs also would last twice as long as a traditional 20-year shingle roof.

"Plus, it's a lot nicer to look at," he said.

On Monday, Gov. Martin O'Malley launched a "Going Green Downtown" guide that he hopes will inspire others to do more of this green-style building.



A development plan is seen at the intersection of Route 40 and Coudon Boulevard in Perryville where Woodlands Perryville, a 250-home residential and commercial development, is expected to break ground next month. CECIL WHIG PHOTO BY ADELMA GREGORY-BUNNELL

"This is really meant to be a catalyst for communities," said Amy Seitz, the coordinator of the Main Street Maryland program. "Maybe you want to do recycling in the business district. Here's how to do that."

The program is geared toward municipalities with a lot of older buildings and modern ideals.

The program encourages communities to maximize existing structures when possible, to consider energy efficient measures such as solar power, to build green communities that encourage trails and tree planting and to shop close to home.

"Buying local isn't just for fruits and vegetables," Seitz said.

For example, Hill is getting his planting supplies from companies in Perryville and Havre de Grace.

"These are good ideas on how to go green downtown," she said. "Hopefully this will create a groundswell of working together for a green strategy."

To view the governor's "Going Green Downtown" guide, visit www.mdhousing.org/Website/publications/document/green_guide.pdf.

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